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23 July 2002

Mr Trevor Rowe
Secretary
House of Representatives Economics,
Finance and Public Administration Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

House of representatives Standing Committee on
Economics, Finance and Public Administration

Submission No: 73

Date Received: 27/7/02

Secretary: Bardell

Dear Mr Rowe

INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COST SHIFTING

Thank you for the opportunity to make an initial submission to the above Inquiry. The terms of reference are of great interest to the Hindmarsh Shire and we intend to make a more detailed submission in due course.

Your terms of reference imply that financial pressures on local government are solely the result of the actions of State Governments. This is not the case. Any examination should consider Commonwealth, State and local issues.

We are concerned about competition and duplication between Commonwealth, State and local government programs and expenditure. For example in aged care where there is competition between the Commonwealth's Community Aged Care Program and the State's Linkages program. There is also the potential for duplication between these two programs and the HACC core services provided by local government.

There is considerable potential for greater cooperation between the levels of government. Local governments have natural advantages in delivering certain programs (due to location, local knowledge, institutional capacity, equipment and staff), but these advantages are not realised if local government and its peak bodies, are not involved in policy development and program planning.

There are many Victorian Government programs, delivered by local governments, which are subject to increasing costs and unfavourable grant/funding arrangements. For example libraries, home & community care, maternal & child health, kindergartens, Landcare, State Emergency Service, school crossing supervision, pest plant and animal control and VicRoads agency services.

I await your advice on timelines for delivery of a detailed submission.

Yours faithfully

Neil Jacobs
Chief Executive Officer