

BRIEF FOR ANNA BLIGH
250907
FROM FRIENDS OF DOUGLAS SHIRE
Re: AMALGAMATION

Anna, the Friends of the Douglas Shire also thank you for the opportunity to meet with you.

As stated in my several correspondences to you, the Friends

- represent a large cross section of this community
- are adamantly opposed to the Amalgamation of the Douglas Shire into a larger Regional Council
- are committed to opposing the decision for as long as it takes to reverse it.

The mayor has made the case for exempting the Douglas Shire from the process. As he points out, it never made sense from the start. The Douglas Shire already meets the criteria the Reform Commission set for its amalgamation goals.

The majority of the Shire's residents have supported Mayor Mike Berwick's vision for the Douglas Shire for the past 17 years. Through his efforts, and the help of the Honourable Desley Boyle, the Shire has a Planning Scheme that

- protects the survival of Daintree Rainforest and its fauna
- secures the rural landscape and supports the cane industry
- encourages best agricultural practices, protecting the Great Barrier Reef
- establishes a limited urban footprint
- provides for adequate infrastructure.

The last election returned four councilors, who have used their combined vote to abuse the democratic process and create a dysfunctional local council.

The Friends support the **proposal** submitted by the mayor and endorse his **reasoning**.

Accordingly, we ask that you take the following actions:

- Announce that the Douglas Shire will not be amalgamated
- Declare the Icon Legislation will guarantee that the Douglas Shire will be a national Environmental Role Model
- Dismiss the Council. They have failed to meet the obligations of the 22-Point Agreement
- Set up a Community Advisory Board chaired by Mayor Mike Berwick to provide guidance to the acting CEO and the Managers
- Guarantee that Mike Berwick has the resources, including council staff, to complete his work on a blueprint for the proposed Iconic Legislation
- Ensure that elections in March of 2008 are non-divisional.

As an apolitical group the Friends would be pleased for the Amalgamation of the Douglas Shire not to be an issue in the national election. But as a group we are committed to continuing opposition to the forced amalgamation for as long as it takes. An announcement that the Douglas Shire will not be amalgamated would certainly enhance Kevin Rudd's prospects in north Queensland and would most likely ensure Jason O'Brien would retain the seat of Cook for your government.

By enshrining this Shire as a sustainable environmental and social model you will be taking the lead in the directionless environmental debate that is raging in this nation and you will garner the respect and gratitude of the community whose hard work has made the Douglas Shire the exceptional place it is today.