

Minister for Energy and Renewables
Minister for Sports and Events
Minister for Parks

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29 November 2024

The Hon. Rebecca White MP
Labor Member for Lyons
Via Clerk of the House of Assembly

Email: laura.ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms White

I write in response to a question raised in Parliament on behalf of your constituents on 27 November 2024.

The Longford Grand Prix Expo (Longford GPX) was a new event concept developed on the back of the successful Longford Motorama event, which was first delivered in 2020. Longford GPX received a grant of \$450,000 to support the delivery of the inaugural event over the long weekend in March 2023. I am advised that from this funding, \$370,000 of the commitment was made to event organisers to plan the delivery of the event, consistent with Events Tasmania's normal practices.

I believe the support was provided to significantly grow Motorama whilst keeping the foundation of the event focusing on celebrating Longford's celebrated motor racing history. I understand \$80,000 in funding from the commitment was not made as it was contingent on later deliverables.

I am told the grant was administered by the Department of State Growth. Longford GPX organisers cancelled the event on 13 January 2023 and advised that a combination of difficult economic conditions, including increased costs and ongoing supply chain issues and labour shortages had forced them to cancel. On 24 January 2023 the Department met with organisers and formally requested the return of unspent grant funding, which totalled approximately \$51,000. This was returned later that same day.

Organisers provided the accounts and records of the grant funding on 27 March 2023, which were reviewed by the Department. I am advised this initial review analysed the expenditure provided by the proponent and compared them against expenditure as proposed in the application and budget submitted by the proponent for the event. The proponent's reporting revealed that event staff wages, advertising and promotion, marketing services, venue infrastructure, event labour and admin costs and consumables were the major categories of expense.

The Department undertook a process to consider a deeper analysis to be able to ascertain the broader context around some of these expenses, as some of the records and accounts, whilst itemised in the documents provided, were unclear. I am told the Department engaged Wise Lord and Ferguson Accounting and Advisory (WLF) to assist with this process. WLF has provided a report on the proponent's expenditure of the grant funding, as well as advice on the administration of the grant.

The Department's analysis and the WLF report noted that several of the expenses were used to engage staff to plan the event, develop marketing and advertising collateral and event launch costs mostly made to third party operators. The Department is, however, working to seek the repayment of approximately \$60,000 in funding relating to promotional products, food and beverage, equipment, uniforms, office, and several other costs that had not been clarified by the proponent.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Duigan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon Nick Duigan MLC
Minister for Sports and Events