

20 December 2012

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Mr Glenn Worthington
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government
Department of House of Representatives
P.O. Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Worthington

Support for constitutional recognition of local government

At its meeting on 19 December 2012, the Greater Bendigo City Council resolved to write to your Committee reinforcing its strong support for constitutional change and a referendum on the recognition of local government.

The Council has noted the importance of recognising local government in the Constitution, particularly financial recognition, as a way of adding certainty to the federal government's power to directly fund councils when this is considered to be in the national interest. The Council needs certainty of funding so that programs like Roads to Recovery can continue.

To this end, the Council supports an amendment to section 86 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 notes the importance of bi-partisan support as an essential precondition if a referendum is to be successful. Given the history of two failed referenda on the issue of constitutional recognition of local government, the Council notes the proposed referendum should be held at a time which maximises its chance of success.

In the meantime, mindful of the importance of ensuring voters are informed, the Council supports a publicly funded national education and awareness campaign to inform the public about the Constitution, how to change it, and about the question being asked at the referendum and what it means.

Yours sincerely,

 Lisa Ruffell
MAYOR

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