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Media release

Local Government Workers to Benefit from Expanded Welcome Experience Program

May 2026

Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers (RDA Northern Rivers) has welcomed the Minns Labor Government's announcement that local government workers will now be supported through The Welcome Experience program, helping regional councils attract and retain essential workers across the state.

The expansion means workers considering or accepting positions in regional local councils, including roles in road maintenance, engineering, town planning, childcare services and other critical local government functions, will now be eligible to receive support through the successful program.

As a major regional employer, local government plays a vital role in sustaining regional communities, delivering critical infrastructure, community services and long term planning outcomes. However, workforce shortages continue to present significant challenges for councils across regional NSW.

RDA Northern Rivers Director of Regional Development, Anthony Schreenan, said the expansion of the program to local government roles was a positive step for regional communities.

"Local government is the backbone of many regional communities, and councils are facing increasing challenges attracting skilled workers into critical roles," Mr Schreenan said.

"The expansion of The Welcome Experience to include local government employees recognises the important role councils play in delivering services and infrastructure that communities rely on every day."

"The Northern Rivers continues to experience strong population growth and significant infrastructure demand, making it essential that councils can attract and retain skilled professionals across engineering, planning, childcare, environmental services and operational roles."

Through The Welcome Experience, eligible workers and their families are connected with a dedicated Local Connector who provides practical, on the ground support to help them settle into their new community. This includes assistance with housing, childcare and schools, introductions to sporting and community groups, and connections to local services and employment opportunities for partners.

Mr Schreenan said the expansion would help strengthen regional workforce attraction efforts and improve long term community outcomes.

“Programs like The Welcome Experience help remove some of the barriers people face when relocating to regional areas and make communities more welcoming and connected for new workers and their families,” he said.

RDA Northern Rivers continues to work closely with councils, industry and government partners to support workforce development, regional liveability and sustainable economic growth across the Northern Rivers region.

Media Enquiries:

Anthony Schreenan
Director of Regional Development
Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers
E: director@rdanorthernrivers.org.au
P: 0407 724 110