

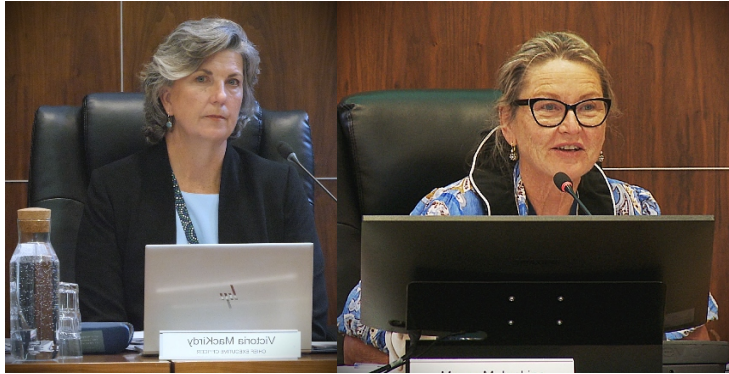
Council Watch Fleurieu Inc.

Accountability with Integrity

Special Governance Edition | 064 May 2026

SPECIAL GOVERNANCE ALERT

WHO WILL CHOOSE VICTOR HARBOR'S NEXT CEO?



COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE NOW AT RISK

COUNCIL WATCH CALLS FOR CEO RECRUITMENT PROCESS TO SLOW DOWN

Council Watch Fleurieu Inc. has formally written to the City of Victor Harbor raising serious concerns regarding the transparency, governance structure, and public credibility of the current process to recruit a new Chief Executive Officer.

The concerns follow confirmation that recruitment for a replacement CEO is already progressing rapidly following the announced resignation of Chief Executive Officer Victoria MacKirby.

Council Watch believes the process is moving at excessive speed immediately prior to the 2026 local government elections and risks creating unnecessary public distrust regarding the legitimacy and independence of the eventual appointment.

THE KEY QUESTION

WHY THE HURRY?

Council Watch is questioning why such a significant long-term appointment is being substantially progressed:

- immediately prior to elections;
- during transition of the outgoing CEO;
- and without clearly identifiable public Council discussion establishing the process.

Council Watch believes councillors should adopt a measured governance approach that preserves the ability of the incoming Council to meaningfully participate in one of the most significant appointments the Council will make.

WHO IS ON THE CEO SELECTION PANEL?

The currently identified CEO Selection Panel consists of:

- Mayor Moira Jenkins
- Cr Angela Schiller
- Cr Brayden Mann
- Cr Michael Quinton
- Cr David Kemp
- Michael Richardson (Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee)

Council Watch believes this structure concentrates significant influence within a relatively small governance group and does not maximise public confidence in the independence and transparency of the process.

INDEPENDENCE QUESTIONS EMERGING

Council Watch has also raised concerns regarding the appointment of:

Michael Richardson

Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee as the “independent member” of the CEO Selection Panel. While this arrangement may technically satisfy legislative requirements, Council Watch believes many members of the community may reasonably question whether a person holding an existing remunerated governance role connected to the Council can be viewed as genuinely independent from the existing governance structure.

Council Watch believes best-practice governance would favour:

a genuinely external independent member with no existing remunerated governance relationship with Council.

WHY WERE OTHER COUNCILLORS EXCLUDED?

Council Watch is also questioning why the majority of members of the existing **CEO Performance Review Committee** have effectively transitioned into the **CEO Selection Panel** structure without broader elected member participation.

Council Watch believes all elected members should have had the opportunity to nominate for participation, with positions determined by Council resolution or ballot if required.

According to Council Watch:

broader participation would have strengthened democratic legitimacy and public confidence in the process.

PUBLIC RECORD QUESTIONS REMAIN

Council Watch states that the publicly available record still does not clearly demonstrate:

- when the CEO Selection Panel was formally established;
- through what Council resolution;
- or through what publicly visible process the recruitment framework was adopted.

This lack of transparency has become a major public confidence issue.

COMPARISON TO THE 2017 CEO APPOINTMENT

Council Watch notes that the 2017 CEO recruitment process appeared to involve:

- a more visible external recruitment structure;
- significant involvement by an independent recruitment organisation;
- and clearer external management of candidate shortlisting.

That process ultimately resulted in the appointment of **Victoria MacKirdy as CEO**.

However, concerns were raised at the time regarding the limited number of candidates ultimately presented to Council for final consideration.

Council Watch believes those earlier concerns contributed to ongoing public discussion regarding transparency and concentration of influence in major executive appointments.

ACTING CEO ARRANGEMENTS ALREADY WORKED BEFORE

Council Watch also notes that during the extended period in which CEO Victoria MacKirdy was absent from duties due to illness, Council continued operating under Acting Chief Executive Officer arrangements rather than immediately pursuing permanent replacement arrangements.

Council Watch believes a similar measured approach should now be considered.

WARNING OF GROWING COMMUNITY DISTRUST

Council Watch warns that if the current process continues without broader transparency and governance safeguards:

- public distrust may increase;
- community division may deepen;
- and the eventual incoming CEO may commence under an avoidable cloud of public concern regarding the integrity of the recruitment process itself.

COUNCIL WATCH CALLS FOR:

- Broader elected member participation
- Transparent process controls
- Independent external oversight
- Conflict-of-interest safeguards
- Transparent recruitment consultant selection
- Merit-based assessment principles
- A six-month independent performance review period for any incoming CEO

MINISTER INFORMED

Council Watch has confirmed that correspondence has also been forwarded to:

Rhiannon Pearce

Minister for Local Government

for awareness regarding the governance and public confidence concerns associated with the process.

THE REAL ISSUE IS NOW PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

Council Watch states the issue is no longer simply:

“Who becomes the next CEO?”

The issue is now:

“Will the community have confidence in how that person was selected?”

Council Watch Fleurieu Inc.

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The time for change is now!

This correspondence is provided in good faith as part of Council Watch’s public interest oversight activities.