

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

Organisation: Narrandera Shire Council

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Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into **integrity, efficacy, and value for money of NSW Government grant programs.**

On Behalf of Narrandera Shire Council



Current accounting standards and reporting requirements place Councils under pressure to fund operational activities and capital replacement programs by raising funds locally. Every effort is made to achieve that. The reality however, in an environment dominated by increased reporting and accountability, cost shifting, rate pegging and the ebbs and flows of climate, weather and more recently the Covid-19 virus is that Councils will always lack the capacity to meet the demands of the residents.

Local Government in rural and regional NSW depends heavily on grant programs provided by both State and Federal Governments to deliver the capital projects it relies upon to provide services and community needs to sustain the quality of life.

Narrandera Shire is in the Riverina and has a local economy and lifestyle dominated by rural industry – broad acre farming, cattle, sheep, and grain with a small manufacturing base. Tourism is very important, as is the transport associated with the intersection of the two major highways, the Newell and the Sturt. In the financial reports to 30 June 2019 Council recorded \$3.9m grants for capital purposes out of a revenue base of \$24m.

This community has suffered as has many through years of drought and now the impacts of the Covid-19 and investment and spending by Council is more important than ever. We are the major employer in the shire and have a strong purchase local ethic.

The Stronger Country Communities program is a very good example of the Council and the State Government working together to provide important Council and community infrastructure and at the same time inject much needed stimulus into the local economy.

I have no doubt the inquiry will have access to the legal arrangements around the SCC program which in round two was based very strongly worded legal agreements between the State, Council and any community groups involved in project delivery. I have to say that those legal agreements were not tested as all projects proceeded on schedule and as expected. Value for money was obtained by using the local government procurement processes and Council's policies. Community groups were able to improve on those outcomes by direct negotiation with local contractors and suppliers.

The following is a brief overview of the projects involved in Round 2 of the SCCF in Narrandera. You will see that they are many and varied and were located in all areas of the Shire.

19/08/2020

Mr George Cowan
General Manager

The Stronger Country Communities Fund – Round 2

The Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) was established by the NSW Government to help deliver local infrastructure projects to regional communities. The objective of the fund is to provide the kind of infrastructure that improves the lives of local residents. Narrandera Shire Council was successful in its application for round 2 for a total of 10 projects representing a total grant allocation of \$1,664,837. A snapshot of these projects are provided below:



Access All Areas - Lake Talbot Water Park

Grant amount \$300,000. This project has seen the construction of a new purpose 89m² Accessible Family Change Rooms and Toilet Amenities which includes outdoor showers. The new building will provide a male and female change room / showers in addition to two parent rooms, providing eight toilets in total.

Council's financial contribution: \$149,024

Just Add Water Slide - Lake Talbot Water Park

Grant amount \$167,108. Under this project we have built three new slides: the new dual Racer slides and a new Open slide. The new dual Racer slides feature a multi coloured (Green & Blue) curved enclosed tube top section and open reverse-bank bottom sections. This project also included a runout which has replaced the plunge pool.

Council's financial contribution: \$992,568 (including replacing the Rampage Slide with the new racer slides)



Barellan Aged Care Support Group - Stage 2 - Construction of units 3, 4, and 5

Grant amount \$351,150. Stage two has seen the completion of a further 3 (2 Bedroom) units. They are all single storey, with accessible access options and wheelchair facilities. **Community group - Barellan Aged Care Support group**

Council's financial contribution: \$300,000



Narrandera Golf Club - Irrigation Automation

Grant amount \$475,157. This project has seen the replacement and upgrading of the irrigation infrastructure, and the re-establishment of grass fairways at Narrandera golf course. The work included replacement of existing water pumping equipment with more modern, reliable, and efficient equipment. The work also included replacement of the aged pipework system with new PVC mains centrally located on 18 fairways and fitted with wide-arc sprinklers. Part of this project was the fairways being reinstated by seeding and fertilizing. **Community group - Narrandera Golf Club**





Grong Grong Earth Park Stage 1

Grant amount \$50,000. The completed park comprises a public food garden, nature playground, straw-bale shed and free library. The Earth Park Committee have erected a Zero Emissions Fort as a combined play and environmental interpretive centre for under 17s. This project will continue to provide shade and seating to the precinct. **Community group - The Earth Park Committee**

Narrandera Bowling and Recreation Club - Stage 1 - Lighting Upgrade

Grant amount \$70,000. This project has seen the installation of 48 LED, environmentally friendly floodlights on three bowling greens to replace old, deteriorated, expensive-to-run fixtures that no longer provide quality light. Installation of new lights has maximized illumination of the greens, ensuring uniform lighting and minimising obtrusive lighting to nearby residents and roadways. The specifications have met Australian standards for competition, recreation, and training purposes. **Community group - Narrandera Bowling and Recreation Club**



Narrandera CRC Plaza Theatre / Hall - Stage 1 - Accessible Facilities Project

Grant amount \$100,000. This project has created accessible toilet

facilities within the building. The project included renovating and upgrading a space between the main hall and kitchen/dining room, which has previously had a small wet area and is currently in poor condition, by providing new, modern all access facilities. The project included improved ramp access and additional link between theatre and toilets. **Community group - Narrandera Christian Revival Crusade**

Hankinson Park Redevelopment - Stage 1

Grant amount \$50,000. Hankinson Park is a feature park within the Narrandera CBD and located on a main avenue within the township. The redevelopment has seen the installation of irrigation systems, planting of a tree hedge line on the western boundary, and stenciled concrete creating paths within the space. The installation of the large Toulouse garden urn and solar lighting completes the project. **Community group - Narrandera Community & Friends – Hankinson Park**

Council's financial contribution: \$35,300



Grong Grong Sports Club - refurbishment of toilet amenities

Grant amount \$75,000. This project has enlarged the existing toilet facility by around 6 m², adding facilities such as a disabled toilet, shower and baby change area, with an extra cubicle added to the ladies toilets and an extra urinal in the male toilets. This project will bring this facility into line with modern community expectations. **Community group - Grong Grong Sports Club**



St John's Uniting Church - Create covered BBQ Kitchen

Grant amount \$26,422. Construction of a covered outdoor BBQ Kitchen to extend and improve the catering facilities of the existing kitchen and hall of the St John's Uniting Church. The project has seen the installation of a 7m x 13m under cover area adjoining the western access to the hall and kitchen and creating connectivity.

This cover houses a built-in barbecue kitchen and a new commercial dishwasher in the existing kitchen completes the project. **Community group - St John's Uniting Church**



In summary, Council financially contributed a total of \$1,476,892 towards the Stronger Countries Communities Round 2 projects, not to mention Council's in-kind support from staff in managing the community grant projects with the community groups, grant and report management.