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**From:** Vic & Sharon Pennisi

**Sent:** Friday, 24 August 2007 2:13 PM

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

**Subject:** senate inquiry

To Whom it May Concern

It is my belief that the whole controversial situation of the QLD council amalgamation should be subject to an independent inquiry. I acknowledge that amalgamation may be beneficial in some instances, however in the case of Stanthorpe it is quite difficult to imagine why or how it can be justified. Our council is quite sound and, to be forcibly amalgamated is preposterous. Apart from having no science, logic, or any evidence to suggest amalgamation is necessary, and overwhelming evidence present to the contrary, the people were not consulted at all. It may seem unreasonable that people should be consulted when governments make decisions on behalf of the people every day without consultation, however in this situation the people were given the democratic right to elect their councillors and that democratic right has been removed by an approach that is nothing short of dictatorial.

I attach my submission I lodged with the commission that clearly identifies why the amalgamation that has suggested for us is not practical. The terms of reference have been totally ignored and evidence exists that shows the decisions were made well before the commission had time to deliberate. I also attach a report by Professor Dollery that clearly indicates the effects on rural Australia caused by amalgamation.

The commission in Qld has ignored most of the Western councils even though they were most vulnerable. They have ignored Indigenous councils because of their cultural background, however they did not ignore the viable councils and in particular our Shire which is identified Internationally as a Bio Region, and in which there is over 100 years of ethnic culture in its bones. For many years the State Government has increased the responsibility of Local Government and for just as many years we have been up to the task, I think it may be referred to as cost shifting. We are resilient people in the bush, however we cannot sustain the future social and financial fabric of our communities if we are to be raped by our leaders. Rural communities revolve around economic development and this act imposed on us will ensure that the potential and necessary growth will be stunted for ever.

Thank you for the opportunity to re enforce our position on this matter.

Yours Truly

Cr Vic Pennisi.