

Our ref: DGC11/1453

Your ref: 8032

07 SEP 2011

Mr Evan Pardon
Chief Executive Officer
Rockhampton Regional Council
PO Box 1860
Rockhampton QLD 4700

Dear Mr Pardon

Re: Capricorn Coast Ratepayers and Residents Association - de-amalgamation petition - Livingstone Shire Council area

Thank you for your letter of 16 August 2011. In response, I am providing you with some background to the amalgamation process and the outcomes achieved.

The reform of Local Governments in Queensland was necessary to ensure long-term financial sustainability. Reviews of Local Government across Australia up to 2007 demonstrated a widespread and common theme, with many small Local Government areas at risk. In 2011, there remains concern about the future of many smaller communities in Australia.

The evaluations of Rockhampton and Livingstone undertaken in 2007 indicated a moderate financial outlook. The evaluations of Fitzroy and Mount Morgan indicated the two Local Governments had a weak financial outlook. The rationale for the amalgamation of the four Local Governments was described by the Local Government Reform Commission as creating an organisation of a scale and capacity to undertake comprehensive natural resource management across the region in an integrated manner, in addition to managing its urban growth areas.

As in your own Local Government area, the recent natural disasters have shown how the bigger Councils are much better placed to react to extreme circumstances.

At the same time, the Commonwealth Government has introduced national reforms aimed at improving asset management planning and long-term financial planning in response to the concerns about the ongoing financial sustainability of Local Government generally, and its ability to invest in infrastructure at the local level.

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In Queensland, these reforms formed part of the Local Government Reform Program, which comprised the four elements of amalgamation, capacity building, the introduction of a new Local Government Act, associated Regulations and Local Government Electoral Act and performance measurement and reporting (now call Sustainability and Reporting). All four programs have been implemented.

The Sustainability and Reporting process evaluates Local Government financial sustainability against four elements; asset management, financial planning, governance and community engagement. The Rockhampton Regional Council has been evaluated to be in a strong financial position.

Three years after amalgamation, Local Governments are financially stronger and the Auditor-General has reported significant improvements in the financial statements of a number of Local Governments.

It is now well recognised that meaningful community engagement is a key principle used by Local Government to develop a single vision for the future; the process shrinking the distance between the Local Government and the community by increasing the awareness of all parties of what is likely to work and what is not. Community engagement allows the residents in the community to improve their understanding of issues behind the government decision making process, gaining awareness of constraints as well as opportunities.

All levels of Government are seeking to ensure that action is taken to support the smaller communities and Local Governments and the way of life that all Queenslanders have become accustomed to.

If you require any further information, please contact Mr David Dobbs, Acting Executive Director, on 3239 0020 or david.dobbs@dlgp.qld.gov.au who will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



Jack Noye
Director-General
Department of Local Government and Planning

DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

F10/4934

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DG

Ref: DGC11/1453

Date sent to division

ACTION REQUIRED

- Prepare DG response
- Prepare DDG response
- Prepare ADG response
- Briefing note
- Division for direct response/action
- No response required (noted and to file)

Date response due to ESU

12/09/11

RESPONSE TIME

- 5 days
- Routine
- Other

GROUP

- Office of the DG
- Growth Management Queensland
- Office of Local Government
- Strategy and Governance
- ESU
- Regional Services
- Far North Region
- Northern Region
- Central Region
- South East Region
- Southern Region

COPY TO

- Director-General
- ELT
- Director, ESU
- Other

NOTES TO THE DEPARTMENT

Reviewed by: CB

Date: 19/8/11

Complaint

FOR ESU/RECORDS USE ONLY:

TRANSFER TO (OFFICER NAME/WORK AREA)	Officer: ENTER WORK AREA TRACKING NO	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION OFFICER INITIAL & DATE ACTION IN WORK AREA	Action Officer: INITIAL WHEN WORK AREA TRACKING SYSTEM UPDATED



Rockhampton Office
232 Bolsover St, Rockhampton
Gracemere Office
1 Ranger St, Gracemere
Mount Morgan Office
23 Hall St, Mount Morgan
Yeppoon Office
70 Anzac Parade, Yeppoon

Our Ref: 8032
Enquiries: CEO Office
Telephone: 07-4936 8278
Facsimile: 07-4922 7351
Email: evan.pardon@rrc.qld.gov.au

Received

19 AUG 2011

ESU

16 August 2011

Mr Jack Noye
Director-General
Department of Local Government and Planning
PO Box 15009
CITY EAST, QLD 4002

Dear Mr Noye

As you may be aware, there is a petition being circulated within the former Livingstone Shire Council area regarding de-amalgamation. This petition has raised concerns within the community and in particular the Capricorn Coast Ratepayers and Residents Association (CCRRA). The CCRRA is concerned that the petition does not contain adequate information for people to make an informed decision if they were to sign it.

The CCRRA has written to Council (refer attached) requesting answers to a number of questions in regards to Rockhampton Regional Council and a de-amalgamated Council.

At its meeting on 28 June 2011, Council resolved as follows:

"That Council resolves that the CEO seek advice and input from the LGAQ and the Local Government Minister and prepares a comprehensive response to the questions raised within the letter received from the Capricorn Ratepayers & Residents Association Inc. for further consideration of Council with a view to publishing the results."

Council has taken the time to best answer the questions, but as you will see, some questions are hypothetical and can't be easily answered. Council would appreciate input into the questions raised or the answers Council has provided. Also please feel free to supply additional information if you wish.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact my office on 4936 8278.

Yours sincerely


Evan Pardon
Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Evan Pardon CEO Rockhampton Regional Council
June 2011

Dear Sir, The Capricorn Coast Ratepayer's and Resident's Association Inc. is very concerned by the de-amalgamation petition, organised by Cr. Ludwig and now apparently backed by business leaders on the Capricorn Coast. Our main concern is that the de-amalgamation petition is not accompanied by any analysis of the issues and costs that will affect the voters on the Capricorn Coast.

In our view, while the petition result may be said to be largely devalued by the fact that people are expressing an opinion that could easily change once all the facts and implications of de-amalgamation are known, any responsible government will need to take note of the voter's feelings. At the same time it will need to confirm the result of the petition by a survey that actually informs the voters of the full range of facts and implications of de-amalgamation. The voters have already suffered a forced amalgamation that featured projected benefits and provided minimal information on the cost and implications of amalgamation. We feel that a de-amalgamation based on public opinion formed in absence of factual information would be equally bad in spite of being somewhat more democratic.

That said, it is also clear that the petition organisers and the incumbent Local Government will need to advise the State Government of the local facts and issues affecting any move to de-amalgamate. It is for this reason that Association members submit a list of concerns and request Rockhampton Regional Council to consider publishing a response along with other factual information that may eventually be provided to the State Government when the issue of de-amalgamation is being considered; we expect that, with some 6,500 signatures, such consideration is becoming more likely as the State election approaches.

These are some of our concerns:

	Suggested Response from RRC
1. We feel that the main factor contributing to the call for de-amalgamation was the ideological stance of treating the whole region as though it was homogenous in all respects. The failure to recognise that there are strong and persisting differences in identity, aspirations and values (cultural, commercial and property) was compounded by a punishing rating regime that appears to take more from the Capricorn Coast than is returned in Council services. Does the Council recognise this as a problem and does it have any solution, other than readjusting the rate system?	Since the formation of Rockhampton Regional Council the Council has always recognised the diversity of the communities throughout the region. The diversity, the aspirations and the needs of all within the region are currently being captured as part of the development of the Community Plan and this is why Council is fully behind this ensuring that individuals, communities and groups have their input into the development of the plan. It also must be highlighted that the rating system and the methodology is very much in line with that of the former Livingstone Shire. As RRC developed its new rating system there was lengthy community consultation during 2009 and please refer to the section 2 of the Revenue Statement 2011/2012 attached.

	Suggested Response from RRC
<p>2. The other action that upset people and became a barrier to unifying the region was the naming of the amalgamated entity; Rockhampton Regional Council rather than Capricorn Regional Council or any other name describing the region as a whole. Whilst a de-amalgamation would overcome this concern for the people of the Capricorn Coast, it would be good if the Council could indicate whether it recognises this as a problem and has a solution better than de-amalgamation?</p>	<p>Prior to the amalgamation all the former Councils were asked to agree on one name this wasn't achieved and hence the name was left up to the state to decide.</p> <p>The Mayor recently did start some community debate on a name change and it would seem that from who responded that a name change could be accepted but the cost to change is significant and this wouldn't be acceptable. Maybe this is a matter for a new regional council to decide post March 2012.</p>
<p>3. It appears that Fitzroy River Water could easily service the Capricorn Coast if there was de-amalgamation. Can the Council indicate what level of control the de-amalgamated entity would have over the cost and availability of water supplied by FRW as a corporatized body and/or as a commercialised body?</p>	<p>This is a very hypothetical question as it takes two parties to be in a partnership and with this current debate some parties believe that this partnership exists. The other non-existent party would also need to be asked whether or not they would be apart of this partnership.</p> <p>Depends on the structure resolved.</p> <p>Fitzroy River Water (FRW) is very capable of dealing with this as they currently do. It would seem that the only option available under a deamalgamation is for FRW to become a corporatised entity with a separate board. As outlined in recent public benefit assessments there is an additional cost to run a board. The board would set the level of service and the costs. The council/s would be a shareholder in the entity and such does have some control. Any smaller council would have less control as they would less equity in the entity.</p> <p>The cost of water and sewerage services would then depend on the cost of operating the networks that service the discrete areas. Until all of the infrastructure required is identified for the individual water and sewerage schemes, it is not possible to be definitive on pricing.</p>
<p>4. Is it practical/possible to have de-amalgamation and still maintain other regional services like the collection of rubbish that will soon be done by RRC employees?</p>	<p>Yes it is possible however it is again up to the second party to agree.</p> <p>There is also an option for Rockhampton Regional Waste & Recycling to become a corporatised entity with shareholders being the Council/s utilising the services and services being provided across the current Rockhampton Regional Council area.</p>

	Suggested Response from RRC
<p>5. The de-amalgamation proponents have mentioned a "twin cities" model which, although no details were given, seems to imply a sharing of a number of Local Government services and responsibilities. Since it is unlikely that a de-amalgamation based on shared services and responsibilities would be imposed by the State Government without the agreement of both Local Governments affected by the deamalgamation, what is RRC's position on entering into such a sharing agreement?</p>	<p>This can't be answered in detail as the 2 entities don't exist to make a decision on whether they wish to be a part of shared service model.</p> <p>The second part is, will there be willingness for the 2 entities to agree on the level of service provided or will the service provider be asked to provide a varying level of service.</p>
<p>6. The Capricorn Coast people were very upset by the naming of Yeppoon as the regional land fill and its consequences. What is the outlook for a more centrally located site?</p>	<p>The extension of the existing Yeppoon Landfill is currently the preferred option for the regional landfill; however, Council is also investigating Alternate Waste Technologies with a view to minimise the reliance on landfills. There are a range of factors that need to be taken in to consideration on the siting of a landfill and having regard for those factors – the extension of the existing Yeppoon Landfill is the preferred site.</p>
<p>7. We see the downside of amalgamation is the huge bureaucracy that has developed in order to fulfil the Government's undertaking to maintain job numbers. Will there ever be a time when rates will not outstrip inflation and economies of scale actually work to reduce the rate burden?</p>	<p>The timeframe for State Government's restrictions on employee management recently expired. Council has adopted a structure it believes appropriate that minimises bureaucracy and delivers a level of service needed for the Region. The recent budget has seen residential rate increases in line with inflation. Work continues across Council to apply financial discipline and achieve economies of scale where possible.</p>
<p>8. The Capricorn Coast seems to be short changed in many respects such as road repairs and downtown (especially Yeppoon) maintenance and beautification beyond individual projects like the James/Mary street roundabout. Is Council able to permanently improve the situation at the Capricorn Coast?</p>	<p>Council has adopted intervention levels and levels of service for road maintenance and classified all roads in the region based on traffic volumes, traffic types and constructed standard. Adoption of intervention levels and standards of service ensures that an appropriate level of financial discipline is being applied to maximise value for ratepayers by spending money on roads assets in greatest need.</p> <p>Council road crews continue to operate from the Capricorn Coast Depot at Cordingley Street and there has been no reduction in the locally based maintenance crews.</p> <p>A strategy is being developed to upgrade centre medians across the whole region. Yeppoon will be incorporated into this. We have the footpath cleaning being carried out on a regular basis. The Strand Hotel is presented as well as it was pre-amalgamation. Appleton park represents a significant upgrade to the presentation and amenity of that area of Yeppoon.</p> <p>As the Yeppoon foreshore is redeveloped there will be significant improvements to both the presentation and general</p>

	<p>amenity of the beachfront precinct. This project is discussed in Council's Investment Brief which can be accessed via this link: http://www.rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/Our_Region/For_Business_and_Investors/Rockhampton_Region_Investment_Brief</p> <p>Yeppoon has the same amount of parks, gardens and recreation maintenance as it had pre-amalgamation. Council's priority for the northern end of the Capricorn Coast over the past two years was to address the identified shortfall in field sports facilities through the development of the multi-sport precinct at Barmarjee. Council has allocated some \$3,000,000 from 2008 through to 2012 on the development of the Barmarjee field sports precinct, this project is progressing well. Council has also invested over \$3,200,000 in the redevelopment of the Yeppoon Town Hall (matched by the Federal government) in the redevelopment of the Yeppoon Town Hall. Since amalgamation Yeppoon has two major community infrastructure projects developed approved and in the implementation stage with a total value of over \$10,000,000. This is the lions share of the community projects for the Region.</p>
<p>9. The Treasury report underpinning the amalgamation gave a snapshot and projections of finances for each council. Did the projection that Rockhampton City Council would achieve near future surpluses take into account all the infrastructure work performed in Rockhampton since amalgamation? If this infrastructure was funded by loans, just like the Capricorn Coast pipeline, why is there no corresponding special charge for Rockhampton ratepayers?</p>	<p>Loan funding is just part of the funding mix of any Council. Council has several special charges for particular groups that specifically benefit from a service. The Yeppoon pipeline is just one of these.</p> <p>Rockhampton Regional Council's Long Term Financial Forecast is planning a balanced operational position for the 2013-14 year.</p>
<p>10. In the event of de-amalgamation, would there be a case for returning/claiming any accumulated difference between rate income and expenditure to/from the new Capricorn Coast entity?</p>	<p>This would be just one of the many cases that would need to be solved if this was to happen. The whole balance sheet would need to be separated to its respective entities.</p>
<p>11. If there is de-amalgamation, can the boundaries of the new shire be redrawn to make RRC and the Capricorn Coast more manageable? Assuming that the people in areas affected by such redrawing of boundaries are properly consulted before any change is made, what would the Council see as the most practical boundary re-adjustment and what would be the budget consequences for the two local</p>	<p>The State government established the Local Government Reform Commission in 2007 to address these questions with the Charter to recommend structural changes to ensure strong, effective and financially viable Councils capable of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitating optimum service delivery to Queensland communities; • effectively contributing to and participating in Queensland's regional economies; • better managing economic, environmental and social planning consistent with regional communities of interest; and • effectively partnering with other levels of government to ensure sustainable and viable communities.

<p>government areas?</p>	<p>This process saw the creation of the Rockhampton Regional Council and whilst acknowledging sincerely of your question Council has neither the resources nor the legislative ability to adequately respond to the contrary.</p>
<p>12. What was the inventory, condition and value of plant, equipment and machinery brought by the former LSC into the amalgamation and what level of inventory expenditure would be required by a new Capricorn Coast entity to adequately discharge its local government duties?</p>	<p>Value of Property Plant Equipment as at date of Amalgamation was \$478,389,274. Gross Value was \$632,286,198 less Accumulated Depreciation of \$153,896,925 – 24%, which is considered a good position. RRC's accumulated Depreciation percentage for 30/6/10 by comparison was 29%. Capital works in progress was \$16,375,137. LSC's financial Statements as at 14 March 2008 can be found on Council's website. Depreciation for the period prior to amalgamation was \$7,574,327. If this was averaged out for the year it would have been approximately \$10.7million. Approximate indexing forward would give a current depreciation amount (not allowing for new assets) of 11.9 million and a healthy replacement works spend (provided by Queensland Treasury Corporation) is 1.1 times depreciation – arriving at an approximate annual investment required of \$13.1million. Note that all these figures are averages and do not allow for major assets that might be close to the end of their useful lives nor development assets that might have been handed to Council. The construction of the pipeline would have been a major project impact on these figures that also has not been incorporated.</p>
<p>13. What was the level and purpose of loans, assumed by RRC from LSC and what will be the level and purpose of loans that will need to be assumed by any new entity from RRC?</p>	<p>Loans as at 14 March 2008 were \$29,614,687. If a deamalgamation were to occur, it would be fair to assume that a portion of these loans and new debt (particularly in relation to the pipeline) would be handed back. This would ultimately depend on the final business model.</p>
<p>14. What was the number of employees (broken up into work categories) serving the needs of the former LSC? How would that number differ following deamalgamation?</p>	<p>On amalgamation LSC staffing levels were: Admin Staff (147) and Outdoor Staff (146). Until any final decision is made on the service model and its area and level of responsibility it is unable to be determined how this would differ.</p>
<p>15. What strategies are available to Councils to compete with the high remuneration packages offered by the mining industry?</p>	<p>Council has adopted an attraction and retention policy to address this problem. It is very cognisant that it can't directly compete with the wages on offer from the mining sector however it does offer other attractions such as lifestyle.</p>
<p>16. Is the number of councillors, currently serving on the RRC to represent voters on the Capricorn Coast, adequate? What would be the minimum number of councillors required by a new Capricorn Coast entity and what is the cost difference compared to representation via RRC?</p>	<p>(a) Divisional representation within the Rockhampton Regional Council is based on number of electors within a quota system as prescribed by s15(2) LGA 2009: 15 Division of local government areas (1) Each division of a local government area must have a reasonable proportion of electors. (2) A reasonable proportion of electors is the number of electors that is worked out by dividing the total number of electors in the local government area (as nearly as can be found out) by the number of councillors (other than the</p>

mayor), plus or minus—

(a) for a local government area with more than 10000 electors—10%, or

(b) for any other local government area—20%.

Examples—

1 If the total number of electors in the local government area is 15000, and the number of councillors (other than the mayor) is 5, the reasonable proportion of electors is 3000 (i.e. 15000 divided by 5) plus or minus 10%, i.e. between 2700 and 3300 electors.

2 If the total number of electors in the local government area is 5000, and the number of councillors (other than the mayor) is 5, the reasonable proportion of electors is 1000 (i.e. 5000 divided by 5) plus or minus 20%, i.e. between 800 and 1200 electors.

(3) When changing the divisions of a local government area, the reasonable proportion of electors must be worked out as near as practicable to the time when the change is to happen.

For the Rockhampton Regional Council currently the divisional numbers are 7132 ± 713 electors resulting in effectively three (3) councillors covering the former Livingstone Shire Council area, two (2) councillors covering the former Mount Morgan and Fitzroy Shire Council areas and five (5) councillors covering the former Rockhampton City Council area. This level of representation is currently numerically, statistically and geographically adequate.

(b) Whilst unable to adequately factor in all the variables considered by the Change Commission in determining Council numbers and therefore conclusion be hypothetical, an extrapolation of known base parameters would result in the following analysis:

Table 6.3 Guidelines for representation – LGRC.

Approximate enrolment	Approximate population	Councillors
1-5,000	1-10,000	4 plus mayor
5,001 - 20,000	10,001 - 40,000	6 plus mayor
20,001 - 40,000	40,001 - 80,000	8 plus mayor
40,001 - 100,000	80,001 - 200,000	10 plus mayor

Based on this if de-amalgamation then two Councils of 21,201 electors and 30,000 est. population and 50,122 electors and 85,000 est. population:

Effectively one council has 8 councillors + mayor = Category 4 Council
and the other has 10 councillors + mayor = Category 6 Council

RRC is 10 councillors + mayor = Category 6 Council

Based on 2010 Local Government Remuneration and

	<p>Discipline Tribunal remuneration determination then:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Mayor</th> <th>Deputy Mayor</th> <th>Councillors</th> <th>Amalgamation allowances</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>113730</td> <td>73590</td> <td>444920 (63560x7)</td> <td>13010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>153870</td> <td>103700</td> <td>842940 (93660x9)</td> <td>24080</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Difference</td> <td>40140</td> <td>30110</td> <td>392720</td> <td>11070</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cumulative Total</td> <td>267600</td> <td>177290</td> <td>1287860</td> <td>37090</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Regionally Council function would be adversely impacted by \$645250 under de-amalgamation even though an ongoing Council in a de-amalgamated coastal shire would operate at a level \$479340 less than its counterpart.</p>	Category	Mayor	Deputy Mayor	Councillors	Amalgamation allowances	4	113730	73590	444920 (63560x7)	13010	6	153870	103700	842940 (93660x9)	24080	Difference	40140	30110	392720	11070	Cumulative Total	267600	177290	1287860	37090
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<p>17. What is the projected cost of wages, salaries and benefits/incentives for a deamalgamated Capricorn Coast Local Government? Is it quantifiable in a way that is comparable to the current cost borne by Capricorn Coast ratepayers under RRC?</p>	<p>There are too many unknowns to be able to provide an answer to this question. It would depend on the service model adopted by the new entity and its area and level of responsibility.</p>																									
<p>18. Given that the Yeppoon beachfront reconstruction plans, favoured by both LSC and now RRC, factor in the removal of the former LSC council chambers, what offices are available to service the needs of a new Capricorn Coast entity and at what cost?</p>	<p>Should Anzac Parade chambers be removed (no formal decision has been made to date), which is not expected in the near future the new entity would have to make this decision based on their circumstances.</p>																									
<p>19. Given the Council's work on a new Regional Planning Scheme and the age of the former LSC Planning Scheme, what would be the cost of updating that Scheme or creating a new one for the new Capricorn Coast entity?</p>	<p>Council has committed \$2M to undertake the major planning studies required in order to meet the statutory obligations required for a new Regional Land Use Plan. It is expected that the total cost for the new scheme will be approximately \$5M. This work is required by all local governments in order to develop a planning scheme that is compliant with the State Government's <i>Sustainable Planning Act (2010)</i>. The government also requires a process of community consultation and engagement.</p> <p>The information gathered in most cases is based on total growth and would not need to be duplicated. However it would be up to the State to determine any transitional arrangements and the necessity for a separate plan if de-amalgamation occurred.</p>																									

The Capricorn Coast Ratepayers and Resident's Association Inc. intends to publish the questions posed to RRC and the De-amalgamation Steering Committee and also the respective responses in order to enable ratepayers to make an informed decision about the issue of de-amalgamation for the Capricorn Coast. We look forward to Council's reply.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary
Capricorn Coast Ratepayer's and Resident's Association Inc.

RTI RELEASE

Subject: Capricorn Coast and rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire to de-amalgamate from the Rockhampton Regional Council
Eligibility: Queensland residents
Sponsoring Member: Ted Malone MP
Principal Petitioner: Cr Bill Ludwig

MC11/445

4(6) Personal Infor

Number of Signatures: 10549
Tabled Date: 30/11/2011
Referred to Minister/s: Hon Paul Lucas MP
Response Due Date: 03/01/2012
Response Tabled: No

Information about the Principal Petitioner is available through the sponsoring Member of Parliaments office.

Email this link to a colleague

TO: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland

The petition of Queensland residents of the Capricorn Coast, rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire, and their supporters draws to the attention of the House that the forced Local Government amalgamation of 2008 has proved to be detrimental to both our region, and the social and economic well-being of our community.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to enable the Capricorn Coast and rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire to de-amalgamate from the Rockhampton Regional Council over the next 18 months, and be afforded the opportunity to once again exercise their democratic rights to elect their own independent Local Government Council.

RTI RELEASED



Hon Paul Lucas MP

Our ref: MC11/4459

Your ref: 1831-11

23 DEC 2011

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of Parliament
Parliament House
Brisbane QLD 4000



Queensland
Government

Attorney-General
Minister for Local Government and
Special Minister of State

Dear Mr Laurie

Re: E-Petition 1831-11: Capricorn Coast and rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire to de-amalgamate from the Rockhampton Regional Council

Thank you for your letter of 1 December 2011.

The State Government remains fully committed to the amalgamation process of 2008 and supporting the Rockhampton Regional Council (RCC) in realising the benefits of amalgamation for the residents in its Council area. The drivers for reform in Queensland are still the medium to long-term sustainability of Local Governments and the need for greater collaboration in infrastructure and regional planning.

While I am aware of public concern regarding rate increases in some areas, it must be stressed that the rate increases that are occurring are not a direct result of amalgamation, and occur regardless of whether a Council is amalgamated or non-amalgamated.

The average rate rise for the 56 Councils that have adopted and published 2011–12 budgets to date is 7.05 per cent.

Of these 56, the average rate rise for the 29 amalgamated Councils is 6.32 per cent. This is influenced by the Isaac Regional Council rise of 20.9 per cent. When Isaac Regional Council is excluded, the average rate rise for amalgamated Councils in 2011–12 is 5.80 per cent. The average for the remaining 27 non-amalgamated Councils was 7.83 per cent. The figure for RCC was 3.7 per cent.

This is clear evidence that, on average, the amalgamated Council's continue to provide better outcomes for ratepayers.

Prior to amalgamation, many Council's were not financially sustainable and were not adequately planning for their future.

In 2008, Queensland Treasury Corporation rated Fitzroy Shire Council as Weak, Livingstone Shire Council as Moderate, Mount Morgan Shire Council as Very Weak and Rockhampton City Council as Moderate.

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ABN 65 959 415 158

In its 2011-12 Budget, the RCC adopted a 3.7 per cent rate increase.

RCC forecasted capital expenditure of \$94 million in 2011-12 and \$87 million in 2012-13, which dwarfs the combined \$28 million capital expenditure of the former Fitzroy Shire, Livingstone Shire, Mount Morgan Shire and RCC in 2006-07, clearly demonstrating the financial strength of the amalgamated Council.

RCC has announced that one of the major benefits of amalgamations was that it forced the organisation to look at every process and service and question why and how things are done. I am further advised that RCC has predicted that over the next five years residents will receive better services and at a better cost arrangement.

I am advised that in the Rockhampton and Fitzroy News on 18 May 2011, Rockhampton Mayor Brad Carter stated that "through amalgamation, the former Livingstone Shire Council area has benefited from the better utilisation of the Council's skilled workforce, greater cost efficiencies, lower administration costs, delivery of capital works projects, an increase in the delivery of major projects and one united voice providing greater bargaining power to secure funding for the region."

In the Morning Bulletin on 21 Mar 2011, RCC CEO Evan Pardon stated that he believed amalgamation had been extremely positive and that the greatest benefits of it were still to come, saying: "I think it's been great for the region. We have a clear direction. We speak with one voice and can see the big picture. I'd say that in the next two years the community will see the rewards in more tangible form."

Bigger and stronger Councils are able to plan regionally, better engage with the State and Commonwealth Governments and represent their ratepayers with greater ability than smaller councils.

Bigger Councils have reacted better to the 2010-11 natural disasters in extreme circumstances. Numerous Councils have acknowledged this since these devastating events.

Given the above, I have no intention to consider the de-amalgamation of the Rockhampton Regional Council.

If you require any further information, please contact Mr Joshua O'Keefe, Policy Advisor, on 3224 4600 who will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



PAUL LUCAS MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Local Government
and Special Minister of State

DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING COVER BRIEF

23 DEC 2011

Our Ref: MC11/4459
Date: 21 December 2011
TO **Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State**
FROM Office of Local Government
SUBJECT Parliament of Queensland E-Petition - Capricorn Coast and rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire to de-amalgamate from the Rockhampton Regional Council – petition number 1831-11

RECOMMENDATION

- That you **sign** the attached letter to Mr Neil Laurie, Clerk of Parliament, Queensland Parliamentary Services (**Attachment 1**).

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

- Councillor Bill Ludwig has submitted an e-petition to Parliament sponsored by Ted Malone MP, Member for Mirani.
- The petition was signed by 10 549 residents supporting the removal of the Capricorn Coast and rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire Council from the Rockhampton Regional Council jurisdiction and the creation of a new Council.

ISSUES

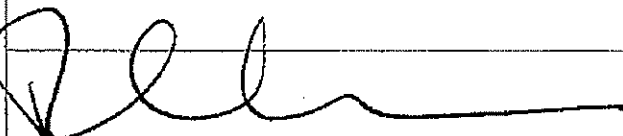
- The State Government remains fully committed to the amalgamation process of 2008 and are supporting the Rockhampton Regional Council in realising the benefits amalgamation for the residents in its Council area.
- Rockhampton Regional Council was formed out of the former Fitzroy Shire, Livingstone Shire, Mount Morgan Shire and Rockhampton City Councils and in 2008, Queensland Treasury Corporation rated Fitzroy Shire Council as Weak, Livingstone Shire Council as Moderate, Mount Morgan Shire Council as Very Weak and Rockhampton City Council as Moderate.
- Both amalgamated and non-amalgamated Councils reported rate rises of between 3% and 17% for the 2010-11 budgets. The average for all Local Governments for 2010-11 was 8%. Rockhampton Regional Council adopted a 3.7% rate increase.
- Further, the Local Government Association of Queensland indicated, via its annual cost index calculation, that costs to Councils can expect to rise by 7.5 per cent in 2011-12.
- The rate increases that are occurring are not associated with amalgamation, and occur regardless of whether a Council is amalgamated or non-amalgamated.

- The amalgamation process has been successful, and the envisaged benefits outlined by the Local Government Reform Commission in 2007 are being realised. Local Governments throughout Queensland continue to report publicly on the significant savings and benefits of amalgamation since the March 2008 formation of the new entities.

POTENTIAL MEDIA

- There are no media opportunities associated with this brief.

RTI RELEASE

NOTED or APPROVED / NOT APPROVED Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State Comments		
		
Paul Lucas MP Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State 23/12/11	Senior Policy Advisor / /	Policy Advisor / /

Contact Officer: Gary Kleidon Director, Office of Local Government 3225 8660	Signed 21/12/2011	Approved: Stephen Johnston Executive Director, Office of Local Government 3225 8654	Signed 21/12/2011
Endorsed: Michael Kinnane Associate Director- General 3239 3216	Signed 21/12/2011		

Ministerial Office Use only:
 Date: 9/12/11
 Ref: 4911/4299
 Internal Document

Received
 - 9 DEC 2011
 ESU

DATE DUE TO MINISTER'S OFFICE:

 Ref:
 File No.: MC11/4459

**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
 CORRESPONDENCE**

Prepared by ESU

Acknowledgement

- Standard
- As Courtesy and Final
- Planning Scheme Amendments
- Section 185
- Local Laws
- Referral Agency/Minister.....

Signatory:

- Minister
- Principal Advisor
- Submission

Prepared by Department

Response Letter

- Priority - 5 days
- Routine - 15 days
- Other - days
- No Response Required
- Refer to Department for direct reply
- Briefing Note Cover Decision Noting

Signatory:

- Minister
- Principal Advisor

Minister's Office:

Copies to:

- Minister Lucas
- Principal Advisor
- Senior Policy Advisor
- Policy Advisor
- Senior Media Advisor
- Personal Assistant
- Other

CONSTITUENT

Refer to Business Group:

- Office of the DG
- Office of Local Government
- Growth Management Queensland
- Strategy & Governance
- ESU
- Regional Services

COMPLAINT

Drafting Instructions:

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.....

.....

Name: Carthey Hall (please print) Date: 9/12/11

Correspondence Finalised



Queensland Parliamentary Service

THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT

Parliament House Ph: 61 7 3406 7250
George Street Fax: 61 7 3221 7475
Brisbane Qld 4000
email: ClerksOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au
www.parliament.qld.gov.au

ag/11/06149

Your Ref: Our Ref: Petitions

1 December 2011

Hon Paul Lucas MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Local Government and
Special Minister of State
PO Box 15009
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Deputy Premier

Petition received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No. 1831-11

Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly require the wording of every petition received by the House be forwarded to the minister responsible for the subject matter of the petition. Under Standing Orders adopted on 28 October 2009 a minister shall forward a response ("ministerial response") within 30 days to the Clerk for tabling.

Attached is a copy of the wording of petition 1831-11, presented by the member indicated and received by the House on 30 November 2011.

Once received, the ministerial response will be tabled, forwarded to the member who presented the petition and to the principal petitioner. Standing Orders also require the ministerial response be published on the Parliament's website, therefore, I would appreciate an electronic version emailed to the TableOffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Unnder Standing Orders, if a minister can not provide a ministerial response within 30 days, an interim response and the reasons for not complying within 30 days, shall be forwarded to the Clerk and within 3 months after the petition is presented, forward to the Clerk a final response.

If the subject matter does not fall within your portfolio responsibilities then please either (a) return it to the Clerk's Office or (b) forward it to the relevant minister.

Yours sincerely

Michael Ries
Acting Clerk of the Parliament

Enc

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PETITION TO
DE-AMALGAMATE AND RESTORE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT INDEPENDENCE
FOR THE CAPRICORN COAST AND RURAL AREAS
OF THE FORMER LIVINGSTONE SHIRE.

Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information

1,549

To: The Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland

Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information

The petition of Queensland residents of the Capricorn Coast, rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire, and their supporters draws to the attention of the House *that the forced Local Government amalgamation of 2008 has proved to be detrimental to both our region, and the social and economic well-being of our community.*

Signature: 30/11/11
Date: 30 NOV 2011
No: 53117 60489

Your petitioners therefore request the House to enable the Capricorn Coast and rural areas of the former Livingstone Shire to de-amalgamate from the Rockhampton Regional Council over the next 18 months, and be afforded the opportunity to once again exercise their democratic rights to elect their own independent Local Government Council.

Principal Petitioner: Cr Bill Ludwig,

Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information

1831-11

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE
Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information		

Please return signed petitions to Cr Bill Ludwig, PO Box 9, Yeppoon 4703
For information or additional petition forms please email
Bill.Ludwig@bigpond.com or Phone 0428-791792.

Ministerial Office Use only:

Date:

Ref: LG/11/3327

Internal Document

Received

15 SEP 2011

ESU

DATE DUE TO MINISTER'S OFFICE:

NRN

Ref: MC11/3534

File No.: F10/5700

DEPUTY PREMIER CORRESPONDENCE

Prepared by ESU

Acknowledgement

- Standard
- As Courtesy and Final
- Planning Scheme Amendments
- Section 185
- Local Laws

Referral Agency/Minister.....

Signatory:

- Deputy Premier
- Principal Advisor

Prepared by Department

Response Letter

- Priority - 5 days
- Routine - 15 days
- Other -days

No Response Required

Refer to Department for direct reply

Briefing Note Cover Decision Noting

Signatory:

- Deputy Premier
- Principal Advisor

Deputy Premier's Office:

Copies to:

- Deputy Premier
- Principal Advisor
- Senior Policy Advisor
- Policy Advisor
- Senior Media Advisor
- Personal Assistant
- Other

CONSTITUENT

Refer to Business Group:

- Office of the DG
- Office of Local Government
- Growth Management Queensland
- Strategy & Governance
 - ESU
 - Regional Services Central

COMPLAINT

Drafting Instructions: Related to LG/11/3056 (MC11/3289)

Name: Josh O'Keefe (please print)

Date: 14/9/11

Correspondence Finalised

Cathy Hall

From: Executive Services [Executive.Services@dlgp.qld.gov.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 13 September 2011 3:20 PM
To: Cathy Hall
Subject: FW: De-amalgamation of Rockhampton Regional Council

Hi Cathy

This incoming corro related to LG/11/3056 - MC11/3289.

Regards

Cheryl

-----Original Message-----

From: Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information
Sent: Tuesday, 13 September 2011 2:44 PM
To: Executive Services
Subject: RE: De-amalgamation of Rockhampton Regional Council

Amalgamation Successful? Rates? dump charges? Water charges? No disaster at Livingston but we pay for Rockhampton's. Councils are broke like never before. You are either joking or completely mad. Here's to the election.
David Dawes.

-----Original Message-----

From: Executive Services [<mailto:Executive.Services@dlgp.qld.gov.au>]
Sent: Monday, 12 September 2011 4:04 PM
To: Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information
Subject: De-amalgamation of Rockhampton Regional Council

Please find attached letter relating to de-amalgamation of Rockhampton Regional Council.

Unless stated otherwise, this email, together with any attachments, is intended for the named recipient(s) only and may contain privileged and confidential information. If received in error, you are asked to inform the sender as quickly as possible and delete this email and any copies of this from your computer system network.

If not an intended recipient of this email, you must not copy, distribute or take any action(s) that relies on it; any form of disclosure, modification, distribution and/or publication of this email is also prohibited.

Unless stated otherwise, this email represents only the views of the sender and not the views of the Queensland Government.

Unless stated otherwise, this email, together with any attachments, is intended for the named recipient(s) only and may contain privileged and confidential information. If received in error, you are asked to inform the sender as quickly as possible and delete this email and any copies of this from your computer system network.

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Unless stated otherwise, this email represents only the views of the sender and not the views of the Queensland Government.

RTI RELEASE



Our ref: MC11/3363
LG11/3128

13 SEP 2011

Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information



Office of the
Deputy Premier and Attorney-General
Minister for Local Government
and Special Minister of State

Dear Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information

Re: De-amalgamation of Capricorn Coast from Rockhampton Regional Council

Thank you for your email of 28 August 2011 to the Honourable Paul Lucas MP, Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State. The Deputy Premier has asked that I respond on his behalf.

The reform of Local Governments in Queensland was necessary to ensure the long term financial sustainability of Councils. The State-wide evaluation of Local Governments' financial sustainability undertaken in 2007 identified that Rockhampton City Council and Livingstone Shire Council both had a moderate financial outlook while Fitzroy Shire Council and Mount Morgan Shire Council both had a weak financial outlook. Amalgamation was prescribed by the Local Government Reform Commission in order to create an organisation with the financial and resource capacity to provide sound governance across the entire region.

Reports indicate that following amalgamation, the former Livingstone Shire Council area has benefited from improved utilisation of the Council's skilled workforce, greater cost efficiencies, lower administration costs, enhanced delivery of capital works projects, an increase in the delivery of major projects and one united voice providing greater bargaining power to secure funding and services for the region. Additionally, the recent natural disaster in your area has shown that the amalgamated Council has a greater capacity to respond effectively to emergency situations.

The amalgamation process has been successful, and the envisaged benefits outlined by the Local Government Reform Commission in 2007 are being realised. Local Governments throughout Queensland continue to report publicly on the significant savings and benefits of amalgamation since the March 2008 formation of the new entities.

With respect to your concern about rate rises since amalgamation, there is no evidence that rate rises in amalgamated Councils are higher than in non-amalgamated Councils. Both amalgamated and non-amalgamated Councils have reported moderate rates rises since 2007. Queensland continues to experience rapid growth in sectors such as the mining industry which means Local Governments have to compete with these strong growth industries for services and supplies. Amalgamation has allowed Local Governments to remain viable in this competitive environment.

If you require any further information, please contact Ms Denise Hallmark, Acting Principal Advisor, Regional Services, Department of Local Government and Planning, on 4938 6524 who will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely


Tess Bishop
Principal Advisor

Level 12 Executive Building
100 George Street Brisbane 4000
PO Box 15009 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3224 4600
Facsimile +61 7 3224 4781
Email deputypremier@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

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 Date:
 Ref: 46/11/3128
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3 1 AUG 2011

ESU

DATE DUE TO MINISTER'S OFFICE:

21 September 11

Ref: MC11/3363

File No.: F10/5700

DEPUTY PREMIER CORRESPONDENCE

Prepared by ESU

Acknowledgement

Standard
 As Courtesy and Final
 Planning Scheme Amendments
 Section 185
 Local Laws
 Referral Agency/Minister.....

Signatory:

Deputy Premier
 Principal Advisor

Prepared by Department

Response Letter

Priority - 5 days
 Routine - 15 days
 Other -days
 No Response Required
 Refer to Department for direct reply
 Briefing Note Cover Decision Noting

Signatory:

Deputy Premier
 Principal Advisor

Deputy Premier's Office:

Copies to:

Deputy Premier
 Principal Advisor
 Senior Policy Advisor
 Policy Advisor
 Senior Media Advisor
 Personal Assistant
 Other

CONSTITUENT

Refer to Business Group:

Office of the DG
 Office of Local Government
 Growth Management Queensland
 Strategy & Governance
 ESU
 Regional Services CENTRAL

COMPLAINT

Drafting Instructions: *please include benefits of amalgamation particularly in relation to increased funding and services in the Yeppoon area. Also include overall benefits. Please include info about where rates have increased within the amalgamated areas.*

Name: 4(4)(6) Personal Inform (please print)

Date: 20/8/11

Correspondence Finalised

Gordon Phillips

From: Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information
Sent: Sunday, 28 August 2011 8:35 PM
To: rockhamptonregionalcouncilreview@ecq.qld.gov.au
Cc: Deputy Premier - SMTP; 4(6) Personal Infor
Subject: De-amalgamation call for Capricorn Coast from Rockhampton Regional Council

Dear Paul

I wish to voice the concern of myself and my husband, 4(6) Personal Infor, who are residents of Yeppoon against the amalgamation of the Rockhampton City Council and Livingstone Shire Council. This has led to a decrease in services and an increase in rates which has seen no real benefit to the Capricorn Coast Community. Furthermore, the decline in the sense of community has become increasingly evident over this time.

Basically we are paying increasing levels of rates (tax) to lower the bar for Cap Coast residents.

We beseech you to reconsider urgently this amalgamation.

Regards

Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information

Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information

Disclaimer: This communication may contain privileged or confidential information. If you have received this in error, please return to sender and delete.



Our ref: MC11/3289
LG11/3056

12 SEP 2011

Office of the
Deputy Premier and Attorney-General
Minister for Local Government
and Special Minister of State

Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information

Dear b) Personal In

Re: De-amalgamation of Rockhampton Regional Council

Thank you for your email of 21 August 2011 to the Honourable Paul Lucas MP, Deputy Premier and Attorney-General, Minister for Local Government and Special Minister of State. The Deputy Premier has asked that I respond on his behalf.

The reform of Local Governments in Queensland was necessary to ensure the long term financial sustainability of Councils. The State-wide evaluation of Local Governments' financial sustainability undertaken in 2007 identified that Rockhampton City Council and Livingstone Shire Council both had a moderate financial outlook while Fitzroy Shire Council and Mount Morgan Shire Council both had a weak financial outlook. Amalgamation was prescribed by the Local Government Reform Commission in order to create an organisation with the financial and resource capacity to provide sound governance across the entire region.

Reports indicate that following amalgamation, the former Livingstone Shire Council area has benefited from having one united voice providing greater bargaining power to secure funding and services for the region. Additionally, the recent natural disaster in your area has shown that the amalgamated Council has a greater capacity to respond effectively to emergency situations.

The amalgamation process has been successful, and the envisaged benefits outlined by the Local Government Reform Commission in 2007 are being realised. Local Governments throughout Queensland continue to report publicly on the significant savings and benefits of amalgamation since the March 2008 formation of the new entities.

I note that you have made a submission to the Change Commission regarding the divisional boundary changes for Rockhampton Regional Council. As you are aware, submissions closed on 29 August 2011. I suggest you monitor the Commission's website at www.ecq.qld.gov.au/electoral_districts.aspx?id=299, as it will advise its final decision shortly.

If you require any further information, please contact Ms Denise Hallmark, Acting Principal Advisor, Regional Services, Department of Local Government and Planning, on 4938 6524 who will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



Tess Bishop
Principal Advisor

Level 12 Executive Building
100 George Street Brisbane 4000
PO Box 15009 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3224 4600
Facsimile +61 7 3224 4781
Email deputypremier@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

Ministerial Office Use only:

Date:

Ref: Ug/11/3056

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Received

24 AUG 2011

ESU

DATE DUE TO MINISTER'S OFFICE:

15 September 11

Ref: MC11/3289

File No.: F10/5700

DEPUTY PREMIER CORRESPONDENCE

Prepared by ESU

Acknowledgement

- Standard
- As Courtesy and Final
- Planning Scheme Amendments
- Section 185
- Local Laws

Referral Agency/Minister.....

Signatory:

- Deputy Premier
- Principal Advisor

Prepared by Department

Response Letter

- Priority - 5 days
- Routine - 15 days
- Other -days

No Response Required

Refer to Department for direct reply

Briefing Note Cover Decision Noting

Signatory:

- Deputy Premier
- Principal Advisor

Deputy Premier's Office:

Copies to:

- Deputy Premier
- Principal Advisor
- Senior Policy Advisor
- Policy Advisor
- Senior Media Advisor
- Personal Assistant
- Other

CONSTITUENT

Refer to Business Group:

- Office of the DG
- Office of Local Government
- Growth Management Queensland
- Strategy & Governance
- ESU
- Regional Services Central

COMPLAINT

Drafting Instructions:

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.....
.....
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.....

Name: [Redacted] (please print)

Date: 23/8/11

Correspondence Finalised

Gordon Phillips

From: Sch.4(4)(6) Personal Information
Sent: Sunday, 21 August 2011 8:17 PM
To: rockhamptonregionalcouncilreview@ecq.qld.gov.au
Cc: Deputy Premier - SMTP
Subject: de-amalgamation

Amalgamation was a disaster from day one as everybody except Beatty and Bligh knew it would be. We now have giant Councils broke to the world, with the big town getting the goodies and the little towns getting forgotten. If the Capricorn Coast is to regenerate and develop, it should be de-amalgamated from the Rockhampton Regional Council, where if the divisional system continues, it will have insufficient representation. We need action on the Capricorn Coast, Keppel Island to be developed, the Strand Hotel to be bulldozed, roads to be upgraded, and business confidence returned. And this will not happen under a Council that is so party political it has forgotten that it was elected to represent the community, and consequently stuffs about and does little. 4)(6) Personal Infor

RTI RELEASEA

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73(1) Not relevant - Out of scope full refusal

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