



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development & Local Government Committee**

MEDIA RELEASE

Issued: 5 November 2008

Chair: Catherine King MP

Regions Revisited

Interim Report Released

Committee Inquiry into Regional Partnerships and the Government's proposed Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Fund

A report released today signals a new approach to funding infrastructure across regional and local communities.

The *Funding Regional and Local Community Infrastructure* interim report tabled today draws on the highly critical Australian National Audit Office report into the previous government's *Regional Partnership Programme* and recommends to government a new framework for regional infrastructure funding.

"Regions across Australia deserve to have access to infrastructure funding on a fair and transparent basis. That is clearly not what happened under the *Regional Partnerships Programme*," Ms King, Chair of the House Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, said.

"Both a Committee of the Senate and the Australian National Audit Office found serious flaws in the previous government's administration of the *Regional Partnerships Programme*.

"This in turn tainted some project outcomes, led to questions about the transparency of the decision making process and in some instances saw substantial amounts of funding go to projects that never actually eventuated, while some recommended projects were not funded at all," Ms King said.

Community infrastructure is vital to the way we live. The wellbeing of a community relies heavily on having access to public halls, sporting and recreation facilities, social clubs and tourist attractions.

The Government signalled in the May Budget that it intends to introduce a *Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Fund*.

"This interim report contains recommendations to government as to how the new fund may be structured.

"The interim report recommends that the new program cover all regions of Australia, employ a partnership approach and predominantly fund hard infrastructure.

"It recommends that local government be the auspice agencies for projects that require a local government financial contribution. With not-for-profit organisations able to apply directly, where they are not seeking a local government financial contribution, but having to work with local government to establish their support. It recommends that for-profit organisations be ineligible to apply.

“The report recommends three funding streams: those seeking less than \$50,000 contribution from the program; those seeking between \$50,000 and \$250,000; and those seeking more than \$250,000, and closed funding rounds.”

“The Committee believes the *Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program* has the potential to stimulate economic growth in local communities at the same time as improving the liveability of our regions,” Ms King concluded.

Copies of the Committee’s report, including the full list of recommendations, can be obtained from the Committee’s website, www.aph.gov.au/house/itrdlg by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 2352 or by emailing itrdlg.reps@aph.gov.au

For media comment: Please contact Keryl Datson on 0409 855 946.