



Speech by
Steve Dickson

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Thursday, 2 November 2006

AMALGAMATION

Mr DICKSON (Kawana—Lib) (9.26 pm): I rise to speak on an issue that is being discussed on the Sunshine Coast by our local media—amalgamation. Some people are very strongly in support of this, and some people are very strongly opposed to this. I personally believe the debate needs to be had. There are many people on the Sunshine Coast who have talked about this for a long, long time.

At this point in time the state and local governments are going through a process called size, shape and sustainability. This process should give the people of the Sunshine Coast the ability to understand what the benefits and the negatives will be; for instance, the savings that can be made and the costs that it may cost the community. We do not know what they are going to be, but we need to get it out there amongst the members of our community and find out what they are thinking.

The only way to move forward is to start this discussion regarding all of those positives and negatives. This issue has been around for a long time on the Sunshine Coast. We need to come to a decision not too far down the track. The only way that we are going to do that is by having a referendum. I hope that referendum is pushed forward by this government to give the people of the Sunshine Coast the opportunity either to go for amalgamation or to kill it once and for all.

Amalgamation has been around for some time. I want to see the people of our area have the opportunity to take it apart or make it happen. I will support them. We always give the people on the Sunshine Coast the opportunity to have their say. I would never like to see this government force amalgamation on the people of the Sunshine Coast, which we hear so much about. I know that it has happened in the past on the Gold Coast. The government pushes, pushes, pushes. We will not be pushed. The people of the Sunshine Coast will have their say, and it will only happen by a referendum. I will make sure that that happens. I am sure that the members of this House will want to support the people of the Sunshine Coast, and they will want to treat them fairly.

I will not talk too long tonight because I think we all need to go home and have a sleep, and a few people may need a cold shower. I would like to finish tonight on a very light note. I want to congratulate my son. He is another winner in politics. He is 19 years and two months old. He has put his hand up to fight on behalf of the people of the Sunshine Coast. I am sure that he will follow a very strong family tradition as my grandfather, my father and myself have done. I am sure that he will do a good job. One day he might be seen in this House.