



Minutes of General Meeting – 14 September 2017

Held at North Shore Community Centre.

1 Meeting opening, welcome and introductions

The meeting opened at 7:00 pm with Vice President, Tony Gibson in the chair in the absence of Greg Smith who was running late due to transport problems. Tony welcomed attendees and acknowledged the Kabi Kabi people, traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting.

Tony welcomed new members in attendance, Paul Robinson of KFRA, and Matt Druce of SDDCA and reiterated that apologies are encouraged to be replaced with another delegate from the member association wherever possible.

2 Attendance

2.1. Present

Greg Smith (PSRA), Kathryn Hyman (STWWD), Charles Toms (ResDev), Tony Gibson (C&NSCC), Mike Gibson (EDV), Max Standage (MADCA), Peter Baulch & Keith Sweatman (YADCA), Kris Bullen (YCPA), Rebecca Statham (MRA), Mike Goss (PBCH), Susie Chapman (MCG), Simon Cracknell, Angela Wilson (AMCS), Tony Barry (Caloundra RA), Barry McDowell (MCG), Paul Robertson (KFRA), Mark Bizzell (CRA), Warren Fraser (STWW/PPPA)

2.2. Apologies

Johanne Wright (EDV), Martin Peelgrane (MRA), Adriana Adamska-Bland (MRA), Lyn Saxton & Brian Raison (DW), Anna Neep (SPA), Narelle McCarthy (SCEC), Gillian Hall (DF), Bob Joubert (PSRA), Christine Tainsh (FOLW), Mike & Resi Fuessel, Mark Jones (CRA), Melva Hobson (due to communication problems)

3 Minutes of previous meeting (distributed via website)

The attendees accepted the minutes of the general meeting held on 24 August 2017 as posted on the OSCAR website. These reflect the request by Narelle McCarthy of SCEC to include in the minutes the fact that there was discussion regarding SCAI (Sunshine Coast Alliance Inc) suitability as a member of OSCAR and the fact that some concerns were raised about their commitment to OSCAR's principles. It was reiterated that OSCAR policy remained that member groups must accept OSCAR objectives as the SCAI had in their application for membership.

That the minutes of the previous meeting, with the amendment noted, be accepted.

Moved: Tony Gibson

Seconded: Mark Bizzell

Carried.

4 Business arising from previous minutes

4.1. QLGRA AGM

The President undertook to provide a report (attached at the end of this document) on the AGM which was attended by Peter Baulch and Greg Smith. In short, though member groups of the QLGRA have different interests there is much in common and it will be a useful affiliation in the long term.

4.2. Developer donation campaign

Greg reported on further responses OSCAR had received in relation to the letters previously sent to state ministers and other politicians.

OSCAR was recently quoted in the media, both ABC and Sunshine Coast Daily, after being approached for comment on the LGAQ's recent recommendations for spending caps for Mayoral and Councillor Campaigns. Their

suggested limit was \$200,000 for a Mayoral campaign, and \$50,000 for a Councillor campaign. OSCAR's comment was that it was excessive, and that grass roots campaigns are of vital importance. Tony Gibson pointed out that face to face consultation with constituents is essential for a healthy democracy and effective Local Government. A media and signage driven campaign is too far removed from public opinion and community issues and that it is important to door knock and meet constituents and listen to common issues. Greg asserted on air that it was our view that \$50,000 was ample for a Mayoral campaign and \$12,500 for councillor campaigns.

4.3. 6 July Strategic Discussion forum letter to SCRC

The letter has been sent to the Mayor outlining our concerns about this "meeting".

4.4. Financial transparency letter to SCRC

The letter has been sent to the Mayor.

Charles Toms gave a breakdown of the reasons why there are questions as to the financial transparency of SCRC business units. He made it clear he was not alleging corruption but that the information is simply not there for public access. From SunCentral, to the Solar Farm and the Airport expansion project, a draft letter had been prepared as the basis for the final letter that went to Council. Tony Gibson pointed out, as was reported in the media that an Audit into Ipswich Council could result in the shutdown of their business units.

Charles elaborated that when SCRC is asked to produce assets and liabilities of a business unit, a exercise of passing the buck is the typical process; ie Council claims it is not responsible for the financial reports, Councillor's suggest the Auditor, the Auditor says they don't audit consolidated units. Charles expressed exasperation and explained that the Keating government initiated business within council including separate accounts and an advisory board, and though it is federally legislated it becomes watered down by the State and Local governments. The question remains in terms of transparency, who is paying for what for where? When a Unit Manager is asked, a profit and loss statement can be produced but no balance sheet. Kathryn asked if this letter would be available on the website along with any other OSCAR correspondence and it was agreed this would be a beneficial feature for member groups of the website under the Members section tab.

4.5. MRECG update

Susie Chapman gave an update on the progress of the consultative group, and Greg pointed out that he was certain that OSCAR was accepted owing to the credibility of our nominated representative, Susie Chapman.

Susie said that historically speaking every 10-15 years the SCRC revisit the idea of training the Maroochy River mouth. She suggested that since the last time this issue was raised, Council have installed infrastructure to the Cotton Tree Caravan Park which has given rise for Council to press for the defence infrastructure. She questioned why council have gone ahead with this infrastructure prematurely. She asserted that this time the community involvement was much more represented than expected. The Maroochy River mouth is one of the last untrained river mouths and other examples have proved engineering structures to control nature are inadequate, namely sand movement become more problematic. Susie reported that the running theme was that the Cost Benefit Analysis had shortcomings in that it did not accommodate environmental, cultural and social values. She recommended broadening the consultation submissions to MRECG, noting that some members of the consultative group have not been present at the community forums and are largely unaware of the community opposition. She also encouraged people to partake in the online council survey. She also urged people to lobby Councillors, as it will be councillors who make the decision at the end of the consultation period, now extended from December 2017 until March 2018.

Of the 4 options available; (1. Rocks to replace the bags, 2. a 200m rock wall, 3. sand bags, and 4. anchoring Pincushion), Susie agreed that the geo fabric sand bags, particularly because the new design technology and materials used are more advanced since the existing groynes were installed and many problems associated with geo fabric have been addressed. She also pointed out flaws in Council's argument regarding safety, particularly algae, noting that rocks are also a danger in terms of barnacles and algae – she also pointed out that the new design technology has eliminated the issue of movement and destabilisation of the sand bags that contribute to the algae growth. Durability issues were pin pointed to fishermen creating holes in the bags for their fishing rods, a solution is to create holes, similar to what one may find on a natural rock surface as a designated feature built in to accommodate fishing rods. It is also a structure that can be considered temporary if there was ever a need to remove the sand bags in the future. Angela Wilson asked if she may forward details and information from the public domain to Susie and Susie encouraged anyone to contact her directly with feedback, queries or information.

5 Correspondence

5.1. Inwards

Deborah McQuattie, SCRC re first meeting of the MRECG – minutes
Cr Jason O’Pray advising appointment of Support Officer Ashleigh Roberson
Premier re developer donation letter
Victoria Nelson, SCRC re Registers of Interest availability
Friends of Lake Weyba re changes to new membership application process
Fiona Simpson response to developer donation letter
Ian Walker, LNP Shadow A-G, re developer donations
SDDCA membership application and invitation to AGM

5.2. Outwards

Cr Steve Robinson re confidential sessions – two emails
Mayor, SCRC re 6 July Strategic Discussion Forum
Mayor, SCRC re financial reporting on Council Business Units
Sandy Zubrinich, SCBC re 2017 Think Tank workshops
OSCAR member updates – 8 & 13 September, 27 August

6 Financial report

6.1. OSCAR funds

Treasurer Charles Toms tabled the Financial Report and advised that the bank balance is \$3,228.02 with un-deposited cheques totalling \$70.00.

Income statement			
Income		Expenses	
Donations	\$70.00	QLGRA membership	(\$50.00)
Total Income	\$70.00	Total Expenses	(\$50.00)

Balance Sheet as at 24 August 2017			
Assets		Liabilities	
Opening bank balance	\$190.92		\$0.00
Plus Income received	\$4,241.00		
Plus Income not yet banked	\$0.00		
Less Expenses	(\$1,283.90)		
Closing bank balance	\$3,148.02	Total Liabilities	\$0.00

7 Membership report

7.1. Membership applications

The President tabled an application from the Sippy Downs & District Community Association Inc organisation seeking membership of OSCAR.

Matt Druce (President, SDDCA) gave some history of the Association with OSCAR previously, and stated that the previous OSCAR did not necessarily consult with member groups on every particular issue represented, which reportedly caused a fracture. With the new undertaking and objectives of OSCAR, Matt reported that SDDCA aligns with what OSCAR aims to achieve, “governance and transparency”. Greg reported that he had attended the SDDCA AGM the previous night and was very impressed with the professional manner in which the meeting was conducted.

That the Sippy Downs & District Community Association Inc be confirmed as a member of OSCAR.

Moved: Susie Chapman

Seconded: Kris Bullen

Carried.

8 General business

8.1. Development assessment and approval process letter to Deputy Premier

A decision to send a letter similar to that sent by GECKO (Gold Coast & Hinterland Environment Council) has been deferred until further notice.

8.2. Planning Scheme workshop

Deferred until Melva is back on the Sunshine Coast.

8.3. Membership application process review. (Friends of Lake Weyba)

See 8.4 below.

8.4. OSCAR Individual membership? – perhaps “non-voting associates”. (Simon Cracknell)

Greg asserted that OSCAR was rigorous but practical in its approach to membership, the focus being on quality not necessarily quantity. It is OSCAR’s endeavour to have member association active in community engagement and supportive of OSCAR goals, objectives and initiatives.

Simon Cracknell questioned the reason for and against having individual members and a wide range discussion ensued. Concerns with voting rights for an individual member were raised where they were not representative of a member base; others questioned whether Simon would consider joining an association in the Caloundra, Pelican Waters, and Golden Beach areas of which he said he would consider.

Tony Gibson suggested associate members, such as Claudia Baldwin, that may not have voting rights nor be a member of any particular association, but are held in high regard and great to have in an advisory capacity.

There was general consensus to consider types of membership moving forward and for further future discussion and potential motions would be presented at the OSCAR AGM in February 2018.

8.5. Member reports

Simon and others initiated discussion regarding OSCAR’s strategy at election time. It was generally agreed a need for new candidates and a change in the balance of council is needed and that new candidates need to be sought and identified, promoted and supported.

8.6. Other items from the floor

Max Standage (MADCA) raised an ongoing issue of “party houses” becoming increasingly problematic for neighbourhoods. These businesses are not a registered tourism organisation or business, and do not contribute to the tourism levy as other accommodation outlets are obliged to do.

This is seen as inequitable within the industry. Max relayed that other councils have used specific legislation regulating airbnb for example, it this not just a problem for the range. Noosa also sees this issue as prevalent in the industry. There has been some media coverage of this issue and it was agreed that regulation is more than likely in order. Max further explained that Cr Jenny McKay and Cr Rogerson have not explored how other councils tackle this issue – Kathryn Hyman asked what the legislative provisions in relation to this matter was. It was agreed that writing to the SCRC for information might be useful.

Tony Barry (Caloundra RA) also spoke of the Bulcock Street redevelopment. He mentioned that the large Fig Trees are earmarked for removal however it was noted that there is evidence of larger trees in significantly smaller spaces are managed successfully in the urban context. Discussion around amenity and green space, including the point raised that shade is particularly important in our climate, general concern with the reflective nature of shop fronts and radiant heat from bitumen with no relief for shoppers and the general public.

Greg digressed back to QLGRA discussion about how elected Councillors are less relevant/effective in the current organisational structure of SCRC where so much power lies with the Mayor and CEO, Tony Gibson relayed that SCRC is one of four of the largest regional councils in Australia, and is structured in such a way that the councillors can only address the Office of the Mayor, and only the Mayor can address the Office of the CEO. It was agreed that this structure was too reliant on the staff of Council and not enough via elected divisional representatives.

9 Meeting dates for future General Meeting

The next general meeting will be held at 7 pm on Thursday 26 October 2017 at the North Shore Community Centre, 701 David Low Way, Mudjimba.

10 Meeting close

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm.

QLGRA 2017 Annual General Meeting Report

The QLGRA AGM was held in Gympie on 2 & 3 September 2017; it was attended by Greg Smith and Peter Baulch as OSCAR's delegates.

Following welcome and introductions the AGM evolved into a forum with two guest speakers:

Dr Cameron Murray, academic and Co-Author "Game of Mates: How Favours Bleed the Nation" and Bernie Dowling, Journalist (Gympie Times, Moreton Bay and Pine Rivers local papers)

Cameron is a very impressive speaker and provided an outline of the key points from his book. Some random take-outs:

- "grey" corruption the real issue
- "grey" gifts – providing benefits to developers without them having to pay for it; eg rezoning which provides a windfall gain to developer. Solution: make the developer pay when land is rezoned – similar to the Betterment Charges levied in ACT.
- Donations are an attempt to join the group/club – not directly to gain individual benefit. On Sunshine Coast Stockland do not need to donate as they are already "in the club".
- Challenges the myth that "if you do not look after developers no housing will be built".
- Estimates that if the ACT system was in place Australia wide it would return \$11 billion to ratepayers/taxpayers.
- CCCs or ICACs do not deal with grey corruption so they are not the answer.
- Citizen juries to decide planning decisions rather than career planners.
- Transparency not the answer (eg EDS) – need to make the benefit public not just the donation.
- KEY – reduce value of "favour" by charging for the value of the gain.
- Complexity of legislation discourages transparency.
- Advocates term limits for councillors/mayors.

Bernie Dowling:

Sees "betterment tax" as protecting ratepayer base.

Bernie's suggested reforms:

- Ban 3rd party political donations
- Ban cross-donation between councillors
- Further improvements to real-time reporting of donations
- Prosecute people who break electoral laws
- Compulsory meetings for candidates re reporting obligations
- Councils must set up independent election website with candidate profiles
- More women must be encouraged to stand for council
- Problem of councillors anointing their successor
- Ban councillors conducting businesses that interact with their council
- Increase restrictions on closed sessions of council
- Minute all council meetings, "workshops", discussion forums etc and make these minutes more comprehensive
- Rate rises should be limited to rate of inflation
- Increasing use of levies to supplement/"hide" rate rises
- A variant of the ACT system is needed
- Councillors should elect mayors
- Divisional based councils preferred
- Council staff generally less corrupt than councillors and therefore should make most decisions subject to councillor review
- Councillors increasing will not engage with "trouble-makers"
- Hubris of incumbency – we deserve perks, we deserve re-election
- Groups like OSCAR must back candidates into election and then post-election provide on-going support
- Incumbents say "we do not want political parties or unelected groups controlling candidates but typically that is what they are doing"

- Threaten unsupportive local media with referral to Press Council.

In the afternoon session there were President and Treasurer Reports and election of Office Bearers. Following this some of QLGRA's members gave local reports – these tended to be very focussed on dissatisfaction with their amalgamated councils.

On Sunday there were a number of reports presented on:

- QLGRA Survey of QLD Councils – summary of responses
- Operation Belcarra – CCC
<http://www.ccc.qld.gov.au/corruption/operation-belcarra-public-hearing/operation-belcarra-public-hearings>
- Review of the ECQ's Performance in the 2016 Council Elections (Jim Sooley)
- The Inquiry into the Long-Term Financial Sustainability of local government
<https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/committees/IPNRC/inquiries/current-inquiries/AGrotLocalGovt>
- Councillor Complaints Review Panel recommendations
Report: <http://www.dilgp.qld.gov.au/resources/publication/local-government/councillor-complaints-review-report.pdf>
Response: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/TableOffice/taledpapers/2017/5517T1074.pdf>

There was also a brief presentation on the Local Government Regulations Sections 234 which was introduced in the Newman era and gives exemption to LGAs re the openness of their tendering arrangements and provides a powerful role for the LGAQ in oversight of tendering. This is something OSCAR may want to look at in the future.