

INTERN RESEARCH PROJECT - Sem 1. 2014

Office of Don Nardella MLA, Member for Melton

TOPIC: Sustainability and employment opportunities in Melton.

Overview:

Recent closures and proposed closures of major industry in Victoria relating to the motor, airline and food production industries and a propensity to send 'off shore' a number of manufacturing businesses has sent shivers down the spines of many employees in Australia; in particular those living in the West of Melbourne. Particularly within its outer west, in places like Melton - where a lack of industry has always been noted (for decades), but never effectively addressed.

The decline of manufacturing in Victoria generally (once renowned as the heart of Australia's manufacturing base) no doubt relates to a number of factors. These include: the rise and sustained high Aussie dollar; the rise of China as a mega industrial goods producer, and the rise of other (tiger) economies such as India and Indonesia. Other factors include: the protracted US recession (and now its recent mild recovery), the economic decline of a number of European economies in countries such as Spain, Greece, Italy, a general uncertainty over the waning of our own minerals/energy export sector and the stated (new) Abbott government's determination to roll back federal spending.

Indeed, the rapid growth of Melton as a residential suburb over the past few decades, and indeed even earlier as a state government designated 'satellite' city in the early 1970s; saw a failure generally to plan or provide the necessary industry base this growing community required. However, close proximity to industry in the neighbouring inner West alleviated, to some extent, employment concerns. But increased pressure on industry employment opportunities generally and an increasing gloomy global economic outlook has given rise to serious concern over increasingly diminishing employment opportunities.

Even the cavalier cheap sell off of Council land by its imposed Council Commissioners to stimulate employment/industry growth - during the Kennett local government restructure years of the mid 1990s, failed to improve the sustainability of employment opportunities in Melton.

The lack of current and future industry and employment opportunities remains a serious issue for this (and other) communities.

The paper could examine:

- The historical growth of Melton & its (Councils) and private employment/industrial history
- The involvement of Melton's imposed Commissioners (1990s) and their role in industry/employment development
- How Melton could insulate itself from this impending unemployment crisis.
- What the state/federal government is doing to deal with this apparent impending social problem - which would see Melton workers become even more vulnerable
- How Melton could avoid becoming a possible unemployment zone like Geelong in Victoria or Elizabeth (SA)
- Locally, what plans are afoot, by Council in particular, to address the current shortage of employment opportunities in a municipality that has almost the fastest growth rate in Australia and a relative high youth unemployment rate.
- Nationally and on a global level, examine what other towns/cities have done to reinvent themselves or, reinvigorate/re-establish industry in their communities
- Can Melton learn from some of these successful examples ?

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