

NFF gets behind #getoutofthecity initiative

The National Farmers' Federation has declared its support for the Federal Nationals #getoutofthecity initiative designed to strengthen regional towns and their communities.

Announced yesterday by Nationals Leader Hon Barnaby Joyce MP the initiative centres on the relocation of Government agencies to regional areas to create jobs and provide financial injections to rural economies.

“There are many and varied advantages of a rural lifestyle and there are no better advocates for regional living than farmers,” NFF President Fiona Simson said.

“It’s where we do our business, raise our families and contribute to the fabric of our wonderful regional communities.”

Ms Simson said farmers had a strong vested interest in seeing their communities remain vibrant, viable and prosperous and therefore NFF welcomed sensible initiatives to achieve this.

“We agree with Mr Joyce that regional Australia deserves its fair share of government services and opportunities.

“In the same vein, regional communities deserve access to infrastructure and services on par with their city counterparts including transport, telecommunications, health and education services.”

Ms Simson said there were already examples of Government agencies operating successfully outside city boundaries.

“The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has had a main office in Albury, New South Wales for many years and an additional ATO office is also under construction in Gosford.”

Ms Simson caveated the NFF’s support for the #getoutofthecity initiative by saying a methodical and evidenced-based approach must be taken when ear-marking agencies for relocation.

“Any proposals to decentralise Government agencies must be part of a sustainable and strategic approach, thoroughly costed and be a good fit for the region.”

The NFF will be making a submission to the Senate’s inquiry into decentralising Commonwealth entities to regional Australia.

“We also look forward to working with all parliamentarians to discuss sensible, practical ways to strengthen our already wonderful regional communities,” Ms Simson said.