

Submission
No 42

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

Organisation: Lachlan Shire Council

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The Lachlan Shire Local Government area covers almost 15,000km² with a population of approximately 6,275 people. The Council maintains the longest road network of any LGA in NSW and provides municipal services to 3 towns, 5 villages and 2 aboriginal communities. Over 90% of people live in the largest 3 towns and over 18% of the population are aboriginal, with 36% of the aboriginal community under 15 years of age. Agriculture accounts for 59% of businesses in the shire while the median weekly income of workers is two thirds that of the national average wage. Further 1 in 3 households reportedly do not have access to the internet.

While the above figures paint a picture of a low socio-economic community what they don't show is the pride that residents have in their towns and villages and the high level of community spirit present in the shire; people love to live in Lachlan.

With such a low population density and such a vast area to maintain our community is reliant of state and federal government funding to maintain our existing infrastructure and provide new or extended services and facilities to our residents. Over recent years Council has been fortunate to receive a generous level of funding that has helped to improve the liveability of our region. This funding has been won through the development of worthwhile projects and sound funding applications, with the support of our state and federal government representatives. It would be often difficult for the government to provide funding for rural and remote communities if the assessment criteria for some of these programs was based simply on a cost benefit ratio or the population of a community.

Lachlan Shire LGA makes a significant contribution to the overall economy of NSW and Lachlan Shire Council would strongly oppose any change to grant assessment criteria that, removes decision making responsibility for grant programs from government representatives who are familiar with and understand the needs of rural communities.