



## ***From the Office of the Mayor***

Contact Name: Cr. Peter Maguire  
Contact No:

17 January 2013

Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government  
Department of House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam

### **Recognition of Local Government in the Constitution**

At its meeting this week, this Council discussed this very important matter with its view being that the constitutional recognition of local government is an issue that needs to be addressed urgently.

This issue needs to be dealt with efficiently, smartly and with a clear outcome. A special ALGA Congress was held in 2008 which focussed on this matter with a view to having the issue as a referendum question at an appropriate Federal Election, with the coming election being the appropriate time in this Council's opinion.

This Council is very disappointed that the impetus appears to have stalled and that the question may not be put as a referendum item at the coming 2013 election.

Council agrees with the following comments of the LGAQ:

*"The immediate need is to commit to a referendum, which will allow the people to decide."*

*We're ready to go in Queensland – ready to campaign for this very important and worthy change to our political landscape.*

*It is preferable that a referendum would be held alongside the upcoming Federal Election in keeping with the undertaking of Prime Minister Julia Gillard – alternatively, a commitment to a fixed date in 2014 is the only other acceptable option.*

*As it stands, local government is a sector that plays an important role in people's everyday lives, yet it is not acknowledged by the supreme law under which our Commonwealth operates."*

Recognising the local government sector in the Australian Constitution would put beyond doubt the Federal Government's ability to help fund important infrastructure projects that drive regional economies as well as provide the other opportunities for the future which includes financial sustainability.

The need for this referendum is clear and needs to be attended to.

In summary, for the long term future and sustainability of local government it is of paramount importance that the recognition of local government question be put to a referendum as soon as possible.

Local governments can assist in providing robust communications to its citizens prior to the election and it is this Council's view that local governments want this important issue put to the Australian people.

Council would gratefully appreciate your urgent assistance and coordination for this to happen.

Yours faithfully

**Peter Maguire**  
**Mayor**  
**Central Highlands Regional Council**

CC:

The President  
Australian Local Government Association  
8 Geils Court  
DEAKIN ACT 2600

For your attention and assistance