

MDCA General meeting April 8 2024 chairpersons report

Resignation of Lee Clarke:

It is with regret that I announce the resignation of Lee Clarke from the MDCA executive, an entirely logical decision on her part given the time load resultant of her interest in research. We thank Lee for her contribution to the executive over the past year.

Voting process at general meetings

In the event of voting at a general meeting, the secretary will remind the meeting that only current financial members can vote.

Conflict of Interest register

This is being established for all executive members, to assure membership that decisions made by the executive are transparent and as free as possible from significant conflicts of interest.

Email spoofing

After the evaluation of a recent email fraud at the Mapua Tennis Club, the MDCA has reviewed its financial processes for payment of invoices. While our invoicing risk is substantially lower, given our small and relatively limited number of invoices, our processes seem satisfactory and we will document these processes in our updated Executive Operating Manual.

Local Government Official Information Act requests (LGOIMA)

The Ombudsman's recent report on Councils' management of LGOIMA's Requests highlights the workload (and thus cost to ratepayers) of the 509 such requests the TDC received in 2023. Identifying the drivers of these requests is interesting and informative, reflected by the fact that one requester, a self proclaimed Sovereign Citizen, made 19 such requests in one year. I took the opportunity to read some of released information posted on the TDC website, particularly on those realms of personal expertise. The drivers are many, but a relatively common theme is conspiratorial. This sheer load of requests is not only a load on the council and thus ratepayers, but also means that a response to more meaningful requests will be delayed, thus adversely impacting on the Council's ability to provide the sort of transparency the Ombudsman has highlighted. Many of these LGOIMA requests have been adversarial, something that contrasts with our MDCA process of analytical engagement with our Council, particularly via our counsellors.

Constitution Review

Paul has been hard at work with this. It has been the topic of much discussion in the Exec and it requires a careful balancing of the risks posed by the deficits of our current constitution verse the fact that the cut off time for submitting a new constitution is April 2026. The value in delay may be that the minimum (mandatory) requirements of a new constitution may change over this time frame but that change could well be towards an increase in constitutional complexity. Nevertheless, the earlier we explore a new constitution, the better informed we will be as an organisation.

Jim Vause Chairperson MDCA