

Tamworth Regional Council

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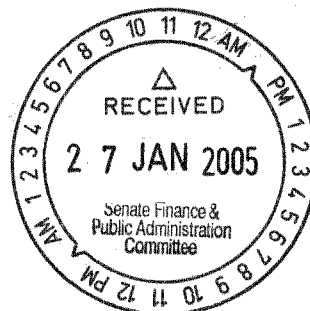
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20th January 2005

Mr Alistair Sands
Secretary
Australian Senate
Finance and Public Administration Reference
Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr. Sands,

Re: Inquiry into the Regional Partnership Program and Sustainable Regions Program

We refer to your letter of 15th December 2004 addressed to Mr Greg Maguire of Killoran Park Dungowan NSW. Mr Maguire's involvement in this project has been as a member and Chairman of a Council Committee.

The Australian Equine and Livestock Centre is an investment and community development project of the Tamworth Regional Council. Mr Maguire is the Chairman of Council's Australia Equine and Livestock Centre Working Committee Group (AELC) and therefore reports directly to Council.

Correspondence in relation to the project and funding agreements under the Regional Partnership Program should be addressed to:

Mr Glenn Inglis
General Manager (Elect)
Tamworth Regional Council
P.O. Box 555
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

In relation to a submission to the Senate Committee, we attach a chronology of the events leading up to the funding commitment by the Coalition Government. Council believes these details provide the Senate Inquiry with a historical context to a very important regional project that had its origins in 1996.

We also attach a further copy of the Business Plan for the project as submitted with the original Regional Partnerships Application, along with a copy of the presentation given to the New England and North-West Area Consultative Committee.

These documents (along with the chronology of events) outline the financial feasibility of the project, and why it is a unique regional investment which will showcase Australian Equine and Livestock events and products to Australia and beyond.

We emphasise that throughout this long process Council and its Committee have acted in a thoroughly professional manner. The success of our funding proposal was based on well researched data, and professional input and planning from experienced equine and livestock industry representatives plus a viable business plan.

Should you require Council to attend the Inquiry please advise in due course and we will arrange a representative to be present.

Should you require any additional information please feel free to contact me on (02) 67-554 440 or 0404-805 671 or telephone Glenn Inglis who will be assuming the position of General Manager on 7th February.

Yours faithfully



(Wayne Collins)

ACTING GENERAL MANAGER

For further information please contact:-

Telephone:- (02)67554-440

Email:-w.collins@tamworth.nsw.gov.au

Please address all correspondence to:-

The Acting General Manager
Tamworth Regional Council
PO Box 555, Tamworth NSW 2340
OR DX 6125

File: SF629

Enclosures

1. AELC Business Plan dated 12th August 2004.
2. AELC presentation to New England & North West Area Consultative Committee.

ABRIDGED CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN EQUINE AND LIVESTOCK CENTRE (AELC)

- December 1996 Initial equine economics study undertaken by Tamworth Development Corporation.
- April 1998 Tamworth and District Events Industry Survey completed.
- May 2000 Tamworth P & A offered assistance from the New England North West Area Consultative Committee (NENWACC) for funding through the Regional Programme.
- June 2000 Feasibility study completed by Tamworth P & A Association by Australian Strategic Planning.
- June 2000 Initial working group formed by Council. Comprised of Federal, State and Local Government representatives plus major horse associations and industry leaders and Tamworth P & A.
- December 2000 Stuart St. Clair M.P., Member for New England announced funding from the Regional Assistance Programme for \$33,000 to assist with employment of a project officer to develop capital investment strategies, business plan and projected revenue streams.
- February 2001 Sinclair Knight Merz engaged as consultants to undertake the study into the Australian Equine and Livestock Centre (AELC).
- September 2001 Sinclair Knight Merz completed their final report of feasibility study into the Australian Equine and Livestock Centre (AELC).
- December 2001 Business Plan developed by Sinclair Knight Merz for AELC.
- January 2002 2002-2003 Budget submission for funding of AELC forwarded to Treasury with copies to Mr Windsor M.P., Member for New England, Mr Cull M.P., Member for Tamworth, Council and NENWACC.
- March 2002 NSW Government announced its commitment to funding of \$3.35 million towards project.
- April 2002 Professor Chudleigh on behalf of Federal Government visited Tamworth to investigate and report on feasibility of AELC.
- May 2002 Professor Chudleigh reported to Minister Anderson rejecting new equine centre. Supports upgrading current facilities at the Showground..

ABRIDGED CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN EQUINE AND LIVESTOCK CENTRE - cont.

- August 2002 NENWACC writes to Tamworth City Council expressing the need to address concerns raised in Professor Chudleigh's report.
- December 2002 Supplementary report completed by Sinclair Knight Merz following Professor Chudleigh's report.
- March 2003 NENWACC approaches Tamworth City Council to assist with developing funding opportunities from the Federal Government.
- June 2003 Advice received from DOTARS that the Regional Solutions Programme is being finalised and that a new grants programme, Regional Partnerships Programme (RPP) will commence from 1st July 2003. Council's application will be assessed under that programme however an initial assessment of the application does not meet the new guidelines.
- October 2003 NSW State Government further advised that its commitment is capped at \$3.35 million and subject to guaranteed funding from other sources including Federal funding.
- December 2003 NENWACC meets with Tamworth P & A to discuss issues and progress regarding facilities and proposal for a National Equine Centre.
- February 2004 Equine events survey undertaken by Council with major horse associations.
- February 2004 Council creates AELC Working Group to facilitate a state of the art nationally recognised equine and livestock centre in Tamworth.
- April 2004 NENWACC writes to Tamworth Regional Council offering assistance to Working Group to secure funding for Australian Equine and Livestock Centre.
- April 2004 Mr Greg Maguire named as new Chairman of the Working Group Committee.
- May 2004 Mayor formally writes to Minister Anderson M.P. Member for Gwydir advising him of Equine Industry financial contribution and completion of full Business and Operational Plan for AELC.
- June 2004 Tamworth Regional Council approves the appointment of Bevan Coote and Associates to undertake and prepare application to Regional Partnerships and to complete a full and comprehensive Business Plan. Preferred site selected adjacent to Regional Sporting Complex and Tamworth Regional Entertainment Centre (TREC) and the preparation of Concept and Master Plans.

ABRIDGED CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN EQUINE AND LIVESTOCK CENTRE - cont.

- August 2004 Business Plan completed by Bevan Coote and Associates.
- 10th August 2004 Briefing of the Business Plan and Regional Partnerships application by the AELC Working Group and Council to NENWACC.
- 13th August 2004 Tamworth Regional Council formally submits Regional Partnerships Application Form together with Business Plan and associated documents to Department of Transport and Regional Services.
- 16th August 2004 Notification from Department of Transport and Regional Services that application has been received and is being assessed.
- 20th August 2004 Confirmation of commitment from the NSW State Government in view of new application of \$3.35m and based on previous conditions.
- 27th August 2004 Project receives a priority rating of 4 by the NENWACC.
- 21st September 2004 Funding of \$6 million announced to establish AELC and committed by the Coalition Government.
- 21st December 2004 Advice from Department of Transport and Regional Services confirming election commitment to AELC.

NOTE: Tamworth Regional Council was proclaimed on 17th March 2004 by the NSW State Government. This amalgamated the major parts of the former Councils of Barraba, Manilla, Parry, Tamworth City and Nundle.