

JOINT STATEMENT OF

City of Salisbury Councillors Severina Burner & Grace Bawden

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Councillors Condemn City of Salisbury for Suppressing Free Speech

City of Salisbury Councillors Burner & Bawden have released a scathing statement condemning the council's attempts to suppress free speech. The Councillors were compelled by a Motion of Council to issue a public apology for expressing their personal views on social media, which they claim is a clear violation of their Constitutional rights.

"Free speech is a cornerstone of democracy & the Council's attempts to silence elected officials who speak on behalf of their constituents is unacceptable," said Cr Bawden. "We are deeply sorry that the Council believes it can trample on our Constitutional rights & deny us the ability to represent our constituents."

Cr Burner added, "Council's actions reveal a complete disregard for diversity of political opinion & robust discussion in the community. It has shown a clear intolerance to opposing views, which is not acceptable in a Constitutional democracy."

Council's Motion #3 of 31st January, 2023, claimed it will not support the creation of a new Social Credit Score System but, in reality, these self-appointed *Ministers for Truth* are creating exactly such a system by stealth; silencing elected officials who express their personal views for "wrong think".

"We cannot allow any Councils to trample our Constitutional rights or the rights of our constituents," said Cr Bawden. "We must protect the right to free speech **at all costs.**"

Council falsely accuses the Councillors of using "Nazi terminology" towards other Councillors when all they did was to educate & caution the public about the horrors of Nazi ideologies, including referencing the philosophy & practice of Eugenics, **which the World Economic Forum (WEF) openly espouses.**

"We find it deeply offensive that the Council failed to acknowledge our own family history & opposition to Fascism," said Cr Burner. "We are both descendants who have been impacted by the Holocaust. Our father & grandfather fled Europe to escape Communism & witnessed the murder of civilians by German troops as a toddler. Council's failure to condemn Fascism raises serious concerns about its motives & intentions."

The slogan "Never again" did not mean "never speak of the Holocaust again" but that we must be eternally vigilant so that it "never happens again", so it is ironic that Council claims to pay its respects to Holocaust survivors whilst behaving like total dictators and tyrants.

In support of their position, the councillors cite five case law precedents in their statement, including:

1. *Lange v Australian Broadcasting Corporation (1997): This case established the implied freedom of political communication as a fundamental principle of the Australian Constitution, which protects individuals' rights to express their opinions on matters of public interest.*
2. *Coleman v Power (2004): In this case, the High Court ruled that local councils cannot restrict political communication by their councillors, as it would infringe on the councillors' freedom of political communication.*

3. *City of Monash v Jacobson (2012): The court held that a local Council cannot restrict the distribution of political materials, such as flyers & posters, on public land, as it would infringe on the right to freedom of political communication.*
4. *Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd v Commonwealth (1992): This case established that the freedom of political communication extends to the media, & that the government cannot restrict their ability to report on political issues or express their opinions on matters of public interest.*
5. *Levy v Victoria (1997): The court held that a local Council cannot restrict political communication by its councillors, as it would infringe on the councillors' freedom of political communication.*

"Council's recent actions are not only unjustified, but also unconstitutional & we will not back down in the face of such intimidation & censorship. We will continue to stand up for what we believe is right & for the people we represent. Our message will not be silenced," said Cr Burner.

Cr Bawden added, "We owe it to our constituents to speak out against Fascist ideologies & practices promoted by powerful global organizations like the World Economic Forum & the United Nations, & all too easily embraced by Council, with no safeguards for residents. We will not be bullied into submission by the City of Salisbury or its subsidiaries. Council's behaviour is a blatant abuse of power," stated Cr Bawden. "We were elected to represent our constituents & to speak up on their behalf. The Council's attempt to silence us is a clear violation of the trust placed in us by the people we serve."

"We are deeply disappointed by the Council's act of reprisal to undermine our Constitutional rights & urge the Council to reconsider its actions to uphold the democratic principles of free speech & political expression," said Cr Bawden.

Cr Burner added, "The Council's failure to condemn Fascism or Nazism in its Motion #3 of 31st January 2023 is deeply concerning & a glaring omission, especially given our family history & opposition to such ideologies. We will continue to speak out against these dangerous & oppressive beliefs."

The Councillors concluded their statement by apologizing to their residents for Council's behaviour & pledging to continue serving their constituents without fear of censorship or reprisal.

"We are here to serve our constituents & the Council's actions not only undermine the democratic principles of freedom of speech & political expression but also attack the very core of our fundamental rights as Australians. The silencing of elected officials who speak on behalf of their constituents is a clear violation of our Constitutional rights & civil liberties."

For further information, contact Severina on 0433 393 298 or sburner@salisbury.sa.gov.au, anytime.