

Mail OSCAR

From: Mail OSCAR <mail@oscar.org.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 August 2018 16:10
To: 'mayor@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au'
Cc: 'mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au'
Subject: Current Planning Scheme amendment round

Dear Mark

On 3 August 2018 OSCAR representatives attended a briefing from SCRC Planning staff in relation to the above amendments. OSCAR members were very appreciative of the briefing, which was initiated by the Council itself, and we have conveyed our thanks to the officers concerned via the CEO. Those who represented OSCAR found the session to be very informative and it will assist OSCAR and its member groups in formulating submissions to Council in relation to the amendments.

The briefing confirmed to those in attendance, however, that these amendments are major in nature and in some instances, once passed, will change the character of parts of the Sunshine Coast into the future. OSCAR members, and the community generally, played a significant role in the development of the Planning Scheme 2014 and you will be well aware of the increasing level of community concern about the volume and pace of amendments passed by Council in its current term.

Given the extensive nature of the proposed amendments OSCAR makes the following recommendation to Council:

1. That Council extends the submission time to 90 business days. The proposed amendments are well outside the community agreed Planning Scheme 2014 and the community should be given sufficient time to respond and at the at the briefing we were not provided with any justification for urgency on this matter. Many community groups only meet once per month and gaining consensus on a submission is impossible within a 30 business day time-frame. Also community members making submissions are doing so in a voluntary capacity, within constraints of work and family commitments and with limited resources. We urge Councillors to bring a motion to Council proposing such an extension of time for the submission process if that is the required mechanism for achieving this outcome.
2. That the Mayor and Councillors undertake meaningful engagement with the Sunshine Coast community in relation to these proposed amendments, with clear explanation and debate about the need for, and implications of, the proposed amendments on the character of the Sunshine Coast. OSCAR urges each Councillor to take an active role in this task and we have sought assurance from the CEO that Councillors will be well-equipped to engage on this issue with their community. It has been brought to our attention for example, that at a recent member association meeting, the Divisional Councillor in attendance at the meeting made NO reference to this round of proposed amendments when providing an update to those in attendance. Engaging with the community on such issues is surely a key role of a Councillor.

OSCAR and its member groups wish to be supportive of Council wherever possible but in order for this to occur the Mayor and Councillors must conduct meaningful engagement with the community. This requires more than sending notices to a number of people in the vicinity of any proposed amendments and advertising on the Council website and in the local media. OSCAR is seeking more than information giving but instead genuine two way engagement. We are confident that much of the concern about the impact of these amendments could be successfully addressed with better consultation with the community. We recognise that there are good reasons why many of these amendments are being proposed to addresses issues facing the Sunshine Coast, particularly relating to accommodating projected population growth, but believe there needs to be a better process for articulating this need and the role of you and your Councillor colleagues is key to this.

We look forward to a positive response to our requests.