



Speech by

**Hon. Andrew Fraser**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT COOT-THA**

Hansard Tuesday, 21 August 2007

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Local Government Reform**

**Hon. AP FRASER** (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport) (10.06 am): The great majority of Queensland councils are getting on with the job of local government reform. It is time for moving forward. We are not going to move against councils who seek to have polls, because we are moving on. The laws have been passed, the boundaries are in place and we are looking to the future. Councils are beginning the transition into more stable, more sustainable and more streamlined local governments. They are also leading the transition in the communities they were elected to serve. The next step for new councils is to lead at the local level to form local transition committees.

As the Premier noted, 22 of them have taken the vital first step towards forming their LTCs either by scheduling their first meetings or nominating their members of the committees. I attended a meeting of the Cairns and Douglas representatives last week. I presented the Cairns city and Douglas shire councils with the first instalment of \$200,000 for their LTC to establish the new Cairns Regional Council of the future. These committees, which include two members from each affected council, union representation and the potential for other community representation, will be critical on the road to reform. They will provide for new councils that are fully functioning entities. On day one after the next local government elections those entities will be in place and the committee will guide ratepayers through the process.

Accordingly, each local transition committee will receive state government funding both now and into the future as part of a \$27.1 million reform package, as I outlined to the House at the last sittings. This funding is a down payment for the future of sustainable local government the length and breadth of Queensland. Our funding commitment extends beyond the next scheduled local government elections in March 2008. We are committed to seeing this through and providing support at each and every step along the way.

Like the mayors and councillors of Cairns and Douglas councils, 21 other councils are leading by example in getting their LTCs up and running. They are getting on with the job. I would urge every council to look now to the future. I applaud the efforts of those who are and with the financial assistance and support from the state government we will build a stronger system of local government for the 21st century.