



Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

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OSCAR questions for 2020 State Election candidates

OSCAR has a tradition of seeking the views of candidates for State elections on Local Government issues that are partially or wholly the responsibility of the State Government (by way of funding or legislative control). Your responses will be published on the OSCAR website for the benefit of our members and the wider community.

We appreciate the fact that you are very busy at this time but we would value receiving your responses on the issues we have identified.

Many questions can be answered with a simple Yes or No response but the opportunity is there for you to expand your response.

While we welcome individual responses from all candidates, those of you who are members of the same political party may submit a collective response if preferred.

Surname:	Dickson	Given name:	Steve
Electorate:	Buderim		
Party affiliation (if any):	Independent		

State Planning issues

1. Will you commit to ensuring there is statutory recognition and protection of the existing regional inter-urban break, between the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay Regional Councils (including Halls Creek), so that it cannot be easily eroded by future State Governments or Councils, thereby ensuring the protection of the national heritage landscape of the Glass House Mountains, the Ramsar protected Pumicestone passage and that the Sunshine Coast retains its distinct character and geographic identity in Southeast Queensland.

Yes, this is vital in protecting the Sunshine Coast's identity.

2. Will you endorse a moratorium on any Planning Scheme amendments within the Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC) within the coastal zone and areas of the Sunshine Coast under threat from storm surge, sea-level rise and coincident flooding until the completion and full implementation of the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CHAS)?

Yes - We should know what the impacts are before allowing development in development prone areas.

3. Will you oppose any declaration of a Priority Development Area (PDA) for an intense residential/mixed-use and mechanical wave-pool development on the Maroochy floodplain at Coolum West?

Yes - The area is major flood risk and the blue heart of the Sunshine Coast. This project is a trogan horse for major urban development. Development will occur, however this is the wrong location.

4. Will you support the Blue Heart project on 5000 ha of the Maroochy floodplain as a critical response to climate change? Will you ensure that funding from the State's Land Restoration Program is continued and is available to landowners within the Maroochy floodplain and in so doing go some way to advancing the Planning Act 2016, Section 3 Purpose – ecological sustainability?

Yes - I will be an advocate and support the Blue Heart project.

5. As a result of changes to the Planning Act 2016 over the last few years, the vast majority of development applications in Queensland are now Code Assessable. The Act requires the approval of a code assessable development application if it complies with all of the Local Planning Scheme's code assessment benchmarks - ie the three measurable components of each applicable Planning Scheme code - Overall Outcomes, the Performance Outcomes, and the Acceptable Outcomes.

However, the Act now gives the assessment manager (usually the local council) subjective discretion to approve development that does not comply with all code benchmarks by imposing approval conditions that they consider overcome non-compliance with some intended code outcomes. As a result, development approvals and conditions are frequently made which conflict in important respects with the intended outcomes of the codes in a Planning Scheme. Furthermore, unlike decisions on impact assessable development applications, there are no formal submission rights for code applications and no third party (public) rights to a merit review of code approvals through the Planning and Environment Court while developers can appeal when an application is refused.

These problems can be rectified by amending the Act and by adding a new section allowing a limited right of third party appeal to the Development Tribunal for an independent review of non-standard development conditions applied to code assessable development approvals that deviate from the intended outcomes of a code. The latter limited right of review will help ensure transparency, integrity, accountability, and professionalism in assessment decision-making without incurring the cost and delays associated with proceedings in the Planning and Environment Court.

Do you agree that there is an urgent need to close these gaps/loopholes in Section 60 (2) of the Planning Act 2016 as soon as possible and if elected, would you advocate for public consultation as soon as possible on amendments which aim to rectify these inequities in the present legislation?

I have always supported public consultation in regards to developments and planning scheme changes. Sunshine Coast resident's should be asked for their views and I support more open and accountable public engagement.

6. Will you commit to:
- advancing the facilitation of the achievement of ecological sustainability (Purpose of the Planning Act 2016) on a local, regional, state and wider level through the principles of ecological sustainability set out in Sections 3 (1), (2) and (3), 4 and 5 (2) and the binding of all persons and entities set out in Section 5 (1) and Section 7 of the Planning Act 2016, which underpin Queensland's system of land use planning, development assessment and related matters?

and

- b. maintaining these ecological sustainability principles in the Act and applying those at all times in relation to all planning processes, development applications, and associated judicial proceedings?

Yes.

7. As the Planning Act 2016 includes forms of planning and development that fall within the scope of "development" in the Economic Development Act, if elected, in the interest of consistency across state legislation, will you commit to amending the Economic Development Act to ensure that the ecological sustainability principles in Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Planning Act are incorporated fully into the Economic Development Act 2012 and applied as intended by the Planning Act?

Yes.

8. If elected, will you support the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's Biosphere nomination?

Yes.

9. In the next iteration of the Southeast Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP) which is likely to occur in the next term of State government, will you agree to:

- a. have no further expansion of the urban footprint
- b. apply the concept of "carrying capacity of areas" across the South East
- c. reverse the current situation in which urban residential developments can be approved on the basis that it constitutes Overriding Need in the Public Interest (ONPI)?

I would like to see coastal development like that intended for Nicklin Way to be relocated to the heavy rail line West of the Bruce Hwy.

10. During the past two years, there have been reports about a proposal for a private developer to build a high rise residential building on the site of the State Government facilities at the end of the Mooloolaba Spit incorporating the Water Police, Pilots and Fisheries. Also, the Mooloolaba Marina members and berth owners recently voted to reject a persistent developer's proposal for 50% of their land be used to build a 5 story high rise hotel development.

What are your views on potential high rise developments at the eastern end of Parkyn Parade on the Spit at Mooloolaba?

I don't support development on this site. It should remain as public land and not sold to a developer.

Transport infrastructure

11. If you were elected as a member of the next State government, which if any, of the following major transport priorities that the SCRC has identified in its Integrated Transport Strategy 2019 would you support as the key priority or what would you see as the best solution for the Sunshine Coast's mass transit needs?
- a. North Coast Connect (including rail upgrades between Brisbane and Nambour and a new rail line from Beerwah to Maroochydore)
 - b. Light rail or bus-based mass transit from Maroochydore to Kawana in Stage 1 and eventual extension to the Sunshine Coast Airport to the north and Caloundra to the south
 - c. Other options.

A - I believe the North Coast Connect project is vital for our region.

12. Will you ensure that any consideration of the Mass Transit Detailed Business Case undertaken by TMR includes comprehensive local community engagement and that the existing commitment from the State Government for a contribution of \$7.5 million to the business case is honoured?

Yes, we must engage the Sunshine Coast community as this will significantly change the look and feel of our region. Maybe the project should be stopped.

13. Do you agree that heritage, natural environment and cultural values must be acknowledged, respected and taken account of in any major new infrastructure projects to protect the character of our villages and towns and unique fauna, for example, fauna friendly underpasses/overpasses?

Yes - I would like to support our existing flora and fauna values and believe all levels of Government should address this through additional funding when delivering projects. It should not be an afterthought.

Local and State Government reform

14. Significant Local Government Reform has been undertaken during the current term of parliament and following the Belcarra report and CCC recommendations. Will you commit to:

- a. maintaining and NOT dismantling those reforms?
- b. continuing the reform program into the next term of Parliament including, but not limited to, expenditure caps for future Local Government (LG) elections?

Yes - I support the outcomes of the Belcarra report and the need to apply equal measures between State Government and Councils.

15. Do you support greater openness and transparency in Local Government, and will you seek to ensure that such requirements are incorporated into the Local Government Act and its associated regulations?

Yes - This should also apply to the State Government and its members.

16. In the interests of transparency, good governance and personal responsibility by politicians will you support:

- a. consistency across levels of government in the rules that apply to personal responsibilities and accountability of politicians?
- b. closing loopholes in legislation and ensure that outcomes from the Fitzgerald Inquiry are maintained, and ban under legislation, any political party charging for access to ministers, shadow ministers and other members of Parliament to ensure all members of the community have equal access to our elected representatives.

Yes.

17. In the interests of consistency will you support the state funding of Local Government elections under a similar model to that of State elections, and the introduction of Full Preferential Voting (FPV)?

Yes.

18. Will you support the existing ban on developer donations at future State and Local government elections?

Yes. This should also apply to all levels of Government.

19. Will you advocate for fee relief for Not For Profit (NFP) groups making Right to Information (RTI) applications without NFPs needing to demonstrate financial hardship?

Yes

20. Are there any further governance reforms to local and State government in Queensland that you would like to see introduced?

Councillors should have the same rules applied to them as State Government MP's.

Other

21. Unity Water has initiated the development of a Total Water Cycle Management Strategy which will consider options for future water supply. Which of these options do you prefer for future water supply for the Sunshine Coast?

- a. more dams
- b. raising dam walls
- c. demand management
- d. desalination
- e. fit for purpose recycled water including potable reuse
- f. tanks
- g. stormwater harvesting
- h. other (please list)

More Dams, Raising Dam Walls, Stormwater Harvesting and Home water tanks. I also support the building of the "Hybrid of the Bradfield Scheme".

22. Will you commit to opposing the Commonwealth Government's proposed devolution to the states and territories of Commonwealth environmental impact assessment and other powers for the protection of matters of National Environmental Significance under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act?

If elected, will you also oppose any move by the incoming Queensland Government to accept the responsibilities for managing and protecting our nationally significant biodiversity and environmental values that the present Commonwealth Government is proposing to abrogate?

These existing Federal Government matters in relation to legislation and powers should remain intact and also shared between all tiers of Government. No one level of government should be exempt.

23. If elected, will you advocate for the Commonwealth to meet its national responsibilities by providing sufficient funding to end the backlog in aged and disabled packages over the next four years to enable aged and disabled persons to live independently in their own homes for as long as they wish?

Yes. Self choice and personal circumstances should be assessed on their individual needs.

24. If elected, will you commit to increasing significantly State financial allocations to social housing, community housing and boarding house style accommodation over the next four years so that the unmet needs for affordable rental housing and crisis, emergency, transitional and disabled housing can be progressively met in Queensland?

If so, by what amount?

Yes, however we should hear from those in need to tell us what they require. I believe the need for those seeking housing has not been addressed by any party in a meaningful way on the Sunshine Coast.

25. Do you currently live in the electorate you are contesting in this election? If not, are you prepared to relocate to the electorate if you are successful?

I live on Tyler Road in Mons which is on the boundary line for the seat of Buderim. I am very close to all areas in the seat Buderim and have lived on the Sunshine Coast for 27 years.