

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

Name: Mr Paul Scully MP, Member for Wollongong

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Paul Scully MP

MEMBER FOR WOLLONGONG



The Hon David Shoebridge MLC
Chair
Public Accountability Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

13 October 2020

Dear Mr Shoebridge *David*

I write in relation to the inquiry of the Public Accountability Committee into NSW Government grant programs.

I note that the Terms of Reference for the inquiry indicate that two of the grant programs to be examined are the *Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund* and the *Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund*.

I am particularly interested in the examination of these two funds as, without any explanation, the Wollongong local government area was not listed as an eligible local government area for either the Greater Sydney fund or the regional sporting infrastructure fund.

This had the effect of leaving sporting groups in the Wollongong local government area without a sporting infrastructure fund to which they could apply to seek funding for facility upgrades.

I am sure you would agree that for any local government area to be left out of grant programs that cover all other parts of the state (except Newcastle) is simply wrong.

After discovering this deliberate exclusion I sought an explanation as to why sporting groups in the Wollongong local government area had been excluded. However, despite correspondence to the then Minister for Sport and questions on notice no explanation or justification has been provided.

In response to questions on notice (see LA8223, printed in Legislative Assembly Questions & Answers Paper No. 189 on 7 June 2018) I was informed that sporting groups in Wollongong had access to the Local Sports Grants program, Community Building Partnerships program and Liquor and Gaming's Infrastructure Grants. It is noted that these grants are also available to every electorate in NSW.

Similar responses were received in correspondence from the Minister for Sport.

It is also noted that analysis of Liquor and Gaming's infrastructure grants reveal that despite 27 applications from organisations in the Wollongong local government area being submitted over the last nine funding rounds only one group has received a grant.

Understandably sporting groups in the Wollongong local government area are frustrated by the fact that despite the region being part of NSW, despite participants and their families paying tax in NSW they remain excluded from all sporting infrastructure grants funding programs without explanation and without justification.

This has increased demand for funds available through the Community Building Partnerships program and the Local Sports Grants program along with additional requests to Wollongong City Council to fund upgrades to sporting infrastructure. As you and Committee members would appreciate this is an unsustainable approach to securing sporting facility upgrades and can put teams in competition with teams in other parts of the state at a disadvantage.

The exclusion of the Wollongong local government area immediately created two tiers of sporting groups across NSW but it also created two tiers of sporting groups within the electorates of Heathcote and Shellharbour, electorates which incorporate multiple local government areas.

I appreciate the Committee taking the time to explore the administration of both the *Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund* and the *Regional Sports Infrastructure Fund* but I feel that, in addition to exploring the allocation of funds through these programs, the Committee should pay particular attention to the exclusion of both the Wollongong and Newcastle local government areas from both programs.

Sporting organisations in Wollongong were more than willing to compete for grant funds with others in the same way that they compete against other sporting teams on the playing field on any other day. They sought no guarantee of success but they cannot understand why they have been excluded from even being eligible to apply for these programs.

They cannot understand why a government would deliberately disadvantage sporting groups in one area and consider the decision to be politically motivated.

I would be more than willing to appear before the Committee to outline the frustration of local organisations, many of whom are fearful of speaking out in case this results in further exclusion from funding programs.

 Yours sincerely

PAUL SCULLY MP

