

Cr Paul Tatton – Division 10
Sunshine Coast Regional Council
Locked Bag 72, SCMC 4560 Qld
Ph: 5441 8373 / Mobile: 0407 161 793
Email: Paul.Tatton@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au

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The Chairman
Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Queensland Parliament
ljsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

**SUBMISSION ON THE INQUIRY INTO A NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ACT:
REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM (EXCLUDING BCC)**

I as the Divisional Councillor for the Sunshine Coast Council would like to make a submission on the inquiry into a new Local Government Electoral Act – review of the Local Government Electoral System.

Electoral divisions

I wholeheartedly support the continuation of the divisional system. In a council as geographically large and diverse as the Sunshine Coast, The community would receive better representation through a local divisional councillor who is directly involved in community issues. Those issues vary widely across the Sunshine Coast. It's about local people representing local people.

Candidates

Candidates for local government should be resident in the council area (although not necessarily within the division they represent). Candidates should also be able to nominate for both the position of councillor and mayor; I believe that would encourage more candidates to nominate for mayor, giving voters greater choice. I do not support the selection of mayor by councillors instead of by public election, as we believe residents are entitled to have a say in who leads the council.

Funding and disclosures

I believe disclosure of campaign funding must be mandatory for all donations over \$1,500. Candidates should be required to disclose significant donations before and during campaigns as well as providing a complete disclosure of all funding after the

campaign. This would reveal to voters which candidates may be backed by particular interest groups such as the development industry, which have a strong vested interest in council decisions.

Electoral signage and advertising

The imposition of a 'media blackout' is no longer appropriate now that there are so many electronic alternatives to mainstream radio and TV (Twitter, Facebook etc). However, Corflute signage should be kept to a minimum in the community and a maximum number of allowable signs should be capped at 10 per candidate.

Voting

I fully support the availability of postal, pre-poll and absentee voting (within the local government area) for local government elections on the same basis as state and federal elections.

Property franchise

I strongly oppose the extension of eligibility to vote in local government elections to non-resident property owners. I believe it is inappropriate for those who can afford and choose to own investment property, to be given the right to vote in more than one local government election – whether multiple divisions within one council, or in different councils. The justification for this suggestion would support giving Rupert Murdoch 20 votes in every state election in Australia because of his investment in this country.

While non-resident owners and investors certainly have a financial stake in the area in which they own property, including being subject to council rates and decisions, their interests may be very different to those of residents. In a rapidly growing region like the Sunshine Coast, investment interests may directly conflict with those of existing residents – for example, the nature and rate of new development.

To allow non-resident owners to vote in multiple council elections would deny the principle of 'one person, one vote' and potentially lead to councils being controlled by business interests instead of the community.

Yours sincerely



Cr Paul Tatton
SCRC - Division 10
Councillor