

MEDIA RELEASE

*STARTS*

**NO TO SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL - NOT DEMOCRATIC, NOT ON!!**

The Council has scheduled a Special Meeting (Planning Matters) for 1:00 pm this Thursday, 13 April 2017 at the Council Chambers in Nambour. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and vote on MAJOR CHANGES to the Planning Scheme 2014.

These amendments are designed to allow an increase in the height and density of new buildings in Mooloolaba, to make more alterations to the Maroochydore CBD Master Plan and to allow urban development on land the council itself maps as flood-prone on the northern side of the Maroochy River - commonly known as Twin Waters West.

The meeting is being held in the afternoon before Easter and the debate is to be conducted in a CONFIDENTIAL session. This means the community is denied access to council officers' recommendations and the materials on which the councillors will base their decision. Concerns about public disclosure of submitters' names and developers' financial information are easily addressed as this information can be redacted from documents that are made publically available. This reason is NOT a justification for making the whole debate confidential.

If the council can change the Planning Scheme in this manner another bad PRECEDENT is being set. It also makes a mockery of the requirement for the Council to take actions that are consistent with the local government principles that are clearly outlined in the *Local Government Act 2009* and mandate transparent and effective processes, democratic representation, good governance and ethical behaviour.

We do not dispute that the Council is following the letter of the law in conducting these closed sessions but it is falling far short in meeting the spirit of the law by pursuing a process that is clearly not TRANSPARENT.

Representatives from OSCAR and a number of its member associations will attend the meeting to demonstrate to the Council the depth of opposition to the manner in which this important issue is being handled.

The community will be excluded from this important debate and will be forced to wait outside the Council Chamber for an indeterminate period of time while councillors debate these Planning Scheme amendments in SECRET. Only then will the community members be permitted to return to the meeting for the vote WITHOUT knowing what the vote of our councillors is based on.

Community representatives will be available to the media during the period of exclusion from the Council meeting.

*ENDS*

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