Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says the possible reversing by the Rudd Government of the previous Federal Government’s policy to scrap the need to obtain permits to use roads in aboriginal communities raises a problem.

If roads within a community are maintained using money raised from shire rates and a permit is required to travel on those roads will ratepayers from that shire who contribute through their rates to the maintenance of those roads be allowed to travel on those roads without a permit?

For instance if a ratepayer living in Tennant Creek who pays rates to the mega council of Barkly and wants to use roads in a community which are maintained using a proportion of his/her rates and require a permit, will that ratepayer be able to use those roads without a permit?

Gerry says that if ratepayers pay to maintain infrastructure or facilities throughout a mega shire they should be able to use the infrastructure or facilities. Local Government rates are normally used for public facilities. If a permit is required to use or access those facilities are those facilities public? If the answer is no, then Gerry says that it follows that Shire rates should not be used to maintain those facilities.

If a road was being maintained using shire funds on a pastoral property but could only be accessed with permission the same would apply.

Gerry says this is just another example of where the new local government reform has not been thought through properly.

Say no to forced amalgamation.