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## Minister suggests merged communities should 'move on'



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Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock has said the communities of Cootamundra-Gundagai and the Snowy Valleys should 'move on' after she was questioned by Mark Buttigieg MLC in Budget Estimates this week about the push from the communities to split following their forced mergers in 2016.

The Local Government Boundaries Commission investigated two proposals to demerge Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council and Snowy Valleys and presented its findings to Minister Hancock in February this year.

Minister Hancock conceded the six months it took to make a decision was 'a little too long', however she was unapologetic about her decision to deny both demergers.

"The decision is made - it has to be done," Minister Hancock said.

Shadow Minister for Local Government Greg Warren said the Minister's advice to 'move on' was insensitive and disrespectful to both communities still reeling



**Local Government Minister Shelley Hancock.**

from the forced mergers.

"Both communities were sceptical about the Local Government Boundaries Commission investigation before it began and the result shows that scepticism was well founded," he said.

"Many residents in those communities believed the decision to not

allow a demerger was a fait accompli and it is easy to see why they believe that.

"The Cootamundra and Gundagai communities have been hit with a 53.5 per cent special rate variation as a result of the bungled demergers policy. I wonder if Minister Hancock would 'move on' if her rates in-

creased that excessively.

"Telling those residents to 'move on' is insensitive, insulting and inconsiderate. Minister Hancock said she understood the communities anger regarding the decision but it's clear she has no idea how the communities of Cootamundra, Gundagai and Snowy Valleys feel."