

New opportunity for Councils with new Minister



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The State Election has delivered communities a fresh chance to demand the most efficient and effective delivery of local services by their Councils.

With the new Minister will come a renewed effort in delivering genuine reform in metropolitan Local Government which the sector needs to recognise and embrace.

The landslide election win for the Liberals sends a clear message of the strong community support enjoyed by the Barnett Government.

And with Mr Barnett declaring that he considers this a new government - not merely an extension of the previous - the sector has an opportunity to put the past false starts behind us and work collaboratively with the new administration.

Unfortunately however there remain some in Local Government that seem to still be stuck on wanting to argue if change is needed rather than debating how it could be achieved.

A constant argument is that traditional services will be lost through amalgamations of more quaint-sized Councils to larger organisations. I would suggest that a change from traditional to more contemporary services would be to the community's advantage.

Certainly that shift is evident in the wider business community which constantly needs to stay contemporary if they hope to meet demand and remain competitive. For example only 71 of the companies that were on the Fortune 500 list in 1955 are still in the

same business today. And most WA Local Governments have been around a lot longer than 1955.

I also do not accept the misty-eyed daydream that somehow only smaller Local Governments can properly serve the community. There are numerous larger Local Governments in WA that not only connect with their communities but also provide a broader range of services and with greater efficiency than most of the smaller Councils could ever be expected to deliver.

However I would like Councils to be able to move on from talking about reform and instead have a quick and decisive direction from the Government.

Certainly the election result has provided Mr Barnett with that option and I would anticipate that most in the sector would also like to see a quick resolution. With direction and support from the State Government we now need to get on with the job of enacting reform. It is important for the community and it is important for Council employees to have greater certainty.

I see the time ahead for us as a time of opportunity. Previously I have urged the sector to embrace the need for change and with such a decisive election result I believe our need to perform a constructive part of the reform process is only heightened.

I do fear that if metropolitan Councils are unable or unwilling to respond decisively and positively to reform, there is fast approaching the day when it will be taken out of our hands.

Having such clear leadership and community support for the new State Government is a chance for greater collaboration that seems too good an opportunity to let slip.



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