

CORRECTED VERSION

RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into retaining young people in rural towns and communities

Bairnsdale — 23 May 2006

Members

Mr B. P. Hardman

Mr R. G. Mitchell

Mr C. Ingram

Chair: Mr B. P. Hardman

Deputy Chair: Mr C. Ingram

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Executive Officer: Ms L. Topic

Research Officers: Dr P. Chen, Ms C. Tischler

Witness

Mr A Sheridan, Farmer.

Ms D Fisher, Mother.

The CHAIR — We are now at the point where we offer comments from the floor and I think we have, is it Alan Sheridan. Alan if you please state your full name and address for the transcript and away we will go.

Mr SHERIDAN — Alan Frederick Sheridan, [ADDRESS REMOVED] I am only here because I had a discussion with Craig at a function last week at Maffra and he ran off a great list of apprentices that was going to happen in Bairnsdale and there wasn't one mention of a rural apprentice. We have employed rural apprentices over the years, we are farmers. We have found that it has got it's problems. Our last apprentice was an indigenous lad and I would say that we would probably be the only people in Victoria who got an indigenous lad through his level 2 and level 3 at sheep and wool. We have had various successes over the years with other apprentices and I think it is a pretty good scheme.

There are a few problems with it which I would like to bring up. The number one, I hear a bloke here earlier saying that apprentices should get more money. Apprentices get plenty of money for what you have to put up as a so called master. That is another issue, with this indigenous lad we got very good subsidies, what I want to know why aren't those subsidies available to everyone and you would find there would be many more apprentices employed. There is not a farm in Australia that could not do with another pair of hands in this day and age. When you hear people say, as we heard here today, that there is no enthusiasm on farms, you want to come to some of our cropping group meetings and our lifetime wool and our best wool and best lamb meetings and you will there is plenty of enthusiasm about farming. It is just a myth that the farmers are not enthusiastic.

This is a bit disjointed because I did not realise until this morning, that I heard it on the ABC this morning, that I could come and say a few words. My main thrust is on this apprenticeship thing. There are 1500 cattle sold in the yards here on average every week, there is probably another 200 to 500 sold privately. There is probably 3,000 sheep sold here every second week and probably as many sold privately. There are thousands and thousands of bales of wool go out of this place, that is a lot of employment and there are no rural apprentices and I think it is not encouraged enough in our schooling system and I listen to all these learned well paid people here today and I did not hear one of them mention. They mention the gas, they mention all these things and they did not mention all the employment that should be and could be available in our rural scene and I think this has been overlooked and overlooked very badly. Thank you very much.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much Alan. Now anyone else who would like to say anything. Yes, can you please say your full name and address and then we will hear from you.

MS FISHER — Dale Fisher, [ADDRESS REMOVED] Bairnsdale. I would like to speak today as a mother. I was fortunate to bring up three children and take them away in the middle of their education for Mallacoota for eight years and I think the things that they need to happen when they leave school is the education foundation, but they also need to have the work ethic.

I feel as if you forgot to tell them that they need to earn money, it is not enough just to study. But they were fortunate enough to be trained in Mallacoota with seafood handling, and food and tourism and they worked at the co-op as well as the local shops and they were always able to come home at the time they worked there. They also went to Orbost TAFE which was fine and as a mother I have been able to help other young children from Mallacoota come down here to do TAFE courses, and I think that networking in East Gippsland is very important so we can help one another. I think it does not matter if they earn money at home, or while they are away it does not mean that when they go back as long as they do get a job in the end.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much. Thank you everybody we will now close the hearing.

Committee adjourned.