



Speech by

Hon. Andrew Fraser

MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Hansard Thursday, 24 May 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government Reform

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport) (9.59 am): As the Beattie government undertakes the most sweeping reform to Queensland's local government in more than a century, I again today urge everyone with an interest to lodge a submission with the Local Government Reform Commission before tomorrow's close of submissions. As of today, the reform commission had received 21,610 submissions from councils, businesses and members of the public across the state. I anticipate many more will be received by 5 pm tomorrow.

The reform commission has been actively encouraging submissions, and that is despite the best efforts of the LGAQ to mislead the public in its attempts to undermine the integrity of the process. The independent commission chair, Bob Longland, was yesterday compelled to release a press statement—which I am holding here—after the LGAQ misrepresented his advice regarding submissions which were being couriered or hand-delivered rather than emailed or sent via the post. The LGAQ mischievously released a statement claiming the commission was refusing all hand deliveries for security reasons. As Mr Longland said in his statement, this demonstrated a degree of duplicity on the part of the LGAQ, which had itself hand-delivered its own submission.

I incorporated the letter from Mr Longland to Councillor Bell of the LGAQ in the *Hansard* last night, but it is important that I read that letter this morning for the benefit of all members. It states—

Dear Mr Bell

I refer to a media release in your name which states 'the Commission was refusing to provide the address for courier or hand deliveries citing security concerns'.

This is incorrect and misinformation of this nature does nothing to assist people wishing to deliver courier bags or hand deliver documents. The fact the LGAQ's own submission was hand delivered to, and received by, the Commission illustrates the fallacy of your claim. The Commission's concern is statements like this simply serve to cause unnecessary confusion, where none previously existed.

Both the reform commission and the Beattie government have been crystal clear in calling for submissions and actively encouraging everyone to get involved. In that light, I would encourage everyone who wants to get involved not to fall for attempts like these to confuse or meddle with the process. For this process to be carried out and completed in the most thorough, detailed and comprehensive manner possible, it is important that the reform commission obtains the views of as many Queenslanders as possible—not just those of councillors and mayors.

I welcome the strong interest in this important issue which will ultimately lead to better local government in this state. I encourage each member of this House to encourage their constituents to put pen to paper and provide their views. This is an opportunity to play a role in the most important reforms to local government in Queensland in more than a century.

Opposition members: Tell us the address.

Mr FRASER: For the record, submissions can be sent by post to PO Box 16325, City East, Queensland 4002, or they can be emailed to lgrc@qld.gov.au.

Mr Elmes: What building?

Mr FRASER: And for the record, and particularly for the benefit of the member for Noosa, the commission operates from premises in the Neville Bonner Building.