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**From:** Athina Pascoe-Bell <mayor@palmerston.nt.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 14 December 2022 11:54 AM  
**To:** Sean Holden; Secretariat NTEC; Chloe Hayes  
**Cc:** Luccio Cercarelli; Iain Loganathan; Robert Sarib  
**Subject:** RE: LG Representation Committee

Hi all,

Thank you for attending the City of Palmerston Chamber last night to discuss the Local Government Representation review with the Council, in particular for considering council's views on our communities of interest, which the council maintains is best placed to inform the committee. I apologise for the long email, however, I want to cover the main points from last night's workshop and where the Council believes we landed.

The Local Government Act 2019 s 31, provides the 5 criteria for assessment for the committee to determine whether a local government area should be divided into wards, as follows:

*'In making a determination under section 28, the committee must consider the following matters:*

- (a) community of interests in the local government area including economic, social and regional interests;*
- (b) types of communication and travel in the local government area with special reference to issues arising out of remoteness or distance;*
- (c) the trend of population changes in the local government area;*
- (d) the density of population in the local government area;*
- (e) the physical features of the local government area.'*

I am confirming that Council does not support any proposal for wards. If wards were to be necessary, and we do not concede that they are, the 2-ward option provided by Council to the Committee with an additional member at the Minister's discretion would result in adherence to s 31(a) and City of Palmerston's communities of interest, as discussed last night.

Regional interests are not an effective consideration given the compactness of the City of Palmerston. Economic interests of the population are dealt with below and economic interests of our industrial areas have been previously discussed, which we maintain are of strategic importance and should be managed collectively by the council, not based on wards.

Communication and travel distances are not relevant to the City of Palmerston given the short travel time from boundary to boundary and there are no communication issues arising out of remoteness or distance.

The trend of population is a consideration relevant to the number of ordinary members discussed below.

Density of population is not a pertinent consideration, as almost the entirety of the City of Palmerston population is urban with less than 2% being 'rural residential' or peri-urban, and none of the population is rural or remote.

There are no pertinent physical features of the municipality identified as relevant.

The Council maintains that our communities of interest are dispersed geographically throughout the municipality and are not communities of interest formed within specific locations. The example that we provided last night and in various correspondence was that seniors are a community of interest with seniors distributed throughout the municipality. The same can be said of any social group within our community such as sporting codes, recreational activities and the like. Economic considerations amongst the population are not barriers to communities of interest, which is why the council opposes the notion that older suburbs or economic considerations are a community of

interest, they are not. Wards break up our communities of interest.

The only scenario provided by the committee that does not isolate the older suburbs, which we contend is not a community of interest of itself, is Scenario C with 3 wards. However, this scenario does break up the communities of interest based on social determinants: seniors, sporting codes, recreational activities and the like. We acknowledge that Scenario C with 3 wards also requires the Minister's endorsement of an additional elected member, and that it is unfortunate that we have 7 ordinary members (a prime number that is not divisible, except with 1 and itself – a no wards scenario or an unreasonable 7 wards scenario). However, the trend in population suggests that an additional member of council is not unreasonable and we believe that the committee agreed on this point.

We also contend that any ward with a single member is not appropriate, and we believe that the committee agreed with us on this point.

In relation to ward names, the Council does not support any of the names proposed as they are not related to the City of Palmerston. They are deceased persons from other municipalities, and do not reflect our community – perhaps a reflection on the youthfulness of the City of Palmerston. As advised last night, City of Palmerston's first mayor, Michael Ting, recently passed away and thus 'Ting ward' may be a suitable ward name. Alternatively, indigenous flora and fauna names or uncontentious cardinal and ordinal compass point names (North, South, North East, etc) would be sensible.

Again, I would like to thank the committee for taking the time to listen to council's position on the 5 considerations under s 31 of the Local Government Act 2019, in particular our communities of interest and social conditions, and how these relate to s 31 of the Local Government Act 2019.

Regards,  
Athina Pascoe-Bell