



SHIRE OF MUKINBUDIN

SUBMISSION 1

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Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development and Local Government
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

“Inquiry into a new Regional Development Funding Program and the former Regional Partnerships program”

Having been a successful applicant of a previous Regional Partnerships program it is vital that funding of this sort is continued by the existing government. The new model should be based along very similar or the same guidelines to the former Regional Partnerships program where the emphasis was on “rural and remote areas” not regional urban areas. The former program gave the only avenue for regional and remote areas to access funding to carry out some very valuable projects. Without this funding many of these projects would have been impossible to complete. The new model should encourage partnerships or funding from other bodies as this worked very well and other funding bodies were keen to commit funding if the application had been accepted by Regional Partnerships.

In August 2006 the Shire of Mukinbudin was successful in receiving an amount of \$99,800 ex GST for a “Mukinbudin 1950’s Working Farm Shed” project. The funding was used to build a workshop/shed which has become the hub of a ‘50’s working farm project and as a community workshop. The Shed is a vital, functioning workshop in the heart of town – a place for members to meet and socialise. Some restore vintage machinery, others maintain the 1950’s machinery for their small historic cropping program whilst others have used the shed to repair or make objects that are needed. It has become a place they can go, to be with friends and chat. The shed is currently being used for:

- a place to restore machinery and preserve the agricultural history relevant to our area;

- the “working shed” for the 50’s farm project, a place to restore/maintain the working equipment used in this project and place for the equipment to be stored;
- a place to access specialist equipment for members use;
- a place to socialise giving avenues of support;
- sharing skills and problem solving for local industries;
- storage of restored farming equipment (small museum); and
- working on Community projects e.g. repairing town seating.

This project has been extremely successful. Already the Shed has been used for many of the original ideas and more. The local doctor has used it for a venue for health promotion gaining more access to the male audience by holding the function in a non threatening male environment. A Melbourne Next Wave Festival Arts project involving Father/Sons and Father/Daughters making coffee tables has successfully been completed. It is a vital, functioning workshop and members have purchased old tractors to restore and sell to aid them in becoming self sufficient, they also have a small cropping program to assist with ongoing costs. The entire community have been extremely supportive and the venue has been used for many events such as an “Art Information Night”, “Town end of year function”, venue for a community mosaic project and monthly morning tea at the Shed sessions to encourage all members of the community to participate or visit and look at what is being achieved.

The process for the old Regional Partnerships involved a very detailed submission being sent to the Wheatbelt ACC. Staff from the Wheatbelt ACC worked very closely with Council’s staff whilst they were preparing the application and then once the WACC staff were satisfied that the project was sound this was submitted on line. All supporting documents were then sent to Canberra along with the original submission. This process certainly was extremely thorough and helped with the overall planning of the project. An enormous amount of work went into the application, planning, quoting and design of the project.

One of the most important aspects of the Regional Partnership funds was the need to form partnerships with other funding bodies, as well as a strong cash commitment from the applicant. In our case the project attracted combined funding of \$ 49,307.91 ex GST from the Department of Veteran Affairs, Department of Environment & Heritage, Lottery West and FRRR Caring for the Aged in Rural Australia. As the applicant Council made a cash contribution of \$58,914 ex GST. Community Partnerships from community groups within Mukinbudin totalled \$26,634.15. The ability to attract extra funding is of a great advantage to the community and spreads the financial burden. This aspect needs to be used in future funding programs that the government may introduce.

Once approval was received from Regional Partnerships, we were assigned a Project Officer in the Perth Officer of DOTARS. This Officer was excellent in their support and follow up. Throughout the entire project good communication was maintained between Council Staff and the Project Officer.

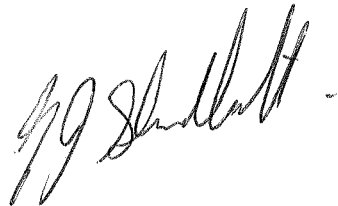
Progress Reports were made outlining whether the milestones had been met for the period under review and subject to this the progress payments were made. The progress reports were quite simple and streamlined and the completion report was worthy of the amount of funding received. The five forms were simple to fill out and the audited financial statement verified the expenditure to enable the final payment of monies to be received by the Shire of Mukinbudin.

Having had a close working relationship with the former Regional Partnerships program Council would like to urge the government to strongly consider introducing the next funding program along the guidelines of the Regional Partnerships program. It is imperative that:

- the proposed new program is accessible for "Regional and Remote" communities of all sizes;
- it is not a program designed solely for Regional Urban areas;
- a "partnership" emphasis continue in the proposed new program;
- the initial application form be more streamlined and simplified. Many questions on the former Regional Partnerships program repeated themselves;
- the reporting and acquittal process be closely modelled on the former Regional Partnerships program in its ease for grant recipients';
- Project Officers be appointed as with the former Regional Partnerships program in the state or territory that the grant is being utilised and that their support remains at a very high level. This is the real key to the success of the project being implemented; and
- it is vital for any new program in the application stage to be given support in the similar role as the Area Consultative Committees worked. Staffs in these areas work tirelessly giving communities' valuable assistance and guidance, and from a government department's perspective eliminate unnecessary or ineligible applications.

The Shire of Mukinbudin would like to request the opportunity for their staff to make further verbal submissions regarding this, preferably at our "Men's Shed Project" so the government can fully appreciate the enormous importance of the former Regional Partnership program. Enclosed are photographs of the project for your perusal.

Yours sincerely



GJ Shadbolt
Shire President

