

## 7. Regional Community Infrastructure Program

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The Federal Government has recently advised of the extension of the Regional Community Infrastructure Program and Council is required to confirm its preferred project for submission to the program

**General Manager**

### BACKGROUND

In November 2008 the Federal and State Governments announced funding programs designed to upgrade public social and cultural infrastructure.

10 The Federal "Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program" consisted of two parts, the first allocating a calculated amount to each local government area in Australia and the second, the Strategic Projects component, providing up to \$50 million to local government in 2008-09 for major strategic projects.

Councils and shires were required to meet guidelines and go through a competitive process in order to have projects selected for funding under the \$50 million component. Last month with the passing of the second economic stimulus package, this amount was increased to a total of \$550 million.

Existing Guidelines for the Community Infrastructure Program - Strategic Projects will continue to apply. They include:

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- Applications are limited only to local governments, and only one application per council;
  - Projects must be ready to go and able to proceed within six months of signing a contract;
  - Projects must be seeking a Commonwealth contribution of at least \$2 million;
  - Councils are encouraged to contribute funds or secure partnership funds for projects; and
  - Community organisations' projects are permitted if sponsored by a local government.

30 Council must now consider if its current project which has already been lodged, remains the priority. There is also a capacity to add further detail to current applications and modify them, or withdraw them in favour of an alternative project. Full applications are required to be lodged with the Department by 4.00pm on Friday 6 March 2009.

At its meeting on 23 December 2008 Council resolved in relation to the lodging of an application in the first round:

1. *That Council note an application for funding of \$2,200,000 for the Pambula Pool project has been lodged.*
2. *That Council note the assistance of PACi in the preparation of the application in particular the effort of Mrs Janet Brandon.*
3. *That Council advise PACi that it offers in principle support for the project and that when the facility feasibility study is delivered to Council and the determination of the funding application is known, a further report to Council will be prepared.*

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At workshops on 17 and 24 February 2009 the matter of Council considering all options was discussed. The possibility of altering Councils nominated project was considered and further discussion and information was requested. The concept plans for the redevelopment of the Bega Town Hall site were presented. Councillors were clear in their continued support for the Pambula Pool project, however they suggested a series of steps be undertaken prior to Council considering a final position, including awaiting the consideration of the independent review of its business case.

A subsequent meeting was held with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, staff and representatives of the Pambula Pool project committee.

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The independent assessment of the Pambula Pool project business plan is expected as the Business Paper goes to print and a workshop is planned for the morning of the Council meeting to discuss the matter.

A detailed development application design and estimates schedule for the Bega Town Hall site is also being finalised for further consideration.

### **Asset**

The decision made, irrespective of the project agreed by Council, will alter the priorities for the asset management activities of Council.

### **Social / Cultural**

There are great community benefits from both projects.

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### **Consultation**

There has been discussions held with the Pambula Pool project Board and with the Bega Town Hall Committee.

### **Financial**

Costs have been involved in the development of both projects to date, including approximately \$17,000 towards the pool business case review, and \$30,000 towards the Town Hall DA design documents.

**Resources (including staff)**

Staff have been involved in supporting the Pambula Pool Committee, liaising with consultants and in consultation on both projects.

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**Operational Plan**

The identified project will be included in the 2009/10 Plan.

**CONCLUSION**

Council need to resolve a final position in relation to the preferred project for lodging with the Regional Community Infrastructure strategic projects program for funding consideration.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council submit a detailed and updated submission for the (project name to be included at the meeting) with the Regional Community Infrastructure program.