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Mr Glenn Worthington
Secretary
Joint Select Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir,

Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

Please consider this correspondence as Toowoomba Regional Council's submission to the Joint Committee supporting the constitutional recognition of local government.

Council has maintained a passionate and consistent position on this matter which includes having adopted the following policy stance in August 2008:

- That the Preamble to the Constitution include a broad recognition of local government as a legitimate and separate level of Australian Government;
- That the constitution include some principles relating to the existence, continuation and role of local government as a democratic institution; and
- That the constitution provide for a streamlined mechanism to provide direct funding for local government.

In May 2011 and January 2013, Council reaffirmed its support for constitutional recognition, particularly with respect to empowering the Commonwealth Government to provide direct funding to local government. This would provide greater funding certainty to the local government sector so that programs like *Roads to Recovery* can continue. Consequently, Council supports an amendment to section 96 of the Constitution to read:

"Parliament may grant financial assistance to any state or local government formed by or under a law of a state or territory."

I note that the Australian Local Government Association has lodged a submission to your Committee that focussed on the benefits of financial recognition and the need for the pre-conditions set by the Expert Panel to be met before a referendum is held. Council supports this view and believes that bi-partisan support to this change is an essential pre-condition to a successful referendum.

In addition, Council also supports the need for a publicly-funded education and awareness campaign on the Constitution, how to change it, and about the question being asked before the referendum.

Thank you for considering Council's submission. Should you have queries or require further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to me directly at your convenience.

Yours sincerely


ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER