

Hawkesbury Liberal Team



27th January 2021

Media Release

The first meeting of Hawkesbury City Council for 2021 has left three Liberal Councillors with significantly higher workloads when other Councillors expressed no interest in taking up crucial Committee work that will take Council through to the next Council elections in September.

Council resolved before Christmas to restructure its Committee system after a year-long process of review and consultation, amalgamating 8 different committees into three.

It was felt that these larger committees would improve public access, enable cross pollination of expertise, and elevate the importance of some issues (like Disaster Management and Resilience) to become the importance of the whole Chamber.

It was intended that each of the new committees, titled *Community Services*, *Environment*, and *Innovation and Partnerships* would take on five Councillors from within the Chamber, from across the political spectrum, to ensure a diversity of views and harness the community connections and expertise each Councillor brings with them.

However, awkward silences met the first Council meeting for 2021 held on Tuesday when none of the Independent or Greens-aligned Councillors expressed any interest in taking up positions on the committees, leaving the remaining Councillors to take on a heavier workload in advising Council on matters encompassing Waste Management, Environmental Sustainability, Tourism, Infrastructure, the Arts, and Civics and Citizenship.

The Mayor, and Liberal Councillors Sarah Richards and Nathan Zamprogno, and several Labor Councillors each took positions on the three committees, despite pleas to the Chamber for others to join them to carry the load. Positions remained unfilled on each new committee for lack of interest.

Councillor Richards said “Our job as elected representatives is to ensure we run an effective and streamlined Council. Committee reform has been needed for some time and I am pleased that we have undertaken this task. It is disappointing that the Independent/Green aligned Councillors chose not to participate. I believe that the Hawkesbury ratepayers expect better.”

Councillor Zamprogno said “The new committee constitution was drawn up specifically so that almost any Councillor who wanted to contribute to this work could be accommodated on one or more of them, especially when these Councillors were so vocal about the importance of the work the committees did.”

“These reforms were discussed for over a year, and were decided on after numerous compromises were made, such as preserving the Heritage Committee. We all have to work equally hard on behalf of the community and it saddens me when others won’t do their share. I’m disappointed that some Councillors have no stomach to do the heavy lifting -- it really is a key part of the work the community expects us to do.”

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