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General Manager
Small Business, Competition and Consumer Policy Division
The Treasury
Langton Crescent
PARKS ACT 2066

Dear Sir / Madam

Competition Policy Review Final Report

The Cairns Regional Council appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission in relation to the Final Report of the Competition Policy Review. This submission is made in relation to Recommendation 9 - Planning and zoning.

The Panel recommends state and territory governments should subject restrictions on competition in planning and zoning rules to the public interest test, such that the rules should not restrict competition unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits to the community outweigh the costs.

While it is acknowledged the planning framework should reduce regulation and be fair and flexible, any proposed reform should not restrict the ability for a Local Government to implement planning outcomes that are considered the most appropriate for their local community.

The use of planning and zoning controls play an important role in supporting productivity through mitigating potential impacts of development, maintaining a high level of amenity and supporting efficient and effective infrastructure provision. Planning and zoning controls should aim to protect the viability of a local community not an individual business.

The Queensland Government has recently implemented a range of planning reforms, with a focus on achieving balanced outcomes and delivering the right development in the right locations.

Cairns Regional Council has facilitated this through the drafting of its new planning scheme which seeks to minimise regulatory requirements and provide certainty and transparency in decision making. The draft Cairns Region Planning Scheme has adopted a higher risk appetite for the right development in the right location and applies the lowest practical level of assessment to development.

The draft planning scheme has also introduced a number of provisions to support greater productivity outcomes including the introduction of local plans that promote development opportunities, a flexible township zone to promote growth and development in small communities and the introduction of a mixed use zone to integrate opportunities for business, employment, retail and residential uses.

Under the draft Cairns Region Planning Scheme activity centres are more than just retail centres as they support a range of business, employment, education, residential, health and community services. The draft planning scheme identifies a hierarchy of centres where each centre performs a defined role. Maintaining a hierarchy of centres and concentrating development within a centre supports higher density living, transit oriented development, and ensures equitable access to services while maximising infrastructure investment.

Cairns Regional Council would like to be kept informed of the outcomes of the review and continue to provide comment on any proposed reform proposals.

Should you have any further enquiries or require additional information, please contact Council's Supervisor Strategic Planning, Ms Deborah Wellington, by email d.wellington@cairns.qld.gov.au or on the above phone number.

Yours sincerely



Kelly Reaston
General Manager Planning and Environment