

**Submission
No 10**

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

Organisation: Port Stephens Council

Date Received: 19 August 2020

Port Stephens Council has been contacted by The Hon. John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier to consider lodging a submission into the Parliamentary Committee examining the NSW Government funding schemes.

Port Stephens is known for its incredible natural beauty, unique wildlife and strong community spirit. These characteristics make our place an ideal recreation, tourist and retirement destination as well as a great place to live, work and play.

We are pleased to have been the recipient of a number of grants in recent times which have enabled us to deliver critical and valuable community infrastructure to the over 75,000 Port Stephens residents and visitors who travel to our region each year.

The Stronger Country Communities Fund, Growing Local Economies Fund and the Fixing Local Roads Programs have enabled us to deliver and build on our region's full potential, helping to shape the future of Port Stephens, drive visitation, infrastructure, growth, jobs, housing and improve the lives of our communities.

Since 2017, the Stronger Country Communities Fund has supported more than 1000 local projects across NSW that make regional communities even better places to call home.

As a result of the Stronger Country Communities funding received, we have delivered a range of infrastructure projects totalling \$3.9 million to improve accessibility, inclusion, health and wellbeing to the local community and visitors alike including:

- Tomaree Sports Complex Multi-purpose Facility
- Construction of pathways and upgrade facilities at Birubi Point Aboriginal Place (stage 2)
- Building Resilience across Port Stephens — PCYC Fit for Work / Fit for Life program
- Upgrade of existing facilities at Bill Strong Oval to include all-access ramp and female facilities
- Upgrade Bagnalls Beach East playground and recreation area
- Upgrade the tennis clubhouse at Mallabula Sports Complex
- Upgrade field at Yulong Park
- Reviving Spencer Park, Soldiers Point — new playground and park furniture
- Construct shared path at Boomerang Park
- Construct accessible facilities at the King Park Regional Sports Complex

We have also been successful in receiving \$5.4 million from the Growing Local Economics Fund to build an information centre and tourism interchange at Gan Gan Road, Anna Bay — which will act as a gateway for visitors to enjoy the Worimi Conservation Lands.

The funding will ensure we can continue to enjoy and protect Birubi Point Aboriginal Place which has faced a number of issues over recent years due to increased visitor numbers, causing traffic chaos and putting pressure on the environment and Aboriginal heritage and cultural values of the area.

The interchange will alleviate these issues and allow residents and the thousands of visitors who come to the area each year the opportunity to access the unique and natural beauty of Port Stephens — attracting more visitors to the area while protecting our natural environment.

Thanks to the \$2.5 million received as part of the Fixing Local Roads Programs, we have also repaired a number of roads across the local government area, getting through the maintenance backlog to create a safer and reliable road network across Port Stephens.

As a result of the NSW Government funding received approaching \$12million, the entire Port Stephens community, Hunter region and visitors to our area have benefited from the initiatives mentioned above, made possible by the funding.

These projects have had a significant impact to help our region prepare for our future, potential growth and ensure we are equipped to meet the needs of our community for many years to come.

We will continue to apply for grant funding and ask that the government join us in delivering these projects for our community as we work together on building a bright tomorrow for Port Stephens.