

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.

The LNP supports the duplication of the railway line to the Sunshine Coast. An LNP Government will commence the first stage of this Railway line from Beerburrum to Landsborough in its first term and this project includes the 'feeder' locations to the Sunshine Coast public transport bus network. Work would commence in the first term under an LNP Government. Further project funds would also be sought from the Federal Government's rail infrastructure fund as this project is tailor-made for this program.

2. Ensuring feeder bus services to rail points are comprehensive and synchronise with rail timetables.

Feeder bus services to rail points synchronised with rail timetables as part of an integrated public transport network are part of our plan.

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.

I note your request for free parking. The need for new parking would need to be assessed as part of any new service. Short term drop off and pick up should be free, however the concept of all-day free parking would need to be thought through as part of the bigger strategy incorporating community consultation, taking all community impacts into consideration.

4. That heritage, natural environmental and cultural values are acknowledged, respected and taken account of in any infrastructure development.

Yes.

5. That the community is engaged as partners in determining the location of new and expanded infrastructure particularly in heritage areas.

Yes.

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?

Yes.



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.

I believe that town planning issues should mainly be handled at a Local Government level. Legally, council must consult with the local community. It's important that the town plan is respected.

Where a major variation to the town plan occurs, I believe extensive community consultation and significant evidence of public benefit is required.

Council would pay the price if they stray too far from community support.

8. Supporting the community in arguing that parking limits, densities and heights for developments be consistent with those outlined in the Planning Scheme.

Yes, I support the principles outlined in the Planning Scheme.

Where there are variations, they must be subject to not only community consultation and scrutiny of the cost/benefits, but also justify why the variation. For example, if you have the opportunity bring forward a rapid transport system such as light rail... you may have higher density around that corridor which supports this mode of transport and means there is less need for parking etc.

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.

I support integrity in the approval process. Where there are breaches, the Court can apply penalties and due process needs to be followed.

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?

- ✓ I've heard the major concerns of the local community about flooding. No development should be allowed that worsens flooding.
- ✓ I'm committed to fight to protect our precious environment, that no development is allowed which increases the risk of flooding and that developers pay for road infrastructure
- ✓ I've raised this in Parliament and with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Planning to ask for an independent review of Council's flood modelling to ensure existing communities are protected
- ✓ I've called on the State Government to release the flood review which was due in October and it's a cop out that they won't release it now that the Government is in 'care-taker' mode
- ✓ The Labor Government has deliberately not released this flood model review prior to the election
- ✓ I've walked through the flood waters in the 1990s which impacted particularly the Pacific Paradise community
- ✓ As a result, I fought hard to help get improved flood mitigation works including bund walls around Pacific Paradise and major drains
- ✓ The previous stage of the Twin Waters development also provided significant extension of the drains and canals which has reduced flood risk and enhanced the local amenity
- ✓ It is important that none of this flood mitigation is compromised.

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?

Essentially, there are many good elements to the plan, but it's not perfect. I have no intention to lobby for changes to the plan unless there are anomalies that need fixing. The SEQ Regional Plan is enshrined in legislation. Any changes have to be legislated.

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)

Donations should be treated equally. People want to know there is transparency and people are equal before the law.

My preference would be for union donations to be treated the same way as developer donations.

However, I'm not able to give you a commitment for what legislation will have the highest priority in the first 100 days. Any legislation should be subject to community consultation and scrutiny of Parliamentary Committees first.

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?

The legislation must first be re-introduced and there would need to be a formal process for this, followed by committee and community scrutiny.

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?

Although this legislation didn't pass the Parliament, I am not seeking or accepting donations from developers or associated entities in accordance with this proposed law.

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?

- Illegal behaviour must be condemned, and corrupt conduct dealt with by the full force of the law. The LNP appreciates the constructive contribution by the LGAQ, mayors and councillors in response to the recommendations made by the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra report.
- We must ensure that there is a proper discussion about these issues instead of tarring everyone with the same brush. Unfortunately, the Palaszczuk Labor Government has sought to use the report as a political tool.
- Annastacia Palaszczuk isn't prepared to extend the same scrutiny regarding donations to the lawless unions.
- An LNP Government will, in consultation with the LGAQ, resume the legislative changes to the councillor complaints system which lapsed once Annastacia Palaszczuk called an early election. The LNP has previously supported in-principles the government's response to the councillor complaints review.

16. Will you support the reduction of the donation disclosure to \$200 as was previously the threshold?

No. This is just not practical. I believe it would cost more than it would raise in compliance costs given that accumulated ticket prices to functions are considered donations even if they include meal costs.

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

I'd like to see a full cost disclosure of their media and marketing activities. Some Councils have a bigger media and PR team and budget than news organisations. This is not a good principle in supporting independent news source reporting.

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?

Yes, I absolutely 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?

I agree there needs to be independent scrutiny or check and balances to ensure the public interest is protected when dealing with matters of commercial in confidence.

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?

If there is a need for initial ‘in-confidence’ hearings, I think there should be a timeframe to release the documentation. The principle should be that eventually, decisions involving public resources will be public.



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?

Note answer under point 15. An LNP Government will, in consultation with the LGAQ, resume the legislative changes to the councillor complaints system which lapsed once Annastacia Palaszczuk called an early election. The LNP has previously supported in-principles the government's response to the councillor complaints review.

22. Will you commit to engaging with community members in relation to this issue?

If the community is able to legitimately have their say, I'm am 100% committed to engaging with the community 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?

The principle should be that as much public information as possible should be available freely. Same goes for members of parliament being able to access information not only community groups.



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?

I think RTIs are currently unaffordable. I've personally been affected by the cost of RTIs because it's difficult to narrow the scope of a search when there is gatekeeping and obfuscation from an agency. The first principle needs to be about organisations releasing as much information as possible for free and where RTI systems are needed, we need a fair review of a fee structure but also the operations.



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?

There is no doubt that climate change is an issue and more must be done to adapt to effect and mitigate.

the LNP has released our policy for a trial of three Environmental Benefit Bonds (EBBs).

They involve the government identifying an environmental issue that could benefit from long-term, outcomes-based funding. The government will then negotiate with a private investor who is interested in tackling this problem before entering into a payment by results contract. The LNP will invest \$4 million for the Environmental Benefit Bonds trial.

(<https://www.betterqueensland.org.au/environmental-benefit-bonds>)

We will also invest in grass roots initiatives like our \$10 million plan to plant 3 million trees

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26. How do you suggest the Sunshine Coast might prepare for such eventuality?

As above

27. What sort of future Sunshine Coast do you wish to leave your children and grandchildren?

I want to ensure people can live, work and raise their families here on the Sunshine Coast as a safe community, with local jobs, and maintaining and improving the natural environment, they love.

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?

Maroochydore is already mainly in a flood plain which requires great care. Any approach to hazard mitigation must be based on science, the most cost-effective and practical solutions and involve community consultation.

My concern about the word 'moratorium' means that someone living in the middle of Maroochydore suburb may not be able to build their home even if they can ensure good flood mitigation strategy.

Climate adaption requires care to address today's impacts (including financial hardship and reputational demise) with clear and science based framework.



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”?

There is going to be growth of the Sunshine Coast, we have to ensure it is sustainable, that we keep our local lifestyle and that there is the appropriate infrastructure there to cater for new residents. We must make sure that the infrastructure is scaleable so that it can support communities from their very beginning without having to build something that won't be needed for tens of years.

30. What “limits to growth” do you see relating to the Sunshine Coast in relation to population growth?

As above. Personally I think it is time we looked at our railway towns and support their growth based on some successful European models which celebrate community identity. Keep green buffer zones but also utilize greater density around rapid transit hubs. There is a lot more land that is flood free in these communities.

31. What are the implications of this proposed population growth for the Sunshine Coast?

As above

32. What policy suggestions would you have to deal with this issue?

As above



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.

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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?

We will work with Queenslanders with a disability to ensure the NDIS is working for them and that through the NDIS they can get access to appropriate housing.

The private sector needs to be encouraged to build more fit-for-purpose disabled housing.