

14th February 2017

p: (03) 6334 9822
f: (03) 6334 9828

Transitioning Regional Economies Inquiry
Productivity Commission
Locked Bag 2, Collins St East
MELBOURNE VIC 8003

All Postal
Correspondence
Level 1 / 29 Paterson Street,
PO Box 85, Launceston,
Tasmania 7250

Dear Sir / Madam

Reference: Productivity Commission Inquiry – Transitioning Regional Economies

RDA Tasmania provides the following submission to the Productivity Commission's "Transitioning Regional Economies" inquiry.

Background

The Tasmanian Economy is diverse with many industry sectors assisting in the generation of the State's income. Mining is a contributor of significance, as is agriculture, forestry, fishing, manufacturing and tourism.

The majority of mining activity employment occurs on Tasmania's west coast region in regional communities. Mining of coal, iron, tin and gold has been in operation since the 1800s¹.

Significant generational employment has been provided to local residents by established mine operators in Queenstown, Rosebery and Zeehan. Drive in/drive out workforce also makes up a significant portion of the mines employees.

These mines have experienced significant cyclical peaks and troughs over their life of operations, primarily influenced by fluctuating commodity prices for bulk minerals. In periods of higher prices, production and resulting employment has increased whilst the opposite occurs in periods of downturn.

In addition to direct employment, Mining also contributes to Tasmania's economy through the supply of a fly out workforce, manufacturing of mine equipment (e.g. machinery) and mine services to domestic and international markets.

¹ http://www.mrt.tas.gov.au/mrt/doc/dominfo/download/UR2013_10/UR2013_10.pdf



Regional Economic Planning

RDA Tasmania has been involved in many economic planning projects, providing regular advice to all tiers of government in relation to regional economic policy and projects. This includes working in regional areas where industry has transitioned or businesses ceased operation.

In our view the following should be considered when addressing the needs of any regional community

- Obtain relevant and current statistical data that can provide an accurate analysis of the region economic and social profile;
- Consult with key local stakeholders including industry, community and government to understand their needs ; and
- Be open and transparent in all consultations and dealings to help deliver clear recommendations in respect of to regional priorities;

Regional communities need to take ownership and the responsibility for structured decision making and strategic planning. This includes supporting economic projects that deliver long terms outcomes for the region, not necessarily projects that just have short term popularism within the community or are short term focused.

Picking winners' is not the business of government and therefore any planning must be community driven, long term and strategic. Project development should carefully consider future employment, a regions livability and skill development.

RDA Tasmanian encourages the Productivity Commission inquiry into Transitioning Regional Economies to consider past "economic transitioning" initiatives, such as the recent Tasmania Forestry transition agreement to find out what lessons can be learnt from past experiences.

Yours faithfully

Craig Perkins
Chief Executive Officer



An Australian Government Initiative

