

## Bunnaloo Recreation Reserve

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1<sup>st</sup> July 2008.

Dear Committee Secretary,

### **Re Standing Committee Inquiry into a new regional Development Funding Program**

I am writing to you on behalf of my community in the Murray Shire (NSW), districts of Bunnaloo, Caldwell and Womboota, to inform you of the tremendous support we have received from Central Murray ACC and Regional Partnerships Program to our small isolated rural communities.

We were able to identify areas of need within our rural community which required upgrading our Halls to accommodate the growing demand of our rural communities to remain connected, provide a venue capable to support each other as the grip of the worst drought on record continued, provide a functional venue to receive information services for farming families, a venue to find comfort & support for social community groups to attend. As always, securing funds from anywhere would prove to be a hurdle.

I attended the Central Murray ACC Community Grants Expo in October 2006. The amount of information and hope that was available made me realise that I had taken the right step in attending. To listen to the guest speakers address the audience was interesting, valuable and informative, to listen to Louise Ross, representing Lockington as small town in Campaspe Shire, was inspirational, but to hear how the Central Murray ACC could assist "not for profit community groups", as ourselves, gave hope that assistance and guidance was close by. The Central Murray ACC encouragement, uncomplicated manner of delivering the facts and providing support from staff was incredible for our community groups as their friendly approach and kindness to assist us built a relationship of support that remains strong today.

Our isolated rural community, with Central Murray ACC's guidance and assistance, submitted a comprehensive funding application to Regional Partnerships Program that was successful. This would not have been as detailed nor would it have been as positive if we had have tried to do this application alone.

Amongst our volunteer community committee we lacked people with the appropriate skills who could understand the application format, terminology and ability to recognise/seek relevant information required to meet the criteria of the application.

I hope my comments assist with the Committee Inquiry to having a positive outcome for maintaining a Regional Development Program for Regional Australia and continued operation of the Central Murray ACC who has a significant role in the framework of rural and regional development within Australia.

Outlined below are our thoughts on the areas outlined in the terms of reference:

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

1. Ability to apply for Federal Funding (new regional program) in the first instance and not have all other funding partners approved first. This will assist small communities greatly when trying to leverage funding for large projects;
2. Early confirmation and/or rejection of Federal Funding Contribution will assist in achieving partnership support with local government bodies and community groups;
3. The ACCs to remain an integral source of information delivered to communities and assist with development of funding applications.

***Examine ways to minimize administration costs and duplication for taxpayer:***

1. As above, when local governments are assisting with capacity building within Australian rural communities, information necessary should be considered as a reliable source as Local Government structure is established for reporting and audit measures.

***Examine the former government's practice and grants outlined in the Australian National Audit Office report on Regional Partnerships:***

1. Timeframe of submissions, clarifications and other information necessary could be supplied expeditiously when local governments are known partners and administrators for community groups.
2. To deliver a simplified application form that streamlines categories, request amount of funding sought/available in reference to population area per district/community.

Yours sincerely,



Fran Graham

Secretary

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