



AUSTRALIAN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Council Name

Address

Address

23 September 2011

To the Mayor, Councillors and CEO,

I am writing to encourage your council to consider making a submission on the Discussion Paper issued by the Expert Panel on the Constitutional Recognition of Local Government and highlight the case that the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) will be putting forward in its submission. The Expert Panel's Discussion Paper, released on 22 September, canvasses four options for constitutional change to recognise local government. Submissions from interested parties are sought by 4 November 2011.

Constitutional recognition has been a priority of local government for a long time but the issue has advanced significantly in recent years after ALGA began a comprehensive process in 2008 aimed at considering possible options and developing a united voice on the type of constitutional change, and preferred options.

The Discussion Paper issued by the Expert Panel and the establishment of the Expert Panel itself are the most recent steps in the Government's progress towards a referendum by 2013.

The Expert Panel is chaired by the former Chief Justice of New South Wales, the Hon Jim Spigelman and comprises parliamentary, academic and local government representatives, including myself and former ALGA President, Cr Paul Bell.

I encourage each and every council to make a submission. It is important that the Expert Panel gains an understanding of the level of local government support for constitutional recognition. In this regard I am pleased to note that over 400 councils across Australia have passed resolutions supporting a simple change which would remove any doubt about the capacity of the Commonwealth to continue to directly fund local government through programs such as Roads to Recovery. Councils which have passed those resolutions might find them useful as a basis for submissions.

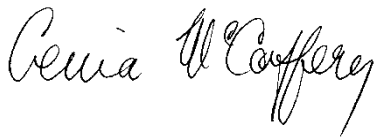
ALGA will be working with your state and territory local government associations to make a comprehensive submission to this important process and I have included an **attachment** to this letter which outlines the case ALGA will be putting forward in its submission.

I urge your council to also make a submission to the Panel, putting your views on the record about constitutional recognition and, if appropriate, your support for any particular option.

The Expert Panel has been tasked by the Government to assess whether there is sufficient support in the Australian community to recognise local government in the Constitution and to provide recommendations to the Government on specific changes which could be made.

It is important that all councils take the opportunity to register their support for constitutional change. I hope you will find the outline of ALGA's submission helpful in identifying issues which might be covered in your own submission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Genia McCaffery". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and 'M'.

Mayor Genia McCaffery

President