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**From:** Anne-Marie Jones

**Sent:** Wednesday, 22 August 2007 9:22 AM

**To:** Committee, FPA (SEN)

**Subject:** Submission

## **Inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Democratic Plebiscites) Bill 2007**

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to add my support to the proposed Bill.

**The Bill seeks to allow the Australian Electoral Commission to undertake any plebiscite on the amalgamation of any local governing body in any part of Australia.**

**However, I believe that such a plebiscite must only be adopted where the majority population of a Local Government is vehemently opposed to the amalgamation proposed.**

**A plebiscite should not be held**

**(a) for popularizing a failing or unpopular Government**

**(b) be held in obscure communities where there is apathy and where the outcome to the opposite is expected**

**© offered with loaded questions with a pre-determined outcome.**

**The sentiments of the population should be felt through various forms, eg: informal emails; on-line polls; letters in the paper; anecdotal via the elected member and opposition walking the streets and collecting information.**

**In the case of Noosa being amalgamated with Caloundra and Maroochydore, I offer my support to the Bill because I believe that the Queensland Government has been undemocratic in threatening the Council (the people of Noosa) with sacking and other threats. The people of Noosa and Port Douglas have not been listened to. In this case, the people know what is best for them and the Queensland Government is pandering to another agenda.**

**I also believe that the Government has been deliberately mis-informed regarding the need for amalgamation. A conflict of Interest exists because of Terry Mackenroth's role as a panelist with the Local Govt. Reform Commission at the same time as being Director of the Queensland-based property development company Devine Limited. I believe that Mr. Mackenroth showed a conflict of interest when he cast his vote for amalgamation. That smells.**

**The Queensland Government failed in its duty of care in allowing a recent by-election to take place. They knew that an announcement about amalgamating shires was imminent. Yet, when Vivien Griffin, Noosa Div. 4 councilor resigned earlier this year, deliberately one day before the need to elect an interim caretaker councilor in her place, the Government did not declare their hand and cost the rate-payers of Noosa dearly in a by-election. My grief is that, if the candidates had known that they would only be serving for one year, would any of them have given up successful careers to take up the challenge? Is the Queensland Govt. prepared to compensate the incumbent successor to Vivien Griffin for loss of opportunity and wages if he is unable to take up a candidature through lack of funds when facing the developer-funded cronies that we will be faced with? The Queensland Government should have made their announcement then, not some 2-3 months after the election.**

**The lack of consultation when proposing amalgamation is what is making me mad. The above situations must never be allowed to happen again. I hope that the panel enquires deeply in these situations and arrange that any plebiscite considered is faultless and not loaded.**

**Yours faithfully and thank you for the opportunity.**

**Anne-Marie Jones**