



**24 August 2007**

The Secretary  
Senate Finance and Public Administration Standing Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary

**Re. Inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Bill 2007**

I refer to the senate inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Bill 2007.

The Central Western Qld Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) is a regional planning agency and regional organisation of councils owned by and representing the eleven shires of Central Western Qld.

RAPAD notes the outline of the Bill that being:

*The Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Bill 2007 (the Bill)* contains measures arising from the Prime Minister's announcement on 7 August 2007 to allow the Australian Electoral Commission (the AEC) to undertake any plebiscite on the amalgamation of any local government body in any part of Australia.

The Bill amends the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* (the Electoral Act) to authorise the AEC's use and disclosure of any information held by the AEC, including information contained in an electoral roll, for the purpose of conducting an activity, such as a plebiscite, under subsection 7A(1).

Additionally, the Bill seeks to override a State or Territory law which prohibits, penalises or discriminates against a person or a body who has entered, or proposes to enter, into an arrangement with the AEC, or who takes part in or assists with (or proposes to take part in or assist with) an arrangement with the AEC.

RAPAD fully supports the Bill given the undemocratic manner in which the Qld State Government removed the rights of local communities, via their elected councils, to voice the decision on the recently announced local government reform recommendations.



RAPAD

It is unfortunate that despite the submissions to the Qld State Governments local government reform commission, stating the regions and communities opposition to forced amalgamation and boundary changes based on factual economic and social data, the government moved ahead with amalgamations. This report is attached.

Denying communities the right to express an opinion via referendum is an affront to democracy and this action of the Federal Government to override the State Government is fully supported.

If you have any further enquiries please do not hesitate to call me 46583944.

Yours Sincerely

David Arnold  
General Manager

**Att**  
RAPAD Report to the Qld Local Government Reform Commission