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In your reply please quote:

Reference: E5-1/13946
KER:NFH

"Regional Centre in Western NSW"

Tuesday 29th July 2003

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Subject: SUBMISSION – INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN PAID EMPLOYMENT

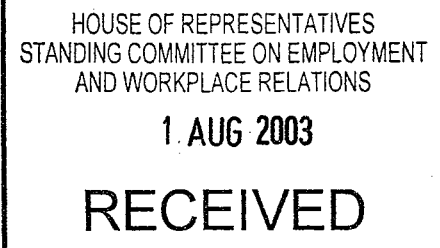
Please find attached Council's submission in relation to the House of Representatives enquiry into increasing participation in paid employment.

Yours faithfully



K.E. Roberts
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGER

Attach....



Cobar Shire Council Offices:
36 Linsley Street
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EMP Inquiry
Submission No. 15

COBAR SHIRE COUNCIL

SUBMISSION – INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN PAID EMPLOYMENT

Cobar Shire Council is a rural, local government authority located in far west NSW, approximately 295 kilometres west of Dubbo and 711 kilometres west of Sydney.

The Council serves an area of some 44,065 square kilometres with a population of approximately 7,500.

Cobar Shire Council believes that 'measures' can be implemented to increase the level of participation in paid employment, in the form of labour market flexibility, employer and employee assistance/incentives.

As a local government authority, and one of four major employers in the shire, Cobar Shire Council has always found it increasingly difficult to attract and retain qualified staff due to the following:

1. Location.
2. Ongoing professional development.
3. Medical, educational facilities.

Certain measures can be introduced to help attract and retain paid employers such as employer and employee incentives:

1. Rental subsidies.
2. Child care assistance.
3. Travel assistance.
4. Financial assistance in relation to educational needs, ongoing professional development.
5. Professional support.
6. Flexibility of working hours to cater for working parents, carers etc.
7. Government funded employment programmes.
8. Resource sharing.
9. Expanding employee assistance programmes.

Income support participants can be benefited by a diverse range of the above measures, resulting in increased employment opportunities from;

1. Employee assistance programmes resulting in multi skilling, or increasing the skill level of the individual.
2. Government funded employment programmes enable the employee to share the financial burden of employment thus enabling Council to take on more participants per annum.
3. Increased community and social benefit from schemes such as 'Work for the Dole'.

Council as a sole competitor in the market place, largely dominated by the mining industry finds it increasingly difficult to compete with the financial incentives currently being offered by its competitors. For Council to adequately play its part in increasing participation in paid work, it must offer social and educational benefits as opposed to those of a purely financial nature.