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Recognising and upholding excellence in local government

13 February 2026

To: Dr David Moore

Manager-Environment and Sustainability Policy

Sunshine Coast Regional Council

Email: david.moore@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

Dear David

RE: OSCAR SUPPORT FOR SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL DARK SKY RESERVE APPLICATION

The Sunshine Coast Association of Residents Inc. (OSCAR) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit peak body representing resident and community organisations across the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Local Government Areas in South East Queensland.

OSCAR currently comprises more than 36 member groups spanning from Pumicestone Passage to Noosa and from the Coast to the Hinterland and Ranges. Collectively, these organisations represent several thousand engaged, community-minded residents who are deeply committed to protecting the environmental, cultural and social values of our region.

OSCAR's overarching Vision states:

"The residents of this region enjoy being part of a connected and engaged community living in an area of outstanding natural beauty. They recognise that they are custodians of the unique and abundant biodiversity, beaches and green spaces of the region."

OSCAR holds that "dark skies" belong alongside biodiversity, beaches and green spaces as defining environmental assets of the Sunshine Coast. Protection of our night skies is a natural and essential extension of our long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship. OSCAR hopes that we will be able to add to our vision "*beaches, **dark skies** and green spaces*".

Therefore, OSCAR strongly endorses of Sunshine Coast Regional Council's (Council) application to the International Dark Sky Association for declaration of a Dark Sky Reserve in the hinterland under the International Dark Sky Places Program.

The proposed 873 km² reserve, encompassing the Mary River catchment and adjoining State-protected areas within the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area — including but not limited to Maleny, Mapleton, Montville, Witta, Flaxton, Kenilworth and Conondale — represents a visionary and strategically important initiative. It will safeguard a significant natural asset for current and future generations while reinforcing the region's environmental leadership.

As we are aware, protection of dark skies delivers measurable environmental benefits, including support for nocturnal wildlife, biodiversity conservation, reduced energy consumption and mitigation of light pollution impacts. It also strengthens community wellbeing, educational opportunities, eco-tourism potential and regional identity.

At OSCAR's General Meeting of 24 July 2025, members formally resolved:

Motion: That OSCAR issue a letter of support for the Sunshine Coast Regional Council Dark Sky Reserve Project application to the International Dark Sky Association.

This motion reflects clear and united backing from our extensive membership base.

OSCAR commends Council for the thorough, evidence-based and community-centred approach undertaken since endorsement of the concept in the Refreshed Environment and Liveability Strategy (ELS) in late 2023. Within a relatively short timeframe, Council has:

- researched the topic;
- established the requirements for such protection;
- conducted two rounds of extensive community consultation conducted;
- published reports on those consultations; and
- completed the application ready for submission within two and half years of the refreshed ELS, with Council approving the related policy document.

Activities that were part of the extensive consultation included:

- An online survey;
- Community drop-in sessions at local libraries;
- A fully booked stargazing event;
- Community information sessions;
- Presentations at exhibitions and events;
- Direct written submissions;
- Over 5,800 letters and emails to property owners within the proposed reserve area.

The amazing photos of the night sky in the hinterland taken by Dr Ken Wishaw and other sky gazers on the "Have your Say" page, the photos presented throughout the commentary, the Information and Fact sheets, the activities and presentations for this community engagement, plus 95% support of the 1200 survey respondents say it all – our dark skies need to be protected!

Given the Sunshine Coast's status as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and its globally recognised natural values, pursuit of Dark Sky Reserve designation is not merely appropriate — it is both logical and aligned with the region's strategic environmental commitments. This initiative is an example of Local Government leadership in sustainable planning and environmental custodianship.

OSCAR strongly supports Council's application and respectfully urges the International Dark Sky Association to recognise the Sunshine Coast Hinterland as a Dark Sky Reserve.

OSCAR commends Council for its process for undertaking activities required to support this application and we wish them well in making its presentation to the International Dark Sky Association.

Yours sincerely



Melva Hobson PSM
President OSCAR

Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents