

OFFICERS REPORT

COUNCILLOR COLUMN MONASH BULLETIN DISCLAIMER NOTICE

Submitting Councillor: Cr Theo Zographos

MOTION

1. That a disclaimer be published in the monthly Councillor column stating that the Mayor has edited the column with or without the approval of the column's author.
2. That this take effect from the September issue of the Monash Bulletin.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

IMPACT ON INTERNAL RESOURCES

Nil.

COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

At the 28 July 2015 Council meeting, Council adopted the following Notice of Motion:

1. Notes that it has been a long standing practice dating back to the establishment of the Monash Bulletin more than 10 years ago that the Mayor reviews and has final sign off (approval) of the content of each edition of the Monash Bulletin
2. Confirms that it continues to support this approach; and
3. Agrees that the principles listed in this report will be the basis upon which Councillor columns in the Monash Bulletin are to be submitted.

The principles outlined in the Notice of Motion adopted by Council are:

1. A Councillor should not use their column to dissent from decisions or formally adopted positions of the Council
2. A Councillor should not use their column to express criticism of the Council, its officers or other Councillors
3. Politically partisan comment should be avoided and should only be contemplated if it is supported by a formal adopted position of the Council
4. The column should be factually correct and not mislead or be likely to mislead people
5. The column should add to the general objectives of the Monash Bulletin to inform people and to present Council to the community in a positive manner.

RELEVANCE TO WORK ALREADY UNDERTAKEN BY OFFICERS OR COMMITTEES

The Monash Bulletin is a ratepayer-funded publication with the aim of communicating with ratepayers and residents on Council activity. It seeks to engage with residents about local issues, providing information on what is happening in their local area and how they can have their say in the process. The Bulletin promotes neighbourhood events and projects and services that are relevant to local communities.

All content in the Monash Bulletin is reviewed and approved by the Mayor prior to going to print.

The Mayor has final sign-off on the entire content and if there is an issue with the content of the Councillor column, the cooperation and agreement of the Councillor is sought to ensure that it aligns with the principles outlined above, and the final Councillor column remains between the Mayor of the day and the relevant Councillor to resolve.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Monash Bulletin is highly valued by the Monash community. In the 2018 Community Satisfaction Survey, it was second (41%) only to the Monash website (47%) as the preferred method of receiving information from the 800 residents surveyed.

The addition of a disclaimer along the lines put forward in the Notice of Motion would serve to diminish the credibility of Council in the public domain.