

GREG PETTY

Independent Candidate for Lord Mayor

MEDIA RELEASE



Major Policy Announcement

Independent Lord Mayor Candidate Greg Petty has announced if elected would seek appointment of an Internal Ombudsman to Wollongong City Council.

Speaking at the Neighbourhood Forum 1 “Meet the Candidates” meeting at Helensburgh Community Centre last night, Mr Petty told residents and fellow Lord Mayor Candidates:

“Lastly, with a five term, and the past scandal, I would review the current position of Professional Conduct Coordinator. Staff, the public and the new Councillors should have the right to speak freely, to have a forum for grievances and complaints, and for system failures to be investigated objectively”.

*“The work environment needs to change, and therefore if elected Lord Mayor, I would recommend creating or upgrading the position of Professional Conduct Coordinator to **INTERNAL OMBUDSMAN**”.*

“This person shall be employed by ICAC, paid for by ICAC, & report direct to ICAC and the people of Wollongong”

Mr Petty, an Accountant and Company Secretary, recognises the new Council will always be accessed in terms of the previous Council scandal.

“Moving forward must be without the stain of the past; this can only be achieved if the staff and public have confidence in the corruption reporting processes in place to go forward. For the first council after administration, it is fair and reasonable ICAC establish and maintain a presence at Council and there can be no better way than ICAC to have a direct monitoring function for the next five years via an Internal Ombudsman” stated Mr Petty.

Warringah Council has operated with an Internal Ombudsman since 2003. It lists *“its main purpose as to ensure that all Council’s dealings with the community are fair, transparent and accountable... (Council) exists to serve the public interest, the Office of the Internal Ombudsman seeks to ensure that Council acts to serve the public interest and carries out all its business in an ethical and accountable manner”*. The role is summarized as:

“Champion excellence in probity and accountability through independent and professional complaint handling, investigations and audit” (Warringah Council)

Mr. Petty stated *“An ICAC appointed Internal Ombudsman for Wollongong will provide confidence for ratepayers, a better work place for staff, and a safety valve for the new Councillors, so that finally the area can finally move forward with confidence based on integrity and trust of its elected officials. I would also support any recommendation from the Internal Ombudsman on a Royal Commission on past Council matters”*.

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