

ADDITIONAL ITEM

10 July 2013

To the Ordinary Council Meeting

Councillor

1.6 Mayoral Minute - Regional Development Australia Fund Round Four - WSC Unsuccessful

TRIM REFERENCE: F2011/01221 - D03481184

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SUMMARY

The Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) round 4 funding has recently been announced, with Wyong Shire Council, again not receiving any funding through this funding program from the Federal Government.

I formally move:

- 1 ***That Council note that Wyong Shire Council's application to the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) - Round Four was again unsuccessful.***
- 2 ***That Council direct the Mayor to invite the Prime Minister to attend a meeting with the Mayor, in Wyong, to explain why Wyong Council has not received any RDAF funding in Rounds 1 – 4, and to give assurances as to priority treatment for Wyong LGA in future for regional development and other Federal Grant Funds.***
- 3 ***That Council direct the Mayor to extend a similar invitation to the Federal Opposition Leader.***
- 4 ***That Council request the General Manager to contact the Secretary of the Central Coast Regional Organisation of Councils (CCROC) and request that the Paucity of Grant Funding for the Central Coast from the RDAF be included as an agenda item for the next CCROC meeting scheduled for 22 August 2013.***

BACKGROUND

RDAF supports the infrastructure needs of regional Australia. The program funds capital infrastructure projects which are identified as priorities by local communities. The program is administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

Council has made the following submissions to the Regional Development Australia Fund in recent years

Round 1: Applications for the following were made, none were successful:

- Ourimbah Enhanced Community, Education and Sporting Hub
- The Art House, Wyong Shire Performing Art and Conference Centre
- Porters Creek Catchment Stormwater Harvesting Scheme
- Warnervale Town Centre Sparks Road Upgrade and Intersection

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- The Entrance Community Centre, Child and Family Centre
- Minnesota Road Reconstruction and Stormwater Drainage Improvements

Round 2: Application for the following, guidelines changed to allow only one Council project:

- Essential Support Infrastructure for Warnervale Town Centre

Round 3: Only available to projects in towns with a population of 30,000 or less in rural, remote, regional and peri-urban areas.

Round 4: Application for the following:

- Art House

In all of these rounds, Council also supported community groups with applications to deliver projects within the Wyong Local Government Area. In four rounds of funding with, Wyong Shire has received no funding from the Federal Government. Gosford has received two projects in round 1 and 2: Refurbishing the Coast Community Centre (\$890,000) and Narara Valley Sporting Precinct (\$2,500,000).

The Australian Government has allocated almost \$1 billion to the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) to support the infrastructure needs and economic growth of Australia's regions. The national program is designed to leverage Commonwealth, state, local government, private and not-for-profit investments for the long-term benefit of communities.

In Round Four successful projects in NSW included 2 in Central West, 3 in Greater Western Sydney, 2 in Mid North Coast, 1 Northern Rivers, 1 Northern Inland and 1 in Sydney:

• Construction of Orange Regional Museum and Cultural Square	\$ 8,125,000
• Parkes Regional Airport Redevelopment	\$ 3,035,000
• Section Two—Great Blue Mountains Trail	\$ 710,000
• Youth and Community Centre in Fairfield	\$ 8,499,349
• Western Sydney Community and Sports Centre	\$30,000,000
• Northern Gateway	\$38,500,000
• Surf Life Saving NSW Port Macquarie Operations & Training Centre	\$ 2,102,488
• Clarence Valley Regional Airport Upgrade	\$ 2,120,000
• Upgrading Thunderbolts Way	\$ 5,120,000
• Sydney Multicultural Arts and Sport Precinct	\$ 8,606,687

This funding program focuses on infrastructure needs of communities and regional priorities. In the case of The Art House, Council has a DA approved and has been ready to start commencement of the construction, this project has been identified as a priority within the Central Coast Regional Arts Framework and also from Arts NSW as a high need project for the north of the Shire. Clearly it is a priority for the region and is shovel ready (a requirement of the funding) and has Council's commitment to funding and delivery, yet in past rounds it has been less of a priority for the Central Coast RDA than other projects which are not shovel ready.

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There are 14 regions in NSW that the RDA identify and over the last four rounds the Central Coast has received grants for two projects, with only two other regions receiving the same number of grants (with populations 100,000 or more less than the Central Coast and with the majority of LGAs in the region with a higher SEIFA index than Wyong). The remaining regions received on average four with one region receiving eight grants.

Wyong Shire is an area of significant need and has a score of 951.7 (55th lowest of 152 LGAs) on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Disadvantage, this index measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics. The index is derived from attributes that reflect disadvantage such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations. The highest score is 1120.7 and the lowest being 788.4. A higher score on the index means a *lower* level of disadvantage. A lower score on the index means a *higher* level of disadvantage.

With such high levels of disadvantage and in comparison to other projects that have been funded I question how the allocation of funds has been equitable or based on need.

RDAF Round 5 opened on 21 June and closes 22 July 2013. RDAF Round Five is an allocative funding round, with each local government that was funded under the General Purpose component of the Financial Assistance Grants 2012–2013 eligible to apply for funding for infrastructure projects. Funding allocations to local government identifies that Wyong should receive \$906,751.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil.