

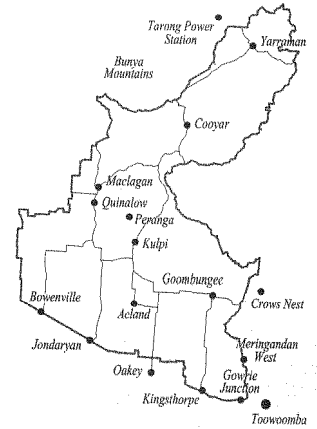
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Rosalie Shire Council

The Bridge between the Darling Downs and South Burnett

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Our Ref: A30-3

6 August 2002

The Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
on Economics, Finance and Public Administration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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

Submission No: 177

Date Received: 06/8/02

Secretary: Bardell

Dear Sir

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the current Inquiry into Local Government and Cost Shifting.

The Local Government Association of Queensland has forwarded an initial submission to you and Council supports the contents of that document. Over the last decade in particular, local government has been "given" considerable additional responsibilities on the basis that they are the level of government closest to the community and therefore best able to deliver the outcomes being sought by the State Government. Given local government's focus on economy and efficiency, they are also seen as being able to provide these services in the most economical manner. Unfortunately, even though local government is able to deliver economically, the level of funding required has not been forthcoming, leaving Councils to not only wear the adverse impact from the community but also to fund the shortfall.

In addition to carrying out the State Government's agenda, there have been a number of legislative changes that have impacted substantially on Council's operations. Some of these include workplace health and safety requirements, environmental standards, an endless list of requirements for Council to complete under the recently introduced Water Act 2000, and the new Pest Management legislation to mention a few.

Rosalie Shire has provided residential accommodation for their older more frail residents and very recently worked hard in regaining basic medical services in the town of Goombungee by attracting a new doctor to the area. These are matters which were once under the umbrella of State Government provided or supervised services. No longer is this the case.

While writing, I would like to advise that Rosalie Shire is not interested in directly providing services such as education, emergency response, law and order or health. As a body, what is sought is input into the operation of these services to ensure that local matters are taken into consideration at the time of planning as well as delivery. This entails close communication with the local government, but not an abrogation of that responsibility to the local government.

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One of the main difficulties experienced by local government is the uncertainty surrounding the level of funding made available by the State and Federal Governments. Over time, the services able to be maintained by these funds has reduced due to inflationary pressures. It is evident that funding is not being maintained in real terms. A suggestion to alleviate this problem would be to provide local government with access to a specific percentage share of GST revenue receipts. This would provide certainty as well as a growth factor and ensure that Councils throughout Australia are able to keep pace financially.

Council appreciates the opportunity to provide this submission to the Inquiry and looks forward to participating in the hearings when they move into the regional areas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C.N. Weber', written over a horizontal line.

C.N. Weber
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER