

Rural Councils Victoria advocacy campaign

The **Agenda**
group



Overview

1. Leading up to the federal election
2. Population advocacy

Upcoming federal election

Rural Councils Victoria completed a significant submission to the federal government prior to this year's budget.

While RCV's advocacy was successful in some areas, such as procuring additional funding for the *Roads to Recovery Program*, smaller but equally important measures were overlooked.

Upcoming federal election

Rural Councils Victoria will continue to advocate for the remaining funding priorities in the leadup to next month's federal election.

Upcoming federal election

Current polling and November's Victorian election indicate that there's a high likelihood the election will produce a change in government, and independent members elected throughout rural Victoria.

For this reason, it's particularly important to establish relationships with a range of candidates in your LGAs – not just sitting MPs.

Population advocacy

Last year, Rural Councils Victoria produced the research report *Population Growth in Rural Victoria – Opportunities and Actions*.

This report examines in detail the population and workforce challenges faced by rural Victoria, and makes clear recommendations on how to meet those challenges.

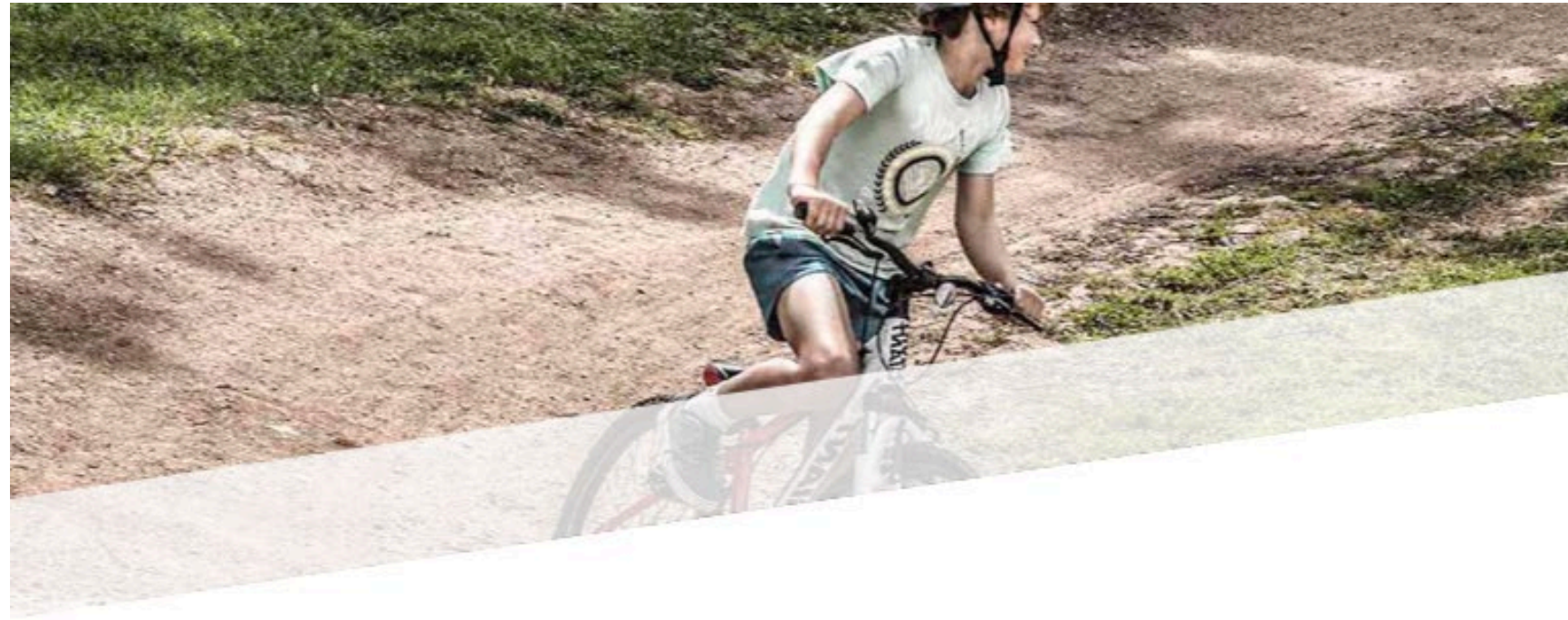
Population advocacy

Federal and state governments have started to respond to the population challenges facing Australia, but not in a coordinated way, and usually not in a way that puts the needs of rural Victorians front and centre.

Population advocacy

Rural Councils Victoria has assembled an advocacy strategy to both directly advocate to government and support member councils in their own advocacy.

Because every council area has different population challenges, your support will help show both the breadth and the diversity of the challenges rural Victoria faces.



How your council can help

While Rural Councils Victoria is advocating strongly for a better response to rural population decline on behalf of its members, supporting advocacy from your council will ensure our response is comprehensive and representative of all kinds of rural communities.

To make our messaging as effective as possible, advocacy efforts should be directed at three main audiences:

- 1) Government: politicians and departments
- 2) The public: residents and businesses
- 3) Council staff: ensuring our efforts are council-wide.

Using the key messages on the previous page, the following guide suggest ways you might lead advocacy activities in your municipality.

Government advocacy

Engaging directly with MPs and candidates in your region is an effective way to ensure we build awareness across Victoria and keep messaging relevant across communities.

With state and federal elections occurring in the next twelve months, now is a particularly good time to discuss our community's needs with politicians. Speaking to candidates as well as sitting MPs will ensure major parties on all sides are aware of our key asks.

Ways to engage candidates may include:

- Sending local MPs and candidates the briefing materials in this pack
- Requesting a meeting to discuss how low population growth is affecting your region
- Speaking to departmental contacts about working together to implement priorities in your municipality.



Key messages: Talking to others

We won't get action on rural Victoria's population unless governments and the public understand the issue.

When talking about the issue, we need to reinforce three key messages:

- 1) we need a plan from the government,
- 2) we need initiatives to attract diverse jobs,
- 3) we need support to increase liveability.

Each of these three messages are supported by the *Population Growth* report and link in with each of the goals the report identifies.

Consistent and clear messaging across all RCV councils will ensure the government and residents hear the same asks and understand what needs to be done.



We need a plan to get people moving to rural Victoria

Key lines:

'Rural Victoria can't survive if people keep moving away.'

'If the government wants to support rural Victoria, they need to support a plan for growing the number of rural Victorians.'

We need the state government to commit to producing a population plan for rural Victoria. Without a plan, we can't be focused and effective in our response.

A state-wide plan from the government will give a clear strategy, measurable goals and keep government actions focused on bringing people back to rural Victoria.



State government plan
Connecting programs together

Examples to share:

What areas of your municipality are struggling with population challenges?

How would a state-wide population plan help your council plan for the future?

Population advocacy

Our advocacy strategy highlights three key actions we are asking governments to take in 2019:

1. Develop a plan to get people moving to rural Victoria
2. Implement initiatives to diversify rural Victoria's job market
3. Increase funding for community liveability initiatives.

Population advocacy

The document lists many ways your council can assist with the campaign, but one item is particularly pressing:

We're looking for examples of communities where population decline or workforce shrinkage is already having an effect. We want to shine a spotlight on these communities to show politicians why this is an urgent problem that needs action.

Population advocacy

If you have communities in your LGAs that need a population solution from government, please contact the RCV secretariat.

Alternatively, the advocacy kit includes material to support councils in their own media and advocacy activities.

Summary

1. In the leadup to the election, meet and brief a range of local candidates
2. Read through RCV's population advocacy kit to understand how your council can assist in the campaign
3. Please contact the RCV secretariat with any examples of communities that are at the front line of rural population challenges.

Connor Parker

(03) 9629 7752

connor@theagendagroup.com.au

