

## House of Representatives Inquiry Submission Wheatbelt Region

**Closing Date for Submission - Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

*Please complete as many pages as required*

Name: Dacre Alcock
Position Role (if applicable): Chief Executive Officer
Organisation (if applicable): Shire of Dowerin
Region: Wheatbelt Region
<b>Signature:</b>
<p>1. Please provide your thoughts on future funding of regional programs in order to invest in genuine and accountable community infrastructure projects.</p> <p>The former Regional Partnerships Program encouraged sustainable regional communities by offering large levels of funding to assist with the development and completion of large, expensive but worthwhile projects in the regional areas of WA.</p> <p>The Regional Partnerships program was perceived as one of the more difficult forms of federal funding to obtain. Reports illustrate that there was a large volume of paper work required and it was in general, a lengthy and time consuming process. Despite this however, in this region (Central Wheatbelt) the Wheatbelt ACC were integral to the program, providing ongoing assistance and support throughout the application process. It would be essential to keep this local knowledge and support available to the applicants when a future program is established.</p> <p>The recent closure of the Regional Partnerships Program has removed the only avenue available to regional communities such as ours (Dowerin) to access Commonwealth funds for local government or community based projects. Future projects within Dowerin include the redevelopment of the sport and recreation facilities within the town including a complete redevelopment of the Aquatics Centre. It is essential that federal government assistance is available to regional communities in order for projects such as this to go ahead. There is at present too much reliance of the Department of Sport and Recreations CRSFF grants to obtain funding for such projects.</p> <p>A Future Federal Government funding program should incorporate regionally based representatives (such as the WACC) in order to assess and prioritise investment proposals. The program should include a more simplistic application procedure (possibly on-line), ongoing feedback &amp; application assistance opportunities and an increased level of funding for Sport and Recreation and also community infrastructure.</p>
<p>2. How should the Federal Government design regional programs in a way to minimise administrative costs and duplication for taxpayers.</p> <p>Recently the WACC has taken initiative in designing numerous user-friendly based workshops with the intention to support capacity building and regional development throughout the region. This assists the Federal Government in that it minimises duplication for taxpayers by utilising grassroots based networks establishing greater feedback and research requirements on behalf of the federal Government.</p> <p>It is of understanding that under the new program there is a proposal to reduce the number of Regional Development Australia committees from the current number of 54. It may be noted that this will have detrimental effects of regional WA with a loss of local knowledge and a loss in representation from more isolated, regional areas.</p>

*Forward Submission to –*

**Email:** [itrdlg.reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:itrdlg.reps@aph.gov.au)

**Post:** Committee Secretary; Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government; PO Box 6021; House of Representatives; Parliament House; CANBERRA ACT 2600  
(Note- In order to facilitate electronic publishing of submissions, the Committee would prefer posted submissions to be sent on disk or CD-ROM in Microsoft Word<sup>®</sup> or Portable Document Format (PDF).

SUBMISSION 67

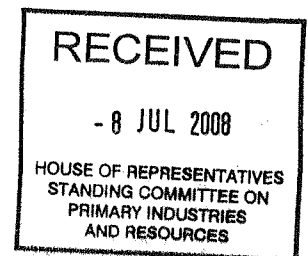
3. Examine the former government's practices and grants outlined in the Australian National Audit Office report on Regional Partnerships [http://www.anao.gov.au/director/publications/auditreports/2007-2008.cfm?item\\_id=40BC1C6C1560A6E8AAA43AAB96708E61](http://www.anao.gov.au/director/publications/auditreports/2007-2008.cfm?item_id=40BC1C6C1560A6E8AAA43AAB96708E61) with the aim of providing advice on future funding of regional programs.

Due to the complexity of previous Regional Partnerships Application a future program may wish to rectify this by simplifying the process and using more local advice/feedback to do this.

The criteria for funding the Regional Development Australia Projects must be clarified.

4. Examine the former government's practices and grants in the Regional Partnerships Program after the audit period of 2003-2006 with the aim of providing advice on future funding of regional programs.

Allow WACC to have more input into any new funding program in order to ensure that valuable projects for the region get the attention they deserve due to the fact that locals (e.g. WACC) understand local needs and their knowledge of regional matters is more effective than that of those in Canberra



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