



Speech by

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BARCALDINE REGIONAL COUNCIL NAME CHANGE

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (9.38 pm): Today I tabled a petition calling on this government to give the electors of the previous Jericho, Aramac and Barcardine shires the opportunity to change the name of the newly amalgamated shire from Barcardine Regional Council to the Galilee Regional Council.

On 27 July 2007 it was announced that the Aramac Shire Council, Barcardine Shire Council and Jericho Shire Council were forced to amalgamate under the new name of Barcardine Regional Council. Shire residents were never asked about the amalgamation, nor did they support it. In reality it was the greatest attack on this democratic tier of government and rural communities ever undertaken in Queensland's history.

Aramac and Jericho shires' loss of identity has been an issue for the fiercely proud residents of these shires, and while the name remains as Barcardine Regional Council the task of unifying this new local government area will be more difficult. There is no dispute that Barcardine has played a significant role in the development of Queensland as a state and Australia as a nation. But this could also be said of Aramac, Alpha, Jericho or Muttaborra. All towns have an equal claim.

Accordingly, the state government and the reform commission stipulated that any consideration of a name change or the implementation of divisions would require the consensus of all three shires. On 2 April 2008 the newly elected Barcardine Regional Council recognised the importance of uniting all three former shires and also recognised how divisive it was to name the new regional council after only one of the communities it encompassed.

It surveyed the residents of the three shires and almost two-thirds of respondents indicated that the name Galilee Regional Council more accurately represented the shires to be amalgamated. Each of the shires has its own icons. The Barcardine shire has the Tree of Knowledge and is known as the birthplace of the Labor movement. The Aramac shire is renowned for the historical Harry Redford Cattle Drive and magnificent geological features such as the natural lakes north of the shire known as Lake Dunn and Lake Galilee. In Muttaborra the Muttaborrasaurus Langdoni, Australia's second most complete skeleton, was discovered by Doug Landon in 1963. Jericho on the Jordan River south of Lake Galilee is a picturesque town. Its most famous feature is the Crystal Trumpeters, which depicts the story of the original Jericho. Alpha is known as the gateway to the west. It has a rich railway history and a peaceful lifestyle. Many of its buildings have been decorated with murals depicting local scenes.

The name Galilee comes from the Galilee Basin and all three former shires are located within this area. Altering the name to Galilee Regional Council will provide a name that is based on an area of commonality to all three former shires and has the greater potential of being a unifying factor than a name that is linked to only one of the former shires. More importantly, it will place all three former shires on an equal footing and have a positive effect on the unification of the three areas under one central banner while individual towns will retain their own identities.