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5 April 2013

Ms Yvette Berry
Chair
Select Committee on Regional Development
ACT Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

	A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE
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Dear Ms Berry

Subject: Inquiry into Regional Development

I refer to the Select Committee's call for submissions to the Inquiry into Regional Development.

Goulburn Mulwaree acknowledges the role that ACT has as a major regional centre to the surrounding communities in NSW.

Goulburn has strong connections into the ACT for higher level services (especially specialist health services and tertiary education), employment and recreation. These connections are facilitated by the well developed road network making it relatively easy to move between the two areas.

While Canberra is a major urban centre there is the opportunity for the surrounding towns to play a role in providing some solutions to the Capital's urban problems.

Goulburn, as Australia's first Inland City, can provide alternative forms of housing not found in the ACT. Older heritage and rural lifestyle properties which are not found in the ACT are readily available in Goulburn and the surrounding rural areas. There is a significant difference in the price of real estate making Goulburn a more affordable option for many struggling to buy their first home. The medium price of housing in Goulburn is \$275,000 compared to \$566,000 in the ACT while medium unit prices are \$180,000 and \$415,000 respectively.

While the road connections between Goulburn and Canberra are well developed there is the opportunity to improve mass transit connection between the two urban centres. Improving this connection could again strengthen the role Goulburn could play in releasing some of the urban pressures facing Canberra.

Goulburn Mulwaree Council has been working with several Federal Government institutions based in the ACT to provide collection storage facilities in Goulburn. The business case developed clearly demonstrates there are significant cost savings for those institutions in their forward budgets. This concept could equally apply to the ACT institutions involved in collection storage and management.


Goulburn Mulwaree Council, in conjunction with Yass Valley Shire Council, are looking to establish a pilot 'Smart Work Centre' to provide an alternative work place and reduce the need to commute daily from the surrounding regions into the ACT. If the concept proves viable there is the opportunity to provide similar centres in many of the commuter towns and villages around the ACT (e.g. Bungendore, Murrumbateman, Yass, Boorowa, Harden).

Many of these smaller communities have under utilised State Government facilities that could easily be adapted to become 'Smart Work Centres'. This provides a unique opportunity for Local Government to work in direct partnership with the NSW and ACT Governments to deliver Smart Work Centres across the Region. Council has previously been supportive of tertiary education facilities being established in the city. The Smart Work Centre can offer the opportunity for existing tertiary institutions in the ACT to deliver education programs to rural students reducing the expense and need for commuting or to live away from home.

The Goulburn Base Hospital already acts as a hub for smaller medical centres surrounding the city. In turn Goulburn forms part of the network hubbed into Canberra. The Base Hospital currently provides training opportunities for ANU rural medical students. In addition Council continues to support the Rural Doctors Network Scholarships to provide the valuable experience of working in a rural area to medical students. The health facilities in Goulburn provide an opportunity for teaching institutions in both medical and allied health areas to utilise.

Council is strongly of the belief that Goulburn and the surrounding rural areas can provide opportunities to be the solution to some of Canberra's urban problems and growth by building onto the existing connectivity in the ACT.

Yours faithfully


Chris Berry
General Manager


Cr Geoff Kettle
Mayor Goulburn Mulwaree Council