

MP asks for answers on Lyndoch's rejection of new members



South West MP Roma Britnell has asked for a “please explain” from Lyndoch Living over its mass rejection of membership applications.

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

South West MP Roma Britnell has asked Lyndoch for an explanation as to why every single membership application from 115 lodged this month was rejected.

“I’ve had contact from a number of people about this issue,” Ms Britnell said.

“I understand that Lyndoch, as a community established and owned service, holds a special place in the heart of the Warrnambool and south west community and I am aware of concerns that some people have raised.

“As such I have made contact with Lyndoch Living asking for advice on the application process and why applications may be rejected.”

Lyndoch is not always rapid in its responses to Ms Britnell, but we can only hope she receives a fulsome answer shortly.

Ms Britnell’s views are shared by other community leaders, including Member for Western Victoria Bev McArthur.

Ms McArthur said she was concerned that so many membership applications had been rejected and “would like to understand why this has happened”.

“As a community organisation, openness and accessibility to residents should be a high priority,” she said.

“Many of the membership applicants were highly qualified and motivated, and could surely have brought great energy and expertise to Lyndoch.”

Ms McArthur said the current members of Lyndoch should be on the public record, and the criteria for the application process properly explained.

“The existing situation seems needlessly secretive, and does nothing to cement the vital community link.

“I call upon Lyndoch Living to live up to its position as a community asset, and be more open and engaging in matters of ordinary membership, board membership, and AGM participation.”

Wannon MP Dan Tehan was less direct, but said the Federal Government expected “approved providers to select board members with relevant skills and expertise” to ensure “quality of care for senior Australians is prioritised and maintained.”

A good point, Mr Tehan, because as it stands, there is nobody on the Lyndoch board with experience in aged care.

Mayor Vicki Jellie and four other Warrnambool City councillors responded to a request for comment, with each speaking personally rather than on behalf of the council.

Mayor Jellie said Lyndoch Living was a valued and much loved local community facility that was “extremely important to us all”.

“As a community member, I would like to see diversity in the membership of our local community organisations to support strong, effective leadership and oversight.

“I acknowledge and commend all of those within the community who put forward applications to become Lyndoch members.”

Cr Ben Blain said “it would be good to see some new local faces on the board that represent the community” – a view also shared by Cr Debbie Arnott.

“Lyndoch is a community owned facility and its board and membership should reflect that...I do feel it might be good to see some new faces on the board,” Cr Arnott said.

Cr Angie Paspaliaris said she believed that any community owned organisation should “seek to be as transparent, engaged and communicative as possible with the community they are there to serve.”

“There are many experienced, extremely well qualified people in Warrnambool who would be great members and contributors to the operation of our local aged care facility,” Cr Paspaliaris said.

Lastly, Cr Max Taylor said it was only “logical and permissible” that people from the community be allowed to become members of Lyndoch, and – if they so desired – to nominate for the board.

“I am sure that one of the original Board Presidents for many years in Stan Berlyn would most certainly permit this

process," Cr Taylor said.

The next Lyndoch AGM is on 26 October. Board nominations close on 12 October, but given there are no new members (that we know of), I don't know who will be nominating for the two board vacancies left by Percy Eccles and Susanne Coulson.

We shall see. See you Sunday.