

Motion

That the Future Melbourne Committee:

1. Notes the advice from the state government and an external law firm that council would be in breach of the Local Government Act if it was involved in funding a third party to host an online register of donations for the forthcoming council elections.
2. Notes that individual councillors have indicated their willingness to voluntarily supply the donations data in the format outlined in the April 19 and August 30 resolutions to a nominated third party (insert name) without any formal involvement of council.
3. Encourages non-councillor candidates to also disclose relevant campaign finance information in a timely manner to the named third party.

BACKGROUND

In response to community comment, councillors have indicated support for the voluntary disclosure of campaign finance information before ballots are cast at the upcoming election.

The resolution at the April 19 Future Melbourne Committee meeting was unanimously supported and outlined the format of a voluntary register to be either hosted by council or a third party.

Officers reported back to the August 30 council meeting outlining potential legal issues with the proposal and difficulties in finding a third party to host the site. Councillors responded by authorising the payment of up to \$10,000 to a third party register host along with directly requesting a letter be sent to the State Government requesting permission to proceed.

The Government, through Local Government Victoria, concurred with the officer view that funding a register would breach the Local Government Act as councils are prohibited from causing the publication of any "electoral matters" during the caretaker period.

The Age newspaper ran a similar register during the 2012 election which most candidates supplied information to and the solution this time may well be for a media outlet to step forward so that councillors can informally indicate support for their involvement in a more comprehensive 2016 version at the Future Melbourne Committee meeting on September 20.

Moved: Cr Mayne