The inaugural meeting of the Local Government and Planning Ministers’ Council is to be held in Darwin on 15 July 2003. The meeting will be co-chaired by the Minister for Local Government, John Ah Kit MLA, and the Minister for Lands and Planning, the Hon Kon Vatskalis MLA. The meeting will also be attended by the Commonwealth Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government, the Hon Wilson Tuckey MP.

"This inaugural meeting provides an important and timely opportunity for ministers to drive the strategic agenda for pressing local government and planning issues," said Mr Ah Kit.

"The Council is uniquely placed to take the lead role on cross-jurisdictional local government and planning issues."

"Recent consideration of such issues has been fragmented and without a common focus. The Council will play a crucial role by jointly developing policy and initiating joint action to resolve issues where appropriate," he said.

Twelve Ministers representing the Commonwealth and all States and Territories, as well as the New Zealand Minister for Local Government and representatives of the Australian Local Government Association will attend the meeting.

Agenda items to be discussed include:

- Council of Australian Governments review of natural disaster arrangements/mitigation;
- Urban sustainability;
- Water recycling;
- Local Government and Cost Shifting Inquiry;
- Indigenous issues;
- Community strengthening;
- National Charter of Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning.