

COUNTRY LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND — ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**67. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Regional Development:**

I refer to the 36 local governments deemed ineligible for the 2012–13 country local government fund funding following the minister's abrupt change to the eligibility criteria.

- (1) Why were the local government authorities suddenly deemed ineligible for the 2012–13 funding?
- (2) Has the minister made any promises to seek to have the funding reinstated for all or any affected local governments as part of the 2014–15 budget process?
- (3) Has the minister informed the Treasurer of his promise?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:**

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for Collie–Preston for the question on the country local government fund. He will be aware that at the last budget the Liberal–National government took the decision to finish the country local government fund. In the budget for the next two years—2013–14 and 2014–15—there is a washout of the regional component of that. There are still funds to be washed out in projects. The last decision was taken by cabinet just recently, but that is being played out.

The member's question is about the 36 local governments that, as a product of not meeting the acquittal deadlines set by the previous Minister for Regional Development of 30 June last year, are ineligible for the individual component of the 2012–13 country local government fund. I am happy to clarify this if I have it wrong, but the previous minister expressed to them that they would need to make a case to him about any extenuating circumstances and explain why they could not meet that acquittal deadline. Bear in mind that some of those local governments had the expectation that they had two years from when the decision was made to have the acquittal met for the previous funds. In some cases, that was after the deadline set by the Minister for Regional Development. That feedback has come to my office now as the new Minister for Regional Development. I have considered that and I am prepared to reassess that and look at it in the context of the new budget process. That has not been presented anywhere but in my office. We are looking at the circumstances around some of the local governments. Tragic circumstances have led some of them to not be able to meet the deadlines set by the previous minister. On the back of that, I am looking at it and I have told local governments that I am doing so. Again, that will be subject to the current budget process, and I have not made any presentations to anyone on that.