

## Meander Valley ratepayers slugged \$6500 for complaint costs

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The EXAMINER 

# NEWS



A complaint lodged against Meander Valley councillor Tanya King has cost Meander Valley ratepayers \$6500.

The figure was revealed in council's November meeting, where Cr King lodged a question without notice in relation to a complaint made by Meander Area and Ratepayers Association's Bronte Booth on July 7.

Mr Booth, the son of former Greens leader Kim Booth, alleged Cr King had breached the council's code of conduct by declaring that she represented Christian organisation Teen Challenge at a June meeting on the future use of the Meander Primary School site.

On August 25 a council code of conduct panel [cleared Cr King of any wrongdoing](http://www.examiner.com.au/story/4215444/no-conduct-breach-by-king/) (<http://www.examiner.com.au/story/4215444/no-conduct-breach-by-king/>), finding "overwhelming evidence that councillor Tanya King did not say she represented Teen Challenge, and did not present a perception of bias".

At the meeting on November 15, Cr King asked council if community service work would help to cover the cost incurred to ratepayers as a result of the MARRA group's actions.

Cr King even reported that constituents had expressed an interest in paying to watch the proposed community service work, which she suggested could help cover the debt.

"The reason for asking the question was to alert the ratepayers to the fact that the actions of the MARRA group and Bronte Booth have cost ratepayers \$6500 for what has turned out to be vexatious and nuisance-type complaints," Cr King said.

"Obviously they were at the time trying to stop council from progressing with Teen Challenge's lease of the school."

Cr King said it was disappointing that the MARRA group had pursued the matter in the way it had.

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"They're very closely aligned with the Greens party and while I definitely don't want to bring politics into local government issues because I don't believe it's got any part, I've never seen anyone associated with those groups do anything to benefit the community."

Council heard that the code of conduct panel determination incurred a cost of about \$2500, with the remaining \$4000 covering legal costs in response to letters from Bleyer Lawyers.

Mr Booth did not incur any costs in submitting the code of conduct complaint.

Mr Booth could not be contacted for comment.