

## OSCAR President

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**From:** OSCAR President <president@oscar.org.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 4 October 2018 17:05  
**To:** 'Frank Wilkie'  
**Cc:** 'Brett de Chastel'  
**Subject:** RE: Your advice please Greg

**From:** Frank Wilkie [<mailto:frank.wilkie@noosa.qld.gov.au>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 October 2018 08:21  
**To:** [president@oscar.org.au](mailto:president@oscar.org.au)  
**Subject:** Your advice please Greg

Dear Greg

Hope you are well

Can you suggest what more information needs to be provided by Noosa Council to address OSCAR's inference there is a lack of transparency due to a "paucity of minutes" at Noosa council please (today's SCD)

Forgive me for recapping if you're aware of the current situation regarding our meeting records

The (public) Ordinary Meeting, the only meeting where decisions are ratified as a decision of the local government, records Attendance, Apologies, conflicts of interests, how those conflicts were handled, every motion and amendment, and voting patterns for divisions. This record appears on the website.

The (public) General Committee Meeting, an advisory committee only, records Attendance, Apologies, conflicts of interests, how those conflicts were handled, every motion and amendment, and voting patterns for divisions. This record appears on the website.

The (public) portfolio committee meetings (attended by the mayor and three councillors) an advisory committee only, records attendance, conflicts of interest, how those interests were handled and the recommendations to be forwarded to General Committee and the Ordinary Committee. This record appears in the General or Ordinary Committee Agendas, available on website.

Hoping you can clarify OSCAR's position please Greg regarding what else can reasonably be done. It is disturbing to see NC tarred with the same brush as other councils on this issue.

Yours sincerely

Frank

**Cr Frank Wilkie**  
Deputy Mayor | Noosa Council

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Dear Frank

Very well thanks – although a little sore as I have just completed the 5 day Cooloola Great Walk. This was a good reminder of how wonderful this part of the world is!

While I do not recall using the term “paucity of minutes” when talking to the SCD, my comments relate to the failure of councils to produce minutes of committee meetings.

OSCAR is committed to lobbying the State Government on a range of LG reforms we see necessary to improve transparency in councils. One of our reform desires is that all public meetings of councils be minuted and the minutes published. We believe S 272 (6, 7 and 8) should be removed from the *LG Regulations 2012* so councils cannot seek exemption from preparing and publishing minutes for public meetings – even those meetings you describe as “advisory committee only”. I note that the Noosa Council now publishes notes from General Committee Meetings; these are effectively minutes in our view and we applauded that change at the time. We believe this should be extended to the portfolio committee meetings as well.

I concede this is a firming of the position I put to the Mayor and CEO in April of this year but reflects OSCAR’s current resolve to advocate for necessary reforms as endorsed at our most recent meeting.

We are also lobbying for a requirement that how each councillor votes is recorded in Ordinary or Special Meetings where decisions are actually made – this is the practice in the SCRC (and many other councils) but not currently at Noosa. We believe that ratepayers and community members should be able to see how an individual councillor voted on issues of interest if they so desire – and not just see whether a motion was Carried or Lost. This would require a change to S 272 (2) of the *Regulations* so that it did not require a division before individual votes were recorded. I know the Mayor does not support this on the basis that the Noosa Council operates on a consensus basis and recording individual votes undermines this. Given the councillors were not elected as a team we do not feel this argument is sustainable.

Another reform we are seeking, and this is one Noosa is already investigating OSCAR is pleased to note, is the mandating of video streaming or video/audio recording of public council meetings. We hope that the report from the CEO in 3 months will recommend this and that Noosa councillors will vote to endorse such a recommendation.

OSCAR recognises the existing high level of transparency that Noosa practices and we often use you as an exemplar of good governance at the various peak forums we attend. This is not to say that Noosa cannot do even better; there is nothing wrong with exceeding legislative requirements or at least honouring the spirit of LG legislation that is so clearly articulated in the Local Government Principles at the beginning the *Local Government Act 2009*.

Please feel free to contact me if there is any further clarification you require. I do hope to catch up with you and your colleagues at the General Committee meeting on 15 October.

Best wishes ... Greg

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