



Speech by

**CARRYN SULLIVAN**

**MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE**

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Hansard 20 August 2002

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.27 p.m.): I am pleased to rise in support of the Local Government Amendment Bill 2002. I am also pleased that the opposition is supporting this bill. It was introduced by the Minister for Local Government and Planning, Nita Cunningham, and has certainly involved wide consultation. In June 2000, the departmental discussion paper was distributed and comments were invited from the Local Government Association, individual councils and other interested bodies. The LGAQ offered no objection to the provisions of the bill, but comments were provided by them during the drafting process and they have been taken into consideration.

This bill contains several amendments. It changes a number of local government electoral procedures to facilitate the effective conduct of local government elections. Those changes include amending the way a tied vote is resolved, providing for voters to apply for a declaration vote anywhere the returning officer decides they can, and allowing the returning officers who are also electors to vote at council elections. This legislation provides an up-to-date framework for an effective and accountable local government system.

This bill also creates a new procedure for developing a review of internal government electoral boundaries or for the Brisbane City Council ward boundaries, which I propose to concentrate the rest of my remarks on. This procedure is based upon the approach in the Electoral Act 1992, under a Goss Labor government, used to initiate redistributions of state electoral districts. Any system for initiating redistributions must continue to be based on the one vote, one value principle. Under the existing law, the Local Government Association provides that each divided local government area, including Brisbane city, must have a quota for voters for each councillor—the only fair and reasonable system. There is, however, a margin of allowance of 10 per cent for local government areas with more than 10,000 electors and 20 per cent for others. This margin is fair and effective and will help limit the number of redistributions necessary.

**Ms Keech:** They are very costly.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** Indeed. If the minister is told that one or more divisions exceed the margin, the minister can issue references to the Electoral Commission for the local government electoral and boundary review commissions to be set up. I believe that a new one has to be set up for Brisbane City Council. I take this opportunity to thank the minister's staff. They have put a lot of work into this. I commend the bill to the House.

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