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Chair
Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Local
Government
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir or Madam

Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

At the Ordinary Council Meeting of 27 April 2011, the Donnybrook-Balingup Shire Council resolved to call on the Federal Government to conduct a referendum to achieve the Constitutional recognition of local government at the 2013 Federal election.

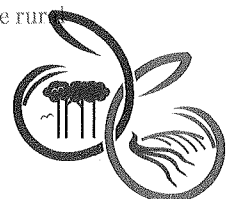
Local government is an essential part of Australia's system of government. While it continues to fulfil the traditional functions of 'roads, rates and rubbish', the size and scope of local government's role has expanded significantly over the past few decades. This is particularly so in country areas where the local 'Shire' is looked to for the provision of infrastructure and amenities as well as support for commercial growth, recreation, culture, community development, health, education, public welfare and public safety.

To plan and carry out these functions successfully, Council needs certainty of funding. It is Council's view that if the Commonwealth were empowered to fund local government directly, it would provide security for vital local projects, such as Roads to Recovery.

The Donnybrook-Balingup council supports the Federal Government having the power to be able to provide funding directly to local government, where this is in the national interest. It therefore supports an amendment to Section 96 of the Constitution so that it would read; "*Parliament may grant financial assistance to any state or local government body formed by or under a law of a state or territory.*"

OUR VISION

The Shire of Donnybrook/Balingup is a thriving community living in harmony with its unique rural environment whilst cherishing its diversity of heritage & Culture



Council further supports the view that, if a referendum is to be successful

- bi-partisan support is important
- the referendum should be held at a time which maximises its chance of success, and
- a publicly-funded national education and awareness campaign should be held prior to the referendum to inform the public about the Constitution, how to change it, and about the question being asked.

Council looks forward with interest to the Government's decision on this important matter.

Yours faithfully

John Attwood
Chief Executive Officer
20 November 2012

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