

# DEBATE OVER WARDS

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By Lea Guy

A DIVISIVE debate is set to begin as Cassowary Coast Regional Council looks to the community to help form a view on local government electoral divisions.

A letter from the Department of Infrastructure and Planning has been received by the CCRC, asking its views on divisions at the 2012 local government election.

"The email advises that the Minister (for Local Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

## Rates are out

RATES notices are on their way.

Cassowary Coast Regional Council mailed 16,700 rates bills yesterday, which will return an estimated \$26 million in revenue.

Prompt payment will ensure a 15 per cent discount on the general rate and pensioners

iginal and Torris Strait Islander Partnerships Desley Boyle) has no fixed views on this matter and she is seeking the views of individual councils as to whether they should be represented on a divided or undivided basis for the next election," CCRC chief executive Terry Brennan said.

Councillors said they wanted to take the debate to constituents before forming an opinion.

Public forums, a survey and street walks were among the suggestions offered by councillors to gauge opinion on divisions.

"I think a forum of some sort is a good idea, but I'm more inclined to listen to the feedback you get walking the street and talking to people and the letters in the newspapers," Mayor Bill Shannon said.

But Cr Shannon said he suspected any effort to gain community consultation would be in vain.

"It's quite feasible for us not to have a view and leave it for the

general rate and pensioners can claim their \$300 subsidy.

Mayor Bill Shannon said ratepayers should expect an increase in the bottom line amount.

Cr Shannon said ratepayers experiencing financial hardship should contact the council as early as possible to see if they were eligible to make arrangements to pay the rates over time.

State Government," he said.

"It will not be our decision and it will not be the community's decision.

"At the end of the day, it will be up to the State Government."

Prior to amalgamation, Johnstone Shire administrator Graham Webb voted against divisions, and Cardwell Shire made a submission supporting a divided council