



Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Local Government,

It is my will to declare that I do not want you to undertake the task of holding a referendum to ask whether Local Councils should have financial recognition in Australia's Constitution.

Whilst I support the good work and management that all levels of government and our councils do every day, there are some issues and concerns with the current system that should not be overlooked.

Firstly, the referendums of 1974 (when Australia's population was approx 13 million), 1984, 1988 and 1999 were not carried, as summarised below. It is apparent that the population do not support the idea of giving more power to local councils within the current framework, as continued growth without a redesign is unsustainable.

1974 Local Government Bodies - not carried  
1984 Interchange of Powers - not carried  
1988 Local Government - not carried  
1999 Republic - not carried

Australia's Constitution is over 100 years old, and though it is a revered and well written document, it was implemented when Australia's population was at roughly 16% of the current population. As our population has grown approx 6x since federation, times have also changed, and therefore a more modernised system should be adopted. Though we should not disregard the lessons and wisdom from history. We should maintain some of the key fundamental designs of the Constitution to ensure an open, balanced, fair, just and transparent system of governance is maintained.

I think that is time for a discussion to be opened about designing a new system. I have included one concept for consideration below. The details for such a new system should obviously discussed in an open forum, collecting ideas from the brightest minds from around our great country, and learning from other bright minds past and present from around the world.

A pattern that has been emerging over recent years is the concept of decentralised and democratic systems based on non-hierarchical leadership. This concept is growing in the business world and is present in nature.

The current model could be revised and adapted in a way that balances the interests and needs of governance and the population. Change can be a gradual process, unless a turning point or critical mass is reached, which may be upon us given some of events in recent world history.

One good example of how decisions are made in a non-hierarchical democratic system can be seen at <http://bettermeans.com>. I have no affiliation with that site, but they have a great demo video that explains the concept.

Yours faithfully,

Joe Cotroneo