



Minister for Local Government,  
Minister for Racing and  
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Our ref: MC19/5398

Your ref: A498771

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6 NOV 2019

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Queensland Parliamentary Service  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

*Dear Neil*

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 2019 about petition No. 3199-19 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The request for the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to be dismissed and an Administrator appointed is a very serious matter.

Section 123 of the *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act) states the dissolving of a democratically elected Local Government requires me to reasonably believe that the Local Government has seriously or continuously breached the local government principles or is incapable of performing its responsibilities or that it is otherwise in the public interest that every Councillor be dismissed. In addition, as a precondition to remedial action under section 120 of the Act, I must give the Council a notice of the proposal to exercise this power.

At this time, and on the information available, I am not of the view that there is factual evidence on which I might reasonably form such an opinion, and consequently, there is no justification to dissolve the Council.

Similarly, I note community concerns about the Council's decision to use ratepayer funds to support a defamation case brought by the Council's Chief Executive Officer. I am not, however, aware of any information that would give rise to a reasonable belief that the Council's decision to do so is contrary to any law or inconsistent with the local government principles as would be required for me to remove the decision under section 121 of the Act. The information available to me instead suggests that the Council followed its own *Provision of Legal Assistance for Employees and Councillors Policy* and put the matter to a resolution of the Council. In light of those actions, I am unable to reasonably form the view that the Council acted in a manner that was in breach of the local government principles.

I will continue to monitor the situation but encourage petitioners to engage with the Council so as to inform and influence its decision-making in this matter.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising these matters with me and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stirling', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

**STIRLING HINCHLIFFE MP**  
**Minister for Local Government,**  
**Minister for Racing and**  
**Minister for Multicultural Affairs**