COMMONWEALTH SIGNALS CHANCE FOR BREAKTHROUGH ON TERRITORY LOCAL ROADS FUNDING

Local Government Minister Elliot McAdam has welcomed the chance of a more equitable and realistic approach to local roads funding from the Commonwealth after today’s Local Government and Planning Ministerial Council meeting in Melbourne.

“The Commonwealth has clearly indicated in its response to the Hawker Inquiry into local roads funding that it is sympathetic to the anomalies faced by local government in the Territory,” said Mr McAdam.

“Last year they demonstrated this through an extra funding tranche to South Australia—the Commonwealth has now confirmed that the Commonwealth Grants Commission will review its approach to local roads funding by July 2006.

“It is slow progress—but no less welcome for that.

“It really signals the chance of a better deal for the Northern Territory local government sector.”

More than 7000 kilometres of unincorporated roads in the Territory are effectively excluded from the funding available to local government throughout the rest of Australia, as these Territory roads do not fall within local government areas. For this reason, such roads are not able to be funded through Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants to local governments in the Territory.

“It’s potentially great news for local government in the Territory now that the Australian Government has confirmed its commitment to require the Commonwealth Grants Commission to urgently review the identified roads component of Financial Assistance Grants to local government.”

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