

## **We The People**

Program 14

Councillors fixed term GCCC



Government is a curious multi headed hydra and seems to want to grow a new head even when one is chopped off no matter what the circumstances. In Australia we have three layers of government being Federal, State and Local and with a population of 23 million people it's a public servant feast resulting in bureaucratic grid lock and entrenched politicians. It is a fact that as the current system stagnates the focus in government is on 'process' and certainly not on 'outcomes'. In other words it's nonsense and we the people know it. Let's however focus on local government for a moment and see what we might be able to do to try and improve things a little.

I spent 4 years on contract with government on the Gold Coast at one point in my life and at the end of that period I felt depleted, frustrated and immobilised. Just imagine what 20 years would do to you as the bureaucracy robs you of common sense, creativity and insightful decision making. It's a real problem and in my view many public servants hate their job and the public. So I believe long standing local councillors would be no different and I note that some possible mayoral aspirants claim that many years in GCCC makes them perfect for the mayor's position. No it doesn't, because they are almost certainly socially impotent and bogged down in fruitless process and irrelevant minor detail. So let's limit the time councillors can be in office to say, two terms, which on the Gold Coast is eight years. By then the rot has set in anyway so if they are really dedicated they shouldn't mind.

Limiting a term to a maximum of 2 electoral cycles limits the potential for corruption through favours, leaks, opportunistic temptation and mates rates. It overcomes the advantage an incumbent has at election time especially if there is public lethargy about voting and candidates. There are fewer motives to pander to big business and this includes some short term hungry developers. Shorter tenure means we get new faces, fresh talent, enthusiasm and creativity on a regular basis and we surely need that. Many people would run for Council if they knew they had a real chance and genuinely wanted to make a difference. The current debacle with the Councils mega computer tender is in part because the councillors are so comfortable and so cock sure of themselves that they just rubber stamp items through which need proper debate and consideration.

Most importantly, limited terms would create a class of citizen legislators who would see politics as a relatively brief but important opportunity to make things better rather than a long term comfortable career for themselves. How much better does this sound than what we have now which is a professional governing class remote from the concerns of average people, fixed in their thinking and hostage to the bureaucracy. We the people have to make this happen and so start voting in new people and fresh blood who think that limited terms for Councillors make sense because like attracts like.

In the words of television's Permanent Secretary, Sir Humphrey Appleby.....Yes minister.

Until next time this is Kent Bayley