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20 December 2012

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
AUSTRALIA

Dear Sir/Madam

Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

I write to you on behalf of Light Regional Council (the Council) with respect to the abovementioned matter.

Council understands that a Joint Parliamentary Committee has been established with the responsibility of determining the level of support for a referendum (and its likely success) with respect to this issue.

I confirm that this is a significant matter of interest for Local Government. Council has previously confirmed its support for Constitutional Recognition of Local Government via a resolution at its meeting held on 24 January 2012. This resolution emphasizes in particular the need for this change so that the Commonwealth can directly support Local Government financially on matters of national interest (such as through the successful 'Roads to Recovery' program).

Like most public authorities, Council needs certainty of funding to enable it to sustain its provision of key services for its community and Constitutional Recognition will greatly assist with this. On this basis, I confirm that the Council **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*".

The Council understands that bi-partisan support is an essential precondition and the Council supports the referendum being held at a time that maximises its chances of success.

As the realities of inter-governmental funding are probably not well understood in the community, the Council also supports there being an appropriate publicity campaign to raise public awareness of this matter, the proposed change and the benefits it will have at a local service level.

I commend this initiative to the Committee on behalf of the Council and please do not hesitate to contact me on _____ should you wish to discuss the content of this letter further.

Yours sincerely

Bill O'Brien
Mayor

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