



Minister for Local Government,
Minister for Racing and
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Our ref: MC18/2572

Your ref: A315486

30 MAY 2018

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Neil

Thank you for your letter of 2 May 2018 regarding petition numbers 2923-18 and 2880-18 about the de-amalgamation of the former Stanthorpe Shire from Southern Downs Regional Council.

I acknowledge the concerns raised in the petition and I appreciate the community's interest in this matter. You may wish to note that I have previously responded to Reverend Alan Colyer, President of the Granite Belt Community Association Inc. and other members of the community regarding this matter.

The current Queensland Government focus is to support the long-term sustainability of existing Council areas. I have stated that the key issues for reform in Local Government need to be restoring community trust, transparency and accountability and this is where the Queensland Government will be focused. De-amalgamations of existing Councils are not a current priority of the Queensland Government.

Under the *Local Government Act 2009*, as the Minister responsible for Local Government, only I may refer a request for a boundary change to the Local Government Change Commission. The Queensland Government's policy for a Local Government boundary change or de-amalgamation of this nature requires each of the following criteria to be met before a referral to the Local Government Change Commission:

- a request from the local communities affected by the proposed change
- resolutions supporting the proposed change from the affected Local Government(s), in this case the Southern Downs Regional Council
- assessments demonstrating the future financial sustainability of all proposed new Local Government areas, including an agreement on the transfer of assets and liabilities and the impacts on existing Council employees, if such a proposal was to go ahead.

The Queensland Government's policy also provides that if the Local Government Change Commission recommends the proposed boundary change should go ahead, a referendum of all residents in the affected Council area will take place before the recommendation is implemented.

I am also aware of recent comments that the Council's Mayor, Councillor Tracy Dobie is now supportive of the proposal and will advocate to her fellow Councillors to support de-amalgamation. It is now a matter for the entire Southern Downs Regional Council to consider its position.

If further information is required, I encourage petitioners to contact Mr Damon Meadows, Senior Regional Advisor, Local Government and Regional Services (South) in the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs on 4616 7314 or by email at damon.meadows@dlgrma.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



STIRLING HINCHLIFFE MP
Minister for Local Government,
Minister for Racing and
Minister for Multicultural Affairs