

15 April 2010

Mr John Rauber  
Chief Executive Officer  
Moreton Bay Regional Council  
PO Box 159  
CABOOLTURE QLD 4510

Dear Mr Rauber

**Re: Moreton Bay Regional Council Planning Scheme**

I am writing on behalf of the outdoor advertising industry to provide some preliminary comments on existing regulations for outdoor advertising in the former shire areas of Caboolture, Pine Rivers and Redcliffe.

We have been advised by Council representatives that a single planning scheme for the Moreton Bay Regional Council is to be drafted in the near future, which is likely to address planning conditions relating to outdoor advertising. These same representatives felt that a submission from the Outdoor Media Association would therefore be timely.

As you may be aware, the Outdoor Media Association (OMA) is the peak national organisation representing the outdoor advertising industry. Our members advertise third party products on public transport, billboards and street furniture such as bus shelters, bins and park benches. One of the OMA's roles is to provide expert policy advice to members and stakeholders to ensure that fair and equitable signage policies result.

The OMA has reviewed the existing laws governing the placement of advertising signs in the former shire areas of Caboolture, Pine Rivers and Redcliffe and has discussed with our members how these laws are currently applied. Our members have advised us that some aspects of these laws that work well. They would however would like to see a number of changes made to certain aspects of these laws to ensure that the resulting single planning scheme for the region provides a reasonable and equitable level of regulation for outdoor advertising signs.

By way of example, while there have been a number of supersites (billboard signs greater than 20 metres squared) approved in the region, the current laws for the former shire areas of Caboolture and Redcliffe state that they do not permit this size of sign.

We appreciate that supersites may not be appropriate for some areas within the region (i.e. residential areas); however we do believe that as a general principle, applications for outdoor advertising signs should be assessed on their individual merits rather than being assessed against regulations that automatically ban the advertisement due to its size. We would like to see this sentiment reflected in the new single planning scheme for the region. Our industry offers a variety of signage formats of varying sizes and new technologies which assist in integrating them into the surrounding environment.

You may be interested to know that outdoor advertising signs directly contribute well-needed finances and public infrastructure to the communities in which they are located. For example, in the 2006/07 financial year, our operators provided 900 bus shelters valued at \$22.5 million to local government areas throughout the State<sup>1</sup>. Our operators also funded the maintenance costs for this infrastructure, valued at close to \$1.6 million per year. These facilities are obviously essential to the members of your local community and can provide advertising opportunities for both the local council and local community events. They can also free up funding resources for other important facilities for the community. There is also the opportunity for local councils to receive revenue directly from outdoor advertising signs, which can then be used to create other community benefits.

Billboard advertising also directly contributes to the economy in regional areas. These structures often advertise local businesses, local events and tourist-related information and can be used to direct traffic off of major routes into smaller towns, therefore injecting money into the local community.

Public attitudes towards outdoor advertising have improved since 2000. Independent research conducted by AC Nielsen<sup>2</sup> found that 87% of people were either supportive of or neutral towards outdoor advertising, compared to just 68% in 2000. A number of factors can be attributed to these results, including industry consolidation, improved quality of outdoor sites and the public benefit created through the funding of community infrastructure and donations of advertising space to charities.

Our members are committed to working with Moreton Bay Regional Council to develop a single advertising policy that ensures that all advertising structures, regardless of size or content, are located in areas permitted by Council, are well

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<sup>1</sup> National economic study of the Outdoor Media Industry. Access Economics, December 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Public opinion on outdoor advertising. AC Nielsen, June 2007.

integrated with the surrounding environment and support local activity. We would be pleased to provide you with a more detailed submission closer to the time when the new planning scheme will be drafted outlining our recommendations as to how this might be achieved. We are confident that a equitable and balanced signage policy will result.

The OMA appreciates your time in considering our submission and looks forward to having the opportunity to work with Moreton Bay Regional Council in the near future to develop this signage policy. The OMA would appreciate being notified of any further developments on this matter and would be available to participate in any working groups if required. If you would like more information about any aspect of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on 02 9357 9900, or our Senior Policy Adviser, Carolyn Samsa, on 0417 060 583.

Yours sincerely

Charmaine Moldrich  
**Chief Executive Officer**