

North Australian Rural Services

Australia has become the smart country but too smart for its own good. We have out priced ourselves in every way. The mining boom has been a major cause of this. Wages have gone to an unrealistic level. The hourly rate of an electrician, Plumber, builder and the list goes on have gone through the roof. Occupational health and safety standards have taken over industry and the cost of business has risen to a point that we can no longer be competitive in more sectors than just the agricultural industry.

It is simple. For the rural sector to become more competitive we need our staple cost of goods and services to come back to a realistic level. Fuel, power, water, transport are just few. Then there are the bodies that leach of the industry that really make no difference if we have them or not but we by law have to pay. Every cost has gone through the roof except the price that the farmer gets from the farm gate. This has happened systematically through the industry. The only way is for our product cost to go up. Middle men and retailers are making more than farmers growing the product in some cases.

Restart Infustructure

Primary industry is called primary industry because it brings in more money to our economy than any other industry. It is a larger employer however the country has got greedy and focused on the mining sector. We have forgotten about the rural sector the sector that will be here long after Mining.

Governments are privatizing and the infrastructure country wide is being closed down. Governments are spending money in the city to buy votes instead of nation building. There is not enough investment being put into the rural industry and the infustructure that we rely on is old and decrepit. Take a look at for example the Tinaroo dam on the Atherton tablelands to mention one. This damn was built in the thirties and we are still using the same channels. Even though the requirements have grown the infustructure remains the same. The channel is falling part and now the government want to privatize it. Pass off all the problems to some one else.

Roads are falling apart. Rail systems are being closed. This puts more pressure on the roads with trucks, which in turn wreck the roads and in the north due to our wet season they cannot sustain the heavy loads.

Our smart Ideas and our impossible standards have simply made it harder to do business.

We also have people in the wrong place making bad decisions. Look at what has happened with regards to the live trade debacle.

It is also clear to me that the places the committee are visiting , that Northern Australia does not rate highly on the list for getting ideas from. The most number of cattle in the country today are from the Rocky line north and yet there are about three visits by your committee in the Northern region.

The cattle industry have too many councils and committees. There should be one body that represents the industry that has representatives from all areas of the industry and states , north and south. This body can then umbrella the other committees . This body should be able to lobby Government direct.

The MLA needs restructuring. It has only one representative from the northern region and decision makers have not a clue as was demonstrated during the live trade debarkle. This organization needs pulling apart and restructuring to cut red tape and be more industry friendly.