

MAYOR JAMIESON'S COMMENTS ON COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE INAPPROPRIATE

OSCAR, the residents' association peak group, views with concern the comments of the Mayor in both the March edition of the *Backstory* magazine, and further reported in the Sunshine Coast Daily on Friday and Saturday, in which he criticises specific community organisations and their spokespersons as being unelected, unrepresentative and always opposed to development and employment growth.

Most of our member organisations are incorporated bodies which means they are subject to strict legal requirements in relation to elections of office bearer and maintenance of membership registers; this makes a nonsense of his claim that spokespersons for these groups are unelected and do not represent their local communities. Further, most people working for our member organisations are volunteers, working incredibly long hours on behalf of their communities without the financial resources of the Council or developers at their disposal. Many are also highly experienced individuals with current or past involvement in every field of endeavour and many at the highest level.

What our member groups are striving to achieve is adherence to the Planning Scheme 2014. OSCAR views the Planning Scheme as a contract between the Council and the community, developed by the Council in consultation with the community and designed to provide certainty to ratepayers in regard to development on the Sunshine Coast.

OSCAR's members are not against development or the pursuit of employment growth. This is an intellectually lazy argument in an attempt to denigrate and marginalize community groups who question Council actions.

OSCAR respects the right of the Mayor and his fellow councillors to criticise the opinions of community groups but he has no right to undermine their legitimacy or their contribution to the community. This is unbecoming of someone who is not only the head of the Council but the President of the Local Government Association of Queensland.

Our member organisations work unapologetically in the interests of their members and the community as a whole and OSCAR and its member groups have indicated their preparedness to work with the Mayor and his colleagues to achieve the best outcomes for the Sunshine Coast – balanced development that is consistent with the agreed Planning Scheme.

The current Council was not elected on a platform of changing or disregarding the Planning Scheme and elected councillors can claim no such mandate. The Mayor would do well to seek engagement with our member groups rather than trying to disparage them.

ENDS

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Available for comment after 2:00 pm on Monday, 29 May 2017