

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES TO QUESTION TIME TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2014

The following questions were addressed to the above meeting. Some questions were adequately responded to at the meeting, however others required a more detailed response in writing.

This document includes both verbal and written responses.

Colin Wallace asked -

At the 9 September 2014 Council Meeting, I asked why the opportunity for members of the public using the publicly accessible Council website geelongaustralia.com.au to access by themselves Minutes from before 2012 was taken away and if that access would be restored. The subsequent written response signed by Acting General Manager Corporate Services Mike Kelly encourages the belief that the decision to take away this access coincided with a change to PDF and that the cost of converting to PDF the Minutes from prior to 2012 was not justified, given the use members of the public were making of these Minutes, according to some apparent monitoring. In fact, when the access as described was taken away in December 2012, the Minutes going back about ten years were already in PDF, so whatever cost there would be in converting to PDF the Minutes of the period going back about ten years from December 2012 had already been incurred. Therefore, simply and starkly what happened was that members of the public used to be able to access by themselves on geelongaustralia.com.au the Minutes from before 2012 going back about ten years, but in December 2012 – straight after what was the last Council Meeting of that year and just the third ordinary Meeting in the mayoralty of Keith Fagg – that public access was taken away and you have to wonder why a government that purports to run democratically would do that.

In light of this and, recognising that the officer responsible for providing the written response for Mike Kelly to sign is Manager Administration and Governance John Brown and the officer responsible for forwarding this letter to me is Manager Customer Service and Councillor Support Tim McDonald, also that in December 2012 John Brown and Tim McDonald between them had responsibility for taking away public access to Minutes as described and diverting members of the public seeking access to such Minutes to customer service centres which were then and are still within Tim McDonald's department, and in further recognition that Mike Kelly bore no line responsibility for what was done as described in December 2012 and that it would be unfair expecting him to know that the belief to do with PDF encouraged in the letter he signed was bogus, would Mr Kelly consider that he was misinformed by officers within the City of Greater Geelong, with particular responsibility at the feet of two managers in his division reporting directly to him, Manager Administration and Governance John Brown and Manager Customer Services and Councillor Support Tim McDonald?

Michael Kelly responded he would take the question on notice for a further written response.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
Acting General Manager Corporate Services in the following terms:**

Further to Council's previous correspondence of 11 September 2014 regarding website access to Council's old meeting minutes, please note the explanation provided hereunder.

On 30 June 2010 AGIMO (Australian Government Information Management Office) released the 'Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy' detailing the accessibility requirements government bodies must meet by 2012 when providing information to the public via the Internet.

As a result AGIMO commissioned in November 2010, Vision Australia to undertake "The Australian Government's study into the Accessibility of Portable Document Format (PDF) for people with a disability" which in summary found PDF files to be inaccessible.

In short when council publishes a PDF to its website it is potentially discriminating against parts of the community who will struggle to access this information.

In response to this requirement, the City analysed public website content accessed by the public which included Council minutes (published in PDF). This analysis highlighted that very few members of the public were accessing old Council minutes.

In order to comply with the required standards, web pages had to be converted to a HyperText Markup Language (HTML) format. The cost of converting Council's minutes back as far as 2002 was cost prohibitive. As a consequence of the low usage, combined with the cost of conversion, the City decided it would only convert and retain Council's minutes, in the HTML format from January 2012 onwards. Old minutes are available upon request from any Customer Service Centre.

Notwithstanding this, in the interests of addressing your concern, if you can provide us with a list of specific pre 2012 Council minutes you wish to access we will endeavour to supply these to you.

Janice Pocock asked the following in respect of the Whittington War Memorial Kindergarten:

In relation to the above kindergarten, there was for many, many years photographs of the five men who passed away in the Second World War displayed in the old infant welfare centre. My question is: where are those photos now and would like them to be put back in their rightful place?

The Mayor took the question on notice for a written response.

**A subsequent written response was provided by the
Acting General Manager Corporate Services in the following terms:**

I wish to acknowledge your question put to the Council at its meeting on 11 November 2014 enquiring about photos formerly displayed at the property 17 Townsend Road Whittington.

Enquiries have been made with staff formerly associated with this service and further searches of the property will be undertaken to see if the photographs can be located.

Enquiries are also being made at the Geelong Historic Records Centre.

If any information comes to hand about these photos you will be informed.