

# OSCAR Issues and questions for State Election 2017 candidates



## Transport Infrastructure

### **Context/Rationale**

Massive growth is anticipated at key locations on the Sunshine Coast, with much centred around major road transport routes particularly the Bruce Highway and associated feeder roads. If traffic is to keep moving and not grind to a halt the rail access to the Sunshine coast must be upgraded and services, particularly at peak times increased. Access to rail via bus and free commuter parking must be fast, reliable and frequent to encourage increased use of rail services to and from Brisbane and locations in between including the airport.

### **QUESTIONS**

***Transport infrastructure – If elected to government, will you advocate for the following infrastructure projects and processes for the Sunshine Coast? When would you see these things happening?***

1. Duplication of Railway line to Nambour.
2. Ensuring feeder bus services to rail points are comprehensive and synchronise with rail timetables.
3. That free railway commuter parking is provided to meet increased demand of rail services owing to proposed growth at Nambour, Palmwoods and Caloundra South.
4. That heritage, natural environmental and cultural values are acknowledged, respected and taken account of in any infrastructure development.
5. That the community is engaged as partners in determining the location of new and expanded infrastructure particularly in heritage areas.
6. Local and state governments and local communities need to be engaged at coming up with transport solutions that preserve our natural environment and the character of our villages and towns. What is your view on this statement? How would you work with the community to arrive at a solution?



## Planning scheme integrity

### **Context/Rationale**

SCRC when it developed the current Planning scheme undertook extensive community consultation. There were many properly made submissions in response to the draft scheme. Although all submitters may not have seen changes made that they requested, there was overall, general acceptance of the final published plan. Since gazettal of the 2014 SCRC Planning scheme, by 2017 more amendments have been proposed than during the entire life of the previous Planning Scheme!

Recent amendments that have been sought have serious implications for the Sunshine Coast as a location and as a community. The community here has always seen the Coast as different from the Gold Coast and other tourist locations. The lower-rise buildings, open space, village nature of settlement, national parks close to population centres, both coastal and hinterland and the high environmental values of the Sunshine Coast are points of difference from other tourist locations.

Since the last local government elections major amendments have been approved or are in consideration including for example:

- Height relaxations in Mooloolaba and Caloundra
- Development at TWW on flood-prone land
- Sekisui at Yaroomba seeking to override the PS, major increase in numbers of dwellings, impact on turtles, traffic and visual amenity.

## QUESTIONS

### ***Planning Scheme integrity – Will you commit to the current Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme by:***

7. Advocating to the new State Government that a moratorium be placed on “major” planning scheme amendments or attempts to “over-ride” the planning scheme for a period of 5 years following the gazettal of a Planning Scheme and 2 years prior to a planning scheme review.
8. Supporting the community in arguing that parking limits, densities and heights for developments be consistent with those outlined in the Planning Scheme.
9. Supporting the provision of penalties against developers and private certifiers who deliberately construct other than what has been approved, particularly in relation to heights and density of developments.
10. What is your party’s stance in relation to this statement:

***“Queensland’s traditional approach to floodplain management and the use of commonwealth recovery funding should be regarded as unconscionable, reckless and mendicant. It should be the aim of the current generation, led by their councils and their state government, to reverse this historic trajectory which has led to the problem of flooding becoming worse than in any other State” [Keys-Chas 2011 p2]***

when assessing the suitability of approving and proceeding with the proposed Twin Waters West planning scheme amendment of flood prone heavily constrained land, currently identified as not suitable for urban development under the Planning Scheme and SEQ Regional Plan provisions?

11. With respect to the South East Queensland Regional Plan (Shaping SEQ) that was given effect on 11 August 2017, do you support the Plan or, if elected, would you seek to change the Plan? If so, why? And in what areas?



## **Local Government Governance**

### ***Context/Rationale – Developer donations***

With the announcement of the election, the Parliament, including its Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee ceased, and all its inquiries lapsed, including its inquiry into the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 and Local Government Electoral (Implementing Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017.

If the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 and Local Government Electoral (Implementing Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 are reintroduced during the next Parliament, and if the Parliament then refers them to a successor committee, such committee should have regard to the submissions and other evidence collected by the former Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee during its inquiry.

## QUESTIONS

12. If elected will you, within the first 100 days, work towards and support the reintroduction, of the lapsed draft legislation to ban developer donations at future State and local government elections? (Local Government Electoral (Implementing Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017)
13. Will you support the completion of the work of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee in relation to this draft legislation and its consultation process established under the previous Labor Government?
14. Even though the legislation has not passed can you guarantee that you will NOT be seeking or accepting any donations from developers or associated entities for this election?
15. Do you endorse the findings of the recent Crime and Corruption Commission report (Operation Belcarra) into reforming local government in Queensland and will you seek to implement the report’s recommendations in this term of Parliament?
16. Will you support the reduction of the donation disclosure to \$200 as was previously the threshold?

17. Are there any reforms to local government in Queensland that you would like to see introduced?

***Context/rationale - closed Council sessions***

As at September 2017 the Sunshine Coast Regional Council has gone into “confidential/closed session” since the 2016 election in excess of 100 times. Noosa Council in the same time has gone into “confidential/closed” session on 10 occasions.

Evidence that the SCRC over-uses closed sessions was demonstrated when OSCAR obtained, through an expensive RTI application, the meeting documents from two of the major Planning Scheme amendments in April. We were ultimately provided with the full content of these documents which strongly suggests that these sessions did not need to be held behind closed doors in the first place.

**QUESTIONS**

18. Do you support openness and transparency in Local Government?
19. Do you agree that there are very few occasions when “closed sessions” are required and then only for matters of high “commercial in-confidence” issues such as the determining of contracts and related financial dealings?
20. Will you advocate as a matter of urgency for the new State Government to give clear direction to LG as to when “closed” sessions are appropriate?



## **Handling of Local Government complaints**

***Context/rationale***

The current complaint process is not working and the community has lost trust in it, to the extent that they feel that it is not worth making a complaint against a Local Government entity or a councillor. Community members have no confidence that they will be given an impartial hearing or that the complaint will be solved in a timely manner.

Community members are also concerned that the CEO or his/her delegate makes the initial determination in relation to the complaint. This is of concern because the Mayor can direct the CEO and senior officers in relation to all things related to Council and that therefore potentiality reduces the impartiality of the CEO and senior officers in their determination.

The previous Labor government commenced a review process into the handling of complaints.

**QUESTIONS**

21. Will you work towards and support the reintroduction of the lapsed review into the Councillor Complaints process within 100 days of the new government taking office?
22. Will you commit to engaging with community members in relation to this issue?
23. Will you consider putting on the table the concept of removing the complaints process from individual councils to a central panel qualified in complaints handling and resolution?



## **Cost of Right To Information (RTI) for Not For Profit groups (NFP)**

***Context/rationale***

Currently NFP groups pay full cost for RTI applications, often for information that should be in the public arena anyway. Many NFP groups have limited access to funds and are therefore prevented from participating fully in the democratic process.

**QUESTION**

24. If elected will you advocate for RTI fee relief for NFP groups?

## **Climate Change**

### ***Context/Rationale***

The location of the Sunshine Coast, and the topography of the land (including flood-prone previous agricultural land) poses issues for the community in terms of development of such land in the light of Climate Change. Concerns include: safety of nearby residents; drainage problems; impacts of severe weather events; coastal erosion; biodiversity impacts; impact on wildlife and people and raising natural height levels to what the community considers excessive. Climate Change will have serious implications for Queensland in general and the Sunshine Coast in particular.

In 2016 the State Government made funds available to Queensland Local Governments to undertake a “Hazard Adaption Strategy” for LGs potentially impacted by Climate Change. SCRC has indicated that it will not have its strategy completed for 2 years.

### **QUESTIONS**

25. What do you see as the impact on the Sunshine Coast of Climate Change?
26. How do you suggest the Sunshine Coast might prepare for such eventuality?
27. What sort of future Sunshine Coast do you wish to leave your children and grandchildren?
28. Will you advocate for the SCRC to have a moratorium on any development in flood-prone areas until such time as the hazard adaptation strategy is completed?

## **Population Growth implications and policies to deal with this**

### ***Context/rationale***

One consistently hears members of government at all levels espousing the value of significant population growth in Queensland in general and the Sunshine Coast in particular. This has led to SCRC Councillors commenting that “the growth must be shared across the SCRC area and the areas north of the Maroochy must take their share”. This led to the CEO of SCRC to write to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning seeking investigations of flood modelling on additional flood-prone areas.

### **QUESTIONS**

29. What do you understand by the terms “carrying capacity” and “sustainability”?
30. What “limits to growth” do you see relating to the Sunshine Coast in relation to population growth?
31. What are the implications of this proposed population growth for the Sunshine Coast?
32. What policy suggestions would you have to deal with this issue?

## **Biodiversity**

### **QUESTION**

33. How would you work to maintain the biodiversity of our land and seas of the Sunshine Coast? You may like to identify particular strategies for iconic species such as the endangered loggerhead turtles or koalas.

## **Affordable Housing, Social Housing and Disabled Access**

### **QUESTION**

34. How would you work to address the housing crisis on the Sunshine Coast with affordable homes and homes that accommodate people with a disability?