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To: [EGC](#)
Subject: Save Our Broadwater Submission to Local Government
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Save Our Broadwater Submission to Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018

Save Our Broadwater considers the first recommendation of the Operation Belcarra Report offers the most significant way risk in relation to the election of councillors may be minimised.

This recommendation suggests that a Parliamentary Committee review the introduction of expenditure caps on campaigns.

Much has been revealed about the amounts of money candidates in the last Gold Coast council election spent on their campaigns. [REDACTED] has declared that he spent \$180,000 of his own money on his campaign. Other successful councillors spent in excess of \$30,000 on campaigns.

It is very obvious that modern political campaigning requires more and more campaign funds for success to be achieved at the ballot box.

One example we have noted is the removal of the requirement to limit corflute numbers to 50, has resulted in hundreds of corflutes bearing candidates photos being displayed in public spaces on the Gold Coast. The costs to a campaign of this type of expenditure must be but one of the factors that contribute to the growing financial costs of campaigning. We are happy to offer other examples to the Committee.

The Parliament may through the legislation before it decide to ban property developers from donating to campaigns and guide councillors in identifying conflicts of interest and how they should be managed, but we contend that unless we can create a more level playing field by putting limits on campaign expenditure, then the essential purpose of this act which is to minimise corruption in relation to council elections will have fallen short.

Australians are proud of the fact that people from all walks of life are entitled and in fact do get elected to parliament and council. It is one of the hallmarks of our democracy. Unless we address the trend that requires candidates to raise and spend more on campaigns, then only the wealthy like the Gold Coast [REDACTED] who can self fund his campaign will get elected and we will see people's attitudes to their elected representatives and their participation in the political process further eroded.

The amalgamation of councils in Queensland over the last 20 years has created some very large councils and the Gold Coast is a useful example as it is Australia's sixth largest city and has a population of over half a million people and it is growing rapidly. The political parties are not ostensibly involved in the Gold Coast Council elections. We ask the committee members to consider how an individual is going to raise the hundreds of thousands of dollars it requires to run a mayoral campaign now and into the future? One of the consequences of creating super councils like the Gold Coast is we have made the task of running election campaigns bigger and more costly. This can only be halted by introducing caps on campaign expenditure.

The legislation before the committee bans property developers from contributing to election campaigns but it does not ban property developers from getting elected to council or indeed continuing to act as property developers while acting as councillors. Using the Gold Coast as an example, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are property developers and they jointly funded [REDACTED] campaign for election. [REDACTED] was his campaign manager. How is the legislation going to address this situation? [REDACTED] of the Gold Coast broke Queensland's electoral laws at the last election by not operating a separate campaign account but no penalty has been awarded against him.

People cannot be blamed for being extremely cynical about the penalties being suggested in this legislation ever being enforced. The Operation Belcarra investigation revealed a number of breaches of the Electoral Act and interested Gold Coast residents observe their Council regularly breaching the Local Government Act with no repercussions. Our organisation commends the legislation's provisions regarding conflicts of interest and how they should be managed but asks the Committee to give some attention to examination of the efficacy of enforcing the current provisions and these new requirements.

Submitted by Judy Spence Vice President Save Our Broadwater

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Sent from my iPad