

The Council of the City of Grafton



City Living - Country Style

EMP Inquiry
Submission No. 12

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Employment & Workplace Relations
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Dear Sir

Submission on Employment : Increasing Participation in Paid Work

Thank you for your recent call for submissions into the abovementioned inquiry.

Grafton City Council, along with Copmanhurst Shire Council, Pristine Waters Council and Maclean Shire Council have co-operated in the production of a Social Plan for the Clarence Valley.

The Social Plan has a chapter on unemployment, which has several strategies aimed at addressing the problem from the social perspective. A full copy of the Social Plan is available at www.graftoncity.nsw.gov.au/townplanning/CVSocialPlan20Oct-01.pdf (1.1MB). You will see that it has a wealth of data and information to support the recommendations made in it.

For this submission, I have attached a copy of an extract from the recent update to the Unemployment Chapter of the Clarence Valley Social Plan for your information.

Your particular attention is drawn to the recommendations which appear from page 15 through to page 19.

In summary, the key elements are the need for improved economic development initiatives. In this regard Council has recently embarked on a Community Economic Development program with the assistance of the NSW Department of State & Regional Development and expects to appoint an Interim CED Co-ordinator in late August 2003. The Unemployment Chapter recommendation for a Clarence Valley wide Economic Development Officer will be submitted to the Community Economic Development Program to determine whether it should proceed under that Program.

Also of importance are improved linkages with tourism and life style change, promoting home based business as a method of improving employment opportunities and improvement in demographic information, particularly regarding greater Grafton, when compared to its much smaller Local Government Area. Council has attempted to have the Australian Bureau of Statistics include the production of data for the Greater Grafton area. Unfortunately, it has met with little success as the ABS will only consider aggregation for population centres of over 20,000. This attitude works against communities such as Grafton and District, which is split over three or four local government areas, depending on your viewpoint, and Council firmly believes that it has been disadvantaged accordingly. Any steps that your review can take to address issues such as occur

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with Greater Grafton, and other similar areas, would certainly be appreciated and will, no doubt, be worthwhile. The disadvantage that does occur is in the form of less attention from higher levels of Government when considering the individual population statistics, rather than examining the figures for a Greater Grafton. Council also believes that private enterprise is not encouraged to consider the Clarence Valley for business opportunities because of the fragmented population data.

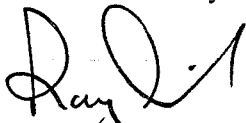
Other initiatives include collaboration with TAFE, promotion of a No Interest Loan Scheme, a Youth Driving Scheme, expanded use of Work for the Dole placements and, of great importance, improved opportunities for Aboriginal employment via Local Government.

Unfortunately, Council does not have the financial capacity to properly address the matter of unemployment, a common concern of each of the councils which are party to the Social Plan. The result is that many of the recommendations will be difficult to implement because of a lack of resources.

I wish to submit the recommendations from the update on the Unemployment Chapter of the Clarence Valley Social Plan as my Council's submission to your inquiry.

If you have enquiries, please feel free to contact my Director, Corporate & Community Services, Brian Lane, on (02) 6643 0213.

Yours faithfully



RAY SMITH
GENERAL MANAGER
23 July 2003

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