



MEDIA RELEASE

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Coal & Allied dollars help secure more than \$6.5m for Hunter communities

A Coal & Allied programme to fund four community grants officers at Hunter Valley councils over the past year has leveraged \$6.5 million in value to the community.

Coal & Allied Community Development Fund chair, Fiona Nicholls, said the grants officers not only help community groups identify funding opportunities, but also guide them through the process of applying for grants.

"In 2008, the Coal & Allied Community Development Fund agreed to provide just over \$275,000 per year for three years to fund community grants officer positions at Singleton Shire Council, Upper Hunter Council, Cessnock City Council and Muswellbrook Shire Council," Ms Nicholls said.

"Since then, these officers have helped the local community secure more than \$6.5 million in funding by holding 27 grant writing workshops and assisting with more than 240 grant applications lodged.

"These officers provide a much-needed link between funding sources and community groups that may otherwise be unaware of opportunities for financial assistance, or need help producing the paperwork required to be considered for a grant."

Ms Nicholls said in the past 12 months, the programme has achieved a significant increase in funding to the region, which is going directly towards building capacity in the Hunter Valley region.

"The types of grants the officers have assisted with include Indigenous, health and wellbeing, disability, community development and environment and heritage grants," Ms Nicholls said.

"For example, Muswellbrook Shire Council's community grants officer, Nerida Wales Brown, has helped secure funding for the town's Active-Over-Fifty exercise programme and an upgrade to the Denman Pony Club's facilities.

"The community grants officers programme is a sustainable initiative that provides long-term benefits for our region, not only by helping to secure money for projects now, but by teaching community groups how to identify and secure funding for future opportunities."

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