



10 July, 2008

**The Secretary  
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT**

**Submission to the inquiry into a new regional development funding program**

On behalf of the Grampians Pyrenees Regional Development Board I write with regards to Regional Development Australia and the future of the Regional Partnerships program. The Grampians Pyrenees Regional Development Board represents the Ararat Rural City, Northern Grampians Shire and Pyrenees Shire Councils as a region, primarily focussed on the social, economic and environmental development of our region.

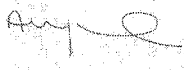
Of high priority to members of the GPRDB is the future of the Regional Partnerships Program. Through this program our rural communities have had the opportunity to strengthen and grow whilst experiencing improved access to services and developed critical infrastructure within small communities. We believe without the continued support of a program such as Regional Partnerships funding, that the growth of rural communities will be severely impaired. This program has been a strong demonstration of what can be achieved through cooperation of the Federal, State and Local Governments and communities in matching funds and developing strategies for action.

The GPRDB would like to see the program continue with similar guidelines as there are many projects worthy of this support. We would further recommend the following;

- It is preferred that support in development and recommendations of projects come from local Regional Development Australia representatives
- That the assessment process be transparent and not deviate from program guidelines
- That the program be eligibility based with regular funding rounds and clear timeframes
- As a matter of good practice it is preferred that decisions on approved or unsuccessful projects be announced within a short period of time to enable applicants to know the outcome as soon as possible to assist with project management and further sourcing of funds.

The GPRDB would welcome any further opportunity for comment on this program.

Yours Sincerely,

Per: 

**IAN WILSON  
CHAIRMAN, GRAMPPIANS PYRENEES REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

