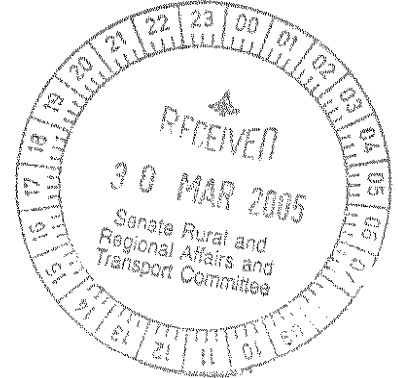




Our Reference: BB 14980

21 March 2005

Ms Maureen Weeks
Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs
and Transport Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Ms Weeks

South Australian Submission to the Senate Inquiry – AusLink Legislation

I refer to your letter of 2 March 2005 and provide the following comments in response.

Local Government in South Australia is responsible for 75,000 kilometres of road and is a major stakeholder in transport provision and infrastructure. To maintain this infrastructure into the future it is crucial that local government designate the appropriate resources to maintaining and improving the current network to meet both existing and future demands.

The LGA is supportive of the principles of the current AusLink (National Land Transport) Bill 2004 and the need to develop a new framework to address the current and emerging land transport challenges.

The National Office of Local Government has estimated the value of South Australian local roads at \$4.8b. This coupled with the findings published by the Department of Transport and Regional Services that the estimated annual local road renewal shortfall of \$66m clearly shows the enormity of the task that faces Local Government in South Australia.

It is anticipated that the current State Government population policy (which proposes to increase the population of South Australia to 2 million by 2050) will increase the transport task and place increasing demand on the current State road network. This in turn will have a dramatic effect on the local road system and associated infrastructure.

Local Government in South Australia acknowledges and greatly values the Commonwealth's support for the provision and maintenance of local roads and the Prime Minister's announcement in March 2004 of an additional \$26.25m over three years for South Australian Local Roads. It is expected, (reaffirmed by the Prime Minister in his announcement of the additional funding), that the current inequity that exists for SA in relation to Identified Local Road Grants will be rectified with the Government's response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration Rates and Taxes: a Fair Share for Responsible Local Government Report.

Financial Assistance Grants, Identified Local Road Grants and the Roads to Recovery Program provide valued funding to Councils and greatly assist in the maintenance of the local road network.

Your letter of 2 March 2005 states that you will be considering the extension of the criteria for Roads to Recovery projects to include public transport, cycling, walking infrastructure and regional airport runways.

The LGA does not support this extended criteria. Public Transport in South Australia is the responsibility of the State Government. Any extension of the Roads to Recovery criteria could result in Local Government funding being used for State Government purposes. In relation to cycling and walking, the LGA is supportive of this where cycling or walking infrastructure is crucial to the effective management of a particular local road corridor.

In relation to regional airport runways the LGA would like to see increased funding to those Councils that have responsibility for this infrastructure from a source other than Commonwealth local road funding.

For South Australian Councils there is inadequate funding for local roads in comparison to other States and our State Executive Committee resolved last week to re-affirm the importance of this funding being used for local roads.

Inquiries in relation to this submission can be referred to Ms Bev Barber, Senior Policy Officer, Roads, Transport and Infrastructure on (08) 8224 2053.

Yours sincerely



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Executive Director

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CC: President, Australian Local Government Association