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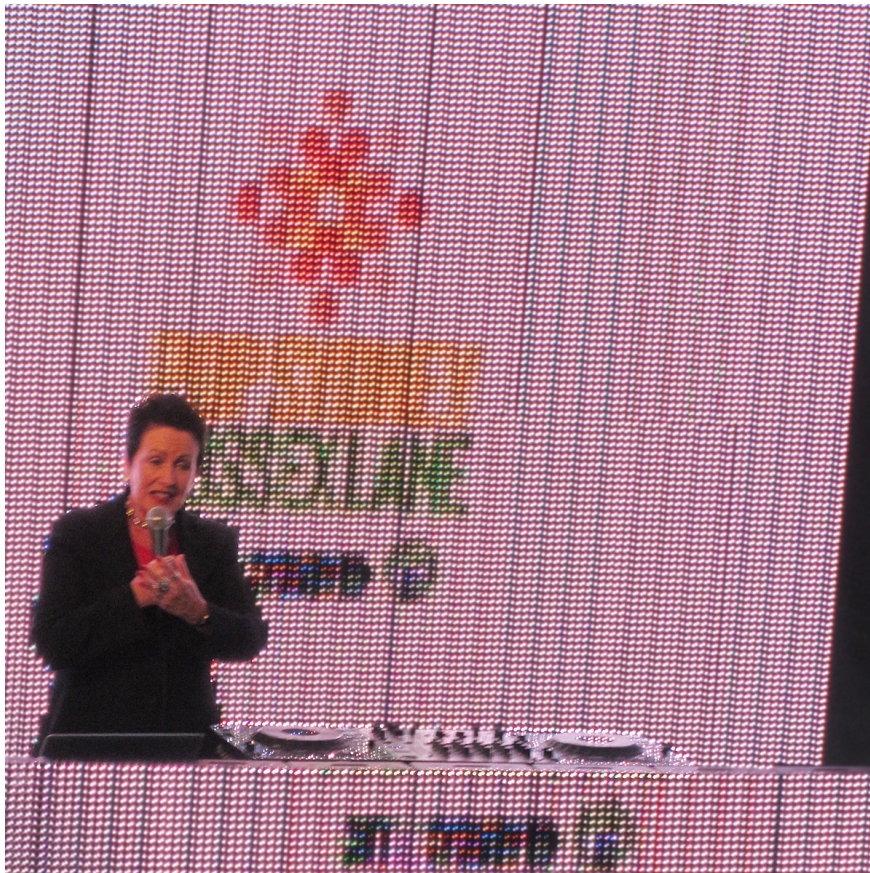
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Craig Chung says Clover Moore is not transparent enough. Credit: Newtown Graffiti (Flickr)

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Hub News

BY ALEX EUGENE

City of Sydney Councillor Craig Chung is gathering signatures for a petition demanding that the Lord Mayor Clover Moore stops refusing to allow council meetings to be live streamed to the public.

Cr Chung moved a motion at the most recent council meeting to propose taking up live-streaming, electronically recorded voting and live minute taking, but all were rejected by the Mayor and her team, claiming they would think about the matter if “further reports” were submitted.

Cr Chung said the response was simply an excuse to dodge public scrutiny.

“This is a brazen pattern of Clover concentrating her power behind closed doors. She continues to block access to Council meetings for anyone who can’t be there in person,” he said.

“When the Lord Mayor uses her casting vote to continue her \$3.5 million budget, her 22 personal staff or her chauffeur driven car, the ratepayers deserve to know exactly how Councillors have voted.”

It’s not the first time the Lord Mayor has been accused of keeping information behind closed doors. Earlier in the year, Deputy Lord Mayor Kerry Phelp stepped down from the Clover Moore independent team, citing lack of transparency, and an increasing tendency to be shut out of decision making which led to her resignation.

Ms Phelps said in her public statement that she was not accusing anyone in the Council of dishonesty, but that constantly being barred access to important financial records had made her job intolerable.

But the Lord Mayor said not only was her transparency sufficient, claiming it was far better than any of her predecessors.

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“A tiny fraction of the 565 local councils we have in Australia live stream their council meetings.”

Cr Chung said that his proposals could be executed in a cost effective manner, and would allow the council to meet best practice standards of governance.


“Many Councils around NSW globally live stream their meetings. Some councils have broadcast their meetings since the 1980s,” he added.


Cr Chung said Lord Mayor Clover was keeping the city under a veil of secrecy, and “hiding decision-making from its rate-payers. Every resident deserves access to how decisions that affect them are made by this Council”.


But the Lord Mayor said there was already enough information available to the rate payers.


“Local government agendas and minutes are freely available for access through council websites, and local government meetings themselves remain open to members of the public. City of Sydney Committee and Council meetings are open to the public, and the agenda and minutes of the meeting are available online,” she said.


The newly formed Inner West Council, which will elect its first team in September, has already begun live streaming its meetings.


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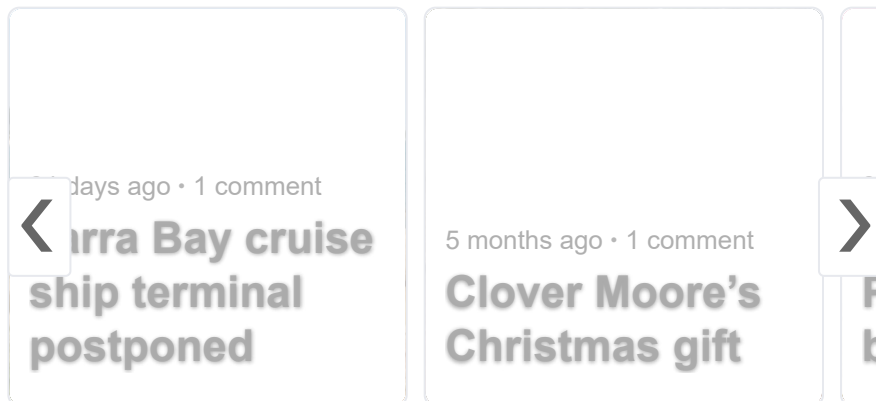
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