

CORRECTED VERSION

RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the opportunities for people to use telecommuting and e-business to work remotely in rural and regional Victoria

Wodonga — 23 October 2013

Members

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Witness

Mr R. Bertazzo, managing director, Bertazzo Engineered.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Raymond, for joining us via your mobile phone today. For the benefit of Hansard, can you state your name and business address?

Mr BERTAZZO — My name is Raymond Bertazzo. I am from Bertazzo Engineered. We are at 4 Turner Court, Wodonga.

The CHAIR — What is the nature of your business, Raymond? What do you build?

Mr BERTAZZO — We are pretty much a multifaceted engineering company. We do have laser cutting, we do have robotic welding and CNC brake pressing, but we also do fabrication. We do site work for installations of food plant and the like. We also do powder coating and sandblasting. We do 3D design drafting. We are pretty much a one-stop-type engineering business.

The CHAIR — Do you have clients over a wide area?

Mr BERTAZZO — From within this area, yes. We get them from Bright and Yackandandah. We just got two new Filipinos who started with us last week in powder coating.

The CHAIR — We missed that. You broke up there, Ray. You have two Filipinos?

Mr BERTAZZO — Yes; a guy from (inaudible) and an Indian.

The CHAIR — Where does all your work come from and go to?

Mr BERTAZZO — We have a large amount of work going to Wilson Transformer, which is a couple of doors from us. We do a large amount of work for a company in Sydney called CMG Engineering. They sell big motor starters for the mining industry worldwide, which we cut, weld and assemble, and an electrical company does the electrical work. We then test them, box them and send them all over the world. If you are in town, you could drop in and see the ones that are currently at the back of the workshop. They are on their way to Mongolia and Ghana. Three are going to Sweden and one to Australia.

The CHAIR — To communicate with all those, do you use the internet and broadband?

Mr BERTAZZO — Absolutely. We are absolutely stuffed with that. We cannot even get ADSL2, because we are too far away from the switch. When the development corporation in their wisdom built the industrial park that we are in they used copper and not enough of it. We do not have any fibre optics where we are at this current stage, and to make it worse, when they built the Wodonga railway station, as sure as hell they dug up something because whenever it rains it is pretty ordinary. We are in a pretty bad way as far as that is concerned, because we try to use voice lines to make our telephone system cheaper. With our design side of things, the drawing we had yesterday we have to give to some people we were talking to on a USB stick, because we could never send a 300 mega file out on the line, because at 4 o'clock in the afternoon all the schoolkids get home and start jumping on their computers.

The CHAIR — If you had good access, how many extra people could you employ?

Mr BERTAZZO — Could we employ? I think that is a bit of a wild one to try to quantify, but if it makes life a lot easier — as it is we currently employ about 10.

The CHAIR — Are you there, Ray?

Mr BERTAZZO — Sorry?

The CHAIR — We missed that bit.

Mr BERTAZZO — We have clients all over the country that we only ever communicate with electronically. We are going through a bad bit. You will have to just bear with us. It will not be too much longer before we are back out in the open again.

The CHAIR — We lost you again, Raymond.

Mr BERTAZZO — You will lose little bits because I cannot see a telecommunications tower. (Inaudible).

The CHAIR — When the NBN comes, what educational programs would you recommend to assist companies to adopt?

Mr BERTAZZO — Can you ask that question again?

The CHAIR — The NBN is coming sometime in the next two to three years; what sorts of programs should a government have to assist people to use it and take up the technology?

Mr BERTAZZO — I would say help for them put it in. I do not know really. Education on what that opens us for us. If they are talking about the speed you can actually communicate with, it would mean that some of the bigger computer programs you work with (inaudible).

The CHAIR — Unless you have any good advice for us, Raymond, we will thank you and wish you all the best. Have you got any extra advice you would like to give us at the end?

Mr BERTAZZO — As far as getting the NBN, let us make it happen. (Inaudible) a marginal seat. We are in a marginal seat that just lost our member, and that might make a bit of difference, but then again it might not make too much difference here in Wodonga. I know that in Albury they already have the NBN (inaudible). I do not know why it seems to be different on our side of the border.

The CHAIR — I think they are in a fairly safe seat too.

Mr BERTAZZO — (Inaudible) obviously Sophie Mirabella (inaudible). I really think that for you guys, particularly in that government area — I know you have someone out from Geelong, and I do not know whether you are there as well — —

The CHAIR — We have lost him.

Mr TREZISE — He mentioned Geelong, and he dropped out.

The CHAIR — I would like to thank everyone who has come along today. I thank the City of Wodonga for hosting us here today. I thank Hansard and the committee executive and research officers for their assistance. I wish all safe travel.

Committee adjourned.