

Office of the Mayor

OUR REF:

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RE: Open letter to the Douglas Community

08 September 2020

Dear Douglas Community,

It saddens me that I am needing to write to you to set the record straight about the half-truths, propaganda and outright lies being published by a community blogging group calling itself Douglas News Network, which was started by the former Mayor's husband, an unsuccessful candidate and their friends, after the recent election was called with me as the successor.

I wish to make this matter absolutely clear:

- The Office of Independent Assessor has confirmed that the process used to suspend negotiations of the Daintree Ferry contract via a Mayoral Minute was 100% compliant with the Local Government Regulations 2012.
- Strong legal advice also backs the CEO who was doing his due diligence and trying to get the best value for ratepayers during contract negotiations for the Daintree River Crossing – the biggest contract Council has on its books. These negotiations were not complete so could not be signed prior to caretaker mode.
- There is no risk to compensation with the contract still in negotiation as Council entered caretaker mode.

The propaganda peddled around by a small group of disgruntled residents is frankly embarrassing. They are adamant to provoke and divide this community, as you – the Douglas Shire community, did not choose their representative.

Instead of accepting the outcome, they continue to run a misinformation campaign backed by paid social media advertising in an attempt to degrade the reputation of myself, the council's CEO and the operation of this council.

Of course, this small group has every right to an opinion, as everyone does in a healthy democracy. However, be truthful and when you use social media or the internet as a tool call it that - opinions. Do not try to insult our community's intelligence by calling yourselves a news network. I challenge DNN to rename themselves as a community blog or community newsletter because that is certainly what they are, and not a news service.

A news service is charged with being impartial, fair and giving both sides of a story through the eyes of a trained and experienced journalist. Any reasonable “news” service that performed like this group would be hauled into a media association’s code of ethics and tribunal situation.

There are overarching bodies such as the Office of Independent Assessor, The Queensland Ombudsman or the Crime and Corruption Commission, who are well equipped to ensure your Council is acting lawfully and in the best interests of the Douglas Shire community.

In a crisis stage of pandemic like this, with nearly all businesses and residents heavily effected, you would think that the community as a whole would be working together to garner the best possible outcomes for its residents and not intentionally inflaming discontent in this community by inciting division for nothing more than their own personal gain and agenda.

Yours faithfully



Cr Michael Kerr
MAYOR
DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL



A 2018 Top 100 Global Sustainable Destination.

