

Media Release

THE HUNTER'S COUNCILS WELCOME COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING BOOST

For release 25 June 2009:

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd today announced an additional \$220 million nation-building investment in community infrastructure such as libraries, community centres, sports grounds and environmental infrastructure.

The \$220 million injection into the Community Infrastructure Program will be delivered through two streams:

- \$100 million shared between all of the nation's councils and shires; and
- \$120 million for larger Strategic Projects, provided on a competitive basis.

This investment has already been allocated in the 2009-10 Budget and builds on the \$800 million currently being delivered through the Community Infrastructure Program.

The Government will also establish a \$25 million Local Government Reform Fund to fast-track improvements to the sector's infrastructure asset and financial management systems, and encourage cooperation between councils in the delivery of their services.

Over two years, the \$25 million Local Government Reform Fund will:

- Assist councils implement new asset management and planning consistent with a national framework;
- Fund the collection and analysis of robust data about councils' infrastructure assets; and
- Support collaboration between councils on a regional basis for service delivery and planning.

The communities of the Hunter will receive substantial funding through the Community Infrastructure Program with the following allocations having been announced:

Cessnock	\$461,000
Dungog	\$101,000

Gloucester	\$30,000
Great Lakes	\$451,000
Lake Macquarie	\$891,000
Maitland	\$480,000
Muswellbrook	\$161,000
Newcastle	\$807,000
Port Stephens	\$404,000
Singleton	\$147,000
Upper Hunter	\$161,000*

In commenting on the announcement, the Chair of Hunter Councils and Mayor of Gloucester, Cr Julie Lyford, said, "The Hunter along with all regions in Australia has suffered from the twin impacts of the recent global economic meltdown and longer term financial pressures associated with asset maintenance renewal and demand. In the context of these pressures the Commonwealth's announcement of additional funding for community infrastructure is a welcome boost and will enable our Councils and their communities to embark on additional, much needed works that will build community capacity and resilience."

She added, "Local government in the Hunter is renowned for its capacity to work cooperatively in the building of resources and the sharing of services. We also welcome the establishment of the Local Government Reform Fund as a means of further promoting across the nation the partnership approach that we have championed."

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* How the \$100 million allocation to councils works

1. All councils will receive a base grant of \$30,000.
2. The 105 councils classified as urban fringe or urban regional according to the Australian Classification of Local Government Code and who have at least 30,000 residents will receive an additional growth component of \$150,000.
3. All councils with at least 5,000 residents will share in the distribution of the remaining funds in proportion to their 2008-09 general purpose financial assistance grant.
4. The Australian Capital Territory will receive \$800,000.