**MEDIA RELEASE**

Gerry Wood MLA  
INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR NELSON

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**SUPER SHIRES PROPPED UP BY OLD COUNCIL RATEPAYERS**

Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says he believes that ratepayers in Litchfield and surrounding councils are now paying to prop up the new super shires.

Gerry says the announcement that Litchfield Shire will get less funding from the Grants Commission because of a new formula smells of discrimination against Litchfield people who pay their way.

Gerry says the facts are that the new super shires are making very little effort to raise sufficient rates to run the bureaucracies they are creating and are relying on large financial input from the NT Government and increased money from the Federal Government - at the expense of Litchfield residents and other rural councils.

Litchfield raises a substantial proportion (63%) of its operating money from rates and receives no money from the NT Government. What percentage of revenue is raised by rates in the new super shires – 1 or 2%? He says that Litchfield also has special rates which are used to pay for the sealing of roads.

What this means is that the Grants Commission has little regard for those councils who run a tight ship – they are penalised not rewarded. It seems that because land values have gone up the Grants Commission says that rural people can afford to have a reduction in their Federal Grant money because rural people must be able to afford higher rates as they live on valuable land. What a load of....!

Gerry says rural people are entitled to their fair share of Federal Government Funding and should not be sacrificed to prop up new super shire bureaucracies that the NT Government has established without enough thought.

The NT Government should tell the people of Litchfield how much operational funding the Government is pouring into the new shires and then say why Litchfield funding is being cut.

Rural people are entitled to ask are they being punished for not supporting the Government enforced amalgamation process.

*Cessi foro gallinarum sed surgo*