



Speech by

Rosa Lee Long

MEMBER FOR TABLELANDS

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION (INDIGENOUS REGIONAL COUNCILS) AMENDMENT BILL; LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Ms LEE LONG: The councils were amalgamated because the government said it would make weak councils stronger, but that was not true on so many levels. It was only the huge majority of government numbers that allowed the ALP to pass that it into law. The latest proof of how weak that financial argument is has emerged from New South Wales, which went through a similar amalgamation process only a few years ago.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would remind the member for Tablelands of my comment about relevance.

Ms LEE LONG: One of the greatest risks about amalgamations is that the four tablelands shires face the cost of that transition into amalgamation. Just merging their IT systems alone is expected to cost nearly \$3 million, yet the entire transition assistance package that they will receive is likely to be only some \$780,000. In the House on 22 August, the then Deputy Premier said—

When those councils do take into account their financial requirements in the next six months—in the next six years—they will have to take account of many of their financial circumstances. When they do they will be looking—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Tablelands, I have reminded you about relevance. You are dealing with the removal of a specific section.

Ms LEE LONG: With the removal of that, it is only common sense that people should be able to speak their minds. We hear this government speaking about democracy all the time in this House. The provisions of the bill are certainly not what we could call democratic.