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25 July 2012

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Dear Sir/Madam

Sunshine Coast Regional Council's submission for the 'Inquiry into the future and continued relevance of Government land tenure across Queensland'

I refer to the Committee's email dated 26 June 2012 calling for submissions for the Inquiry into the future and continued relevance of Government land tenure across tenure.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERESTS

The terms of reference to the inquiry and its public briefing seem to focus largely on the review of a variety of state land tenure arrangements from the point of view of how this may impact on the viability of sectors such as tourism, mining and agriculture and how it relates to land access for traditional owners. The efficiency, equity and consistency of these various forms of tenure are under review by the Inquiry.

While this review is supported, local government has particular issues of interest that relate to state land tenure which would ideally be under consideration as well.

A key issue is with Road Closures. This was discussed indirectly by some of the presenters at the public briefing, however, from a local government perspective, it is a critical issue that needs urgent review. Local Government is responsible for delivering the road network at a local level and has acquisitions powers that require local government to compensate land owners to acquire land, yet receives no proceeds of sale when roads are closed. Further, local government's say in the Road Closure approval process is very limited, seeing road reserves lost to future communities unnecessarily. Queensland is lagging behind other states when it comes to reform in this area, and a **separate submission** can be made to document this further should this be requested.

Other land tenure issues which are considered relevant to local government include:

- Ownership issues around reserves and open space.
- Flexibility for a broad range of uses on land with public recreation designation.
- How to rationalise reserves in the future (ie the issue of too many small parks), with the ability to swap areas for open space.

- Easements and access to services in private property.
- Commercial leasing of reserves.
- Valuations and who receives the funds from sale of reserves.
- Creating easements for recreation trails on private property.

Consideration of these broader issues would be welcomed by local government.

In terms of changing land tenure, a key issue that should be noted is local government's statutory responsibility to manage land use in its area. It is encouraging to note that several of the senior government officials providing presentations to the Inquiry's public briefing held on Wednesday, 11 July 2012, recognised that existing procedures relating to changes in land tenure and leasing already have regard (to varying degrees) to land use planning, including the local government's planning scheme.

It is therefore a key interest of local government that any changes to state land tenure should be consistent with state planning and local planning land use intents.

TOURISM & RECREATION

It is understood that the Inquiry may consider what needs to be done to broaden use and access to national parks and other lease areas for recreational and tourist pursuits. While the concept of broadening access to national parks has many possible benefits, for such measures to be successful, well resourced and clear management arrangements are just as important as the tenure arrangements.

It would also be desirable that any leases relating to national parks or other natural values, provide for a net positive environmental benefit through complementary activities such as research, rehabilitation, additional land purchases and the like.

The illegal use of state forests for recreational purposes is a case in point for the need for adequately resourced, clear management plans that consider "multiple use" rather than a predominance of "single use".

There were some common themes in the public hearing notably that the key areas for reform in state land tenure arrangements are:

- The need for security of land tenure for users.
- The need for diversification of use and users.
- The need for contribution – in particular the sustainable resourcing and management of reserves.

These principles are considered important to any review of state land tenure.

RURAL PRODUCTION

The ongoing rural viability or agricultural and transition land is an issue affecting the Sunshine Coast. Although the Inquiry seems to be directed more at the future of large scale pastoral leases in comparatively remote areas, initiatives that support agricultural viability would be supported where they are consistent with state and local planning intents.

CONCLUSION

- Local government is particularly interested in a review of state land matters that affect it most, notably, road closures and use of public reserves and their rationalisation.
- State and local planning intents are critical to consider when changing tenure arrangements.
- A review of multiple use of state forests and environmental areas is welcomed, however, the need for well resourced management arrangements that consider multiple use are just as important as the tenure issues and in the case of sensitive environmental areas, should provide a net positive environmental benefit.

Should you or your officers require any further information or assistance in considering Council's submission, I would encourage you to contact Richard Hill, A/Manager Property and Business on [REDACTED].

Yours faithfully



Greg Laverty
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FINANCE & BUSINESS