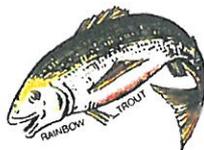


# WALCHA COUNCIL

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23 January 2013

**Submission Number: 162**  
**Date Received: 29/01/2013**

Mr Glen Worthington, Secretary  
Joint Select Committee on the  
Constitutional Recognition of Local Government  
PO Box 602, Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Sir

## **Submission on Constitutional Recognition of Local Government**

In October 2011, Walcha Council passed a resolution to declare its support for Constitutional Recognition of Local Government.

Walcha Council fully supports the amendment to Section 96 of the Constitution to explicitly say that the Commonwealth Government can provide funding directly to local councils so that it will read: "Parliament may grant financial assistance to any state or local government body formed by or under a law of a state or territory". The certainty of direct Federal funding to Local Government ensures the money is spent direct on the projects without additional administrative or handling costs and with efficiency. The "Roads to Recovery" Program is a great example of this. This program has been a vital part of the Walcha Council's provision of local services and infrastructure.

Walcha Council strongly supports the constitutional recognition of local government but is concerned that the extent of possible changes to bring about this recognition may well be its undoing. It is important that the referendum process be designed to ensure that the community can properly understand the changes needed and be comfortable and confident of the outcome when casting their vote. Therefore Council fully supports a publicly funded national education and awareness campaign to inform the public about the Constitution, how to change it and about the question being asked before the referendum. Bipartisan support is an essential precondition if a referendum is have the best chance of success.

Yours faithfully

JACK O'HARA  
GENERAL MANAGER