

CORRECTED VERSION

RURAL AND REGIONAL SERVICES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into retaining young people in rural towns and communities

Yarram — 24 May 2006

Members

Mr B. P. Hardman

Mr R. G. Mitchell

Mr C. Ingram

Mr J. M. McQuilten

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

Witnesses

Mr P Boadle

The CHAIR — We are now up to the time when we do take comments from the floor to add anything. If you would like to indicate to Lilian and she will bring you up to the table if you like to make some comments. If you would like to give us your name and address for the transcript. This evidence will be taken down and become public evidence in due course.

Mr BOADLE — My name is Peter Boadle, [ADDRESS REMOVED] Devon North. I understand this has to be fairly brief so I will read straight off this if that is okay.

The CHAIR — Yes, please.

Mr BOADLE — Young people should leave rural communities to broaden their knowledge, to travel, experience other cultures, understand the big smoke et cetera. This is healthy for any society as far as I can see. The problem in rural areas is that there is an ever-diminishing availability of suitable jobs in rural towns, so few students return. What initiatives should be promoted for the future. I have just made a brief comment here.

The formation of Wellington Shire and its performance in regard to job creation during the past ten years has been abysmal. No new jobs have been created in that period in the Yarram District. Instead, we have lost approximately 100 jobs due to the closure of the Alberton Shire and 40 jobs due to the closure of the Won Wron Prison farm. Nearly every new councillor has suggested that economic development is of prime importance during the election process, but when they get into office, they have little idea about how to introduce a program of job creation. Even state government Ministers seem to have little idea about the local unemployment levels and strategies that ought to be put in place to address these issues. We have spoken to some Ministers who have come down here and asked them what is the unemployment level in the Yarram district and they have not got a clue, and that is important.

Recommendations, one; re-establish the Latrobe Regional Commission which previously operated and which operated independently, but in the best interests of Gippsland Shires. They were extremely successful in getting projects off the ground and creating new jobs in Gippsland.

Two; give consideration to the petitions that have been raised in state parliament for de-amalgamation of the former Alberton Shire from Wellington Shire. It is believed that the former shire was far more successful in job creation and have the track record to prove it.

Three; give consideration to Won Wron Prison Farm being developed for both aboriginal correction purposes but also as on campus facility for training locally unemployed people in vocations which would be most useful in the district. That is, farm fencing contracting, relief dairy milking, weed control, sheep shearing, forest work, calf rearing et cetera. We believe that better use could be made out of the Won Wron facility by using it for a dual purpose both aboriginal and local application.

Four; give consideration to the establishment of Regional Applied Research Centres to employ university graduates and technicians to explore new ideas which are relevant to the district and develop them to create new industry and potential job growth. The local government have raised this on a number of occasions over the last 15 years. It has not actually come to pass and I would love to see applied research set up in Sale, or somewhere in the Latrobe Valley to pick up on the clever ideas that young people and bring forward and I could go on and detail a lot of these if that is required.

Five; introduce and promote a job creation philosophy within all councils. Set up programs which will set guidelines for all councils to follow. At the present time they are lost as far as job creation is concerned. They facilitate an entrepreneur that comes into the place, but as far as setting up a program of job creation it is lacking and whether it is state government, local government, it is missing at the moment, federal too, but more particularly local councils need to have a system to follow, and I think the state government can lay something down for every council to follow.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much Peter that was great. You will get a copy of the transcript in about two weeks time and you may correct any typographical errors but not matters of substance. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak. Thank you very much Yarram District Health Service. We have now completed the hearing.

Committee adjourned