

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2020**

**OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY MUST SERVE PROPERTY CUSTOMERS: REIA SAYS**

REIA has called on the Australian Government to remove real estate agents from the proposed Automatic Mutual Recognition (AMR) Occupational Mobility Project, a policy objective intended for tradespeople.

REIA President, Adrian Kelly, said the opening of consultation on Occupational Mobility, has raised critical concerns about the inclusion of real estate agents adding that concerns had not been addressed by real estate leaders regarding the blanket application of AMR.

Mr Kelly said training, qualification and consumer protection standards will not be consistent if agents are included in the Automatic Mutual Recognition.

“Whilst it makes sense for a plumber to be able to change a tap washer across states as the process is the same, it is not so with property transactions where different legislation and multiple regulators exist in different states.

“The other obvious difference between a plumber and an estate agent is the vast quantum of funds involved, which is, more often than not, a family’s life savings.

“A ‘taken to be registered’ in the second state – or agents operating in two different states – could leave customers critically exposed.

“Any reforms in this space must holistically provide greater customer assurance to Australia’s property tenants, investors, buyers and owners.

“This is a longstanding objective of our industry that, done properly, legislation changes would benefit all real estate stakeholders, including State and Territory Governments, as well as enhancing the reputation of property professionals and our collective customer assurance offering,” he said.

Mr Kelly said that the property industry contributes \$300 billion annually in economic activity and underpins a combined workforce of 1 in 4 Australian jobs.

“Licensing, training and on the job conduct and ongoing professional development varies wildly across each state and territory. An automatic deemed recognition should honour national training reforms that require a Diploma of Property Services for a business owner and a full Certificate IV for associates or equivalents.

“Ideally, agents would also have to have to prove their knowledge of local consumer protection laws and be subject to continued professional development.

“REIA is committed to providing research and well-informed advice to the Federal Government, Opposition, and professional members of the real estate sector, media and the public on a range of issues affecting the property market.

“It is disappointing that the Federal Government is continuing to deregulate without taking into account consumer standards.

“This is a case of ‘back to the future’ as was in the case in 2012 – 2013 underneath the then National Occupation Licensing Authority (NOLA) and in 2015 when contributing to a Productivity Commission study on Mutual Recognition.

“We would like to see an industry-government ‘case for change’ identified that outlines the benefits of an AMR framework for real estate customers, agencies and governments. This business case should harmonise nationally any aspects of training and qualifications as well as consumer affairs credentials,” Mr Kelly concluded.

**ENDS**

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