

To the Queensland Parliamentary Committee:
I would like to make a submission regarding the SPOLA Bill 2012.

As a recently elected local councillor for Redland City Council's Division 10 (Birkdale/Thorneside), representing *community values* is my responsibility and my great honour.

I have a General Philosophical Issue and One Specific Moral Issue regarding SPOLA: At the outset, let me say, I support a majority of the proposed changes. Especially where the reduction in 'Red Tape' can ensure increased productivity & efficiency within bureaucratic processes, especially in favour of both *community AND developers*.

However, I would like to note that due to the significant amount of changes, (proactively spearheaded by Minister Crisafulli), and the rapid response to a new local and state 'refocus', there exists some potential for broad sweeping changes to expose community individuals to unforeseen problems.

Without current clarity on the 'Details' (which are yet to be defined), my General concern is that Developers may be unfairly advantaged, at an increased risk to community values and/or individual citizen expense, unless we are vigilant about how the subsequent details are written into legislation on behalf of future generations. Please ensure that any changes will help to address ongoing community needs, in as comprehensive a manner as possible. This will help to prevent loss of citizen pride, civic amenity, natural environment and access to 'open space', which is increasingly important now and in perpetuity, in our local community neighbourhoods.

More specifically, I have concerns in relation to ***Planning & Environment Court***. Here, I would like to raise a moral concern, (which I can confidently say I share with many other people in my local division, within our city and throughout the state), after a number of recent and wide-ranging discussions on the matter.

Discussions relate to proposed changes to the 'Own Costs' Rule. This has potential to expose community citizens to financial peril, which I urge state government legislators, in the strongest possible terms, to address, amend and change.

Particularly the matter regarding the potential for court costs to be paid by unsuccessful parties. This is a ***moral issue***, in the sense that it has the potential to prevent justice from being pursued, by well meaning community members, due to a perception that an unfair economic bias will favour wealthy parties.

Such a change represents a dangerous departure from people taking personal responsibility for meeting their own court costs (which has been a 20 year safeguard) Such laws support those who represent community values in relation to development. There is a strong concern that this change could be seen as a trend toward economic exclusion, fiscal favouritism and corporate elitism, which I'm sure we would all regret.

Thank you for receiving this submission, which is a personal recommendation for continued common-sense in relation to future SPOLA changes.

Regards,

Cr. Paul Bishop