




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION (VALIDATION OF RATES AND CHARGES) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.50 pm): I also rise to make a very short contribution and speak in favour of the Local Government Legislation (Validation of Rates and Charges) Amendment Bill 2018. I do not intend to cover the bill in detail. Others before me have done it and done it well. The member for Cairns just made a good contribution. Whilst philosophically I do not like any retrospectivity in legislation, I will accept it when it is to effectively state what was always the intent. Clearly the intent when a council tables its rates for the year is to levy what it sees as a reasonable contribution for its residents to pay. I am sure the Fraser Coast Council did so in good faith, as would the other couple of dozen councils we have spoken about.

My contribution today concerns local government in general. Whilst it is important to change legislation when needed, I will not stand here and say that local government in this state is broken. As I look around this chamber I see that we are in good hands. There are over a dozen people with experience in local councils from both sides of politics, from the crossbench and people who have represented the largest council in the nation, including the member for Clayfield, to smaller country councils, mayors, deputy mayors, councillors and aldermen. We are well served.

What I do not want to see is somehow the autonomy of local government eroded piece by piece. I will not stand by and allow things like that and the behaviour of a handful of bad individuals to be used as a stalking horse for this place to claw back power from our councils. We should never stand for that. Faced with the choice of people being able to pass judgement on mayors and councillors who they can elect and hold accountable every four years and a minister living in Brisbane, albeit well intentioned, I will always choose the mayor and councillor. That was my view even when I was in that role and I will always defend it.

How much do people believe in councils? I will tell you how much they believe in them. Around this state when there were forced amalgamations we saw communities rise up in anger. How angry were they? Years after they were prepared to reach into their pockets and pay for de-amalgamation even when they knew it was going to cost them some money up-front, so they are passionate about it. I do not for one moment suggest that everyone in this place is perfect or that everybody in councils is perfect, but I will say that fundamentally the people who take up those very highly regarded positions as mayors and councillors do so with the best of intentions, and I am sure the dozen or more people from this place did the same.

In closing, I fully support this bill. An error was made and the minister is doing the right thing in tidying it up to ensure that there is not pandemonium on the rates front. It is retrospective, but it does restore the intent that was always there in the first place. Long may the autonomy of local government continue in this great state!