



**CENTRAL
GOLDFIELDS
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE
ENQUIRIES

Mark W Johnston : smg



11 APR 2006

10 April 2006

The Executive Officer
Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee
Level 8
35 Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Committee Members

RE: INQUIRY INTO RETAINING YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL TOWNS
AND COMMUNITIES

Central Goldfields Shire Council, with its main business centre Maryborough (population 8,000), has considered the Terms of Reference of the above Inquiry.

Council submits that the absolute, overriding factor in retaining/returning young people in rural towns and communities is 'employment opportunities'.

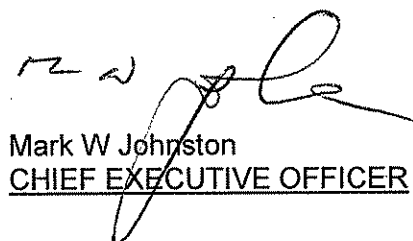
Council contends that the rate of loss of young people is proportionate to the township population, whereby critical mass provides greater and broader employment opportunities.

Other factors, embracing all range of 'liveability' matters, are believed to be very much secondary considerations for young people when compared to employment. Having established the employment, other factors will then be relevant.

Strategies and recommendations to increase the number of young people deciding to remain in or return to rural areas must then be based around employment. Removal of Government services/agencies from rural towns for example has been devastating. Loss of jobs, loss of professional jobs, loss of career paths, have had a huge impact.

Action that supports employment opportunities is the most crucial role that Government can take to support young people and rural towns/communities.

Yours sincerely



Mark W Johnston
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER