

GREG PETTY

Independent Candidate for Lord Mayor

MEDIA RELEASE



Petty asks “*Where was Connor, or other candidates, in March*”

Wollongong City Council “Community Reference Panel” provides framework for future interaction between Council and community – but do all candidates know this?

Independent Lord Mayor Candidate Greg Petty attended a “Community Reference Panel” (CRP) workshop in March this year. The CRP workshop was organised by Wollongong City Council as part of a return to elected Councillors. The program was a requirement under the then State Labor Government as part of the strengthening consultation between local councils and residents/ratepayers.

Mr. Petty was the only Lord Mayor Candidate to register, attend and complete the course – where were the other 11 Lord Mayor Candidates – not interested in future consultation with their community!

Reform Wollongong City Council website posting put it so clinically “*The issue of community consultation has now been put on the election agenda by several candidates. The latest was by ALP Lord Mayor Candidate Chris Connor, who was interviewed on ABC radio 97.3FM this morning (Tuesday 16 August) under the catch line of an undertaking to consult with every household.*

*When asked, by interviewer **Nick Rheinberger**, how this could be done Chris suggested that some form of questionnaire could go out with every rate notice. Not a bad idea for some major issues, but as many people pay their rates annually, this would not be a very active means of consulting.*

When pressed by Nick, Chris also suggested the use of social media such as Twitter. Another good idea, and also subject to problems as Nick pointed out in terms of how much weight can be put on the twittering of a small but vocal number of people who feel passionate about a particular issue”.

Lord Mayor Candidates would do well to access the CRP workshop [final report](#).

Mr. Petty begs the question; “*Where has other Lord Candidates been in the last 3 years during the period of Administration. How many Lord Mayor Candidates have been actively working in the community on council issues? And lastly, how many are on the Neighbourhood Forum Committees? Answer, just 2*”.

“The issue of Community Consultation can be easily hijacked by political parties to give the illusion of being inclusive of community concern. True consultation of community concerns will only be achieved by councillors being free of political party influence” stated Mr. Petty.

One suggested outcome of the CRP was emailing rate notices. Apart from the obvious **cost-savings**, was the ability to communicate events, issues, updates, etc, to residents and ratepayers quickly and regularly. Council has yet to advise if implementation of Mr. Petty’s suggestion will be adopted.

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