

# Victoria's businesses are welcome to escape to NSW

**Paul  
Nicolaou**



In the 1990s when, like now, Victoria was on its knees after years of economic mismanagement, then NSW premier Nick Greiner came up with a bold idea to woo businesses north of the border.

Mr Greiner set up a business hotline in the Premier's department for beleaguered Victorian companies seeking to check out the benefits of moving to NSW. Many did.

It's time to dust off the hotline, or its 2025 equivalent, because business migration from Victoria to NSW could be on the cards again. All the signs are there.

Victoria, specifically Melbourne, is weighed down by debt, a disturbing crime wave, and its government is legislating to enshrine work-from-home on at least two days of the working week.

The Business Council of Australia has warned that companies will move capital – and jobs – out of Victoria if legislated WFH goes ahead.

So, perhaps it's time for Premier Chris Minns to take a leaf out of the Greiner policy playbook and again put out the welcome mat.

The Premier might be reluctant to upset his Labor colleague, Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan, but there's a saying in business – business is business. And in politics, attracting businesses to our state is making the most of an opportunity.

There is good reason to think businesses in Victoria would be attracted to NSW where a usually pro-business government is in power.

These businesses also know Victoria is burdened by debt of \$167bn in this year's budget on the way to an eye-watering \$194bn in three years – the highest gross state debt in Australia.

There are incentives the Minns government could offer businesses to

cross the Murray River. What about a payroll tax holiday for willing movers? Come to think of it, a payroll tax holiday for all businesses would help to retain jobs. Energy rebates would also be attractive.

Relocation costs to move a business and staff can be onerous. NSW could help with these costs and give Victorian businesses an "express lane" for registering in our state. Also NSW could offer expedited planning approval for companies wanting to build their headquarters in Sydney.

Let's also have special incentives for younger entrepreneurs with big ideas for businesses that shape the economic future. Sydney already has precincts such as Macquarie Park and

Tech Central that exist to drive innovation and technology-driven futuristic ventures.

Sydney, and our state more widely, are just more open for business.

The move to enshrine WFH in law is an example of the Victorian government's overreach. WFH arrangements should be left to employers and employees to determine. Many employees might want to give up WFH if their jobs come under threat from AI.

In the meantime, let's give businesses every opportunity to cross the border into our state of business sunshine.

**Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney**