

One of my election pledges was to **RESTORE DEMOCRACY** in these Council Chambers, I believe restoring a **GENERAL MATTERS** item to our Agenda is a simple and practical way to do that. In plain terms – I am asking for proper opportunity for Elected Members to speak freely in Council Chambers, in public, on matters we are hearing and seeing. Because right now, that opportunity does simply not exist.

At present, the only pathway available to us is a **Notice of Motion** - which requires a formal recommendation and from last term also a Secunder in advance. That process is appropriate for formal decision making, but it is not suitable for simply raising matters or sharing information.

So what we have ended up with – and I believe it has over time been not altogether unintentional - is the situation whereby **members of the public have greater freedom to raise matters in this Chamber, in a public forum, than elected members do.....**Think about that for a moment (REPEAT).... I think most people would agree that is quite an absurd situation, and is completely contrary to common sense as well.

For the record, the opportunity for elected members to **freely discuss matters of the day** was squashed about half-way through last term. Our new Mayor could have **unilaterally decided to reintroduce it, and I am quite disappointed that he hasn't**, and is letting it be decided by vote. So I am now here appealing to your sense of reason, fair play, and not least of all dignity.

Now I have heard some of the arguments against, which seem to boil down to just this: **Don't give platforms for political posturing, and don't drag out Council meetings with stuff that nobody really wants to hear.**

My response is this: **What on earth do you think we are put here for?** We are elected, in a political process to represent the people, and that means that sometimes, **we might even have political things to say**, and even when we don't (which is most of the time) – what makes any of you think that just because **you don't want to hear it** then it shouldn't get heard?

For goodness sakes, this is a normal state of affairs in most other places, but this Council has been **locked down for so long** we now have a throttled form of **democratic participation**. This measure that I am advocating for today is just one small step towards fixing that - noting there is still discretion by the Chair to **determine time limits**, and these are **not for issues which call for discussion or debate** - just to keep the public informed of how things are getting on. **Pretty basic stuff really, and because it is already allowed for in the Standing Orders of this Council**, I am frankly quite nonplussed that I have had to put time and effort into tabling such a fundamental.

So I appeal to your common sense and reason, and I say that anybody who votes YES to this is simply voting for a basic functioning democracy for Taupo District Council, and some TRANSPARENCY. Those who vote NO, don't want that.