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In response to your phone call this morning – re: 2.00pm appearance at Productivity Commission hearing in Launceston on 5 July 1999 of Tasmanian Rural Women’s Advisory Group:

- . Competition Policy = Economic Rationalism
- . But no \$ value allocated to social fabric and well being of community
- . Rural commodity prices all ready subject to Law of Supply and Demand (= competitive) and some don’t cover cost of production
- . If cost recovery prices charged for services in rural area (= electricity, rail, gas, road and postal), community can’t afford to pay. Therefore, population drift to cities
- . Long Term sustainability of Rural Communities reliant on primary production not taken into account
- . Equal I.T. availability will ↓ communication cost and ↓ population drift.

Following 2 pages are Recommendations from our Report “In Our Back Paddock” launched 26 February 1999. = Snapshot of Tasmanian rural communities.

Hope this is what you required.

Anne Taylor

- . Any accountant can cut 20% off your business costs. However it is unlikely you or your family will eat or be clothed. It all looks great on paper though.

- . Food, Fibre and Shelter are basic requirements of life. They are all provided by primary industries which are rural community based.

- . Not taken into account of the true economic equation is the long term sustainability of rural communities reliant on primary production for their survival.

- . Until consumers – all consumers – GLOBALLY – acknowledge that the provision of cheap food, fibre and shelter is coming at a social and environmental costs then rural communities will continue to decline.

- . It doesn't matter whether you are a farmer in the USA, UK or Australia – all producers of primary products are moving further and further into a poverty existence.

- . Yes food will be produced by larger more cost competitive but more people will be living in overcrowded cities and rural areas will be ghost towns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group release this report to seek community comment on the issues raised and to seek the support of the State and Commonwealth Ministers for the Department of Primary Industry for future funding to support Women in Agriculture and their Action Plan.

Recommendation 2

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group enlist the support of local Government to develop strategies to foster the retention of young people in rural communities.

Recommendation 3

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group seek consultation with the Minister for Employment and Training to establish ongoing strategies to address employment opportunities for people in rural Tasmania.

Recommendation 4

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group continue to work closely with the media as indicated in the Action Plan for Women in Agriculture, to ensure that an awareness of rural issues is paramount in all forms of media in Tasmania.

Recommendation 5

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group seek a meeting with the Minister for Health and Community Services to ensure funding for counselling, education and support to address the issue of rural suicide and allied health services.

Recommendation 6

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group, through the Minister for the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, promote the responsible management of natural resources and ask that the Minister consult women working in agriculture to develop appropriate policy and legislation.

Recommendation 7

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group, through the Minister for Health and Community Services, develop a health and wellbeing policy that encompasses the needs of all members of the rural community. At the present time only the frail, aged and people with disabilities are covered by the Home and Community Care Program.

Recommendation 8

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group enlist the support of Local Government to develop strategies to address the issues related to isolation, including availability of services such as transport.

Recommendation 9

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group collaborate with FarmBIZ, Farmwide Pty Ltd, and other farmer organisations to promote education in the efficient use of the Internet.

Recommendation 10

That the Rural Women's Advisory Group lobby the Banking Industry to provide and develop education programs on the use of electronic banking, especially targeting the elderly people.