BURNSIDE COUNCIL SEEKS URGENT MEETING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER TO DISCUSS BEHAVIOUR OF ELECTED MEMBER

The City of Burnside today requested an urgent meeting with the Minister for Local Government, Geoff Brock, to seek his immediate assistance with the ongoing behaviour of one of its Elected Members, Councillor Lance Bagster.

This follows the release of a comprehensive report that revealed the significant health and safety risk posed to Council Elected Members and administration staff by Councillor Bagster.

The report, commissioned by the Council, and compiled by respected human resources specialist Theressa Hines of Employer Global Solutions, found that Councillor Bagster contravened obligations as follows:

- as an Elected Member for the City of Burnside consistent with the Work Health and Safety Act 2012; and therefore is liable to criminal prosecution;
- the Fair Work Act 2009 and is therefore liable to orders (jurisdictional issues may apply);
- the Local Government Act 1999;
- the Australian Code of Practice for Bullying, and therefore is liable to criminal prosecution;
- the prescribed Code of Conduct for Council Members;
- City of Burnside Policies and procedures;
- anti-discrimination legislation; and
- anti-stalking legislation.

Further, the report states: “that the evidence demonstrates a systemic ongoing bullying; harassing and stalking campaign has, and continues to be engaged in by Councillor Bagster.”

“There is additional evidence demonstrating that Councillor Bagster has engaged in this behaviour for a significant period of time.”

Previous requests by the Council to meet with Minister Brock to discuss the issue have been declined.

City of Burnside Acting CEO, Mr Martin Cooper, said today “Council has a duty of care to protect its staff and Elected Members.”

“The report clearly identifies that the Council and its staff are exposed to a number of risks in relation to Councillor Bagster’s behaviour.”

“The report recommends that the CEO take all possible steps to mitigate or reduce these risks.”

“The Council resolved that it has no confidence in Councillor Bagster to continue in his position as an Elected Member.”

www.burnside.sa.gov.au
“Under the Local Government Act, one of the mechanisms for removal of an Elected Member from their position is with the intervention of the Governor.”

“We are seeking an urgent meeting with the Minister to fully brief him on the report and ask for his urgent assistance with this issue.”

Mayor David Parkin said: “We call on Minister Brock to meet with us as soon as practical on the back of the disturbing findings of this independent report.

“Council cannot continue to function properly with this level of continual disruption and calls on the assistance of the SA Government,” he said.

“Dealing with this issue has come at significant cost – not only in the thousands of hours it has taken Elected Members and our Executive Team to deal with matters, but also the significant financial impact.

“The safety of our staff and Elected Members is, and will always remain, our paramount concern.

“I thank and acknowledge our hard working and dedicated staff who continue to manage the day to day business of Council despite the current obstacles.”

Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Association SA, Matt Pinnegar, stated “We have received the EGS report and are aware that it contains a recommendation that involves the LGA which we will, of course, give due consideration to.”

“The LGA supports the City of Burnside’s efforts to find a resolution to what appears to be a serious and intractable issue.”

MEDIA CONTACT:
Office of the CEO
8366 4205