




Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**

**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 June 2015

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (11.08 pm): Once again I will be brief. I rise to speak to the amendments in the Local Government and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. Council elections, as we all know, are an essential part of the democratic process and, as we also know, they are expensive. Anything we can do to manage that cost to the ratepayer is worth pursuing as long as the democratic process is open and transparent. Allowing the CEO to serve as the returning officer with the support of the council would be one way of doing this. This has been done for many years before the change in 2008. In 2014 the act was amended again to allow the CEO to be the returning officer. Once again we see this government reversing amendments where there would not appear to be any valid or overwhelming argument to support the change.

In the seat of Condamine, in both the Toowoomba Regional Council and the Western Downs Regional Council, there is much more interest in support of a full postal ballot to elect both councillors and mayor. This would be a significant saving for both the council and the candidates and also their families and supporters. It would also save the general public from having to visit a polling booth on election day which in some areas of the region can be quite a drive.

We all know the time and expense that is involved on polling day and all that goes into the arrangements to secure venues and staff for the day. All this would not be necessary if we had a postal plebiscite. Not everyone and not every council would probably be in favour of this proposal, but I believe it is a discussion that we need to have.

As we know, local government is recognised as being a more hands-on forum of government than others, mainly because of the services that are provided and the community services it is involved in. I am sure that if you asked most of the local government representatives the one thing they would like most from both their state and federal colleagues, other than money, would be to stop changing rules and regulations and let them get on with their job. Let them use the valuable dollars that they have as they are meant to be used, not paying for electoral workers but on the services they specialise in—roads, rubbish and water. There is no need for this change, and I do not support it.