



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 22 May 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Local Government Reform

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.44 am): My government is absolutely determined to reform local government in this state. The government understands that reform is difficult. We also understand that one size does not fit all. However, without reform the system faces major problems, challenges and difficulties. We are determined to achieve sensible reform.

Queensland currently has 1,258 councillors—that is, 1,117 mainstream councillors, 79 Aboriginal councillors and 62 Islander councillors. No-one but the opposition would argue that those numbers are reasonable. Today I announce that reform will be achieved without forced redundancies for council employees. Everyone who wants to continue working in local government will be able to do so post 15 March 2008, which is the date of the next local government elections.

I also announce today that our employment package to assist local government transition to the new arrangements next year will be supported with an initial allocation of \$12 million in next month's state budget. We will legislate to protect and preserve jobs as part of our reform package. This protection will apply to all local government employees, apart from CEOs, senior executives on contract and, of course, mayors and councillors.

There has been a lot of nonsense in this debate, and I say clearly to the House today that this is about protecting the jobs of all local government employees. Bankrupt councils do not employ anyone. The government is determined to achieve reform of local government—sensible reform that is in the interests of all Queenslanders.