

## 10. Regional and rural lifestyle

Escape from the pollution and congestion of large capital cities and experience a 'tree' or 'sea' change. The benefits of a regional and rural lifestyle include open spaces, fresh air, little traffic and a safe family-friendly environment for raising children.

'I enjoy living with my family in a safe, friendly community. The schooling is good and affordable too, with plenty of healthy activities for the kids to get involved with. I like that I can walk to work and that there is minimal traffic congestion, if any, yet my home is only about an hour away from all sporting, cultural, culinary and family activities that Melbourne offers.'

**Physiotherapist, Gippsland Region**

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health

Working in allied health in rural and regional Victoria



The Victorian State Government recognises that workforce is a key issue that impacts on the delivery of rural and regional health services. The increasing burden of chronic disease and morbidity relating to an ageing population significantly increases the need for an adequate and sustainable health workforce. The government is committed to improving the recruitment, retention and equitable distribution of the allied health workforce across Victoria, through a range of Allied Health Works initiatives. There are many reasons to consider working in allied health in regional and rural Victoria – here are some of them:

## 10 reasons to consider a career in rural and regional allied health

### 1. Diverse range of clinical experiences

Working in a rural and regional area provides opportunities for diversity in clinical practice within the workplace. Rural allied health practitioners are often referred to as ‘specialist generalist’, which reflects the diversity in their caseload. They work with different client groups across the lifespan from paediatric to aged care, as well as across different clinical settings, including acute, subacute, residential aged care, community and health promotion.

‘I enjoy working where you can know all the staff by name, from environmental service staff to CEO. You get to work as an interdisciplinary team in a real sense. You can bring all your skills into play because the job is different every day. There is always a new challenge and it provides the best opportunity to broaden your skills.’

**Occupational Therapist, Loddon Mallee Region**

### 2. Meaningful client relationships

Working in a rural and regional area, practitioners can develop meaningful client relationships, where their contribution to the client’s care makes a difference.

‘Working rurally has the benefit of being able to have a really good grasp of the entire region’s services and healthcare providers; I find this enables me to provide the optimum client care. There is also the added benefit of affordable housing only five minutes from work.’

**Podiatrist, Grampians Region**

### 3. Strong professional relationships

In regional and rural areas, allied health practitioners work in small teams, with opportunities to learn from other healthcare professionals, and build strong professional and interprofessional relationships.

### 4. Autonomy

Many rural allied health practitioners work independently in their roles and influence and shape service delivery, while also having access to professional support.

### 5. Professional support

Rural and regional organisations are very supportive. They often provide access to professional development opportunities so practitioners can continue professional development without having to travel long distances.

### 6. Career progression

Working in a rural and regional area can fast-track career progression. There are numerous examples of young allied health practitioners progressing quickly to team leader and management positions within regional and rural healthcare organisations.

### 7. Work-life balance

A strong work-life balance is encouraged and embedded in the rural and regional Victorian way of life. People living in rural and regional areas not only have access to an appealing array of natural, culinary and tourist attractions; they have the time to enjoy them.

‘Take a chance, meet new people and experience new things. Younger professionals should challenge themselves and get out of their comfort zone. The lifestyle is fantastic – no commuting longer than 15 minutes, even if you live by the water, which means your time is your own by 5 pm.’

**Physiotherapist, Gippsland Region**

### 8. Affordable lifestyle

The cost of living in rural and regional Victoria is often substantially less than in a metropolitan area. Housing is cheaper, commuting is easy and the cost of everyday living is generally cheaper.

### 9. Sense of community

Rural and regional areas are well known for their strong sense of community. Allied health practitioners play an important and valued role in the local community, and generally get to know and socialise with a wide variety of community members.