



**NORTHERN
MIDLANDS
COUNCIL**

28 August 2019

Committee Secretary
Jobs for the Future in Regional Areas
Department of the Senate
P O Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Ms Allan

COUNCIL SUBMISSION TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE INTO THE JOBS FOR THE FUTURE IN REGIONAL AREAS

This submission is being made on behalf of Council and it addresses the Select Committee's term of reference: 'any related matter'.

The Northern Midlands is one of the largest and most diverse municipal areas in Tasmania. Our municipal area is rich in agricultural resources, natural and built heritage and has a thriving business estate – the Launceston Airport TRANSLink Precinct- where a diverse and ever-growing range of commercial, industrial and logistics businesses prosper.

Vibrant historic towns and villages blend in with the surrounding rural landscape. Our residents enjoy an enviable lifestyle: rural living within easy reach of the services and facilities in Launceston city.

The many sustainable competitive advantages of the northern midlands result in our municipal area having a higher than state average rate of population growth, led by internal migration. Plans for new residential subdivisions are consistently being lodged with Council and realistically priced real estate coming onto the market sells readily.

Despite these many positives, northern midlands businesses are increasingly experiencing difficulties in recruiting employees to fill trade and professional positions.

Council appreciates that the majority of the terms of reference for the Select Committee relate to opportunities to create employment in regional Australia in the industries of the future – clean energy technology and ecological services – and the diversification of supply chain industries.

Whilst measures that create more employment in regional Tasmania are welcomed by Council, the fact that regional Australia already has job vacancies (estimated by the Regional Australia Institute as 44,000 trade and professional vacancies across the nation in August 2019) needs to be recognised and strategies put in place, as a matter of urgency, to attract our city counterparts to relocate to regional Australia, and skilled migrants to settle in regional and rural communities.

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The Regional Australia Institute has this year released two reports:

- Regional Australia Institute (2019). *National Population Plan for Regional Australia*, Regional Institute Australia, Canberra
- Archer J., Houghton, K., and Vonthehoff B. (2019). *Regional Population Growth – Are We Ready? The economics of alternative Australian settlement patterns*, Regional Australia Institute, Canberra

that succinctly and clearly document recommendations and associated strategies to encourage population movement to rural and regional Australian communities.

The reports' recommendations include:

- The establishment of a national awareness campaign to promote regional population opportunities;
- Rebalancing of national and state infrastructure spending to enhance liveability in regional centres as much as dealing with congestion and housing problems in capital cities;
- The elevation of migration strategies for regional Australia;
- Removing barriers to secondary migration of international migrants wanting to relocate to regional areas, and funding to support community initiatives to make contact and assist their settlement.

Whilst the Select Committee's primary focus is on identifying opportunities to create more employment in regional Australia in the industries of the future, Council trusts the Committee will also address how to attract city workers to relocate to, and skilled migrants to settle in, rural and regional communities to fill the existing as well as future employment vacancies.

Council looks forward to the outcome of the Select Committee Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Des Jennings

GENERAL MANAGER