

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of seven minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on **11 October 2022**

Name	Subject/Comments	Presentation	Hybrid
Public Forum – 10.30am			
Patricia Hellier	Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting: 4.1 Ordinary Meeting held on 13 September 2022	No	In person
Jim Bright	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting: 4.1 Ordinary Meeting held on 13 September 20222. GMR22/099 and GMR22/100 Records Management Policy	Yes	In person

Good Morning Mayor, Councillors, Acting General Manager, Staff, Gallery and those comfortable zooming from home my name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay.

Today I would like to speak on items contained in the **Minutes for Council meeting 13th September 2022**. To understand these minutes I had to **access the Councils Live Streaming** to see what actually occurred during this meeting.

NOM 22/015 **Sale on Crown Rd adjacent to Turnbull Lane Moruya** – I would like to touch on some of the comment made during this debate. **Clr Grace** stated words to the affect that we are living in a different situation **post the fires and Covid** and he raised the **ROSS Report**. The facts are the ROSS REPORT was **extensively canvassed** and I have to agree with the advise from **Director Arthur** as to the use of **Public Land** and **facilities** should be for the benefit of the **majority**. Councillors I would like to remind you of the words in the **Oath/Affirmation** “to undertake **your civic duties** in the best interest of the people of the Eurobodalla Shire”. Councillors cannot be seen to be **cherry picking our resources** to suit any one situation, **staffs time** and **Councils resources can not be stretched to something that is seen only as “benefit for a minority”**.

QON11/004 – Dalmeny Land Release Area moved by Clr Worthington / Clr Schutz.

1.49pm Clr Mayne Left the room

In watching the Live Streaming **Clr Worthington moved the motion and it was seconded. After moving the motion** I was shocked to hear Clr Worthington then call “**for a 5 minute break**” I believe in **ALL my time** attending Council meeting this has never occurred.

The motion on the Dalmeny land was put and declared carried.

At 1.51PM Clr Worthington left the room

There was a lengthy silent pause – then Clr Dannock stated words to the affect “**To respect the process**” - then

Clr Dannock moved and Clr Diskon seconded – 22/244 MOTION

That the Council meeting be adjourned for a period of 5 minutes.

I now question why was an adjournment called for, as there was still **6 Councillors** in the gallery and a quorum is 5.

It is known that if a Councillor **does not wish to vote** for an item they cannot **abstain** therefore their option is to leave the gallery. I note that when the Councillors resumed the meeting there was only **17 minutes to the end of the meeting**.

Again I would remind **All the Councillors** of the Oath/Affirmation of Office contents “to undertake their civic duties in the best interest of the people of Eurobodalla Shire” **this Council is a multi million dollars business** you Councillors are now **9 months** into this term of Council I firmly believe that there is an **element within this Council that requires further training on meeting process** and I believe there is far too much time being spent on “party politics”.

I will also add that if what has been occurring during Council meeting happened under the previous Mayor and Councillors I believe the “**On line Media Outlet**” that we are all be aware of would have issues of recent meeting splashed all over its front page.

Patricia Hellier

**EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING - 11 OCTOBER 2022
PUBLIC FORUM**

My name is Jim Bright. I live in the Narooma area.

I'm here to comment on the draft minutes of the meeting of 13 September. Those minutes are before you today for confirmation.

Specificly, I would like to draw your attention to pages 26 and 27 of the minutes. Those pages contain the record of the speech that the Mayor made at the end of that meeting recognising the service to the shire by Catherine Dale and Warren Sharpe.

The issue that I have with the draft minutes relates to the following sentence which can be found in the second last paragraph on page 26.

"Catherine's continued commitment to customer service saw Council recognised as a leader in Australia under a benchmarking program."

The first problem with this sentence is that it was simply not part of the speech that was actually delivered by the Mayor on the 13th of September - a fact that can be readily and irrefutably confirmed by viewing the webcast of the meeting.

On that basis alone, the confirmed minutes cannot be allowed to include that statement if, as required by law, they are to be a true and accurate account of the meeting.

But also on ethical grounds, that particular statement cannot be allowed, in my firm view, to become part of the official record of this Council.

The background to my assertion (for the number of you who might quite possibly not be aware of that background) is as follows. (By the way, a couple of weeks ago, I received confirmation from the Council that the benchmarking program that is being referred to the draft minutes is the particular benchmarking matter that I am about to describe.)

In a Mayoral Report presented to the ESC meeting on 9 May 2017, it was announced by the former Mayor that the ESC had been placed "first in Australia's local government sector for customer service general enquiries" in an Australia-wide benchmarking program.

A few days later, the Council followed up this announcement with the issuing of a media release (copy attached) about this (apparently) very significant achievement. As you will surely note, any reader of that release would have been very likely to have reasonably and understandably concluded that the Eurobodalla Shire Council had been ranked first in the entire Australian local government sector (which has around 550 local councils) in relation to customer service enquiries.

However, as it was to be later irrefutably established, this was a very, very long way from the truth of the matter.

That is, following an investigation by a skeptical member of the local community, it was eventually discovered that the fact was that **only 24** (self selecting) councils (out of Australia's 550 or so councils) had actually participated in the survey in question.

Mathematically, rather than being described as the "the top council in Australia for customer service general enquiries" the only firm conclusion that should have been drawn from those statistics was that the ESC could claim to be not lower than 526th (ie 550 minus 24) in Australia in that particular quarter. Of course, in theory, had the other 526 councils participated in the survey, the ESC might still have come out on top - but, statistically, that is spectacularly unlikely.

Typically, when later confronted with these facts, the Council refused to take any steps to disabuse councillors and the public of any misinformation that might (understandably) have been strongly implied by the manner in which the relevant announcements had been made.

Of course, this was totally unacceptable behaviour by an Australian public sector body that is expected to act at all times with integrity and honesty. Both in the manner in which the Council originally presented this information and in its failure to later take reasonable steps to clarify the facts, the Council unquestionably failed to honour its obligations.

The previous misrepresentation of the facts relating to this matter must not be allowed to be now repeated by the inclusion, in these official minutes, of the disputed sentence.

Thank you for your time.

Jim Bright

You are here: [Home](#) [News & events](#) [Latest news](#) [Council number one for customer service](#)

Council number one for customer service

Friday 12 May 2017

Council has been judged the top council in Australia for customer service general enquiries in a quarterly national benchmarking report.

The results from Customer Service Benchmarking Australia were announced by Mayor Liz Innes at Tuesday's Council meeting, who congratulated General Manager Dr Catherine Dale and all Council staff for setting such a high standard.

The improvement program was initiated by Dr Dale in July 2014 with the aim of improving Council's customer service performance through CSBA's 'mystery shopper' program.

The program is run quarterly and involves CSBA staff ringing and visiting the Council, posing as a resident with a common local government enquiry. Staff are measured on their greeting skills, their manner, how they resolved the enquiry, and phone and voicemail use.

For the March 2017 quarter, Eurobodalla was judged the top Council in Australia for customer service general enquiries ahead of Blacktown City Council in second place and City of Perth in third.

"We've made some great inroads in the past four years," Dr Dale said, "but there's always room for improvement as we aim for consistent and responsive customer service right across the organisation."

Council's performance has progressively improved since the monitoring began in 2014. It was ranked 29th of participating councils at that time with a score of 150 against the local government average of 155.

A continuous improvement program that included in-house staff training in customer service skills and telephone etiquette saw Council achieve a score of 175 against the local government average of 144 in the latest March 2017 result.

Dr Dale said the benchmarking is an investment with demonstrated results. "I'm incredibly proud of Council staff, who serve our community every day with courtesy and respect. This is a wonderful

result for them".