



Warren Pitt MP
Member for Mulgrave

MC07.6845



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Main Roads and
Local Government**

02 OCT 2007

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for providing the Honourable Andrew Fraser MP, former Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport with a copy of the wording of petition number 873-07, lodged with the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, regarding local government reform in the Redcliffe City area.

As the newly appointed Minister for Main Roads and Local Government I am responding to you on this matter.

As you are aware, on 27 July 2007 the independent Local Government Reform Commission (the Commission) announced its recommendations on the name, class, boundary and electoral arrangements for each new local government.

The Government established the Commission as the most appropriate vehicle to provide advice and recommendations on the most sustainable structure for local government in Queensland.

The use of an independent commission is the same process used to determine the boundaries within which constituents vote at both State and Federal elections. It is appropriate that Queensland's new local government sector be held to the same standards.

All Queenslanders had the opportunity to provide the Commission with their individual views on local government reform in their region during its month-long public consultation. The Commission received 47,267 submissions, including 3,796 suggestions that contained specific issues for consideration.

Importantly, the reform program is not entirely premised on financial sustainability. The Commission was provided with specific Terms of Reference that took into account a range of factors including bringing communities of interest together, regional planning and consolidating natural resource management areas, such as water catchment areas.

In determining its recommendations, the Commission gave consideration to the effect of the reforms on individual communities. In particular, the Commission noted that many of the submissions received expressed apprehension that a specific community might cease to exist if it were amalgamated with other local governments. The Commission considers that identification with 'place' or area-specific communities exists within the current local government arrangements, and that changes to these boundaries will not extinguish the ability for communities to identify with the particular locality into the future.

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Specifically referenced in the Commission's report is the example of Maleny and Bribie Island. Both are distinctive communities within the current borders of Caloundra and Caboolture Shires respectively. There are similar examples across Queensland where distinctive communities thrive within existing local government boundaries, including Kuranda (in Mareeba Shire), Babinda (within the boundary of Cairns City Council), Airlie Beach (in Whitsunday Shire) and Magnetic Island (within the boundary of Townsville City Council). These examples demonstrate that an area's unique sense of place is not lost within or subsumed by a local government structure that reflects a larger area.

Redcliffe has a strong sense of community and a proud history, and will always be Queensland's first settlement city. This will not be lost because of local government boundary changes. Local government boundary reform is about providing the most efficient local government services, now and into the future.

In examining the region, the Commission found that there are no clear geographic boundaries between Pine Rivers Shire, Caboolture Shire and Redcliffe City councils. Similarly, many of the servicing issues and economic and social interests of the existing local governments overlap.

The Commission thus determined that all three local governments share a number of cross-border local government concerns including water catchment management, regional road, rail and public transport provision, and employment and economic development opportunities for their resident populations. The Commission recommended that the infrastructure demands of a rapidly growing urban area without any discernable boundaries would be more effectively and efficiently addressed as a core business responsibility of a regional local government.

The Government has accepted the boundary change recommendations of the Commission. These were implemented through the passing of the *Local Government Reform Implementation Act 2007* which became law on Friday, 10 August 2007.

A Moreton Bay Regional Council Local Transition Committee has been established to help lead the transition to the new council.

In the meantime ratepayers will continue to receive the same services from their existing councils until the new Moreton Bay Regional Council takes effect after the next local government elections on 15 March 2008.

Should you require any additional information in relation to this matter, please contact Mr Leigh Spencer, Senior Policy Advisor, of my office on telephone number 3227 8820.

Yours sincerely

Warren Pitt MP
Minister for Main Roads and Local Government