

# OSCAR directions 2017 and beyond

**OSCAR Inc**

Organisation Sunshine Coast Associations of Residents  
Greg Smith, President

# OSCAR background - 1

- ▶ Established as an incorporated body in 2008
- ▶ Non-partisan umbrella organisation, members are residents' associations and not individuals
- ▶ Just over 40 member organisations in *both* SCRC and Noosa LGAs
- ▶ Members are representative despite claims to contrary
- ▶ Funded solely by member organisations fees and individual donations
- ▶ Active up until last council elections with minor activity during 2016
  - ▶ Donation disclosure focus
  - ▶ Suffered “volunteer burnout” and lack of resources



# OSCAR background - 2

- ▶ Revived early this year following series of informal meetings of concerned residents' association which commenced in late 2016
- ▶ Agreed to retain OSCAR name but little else existed
- ▶ A “work-in-progress”; we need to increase our exposure, reach and credibility with:
  - ▶ existing and potential members
  - ▶ the Councils, and
  - ▶ the business/development community



# The OSCAR vision - 1

## ▶ Leadership and governance

- ▶ Local government policies, plans and actions will be consistent with achieving social, economic and environmental *sustainability*.
- ▶ Governance will become *open and transparent* and residents will have reasonable access to reports and documents.
- ▶ Local government decision making will be responsible, informed, ethical, and accountable - consistent with the Local Government Act 2009 principles.
- ▶ Community consultation will become routine and results respected and acted upon.
- ▶ The public interest will prevail over vested interests.



# The OSCAR vision - 2

## ► Development

- Will be consistent with the prevailing Planning Schemes unless there is significant community support for change
- Urban areas will be generally characterised by low-rise and low-density residential development that will continue to distinguish the region's urban landscape from the high-rise cityscape of the Gold Coast
- Urban settlement will be contained so that our natural coastal and rural landscapes remain visible and accessible



# OSCAR operational objectives

- ▶ Be recognized as the peak body for resident/community organisations
- ▶ Increase membership and geographical coverage
- ▶ Support member organisations by:
  - ▶ Representing and advocating to all levels of government on issues of regional significance
  - ▶ Empowering our members to be more informed and effective
    - ▶ Better ITC adoption
    - ▶ Improving advocacy and campaigning skills
- ▶ Better engagement with the business community
- ▶ Continued monitoring of councillor performance and donations
- ▶ Long term planning for the 2020 council elections
- ▶ Building relationships with similar organisations in SE Queensland



# Planning Schemes

- ▶ OSCAR members are not anti-development
  - ▶ Seeking balanced and sympathetic development that is Consistent with the Planning Schemes
    - ▶ We see these as contracts between Council and community
    - ▶ Need to provide *certainty* to all stakeholders
  - ▶ We need to accept these are not set in stone and will change over time to reflect opportunities and challenges ...
    - ▶ provided there is genuine community engagement and support for amendments
    - ▶ changes are not driven solely by the commercial interests of developers or an irrational growth imperative



# Our vision - the reality - 1

## ▶ Non-negotiable

- ▶ Transparent and accountable governance by our Councils
- ▶ Genuine community engagement by Councils and developers - not “targeted consultation”.
- ▶ Population growth consistent with a balance between natural and built environments
- ▶ Amenity/needs of existing residents must be respected
- ▶ Retention of the character of our towns and villages





# Our vision - the reality - 2

## ▶ Negotiable

### ▶ Protection of the Planning Schemes

- ▶ Accept that we may need to be more flexible than we have argued in the past ... BUT
- ▶ Population pressures may require acceptance of higher density urban development ... BUT



# Other issues

## ▶ OSCAR members question

- ▶ The notion of the Sunshine Coast as a “emerging city”
  - ▶ Region of villages/towns rather than continuous/homogenous “city”
  - ▶ This is not inconsistent with support for a “smart city” at the heart of the region
  - ▶ Where does Noosa fit?
- ▶ Population projections and “growth mantra”
  - ▶ Both the numbers and the demographics of population need more research
  - ▶ Is the figure of 500,000 a target the SCRC sees as a desirable objective or is it one that is being imposed by the State?
  - ▶ Either way, we need “push-back” if infrastructure not there



# Lack of political relevance

- ▶ One party dominance at state and federal level
  - ▶ Likely to get “worse” with retirement of Peter Wellington and creation of new seat of Ninderry
- ▶ ... and we wonder why the Sunshine Coast misses out!
  - ▶ Contrast with regional centres that are marginal
    - ▶ Eg FNQ and Tasmania
- ▶ Role of SC Mayor needs to be acknowledged; a formidable politician who strongly argues, in a non-partisan way, for the region - perhaps business and resident groups need to be more vocal in support of the Mayor on this issue.



# Where we can work together

- ▶ Joint lobbying/advocacy to state and federal government
  - ▶ Funding for necessary infrastructure
- ▶ Early consultation with OSCAR, and in turn, its members and the community at large
  - ▶ Early engagement leads to better and less contested development
  - ▶ OSCAR will acknowledge good community engagement and will not criticize the process if it is sound



# The housing affordability dilemma

- ▶ Peregian Springs - a case study
  - ▶ Master planned community
    - ▶ Original housing - single dwelling on larger allotments
      - ▶ Generally higher value properties with empty nesters and larger/younger families
    - ▶ Ridges - mix of lot types but with increasing proportion of duplex and dual key allotments and generally smaller (and diminishing) lot sizes - ie “densification”
      - ▶ Infrastructure already inadequate for increased population that results - pressure on traffic, on and off street parking and schools
  - ▶ Correct to assert that community accepts need for higher density dwelling than in past but ... this does nothing for housing affordability per se
    - ▶ Duplex/dual key lots are an attractive proposition for individual investors and investor syndicates - this is increasing house prices and forcing out entry level owner/occupiers
    - ▶ Yes, rental pool is greater but certainly not meeting low-cost rental demand
    - ▶ Drip-feeding of lots to market



# Social housing

- ▶ Problem is acknowledged ... BUT
  - ▶ Classic “Yes Minister” scenario
  - ▶ Everyone agrees that there is a problem and we need to do something about it
    - ▶ Should our Councils do more to mandate the provision of social housing?
    - ▶ Should the state and federal governments be put under more pressure to provide or facilitate it?
    - ▶ Should developers ensure there is a mix of housing in residential development projects - eg?
      - ▶ Maroochydore CBD
      - ▶ Bokarina Beach
      - ▶ Aura
    - ▶ Need community acceptance of this - countering the NIMBY factor



Questions/comments?