



Council Watch Victoria (CWV) would to make it very clear, that we do not like the way some Councils are closing their Council meetings to the public. But the Councils are not the main problem; the main problem is the Parliament of Victoria. The Parliament of Victoria created new versions of the Local Government Act (LGA). The 1<sup>st</sup> that came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2020 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> that came into force on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April this year (2023).

In that new version of the LGA, the words "open to the public" can now mean that you can walk into the meeting and view the proceedings while they are taking place, or you can view the meeting live on the Internet site of the Council or any other prescribed means. It is not clear who prescribes "any other means".

Most people would consider the words "open to the public" means that you can walk into the meeting and view the proceedings while they are taking place, which is the way it was in all previous versions of the LGA.

It is only the parliament of Victoria that would be able to explain to the people of Victoria how; open to the public can be closed to the public. Defining the words "open to the public"; as is the case in the two versions of the LGA does not pass the pub test, except the pub in Spring St Melbourne (Parliament House).

We at CWV are very concerned for those that do not have a computer with internet or access to a computer with internet. This situation is very common with older members of the community and the members of the community that don't have the spare money to be able to afford a computer with internet.

Is this not a breach of the peoples human rights; those rights given by section 18 of the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic) The Right to participate in public affairs?

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