



Speech by

**Glen Elmes**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

Hansard Wednesday, 23 May 2007

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## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**Mr ELMES** (Noosa—Lib) (6.08 pm): I rise in support of the opposition's motion on this particular subject. I start by thanking the Premier for bringing to the attention of the parliament yesterday in question time the correspondence that he received from his very good mate Sir Richard Branson. In the hurly-burly of question time, poor old Premier Pete did not get the opportunity to expand on the details of that correspondence. For the benefit of Labor members opposite, I thought I would give the House an idea what the Premier's best mate actually thinks about the amalgamation of the Noosa shire. I will quote from the letter—

Of course I genuinely hope that the team pursuing this program consider the risks that a 'no exception' policy could have on the likes of Noosa.

Here is another quote—

I am totally opposed to Noosa Shire being amalgamated with any neighbouring shires.

Here is another quote—

From my visits, I see Noosa as a distinct and iconic location that provides a unique experience to international and domestic visitors. I am strongly supportive of how Noosa has differentiated itself from other locations due to its environmental management and creation of strong brand recognition based on its unique community values. This differentiation needs to be protected at all cost.

Here is another one—

I have been a strong supporter of tourism in Queensland and want to emphasise the importance of market and brand differentiation. Noosa certainly has this and clearly, it is so different from its neighbours. Any suggestion that Noosa should be amalgamated with adjoining areas should be avoided as it would dilute its special character.

Here is another one—

I have recognised that the village atmosphere of Noosa has a very different look and feel to the surrounding areas. The casual non-urban approach to development is what I love and why I keep coming back.

And here is the last one—

I would urge the Commission and the State Government to keep Noosa as a stand-alone area, recognising the unique values that differentiate it from other regions and a key reason why it is such a sought after, invaluable and irreplaceable tourism 'jewel' for Queensland.

They are all the bits and pieces that the Premier did not get the opportunity to tell us about in question time yesterday, obviously because of a lack of time.

Sir Richard Branson is not the only friend of Noosa. We have people like Pat Rafter who signed on, and we have Bob Ansett who signed on. On a particular occasion like tonight being State of Origin night, I can also say that Michael O'Connor, the New South Wales State of Origin legend, signed on today as a friend of Noosa as did Willie Carne, a Queensland State of Origin legend.

But they are not the important people in this equation. I draw the parliament's attention to a petition that was presented here on 20 October 2004 that was signed by 18,747 residents of Noosa. That petition was collected on one day. If someone can tell me of a petition that raised those sorts of numbers on one day anywhere in Australia, I will be very surprised. They are the important people.

On Sunday we had what we called a day of action. There were three rallies held in Noosa and I spoke to one of them. There were 3,500 people there, with a total of 8,000 people attending the rallies

across the shire on Sunday. This is the people of Noosa voting with their feet and showing how supportive they are of Noosa standing alone.

One of the things that I wanted to do when I came down to parliament this week was to make sure that, on behalf of my community, I gave my submission—and this is it here—to the people in the reform commission who needed to see it, so I decided to hand-deliver it. It was easy to find the Premier's office up on the 15th floor of the Executive Building, it was easy to find Anna Bligh's office on the 9th floor and it was easy to find the minister's office on the 18th floor of Mineral House, but when my office rang around to find where the reform commission was last week it took us about 20 minutes before we could get an address.

Surprise, surprise, they sent us to the 18th floor of Mineral House. So I went up there and handed my copy over to the minister for local government and planning, and I then asked if I could give one to the reform commission. The person at the counter looked dumbfounded and was not sure whether she could accept the submission. So she made a total of five internal phone calls in the minister's department before she could find someone who had some association with the reform commission to come and take my submission off me. Where are they? Is this a secret society or something? They are all hidden away. The only place where we can find anywhere written down that has some sort of address for the reform commission is PO Box 16325 in Brisbane City. Are all seven members of the commission in that box? The people who want to put their submission in person to the reform commission—

Time expired.