

GREAT OUTCOME AT REDCLIFFE

On Saturday 22 February 2014 fifteen QLGRA supporters converged on Redcliffe to assist Len Thomas in the Redcliffe by-election. Len – a first time candidate with no previous political experience or position ran on a platform of de-amalgamation for Redcliffe and other affected shires. Achieving an excellent **10.81%** of the vote, this was a fantastic outcome. Both the Labor Party and the LNP had their forces out in full (and we mean full – the Labor party was actively supported by 7 big unions, whilst the LNP had many supporters bought in from different parts), turning this by-election not into issues of concern to Redcliffe residents but a fight between the two major parties and their policies. There is no doubt that Len's vote took from the LNP candidate.

In the face of numerous glossy pamphlets, hundreds of candidate placards, many oversize billboards, brightly coloured printed t-shirts, travelling billboards, Len Thomas's supporters in black and white t-shirts with black and white pamphlets should be very proud of this outcome.

The final result was Labor 44.61%, LNP 34.88% and Len Thomas with 10.81%.

As you are aware Premier Campbell stated in the face of the defeat that he will listen to the voters. He stated: *"I just say to Queenslanders the government will be listening more and consulting more. We got the message and we will do the right thing in the future."* *

The QLGRA is taking him at his word along with a number of member groups (Caboolture and Redcliffe) who are seeking face to face meetings with the Premier. Let us hope that he got the message loud and clear – **over** 10% of the vote to Len Thomas.

The QLGRA would sincerely like to thank all those who supported Len whether in thought, word or action.

THANK YOU

QLGRA

Primary goals:

I. To promote community acceptable natural Local Government boundaries that reflect locally held beliefs about community and identity, and provide local amenity and service;

II. Recognition in the State Constitution of Local Government as a legal entity with a clearly articulated role in governing, such that it can only be changed after a majority vote in a properly constituted referendum;

III. Retention and maintenance of reasonable levels of State and Federal Grants and Subsidies to support the necessary and important role of Local Government in providing and supporting rural and regional infrastructure serving not only local communities but also the state and the nation.

Strategic goals:

IV. To promote the benefits of effective, community based 'local' government throughout the general public and as an area of learning and study in tertiary institutions;

V. To share the commonality of our cause with all amalgamated shires and promote the sharing of strategy and resources to overcome barriers to de-amalgamation and boundary changes.



Two Len Thomas Supporters outside the Woody Point Booth taking advantage of some wealthier competitors' advertising. How can we get the QLGRA message through?

WHERE TO FROM HERE?????

The QLGRA is now faced with working out our next steps. First step will be to see if we can get Premier Campbell to listen to and act upon our requests. If that fails we will then need to consider our options. There is a State Election due before June 2015 and Council Elections due by March 2016. We have a range of options open to us and our choices may depend on local circumstances as well as state level outcomes. We can run candidates, we can promote our cause at state level with all political parties from the Palmer United Party, Katter's Australia Party, Family First, the Greens and of course the big two (neither of whom have served us well thus far) or we can run a third party campaign where we draw voters attention to those candidates who support the cause. Keeping our voice present in all discussions will be paramount and member feedback is welcome. We also need to build. Size is strength.

COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION

The Council Remuneration Tribunal has recommended an annual increase of 3% per annum for all Queensland Councillors. The QLGRA would like to congratulate Councillors Nigel Waistell and Nadia O'Carroll for moving that the increase for Scenic Rim Councillors be bought in line with the CPI or 2.7% pa. This was rejected by their 4 fellow councillors and the Mayor John Brent. But thanks for trying. (QLGRA had put in a submission that increases should not occur as they had far exceeded CPI in the past increases.)

Management Committee:

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Stanthorpe
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Secretary
Joanna Kesteven
Boonah
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Vice Chair Colin Hewett
Redcliffe
07 3283 7208

Strategy Officer
Ken Park
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Treasurer Jack Muller,
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Asst Secretary
Geoff McKay,
The Hills
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Membership Secretary
Sue Johnson,
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LOCAL ROUND UP

Killing Small Towns - Scale does not lead to efficiency

The Maranoa Regional Council consists of five small rural based towns and one large regional centre – Roma. All Council efforts are made to enhance Roma, but very little is done for the rest. Roma has recently gained major regional airport status with a \$5m upgrade and \$1.4 mil Rural Flying Doctors Service base, yet the lights at Surat airstrip were not maintained. Recently an RFDS plane could not land because the lights had not been maintained. This wasted the time and effort of the plane and crew, the ambulance crew waiting on the tarmac and the surgeon waiting in Toowoomba. The patient, a 98 year old lady was suffering pain and trauma from her broken leg. It was later found that the lights had been broken six weeks earlier, and that weekly checks had not been happening.

\$7 mil dollars has been spent on Roma's Big Rig tourist attraction to make it a show case of the region, yet existing galleries and museums in outlying towns can't even get light bulbs replaced. Surat's Cobb & Co Museum used to win awards and had its' own Curator when under Warroo Council control. This person is now spread over all the new council's museums and is spread too thin to be effective. Maranoa inherited the plant and equipment of five former shires, then sold most of it to gain economies of scale with the rest. After the 2010 floods they found they did not, after all, have enough men or machinery to fix the regions roads, and so hired contractors. One contractor cheated the council by re-sheeting roads with ripped sand stone instead of crushed gravel. This rock cuts tyres to shreds and damaged vehicular suspension, doubling maintenance costs and making some roads out of bounds for ordinary cars. When dry, it breaks into bull dust making roads dangerous and blanketing homes. Over 100km was done over a 6 month period and at no stage did a council engineer inspect the work or material. They must have been spread too thin as well. Council must now wear the cost of repairs. In the Maranoa, scale has not led to efficiency nor economies. It has led to neglect. It has led to expense. It is leading to centralization and hastening small town demise.

Is this familiar? Tell us your stories.

Another small town:

WHITSUNDAY REGIONAL COUNCIL and BOWEN

Yet another example of the distressing ripple effects that amalgamation continues to have even years after the event. The Bowen Independent of Friday Feb 28th 2014 reports a public outcry – '**A staggering 1400 people** converged on the town square with signs and placards against the Bowen Council office being stripped of its employees." Page 1. "Such was the passion for the cause and the level of dissatisfaction with the current council, that some businesses didn't open their doors so staff could attend." It is rumoured that the Council is planning to sell the chambers and hence another 20 workers once located in Bowen will lose their connection with the local town, the town will lose access to the workers on both formal and informal levels. Another town set to die?

*Channel 9 News clip 23 February 2014 <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/redcliffe-byelection-premier-campbell-newman-vows-to-listen-to-message-sent-by-voters-after-labor-win-20140222->