

**Submission
No 70**

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

Organisation: Cessnock City Council

Date Received: 25 August 2020



23 July 2020

The Director, Public Accountability
Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Public.Accountability@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Contact: Katrina Kerr
Our Ref: DOC2020/120307

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grant programs - submission

Thank you for your request received Monday 13 July 2020 for a submission on Sunday 23 August 2020.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide a submission.

By way of introduction, Cessnock City Council is located just 120 kilometres north of Sydney and 40 kilometres west of Newcastle, the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA) covers 1,966 square kilometres within the beautiful Hunter Valley, NSW.

Our region is now home to close to 60,000 residents and the towns and villages within it are sustained by a diverse business environment, with a backdrop of our famous wine and tourism industry.

The Hunter Valley is Australia's oldest wine producing region with around 4,500 acres under vine and the wine tourism industry is worth an estimated \$521 million.

Offering 28 schools, childcare options, 72 parks, playgrounds, great libraries, an entertainment centre and the Hunter Valley Zoo, the Cessnock LGA is a great place to live and bring up a family.

In our experience we are not aware of any deficiency in the manners in which grants are determined as set out in the Terms of Reference.

We would like to provide feedback and recommendations on related matters. Accordingly we recommend as follows:

- Provision of webinars prior to submission to guide our preparation and fact sheets to refer to which allows us to remain fully aware of our obligations and compliance.

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- Provision of information on anticipated timeframes, to allow appropriate levels of planning and resources to meet grant funding commitments.
- Use of the Stronger Country Communities method of grant funding as it provides a funding allocation to each LGA. We support allocation of funding by Council and submission of community group application through local councils, as this will allow projects to be prioritised based on the communities stated priorities as documented in the Community Strategic Plan and 4-year Delivery Program.
- Provision of grants to fund the investigation and design phase of projects to allow Councils to develop more competent shovel ready projects.

Standardisation in:

- dates that applications open and close each year to enable councils to better plan better for grant applications.
- application forms, and
- progress and an finalisation reports.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Council's Infrastructure Manager , Katrina Kerr

Yours sincerely

Katrina Kerr
Infrastructure Manager