



Mail: PO Box 105  
Coolum Beach QLD 4573

Email: [mail@oscar.org.au](mailto:mail@oscar.org.au)  
Mobile: 0433 214 320

*Recognising and upholding excellence in local government*

---

18 December 2024

To: Hon. Jarrod Bleijie MP  
Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations

Email: [deputy.premier@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:deputy.premier@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**RE: SUNSHINE COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL REQUEST TO THE MINISTER FOR APPROVAL OF A TEMPORARY LOCAL PLANNING INSTRUMENT (TLPI) No.# of 2024 (ACCOMMODATION HOTEL INCENTIVE MEASURES)**

This Letter/email has been sent by the Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents Inc (OSCAR).

OSCAR is a non-partisan, not-for-profit umbrella/peak organisation covering resident and community organisations on the Sunshine Coast and Noosa Local Government Areas (LGAs) in South East Queensland.

OSCAR currently has over 35 member groups from the Pumicestone Passage to Noosa and from the Coast to the hinterland and ranges. Collectively, these organisations comprise more than several thousand engaged and community minded members.

The OSCAR overarching Vision states: *"The residents of this region enjoy being part of a connected and engaged community living in an area of outstanding natural beauty. They recognise that they are custodians of the unique and abundant biodiversity, beaches and green spaces of the region."*

OSCAR aims to support member organisations by:

- 1 Advocating to local and state government and the public on policy issues that are of regional significance and of concern to our members.
- 2 Acting to resolve issues of strategic or region-wide relevance that are referred by member organisations.
- 3 Representing the member organisations on region-wide matters of interest to the community.
- 4 Maintaining awareness and responsiveness through frequent and regular ordinary meetings and dialogue with member organisations; and
- 5 Practising professional, honest and ethical conduct.

OSCAR wishes to register its concern to the Minister regarding the proposed TLPI submitted by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council (SCRC). We have summarised the arguments that were put by OSCAR, and some of its member groups, to the SCRC. Contributing to this submission are member groups:

Caloundra Residents Association Inc., Friends of Buddina Inc., Development Watch Inc., and the Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC). Attached are supporting documents submitted to the Council:

1. August 2024 Initial submission before SCRC August Ordinary meeting
2. November submission to TLPI consultation
3. SCRC slide relating to Sky Glow levels

In the first instance, OSCAR acknowledges that, following advocacy by community groups, SCRC did vote at the August 2024 Ordinary Meeting (OM) to advertise the TLPI for community consultation, something not required under the Planning Act 2016. This allowed many community members to ask questions and have their say. OSCAR also acknowledges the willingness of Council Officers to offer meetings via TEAMS for interested community members.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Following the November 2024 OM, where SCRC presented their consultation report and voted on the proposed TLPI, many in the community felt that insufficient consideration had been given to the issues raised by the community, with only two changes being made as a result of community submissions. The two changes referred to external lighting in turtle nesting and shorebird areas and the removal of one site in a residential zone at Alexandra Headland. There was no reference to light spill from the windows of the hotels proposed or from proposed roof-top bars. In the original proposal, NO consideration was given to either nesting turtles or both resident and migratory shorebirds, both of which are significant to the Sunshine Coast Environment and to residents and tourists. The TLPI permits development changes in the areas that would impact the RAMSAR declared area of Pumicestone Passage. In fact, in the economic policy document passed separately at the August OM, there was no reference to consultation with the Environment and Natural Assets Group of SCRC despite all the other SCRC groups being consulted.

Whilst the changes go some way to ameliorating light spill, SCRC officers have advised OSCAR organisations that any impacts will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the assessment criteria, especially for shorebirds, not being transparent.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION RELEVANT TO THE TLPI PROPOSAL**

### **The Environment and Liveability Strategy (SCRC)**

*The Environment and Liveability Strategy helps us manage change. The strategy provides long-term direction and allows us to guide growth and shape the future of our region. (SCRC Environment and Liveability strategy "About the strategy" section.)*

### **Environmental Values**

*Our coastal environmental values are foundational to the character and identity of the Sunshine Coast, contributing significantly to the region's economy, sustainable use, and community connections. This is supported by a local community survey which found 'natural ecosystems and wildlife' and 'unique landscape features and natural were the most important values for 67% of respondents. Clean, debris-free, and non-polluted environments were values that also featured prominently. (p10 SCRC Coastal Management Plan).*

## Sunshine Coast Biosphere

The Biosphere designation by UNESCO sought by SCRC must provide the key element of our management of the Sunshine Coast environments. Key commitments as they are relevant to the Biosphere designation should be listed in the TLPI. For example, there was an opportunity in relation to hotel development to further the objective of managing economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable. However, it appeared to many community members that the only consideration was given to an economic component.

If the Biosphere designation remains important to SCRC, it requires ongoing commitments and performance to maintain the designation, for example, the implementation of requirements of the “Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves” within land-use planning projects.

If management plans do not demonstrate high-level integration of the Biosphere criteria and indicators, the designation should be rescinded.

## TLPI Community Consultation report

There was no acknowledgement that the submissions made by community groups were made on behalf of some thousands of residents. Each community group submission was given the same weight as a single individual rather than being counted as the collective numbers that were truly represented. *“As we deliver a Healthy Coast as part of a sustainable and liveable Sunshine Coast, the community has shared that there is a need to find a balance. **This balance must manage the competing needs and desires of individuals, communities, businesses, and industries, and meet the social, economic, and environmental needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.**”* (P 8 Healthy Coast Management Plan Part 1 – The Healthy Coast Context)

**OSCAR suggests that this commentary very strongly supports the concept of managing our LGA sustainably, particularly concerning height and parking provision relaxations on the coast and the implications for endangered fauna.**

## Community Objections to the Proposed TLPI

### 1. Urgent and emerging need

Community members agree that the need for upscale hotels is not urgent or emerging and any deficiencies of supply can be dealt with through the Planning Scheme under the relevant planning scheme and instruments and without removing and bypassing public notification and third-party rights.

“Notwithstanding the acknowledged timelines for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and a need for contemporary 4–5-star hotel stock, OSCAR does not agree that it necessarily fits the criteria for triggering a TLPI in terms of “urgency”, given hotel supply status has been understood for a considerable number of years which has allowed for well-considered and appropriate applications to come forward.” (SCEC)

In August 2024 OSCAR sent the following to SCRC Councillors as well as in its submission to the community consultation.

## **Section 23 of the Planning Act 2016**

*In making a TLPI, this proposal does not appear to align with s23 (1) which requires that*

*(a) there is significant risk of serious adverse cultural, economic, environmental or social conditions, **AND***

*(b) the delay involved in amending the PS would increase the risk, **AND***

*(c) would not adversely affect State interests.*

The need for additional hotel accommodation is not new; this was obvious when the 2032 Olympics were awarded in 2021 and again flagged publicly in October 2022 by the former Mayor (Mark Jamieson) in SCD 22/10/22).

Three years of inaction creates multiple risks, but not an event of such magnitude that it results in significant risk as defined in s23 (1) (a). The incentive program could have been included with other amendments to the 2014 PS or incorporated within the new PS, rather than delayed further to justify making a TLPI thereby intentionally avoid community consultation and any constructive improvements from the public on the proposed changes.

The 'new' Councillors, elected in March 2024, may well argue they are rectifying the inaction of the 'former' Council and may demonstrate that economic risks have increased. Consulting only with industry and some departments within SCRC appears deliberately and selectively non-inclusive which also increases various other risks.

A TLPI, as an option, may be a legitimate approach for enacting a proposed change, if s23 can be satisfied.

Any suggestion that delays involved in amending the PS would increase the risk is limited, given no hotel incentive package action was undertaken during the last 2 amendment processes which have been implemented.

State Interests include SPP Biodiversity Policy which requires mitigation of lighting impacts on Turtles and other wildlife, and these must be incorporated into the new PS. Refer to the State Agency Comments - State Interest Review - Table 2.pdf (a public document on the Gov't Dashboard). Therefore, this ought to be included in this TLPI, otherwise the TLPI would adversely affect State interests and not be compliant with S 23 (1) (c).

**OSCAR maintains that the minor changes made to the TLPI proposal still DO NOT satisfy Section 23 of the Planning Act 2016 and therefore the Minister should refuse the Proposed TLPI.**

## 2. Height allowances and impact of sky glow

The height allowances in the proposed TLPI, including additional "roof top bars" are excessive and potentially hazardous in all areas, but particularly in coastal locations, for our endangered fauna including turtles and migratory and resident shorebirds. In the first iteration of the TLPI, no consideration was given to sky glow in any shape or form.

Following being reminded of Matters of State Environmental Significance and the Sea Turtle Sensitive Area Code a Model Code for Local Government the revised TLPI Proposal includes installation of "fauna friendly" external lighting only. However, no reference is made regarding alleviating sky glow from untreated windows external wall materials and rooftop bars. In fact, the Proposed TLPI only references PO1 and PO2 of the Performance and/or acceptable Outcomes for this Code. OSCAR also notes, with interest, that SCRC has not incorporated the Model Code into its current Planning Scheme. OSCAR anticipates that this should/will be done in the new Planning Scheme 2025 (PS 2025).

(see Table on page 4-5)

## Sea Turtle Sensitive Area Code a Model Code for Local Government

© State of Queensland, The Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, May 2019.

Performance Outcomes	Acceptable Outcomes
<p>PO1 All outside lighting provided as part of the development avoids direct illumination of the beach, ocean and sky at night</p>	<p>AO1.1 Use outside lighting that is:                      (a) shielded by 25cm shields                      (b) mounted down low to avoid direct horizontal light or downwards glare onto the beach or ocean and                      (c) directed downwards and away from the coast.                      AO1.2 All outside lights are fitted with light motion detection sensors and/or timers to ensure lighting is turned off when not required</p>
<p>PO2 Development minimises the use and intensity (brightness/luminance) of outside lighting required to achieve the light's purpose to avoid reflection from the ground, buildings and other surfaces.</p>	<p>AO2 No acceptable outcome is provided</p>
<p>PO3                       Development minimises reflective glare that contributes to sky glow.</p>	<p>AO3.1                       External building materials, colours and finishes have low reflectivity.                       AO3.2                       Impervious areas use coloured (non-reflective) concrete or other pavement material.                       AO3.3                       Building design, architectural elements or landscaping treatments block or reduce excessive reflective glare.</p>
<p>PO4                       All interior lighting provided as part of the development avoids direct illumination of the beach, ocean and sky at night.</p>	<p>AO4.1                       All windows and glass doors visible from the coast are:                       (a) tinted with non-reflective tinting, or utilise smart glass technology, to block a minimum of 50% of light to reduce light transmission or spill from indoor lighting (i.e. allows a maximum of 50% of light to pass through) or                       (b) shielded by external screens to reduce light spill from indoor lighting.                       AO4.2                       All windows are shielded with external fixed louvres, and are to be:                       (a) solid (i.e. no holes)</p>

	(b) directed downward from the window at a minimum angle of 30° or  (c) in accordance with the dimensions identified within Figure 2 (Fixed louvres detail).
PO7 Where development involves advertising devices, illuminated signage is avoided.	AO7 No acceptable outcome provided.

Attached is a copy of a SCRC labelled slide which was shown at several recent presentations during 2024. This indicates increased sky glow, resulting from Artificial Light at Night (ALAN). Over the 5 years from mid-2017 to mid-2022, the increase was over 50%.

The gravity of the ongoing increases in ALAN has not been curtailed nor managed to date. The State Interest in MSES in the PS 2025 will support better management of this threat to impacted wildlife and their habitats. However, the TLPI has not incorporated the important measures referenced, as required in the State Interest feedback to SCRC for the PS 2025. Bypassing the known State Interest requirements is not supported.

In a recent article in "Our Sunshine Coast" (11 December 2024)—SCRC publication, a story about Dr Ken Wishaw, an advocate for dark skies wrote the following:

*More than 80 per cent of the world's population lives under light polluted skies, and 90 per cent for those living in the USA or Europe.*

*"Environmentally, it's important we protect our wildlife, many of which rely on the night in their predator-prey relationships," Dr Wishaw said.*

*"Further, one third of plant pollination occurs at night and is seriously affected by excessive lighting."*

*That's because night pollinators such as bats and insects need dark nights to travel and feed.*

*Excessive light at night impacts human health and wellbeing, also contributing to more greenhouse gas emissions and higher energy demand.*

*"From a heritage point of view, we should remember that we're looking up at the same stars that navigators have used for thousands of years," Dr Wishaw said.*

*"Particularly our First Nations people, who were the first astronomers and the first navigators to use the night sky throughout their ways of navigating across the country."*

### 3. Reduction of provision of parking for "upscale" hotels

The provision of car parking in many areas of the coast, particularly in the areas where it is intended that the upscale hotels will be located, is already at and beyond capacity. Decisions are being made based on what "might" be the future of public transport on the Sunshine Coast and that guests in upscale hotels do not drive themselves but rely on private and public tours. Much is being made about the requirements of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This will be a short-term variation in tourists visiting the Sunshine Coast and will no doubt revert to the tourism market that predominantly visits the coast.

At one of the “Teams” meeting with Council, a former senator, who visits both the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane, regularly drives his own vehicle to and from those destinations. This example raises the question of, when a hotel cannot accommodate parking for guests, how will alternative parking be provided that does not negatively impact the parking requirements for local residents and businesses?

While Caloundra Residents Association (CRA) have indicated its firm support for hotel development applications that “adhere to the current regulations and planning frameworks established to ensure sustainable and orderly development” their concerns remain that the proposed number of parking bays will result in significant additional demand on the already constrained local parking situation. Since the finalisation of the Caloundra Centre Master Plan in 2016, the CRA has been advocating for significant improvements to transport infrastructure, particularly active transport and placemaking. Until these are in place, any proposed reduction in parking spaces, outside of the current Planning Scheme, is premature.

Further, is SCRC suggesting that for the 2032 Olympics, visitors from interstate will NOT travel to the Coast by car or hire a vehicle? The alternative proposition is that the proposed hotels are only for the elite and wealthy and that they will not use a vehicle themselves. Is the proposed use of upscale hotels only by individuals or are families included? If so, it would only be wealthy families able to afford private tours which can cost \$500-1000 a day per person. (This last is a comment from a tour guide who works for a private tour company operating both cars and buses from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast.)

4. Visit Sunshine Coast Tourist organisation espouses and encourages visitors to see all parts of the Sunshine Coast LGA from the coast to the hinterland and many parts between. Public Transport on the Sunshine Coast is N-S linear in design with infrequent and lengthy trips from East to West. One question is how a family would get to see such locations without a motor vehicle, certainly not by Public Transport.

5. Just as low-rise buildings define the Noosa Shire, including upscale hotels, the Sunshine Coast community is adamant that the Sunshine Coast is defined by its casual approach and lifestyle. It does not want to be seen as another Gold Coast with its towers right along the coast. Just as the low-rise nature of development defines Noosa Shire the Sunshine Coast community does not want the nature of the Sunshine Coast to be that of towers across the region.

6. Precedent Risk. *“It is understood that the TLPI only relates to specific local plan areas and zones. What is of concern is a possible expansion of these areas during this or a refreshed TLPI (after it expires in 2 years) and also the negative influence this policy/instrument may have on the formulation of the new Town Plan due in 2025. It is considered that the TLPI puts additional negative pressure on SCRC to lock in additional heights more broadly during the 2025 Town Plan update.”* (Development Watch October 24 TLPI submission.)

7. Economic Policy incentives, approved by SCRC in the Accommodation Hotels Incentives package, are already significant. The policy includes both application fee and 50% infrastructure charges fee relief for construction commencing by 2028 and completed by June 2031. The Policy is not limited to the locations identified in the TLPI. However, the SCRC Officers Report to the August 2024 OM failed to include in the Policy or the Report at the Council OM or inform the community of the financial consequences of such a policy over the intervening years. The lack of a financial consequences report is further cause for concern given the project deferrals, due to budgetary problems, at the last Ordinary Meeting for 2024, on 12 December, as reported in the media <https://www.sunshinecoastnews.com.au/2024/12/16/council-capital-works-deferrals/>. This report quotes the Chief Financial Officer attributing ‘a drop in developer contributions from \$33.6m to \$25m had reduced the Council’s cash and affected the operating result.’ Given the policy incentives in the Hotel package, it appears hard to argue that the operating results would continue to be negatively impacted.

In August this year before the TLPI component was released for public consultation OSCAR sent the following to Councillors:

*No projected Financial Impact Statement Quantifying the net financial costs and risks to Council are critical in assessing the TLPI impact. Good governance predicates that a financial budget ought to be prepared and approved, reflecting the Financial Statement elements, including cash flow impacts. Revenue foregone includes fees waived (DA fees, OW fees, Temp works fees and rental fees), discounted infrastructure costs (50%), and impacts of deferred infrastructure charges (up to 5 years) on cash flow and risks and costs of debt recovery. Additional costs include staff assigned to free case management pre-lodgement services and the dedicated development assessment team.*

Full earlier submission attached.

Council officers were remiss in not including the budgetary impacts of such fee relief. Councillors should have demanded such information and not voted until so informed. The only reference to finance in the report was that Strategic Planning had sufficient funds in its budget to get the process underway.

The community wishes to know who is picking up the cost of these incentives – the ratepayer and/or other developers?

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite the reasons advanced by SCRC in support of the TLPI, OSCAR and its member groups feel strongly that the TLPI does not satisfy the three elements of Section 23 of the Planning Act 2016.

*(a) there is significant risk of serious adverse cultural, economic, environmental or social conditions, AND*

*(b) the delay involved in amending the PS would increase the risk, AND*

*(c) would not adversely affect State interests.*

We note that these elements are cumulative and not individual.

OSCAR and its member groups respectively request the Minister refuse the TLPI and suggest to Council that they consider other options and that given the approval of the Incentives Policy (flawed as it is) that Sunshine Coast Regional Council should work within that context.

Yours sincerely



Melva Hobson PSM  
President OSCAR

Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents