



Minister for Community Development

Ms Catherine King MP
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16 JUL 2008

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Dear Ms King

Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program

Can I firstly congratulate you on the recent birth of your son Ryan, and I hope you are both doing well.

As you know, the House Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government is conducting an 'Inquiry into a New Regional Development Funding Program' to advise on guidelines for the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (RLCIP) announced as part of the 2008 Federal Budget.

I welcome the establishment of this new program as it offers the opportunity to overcome the inadequacies of the previous Regional Partnerships Program (RPP) identified by the Australian National Audit Office. At the same time, it would be wise to retain the most useful features of that program.

Funding under the RPP was available to all administrative regions across Australia. However I understand that there have been suggestions that the new program be restricted to rural areas only. If funding in the new program was available only to rural areas, there would be a reduction of at least \$20 million per annum available to projects in metropolitan areas.

This is an issue which particularly affects my Department of Planning and Community Development which is responsible for the Victorian Community Support Grants Program. Through this program, we have jointly funded many projects which also received Federal RPP funding.

If future funding from the RLCIP was restricted to rural areas only, many projects in metropolitan areas of high needs or high growth would be ineligible for Federal funding and may therefore not proceed. Examples (which either received funding under RPP or have applied) include:

- Abbotsford Convent (Melbourne)
- East Reservoir Neighbourhood House and Community Hub (Batman)
- St John's Anglican Hub in Footscray (Gellibrand)
- Yarraville Community Centre (Gellibrand)
- Eley Park Community Centre (Deakin)
- Thomastown Recreation and Aquatic Redevelopment (Scullin)
- Frankston Regional Aquatic Health and Wellness Centre (Dunkley)



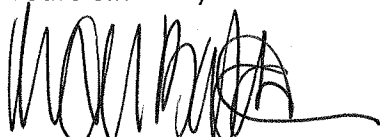
This would affect the government's ability to provide important social infrastructure in these areas and also runs counter to the Social Inclusion agenda.

The Victorian Government will be making a submission to the Inquiry, but from a social inclusion viewpoint I would suggest that the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program should be able to fund projects from eligible organisations from across the country which focus on:

- Areas of high need/ socioeconomic disadvantage
- Areas of high growth or
- Regional/rural decline.

I would be happy to discuss this issue with you and can be contacted at my office on (03) 9658 4660.

Yours sincerely



Peter Batchelor MP

10/7 / 2008

cc: Julia Gillard, Deputy Prime Minister, Member for Lalor
Lindsay Tanner, Minister for Finance and Deregulation, Member for Melbourne
Martin Ferguson, Minister for Resources and Energy, Member for Batman
Nicola Roxon, Minister for Health and Ageing, Member for Gellibrand
Mike Symon, Member for Deakin
Harry Jenkins, Member for Scullin
Darren Cheeseman, Member for Corangamite