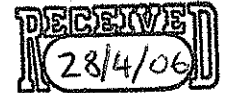




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Submission to

**The Executive Officer
Rural and Regional Services and Development**

**Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and
Communities**

By

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Submission

Inquiry into retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities

Background to ANI.

Australian National Institute is a private Registered training Organisation that operates out of Mildura. The Director Frank Strangio has grown up in the region and then went to Melbourne in 1970 to complete a teaching qualification before returning to Mildura in 1974. Frank and his wife Teresa have three children who currently reside in Melbourne and have seen the trend of children leaving to further their careers and not return to a rural community Frank has had 30 years in Education working in the secondary and TAFE sectors in the Mildura region.

Section 1

Factors that influence young people in deciding to remain or leave rural communities.

Rural Situation

During the twentieth century inland rural Australia has continually declined in its share of the national population as farms became larger and small towns declined or disappeared.

Small cities and towns and rural areas have been left with an increasingly aged population reliant on private transport. In contrast areas along the rainfall favoured coastal belts on the east, the south east and south west have experienced unprecedented growth based on retirement and leisure services.

In response to these changes inland rural Australia has responded in a number of ways. Some areas and communities appear to have accepted their fate and simply watched their towns and institutions die. Many communities have sought to look beyond their local area and form regional groups with or without government support or encouragement. These new regional associations have tackled issues like, resource management, marketing, tourism, infrastructure and economic development and in some cases produced real benefits for their communities.

State and federal governments have also responded in various ways with initiatives such as the restructure of local government by State governments. This initiative has seen the voluntary or forced merger of small local governments into larger, effectively regional, Councils. While these changes have met with some resistance at the local level they have generally been very successful in enabling local government to adopt a broader more proactive approach by grouping similar communities.



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The consequences and impacts of change and decline in rural Australia are a strange mix of resignation and action. Those communities without the energy and the leaders to reinvigorate themselves are finding that the prospects for the next century are more of the same, but those prepared to have a 'fair dinkum' go can see that there are real opportunities for communities prepared to take a longer term view. (Trevor Budge Rural Australia Change Decline and New Directions)

As towns decline job opportunities are lost thus the cycle of decline continues in a downward spiral less income, fewer job opportunity, fewer reasons to stay . couple this with difficult economic conditions on the land and it creates an environment unlikely to foster growth. Or maintain the social fabric

Discussion with a number of you people in the Mildura are (A larger Rural are)

Has identified the following as reasons for wishing to leave

Career opportunities tertiary studies

Career opportunities Post secondary studies

Better work prospects in specific areas : manufacturing, retail ,science

Social Pressure the draw of city life

Social Pressure peer group has gone to the city.

Section 2

Factors influencing young people to Return to rural communities

Economic

Cost of Living this is less in rural communities and provides impetus once the reality of city life has set in.

Opportunity to save ,buy house .

Life Style far more relaxed if work is available

Family and friends this provides easy access to reestablish ones self in the community.

Section 3

Strategies and recommendations

Hypothesis : The most likely people to return and remain in rural communities are those who grew up in the community



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Background

Young people who have grown up in rural communities already have and understand the social fabric of their community. They are known by the community. They do not have to be socialized into the community. They are less likely to face the same problems that expatriates will face in a rural area. This will

Model

1 Establish the needs of the community

This would be done undertaken by the community and consider the demographics of the current workforce. The community needs to identify its human resource needs immediate and over the next 5 ; 10; 15 years

2 Through the education system identify the career aspirations of the students of the area. This would act as an indicator as to who has a willingness to undertake the required training to work in the areas where there is/will be a demand.

3 Community Scholarships . The local community is to buy into the plan by providing a scholarship for the student once they have left school to take on training (tertiary. apprenticeship, traineeship) This would be in the form of support where the student has to travel or has to live away from home to further their studies
The scholarship is to be a formal contract between the receiver and the community.
In return for support throughout the training the receiver will then be indentured back to the community for a period of the number of years they received support for less one where the training has been for longer than 2 years
If it is less than two years then they are required to work for one year.

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Nurse Training 3 years tertiary must work in the community for two year
Doctor 7 years must work 6 years in the community that sponsored him/her.
Apprentice carpenter received travel support to value of \$ 5000 over 4 years must remain in community 1 year

Accountability

The receiver of the scholarship will need to report back to the community on a regular basis Twice a year on academic progress.

Scholarships may be terminated if the recipient has not show progress

All monies paid must be reimbursed if the contract is broken

Participants who are undertaking tertiary studies must work in the community that sponsored them for a period of 10 weeks per years in their field of training
The community is to ensure that there is work /training in the field.



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Options at the end of the training

This would be decided by the parties concerned on the basis of availability of work and willingness to stay in a position

Funding

The bulk of the funding to be from using a percentage of money raised through poker machines that could be directed to the community. This may need to be managed centrally at a state level or possibly dealt with at a regional rather than local area. If 2-3% goes back into community education then any extra money needed could be raised by community groups

Eligibility

First priority would be given to student from the area they live in this could be looked at regionally rather than locally ie Mallee region not just Ouyen .The senior school in Regional Victoria would be responsible for identifying appropriate students.

Second priority

Students from other regional area willing to move

Third Priority

Students from city area who are willing to move to rural area

Fourth

Students outside Victoria with preference following the same pattern. .

Conclusion

This model works on the assumption that the most suited people to return to rural areas are those who have grown up in those areas.

It also requires the community to become pro active in supporting young people when they need it whilst training . In return the recipient will have to pay back the community by working in it once they are qualified.

The model is in a crude state but can be developed further

Yours sincerely

Frank Strangio

