



22<sup>nd</sup> August 2007

Mr. Stephen Palethorpe  
Secretary  
Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA 2600

Fax 02 62775809

Dear Sir

I hereby wish to appear before the above Committee when it has public hearings in Cairns, on Monday, 3rd September 2007, to examine the new laws introduced into Federal Parliament last week backing a proposed referendum on the amalgamation of Queensland Local Authority areas.

Matters I wish to raise with the Committee are:-

1. That I believe this legislation is a 'political stunt' to keep the anger amongst certain sections of the community in the public eye until the upcoming Federal Election is held.
2. The hypocrisy of the Howard Government in proposing a referendum on the Queensland Local Government Amalgamations when it did not do the same when the Kennett Liberal Government amalgamated Local Councils in Victoria in the 1990's.
3. The hypocrisy of the Howard Government in legislating and paying for a referendum on what is purely a State Government matter, Local Authorities, and not for matters under its jurisdiction, such as the 'work choices' legislation.

If Australia is to follow some States in the United States of America in having 'Citizen initiated Referendums' the legislation authorising this should be for any matter the community wishes to put to a referendum and not just one that the Prime Minister considers to his electoral advantage.

4. The hypocrisy of the Coalition Parties of interfering in Local Government matters when it failed to support a referendum in the 1980's to include Local Government in the Australian Constitution.
5. My concern that the proposed amalgamations in Far North Queensland did not go far enough as the proposed Cassowary Coast Regional Council will not overcome the issues that led to an appointment of an Administrator to the Johnstone Shire Council, as the existing Johnstone Shire will be the dominant area in the amalgamated Council with 11,739 votes to the existing Cardwell Shires 5850 votes.

I believe that the area of the existing Johnstone Shire where sugar is supplied to the Tully Sugar Mill, including Mission Beach, should be transferred to the Cardwell Shire, and the remainder transferred to the larger and more stable Cairns Regional Council.

I am informed by Tully Sugar, that the northern extremity of the Tully mill area is between El Arish and Silkwood.

6. My concern over the lack of transparency in the process of creation of Divisional Boundaries within the Councils where it has been decided to have 'divided Councils'.

While I accept there may be insufficient time to carry out the process which occurs in a State and Federal Redistributions, I do believe that the submissions received by the Electoral Commission of Queensland for the proposed internal boundaries should be posted on the web site for everybody to see what each submission suggests.

I look forward to the opportunity to appear before the Committee to expand on this submission and could you please advise me the venue and time such hearings will be held in Cairns



Yours sincerely



R. J. Richardson

