

Submission to the Inquiry into a New Regional Development Funding Program**Ian McCausland****Referring to Item 4 in the Terms of Reference**

I have a background in administering grant funding for rural industry research and wish to comment on the local arrangements which have been in place to assist applicants for the Regional Partnerships Program

- As Managing Director of the Meat Research Corporation for 13 years (1986-1998) I was responsible for distribution of research and development funds of over \$50 million/annum on a competitive basis.
- The main applicants for MRC funds were graduate scientists who were highly skilled and experienced at writing applications according to defined terms of reference, and in presenting their case in person where this was required. They did not require assistance in these tasks.
- Over the past two years I have assisted local organizations and individuals in the Upper Lachlan/Crookwell area in their applications for community infrastructure grants from the Regional Partnerships Program.
- In providing this assistance I have found that there are many local infrastructure projects worthy of support, but few or no local people associated with them who are equipped to prepare a comprehensive and compelling application in support of their project.
- In this situation there is a grave risk that the best prepared applications may succeed in attracting grants, while more worthy ones are rejected because of inadequate applications or no application at all.
- In my view the Capital Region Area Consultative Committee has been highly effective in helping local groups decide if their potential project fits the criteria for Regional Partnership Program funding, and, if it does, in providing assistance to them in preparing a strong and convincing application.
- **In summary, I consider that the outcomes of any future competitive funding arrangement for regional communities will be greatly enhanced if it incorporates a local filtering and assistance service such as that currently provided by the Area Consultative Committee.**

Ian McCausland

