
MEDIA RELEASE

May 17, 2016

OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REQUESTED TO INVESTIGATE COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL

New South Wales' peak representative body for employers in the civil construction and maintenance industry, the Civil Contractors Federation NSW (CCF NSW), has today formally called on the NSW Office of Local Government to investigate Coffs Harbour City Council.

Chief Executive Officer of the Civil Contractors Federation NSW, David Castledine, said today, "The Council has elected to compete with its own ratepayers by setting up, using ratepayer's funds, a business unit called 'Coastal Works'. Local businesses asked us to look into what the Council were doing."

Initially, CCF NSW requested a meeting with Mayor Denise Knight which was ultimately declined. Following this failed attempt CEO, David Castledine, addressed a Public Forum of Council on 14 April and subsequently submitted a list of questions in writing the very next day. Council then conceded to meet with CCF NSW on 29 April.

Mr Castledine has today said "At that meeting we were assured a response to our questions would be provided, but they have not.

"We have been patiently waiting for Council long enough, with no response. Now we are forced to seek the assistance of the NSW Office of Local Government."

Mr Castledine went to say, "Transparency surrounding the delivery of the Council's infrastructure works program through the Council's commercial business unit Coastal Works was the initial focus of our questions. However, since our initial contact serious questions regarding governance and reporting have arisen.

"It is deeply disappointing for local businesses and the industry as a whole that Coffs Harbour City Council have so blatantly refused to answer what should be simple, straight-forward questions.

"We find these actions perplexing. Why not simply answer the questions?"

"Council have said publically that CCF NSW incorrectly quoted the financial results of Coastal Works from 2015, but their Chief Financial Officer and Director of Infrastructure both conceded during the 29 April meeting that we were correct. We have asked the Council to tell ratepayers the truth about this, but that hasn't happened either," said Mr Castledine.

"CCF NSW is not making accusations of misconduct, or that anyone in Council has acted inappropriately, we just want some answers. We hope the Office of Local Government will take interest in this matter, and obtain what the people and businesses of the Coffs Harbour local government area deserve – transparency and good governance," concluded Mr Castledine.

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