

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

Organisation: Department of Regional NSW

Date Received: 26 August 2020

Mr Stewart Smith
Director, Committees
Public Accountability Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Smith

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into NSW Government grants programs.

I am writing in response to the NSW Legislative Council's Public Accountability Committee Inquiry into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grants programs.

The Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW) has prepared information on the following programs that have been identified in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:

- Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF)
- Regional Cultural Fund (RCF)
- Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund (RSIF)
- Deputy Premier's Discretionary Fund.

Information on each of these programs is provided at *Table A – Department of Regional NSW Inquiry Submission*.

Under the NSW Government Regional Growth Fund, \$1.7 billion in grant funding has been committed to more than 2,100 projects, with vital community projects delivered in every local government area in regional NSW. These projects will deliver economic growth and sustainability as well as new and improved local amenity. The overall Regional Growth Fund investment is underpinned by strong evidence set out in the NSW *Regional Development Framework, 20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW* and 38 unique *Regional Economic Development Strategies*.

The Department of Regional NSW has robust processes for managing grants programs that ensure transparency and value for money for the people of NSW. A range of measures are in place to maintain the integrity of grants programs and deliver a fair and equitable allocation of funding under these programs. These include, but are not limited to:

- engaging independent probity advice at the design, implementation and acquittal stages of all programs
- published guidelines and assessment criteria
- regular internal audits and review of our processes
- access for all applicants to feedback and support on their applications
- evaluation of program processes and outcomes aligned with the NSW Treasury Guidelines.

The application and assessment process for each program varies depending on different factors such as the eligible funding recipients, scale and type of projects to be funded and the intended outcomes of the program. Program assessment methodologies and assurance

processes are in place for each program, are designed to be appropriate for the size and type of the program and ensure the fairness and transparency of the assessment process.

The Department regularly engages suitably qualified experts to provide advice on the eligibility, suitability and viability of projects. All projects funded from the Restart NSW Fund require projects to be independently assessed by Infrastructure NSW and recommended to the NSW Treasurer for funding.

I am confident in the robust processes the Department has established to deliver grants programs that are efficient, effective and deliver value for money for people of NSW.

I can be contacted via email
further information.

should the Committee require

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hanger
Deputy Secretary
Public Works Advisory and Regional Development
Department of Regional NSW

Encl.

Table A: Department of Regional NSW submission – Parliamentary Inquiry into the integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grant programs

Program name	Program objective	Total Program funding available	Lead Agency	Program guidelines	Assessment methodology and process	Final approval	Publication of funded projects
Deputy Premier's Discretionary Fund	<p>Support projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are important to local communities; deliver social, economic, environmental or cultural benefits to a local community; may not fit within other grant programs. 	\$1 million in 2019-20	The Department of Regional NSW provides administrative support.	N/A	All grants are considered and approved at the discretion of the Deputy Premier.	Deputy Premier	Listed in the Department's Annual Report.
Stronger Country Communities Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost the liveability of communities in regional areas by providing new or upgraded social and sporting infrastructure or community programs that have strong local support. Provide programs and infrastructure that enhance opportunities for young people to be work ready and thrive in regional NSW. 	<p>\$100 million - Round 1 \$200 million - Round 2 \$100 million - Round 3</p>	Department of Regional NSW	<p>Round 3: https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/SCCF-Guidelines-Round-Three-2020.pdf</p>	Per the published Program Guidelines.	Deputy Premier	https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-growth-fund
Regional Cultural Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional NSW's cultural offering is improved, and its rich diversity is supported and encouraged. Bold and exciting new and upgraded cultural infrastructure is supported cross NSW. Projects representing value for money and strong ongoing viability are supported. Regional communities have access to cultural experiences that result in recreational and educational benefits. 	\$100 million over two rounds	Create NSW	<p>Round 2: https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Regional-Cultural-Fund-Round-Two-Guidelines.compressed.pdf</p>	Per the published Program Guidelines.	Joint Ministerial approval - Minister for Arts and Deputy Premier	<p>https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-growth-fund and https://www.create.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Regional-Cultural-Fund-Round-One-and-Two-Recipients.pdf</p>
Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number and type of regional sporting facilities. Improve the standard of existing regional sporting facilities. Increase participation in sport. 	\$100 million	Office of Sport and the Department of Regional NSW	<p>Available at https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/oo-s-regional-sports-infrastructure-guidelines-2018.pdf</p>	Per the published Program Guidelines.	Joint Ministerial approval - Minister for Sport and Deputy Premier	https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-growth-fund