

## **INQUIRY INTO SKILLS SHORTAGES IN RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW**

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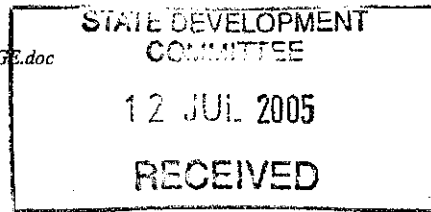
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**Theme:**

**Summary**

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8th July 2005

The Director  
Standing Committee on State Development  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir

**INQUIRY INTO SKILLS SHORTAGES IN RURAL AND REGIONAL NSW**

I refer to the correspondence dated 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2005 addressed to Cllr Alan Smith, Mayor Dubbo City Council regarding the Inquiry into Skills Shortages in Rural and Regional New South Wales and would like to provide some information in regard to the difficulties experienced by Dubbo City Council as an employer of significance in our region.

The attached submission addresses the issue of Staff Recruitment and Retention specifically and highlights difficulties this organisation has experienced in recent years in attracting and retaining suitably qualified and experienced professional officers.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a contribution in this matter.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol P Logan".

*Carol P Logan*  
Manager Human Resource Services

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**Submission by Dubbo City Council into the NSW Parliament's Standing**  
**Committee on State Development Inquiry into Skills Shortage in Rural and**  
**Regional NSW**

**Staff Recruitment and Retention**

Dubbo City Council has trouble in the recruitment and retention of Professional people, particularly in the areas of Environmental Services and Engineering Services.

Over the last 12 months, each of the last 10 recruitments for professional positions in these areas had to be readvertised at least once and in some cases, twice, due to a lack of a suitable pool of applicants.

It has taken, on average, seven months to fill those positions now filled. Not all positions have been filled at this stage.

In an effort to ensure we are doing all we can in our recruitment campaigns, Council advertises widely outside our regional area as well as locally. This wide-reaching advertising is costly and as discussed above, does not necessarily result in a pool of applicants.

Because of our geographical location, Council must cover the cost of bringing shortlisted job applicants to Dubbo for interview. Telephone interviews are used from time to time, however, the face-to-face interview remains an important element in the process. This cost, along with relocation costs for new employees runs into a substantial amount and is a cost, which metropolitan-based councils would not normally have to bear.

Our recruitment problems are two-fold:

- Inability to attract and retain suitably qualified professionals
- Substantial cost of recruitment (advertising, re-advertising, interview expenses, relocation costs)

This inability to recruit staff in the environmental and engineering areas leads to overload of current employees and reduction in Council's ability to service efficiently and effectively the local and regional community, as is its charter. This can lead to frustration on the part of the public and a perception that the organisation is not servicing its community well.

Dubbo City Council services 120,000 people in a geographical area, which reaches almost to the Queensland border and covers 24% of the state. It is a growing regional centre and as such has an increasing requirement to be able to facilitate its development and manage its burgeoning infrastructure. To meet current and future needs in these areas, Dubbo City Council will have to somehow, overcome the problems it suffers in recruiting and retaining qualified professional staff.

### **Staff Training and Development**

Whilst Dubbo City Council's expenditure on training and development is considered substantial, there are issues in relation to the cost of bringing qualified trainers to Dubbo.

In addition, the cost in lost time and expenses such as wages, travel, accommodation and sustenance, when we are forced to send people out of town for training, can be significant.