

SUBMISSION # 105



Victorian Local Governance Association

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BY:.....

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12 October 2005

Ms Pru Goward
Paid Work and Family Responsibilities Submission
Sex Discrimination Unit
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
GPO Box 5218
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Pru and colleagues,

**Re: the relationship between family responsibilities and
the work of elected local government Councillors in Victoria**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this very important discussion.

I wish to submit copies of two research papers which address the issues of HEROC's Discussion Paper on behalf of elected local government politicians in Victoria. While *Striking the Balance - women, men work and families* itself does not directly address these issues for elected Councillors, it is certainly relevant to consider how women's and men's unpaid community work in local government impacts on family life and vice versa.

In 2003, the Victorian Office of Women's Policy in partnership with the Women's Participation in Local Government (WPILG) Coalition commissioned a research paper about attrition among elected women councillors in Victoria. Entitled *Moving On* (Marion Frere 2003), the research was based on the experiences of 19 of the 21 women who retired from Victorian Councils at the March 2003 elections.

In exploring the reasons for women's retirement from local government, the research author reports in 4 areas: a councillor's life; women, leadership and government; council culture and workload; and women, work and remuneration.

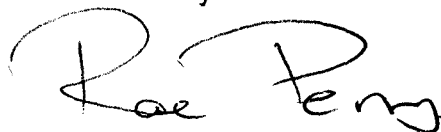
Among the issues raised by former women Councillors were a number relating directly to the *Striking the Balance* discussion paper. These were:

- balancing carer responsibilities with the largely unpaid work of being an elected councillor,
- the impact of council life on family members including role expectations, time, income and entitlements.

Further, the recent What Price Democracy (Kate Nash 2005) discussion paper commissioned by the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), raises questions about a number of issues also relevant to the concerns of HEROC's Paper. These include the consequences of a system which relies on candidates having independent means to support themselves and their families.

We believe that these issues have a critical impact on women, men and the democratic governance of communities. We believe it is that it is timely to raise them in relation to your paper, and would be interested to participate in further discussion with you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rae Perry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rae" and the last name "Perry" clearly distinguishable.

Rae Perry
Chief Operations Officer, VLGA

Enclosed:

Frere, Dr. Marion (2003), Moving On - women and retirement from local government,
Women's Participation in Local Government, Victoria

Nash, Kate (2005), What Price Democracy - Mayoral and councillor remuneration,
Victorian Local Governance Association, Melbourne