



# Ordinary Council

## MAYORAL MINUTE

### Business Paper

**date of meeting:** Wednesday 3 June 2020

**location:** Via Skype

**time:** 5:30pm

**Community Vision**

A sustainable high quality of life for all

**Community Mission**

Building the future together  
People Place Health Education Technology

**Council's Corporate Values**

- ★ Sustainability
- ★ Excellence in Service Delivery
- ★ Consultation and Communication
- ★ Openness and Accountability
- ★ Community Advocacy

**Community Themes**

- ★ Leadership and Governance
- ★ Your Community Life
- ★ Your Business and Industry
- ★ Your Natural and Built Environment

**Ordinary Council Meeting**  
Wednesday, 3 June 2020

**MAYORAL MINUTE**

**Items of Business**

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Item: 06.01

Subject: MAYORAL MINUTE - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Mayor, Peta Pinson

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## RECOMMENDATION

### That Council:

1. Note that in March 2020 amendments were made to the Local Government Act by the NSW Government, postponing the September 2020 Local Government elections for 12 months, to September 2021.
2. Note that the decision by the NSW Government to make the amendments referred to in 1) above were as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the interests of the health of voters and to provide communities with stability and continuity by their elected representatives.
3. Request the General Manager write to the Minister for Local Government, The Hon. Shelley Hancock MP seeking urgent consideration of granting permission for Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to hold their election at the earliest possible date due to the seriousness of the dysfunction of Council and the growing community dissatisfaction with the elected representatives of Council.

### Discussion

*"To provide certainty to councils, communities and potential candidates, the NSW Government has made the decision to postpone the September Local Government elections in the face of the COVID-19 crisis,"* Local Government Minister Shelly Hancock was quoted as saying in March 2020.

*"Local government elections are a vital part of the democratic process, ensuring local councils are accountable to their local communities. The decision to postpone them has not been taken lightly but is necessary to ensure the health and safety of voters, NSW Electoral Commission staff and election candidates."*

*It is the government's intention that these council elections will be held in September 2021. Councillors and popularly elected mayors will hold office until the rescheduled elections are held."* Minister Hancock further stated.

In light of the Minister's decision to delay local Council elections because of the COVID-19 crisis, I now make this request through the General Manager due to the serious dysfunction of the elected body which has resulted in the inability to all pull together for the public good. Evidence of warring factions within the elected Council are now publicly evident with the deep divide between some Councillors and the Mayor rendering the Council as dysfunctional. Councillor behaviours in Council meetings have not been consistent with the Code of Conduct which has caused significant harm to Council's reputation.

Now is a vulnerable time for the community of the Port Macquarie-Hastings region which requires and expects more than ever before, calm and strong leadership. It is now questionable that as Mayor and Councillors, true effective leadership will be delivered due to the ongoing toxic dysfunction.

The community deserves Council representatives who will champion their needs and future visions whilst also providing accountability and stability within the organisation.

In 2016, the voters of the Port Macquarie-Hastings region elected the current Council to serve for a four-year term and at the 2017 by-election, voted for the Mayor to serve to the end of the 2020 term also. As a matter of urgency and as early as is safe to do so, I request that the Minister looks at the options available to Council for early elections due to the increasing public demonstrations of the inability to deliver community leadership by the elected body.

It is a growing concern of the community that should Local Government elections remain scheduled to occur in September 2021, the community will continue to be tethered to an ineffective and self-serving Council.

### **Attachments**

Nil