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ENCOURAGING REMOTE WORKING **IN THE BALLARAT REGION**

Paul Weller MP, Member for Rodney, believes that a shift in thinking about how and where people work will contribute to the growth of rural and regional Victoria.

A new Inquiry by the cross-party Rural and Regional Committee is investigating best practice in e-business and remote working policy.

“There’s no doubt that teleworking is growing more popular across the world as economies change from traditional models to become more information based,” Mr Weller said.

“Workers from home often say they are more productive and have a better work–life balance. Also the potential benefits of getting cars off the roads and keeping people in rural and regional Victoria are enormous.

“What we need to ensure is that rural communities have the ICT infrastructure in place and the skilled workforce needed to take advantage of future opportunities to diversify and strengthen regional economies. This Inquiry will determine the best way to ensure rural and regional Victoria is prepared for the future of remote working.”

The Committee invites all interested members of the community to attend its public hearing in Ballarat at the Greenhill Enterprise Centre, Mt Helen Drive, University of Ballarat, from 9.30 am on Wednesday 17 July.

Mr Weller said: “We will be hearing from experts who can provide advice and information on the Inquiry’s Terms of Reference, as well as people in regional areas who have first-hand experience of teleworking or establishing their own e-business.”

Some of the issues the Committee will look into include:

- identifying the potential benefits for rural and regional Victoria if more people were able to work remotely
- establishing potential productivity, infrastructure or other savings associated with fewer employers and employees needing to travel to and from work each day
- identifying any legislative impediments at a state, federal or local government level
- determining potential workplace relations or occupational health and safety issues that would need to be addressed.

To view the public hearing timetable and the Terms of Reference visit www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc or phone the Secretariat on 03 8682 2884.

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