



16 May 2022

Via Email: review@coaldrakereview.qld.gov.au

Dear Professor Coaldrake

Re: Interim report - Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland Sector

The Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents (OSCAR) congratulates you on the interim report of *Review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector*. It is a document that is clear to read and understand. In fact from the perspective of a former Queensland public servant this review is perhaps one of the most concise and common sense documents I have read relating to the public service.

There a number of specific areas on which we make comment as follows:

General comment - The relationship between government and the community.

Despite the fact that this review relates to State Government, many of the issues raised also relate to Local Government. Concepts such as agencies:

- swarming collective efforts with those of the local community (p3)
- not suppressing local initiatives (p3)
- working together to craft local solutions (p3)
- partnership with the community (p8)

We welcome and support these concepts.

Community expectations of accountability and integrity of government

The review states that (p3) *the community nowadays demands heightened performance and accountability and requires safeguards on the behaviours of government and the use of taxpayer dollars*. OSCAR would suggest that “*transparency*” should be included with accountability and integrity at all levels of government.

Clarifying definitions

These definitions are clear, plain English and easy to understand by any politician, public servant, and community member and again within all jurisdictions. There is no “wriggle” room or “spin” required. OSCAR recommends that all Government legislation should include definitions expressed in plain English.

The intersection of culture and integrity

OSCAR endorses the clear description and analysis of how an integrity system applies to all levels of government. We also give unqualified support to the statement – *integrity is not an adornment to*

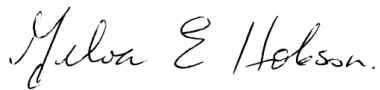
the system but essential to it and should be seen as such by the public, even if sometimes discounted in its value by the actions of some players (p6).

Specific topics from the interim Report that are important to our members include:

1. influence of lobbyists – terms such as commercial-in confidence should be removed from the lobbyists register and all topics being discussed should be listed on the register. The only topics that should be unidentified are those relating to domestic & family violence and criminal matters.
2. erosion of functions designed to hold government to account, such as the Auditor General, Ombudsman, Information Commissioner and Office of the Independent Assessor. These functions are the key and often only ones available to the community in seeking information, review of processes and actions within LG and should not be diminished but strengthened. Their functions are “independent” of organisations who wish to influence government such as the Local Government Association of Queensland.
3. the increased use of outside consultants and the subsequent loss of capability in the public service decreases the capacity of public servants to really understand and appreciate the opportunities and challenges facing the community and government from an experiential perspective. The same approach, that only paid, external consultants are of value is also spreading across areas of community activity.

Again on behalf of OSCAR and the communities it serves we thank you for the interim report and hope you will consider our suggestions and comments in formulating your final report.

Yours sincerely



Melva Hobson PSM
President, OSCAR