



Shire of Victoria Plains

28 Cavell Street Calingiri Western Australia 6569

P.O. Box 21 Calingiri W.A. 6569

TELEPHONE (08) 9628 7004 FACSIMILE (08) 9628 7008

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Enquiries: P Anning
A1.8.1.2
pa/fw

The Secretary
House Economics Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

House of representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration	
Submission No:.....	354.....
Date Received:	1/4/03.....
Secretary:

Dear Sir

Local Government and Cost Shifting

The State of Western Australia and particularly rural local government in WA provides completely different issues to other States with the exception to some extent of Queensland. There is little doubt in my opinion that though amalgamations have been successful in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia they would in the more remote areas of Western Australia especially be unworkable. In the city and more densely populated areas of WA it is inevitable and the only reason it has not happened is the lack of Government will to take what is seen by many as an obvious but unpopular step and vote loser and the parochial attitude of the individual Local Governments.

The big picture of viable units of Local Government increasing their responsibilities to include such services as police, education, transport and such services with direct funding support from the Federal Government and either removal or redirection in State Governments responsibilities is attractive and should be pursued.

Over many years Federal, State and Local Governments have failed to maintain the most important asset in such a vast country which is roads. Several studies will clearly show that our road asset is deteriorating due to lack of funding, resources and Political will. This cannot be allowed to continue in a country that regardless of shipping and train usage will be more and more dependant on roads.

Again in Western Australia the current push by the current State Government supported by the Greens to achieve one vote one value will reduce the rural vote to negligible if successful and mean that the political concentration on the metropolitan area which is already occurring will become stronger as elections will be won in the cities not the country. As an example we have already seen a 40% cut over two years in Regional Road Group funding. Apparently this has been done to create a State

Initiated Local Roads Fund and there is no doubt where that would be utilised with the cost of putting underground rail in the metropolitan area.

Local Government has continually, over recent years been involved in areas which have never been recognised as their responsibility. The old days of Road Rules and Rubbish have long gone. State Government and Federal Governments have been quick to provide start up funding for other issues but invariably Local Government is left to hold the baby.

We welcome this inquiry as a positive step to investigate the role of Local Government as the unrecognised partner in service provision in Australia and hope for positive outcomes.

Yours faithfully



P A (Phil) Anning
Chief Executive Officer