

INQUIRY INTO INTEGRITY, EFFICACY AND VALUE FOR MONEY OF NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS

Organisation: Mid Western Regional Council

Date Received: 17 August 2020



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13 August 2020

The Director,
Public Accountability Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Director,

**SUBJECT: INQUIRY INTO THE INTEGRITY, EFFICACY AND VALUE FOR MONEY OF
NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS**

It is with pleasure that I make this submission towards the inquiry into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grant programs, on behalf of Mid-Western Regional Council (Council).

Submission:

(a) the range and availability of funding programs:

From Council's perspective, NSW Government grant programs make a significant positive contribution to the region. The funds received to date are appreciated and have impacted the community in a number of ways including safer roads, improved standards of living, and greater opportunities for youth and elderly residents.

The range of programs available provides the opportunity to apply for funding across multiple sectors and needs in the community. Further, having specific funding programs for particular activities such as roads, community infrastructure, the arts and sports ensures the local community can see funds invested across many facets of regional living.

Having a small rate-payer base across a large geographical area, the impact of grants to deliverables in the region is significant. Rates are most often used to deliver the day to day services in the region and do not leave significant funds to invest in new infrastructure and opportunities to grow the region. In recent years, the majority of grant funding from the NSW Government has led to the investment in new infrastructure that will support our growing community and enable economic growth into the future.

(b) the manner in which grants are determined,

From Council's experience, the manner in which grants are determined has been transparent. The provision of clear guidelines helps staff understand what funds can and can't be used for and ensures the provision of accurate and appropriate information. Importantly, when Council has not been successful in receiving grant funds, NSW Government staff have provided feedback regarding this and outlined why this was in relation to set criteria.

Our experience has seen demonstrated independence of assessment of projects.

(c) measures necessary to ensure the integrity of grants schemes and public confidence in the allocation of public money,

The current measures in place to ensure integrity of grant schemes and public confidence in the allocation of public money appears appropriate at this point in time.

(d) any other related matter.

From an improvement perspective for NSW Government grants programs, it would be beneficial for the fund assessment process to be faster. At times, there is significant delay from application of submission to outcome. At times this is 6 to 12 months. The impact of this delay and not knowing if funding will be approved greatly impacts Council's ability to program works and where co-funding is required, this impacts the budgeting process for Council.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to make the above comments and trust they will be useful in your deliberations.

Yours faithfully,

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER