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MANNINGHAM

File No.:

24 January 2013.

Mr G Worthington,
Secretary, Joint Select Committee,
Constitutional Recognition of Local Government,
Australian Parliament House,
P.O. Box 6021,
Canberra, ACT, 2600.

Dear Mr Worthington

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

The Manningham City Council (MCC) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government. MCC is located 12 km from Melbourne and provides more than 100 services to 116,000 residents, ratepayers, businesses and community groups across the municipality.

I write on behalf of the Council to express it's long held support for constitutional recognition of local government within Australia and welcomes the establishment of a Joint Federal Parliamentary Committee to inquire into and report on the majority finding (financial recognition) of the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government including amending section 96 of the Australian Constitution.

MCC has previously considered various options for constitutional recognition and unanimously passed the following resolution on 29 March 2011.

"That MCC declares its support for financial recognition of local government in the Australian Constitution so that the Federal Government has the power to fund local government directly and also for inclusion of local government in any new Preamble to the Constitution if one is proposed, and calls on all political parties to support a referendum by 2013 to change the Constitution to achieve this recognition."

Therefore, MCC welcomes the majority finding of the Expert Panel favouring financial recognition of local government by amending Section 96 of the Constitution

MCC believes that Local government has had a long and proud history in Australia. It has evolved from the pre-federation era and developed into a strong third tier of government and a form of democratic government well recognised

and supported by local communities. Therefore, it makes sense that in the twenty-first century the Australian Constitution should include a mention of local government.

MCC believes it is of the utmost importance for the Federal Government to be able to provide funding directly to local councils to meet local community needs and assist especially in times of natural disasters as has been experienced within many municipalities in recent years.

MCC agrees with and supports the Expert Panel's proposed new wording for Section 96 of the Constitution being; "Parliament may grant financial assistance to any state **or any local government body formed by State or Territory Legislation** on such terms and conditions as the Parliament sees fit". MCC also supports, if the Committee see fit, the slight wording change as recommended by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).

The above constitutional amendment deals very well with the concern over the Australian Government's inability to directly fund local governments or community programs such as childcare, aged care and road works. It is also a very practical amendment that has a very good chance of attracting support from across all political parties and be logically acceptable with the Australian people at a referendum.

The issue of financial recognition within the Constitution is of vital importance for the development and sustainability of local government throughout Australia and the MCC fully supports the need to have this put in a referendum at the same time as the next Federal Government elections later this year.

The two conditions set by the Expert Panel on whether a referendum should be put to the Australian people are considered absolutely vital in generating wide public support and ensuring a successful referendum.

Yours sincerely

Cr Jennifer Yang
Mayor