

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
House of Representatives
Parliament House,
Canberra

Re inquiry into a new Regional Development Funding Program

I would like to comment on the new Regional Development Funding Program. Our organisation, located in Canberra and serving children and families in the ACT and surrounding area, submitted a proposal (for assistance with the construction of a new building) to the Capital Region Development Board in March 2008. Unfortunately our proposal was not considered.

Our proposal was based on the following:

- * We are a local not-for-profit community organisation.
- * We provide Family Relationship, mental health and Indigenous family support services, all funded by the Australian Government. In addition we are providing early intervention counselling services and family support to vulnerable families with young children.
- * Our services are growing, to a large extent due to the growth of Australian Government funding – we have run out of space to provide these services.

Our organisation, like many across Australia, does not have funding for capital works, and yet we are providing services on behalf of the Australian Government. We welcomed the opportunity to apply for funding which would help us significantly.

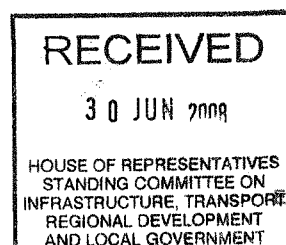
I would like to make a few general points about future models:

- * Local community organisations in most cases do not have the capital to build, regardless of what service they are providing to the community, so capital grants are vital.
- * In our sector, donors would rather be contributing to services for children and families than to bricks and mortar.
- * Applications for funding need to be as streamlined as possible: we believe that our recent application was highly scrutinised; the process was rigorous; the range of supporters for the project was wide – this is proper - but it took two staff an enormous time to prepare and respond to Board queries. Not all organisations would be able to prepare such an application. Where possible some face-to-face conversations with Departmental staff, or an application form which allowed organisations to succinctly talk about their projects would be helpful.

Capital Region staff were very helpful throughout this process.

- * I would like the committee to consider the situation of organisations like ours who are delivering services on behalf of Government. This might be a separate strand of funding.

Yours sincerely,
Shelley Atkins
Acting Chief Executive Officer
30th June 2008.



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