

To: Brisbane City Council
From: Anthony Walker
Re: Support for agendaing discussion of updates to election policy
January 16, 2024

Dear Madame Mayor,

I am writing to voice my support for agendaing discussion of term limits for council members, transitioning to a citywide Mayoral election and of district elections.

I have found the recent goings on in the council deeply distasteful and a disappointing distraction from the peoples' work. And I've also gotten a general sense of resistance to openness and dialogue with the community which I find disturbing.

I believe clearly defined term limits for council members would naturally leave more opportunity for new candidates to step up to serve their community, and would encourage more voices to be more evenly represented in city government over time as our city grows.

A citywide Mayoral election would remove from the equation any opportunity for perverse insular incentives in the selection process, and would leave the decision of who is to represent the city as Mayor up to the voters.

And, where I see the potential utility in district elections is as a preemptive move that could help safeguard an equitable balance of political power in Brisbane well into the future – both in terms of distributed geographic areas and racial equity.

During the campaign, I heard from many registered voters – especially up on The Ridge and in the mobile home park that they did not feel heard or represented by the current city council as it stands today. And when the Baylands development is completed we'll be doubling the size of the city. What will be the effect on the makeup of the council then?

As a resident of Central Brisbane myself, I certainly would hate to see a future scenario where only folks from the Baylands – or any individual area of the city – seem to be able to get elected for one reason or another. Consider how you might feel if you lived in an area, or belonged to a group that never seemed to get represented. I hate to think that's what's happening to anyone in our community. Better representation is critical.

In closing, term limits, a citywide mayoral election and district elections all seem as though they could be potential antidotes to some of the issues we're witnessing currently. I support exploring these changes further and encourage the council to agenda and engage in an open and earnest discussion on these matters. By having it on the agenda - the Public will also hear from city staff findings and be able to participate in a public discussion.

Sincerely,
Anthony Walker