



WHITSUNDAY CONSERVATION COUNCIL

Caring for the future is in our nature

Email: admin@whitsundayconservation.org.au

www.whitsundayconservation.org.au

Contact: Secretary 0407 207 441

URGENT - MEDIA RELEASE

28 March 2022

LACK OF COMMUNICATION –

WHITSUNDAY COMMUNITY COULD MISS THEIR CHANCE TO CHANGE THEIR COUNCIL'S ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Nearly two weeks ago the Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC) added an "Electoral Arrangements Consultation" to their "Have Your Say" webpage where reportedly, for past consultations, the time-consuming registration process has deterred many would be responders.

This happened shortly after councils meeting 9 March 22 when a recommendation NOT to consult the community on Electoral matters was presented. One reason presented; "**Lack of interest from the community in the subject matter.**" (*Agenda Item 13.2.3 Risk Assessment*)

Fortunately, due to pressure from people who had been waiting for this consultation to take place since a Council vote 12th May 2021, the recommendation to delay consultation for two more years was not voted through.

But other than the information included on the "Have Your Say" webpage, inclusion in the Council's usual Public Notices p25 Whitsunday News 23 March 22 and a WRC Facebook post, it seems there has been little effort made by Council to make the public aware of this important matter.

If any mention has been made to the media by any council representatives, then it has been very ineffective.

At last Saturday's Airlie Beach markets, Whitsunday Conservation Council (WCC) held their regular monthly stall and found that hardly anyone knew that this consultation was in place or had any idea that they had an option to change how Whitsunday regional councillors were elected.

It seems that Council has left it to local community groups to alert the Whitsunday community that change is possible.

The WCC considers the change to an undivided region would be in the interest of better outcomes for our natural environment and have provided their website to support this consultation as a community project. Go to: whitsundayconservation.org.au - click on the red megaphone top RH of Home page for link to a submission to the Minister & Whitsunday Council.

If 70% of Queensland councils, including Mackay, are undivided, why isn't Whitsunday?

At present, a Whitsunday resident can only vote for one councillor in their own council division. Whitsunday has six separate council divisions. We can't vote for the other five councillors. But they can, and do, vote on serious matters affecting divisions other than their own.

With change, all six councillors will be answerable to the whole community and not just their own local support group. All candidates will need to make themselves known to the entire community and convince us that they should be one of the six who become councillors by gaining the most votes across the whole Whitsunday region.

Whitsunday Conservation Council supports this change in the hope that greater representation will afford the best possible protections for both our built and natural environments.

This consultation ends WEDNESDAY 30 March 22.

Faye C Chapman
Secretary - Whitsunday Conservation Council – 0407 207 441