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24 April 2015

Mr Jim Pearce MP
Chair - Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resource Committee
C/o Parliament House
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Dear Sir

SUBMISSION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

I refer to your letter dated 10 April 2015 inviting submissions to the Local Government and other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Council's submission concerns the proposed amendments contained in the bill that seeks to change the arrangements for conducting local government elections. Council at its meeting of 21 April 2015 endorsed this submission being made.

Under the current provisions of the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*, all Council Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) are the default returning officer for Council elections.

Historically, Council elections have been managed or run with the CEO as Returning Officer with support from Council staff. In the case of Logan, we have done this successfully for many years and have a positive reputation within our community for running cost-effective, professional elections.

The previous Labor Government changed this long standing arrangement to require that local elections must be run by the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ). The 2008 and 2012 council elections were conducted by the ECQ with Council receiving mixed reviews from candidates and the voting public. This legislation was then subsequently changed by the previous Liberal National Party Government and is reflected in the current legislation with the Council's CEO as default returning officer. This was in accordance with the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) policy position and therefore represents the majority view of Queensland Councils.

We believe that giving Councils the choice as to who runs their elections is the right call and in our case, we know that Council could run the elections for significantly less than what the ECQ would charge. We estimate we could save in excess of \$400,000 by running our own election and these savings could then go directly back into either keeping our rates low or providing additional services for our community.

A local council's CEO and staff are also at an advantage as they have an intimate knowledge of their local community and this on the ground knowledge and experience enhances the election experience for all concerned.

For these reasons we request that, the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011* should remain unchanged so that the Council's CEO is the default returning officer.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to your committee and if you need further information concerning Council's submission please contact me on (07) 3412 5212 or simonbenham@logan.qld.gov.au.

Yours faithfully

Simon Benham
Governance Manager
(on behalf of Chris Rose, Chief Executive Officer)