

Meander Valley Council

W O R K I N G T O G E T H E R

Our Reference. S13-01-049

17th January 2013

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Mr Glenn Worthington
Secretary
Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir

Meander Valley Council wishes to show its support for the financial recognition of local government in the Australian Constitution. This support was passed by Council at a meeting in April 2011.

As a small urban/rural Council with a significant asset stock of bridges, sealed and unsealed roads, Federal Government programs such as "Road to Recovery" are essential to assist with ongoing maintenance and upgrade of the network. The current model of direct funding to Council rather than through State Government agency avoids a percentage of the funding being siphoned off by the agency as an "administration fee".

Council has invested considerable time and resources developing asset management plans and a long term financial plan. Certainty of future funding of programs such as "Roads to Recovery" is critical for long term financial planning.

On behalf of our community, Council would ask all political parties, independents and every State to support the referendum. It is essential that the referendum be conducted at a time which maximises its chance of success. Council would also ask that a publicly funded national education and awareness campaign be undertaken to inform the public about the Constitution, how to change it and about the questions being asked, well in advance of the referendum.

Finally, in closing, Council would like to reiterate its support of an amendment to Section 96 of the Constitution so that it reads "Parliament may grant financial assistance to any state or **local government body formed by or under a law of a State or Territory**".

Yours sincerely

Craig Perkins
MAYOR

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