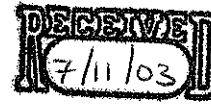


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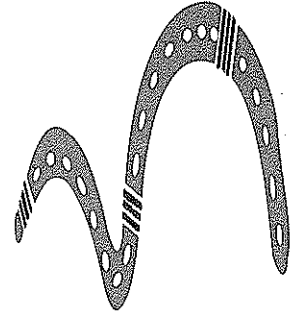
10/02/01 DDH/cc

5 November 2003

Daniel Hogan



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Kristen Murray
Executive Officer
Rural and Regional Services & Development Committee
Level 8, 35 Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

**MURRINDINDI
SHIRE COUNCIL**

"Mist of the mountains"

Dear Madam

Re: Parliamentary Inquiries into Fatalities and Injuries on Victorian Farms/Decline of Country Football

I refer to the above inquiries and make the following comments on behalf of the Murrindindi Shire Council.

ALEXANDRA
Perkins Street,
Alexandra, 3714

Ph: 03 5772 0333
Fax: 03 5772 2291
Local call: 1800 633 792

Farm Safety

The issue of farm safety was an element of the Safer Murrindindi - Safety Plan which was adopted by the Council in 2000. It is understood that farms have some of the highest accident rates of all workplaces.

From a Council perspective, the key mechanism considered realistic to address concerns in this area related to increased community awareness of the problem, with the following suggested programs recommended to be developed.

KINGLAKE
Shop 1,
Glenburn Road,
Kinglake, 3763

Ph: 03 5786 1522
Fax: 03 5786 1515
Local call: 1800 651 821

- The conduct of various community education sessions, particularly with local farming groups with high profiles in the district.
- Delivery and promotion of Farm Safety programs to schools because it is often the farm children who are involved in the accidents.
- Conducting Farm Biz Education Programs.
- Conducting targeted and general marketing campaigns in conjunction with Workcover.
- Promotion of the establishment of a Farm Safety Action Group with the Victorian Farmers Federation.
- Development of an Emergency Management Support Framework for the various agencies which become involved in the outcomes of farming accidents.

YEA
Civic Centre,
Semi Circle,
Yea, 3717

Ph: 03 5797 2209
Fax: 03 5797 2900
Local call: 1800 672 719

Unfortunately, these programs take funding to implement and the Safer Murrindindi Project had to be wound back due to lack of government support. If the Committee considers that some form of cultural change process needs to take place, then it will need to consider funding support to enable community education programs as outlined above to be implemented.

Please address all
correspondence to
P.O. Box 138,
Alexandra, 3714
DX: 71402

.../2..

Email:
msc@murrindindi.vic.gov.au
ABN 83 600 647 004

Decline of Country Football

Councils wishes to put on record its position that the local football/netball teams are a strong barometer of the relative strength of rural communities and that the level of resource required to keep them operating in a satisfactory way must not be underestimated. This means that in addition to a strong supporter base, significant business skill is required to keep them operating in a financially sustainable way, although in a situation where there is population decline and/or ageing taking place this trend will eventually overtake the best business management practices.

In a Murrindindi situation there is a degree of population growth which has maintained the current level of football teams for a number of years, although anecdotal evidence exists that this has been a struggle. The relative success of those clubs, however, appears to be associated with the quality of the management. It is suggested that there is a significant opportunity to incorporate appropriate business training to ensure that those in senior positions have the skills to be aware of and respond to the demanding requirements necessary.

A real success story at the junior levels has been the Auskick campaign which appears to go from strength to strength each year and represents an investment in the future of the game. Again, this appears to be performing well because of the quality of the volunteers supporting and participating in the program.

The level of volunteerism in country football (and all other country sports) needs to be acknowledged and supported where appropriate. Issues such as public liability premiums, increased standards, etc. appear to be major disincentives to volunteers supporting their local competitions. It is considered that if volunteers consider that they are being supported by the "powers that be" at every level of government and bureaucracy where appropriate, then interest and ongoing contributions are maintained for the benefit of the local community. If volunteer effort is considered to be supporting "bureaucracy" or government then the result can be people taking their time and effort elsewhere.

I trust that the above comments are of interest.

Yours faithfully



D.D. Hogan
Chief Executive Officer