



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **LGANT WELCOMES REFERENDUM TO RECOGNISE LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Local Government Association of Northern Territory (LGANT) welcomes today's announcement by the Prime Minister that a referendum on constitutional recognition of local government will be held in conjunction with the federal election on 14 September 2013.

"This decision allows local government to move forward with the national campaign to have local government recognised in the constitution," President Damien Ryan said.

"Recognition is vital to protect direct funding from the Commonwealth to local government."

"It is clear the only way to protect direct funding from the Commonwealth to local government for community services and infrastructure is to have local government recognised in the Australian Constitution.

"Recent High Court decisions in the Pape Case and the Williams Case have both put into doubt the power of the Commonwealth to provide direct funding to entities not included in the Constitution.

“Constitutional recognition will provide local government with financial certainty to be able to continue with programs such as Roads to Recovery and Black Spot. Since the inception of the Roads to Recovery program, local government has spent over \$28 million fixing local roads in the Northern Territory.

“A ‘Yes’ vote for the referendum on 14 September 2013 will protect this funding,” President Ryan said today.

Local government seeks an amendment of Section 96 of the Constitution so that it would read: “Parliament may grant financial assistance to any state or local government formed by or under a law of a state or territory on such terms and condition as the Parliament sees fit.”

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