

**Submission  
No 9**

**PERFORMANCE OF THE REGIONAL INVESTMENT ACTIVATION FUND AND  
THE REGIONAL JOB CREATION FUND**

**Organisation:** Countrywide Industries

**Date Received:** 27 October 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the program.  
Firstly , I would like to introduce myself and my involvement in the regional manufacturing .

- \*commenced an apprenticeship in welding in January 1977.

- \*taught welding at tafe part time before obtaining a full time position at Dubbo

- \*Completed extra welding certificates and technical drawing

- \* commenced my own business in 1982 manufacturing and repairing Farm machinery and general engineering. Which I still own today.

- \* During this time we have trained many good apprentices in welding and fitting and machining. Also Cad drafting and Engineering.

I was very pleased to be accepted into your program . I would like to offer some of my experiences during this time.

We have not been able to fully complete the construction phase due to some difficult circumstances.

- 1) Firstly Covid hit, sending steel and other materials sky high in price increasing the cost of our construction above original estimates.

- 2)Labour became very hard to source , migrants workers were in short supply .

- 3) we advertised extensively for apprentices , but did not receive any applications. This has been a common story with all employers.

- 4) on a good note, the government instant asset tax write off caused the greatest rush of orders for our business in 41 years. This kept us very busy attending to our customers to make money to cover the increased construction costs of our expansion, without being able to secure any number of workers.

- 5) complying with local council applications has taken some time to sort through as well

Problems I have encountered with the program are,

- \* I have not been able to implement the construction in the allocated time frame, from the reasons outlined above. Therefore we are again asking for a time extension.

- \* I feel the number of jobs to be created is a bit on the high side.

It is very hard to ramp up a manufacturing business , as you need a variety of equipment and floor area to accomodate those people. In saying that we had the opportunity to do just that in the last few years with good seasons and a government willing to give industry and farmers some financial breathing space with tax incentives. This flows through to all our suppliers , even in the capital cities, where most of the warehouse and distribution is carried out.

Due to the fact we design and build our own products, we are not in direct competition with any person in our local town or area. We have also exported to Sudan and New Zealand.

Having this ability to adapt quickly to change in our manufacturing environment, surely must be a consideration for a government to have a strong manufacturing base and be self reliant in these troubled world times.

The program of support for regional business has been a great idea. We face many challenges in regional areas , from increased competition from countries with cheap labour and whose workforce are not treated or valued to the same standard as ours. Drought has a big influence on the amount of orders we receive, as does government policy.

I would like to acknowledge the staff at all the government departments have been most helpful and the lack of completion of the program is from my end.

I applaud the people for working out this program, thank you!

I would like to make a comment about youth employment and doing apprenticeships. We need to be able to attract young people into trades and may have to offer greater wage incentives to get that to happen. I would gladly have a discussion with you , as I have a few ideas.

I would like to see a survey to where all the young people are currently employed, ie which sectors.

In summary, I would like to say the program is very relevant, it would be great to have lots of small manufacturing facilities with modern up to date machines and technology that can turn their hand to any task required required to keep our country going forward, competitive, with job security and a safe place to live. Technology is the key to this, but can be financially out of reach for some business.

Look forward to hearing from you

Regards

Rodney Carr

Countrywide Industries Pty Ltd