



LABOR DECEIVES NOOSA

Tuesday, 30 October 2007

The Bligh Labor Government's council amalgamation consultation process has been exposed as a "fraudulent sham" with merger laws drafted months before a supposedly independent report was finalised and public submissions considered.

In State Parliament today (Tuesday 30 Oct 07) Member for Noosa Glen Elmes who has been working tirelessly against the Labor Government's forced amalgamation of Noosa Council, went on the attack over revelations that the order to prepare the first draft of the legislation to merge local councils was given many, many months ago.

"The Bligh Government issued drafting instructions for the new laws **prior** to 25 May 2007 – the date for the close of submissions - and well before an independent commission was formed to assess the thousands of submissions from the community", Mr Elmes said.

"The litany of lies, secrecy, push polling and outright bullying by the State Labor Government in its move on the forced council amalgamations process should outrage Queenslanders who believed they had an opportunity to have input into the future of their local governments.

"These latest revelations prove Labor had no interest in listening to Queenslanders' views. They had already decided which councils were going to get the chop, they had the laws ready to go and they had the maps in the bottom drawer", Mr Elmes said.

The 'smoking gun' document uncovered by the Friends of Noosa was Version 3 of the *Local Government Reform Amendment Bill 2007* dated 25 May 2007 with a time on the document showing 9:48am, seven hours before submissions were due to close.

Mr Elmes said that the Premier must now release the first two versions to show just how far back the deception went and then explain to the people of Noosa and the rest of Queensland why they were misled.

"Thousands of Queenslanders spent time and money to produce and tender submissions to the commission in the belief that their views would be seriously considered yet the State Labor Government clearly deceived and breached the trust of these people throughout the entire fraudulent process.

"How can the Premier possibly expect anyone to believe that her officers only started drafting 'some elements' of the council merger laws prior to the release of the commission's report when Version 3 is almost identical to the Bill that presented to the House for debate', Mr Elmes said.

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