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MEDIA RELEASE

24th August 2022

Moving to a Regional Capital (not The Country)?

With many local employers telling us that there is a shortage of professional and highly skilled technical staff available in Bendigo, and high vacancy levels across a wide range of industries, how can we encourage more people to move to Bendigo as they build their careers?

In this we are very fortunate, since the Regional Australia Institute has undertaken some significant research into the question of “What do people need around them to call a place home?” While relating to “mid-sized towns” (population between 5,000 and 50,000), it seems reasonable to assume that many of the factors would also be relevant to those moving from Metropolitan areas, to larger Regional cities such as Bendigo.

The factors will come as no surprise to most people:

- Access to, and quality of, Health Services;
- Options for primary and secondary schooling, and access to post-school learning through vocational training or university;
- Balance between employment remuneration, affordable housing and living expenses;
- The natural, physical and cultural attributes of a place;
- Feeling socially included and connected in a friendly, welcoming community, and;
- Lower commuting times and increased leisure time.

On the above list, Bendigo stands up brilliantly as a tree-change location with the only significant impediment on this list being a current shortage of “affordable” housing. These, also, are the things that we hear people talking about when we watch all the “Moving to the Country” TV shows, or read the “Special Features” that run in the Real Estate Guides in metropolitan newspapers.

Does this image, however, sell us short, and do us a disservice in attracting the “hungry to succeed” people in the earlier parts of their careers – the ones who’ve been identified as missing from our current skills mix?

With the slogan “Where ambition finds opportunity”, the recently released INVEST Loddon Mallee website (www.investloddonmallee.com.au) provides a wonderful overview of the exciting industries and companies that are established, expanding and relocating to the area, and last week’s Bendigo Business Excellence Awards provided a showcase of exciting businesses, operating, innovating and thriving in the region.

Should we use these as a template to help with a slightly different message – one that adds a little bit extra to “liveability”? That Bendigo is also a great place to build and have a career!

Should we be in Melbourne and Sydney and Adelaide talking about the people who are working in Bendigo in highly skilled technical and professional roles? The ones who are building national and international personal profiles while working with and in businesses across Australia and the World?

The search for “talent” is not just National, but Global, and we need to take every opportunity to promote our City.

What would it take for “us” to launch a campaign featuring some of those people who could show that, at a personal level as well, Bendigo is a place “where ambition meets opportunity”?

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