

sub. 25

30 September 2014

Mr Charles Casimaty
Secretary
House of Assembly Standing Committee on Community Development

Re: INQUIRY INTO THE TRIABUNNA WOODCHIP MILL AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TRIABUNNA REGION

Dear Charles,

Further to our conversation yesterday, I am sending along a few brief points with reference to your Committee's Inquiry, specifically *(b) Identify development and other opportunities for the Triabunna Community and the surrounding regions*, as you requested.

Like many regions in Tasmania, Australia, and elsewhere around the world, this region is in a period of economic transition. Triabunna's economic situation is not unique; economic restructuring and industry transition are common in regions around the world. The loss or reduction of a key industry base is never easy, least of all in rural regions, which are less likely than urban regions to have other industries to 'pick up the slack'. The good news, however, is these situations of economic restructuring have been studied extensively around the world. We now know a great deal about what local communities can do to manage economic transition, as well as the sorts of roles that governments can play.

Distilling a few points from this large and complex literature, it is possible to state that there are various 'methodologies' or approaches to 'doing something' about economic development in rural regions undergoing economic restructuring. Many different economic development methodologies have been tried around the world, and we have learned a few things in the process:

- Government-led economic development solutions imposed from the 'top down' tend not to provide economic answers for rural communities facing restructuring. This is because external policy initiatives generally operate from incomplete information about local assets, capabilities, opportunities and needs;

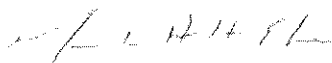
- 'Bottom-up' community-led economic development methodologies (such as Economic Gardening, Enterprise Facilitation, Community Economic Development, Microenterprise Finance) tend to be somewhat more effective in mobilizing local assets for local development, but the results are uneven. The results depend heavily on the extent of local capabilities, assets, motivation, and access to information and contacts along the value chain (suppliers, markets) as well as the extent to which the bureaucratic environment keeps the transaction costs of business startup low (or high). Importantly, heavily bottom-up 'self-help' approaches risk placing additional costs and expectations on already-stressed communities;
- The most promising economic development approaches are 'hybrid' place-based approaches that leverage both internal and external resources to construct innovative platforms for economic advantage from the ground up. **Place-based platform approaches** (such as Regional Development Platform Method and Knowledge Partnering) bring together leaders from different sectors of the community to share their knowledge and identify place-based platforms for economic development. Place-based platform approaches enable cross-sector knowledge sharing about local assets and capabilities, and then exploit cross-sector synergies to provide unique responses to market opportunities. These may take the form of traditional enterprises, social enterprises, or other examples of social innovation.

The Institute for Regional Development is a cross-disciplinary teaching and research institute of the University of Tasmania. We bring together a number of researchers specialised in community and regional development. We regularly partner on applied research projects with local communities, organisations and industries and run postgraduate courses on these topics.

A few relevant international scholarly publications on place-based platform approaches (including a number by Institute for Regional Development researchers), are listed below. I am happy to provide copies of any of these, or further references on request.

I hope this information assists with your enquiry. Clearly, there are a number of established methodologies that communities like Triabunna can use, and resources within the University that are available to assist as required.

With best wishes,



Associate Professor Robyn Eversole
Director, Institute for Regional Development
University of Tasmania

A few selected international publications on platform-based regional development approaches:

- Eversole, R. and T. McCall (2014) "Constructing advantage in the Cradle Coast region, Tasmania: Knowledge partnering as a regional development platform approach", *Regional Science Policy and Practice*, 6(3):251-264.
- Allison, J., D. Broun and S. Jones (2014) 'Rise of New Manufacturing: Transitioning Skills and Technologies into the Future' in the *Proceedings from the PACITA 2013 Conference in Prague*, pp. 207-214.

- Symes, M., J. Allison, D. Broun, D. Dowling and A. Patil (2014) 'Knowledge Partnering for Engineering Pathways in Regional Australia', *Engineering the Knowledge Economy: Collaboration, Engagement & Employability*, the 2014 Annual Conference of the Australasian Association for Engineering Education (AAEE2014), Wellington, NZ, 8-10 December.
- Eversole, R (in press) *Knowledge Partnering for Community Development*. Scheduled October 2014. New York: Routledge.
- Eversole, R., L. Coates and D. Wells (in press) 'Rural Development from the Ground Up: Agro-food Initiatives in Tasmania', *Development in Practice* (accepted 31 July 2014).
- Eversole, R. (2013) 'Social enterprises as local development actors: Insights from Tasmania', *Local Economy* 28(6): 567–579.
- Harmaakorpi, V., Tura, T. and Melkas, H.(2011) 'Regional Innovation Platforms' in Cooke, P., Asheim, B., Boschma, R. et al. (ed) *Handbook of Regional Innovation and Growth*, Cheltenham, UK, Edward Elgar: 556-572.
- Asheim, B.T., Boschma, R. and Cooke, P. (2011) Constructing Regional Advantage: Platform Policies Based on Related Variety and Differentiated Knowledge Bases, *Regional Studies*, 45(7): 893-904.
- Allison, J. and Eversole, R. (2008) A New Direction for Regional University Campuses: Catalysing Innovation in Place, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 21(2): 95-109.
- Cooke, P. (2007) To Construct Regional Advantage from Innovation Systems First Build Policy Platforms, *European Planning Studies*, 15: 124-46.
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- Charles, D.R. (2006) Universities as key knowledge infrastructures in regional innovation systems, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 19(1): 117-130.
- Gunasekara, C. (2006) Reframing the Role of Universities in the Development of Regional Innovation Systems, *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 31(1): 101–113.
- Harmaakorpi, V. (2006) The regional development platform method as a tool for regional innovation policy, *European Planning Studies*, 14 (8): 1085-184.
- Harmaakorpi, V. (2004) Building a competitive regional innovation environment – the regional development platform method as a tool for innovation policy, Espoo, Helsinki University of Technology.
- Harmaakorpi, V. & Pekkarinen, S. (2003) The Concept of the Regional Development Platform and RDPM as a tool for Regional Innovation Policy, *43rd Annual Conference of European Regional Science Association*, Finland.
- Cooke, P. and K Morgan (1998) *The Associational Economy Firms, Regions, and Innovation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.