

**Jon Stanhope** MLA

CHIEF MINISTER

TREASURER MINISTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

MEMBER FOR GINNINDERRA

Ms Janet Holmes
Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
PO Box 6021
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600

Dear Ms Holmes

I am writing in response to a letter of 20 May 2008 from Ms Catherine King MP about the Standing Committee inquiry into a new regional development framework. I am pleased to have been offered an opportunity to comment on this issue.

As Ms King's letter rightly acknowledges, Australian Government funding plays a key role in regional economic development and in the provision of community infrastructure. It is therefore vital that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to identify regional infrastructure requirements and to distribute national funding on an equitable and efficient basis.

The Standing Committee Inquiry presents an excellent opportunity for the Australian Government to review its role in regional development, to review existing regional structures across the states and territories and to consider the types of community infrastructure that are required within regions. Consideration of these issues should engage all levels of government with the ultimate goal being a unified structure within which all jurisdictions and all levels of government are able to work.

The present system, which currently has 54 Area Consultative Committees (ACCs) across Australia, has differing arrangements from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, with little by way of overarching principles or consistent governance in place. The regional landscape is further complicated in many jurisdictions by the presence of separate regional development boards that may or may not align to the ACC boundaries. These boards often deal with a separate set of issues to the ACCs, however, there are often areas of overlap, which may lead to rivalries and tension between the groups, and confusion in the community.

The ACT is fortunate in this regard, in that we have a single Capital Region Area Consultative Committee and a Capital Region Development Board, with the latter being jointly funded by the NSW and ACT Governments. Although there is potential for there to be some overlap between the two organisations, in general this has not been the case. This is not to say that improved arrangements would not be possible

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and the ACT Government looks forward to considering the report of the Standing Committee.

Should you require any further information or assistance on this matter, please contact Mr Dan Stewart, Director, Economic and Regional Branch in my department on 6205 0468.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment for the consideration of the committee and I wish the Standing Committee well with its deliberations on this very important matter for regional Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Stanhope', written in a cursive style.

Jon Stanhope MLA
Chief Minister

8 JUL 2008