



Corowa Shire

...the choice

REFERENCE: BJC:MTH – Constitution
CONTACT: MR BRUCE CORCORAN

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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,

RE **CONSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Council thanks the Joint Parliamentary Committee for the opportunity to provide a submission on Local Government's Recognition in the Australian Constitution.

Corowa Shire is a Local Government area located in the New South Wales Murray and Riverina regions. The Shire is a multi-purpose Council, situated on the Murray River with a population of 11,000 people. The Shire covers an area of just on 2,408km² and includes the towns of Corowa, Howlong and Mulwala.


Currently Corowa Shire and its community is one of the many Councils across Australia that have passed resolutions supporting a referendum to change the Australian Constitution to recognise Local Government.

The current Constitution has been in place for over 100 years and although serving the country well during this period requires updating to recognise the changing and important role Local Government undertakes in providing a greater range of services and infrastructure to local communities.

To recognise Local Government's important and increasing role in providing services to its communities Local Government should be included in the Preamble of the Constitution. A change should also be made to Section 96 of the Constitution by including the words "or Local Government body formed by or under a law of a State or Territory" after the current wording the "Parliament may grant financial assistance to any State".

The current Constitution does not mention Local Government. This means there is uncertainty about how the Federal Government can work with Local Government and its ability to provide taxpayers funds to Councils. If the Federal Government is unable to provide these funds in the future the current level of services and local infrastructure provided to communities through Local Government may not be able to continue.

By including Local Government in Section 96 of the Constitution it will ensure our communities continue to receive infrastructure and services from their Local Government's by funding directly from the Federal Government.



It is in the nation's interest to recognise Local Government's increasing role in the Governance of Australia. To allow the Federal Government certainty and in providing funding to Local Government will ensure our local services and infrastructure such as local roads, libraries, parks and gardens are maintained. It is imperative Local Government be included in the Australian Constitution.

As we know for the referendum to be successful it must have bipartisan support. To this end Council supports prior to the referendum a publicly funded national education and awareness campaign to inform the public about the Constitution, how to change it, and provide information about the question being asked. An informed voter is more likely to cast an informed vote, which is based on facts rather than misinformation.

Again, Council thanks you for the opportunity to provide this submission and requests the Joint Parliamentary Committee to favourably consider the position put forward by this Council.

Yours faithfully

BJ CORCORAN
GENERAL MANAGER