

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

**Organisation:** Coolamon Shire Council

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Coolamon Shire Council (CSC) believes that transparency and accountability of government funds is essential to ensure confidence in allocating and managing public money.

CSC believes the SCCF initiative was successful in delivering community assets, particularly to small and regional communities. In the past these projects may have not met BCR's or funding models biased toward larger populations (look at active transport as an example) but are non the less just as important to those communities that need them. Representations were made to State Government about these exact concerns when Local Government was advising that there were deficiencies in funding models that focused on bureaucratic process over delivery outcomes. The delivery or upgrade of public infrastructure under SCCF (such as halls, toilets, parks, playgrounds, sporting facilities etc) had input from Local Government in both the allocation and acquittal process. This was considered a partnership of trust that the Local Government sector have been calling for, for a long time. What this has meant is that projects have been delivered, not to the squeaky wheel, or best resourced organisation, but to where communities need them. Councils undertake significant consultation with their communities and are in touch with where the needs are. This should be a resource that all levels of Government look to in allocating community funds.

It is amazing what can be achieved when you don't care who gets the credit.

The funding for fixing Country or Local roads and bridges has also been of great benefit to CSC and is seen as an essential part of ensuring the productivity of regions is not compromised. Rural communities on the whole, have seen a slow population decline due to farm aggregation and therefore a reduced voice. This however does not mean that the transportation and freight requirements have diminished, on the contrary our nation depends on this road network to be fed and for exports (our GDP). CSC feel it is important that a funding pool and model be allocated to this important infrastructure to ensure it is adequate to the needs and requirements of regions.

Both these funding models, delivered through local Government, achieved much needed local asset upgrades or improvements, while ensuring local communities and jobs were benefiting through the stimulus of local economies.