

Mr Michael Crawford
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development
and Local Government
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Crawford

INQUIRY INTO A NEW REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the issues raised from the inquiry into a new Regional Development Funding Program. Peel Development Commission is pleased to submit the following advice in response to Points 1 and 2 of the terms of reference.

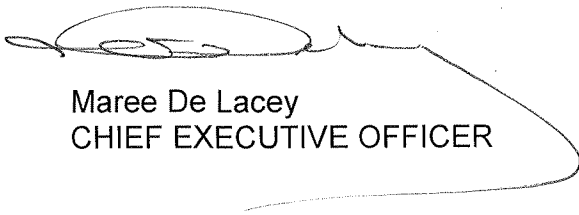
- Funding decisions should be based on identified regional priorities established through a transparent process. Where possible, there should be a single process and structure to determine these priorities in the region to avoid duplication, wasteful competition, or gaps in planning. Peel Development Commission, a WA State Government organization, coordinates regional priorities on an annual basis through a comprehensive process involving of all stakeholders including all five local government authorities; peak bodies in the environmental and community services sector; the Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Minerals and Energy; all State and Federal Members of Parliament in the region (government and opposition); all state government agencies and key major organizations. This results in a broadly-agreed regional priority list on an annual basis. The Commission also facilitated the *Peel 2020 Sustainability Plan* with involvement of all of the previously-mentioned agencies and with broad community consultation, which provided a long-term strategy for the region. The Commission would welcome the involvement of the Commonwealth Government in these processes and structures.
- While agreeing with the need for project proponents to demonstrate regional partnerships, the previous practice of announcing Regional Partnerships funding conditional on State matching funds was at times counterproductive. A stronger partnership approach between all spheres of government in funding assessments and decisions is recommended.
- Application and assessment requirements for State and Commonwealth funding should, where possible, be closer aligned so that project proponents do not need to

provide onerous amounts of different information to different spheres of government for the same project.

- Peel Region's local government authorities have identified a need for partnership between the three levels of government and for funding eligibility to include funds for planning at the local and regional level in areas facing rapid population growth. Currently it is the local governments' role to fund and deliver a range of local plans. In areas of rapid growth, the local governments may not have the resources to do so effectively. A more appropriate partnership arrangement between the three levels of government at the earlier stages of planning may deliver a better long-term outcome, reducing the need for costly programs to remediate economic, social and environmental issues.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact Diane Russell-Taylor at Peel Development Commission on telephone (08) 9535 0000.

Yours sincerely



Maree De Lacey
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

21 July 2008