



Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

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4 March 2019

Hon Stirling Hinchliffe
Minister for Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs
1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Email: LGRMA@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Dear Minister

Subject: Local Government electoral reform

OSCAR, as the peak body representing around 40 resident and community organisations on the Sunshine Coast, resolved as a result of a motion at our General Meeting held on 28 February 2019, to write to you expressing our support for your attempts to introduce reforms including, but not limited to, expenditure caps and compulsory preferential voting at council elections.

This decision was prompted by a media report on that day in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* that quoted Sunshine Coast Regional Council Mayor Mark Jamieson in his capacity as President of the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) as being critical of “major changes like this being forced on the sector”. Mayor Jamieson went on to say “the State government needed to be more transparent with fundamental changes to the local government electoral system”. [Note: OSCAR members find his reference to transparency as highly ironic given his Council’s record on closed meetings (182 confidential sessions to date in this term of Council – many on major issues that ratepayers have every right to be aware of!).]

Today (4 March 2019) there is further reporting on this issue in the *Courier Mail* where LGAQ CEO Greg Hallam is quoted as saying “the community deserved to know the changes in advance of a Bill being introduced to Parliament”.

In supporting reforms such as these, we would like to point out that the LGAQ does not represent the broader community. Organisation like OSCAR, the South East Queensland Alliance (SEQA), Brisbane Residents United (BRU) and Redlands 2030 are examples of organisations that do represent the broader community and we have been widely consulted on these issues. Tim Dunne, from your Department, has conducted extensive discussions with organisations such as those I have identified and I would be confident that the reforms you are contemplating do largely reflect the dialogue that Tim Dunne initiated and which we found to be an excellent opportunity for genuine community consultation on these matters.

We would urge you to continue with your reforms in Local Government which do reflect the desires of the wider community and will result in the community having greater confidence in this tier of government in Queensland – something that has been put at risk by recent events in a number of councils in the state.

Yours sincerely

Greg Smith
President