

# OSCAR issues for the Local Government election

## OSCAR vision and mission (extract)

OSCAR remains committed to the following planning objectives:

*A culture in which planning schemes are subject to amendment only in the public interest after a rigorous process of public consultation and never to expedite the approval of a development application;*

*Retention of the existing character of towns and villages, with future urban development predominantly low-rise and supported by environmentally responsible transport options;*

## What OSCAR would like to see from the post-election Council ...

### New Planning Scheme

- 1 A commitment to a **thorough** review of the proposed draft of the new PS, including the assumptions underlying it and the infrastructure on which the PS is relying and how SCRC has incorporated the information from Table 8 of the Preliminary Non-Statutory Consultation Program Final Consultation Report, dated March 2022 to Council.

The Report (attached) in preparation for drafting the new PS. indicates Planning Scheme directions and outcomes supported by the Coast community (Figure 8). Will you ensure that these community expectations are effectively incorporated in the proposed Draft of the new PS?

- 2 We wish to see honest answers to the proposed rate of population growth being accommodated on the SC and the impact of the rate of population growth in the region.
- 3 Given the focus on increased densification via higher buildings and/or “gentle density” as per the SEQRP2023 Update, careful guidelines are issued and not just seen as accepted development. We also wish to see SCRC undertake a pilot project for higher-density living that demonstrates the best in planning outcomes as per the Environment and Liveability Strategy Policy.
- 4 Consultation time for the new Planning scheme should be longer than the statutory timeframes (currently a minimum of 40 business days) to allow time for the community to understand and make a response.
- 5 Halls Creek should not be recommended for future residential development and should remain as part of the Inter-Urban Break as per the long-held view of SCRC and supported by OSCAR.
- 6 The use of “Overriding need in the public interest” (ONIP) is only applied where there is a clear demonstration of the need. It is not good enough to say “there is a housing crisis so we need to build more houses” particularly where there are longer-term implications of such a decision – eg flood and/or erosion-prone areas.
- 7 There are concerns that approval of a non-conforming DA eg An increase in building height, may create a precedent for increases in building heights for that area.
- 8 Greater enforcement is needed where a developer or applicant constructs (or private certifier signs off) other than what has been approved, particularly concerning the height and density of development.
- 9 The vast majority of Material Change of Use development applications are Code Assessable under the current Council Planning Scheme and are therefore almost always decided by staff rather than by Councillors. Code Assessable development applications do not give the community the formal public submission and Court appeal rights that exist for Impact Assessable applications. To rectify this situation, will you ensure that when an application does not comply with the codes, it then becomes impact assessable? We believe the new PS needs to have more Impact Assessment and less Code

Assessment for applications with major impacts on the community and environment, and more decisions by Councillors and less delegated decision-making by staff on such applications.

- 10 Most important, is how the planners do the drafting of the Tables of Development Assessment and use the Overlays and Code requirements as triggers for allocating development proposal types to Impact versus Code assessments.
- 11 Existing PS - A commitment to applying the PS provisions regarding density, site cover, height and parking requirements must comply with the Acceptable Outcomes in the PS.

### **Transport Infrastructure**

- 1 Given that the Australian Government has withdrawn financial support for most of the 5 major transport projects on the SC with reduced Federal contributions contribution to projects approved, and the strong nexus between land use planning and transport infrastructure all the current projects should be put in a "melting pot" to identify the most effective and affordable projects. There must be accurate budgeting with realistic cost increases and contingency funding included. Ratepayers should not be subsidising major projects through an increase in the transport levy.
- 2 Landuse planning/infrastructure nexus – until the infrastructure funding for any of the 5 major infrastructure projects is negotiated, budgeted and timeframes determined no residential densification reliant on any of the projects goes ahead. The landscape has changed since the 2014 PS was developed, the funding arrangements for major projects have unravelled and there is no guarantee of future funding.
- 3 Active transport must be a priority in any transport infrastructure project.
- 4 Accessible transport must be a priority in any transport infrastructure or urban development project.
- 5 There should be an immediate transparent planning study as to the existing people movements across the LGA. Only then can a realistic system of transport be planned.
- 6 There are opportunities for interim measures to be applied and monitored for example with public transport - express buses, on-demand buses, bus clearways and priority bus movement at traffic signals. These may provide both short-, medium-, and long-term solutions to transport issues.
- 7 Biodiversity considerations in transport projects must be considered and accommodated wherever possible – wildlife under and overpasses.

### **Governance issues**

- 1 Leadership and Governance Local government policies, plans and actions will be consistent with achieving social, economic and environmental sustainability.
- 2 Local government decision-making will be responsible, informed, ethical, and accountable.
- 3 Governance will become open and transparent, and residents will have reasonable access to reports and documents.  
As Councillor/Mayor you will regularly meet to vote on various matters. Some of these votes may be passed by a majority decision, yet there exist aspects that indicate some or all of the following: improper due process, breaches around what might be deemed 'reasonable action' according to a duty of care, statutory instruments, local government legislative provisions, by-laws, policies, procedures and responsibilities. What action would you take?
- 4 Community consultation will become routine, and results respected and acted upon. The public interest will prevail over vested interests.
- 5 Transparent and collective stakeholder briefings and engagement are required. Council sometimes consults only with one interest group rather than all groups, and it fails to advise the community that this has happened eg talking only to a Chamber of Commerce. Council also sometimes consults with

different interest groups separately rather than collectively and what occurs in engagement with one interest group is not necessarily communicated to other groups or the wider community.

- 6 Commitment to forensic scrutiny of projects and expenditure directions and the budget overall
- 7 Regular opportunity for all council staff to be engaged and actively participate in providing feedback and solutions - particularly the ground and in-field staff who have great insight into the outcome of management plans. Monthly anonymous survey for example until staff feel comfortable about having their say in person which they don't currently.
- 8 Should the entire current rating system be reviewed to ensure that it is equitable and fit for purpose?

## **Climate Change**

- 1 Climate Change Emergency Declaration
  - a. endorse Declaration made by the current Council, but also
  - b. review the scope, effectiveness transparency and accountability of the current Corporate performance mechanisms to give effect to the Declaration, and
  - c. commence advocacy and leadership concerning ways the community can contribute to action to address Climate Change issues.
- 2 Update the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy (CHAS) as new Climate Change information and IPCC reports become available and incorporate Updates in the Planning Scheme as soon as possible after the release of new reports.
- 3 Pursue a broader range of Climate Change mitigation, adaptation and resilience strategies, policies and programs, including advocating and going above and beyond the current minimalistic expectations of the State and Federal Governments where necessary.
- 4 Council action to work with the community to make the Sunshine Coast region as a whole Zero Net Emissions by 2041 or earlier if possible.

## **General issues**

- 1 The community would like to see SCRC work harder to lobby the State Government eg. Mayor and Councillors and where appropriate with staff only, on council-determined issues/policies.
- 2 A register of all meetings involving councillors and/or officers is established similar to the lobbying register.
- 3 The community is keen to work with the Council when advocating to the State and Federal governments.