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Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Reform of Local Government  
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Dear Sir

### **Constitutional Recognition of Local Government**

Council considers Constitutional Recognition of Local Government as a vital component of strong unified government.

Being the sphere of government closest to the people, local government is well placed in hearing and understanding the needs of the community. Council currently has a governing body of seven democratically elected members, who through their actions and the wider actions of the council organisation are directly accountable to the community from which they have been elected.

Funding certainty is another vital component of Constitutional Recognition and the payment of the Financial Assistance Grant (Equalisation and Road components) as well as Roads to Recovery funding direct to local government will ensure that the vital services and community needs are better catered for.

Council already partners with all levels of government in the provision of vital community services and also acts and advocates on behalf of the community as a:

- Leader
- Provider
- Regulator
- Partner
- Supporter, and
- Promoter

in ensuring that community needs are met.

Formal recognition in the Constitution will aid in a better working relationship with all spheres of government, being Commonwealth, State and Local and Council has demonstrated that it can confidently acquit specific Commonwealth Grants totalling in excess of \$2 million over the last two financial years.

Council was constituted in 1902 and as with other councils was established to provide roads and community facilities that could not be provided by the centralised form of government and much has changed since the inception of Council. Constitutional

Recognition is a logical step in the autonomy of local government that is worth embracing and formally acknowledging. From a local perspective, Council not only accords with various levels of legislation, but also has Local Policies, which through their implementation, directly affect local residents and establish benchmarks for expected service delivery.

In the pursuit of Constitutional Recognition, Council is also partnering with the Local Government and Shires Association of NSW, whom on behalf of member councils are seeking a Referendum be conducted to gauge the communities stance on this vital matter.

Council is of the view that as the current Constitution does not mention local government, nor does it provide for the Commonwealth to fund councils directly, that this anomaly should be corrected and the proper autonomy be recognised for the sphere of government that is the most reactive and closest to the electors. Constitutional Recognition of Local Government will ensure that the local communities will receive the local services and infrastructure they desire and deserve.

Please accept this letter as Council's submission to the Joint Select Committee on Constitutional Reform of Local Government.

Yours faithfully

**David Keenan**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**