

Joint Statement:

Premier and Minister for Trade
The Honourable Peter Beattie

Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport
The Honourable Andrew Fraser
16/08/2007

BEATTIE - QUEENSLANDERS WON'T BE FOOLED BY PRIME MINISTER'S STUNT

Queensland Premier Peter Beattie said the Prime Minister's latest stunt was an exercise in false hope.

"Nothing the Prime Minister has announced today will make a difference to the much needed reform of local government in Queensland," Mr Beattie said.

"The Prime Minister has himself admitted, for the first time today, that council reform is necessary.

"The Queensland Parliament has passed into law the much needed changes to make our State's local councils stronger and more efficient.

"The Prime Minister is making a lot of noise but at the end of the day he's playing tricks on people.

"The vast majority of council areas affected by the independent Commission's recommendations are now joining together to make the new council boundaries work.

"By repeatedly playing silly games all the Prime Minister is doing is diverting councillors away from the important job they should be doing to ensure the amalgamations work for their communities.

"Reports in today's newspaper show the majority of Queenslanders are moving on and have accepted the independent umpire's decision - it is time the Prime Minister did too," Mr Beattie said.

The Premier said the council amalgamations are critical to the State's future growth and prosperity and Queensland now has two options.

"We can mount a High Court challenge and I have sought Crown Law advice that indicates we are in a strong position.

"There are no referendums for federal boundaries, there are no referendums for state boundaries.

"What the Prime Minister has done is potentially open the flood gates on a myriad of issues - we could consider running plebiscites on vital issues including Work Choices and the placement of nuclear dumps in our State," Mr Beattie said.

The Minister for Local Government, Andrew Fraser said the independent Local Government Reform Commission has provided its recommendations to the State Government, the State Government has accepted those recommendations wholesale and the new council boundaries are now law.

"The overwhelming majority of councils which will be affected have accepted the umpire's decision.

"The councils affected by amalgamation are moving ahead and getting on with the job of delivering new and streamlined local government to their communities.

"The tough decisions have been made, the legislation is now in place and councils now need and want to get on with the hard job of reform to build a future Queensland - without the useless interference of Canberra politics," Minister Fraser said.

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