



The Hon Gary Gray AO MP

Parliamentary Secretary
for Regional Development
and Northern Australia

Reference: 01756-2008 & 02468-2008

13 May 2008

Mr Stephen Merchant
Convenor, Surface Committee
Ryde Hunters Hill District Hockey Club Incorporated
PO Box 1789
CHATSWOOD NSW 2057

Dear Mr Merchant

RE: RP03595 - New Hockey Synthetic Sports Surface.

I refer to the New Hockey Synthetic Sports Surface (the Project) application that was submitted to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government on 13 July 2007 for consideration under the Regional Partnerships program.

Since being appointed, the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government and I have been considering how to proceed on a range of issues surrounding the future of regional development.

The Australian Government has announced a package of new initiatives: Infrastructure Australia; the Better Regions election commitments; the Office of Northern Australia; Regional Development Australia; Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program and the Council of Australian Local Governments.

Through these initiatives, the Government will ensure that investments in regional Australia promote sustainable economic growth and benefit the community as a whole. This package demonstrates our strong commitment to regional Australia.

These new initiatives will replace the *Regional Partnerships* and *Sustainable Regions* programs. These programs are now closed for new and uncontracted projects. This means that your application for funding will not proceed.

The Government recognises that many funding applications under the previous Government's regional programs have merit and reflect vibrant and creative communities. However, this decision reflects the Government's strong commitment to high standards of public administration, accountability and fiscal responsibility.

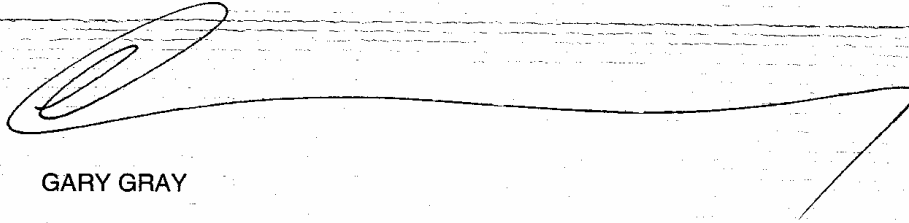
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In making this decision, the Government has taken into account the three volume report into the Regional Partnerships program of the Australian National Audit Office, which was tabled on 15 November 2007 <www.anao.gov.au>. The report made 20 recommendations, which the Government has reviewed in detail. That report highlighted serious issues relating to the transparency of decision-making and the administration of the program.

If you require further information, please contact the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government by email at <Regionalgrants@infrastructure.gov.au> or through the departmental information line on 1800 038 160.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'GARY GRAY', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

GARY GRAY