



Speech by

Hon. Andrew Fraser

MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA

Hansard Tuesday, 5 June 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government Reform

Hon. AP FRASER (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport) (10.03 am): With the close of public submissions, the independent Local Government Reform Commission is now working its way through each of the submissions it has received from councils, businesses and members of the public around the state. The reform commission has been charged with the responsibility of reviewing council boundaries and has encouraged as many submissions as possible, despite the efforts of some in attempting to discourage submissions.

At the closing date for submissions—Friday, 25 May—the reform commission had received more than 35,900 pieces of mail. We need to be clear about the nature of those submissions. Judging by the comments of a number of people since the closing date, it is important that I affirm the following facts which have been detailed by the independent chair, Bob Longland. For the record, the majority were form letters or postcards or petitions and many were from the same area. This was particularly the case for material received regarding the Noosa shire. Ten batches of letters and cards from this area included over 31,000 separate pieces of correspondence. Most of the postcards and letters received were identical other than signatures and so have been collated in batches. Around 1,400 of the submissions took the form of thorough and detailed submissions.

Mr Longland was quoted in the media last week confirming the commission's views that it has the capacity to complete the task. He said—

We don't need more time. I'm confident we can undertake this task and report by the 1st of August.

We're certainly giving weight to the numbers involved, but ultimately everyone needs to remember that we're not set up to run a poll of any sort on this topic.

I have every confidence in Mr Longland and his six commissioners making a thorough analysis of the detailed submissions and, indeed, having proper regard for each and every properly made submission. The commission is obliged under its enabling legislation to take account of each submission, and I have every confidence that it will. The reform commission will deliver its report on 1 August and at that time it will be made available to the public. Along with everyone else, I look forward to the report.