

18 October 2019

Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments study
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

RE: Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments

Dear Sir/Madam

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana welcomes the opportunity to provide the attached submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the effectiveness of the current Remote Area Tax Concessions and Payments. We applaud moves to ensure this system provides successful outcomes for communities and industry, particularly in inland regional and rural NSW.

The Orana region covers approximately 25% of the state and includes some of the most productive agricultural areas in NSW. The region is also a significant mining region with more than 12 mines operating in the area, along with several in development. With a project pipeline of \$7.9 billion worth of public and private projects, the outlook for the region is strong, however the attraction and retention of skilled labour is a critical (and complex) issue.

In May 2018, RDA Orana undertook significant piece of research to better understand the factors affecting business and economic growth in the region. As a result of the research, RDA Orana published a detailed research paper called Bracing for Change, which included 9 position papers and 34 recommendations for change to support inland growth.

Of the 12 local government areas (LGAs) in the Orana region, 10 identify the ability to attract and retain staff as one of their critical issues. Six are concerned about a declining population. Most have expressed concern about the needs of the ageing population across the region.

Our region has critically low unemployment rates (our average is 2.4%, March 2019) and therefore the employers in our region are keen to reverse negative growth trends and to welcome workers into the region. But in a region with an ageing population and a workforce population of 52% (3% lower than the State average), employers are faced with many obstacles. We have both a skills shortage and a people shortage.

RDA Orana is committed to supporting our regional economy to overcoming these issues. We recognise the complexity of the labour market, but also believe that there a number of key strategies that the Federal Government can implement to support inland regional growth. A review and increasing tax incentives for business and families that choose to locate in an area that are facing critical skills shortages is one strategy that the Federal Government could implement that may make a significant difference to our communities.

The attached submission outlines these concerns in detail. Should you require further information regarding this submission, please contact me on (02) 6885 1488.

Yours sincerely

Megan Dixon
Director Regional Development

RDA Orana

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana is a not-for-profit organisation, funded by the Commonwealth Government as part of a national initiative charged with leading economic development across our regions.

Orana is the most diverse and largest region in NSW, servicing a population of more than 122,000 people across the central west and western NSW. It covers 200,000km² and represents 25% of the state. The region encompasses 12 local government areas (LGAs), with major regional towns including Dubbo, Mudgee and Cobar.

Orana has a strong agricultural history and growing mining tradition, with a diverse range of production activities undertaken across the region. The gross regional product is valued at approximately \$8 billion, with mining and agriculture the two most important industries, representing 18.3% of output. However, their success is impacting on the workforce in regional centres such as Cobar and Mudgee. The mines themselves also reporting difficulty in attracting and retaining staff, particularly where they are based in smaller centres.

In May 2018, we released a report titled Bracing for Change. This report was the result of a project throughout 2017-18 whereby we surveyed 190 businesses and organisations across the region to understand key issues affecting business growth.

One of the basic needs for business to develop and grow in regional communities is the ability to attract and retain suitably qualified and experienced staff. With five of the region's 12 LGAs recording full employment, an ageing regional population and declining participation rates, access to—and availability of—labour is critical.

Data analysis also show that there are less people in the Orana region available to work. The workforce population in the region is 52%, which is 3% lower than the national average of 55%. Census data also reveals a growing reduction of those in the workforce over the past 10 years in the Orana region. This is across the board and no industry is unaffected.

What's holding us back?

Of the 12 local government areas (LGAs) in the Orana region, 10 identify the ability to attract and retain staff as one of their critical issues. Six are concerned about a declining population. Most have expressed concern about the needs of the ageing population across the region.

Basic needs for business to develop and grow in regional communities include:

- attracting suitably qualified and experienced staff
- space to develop and grow
- high speed, reliable internet access
- available housing
- community support services, including health, childcare and education
- affordable access to training
- incentives to choose employment over ongoing dependence on welfare.

Focus groups with employers during the surveys uncovered a range of burdens on business. The incidental cost of training was among these. Where trainees and apprentices are concerned, their TAFE requirements regularly see young staff away from work for three days at a time, allowing for travel. This places a significant burden on both the employer, who is without a staff member, and on the employee. Young apprentices away from home who do not have a driver's licence or their own vehicle, are faced with additional transport costs, on top of accommodation, food and fuel. While training at home, apprentices and trainees registered with TAFE also have regular online training expectations that require access to high speed internet that is not always guaranteed.

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A further barrier to employment raised by survey participants revolves around the generosity of our welfare system and the disincentive it presents to unskilled job seekers. Employers seeking unskilled or lowly-skilled labourers have found that the minimum wage is lower than the full value of benefits that unemployed people are entitled to. When fully employed, welfare recipients lose not only their unemployment benefit, but also the associated rental and transport assistance, as well as their Health Care Card. Accepting the minimum working wage effectively means they are worse off financially, in most instances.

The additional benefits associated with unemployment payments mean that many towns are home to families that have been welfare dependent for three generations.

The economic base in many of the region's small rural communities has narrowed over the past 10 to 15 years. While agriculture remains the biggest employer, drought has brought many challenges. Farming enterprises have also become larger and more mechanised. This has reduced the demand for low and unskilled labour and caused a drift towards larger urban centres.

Despite this, opportunities are still emerging, local councils are encouraging development wherever possible and new enterprises are being developed. However, the community supports are lacking.

Larger regional councils like Dubbo and Mid-Western Regional Councils have small budget allocations to support widespread promotional campaigns. Dubbo is one of seven major regional councils involved in the Evocities campaign that aims to change perceptions of life in a regional city and encourage people to live, work and invest in an Evocity. It showcases the abundance of opportunities in the Evocities due to their lower cost of living, strong career and business opportunities and enhanced lifestyle.

Whilst the cost of living in these communities, is relatively cheaper than the cost of living in a regional city, a person who chooses to live in an **inland** regional, rural or remote location is also immediately disadvantaged in terms of access to certain services, including the critical services of advanced health and higher education. As an example, a family located in region with tertiary aged students in the family, will often be supporting two households, due to the lack of local tertiary study options available in the region.

Situational review and gap analysis

What has become clear in working with local councils in the region is that there is a looming critical labour supply shortage. There are a number of major projects being developed in the region that will impact on the labour force, including:

Project	Date	Value \$M
Dubbo Regional Council		
New Dubbo Bridge	2018 - 22	140
Newell Highway Mitchell Highway Intersection Upgrade	2018 – 20	20
Newell Highway Upgrade – West Dubbo	2017 – 19	11
Mitchell Highway & Fitzroy St Upgrade	2018 -20	14
Wellington Pool Revamp	2018	7.5

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Wellington Caves Visitor Experience	2017- 19	3.8
Victoria Park upgrade	2017	8
SES Upgrade	2017	2.3
Dubbo Solar Hub	2017	55.6
Regional Rail Project	2018	50
Taronga Western Plains Zoo Redevelopment	2017-18	25.8
Dubbo Base Hospital Upgrade	2017-18	43.5
Wellington Solar Farm	2018-19	400
Suntops Solar Farm	2019	286
Fletchers Expansion	2018-20	30
Alkane – Dubbo Project	2018-19	1290
MAAS Macquarie St – Mixed Use	2018-19	115
RSL Lifecare “Horisons”		12
NSW Rural Fire Services	2018-20	16.2
Bogan Shire		
Nyngan Medical Centre	2017	1.3
Cobar-Nyngan twin pipelines	2017/18	2.5
Road maintenance	2017/18	1.65
Plant	2017/18	1.3
Capital roadworks	2017/18	1.4
Road gravel resheeting	2017/18	1.01

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Water supply and sewerage assets	2017/18	0.94
Water storage	2017/18	7.869
Nyngan Scadium Project	2019	110
Lawlab	2018/19	-
Bourke Shire		
Abattoir	2017-18	61
Reconstruction/resealing roads	2018	11
Indigenous anti-DV program	2010-2022	1.5
Water treatment plant	2018	8.5
Main St makeover	2017	1.5
Brewarrina Shire		
Goodooga Rd upgrade/sealing	2018/19	21.3
Cobar Shire		
Copper City motel extensions	2017/18	1
Cobar Water Board - Pipeline Replacement and Pumping System Upgrade	2017/18	10.7
New water treatment plant	2017/19	8
Sewer treatment plant upgrade	2017/18	2.1
Cobar Airport - Lighting and Pavement Upgrade	2017/18	2.5
Cobar-Nyngan twin pipelines	2017/18	51.5
IGA development	2017/18	1
CSA Mining - concentrate filter replacement	2017	2

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Sealing the Wool Track	2018	52
Heritage Centre extensions	2018	31
Mobile preschool relocation	2018	1.4
Cobar Biohub and Solar Thermal Plant	2019	250
Coonamble Shire		
Coonamble to Warren Rd upgrade	2017	1.9
Gilgandra Shire		
Federation Street Upgrade	2018	1.4
CBD Upgrade – Stage 2	2018/19	2
Inland Rail	2024-25	
Gilgandra Solar Farm	2018	61.62
Mid Western Regional Council		
Bylong Coal Project		
Bowdens Silver Project	2020?	150
Bylong East Duplication		106.3
Wollar Solar Farm		450
Beryl Solar Farm		171
Water and sewer infrastructure	2017-18	12.8
Unsealed rural roads	2017-18	11.1
Wilpinjong Mine Extension	2018/19	101
Mudgee Hospital Upgrade	2017-18	70

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Crudine Ridge Wind Farm	2018	300
Sewer augmentation	2019/20	15.9
Narromine Shire		
Inland Rail – Parkes to Narromine	2019-20	\$300
Narromine Airport Industrial Park	2017-18	1.5
Agricultural value-added manufacturing[1]	2018-20	23.5
Walgett Shire		
Walgett Solar Project		51
Walgett Levee	2018/19	2.4
Bugilbore Rd upgrade	2017	3.5
Goangra Bridge Replacement	2018	1.2
Lightning Ridge VIC Construction	2018/19	1.3
Australian Opal Centre	2019/21	30
Warren Shire		
Nevertire Solar Project	2018	178.5
Regional Rd maintenance	2017	1
Sewerage Treatment Plant	2018	6
Reconstruction of Ellengerah Rd	2017	1.06
Flood damaged road repairs	2017	1.17
Warrambungle Shire		
Dunedoo Solar Project		90

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Liverpool Range Windfarm	2018	643
Three Rivers Regional Retirement Community	2017/18	7.2
NSW Rural Fire Service Control Centre	2017/18	3
Regional projects		
Western Slopes (Gas) Pipeline	2018/19	450
TOTAL		6427.019

In Bourke, where 220 jobs will be created through the development of the new small livestock meatworks, the impact on the community of only 2,633 people will be significant. The total output from this development, including all direct, industrial and consumption effects is estimated to increase the local economy by up to \$242 million.

The total employment increase, including all direct, industrial and consumption effects is estimated at up to 526 jobs. That's nearly one new job per every five residents. The additional consumption effect alone is an estimated \$15.4 million boost.

Bourke Abattoir Impact Summary	Direct Effect	Supply-Chain Effect	Consumption Effect	Total Effect	Type 1 Multiplier	Type 2 Multiplier
Output (\$M)	\$144.447	\$71.653	\$26.164	\$242.264	1.496	1.677
Employment (Jobs)	220	210	96	526	1.955	2.391
Wages and Salaries (\$M)	\$18.380	\$11.780	\$6.151	\$36.311	1.641	1.976
Value-added (\$M)	\$31.092	\$28.626	\$15.412	\$75.129	1.921	2.416

(Remplan, Impact report for Orana RDA viewed 4 April 2018).

Housing shortage

However, there are currently only three houses available for rent in Bourke. The current vacancy rate is only 2%, suggesting very high demand. Nearby Brewarrina has nothing available to rent.

Employers in these towns, including the NSW Government, are regularly faced with housing as a key barrier to recruitment. This makes it particularly difficult to fill essential roles such as police and nursing, as well as to attract quality teaching staff to local schools. NSW Government studies show there will be demand for 12 new dwellings a year to 2036, or another 253 houses.

Without investment in suitable accommodation, or incentives to improve the supply of housing, communities like Bourke and Brewarrina will continually be faced with declining and ageing populations that have increased health and community services requirements.

FBT concessions currently apply for staff in remote areas where housing is provided—assuming any is available. However, those benefits are not well promoted or packaged into salaries and the only benefit

employers gain is access to staff. There is no incentive for them to become direction accommodation providers as that is considered an area for developers.

Tax incentives

A number of respondents felt that major adjustments to the taxation systems—specifically Payroll and PAYE—could potentially benefit the economies and residents of regional areas, without making a significant difference to the amount of tax collected by the government.

Employers and training providers surveyed also suggested that tax incentives could recognise the additional costs of training staff in rural areas. They believe that help is needed to provide quality on-the-job training to young trainees and apprentices.

Suggested incentives that could help reduce the declining rural populations and support communities trying to attract and retain staff include:

- reduced tax thresholds for people employed in regional, rural and remote areas that are faced with declining populations and difficulties attracting and retaining staff
- extending schemes such as IPTAAS (Isolated Patients' Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme) that recognise the additional financial burden people are faced with when travelling long distanced to access specialist medical treatment and even children's sporting activities
- higher HECs thresholds for graduates locating to remote and rural areas for employment
- tax incentives for businesses or organisations to build staff housing that would help attract new employees to rural areas.

RDA position

The Orana region is home to a number of very productive rural centres that play an important role in sustaining our nation's agricultural and mining industries. These centres have a proud history and are a significant part of the fabric of our society. RDA Orana is committed to promoting the Orana region as a place to live and work and to supporting employers to attract staff.

Addressing the issue of family drift through incentives

RDA Orana has identified family drift is a primary reason for population decline (labour shortages) in inland regional, rural and remote areas.

A large number of families, particularly those with mobile employment such as police, banking staff, teachers and nurses either completely leave rural towns or the region altogether when their children reach high school age. These people do not come back to these communities, so the recruitment cycle continues, leaving not only skills gaps, but also community gaps. In these cases, two professionals are sometimes lost from a small town. When this becomes a trend, there becomes a reduced need for services.

For those families with property interests, or where one parent needs to remain for employment in the region, it is not uncommon for one parent to relocate with the children to a major centre such as Dubbo or Orange during school terms. Whilst this option retains contact with the region, the flow-on effect of family drift away from rural towns is substantial in terms of:

- teaching capacity no longer needed
- medical and other community facilities not being used to capacity and becoming unviable
- reduced spending on groceries and other commodities
- absence of volunteers
- reduced numbers in local sporting teams and other interest groups that bind rural communities together.

The same situation occurs in some families due to higher-level sporting commitments where the athlete and one parent move closer to Sydney to accommodate training and competition requirements.

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Census data shows a 2.2% decline in total population in the Orana region over the past 10 years. While there was a slight increase in the 2016 Census, most of that occurred in the larger centres, with Dubbo and Mudgee the main beneficiaries.

Population drift in the teenage years is a significant trend when children either move to boarding school or to larger centres with one or more parents. Cobar and Bourke are strong examples with 20 less 10 to 14-year-olds in Cobar between 2011 and 2016 (a drop of 0.34%) and 47 less 15 to 19-year-olds (a drop of 1.08%). There was a corresponding drop of 2.5% in the population of 45 to 49-year-olds in Cobar – the age group that is possibly represented by the parents of these teens.

Bourke's 2016 Census data shows a similar trend, with a more pronounced loss of adults in the age's groups 35 to 44, down by more than 1.5%. The drop of teenagers in the Years 9 to 12 age group was from 162 to 114 over five years. In 2011, there were 202 children aged 10 to 14 but this drops down to 114 in the 15 to 19-year age group five years later. That's nearly 100 less children in that period.

Age	Cobar (A) (2016)		Cobar (A) (2011)	
	Persons	%	Persons	%
0-4 years	363	7.81%	401	8.51%
5-9 years	372	8.00%	343	7.28%
10-14 years	290	6.24%	310	6.58%
15-19 years	252	5.42%	299	6.34%
20-24 years	259	5.57%	301	6.39%
25-29 years	351	7.55%	368	7.81%
30-34 years	367	7.89%	292	6.20%
35-39 years	294	6.32%	353	7.49%
40-44 years	293	6.30%	259	5.50%
45-49 years	242	5.20%	361	7.66%
50-54 years	343	7.38%	343	7.28%
55-59 years	338	7.27%	284	6.03%
60-64 years	260	5.59%	231	4.90%
65-69 years	208	4.47%	176	3.73%
70-74 years	139	2.99%	157	3.33%
75-79 years	123	2.65%	108	2.29%
80-84 years	85	1.83%	75	1.59%
85-89 years	47	1.01%	45	0.95%
90-94 years	21	0.45%	7	0.15%
95-99 years	3	0.06%	0	0.00%
100 years and over	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	4,650	100.00%	4,713	100.00%

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Age	Bourke (A) (2016)		Bourke (A) (2011)	
	Persons	%	Persons	%
0-4 years	216	8.20%	268	9.35%
5-9 years	220	8.36%	253	8.82%
10-14 years	173	6.57%	202	7.05%
15-19 years	114	4.33%	162	5.65%
20-24 years	168	6.38%	173	6.03%
25-29 years	179	6.80%	185	6.45%
30-34 years	192	7.29%	179	6.24%
35-39 years	142	5.39%	200	6.98%
40-44 years	155	5.89%	215	7.50%
45-49 years	211	8.01%	198	6.91%
50-54 years	199	7.56%	197	6.87%
55-59 years	169	6.42%	155	5.41%
60-64 years	140	5.32%	151	5.27%
65-69 years	111	4.22%	126	4.39%
70-74 years	97	3.68%	64	2.23%
75-79 years	62	2.35%	68	2.37%
80-84 years	44	1.67%	54	1.88%
85-89 years	33	1.25%	17	0.59%
90-94 years	8	0.30%	0	0.00%
95-99 years	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
100 years and over	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	2,633	100.00%	2,867	100.00%

Reasons for students and/or families leaving rural communities identified through this research and by local councils include:

- the standard of education on offer
- the gap in NAPLAN results compared to the national standard
- teacher shortages
- limited subject choices for HSC students
- time spent commuting to school each day
- social issues within communities, including unemployment, crime, drugs and alcohol
- perceived lack of employment opportunities for young people after leaving school
- lack of opportunity to participate in sporting and cultural activities at a higher level
- time and travel costs associated with sporting and other extra-curricular commitments.

While most of these factors relate to the education of school students, other family members also face difficulties if they wish to pursue further study. The most significant factor is the time required away from family for practical experience and training. This can be expensive and logistically challenging for many families in regional, rural and remote areas.

“... at the heart of rural education is a critical question about its purpose, and as a student might ask, ‘Am I learning so I can leave my community; am I learning so I can stay locally; or am I learning so I can have a real choice about what I do?’” (Halsey, 2017)

Situational review and gap analysis

RDA Orana’s survey findings suggest the following issues are having an impact on economic growth and causing family drift, as well as community decline:

- The clear lag in academic results in rural schools in the region.
- The poor reputation of local schools within the region in terms of academic offerings and results.
- The difficulty experienced by all schools in attracting and retaining secondary school and early childhood teachers.
- Economies of scale and less access to teachers reducing the range of subject choices on offer, particularly for HSC students.
- The decreasing working age population.

At 42%, the working age population in the Orana region is 11% below the national figure of 53%. There has been a growing reduction in the workforce in the past 10 years, as shown in Census data.

Teacher shortage

According to the 2016 Census, education and training is the fourth biggest employment area in the Orana region and sits at 3.87% of the workforce, or 4,590 people. This has been gradually increasing in the past 10 years.

Eight of the 12 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the Orana region list secondary and early childhood teachers as a critical skills shortage in their area. In particular, there is a significant shortage of secondary mathematics teachers – an issue raised by four LGAs, including Dubbo.

Facilities and incentives

A study released in April 2018 also suggests stronger incentives to bring experienced teachers from metropolitan to rural and regional areas through incentives including extra cash, comfortable housing and a guaranteed right of return. The report's author is education professor and former teacher, Professor John Halsey. He has urged the Federal Government to offer more incentives for established teachers to work outside the city, and to break down the stigma attached to the bush as a place for teachers to work.

Under a plan to improve student results in Australia's regional schools, he has recommended experienced city-based teachers should also be given an "absolute, rock-solid guarantee" they can return to their original school. This is a move away from permanent recruitment but could bring experienced teachers to regional areas to support less experienced staff and young graduates for periods of several years. He pointed to models used in mining and engineering industries to lure staff to regional areas by offering "very nice housing" and paying for staff and their families to fly and inspect their potential homes.

Professor Halsey said there should also be more help for students from regional schools who move to the city for university, where they often struggle to find and maintain property leases. He proposed an "adviser-cum-broker" to help them into affordable student housing where possible, rather than the private rental market.

From June 2009 to July 2017, the Australian Tax Office provided HECS-HELP Benefit for education and nursing/midwifery graduates who took up employment in these professions. This benefit reduced the graduate’s compulsory HECS debt repayments. These kinds of incentives are important in attracting graduates across all professions to pursue employment in regional Australia. If also applied to HECS debts for post-graduate studies, it would also encourage people to take on further study and help build the knowledge base within the region and its ability to be more innovative.

Lack of boarding opportunities close to home

Without a critical mass of students, it is difficult to offer a wide range of subject choices in the senior school environment and to attract quality teaching staff. With more than 300 students in both Years 11 and 12, Dubbo College's Senior Campus is in a position to offer a greater range of options. The school also made history in 2017 with 60 of its students becoming the largest group of Aboriginal students to sit the HSC exams.

But that still leaves students in other parts of the region without an option if there is no boarding school. In a bid to fill this gap, Macquarie Anglican Grammar School has lodged a development application for a boarding house in Dubbo that would complement its existing Kindergarten to Year 12 school. This would give families from western NSW the opportunity to send their children to the school and board in Dubbo. Currently the nearest boarding facility is at Orange or Forbes, both of which are out of the region. Many families opt for Sydney-based boarding options. Boarding in Dubbo would allow parents to watch their children play sport, participate in musicals or other school activities, and spend the weekend in Dubbo, with the subsequent economic benefit remaining within the region.

Poor NAPLAN results

The lag in academic results in rural schools in the region is pronounced and viewed by NAPLAN results. Of particular concern are these observations from the 2016 results:

- schools in four LGA areas failed to reach the national average for the percentage above the minimum standard across all four years of testing in both reading and numeracy
- Dubbo only met the national average for the minimum standard in Year 3 numeracy – all other year groups recorded below the national result for both areas
- no LGA recorded a result matching the national result for Year 9 reading
- Cobar LGA recorded 100% of students above the minimum Year 7 standard for numeracy, with no other LGA meeting the national result
- In Year 5 numeracy and Year 7 reading, 11 of 13 LGAs were below the national result
- in Brewarrina LGA, only 55% of students were at or above the minimum standard for Year 7 numeracy – this was 45% below the national result
- only Gilgandra met the national result for Year 5 reading
- Cobar's results were high or above the national result across all areas, with two ratings of 100% at or above the minimum standard.

RDA Orana Recommendations

1. Review the boundaries of eligible areas and prescribed zones for zone tax offset and FBT remote area concessions to incorporate the 12 Local Government Areas that make up the Orana Region
2. Significantly increase tax incentives that encourage people to live and work in inland regional, rural and remote communities that are facing skills shortages and for businesses to invest in housing to support increased employment.
3. Expand the support for families, students, trainees and apprentices located in inland regional, rural and remote areas to access university or VET training outside of their region.
4. Increase tax incentives or other relief for families who chose to relocate (or remain) to/in regional, rural and remote communities within the Orana region.
5. Provides HECS tax relief: for all graduates who gain employment in their field of study and base themselves in regional, rural or remote areas that are facing critical workforce shortages and provide this incentive to all professions, across both undergraduate and post-graduate studies.

6. Advocate for incentives to ease the financial burden of studying and training for apprentices and trainees.

Conclusion

Much of the Orana region is not covered by the current zones, yet as an inland area, our region has not been able to retain or attract population growth, for a variety reasons, outlined in our report.

RDA Orana is committed to the principle of supporting regional economic development that contributes to the wealth and prosperity of Australia, Viable economic regions, such as our, will only be able to continue to prosper if we have access to workforce and access to workforce is underpinned by positive population and sustainable regional, rural and remote towns that supports them.

The Federal Government has recognised the role of regions and has significant aspirations for the regions in terms of contribution to GDP. This includes the commitment to growth in agricultural and strategic minerals, which underpin the Orana regions economic activity.

Whilst the cost of living in an inland regional, rural or remote location is viewed as being significantly cheaper, particularly in terms of housing costs, the people who choose to locate in these locations are faced with different difficulties, including access to advanced medical treatments and education. The people who have made the Orana region their home, must travel great distances to access to services, that people located in large coastal centres and our capital cities, can access with ease.

Our region has a critical labour shortage and has struggled to attract workforce to relocate into the region. Improving the tax incentives and financial outcomes for people who live in inland regional, rural and remote Australia is one small aspect that can contribute to supporting economic growth of our region.