



Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**


**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2016

**INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to speak to the auditor's report on the results of the audit of local government. I would also like to thank the member for Keppel for her kind words. I acknowledge the member for Keppel's previous role. She brings a great depth of knowledge in planning ability and planning intricacies to our committee. I think it is important that we have that skill base on our committee.

Local governments are very important in the seat of Gregory. In my electorate we have the Central Highlands Regional Council, the Barcaldine Regional Council, the Longreach Regional Council, Barcoo Shire Council, Quilpie Shire Council, Blackall-Tambo Regional Council and the very important Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council, which also does a great job. Local councils are more than just roads, rates and rubbish in Gregory. They play a critical role not only in delivering services at the grassroots level. They play an important role in providing services from economic incubators, getting projects off the ground and getting events off the ground. They play a critical role in Western Queensland and Central Queensland. I enjoy a great relationship with all of my councils.

It would be remiss of me if I did not pay respects to probably one of the best mayors regional Queensland has ever seen who is retiring after the council election on Saturday. That is Peter Maguire, who is affectionately known in regional Queensland and across the state as 'Maggot'. He is one of the original larrikins in regional Queensland and he has certainly played a significant role in not only the Emerald Shire Council but the Central Highlands Regional Council for 28 years and for 12 years as mayor. I have known Peter Maguire and the Maguire family most of my life. It is not only Peter who plays a critical role; it is his whole family including his brothers. Everybody involved with the Maguire family has a significant role in the town of Emerald and Central Highlands.

**Mr Pearce:** What is his nickname?

**Mr MILLAR:** 'Maggot'. I take that interjection from the member for Mirani. Peter certainly deserves to be recognised in this House as one of the most significant mayors in regional Queensland for a very long time. I certainly pay my respects to him. I wish Peter, his beautiful wife, Jo, and his two children, Brooke and Mark, all the very best. I am sure we will continue to see Peter Maguire play a significant role in regional Queensland. We need him to do so because he is certainly a strong advocate for regional Queensland.

This report looked at many issues, including the financial reporting issues that councils face. It can be difficult for regional councils—certainly councils out in my seat—because they have such a large area to cover. This report looked at asset management, but one of the biggest issues that faced regional councils and councils in Western Queensland was amalgamation. It had a significant impact on how

those councils had to operate. It forced a lot of issues onto those councils that they had never seen before. One only has to look at the new Barcaldine Regional Council. Before amalgamation, it had the Aramac council, the Jericho council and the Barcaldine council. They have been joined into one. Trying to have the resources, the funds and the management expertise to cover the whole council can be very difficult. I can tell the House now that that council does a significant and fantastic job trying to cover as much of the area as they can to maintain those services.

Members only have to look at the Longreach Regional Council, which had the old Ilfracombe council plus the Longreach council come together. Those councils out in Western Queensland have large areas to cover. Look at the Central Highlands Regional Council: it had the Peak Downs council, the Bauhinia council and the Duaringa shire council come together. The Central Highlands Regional Council covers an area the size of Tasmania. That regional council in regional Queensland has to maintain a lot of infrastructure and a lot of resources and keep all the services going for the local community. They certainly play a significant role.

Finally, I would like to talk about something that is very important—that is, the tendering process for these regional councils. If we are going to tender projects in regional councils such as the Central Highlands, Longreach or Barcaldine, we must make sure we keep local people employed on these tendering projects. The last thing we need is outsiders taking those jobs, and we have seen outsiders from as far away as Cairns come down to the Central Highlands Regional Council to take those jobs. We have to employ locals and we have to make sure that those tendered projects go to local people to keep local people employed in local councils.