

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

**Organisation:** Griffith City Council

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The Chair  
Mr David Shoebridge, MLC  
Public Accountability Committee  
Parliament of NSW

E: [public.accountability@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:public.accountability@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Mr Shoebridge,

**RE: PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE INQUIRY – INTEGRITY, EFFICACY AND  
VALUE FOR MONEY OF NSW GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment with regard to NSW Government grant programs.

The NSW Government has demonstrated its commitment to Regional NSW with an extensive list of funding programs to support communities in the bush. These programs have been designed to improve the lives of all residents and businesses in regional NSW by investing in infrastructure which not only drives jobs and economic growth but also provides amazing livability assets for current and future generations to enjoy.

The level of infrastructure investment by the NSW government in regional communities is unprecedented and is thank fully now “playing catch up” for decades of focus on metropolitan Sydney based projects.

The grant funding schemes delivered by the NSW Government have comprised a healthy mix of competitively based programs and others which have invested in projects right across every local government authority in regional NSW.

Griffith City Council has been successful in securing funding under numerous programs as described below.

**Regional Sporting Infrastructure Fund**

Council has secured \$10M under this Program. Council is committing \$11.9M and Federal Government \$4.5M. The \$26.4M Griffith Regional Sports Precinct Project will provide a new 50M pool at the existing Griffith Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre and a massive expansion of the West End Sports Complex with 5 additional indoor basketball courts, 7 netball courts, synthetic hockey field, synthetic athletics track and grand stand facilities. Construction of the new pool is well under way. West End Oval site construction will commence during the first quarter of 2021.

This was a very competitive program with an initial EOI phase followed by preparation of a detailed business case. This incredible new facility (across 2 sites) will attract regional sporting events and boost the economy of Griffith.

#### Stronger Country Communities (Rounds 1, 2 and 3)

(R1) Village footpath project – Extending pathway network in Griffith and surrounding villages. \$392K. Completed.

(R1) Community stage and renovation of existing amenities block – Memorial Park. \$486K. Completed.

(R2) Community stage and toilet facilities – Community Gardens. \$878K. Under construction.

(R2) Amenities complex – Jubilee Oval - \$878K. Contractor appointed.

(R3) BMX and Scooter (Pump Track) – Olympic Street. \$435K. Detailed design underway.

#### Regional Cycleways Priority Program

Hanwood Cycleway - \$1.06M grant funding toward total project cost of \$1.46M. Construction nearing completion.

#### Fixing Local Roads Program

Seal of Boorga/Dickie Road - \$5.689M (Joint State Gov. and Federal Gov.) funding towards total project cost of \$7.352M. Construction to commence December 2020.

#### Fixing Country Roads Program

Jones Road Causeway Upgrade - \$1.8M grant towards total project cost of \$1.9M. Detailed design in progress.

#### Regional Cultural Fund

Griffith Regional Theatre Upgrade - \$636K grant towards total project cost of \$1.2M. New air conditioning, upgrade lighting, renovated existing and additional toilet facilities, sound desk. Complete.

#### Regional Communities Development Fund

New Griffith Community Centre incorporating additional space for Western Riverina Country Universities Centre - \$3.65M Grant Funding. Total project cost \$4.53M. Construction commencing September 2020.

#### Country Universities Centre Establishment Funding

Funding of \$1.3M to establish and operate the Western Riverina Country Universities Centre in Griffith and Leeton. The Griffith site opened in July 2019 and the Leeton site opened in October 2019. Student numbers for the Griffith site have already exceeded targets thus a new site is being established. (Refer Griffith Community Centre project above).

#### Streets and Shared Spaces Program

Funding of \$401K towards a total budget of \$492K. Funding announced Tuesday 18 August 2020. Winter Delights – Activation of Kooyoo Street, Griffith. Temporary street closure and alternative use as a cultural and strategic “town square”. The project will involve the commissioning, purchasing and temporary installation of items of infrastructure that will

convert the streetscape into an open public space with interactive activities and opportunities for gathering and recreation.

Fixing Country Truck Washes Program

Funding of \$76K (Transport for NSW) towards total project of \$392K. Completed.

Low Cost Loans Initiative

Council has been successful with applications for 3 low interest loans under this Program

- Griffith CBD Upgrade Project \$10M.
- "Griffin Green" Affordable Housing Project \$3M.
- Collina Residential Housing Precinct. \$2.2M. Land acquisition for storm water drainage, detention basin and sewerage pumping station.

A 50% subsidy will apply to the interest component of these loans. This program has prompted Council to borrow funds at very low interest rates to provide valuable community assets.

These funding programs are well administered and Council is required to report on a regular basis in terms of project milestones and acquitting expenditures in a transparent way. Any attempt to centralise decision making for future programs would not be supported by Council.

Griffith is a growing regional centre and it is pleasing that the NSW Government has partnered with us to achieve fantastic outcomes for the entire community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

**BRETT STONESTREET**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

CC: Councillors, Griffith City Council