



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT AREAS) BILL

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (8.48 p.m.): I rise to say a few words in support of this bill and indicate my party's support for it. This bill deals with a number of issues, including: providing indigenous councils with the capacity to attain full shire status under the Local Government Act; and, equally importantly, providing and maintaining, as the minister stated in her second reading speech, an accountable, transparent and streamlined system of government. In addition, the bill requires the new shires to incorporate a strategic planning and reporting strategy, and to move towards an accrual based financial accounting system. Due to the unique situation of the current councils and the way such councils have operated in the past, there is an acknowledgment of the need to recognise these cultural characteristics and the individual needs of the councils. This is to be applauded.

As a consequence of this acknowledgment, they will be exempt from certain provisions in the Local Government Act but still be accountable for their actions. In general, whilst protecting the essential elements inherent in these councils, the bill furthers the process of their development by moving them into the status of local government shires. Importantly, the bill provides for the training of councillors and senior staff in corporate government and leadership, and it assists in putting in place a structure that will provide certainty and security for the future of these councils.

The bill is a major step forward. Hopefully, it will alleviate the past problems faced by these councils. We must always remember that we live in one state and we need to work as one. The practices of teaching, assisting and guiding contained in the bill are to be commended. As I have stated, I support this bill.