
From: noreply@ecq.qld.gov.au
Sent: Monday, 28 November 2022 11:50 AM
To: LG CC Submissions
Subject: (58115) Moreton Bay Regional Council - electoral arrangements review - Adrian Raedel
Attachments: A-case-to-remain-a-Region.pdf

Online submission for **Moreton Bay Regional Council - electoral arrangements review from Adrian Raedel**

Submission Details

Name: Adrian Raedel

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SUBMISSION

IN RESPONSE TO THE MORETON BAY
REGIONAL COUNCIL RECLASSIFICATION
PROPOSAL

Working title:

**A case to remain a Region -
Correcting the spin and
dispelling the myths**

Adrian Raedel

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A case to remain a Region - Correcting the spin and dispelling the myths

1. Executive Summary

The Moreton Bay Region is a diverse existing polycentric region made up of localities where farming and country lifestyle opportunities still, small towns (less than 300 dwellings) with a seaside/country town feel, large towns (greater than 300 dwellings), business neighborhoods and urban neighborhoods.

The area is diverse from farming to large industry, from small townhouse/unit dwellings to lifestyle size blocks.

Such diversity means that those living in the farming localities, small and large towns don't see themselves as part of a city. Indeed, at the forced amalgamations it was a journey to connect these people to the region but over time they have connected and embraced the region - now they will be disenfranchised all over again.

It would be unfortunate that the end result of this proposal being realized was the community revisiting the issues of forced amalgamation with regard to the community's level of trust in its governments or the elected representatives on a Council and State level and that it takes another 12 years to bring the community together to embrace their "city" when the Council and Representatives could use those 12 years distraction free to forge a strong path putting a vision to work for the community.

This submission will show the level of community engagement and communication is unsatisfactory and has been misrepresented in the report.

This submission will show the level of dissatisfaction in the council's proposal is not fairly represented in the Councils submission to the Change Commission and the Minister.

The submission will also identify that the act only talks of city status in the fact that the act is explicit in that it is in the context of density within a local governments urban centre. This denotes the LGA should have a single urban centre. In the case of Moreton Bay Region there are multiple urban centres within the LGA. This is confirmed within the Councils own report with the report identifying four urban centres.

The word “polycentric” is a buzz word that can be used to describe the attributes of many nouns for example we are already a polycentric region ie that is we are a region that is made up of many different towns and urban area without a central singular location. We have been this way since amalgamation, and some would argue that Caboolture and Pine Rivers Councils pre-existed in this way for many years prior to amalgamation.

This submission would respectfully request the state change the act prior to the Change Commissions endorsement of city status should it be of a mind to do so.

This submission requests that the Change Commission either reject the proposal as it currently exists or that it may require the Moreton Bay Regional Council to place the question before its residents at the 2024 election. There is a precedent to this approach with two of the previous local Government name changes Roma (now known as Maranoa Regional Council) and Dalby (now known as Western Downs Regional Council) doing a direct mail plebescite of the voters in their region.

“We got a very impressive response rate of more than 4000 responses” Mayor Robert Loughnan

A petition of the State Government was undertaken requesting that it be put to the residents at the next election with over 1130 people signing it. Many made comments similar to:

I am horrified to think the proposed change from Region to City was based off 683 participants votes. Why was the proposal not put into the rates notices for a much wider coverage and feedback? I have signed the petition to take this back to the people of Moreton Bay Region to have their say.

<https://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/.../Moreton-Bay-City...>

I've read this and cannot see any reason why the Vision for Moreton Bay Region couldn't be fulfilled as a Region. A change of name doesn't change a Vision.

The Five proposed 'Big Ideas for our future' could all be implemented as a Region and would be very welcome.

Federal Funding would be based on population not whether we are called a city or not.

Further research of Facebook commentary could be undertaken by the Change Commission which will verify a more indicative feeling of negativity towards the proposal then the council has represented in their report.

Placing the question before the residents of the Moreton Bay Region will ensure that the outcome (whatever that may be) is owned by the residents and will grow a greater sense of pride and involvement in Council decisions.

This vote would also see a greater community debate and a more transparent delivery of information on the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats regarding the proposal.

Over twice the number of people who participated in the Council survey signed a petition asking the state government to include it in a vote at the next Council election.

There are much bigger issues within Moreton Bay Regional Council than this. Why not just incorporate the name Redcliffe in whatever decision is made. This is all just stroking egos of members of our council. - [Ruth Stojkovic](#) (Narangba and Surrounding Landholders Support Group)

INTRODUCTION

In answer to councils report no one is disputing demographics, the Moreton Bay Regions area summary, the Councils service provision or the geographic and environmental characteristics of the Moreton Bay Region, especially not the author of the report who spent 12 years as the only Councillor elected at amalgamation who had not served on the previous councils of Caboolture, Pine Rivers or Redcliffe which gave a unique perspective at the time having no preconceived ideas on how things had been done in the past at those Councils only looking at what was good for the amalgamated Councils - often those clashed.

It is disappointing though that the council in its report concentrated on the Urban Centre Profiles somewhat ignoring the larger regional context of the area. The report talks of the economy however neglects to talk about the farming and rural aspects of the region. The region grows approx. 70 percent of Australia's strawberries, grows numerous other fruit and vegetables on mass, cattle grazing and other rural pursuits. This contributes not only to the economy of the Moreton Bay Region but to the food supply to South East Queensland.

The report concentrated solely on the urban centres with very little consideration to the non-urban areas of the region. This is also borne out in the consultation approach that was undertaken with very little understanding that these areas do not receive newspapers and often do not get their mail delivered to their house. Council had multiple opportunities to place information with its rates notices to each and every property owner. This opportunity was not taken and Council relied on other avenues of communication. This would have been an effective method of communication as 89 percent of property occupants in Division 12 for example are owner occupiers in comparison to 55 percent of owner occupiers in the urban centre division of Division 3.

MONOCENTRIC VS POLYCENTRIC

The Council have failed to give an example of other polycentric cities from around the world but have put forward a planning exercise that exists in Melbourne to deliver an area that works together to deliver jobs and economic growth for an area. What they have failed to put forward is that there is not an indication that all the councils in the greater Melbourne area are amalgamating to form a polycentric city local government.

London was put forward as an example of a polycentric city however the council reports recognizes that it isn't quite - it still has a singular centre which by definition means it is a monocentric city in general. This is an example where the report has taken liberties with the truth and whilst this submission falls short of calling these lies it certainly could be considered spin or sales pitching. This is a similar case with New York City.

Comment by a local resident:

The City you have when you're not having a City 🤔 Monty Python would have a field day with this.

Indeed if Council has a vision of better economic benefits to the region, these can be put forward as part of an economic strategy for the Region - in this regard any of the vision components ie environmental, economic and planning should be contained within the next iteration of the planning scheme, economic strategy and environmental strategy - the changing of the name and classification only serves as a distraction to the real job of getting the Moreton Bay Region to serve as the economic powerhouse, the environmental area of excellence and the balanced growth area it can be with the right leadership, drive and vision it can be.

COMMUNITY VALUES

The Council report recognizes the values the community holds including lifestyle, environmental, affordability and access to services. These values Council has connected to its proposal to become a city.

However, are these values mutually exclusive or are these values something Council should be incorporating into the day-to-day workings of Council. Why does it take a reclassification from Region to City for these things to happen?

Its almost like the Moreton Bay Regional Council has lost its way. Changing names won't fix that.

These values and ideals should form the very cornerstones of the Councils vision, they should not be the vision itself. A vision is something you should aspire to, something to strive for, something that should be constantly reviewed, and once you get close to achieving that vision, you evolve that vision into something better... once you stop this process as an individual or an organization then it's time to move on however this Council hasn't come close to achieving the so called vision but is tying its success to renaming and reclassification - this in itself is disappointing as these day to day components can be and should be achieved regardless of classification.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Council commissioned report identified the immediate impact of becoming a city was linked to four key areas:

- 1) Increased cohesion, social inclusion, and civic pride.*
- 2) Increased awareness and improved perception of Moreton Bay*
- 3) Shared economic interest*
- 4) Increased equity within Queensland and nationally.*

The report also noted that becoming a city could be a catalyst to accelerated good planning to enable economic growth and social outcomes.

The report relied on a number of assumptions,

- 1) The fact that there would be a cohesiveness and civic pride associated with changing the name. The report failed to recognize the outcomes of the amalgamation which was the exact opposite. Indeed, if this was a required outcome of this name change than the responsible action to take would be to enable a vote of the entire region so the residents have ownership of the change similar to de-amalgamations this has seen tremendous pride being shown in the local area ie Noosa and could be achieved in the Moreton Bay Region if the opportunity existed.

Below are some of the comments on this issue from local residents:

I miss living in Pine Rivers Shire. I was dragged kicking and screaming into Moreton Bay Region and now the powers that be are wanting to move me to a city. Leave me alone! It doesn't make sense.

- 2) Increased awareness and improved perception of Moreton Bay - internally or externally? Is the first question that arises from this statement within Councils report. If its internally perhaps the answer above would also enable a better internal perception of a Council that asks the question of its residents and then listens to the answer the residents give. If the issue identified is external, then perhaps the issue is less around the distraction of reclassification and more the need to an improved marketing of the region.
- 3) Shared economic interest - the region already has a shared economic interest with many from around the region visiting Redcliffe on weekends, or business transactions occurring across the economic centres of the region - North Lakes for Shopping, Brendale, and Caboolture for industrial just to mention a few small components of the Moreton Bays shared economic interest. Many of the residents are aware of this through constant cross promotion of areas within the council's newsletters for the last 12 years.
- 4) The report references increased equity within Qld and nationally however it fails to give a tangible amount or even a possible tangible amount. Usually, the funding for the area comes through 2 different scenarios, the first is need and available of funds with the second as lobbying. The need can be set aside as it will occur regardless of city or region status - as evidenced in the then city deals which Moreton Bay Region was a part of proving this particular section of the report to be based more on spin than substance. The second is lobbying, particularly (but not exclusively) just prior to election time where it is up to the leadership to push for promises of funding. If the leadership misreads an election result or doesn't take an opportunity to spread the risk or isn't charismatically capable of eliciting election promises than the area will miss out regardless of its regional or city status. The example of a charismatic leadership delivering an outcome was the previous Mayors ability to elicit an election promise for funding for a new university in spite of the fact it was Moreton Bay Region.

The note about good planning is also irrelevant as good planning should occur regardless of region or city status and if good planning isn't being delivered now then residents should be entitled to ask why and they should be asking what

difference the region vs city status should make. Again, this is a non-tangible comment that can only be the opinion of the report writer.

COSTS

We undertook our own survey in the initial stages of the Councils consultation by ourselves as the Councils survey was convoluted especially in the question around how important is this to you?

Many of those who made specific comments queried the costs to date and the ongoing costs moving forward.

Many other comments not included in the council report from their own Facebook page and that of the council associated Moreton Daily queried the costs.

The author of this report having been involved with Council through amalgamation has seen the amount of funds spent on signage, bin branding and all other aspects of rebranding - and it is to the tune of millions over the 12 years and there is still signage that needs changing to Moreton Bay Regional Council however if the Council are wanting to satisfy the above four points recognized as potential outcomes the signage must be undertaken with a level of speed that would extenuate the civic pride and the awareness of Moreton Bay both internally and externally coupled with a marketing exercise to ensure the "benefits" were realized. It can be believed the costs are going to be far greater than the \$400,000 set aside for signage renewal that the Council have been sales pitching noting the wording has evolved in the Council report compared to the messaging put out on Councillor and Council facebook pages.

Comments like:

I put up a post asking for the TRUE cost of this proposal relating to the consultants costs and the cost of the MBRC staff and true to form it has been deleted. So much for transparency.

What a ridiculous waste of money. Moreton Bay Region is many towns. We are not one city. Complete waste of taxpayers money.

Spend the money on activities for our youth. We have groups of young teens riding in gangs terrorising elder people at Bongaree on Bribie Island and nothing is being done to stop this. If the kids had things to do then maybe this wouldn't be a problem. I am sure this is happening in most areas.

Another waste of tax payers money.

Waste of taxpayers money ... maybe the council should be transparent and advise tax payers how much it will cost them

What a waste of money. How much has this already cost us and how much will it cost us if they go ahead with it.

Imagine what the cost will be to the ratepayers

How much will our rates go up to pay for this crap! Lakes Macquarie did this and every rate payer had their rates go up and being a city gave no benefit to the residence living there!

Just fixing our roads would be a better thing to do then waste time and money on this issue.

These comments are much more prevalent than represented in the report.

To see further comments and to verify the above comments please click the attached link to the multiple Facebook posts.


[moreton bay regional council city - Search Results | Facebook](#)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The council report references the amount of reach it achieved with its community engagement and communication strategy. It included the reach of the media coverage both TV, Radio and Newspapers, to do so just shows the desperation of the Council to impress upon the Change Commissioner that they have reached millions of people even though the exact number of people within the region that actually saw any of these new reports or commentary cannot be verified and just as this report would be in error to suggest that no one saw it - it is also an error of the council report to include the statistics with an inference everyone saw them.

The council relies on the focus groups and certainly the initial focus groups may have been representative of the community with no preconceived concept of what was being put forward the report does not explain or extend on the "deep dive" focus groups that were later involved. I would suggest that the participants in these groups were a) initially there because of their preconceived ideas hence the "deep dive" and that some may have already had their opinion formed from media they may have seen. It is disappointing that Council has sort to include these focus group participants as a component of their positive feedback for the case for reclassification. Again, this is a stretch or sales pitching on behalf of the council.

The "free lunch" - there is no such thing as a free lunch, and this is a prime example. The validity of the feedback from this luncheon can be called into question at best. Whilst it is a great example of what can be achieved in disseminating information via community leaders to use it to gather feedback can be called into question when the data behind the participants isn't researched.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

The Council engagement findings incorporate both the “free lunch” participants and the Moreton Says survey. The combination of these two in the opinion of this author skews the result as those at the free lunch were free to participate in the Moreton Says survey. So, for the moment we should look at the Moreton Say survey results by themselves. There were 451 participants that voluntarily took part in the survey according to the original report to Council on 20th July 2022, however the attachment (reimagining report) concludes there were 519 participants one can only assume is the focus group participants combined with the survey participants.

It should be noted the number of participants was not highlighted or included in the report to the State Government. Perhaps this is simply in error or perhaps a need to not highlight how many participants actually took part in the Moreton Says survey. Regardless of the reason 451 respondents to a region wide report is not indicative of the 486, 645 residents of the Moreton Bay Region. This in itself suggests a lack of interest in changing, or a distrust of Council and Councillor (in that “they’ll just do it anyway so why waste time doing a survey”) - this sediment came through in Facebook comments.

Removing the neutral there are 35% who support a change as opposed to 55% who do not. This is reflective of the survey this author undertook and indicative of the comments made on the survey and Facebook posts.

It is only by combining the luncheon participants who did not have the benefit of a balanced presentation can Council claim they have the support of the region to ask for the name change.

SOCIAL MEDIA SENTIMENT

The council have cherry-picked the responses to their Facebook posts to support their argument. It was noted that the Council have discarded comments made on posts and relied on likes and loves or sad and angry to indicate support or not for the concept. Having been made aware of this the author has trolled through not only the comments and reactions on the council posts but also on Moreton Daily, our own page along with other pages and groups. Once you've included the comment as feedback the resultant indication of in support or not in support changes from Council's inference of support to one of substantial non-support. In fact, taking into account the commentary for both sides a conclusion can be drawn that not only is there a substantial "not in support" contingent that outweighs the lesser "in support" those that are not in support are far more vocal and are far more passionate about it staying as a Region than those supporting the change.

Indicative Facebook comments

This reads the decision has already been made..??? Absolute rubbish and waste of our hard earned money! Shame! Shame! Shame! (Pine Rivers Press)

Why bother with survey, community tells you what they want & council does what it wants anyways. Every other survey community clearly sat they want green spaces & environmental corridors but instead we get high density living. Waste of time & money.

Caboolture Herald Facebook Page

 **Caboolture Herald** ✓
December 9, 2021 · 🌐

Moreton Bay Regional Council will be renamed Moreton Bay City - if council's proposal is approved by the state government.
FULL STORY HERE: <https://bit.ly/3IEXFeD>
🗣️ Do you support the move to rename the council?



All 🙄 98 ❤️ 15 👍 12 😡 6 😂 4

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CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this submission is that Council has not done enough to receive a true response representative of the residents of Moreton Bay Regional Council.

The Councillors and Council have misread the sentiment of the residents of Moreton Bay Regional Council area.

That the report has been written in such a way as to avoid certain relevant commentary and components of the community sediment and consultation outcomes to push the Change Commissioner into agreeing to the change and ultimately being the scapegoat for approving the change.

That the Change Commission deny the change or at the very least require Council/ECQ to place a vote at the 2024 election to guarantee the regions sentiment before agreeing to the change in similarity to those of Roma and Dalby Councils.