

## Population Growth Study – Community Discussion

Date – 3 April 2018

‘Paula’ aged 29 grew up in Foster, moved away to Melbourne for university studies. Returned to Gippsland for work related to her qualification in dietetics and nutrition. Chose Latrobe Valley rather than other areas in the West of the State to be closer to family.

Now lives in Glen Iris in a house she is purchasing with a housemate. Paula travels to Cardinia for work and often returns to Foster to catch up with family. While in Foster Paula volunteers in the local community assisting her retired parents. She has a number of friends who have returned to the area with young families. Paula may also return to South Gippsland for the environment and lifestyle but is current pursuing her career in Melbourne where a rewarding workplace and challenging job satisfies her current needs.

### Background – Living in South Gippsland

Born in East Melbourne, Paula moved to Foster aged 6 months and spent her first 18 years there. From four years of age Paula lived with her family out of town on around 50 acres. Her parents remain living on the property.

Paula’s grandparents were dairy farmers in the Foster area leading to Paula’s family moving to be closer to them. Paula’s parents did not have work in the area when they first moved so her father continued to work in Melbourne for a while. The family then bought a business in Foster they ran for 25 years. The business has now been sold and Paula’s parents retired.

### Education

Paula attended the local primary school and then travelled by bus to the regional catholic college in Leongatha. Post-secondary school, Paula moved to Melbourne to attend Monash University where she lived on campus for the first three years before moving into shared accommodation with friends for the next three years.

### Employment

Paula has a Bachelor Degree in Nutrition and Dietetics. She is thinking of further study but previous work prevented her from studying the course in her preferred study mode of face-to-face. On graduation, Paula gained work in Gippsland in her area of qualification living in Traralgon. Similar work was available in other areas of Victoria at the time, however working in Gippsland allowed Paula to visit her family easily.

Paula now works in Cardinia and lives in Glen Iris. She had bought a house in Glen Iris some years earlier but decided to live in it and commute to Cardinia. The challenges of her work are satisfying and living in Melbourne allows opportunities for further study.

### Benefits and Barriers to living in South Gippsland

Paula enjoyed growing up in South Gippsland. Their family is close and they are all very connected to the community. Paula values country living, the natural environment, Wilsons Promontory and

the beaches. The local people know who you are and get together to get involved. It is nice to know all those people could help you if you needed it.

#### Disadvantages to living in South Gippsland

As a younger person at high school it was difficult to get around. Young people rely a lot on parents to help you to visit friends. Paula lost connection in secondary school coming from a small town because it was not easy to catch up with school friends who attended the school from a broad range of places. The lack of public transport left young people isolated from their social groups.

Paula felt restricted by the choice of subjects available in South Gippsland secondary schools. Choice of subjects in schools led the family to consider boarding school or moving to live with family in Melbourne. The choices provided by a regional college were greater than at the local school, however Paula would have selected different subjects at school had she had a better choice.

#### Future plans

Some of Paula's friends have moved back to South Gippsland with young families. As a single person, Paula is not at this stage of life and gains great satisfaction from her work in Cardinia. She would consider moving back to the area in the future.