



COMMUNITY CONNECTOR CO-ORDINATOR

FIONA SMOLENAARS

Via the Working For Victoria (WV) fund, Council and the Great Thing Happen Here Careers + Lifestyle Working Group, have been able to create a position that will service Greater Shepparton employers to assist with the attraction and retention of new employees to the region, with a particular focus on hard to fill roles in such industries as agriculture and horticulture, building surveying, engineering, health and teaching just to name a few.



The position will provide a service to support employees contemplating applying or accepting a position with a Greater Shepparton organisation or those who have already accepted a job and are needing to move to the region to undertake a role.

The position is designed to facilitate the employee's and/or their partner's/family's assimilation into our community and to create meaningful opportunities to connect with others in the region so that they not only feel welcome but will eventually call Greater Shepparton home.

By feeling at home in Greater Shepparton, this is likely to increase the employee's satisfaction and commitment to the workplace.

The role, the Community Connector Co-ordinator, is responsible for providing services and support in the following areas:

- 1. Social connections** – with existing locals as well as other new people to the region.
- 2. Place integration** – promoting awareness of the available amenities, services, events, activities in the region etc.
- 3. Community participation** – exploring opportunities to participate or volunteer with committees or community groups and sporting associations etc.





While the service will be pilot with several major employers, referrals from other businesses and organisations to access the service will be considered.

The type of work the position is likely to undertake includes:

- Set up various systems to support the operation of the program e.g. referral system, communication and reporting channels etc.
- Ensure that newly-recruited employees are warmly welcomed to and informed about the Greater Shepparton region and that mechanisms exist to be able to connect with these individuals pre and post their arrival to the region.
- Nurture and strengthen social connections of newly-arrived employees (and their partners/family) to the region.
- Ensure that newly-arrived employees are connected with necessary services.
- Assist with finding employment and/or educational opportunities for partners of new employees to the region.
- Based on critical discussions, connect new employees (their partner/family) with activities of interest and cultural connections or communities where appropriate.
- Create or leveraging opportunities and events for new employees/residents that support the development of social networks e.g. welcome event/night/expos.
- Consult and facilitate partnerships with employers, community groups and organisations to facilitate the objectives of the position.
- Identify opportunities to build alliances, create partnerships and work collaboratively to ensure a holistic approach to the employee/new resident is undertaken.
- Measure levels of success and report on project outcomes.

While the funding is only available for six months, during this time the program will be evaluated to assist in looking for a more sustainable option for the program to be on-going.

In getting the program off the ground we are extremely excited to announce that Fiona Smolenaars has accepted the Community Connector Co-ordinator position and will official commence on 4 January 2021.

Fiona has a passion for regional communities and a drive to see people connected to create a rich and happy life. She started her career in agriculture and the dairy industry in northern Victoria; has had her own business as a professional facilitator and event manager and is leaving the Lighthouse Project as Volunteer Broker where she mobilised 500 volunteers.

Fiona is involved with the Shepparton Festival and is excited about this new opportunity and sees we all have a role to play in showcasing the best of Greater Shepparton.

To discuss how Fiona can assist with the assimilation and retention of staff please contact her on:

FIONA SMOLENAARS

Community Connector Co-ordinator

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