

**Submission to the Australia 2020 Summit on
Strengthening Communities and Supporting Working Families**
by Mark Drummond, 9 April 2008

**LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES NEED STRONGER LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS**

To optimally support local communities and families at the critical scales of individual people, households and families, neighbourhoods, towns and cities, businesses of all sizes, and local and regional communities as generally understood, we should constitutionally recognise and significantly strengthen local governments (which account for just 7% of total government spending in Australia, compared to about 18% in Canada and 25% in both the US and UK) and either (1) amalgamate Commonwealth, State and Territory government to form a single national government or (2) otherwise ensure that our communities and families are in absolutely no way impeded by duplicated and generally excessive taxation and red tape.

A PhD I completed in 2007 (please email to markld@ozemail.com.au for further details) summarised past estimates and established new estimates of the public and private sector financial benefits possible through government structure reforms such as New States, Unification, Regional Governments and Functional Transfers (to establish national health or education systems, for example), motivated by the hope that financial benefits achieved through intelligent reform can generate significant benefits for our country socially, environmentally and generally. Past and new estimates alike suggest that intelligent reform of Australia's government structures and regulatory systems could achieve financial benefits of at least \$50 billion per annum across the entire Australian economy (in June 2007 dollar terms). Such gains could deliver huge boosts for communities and families through reduced taxation and improved infrastructure, facilities and services.