



NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2009



Resolution Number Nineteen

Submitted by National Secretary, Paul Howes.

Regional Development

Background

The Australian Workers' Union has a proud history in the bush. From our inception in the Fern's Hotel in Ballarat on 16 June 1886 to our current representation of aluminium and steel workers, shearers, miners and many more who live and work in regional Australia, the AWU is the only union to maintain strong and deep links to the working families of regional Australia.

The AWU believes that for far too long regional Australia been viewed as a problem, rather than a valuable national resource. Regional Australia faces many challenges including drought; the drift of young workers to the cities; a lack of sustained infrastructure; and inadequate access to those public and private services that are an assumed part of day to day living of our metropolitan centres. Despite the existence of these challenges, they are nevertheless not insurmountable.

It is time for Australia to take a longer term look at the importance of our regions. With the increasing costs of metropolitan living, and increasing pressure being put on infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and schools, regional Australia offers a readymade solution. We are a big country, and the time has come to utilise this.

Socially, environmentally, and economically, it is vitally important to Australia's long term needs to have a structured and focused strategy that encourages greater public and private sector investment in regional Australia; that promotes more highly paid, skilled and stable forms of employment; and that delivers a better quality of life for working parents and their children.

Resolution

This National Conference believes it is time for the federal government to look seriously at the development of regional Australia and calls upon the federal government to develop and implement appropriate strategies that will actively encourage workers and their families to live and work in regional Australia, and which will drive greater investment in the creation of regional employment and social infrastructure.

Moved:

Seconded:

Outcome: