



Hon David Templeman MLA
Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Culture and the Arts

Our Ref: 66-02604

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chair – Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
env@parliament.wa.gov.au

Dear Mr Swinbourn

Thank you for your correspondence dated 13 September 2017 requesting additional information related to Petition No. 12 – Proposed inquiry into the City of Melville.

In response to your specific requests I can advise that:

1. The Manager of Sector Governance, Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries has met recently with the City of Melville Chief Executive Officer; Manager Governance and Compliance; and Director Legal, on three separate occasions to address issues of concern and discuss strategies for dealing with the volume of complaints and correspondence being received.
2. The Department is monitoring developments at the City by recording and responding to specific and general complaints and expressions of concern received in writing and by telephone from members of the public, and also through the intermittent, unannounced attendance of Department officers at City Council Meetings.
3. The Department suggested that the City appoint an independent person to deal with complaints from several groups, such as the Melville Residents and Ratepayers Association and the Alfred Cove Action Group.

Department observations are that the City's executive staff are too close to the issues and it would be prudent for an independent person to review and act on complaints about City processes and decisions.

The City took proactive measures to improve public relations by engaging a staff member to undertake media relations.

It was also suggested that the City consider training for all senior staff in complaint management and dealing with media issues, as several articles published recently highlighted comments that were made that would have

benefitted from being reviewed by someone outside the organisation prior to going to print.

The City's Governance and Compliance Manager recently completed a Certificate IV in Government Investigations. A focus on training is expected to continue for other relevant staff and elected members, including the importance of body language during meetings.

The Department continues to respond to correspondence and informal complaints, and provide advice to City staff and members of the public on request.

4. In November 2016, Mr Gary Crawford submitted a formal complaint to the Local Government Standards Panel against Mayor Aubrey regarding an email exchange. The Standards Panel found that a minor breach of the *Local Government (Rules of Conduct) Regulations 2007* had occurred and required Mayor Aubrey to make a public apology, however Mayor Aubrey has made an appeal to the State Administration Tribunal to review the decision; with the outcome yet to be determined.

Since 2013, the Department has received more than 200 informal complaints regarding the City. Of this total, more than 100 were submitted by just two individuals.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide further information related to this petition and trust the information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



HON DAVID TEMPLEMAN MLA
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT;
HERITAGE; CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

16 OCT 2017