

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

ID: 519234 - APB:lc

17 November 2022

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Mr Sean Holden
Chair
2022 Local Government Representation Review Committee
GPO Box 2419
DARWIN NT 0801

By email: Secretariat.NTEC@nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Holden

2022 Local Government Representation Review

I am writing in response to your correspondence received late Friday the 11 November 2022. Your correspondence was considered by Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 15 November 2022 and I can advise as follows.

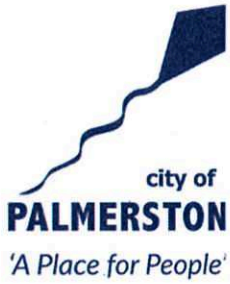
Council would like to express its disappointment in the authenticity of the process including engagement and consultation. Council further notes that the second-round of consultation has received a total of four submissions all objecting to the proposal for wards in the City of Palmerston.

Your latest response indicates that you have dismissed council's concerns regarding splitting our communities of interest that Council is best placed to inform the committee of, our small geographic area and travel time, and the real likelihood that wards would not deliver the best representation for our community, despite these being legislated as key considerations that the panel must take into account. The committee cannot simply base your decision on population considerations alone.

It was clear from statements made by committee members that a significant bias has driven the committee's consideration of population alone without genuine concern or consideration of the impacts to our community that a ward structure would impose. The council maintains that it is best placed to inform the committee on social and community considerations, which we have done on several occasions now, but we feel that these are being ignored, in favour of a bias for population considerations alone.

Council would be happy to meet with the committee as requested to discuss our concerns regarding the ward boundary options. However, the timeframe is unreasonable and is ill-conceived to expect that we can do this prior to 25 November 2022, given Council's other commitments, both with regards to scheduled Committee Meetings and Workshops of Council, and the availability of individual members on such short notice.

Council's submission on 19 October 2022 identified several social and practical concerns regarding the two scenarios of proposed ward structures. As Council has clearly articulated these to the panel, we would appreciate it if you could provide new options, based on our feedback prior to any meeting.



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The earliest practical time for the majority of Council to meet with the Committee is Tuesday 29 November 2022 or a mutually suitable date after this time.

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Should you have any queries or would like to arrange a time to meet with Council please contact me on mayor@palmerston.nt.gov.au or (08) 8935 9969.

Yours sincerely

Athina Pascoe-Bell
Mayor