

11 February 2013

**Submission Number: 176**  
**Date Received: 11/02/2013**



Committee Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government  
Department of House of Representatives  
GPO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

[jsclg@aph.gov.au](mailto:jsclg@aph.gov.au)

re Submission  
Constitutional Recognition of Local Government

On behalf of Maroondah City Council I am pleased to make this submission on the matter of Constitutional Recognition of Local Government.

Maroondah Council believes most strongly that Local Government cannot effectively discharge its ever-evolving duties as the third tier of government within Australia without constitutional recognition. Such would enable Local Government to have a greatly enhanced ability to serve the interests of the communities they represent by: better attracting the support and resources they require and by being recognised as a legitimate tier of government.

Council is delighted that the Joint Select Panel in its Preliminary Report indicated that a referendum should be held on financial recognition of Local Government at the same time as the 2013 Federal election. Financial recognition would enable the Federal Government to directly fund Local Government and this would have a great impact and make an enormous difference to the sector. It would place beyond doubt any of the current legal concerns about direct Federal funding and also enhance efficiencies in avoiding duplication in not having to deal with the relevant State.

Council fully endorses the concerns regarding the success of referendum that were outlined in the submission made to the Joint Select Committee by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA). Historically achieving a double majority for any referendum has proved to be extremely difficult and indeed only 8 out of 44 referendums have been successful since 1901. ALGA reiterated the findings of the earlier Expert Panel in that these factors are an essential ingredient for success of any referendum:-

- Bipartisan support amongst the political parties;
- Federal Government taking the lead on the issue in terms of dialogue with the States and also within the community;

..12

- Information to be available to the public on the constitution and the referendum process; and
- The cases for yes and no are to be prepared in a factual manner.

Council calls on the Joint Select Committee to most strongly emphasise within its final report the pivotal importance of the Federal Government taking direct action to maximise the chances of success of a referendum.

I advise that Council will also be forwarding a copy of this submission to the Australian Local Government Association, The Municipal Association of Victoria and our local Members of Parliament seeking their direct support.

Council trusts that the overriding view of submissions is positive and looks forward to the final report of the Joint Select Committee on this critical issue for Local Government. Finally, with the Federal election now scheduled and rapidly approaching, urgent action to progress this matter is essential.

Yours faithfully

Nora Lamont  
MAYOR