LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE

The Territory Opposition has today moved a motion in Parliament calling for the Henderson Government to put its forced council amalgamations before the people.

“Fundamental democratic change shouldn’t be made without a democratic vote of the people affected,” says Jodeen Carney, Leader of the Opposition.

“The new Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, claims he’s confident his Government’s forced council amalgamations have majority support, so he should have nothing to fear from a territory-wide referendum on the issue.

“The former Chief Minister was determined to bulldoze these forced amalgamations through Parliament, with nothing more than token community consultation.

“That process has generated intense levels of hostility in the electorate and has the potential to damage the legitimacy of the new local governments.

“Nor does Labor have a mandate to change local government in the Territory.

“Labor was mute about the prospect of change before the last Territory election and is attempting to jam the amalgamations through well before the next election.

“That tactic is a profound mistake that is damaging confidence in the Territory’s democratic institutions.

‘If the case for the Government’s proposed changes is as sound as the Chief Minister claims then it will carry a majority of Territorians at the referendum.

“A majority vote would give the process a legitimacy it currently lacks.

“The Opposition believes the current proposal doesn’t stack up and the Henderson Government would be forced to begin the process again.”

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