



# MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 27 November 2007

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## Plebiscites Give Communities Last Chance Say on Council Amalgamations

Ballot papers posted to electors in 85 Queensland Council areas affected by the State Government's forced amalgamations would give communities their last and only say to express their feelings about the Government's decisions, Local Government Association of Queensland president, Cr Paul Bell said today.

"Throughout the Government's forced amalgamation process, it was obvious the last thing it was going to do was to actually ask the people affected what they thought," Cr Bell said.

"Now, through the Australian Electoral Commission, in a process instigated by John Howard and supported by prime minister-elect Kevin Rudd, the communities finally have a chance to have a say," he said.

"The AEC posted ballot papers to electors in the 85 Council areas last week, asking a simple question: Do you support the Queensland Government's decision to amalgamate your Council with other Council areas?"

"Urban communities must return their ballots to the AEC no later than December 7 and rural communities by December 14.

"The LGAQ fought hard, in a six-week campaign, to secure the right of the people to a plebiscite - against the wishes of the state government - while specifically resolving that it would not support either the 'yes' or 'no' cases. The decision is entirely up to Councils and their communities.

"I make the point that the LGAQ is not anti-amalgamation, but it has been strongly opposed to forced amalgamations with the attendant abysmal lack of community consultation."

Cr Bell said the AEC expected to finalise counting of the ballot papers by December 21.

**CONTACT:** For further information please contact Cr Paul Bell AM, President, LGAQ on (07) 3000 2222, or Inglewood Shire Council Mayor Joan White on 0428 883 541.