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MEDIA RELEASE

Property Council calls for total transparency on political donations

Operation Belcarra was an investigation into the 2016 Local Government elections. Its focus was limited to the Gold Coast, Moreton, Ipswich and Logan council areas.

Through this report, and subsequent public statements, the CCC has made it clear that the integrity of the electoral system can be damaged merely by the perception that political donations may lead to corrupt conduct. This perceived risk of corruption is the basis for proposing a ban on developer donations.

The following comments can be attributed to Property Council Queensland Executive Director, Chris Mountford:

“It is the view of the Property Council that if the threshold test for banning donations is whether or not there could be a perceived link between a political donation and the decision making of government, this perception would exist in relation to political donations made by other business sectors, community groups, environmental groups and unions at both local and state government levels.

“It is possible that the limited scope of the CCC investigation - to only four of the fastest growing urban local government areas in the country - has meant that the issues of focus were naturally skewed to the matters those councils are likely to be dealing with as a priority. Namely, accommodating a growing population through the provision of housing. If the review was limited to farming or mining dominated local government areas, it would be reasonable to expect property development would be a less pertinent issue.

“Similarly, if the review considered political donations in the context of real or perceived risk of corruption at the State Government level, no doubt it would find that there are different issues and interests relevant to that level of government.

“The Property Council remains strongly of the view that everyone should be treated equally under the law, and we are willing to support actions that will strengthen community confidence in the political system.

“It is clear to us that to deliver this equity and community confidence, a wider review that does not have the obvious scoping limitations of Operation Balcarra is required.

“That is why we are calling on all State Parliamentarians to support a wide-ranging review by the CCC, that includes an investigation into the real or perceived risk of corruption and the relationship with political donations at their own level of government.”