

Question on Notice
No. 1001
Asked on Tuesday 7 August 2007

MR LANGBROEK asked the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport (MR FRASER) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the new classification of Regional Council—
Will he outline the (a) definition of what constitutes a Regional Council, (b) new definition of what constitutes a Shire, Town or City and (c) reasons for the new definition of Regional Council and what benefits will flow to a Regional Council that will not be available to Shire Councils?

ANSWER:

The Government is creating a new 'regional' class of local government, in line with the Local Government Reform Commission's recommendation.

In its efforts to recommend better structural arrangements for local governments in Queensland, the Local Government Reform Commission proposed new local governments which do not fit into the existing paradigms of cities, towns, or shires.

Currently, under the *Local Government Regulation 2005*, the criteria for a local government area to be declared a 'city' are that:

- the area must be the centre of a region providing commercial, industrial, health and public sector services for the region;
- the area must, for the three years immediately before the declaration, have had:
 - (i) a population of at least 25,000;
 - (ii) a population of at least 15,000 in its urban centre; and
 - (iii) a population density of at least 150 for each square kilometre of its urban centre.

For a local government area to be declared a 'town', the area must be urban in character. All other local governments are declared to be 'shires'. No changes were proposed to the existing criteria or definition of cities, towns or shires.

The objectives of the *Local Government Act 1993* relating to the local government reform process required the Commission to consider and recommend whether there should be a class of local government area other than those currently provided for and, if so, what criteria should apply.

The Commission noted the many references to 'regional' considerations is a number of suggestions which resulted in the recommendation for this additional 'regional' class of local government area.

This new class of 'regional' council relates to a local government area that has been amalgamated and does not fit the criteria for a city or town and is not likely to have the rural focus that a shire class suggests. Instead, regional local governments reflect a need for more robust and sustainable governance that has the capacity to

address and manage a range of economic and social development issues which extend across a considerable geographic area.