

# John Castrilli MLA



## Representing the people of Bunbury

In Australia – we are constantly reminded that we live in a democracy and have the privilege of shaping the future through our open political processes.

The slogans put out by politicians, myself included, are that we are there to listen, and I assure you, I am.

However recently I have half a mind report a few of my colleagues for false advertising.

In particular, I have become most disgruntled with our State Government Ministers' apparent allergy to public consultation.

As big decisions are made through press statements – I take calls from enraged residents whose lives have been transformed as a result.

On too many occasions, these people were not aware the decision loomed, meaning in some cases it is too late to be challenged.

The daylight saving issue is a classic example of how your opinion has been ignored by this government.

Over the past 31 years, the WA public has rejected daylight saving in three referendums and a 10,000-signature petition tabled in Parliament earlier this year clearly shows this issue is polarising our State.

So why then I ask – would this government force the people to accept this decision for three years without asking for their view?

Would it not be more democratic to hold a referendum first or even after a one-year trial to determine the level of support?

The Equine Influenza issue is another which has laid bare this State Government's disregard for consultation.

On September 20, a press statement from Agriculture Minister Kim Chance informed that the ban on interstate horse movements would be lifted immediately.

This announcement shocked the thousands of industry stakeholders and jeopardised their livelihoods.

Again I ask, where was the industry consultation before the decision was made?

While I understand this is an unforeseen issue, an emergency public meeting should have been called to ensure full and adequate consultation was carried out.

On top that failure, a closed meeting with just a few industry representatives proved superficial because their advice to keep the ban was ignored.

Instead, it wasn't until eight days later, after the industry, Shadow Racing and Gaming Minister John McGrath and myself jumped up and down, that the industry was consulted with the forming of an industry reference group.

It concerns me that public consultation is all too often an afterthought for our Ministers instead of the presiding factor in their decision-making.

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