

Media Release

The Hon Adem Somyurek MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Small Business



Thursday, 19 March 2020

WHITTLESEA CITY COUNCIL DISMISSED

The Bill to dismiss Whittlesea City Council has passed Parliament, with Councillors to be replaced by an interim administrator within days.

The *Local Government (Whittlesea City Council) Bill 2020* provides for the dismissal of the council and appointment of administrators, who will act as the council in the best interests of residents and ratepayers until the October 2024 Local Government elections are held.

Municipal monitor Yehudi Blacher's report found clear evidence that governance had collapsed in the City of Whittlesea and recommended its dismissal.

In addition, the report found that:

- The council's deep divides and personality conflicts have rendered it dysfunctional
- Councillors have failed to provide stability in the Council's senior leadership with five CEO's in five years and over \$500,000 spent on legal disputes
- Councillor behaviours have not been consistent with the Councillor Code of Conduct and have caused significant harm to the council's administration and reputation.

The Government will move quickly to give ratepayers certainty around the Council's governance and accountability by appointing an interim administrator once the Bill receives Royal Assent – before establishing a full panel.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek

"We did not take this decision lightly – the monitor found serious failures by Whittlesea City Councillors and we acted swiftly to protect residents and ratepayers."

"Over the next four years Administrators will work with the CEO to ensure council services are delivered effectively and that the health and wellbeing of council staff is prioritised."

"We will now work towards rebuilding the council so it can provide the first-class services and representation the local community deserves."