



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

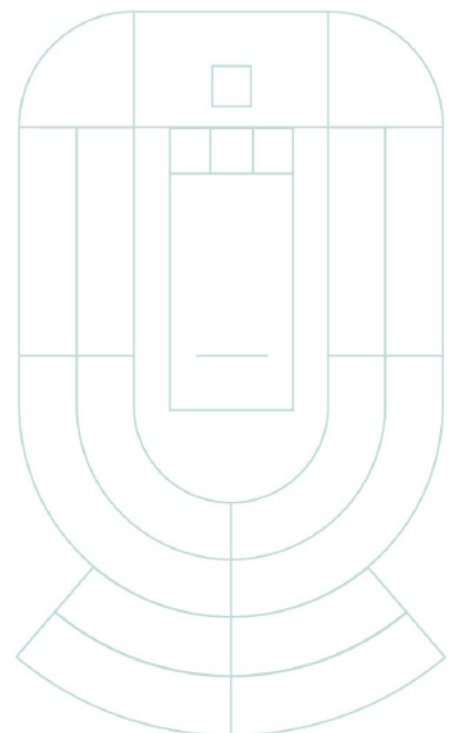
Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development

Performance of the Regional Investment Activation Fund and Regional Job Creation Fund

Supplementary questions

Countrywide Industries

1. At the public hearing, you stated that Regional Development Australia - Orana assisted you in the application process (page 13, uncorrected transcript), could you provide more detail on the assistance? In what areas would you have liked further support?



In relation to the performance of regional jobs creation fund,

1) Support given by Orana regional development , Orda, helped us with the application process, they were able to state our case and layout our application in an appropriate manner. Orda staff also understood the figures , facts and ratios required by the fund.

They also lodged a successful request for a time extension for us.

Orana regional development, done everything they could to assist our progress, but we were held up with council approvals for various reasons.

This was not a costly process and we received value for money.

The fund staff were trying their best to move us forward to finalise the project on time, but may not have fully understood the hold ups and frustrations we had encountered, along with wet weather, lack of staff and Covid, all contributed to slow the whole process.

2) in relation to what further support we would have liked, I would like to raise the following points , bearing in mind all the fund staff were doing their utmost to assist with the information available to them.

a) A better understanding of the problems encountered with scope to adjust or accommodate these changes would be good. A project like this has to flow in logical order, you cannot put on extra staff until you have the facilities in place to accommodate them.

b) The amount of jobs to be created seems too high for the financial assistance given and it is very hard to ramp up a business quickly in a short time, bearing in mind the new employees wages and conditions have to be met, while obtaining sufficient new customers to help offset their wages and the whole process to be financially viable for all parties.

c) I would like to see some financial assistance for wages, as we are encouraged to employ a diverse range of people with various skill levels. Some have learning disabilities and other problems that may have held them back during their life . We are happy to employ and train them , but feel it is not our responsibility as an employer to personally fund those disabilities that can affect their performance and profitability.

I would like to make another separate submission about some of the employment issues at a later date.

d) I would like to see a larger allocation of money in relation to the number of new employees , bearing in mind, the government will receive a fair amount of wages tax, stamp duty etc , generated by these new employees. This should provide a pretty quick return on investment for the government funds.

e)In my last meeting with your committee, I suggested we should pay our apprentices higher wages to attract them into trades. Upon reflection, this would not be the best approach and I have an alternate suggestion which will see the apprentice financially rewarded and not cause too much wage inflation.

I suggest we pay them a substantial bonus to the apprentice, upon completion of their apprenticeship. It should not be given in yearly progress payments but given at the end of the full term, with the original employer, unless the employer breaks the contract, goes broke , which forces them to leave.

I am thinking roughly \$25,000 per student, payable by the government, seeing how all the apprentices leave on completion and in my trade end up in the mining industry to the benefit of companies like BHP and their shareholders. If the apprentice wants early completion, the employer has not received sufficient financial returns on their investment and time. That's why it should be paid at the end.

As a former Tafe teacher myself, you cannot produce world class tradesman from tafe alone. These people have to be employed in a full time job , which compliments the Tafe system.
I would like to thank the government for their initiative and assistance provided so far.