



Speech by


Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard Tuesday, 21 August 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Local Government

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government) (10.34 am): In the past few months, it has been my great honour to meet with the mayors and councillors from most of the state's 73 local governments, and I humbly thank them. From the Gold Coast to Normanton, Cherbourg to Thargomindah, councillors have come to the table with a willingness to get the best outcomes for their communities. This tour is about two things. Firstly, it is about healing the wounds from a generation of rule where centralist control was the order of the day, a time when those who ran this parliament believed that a council's true worth should be measured by a one-size-fits-all community plan instead of the satisfaction of the people who pay their rates. From the brutal forced amalgamations, where the majority of councils were written off with the stroke of Andrew Fraser's pen, to the imposition of expensive state levies, councils were treated with contempt. It is with heartfelt relief that I announce a new era for local government in Queensland.

The meetings with councils are helping me gather the information I need to change the Local Government Act to put local communities back in charge of their destinies and end the 'George Street knows best' mentality. We will introduce the first round of these amendments to the act by the end of this year. Mayors and councillors are relying on us to deliver those changes to help them provide fast and effective solutions to their communities. We will not let them down. I have been impressed by the resilience of all of our communities but particularly those out west. They do not whinge; they do not whine, and perhaps that is why they have been overlooked for so many years. When I see firsthand communities waiting years for an approval to do the basics like running power to an industrial estate or acquiring extra land to bury their people, I know the time has arrived for a new way of governing.

The councils are not looking for handouts or a free ride. Without exception, Queensland councils have understood the diabolical financial legacy left to us by those who sit opposite. They know I am walking into our meetings with empty pockets. They also know that the Newman government is doing everything it can to change that situation, such as finally balancing our books and, in the process, restoring the state's AAA credit rating. This will save millions of dollars for councils and, therefore, the long-suffering ratepayers.

Councils are struggling at the restraints imposed by Labor so they can deliver for their communities. They are asking the state directly and respectfully to put 'local' back in local government and allow them to again set their own course.