



14 July 2008

Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport
Regional Development and Local Government
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE 'INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAMS'

Bass Coast Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry. It acknowledges that the Regional Partnerships Program is a valuable source of funding for projects in Bass Coast that would not have otherwise been possible to fund. As ageing infrastructure replacement and maintenance presents a huge financial challenge for Council, Federal Government funding for infrastructure projects is greatly appreciated. Council therefore offers the following responses:

I. Future funding of Regional Programs

(i) How might regional programs be funded in the future so that they invest in genuine, accountable community infrastructure projects?

Partnership approach

Partnership funding worked well for projects that required large capital expenditure. It spread the cost over a number of government departments (Commonwealth, State and local) and stakeholders. This meant that large projects could be funded (e.g. community hubs). It also gave greater endorsement to good projects and resulted in greater accountability.

Funding for specific projects rather than fitting projects to funding programs

All Councils have a Council Plan which identifies the priorities for each municipality. Commonwealth Government funding has been available to Councils through specific programs. Often these funding programs do not match the priority projects of the Council, which means there is no funding for



some very important projects. It also means that funding applications are written for projects, where there is funding, even if these are not high priorities.

(ii) How might administrative costs and duplication for taxpayers be minimized?

Application and reporting process

Most Commonwealth Government funding applications are complex and very time consuming to complete. The system similar to what DIIRD/RDV has introduced is one that could be adopted. This is where a half to one page summary is submitted to a Committee for assessment. If it meets the funding criteria, then the applicant is advised to submit an application. This cuts out the time wasted on writing applications that go nowhere.

Staff member to assist with project application

Currently ACC staff have been available to assist applicants with their funding applications. This has been very positive, particularly for community groups, who often have the basis of every project but do not know how to articulate it or structure it.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanette Draper". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeanette Draper
Director Community and Economic Development (Acting)