

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Consultation on the Federation White Paper

LGMA National will make a major contribution to discussions on the White Paper on Reform of the Federation, and the implications for Local Government. This follows the release of the latest discussion paper, which makes little reference to the role of local government.

The Office of the Prime Minister announced the 'White Paper on the Reform of the Federation' (PM 2014) in June 2014.

The White Paper will seek to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure that, as far as possible, the States and Territories are sovereign in their own sphere.

The objectives of the White Paper will be to:

- reduce, as far as possible, the waste, duplication and second guessing between the different levels of government;
- achieve a more efficient and effective Federation, and in so doing, improve national productivity;
- make interacting with government simpler for citizens; and
- achieve agreement between State and Commonwealth governments about their distinct and mutually exclusive responsibilities and subsequent funding sources for associated programs.

As well as to ensure our federal system:

- is better understood and valued by Australians (and the case for reform supported);
- has clearer allocation of roles and responsibilities;
- enhances governments' autonomy, flexibility and political accountability; and
- supports Australia's economic growth and international competitiveness.

LGMA National President, Dr Shayne Silcox, said "it is important that local government's critical contribution to Australian society and productivity is understood and positioned strongly in any reform of the federation." He echoed the view of the President of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), Mayor Troy Pickard, who called for more attention to be given to local government issues, and for all sides of politics to keep an open mind on options throughout the White Paper process.

LGMA will be facilitating wide-ranging discussions with stakeholders over the coming months

about what implications the Federal White Paper could have for local government, culminating in a forum in Canberra in November. The draft consultation paper will be available by late August.

LGMA's CEO Lauren Oakey is committed to receiving opinions from as many Councils and staff as possible to make these issues a priority.

"Every state LGMA office will be contacted for their response on issues of importance to local government such as the role councils should play as part of the Federation, the tax system, strengthening local democracy, regional collaboration between levels of government, and ensuring the best possible services to communities," said Lauren.

"We will be coordinating a strategic consultation that ensures a quality submission is developed, supported by the expertise of Professors Mark Evans and Graham Sansom, to assist this process," continued Lauren. "We ask for robust contributions from members, councils and other key stakeholders to ensure our submission has a strong foundation of input from the sector."

More information about the LGMA National consultation process will be released on the LGMA website - <http://www.lgma.org.au/advocacy.html> and on Twitter @LGMANational.

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