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Vision

The RDA-Riverina region will be renowned for its excellence in all dimensions – economic, social and environmental with an emphasis on innovation, life long learning, healthy living and an optimistic outward looking culture based on confidence, resilience and social inclusion.

Values

RDA Riverina embraces and supports the following values:

- Innovation/creativity
- Commitment to a learning culture
- Inclusiveness
- Sustainability
- Optimism



Mission

RDA-Riverina will build partnerships that facilitate the development of a sustainable region.



**“RDA Riverina connects communities,
business & government to projects,
programs, services, funding and other
people.”**

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INTRODUCTION

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is an Australian Government initiative that brings together all levels of government to support the development of Australia's regions. A national network of 55 committees has been established to achieve this objective.

In New South Wales, RDA is a partnership between the Australian and New South Wales Governments. There are 14 RDA's across NSW. RDA Riverina's work bridges the activities of the Local, State and Australian Governments and the community.

RDA Riverina, covering 14 shire councils, advocates to both governments on the key emerging opportunities and issues in the Riverina community. Visit www.rdariverina.org.au or the national website www.rda.gov.au for more information on the whole network.

In 2015 - 2016, RDA Riverina continued to take leadership in bringing together Riverina organisations, business and industry and delivering capacity building opportunities for individuals and groups across the region. These included projects and activities such as:

- Regional planning RDA Regional Plan 2013-2016 www.rdariverina.org.au/regional-plan.aspx
- Riverina Development Officers Network Forums
- Industry Tours - taking government to business
- Digital Skills for Community Groups
- Introduction to Grantwriting
- Advanced Grantwriting
- Writing a Winning Business Case
- Workforce Futures Planning - Grow Our Own Western Riverina
- Promotion of the Riverina Foodbowl - Taste Riverina
- Leadership opportunities for young people
- Riverina Regional Profile - regional economic, sustainability and social inclusion information regarding the Riverina region
<http://www.rdariverina.org.au/f.ashx/EventsInfo/RDA-Riverina-Regional-Profile-2014.pdf>
- E Newsletters - providing information on government grant programs, services and other initiatives.
- Advocacy to Federal and State government on regional issues



RDA RIVERINA REGION PROFILE

The Riverina is an agricultural region of south-western New South Wales (NSW). It is distinguished from other Australian regions by the combination of flat plains, warm to hot climate and an ample supply of water for irrigation. This combination has allowed the Riverina to develop into one of the most productive and agriculturally diverse areas of Australia.

The RDA Riverina region covers an area of 80,586 sq kms and services a population of 168,977. It comprises the regional cities of Wagga Wagga and Griffith and the local government areas of Bland, Carrathool, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Gundagai, Hay, Junee, Leeton, Lockhart, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera, Snowy Valleys and Temora.

Employment is primarily driven by agribusiness and service industries. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from the November 2015 Labour Force Survey indicate that around 86,300 people were employed in the Riverina region. The Riverina accounts for 2.4 per cent of total employment in New South Wales and 23 per cent of all people employed in the New South Wales Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector.



The major food producing areas of the Riverina are the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) and Coleambally Irrigation Area (CIA). These irrigation areas provide over one-quarter of all the fruit and vegetable



production in NSW and is also one of Australia's largest exporters of bulk wines. Further growth in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is being experienced in cotton, aquaculture and nut industries.

The Riverina's burgeoning food culture currently presents numerous opportunities for businesses. The diversity of the produce grown in the area is unmatched and has enhanced the attractiveness of the region.

The RDA Riverina region faces challenges and many opportunities which it is working collaboratively with the Australian, state, territory and local governments to overcome and achieve. Regional Issues include:

- road and rail infrastructure
- skills shortages
- environmental issues
- agricultural economy.

The region has a strong education base with Charles Sturt University, TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, RAAF and Kapooka Army Base. All of these facilities will be vital in building the skills and confidence of all people RAAF Base in the region.

The Riverina has a wealth of people with a proactive and entrepreneurial approach to business and life. Opportunities for development exist in the Riverina region in agriculture, aged care, aviation, manufacturing, transport & logistics and education.

RDA RIVERINA

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

On 6 January 2016 the Minister for Local Government referred 35 merger proposals to the Chief Executive of the Office of Local Government for examination and report under the Local Government Act (the Act). NSW Premier Mike Baird and the Minister for Local Government Paul Toole announced 19 new councils in NSW commencing 12 May 2016. The RDA Riverina region shires affected by these changes were Cootamundra, Gundagai, Murrumbidgee and Tumut Shires.

Local Government Area	Communities	Website	Population	Area (km ²)
Bland Shire Council	Ungarie, Barmedman, West Wyalong, Wyalong, Tallimba, Weethalle, Naradhan, Mirrol	www.blandshire.nsw.gov.au	5,959	8,560
Carrathool Shire Council	Hillston, Goolgowi, Rankins Springs, Merriwagga & Carrathool	www.carrathool.nsw.gov.au	2,733	18,933
Coolamon Shire Council	Coolamon, Ganmain, Ardlethan, Beckom, Marrar & Matong	www.coolamon.nsw.gov.au	4,342	2,432
Griffith City Council	Yoogali, Hanwood, Tharbogang, Lake Wyangan, Bilbul, Beelbanger, Nericon	www.griffith.nsw.gov.au	25,986	1,639,90
Cootamundra - Gundagai Shire Council	Cootamundra, Wallendbeen, Stockingbingal, Muttama, Nangus, Adjunbilly, Coolac	www.gundagai.nsw.gov.au	11,561	3,990
Hay Shire Council	Hay, Booligal, Maude	www.hay.nsw.gov.au	2,999	11,326
Junee Shire Council	Bethungra, Old Junee, Junee Reefs, Eurongilly, Illabo, Dirnaseer, Wantabadgery, Harefield	www.junee.nsw.gov.au	6,230	2,030
Leeton Shire Council	Yanco, Whitton, Wamoon, Murrumbidgee	www.leeton.nsw.gov.au	11,645	1,167
Lockhart Shire Council	Lockhart, The Rock, Yerong Creek, Pleasant Hills, Milbrulong	www.lockhart.nsw.gov.au	3,025	2,895
Murrumbidgee Shire Council	Darlington Point, Coleambally, Jerilderie	www.murrumbidgee.local-e.nsw.gov.au	4,084	6,880
Narrandera Shire Council	Grong Grong, Barellan, Collinroobie, Corobimilla, Kamarah, Kywong, Moombooldool, Binya	www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au	5,920	4,116
Snowy Valleys Shire Council	Adelong, Batlow, Tumbarumba, Brungle, Tumut, Cabramurra, Gilmore, Grahamstown, Gocup, Jingellic, Khancoban, Killimicat, Rosewood, Talbingo, Tooma and Wondalga	www.snowyvalleys.nsw.gov.au	14,994	8,990
Temora Shire Council	Temora, Arian Park, Springdale	www.temora.nsw.gov.au	6,071	2,802
Wagga Wagga City Council	Wagga, Forest Hill, Kapooka, Gumly Gumly, Bomen, Lady Smith, Collingullie, Currawarna, Mangoplah, Uranquity, Tarcutta, Oura, Galore, Humula	www.wagga.nsw.gov.au	63,428	4,826
RDA Riverina		TOTAL	168,977	80,586,80



Message from the Chair

Diana Glbbs
RDA Riverina Chair

Our region is demonstrating strong growth, and now enjoys one of the lowest unemployment rates in the State. Public announcements of major investments being made by private operators in the food and wine sectors have been matched by public sector infrastructure investments – all generating jobs and incomes for our regional community. After years of uncertainty over the availability of water for irrigation, managing with less water and utilising the infrastructure efficiency grants being offered is now “business as usual”. Investment in enterprises based on irrigation demonstrates the return of confidence, and our cotton growers lead the world in water use efficiency.

The last twelve months have seen significant change for RDA-Riverina, and also considerable growth and development in our region. We farewelled Lani Houston, and welcomed Mark Ritchie as our new EO in August. We also farewelled our staff member Nicole, and our Committee member Phil Pinyon, during the year.

We now have a new Committee, under the changed arrangement whereby members are no longer appointed by Government, but are selected on the basis of their skills and networks. The result has been the establishment of a strong committee consisting of individuals from a wide range of interests, but who all share a dedication to the wellbeing of the Riverina community. Each member is being profiled in our Newsletter – I commend them all, and welcome their valued input.

We also welcomed Tumut to the RDA-Riverina family at the beginning of 2015/16, and more recently (as a result of the local government reforms) the communities of Tumbarumba and Jerilderie have, via mergers, also joined us. This is a good development for the work of our RDA, as these mergers enable a concentration of some of the sectors that are so important to our region, such as horticulture (particularly nuts), poultry/egg production, and softwood plantation based activity.

The State Government is also closely examining opportunities for further investment in “enabling” infrastructure, and a workshop was recently held at which RDA-Riverina could nominate priority projects. This process was also an opportunity to stress the unique strengths of the Riverina – we not only produce high quality food, fibre, and wine, but also process these commodities within the region, to derive economic benefits from high levels of value-added.

Our challenges for the year ahead are many, such as ensuring that the social and economic impacts of water reform (via the Murray Darling Basin Plan) are fully considered in efforts to rebalance water use. The reforms being rolled out for local government, and the formation of Joint Organisations of Council (JOC), also present challenges for us as the State Government increasingly seeks efficiencies in the use of financial resources. We are actively pursuing opportunities for increased collaboration in our operations, not only with the proposed JOC, but also with neighbouring RDA regions and with other agencies such as the Riverina LLS.

We are confident that we have a sound base from which to meet these challenges. I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by our staff – Mark, Lani, Marg, and Faye – and with their continuing efforts we shall be able to assist in developing our region.

RDA RIVERINA COMMITTEE

2015 - 2016

The RDA Riverina committee comprises 12 members from across the region who represent local communities, local businesses and local government, and understand the challenges, opportunities and priorities within these communities. Together we develop a Regional Plan which outlines priorities for the region and is used to guide us in strengthening our regional communities.



RDA Riverina Chair - Diana Gibbs

Term: 1 Jan 2012 - 31 Dec 2014

Chair: 15 Jan 2016 - 21 Dec 2017

Diana is an economist, with post-graduate qualifications in environmental studies and Director of Diana Gibbs Consulting. She specialises in regional economic development planning and was a Member of the Murray Darling Basin Authority. Diana is currently, a member of the Graham Centre Industry Advisory Committee and NSW Climate Change Council.



RDA Riverina Deputy Chair - Miriam Dayhew

Term: 15th Jan 2016 - 21 Dec 2017

Miriam is the University Ombudsman of the Charles Sturt University and the Head of Wagga Wagga Campus. Other positions include member of the Board of Management for The Riverina Anglican College, a Director of CCSA and Director of WW Business Chamber. Miriam has extensive experience in complaint management, systems development and project management.



RDA Riverina Committee Public Officer - Brett Stonestreet

Term: 1 Jan 2012 - 30 June 2017

Brett is General Manager with Griffith City Council.

He holds a Bachelor of Business (Local Government) Degree and Graduate Cert. in Regional and Local Government Management and has held other senior positions with Gunnedah, Barraba, Cobar and Moyne Shire Councils.



RDA Riverina Committee Member Phil Pinyon

Term: 1 Jan 2012 - 9 June 2016

Phil Pinyon was the Interim General Manager of Murrumbidgee Shire Council before taking up the role of CEO Loddon Shire during his RDA Riverina Committee term. He has had an extensive Local Government career, holding many varied positions in Councils across Australia in four states/territories.



RDA Riverina Committee Member - Kerry Penton

Term: 1 Jan 2012 - 30 June 2017

Kerry is the Director of TAFE NSW Riverina Institute and has nearly 30 years' experience in the vocational education and training sector. Kerry believes that it is the partnerships that we develop that will contribute to the success of the region and will assist to secure the social and economic growth of the region.

► CONTINUED



RDA Riverina Committee Member - Bill Thompson

Term: 1 Jan 2012 - 30 June 2017

Bill is a solicitor and partner in Commins Hendriks law firm. After 31 years building the business, Bill specialises in succession planning for farmers and small business. Today, Commins Hendriks is the largest country firm in New South and has full time offices in Wagga Wagga, Coolamon, Junee, Ganmain, Tumut and Henty.



RDA Riverina Committee Member - Margaret Andreazza

Term: 1 Jan 2012 - 30 June 2017

Margaret is Grants and Administration Officer for Griffith Regional Theatre and Art Gallery. Her background and experience has been with Riverina Area Consultative Committee assisting small businesses, advocating for the rice industry, running her administration business and managing a Family Support Program. She continues to advocate for young people and families, striving for equality between the regions and the cities in areas of education and health and access to opportunities.



RDA Riverina Committee Member - James Davis

Term: 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018

James is the General Manager with Junee Shire Council. He has worked in Local Government and in private enterprise for over 30 years and has held senior leadership positions within the Riverina area. These positions involved the delivery of both hard and soft infrastructure projects such as local hospitals, leisure center, and critical road and rail infrastructure.



RDA Riverina Committee Member - Deirdre Lemerle

Term: 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018

Deirdre is a weed scientist, research agronomist at CSU Wagga and the inaugural Professor of Agricultural Innovation at Charles Sturt University. She is passionate about farmer-driven research and collaboration, evidence-based communication, and capacity building in the agri-food sectors of Australia and the Asian-Pacific Region.



RDA Riverina Committee Member - Karen Hutchinson

Term: 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018

Karen Hutchinson is part of the senior management team at Murrumbidgee Irrigation Ltd. She has been involved in the irrigation industry in policy and advocacy positions for the past 15 years. Karen currently sits on the Board of the National Irrigators' Council and is a member of the Basin Community Committee, an advisory committee to the Murray Darling Basin Authority.



RDA Riverina Committee Member - Patricia Wilkinson

Term: 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018

Patricia is a Tourism Strategy Senior Project Officer for Office of Environment and Heritage. She currently works for NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in strategic development and played a significant role in NSW NPWS Tourism Masterplan 2016-2021. Her background in Regional tourism was cemented through her previous roles in regional NSW which included Riverina Regional Tourism and Tourism NSW.



RDA Riverina Committee - Paul Pearsall

Term: 1 July 2015 - 30 June 2018

Paul is the Managing Director at Grain Link. Grain Link is a privately owned agribusiness based in Griffith and the company is a fully integrated grain storage, handling and logistics business with assets and commercial interests in every stage of the supply chain. He is committed to building a strong sustainable regional economy that builds on job creation and encourages young people to remain in the region.

RDA RIVERINA STAFF 2015-16

RDA Riverina have offices located in Griffith and Wagga Wagga, which ensures the adequate servicing of the region.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This overview includes reports, stories and photos demonstrating the progress, activities and achievements of RDA Riverina and its partners in 2015 - 2016. It also includes the following strategies that RDA Riverina uses to implement its goals.



▶ **Economic diversity & industry innovation.**

▶ **Environment**

▶ **Education & Skills Development**

Outcome 1: Regional Plan

A current three to five-year plan that focusses on economic development with the region. This plan must take into account any relevant Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local Government plans.

Outcome 2: Critical Issues

Advice to the Australian Government on critical issues affecting the region.

Outcome 3: Priority activities

Advice to Australian Government on priority activities that will drive regional economic development, on future economic opportunities and on the region's comparative advantages, based on consultation and engagement with community and business leaders.

Outcome 4: Project Proposals

Assistance to local business, industry and community stakeholders in order for them to develop project proposals; and referral of stakeholders to appropriate public and/or private funding sources - including the National Stronger Regions Fund, Murray Darling Basin Economic Diversification fund or Innovation funding.

Outcome 5: Promote Australian Government Programs

Increased awareness of Australian Government programmes across the region.

“

**“We are all faced with a series of great opportunities -
brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems.”**

John W Gardner

Economic Diversity & Industry Innovation

INFRASTRUCTURE

RDA Riverina worked local government, business and industry to prioritise and support significant infrastructure projects that contribute to economic, social and environmental development of the region. In 2015 – 2016. Government infrastructure funding promoted:

- National Stronger Regions Fund
- Murray Darling Basin Economic Diversification Funding
- Energise Enterprise Fund
- NSW Community Building Partnership Fund
- Bridges to Renewal
- Fixing Country Roads
- Restart NSW

► National Stronger Regions Round 2

The National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) is a program designed to promote economic development in Australia's regions. The Government is providing \$1 billion over five years, which commenced in 2015-16, to fund priority infrastructure in local communities. The objective of the NSRF is to fund investment ready projects which support economic growth and sustainability of regions across Australia, particularly disadvantaged regions, by supporting investment in priority infrastructure. Successful projects include:

Location by Shire	Project	Description	Amount	Total Project	Progress
Gundagai	Gundagai Main Street Redevelopment	The project will enhance the towns tourism infrastructure by improving the visual amenity and facilities provided in the main street. This will in turn provide for an improved level of economic activity, building the sustainability of the community.	\$915,490	\$4,006,404	Gundagai nearing completion December 2016
Temora	Medical Precinct Development at Temora	The outcome of this project is to increase access to health services for rural and remote patients through the provision of a larger range of more accessible medical specialists, GPs, and diagnostic imaging to residents in Temora Shire and surrounding communities.	\$599,962	\$1,519,922	Temora Stage 1 opened 11 July 2016 due for completion Feb 2017
Wagga Wagga	Exhibition Centre Multi-Purpose Stadium	The Exhibition Centre Multi-Purpose Stadium will consist of a three court indoor stadium constructed adjacent to existing netball courts and rugby league fields. This project once completed will provide a regional facility capable of hosting a wide range of sporting, community and business events	\$4,400,000	\$9,165,869	Preconstruction works in progress. Tender process to be completed by January 2017

►► SPOTLIGHT



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

RDA Riverina supports business development and growth across the Riverina region and is committed to providing business operations with helpful resources, advice, expertise and funding support. In 2015 - 2016, four Industry Tours and three Economic Development Forums were held. The forums and tours are designed to :

1. Build capacity of community, business and industry to work with all levels of government
2. Maximise resources available to respond to regional challenges
3. Capitalise on regional opportunities

► Industry Tours 2015 - 2016

Wagga Wagga

- Kurrajong Waratah Recycling Plant
- Total Electrical Control Solutions (TECS)
- Enirgi
- Southern Oil
- Flip Screen

Griffith

- Baiada Poultry
- Ettamogah Rail
- Riverina Aquaculture

Leeton

- Wumbulgal Intermodal Freight Hub
- Commins Bros
- Southern Cotton
- Climate Technologies
- Gogeldrie Weir Holiday Park

Temora

- Temora Rural Museum
- The Whiddon Group Nursing Home
- Moses & Sons Woolbrokers, Merchandise & Livestock
- Temora Agricultural Innovation Centre
- Temora Aviation Museum
- InterSales Farm Machinery
- Mimosa Lamb and Sam Dart PSD.

Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal (WRIFT) - Wumbulgal



Climate Technologies - Leeton



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

► Development Officer Forums

Wagga (28 attendees)

Topics Discussed:

- Wagga Wagga City Council update- Rod Kendall, Mayor
- Agribusiness Banking-Nicole Killen
- Infrastructure NSW- Jenny Davis, Executive Director, Infrastructure NSW.
- SEGRA Report - RDA Riverina Young Leaders
- Leadership - Chris Fitzpatrick, CEO Committee 4 Wagga
- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Opportunities - Kylie Walker, Office of Environment and Heritage
- Bio Oils & Bio Energy - D.D. Saxena

Lockhart (30 attendees)

Topics Discussed:

- Lockhart Shire Council Economic Development Update
- Rollout of the NBN in the Riverina-Jonathon James, NBN Co
- Local Land Services Riverina Programs and Funding-Tom White, Riverina Local Land
- Enabling Regional Adaptation-Melinda Hillery, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
- Regional Plan 2016-2019 Input - Mark Ritchie, Executive Officer, RDA Riverina

Narrandera (48 attendees)

Topics Discussed:

- Narrandera Shire Council update- Judy Charlton, General Manager and Jenny Clarke Mayor
- Developing an Events Unit - Cassie Nimmo Wagga City Council Events Dept
- Manildra Flour Mill - Aaron Hall, Mill Manager Narrandera
- Right to Farm Policy - Lilian Parker, NSW Dept of Primary Industries
- Joining the Dots - Gary Whittaker, State Training Services



Riverina Economic Development Officer Forum Narrandera TAFE Riverina Institute

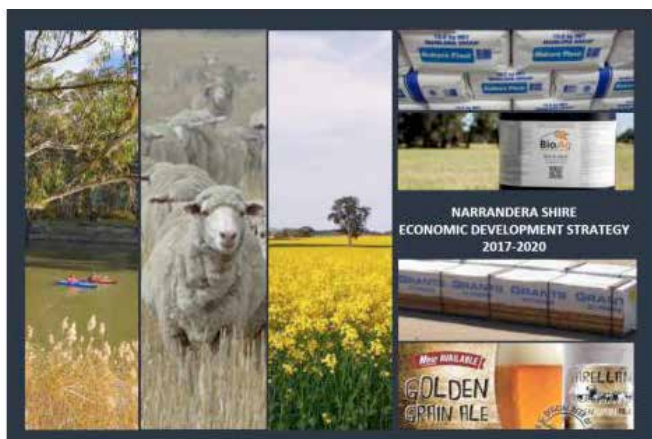


► Funding Support:

Energise Enterprise Fund was administered by the Office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner and provided funding for the delivery of economic development and diversification projects by local councils and not for profit organisations. RDA Riverina supported applicants in their project submissions which included small economic development projects which support small business, skills capability building projects and economic development studies with clearly actionable and supported outcomes.

Location by Shire	Project
Bland	Regional Remote Transformative Innovative Resilient and Sustainable Retail Skills Capability Workshops
Griffith	Aquaculture opportunities in the Murray Darling Basin - Training Workshops
Griffith	Digital Marketing Workshop
Gundagai	Building greater understanding of Social Media Workshop and 1:1 support
Gundagai	Improving Selling Skills Workshop
Hay	Effective visual merchandising in a small community
Leeton	Development of Leeton CBD Revitalisation Strategy
Narrandera	Building greater understanding of Social Media Workshop and 1:1 support
Narrandera	Get Local - Development of Buy Local Strategy
Narrandera	Formulation of an Economic Development Strategy 2016-2020 to develop and maximise economic opportunities
Snowy Valleys	Regional plantation expansion - Stage 1 feasibility in the south west slopes region (Tumut/Tumbarumba)
Wagga Wagga	Activate Online -Grow your businesses online potential course

►► SPOTLIGHT



Development of Narrandera CBD Revitalisation Strategy

Formulation of an Economic Development Strategy 2016-2020 to develop and maximise economic opportunities.

This Strategy recognises the commitment of Council to position the Narrandera Shire as a place where people wish to live, work and invest with appropriate infrastructure to support and encourage investment. The Strategy also aspires to work more strongly with the community and be a leader in the Region in business sustainability and growth.



Softwood Plantation

Regional plantation expansion feasibility in the south west slopes region (Tumut/Tumbarumba).

RDA Riverina was successful in \$25,000 under the Murray Darling Basin Diversification Program for timber plantation expansion project in the South West slopes. This project supports the development of a business case to identify the financial and economic returns for the establishment of new softwood plantations within the south west slopes region.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

► Other activities included:

- RDA Riverina is a member of the Softwoods Working Group and the relationships developed through RDA's involvement resulted in a successful project proposal being submitted to the Murray Darling Basin Diversification Fund.
- RDA Riverina EO Chaired Tumbarumba-Rosewood Rail Trail working Group.
- RDA Riverina EO & PO joined the CSU Industry tour to Batlow Apples and investigated the apple value chain & discussed challenges obtaining skilled workers with experience in apple industry.
- Agriculture industry meetings included Riverina Aquaculture, Graham Centre for AgInnovation, Softwoods Working Group, Grainlink, Meat Livestock Australia, Wagga Wagga Livestock Marketing Centre, Fresh Technique, Charles Sturt University (Wagga Wagga Agri Science Park), Prune Growers Association, Agrifood Skills Australia
- Assisted business activity as Judge on 2016 Murray-Riverina Regional Business Awards, Inland Tourism Awards and Leeton Business Awards
- Profiled opportunities for Riverina business and industry to utilise international airfreight out of Canberra at the Canberra International Freight Symposium



TRANSPORT

► Road

To enable economic growth, diversity and industry innovation a number of enablers need to be present. Efficient transport mechanisms providing access to transport & markets eg ports, bridges, rail and road intermodals is one of these essential enablers.

In 2016, RDA Riverina partnered with REROC to update the Riverina Murray Transport Study Report. This study assisted REROC expand their original Regional Freight Transport plan to identify significant industry freight users across the Riverina and build the matrix to include accurate industry data. RDA Riverina liaised and worked closely with a number of industries to gather quantitative data on the volume and value for the priority commodity industries of livestock, grain and timber.

The implementation of integrated transport solutions for the Riverina and Murray regions is a significant regional development priority. The current REROC Regional Freight Transport plan has reviewed both the

rail and road transport networks that service the eastern Riverina region. The full 2nd Riverina Freight Transport Plan can be accessed from at www.reroc.giscloud.com



The volume of freight that is transported from the Riverina is expanding. In 2015 - 2016 Port of Melbourne reported the following:

- Approximately 135,000 containers are exported from the Riverina (2009 volumes were about 52,000 containers)
- Industry breakdown: 62% are agriculture, 30% Pulp & Paper, 5% Industrial and 3% is Retail
- Commodity breakdown: 39% is Pulp & Paper, 13% Grains, 9% Rice, and 9% is Wine 7% Meat 5% Cotton
- 72% uses Rail and 28% uses road transport -
- 88% of trade is containerised and 12% is bulk

► Air: Regional Airport Infrastructure

The NSW Government has committed \$70 million for upgrades to 27 regional airport projects that will boost their capacity and safety and increase their ability to attract visitors to regional NSW. The projects were promoted and supported by RDA Riverina and included passenger terminal upgrades, improved

lighting to support airport expansion, and expanding runways or aircraft parking to accommodate larger planes. Confirmed regional airport infrastructure projects in the Riverina:

Stage 1: Griffith, Narrandera, Wagga Wagga.

Stage 2: Wagga Wagga.

Stage 1			
Griffith	Upgrade the runway and improve lighting. The upgrade will help ensure the long term viability of air services to the area.	\$710,000	Completed
Narrandera/Leeton	Widen and seal the general aviation parking area. The upgrade is essential to attract charter flights to the region.	\$125,000	Completed
Wagga Wagga	Upgrade the aircraft taxiway network. The upgrade is critical to accommodate bigger passenger aircraft and improve safety.	\$4,000,000	Planning Stage
Stage 2			
Wagga Wagga	Expansion of airport terminal building which will incorporate an internal baggage claim carousel and additional passenger amenities.	\$2,000,000	Planning Stage

RDA Riverina also supported 2 projects outside the region that were going to have positive impacts on the region. They included the Canberra Airport submission for National Stronger Regions Fund to expand to enable direct flights to Singapore and Harden Shire Council SW NSW Grain Export Infrastructure Development.

SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

RDA Riverina believes that solving the labour shortage challenge in the region requires a multifaceted approach that focuses on different audiences. An integral component is growing skills within the region and promoting the opportunities to young people.

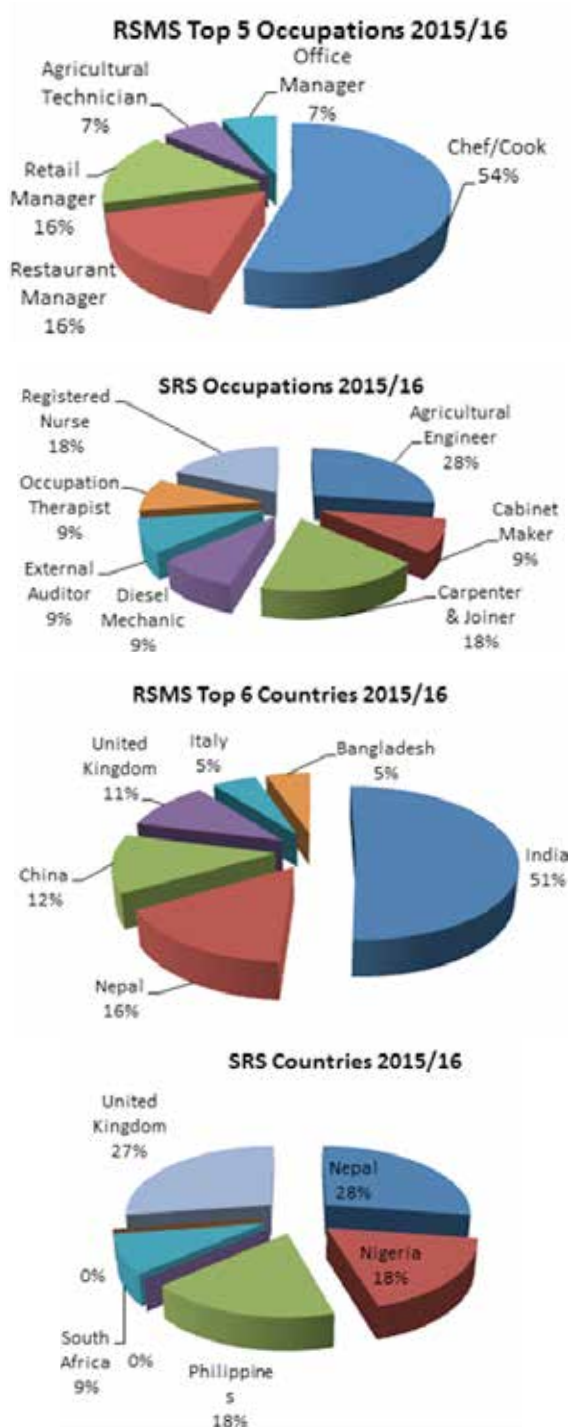
► Skilled Migration

RDA Riverina is committed to ensuring the economic sustainability of the Riverina Region. As a Regional Certifying Body (RCB) approved by the Minister for the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, the organisation provides an Assessment for:

- Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme Subclass 187 visa (RSMS). This visa enables skilled migrants, who hold a Trade, Diploma or higher level qualification in the listed Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO), to be sponsored by a regional employer for a minimum of two years.
- Skilled Regional (Provisional) Subclass 489 visa (SRS). Under this visa, the RCB assists overseas skilled workers wishing to migrate to Australian through the NSW State Regional sponsorship.

The RSMS Assessed applications have been a focus in 2015 - 2016 with only a small demand for the SRS sponsored applications.

Visas processed 2010 - June 2016			
Year	RSMS 187 Visa (employer sponsored) Business	SRS 489 Visa (Independent)	Total
2012/13	82	16	98
2013/14	67	18	85
2014/15	77	9	86
2015/16	78	11	89



► Skills in demand list for the Riverina region of NSW

The Regional Development Australia, Riverina Inc. is the certifying body for the Riverina region of NSW and is inviting applications from qualified applicants who hold a degree, diploma, masters or AQF Certificate in the listed ANZSCO occupations for sponsorship through the Skilled (Provisional) Regional Sponsored Visas program. Sponsorship is valid for 90 days.

The relevant Australia and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupation (ANZSCO) code is also shown:

Quantity Surveyor	233213
Production or Plant Engineer	233513
Agricultural Engineer	233912
Agricultural Consultant	234111
Agricultural Scientist	234112
Veterinarian	234711
Occupational Therapist	252411
Physiotherapist	252511
Podiatrist	252611
Speech Pathologist	252712
General Practitioner	253111
Anaesthetist	253211
Intensive Care Specialist	253317
Neurologist	253318
Paediatrician	253321
Renal Medicine Specialist	253322
Rheumatologist	253323
Medical Practitioner	253999
Psychiatrist	253411
Surgeon (General)	253511
Orthopaedic Surgeon	253514
Vascular Surgeon	253521
Emergency Medicine Specialist	253912
Obstetrician & Gynaecologist	253913
Diagnostic and Interventional	253917
Radiologist	
Radiation Oncologist	253918
Midwife	254111
Nurse Practitioner	254411
Registered Nurse (aged care)	254412
Registered Nurse (critical care and emergency)	254415
Registered Nurse (medical)	254422
Registered Nurse (mental health)	254422

SUSTAINABLE WORKFORCE

►► SPOTLIGHT

Vetafarm - Wagga Wagga and Bomen

Vetafarm is Australia's leading innovator in exotic animal health and welfare. The successful operation of Vetafarm has been assisted by employing highly skilled overseas workers through the Skilled Migration Program, being both the Employer Sponsored RSMS subclass 187 visa and the Skilled Regional (Provisional) subclass 489 visa.

The vast experience of the group of skilled migrants has allowed Vetafarm to expand its product range while meeting myriad regulatory requirements of not only the Australian authorities but those of the countries into which Vetafarm export. Dedication to the company and their unfailing good humour has meant the group has become an integral part of Vetafarm and the company will continue to support them in their quest for Australian citizenship.



Pharmaceutical Plant Team in Bomen - Wahid Zaman (Inventory & Regulatory Affairs Manager), Mrs Kamrun Nahar (Quality Assurance Officer), Dr Kaiser Hamid Phd (Analytical Chemist), Faye Anderson (RDA Riverina Skilled Migration Officer), Md Kamal Hossain (Research & Development Manager), Dr Ehsan Mazumder Phd (Quality Assurance Manager),

Pacific Fresh -Leeton

Since 1993, Pacific Fresh has been wholeheartedly committed to producing quality citrus fruit.

Diana Rose G Castillon commenced employment with Pacific Fresh in July 2012 under the Rural Skilled Migration Scheme for the position of Primary Products Inspectors.

Diana is currently in her fourth year working for the company and now is the Leading Quality Manager. She has been a great asset in controlling the quality of Pacific Fresh products and has had key involvement in the growth of their export and domestic markets.



Joe Nardi, Marketing and Logistics Manager with Diana Rose G. Castillon.

PROMOTION OF THE RIVERINA

The Riverina offers a diverse range of facilities, services and jobs however those in metropolitan areas and other regions have limited awareness of this. Further promotion is required within and outside the region to raise awareness of what communities in the region have to offer.

The Visitor Economy is a critical factor in the initial showcasing of the region and the initial step before a relocation for a job or business venture is considered. RDA Riverina have partnered Riverina Regional Tourism, TAFE Riverina Institute, local government business and industry leveraging funding to support a showcase of locally grown & value added food through the Taste Riverina Festival



The TASTE Riverina Food Festival promotes the unique and diverse range of food available in the Riverina region and endeavours to educate locals and visitors to the region about local provenance and value added food available in the Riverina region.

The 2015 festival:

Month long festival - October

- Partnerships RDA Riverina, Riverina Regional Tourism and TAFE NSW Riverina Institute, ABC Riverina, rice, wine, viticulture, horticulture and hospitality industries.
- Over 90 diverse events
- 53,491 people attended
- Top 5 towns that held events Wagga Wagga (30) Griffith (13), Leeton (8), Narrandera (7) and Tumut (4).



Taste Riverina Festival Steering Committee

The focus for RDA Riverina is to work with producers to develop their value added product and also look at their supply chains, developing direct links with their markets (restaurants and outlets either within the Riverina or metropolitan centres).

In 2015 RDA Riverina:

- Developed the Riverina Food Directory
- Designed shelf talkers for Supermarkets promoting Riverina producers
- Developed the Riverina Top Plates Eat Local Campaign
- Developed guidelines for Local Food Catering Policy templates for Local Councils

Environment

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Ensuring a sustainable environment is imperative to the Riverina region. As the Riverina has diverse range of landscapes including cities, towns, farming land, rivers, plains, rolling hills, timbered forests and open grasslands it is in the interest of the people living in the region to protect and nurture the environment in which they live.

Water availability is arguably the most important issue facing regional Australia. The desirable outcome is security of water for optimum results economically, environmentally and socially. RDA Riverina encourage a balance and well considered approach to the management of water efficient practice ensuring sustainable outcomes for communities and the environment. Committee member Karen Hutchinson is a member of the Basin Community Committee, an advisory committee to the Murray Darling Basin Authority and through her we are able to advocate the social, economic and environmental concerns of the catchment.

RDA Riverina also invited Michelle Young, Assistant Director, Social and Economic Monitoring and Evaluation, Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) to a presentation on MDBA Monitoring Process at the RDA Riverina Committee Meeting held in Tumut in on August 25, 2015.

Michelle provided selected information from the Social and Economic Monitoring work program being undertaken by the Murray Darling Basin Authority, giving an overview of some qualitative research based on interviews conducted with Farmers in the Riverina. She also stated that the intention of the Basin Water Reforms included:

- Re-balance water use by setting revised SDL (Sustainable diversion limits)
- Water quality targets
- Basin wide environmental watering arrangements

In 2015 the Australian Government allocated another \$14.1 million to the Murray Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification Program to assist economic development projects that support the economic base of New South Wales regional communities that are most likely to be affected by the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan. Once again RDA Riverina supported applicants in their applications for funding for projects, providing valuable feedback and letters of support to ensure projects aligned with the RDA Regional Plan. Congratulations to the following applicants who were chosen from a diverse range of industries of which some are already delivering outcomes that will help diversify economies and create new jobs in the Riverina region.

Location by Shire	Business	Project	Jobs Created
Leeton	Walnuts Australia	Walnuts Australia - Cool Store Project	28
Griffith	McWilliam's Wines Group Ltd	Construction of a centralised bottling warehouse and distribution facility	118
Coleambally	Coleambally Saltbush	3 Buds herb & spices Packing Room and storage facility	15.3
Murrumbidgee	Oilseeds Australia P/L	Construction of a specialised production and storage shed for cottonseed crushing and refining	19.5



SPOTLIGHT Walnuts Australia - Cool Store Project



Walnuts Australia is the Southern Hemisphere's largest walnut orchard owner, manager, producer and marketer of walnuts, producing approx. 90 % of the Australian walnut crop.

It is vertically integrated business, from nursery through to market, offering both in-shell and walnut kernel products both locally and globally.

The development of a cold storage facility regionally complements the existing state-of-the-art cracking and processing facility. The best practice food traceability systems also make Walnuts Australia a safe, consistent and reliable producer and supplier of premium walnuts.

This increased investment will mean a potentially significant increase in future jobs growth and economic stimulus in the region over time. Visit www.walnutsaustralia.com.au for more information.

► Renewable Energy

In 2015 - 2016 RDA Riverina collaborated with Kylie Walker Regional Clean Energy Coordinator - South West NSW Department of Environment and Heritage to promote and support forums and workshops on renewable and alternative energy sources such as solar, biomass/bio-fuels and hydro. Through the RDA RiverinEnews (distributed twice a monthly) and Economic Development Forums , government funding programs for business and community such as Sustainable Advantage Program were also promoted. This program assists organisations across New South Wales to achieve increased competitiveness and improved bottom lines through better environmental practices.

In 2015 - 2016 supported activities included:

- Solar Pumping And Energy Efficiency For Irrigators
- Promoting grants for Sustainable Agriculture
- Energy Efficiency Training Courses Develop to increase energy efficiency and reduce costs
- Hillston Solar Pumping field day
- Solar For Business Seminar Roadshow
- Support OEH Clean Energy Coordinator in overview of electricity consumption & projections in the Murray-Riverina region.



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“RDA Riverina promotes sustainable environmental practices to ensure the future of our region for generations to come.”

Education & Skills Development

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

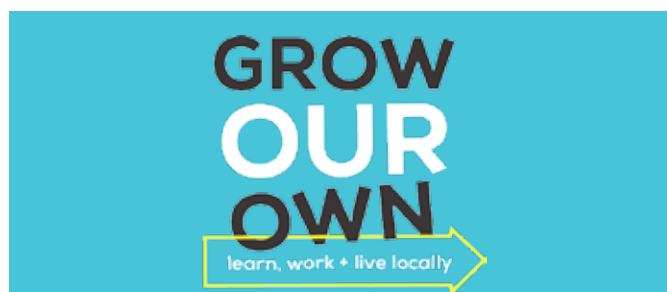
The Riverina region has experienced a shortage of skilled people particularly in past years. RDA Riverina seeks to address these challenges using a variety of measures such as: through a partnership in Grow Our Own Western Riverina program, and our skilled migration program.

► Research - Skill Shortages in Regional New South Wales: The Case of the Riverina

Despite these endeavours and those of other vocational education and employment programs many sectors and LGA's within the Riverina Australian still face skills shortages. RDA Riverina commissioned Charles Sturt University researchers Kishor Sharma, Edward Oczkowski and John Hicks to study Skill Shortages in Regional New South Wales: The Case of the Riverina. Using a survey based method, this paper investigate causes and effects of skill shortages in the Riverina. About 48 per cent of businesses have reported

that they have unfilled vacancies. The shortage of qualified applicants, lack of sufficient experience and lack of technical ability are the main causes proffered by regional business for skill shortages. These findings point the importance of investing in quality infrastructure, offering tax incentives and channelling investment into the TAFE and University sector to address regional skill shortages in both short- and long-run.

► Grow Our Own Western Riverina



GrowOurOwnWesternRiverina is a regional partnership with a shared belief that education underpins regional growth and prosperity. Deakin University and Bendigo Bank have formed a partnership with RDA Riverina, TAFE Riverina Institute and 11 other leaders from local government, industry, education and community in the Western Riverina, to pilot an education and skills plan for the region. This partnership was formally launched at TAFE Riverina Institute Griffith in August 2015.

This pilot plan aims to improve the level of education participation and skills retention in the Western Riverina. If successful, both parties will consider brokering similar partnerships in other regional centres. In contributing to the program RDA Riverina provided a link with industry and produced videos (now on youtube) showcasing 4 businesses with different learning pathways within their industry. This has become a resource for career advisors in the Western Riverina region schools. Businesses



Grow Our Own Western Riverina Partners

participating were Yenda Producers, Southern Cotton, Flavourtech and Griffith City Council.

Grow Your Own Western Riverina facilitated Workforce Futures business and industry breakfasts in Leeton and Griffith. RDA Riverina Chair Diana Gibbs was MC for both events. These events were well received by over 75 attendees from local government, schools, business and industry with inquiries for partnership opportunities as an outcome of the events.

In addition to this project RDA Riverina sponsored and partnered with Agrifood Skills Australia SHE (Skilling her Enterprise) workshop series focused on business and management skills on July 2015. This opportunity provided:

- Workshops for women in the agribusiness sector
- Business and management building skills
- Networking with likeminded business women
- The right resources to evolve your business

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

RDA Riverina in partnership with TAFE Riverina Institute delivered 'Digital Skills for Community Groups' workshops in 9 LGA's with 84 free spaces allocated and over 100 attendees. Participants completed 2 Units of Learning which enabled them to obtain a Statement of Attainment in 'Operate Application Software Packages' and 'Use Social Media Tools for Collaboration and Engagement'.

Back L to R: Lani Houston & Jasmine Gregory (Hay Shire Council) Front: Loretta Cooper & Tarlia Cooper



► Introduction to Grant Writing Workshops:

RDA Riverina facilitated 5 'Introduction to Grant Writing' workshops for community groups. The workshops were free and provided an introduction to grantwriting that answered all grantseeking questions, leaving accidental grantwriters GrantReady.

TOPICS:

- Prepare your organisation for funding
- Where to find the funding
- Find the funds to suit the budget
- How to write the application

TOWNS:

- Tumut
- Temora
- Leeton
- Narrandera
- Cootamundra

Summary of participation:



Presentation: Excellent 90%



Content: Excellent 84%



77% FEMALE



23% MALE



Total Attendees 74



► Testimonials

New Tips learned

"Where to find available grants and methods of applying"

- Kylie Cootamundra

"Budgeting, what not to do. The value of good communication & planning."

- Julie Narrandera



KATIE HALDEN

Gap Year Student Program
Southern Cotton, Whitton

Next year I want to move away to pursue a university degree, but because I've taken this rural gap year position it has reignited my love of where I live and come from. I really want to return to the region when I complete my degree in the health sector.

Regardless of what you want to do, its moving away to study, work or travel you can always return to the Western Riverina and thrive. This region has everything you will ever need!



BEN FORNER

Design & Drafting Pathway Student -
Drafting and Mechanical Engineering
- Flavourtech

Working at Flavourtech has created a learning pathway that allows me to work locally and still travel and study out of town. During my apprenticeship in Design and Drafting I was supported by the business for food, travel and accommodation expenses whilst studying at TAFE and University. I have also travelled regionally and interstate for work with the prospects of overseas travel as well. Its been great, Im not out of pocket at all!

Collaboration

COLLABORATION

The strength of the region will ultimately be determined by the capacity of businesses and communities to work collaboratively with all levels of government to maximise the resources available to solve the challenges and capitalise on opportunities presented. A pivotal component in this is the leadership capacity of people in the region, their capacity to adjust to change and their ability to work together.

► Leadership Development

Highlights of RDA Riverina 2015 - 2016 leadership activities below:

- RDA Riverina through an EOI process selected two young people (18 -35yrs) to attend the Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia - (SEGRA) conference in Bathurst during October 2015. Sarah Collis (Griffith City Council Economic Development Officer) and Richie Robinson (Wagga Wagga City Council Economic Development Officer) were successful nominees and contributed to rigorous regional discussion throughout the conference. Both provided a report on their learning from the conference at the Economic Development Officers Forum held in Wagga Wagga.
- RDA Riverina and CSU partnered to present a research paper Skill Shortages in Regional New South Wales: The Case of the Riverina. This report was commissioned by RDA Riverina delivered by Kishor Sharma at CSU University Wagga Campus.
- The 2016 NSW Regional Events Conference was the first conference of its kind in NSW.

Event professionals and event stakeholders had the opportunity to get together and hear from targeted and experienced presenters discussing issues and topics that directly impact the regional event industry. Three successful Riverina nominees hungry for knowledge and industry contacts were chosen to attend this event which provided a quality program blended with networking opportunities and thought provoking and constructive discussions .

Ongoing activities included:

- RDA Riverina EO held the position of independent Chairperson for the Tumbarumba - Rosewood rail trail initiative.
- RDA Riverina Executive Officer participated in the NSW Government Riverina Murray Managers Leadership network meetings.
- RDA Riverina hosted Business Services Workplacement student DeeJay Horne from Marian College and mentored Wade High student Mitch Lane on the four month Youth Frontier Program



L to R: Diana Gibbs (RDA Riverina Chair), Richie Robinson (Wagga), Hon Warren Truss MP (Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development), Sarah Collis (Griffith), Mark Ritchie (RDA Riverina EO).



Successful nominees.L - R: Nicole Jaffrey (Griffith), Maryann Vitelli (Leeton), Brooke Brunskill (Wagga)

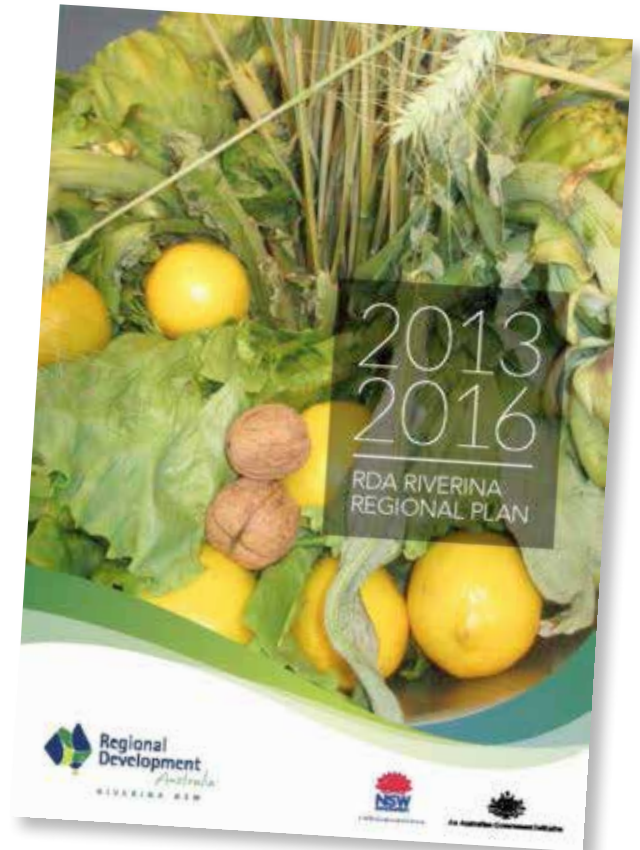
► Regional Planning

RDA Riverina provided input into the following plans, strategies and discussion papers:-

- Participated in the NSW Dept. Environment & Planning Murray Murrumbidgee Regional Growth & Infrastructure Plan consultation.
- Hilltops Regional Freight Summit (Young),
- Griffith City Council CBD Strategy.
- Riverina Local Land Services Strategic Plan
- Australian Forest Products - Plantations, the missing piece of the puzzle
- Australian Rail Track Corporation - The case for Inland rail
- Investing in Regional NSW Infrastructure - Southern NSW
- NSW OLG Fit for the Future - Council amalgamation.
- Murrumbidgee Irrigation strategic direction and planning consultation
- Rural Issues Forum - Australian Rural Leadership Foundation
- Riverina / Murray Regional Plan

Critical issues identified include;

- Infrastructure investment particularly roads, rail, and air.
- Access to utilities such as gas and electricity.
- Further development of telecommunications (mobile service coverage and high/fast speed, reliable broadband) services for all people living in region areas.
- Integrated Planning



“

“Towns and cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

Jane Jacobs

Governance

RDA RIVERINA GOVERNANCE

RDA Riverina has had another year of change but has continued to deliver outcomes that reflect the RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013-2016. A new committee was bedded down in August 2015 with the first full committee meeting in Tumut. This was also a first as the (then) Tumut Shire Council was our newest local Government area to join RDA Riverina.

The new committee members held 4 meetings during the 2015-2016 financial year period across the region and allowed new members to gain an insight and appreciation for the diversity, productive capacity and

economic development opportunities that the region as a whole presents.

With a number of new Committee members and a new Executive Officer it was decided to review and refresh governance activities for RDA Riverina. Michael Goldsworthy, Australian Strategic Services was engaged to facilitate a workshop on 16 October 2015 and review documents such as RDA Riverina Policies & Procedures Manual and ensure all members were unified in the methods used for supporting projects, dealing with conflict of interest and Regional Plan updates.

LGA	Presentations	Date
Tumut Shire Council Chambers	Presentation by Michelle Young, Assistant Director, Social and Economic Monitoring and Evaluation, Murray Darling Basin Authority (MDBA) on MDBA Monitoring Process. Presentation by Tumut Shire Council General Manager Bob Stewart and Mayor Trina Thomson	26 August 2015
Narrandera TAFE Riverina Institute	Presentation by Narrandera Shire Council GM Judy Charlton and Narrandera Mayor Jenny Clarke. RDA Riverina Committee Governance Training with Michael Goldsworthy - Australian Strategic Services.	16 October 2015
Griffith NSW Rural Fire Service	Presentation by Griffith City Council General Manager Brett Stonestreet and Mayor John DalBroi. Presentation by RDA Riverina Young Leaders SEGRA 2015 delegate Sarah Collis Griffith City Council Economic Development Officer.	26 November 2015
Cootamundra The Arts Centre	Cootamundra Shire Council General Manager Ken Trethewey and Mayor Jim Slattery.	25 February 2016
Coleambally Community Club	Presentation by Murrumbidgee Shire Council Interim GM Phil Pinyon and John Gorman Amapan.	26 May 2016



L-R Back: Marg Couch, Brett Stonestreet, Patricia Wilkinson, James Davis, Diana Gibbs, Bill Thompson, Deirdre LeMerle, Phil Pinyon, Paul Pearsall, Faye Anderson, Nicole Lucas. Front: Karen Hutchinson, Mark Ritchie, Miriam Dayhew, Lani Houston



Griffith

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RDA support for Riverina projects

RDA Riverina is involved in the development and implementation of projects across the region. This involvement may be as an initiator, facilitator, supporter or implementer depending on the nature of the project. RDA Riverina values community driven, innovative, inclusive and sustainable initiatives.

We develop close partnerships with many stakeholders from the three tiers of Government, business, industry and communities when working on projects in the Riverina.

If you wish to enable this support for a regionally significant project go to our website: www.rdariverina.org.au/projects, complete the Project Outline Form and submit to RDA Riverina Project Officer, Marg Couch po@rdariverina.org.au

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