

Question on Notice

No. 561

Asked on 20 August 2013

MRS CUNNINGHAM asked the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (MR SEENEY) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the first round of Royalties for Regions (\$49.6M), where \$22M was allocated to State Government road projects, and the remaining \$27.6M was allocated to local government infrastructure projects and of this figure only 10 per cent was allocated to councils reporting sustained operating surplus –

Is it a policy guideline to not support applications from councils that work hard for financially sound results?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Gladstone for her question.

Royalties for the Regions was designed to ensure that long-term royalty benefits flow back to Queensland's resource regions by investing mining royalties in priority infrastructure projects identified by local councils.

Over its first four years, Royalties for the Regions will direct \$495 million to critical infrastructure projects that will help regional communities cope with the pressure that resource sector developments place on their infrastructure.

Royalties for the Regions funding is distributed to eligible councils through a competitive grants process. The key criterion for all road and community infrastructure projects is the clear demonstration of a critical need arising from the impact of resource sector activity.

Round one of Royalties for the Regions had a clear focus on addressing legacy infrastructure issues resulting from rapid growth in the past. Assisting councils to meet the demands of rapid growth over an extended period and to take advantage of this growth for long-term benefit will continue to be a priority.

The Royalties for the Regions Program Guidelines detail a number of other eligibility and assessment criteria which focus on a proposed project's:

- benefit to the community;
- alignment with state and regional economic or planning priorities;
- financial case and value for money; and
- level of regional and community support.

In assessing applications for funding, the government considers the capacity and capability of a council to both deliver the project, and manage and maintain the resulting infrastructure into the future.

As a result of the program's first funding round in 2012, 18 projects across six local government areas will receive a total of \$49.6 million. These projects will deliver:

- core infrastructure projects such as water and waste management;
- critical road safety and access improvements across regions impacted by resource development;
- flood mitigation projects to better safeguard communities from flooding; and
- infrastructure to support essential community services.

Investment in these kinds of projects is critical to managing growth and improving the liveability of resource communities. This is essential to ensure regional communities are able to thrive and grow. Communities should be given the opportunity to capture these benefits and not be held back simply on the basis of available operating budgets.