

# CORRECTED VERSION

## RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into rural and regional tourism

Bright — 29 August 2007

#### Members

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Mr D. Drum  
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Executive Officer: Ms L. Topic

Research Officer: Dr C. Hercus

#### Witness

Mr D. Butler.

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**The CHAIR** — We welcome Mr Butler, who wishes to make comments from the floor.

I wish to advise you that anything you say has the protection of parliamentary privilege under the Constitution Act 1975. Obviously anything you repeat outside here will no longer have that privilege. You understand the group you are talking to is the all-party parliamentary committee inquiring into regional tourism. If you can keep your comments to a brief 2 or 3 minutes, that would be great.

**Mr BUTLER** — My name is Derek Butler. My address is [detail removed]. I am a proud resident of Bright. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. It is pretty obvious from some of the things we have heard that tourism is a very important part of Bright's income and survival. As someone who has visited Bright for many years and now lives here, I would say that if you spoke to people who already know about Bright — and they are a significant market for our tourism; sure, we must have new markets, but the people who know about Bright are a significant portion — they would mostly say it is a beautiful place and they would know the flora of Bright in the springtime and in the autumn. That is one of iconic things about Bright that we are known for.

We had some figures before that said 45 per cent of our visitors are aged 45 to 64. They may well do some of the adventure things. They probably do walks, they probably do cycling, but they do appreciate a beautiful garden or a beautiful tree or whatever. We are known by our spring and autumn flora, but a significant part of that is exotic and deciduous. To maintain that part of our market we must keep strong our deciduous and exotic flora. That is both in common places like roadsides and in parks and along the river but it also in private areas, both residential and commercial.

What I am here to say is that it is so important for Bright and our tourism industry to have a reliable water supply. If the majority of our residents, who are in private residential and commercial places like B&Bs and caravan parks and motels, cut back their gardens a lot and went to natives, for example, I do not think Bright would be the same place. A large part of our market would see the difference.

I know that in all of Australia and Victoria and in our region, water is very important. It is important for growing food, and it is important for industry and so on, but in Bright, because of the link of tourism and our exotics and our deciduous, we need a reliable water supply to maintain our exotic and deciduous flora. It is beyond the normal ambience that people look for in their gardens; it actually has a link to our tourism industry. That is really what I wanted to do; I wanted to support the earlier comments by people speaking for Bright about the importance of water. They already mentioned about our seasonal — our autumn and spring — festivals and so on, but I just wanted to point out that a significant part of that is our exotics and our deciduous. If we let that drop off, there are other places that are growing that part of their attractiveness, so we have to maintain that if we want to keep that part of our market. It is a very important part of our market.

**The CHAIR** — Thanks, Derek; I do not think you would get too many arguments from the panel on the importance of a secure water supply for Bright. Having been here now, one of the great things about bringing the Rural and Regional Committee to the regions is that we can all experience it for ourselves. We will go away from here knowing that Bright is precariously balanced if we have another drought.

**Mr BUTLER** — Yes, it is very important in private areas that people can maintain the gardens that represents the past of Bright, which should continue into the future.

**The CHAIR** — Thanks very much.

**Witness withdrew.**