



11<sup>th</sup> July, 2008

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

**RE: INQUIRY INTO A NEW REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING PROGRAM**

Dear Sir/Madam

Regional Development South Australia is the peak organisation which is representative of South Australia's network of 13 Regional Development Boards.

The Regional Development Boards are a partnership between State Government and Local Councils and have been established to facilitate economic development at the regional level. That facilitation role has developed over many years to include small business advisory services, infrastructure and industry development projects, strategic regional development planning and promotion of the various regions for the purpose of investment attraction, economic, employment and population growth.

The Boards have created a range of partnerships to carry out their roles, through the delivery of a range of Australian Government programs, including Austrade and its TradeStart program; AusIndustry – Small Business Field Officer Program; Indigenous Business Australia; and others. Delivery of those programs and the associated reporting should clearly demonstrate the capability of the framework for effectively managing and reporting against the requirements of the various programs.

RDSA has been in existence since the late 1980s and has a strong relationship with the Local Government Association of South Australia and all of the Councils across the State. The organisation values the commitment to developing regional communities, through the partnership with all spheres of Government and in particular for the purpose of this inquiry, the valuable contribution that is made through Australian Government funded programs.

RDSA supports the Australian Government in developing stronger alliances with Local Government and would encourage the devolution of funded programs towards Local Government structures, which have been established over years for promoting community and economic development at the regional level.

In relation to the Terms of Reference, in particular where the Government is seeking input into the area of administrative cost savings and a reduction in duplication, we make this recommendation.

**The Peak Body for South Australia's Regional Development Boards**

• Regional Advocacy • Regional Leadership • Results for South Australia

Telephone (08) 8723 1057 • Facsimile (08) 8723 1286 • PO Box 1445, Mount Gambier SA 5290 • executive@rdsa.org.au

The Australian Government should consider capitalising on the existence of the partnership between State and Local Government, through the Regional Development Board Framework, to promote and deliver its regional development programs. Each of the Regional Development Boards are comprised of local people, with industry community and Local Government backgrounds and are staffed with a range of people covering the administrative functions through to program and project delivery.

There will be significant opportunities to access those structures as a means of increasing capacity at that level to take on board the development and delivery of programs which meet the Australian Government's objectives. RDSA believes that by using existing capacity in South Australia (and maybe elsewhere in Australia) considerable savings could be achieved annually in administrative and operational savings.

We take this opportunity to thank you for considering this brief submission and look forward to the outcome of the Inquiry. If we can be of further assistance in relation to anything contained in our submission please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian O'Loan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Ian O'Loan  
CHAIRMAN