



# blueprint Shoalhaven

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19 June 2008

The Secretary  
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and Local Government  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Crawford

Thank you for your letter and your interest in the views of blueprint *Shoalhaven* into a new regional development funding program.

blueprint *Shoalhaven* welcomes this opportunity and provides the following views and feedback to the terms of reference stated in your letter of 11 June 2008.

1. Provide advice on future funding of regional programs in order to invest in genuine and accountable community infrastructure projects.

The Shoalhaven is a regional area with specific social issues, advantages, demographics and culture and covers the geographical area from Berry to North Durras on the NSW South Coast. Detailed below are some of the issues relating to the Shoalhaven. What is important is that each region in Australia has significant and important issues for regional growth for their local government area. **Regional Development needs to work with local government for advice, infrastructure and regional strategic**

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planning for their own specific region and not have to compromise because Regional Australia creates larger regions with 2-4 LGAs with some areas 'missing out' on initiatives to grow their specific region with resultant disengagement with the Regional Australia program and partnerships pulling in different directions, rather than as a team approach.

Shoalhaven issues include:

- A significantly higher proportion (43%) of the population aged 55 and over, compared with 30% in both NSW and Australia. This age profile is likely to have a significant impact on demand for services in the region, particularly – wellness; infrastructure; health/aged care/community. The percentage will grow over the next decade with the trends in population growth.
- High unemployment particularly with young people. The Shoalhaven unemployment rate is 7.7% (December 2007) compared with a national average of 4.1%. The Shoalhaven has a youth unemployment rate of 19.6% for 15-19 year olds (2006 Census) the national average is 15.6%.
- High percentage of indigenous population (3.7%) compared to the national average (2.3%). 2006 Census data.
- The Shoalhaven is made up of 49 towns and villages with major centres of Nowra and Ulladulla. Issues relate to isolation, lack of industry (especially in the southern part of the Shoalhaven) lack of transport, career opportunity and full time, permanent jobs (compared with part time and casual employment). Areas in the southern half of the Shoalhaven rely on the tourism industry for employment which creates casual, by-demand work environment.
- A large percentage of the population leave the Shoalhaven from the age of 16 with populations returning after the age of 35. This is due to a lack of opportunities for tertiary education and career paths

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Advice on infrastructure programs for the Shoalhaven would relate to these issues including:

- Wellness Centre model (includes core and adjunct industry – skills and training)
- Recreational facilities & assets
- Infrastructure to attract industry development and growth:
  - roads and transport
  - education and training (such as the VET schools/skills training)
  - adequate provision of utility services
  - see above recreation – liveability assets
- Aged Care/Health/Mental Health
- Support of innovative and catalytic projects (such as a Shoalhaven Marine and Fresh Water Centre – Ulladulla Future Park)

## 2. Examine ways to minimize administrative costs and duplication for taxpayers

There is often duplication of service delivery across the three levels of government. Each government area has its own office and associated capital expenditure and operating costs. In an ideal world, each LGA would have one area for government services – there should also be a more comprehensive service delivery especially with services such as youth and aged care. This would save dollars, time and be much easier for the taxpayer for access (transport) and time in being referred from one area to the other.

## 3 & 4. Examine the former government's practices and grants outlined in the Australian National Audit Office report on Regional Partnerships with the aim of providing advice on future funding of regional programs

The Shoalhaven region has a very professional, 'hands on' and well connected Area Consultative Committee. It has a strong board with a good cross selection of people for advice and knowledgeable

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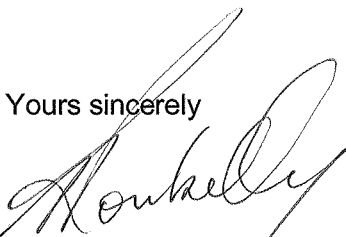
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and experienced CEO and project officers and the Shoalhaven has benefited well in past years with programs of practical and needed benefit to our community.

In summary, blueprint *Shoalhaven* recommends Regional Development Australia supports an ongoing program to support regional development with:

- ✓ offices in regions to work with local government areas (LGAs). Each LGA will have unique cultural, social and economic issues and partnerships with local government, industry and organisations will deliver significant benefits. This would foster innovative solutions to specific regional issues rather than set programs where regions need to comply and fit into a stated framework which may fit or best benefit that region for the future.
- ✓ continue to support local infrastructure. Without Federal Government support on regional infrastructure, regions will wither.
- ✓ continue to work in partnerships especially relating to regional development which includes both community and economic development.
- ✓ support initiatives relating to building social capital within regions including innovative programs to enable people such as social entrepreneurship and micro finance.

Yours sincerely



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Managing Director, Tyco Flow Control

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13 JUL 2009

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT