

Submission - remote tax 06.11.19

I read the Voice (NTAA publication) regularly and having just finished the October edition am compelled to comment on the article about Remote area tax concessions.

I am absolutely appalled that the government wants to remove the piddly zone offset we regional people 'enjoy'. Goodness me - Cairns, Townsville and Darwin get a zone offset of \$57. This would not even buy a coffee each week. Probably means paying about \$17 less tax. Wow. The amount should be more - much more and there should be even more incentives to live and work in rural and remote areas in Australia. Australian outback towns are dying.

But my biggest gripe in the article were the words by Mr Coppel where he said that '*Many ZTO recipients are already compensated by higher remuneration and may enjoy the nature and pace of remote living.*'

I can assure you that no one living on Cairns would agree that their wages are high. Quite to opposite - most think they are not paid well at all - let alone being paid higher than anyone else. Wages growth is stagnant - more so in regional areas.

The age old argument that those living in remotes area enjoy the nice views and more laid back lifestyle actually means that because they live somewhere that others would like to go on holidays - this is more than enough compensation for higher wages - which is why wages in areas such as Cairns are low.

This was the case when I moved to Cairns 30 years ago. I was told that as I live in a lovely area, we don't need to pay you too much.

I assume Mr Coppel does not live in a remote area. Why would he want to give up access to major hospitals, transport infrastructure, major sporting events, more choice in schooling, better supermarkets and higher paying jobs.

By the government taking away what little additional tax concessions rural and remote workers get could mean that no one really wants to work in those areas anymore. Many young people in regional areas regularly leave town to go to the capital city universities and then never return after graduating. Why would they with all that is on offer in a capital city and the higher pay packet.

Hayes salary survey regularly notes those in capital cities average pay packet are much higher than those in regional areas. So the notion put forward by Mr Coppel that regional people are compensated by higher remuneration is just wrong.