Scots Presbyterian Church

PO Box 134

BINGARA NSW 2404

22nd July 2015

Local Government Expert Advisory Panel

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

PO Box K35

HAYMARKET POST SHOP

NSW 1240

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to submit a letter regarding the position of the Scots Presbyterian Church and the Gwydir Shire Council.

The Presbyterian Church is one of five churches in our small rural country town. Our local council is extremely supportive of all not – for- profit organizations within the town. The council provides donations to all organizations upon submission, in our case with a reduction of council and water/garbage/sewerage rates which enable our Church to remain viable.

It is extremely satisfying to be able to walk into our local council and speak to the staff that we know well and know full well our request or questions will be attended to then and there. If they don’t know something they go out of their way to find out. That would not happen if Bingara were to be on the end of the proposed new amalgamation with Moree. We would be forgotten as the Shire would be the size of a small state.

Bingara has suffered significantly since our amalgamation in recent years with Warialda where the Gwydir Shire Council was formed. We have seen a decline in the funding spent on our swimming pool and caravanpark. Due to the sheer size of the new Gwydir Shire there is greater population in the old Warialda shire and hence when it comes to an election the majority of voting is for the top end of the Shire. The rubbish tip and swimming pools have had their opening hours reduced since amalgamation. The youth of Bingara rely heavily on the swimming pool in the summer months for entertainment. Take this away, they have nothing.

We are such a small community and rely heavily on our local Council for employment. If we were to lose our local Council staff with young families, they would be forced to move away and then the whole town suffers. The school would be forced to downsize or close. We would lose teachers who spend their money in town, council staff who spend their money in town. Bingara would become a place for senior citizens only with their pension incomes. They get a reduction in rates so how will that support council income? We simply cannot afford to let Gwydir Shire Council become part of Moree Plains. It is not viable for either organization.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my submission.

On behalf of Scots Presbyterian Church Bingara

Mrs Shirley Brien

Honorary Treasurer/ Secretary