

Submission To The Senate Committee on Finance and Public Administration

24 August 2007

Re: Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Bill 2007.

We wish to lodge our strongest condemnation of the legislation which the State Government (at the behest of Premier Beattie) rushed through in order to prevent Local Government Plebiscites. In our opinion, this legislation is not only undemocratic, but sets a dangerous precedent which could be used by future Governments.

It is also outrageous that the State Government, having announced in 2004 that there would be no forced council amalgamations during the term of that government, proceeded with forcing many councils to amalgamate against the wishes of the ratepayers.

We strongly question the independence of the LGRC set up by Premier Beattie as the Act contained provision to permit any Commissioner considering any matter even though they may have a conflict of interest. One of the Commissioners, Mr Mackenroth, is a director of a major property developer and reputed to have close ties with the Property Council.

Furthermore, the LGRC was clearly given insufficient time to make any reasonable assessment of council boundaries with a view to amalgamations.

To date, there has been no reasonable explanation given as to any benefit to be gained in amalgamating Noosa Council with Caloundra and Maroochy Councils and this amalgamation has been publicly opposed in the strongest manner by the vast majority of ratepayers.

Finally, we fully endorse the proposed Federal Government legislation to overturn this draconian act by the State Government.

Gordon & Narelle Hayes