



31st May 2007

The Committee
Rural and Regional Tourism
Parliament House
Level 8
35 Spring Street
Melbourne

Re : Inquiry into Rural And Regional Tourism

From : Juliet Sheed – resident in the Shire of Central Goldfields
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The Committee

I am sending a brief submission to the inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism. I have had a background in tourism operation in our Shire during which time I was a member of the Shire's Tourism Board during the 1990s. The main focus of the Board was to implement the Final Report on Tourism Development and Marketing and a Strategic Plan for the Central Goldfields Region by EN Mouritz (1995).

The Tourism Board and the Business Development Officer with whom the Board was working closely to build a tourism infrastructure and generate funding to implement the Mouritz Report was dismissed in preparation for the incoming Council following the amalgamation of new communities into the new Shire. The reason given was the need to reduce Council debt, the honorary Tourism body and Business development was not seen as a priority in the course of this process

Sadly to this day our Shire still does not have a tourism association, a tourism co-ordinator nor council policies for highly prioritising the development of an infrastructure to vitalize the potential tourism industry that lies dormant here

On a positive note council did commit and build a multi purpose resource centre which is a attractive building in the centre of Maryborough. It houses the Tourism Information Centre, the Library and the Community Information Centre .

I spoke with the Co-ordinator of the Tourism Centre today to check in and ask if a submission was being forwarded by herself. The answer was no, but perhaps Council was preparing one, it was not able to be confirmed. After some discussion I asked how things were going and was the flow of visitors steady and what did they want to see etc

I would like to give you the feedback I received and in doing so comment on the Inquiry's Terms of Reference

Before doing so just a refresh on our attractions:

Heritage of State significance in the built form, intact old goldfields, a considerable proportion of the State's remaining Box-Ironbark forests, industrial history and of course the iconic Maryborough Railway Station. The Shire is inclusive of the historical towns of Talbot, Dunolly, Bealiba and many hamlets

Terms of Reference (I'll address 3 points)

1. Economic benefits :visitors do make day trips or pass through to visit the Maryborough Railway Station, but they move on. The Station café is open six days.

We don't have a diverse café culture to entice visitors to stay.

The Tourism Information Co ordinator says

" I've been here six years and I am losing heart, visitors are not coming as much, there's no tourism association, public transport doesn't provide for day trippers, the Flour Mill has closed and now, The Honey Bee Shed(extensive memorabilia display) has closed both from lack of patronage. There are no tour operators to transport visitors trying to link with the public transport schedules". Her comments focused on the progress Castlemaine Tourism has made over the years but it hasn't happened here

5. Drought etc we remain on Stage 4 water restrictions and this will be permanent for years to come. There is no doubt that economic downturn is impacting on our community because of this. It directly impedes the development of new industries especially food processing which council is trying hard to attract to our Shire for employment

6. Opportunities are not coming our way but we need them. We need investment and an economic revival to kick start a new era. Apathy is endemic as we experience serious social and economic problems. It would be so wonderful to develop a vibrant tourism economy to promote and market our significant heritage and other beautiful aspects of the Central Goldfields

I'm sure you will receive many submissions commenting on a downturn and many that might be experiencing growth. The problem here is its never got started and we so desperately need to try and do this

As one individual I'm not sure where we start

Thankyou for taking the time to read this

Yours faithfully
Juliet Sheed

