



Our Reference: TRIM 1288 JS:ts

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

6 December 2012

Dear Mr Worthington,

CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I am writing in my capacity as General Manager on behalf of Wollondilly Shire Council.

Wollondilly Shire Council has considered the matter of Constitutional Recognition of Local Government on a number of occasions in public forums.

Council on the 18th April 2011 unanimously passed a resolution:

- “1. That Council support financial recognition of Local Government in the Australian Constitution so 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.
2. That Council write to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and Federal Member for Macarthur and the State Member for Wollondilly advising of Council's support for the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government.”

Following this Council submitted a motion to the 2011 NSW Local Government Conference requesting the Association continue to pressure the Australian Federal Government to uphold their election commitment and hold a referendum to constitutionally recognise local government.

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On the 14 August 2011 Council resolved:

"That Wollondilly Shire Council write to the Hon. Simon Crean MP in his capacity as Minister for Local Government and enquire when the promised National Referendum to constitutionally recognise Local Government will take place".

On the 20 February 2012 Council resolved:

"That Council continue to support the campaign for recognition of local government in the Australian Constitution by allocating funding over the next three years for Council's contribution to a national advertising campaign".

Council at its meeting to be held on the 17 December 2012 will consider a report outlining Council's position being:

- Financial recognition stemming from any change to the constitution is supported
- The Federal Government should have power to be able to provide funding directly to local government where there is a national interest
- Councils need certainty of funding opportunities in order for programs such as Roads to Recovery can continue
- Wollondilly Shire Council supports an amendment to section 96 of the Constitution to read "Parliament may grant financial assistance to any state or local government body formed by or under a law of a State or Territory"
- In considering constitutional recognition for local government it is apparent that bi-partisan support is an essential precondition if a referendum is to have the best chance of success
- A publicly funded national education & awareness campaign to inform communities about the Constitution, how to change it and about the question being asked is inhibited prior to a referendum.

Council has consistently supported Constitutional Recognition. I would like to request the Committee consider Council's views as part of its deliberations.

Yours faithfully

Les McMahon
General Manager