



# Community Connector Program

## Challenges and Opportunities

Greater Shepparton’s regional economy is critically dependent on attracting skilled professionals:

- Greater Shepparton is the only major regional city that does not offer local university level training in engineering, allied health, medicine, IT and technology and similar qualified professions.
- Unlike Victoria’s other major regional cities of Latrobe, Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong, Greater Shepparton is outside the ‘commutable zone’. Settlement services are critical to relocating professionals who do not have the option of commuting while they settle into their new role and community.
- Greater Shepparton’s industry is dominated by construction, health, advanced manufacturing, care services and agribusiness – industries that have limited capacity to support remote and hybrid working models.

Committee for Greater Shepparton’s Community Connector Program provides bespoke settlement services to support local industry attract and retain critical skilled and professional employees.

Since 2021 the program has:

- Supported more than 700 professionals to relocate to Greater Shepparton for roles in more than 100 businesses.
- Injected more than \$50 million per annum into the local economy.
- Supported regional business growth and enabled local delivery of critical health, education and care services.

The program was established by Greater Shepparton City Council and the Committee for Greater Shepparton with funding from the Victorian Government and the Murray Darling Basin Economic Development Program. Committee for Greater Shepparton in partnership with local business is currently funding a scaled back version of the program, but urgently needs to scale up the program to support business, education and health.



**JOHN CALLEJA**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Gouge Linen and Garment  
Services*

*“When we tell candidates about the program we see an immediate change in their willingness to consider relocating to Shepparton rather than a capital city.”*



## Solution

The program requires secure multi-year funding to provide ongoing confidence to clients, industry and the staff employed to deliver the program, and to support expansion to full time in line with business demand.

## Investment

The Committee for Greater Shepparton on behalf of industry and community, is seeking a co-contribution from government of \$150,000 per annum for three years to co-fund the Community Connector Program. The funding will supplement the existing contributions from local industry and from Committee for Greater Shepparton on behalf of members and community.

## CONTACT US

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**PAUL BAKER**  
- ADELAIDE VIA GRIFFITH

Project Manager  
Goulburn Valley Water

*“Other employers sent us booklets and links to websites, but it was so much easier and better to talk to a local person. Just for the peace of mind that someone was there to ask if we needed it was so reassuring.”*

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**NEETHU JOE**

Registered Nurse  
Goulburn Valley Water

*“When they told me there was a person who we could talk to before we left New Zealand and would be there when we arrived it was such a relief and a key reason why we chose Shepparton.”*

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**KAREN LINFORD**  
Chief People Officer  
Goulburn Valley Health

*“We are the largest employer in Greater Shepparton but we still rely on the program because we know our staff and especially their families benefit from networks outside of their workplace.”*