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The Secretary
Joint Committee into Constitutional Recognition of Local Government
Parliament House
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir

SUBMISSION - JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE INTO CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I am writing to advise you of a resolution passed by this Council in February 2011 supporting the constitutional recognition of local government. The resolution unanimously adopted states:

"Kingborough Council 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."

Councils throughout Australia play a vital role in the provision of essential services and infrastructure at the local and regional level including at times of natural disasters as highlighted by events in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

The provision of financial support through programs such as *Roads to Recovery* are critical support to local government to assist in providing a reliant transport network that is critical for both the well being of the community and ensuring that business has access to intrastate, interstate and overseas markets as well delivery of commodities to Australian communities.

Constitutional recognition of local government would also remove any doubts as to direct funding of local government that was highlighted in the 2009 High Court decision *Pape v Federal Commissioner of Taxation*.

It is noted that in 2010 at the National Assembly of Local Government, leaders of the major political parties publicly supported the constitutional recognition of local government. A referendum for amendment to the Constitution supported by all major political parties would, with support of local government, have a strong chance of success.

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My Council strongly urges honourable members of the Committee to support the conducting of a referendum to amend the Constitution to provide financial recognition of local government so that the Federal Government may provide funding direct to local government.

Yours sincerely,

DR GRAHAM BURY
MAYOR