

Councillors' Office – Nambour
 Division 10



12 October 2012

The Research Director
 State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
 Parliament House
 Corner George and Alice Streets
 BRISBANE QLD 4000

Via email: SDIIC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Sustainable Planning and Other Legislation Amendment (SPOLA) Bill 2012

I refer to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council submission on this Bill; the submission was based on a unanimous decision of Council and I therefore fully support it.

Without wishing to diminish the importance of any of the issues raised in Council's submission, I would like to add further personal support to concerns raised about one of the proposals in the Bill to do with awarding of costs in the Planning and Environment Court.

Put simply, the proposal to award costs is an affront to justice and must not be adopted in the form proposed in the Bill.

As outlined in Council's submission, the need for parties to meet their own costs is already a burden to community groups and Councils. Exposing Councils and community groups to further unquantified significant costs would virtually eliminate the public interest being represented in planning matters.

I am also concerned that community groups and the general community across Queensland have not had enough awareness of this proposal and sufficient time to consider its full ramifications. The current system that has been in place for in excess of 20 years may not be perfect but it is understood by the community, and any proposals for such substantial change should be subject of comprehensive community and stakeholder consultation.

I urge the Committee to seriously consider other proposals to reform the Planning and Environment Court without awarding costs to the winning parties, and the lack of access to justice that comes from this. As outlined in Council's submission, the Planning and Environment Court are different to other Courts and shouldn't be used as a comparison.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Rogerson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

CR GREG ROGERSON