

FRIENDS OF NOOSA

Media Release

Monday 12th November 2007

Sly Bligh Deceives Councils

Bob Ansett, spokesman for the Friends of Noosa, said today that the fight against the undemocratic Bligh Government will continue and is about to move to a new level.

Following a successful joint meeting with the Regional Area Planning and Development Board, communities across Queensland have called for a Royal Commission into the sham of the Local Government Reform Commission.

Recent revelations have unveiled that Councils are being forced into amalgamations by a process which is clearly rotten to the core.

Communities across Queensland spent countless hours writing submissions to the Reform Commission, setting out logical reasons why forced amalgamations were not needed only to find that it was a wasted cause.

Two Commissioners have recently revealed that they did not read the submissions. Instead, they were fed summaries, the majority of which were drafted by University students. The unqualified helpers were supervised by the same departmental officers, some of whom had prepared the "Local Government Reform" document. That document set the stage for regional government, thus telling the Reform Commission what to conclude.

The same departmental officers who had prepared the "Local Government Reform" document also provided the "policy advice" to the Reform Commission, removing any chance of an independent outcome.

"We challenge the Bligh Government to prove us wrong by producing documents that show the Reform Commission did act independently", said Mr Ansett.

"Should the Government not provide these documents, it is yet another reason why a Royal Commission of inquiry be evoked and a serious review by the Crime and Misconduct Commission be actioned".

Amalgamation is no trivial matter - the reforms affect 700,000 Queenslanders and the Premier has described it as one of the most important economic reforms in the history of Queensland. This comment from the Premier is way off the mark as the Reform Commission did not identify any cost savings.

The real reasons for the amalgamations are to centralise power in Queensland and to smooth the path for an unholy alliance of developers and unions.

The same sort of deception is being forced on Councils by seizing their water assets, then compensating them for only a fraction of their true worth. Ms Bligh is bleeding us dry.

What are Queenslanders getting from these so-called "reforms" – less democracy, higher rates and lower services. These are wounds that are not going to heal, Ansett said.

In a sign of unity anti amalgamation and community groups across Queensland will be staging a state Protest Day on Sunday 18th November.

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For further information please contact Bob Ansett on 0432 133 666