

*Monaro Early Intervention Service Inc
PO Box 1332, Cooma NSW 2630
Ph: 02 6452 7424 Fax: 02 6452 7399
Email: meis@snowy.net.au*

7 July 2008

The Chair
Ms Catherine King MP
The Standing Committee on Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ms King

Thank you for the invitation extended through Peter Hughes from SEACC to contribute to this inquiry.

In 2004 our organisation, the Monaro Early Intervention Service Inc (MEIS) applied for, and received a grant of \$42,750 (GST exclusive) under the former government's Regional Partnership Program. This funding partially funded the furnishing and fit out of our building as part of our drive to build a purpose built centre for our service. Our service covers the three shires of Cooma-Monaro, Bombala and Snowy River.

I cannot overemphasise the importance of having such a facility in our region and the extent to which this grant enabled us to complete our project. We dealt with the Department of Transport and Regional Services, Sydney Southern Regional Office in Wollongong and found them to be diligent in their execution of our Agreement but also flexible and compassionate. For example

As construction progressed we realised the long term benefit in power efficiency of installing double glazed windows. We had originally detailed curtaining as a window treatment but were permitted to vary our request. The installation of double glazed windows has indeed proved most energy efficient and cost saving in our climate.

Thanks to the sensitive management of the project by the Department in accommodating our changing needs our milestones were met with best outcomes.

Both Federal and State Governments were very supportive of the project but it was impossible to finish the project without an enormous fund raising effort by the

voluntary management committee over several years (refer attached outline of income and expenditure for the project). As you would expect the building costs increased as time was needed to raise funds. Parents of children with disabilities or developmental delays already have enough on their plates and are not in a position, nor should they be, relied upon to fund raise. It was a gargantuan effort by a small number of people but one that has resulted in an outstanding infrastructure facility and regional asset. It makes me angry that things should be so hard but there is no doubt that this grant was a godsend.

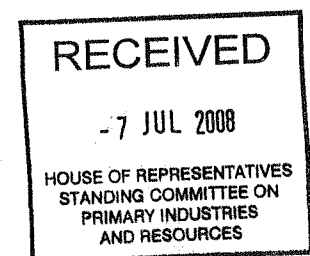
As to the future infrastructure needs in our region for our service we see a need for a facility for our staff to use when they visit the outlying centres of Bombala and Jindabyne. At present we would envisage a designated room attached to the centre of a like minded service especially in Bombala. However, Snowy River Shire is the third fastest growing regional local government area in New South Wales [ABS statistics March 2008]. Jindabyne is rapidly growing with increasing numbers of young families so serious consideration should be given to a facility in Jindabyne with room to grow.

In conclusion, the experience of the MEIS service and the former Regional Partnership Program was a positive and beneficial one. As to the future early intervention is being increasingly recognised as a vital government initiative in making early life changing benefits to children and their families which have flow on effects which create long term benefits to them and savings in government services later on. Providing infrastructure to facilitate early intervention is money well spent.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Do not hesitate to contact me or our Director, Rhonda Howie for any additional information.

Yours faithfully

Robyn Boyce
President
Management Committee



Enclosed: Extract from MEIS Annual Report 2004-2005 'Cost of Establishing Monaro Early Intervention Centre 6 Hill Street, Cooma' (2 pages)

Note: electronic version provided 7 July 2008. Just today we have been notified that our ISP is closing down on 31 July so we will have to source a new ISP provider, therefore please do not rely on this email address near the end of July.