



Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

Mail: PO Box 105
Coolum Beach QLD 4573
Mobile: 0417 577 881
Email: mail@oscar.org.au

24 May 2019

Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP
Premier and Minister for Trade
1 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000
Email: thepremier@premiers.qld.gov.au

Dear Premier

Subject: Business case for an integrated urban public transport solution for the Sunshine Coast

OSCAR (Organisation of Sunshine Coast Association of Residents) is the peak body representing more than 40 resident, ratepayer and community organisations on the Sunshine Coast. We are a non-partisan and not-for-profit incorporated association.

We would like to congratulate your Government on its decision to provide \$7.5 million in funding, to be matched by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC), to help develop a detailed business case for the first stage of an integrated urban public transport solution for the Coast.

We acknowledge that this financial support is in addition to other funding commitments made by your Government including its contribution to the Beerburrum to Nambour rail duplication project.

OSCAR is keen to publically indicate our support for this financial contribution, which is an excellent example of the Government's commitment to the Sunshine Coast, to our membership and to the broader community.

We do have two concerns that I would like to draw to your attention however:

- The SCRC seems fixated on light rail as the only solution to the mass transit needs of the Sunshine Coast; this is apparent in on-going public comments by both the Mayor and Councillors and the fact that this project is always referred to as the "light rail project"; this occurred as recently as yesterday's SCRC Ordinary Meeting.

We believe this focus will result in a business plan that fails to adequately address alternative technologies that may provide a more future-proof and cost effective solution to our transport needs. There are many emerging technologies that need to be thoroughly investigated (including, but not limited to, electric buses, autonomous vehicles and "trackless" trams). The business plan should not place all its emphasis on infrastructure solutions that are "end-of-life" technologies that may be extremely expensive rather than properly exploring new and emerging technologies that may prove to be cheaper and less disruptive to implement and maintain.

Ironically, the SCRC's own and much touted **Sunshine Coast International Broadband Network Project** (supported financially by the State Government through the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund) has the potential to deliver the infrastructure to leverage emerging transport technologies such as trackless trams and autonomous vehicles through high speed internet and WiFi connectivity.

- The SCRC has demonstrated a poor record on community engagement when undertaking major projects and developing key policy documents; far too often stakeholder reference groups do not include any representation for the key stakeholders involved – ie the ratepayer/taxpayer (an excellent example of this is the SunCentral Maroochydore Shareholder Representative Group that has oversight of the City Hall project). All too often this community is presented with a fait-accomplis.

Accordingly, we would appreciate feedback on the proposed governance model for this project, and particularly what will be the relationship between the SCRC and the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) under the planning partnership between the Palaszczuk Government and the SCRC.

We would also like an assurance that the community as a whole will have genuine input into the development of the detailed business case for public transport on the Coast and an indication of how your Government will ensure this happens.

OSCAR representatives would be happy to discuss this matter further, and in more detail, with DTMR staff or anyone else that you deem appropriate, as we are very keen to see both a high return on investment for the \$15 million of ratepayer/taxpayer funds that has been set aside for this business plan, and an outcome that has a significant level of broad community ownership and hence support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Smith
President

cc Honourable Mark Bailey, MP, Minister for Transport and Main Roads