



# Geelong to drop directly-elected mayors in wake of council dysfunction

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**The troubled Geelong City Council is likely to go to election in October after the Victorian Government announced it supported recommendations from a group of local residents.**

The council was sacked last year and put into administration following a report which found it was so dysfunctional it could not govern properly.

Councillors, including high-profile mayor Darryn Lyons, were removed from power after the Victorian Upper House passed a bill to dismiss the entire council.

A Citizen's Jury has recommended the mayor be elected by councillors and serve a two-year term, with a total of 11 councillors elected from across four wards.

The change will replace the city's short-lived experiment with directly-elected mayors, first introduced in 2012.

The last time the city voted on the position was in 2013, a year after Keith Fagg resigned from the post nine months into his term due to illness.

He was replaced by Mr Lyons, a flamboyant entrepreneur who received close to 30 per cent of the popular vote, more than twice as many as his nearest rival.

## Geelong Citizen's Jury debate

Local Government Minister Natalie Hutchins said the Government would now move to have legislation passed in Parliament.

"The citizens of Geelong have certainly spoken through the Citizen's Jury and delivered a range of recommendations the Andrews Government will be supporting in taking forward some legislation as soon as possible to the Parliament based on their recommendation," she said.

Ms Hutchins said the jury was made up of a diverse group of people from around the region.

"The Citizen's Jury which was 100 people plus gave us four Saturdays to deliberate and go through all the information and then debate and come up with the decisions that they have," she said.

"It was a fantastic process and the first time it's happened in Australia.

"Some had fixed attitudes when they walked in and then after listening, having the opportunity to debate and decide they came up with the best model for their local area, rather than what individuals wanted."

**Topics:** local-government, government-and-politics, state-parliament, corruption, geelong-3220, vic, melbourne-3000