

GREG PETTY *MEDIA RELEASE*



Wollongong City Councillor - Independent - Ward 1

Petty says “the debate over Illegal Dumping becomes a farce of name calling devoid of any positive overall organizational review”.

Last night’s Wollongong City Council meeting conveniently side-stepped any positive action on the “Mound Barrier” illegal dumping.

The blame game continued with the Illawarra Mercury reporting “Cr. Crasnich - who has previously called Cr Petty a salami - insinuated that his motion was politically motivated and “a classless act”.

Cr. Petty stated in his speech (reproduced below) said that a “totally independent review of the organisation is mandatory to expose any other potential systemic problems in all the divisions” was needed.

Those comments are in total accord with the Media Release dated 6 December 2013 wherein Cr. Petty stated <http://gregpetty.com.au/press-room-pdfs/press-release-fsr.pdf> “Councillors need to step back and take a holistic review of council operations. Nothing short of a full review would be acceptable” – that certainly sounds like singing to the same hymn sheet.

“If the review had been conducted following the call in December 2013, the current problem would never have happened” Cr. Petty stated today.

Cr. Petty’s foreshadowed motion (reproduced below) of reviewing certain past operational issues and setting a business framework for ongoing review failed with Councillors voting 10-1 in favour of a staff motion with a minor amendment.

Illegal Dumping Speech – 3 August 2015

Our organisational structure has “community” at the top, and it should be the number one above all else. I believe, right now, they are feeling very let down by performance following this report.

The community, and further afield, including the EPA, the Local Government Minister, other Councils, the previous Administrators, staff, community, business leaders, will be watching this webcast to see whether we have the intestinal fortitude to make the right decisions “going forward” to fix this issue.

Our decision tonight should not be based on anything other than what is right for our community, the ratepayers that elected us, and be corner stoned on good corporate governance principles under a BOARD of DIRECTOR model using evidence.

The Administrators had their management style, not everyone agreed with it and one would assume supposedly cleared the decks of all these types of issues. One could conclude the waste problem has manifested since the Administrators left and this Council has dropped the ball allowing an environment to flourish that resulted in this “systemic” problem. I don’t believe this issue has had enough time to morph itself into the problem it has become today. In fact, I offer extracts from a letter written in 2002 by the then Lord Mayors office, yes, 13 years ago.I quote; “The fill used in the project was not as clean as council would have liked. Following the grading and compaction of the material the works crew walked the site and removed any material which may represent a danger to pedestrians” unquote. This was in response to a ratepayer complaining about, again I quote “revealed broken glass, bottles, bricks, railway sleepers, plastic, sewerage pipe and a wide variety of material that could NEVER be classified as “top soil” used in a grass footpath reconstruction” unquote.

So the problem has been in existence well before the Administrators. Through dismissing the then elected Council i.e. Councillors through an ICAC lead enquiry, the appointment of Administrator's and now us as elected Councillors, the practices causing this problem went undetected for 13 years and would have remained undetected if not for A RATEPAYER challenging council on illegal dumping. This has been poor management practices and decision making to detect system failures. I disagree with the Lord Mayor's reported comments in the Illawarra Mercury that I quote "any "systemic" issues were contained to one division" unquote. As one of two Council representatives on the Internal Audit Committee, there have been similar well documented "systemic" failures in other divisions.

The reins of the organisation need to be pulled. A totally independent review of the organisation is mandatory to expose any other potential systemic problems in all the divisions.

This is too large and important a decision to not seek proper and professional help. My motion sets the framework for an organisation wide independent review in a staged approach.

The motion before us is soft on affirmative action. It fails in that it assumes there are no other systemic issues in the same or other divisions. Councillors, we don't know that, but there are enough "red flags" in my mind that should guide us to believe otherwise.

Foreshadowed Motion - Illegal Dumping – 3 August 2015

Parts marked in red denote changes sought to the staff motion as published in the business paper.

1 The report be noted.

2 The rectifications identified be endorsed **as an interim measure**.

3 Ongoing reporting be undertaken to the Corporate Governance Committee on the progress of rectifications including the implementation of the 'IAB Review Rectification Plan'.

4 The Audit Committee be requested to commission a post implementation Audit of the 'IAB Review Rectification Plan'.

5 Council commission the IAB to conduct reviews of:

5.1 Mall construction budget and costs and ancillary charges not directly charged to the Mall

5.2 Flinders Street construction budget and costs and ancillary charges not directly charged to Flinders Street

5.3 Annual Capital Works Budget program for the last 4 years and its effectiveness as a management tool

5.4 Available Cash Report and its compliance to Policy and relationship to the Capital Works and Maintenance Budget

5.5 A review be conducted of all Waste and Construction Tenders/Quotations/Expressions of Interest be conducted for the last 15 years as to compliance and execution

5.6 Maintenance performance costs of all projects over \$25,000 against budget for the past 5 years

6 The Chairperson Audit Committee convene a closed session meeting of the current Audit and Governance Committees with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), IAB, Professional Conduct Coordinator, Internal and External Auditors to review the report and recommend any additional areas of operation in any division for immediate independent review not already included in 5.1 to 5.6

7 The Lord Mayor write to the EPA and enclose a copy of the IAB findings and self report the breaches outlined in the report together with a summary of all breaches of the EPA Act in the last 15 years as well as request the EPA attend a meeting as detailed in 6.

8 Further reports be made to Council and the community of Wollongong when 5 and 6 above are completed.

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