

## **NORTHERN RIVERS**

**Tuesday 3 December 2024**

[start]

### **Local Connector to provide a very welcome experience**

RDA Northern Rivers welcomes Lisa Richards to the role of Local Connector for The Welcome Experience – Northern Rivers.

The Welcome Experience is a free service supporting essential workers (and their families) who are considering applying for or have accepted a job in regional NSW.

As a Local Connector, Lisa will be helping new essential workers with the practicalities of finding housing, choosing childcare and schools, exploring job opportunities for partners, through to meeting their new community and making social connections.

Lisa brings a breadth of knowledge to the position, which includes economic development, and languages.

She has direct experience in local government, tourism, business development, marketing, and small business management.

Being passionate about local community, Lisa has been actively engaged in local youth initiatives and is secretary of the volunteer-run Tweed Coast Youth Service.

“I am genuinely excited to be able to have this opportunity of Local Connector and look forward to working with relocating essential workers, their families and the employers.

“The role gives me the opportunity to build on existing relationships with the government and non-government sector while providing a personalised service to ensure our new essential workers feel welcome in the region,” said Lisa.

NSW Minister for Regional NSW, Tara Moriarty, said Ms Richards will join a close-knit community of Local Connectors who are extending a warm welcome to essential workers in 55 LGA's across the state.

"The Welcome Experience recognises that to build a resilient workforce in regional NSW, we must first help singles and families alike to put down roots and become a valued member of their local community," Ms Moriarty said.

"Whether it be catching up to see how a new Ambulance Officer is settling in or hiring a moving van to help ease the burden of a move for the new school teacher, I hear regularly about Local Connectors who are going above and beyond to ease the burden of moving."

"I wish Ms Richards all the best in her new role and can't wait to hear about the great things she will help RDA Northern Rivers achieve for the region."

RDA Northern Rivers Director of Regional Development Anthony Schreenan is excited to have Lisa join the team.

"This is an important role for our region and Lisa brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and connection to ensure new workers feel welcome and part of our community.

"Maintaining essential workers is vital to community cohesion and sustainability, and I believe Lisa has the skills to support newcomers to make the Northern Rivers home," he said.

The Hon Don Page, Chair of RDA Northern Rivers said "RDA Northern Rivers Board has been a longtime supporter of retaining essential workers in the region and The Welcome Experience is an excellent program to support this.

"We have great confidence in Lisa and her ability to provide exceptional service delivery to our new essential workers.

"This is an exciting time for RDA-NR as we continue to make positive impacts throughout our region," said Mr Page.

"The Welcome Experience is an excellent program and RDA Northern Rivers thanks the Minister and the NSW Government for funding the program in the Northern Rivers and know that this will make a very real difference in the attraction and retention of essential workers for the region" said Mr Schreenan.

State Member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin said she welcomed Ms Lisa Richards to this newly established role of 'Local Connector', a role that will not only make the new essential worker residents welcome but help attract them too.

“This has been a gap in the regional workforce framework and I am pleased that Minister Moriarty responded so well to this,” Ms Saffin said.

The Welcome Experience is available for NSW Government employees from NSW Health, NSW Police, NSW Fire & Rescue, NSW Ambulance, Department of Education, Department of Communities and Justice, and Corrective Services, as well as employees from government and non-government services in the areas of health and education, including aged care, early childhood education and disability service.

The Welcome Experience is part of the NSW Government’s \$25.1 million Essential Worker Attraction Program, which aims to boost essential workforces in regional NSW.

Find out more about [The Welcome Experience](#) and the exciting opportunities that await those considering a move to the regions.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/makethemove/welcome-experience>

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