




Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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Record of Proceedings, 31 October 2013

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (5.15 pm), in reply: I thank all the honourable members who have made a contribution today to the debate on the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. Can I reinforce the importance of the bill in realising the government's commitment to empower Queensland local government by ensuring there are appropriate transitional and financial arrangements in place for the four new deamalgamated local governments on changeover day and in further supporting the government's commitment to reforming Queensland's planning and development assessment system.

I wish to make some brief observations on some of the contributions today. They have been very good contributions. I will leave the opposition until last, as there are a few things that I wanted to outline to my friend the member for Mackay. I will start with the member for Warrego who very succinctly articulated the value of the committee process. It is working well. Indeed, some of the changes put forward by his committee were good ones. It is an example of how the committee system can function in a very positive manner.

The member for Southport spoke on planning reform—an area near and dear to his heart. Whilst the bulk of the heavy lifting has been done already, can I acknowledge that this does enable a few nuts and bolts to be cleaned up. It is this government's view that planning is at the heart of the economic revival that this state so desperately needs.

The member for Springwood is one of the great orators of this parliament and a great friend of local government. He spoke about the forced amalgamations and the wasted money that the process uncovered. We are living that legacy each and every day. I thought that was a very valuable point that had not been made.

The member for Gladstone took us back to the dreaded size, shape and sustainability. We all remember that, member for Gladstone—we sure do. We in the local government family were told what a wonderful job we were all doing. We were all patted on the head and given little bags of lollies. We were told to continue down the path of size, shape and sustainability and it would deliver us all great things. One morning, in a moment of madness—and the member for Gladstone even remembers the time—all that hard work was put to the sword. In the process, the face of local government changed in this state forever.

I also thank her for her kind words. She raised something else and it would be remiss of me this evening not to talk about this. She named one of the transfer managers—Graeme Kanofski. There are three others for the three other areas—Jeff Tate, Peter Franks and Rod Ferguson. I publicly thank the work of those four gentlemen. Can I also place on record my sincere thanks for the manner in which the four continuing CEOs have conducted themselves. Those eight gentlemen have been fiercely proud and have fiercely defended the rights of their separate organisations, and so they

should. They have entered this process with a level of maturity that I am humbled by. They have all done an outstanding job.

The member for Algeester spoke about the instant dismissal, the threat that if you dare have a referendum what would happen. Whilst he was not as brutal as the member for Noosa in commenting about the former Treasurer, he did articulate that bullying very, very clearly. The member for Burnett spoke about the red-tape reduction and self-empowerment—something he knows all too well. The member for Beaudesert, who was a late starter but I am glad he was because he made a wonderful contribution, spoke about the integrity offence.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will not take that one. He spoke about the fact that a minor integrity offence should not allow for disqualification. He spoke clearly as to why that should be in the act and not the regulation.

I was very glad to hear the member for Noosa speak and he mentioned the word 'crusade'. Well it has been a crusade of his and his community. I am not sure how you could ever convince more than 80 per cent of people to support anything really, yet that has been the case in Noosa. It was an overwhelming result—over 80 per cent of people voted to re-establish a council. They knew the facts; they were put on the table. I think that shows the level of passion there and indeed the level of passion that the member for Noosa has displayed. May I place on record that he made a commitment that this would be his goal and he pushed and he fought, and I commend him for achieving it.

The member for Hervey Bay spoke on Wide Bay Water. I think this change strikes a good balance because the community of the Fraser Coast have been, let us use the word, 'divided' in recent times. We have to unite that community. We have to find a way to restore faith in the council and this entity that provides a valuable service. It has in recent times been a very contentious issue. What I think we have done is struck a balance, and that is that we have allowed one member of the council to be on the board, not as the chair or the deputy chair. I think the member for Mackay clearly summed up why this is not open slather; it applies to a couple of organisations. But council clearly want a level of oversight. We want to make sure that that entity can still operate independently. But I hope this level of oversight ends the madness and ends the uncertainty that the member for Hervey Bay clearly spoke about, because this community needs some certainty to be able to get on with life.

Finally, I thank the member for Nicklin for his kind words and for his contribution. He is right. I think we have struck a good balance with the Noosa on Weyba development, and that is enabling the local community to find its balance, to each have a say and to be able to make the decision that best suits the local area that they are each responsible for.

I turn to the contribution of the member for Mackay and start by thanking him for his support of many of the initiatives. I acknowledge that there is a fundamental shift, and I thank him for that. I have to raise two issues. The first is that the member for Mackay tabled a document and he seeks to paint this as a broken promise. It is Halloween, member for Mackay, but you are not going to try to come back and haunt me on this, because we have delivered exactly what we said we were going to do and then some. We went to the electorate and we said we would give communities an opportunity to pursue this. Whilst the document that the member for Mackay tabled was a small extract, I have the whole thing here—I carry it; I sleep with it; it is a bible. Paragraph 9.1 states—

An LNP Government will ensure that there is an open and logical process under the authority of a Queensland Boundaries Commissioner ...

That has been delivered—tick. Paragraph 9.2 states—

The LNP's preference is for Queensland Councils to now remain as currently constituted to avoid any further disruption and cost for local communities. We don't believe there is a widespread need or community mood for changes to Local Government boundaries.

Paragraph 9.3 states—

However, we do recognise that there are a small number of Queensland communities that will want to re-examine their position. The LNP is committed to giving local people a choice about de-amalgamation.

What did we do? We actually named the two councils that we said we would focus on, and they were Noosa and Douglas. But we did say that the process would be fair and open. If you want the definition of doing as you say and being fair dinkum, it is this because we named two, yet we tested five with the Boundaries Commissioner and four went to a referendum. We said if it were possible to

create two viable entities we would take the information to the community and allow them to have their say based on the information at hand; we did that. Four of them stacked up. The communities went in with their eyes wide open—the entity wishing to deamalgamate is to pay the cost. They had their say and now this legislation enables that to occur.

The member for Mackay mentioned clauses 10 and 11 and expressed some concern with that. I hope that I am able to allay those fears for the member for Mackay. The clauses relate to who can refer a matter for a boundary change. In terms of what happened in 2007 with any entity that was amalgamated, only the minister can refer that on. But it is not just those entities that were amalgamated; it is anything touched during that process. As a result of that, it is far more broad and it involves anything, including if there has been a name change or a reduction or an increase in the number of councillors. So, effectively, of the currently 73 councils that we have, the vast majority were touched in that process to the point that there would literally only be several councils—and they would be the very small western shires—that were not touched by that process. So we are in fact dealing with a change that brings into line only a few Queensland councils with what happened in 2007, and I hope the member for Mackay can see that in good faith.

I conclude by thanking everyone for their contribution. Again, I thank the member for Warrego and his committee for their involvement in this. It is something that is near and dear to my heart. I am very, very proud of what has been achieved and in a very short time, too. We only embarked on this process a short while ago, and to see it reach this point is something I am particularly proud of. I sincerely thank everyone for their commitment. Can I say that if further changes are needed they will be made. I have no qualms in coming back into this place. If local government need more certainty, if local government need more ability to serve their constituents, we will continue to make changes, because at the heart of the economic revival that this state needs are councils that come on the journey with us, are councils that want things to happen—because, in the vast majority of cases when somebody turns up to do something, the first face they see will be that of the mayor and the councillors. We need them to come on board. We need them to be empowered. It is a great pleasure for me to thank everyone for their contribution. I commend the bill to the House.