



Shadow Minister for Regional Communications  
Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government

Mr Grant Hehir  
Australian National Audit Office  
GPO Box 707  
Canberra ACT 2601

15 May 2017

Dear Mr Hehir,

I am writing to you in regards to the Community Development Grants Programme administered by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

According to the Guidelines for the programme,

Only projects identified by the Australian Government will be considered for funding under the Community Development Grants Programme, including 2013 and 2016 election commitments and Government selection uncontracted projects from the Regional Development Australia Fund and Community Infrastructure Grant Program.

The Community Development Grants Programme is not a competitive grants programme. [http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/communitydevelopment/CDG\\_Guidelines\\_December\\_2016.pdf](http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/communitydevelopment/CDG_Guidelines_December_2016.pdf)

To date, funding of more than \$941.2 million has been committed to 750 projects including 450 projects from the 2016 Federal Election. This is a considerable sum of taxpayer funding.

As this is not a competitive grants program, I believe that the allocation of funds does not meet the guidelines in the Department of Finance Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines.

Furthermore, as only projects selected by the government can be funded, I believe that any analysis of the projects awarded funding under this program would identify a high correlation with electorates that provide a political advantage to Coalition members and candidates.

I therefore ask you to conduct an audit of this program to provide an independent assessment of its administration.

Yours sincerely,

**Stephen Jones MP**

Shadow Minister for Regional Services, Territories and Local Government;  
Shadow Minister for Regional Communications