



**Warren Pitt MP**  
Member for Mulgrave



**Queensland  
Government**

MC07.4194

**Minister for Main Roads and  
Local Government**

11 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 no. 842-07 regarding local government reform and the amalgamation of Daringa Shire 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 for the Central Highlands Regional Council.

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.

The Commission gave consideration to the 102 suggestions it received in relation to this region and noted receipt of 390 anti-amalgamation postcards.

The Commission's report highlights that future growth will place increasing demands for connectivity, economic prosperity and social self-sufficiency, regardless of the particular locality where people live. Councils that have the capacity to deal with broader communities of interest around these themes will deliver the best outcomes for their constituents. Equally they will also have the greatest prospect of retaining unique and distinctive places within their jurisdiction because of their enhanced capacity to manage the impacts of change in a way that recognises and protects those attributes which are valued by the local community.

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The Commission found that amalgamation of Emerald Shire Council, Bauhinia Shire Council, Daringa Shire Council and Peak Downs Shire Council will strengthen the ability of local government to engage with industry and State and Federal Governments in relation to environmental issues, economic development, road networks and water, waste and sewerage issues on a regional basis.

Furthermore, the Commission noted that the town of Emerald is the regional centre for the central highlands and central western Queensland where major educational, health, commercial, government, and retail services are located. Other towns have some of these facilities, however not to the extent available in Emerald, and therefore residents generally travel to Emerald or to Rockhampton.

Finally, the Commission argued that through amalgamation, the Central Highlands Regional Council will have greater capacity to improve economies of scale; attract, retain and develop skilled staff as well as build capacity of systems; undertake regional planning and infrastructure delivery and manage development of the region.

The Central Highlands Regional Council Local Transition Committee (LTC) has been established to help lead existing councils to the new arrangements.

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**