



Speech by
**Hon. NITA
CUNNINGHAM**

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard 7 November 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government Grants Commission

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (10.17 a.m.), by leave: I have pleasure in informing the House today that I have recently appointed a new Local Government Grants Commission for Queensland. At the outset, I would like to again acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the outgoing commission and its chair, Bill Rahmann.

The Queensland Local Government Grants Commission is responsible for recommending how the federal government's financial assistance grant is allocated to our state's councils. It also holds public hearings and receives submissions from councils about the grants. The single most common complaint I receive from councils about how that grant is distributed is that the methodology used to calculate how much each local government will receive is too complex.

The new Queensland Local Government Grants Commission now faces a challenging term as it performs the crucial task of reviewing our methodology. The new members of the commission are: the former CEO of Bundaberg City Council, Mr Dennis Byrnes, who has been appointed chair; the manager of the Local Government Funding Division of the Department of Local Government and Planning, Peter Woolley, as deputy chair; Toowoomba City Council deputy mayor Peter Wood; former mayor of the Burdekin shire, Beth Honeycombe; and Booringa shire mayor Warren Wilson. State cabinet has also given approval for legislation to be prepared to amend the Local Government Act to allow the membership of the commission to be expanded to include a member to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils.

The new commission is well equipped with the expertise and local government experience necessary to take on and meet the challenges it faces. However, I must add that no commission, no matter how effective, can distribute more to our councils than the total amount that Queensland is allocated by the federal government. And that, of course, is the root of some of their problems. Queensland councils are not receiving a fair go from the federal government and they can have no confidence that they will receive a fair go in the future if John Howard is re-elected on Saturday.
