

## **Parliamentary Inquiry: Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities**

### ***1. Identifying and examining the factors that influence young people in deciding to remain in or leave the rural communities which they reside***

- Limited job opportunities driving youth away to pursue their careers and dreams.
- No Universities within the South Gippsland Shire Council drives youth out of the area to metropolitan University campuses.
- There are limited places for young people in their late teens and early 20's to meet people and form relationships. The city offers more clubs and entertainment facilities to socialise.
- Young people want to experience city life, including the social and educational aspect. Country youth can feel intimidated when named your from the country by others living in the metropolitan area and feel it's not trendy to live and dress like a country person.
- School and Career teachers focus on students attending further education (university) that requires young people to travel on completion of VCE.
- No public Transport within the regional area makes travelling impossible for those who don't have their own vehicles or are on their Learners.
- Youth want to feel independent and leave the family home and treated like a grownup. They think they can do this by moving far away from the family residence.
- The image the city provides is alive and doesn't sleep. Youth are full of energy and want to be part of the action that doesn't necessarily happen in regional areas.
- Health facilities i.e. specialists are mostly based in the metropolitan area and for those who suffer illnesses or disabilities are influenced to move to metropolitan area where they can be easily accessible.
- Limited rental properties in South Gippsland, whereas the city is the opposite.
- The city offers higher paid jobs that in regional areas.

### ***2. Identifying and examining the factors that influence young people in deciding whether or not to return to the rural communities in which they have previously resided following the completion of study, travel or other fixed or short term activities in other places.***

- Limited job opportunities in South Gippsland, doesn't accommodate young people's degree which they have studied
- Limited public transport, if they don't have vehicles this makes it impossible to travel for work or study therefore they stay where trains and buses are available and easy to access
- Entertainment aspects, that are not available in rural areas
- Standard of living is more affordable and can influence the decision to return or though they might not necessarily want to return.
- Feeling safe within a regional community is outweighed compared to metropolitan area, therefore young people may return to have families.
- Families influence people to return home to their regional residence.
- Safer schools in regional areas influence young people to bring their families back to the regional area.

**3. *Developing strategies and recommendations on steps that might be taken to increase the number of young people who decide to remain in or return to rural town and communities***

- Metropolitan and regional student youth exchange program, allowing young people to experience living in the metropolitan area and vice versa for 6 to 12 months. This will show regional youth the fast pace of city living and peer pressure to stay up to date with clothing trends, image and need for plenty of spending money for entertainment.
- Possibility to waive stamp duty on first home purchases for young people to purchase in the regional area, influencing their decision to move back to regional areas.
- Increase first homebuyers grant for purchases in the regional area.
- Offer regional scholarships, therefore regional areas are supporting one another and not losing youth to the city.
- Provide regional youth with a “Regional Night Rider”, this would not necessarily need to operate on a weekly basis however if this is offered once a month or fortnightly the youth will be entertained and at the end of the evening they return home to their regional area.
- Career teachers at school need to be educated about the difference between city and country living standards and lifestyle. This needs to be reiterated to youth who don't know the differences between metropolitan and regional living standards.
- Careers teachers could encourage young people to apply for University in another regional areas.
- Daily bus from South Gippsland to Berwick and Monash Gippsland Universities. Young people can then continue to reside at home with their families.
- Educate Career teachers and Employment agencies on the different job opportunities and apprenticeships that are here in South Gippsland.
- Offer South Gippsland small businesses incentives to employ a trainee. This could include a lump sum to help pay wages.
- Youth need to be trained on the reality of skill development that is achieved by living in a regional area such as how they respond better to crisis than those living in the city, the high level of artistic flair and craftsmanship that is here in regional areas, regional youth are generally healthier and not exposed to high levels of pollution and crime.