



[REDACTED]

22 March 2018.

Committee Secretary,  
Economics and Governance Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL  
[IMPLEMENTING STAGE 1 OF BELCARRA]  
& OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

Thank you for the opportunity to make our submission on the proposed legislative changes.

Queensland Local Government Reform Alliance is the peak representative body for groups across Queensland with interests in Local Councils and the need

for them to properly represent the people within their respective communities.

We are a non political organisation, and as such support any party with good policy that enhances the voice of the people and reflects the consensus of the majority.

While QLGRA, supports in principle, the banning of developer donations to Mayors and Councillor re-election campaigns we are concerned that this legislation is covering only the very small tip of a massive bed of potential corruption.

The banning of third party "Trust" funds is also supported by QLGRA.

However as some of these trust funds were allegedly set up under the instruction, or guidance of, the [REDACTED] for LGAQ, [REDACTED] (Refer evidence given at Operation Belcarra public hearings by [REDACTED] Moreton Bay Regional Council) we believe this will be circumvented without difficulty and should be more comprehensive than the proposed changes.

Developers have for many years held influence over Mayors and Councillors to an extent that sees councils not acting in accord with the Local Government Act's five basic principles.

There are other entities who also donate to re-election campaigns that have not been included and are not developers, these entities derive benefit from such donations but as yet have not been addressed by either government or the CCC. (We understand official complaints of the Conflict of Interest by Mayors and Councillors have been presented to the CCC but with no action taken.

The major point of concern for these "band aid" legislative changes ( Refer article Courier Mail ) do not include major (non developer) corporations from donating to campaigns as outlined in the above paragraph.

The wording of a developer being one who "regularly" makes development applications is loose and needs definition. What constitutes "regular" applications? Is one application per year, over several years considered "regular applications"?

On the issues of Conflict of Interest we propose that any Mayor or Councillor who has a real, or perceived Conflict of Interest, should leave the meeting and be unable to vote on the proposal before council.

This should also be the case during Council's pre meeting meetings where minutes are not kept and Conflict of Interests are not required to be declared.

As long as councils are permitted to hold meetings "in secret" it is our contention corruption will continue to thrive and prosper behind these closed doors.

There are many more issues that time does not permit us to address, however a full review of the Local Government Act that will effectively force councils to adhere to the five core principles is of paramount importance.

The second being a complete overhaul of the Electoral Act that will see recalcitrant Mayors and Councillors brought before the courts and NOT allowed to go unpunished as the CCC has recently done for those against whom they have damning evidence.

Successive governments since the forced amalgamations in 2008 have demonstrated and unwillingness to truly address corruption in councils and throughout the state, the Palszczuk government has proven to be no exception to this approach.

Much talk with no real action to address the problem.

Sincerely

Colin Hewett

President

Queensland Local Government Alliance Inc.

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