

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

Name: Mr Tim Crakanthorp MP, Member for Newcastle

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Tim Crakanthorp MP

STATE MEMBER FOR NEWCASTLE

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Mr David Shoebridge MLC
Chair
Public Accountability Committee
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SYDNEY NSW 2000

via email - public.accountability@parliament.nsw.gov.au

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GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS**

Dear Chair

I write to you regarding the Public Accountability Committee's Inquiry into integrity, efficacy and value for money of NSW Government grant programs and the impact this has had on my electorate of Newcastle.

As you may be aware, the Newcastle Local Government Area (LGA) is excluded from many government grant programs, significantly disadvantaging my local community. I believe that the NSW Government's inconsistent classification of regional and metropolitan status to the Newcastle LGA contributes to this.

For example, the Newcastle LGA is excluded from the following regional programs:

- \$4.2 billion *Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund*;
- \$500 million *Growing Local Economies Fund*;
- \$100 million *Regional Cultural Fund*;
- \$100 million *Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund*;
- \$10 million *Regional Skills Relocation Grant*
- *Regional Seniors Travel Card* despite the policy being costed by the NSW Government to include Newcastle.

In further highlighting the inconsistent classifications applied by the NSW Government to grant programs, Newcastle is ineligible for the Metropolitan Greenspace Program despite being considered metropolitan by the above regional funds.

However, the Newcastle LGA is eligible for the following regional programs:

- *Regional Tourism Product Development Program*
- *Resources for Regions*

Extraordinarily, despite being ineligible for the \$100 million *Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund*, the Newcastle LGA is also excluded from the \$100 million *Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund*. This decision of Government locks out local sporting organisations from any major sports specific infrastructure grant program.

I ask that the Committee closely examines this point as I am sure both yourself and the Committee would agree that excluding Newcastle sporting organisations from accessing any funding is simply unfair.

Sporting clubs in the Newcastle LGA are frustrated by the fact that despite the region being part of NSW, and despite participants and their families paying tax in NSW, they remain excluded from all sporting infrastructure grants funding programs without explanation and without justification.

When raising this inequity with the NSW Government on behalf of my community, I am regularly advised that sporting organisations should apply for the Local Sports Grant program or the Community Building Partnership program.

It should be acknowledged that both of these programs provide very limited access to funding opportunities. Both programs were extremely heavily subscribed this year, with over \$2.4 million worth of applications received to the Community Building Partnership program, representing eight times the amount available. Similarly, I am advised that the Local Sport Grant program has received approximately \$163,000 worth of applications from Newcastle organisations representing over three times the amount available from this round of the program.

Undoubtedly Newcastle's ineligibility for NSW Government grant opportunities increases the number of applications these programs receive and results in many sporting organisation and community groups missing out on funding.

I understand Newcastle City Council has also made a submission to the Committee outlining similar concerns to those I have raised above.

Considering the issue I have outlined, I believe it is critical that the Committee hold a hearing in Newcastle to hear first-hand the issues facing local sporting and community organisations accessing funding from the NSW Government.

I would be willing to appear before the Committee to further expand on the information I have provided in my submission.

I thank the Committee for the important work they are undertaking and I look forward to their support in ensuring Newcastle receives its fair share of funding from the NSW Government.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below.

Yours sincerely

TIM CRAKANTHORP MP
STATE MEMBER FOR NEWCASTLE