



Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

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Andrew Wallace MP  
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Dear Mr Wallace

**Subject: Follow up from the Casino Public Meeting**

I was an attendee at the Casino public meeting held on Tuesday, 17 April 2018 in my capacity as an OSCAR representative and I was fortunate to speak briefly with you afterwards.

Congratulations on a successful forum; Dr Livingston and Mr Sang were very engaging speakers and made very informative presentations. I believe the feeling in the room reflected this.

OSCAR does not have a formal view on a Sunshine Coast casino but I am confident your position on this issue would reflect the feeling of the majority of our member organisations who believe a casino is not consistent with the Sunshine Coast we strive for.

I have two follow up questions, on behalf of OSCAR, that arose from the discussion at the meeting. These do not directly relate to the casino but are important to OSCAR and may provide us with guidance on how we should act in relation to these issues:

**RTI applications**

I note your expectation that documents you have applied for under the RTI Act will be redacted, and that your planned recourse will be to institute legal proceedings.

On what legal grounds will you pursue the matter? I presume that you anticipate commercial in confidence provisions will justify any redactions made, and, as you said, Sunshine Coast Regional Council wholly owns SunCentral (and is in fact the local planning authority). Does a legal challenge imply that this is essentially a public expenditure/public interest matter and under what provisions of the Act would be relied upon if this is the case?

You alluded to the difficulty in accessing information under RTI, and indeed from Council generally. I would like to pose the question as to why there is not also a push to rectify the overuse of closed sessions by our Council, and the provisions under the relevant Act to provide for ease of access to information in a cost effective, timely and transparent fashion for those who do not have access to staff nor the financial capacity to undertake RTI applications such as community groups and not for profit organisations?

As a not for profit representative organisation, OSCAR, and our member groups, are often powerless to access information as the cost is prohibitive, and the prospect of a legal challenge is untenable for the same reason. We realise that these issues are predominately within the jurisdiction of Local and State governments but strongly believe the issue of transparency and access to information concerning community issues needs to be addressed at a Federal level as well or would at least benefit from public lobbying on your part.

**Petitions**

A member of the audience raised the concern that the inevitable outcome of a *change.org* petition will be “ignored” by decision makers, and he referred you to the alternative of tabling a petition in Parliament as a more democratic and effective platform to lobby on this issue.

Is there a reason why this option was not explored in the initial stages of campaigning on this issue?

I appreciate your response in due course in order that I can report back to the OSCAR Executive team and to our broader membership.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn Hyman', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kathryn Hyman  
**Executive Member**