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EfVIP Inquiry
Supplementary Sub No, 34 fa)

5 February 2004

The Secretary
Standing Committee On Employment And Workplace Relations
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Sir/Madam

FURTHER RESPONSE TO INQUIRY INTO INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN PAID EMPLOYMENT

Purpose of Report

To inform the Inquiry of further progress made towards the development of an innovative employment project since it was proposed in Logan City Council's initial submission to the Inquiry, dated 28 August 2003.

The Logan Employment Task Force (LETF) in partnership with the Logan City Council wishes to sincerely thank the Inquiry for the opportunity afforded to present this information to the Parliamentary Hearing in Brisbane on 6 February 2004.

Background

Recognising that the Inquiry's Brief is wide-ranging, Logan City Council sought to limit the scope of its original submission to an area that focused on concerns special to, but not peculiar to, the Logan community.

In the submission of 28 August 2003, information was provided in relation to the areas of highest unemployment in Logan City, the roles and membership of the Logan Employment Task Force (LETF), the barriers to employment identified by the LETF, and the proposal and benefits of piloting an innovative employment project in Logan City. It is proposed that such a project will be auspiced by the LETF and actioned through the existing partnerships between Federal, State and Local Governments, who are committed to increasing the level of participation in paid employment in Logan City.

It is not intended to repeat this information contained in the initial submission here, but to reaffirm the resolve of the stakeholders and to detail further progress made to date.

Statistical Snapshot (Census 2001)

The following data is by no means comprehensive but is provided to put the Logan context; into perspective:

- « The total resident population is 167,808. This represents a 0.6% increase over 1996;
- » Mature aged (45 - 65) represent 29.5% of the population;
- « Overseas born represents 24.9% of the population;
- « There are an estimated 161 different cultures represented in Logan;

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- « Low income earners (less than \$200 per week), aged 15 and over, represent 28.4% of the population;
- » Only 65.5% of all employed persons are in full-time employment;
- * There are 28 suburbs in Logan. The three (3) suburbs with the highest rates of unemployment are VVoolridge (16.95%), Logan Central (14.29%) and Kingston (14.01%).

An analysis of the surveyed characteristics of households of these three suburbs reveals that persons who live there are:

- » More likely to have a higher percentage (but low actual numbers) of persons who did not attend school;
- More likely to have a smaller percentage of persons who went on to year 12 education;
- « More likely to be attending a TAPE, but less likely to be attending university;
- » Less likely to have formal qualifications (degree or certificate based education);
- * More likely to be "labourers and related workers" or "intermediate production and transport workers";
- More likely to be working in the manufacturing sector;
- More likely to have a higher percentage of Indigenous persons;
- « More likely to have a higher percentage of persons born overseas;
- « More likely to have a higher percentage of overseas born persons who arrived in the past five years (1996 to 2001);
- » More likely to have a higher percentage of persons who speak a language other than English at home;
- * More likely not to have a motorised vehicle in each dwelling;
- « More likely to have a higher percentage of one parent families; and,
- « Less likely to have a computer at home.

Progress to Date

There have since been two (2) significant workshops held in Logan City to address this issue.

The first forum was the "Employment Roundtable Discussion" jointly hosted by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) on 11 December 2003 which was held at the Logan West Library. It was organised in partnership with Logan City Council (LCC).

As the primary focus of the Roundtable was the employment needs of Humanitarian Entrants (as part of the Review of Settlement Services for Migrants and Humanitarian Entrants), the participants of this forum included representatives from the major multicultural community-based agencies, leaders of various ethnic groups, selected employers, Job Network providers and a range of government officials.

The significance of the forum was highlighted in the opening address by the Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Gary Hardgrave MP.

It was pleasing to see that the State Directors of DIMIA and DEWR took on board the grass roots comments to come from the forum and endorsed further local collaboration to address the issues raised.

This forum identified four (4) key themes that, if addressed, would improve the access to, and employability of, this disadvantaged sector of job seekers. They were, in brief:

- « Pathways - the development of entry points that are easily understood and provided in a timely manner;
- « Communication - between all the stakeholders;
- « Linkage/Partnerships - between the service providers, employers and government agencies; and,
- « Enhancing Job Seeker Tools - improve the targeting and relevance of training/development programs.
(More information can be obtained from DIMIA and/or DEWR).

However, the overarching need identified was one of Coordination of these themes, with particular emphasis in engaging employers in relevant strategies. As a result of these outcomes, LCC was invited by DEWR to organise a further forum to progress these findings into identifiable actions, strategies or projects.

Therefore the second forum was a half-day workshop hosted and organised by LCC on 22 January 2004. Participants included senior representatives from DJMIA, DEWR, Multicultural Affairs Queensland (MAQ), Gem-relink, Queensland Department of Employment and Training (DET), Committee of the Ageing (COTA), Greater Brisbane Area Consultative Committee (GBACC), Multicultural Employment Advocacy Network (MEAN), Multicultural Development Association (MDA) and of course, LCC,

This was an extremely productive workshop, resolving to develop an innovative employment project, including the development of an "Employer Support Model" to pilot and test the idea that the provision of targeted work experience through identified key local employers, would substantially increase our client group access to and suitability for employment in Logan City. A draft of the proposed model is attached.

A project team has been established and is comprised of one (1) representative from each of the following organisations: Centrelink; COTA; DET; DEWR; DIMIA; GBACC and LCC. The client groups chosen, which are not mutually exclusive, are:

- » Mature Aged;
- » Humanitarian Entrants; and,
- » Job seekers from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

The project team has agreed to two (2) main tasks:

1. The development of the project brief and associated draft model; and
2. The preparation of the necessary applications for funding to support the project.

Two (2) sources of funding have been identified:

- « Employment Innovation Fund (EIF) from DEWR; and,
- » Community Employment Assistance Scheme (CEAP) from DET.

It is envisaged that such funding will be complimentary. The EIF grant would support the project on an operational basis, ideally for two (2) years, and the CEAP funding would support the assessment-based training and work experience placements of job seekers with employers.

This week, members of the project team have begun the process of approaching selected local employers to gauge their support and willingness to participate in the project. Initial reaction has been very positive.

Financial Considerations

Whilst the proposed project is still being developed and the funds and other resources required to support and administer it have not yet been identified, it is obvious that the resources required will be significant and beyond the capacity of both the LETF and individual member organisations. Third party funding will be essential

In the course of the discussion of the workshop of 22 January 2004, the DEWR representatives detailed the funding available from the EIF and its purposes and criteria. In general, feedback was that the proposed project did fall within the eligibility guidelines of the EIF, but it was made clear that even if the project was eligible, well supported, and recommended by the State Director of DEWR, there was no guarantee that funding would be provided to the project, regardless of the merit or quality of the project, as funding was on a first-come-first-served basis in the given financial year. This is because there is no funding round as such, with defined deadlines where all submitted projects can be evaluated and rated against the criteria at the same time.

This is of concern to the LETF as funding would seem to be geared more to timing than to merit. The LETF would like some assurance that where there is demonstrated cross-government collaboration, a

demonstrated commitment developing employment initiatives and established support networks such as existing with the Logan LETF, the work and effort directed to developing this innovative and collaborative project would not be in vain.

It is worth noting that the LETF has already auspiced the conduct of two (2) Logan Jobs teIUisi'irss 1 \po<- in 2002 and 2003 and is planning one for 2004. These have been resounding successes and demonstuite liie "can do" attitude of the LETF and it's partnering organisations.

In conclusion, the Inquiry is encouraged to secure the ongoing and substantial support of both Commonwealth and State Governments for projects such as that proposed by the Logan Employment Task Force which demonstrates focused multi-sector collaboration between agencies and seeks to address specific employment issues in a targeted and innovative fashion. In particular, the Inquiry's support is sought in ensuring that funding is provided to resource such innovative schemes on a merit basis.

Yours faithfully



GT Kellar

CITILIF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

EMPLOYER SUPPORT MODEL

The overarching purpose of the model is to ensure that each job seeker, regardless of circumstances is personally assisted to develop a comprehensive individual employment plan (IEP), which will address all relevant impacting issues, social and vocational (including literacy, ESL, housing, transportation, access to training, etc) that are identified barriers to that person in seeking and obtaining employment.

In the proposed project, the model is specifically targeting the need for recent and relevant work experience so that the job seeker is suitable for (competitive) and given access to appropriate job opportunities. It entails matching participating employer's criteria with the training provided to job seekers and a period of approximately 10 weeks on-the-job experience. Both employer and job seeker needs would be identified and supported to ensure a successful training and employment outcome.

In the Logan context, it would look something like this:

