An Australian Government Initiative

Regional Development Australia

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA NORTHERN RIVERS

Media release

1,000 leads highlight growing demand for Northern Rivers workforce.

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Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers (RDA Northern Rivers) has reached a significant milestone, with 1,000 leads generated through The Welcome Experience, highlighting the continued demand from essential workers looking to make the Northern Rivers their home.

The Welcome Experience is a NSW Government initiative designed to help essential workers and their families not only relocate to regional NSW, but settle, connect and build a life in their new community. The program provides practical local support and connections across employment, community, services, social networks and local opportunities.

The initiative supports workers across a range of essential industries, including health, aged care, education, veterinary services, police, emergency services, childcare and local government, as well as roles in areas such as road maintenance, planning and engineering.

For RDA Northern Rivers CEO Anthony Schreenan, the 1,000 lead milestone demonstrates both the attractiveness of the Northern Rivers and the importance of providing practical support once people decide to make the move.

“Reaching 1,000 leads is a significant milestone, but more importantly, it represents 1,000 opportunities to connect people with the Northern Rivers,” Mr Schreenan said.

“Attracting people to regional areas is only one part of the workforce challenge. We also need to make sure people and their families have the support, connections and local knowledge they need to settle and want to stay. That is where having people on the ground, who understand our communities, makes a real difference.”

RDA Northern Rivers delivers The Welcome Experience across the Northern Rivers, working with councils, employers, community organisations and other local partners to help new and prospective workers navigate life in their new communities.

The Local Connector team provides personalised support, helping workers discover everything from local services and community groups to schools, recreational activities, social opportunities and other connections that can make the transition to a new community easier.

The Welcome Experience Team Leader Lisa Richards said the 1,000 lead milestone represented far more than a number in a database.

“Every lead represents a person or a family who is considering making the Northern Rivers their home,” Ms Richards said.

“Our role is to understand what matters to them and then help make those local connections. Sometimes it might be finding a community group, helping someone understand what is available locally, connecting them with a council or employer, or simply helping them feel like they belong. Those connections can make a real difference when someone is starting a new life in a new place.”

The milestone comes at a time when regional communities continue to face significant workforce pressures, particularly in essential services. Helping skilled workers successfully relocate and establish themselves in the Northern Rivers is an important part of supporting local businesses, services and communities.

For RDA Northern Rivers, the program also demonstrates the value of a coordinated, locally delivered approach to workforce attraction and retention.

“Workforce is fundamentally an economic development issue,” Mr Schreenan said.

“If we want our communities to grow and our essential services to have the people they need, we need to think beyond simply filling a vacancy. We need to create the conditions where people can see a future here, establish connections and become part of the community.”

With 1,000 leads now reached, RDA Northern Rivers will continue collaborating with councils, employers and community partners to connect essential workers with opportunities across the Northern Rivers and help newcomers make the region home.

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