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The Chief Executive Officer
Gold Coast City Council
Mr. Dale Dickson

Dear Mr. Dickson,

As you are aware the Gold Coast Combined Chamber Of Commerce has publicly expressed its concerns regarding Council's purchase of the Tiplers Resort. The Chamber has also objected to plans, works, costs and conceptual changes council has expressed as to its future use.

The 'Tiplers Affair' has developed into an unmitigated public relations disaster drawing severe criticism from the broad community including business. In our opinion, based on our own investigations, much of what has been said or written by some members of council appears to be misleading information or unsubstantiated allegation. This is not the relationship the Chamber would expect with council.

The absence of promised consultation, council's seemingly entrenched position and contradictory or selective project costs revealed in correspondence by the Mayor, led the Chamber to write to the Minister For Local Government and the Attorney General requesting an inquiry. In that correspondence the Chamber stated its lack of confidence and trust in this council, a position that was not taken lightly.

Whilst we have not as yet received official conformation, the comments attributed to the Minister for Local Government in the Bulletin on February 18th, state that the appropriate protocol would be for the Chamber to initially request any investigation through your office. Therefore, in light of the Minister's reported suggestion, the Gold Coast Combined Chamber of Commerce calls upon you to institute an investigation to determine, clarify and make public various aspects of the Tiplers purchase, ongoing costs and plans for the site that also includes the former Club 'B'.

We would expect this investigation to be completed in a reasonable time so that parties submitting an expression of interest in development of the site are aware of all of the pertinent information that may effect their proposal.

The Chamber, and we are aware, the community, seek resolution to this matter; to that end we submit the following questions we believe need to be addressed and further, to assist you in your investigation.

Question 1. Did Council issue notices for the alleged environmental breaches?

Question 2. Did Council or EPA issue notices on the Sewage Treatment Plant being outside the lease area?

Question 3. Did Council report Tiplers to Liquor Licensing for alleged breaches of Liquor License? (I.e. serving intoxicated customers as the Mayor claims)?

Question 4. How long did Council know of the various breaches?

Question 5. Who initiated the idea of a purchase? Was it a Councillor or Officer?

Question 6. Who gave Cr. Clarke the impression this site was the only landing spot on the Western side of the Island as quoted in the media?

Question 7. Why wasn't a complete financial plan presented to Council prior to purchase?

Question 8. Why did Council planners tell Councillors that the proposed development plans for the former owner could be approved when all private sector planners (former Council staff) indicate that it couldn't?

Question 9. When did negotiations start with the former owners?

Question 10. Was this negotiation with a Councillor or an Officer?

Question 11. How did Tiplers present an environmental threat to the site as required under the Green Levy resolution when it was already developed?

Question 12. Did Council obtain legal advice that the purchase complied with the intent and resolution to raise the Green Levy?

Question 13. Were there any contra opinions provided by staff but not presented to Council?

Question 14. Who told Cr Clarke there were alcohol problems with Tiplers, and what evidence is there to substantiate his publicly made claims these problems existed?

Question 15. How much will the Green Levy and General Rates be affected by the purchase given it was not budgeted?

Question 16. How much has the camping ground revenue reduced since Tiplers has been closed?

Question 17. Why has Council tried to change the designation from tourism to environmental including other land within the Tiplers precinct through its draft Masterplan without consultation?

Question 18. Council has referred to its extensive consultation process prior to the purchase of Tiplers, were the participants informed of the way council's plan would and subsequently has unfolded and if so what was their response especially from those involved in the marine industry or associated tourism interests?

Question 19. Marine Queensland has been recognized as a significant stakeholder and representative body, were they part of the consultative process and if so what was their response to council's plan and subsequent consultation regarding a swimming enclosure within the adjacent passage?

Question 20. In what way will the Tiplers Master Plan restrict concepts or implementation of those concepts in regard to council's proposed invitation for expressions of interest in determining the future use of the Tiplers precinct?

Question 21. What are the actual costs that can be reasonably attributed to the Tiplers project inclusive of?

*Purchase Price

*Legal Fees

*Stamp Duty

*GST (presumably council can claim this item back)

- *Interest on loan (over the life of the loan)
- *State Government lease fees
- *Consultancy fees
- *Accommodation
- *Contractual works
- *Works by council employees or staff
- *Equipment and material
- *Maintenance
- *Security
- *Transport
- *Equipment hire (either with or without operator)
- *Dumping fees
- *Staffing

Understandably, the answers to some of these questions will raise more.

We advise that considering our engagement with council on this matter has been less than accommodating to date, and in the interest of transparency and accountability, this correspondence will be open to public scrutiny on the www.marineactiongroup.com and www.gcccc.net websites as central information conduits. A copy will also be forwarded to the Minister For Local Government, the Attorney General and the local State and Federal members.

The Chamber trusts that your investigation will achieve a better understanding of the issue, address concerns and lead to an outcome that will satisfy the broad community.

Yours sincerely,

Bob Janssen
President Gold Coast Combined Chamber Of Commerce Inc.