

Responses and Clarifications from Dr Rosemary Dillon to questions asked and Statements made at Public Accountability Committee on Integrity, Efficacy, and Value for Money of NSW Government Grant Programs on Monday 26 April

1. **Dr DILLON:** My recollection is I followed up at least three times—it might have been more—by phone and I got no feedback at all. Just no comment from it and just not resolved. I was not given any information.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Those follow-ups were with the agencies. Were they with Resilience NSW or Regional NSW?

Dr DILLON: It was one of those. I would have to look at my records.

RESPONSE FROM DR DILLON: The contact was [redacted] from Regional NSW with contact details provided below:

nsw.gov.au/regionalnsw



2. **The CHAIR:** At any point between when you submitted the projects in July and when the announcement was made in November was there ever a request for further information or some further details that came to you from the State Government about the 23 shovel-ready projects you provided?

Dr DILLON: Nothing, which I found really strange. That is why I kept following up.

The CHAIR: Do you know if that follow-up was by email, by phone or by a mixture of each, Dr Dillon?

Dr DILLON: It was by phone. I am not sure but I may have sent an email, but I think it was phone.

The CHAIR: Could you provide us on notice with as much detail as you can about when those follow-ups were made by either you or your staff, Dr Dillon?

Dr DILLON: Not easily. We would have to maybe go through the telephone records.

The CHAIR: I will not ask you to do that. You have been put to enough trouble by the State Government. If you can identify without undue use of resources roughly when those requests were made and how many, that would be helpful.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: They do not even have an asbestos register. They are not going to have a phone record.

Dr DILLON: Yes.

RESPONSE from Dr Dillon: In answering “Yes” above, I was acknowledging that YES I could identify details of when the follow-ups were made. I was categorically not responding to the inaccurate and false allegation by Shayne Mallard that the Council “does not even have an asbestos register.” Blue Mountains City Council has an asbestos register on every site and / or structure suspected of containing asbestos materials.

I have been able to locate two emails received from [redacted] acknowledging my telephone calls to her respectively on 4 September 2020 and 3 February 2021. These are shown below, however, my recollection is there were an additional two calls where I actually spoke to [redacted] seeking update on the status of our funding submission:

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@dpc.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, 4 September 2020 3:15 PM

To: Rosemary Dillon <[redacted]@bmc.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Missed call

Hi Rosemary,

Sorry I missed your call earlier in the week. I couldn't hear your phone number on the message in order to call you back.

Would be good to catch up if you have availability next week.

Kind regards

nsw.gov.au/regionalnsw

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@regional.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Wednesday, 3 February 2021 2:53 PM

To: Rosemary Dillon <[redacted]@bmc.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Line dropped out

Hi Rosemary

Sorry the line dropped out.

I don't have your mobile number on hand

Kind regards

nsw.gov.au/regionalnsw

Additional Supporting Information

Please find below additional email correspondence between BMCC and [redacted]

While the email of 13 July 2020 from [redacted] mentions that "we still do not have all of the details of the eligibility and criteria" and later in this email he states "we expect that the final eligibility criteria will be ready in the next two weeks" there was categorically no formal criteria provided to Blue Mountains City Council at all. This included no indication of funding levels for project submissions.

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@dpc.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, 17 July 2020 2:35 PM

To:

Cc: Rosemary Dillon

Subject: RE: NSW Local Economic Recovery (LER) fund meeting

Hi all,

Thanks for your time today. Should you have any questions or projects you would like to share with me, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

nsw.gov.au/regionalnsw

-----Original Appointment-----

From: @dpc.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, 13 July 2020 1:58 PM

To:

Cc: Rosemary Dillon;

Subject: NSW Local Economic Recovery (LER) fund meeting

When: Friday, 17 July 2020 2:00 PM-3:00 PM (UTC+10:00) Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney.

Where: Skype Meeting

Good Afternoon

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us this morning. I have book in 30 minutes from 2.00pm on Friday if this is suitable for you?

We are happy for you to extend the invite to key relevant people who you think would benefit attending the meeting on Friday. I have set up a Skype meeting (with associated phone access) for this session, if you would prefer we use another method happy to try and arrange.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind regards

nsw.gov.au/regionalnsw

-----Original Appointment-----

From: @dpc.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, 13 July 2020 2:52 PM

To: ; Rosemary Dillon;

Subject: FW: NSW Local Economic Recovery (LER) fund meeting

When: Friday, 17 July 2020 2:00 PM-3:00 PM (UTC+10:00) Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney.

Where: Skype Meeting

Good afternoon & Rosemary, as outlined briefly on the phone today I am working with my Regional NSW colleagues to get arrangements in place to roll out the new bushfire **Local Economic Recovery Program** (LERP). This program is coming from the recently announced Commonwealth funding. NSW is expected to receive approximately \$270M. **We still do NOT have all the details of the eligibility and criteria**, however we are expecting that projects under the following categories will be considered:

- Enabling Infrastructure (new infrastructure and functionality enhancement or upgrades to existing infrastructure including betterment).
- Industry and Business development (Initiatives supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, business retention, development of regional specialisations, economic diversification,

expansion & attractions, skills development, small business development, and local & regional industry networks).

- Social development (community development & wellbeing, social support or social development initiatives)
- Natural environment and Resource development (Natural resource restoration and environmental improvement initiatives)
- Built environment adaptation (Disaster risk reduction through adapting the built environment to future climate and natural hazard conditions).

We expect that the final eligibility criteria will be ready in the next 2 weeks and that there will be a quick turnaround time for the first round of funding with a focus on “shovel ready” projects that can be rolled out in a short timeframe. Therefore we want to have an informal/preliminary discussion with you about the sort of projects that MAY be eligible so that you can start to consider your priorities and scope your ideas.

In the regional areas there is slightly different process underway with a focus on projects identified through the Regional Economic Development Plans but as we do not have one of those in the Western Parkland City we need to work together to identify strategically important projects that will meet the outcomes we are after.

We will not be able to answer all your questions on Friday but would like to start the discussion with you. **Please feel free to bring along other Council Officers who you would also like to be part of the discussion.** The meeting is by Teleconference and the Skype link is below.

Please give me a call if you have any questions. Cheers

Resilience NSW

@resilience.nsw.gov.au

From: @dpc.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, 24 July 2020 1:25 PM

To:

Cc: Rosemary Dillon

Subject: RE: BMCC submissions for the NSW Local Economic Recovery (LER) Fund

Thanks

From: bmcc.nsw.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, 24 July 2020 10:38 AM

To: @dpc.nsw.gov.au>;

Cc: Rosemary Dillon

Subject: BMCC submissions for the NSW Local Economic Recovery (LER) Fund

Hello,

Please see attached Blue Mountains City Council submissions for the NSW Local Economic Recovery Fund.

Regards,



BMCC_NSW Local
Economic Recovery I

Click on submission document above

3. **The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Councils have lobbied the Government for that. I have two quick questions, but take them on notice. Do not answer them now because time is running out. I will table these media releases. On 25 January 2019—I beg your pardon, it is 1 May 2020—I put out a media release in the Blue Mountains announcing that we were not requiring councils to reimburse us for the fire services levy. That saved Blue Mountains council approximately \$670,000 you did not have to give to the State Government. I have been trying to find out what you have done with that money, as has Councillor Kevin Schreiber. We have not got a response. On notice, can you advise this Committee—

The CHAIR: Well—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: He is entitled to ask.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: It is legitimate. It is a grant.

The CHAIR: It is not a grant.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Yes, it is.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: He is entitled to ask.

The CHAIR: You can ask a question. If it is outside the terms of reference—go for your life.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I object. He is entitled to ask. It is a Government grant.

The CHAIR: It is not a grant.

The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD: Exactly right. It is a COVID initiative and it is \$670,000. The Minister for Local Government put out a media release. The councils need to indicate how they use that money.

That is one question. The second question on notice is: On 25 January 2019 I announced some grants to the Blue Mountains council in regards to roundabouts. The council has applied for these grants. The roundabouts are at Megalong Street, Katoomba, and Prince George Street, Wentworth Falls. I have been to inspect those finished projects and they are substandard. I have got photographs I can table. I have had complaints from the community up there about the standard of those roundabouts. I will ask you to review the execution of those grants that the State gave you and the quality of the work that has been done on those. I will table those photographs.

The CHAIR: They are questions on notice, Dr Dillon.

Dr DILLON: I am happy to take that on notice. Perhaps if there was less cost shifting to local councils we might have more funding to do work of a higher quality.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The fire levy is an example of you not being asked to be reimbursed.

RESPONSE from Dr Dillon to first question on notice: OLG reimbursed Blue Mountains City Council for the \$667,463.63 increase in the Emergency Services Levy from FY2020 to FY2021. The money was used to offset the additional \$667,463.63 that the Council had been required to pay for the Emergency Service Levy in the 2020/2021 financial year.

ESL Paid			
	per Qtr	per annum	
FY2020	\$ 625,835	\$ 2,503,341	
FY2021	\$ 792,701	\$ 3,170,805	
		\$ 667,464	increase

RESPONSE from Dr Dillon to second question on notice: In response to the allegations made by Shayne Mallard regarding sub-standard roundabouts, I immediately completed a field inspection with key staff of the Blackheath roundabout that he specifically referred to. My response is documented in the email below, sent on 26 April to Mr David Shoebridge, MLC.

From: Rosemary Dillon <

Sent: Monday, 26 April 2021 1:42 PM

To:

Public Accountability

<Public.Accountability@parliament.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: David Shoebridge <David.Shoebridge@parliament.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Further submission to Public Accountability Committee from CEO BMCC on Grant funding expenditure on Roundabout at Wentworth and Prince George Streets, Blackheath

Importance: High

Good afternoon Senator Shoebridge and Public Accountability Committee,

I am extremely disappointed at allegations made by Senator Mallard in relation to roundabouts constructed by Blue Mountains City Council with state government funding. The statement that the roundabout installed on the corner of Prince George and Wentworth Streets, Blackheath, is 'sub-standard' is categorically incorrect. I attended the location with the Manager Infrastructure this morning to have a look for myself. The roundabout is a single lane roundabout at a notorious problem area for traffic coming from and going toward the highway.

Please note the following:

- Construction for these works commenced only two weeks ago on Monday the 12th of April. The bulk of the works were completed within 5 days, so that the works would be finished during the school holidays and minimise disruption. The last week has involved minor finishing works.
- As per standard practices, the permanent line-marking is scheduled to take place within the next two weeks. This is to allow enough time for the new concrete to fully cure before any paint is applied to the surface.
- The site has all the appropriate signage installed and has temporary line-marking in place until the final line-marking is installed.
- The construction team has also placed temporary bollards and temporary LED lights at the each approach to the intersection. This is to ensure that until all the works are complete including the line-marking, the new traffic facility is highlighted for drivers.
- Pictures below show the roundabout and the fact that it is not substandard.
- The roundabout was designed by a company called Shire Civil Design, who have extensive experience in the design of roundabouts.
- The designers have also supplied a Design Compliance Certificate stating that all the works have been designed in accordance with the appropriate Australian Standards and Austroad Guidelines.

I query what it is that Senator Mallard believes is sub-standard. Qualified engineers have certified the standard of the works completed to date.

I hope that this is not yet another example of the City of Blue Mountains being targeted unjustly for political purposes.

Having now provided this information I would hope that it is tabled in the inquiry, given that Senator Mallard publicly cast dispersions on Blue Mountains City Council's expenditure of grant funding and on the contractors who designed and built the roundabout.

Regards,

Rosemary

Dr Rosemary Dillon | Chief Executive Officer

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Katoomba NSW 2780