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20 October 2021

Ms Melva Hobson PSM  
President OSCAR  
PO Box 105  
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By email: [mail@oscar.org.au](mailto:mail@oscar.org.au)

Dear Melva

I refer to your letter of 12 October 2021 enquiring about Council's reporting of the community engagement outcomes for the Sunshine Coast Mass Transit Options Analysis.

Thank you for acknowledging the time made available following the release of the finalised Options Analysis report and the form in which the finalised report has been presented.

The answers to your questions are provided below.

**Question 1:**

*Why the submissions from 30 organisations (Appendix 1) were deemed to be "outside of these engagement activities" and appear only to be reflected in the revised OA in the form of summary dot points (pp 36-39) which show no evidence of support for light rail? Why were these submissions not published in full? Was it stated in the community engagement process that only those responses to the official engagement process would be considered in detail?*

**Answer:**

The submissions summarised in Appendix 1 of the Engagement Report were outside of the engagement activities described in the body of the report. These submissions were neither requested nor invited by Council but were nonetheless welcomed by Council, which complied the summaries presented in Appendix 1 based on a thorough analysis of each submission.

Because these submissions were unsolicited, the organisations and individuals involved the preparing the submissions would not have expected their submission to be made public. It would therefore be inappropriate for Council to publish these submissions. This is consistent with the limits to disclosure contained in the Information Privacy Principles (Schedule 3) of the *Information Privacy Act 2009*:

*“An agency having control of a document containing an individual’s personal information must not disclose the personal information to an entity, other than the individual the subject of the personal information unless:*

- *The individual is reasonably likely to have been aware or to have been made aware, under IPP 2 (data collection) or under a policy or other arrangement in operation before the commencement of the IP schedule that it is the agency’s usual practice to disclose that type of personal information to the relevant entity; or*
- *The individual has expressly or implied agreed to the disclosure.”*

**Question 2:**

*Why is the MTAG submission the only one of the organisational submissions that has been included in the OA (Appendix 5) and why were its survey responses not included in the community consultation outcomes?*

**Answer:**

As you observe in Question 5 below, Appendix 5 also contains information about the ePetitions lodged by Beach Matters with the Legislative Assembly on 15 June 2021, so MTAG is not the only group to be mentioned in Appendix 5 of the Options Analysis Engagement Report.

Appendix 5 reports on community consultation activities that were conducted separately by groups; activities that either came to or were drawn to Council’s attention. MTAG’s submission, which included MTAG’s analysis of the feedback forms it received, is included in its entirety in that appendix.

The MTAG feedback forms were reviewed, and the themes referenced in the engagement reporting. When compared with the comments provided in response to the questions asked in the Council’s surveys, it was apparent that many of the written comments in the MTAG feedback forms were very similar and in some cases identical, suggesting that much of the feedback was following a proforma, the content of which was well known to Council and the engagement consultants.

Although it was not possible to determine how many people completed both Council’s survey and MTAG’s feedback form, it appears that many completed both. An audit of the completed MTAG forms revealed duplicates.

The analysis of MTAG’s submission is included in Appendix 1 of the Engagement Report, along with the other submissions provided outside the formal engagement process.

**Question 3:**

*Why do the 1015 submissions (with names, addresses and signature of submitters) presented to Council by MTAG appear not to have been considered despite assurances from Council staff, verbally and in writing (from James Coutts), that all submissions, irrespective of their format, would be considered in the community consultation evaluation? Note: These are not pro-forma submissions and even if they were they should not be discounted.*

**Answer:**

A number of MTAG's feedback forms did not contain information about the person providing the feedback – addresses were not included on some forms or only an email contact was given. Notwithstanding this, as stated in answer to Question 2 above, the MTAG feedback forms were reviewed, and the themes referenced in the engagement reporting.

**Question 4:**

*Were there other submissions about which the community is not aware, that the Council has not accounted for/reported on?*

**Answer:**

Council has reported on all the submissions from organisations received outside of the formal engagement process.

Other means of providing feedback that were outside the engagement process, such as the sending of letters and emails by individuals, although again not requested or invited by Council, were welcomed, and reviewed by Council. The matters raised in these letters and emails were found to be consistent with the matters raised in the formal engagement activities.

**Question 5:**

*Why was only 1 of the Beach Matters ePetitions referred to in the OA (Appendix 5)? There were 3 Beach Matters petitions opposing light rail (as referenced in the Minister's response to these) with 1354, 1958 and 547 signatories respectively (3859 total opposing light rail).*

**Answer:**

This was an oversight and will be corrected in the finalised version of the Options Analysis to be provided by Council's Chief Executive Officer to the State and Commonwealth Governments, should Council endorse the Options Analysis.

**Question 6:**

*Council's own Community Engagement Policy Statement (page 1) states "Genuine, inclusive, fit-for-purpose and transparent community engagement" In the true spirit of*

*Community Engagement and noting particularly the Guiding Principles of Inclusivity and Transparency, surely all contributions would be welcome in whatever format people chose and should be reported on at least and included at most.*

- *Was the community advised that ONLY those official engagement activities would be considered?*
- *Which level on the International Association for Public Participation Framework and Spectrum was the Mass Transit engagement process based?*

**Answer:**

All contributions to the engagement process were welcomed in whatever format people preferred and were subsequently reviewed by Council.

In answer to the dot-pointed questions:

- The community was not advised that only the official engagement activities would be welcomed. Other means of providing feedback that were outside the engagement activities, such as sending letters and emails, although not requested or invited by Council, were welcomed, and reviewed by Council. The matters raised in these letters and emails were found to be consistent with the matters raised in the formal engagement activities.
- The Mass Transit engagement process incorporated aspects of the first three levels in IAP2's spectrum – "Inform", "Consult" and "Involve". At the "Involve" level (consistent with IAP2's description of the features of that level), Council has worked with the community to ensure that its concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed (i.e. in the updated Options Analysis) and provided feedback on how public input influenced the decision (as set down in the Public Interest Statement Chapter of the Options Analysis (Chapter 15)). The Enquiry-by-Design Workshop and Intergenerational Forum exhibited aspects of the "Collaborate" level of the IAP2 Spectrum in that these activities looked to the community for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporated that advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible (again consistent with IAP2's description of the features of that level).

**Question 7:**

*Why are the requirements of Infrastructure Australia dictating the timing and quality of the OA? What is the problem if a post 31 December 2021 IA submission would need to comply with the requirements of IA's new business case framework, particularly if these are more rigorous and therefore more likely to lead to a robust evaluation of the costs and benefits of the MT project relative to IA assessment criteria? Is a rigorous assessment not in the best interests of Council and ratepayers given our responsibility for meeting some proportion of the project costs should it proceed?*

**Answer:**

The Options Analysis was produced as soon as practicable following the analysis and reporting of the community engagement process and on the basis of the feedback received during the process.

The advice in the Council report about the impending refresh of Infrastructure Australia's Assessment Framework therefore has nothing to do with the timing of Council's consideration of the Options Analysis. It simply draws attention to the potential for the refreshed the framework to necessitate rework if the Options Analysis is provided to Infrastructure Australia after the end of 2021. Infrastructure Australia has indicated that its refreshed framework will include a range of changes:

- A simpler, four-stage process that aligns with state and territory frameworks;
- A clear and transparent definition of what makes a proposal nationally significant;
- Removing duplication. After Stage 1, there are no templates to complete, only detailed checklists to assist with submissions;
- Standardising the terminology in the Priority List;
- Improved guidance on options analysis, including the use of multi-criteria analysis, rapid and detailed cost-benefit analysis;
- Encouraging wider application of post completion reviews;
- Recommending, but not requiring, that a business case includes at least two options in addition to the base case;
- Identifying in the Priority List which stage each proposal has reached, in line with the Assessment Framework stages.

(See <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/listing/newsletter/launch-infrastructure-australias-refreshed-assessment-framework>)

At this time, the exact nature and extent of the effect these changes would potentially have on the structure and content of the Options Analysis is not known.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the Sunshine Coast Mass Transit project.

If you have any further questions, James Coutts, Program Director, Urban Growth, would be pleased to assist and can be contacted on (07) 5420 8095 or at [james.coutts@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:james.coutts@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Emma Thomas**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**