



Warren Pitt MP
Member for Mulgrave



**Queensland
Government**

MC07.7292

**Minister for Main Roads and
Local Government**

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 no. 886-07, lodged with the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, regarding the amalgamation of Atherton Shire Council, Eacham Shire Council, Herberton Shire Council and Mareeba Shire Council to form 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 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.

The Commission gave consideration to all 168 suggestions it received in relation to local government administration of the 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 region.

The Commission stated that the continuation of separate local governments would not facilitate optimum service delivery for the region, and will ultimately impair each local government's ability to develop capacity to address social, environmental and economic development issues facing the region. The benefits arising from amalgamation – including improved economies of scale, capacity to develop the skills base, and undertake broader regional planning – are considered sufficient to outweigh any negatives put forward by the local governments.

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In arriving at the recommendation for the Tablelands Regional Council, the Commission examined shared characteristics of the region's communities of interest. It noted that the major towns and settlements of the Atherton, Eacham, Herberton and Mareeba Shire Councils 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.

The Tablelands Regional Council Local Transition Committee has been established to lead the transition to the new Council.

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

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