



Office of the Mayor

Redland City Council

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Mr Paul Lindwall
Commissioner
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601, Australia

Email: remotetax@pc.gov.au

Dear Mr Lindwall

I write in response to the Productivity Commission's call for submissions to the review into *Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments*.

I acknowledge the Federal election has been called since I received the original correspondence from Senator Ian Macdonald in March calling for submissions and as such the Commonwealth Government is now in caretaker mode. Be that as it may, I believe parts of my community could potentially benefit from the contents of the following submission and as such I am pleased to submit it by the deadline as directed in Senator Macdonald's original correspondence. Should the impending Federal election change the scope or timing of the review, I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss further to ensure the content of the following submission is still considered.

I note that Redland City is not currently eligible for these tax concessions, which are historically applied to remote and regional areas of Australia. It is my understanding that these tax concessions are available to zones based on the proximity of the area to specific population levels. The concessions are there to assist people with hardships associated with living in a remote area with limited access to public transport, paid work and critical goods and services. I firmly believe certain areas of the Redlands face these same hardships and as such should be eligible for these tax concessions as outlined below.

The Redlands Coast is situated a short drive from Australia's third largest city of Brisbane. As part of South East Queensland – one of the fastest growing regions in Australia – the Redlands is often considered a metropolitan area and as such is excluded from many regional and remote grant allocations, tax offsets and other economic and social incentive programs. However our idyllic location on Moreton Bay and a short distance (as the crow flies) from Brisbane belies a number of significant isolation challenges faced by parts of our community.

With six residential islands, the Redlands Coast has one of the largest populations living on unbridged islands in the nation, bringing with it significant isolation challenges. Key amongst these challenges is the time it takes to travel to key employment areas, community services and specialist health care. It would not be uncommon for someone living on one of our islands to face a two hour one-way journey via several modes of public transport to access the services many people take for granted, a scenario not dissimilar to many regional areas of the country.

This in turn has resulted in significant unemployment on some of our islands, with our Southern Moreton Bay Islands recording a 16.5 % unemployment rate, more than twice the state's rate. In the 2016 Census, 13.1% of SMI residents identified as needing assistance due to a severe or profound disability, and needing help in their day-to-day lives. This is more than double the state (5.2%) and shows the transport and access challenges faced by these communities. These islands are also home to a rapidly ageing population with 63.2% of the population aged 50 years and over compared to the state with 33.6%.

These social statistics contribute to the Southern Moreton Bay Islands falling in the third percentile on the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), making it one of the most disadvantaged communities in Queensland. Compared to the State's SEIFA percentile rank of 43 and Greater Brisbane rating of 53, the SMIs suffer significant disadvantage and I believe having access to federal tax concessions would very much be welcome by the local community.

I would also appreciate the Productivity Commission investigating our two other residential islands of Coochiemudlo and North Stradbroke Island as part of this review. North Stradbroke Island in particular is going through a significant economic transition at present due to the end of sandmining on the island this year. The cessation of sandmining on North Stradbroke Island will result in the loss of approximately 141 jobs and a \$55 million annual contribution to the local Gross Regional Product, showing the need for economic assistance for the community.

Last year I successfully lobbied for the Federal Government to include our island communities in the Building Better Regions Fund, recognising the significant challenges faced by these communities. I believe these challenges support the inclusion of these island communities in the Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments to support the community in accessing vital economic and social opportunities.

Yours sincerely

Mayor Karen Williams
Redland City Council