

CORRECTED VERSION

RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Inquiry into rural and regional tourism

Daylesford — 28 June 2007

Members

Ms. K. Darveniza

Mr D. Drum

Mr J. Eren

Ms W. Lovell

Mr R. Northe

Ms G. Tierney

Chair: Mr D. Drum

Deputy Chair: Ms G. Tierney

Staff

Executive Officer: Ms L. Topic

Research Officer: Dr C. Hercus

Witness

Mr E. Bellchambers, owner, Zig Zag Wines.

The CHAIR — Eric, I would like to welcome you to the Rural and Regional Committee's inquiry into rural and regional tourism. Evidence given at this public hearing is being captured by Hansard, and you are accorded parliamentary privilege as you deliver that evidence, although anything that you repeat outside the building is not accorded such parliamentary privilege. That parliamentary privilege is provided by the Constitution Act, the Parliamentary Committees Act and also the Defamation Act. Before you start, Eric, if you could give us your full name and address and also the name of the company you are with, and then it is over to you.

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — Thank you for the opportunity to speak here. My name is Eric Stanley Bellchambers. I am the owner of Zig Zag Wines. I am speaking on behalf of eight very small owner-operated wineries on the road between Daylesford and Malmsbury. We produce our own brochure, which I am getting you each a copy of, just to show you where we are located. We produce that at our own expense as a marketing exercise, and we distribute it through the information centres within the shire and at various general stores, widely but not so much in Melbourne. We looking to have people who are here, as they said, looking at Daylesford as the hub and people going out to the hinterland. I guess we are part of the hinterland, and we would look to have people visit our wineries. All of us are open every weekend and on public holidays. Some of us are open during the week. The problem we have is signage. Here is my beef — and it is at the bottom of the poster. If you look at the top photograph, it is the signage at Newham which is the Macedon Ranges shire. It shows each of the distances to the wineries, and the name of the winery and whatever.

Ms DARVENIZA — That is the big brown one?

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — Yes. For four years we have been talking to VicRoads about signage at the Midland Highway and Malmsbury Road at Daylesford. All we have been able to get is one sign that says wineries. It does not say how many there are, it does not say what they are, and it does not say the distances — for example, our winery is right up at the Malmsbury end. There are others at Glenlyon. You can go to Glenlyon and think, 'Oh well, there are two wineries at Glenlyon — that is it'. There needs to be a notice like the one at Mount Macedon, but we cannot get it. At the other end of the road, at the Calder Highway end, there is no notice. That particular corner is an absolute hotchpotch of signs with some signs that are no longer relevant — for example, the 'old wares' sign?

Ms DARVENIZA — The old what?

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — The 'crafts and old wares' is no longer in existence. There is a railway sign. There are all different sizes. There is no integration of signs. For anyone coming up to that intersection, it is really confusing. There is no signage prior to the intersection.

The bottom three photographs give you an idea about the inconsistency of the signage along the Malmsbury Road in Daylesford — for example, in Glenlyon, the first photograph, you just get a sign saying 'winery' when in fact there are two. That is there with an arrow. Further on down that road is Big Shed. It has its own sign approved, a very nice sign and most acceptable. At the far end is the sign at Zig Zag Road which says 'Wineries 2'. We do not know whether they are 2 kilometres or in fact two wineries right next to each other. That is just about that size. We have blown them up in the photographs. What I am asking is that there is a consistency throughout Victoria on the signs that are there. They are administered by VicRoads. It is very inconsistently administered. We are really concerned with the freeway at the other end which is bypassing Malmsbury. We need adequate signage. The signage in this area is no way compatible with the signage that is in Macedon Ranges let alone the Yarra Valley and the Mornington Peninsula or Rutherglen where the signage is all of this standard or better. I understand that Ballarat is the same, but I do not know and I cannot speak for that. I can only speak for our personal frustrations. We are all owner operators of wineries. They are all small. The sign at Zig Zag Road is the smallest because that was the first. There has been a sense of frustration trying to get bigger signage and more accurate signage. We have got nowhere with it, because the wineries sign at

Daylesford and the Midland Highway and the lack of signage at the other end is just a complete nonsense.

Ms DARVENIZA — I appreciate that.

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — That is all I wanted to say.

The CHAIR — I would like to ask a few questions on behalf the committee. So you have previously made advances to VicRoads about this problem with not much result?

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — Yes, not much result at all.

The CHAIR — Would the wineries be prepared to pay for the installation, upkeep and maintenance of the respective signs?

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — Yes, I think they would.

The CHAIR — This is a VicRoads issue. How are other councils able to get such a desired sign up and going.

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — I do not know.

The CHAIR — Have you made written submission to our inquiry?

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — No.

The CHAIR — So we need to take this down.

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — That was my submission.

The CHAIR — Yes, it has been raised as an issue with us previously, so you are not on your own on this issue. We will certainly take that on board, and ensure it forms a part of our report.

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — Right.

The CHAIR — That is very good.

Mr BELLCHAMBERS — That is my submission. I think that is all you need.

Witness withdrew.