

Finally, some common sense

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

WODONGA council has reacted with paranoia over a small leak from one of its secret meetings.

No councillor is a rat. Councillors elected to the City of Wodonga are caught between a rock and a hard place.

The council hierarchy says councillors cannot speak publicly on council matters yet they have to answer to those who elected and pay them.

There are times when they have to choose between breaking faith with the establishment and keeping faith with those who elected them.

It could be argued their main responsibility is to those who entrusted them to watch over our interests.

The establishment are appointed servants of the public and it could be argued their responsibility is to guide, but not control, the decisions of councillors.

The council holds one only "open-to-the-public" meeting each month.

It meets behind closed doors sometimes several times a week.

Why should someone wait four weeks to get an answer when a quiet confidential interchange between a councillor and a client can save time and money?

The "bugging" event was said not to involve a commercial decision — so why meet secretly?

Constitutionally, all levels of government in Australia are "for and by the people".

The past couple of months of angry rate-payers' meetings should have given the council a wake-up call that the peasants have had enough and are beginning to revolt.

The hilarity with which *The Border Mail's* "Rat in the ranks" story has been greeted is a circuit-breaker to their anger after frustrating years of often unnecessary secrecy and spending, burdensome borrowings, expensive out-of-town consultations, failure to listen to the people and the making of dictatorial decisions.

The drama of it all!

Do we now expect the police, CIA and MI5 to become involved in an indiscretion that should have been ignored?

How much did it cost to bring a debugging unit into Wodonga?

The public isn't surprised there was no bug.

For goodness sake, forget the paranoia, get on with the job, let some sunshine in.

Open council chamber doors more often.

Listen to and act upon the considerable available local expertise and stop mountain-climbing over increasingly expensive molehills.

— JEAN WHITLA,
Wodonga

Well versed on council matters

JEAN Whitla is well credentialed to comment on Wodonga council matters.

Mrs Whitla, a long-time Wodonga resident, worked for *The Border Mail* on special publications and covered local government on both sides of the Border.

Mrs Whitla started as a correspondent for the ABC in the early 1970s and part of her duties included covering Wodonga council for more than 30 years. She also covered Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation board meetings.

In recent years, Mrs Whitla has filled a community watchdog role, attending open council meetings as an interested observer.

She has been a strident critic of the council's meeting procedures.



HOW THE SAGA UNFOLDED

