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SUBMISSION.

RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES.

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_Teacher, - Administrator at Kerang, Robinvale, Echuca, Mildura, Ouyen, Birchip and Swan Hill.

-Six children all tertiary qualified have lived/worked in Rural/Remote Australia.

One big motivation in making this submission is my despair at the future prospects for my grandchildren for meaningful, rewarding work outside the capital cities.

FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUNG PEOPLE.

- A. Young people have always left rural communities for training, tertiary education, adventure in the short-term. This is to be encouraged, although we should note that the introduction of HECS has disadvantaged this group.
- B. Young people who remain in the rural area – do so for a variety of reasons namely.
 - 1. Cheap board.
 - 2. Friendships, relationships, sport.
 - 3. No ongoing educational training costs.
 - 4. A fill in year before they undertake tertiary education.
 - 5. Lack of initiative, poor attitude.

Many of these young people find seasonal work unattractive because of the low wage, hard conditions, red tape with centrelink.

Those that do stay may be lucky enough to work in a family business or gain an apprenticeship, but the majority face-

- a. casual work in a large store, restaurant.
- b. Contract work. i.e. cleaners.

Several points need to be made here.

- 1. Farming is uneconomic, & speculative with larger farms, mechanisation, use of contractors and competition from cheap imports. I can only name a handful of students who have gone "Back to the Farm" and are making a good living. The poor image presented by the media, plus corrupt international markets, does not help.
- 2. Small Business-Tradesmen are overwhelmed by government regulations, taxation, health & safety, legal liability and are loath to take on young people. They also face a shrinking market due to competition from large international firms and franchises.
- 3. Government Policies - esp. Taxation, Health & Safety, Pension requirements, etc., combined with Legal Liability actively discourages individuals from economic activity. Privatisation of Government services and rationalisation of departments has slashed the number of attractive jobs for young people in country areas. Also spasmodic funding by

means of submissions makes long term economic activity difficult.

- 4. The advent of contract work rather than permanent ongoing employment means that skilled young people need to be based near a pool of alternatives if they wish to settle down, buy a house, etc.
- 5. Reliance on tourism and retail sales means that the work available is increasingly unattractive with long hours, low wages, harsh conditions, hard physical work, uncertainty and after hours work,(made worse by big company exploitation of junior workers.
- 6. Finally what meaningful jobs that are left are filled by mature, middle aged persons supplementing lifestyle with a second income

TO SUM UP.

Young people do not stay in or return to rural areas because there is little meaningful, ongoing employment to attract and hold them.

FACTORS INFLUENCING WHETHER YOUNG PEOPLE RETURN.

As stated young people will not return if their employment prospects are limited.

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.

- 1. Reintroduction of Government Decentralisation Policies. e.g.Movement of specialist hospital/education facilities to regional centres e.g. Hip replacements could be done at **Bendigo, Transplants at Ballarat, etc.**
- 2. Massive injection of funds into Research, Science and Technology located a appropriate centres
 - Grains – Horsham - Medical – Geelong -Forestry – Creswick
 - Stone fruits – Mildura - Marine – Portland - Water – Swan Hill
 - Technology – Orbost -Mining/Metallurgy – Ballarat-Bendigo.
- 3. Allocation of ongoing funds to INFRASTRUCTURE – Dams, bridges, transport, communication, power, water, sustainability, conservation, re-forestation, weed/pest control around the country.
- 4. Allocation of all Government contracts, including Military, to Australian Firms in regional areas.
- 5. Encouragement of Australian (primary & secondary) industry and small business by rationalising taxes, govt. regulations, cutting out red tape and special treatment for export industries.
- 6. Review of educational entry requirements for skilled areas of need. i.e. doctors. Plus scholarships for those taking up rural appointments.
- 7. Review of education by focusing on tangible skill goals that dovetail with the needs of the economy and nation.
- 8. Every employer, including sole proprietors, should be required to train youth with the emphasis on multi-skilling, and long term structures for advancement.
- 9. Local governments should be given an injection of funds and a wider role in providing employment and training. i.e. All dole recipients should be required to work and undertake certified supervised training by the Shire, e.g. office work, gardening , equipment use, pest control. , *CHILD CARE.*

10. Restrictions on overseas companies outsourcing goods and services outside Australia. (Australia should not import ^{WHAT} and produce it can produce itself).
11. Value adding industries for our minerals and primary producers.

To Sum Up. The solution to attracting youth to rural Australia requires a major – structural change in the location and type of Australian economic activity which can only be done by all levels of Government revising existing policies and working together.

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