



25 October 2017

Acting Committee Secretary  
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee  
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Dear Committee

### **Local Government Electoral (Implementing Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017**

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission on the Local Government Electoral (Implementing Belcarra) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017 (the Bill).

The Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland (the Institute) welcomes the release of the Crime and Corruption Commission report into complaints about the conduct of some candidates contesting the last local government election. It is the Institute's view that all recommendations should receive thorough consideration and investigation.

While the Institute supports increased steps to advance transparency and accountable decision making in government, the Institute has significant concerns with the approach taken. The property development industry in Queensland employs one in ten Queensland workers and many more indirectly. For every \$1 million in turnover generated by Queensland's development industry, three direct full-time equivalent jobs are created and sustained. Importantly, the property development industry provides essential housing to meet the needs of a growing community.

The Institute would be supportive of a debate on how to ensure our political processes maintain the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and transparency. The present bill however, has been prepared with undue haste. We support transparency and advocate for a solution that achieves this without discrimination.

It is the stance of the Institute that all donations to political parties should be banned. The Institute does not support discrimination against a particular industry or profession. The Bill singles out one industry and in doing so maligns the reputation of the industry. Many entities, including mining, unions, medical, and infrastructure make financial contributions to political candidates and parties. To exclude only property developers is to besmirch the development industry as a whole.

The Bill and proposal does not address the core of the issue which is to depoliticise the planning process and increase the transparency of planning and development decisions. The Institute believes that further investigation into alternative arrangements for planning decisions is warranted. One potential solution

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includes the introduction of independent planning panels. Such planning panels are already in place in most of Australia, including New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia. The Institute would welcome the opportunity to discuss the possibility of planning panels or similar mechanisms with the Committee or Government.

In addition to concerns regarding the banning of political donations from a single industry, the Institute notes the significant changes contained within the Bill to managing conflicts of interest under the *Local Government Act 2009* and *City of Brisbane Act 2010*. While the Institute supports additional measures of transparency, there is significant administrative work required by local governments to prepare for these changes. To ensure that no planning and development decisions are delayed by these changes, the Institute suggests that either the assent date be early 2018 or Parts 2 and 4 commence on a date to be fixed by proclamation.

The Institute does not consider this submission as confidential and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further, or to provide any other assistance during the consultation process. If you have any questions relating to this submission, please contact Kirsty Chessher-Brown [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] on (07) [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

**Urban Development Institute of Australia Queensland**



Marina Vit

**Chief Executive Officer**