



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development & Local Government Committee***Chair: Catherine King MP*

**Availability, accessibility and accountability: final report into
Funding Regional and Local Community Infrastructure**

Local governments are struggling to provide sufficient levels of infrastructure for their communities while community organisations have been hit by a significant drop in donations, according to Catherine King, Chair of the House Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government.

In tabling the final Funding Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Report, Ms King said the failure of the Regional Partnerships Programme showed infrastructure funding programs needed to be based on sound principles.

“Regions across Australia need access to infrastructure funding on a fair and transparent basis,” Ms King said.

“The final report stresses, in simple terms, principles which the committee believes are fundamental to the development of a fair and transparent funding program.”

Ms King said principles espoused by the committee had been grouped in the report under availability, accessibility and accountability.

“Availability refers to a set of program guidelines which clearly establish what types of projects will be funded, who is eligible for funding and how the funds will be distributed,” Ms King said.

“The principle of accessibility focuses on developing a simple, streamlined application process, supported by assistance to help applicants develop their proposals. Accountability stresses the importance of ensuring that decisions made throughout the funding program are well documented and can be adequately expressed.”

Ms King said the first recommendation in the report was to ensure the continuation of ongoing funding support for community infrastructure beyond the direct payments already provided under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program.

Of equal importance was the need to ensure non-profit organisations also had access to funding, Ms King said. To this end the committee recommended a centralised assessment process as well as an acquittal process that utilised well-structured funding agreements.

Ms King said the committee was unable to reach consensus on a number of key points, largely around the funding of private sector interests.

But the interim and final reports presented options for a wider framework which the government could utilise in developing “an ongoing, fair and accountable funding program” which met the needs and expectations of regional Australia, Ms King said.

Copies of the committee’s report, including the full list of recommendations, can be obtained from the committee’s website, www.aph.gov.au/itrdlg, or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2352 or by emailing itrdlg.reps@aph.gov.au.

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