

# Changing Horizons

## Moving in, Moving out, Moving on

Moving out to rural NSW, moving interstate or even back to the city?

Wherever you're headed, below are some things to take into consideration while you're making these decisions.

### Living in the country

Living with HIV in rural and regional areas has both benefits and challenges. Overall, you might find you need to be more self-sustaining across a range of areas such as food, housing, socialising, employment etc.

#### Benefits

- Fresher air, less pollution
- A more relaxed and laidback lifestyle
- Housing costs may be lower with more affordable housing available
- Quiet and healthier lifestyle may be therapeutic for someone living with HIV
- A greater sense of community
- Food costs may be offset with extra room for a home garden
- Getting away from the temptations of a large city

#### Challenges

- Less peer support and social situations with others living with HIV
- Less public transport
- You might need to own a car
- Transport and groceries may be more expensive
- Isolation from HIV-specific services or access to HIV information
- Fewer employment opportunities
- Lack of HIV specialists
- HIV medication may need to be ordered in advance
- Possible confidentiality issues in healthcare settings
- Possible discrimination
- Access or travel to entertainment can take more planning
- Internet access and coverage may be less compared to the city areas



### Services in rural areas

Most people in rural areas choose to preserve their confidentiality by avoiding their local GP for their HIV care and instead travel to HIV specialist services outside their local community.

Some people have concerns that friends or family members working at the local clinics could become aware of their HIV status in rural areas and this can motivate people to travel large distances.

## Living in the city

Living with HIV in metropolitan areas also has benefits and challenges. Overall, the main impacts may be around housing, socialising and entertainment costs.

### Benefits

- Access to HIV-specific services and access to HIV information closer to home
- More peer support and social situations with others living with HIV
- Greater access to a range of HIV specialists and other healthcare providers
- Access to public transport
- Transport and groceries may be cheaper
- More employment opportunities

### Challenges

- More demands on your time and a busier lifestyle
- More pollution
- Higher housing costs
- Large population of people can be overwhelming
- Possible confidentiality issues in healthcare settings
- Possible discrimination

## Socialising while living rurally

In the country, you might need to be more proactive than usual about making friends.

- Invite people over or host dinner parties
- Volunteering can be a good way to get sociable
- Social clubs, like a choir, a gardening club or other community-related groups can broaden your social network
- Private groups on social media platforms can be useful

## Disclosure & privacy

In smaller communities, news travels fast, and information is not always kept private. For this reason, disclosure can be a greater concern in rural areas than in the city and you may find you need to choose carefully who you disclose to. Be prepared for less knowledge about HIV in rural areas and you might need to explain in more detail what it means to live with HIV.

If you find that someone has disclosed your status without your consent, you can find support at a local [NSW sexual health centre](#) or call Positive Life NSW on (02) 8357 8386, 1800 245 677 (freecall outside metro areas) or [contact@positivelife.org.au](mailto:contact@positivelife.org.au) for support and advice.

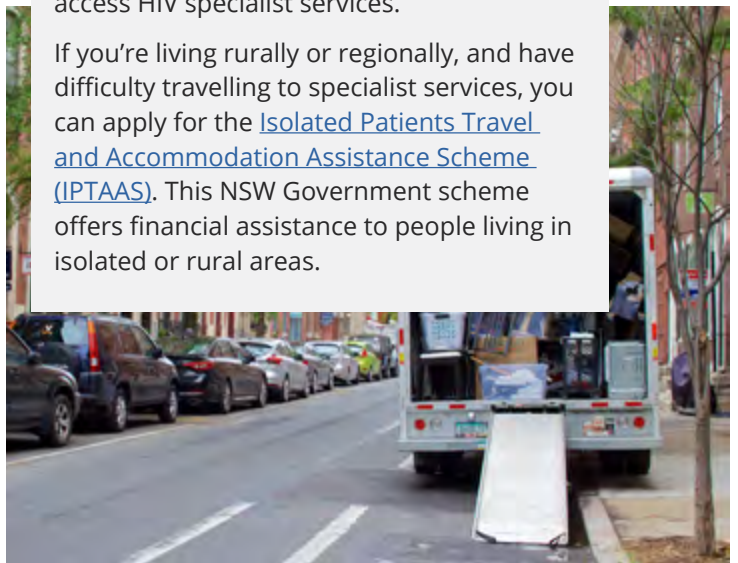
## Making decisions about moving

- Check your reasons for moving. What do you hope to gain by the move? What could you lose by moving? What are the benefits and drawbacks of moving?
- Whether rural, regional or metropolitan, these locations all hold different benefits and challenges
- Living rurally, you might need to be prepared for the lack of social, medical or economic opportunities
- Moving to the country, you might find a lack of peer support groups or friends, and your social networks may need to expand from the usual group of people you hang out and socialise with
- Wherever you move, you'll need to think about your options to maintain your relationship with your HIV doctor
- If you'd like to move away from the city, you can always check out rural areas on a short holiday there first
- If you're planning to move to the city or interstate, you might be able to trial it by house-sitting a friend's home first
- Whether city, rural, regional or interstate, discuss your options for access to HIV-related healthcare or other services in the area with your HIV specialist before moving

### Costs

Housing costs in city areas can be more expensive, while in most rural areas, the lack of public transport can force people to own a car which can become a significant expense. Metropolitan areas usually have good public transport, while people living in rural or regional areas may need to travel further to access HIV specialist services.

If you're living rurally or regionally, and have difficulty travelling to specialist services, you can apply for the [Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme \(IPTAAS\)](#). This NSW Government scheme offers financial assistance to people living in isolated or rural areas.



**For more information phone 02 8357 8386 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or visit [www.positivelife.org.au](http://www.positivelife.org.au)**

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