



Rural and Regional Committee

INQUIRY INTO TELECOMMUTING AND E-BUSINESS

Media Alert

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REGIONAL VICTORIA'S DIGITAL FUTURE

"The time to embrace the digital economy has arrived," said Mr Paul Weller MP, Member for Rodney.

"People are now able to work from anywhere, with geographical location becoming increasingly irrelevant for business. The potential economic and social benefits for rural and regional Victoria are huge, for businesses and workers alike."

A Victorian State Parliamentary Inquiry into the Opportunities for People to Use Telecommuting and E-Business to Work Remotely in Rural and Regional Victoria has recommended ways government can facilitate rural and regional Victoria's online economic development, including e-business and telecommuting.

"Victoria has long had a reputation as a place of innovation and creative thinking, frequently led by our regional towns and cities. This report recognises this reputation and encourages ways in which the state can continue to lead the world."

Mr Weller, Chairman of the Rural and Regional Committee, said that the best way for the Victorian Government to encourage telecommuting is to lead by example.

"The state government is well placed to not only promote telecommuting but set an example," Mr Weller said.

"One relatively simple way the Victorian Government can do this is to actively encourage telecommuting across all Departments. Advances in technology mean that more public servants should be working remotely away from central offices, both increasing their productivity and taking pressure off crowded roads and public transport systems. This would send a strong signal to the rest of the economy about what is possible."

The Committee has also suggested that the Victorian Government continue its efforts to boost e-business skills across the state.

Mr Weller added: "There are a lot of training and educational opportunities available for businesses. The Victorian Government needs to maintain its investment in projects and direct resources in a more targeted way, to reach more businesses, especially small businesses."

The Rural and Regional Committee travelled widely throughout Victoria and spoke with many businesses embracing the global digital economy and leading the world in online innovation and creativity. Evidence was received from online businesses, farmers and manufacturers, industry, and government.

"The Rural and Regional Committee believes that the recommendations contained in our report will speed up the transition to a workforce that will work anywhere and increase the digital literacy of employers and employees," Mr Weller said.

Paul Weller will be available to talk in detail about his Committee's new report.

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