

MEDIA RELEASE

Is Rockhampton Regional Council Throwing Good Money Away?

20 MARCH 2014

Less than three months after de-amalgamation, Rockhampton Regional Council are considering yet another major structural change which could result in reduced services; a loss in direct interface with Council for ratepayers as well as possible redundancies for Council employees.

"Employees and Council itself have not fully recovered from the affects of de-amalgamation on Council operations and services let alone the personal affects from the loss of staff and knowledge from the organisation. The proposal to consider effectively outsourcing core Council work to Propel Partnerships, a South East Queensland company, has come as a considerable shock," Acting Secretary of The Services Union, Neil Henderson said.

In 2013, Rockhampton Regional Council requested that Propel Partnerships (Propel) conduct a scoping of Council operations and procedures. The areas in scope were customer service, pay roll and accounts, administration, support services and library services.

Propel, recommended that the Council set up a separate company to directly manage the work of Council employees.

Propel claims that the partnership will improve workplace efficiency, but The Services Union believes Rockhampton Regional Council will receive little to no benefit.

"The proposed changes will have a direct and negative effect on the quality of customer service, the local interface of the business, and staff morale," Mr Henderson said.

"We have seen a similar model adopted at Ipswich City Council. It has resulted in drastic staff reductions, increased staff turnover, and inefficient performance monitoring. This has been at the expense of direct customer contact, and retention of committed and experienced personnel. None of the available evidence is to the contrary," he said.

Currently, customer service staff at Rockhampton Regional Council resolve up to 90% of customer queries without referral, maintaining excellent levels of customer satisfaction.

The Services Union said the Council has been able to achieve this while experiencing increased workloads because of de-amalgamation due to their commitment to quality training and management.

"If this partnership with Propel goes ahead, efficient service delivery for the rate payers of Rockhampton will likely be a thing of the past. Why would Council want to risk this?" Mr Henderson said.

W theservicesunion.com.au

P 07 3844 5300
F 07 3846 5046

AUSTRALIAN MUNICIPAL,
ADMINISTRATIVE, CLERICAL
AND SERVICES UNION
QUEENSLAND (SERVICES
AND NORTHERN
ADMINISTRATIVE) BRANCH
ABN 86 351 665 653

QUEENSLAND SERVICES,
INDUSTRIAL UNION OF
EMPLOYEES
ABN 13 540 483 194

TRADING AS
THE SERVICES UNION

ACTING SECRETARY:
Neil Henderson
ACTING ASSISTANT
SECRETARY:
Justine Moran

... ENDS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Belinda Hogan-Collis, Media/Communications Officer on 07 3010 4446 or 0401 710 039.