

LOCAL GOVERNMENT - STRUCTURAL REFORM

1275. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Local Government:

What strategy does the minister have in place to address the issue of a number of Western Australian local government authorities now having been deemed to be unsustainable?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Carpenter government is encouraging local governments to address sustainability issues through a combination of good business planning and practice and by promoting structural reform. In addition, the \$3 million Connecting Local Governments structural reform program assists local governments by providing grants to explore measures to increase their capacity and efficiency. Since 2006, 50 local governments have received grants for structural reform initiatives. Also, with government assistance, there have been two amalgamations this year. I commend the new councils of Northam and Geraldton-Greenough for pursuing the best interests of their communities through their respective amalgamations. I also advise that the Local Government Advisory Board is considering a request to amalgamate the Shires of Tambellup and Broomehill. In meetings with more than 100 local governments across the state since February this year, I have made it clear that the state government will continue to work cooperatively and positively with local governments to address sustainability issues.