



VRCA

Victorian Regional Chamber Alliance

The Victorian Regional Chamber Alliance (VRCA) welcomes the recent announcement of \$11.1 million in funding to establish a National Centre for Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing. This initiative represents a significant step forward in addressing the mental health challenges faced by workers across Australia. However, it is crucial that this funding translates into tangible support and access for regional and rural Victoria.

In regional areas, the pressures of isolation, economic uncertainty, and access to mental health services create a unique set of challenges for businesses and their employees.

The Partners in Wellbeing and Peak Bodies Program established during COVID was extremely successful and clearly addressed Recommendation 16 of the Government's own Royal Commission.

Enquiry was at all time high earlier this year when many of the peak bodies lost their clinician. The loss of this skill set also means business support organisations cannot offer important training and development to our business community. Knowledge and understanding is critical for managers and supervisors to ensure their approach is appropriate.

With all other supports, especially financial ones, from governments now removed business owners are struggling now more than ever before, having to deal with workforce shortages, higher interest rates and major cost increases across their supply chains as well as higher energy and insurance costs.

Regional Chambers who have day to day contact with business owners and their team members, need to be resourced to allow us to help those in our communities get through what is most possibly the most difficult time in their business lives.

The VRCA welcomes the opportunity to be part of the collaboration on how best to deliver these services to our regional business communities.

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