

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local Government
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House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Interface Secretariat

C/o Socom

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Dear Sir/Madam

RE: New Regional Development Funding Program

The Interface Councils write to this committee to give comment on new regional funding programs for Australia. Specifically, the Interface Councils would like to highlight to the committee the importance of developing criteria for inclusion in the fund that does not exclude genuine rural communities.

The Interface Councils are the group of eight municipalities which form a ring around Metropolitan Melbourne. We understand that the purpose of a regional grants fund is to strengthen growth and opportunities within regional areas and to help regions address change such as population change, climate change or economic change.

The Interface Councils are unique spaces that bridge the gap between rural and urban Victoria. While both urban and rural, the Interface councils are still classified as 'Metropolitan Councils'. However, they are no more than 30% urban, with the vast majority of land inside their boundaries comprising of agricultural land, national parks or rural communities.

Despite there being genuine rural communities within the municipal boundaries of the Interface Councils, we are often disadvantaged when it comes to access to programs, grants, schemes and concessions that are designed specifically for 'regional' areas. This is because Government departments use the classification of the whole local government area to determine their eligibility.

The classification of vast areas of rural land within a metropolitan council as 'urban' is unnecessary and unfair. The needs of the rural communities within the Interface Councils are different those in the urban areas and need the same opportunities, support and funding as councils that are classified as regional or rural.

Consider the following chart of rural areas in both the Interface Councils and other Rural Councils. It highlights the anomaly of the ‘metropolitan’ classification rule on the Interface Councils when being considered for regional funding.

INTERFACE - Considered Urban	OTHER COUNCILS - Considered Rural
Lang Lang (Cardinia Shire) 85km from CBD	Mt Macedon (Macedon Ranges Shire) 64.1 km from CBD
Flinders (Mornington Peninsula Shire) 96km from CBD	Nyora (South Gippsland) 108 km from CBD
Warburton (Yarra Ranges Shire) 77.15km from CBD	Bacchus Marsh (Moorabool) 61.23 km from CBD

Similar to other Councils classified as ‘regional’, the Interface’s rural areas are home to:

- Rich agricultural production
- Reservoirs servicing Melbourne’s water supply
- Lands of high environmental significance – coastal areas, grass lands, state forests, national parks
- Tourism icons, from Werribee Mansion through to the Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula.

The Interface Councils propose that for any regional funding program, that a definition of rural and regional NOT be based on the definition of the municipal area and be extended to include the rural areas of Interface municipalities. The Greater Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary is a good delineation between rural Victorian and metropolitan Melbourne and this should be considered when developing the criteria for the fund’s inclusion.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Tim Heenan
Mayor, Shire of Yarra Ranges

On behalf of the Interface Councils.

Cardinia Shire Council	Hume City Council
Melton Shire Council	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
Nillumbik Shire Council	Whittlesea City Council
Wyndham City Council	Shire of Yarra Ranges