



# The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP

## FEDERAL MEMBER FOR EDEN-MONARO



Australian National Audit Office  
GPO Box 707  
Canberra ACT 2601  
AUSTRALIA

To whom it may concern

I am writing to bring to your attention discrepancies in the awarding of Commonwealth Government grants under the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Package (RJIP) South Coast New South Wales.

The RJIP South Coast region covers two Federal Electorates, Gilmore held by a Liberal Party representative and Eden-Monaro held by a Labor representative. The funding available to the RJIP South Coast region was \$20 million through three grant funding streams.

The funding allocation split between the two electorates was 18.5 million dollars to the electorate of Gilmore and 1.5 million dollars to the electorate of Eden-Monaro.

The heavy weighting towards the Liberal held seat of Gilmore in awarding these grants appears to be inconsistent with the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines, specifically those outlined in section 13.9

The ANAO has put an emphasis on the geographic distribution of grant activities as a measure of equitable distribution and as an indicator of party-political bias in the distribution of grants. The ANAO has emphasised that those involved in grants administration should, therefore, be aware that the geographic and political distribution of grants may be seen as indicators of the general equity of a grant opportunity.

<https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-guidelines.pdf>

Such a large inconsistency in the funding allocation between two electorates leads to questions being raised about the implementation of all the funding allocated through the RJIP across all the trial sites in Australia.

I would appreciate the assistance of the Australian National Audit Office to investigate if the RJIP adheres to the Commonwealth Grant Guidelines. Taking into account the differences in RJIP funding that are apparent between the funding allocated to Eden-Monaro and Gilmore, and investigating if there were equitable allocations of funding to all trial sites in Australia.

I look forward to your response.

Kind regards

Mike Kelly MP  
Federal Member for Eden-Monaro  
6th April 2018