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IPA: CANBERRA COUNCIL GRAB A DISASTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND RATES

“Constitutional recognition of local government will lead to a federal takeover of local laws, lead to rate increases, expansion of bad and petty laws and corrode Australian democracy,” said Tim Wilson, policy director at free market think tank, the Institute of Public Affairs.

The Institute of Public Affairs is strongly opposed to constitutional recognition, because it will:

- lead to creeping Canberra control of local services through funding agreements.
- undermine the role of the states and their oversight of local government.
- stop states from removing corrupt councils and amalgamating inefficient ones.
- lead to rate rises from councils without state government oversight.
- increase the volume of petty and intrusive laws into people’s lives and businesses.

“Australia should be governed from local communities-up, not Canberra-down,” Mr Wilson said.

“This referendum is about governing bin collections for Broome, Buderim and Burnie from the Prime Minister’s Canberra office.”

“With every single federal dollar comes strings attached, this plan is about centralising more power in Canberra and further away from local communities. Local government rules and regulations, from planning applications to caring for local parks, will be driven by Canberra.”

“The referendum is a rehashing of Gough Whitlam’s failed attempt to bypass the states and promote a level of government that is easier to control from the Prime Minister’s office.”

“Scrapping state government oversight of local government will create fiefdoms for local kingmakers and petty bureaucrats.”

“Often state government restraints stop significant rate rises, once local government sits separately they will raise rates and increase costs to families.”

“Local governments are already the source of the most intrusive rules and regulations into people’s lives from stopping kite flying in parks, to tying community street parties up in red tape and destroying community festivals through excessive food handling regulations. Constitutional recognition will make it worse.”

“If this referendum is successful the level of government closest to Australian families will be taken over by the one most distant and disconnected. It will be a disaster for Australian democracy,” Mr Wilson said.

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