

Rural Promotion Program – final report

The LiveCountry campaign developed for Rural Councils Victoria's Rural Promotion Program has established a new benchmark for campaigns designed to encourage people to move to rural Victoria.

For more than a decade, statewide campaigns encouraging people from Melbourne to move to the country have met with limited success. The Rural Promotion Program, delivered by Shepparton marketing consultancy Twig Marketing, adopted a new approach, seeking to pilot new ways to encourage people to make the move to rural Victoria.

To uncover new insights that would improve the success of the campaign and also provide direct benefits to member councils, the project began with extensive market research – delivering new insights into the types of people likely to move, key drivers for deciding to move, issues with past campaigns and barriers to moving.

This information has been presented and packaged for use by councils and will help inform not only Statewide campaigns, but also individual campaigns that councils choose to run – helping to make future campaigns more efficient.

People interested in moving told us that they wanted information about jobs, education and healthcare relevant to specific areas that they were considering moving to – and they wanted the facts about day-to-day life, not just general information about recreation.

A campaign strategy was crafted around these key ingredients for success, and the team set about visiting all 37 RCV Council areas to gather stories and key facts that would be relevant to people seeking to move.

The LiveCountry campaign achieved a reach of more than 361,500 people, with more than 13,900 engagements on Facebook and a growing following of more than 600 people on Instagram both driving strong web traffic. Campaigns achieved an average Click Through Rate of 4.9%, which is well above industry average – ensuring optimal value was achieved from campaign spend. This also established a sound benchmark for measuring the effectiveness of future campaigns.

Key learnings:

1. **Make invisible jobs visible** – there is a disconnect between thousands of unfilled which are no longer advertised because the advertisements are not working; and the thousands of potential movers who look in traditional online job boards and can't find jobs. A professionally curated website drawing information from employers and communities and packaging it for movers would be effective in addressing this information gap.
2. **Combat misconceptions** - Negative perceptions and misconceptions about moving to the country need to be rebutted with evidence and case studies. Potential movers want facts, not hype – and rural communities also need to believe in their own potential to reduce population attrition. Further campaigns are required to help overcome this issue.
3. **Experience and evidence combine to persuade** – the campaign demonstrated the value of experiencing the reality of rural life by pairing local people with potential movers – with very positive results. Events and strategic campaign development offers opportunities to significant increase rates of moving.

The project generated images, stories, video and other content relevant to all RCV areas, providing material which Councils can use to distribute to their communities and potential movers.

For more information about project outcomes please contact Tim Winkler at Twig Marketing tim@twigmarketing.com