



Northern Grampians
Shire Council

1 November 2002

PB:CH 08 01 001A

Mr Stephen Dyer
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Dyer

Finding Skilled Migrants

The Northern Grampians Shire Council is experiencing substantial growth along with other regions of the Victorian Wimmera Region. We have had reports from some of our employer bodies the problem in getting skilled workers into rural Victoria. Some have begun to source skilled migrants especially in the engineering and technical skill area.

We as a Council have experienced problems in regards to providing a level of infrastructure that these skilled migrants expect and we believe there is a role to be played in advising migrants of expectations of working in rural Australia.

We would also wish to bring to the committees attention the time taken in processing applications has been seen as an impediment in some cases, especially where long term visas are being sought. Whilst we appreciate the need to screen applicants thoroughly, we believe that consideration needs to be given to the sponsoring companies and should they be of a reputable nature, the ensuing applicant screening should be more streamlined.

If our region is to continue to grow, we need to tap into the skilled migrant market more effectively. We need Government to be more supportive with a "whole of Government" approach as skilled migrants are intertwined with business development and growth, research and development along with improving infrastructure and support facilities such as rural health services (also a major area of need for skilled migrants).

The Northern Grampians Shire is ideally centrally located within 1-1.5 hours drive of all the major population areas in the Wimmera and Western Victoria. We would offer our facilities in Stawell should your committee wish to hear first hand answers to your questions from this region.

Town Hall, Stawell
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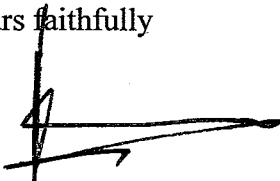
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Attached with this letter is a copy of a CD that Council has recently produced in an effort to stimulate interest in the shire from potential employees. We know that selling employment opportunities in rural areas is not just a matter of matching city pay rates but also promoting lifestyle and we believe the same applies to skilled immigrants.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss setting up of a regional meeting at your convenience.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter Brooks', written over a vertical line.

PETER BROOKS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER