
From: Bill Loudon
Sent: Monday, 26 July 2010 3:52 PM
To: Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Subject: REVIEW OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL SYSTEM (Submission)

July 26 2010

The Research Director
Law, Justice and Safety Committee
Parliament House
BRISBANE Q 4670

Dear Chair

I have only one (1) issue to address : Timing of elections

Firstly allow me to advise the Committee that I am and always have been an ardent and committed proponent of Queensland council amalgamations and as a prolific writer to the Letters to the Editor section to newspapers throughout the state, I have on many occasions highlighted the numerous benefits that should and could be achieved as a result of amalgamations.

TIMING OF ELECTIONS:

Notwithstanding that the timing of March has been and still is the accepted and relatively complaint-free period for Local Government elections, I believe that the month of October should be given consideration solely as a consequence that first-time councillors being in their mere infancy of weeks into their new 'jobs' are expected and required to make significant decisions during budgetary deliberations.

Although it's not the first time that new councillors have got to come in and make those big decisions 'almost immediately', it's a whole new ball game now with much larger councils.

Should the Committee recommend the month of October for future Local Government elections, I suggest the year 2015 be considered in preference to 2012 for the implementation of such a change,

I feel it would be more acceptable by the community that an amendment to legislation to cover only a 43 month term instead of the usual 48 month term for those wishing to nominate as councillors for the 2012/2015 term rather than extending the current term of councillors.

As current councillors are virtually on a 'four year fixed contract' expiring in March 2012, reducing this term by five (5) months and holding an election in October 2011 as has been suggested by some (myself included in the past) would be impractical and unreasonable for a number of reasons. Most importantly among these are that councillors would and could rightly maintain their financial situations may be placed in jeopardy through loss of income, because of a 'breach of contract'.

However councillors who in the eyes of constituents have demonstrated ineffectiveness and/or incompetence, laziness and have not acted in the best interests of the electorate throughout this current term most definitely should not be gifted on a golden platter another seven (7) months remuneration at ratepayers expense.

In view of the previous paragraph, should the Committee deem that recommendations for next election be October 2012, please allow me to suggest the following:

27/07/2010

The current council be disbanded in March 2012 but the Mayor who was democratically elected by the 'majority' of constituents in the whole of the region, retain office until the October election and attend all budgetary meetings with the relevant council directors, managers etc.

Or an administrator be appointed during this time..

The savings of councillors salaries for this period could go towards offsetting the hefty amalgamation costs perceived by many current councillors and members of the community.

Sincerely

BILL LOUDON