



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Petition

Registration No:	13
Title:	NT Operations Grant to Wagait Shire
Presented on:	6 May 2009
Presented by:	Mr Wood
Referred to:	Treasurer (Lawrie) [<i>Local Government (Knight)</i>]
Date referred:	6 May 2009
Response due:	20 August 2009
Response received:	27 July 2009
Response presented:	17 August 2009

Petition

TO THE HONOURABLE THE **SPEAKER AND MEMBERS** ~~OF THE~~ ^{Clerk of the A}
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY:

WE THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH

1. That the community of Wagait Beach has always maintained that it will remain a viable local government unit provided that it does not receive any less in grant funding that it received in the previous year.
2. The community has been informed that the Minister for Local Government is proposing to amend the NT Operations Grant funding formula that could result in a 100% rate increase for ratepayers within the Wagait Shire.
3. That the Government has an inherent obligation to treat all Territorians equally and ensure that actions of the Government do not prejudice any sector of the community by being responsible for 100% rate increases

YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY THAT

1. Prior to the finalisation of changes to the NT Operations Grant funding formula that no Council be disadvantaged as a consequence of the new formula.
2. The 2009-10 allocation of the NT Operations Grant to the Wagait Shire be no less than the previous years allocation.

AND YOUR PETITIONERS, AS IN DUTY BOUND, WILL EVER PRAY.

Response

Recent and significant reforms of local government across the Northern Territory have led to a reconsideration of the purpose and distribution methodology for all local government funding.

For a number of years, the distribution of the Northern Territory Operational Grants (Grants) have not been managed according to objective factors such as population, geographic areas and service delivery locations. I have now made the decision to approve a fairer and more equitable distribution methodology for the Grants which now reflects the cost adjusters described in the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* – population, dispersion and Aboriginality of the population.

The methodology is consistent with the achievement of the Northern Territory Government Closing the Gap and Working Future goals and recognises that the service delivery 'location' and 'dispersion' factors mean that large shires and those with dispersed service delivery locations have higher costs than smaller shires with less dispersed service delivery locations.

For 2009-10, the Government distributed \$20.7 million in grants.

Wagait Shire Council received \$145,017 for 2009-10, the same amount as 2008-09.

Local government councils receiving grants funding have also been provided forecasts over the next four financial years (2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14). The revised methodology will be implemented over these years to cushion the impact for councils that receive a smaller allocation over time. The timeframe of four years will provide the councils with time to prepare and adjust to funding changes.

Councils are able to raise revenue through rates and encouraged to apply for grant funding under other programs provided by the Northern Territory Government and Australian Government.