

Norfolk Island COVID-19 Community Recovery Grant

DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL: DRAFT

DATE: 23 March 2020



Authored by: Office of the Administrator



Office of the Administrator
New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

Norfolk Island Covid-19 Community Recovery Grant

Unique Norfolk Island Factors

The Island's only industry is tourism

Norfolk Island's only industry is tourism with around 40% of its economy dependent on this single industry¹. With the declaration of the State of Emergency and cessation of visitors of the island 59% of the island's workforce has been stood down². In comparison with other communities this impact will be immediate and extremely severe.

Without recovery support the impact on the industry will be long-lasting.

Norfolk Island does not come into the GST system

Being an external Territory Norfolk Island is outside the GST system. The impact of this is that local businesses do not collect and submit GST in their Business Activity Statements (BAS) to the ATO. A requirement to qualify as an "active employer test" under the legislation passed yesterday has the requirement to have lodged a taxable supply. If this remains the case, no businesses will qualify for the Cash Flow assistance for businesses.

A package of business support that mirrors the Cash Flow assistance for business has been costed as part of this Grant.

There are no other economic opportunities

In the short-term there are no alternate economic opportunities available on the island. The island's resident economy is 1642³ and therefore a limited and easily satisfied market for basic fruit, vegetables and fish that can be produced locally. The only export market is for Kentia Palm seed and this is limited. Agricultural exports are constrained both by the high cost of airfreight, irregular shipping services and biosecurity requirements. Communications infrastructure is limited to satellite data communication with limited bandwidth and high latency. This limits the ability for IT related industry.

The only short-term alternate economic opportunities will relate to those provided for under this grant. Infrastructure and other community-based projects that can be undertaken on the island are provided.

Remote Island Community

The community is both remote and an island. This impacts on the cost of living as most food and goods are imported. Business faces high fixed costs in areas such as insurance⁴ as it is seen as exposed to natural disasters such as cyclones. In contrast to other remote mainland communities the isolation is enhanced as it is not possible to drive to another area in the country. To leave requires flying to either Sydney or Brisbane. This is now limited and relatively expensive.

The unique aspect of this is that in the current environment unless meaningful activity can be found for the population there is likely to be escalating social and mental health problems on the island.

Oldest community demographic in Australia

The median age on the island is 49 years old, this compares with 42 years for the other territories and 38 years for the whole of Australia. People aged 65 years and older comprise 23.6 % of the

¹ Monitoring the Norfolk Island Economy, KPMG, 26 August 2019

² A business survey was undertaken on the 19th of March, of the 711 people employed business indicated that they had or intended to stand down 417 employees.

³ Table 03, Census, 2016

⁴ Insurance on the island has increased by 30% between 2018 and 2019 and for many businesses it has doubled, ()

population compared with 15.8% of the Australian population⁵. Apart from making this island's population highly susceptible to the Covid-19 virus the economy is uniquely vulnerable to population loss in the productive age group of 20-64-year age group.

Loss of population in this productive age group will make it difficult for the tourist industry to recover on the island as it is very difficult to both attract workers to the island -especially those that can live and thrive in a remote island community.

The measures proposed for support under this grant will aid in retaining these people on the island so that the island can recover.

High proportion of Casual employment

Based on the survey undertaken late last week⁶ 59% of the workforce is engaged as Part-time/Casual or Contract employees. Most of these are low income workers on basic award rates. These workers once stood down will have no entitlements associated with sick or other leave entitlements. Incomes for most of the majority of the island's workforce therefore ceased last week.

Provision of assistance through the department is seen as a way to provide rapid assistance in the timeliest manner to the island.

Recovery Program

Purpose

The purpose of this grant will be to fill the support gaps in the current whole-of-Government relief assistance, considering the unique factors that face the Norfolk Island Economy. The program is forward looking and the support it provides and the proposed activities to be undertaken are to enable the economy to prepare and respond quickly to recovery from the current crisis.

The proposed grant is to be provided to and disbursed by DITRDC. The disbursement criteria will be determined internally and administered by the department.

Summary Covid-19 Community Recovery Grant	
<u>Program to address gaps for support to individuals</u>	
159 Visa-holders on the island	
<u>Program to address gaps in support for business</u>	
Mirror Cash Flow assistance for businesses	
<u>Program to Support Economic Recovery</u>	
New Airport Terminal	
Council Community Grant Program	
Environmental Employment Program	
Airport to Burnt Pine Footpath	
Recovery Tourism Promotion	
Recovery Program Salary Support	
Community Emergency/Indoor Sports Centre	
Business Diversification Fund	
Waste Management Improvements	
Cascade Roll-on-roll-off design costs	
Youth Centre Renovation	
Total Proposed Grant	

⁵ ABS, 2016 census data

⁶ Previously referenced business survey.

Program to address gaps for support to individuals

159 Visa-holders on the island

Currently working on the island are an estimated 80 foreign nationals who are becoming Australian citizens through the 159-visa process. Many of these are employed in the tourism sector and have been stood down. They are not Australian citizens and would not qualify for Job-seeker support. They are effectively stranded on the island with no income and no means of support. The estimated cost of providing the equivalent of job seeker support is [REDACTED] for a six-month period⁷.

Program to address gaps in support for business

Mirror Cash Flow assistance for businesses

As highlighted above due to businesses on the island not being required to collect and remit GST an unintended consequence will be that they will fail the test to qualify for the Cash Flow assistance for business. This is the major form of assistance that will be applicable to local island business. Most of the businesses being small and employing casual staff will only qualify for the minimum level of support ([REDACTED]).

Costing of providing an equivalent amount through a mirrored scheme has been undertaken using the [REDACTED]⁸. The likely cash flow refund to the few medium-large businesses on the island was an average of [REDACTED]. Most of the small businesses on the island would only qualify for the minimum refund of \$20K. With a provision for administrative costs the mirrored program has an estimated cost of \$[REDACTED]⁹.

Program to Support Economic Recovery

New Airport Terminal

One of the biggest challenges facing the Norfolk Island community will be reactivating the tourism market. The first point of entry is tired, presents a poor first image, and a poor workplace for processing large numbers of passengers. Council has drafted a Master Plan, have yet to resolve its final position, but we can move quickly on this matter should funding become available. Attached as an appendix is the draft plan, including the preferred Terminal development.

The project would provide on-going employment for the tradespeople on the island and potentially replace the loss of work that is normally taking place in supporting the tourism sector. (See Option T3 of the *Airport Masterplan*).

Council Community Grant Program

Commonwealth partnering in a new Round of Council's Community Grants Program which is very popular on island but largely limited by available funding.

The Community Grants Program with a dedicated stimulus stream, could be a fast, simple and transparent way of distributing money to businesses and not-for profit community groups for activities that will immediately inject project money into the community. The online platform is in place and Council could perhaps underwrite a new Round opening whilst the required paperwork for federal money to flow were instrumented.

Clubs, businesses and individuals looking for grant assistance are contacting the Council's Grant Officer and the Council's current resources will not enable many of these projects to be supported. See attached *Community Grants -potential stimulus funding projects*.

⁷ See attached spreadsheet "Nlk Bus 20200323" Tab 159 Visa

⁸ [REDACTED]

⁹ See attached spreadsheet "Nlk Bus 20200323" Tab Bus Cash Flow Support

Environmental Employment Program [REDACTED]

This program will provide the opportunity to redeploy 24 people for 8 months. However, this can be scaled depending on how much funding is available and the duration of the project.

The idea would be to have 5 current NIRC employees (including one in KAHVA) and one Parks Australia employee supervising crews of 4 to implement actions from plans of management and the pest and noxious weeds management plan and doing work within the National Park.

Most of the materials required are here on Island already or we could get them quickly and easily via airfreight if required.

Costing include [REDACTED] project management and administration, and some funding for local contractors/plant hire and local hire car businesses. Project Plan and Costing attached. (*Project Plan Norfolk Island Environmental Employment Program 2020; Norfolk Island Environmental Employment Program costings March 2020*)

Airport to Burnt Pine Footpath [REDACTED]

This would also be a labour-based project to complete footpath with lighting from the Airport to Burnt Pine. Lighting would be smart poles, that would allow Council to include free WiFi once 4G was installed.

It would provide local construction opportunity, and improved facilities for visitors. Detailed cost estimates can be provided.

Recovery Tourism Promotion [REDACTED]

Funds are sought for commencing promotion of the island for tourism as soon as it is possible to take visitors safely again. Funding is sought now to enable the planning of a program of promotion to be ready for roll-out as soon as the island is open. Provision of the funding now is in recognition of the long lead time associated with getting bookings to the island to resume.

Recovery Program Salary Support [REDACTED]

This is a program of support to businesses to re-engage staff that have been stood down. The program provides up to 30 hours per week for four weeks of salary support to aid businesses in cleaning and preparation to reopen for visitors. It is based on an average casual wage rate of \$29.47 per hour, superannuation and the program include a provision for departmental administrative cost¹⁰.

Community Emergency/Indoor Sports Centre [REDACTED]

Rawson Hall Project - Community Emergency Shelter / Indoor Sports Hall, this is a project to repair and develop an existing asset. It will produce a space capable of sheltering the community properly, also an indoor sporting venue that can be used in wet weather / evenings for sports that is currently unavailable on the island. It would that would generate plenty of local work and produce an excellent community asset. It is a shovel-ready project that can be completed in 9 months from complete design to completed construction.

Business Diversification Fund [REDACTED]

It is proposed that a fund be established whereby local businesses can apply for small grant funding associated with diversification away from the tourism and tourism support sectors on the island. It is in recognition that positive measures need to be taken to expand the island's economic base. The fund is initially proposed to have [REDACTED] and would be managed by the department. The criteria for eligibility will be determined in consultation with the Administrator's office on the island.

¹⁰ See attached spreadsheet "Nlk Bus 20200323" Tab Bus Salary Support

Waste Management Improvements [REDACTED]

Improved waste management around the Island. Replacement of Wheelie Bins, with better sorting to improve waste management. Attached is a picture of a new scheme from Queenstown (New Zealand). New bin costs [REDACTED] plus housing [REDACTED] (made locally), and installation \$25K. Total cost [REDACTED] (See Queenstown photo)

New Glass Crusher, to improve material resourcing so that Council can use product in road base, and solve waste management issue for Island. Cost [REDACTED].

Cascade Roll-on-roll-off design costs [REDACTED]

Council has provided approval for in-principal support at its March meeting for the General Manager to investigate Cascade as a long-term solution to the Island's sea freight. Funding is sought for design to be expedited for Cascade to be developed into a sustainable all weather sea port with RORO Capabilities, to be built in conjunction with quarry works. The estimated design cost is [REDACTED] with a 3-month delivery for design plans and community consultation.

Youth Centre Renovation [REDACTED]

Until about 3 years ago a Youth Centre operated out of a council owned house known as 'Stingys' at the back of Bicentennial Complex, footy field and netball courts (aerial attached). Part of the reason it stopped running was that it's really run down and needed renovating. It could potentially be done up to be a multipurpose meeting centre for Youth Centre primarily but also Senior Citizens Centre for daytime use with opportunity to share facilities. It is currently vacant and becoming more dilapidated. It has potential to be rescued and renovated.

An estimated cost for materials is [REDACTED] with most of the work being undertaken by unskilled people under supervision from NIRC staff. It could be a useful project to allow people receiving Job seeker allowances to provide voluntary assistance to a community project.

s22

From: Eric Hutchinson
Sent: Thursday, 2 April 2020 2:46 PM
To: HOLM Oliver
Cc: s22
Subject: FW: Community Recovery Grant [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Community Recovery Grant 20200325.docx; s47C

s47C

Importance: High

OFFICIAL

For your visibility.

Kind Regards,

Eric Hutchinson

Administrator of Norfolk Island



New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

Office: (+6723) 22152 Mobile: s47F

Email: Eric.Hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au



History has nothing to record save wars and revolutions: the peaceful years appear only as brief pauses or interludes, scattered here and there.
[Schopenhauer: Parega and paralipomena II]

OFFICIAL

From: Eric Hutchinson
Sent: Wednesday, 25 March 2020 11:02 AM
To: 'FOULDS Alex' <Alex.Foulds@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: BACON Rachel <Rachel.Bacon@infrastructure.gov.au>; PEARSON Nicole <Nicole.Pearson@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22 @infrastructure.gov.au; s22 @infrastructure.gov.au; s22 @infrastructure.gov.au
Subject: FW: Community Recovery Grant [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Importance: High

OFFICIAL

Good morning Alex,

s47C

All of us here are appreciative of your efforts.

Kind Regards,

Eric Hutchinson

Administrator of Norfolk Island



New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

Office: (+6723) 22152 Mobile s47F

Email: Eric.Hutchinson@Infrastructure.gov.au



OFFICIAL

From: George Plant s47F

Sent: Wednesday, 25 March 2020 1:12 AM

To: eric.hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au, s22, [>](mailto:@infrastructure.gov.au)

Subject: Community Recovery Grant

Importance: High

Hi Eric and f s22

s47C

Kind regards

George Plant

Consulting Economist

s47F



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³ Table 03, Census, 2016

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The unique aspect of this is that in the current environment unless meaningful activity can be found for the population there is likely to be escalating social and mental health problems on the island.

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Program to address gaps in support for business

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Community Emergency/Indoor Sports Centre

s47C

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Business Diversification Fund

s47C

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Waste Management Improvements

s47C

Improved waste management around the Island. Replacement of Wheelie Bins, with better sorting to improve waste management. Attached is a picture of a new scheme from Queenstown (New Zealand). New bin costs s47C plus housing s47C (made locally), and installation s47C Total cost s47C (See Queenstown photo)

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s47C

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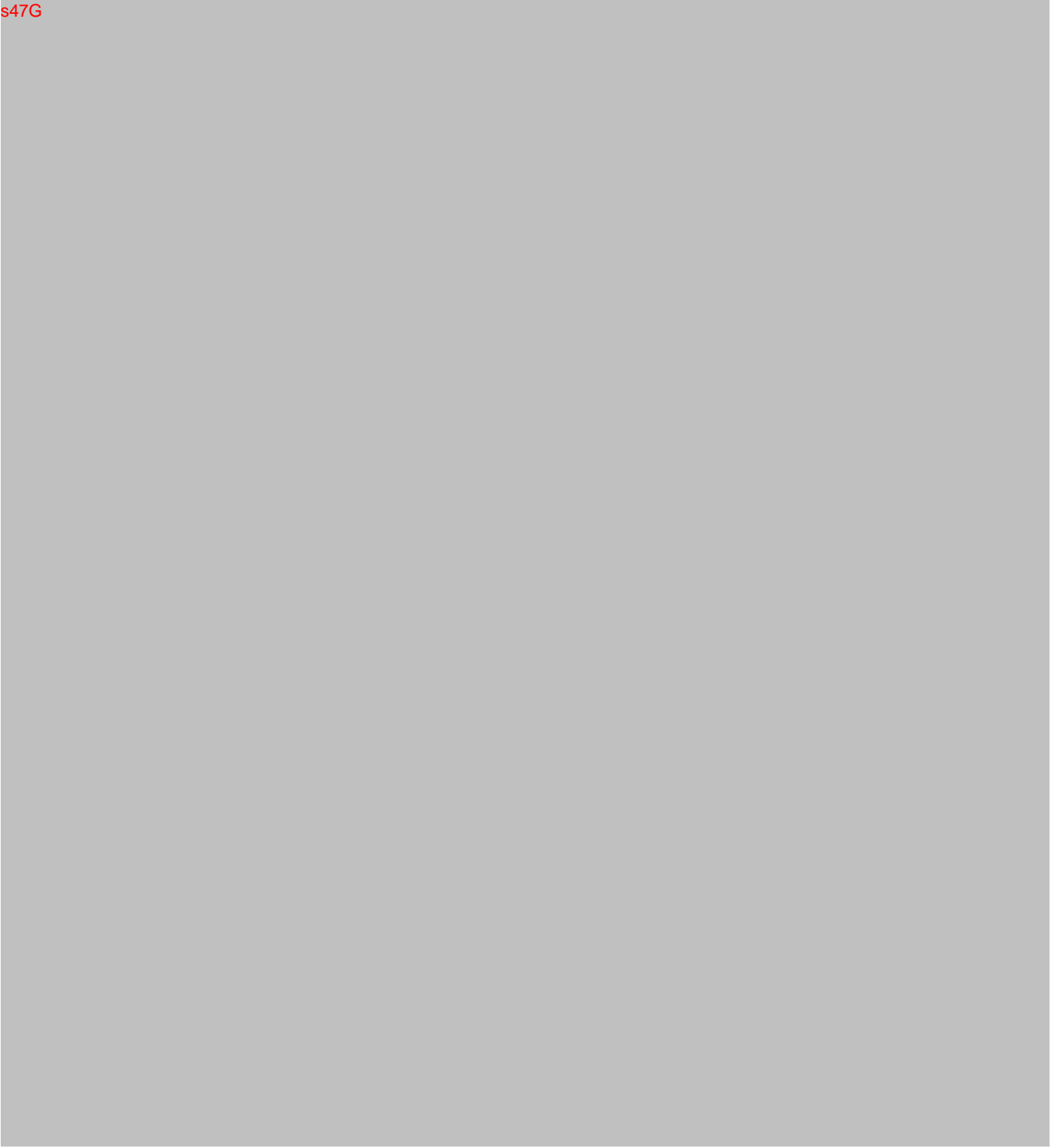
Youth Centre Renovation

s47C

Until about 3 years ago a Youth Centre operated out of as council owned house known as 'Stingys' at the back of Bicentennial Complex, footy field and netball courts (aerial attached). Part of the reason it stopped running was that its really run down and needed renovating. It could potentially be done up to be a multipurpose meeting centre for Youth Centre primarily but also Senior Citizens Centre for daytime use with opportunity to share facilities. It is currently vacant and becoming more dilapidated. It has potential to be rescued and renovated.

An estimated cost for materials is s47C with most of the work being undertaken by unskilled people under supervision from NIRC staff. It could be a useful project to allow people receiving Job seeker allowances to provide voluntary assistance to a community project. (See "Stingys" former youth centre aerial photo)

¹⁰ See attached spreadsheet "Nlk Bus 20200323" Tab Bus Salary Support





s47C



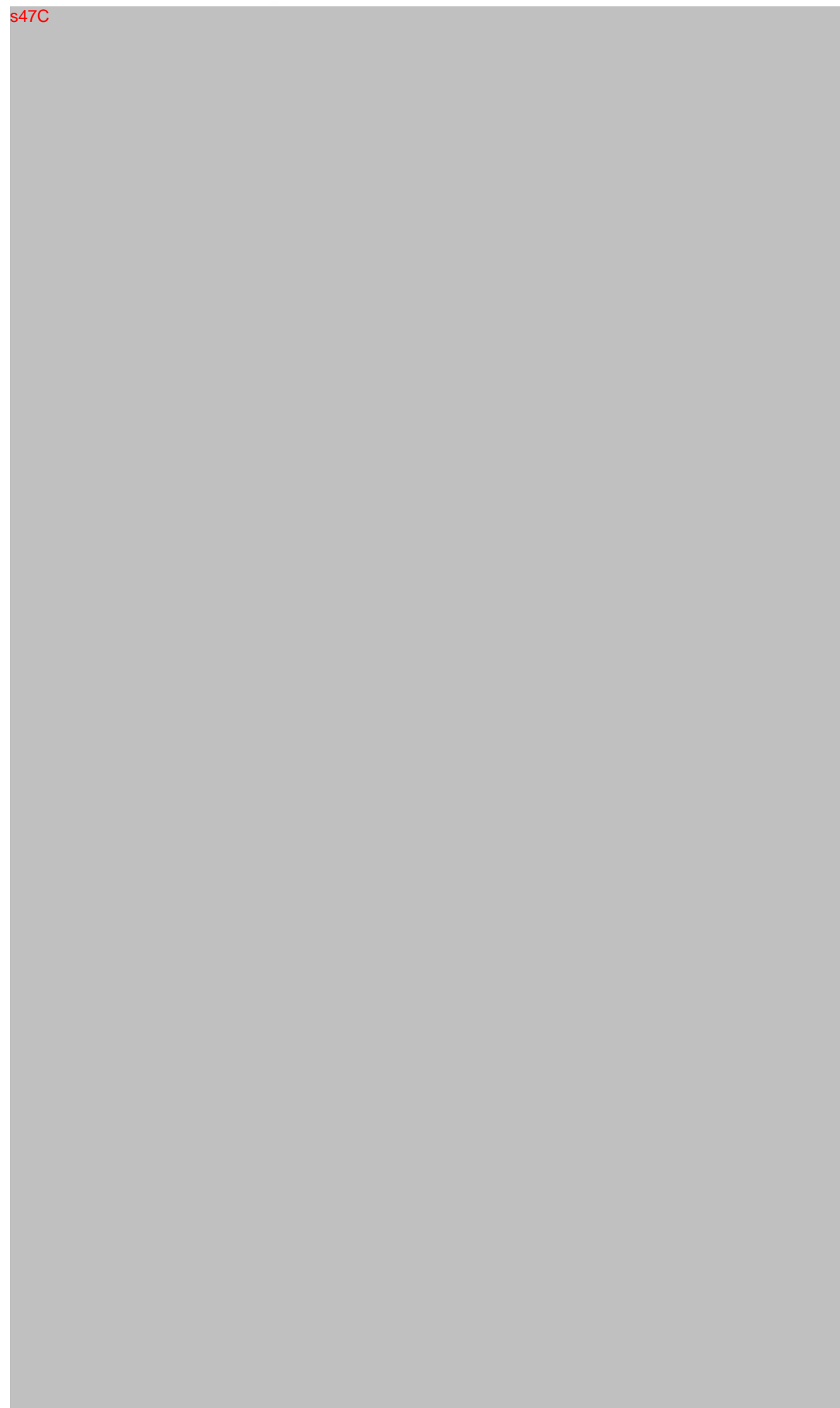
s47C



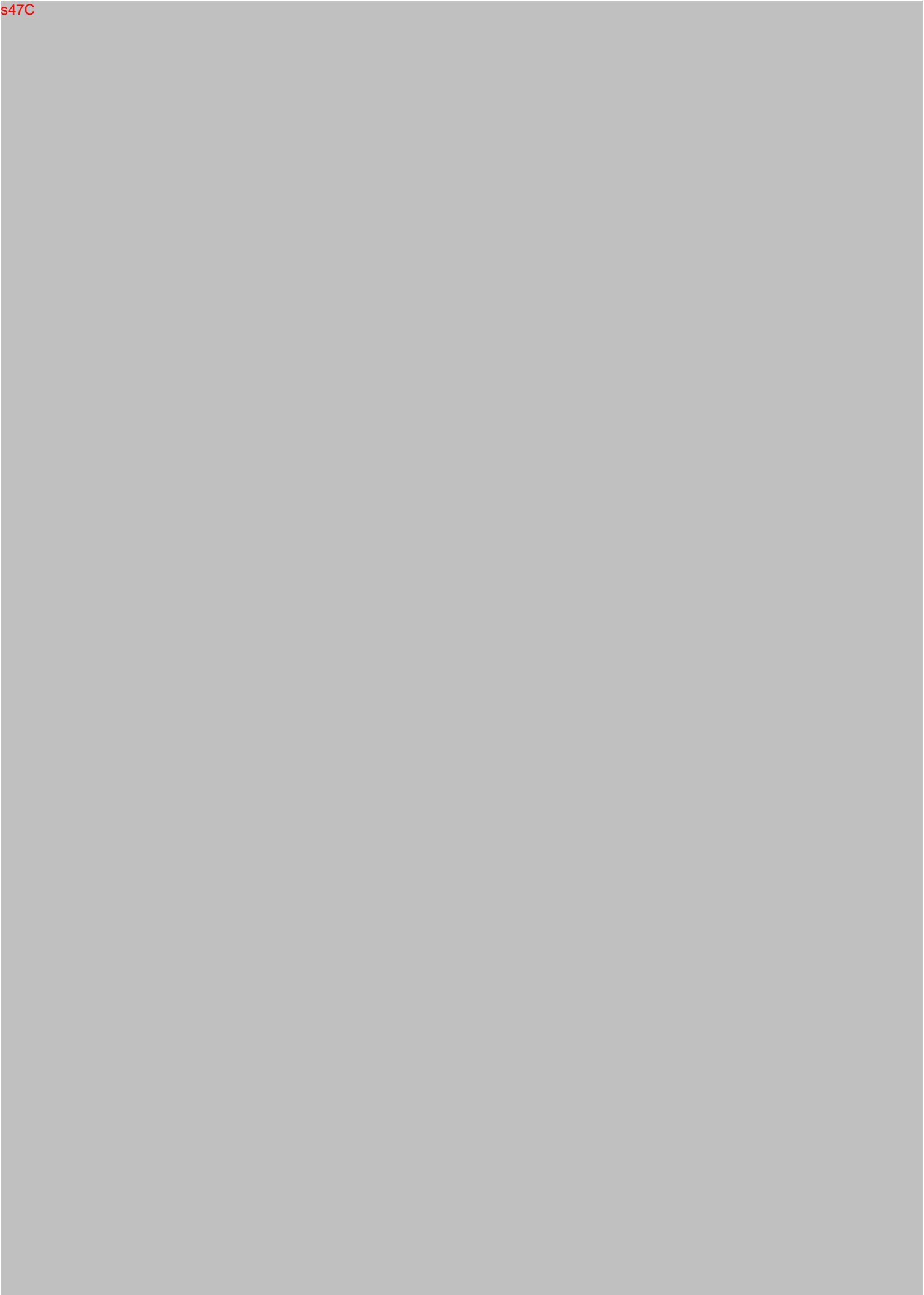


s47C

















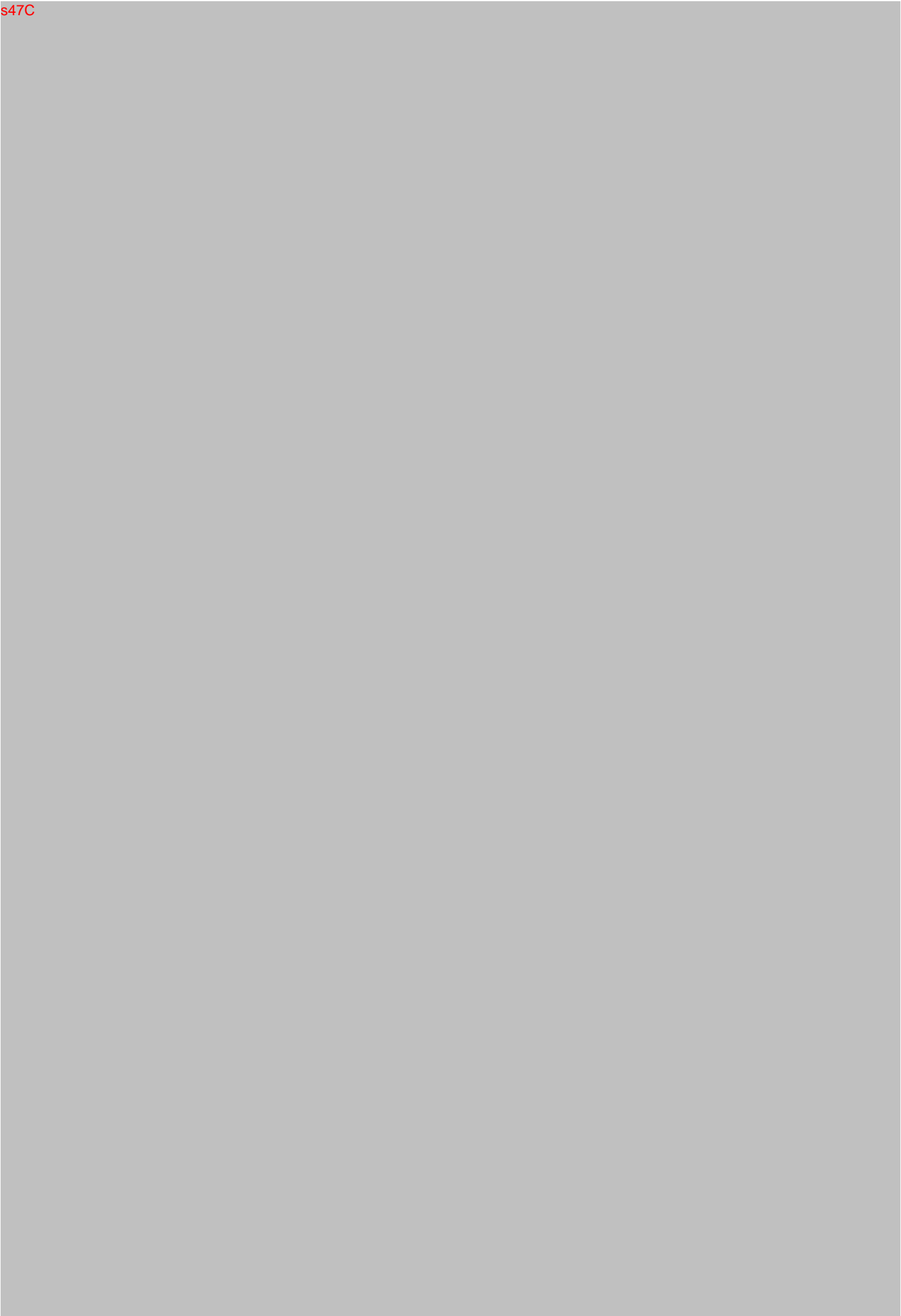












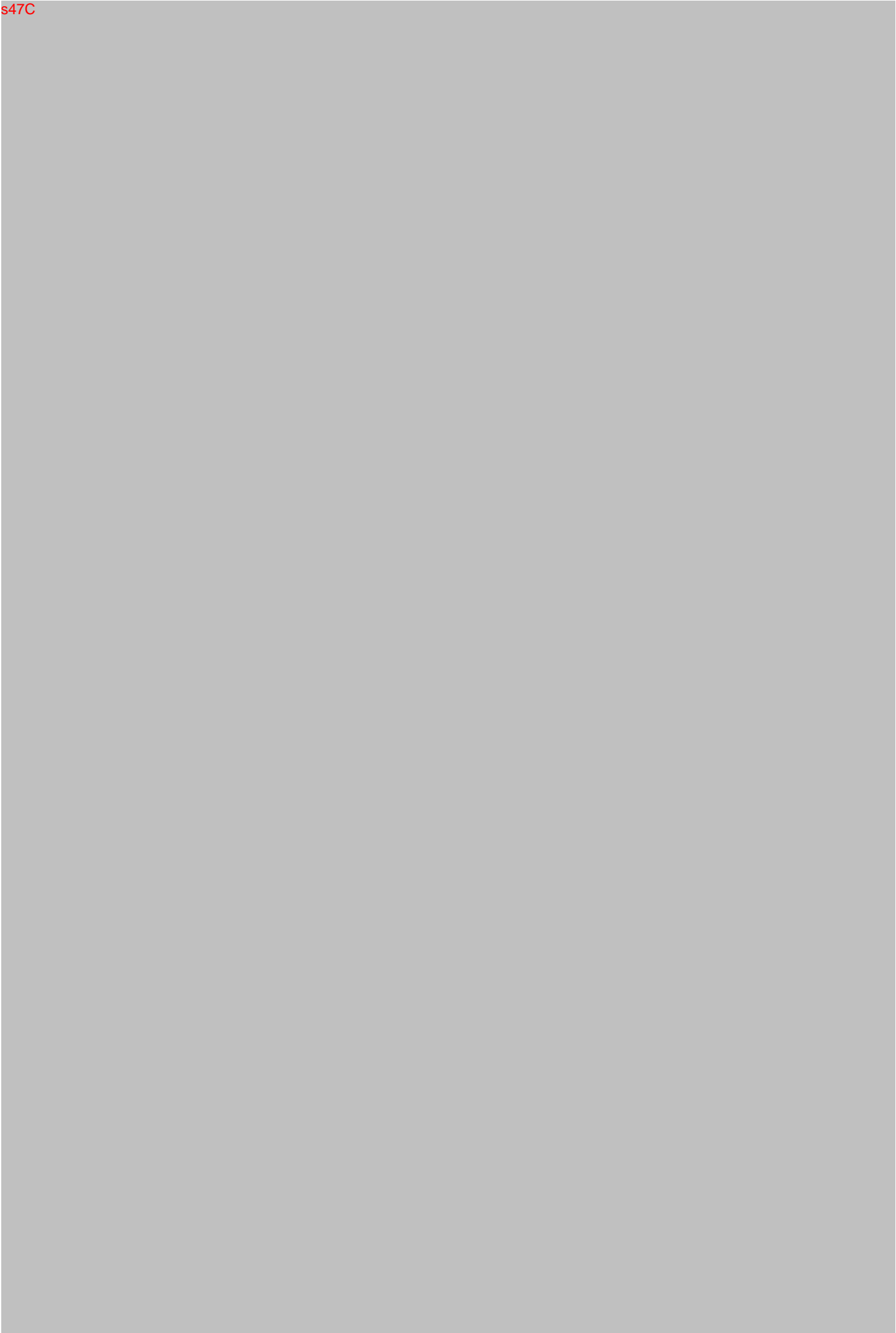




















s22

From: George Plant s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 29 April 2020 2:54 PM
To: s47F
Cc: HOLM Oliver
Subject: RE: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]
Attachments: Copy of Community Grants - potential stimulus funding projects.xlsx

Hi s47F

Attached again let me know if can't open.

Kind regards

George Plant
 EMNI Controller
 Norfolk Island Regional Council
 PO Box 95, Norfolk Island, 2899
 Ph:- s47F

From: s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 29 April 2020 15:13
To: George Plant s47F
Cc: HOLM Oliver <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

George,

The attached file is corrupted, any chance you could send it again to me.

Thanks

s47F

From: George Plant s47F
Sent: Wednesday, 29 April 2020 2:38 PM
To: s47F
Cc: HOLM Oliver <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Hi s47F

See the email below from the dept regarding the proposed Community Grant Program.

s47C

s47C

I have copied Oliver into the email so you can get back to him directly.

Kind regards

George Plant
EMNI Controller
Norfolk Island Regional Council
PO Box 95, Norfolk Island, 2899
Ph:- s47F

From: HOLM Oliver <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 April 2020 14:23
To: George Plant s47F
Subject: Re: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Thanks George- really appreciated.
O.

UNOFFICIAL

From: "George Plant" s47F
Date: Wednesday, 29 April 2020 at 1:19:16 pm
To: "HOLM Oliver" <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

Hi Oliver,

Thanks for the reminder as I have been caught up doing this controller role.

s47C

Kind regards

George Plant
EMNI Controller
Norfolk Island Regional Council
PO Box 95, Norfolk Island, 2899
Ph:- s47F

From: HOLM Oliver <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 April 2020 13:17
To: George Plant s47F
Cc: s22 @infrastructure.gov.au>; Eric Hutchinson <Eric.Hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi George

Just following up on my previous email. s47C

Rgds

Oliver

UNOFFICIAL

From: HOLM Oliver

Sent: Friday, 17 April 2020 10:27 AM

To: 'George Plant' s47F

Cc: s22 <s22@infrastructure.gov.au>

Subject: RE: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added [SEC=UNOFFICIAL]

UNOFFICIAL

Hi George

s47C

Kind Regards

Oliver

UNOFFICIAL

From: George Plant s47F

Sent: Thursday, 26 March 2020 5:36 PM

To: HOLM Oliver <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>

Subject: Updated Community Grants file -with Environmental Employment Program added

Importance: High

Hi Oliver,

As discussed attached is the Community Grants Program s47C

Kind regards

George Plant

Disclaimer

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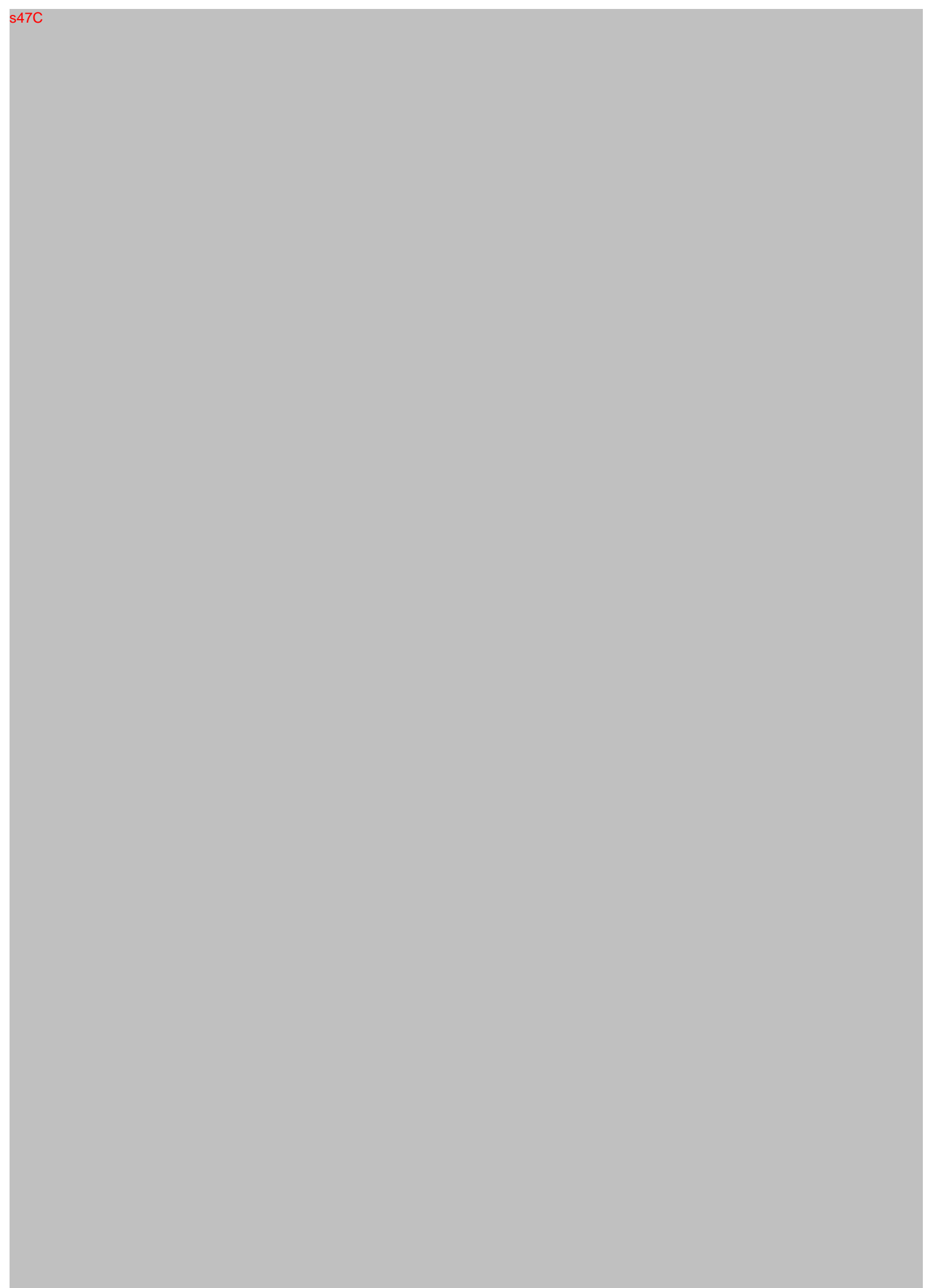
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s22

From: Eric Hutchinson
Sent: Monday, 11 May 2020 2:48 PM
To: HOLM Oliver
Cc: PEARSON Nicole; FOULDS Alex; s22
Subject: FW: Prioritisation of works [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Copy of Community Grants - potential stimulus funding projects 20200326_GM prioritisation.xlsx

OFFICIAL

Hi Oliver,

Further to our conversation this morning, please find an updated and prioritised list of projects.

Please note also that there are question marks in relation to a number of projects highlighted in the Community projects and Environmental Employment streams. It appears some of these may have already been successfully funded via alternative sources.

Happy to discuss.

Kind Regards,

Eric Hutchinson

Administrator of Norfolk Island



New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

Office: s47F

Email: eric.hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au



*Life is short, the art long, opportunity fleeting,
 experience treacherous, judgement difficult.
 [Hippocrates: Aphorisms I.i]*

OFFICIAL

From: s22 [mailto:s22@nlk.regional.gov.au]
Sent: Monday, 11 May 2020 3:39 PM
To: HUTCHINSON Eric <Eric.Hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: s47F
Subject: Prioritisation of works [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Eric,

I met today with the s47F

Andrew prioritised the works items and design item in the attached spreadsheet (Column A).

Please note the following:

- BiCentennial complex has been increased from s47C to reflect re-development rather than renovation (additional detail can be provided) and prioritised as No.1
- Design work for the construction of an all-weather port at Cascade has been included and prioritised as No.2
- Prioritised items 3., 4. And 5 have been added
- The remainder of works prioritised 6 to 325 are essentially works captured within the NIRC's Community Grant Program.

Questions were raised in relation to the Community Projects noting:

- DCA houses urgent maintenance works has been removed
- The highlighted works items relating to cleaning, sanitisation and maintenance of elderly residents homes have already been funded under the NIRC SDA ?

Questions were raised in relation to the Environment Employment Program noting:

- The highlighted works items relating Noxious weed control and Feral animal control have already been funded under the NIRC SDA ?

Kind regards, Fiona

s22

New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

Office:

Email:



OFFICIAL





s22

From: HOLM Oliver
Sent: Friday, 22 May 2020 2:10 PM
To: s22
Cc: HUTCHINSON Eric; PEARSON Nicole; George home; OFFICE.ADMINISTRATOR
Subject: RE: For your advice - Provide DRAFT paper developed for Community Recovery Grant [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s22
 I have spoken to Eric about this.

Rgds
 Oliver

OFFICIAL

From: s22 @nlk.regional.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 22 May 2020 10:50 AM
To: HOLM Oliver <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>
Cc: HUTCHINSON Eric <Eric.Hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au>; PEARSON Nicole <Nicole.Pearson@infrastructure.gov.au>; George home <giaplant@outlook.com>; OFFICE.ADMINISTRATOR <OFFICE.ADMINISTRATOR@infrastructure.gov.au>
Subject: RE: For your advice - Provide DRAFT paper developed for Community Recovery Grant [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Oliver,

Following on from my earlier email and whether you have had the opportunity to review and consider releasing the Recovery Grant paper.

A number of interested parties chasing this office for its release.

Kind regards, s22

s22

New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

Office: s22

Email: s22



OFFICIAL

From: s22
Sent: Monday, 18 May 2020 2:28 PM

To: HOLM Oliver <Oliver.Holm@infrastructure.gov.au>

Cc: Eric Hutchinson <eric.hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au>; PEARSON Nicole

<Nicole.Pearson@infrastructure.gov.au>; George home <giaplant@outlook.com>; OFFICE.ADMINISTRATOR

<OFFICE.ADMINISTRATOR@infrastructure.gov.au>

Subject: For your advice - Provide DRAFT paper developed for Community Recovery Grant [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Oliver,

The information that was brought together by George Plant in relation to the COVID-19 Recovery Grant was provided to this office in the form of a 'paper'.

In preparing the paper, George referenced business information gathered by Cherri Buffett, Tony Cook and Louise Tavener (see preceding email history).

Cherri, Tony and Louise would like a copy of the paper.

The community more generally are aware that work is underway in relation to identifying potential gaps and additional stimulus and a paper has been prepared.

Would you please review the attached redacted PDF and advise if you are comfortable releasing this paper.

Kind regards, s22

s22

New Military Barracks, Kingston, Norfolk Island 2899

Office s22

Email



OFFICIAL

From: CB Norfolk [<mailto:norfolkenquiry@gmail.com>]

Sent: Monday, 23 March 2020 11:33 AM

To: George Plant <giaplant@outlook.com>

Cc: Eric Hutchinson <eric.hutchinson@infrastructure.gov.au>; s22

<s22@infrastructure.gov.au>; OFFICE.ADMINISTRATOR <office.administrator@infrastructure.gov.au>

Subject: Norfolk Island Business Community Comments - Coronavirus March 2020

Dear George,

Attached for your information is an excel spreadsheet with answers to the questionnaire that we did for 2 days last week. Unfortunately because of time constraints we were not able to obtain comments from all businesses on Norfolk Island. Please note also that the numbering does not follow your numbering on the list you provided.

The comments listed are confidential, they do not identify any particular business and are for use by the Administrator only to assist with obtaining an excellent stimulus package for Norfolk Island.

We look forward to the meeting at 2pm today and thereby highlighting many other concerns that were raised with us.

Kind regards

Cherri Buffett
Louise Tavener
Tony Cook