



6 February 2020

Bill Hastie  
Manager  
Local Government Policy  
Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs  
Level 12, 1 William Street Brisbane QLD 4000

Email: [lgreforms@dlgrma.qld.gov.au](mailto:lgreforms@dlgrma.qld.gov.au)

Dear Bill

**Subject: *Proposed local government regulatory reforms – informal meetings***

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

We are very supportive of the future amendments under consideration in relation to the regulation of informal meetings contained in the Department's Information Paper of January 2020.

We would like to suggest, however, a number of additional requirements for inclusion in your proposed regulatory reforms relating to:

- Inclusion of additional examples in your list of Examples of informal meetings to cover what are often referred to as Agenda Review or Briefings held prior to a local government meeting (General, Ordinary or Special) and workshops related to policy development; and
- The Conflicts of interest (COI) provision need to explicitly cover the position of political advisors.

We have shown our proposed amendments (in red) on the following page.

OSCAR wishes you and your colleagues at the Department well in your work on these important regulations.

Yours sincerely

Melva Hobson PSM  
President

Email [mail@oscar.org.au](mailto:mail@oscar.org.au) (NB our preferred form of communication)

## Proposed informal meetings regulatory reforms

<p>Definition of informal meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meeting of councillors, regardless of whether other persons may attend—             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) that is organised by decision of the local government, a committee of the local government, the mayor or the chairperson of a committee of the local government; and</li> <li>(b) at which matters that may result in a decision of the local government are discussed; and</li> <li>(c) that is not a local government meeting.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Examples of informal meetings—             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a site visit for a development application under the Planning Act</li> <li>• a workshop to develop the local government’s budget</li> <li>• a briefing session on issues to be discussed at a local government meeting (<i>eg an Agenda Review meeting or Pre General/Ordinary/Special meeting discussion</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Workshops to develop responses to issues and develop and/or modify key Local Government policies.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Requirement for a local government to prepare and adopt a policy about informal meetings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy must provide for:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a notice of each informal meeting to be made publicly available before the meeting is held, stating:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the day, time and location of the meeting; and</li> <li>(ii) whether the meeting is open to the public; and</li> <li>(iii) the purpose of the meeting; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) the circumstances in which a councillor is expected to attend an informal meeting; and</li> <li>(c) monthly reports to be presented at a meeting of the local government stating for each informal meeting held during the previous month:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the name of each councillor who attended the meeting; and</li> <li>(ii) each class of persons (e.g. members of the public, officers) who attended the meeting, other than councillors; and</li> <li>(iii) the matters discussed at the meeting.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Conflicts of interest (COI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A councillor who has a prescribed COI cannot attend an informal meeting for the agenda item which discusses the matter in question. <b><i>A councillor’s political advisor, where the councillor has a prescribed COI, cannot attend an informal meeting for the agenda item which discusses the matter in question.</i></b></li> <li>• A councillor who has a declarable COI in a matter to be addressed in an informal meeting cannot attend the informal meeting for that agenda item unless the local government has previously approved their participation in that matter under the provisions of the legislation. <b><i>A councillor’s political advisor, where the councillor has a declarable COI, cannot attend an informal meeting for the agenda item which discusses the matter in question irrespective of whether the local government has previously approved their participation in that matter under the provisions of the legislation.</i></b></li> </ul>