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2 January 2013

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

Dear Secretary

### **Submission to the Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government**

The City of Rockingham welcomes the establishment of the Joint Select Committee and is pleased to make a submission seeking the Constitutional recognition of Local Government in Australia.

Primary of the City's concerns is the financial recognition of Australian Local Government, particularly relating to tied and untied grant funding. The City of Rockingham is a high growth Western Australian Local Government and certainty of federal funding is critical success factor in the sound planning for the future demands of our growing population.

To this end, at its meeting held 25 October 2011, Council resolved to support the amendment of the Australian Constitution to establish financial recognition of Local Government which would allow the Commonwealth to directly fund Local Governments.

The City is aware that financial recognition could be achieved by amending Section 96 of the Constitution so 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."***

The City understands that any Constitutional change is achieved through referendum and these are best conducted in conjunction with federal elections. With such an election due next year in 2013, Council has resolved to request the Federal Government to conduct a referendum to achieve the Constitutional recognition of Local Government at the 2013 federal election.

History demonstrates that the success of a referendum is often contingent upon bi-partisan support of the major political parties. The City looks to the Joint Select Committee to lead the way forward in obtaining bi-partisan support for the principle of Constitutional recognition of Local Government.

Council has resolved to develop a local campaign for constitutional recognition of Local Government in support of the industry national campaign, to inform the local community and garner its support.



The City encourages the Joint Select Committee to recommend a publicly funded national education and awareness campaign to inform the public about the Constitution, how to change it, and the need for change to recognise the important contribution made by Local Government to the Australian community.

I trust that the City of Rockingham's position on Constitutional recognition of Local Government can be included in any call of submissions made by the Joint Select Committee.

Yours sincerely

**PETER VARRIS**  
**MANAGER GOVERNANCE AND COUNCILLOR SUPPORT**