



Speech by
**Hon. NITA
CUNNINGHAM**

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard 3 May 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government Awareness Week

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: I would like to inform members of the House that Local Government Awareness Week is being coordinated by the Local Government Association of Queensland and will run from 28 May to 3 June.

Local government is one of our state's oldest institutions and provides many of the services and facilities used every day by communities. The Local Government Act offers many opportunities for people to participate responsibly in planning and deciding future community services and facilities, yet community participation in local government decision making has generally been of a low level. In many instances I believe this is because people do not understand what local governments do or do not know how to influence council decision making.

Local Government Awareness Week provides opportunities for the public to learn more about local government and to become involved with their own council. It also enables councils to educate the community about the importance and diversity of services that local governments provide.

I am very pleased that my Department of Local Government and Planning is one of the sponsors of Local Government Awareness Week, along with several other state government departments and agencies. The interest among local governments in staging community events to promote what they do and encourage community participation is growing, and activities such as council open days, school visits, free access to facilities for the week and local business awards are planned.

Maroochy Shire Council is organising a Capture the Spirit of Maroochy photographic competition designed to depict every aspect of Maroochy's character, heritage and spirit through photography. Gold Coast City Council is preparing to launch stage 2 of its web site, which will include an interactive council game for school students. Whitsunday Shire Council is planning a Thankyou Volunteers function to acknowledge the contribution made by volunteers from the community, as well as a staff barbecue including a presentation of gifts to staff who have given 10 and 20 years continuous service to council. Primary school students around the state have the opportunity to participate in the Local Government Awareness Week colouring competition and will hopefully learn a little more about their council through their involvement.

Local Government Awareness Week is a significant event on the local government calendar and I would ask all members to support it in their electorates in whatever way they can.
