



## **Rotary Club of Traralgon Central Inc.**



**District 9820** – Chartered 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1981

P.O Box 873, Traralgon, Victoria 3844

**To Commissioner Paul Lindwall**

**24<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Submission to The Productivity Commission's "Transitioning Regional Economies" Report,  
April 2017**

### **Introduction**

Following a consultation meeting with Commission representatives in Traralgon, this submission from the Rotary Club of Traralgon Central Inc, is forwarded as part of working towards one of our current objectives.

We aim, within our means, to constructively support those community members in Latrobe City who are impacted by the closure of Hazelwood power station and other timber industry closures in the Region.

Issues of concern in this city are also the result of other business closures/downturn not necessarily directly related to the closure of Hazelwood and the timber industry, which have exacerbated the pre-existing lack of jobs in the area.

Part of our current program supports the general community e.g. through our annual "Give A Damn Give A Can" appeal, which supplies a local St. Vincent DePaul food relief outlet for 4 - 5 months. We also engage in a number of other club activities assisting with community concerns or enhancing community life.

### **A Role For Volunteers**

In looking at the submissions lodged to date, we note that there does not appear to be any from a Community/Service organisation.

Whilst we as an individual club, do not see ourselves as a major player in helping to provide solutions to the overall problem, we believe there are specific ways that volunteer organisations such as ours and many others in the Latrobe Valley can make a contribution (though we do not claim to speak for them).

Volunteer organisations cover a wide range of social, physical, spiritual and mental (educational) fields. Whilst not at the top of the list in economic terms, a significant part of the response to human stresses and challenges is met by the aggregated support and effort of volunteers, providing a positive effect in supporting families.

The contribution from volunteers in Victoria is argued very well by Volunteers Victoria and good information is available from their website. One notable statistic published, is the estimated amount of \$24 billion, the assessed value of volunteer work to the Victorian Economy, in 2014.

### **Comment on Draft Report**

We support the principle stated in the Draft Report, Transitioning Regional Economies.

“Support for regional development has the best chance of success when it involves regional communities taking a leadership role in planning their own development needs and identifying strategies for how best to facilitate development.”

This principle is reiterated in the City of Latrobe’s submission.

“This can only be done through an earnest desire to partner with the community in a process of co-design and collective engagement.”

### **Preventative Expenditure**

Our Club along with others in the Region has contributed to numerous programs aimed at building citizenship and developing healthy, responsible young people. Some of these activities rely on an amount of sponsorship from commercial enterprises with considerable financial and other resources supplied by Rotary. We contend that \$1 expenditure on developing resilient young people, creates a potential saving of many times more than \$1 in the long term, if the prevalent problems and attitudes that befall a significant number of young people, are avoided. Eg. Costs savings for counselling, legal costs, rehabilitation, hospitalisation, corrective facilities etc.

### **A Role for the Rotary Club of Traralgon Central Inc.**

Club members have a wide range of life and occupational experience. They are in a position to give support and advocate for others, if opportunities arise or are sought out. Financial resources of club members whilst generously given are limited. Discreet allocation of funds available for transitioning communities, given to a Rotary or similar volunteer group would be leveraged to produce high value returns. Their local knowledge, low or non-existent overhead costs, coupled with voluntary labour input can help to bring this about.

### **In Summary,**

As well as our ongoing interaction with the whole community, we see our major role as supporters of and advocates for, those “doing it tough,” as a result of the changes in their personal circumstances. In financial terms, we aim to contribute to and access funds for assistance programs, or for direct financial assistance to those in need, as appropriate. Our organisation, or others on the front line, are well positioned to provide assistance in the most constructive and efficient manner.

As a volunteer organisation, we hope that this submission might bring to the Commission another viewpoint to be explored further. In our experience, volunteer organisations can be engaged strategically to bring about positive and long lasting improvements. Their input and local knowledge contributes to efficient and effective action.

Yours Sincerely

Ian Round

President, Traralgon Central Rotary Club