



Why is Lyndoch so paranoid about public scrutiny?

Description



Lyndoch Living is owned by the community, but it appears that not all community members are welcome to join.

Carol Altmann – The Terrier

I have been asking this question for several months now, but what has Lyndoch Living got to hide?

The latest act of apparent paranoia is a blanket rejection of *everyone* who recently applied to become members of Lyndoch.

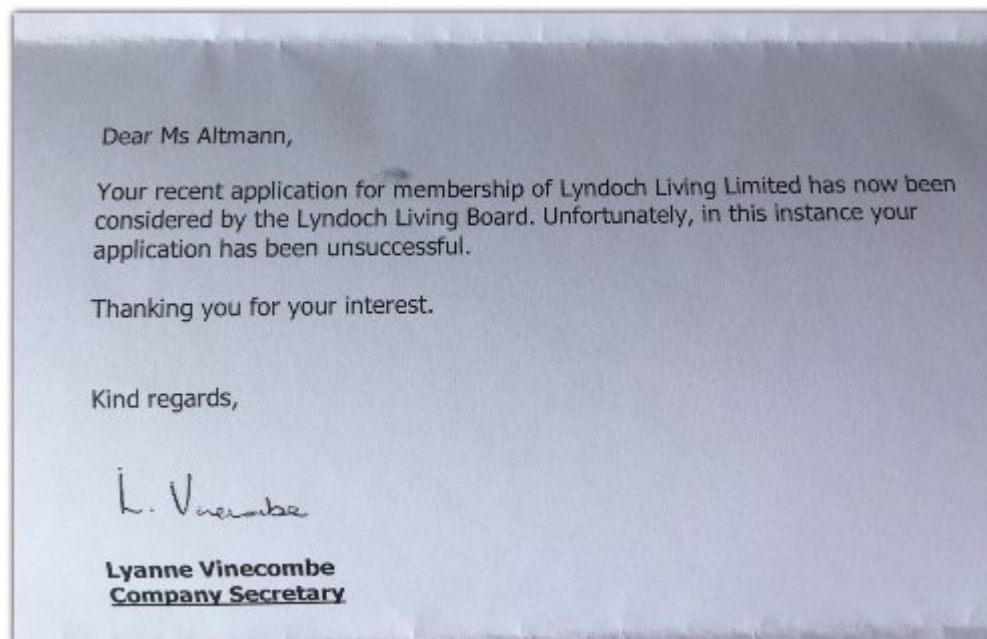
Not one person, it seems, made the cut.

Let's be honest, my application was never going to be accepted, despite my own personal connection with Lyndoch as someone who had a parent in its care for 10 years, because I have made it clear through *The Terrier* that I intend to dig deep into its priorities, direction and its care for staff and residents.

But others have been rejected too.

In fact, from what I am hearing, those who had their applications rejected include a local GP, a retired business journalist, a former high school maths teacher, a former international school librarian, a former small business owner...

According to the Lyndoch board, not one of these people was considered up to scratch.



The Lyndoch rejection slip: expected in my case, but others have also failed to make the cut.

I am not sure what selection process was used, as the board is under no obligation to give its reasons for saying 'no', but the fact every single application was rejected suggests that there was no process.

Instead, it was most likely based on whether the applicant knew me, or liked The Terrier on Facebook, or commented on a story, because Lyndoch doesn't want anyone creeping into the tent who may make life uncomfortable by asking tricky questions, or, heaven forbid, stand for the board.

That would mean a loss of control, and control, in the current climate at Lyndoch, is everything.

What we should have is a fully transparent organisation with a broad cross section of members – the

more, the merrier – because Lyndoch is **owned by the local community**.

I will say it again: **the community owns Lyndoch**, not the small group of people who are now refusing to let anybody else in the door unless, it seems, they are hand-picked.



Among the existing 16 members of Lyndoch are company secretary Lyanne Vinecombe, chair Kerry Nelson, CEO Doreen Power and Director of Nursing Julie Baillie. Image: Lyndoch Living.

As it stands, there are just 16 members of Lyndoch, including the nine-member board, the CEO, some

senior executive staff and a couple of life members.

This might be perfectly acceptable if other platforms of scrutiny had not been removed as part of recent changes to how Lyndoch operates.

These changes, of course, were approved by the existing members. Most of us didn't even know it was happening, yet the way Lyndoch had operated for decades would be no more:

As of last year, the Lyndoch annual reports are no longer available online.

As of last year, the Lyndoch annual meetings are no longer advertised to the general public.

As of last year, vacancies on the Lyndoch board no longer have to be advertised.

We don't even know, until Lyndoch is compelled to report to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission later this month, whether it made a surplus or another deficit in 2019.

So much for being open and accountable to the community.

Inside the Lyndoch tent, the clamps are also coming down.

A new policy from the CEO Doreen Power prevents Lyndoch staff from approaching the board directly and declares all communication to the board must be made via the CEO.

Even then, staff can only talk to the board about policy matters.

Again, this might be fine except for when, hypothetically speaking, the problem is with the CEO.

What does a troubled staff member do then?

Well, they might come to The Terrier, where there is at least a place to be heard outside of the Lyndoch cabal.



A shot of one of the depleted linen shelves inside Lyndoch last year. Some staff took to tearing up old towels to use for face washers.

As readers know, a lot of people concerned about Lyndoch have come to The Terrier to talk about all manner of things.

This includes the on-going shortage of staff – with one RN on night duty across the whole of Lyndoch – or the shortage of linen that saw staff cutting up old towels to use as face washers.

Or they have come with concerns around the huge number of staff that had left the organisation in the past four years – up to 80 people from right across Lyndoch, with many leaving distressed and disheartened.

Or they are worried about how Lyndoch could afford to buy two existing medical centres and have the funds to build and operate a brand new medical centre when, at the end of the day, it is supposed to be focussed solely on looking after the frail.

These are all good questions that deserve to be fully scrutinised and, with your help, that is exactly what I will continue to do in 2020.

Did you apply to become a member of Lyndoch? Send me a message to tell me how you fared. If you would like to apply, here [is the form](#).

If you would like to help keep the Terrier typing, please throw something in the tip jar below.

Category

1. Opinion

Tags

1. board
2. CEO
3. chair.
4. change
5. clinic
6. constitution
7. direction
8. Doreen Power
9. Health Spot
10. Kerry Nelson
11. Lyndoch Healthcare
12. Lyndoch Living
13. masterplan
14. medical centre
15. membership

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16. million dollar plan
 17. paranoid
 18. policy
 19. protection
 20. rejection
 21. relocate
 22. Warrnambool Medical Clinic

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