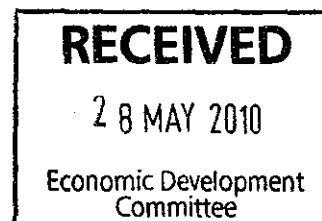


Sub 67

From: webmaster@parliament.qld.gov.au  
 Sent: Friday, 28 May 2010 12:06 PM  
 To: Economic Development Committee  
 Subject: ONLINE SUBMISSION - 'Grey nomad tourism'



ONLINE SUBMISSION - Grey nomad turism

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#### Importance of grey nomads to the Queensland economy:

1. What economic contribution do grey nomads make to rural and regional areas of Queensland?
2. Are the available statistics on grey nomads in Queensland useful, current and accessible?

1. Much has already been written about this topic by qualified researchers and I am able to add only a few additional points. I refer you to documentation available from the Volunteering Australia website found at <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/> and details of trial locations. My additional comment : Grey Nomads support local grocery stores and supermarkets through food purchases and local fuel suppliers as they travel. Other local repair businesses, caravan and camping stores, newsagents, chemists, visitor information centres, hairdressers, local arts and crafts stores, movie cinemas and local pubs and clubs also benefit through purchases made by Grey Nomads. In doing so they help to support the viability of some of these local businesses, although this is seasonal and aligned with the cooler months of the year. Their major outlays for their method of transport such as a car, 4WD, caravan, Winnebago, 5th Wheeler, converted bus etc are generally made in major coastal centres. Some regional centres are picking up on this and are offering vehicle and van refurbishments which in turn provides more local employment. Others are benefitting from the promotion of reasonably priced local tours to iconic locations. Most Grey Nomads travel with limited budgets and are quite aware of how much that are likely and willing to spend each travelling week and by location. Grey Nomads are experiential tourists and are likely to pop up in smaller towns if there are things to see and do. Their visitations are generally welcomed by locals so long as there is not an overburden on the amount of voluntary time needed to entertain these visitors. By word of mouth, other Grey Nomads will travel to these off the beaten track locations and spend a little bit of time and money. It should also be remembered that these Grey Nomads have spent a lifetime contributing taxes to their local, state and federal governments. They now enjoy the time to take in the rewards of their efforts and Governments at all levels have a responsibility to provide something back to them in their later years to help them enjoy their travelling experience. This includes allocating funding from Tourism, Employment and Seniors budget areas to support proposals as detailed in sections 6,7 and 8 of this submission. The State Government should let Grey Nomads know exactly what benefits they are providing to rural and regional areas through active marketing. Travellers want to experience the lifestyle of those living and working in regional, rural and remote areas. They want a taste of it for themselves and for many it is a great relief compared to the hustle and bustle of their lives in more populated centres. Many want to feel that they are contributing to the support of their fellow Australians. A number of years ago I worked as a Project Manager at the Roma Big Rig Visitor Information Centre. For most tourist attractions like the Big Rig it is a struggle for operators and local councils to keep them financially viable. These attractions are a key way for local communities to highlight their past, present and future. These attractions rely on all travelers including Grey Nomads to stop, stay and spend a little. By doing so they are playing their part in keeping the town and district vibrant and interesting. So they do have a part to play in the ongoing social and economic development of rural and regional towns. 2. There seems to be statistics from numerous sources including the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Tourism Qld, Universities, volunteer organisations and private businesses. The statistics show the growing numbers of Grey Nomads as the Australian population ages. The statistics and trends do not offer realisable solutions towards the ways of harvesting the potential of Grey Nomads to bring about ongoing economic and social benefits for regional, rural and remote communities. The statistics back the requirement to fund and develop coordinated projects specifically aimed at Grey Nomad based tourism and employment as proposed in sections 6,7 and 8 of this submission.

#### Infrastructure requirements:

3. What are the public infrastructure requirements of grey nomads including health services, waste disposal sites and signage?
4. Is the current infrastructure for grey nomads in Queensland adequate? What additional infrastructure is required?

Travellers to regional, rural and remote locations are always on the lookout for suitable places to pull over and park, particularly in town areas within short walking distance to shops and other facilities. It is important for local councils to maintain such areas including clean toilets, shaded picnic areas, with regular grounds and rubbish maintenance. Where appropriate, community and tourist noticeboards should be placed nearby. It is essential that a good and lasting

impression is made on travellers so that by word of mouth other Grey Nomads will be enticed to visit, stay and spend a little. A problem that some councils face is that by preparing and making available decent stop over areas this may actually entice Grey Nomads to shy away from staying in town at the local council owned or privately operated caravan or tourist park. It is therefore important that Grey Nomads and other travellers are made aware that overnight stays in some of the stop over locations are not permissible. The State and Federal Government also need to continue providing financial support to Councils and local Visitor Information Centres and key tourism attractions. These are the key meeting points for tourists to find everything they need to know about the local area including tourist attractions and potential paying and voluntary work.

**Government coordination:**

5. What are the major issues relating to the regulation of Queensland's camping and caravan parks?

No comment provided

**Marketing and promotion:**

6. What is the best method of marketing Queensland's rural and regional communities to grey nomad tourists?

The surveyed work completed by Volunteering Australia shows that the local visitor information centre, signs or noticeboards at local camping grounds and word of mouth are the best methods of communication with Grey Nomads. It is however my belief that much work can be done through a coordinated State-wide Grey Nomad Tourism and Employment Strategy as detailed in sections 7 and 8. The setting up a web based portal will in time become a major marketing tool to Grey Nomads as they plan to travel and as they move throughout the State. Individualised signage specific to a Grey Nomads brand should be established and marketed closely with visitor information centre signage. This will market to those Grey Nomads that there is specialised information and services available to them locally. A number of other marketing strategies can be included once the Grey Nomad portal and specific branding have been developed. This may include advertising in local papers, on the local radio, on tourism based television shows, caravan and camping shows, at caravan parks and stopovers, through promotional materials and signage and potentially through "Working Grey Nomad" caravans or buses used at locations where there are no visitor information centre.

**Utilisation of grey nomad skills in regional and rural Queensland:**

7. How successful have existing programs been in utilising the skills of grey nomads in rural and regional Queensland?

8. What can the government do to encourage grey nomads to use their skills by undertaking work in rural and regional areas?

Existing programs seem to be having some localised impact with coordinated efforts between some local councils, community volunteers and Grey Nomads under the guidance of organisations such as Volunteering Australia. However there is no consistency across the State so that Grey Nomads can follow a standardised approach to finding paid or voluntary work or to access tourism information from a single source. The groundwork has already been done in most areas. There is scattered information available on things to see and do for tourists in most towns and regions and on paid and voluntary work available. The State Government should setup a project to investigate the work completed and information already available with a view to having a consolidated approach which is easy to manage and will provide lasting benefits for Grey Nomads, local councils and communities. Visitor Information Centres need to become the physical one stop shop for a proposed Grey Nomad Tourism and Employment Strategy. The services of organisations such as Volunteering Australia and other not for profit entities should be used to find, promote and organise voluntary work. Existing job network agencies should be included to find, promote and organise available paid work. There needs to be a conduit between each of these stakeholders and this needs to be managed by the State Government. It is essential that a Sharepoint Portal be established which will provide the linkages to all the information and services that Grey Nomads would require access to. This would include linkages to existing tourism websites that already exist including those run by the local councils or visitor information centres. The portal would also provide the linkages to the available paid and voluntary work available to Grey Nomads across the State. This would include categorisation of the location, type, activity area (eg environmental, community, health, historical, fundraising), terms, priority and duration of work available with linkages to websites maintained by stakeholder partners. Through the Portal, details of work completed, underway and planned by Grey Nomads could be promoted. Grey Nomads would also be able to submit details of their availability to take on work in certain location or work areas. All activities would be coordinated online through the Portal. They would also be able to record their stories online and use the site for online social networking. They would be able to put forward their own ideas and have them recorded for subsequent consideration. Options should also be made available for interested Grey Nomads to provide project related work in the non-tourist season or when back working from home and not just when they are travelling. The Portal would be available from computers provided at visitor information centres and online through web access from any computer. Although the statistics show that marketing to Grey Nomads via a website is only favoured currently by 1/4 of surveyed Grey Nomads it may be that the information required has just been too hard to access or located in too many places. The setup of a Grey Nomad focussed web Portal covering the State that is easy to use and well promoted would result in much greater interest by Grey Nomads and other travellers. In order for this to happen the strategy must be coordinated by the State Government. An initial project should be setup to investigate the feasibility of the proposed Portal and the integration of available sources of information into it with a State-wide focus. The setup and ongoing operation of the proposed Portal can only be achieved through the financial support of both the State and Federal Government. Funding should be sought through Tourism, Employment and Seniors budget areas across both government levels. The proposed coordinated approach to implementing the Grey Nomad Tourism and Employment strategy should be championed by a single State Government agency and a project team established. This project team could consist of a mix of public servants and private contractors. The project team should liaise closely with a working group of stakeholders including local council representatives, visitor information centre managers, job network managers and members of voluntary employment organisations. The costs to setup this project team and to commence work of the Strategy could range up to \$1 million per year. This would include salary costs for the project team, Portal development costs, travel and accommodation, ICT costs for

the project team and at local visitor information centres, and a pool of funding to help support work initiatives across the State. There is little opportunity for income offset due to the nature of the project and little potential for returns from the beneficiaries including the Grey Nomads, local community organisations and local councils. Corporate sponsorships should be pursued but this still would only provide minimal income returns. Grey Nomads could be provided with free membership to a "Grey Nomads" club which provides them with membership level access to the portal. A level of paid membership options could be considered giving members access to discounts, tokens or tickets to be used at local stores and attractions. This will not necessarily provide a financial return to the project but would act as a mechanism for Grey Nomads to support local businesses and as a way of attracting more Grey Nomads to the services offered through the strategy. The proposed strategy will provide benefits to all stakeholders concerned. It should result in more site visitations with Grey Nomads stopping, staying and spending. There should be an increase in dollars spent in the local communities with the potential for improved services and minor infrastructure. Each community will have the opportunity for greater promotion through a common interface to a growing number of interested travellers. The State and Federal Governments will be seen as clearly making efforts to support regional, rural and remote communities.

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**Comments:**

There is great potential in setting up a Grey Nomad Tourism and Employment Strategy backed by a web portal providing a standardised means for Grey Nomads to access a wide range of relevant information across the State. It is not a self sustainable proposal on its own and therefore would require financial support and ongoing commitment by both the State and Federal Governments to make the strategy achievable. There is an obligation to governments at all levels to provide services back to those Grey Nomads who have spent a lifetime working and paying taxes. The setting aside of necessary funds to implement a strategy which will provide benefits to Grey Nomads, local councils and communities and the State is a worthwhile public objective. I have worked in regional, rural and remote area of Queensland for close to 20 years as a project manager and information and communication technology professional with experience in local tourism. I have experience in completing feasibility studies and preparing project initiation proposals in the development of information systems. I have numerous additional ideas on how the proposed strategy can be developed and implemented which are not included in this submission. Please feel free to contact me should you wish me to provide any further assistance.

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