



Queensland  
Government

MC07.6846

02 OCT 2007

Mr Neil Laurie  
Clerk of the Parliament

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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 no. 871-07, lodged with the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, regarding the amalgamation of the Atherton Shire Council, Eacham Shire Council, Herberton Shire Council and Mareeba Shire Council into the Tableland Regional Council.

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.

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

The Commission gave consideration to all 168 suggestions it received in relation to local government administration for the Atherton Tablelands.

The Commission determined that amalgamating the four local governments to form the Tablelands Regional Council offers the potential for improving the quality of governance across the Atherton Tablelands.

The Commission stated that the continuation of separate local governments would not facilitate optimum service delivery for the Atherton Tablelands, and will ultimately impair each local government's ability to develop capacity to address social, environmental and economic development issues. The benefits arising from amalgamation include improved economies of scale, capacity to develop the skills base, and undertake broader regional planning.

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In arriving at the recommendation for the Tablelands Regional Council, the Commission examined shared characteristics. It noted that the major towns are in relatively close proximity. All major towns with the exception of Malanda are on the Kennedy Highway. Additionally, the Atherton Tablelands is a unique geographic area with no natural barriers between the various communities.

A Tablelands 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 Tablelands Regional Council takes effect after the next local government elections on 15 March 2008.

I encourage you to visit the Department of Local Government, Sport and Recreation's website at [www.strongercouncils.qld.gov.au](http://www.strongercouncils.qld.gov.au) for further information.

I acknowledge that change may not come easily to all, however the Government is committed to providing a smooth transition to a more appropriate local government structure.

The local government reform program is about building a stronger, more financially viable system of local government throughout Queensland.

It is envisaged that new councils will have a greater ability to place more emphasis on frontline services rather than administration, meaning more people working in jobs which deliver local services and infrastructure to the community.

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Should you require any further information in relation to this matter, please contact Mr Leigh Spencer, Senior Policy Advisor, of my office on telephone number 322 78820.

Yours sincerely

Warren Pitt MP  
**Minister for Main Roads and Local Government**