**Select Committee on the Closure or Downsizing of Corrective Services NSW Facilities**

Supplementary questions on notice from the Committee

Clarence Valley Council

1. What lessons should the Government learn from the Grafton Correction Centre downsizing exercise?

The main lesson I believe to be learnt out of the decision to downsize this centre is that Community Impact Statements should be considered in relation to major decisions affecting a community such as mine. Consultation with those affected by decisions like this, also need to be carried out in a more open and transparent way.

2. Is your Council aware of any involvement or advocacy from the Minister for the North Coast on behalf of Grafton during the Correction Centre downsizing?

 Not to the best of my knowledge.

3. Has your Council had any contact with the Minister for the North Coast regarding the Correction Centre downsizing? If so what was the extent of the contact?

 Not to the best of my knowledge.

4. What involvement do you think the Minister for the North Coast should have had regarding the Grafton Correction Centre downsizing?

 It is difficult for me to answer this question as I am not aware of the involvement the Minister has had in this matter, especially in relation to lobbying for a better outcome for the Clarence community.

5. Has your Council had any contact with the Deputy Premier regarding the Correction Centre downsizing? If so what was the extent of the contact?

 Yes, I met with the Deputy Premier and the Attorney General in Sydney following the announcement. The Deputy Premier made available a North Coast Jobs Package during that meeting. Since the meeting, there have been a number of Crown Lands jobs provided back into the Clarence economy.

6. What involvement do you think the Deputy Premier should have had regarding the Grafton Correction Centre downsizing?

 It is difficult for me to answer this question as I am not aware of the involvement the Minister has had in this matter, especially in relation to lobbying for a better outcome for the Clarence community.

7. Many submissions to the inquiry talk about a failure of communication and consultation by the Government. What does your Council consider to be the level of communication and consultation required in an exercise such as the downsizing of the Grafton Correction Centre?

 The area around consultation has been widely criticized during this entire matter. There were times when I felt my community was not listened to by the Government. There were times when my community felt they had been let down in some way during this process. The consultation required, should have been on a number of levels: industrial, community and also within the inmate population regarding the future direction of the centre.

8. Many submissions raise the need for Community Impact Statements to be completed when a decision is made similar to the one to downsize the Correction Centre, (some submissions also refer to Rural Impact Statements)

a. Do you think a Community Impact Statement should be prepared when decisions are made similar to the downsizing of Grafton Correction Centre?

Yes, and considered during the decision making process.

b. Do you think a Community Impact Statement should be publicly available and in what circumstances do you think they should not be made public?

 In the interest of transparency it is my belief where possible, Community Impact Statements should be made available to the public and in some circumstances invite public input on the statement.

 Commercially in confidence matters should remain of a private nature. Personal details should also remain outside the public domain.

c. What are the items or issues that should be considered when preparing a Community Impact Statement?

Social issues, environmental matters, economic matters, and community sentiments should all be included in the Impact Statements. The Clarence community have had a long association with the Correctional Centre. The community, as we are all aware, did not and still do not accept the decision that has been made.

9 Are you aware of any Community (or Rural) Impact Statement being completed for the Grafton Correction Centre downsizing? Do you think the Rural Impact Statement completed for the Grafton Correction Centre downsizing should be made public?

 No.

10 Can you detail the types of services and skill-sets that are now being lost to the Grafton community because of the downsizing of the Correction Centre? (For example hairdressers, teachers, nurses)

 This is a difficult question to answer, and one that would have been highlighted if an Impact Statement was carried out. However I am aware of a number of teaching positions that have been lost at South Grafton High School due to student populations declining. This is a direct result of the decision to downsize the Grafton Correctional Centre. The flow on effects through the economy of the positions being lost, are only now becoming apparent as the school year gets underway. I am confident there would be many other examples which I am not aware of at this stage.