

Ditch lord mayoral car and walk, say Melbourne City Council candidates

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It's time to dump the lord mayoral limousine and take public transport, get a cab or walk, every candidate in contention to lead Melbourne City Council has said – except incumbent Robert Doyle.

And one of Cr Doyle's key opponents at this month's election has also demanded the state government limit Melbourne's popularly elected lord mayor to two terms.



Robert Doyle beside his lord mayoral limousine. Photo: Clay Lucas

Cr Doyle is running for a third term – if he wins he will have spent 12 years in the job.

Councillor Ken Ong has been the council's planning chair, and is now running for lord mayor. Cr Ong said that, if he won, he would dump the mayoral driver and walk.

"If I can't walk, I can take public transport. If I really need a car we can get a hire car for the day," said Cr Ong, who this year [offered to donate](#) hundreds of thousands of dollars to Cr Doyle in exchange for running as his deputy.

After Cr Doyle declined the offer, Cr Ong launched his own lord mayoral campaign.

Cr Ong also said the Andrews government should change the City of Melbourne Act so that eight years – or two terms – was the limit as lord mayor. "If the US president gets two terms, why should a lord mayor need more?"

Cr Doyle is the clear favourite, having easily won the 2012 election with 41 per cent of the primary vote.

But Cr Ong is a well-known Liberal Party member and his campaign may split some of Team Doyle's business vote. He has also preferenced The Greens ahead of Cr Doyle, and well-known independent Phil Cleary. All are in turn directing votes away from Cr Doyle.

The Greens and Mr Cleary both agree the lord mayoral car and driver should be dumped.

Another candidate for Lord Mayor, Gary Morgan, said he would ditch the lord mayoral vehicle and would support capping term limits: "Four years is enough for anyone to do that job. Twelve years is lunacy."

Cr Doyle said those who argued against a lord mayor car had a "facile understanding" of the job's demands and that a car was "an efficiency measure" because a typical day involved so many meetings and functions across Melbourne.

"It's an easy thing to promise when you don't understand the role. You have to be there on time for the organisers of that function. It doesn't mean you can cycle there in the rain – it's not something frivolous."

Cr Doyle said term limits were not appropriate, and that the status quo should be kept.

Under Melbourne City Council's rules, both the lord mayor and their deputy has a council car. The cars can also be used by the lord mayor and deputy for private purposes.