



2014 - 2015

RDA Riverina Overview



An Australian Government Initiative



A NSW Government Initiative



Regional
Development
Australia
RIVERINA NSW

Vision for the region

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.

MISSION

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

VALUES

RDA Riverina embraces and supports the following values:

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



**“connecting 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 and consists of 14 RDA's.

RDA Riverina's work bridges the activities of the Local, State and Australian Governments and the community. RDA Riverina communicates 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.

2014/2015 has been a year of transition for RDA Riverina, under the new Federal government and a new direction focused on economic development. The adjustment to a new framework under constrained funding in various government departments, agencies and programs in addition to the Local Government Review, created a challenging year in redefining our core business. There were also changes to the Skilled Migration Program with the proposed removal of the Regional Certifying Body in

the RSMS visa application process.

With these changes in mind, RDA Riverina continued to take leadership in bringing together Riverina organisations, business and industry and delivering learning opportunities for individuals and groups across the region. These included projects and activities such as:

- Gathering local government, business and industry to participate in regional planning Link to RDA Regional Plan 2013-2016 <http://www.rdariverina.org.au/regional-plan.aspx>
- Interest group meetings, such as the Riverina Development Officers Network
- Facilitating workshops and seminars focusing on skills development and capacity building eg Grantwriting workshops
- Sponsorship opportunities for regional events of relevance to RDA
- Gathering economic, sustainability and social inclusion information regarding the Riverina region
- Providing information on government grant programs, services and other initiatives.



RDA Riverina Region Profile

The Regional Development Australia (RDA) Riverina region stretches 500 kms east to west across south-central NSW. It covers an area of almost 59,665sq kms and services a population of approximately 144,000 people. The Riverina RDA is comprised of 14 Local Government Areas: Bland, Carrathool, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Griffith, Gundagai, Hay, Junee, Leeton, Lockhart, Murrumbidgee, Narrandera, Temora and Wagga Wagga. The Riverina region is home to the Murrumbidgee River and the major food producing areas of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) and Coleambally Irrigation Area (CIA).

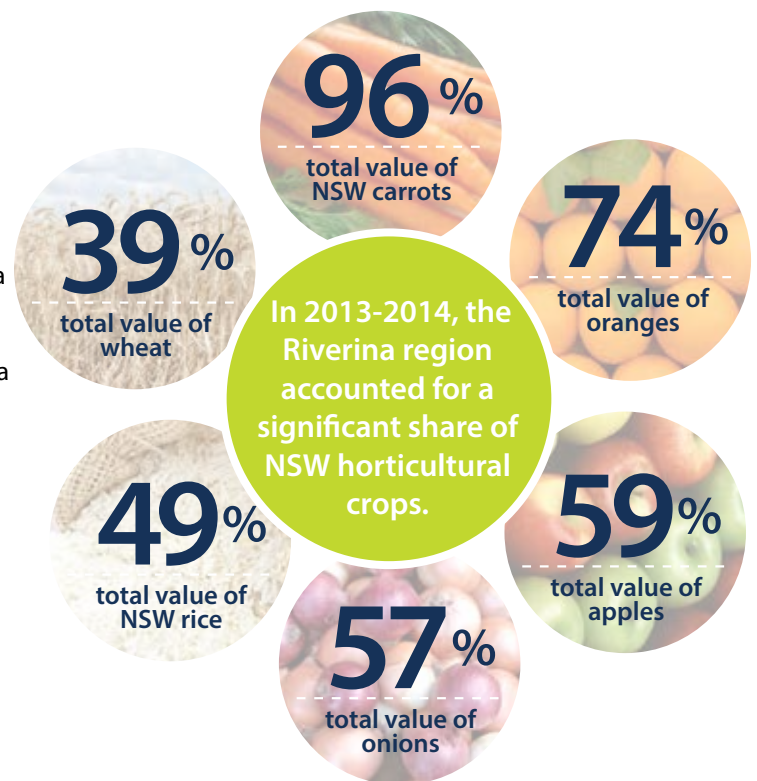
The MIA itself provides over one-quarter of all the fruit and vegetable production in NSW and is also one of Australia's largest exporters of bulk wines. Cotton production is also a fast growing sector in the Riverina growing 45% NSW's crop projected for 2015. Retail, manufacturing, health care and social assistance are also major employers in the region.

The RDA Riverina Regional Profile updated in 2014 reported Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from the 2014 Labour Force Survey that 86 300 people were employed in the Riverina region. The region accounts for 2 % of total employment in NSW. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is the Riverina region's largest employer - 18,900 people representing 21% of the region's workforce. In 2013-2014, the gross value of agricultural production (GVAP) in the Riverina region was \$2.0 billion, which was 16% of the total GVAP in NSW (\$12.1 billion). (ABARES, Agriculture & Forestry in the Riverina Region of NSW, 2015)

Health care and social assistance were the second largest employment sector (11,900 people), followed by construction (9,000) and manufacturing (7,000). Other important employment sectors in the region were retail trade (6,400) accommodation and food services (6,000). (ABS Labour Force Survey 2014)

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. Some of the prominent issues facing the region include the road and rail infrastructure for growing agricultural markets such as cotton, skills shortages, the fluctuating Australian dollar, environmental issues and the 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 (including Aboriginal & new immigrants) 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. Link to RDA Riverina Regional Profile <http://www.rdariverina.org.au/our-region/regional-profile.aspx>.

RDA Riverina Local Government Areas and their communities

Local Government Area	Communities	Website
Bland Shire Council	Ungarie, Barmedman, West Wyalong, Wyalong, Tallimba, Weethalle, Naradhan, Mirrol	www.blandshire.nsw.gov.au
Carrathool Shire Council	Hillston, Goolgowi, Rankins Springs, Merriwagga & Carrathool	www.carrathool.nsw.gov.au
Coolamon Shire Council	Coolamon, Ganmain, Ardlethan, Beckom, Marrar & Matong	www.coolamon.nsw.gov.au
Cootamundra Shire Council	Wallendbeen, Stockingbingal	www.cootamundra.nsw.gov.au
Griffith City Council	Yoogali, Hanwood, Tharbogang, Lake Wyangan, Bilbul, Beelbanger, Nericon	www.griffith.nsw.gov.au
Gundagai Shire Council	Muttama, Nangus, Adjunbilly, Coolac	www.gundagai.nsw.gov.au
Hay Shire Council	Hay, Booligal, Maude	www.hay.nsw.gov.au
Junee Shire Council	Bethungra, Old Junee, Junee Reefs, Eurongilly, Illabo, Dirnaseer, Wantabadgery, Harefield	www.junee.nsw.gov.au
Leeton Shire Council	Yanco, Whitton, Wamoon, Murrumbidgee	www.leeton.nsw.gov.au
Lockhart Shire Council	Lockhart, The Rock, Yerong Creek, Pleasant Hills, Milbrulong	www.lockhart.nsw.gov.au
Murrumbidgee Shire Council	Darlington Point, Coleambally	www.murrumbidgee.local-e.nsw.gov.au
Narrandera Shire Council	Grong Grong, Barellan, Collinroobie, Corobimilla, Kamarah, Kywong, Moombooldool, Binya	www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au
Temora Shire Council	Temora, Arianah Park, Springdale	www.temora.nsw.gov.au
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

Message from the Chair

This year sees many changes for RDA Riverina – not least of which is having a new leadership team! I would like to acknowledge the great contribution made by Tom Watson, the previous Chair, his Committee in their work to support regional development for the Riverina and our staff (Lani, Marg, Faye, and Nicole) who continue their outstanding collective job to implement a range of initiatives developed by the Committee and created as a result of various government policy measures.

Our funding agreements with both the Australian and NSW Governments have given us a somewhat different focus for our work in 2015. These changes mean that we are concentrating our work more closely towards employment creation and economic development. However, this does not mean that other aspects of our well-established strategy are to be ignored – the provision of services and other social infrastructure is, we believe, an important element of realising sustainable development for our regional community.

Our focus for the future is based on the development of innovative agriculture, value-adding and strengthening our infrastructural base.

Our agricultural and forest resources, and the processing activities based on them, are world class in scale and standard. While climatic challenges remain, the re-balancing of water between consumptive and environmental use under the Murray Darling Basin Plan is now being implemented. The changes involved in this water reform will undoubtedly cause changes for the Riverina, but are yet to be fully identified and understood. However, many irrigators have taken advantage of efficiency improvement funding available, and changed enterprise mix, to reduce their need for water. The Basin Plan is now regarded by the majority of enterprises as being part of “business as usual”.

The Riverina has unique strengths in the primary industry sector, in that we not only produce the raw

commodities here, but also process them through to a value-added product. If not the “food bowl” of Asia, we are certainly aiming to be the “deli counter” of Asia, with a range of high quality specialised produce now available for export to the world.

While no applications from the Riverina were successful under the National Stronger Regions Fund Round 1, several enterprises have received funding under the recent Murray Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification program, to assist in employment creation and business expansion. We welcome these funding initiatives, which are entirely consistent with our goals of stimulating economic growth and employment in the Riverina.

I look forward to working with the new Committee members, as well as the continuing members. We will also be working with other organisations in the Riverina, such as the new pilot Joint Organisation of Councils, as well as with the 15 Local Government areas within the RDA-Riverina region. Together, we will aim to expand employment opportunities and economic activity within this strong region.

Diana Gibbs - Chair



Message from the CEO



The Regional Development Australia network has the potential to be an important enabler for regions nationally. In regions such as the Riverina there was a culture of working collaboratively across governments, industry and community, and I believe this framework has resulted in a strengthening of that culture and collaboration to further grow the region.

This being my last overview with RDA Riverina, I would like to say I have been proud to be part of the RDA wave and even more proud to work with the amazing people of the Riverina. That includes a supportive staff, visionary Chair and strategic Committee. It also includes the numerous entrepreneurial, knowledgeable and passionate people in local, state and commonwealth government, non- profit organisations, business and community that I have been privileged to work with.

The last year as seen substantial change in government, a good season agriculturally and RDA Riverina has worked with its stakeholders to adjust and capitalise on the opportunities. The year

has involved progressing regional infrastructure projects such as Griffith Community Private Hospital and the Riverina Intermodal & Logistics Hub as well as planning for the next roll out of transport infrastructure and the NBN. In addition focus has been on profiling agriculture through the "Occupations In Agriculture" YouTubes as well as the National Farming Forum, TASTE Riverina Food Festival and MDB Diversification Fund.

Identifying the champions and innovators of the region, building their skills, confidence and leadership potential is always central to RDA's role when working on projects. RDA Riverina has a particular focus on the younger generation (20-35 years) as they will be the ones leading and progressing the region into the future.

I think if we can be "respectful of the past, realistic about the present and optimistic about the future" the region will realise great things!!!

Thank you to all for your support and commitment.

Lani Houston CEO

RDA Riverina Committee 2014 - 2015

The RDA Riverina committee comprises of 12 members from across the region who represent local communities, businesses and local government. The RDA Riverina committee has a broad and diverse skills base and demonstrated networks and alliances.

Six members of the committee including the chair and deputy chair terms expired in December 2014. Diana Gibbs, RDA Riverina committee member since 2012, was elected as the new RDA Riverina Chair in February 2015 with a new addition to

the committee and Deputy Chair Miriam Dayhew Charles Sturt University Head of Campus. The remaining five positions are to be appointed by June 2015.

The RDA Riverina Committee and Staff are local people developing local solutions to local issues. We build partnerships to develop strategies and deliver sustainable infrastructure and services to the Riverina. We also work with other regions to identify issues that cross the regions.



CHAIR

Tom Watson

Economics Advisor

START-END DATE

30 Jun 2009 - Dec 2014



CHAIR

Diana Gibbs

Director Diana Gibbs Consulting Member of the Murray Darling Basin B. Science (Hons), Masters Environmental Studies, Grad Diploma AICD

START-END DATE

1 Jan 2012 - Dec 2014
1 Jan 2015 - Jun 2018



DEPUTY CHAIR

Joe Burns

Accountant

CPASA – Member 40 years in Leeton

START-END DATE

30 Jun 2009 - Dec 2014



DEPUTY CHAIR

Miriam Dayhew

University Ombudsman CSU Wagga and the Head of CSU Wagga Campus

START-END DATE

1 Jan 2015 - Jun 2018



TREASURER

Robert (Bob) Tuck

Director KunWa Consulting Business Management/ International Consulting MBA & DBA Business Management,

START-END DATE

1 Jul 2011 - Dec 2014



SECRETARY/PUBLIC OFFICER

Brett Stonestreet

General Manager, Griffith City Council Bachelor of Business Degree & Graduate Certificate in Regional & Local Government Management.

START-END DATE

1 Jan 2012 - Jun 2015



RDA Riverina Committee 2014 - 2015



Gary Lavelle

*General Manager,
Temora Shire
Bachelor of Business*

START-END DATE
1 Jan 2012 - Jun 2015



Margaret Andrezza

*Project Officer, Griffith Connections (Early Childhood &
Family Support).
Bachelor of Arts (Tourism Management),*

START-END DATE
1 Jan 2012 - Jun 2015



Bill (William) Thompson

*Solicitor/Partner
Comminshendrik, Coolamon
BA ANU & Bachelor Legal Studies*

START-END DATE
6 Aug 2009 - Dec 2014



Michael Rutledge

*Grazier and proprietor of
FoodWorks Hay
Deputy Mayor Hay Shire
Council*

START-END DATE
6 Aug 2009 - Dec 2014



Kerry Penton

*Director TAFE NSW Riverina Institute
Bachelor of Education (BEEd), Diploma of
Teaching, Graduate Certificate in Management
Development*

START-END DATE
1 Jan 2012 - Jun 2015



Phil Pinyon

*General Manager, Wagga Wagga City
Council,
Master of Business Administration
Graduate Diploma in Public Sector
Management, Diploma Local Government
Administration*

START-END DATE
1 Jan 2012 - Jun 2015



Tracey Valenzisi

*Executive Officer Australian
Regional Tourism Network
Director Inspired Results,
Bachelor of Business (Tourism
Management),*

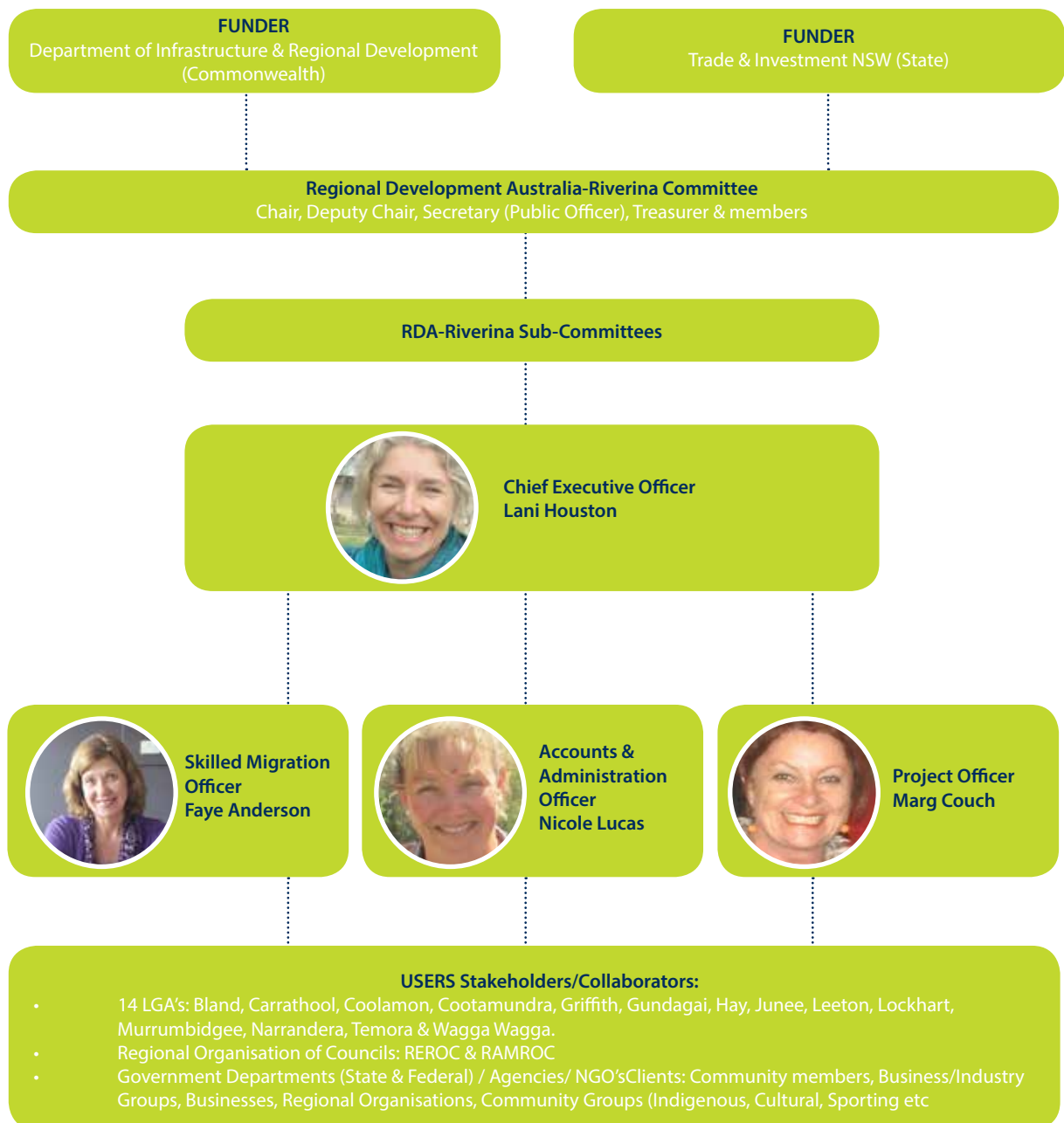
START-END DATE
1 Jan 2012 - Jun 2015

RDA Riverina Staff 2014 - 2015

RDA Riverina have two offices located in Griffith and Wagga Wagga, which ensures the adequate servicing of the region. A presence in both the largest centres located at either side of the region assists with a regional approach to service delivery.

In May 2015 the Wagga Wagga Office, which is co-located with the Department of Industry and Investment, was relocated to Level 4, 76 Morgan St, Wagga Wagga. The co-location allows for further collaboration and promotion of Federal & State government programs and services.

RDA Riverina Organisational Structure



About this report

This overview includes reports, stories and photos demonstrating the progress, activities and achievements of RDA Riverina and its partners in 2014 - 2015. It also includes the following strategies that RDA Riverina uses to implement its goals.

1

To encourage greater economic diversity & industry innovation.

2

To nurture the development of a sustainable environment for future generations including an innovative response to water.

3

To ensure all people have the capacity & confidence to contribute to the regions growth.

4

To ensure a collaborative approach between all tiers of government, business and community to solving the challenges of the region.

5

To encourage a proactive approach to health and living.

6

To act with honesty, integrity, transparency and in accord with relevant legal and financial obligations, sound corporate governance procedures and to fulfil Departmental funding requirements.

The strategies that RDA Riverina implements when aiming to achieve its goals will result in the following key outcomes:

- **OUTCOME 1:** Enhanced Community Engagement and Consultation
- **OUTCOME 2:** Improved Regional Planning
- **OUTCOME 3:** Enhanced Whole-of-Government Approach
- **OUTCOME 4:** Enhanced Awareness of Government Programs
- **OUTCOME 5:** Improved Community & Economic Development

The delivery of these outcomes is supported through work of strategic regional sub-committees responding to the priority areas identified in the RDA Riverina Regional Plan.



"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities - brilliantly disguised as insoluble problems." John W Gardner



To proactively encourage greater economic diversity and industry innovation

RDA Riverina worked with local government, business and industry to prioritise & support significant infrastructure projects that contribute strategically to the economic, social and environmental development of the region. It is vital that infrastructure projects be resourced appropriately both financially and with human capital, to ensure success.

Infrastructure

Riverina Murray Infrastructure Group (RMIG)

The RDA Riverina's Infrastructure Sub-committee's role is to identify infrastructure priorities for the Riverina and coordinate the Riverina/Murray Infrastructure Group (RMIG). Proponents can submit projects through the RDA Riverina Project Outline Form located on the RDA Riverina website www.rdariverina.org.au

The Riverina Murray Infrastructure Group consist of:

- Chief Executive Officers from RDA Riverina and RDA Murray, RDA Southern Inland
- Executive Officers from Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Council (REROC) and Riverina & Murray Regional Organisation of Council (RAMROC)
- NSW Business Chamber- Murray Riverina
- NSW Trade & Investment
- NSW Premier & Cabinet
- NSW Department of Transport

These stakeholders work closely to identify infrastructure projects that have cross region significance and have the capacity to attract funding or fit into a current or future funding program. RMIG encourage any collaborative projects to have a cost benefit analysis indicating the value of the project to the region and provide a solid business case. This group is a good mechanism to support any potential developments to achieve these 2 main criteria for funding a successful application.

In 2014 transport infrastructure was identified as a very high priority in the Riverina Murray region and the group agreed to focus on road, rail, bridges

and air as priority cross regional projects when leveraging Government funds.

In September 2014 RDA Riverina sort feedback from Local Governments in the RDA Riverina region regarding infrastructure priorities for the next 12 – 36 months. The collation of the infrastructure priorities identified that approximately 25% of projects related to road and rail infrastructure worth over \$200m in project value. These projects included but are not limited to:

- Regional rail network upgrade
- Bridge upgrades
- Rail Intermodal Terminal Cootamundra
- Melbourne- Brisbane Inland Rail
- Griffith Intermodal Freight Hub
- Griffith Heavy Vehicle By Pass
- Leeton Intermodal Hub
- Riverina Intermodal Freight & Logistics, Wagga Wagga
- Alternate Heavy Vehicle By Pass Temora

A Regional Freight Transport Plan was initiated by REROC to investigate the freight infrastructure network from a regional perspective and integrate transport solutions for the region in 2014. This includes a matrix which incorporates essential criteria when accessing and prioritising transport projects. Riverina Murray Infrastructure Group (RMIG) in expanding the matrix to RAMROC, are extending the plan to cover the whole Riverina Murray Region. The collective project for the group will be the "Industry Freight & Transport Priorities Project" and will be developed with REROC JO Pilot. RDA's role will be gathering industry data to make the plan more robust with grain, livestock and timber being the initial focus.

1 To proactively encourage greater economic diversity and industry innovation

Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics Hub Update

The Riverina Intermodal Freight and Logistics Hub (RiFL Hub) project involves the construction of new major rail and road infrastructure and a freight terminal on 95 hectares of land at Bomen, Wagga Wagga. In June 2012 Wagga Wagga City Council were successful in their application of \$14.5 million, to Regional Development Australia Funding (RDAF) Round 2 for roads and rail infrastructure to the proposed RiFL Hub. Council is also seeking funding support from the NSW Government towards the roads infrastructure.

The project is a partnership between the Wagga Wagga City Council (WWCC) and a private sector proponent, to be determined, with funding support from the Federal Government and in-kind support from the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).

The project consists of:

- rail infrastructure, including a master siding (approximately 5.8 kilometres) and siding servicing the terminals and industrial lots
- a container terminal for the transfer of containers between road and rail transport
- a grain terminal with bulk grain handling facilities
- the road infrastructure to enable access to the facility for heavy vehicles, enable

the closure of the existing rail crossing, provide improved access to the Bomen Business Park and link the Sturt and Olympic Highways.

By establishing the RiFL Hub, Wagga Wagga and regional NSW is expected to see expanded industrial production, increased employment and economic activity, a shift in the freight task from road to rail, and industry efficiency gains from reduced product handling and hence lower costs. The project will also address current safety and productivity issues associated with the Bomen level crossing on the busy Sydney to Melbourne rail corridor. The road infrastructure will effectively form an inner northern bypass of the city, potentially also reducing heavy vehicle traffic in populated areas.



Riverina Intermodal Freight & Logistics Hub, Bomen Wagga

National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF)

The first round of National Stronger Regions Fund was announced in May 2015. Although the Riverina was unsuccessful in the first round, 8 inquiries were fielded with approximately 4 actually submitting. RDA Riverina assisted or supported 10 submissions to round 2 which opened 15 May 2015 and closed on 31st July.

The NSRF is designed to boost social and economic growth in Australia's regions by funding infrastructure projects in local communities. The funding provides for capital projects which involve construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade, extension or enhancement of existing infrastructure. Projects selected for funding will deliver an economic benefit to the region beyond the period of

construction, and support disadvantaged regions or areas of disadvantage within a region.

RDA Riverina have been involved in not only the promotion of this fund through our website, facebook, extensive database and Development Officer Forums but also assisted interested eligible applicants:

- identify infrastructure projects;
- facilitate bringing key parties together;
- in supporting applications, documents and evidence with use of regional statistics collated in the

RDA Riverina Regional Profile accessible from <http://www.rdariverina.org.au/our-region/regional-profile.aspx>

1 To proactively encourage greater economic diversity and industry innovation

The Arts Centre Cootamundra - Community Creative Hub

The Arts Centre Cootamundra complex is a project by the community for the community. It has taken a historically significant warehouse and redeveloped it into an Arts facility for the Shire of Cootamundra.

In 2013 an injection of funds (\$93,175) were confirmed from Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) Round 3 for completion of the Arts Centre Cootamundra Project. In 2014 RDA Riverina attended the formal opening of the Arts Centre Dressing Room Complex and the Tin Shed Theatre Backstage, celebrating the finalisation of the infrastructure development phase of The Arts Centre.

This centre has a long history of community driven voluntary hours dedicated to realising this dream for the Shire of Cootamundra. Since 2007, the committee have been successful in receiving grants:

- RDA Riverina's Riverina First Community Fund grants program
- Foundation of Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR)
- Arts NSW

- Regional Arts NSW
- Community Building Partnership Grant
- Office of Communities Sport & Recreation NSW at various stages in the development
- Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF)

Whilst these funds have assisted in the progression of this development to completion, the biggest achievement is the volunteer hours that have supported the construction and the great vision of the local community in acknowledging the benefits of a community arts centre that now :

- Houses a first class regional theatre
- Incorporates visual and performing arts studios, workshops, Cootamundra Tourist Information Centre
- Provides workshops that train people for creative industries
- Creates a central point for community to gather for meetings , youth activities and recreational activities for the third age.



1 To proactively encourage greater economic diversity and industry innovation

Infrastructure projects prioritised in regional plan update

Project	Stakeholders	Outcomes/Benefits	Project Cost	Update
Western Riverina Intermodal Freight Terminal	Griffith City Council Leeton Shire Council RAMROC Trade & Investment NSW Dept Premier & Cabinet Transport NSW ARTC Private Enterprise	Increase capacity for the movement of rail freight to Port. Currently at capacity. Improve storage capacity	Estimated \$39-\$42 million	This project remains a priority for the western region. There are currently a number of options in the developmental phase.
Gocup Road	Gundagai Shire Council Tumut Shire Council REROC NSW Transport NSW Roads Maritime Services	Increase Capacity for the movement of freight (timber, timber products etc) via road in a safe and efficient manner	Estimate \$70 million project. First phase \$5 million	2011-2014 - \$2.5 million widening of 1.5km at Meadow Creek, north of Tumut (completed) - \$2.1 million to improve road shoulders and alignment at Minjary Creek - \$5.5 million widening, realignment and intersection upgrades near the Gundagai abattoir (currently underway due for completion by the end of 2015) Feb 2015 - 2019 \$70 million - upgrade to completion
Murray Darling Medical School	Charles Sturt University/ La Trobe University NSW TAFE Riverina Institute	Charles Sturt University and La Trobe University to establish a new rural medical school to address the chronic and ongoing shortage of doctors in our communities, with a particular focus on GP procedural careers	\$46 million	CSU still pursuing opportunities for the Murray Darling Medical School
Murray Darling Engineering Program	Charles Sturt University (Bathurst Campus)	Project delivered across 2 regions (Riverina/Central West). To build teaching facilities to support the introduction of innovative new work, integrated civil engineering programs to address current and future skills needs for Murray Darling Basin communities and industries.	\$18.72 million \$6.24 m Riverina \$12.48 m Central West \$17.7 m Infrastructure & equipment \$1.02 m non capital establishment costs	Murray Darling Engineering school redevelopment of existing buildings due for completion at the end of December 2015. Bachelor of Technology and Master of Engineering (Civil Systems) will be offered in 2016. The course is a unique mix of undergraduate and post graduate study with industry experience.
Griffith Community Private Hospital Partnership (Griffith) E-Health Services & Training Facility	Griffith City Council St Vincents Hospital Mater Health Sydney Murrumbidgee Local Health Network University of Wollongong Charles Sturt University TAFE NSW Casella Spagnolo Trust	The Griffith Community Private Hospital will be co-located on the same site as the Griffith Base Hospital, the facility will create integrated health campus delivering public/private medical, surgical & primary care for the growing rural community.		The project received: 2011 - \$5.4 million for a Clinical Teaching/training facility. 2012 - \$11.388 million through Commonwealth Hospitals & Health Fund 2012 - 2015 Community raised \$1 million 2015 - Construction commenced

1 To proactively encourage greater economic diversity and industry innovation

Transport

Transport infrastructure is an important economic driver as well as an important tool for social inclusion. The Riverina region produces a significant amount of NSW agricultural product. The interconnectivity of road and rail enable the efficient transportation of this raw and value added product to port (Melbourne and Sydney) and national and international markets. The volume of freight that is transported from the Riverina region is expanding. In 2013 - 2014 Port of Melbourne reported the following international trade data:

- 129,000 twenty foot containers are exported from the Riverina (52,000 containers, 2009)
- Industry breakdown: 60% agriculture, 31% Pulp & Paper, 6% Industrial and 4% Retail
- Commodity breakdown: 36% Pulp & Paper, 14% Rice, 13% Cotton, 11% Grains

and 8% Wine

- Transport: 72% rail and 28% road
- 85% of trade is containerised and 15% is bulk
- Estimated freight value Agriculture \$2.3b, Paper \$1.1b, Industrial \$155m

The relocation and establishment of the Western Riverina Freight & Logistics (WRFL) Hub in Griffith/Leeton is a significant priority project for the Riverina, as highlighted in RDA Riverina Regional Plan. The WRFL Hub will provide greater connectivity between the west & east of the region and enable commodities to be transported by rail to ports (Sydney or Melbourne) via the Riverina Freight & Logistics Intermodal in Wagga Wagga.

Bridges Renewal Programme

The Australian Government has committed \$300 million over five years from 2014-15 to the Bridges Renewal Program (BRP). The objectives of the BRP were to contribute to the productivity of bridges serving local communities, and drive greater efficiency in road freight and traffic movement. With these upgrades residents will enjoy improved, safer and more reliable road access. Freight from farms and local factories will be able to pass safely along quicker routes with greatly improve productivity.

This program and the Heavy Vehicle Access program have been broadly promoted through RDA Riverina's networks and other activities. Successful applicants in 2014 included:

Project Name	Location	Project Description	Federal Contribution (000's)	Total Project Cost (000's)
Carrathool Shire Council	Carrathool Bridge, Carrathool Rd, over the Murrumbidgee River, 60kms east of Hay	Replace a one lane timber bridge with a two lane concrete bridge.	7,500	15,00
Gundagai Shire Council	Gobarralong Bridge, on Gobarralong Rd 9.3kms east from the Hume Hwy at Coolac	Replace a flood damaged bridge with a new bridge	1,046	2,592

1 To proactively encourage greater economic diversity and industry innovation

Fixing Country Roads

On 13 February 2015 the NSW Government announced that 77 projects on council-owned roads would be largely funded as part of the \$42.85 million Fixing Country Roads program. 15 successful applicants from across the RDA Riverina region were successful, with project costs totalling over \$25 million. Tumut Shire received \$70 million through Restart NSW for the upgrade of Gocup Road.

Regional Aviation Services (Inquiry)

Over the past two decades there has been considerable change across the aviation sector and the provision of regular passenger air services to regional centres has been adversely affected. In a relatively short period of time, between 2005 and 2014, the number of airlines providing regular passenger transport services in regional New South Wales decreased by 54 per cent. As a result, there has been a 37% reduction in the number of regional centres that have a regular passenger transport service. Unfortunately, it is anticipated that regular passenger transport services will continue to be vulnerable as airlines work hard to remain viable.

On December 13, 2013 the Legislative Council established an inquiry, conducted by the State Development Committee, to inquire and report on regional aviation services in NSW. The reduction of services by these airlines is foreseen to be a threat to the Riverina Region, RDA Riverina and other regional stakeholders participated in this inquiry.

The major recommendation to come from this

inquiry relates to the governance of regional aviation and the creation of an industry and community based taskforce to progress the stabilisation, sustainability and viability of regional airlines required to service ports of less than 30,000 passengers per year. The provision of a return passenger air service to and from Sydney is the most important transport issue facing many communities across NSW

On 10 June 2014, the State Development committee scheduled a hearing in Wagga. The Regional Aviation Services Report released in October 2014 is available from the website, www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/regionalaviation. The report and its 21 recommendations are now with the Government for consideration. It was noted in Chapter 7 Future Directions for regional aviation that RDA Riverina would support the dual use of both freight and passengers on air services but observed that additional funding would need to be provided to implement any necessary infrastructure.

Griffith Airport Impact

- RDAF RD 1 funding - \$1.9m. Total project \$2.4m
- Doubled floor space to cater for projected passenger numbers for next 30 years.
- 5 weekly return flights per day servicing Sydney/Griffith
- 4 returns to Sydney on Saturdays / 3 returns on Sundays
- June 2013 - 2014 Rex carried 63,120.
- March 17, 2014 service commenced to Melbourne by Par Avion
- 2 return flights per day on Monday, Wednesday and Friday / 1 return on Sunday
- Mar 2014 - 2015 Par Avion carried 2,850 passengers
- Griffith City are continuing to plan further improvements



John Dal Broi Mayor of Griffith
Shannon Wells Par Avion
Tom Watson RDA Riverina

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Utilities

The Riverina Murray Infrastructure group facilitated by RDA Riverina have identified, the future of progressive agricultural enterprise is dependent on access to affordable electricity and gas supply. Electricity is a major input cost impacting on primary producers and requires control measures to be developed and regulated by government.

RDA Riverina have identified the need for further access to utilities such as gas and electricity particularly for industry development in the RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013-2016. A number of industry developments have been delayed due to the inadequate capacity or cost prohibitive nature of access to power and also gas, especially in Local Government Areas in the western part of the region such as Murrumbidgee, Griffith, Leeton, Carrathool and Hay.

The high cost of electricity is also impacting on irrigation farmers by making water infrastructure (designed to improve water efficiency) too expensive to use. Having the capacity to privately generate electricity through renewable energy options and reducing input costs is vital to the future of our region. These challenges were submitted by RDA Riverina in a submission on the Agricultural Competitiveness Green Paper in December 2014.

RDA Riverina also recommended that incentives for renewable energy be a policy consideration to assist this challenge and that they include incentives for and a commitment to expanding gas and electricity networks.



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Telecommunications

Access to the internet and mobile service coverage is an important tool for communication with markets at all levels. According to 2011 Census data the RDA Riverina region (68%) is not far behind the NSW (76%) and Australian (77%) average broadband house connections.

There are some areas of the RDA Riverina region that due to isolation still do not have access to internet. RDA Riverina through its Regional Planning process identified that reliable & efficient telecommunication infrastructure is essential to enable and encourage business/industry growth (including home based business) and service sector delivery. To view the RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013 - 2016 visit <http://www.rdariverina.org.au/regional-plan.aspx>

In 2014 RDA Riverina welcomed the opportunity to make a submission to the Mobile Coverage Programme Discussion Paper. In this submission we recommended that the following points be considered in the delivery option for the Mobile Network Expansion Project program :

- Multiple Mobile Network Operator's (MNO) or consortia of MNO's need to have access to the infrastructure to ensure competitive pricing and maintenance of the infrastructure in a timely manner.
- Local Government, Emergency Services (Fire, Ambulance, SES) need to be consulted in determining priority areas for mobile network expansion.
- Open access and the co-location of telecommunication infrastructure (mobile, broadband, radio, TV) services is imperative and cost effective, especially in isolated areas.

The RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013-2016 supports initiatives that reduce mobile blackspots in the region. Some mobile service area blackspots experienced and communicated to RDA Riverina include (but are not limited to):

- Lockhart Shire Council – between Lockhart & Wagga Wagga
- Wagga Wagga City Council, Narrandera

Shire Council, Murrumbidgee Shire Council & Hay Shire Council – Sturt Highway between Wagga Wagga & Hay numerous blackspots.

- Coleambally – Kidman Way Highway between Darlington Point & Jerilderie
- Temora – Burley Griffin Way either side of Temora
- Carrathool Shire Council – numerous sections of the Shire including highways such as Kidman Way, Mid Western Highway
- Hay Shire Council – Sturt Highway between Hay & Balranald, Cobb Highway

Access to high speed broadband has reduced in centres such as Wagga Wagga, Temora, Griffith due to the over allocation of the current broadband service. This also needs to be addressed in these communities. There may also be other communities but these have been reported to RDA Riverina.

The national broadband network (NBN) has provided high expectations and regional centres and communities are ready. Access now needs to be readily available not only from the office but from all points where agricultural activity occurs. Eg technology in the paddock occurs at watering systems/feeding units/ control equipment/ buying and selling stock online. It is also important for attracting a workforce and industry to our rural and regional centres.



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NBN Co Updates Construction Plan

In May 2015, NBN Co issued a quarterly report update to the national rollout plan. This report announced good news for Riverina/Murray with an additional 50,000 homes (158,000 NSW) and businesses across 18 suburbs and towns (40 NSW), in the RDA Riverina & RDA Murray region added to the rollout of the National Broadband Network.

The expansion of the rollout is an important step toward reaching its goal of connecting 8 million premises to the NBN by 2020.

Link to: <http://www.nbnco.com.au/.../nbn-co-updates-national-construct> for more information on these quarterly updates

NBN Co, Fixed Wireless Community Relations Advisor Tony Gibbs alongside Telstra and Optus representatives, met with Griffith community in May 2015 at Griffith Central Plaza to answer any questions on how to get connected. This two day promotion was very successful in raising public awareness on the steps to take in preparing for Fixed Wireless Connections. RDA Riverina assisted NBN Co in promoting these information sessions through our broad networks, database, social media.

Riverina Schedule

They are the surrounds of:

Albury, Wentworth 9,700

Balranald, Culcairn, Darlington Point, Griffith, Hay, Henty, Holbrook, Hillston, Leeton, Narrandera, Wagga Wagga 35,100

Batlow, Gundagai, Tumbarumba, Adelong, Tumut 5,200

Total Riverina Murray 50,000

"The Fixed Wireless NBN has allowed us to decommission our previous archaic setup which combined multiple ADSL2+ services at a local farmhouse wireless connected to our Bilbul head office. Even though the NBN Fixed Wireless service is targeted at consumers, the additional bandwidth when added to our new BigAir wireless service has allowed us to continue our push into cloud services such as Google Apps."

- Bill Robertson (IT Manager) and Dion Edwards (Systems Engineer), De Bortoli Wines



Marg Couch RDA Riverina
Tony Gibbs NBN

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Business/Industry

RDA Riverina supports business development and growth across the Riverina region and is committed to providing business operations with helpful resources, advice and expertise. RDA Riverina supports start-up businesses, provides regional networking opportunities and assists established businesses looking to expand.

In 2014/2015 RDA Riverina facilitated 6 Development Officer Forums, designed to build the capacity of community, business and industry to work with all levels of government to maximise the resources available to respond to regional challenges and in turn capitalise on the opportunities. We also facilitated and participated in industry tours and partnered with other regional development stakeholders facilitating business and industry workshops and forums.

Topics Covered

- Murrumbidgee Catchment Action Plan
- Review of Agriculture Education & Training in NSW
- Aust Bureau Statistics – 2011 Census
- Lake Cowal Conservation Centre Overview
- Bland Shire Council Economic Development
- NBN Rollout
- Taste Riverina Food Festival
- Innovate NSW
- Regional Wellbeing Survey
- Agriculture in the Riverina
- Murray Darling Basin Diversification Fund
- Temora Economic Development
- Modelling the local impact of Megatrends
- Economic outlook and regional competitiveness in the Riverina.
- Free Trade Agreements with Korea, Japan and China.
- Goldenfields Water Regional Data Acquisition Network
- Food Systems Food Alliance – Deakin University
- Hay Economic Development & Tourism
- National Stronger Regions Fund
- Renewable Energy Efficient Opportunities
- Entrepreneurs Infrastructure Program
- Accelerating Commercialism
- Environmental Watering
- Leadership the Essential Ingredient for Success
- Connecting Regional Australia to Future opportunities
- Engaging with disability enterprises – an new business model
- TAFE Riverina Institute & Deakin University Partnership

- Griffith City Council Overview
- Smart & Skilled
- What the hell happened? Thinking outside the square in Economic Development
- Riverina Agriculture Education Alliance – MIA Ag Inspirations Camp
- Emerging Leaders Program
- Data for Community Development
- Murray Darling Basin Futures Research
- Dept Premier & Cabinet Regional Action Plan
- NSW Rural Womens Gathering Coolamon



DO Forum Hay 2015

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Industry Visits & Tours

- February 2014** - Chinese Delegation: RDA Riverina representatives Tom Watson (Chair), Lani Houston (CEO) and Bob Tuck (Committee) joined both Griffith and Wagga City Councils and host Wayne Murphy, Export Advisor, Trade & Investment NSW to participate in a Chinese business delegation focusing on agriculture and business in the Riverina. The visit was coordinated by National Heritage and Tourism Research Committee (HTRC), from the Xicheng District, Beijing, China.
Attendees: 30
- March 2014** - RDA Riverina Development Officers Forum – Tour of Barrack Cowal Gold Mine Bland Shire
Attendees: 15
- August 2014** – National Food And Farming Forum Industry Tours: RDA Riverina facilitated pre conference tours for Graham Centre for Agriculture Innovation. Businesses visited included: King Bee Honey, Walnuts Australia, Commins Bros Farming Enterprises, The Little General Olive Oil, Eat Local Thursday Producer Market, Wollundry Olive Grove,
 - June 2015** - RDA Riverina Development Officer Forum - Tour of Auscott Cotton Gin, Hay.
Attendees: 23
- May 2015** - RDA Riverina and Griffith City Council facilitated an Industry tour designed to connect government departments with business and industry. The tour included visits to Riverina Aquaculture the proposed site of Ettamogah Freight Development and Baiada Poultry.
Attendees: 12



My App Venture

My AppVenture is a live, dynamic iPhone and Android App that lets Visitors choose their own "AppVenture". Both local residents and visitors can plan their trip before they come or while they are here to take in local attractions as well as dining options and book accommodation directly with the property. It is a



complete platform for industry, stakeholders to view real time usage and analytics, updates and reports. Not only is it a world first opportunity for such a unique digital presence, all stakeholders can get an hourly/daily insight into return on investment.

Coolamon, Junee and Wagga Wagga shires worked with entrepreneur Simone Eyles 365 cups in a proof of concept stage of development of My AppVenture. The collaborative sort the support of RDA Riverina as there are currently no funds available for "proof of concept" development. This is an innovative project that supports the technology & innovation outlined in RDA Riverina Regional Plan and once the platform has been developed and tested with the 3 Councils it is anticipated that the App would then be rolled out to all Councils across the Riverina. There is also capacity for this technology and process to be used for the successful TASTE Riverina Food Festival.

www.myappventure.com.au

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Sustainable Workforce

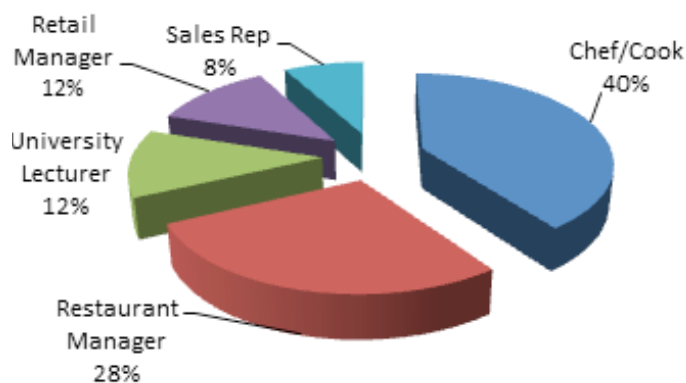
Skilled Migration

RDA Riverina is committed to ensuring the economic sustainability of the Riverina Region. RDA Riverina provides an assessment for the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) Visa as a Regional Certifying Body (RCB). This visa enables skilled migrants, who hold a degree, diploma, masters or trade certificate in the listed ANZSCO occupations, to be sponsored by a regional employer for a minimum of two years and enjoy the lifestyle of regional Australia.

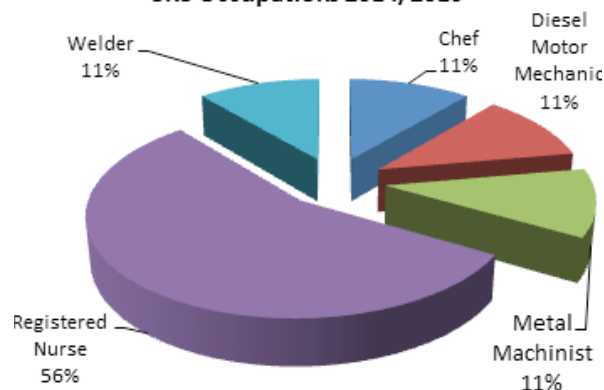
The program aims to attract young, skilled, English speaking migrants to areas of Australia where they are most needed. The RSMS visa enables regional employers to sponsor overseas skilled workers and employ them to work in skilled vacant positions which cannot be filled using the local labour market.

The Employer sponsored or RSMS applications have been a focus in 2014-2015 with only a small demand for the SRS or independent visa's. This last year has seen a decrease in visa applications for RSMS due to the Skill Select program and the use of 457 visas that RCB's do not play a role in processing.

RSMS Top 5 Occupations 2014/15



SRS Occupations 2014/2015



Mates Gully Restaurant Wagga

L to R: Marcia McCoy (Owner) Marlon Lopinto (Chef) Paul Nolte (Owner)

Visas processed 2009 - June 2015

Year	RSMS - 187 (Employer Sponsored)	SRS (Independent)	Total
2009-2010	64	158	222
2010-2011	93	107 (475 & 487 visa)	200
2011-2012	167	6 (475 & 487 visa)	173
2012-2013	82	16 (475 & 487 visa)	98
2013-2014	67	18 (489 visa)	85
2014-2015	77	9 (489 visa)	86

Skilled worker (chef) Marlon Lopinto gained sponsorship in September 2014 and visa was granted in March 2015, after meeting with RDA Riverina Skilled Migration Officer.

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Industry Workforce Presentations

RDA Riverina supports various projects across the Riverina and in 2014 co sponsored the "Riverina Agriculture Workforce: finding, training and retaining" workshop in Griffith. This workshop was facilitated by the University of Melbourne as part of their review into regional and farm workforce development activities for the Cotton Industry. RDA Riverina presented an overview of the current trends in workforce opportunities, shortages and industry trends in the Riverina.

Other RDA Riverina presentations included:

- TAFE Riverina Institute Production Business Line All Staff Forum - Presentation: Regional & Industry Overview
- Career Development Association Australia Where the Jobs Are? - Presentation: Riverina Regional Labour Market

Occupations in Agriculture - Broadening Your Agriculture Career Perceptions

A series of six videos were also developed promoting the diversity in agricultural careers. These videos have been screened at industry forums and on the RDA Riverina website. During 2014 these short videos were viewed by over 600 visitors to the RDA Riverina YouTube Channel. Careers highlighted are:

- Agronomy & Aquaculture – Matt Ryan
- Agriculture Science Student – Eliza Star

- Communications – Liz Stott
- Poultry Industry – Roy Sutherland & Kirsten Jensen
- Hospitality – Chef – Luke Kerlin

To view these videos go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY8Xs5wTvf0YV3L4qegpsnQ>

Meet the Producer - Mat Ryan

Owner Riverina Aquaculture /Part Owner AgGrow Agronomy

Mat Ryan was raised and educated on a dryland property near Griffith until he completed the HSC. Harboursing a passion for the land and fishing, he attended University of New England, Armidale attaining a Bachelor of Rural Science before returning to the family farm. After 11 years dryland farming he returned to agronomy whilst researching an agricultural enterprise that was in high demand, low supply and high in returns. Extensive investigation highlighted an opportunity to develop a fish farming enterprise that had growth capacity.

RDA Riverina met Mat Ryan in his brief and concept stage into the sustainable options of growing Murray Cod on his farm at Bilbul. Realising the potential of this industry Mat has also promoted this business opportunity to potential farmers at the Riverina Food Futures Forum and Winegrapes Marketing Board Farm Options Workshop. He believes to grow the enterprise you need trained labour and the right people.

In 2015, Riverina Aquaculture was a successful recipient of Murray Darling Basin Diversification Funds, which will be utilised to expand and develop the aquaculture enterprise with three extra dams. With three new local farmers developing Murray Cod Farms, Griffith will boast 10 dams with the capacity to produce 180 tonne /year by the end of 2015. Although Riverina Aquaculture are concentrating on the domestic market, they have already sent their first shipment overseas to Singapore and Malaysia.



Everyday is something new. Jobs change with the seasons. There are new and different challenges daily.
- Mat Ryan

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Promotion of the Riverina

The Riverina offers a range of facilities and services as well as jobs however those in metropolitan areas and other regions have limited awareness of this. Further promotion is required within and outside the region to promote what communities in the region have to offer. RDA Riverina facilitate and support two major projects in the RDA Riverina region. They are Country Change Program and Taste Riverina Food Festival.

Country Change

Country Change is a collaborative project involving 9 LGA's promoting the Riverina region as an ideal place to get a job, find industrial land, or real estate, invest and make an enjoyable lifestyle change. In 2014 participating councils were- Griffith, Leeton, Narrandera, Cootamundra, Tumbarumba, Temora, Greater Hume, Lockhart and Hay.

RDA Riverina continued to facilitate & promote the Country Change program in 2014 which included:

- Attendance at NSW Country & Regional Living Expo at Olympic Park, Sydney in August 2014.
- Expo Results- the expo attracted 5000 visitors over a period of 2 days. The Country Change site recorded 109 (2014) leads compared with 105 (2013) and 86 (2012)
- Expo statistics showed:
 - Attendees visited from North Shore(16%), South Sydney (14%), West Sydney(13%),

Blue Mountains & Hawkesbury (12%).

- Employment Status Full Time 50%, Retirees 20%, Self Employed (14%), Stay at home parent (4%), Job Seekers (2%), PT & Casual (10%).

- Top 5 industries of employment - Trade (23%), Health (14%), Education (12%), Admin & Professional (8%), IT (7%).

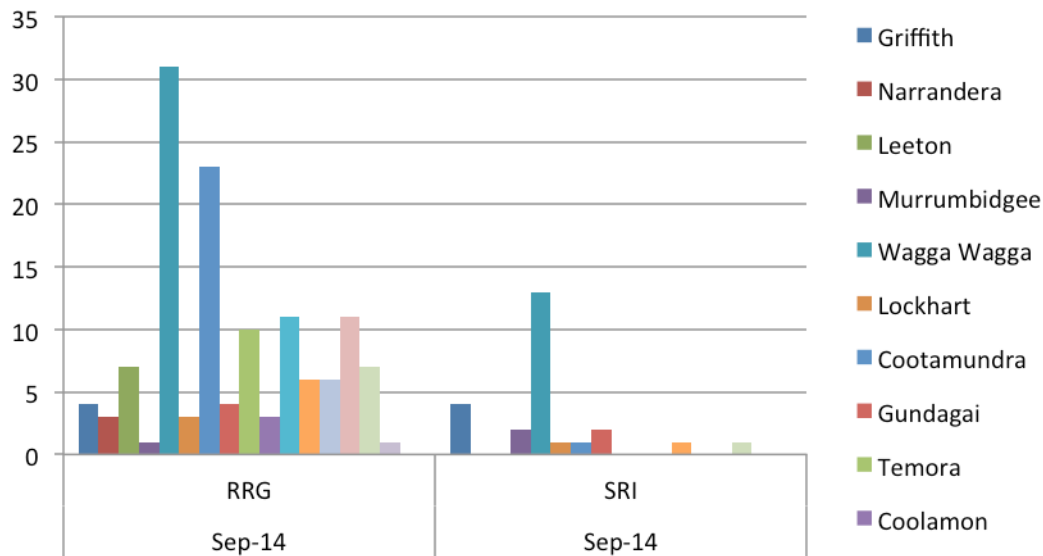


The graph below shows the number of people who have reported a relocation to a Country Change Development Officer from a participating shire. Research conducted at NSW Country & Regional Living Expo states that 71% of attendees were moving within 5 years of attending the expo, 4% were in the process and 9% only not interested in moving at all. 31% were moving within 12 months compared to the previous year where 23% were moving in this time period.

2012	2013	2014
Lockhart - 3 families	Lockhart - 1 single	Temora - 10 families
Leeton - 1 couple	Leeton - 1 couple	Narrandera - 2 families
Griffith - 1 person	Temora - 7 families	Cootamundra - 2 families
		Griffith - 2 families

The Regional Relocation Grant and Skilled Relocation Grant have offered great incentive in assisting those who are considering a relocation. In 2014 – April 2015 the Relocation grant pages on the Country Change website recorded over 18,000 visitors. The Office of State Revenue have also recorded the following relocations for those who have taken up the \$7000 Relocation Grant (RRG) which closed in September 2014 and \$10,000 Skilled Relocation Grant (SRG) which closed on March 31, 2015. As at September 2014 the following relocation grants were converted in a relocation.

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Digital Platform

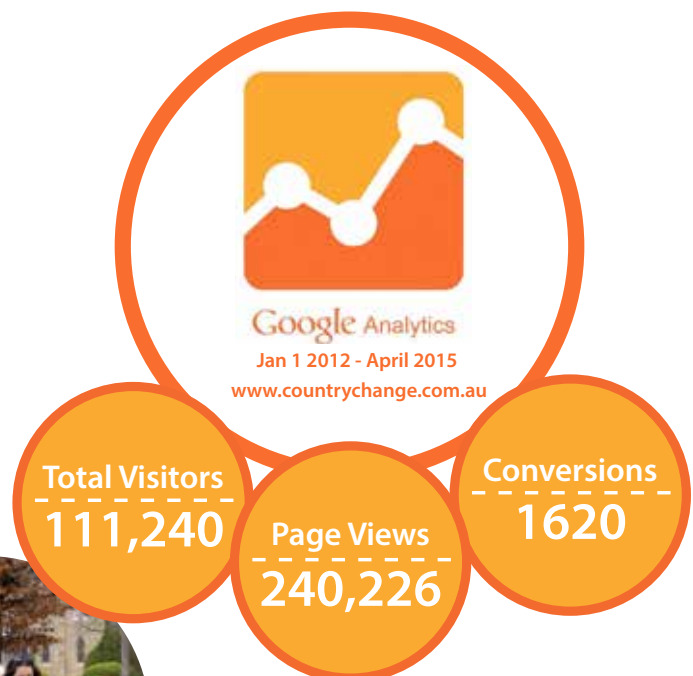
The Country Change digital platform has become an integral part of the Country Change promotion. It now underpins a vast portion of promotional activity giving us direct access to our target audience. Countrychange.com.au is returning record webpage views in exposing our member shires to their target audience. It has become a vital tool for ongoing exposure of the program. Two families, from Adelaide and Melbourne, relocated to Griffith in 2014 with assistance from Country Change officer through this platform alone.

At the end of 2014 the Country Change undertook a website audit and made recommended changes. The results have already returned impressive results with an increase in conversions by 75% for same reporting period in 2014. The website interaction with Facebook has also recorded increased referrals from Facebook to website.

Testimonial

"Cootamundra is a great place to raise a family, there is nothing we want on a daily basis that this town can't provide. The town feels safe, activities are very accessible and a good education service for our family is well catered. After looking for work I decided to use my skills in opening my own business. I believe there are many opportunities in country centres, providing people want to seek out and create opportunities for work, the town is very supportive. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else."

- Nicholas & Susan Pardy



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Taste Riverina

TASTE Riverina is a month-long 'menu of events' during October each year, celebrating the year's harvest, showcasing food, wine, beer and agricultural experiences across 17 shires in the Riverina.

In 2014 the program was filled with more than 100 activities and events with hands-on cooking classes, celebrity chefs, local producer markets, behind-the-scenes tastings and tours, fantastic dining experiences and genuine 'meet the maker' experiences.

Whilst the main focus is on the diversity and wealth of the Riverina's local provenance, the festival itself is an all-encompassing music, arts and cultural experience.

Now in its fourth year, TASTE Riverina, led by Riverina Regional Tourism with support from a TASTE Riverina steering committee undertakes the marketing and promotion of the full program of

events under a creative and coordinated central marketing platform. The steering committee comprises RDA Riverina, TAFE Riverina Institute, NSW Trade & Investment, ABC Riverina, Local Government, tourism operators, local food growers, producers and retailers.

RDA Riverina have been working with TAFE Riverina Institute to develop resources to assist the event holders and food retail outlets. TASTE Riverina event holders and food outlets will receive a copy of the Riverina Food Directory which identifies Growers, Producers and Providers of locally grown and produced food. In addition to this directory, a TASTE Riverina Introduction video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YINMyIIWJNQ>) has been filmed by TAFE Riverina to educate food retailers and staff in the background of TASTE Riverina and the opportunities in hosting an activity or event during the month of October. Shelf talkers have also been designed to highlight locally grown food in our supermarkets and retail outlets.



Too Many Cooks Lunch
TAFE Riverina Institute On Course
Restaurant Wagga



TASTE Riverina Launch 2014
TASTE Riverina Steering Committee
L to R: Jacqui Hermann (RRT) Marg Couch
(RDA Riverina) Sara Morley (TAFE Riverina
Institute)



2

To develop a sustainable environment for future generations involving an innovative response to the water challenge

Water Management

RDA Riverina aims to encourage a balanced and considered approach to the management of water ensuring sustainable outcomes for communities and the environment. RDA Riverina is a member of Murrumbidgee Valley Stakeholder Group (MVSG) and has continued to monitor the implementation of the Murray Darling Basin Plan (MDBP). In 2014 focus was placed on providing input and feedback to determine the social and economic indicators that would be used as part of the MDBA Monitoring and Evaluation process. RDA Riverina has:

- Suggested potential data sources and provided feedback to develop the MDBA's framework for determining Social & Economic Indicators as part of their monitoring and evaluation process.
- Participated via webinar in the MDB Futures The Plan, The People, The Community- Are we there yet? Forum held in Canberra on 30th May.
- Participated in research by University of Canberra (met with Dr Lain Dare & Dave Marsh) on a project titled 'Sustainable Communities in the Murray Darling Basin (MDB)' by contributing thoughts on leadership and community capacity in the Riverina as part of the MDB region.
- Participated in a meeting on 19 Feb 2015 with MVSG to meet the new MDBA Chair Neil Andrew, Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Environment, The Hon Bob Baldwin MP as well as MDBA (David Papps/ Russell James) and

Department of Environment (Tony Slater) staff. Concerns were raised in regard to the:

- Constraints Management Strategy
- Replication of work required from landholders by both State & Commonwealth agencies in the region & confusion from the community about what agency is responsible for the different environmental water management activities. More collaboration between agencies was suggested as a solution.
- Importance of the cap to 1500 on buyback and members emphasised preference for infrastructure efficiencies and strategic buy backs if required.

A number of publications were released by the MDBA in the last year and they can be accessed from the web link <http://www.mdba.gov.au/media-pubs/publications>

These include (but not limited to):

- Murray- Darling Basin Water Reform: Frame work for evaluating progress
- Basin Plan Annual Report 2013-2014
- Basin Plan Environmental Watering Priorities 2015-2016

Murray-Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification Programme

Almost \$18m was provided to 21 projects in the Murray Riverina region early in 2015. RDA Riverina assisted 6 applicants in the submission process. The provision of these Government funds to support a range of industrial and food manufacturing projects is a great boost to the Riverina region. Successful applicants in the RDA Riverina region include:

Coolamon Cheese Company - boutique cheese making facility in Coolamon.

Compost Carbon Fertiliser - compost and dispatch facility that treats extensive waste from large wine producers.

Fresh Technique - hydroponic facility to grow leafy salad greens

Riverina Aquaculture - Murray Cod production dams at Bilbul.

Rivcott - power infrastructure upgrade at the Carrathool substation to support new cotton gin at Rudd's Point.

AgriAustralis - power upgrade for new hazelnut drying and cracking facility at Sandigo.



Anton Green Managing Director Coolamon Cheese

"Coolamon Cheese has received overwhelming support from our local community, the Riverina as whole and private investors. Murray-Darling Basin Regional Economic Diversification Programme funding validates our project and with this funding, hand in hand with community support, we can ensure the success of Coolamon Cheese"

2 To develop a sustainable environment for future generations involving an innovative response to the water challenge

Environmental Sustainability

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

Renewable Energy

A Seminar series "Renewables In Agriculture And Solar Pumping" was launched in Griffith and Grong Grong in May 2015. The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) partnered with Grain Corp in Grong Grong and NSW Farmers Association (NSWFA) in Griffith. Over 80 farmers, businesses and local government gathered to explore how farming enterprise could benefit from clean technologies.

These seminars covered the following topics:

- Solar-powered pumping in agriculture: A guide to system selection and design
 - Renewable energy in agriculture: A farmer's guide to technology and feasibility.
- Feedback gained from this activity is being used in further discussions with RDA Riverina and N SW Office Environment & Heritage, with the view of working collaboratively to respond to the ideas and issues raised at this workshop.

Petroleum Exploration Licenses

In early 2014 Grainger Energy Pty Ltd applied to the NSW Government for Petroleum Exploration Licenses Applications (PELA's) covering about 33,000 square kilometres including areas of the Riverina region. This was a relatively new challenge for this region, however exploration has occurred previously.

The critical issue for a number of stakeholders (RAMROC Councils, Murrumbidgee Irrigation, Coleambally Irrigation, Ricegrowers of Australia & RDA Riverina) was that no process had been determined for classifying the area as having "critical industry clusters" or "Biophysical Strategic Agricultural Land (BSAL)" as it had been deemed that the Riverina had no imminent mining activity. This was communicated to the NSW State Government

If areas are classified as 'critical industry clusters' or BSAL, they must then go through a Gateway process which ensures the impact of resource development on agriculture & water are considered up front in the assessment process. This provides more certainty for landholders and the community.

As mining exploration Licenses have been submitted in the region, the possibility of mining into the future is more probable. Therefore, stakeholders felt it was worth proactively pursuing the identification process and criteria set out for 'critical industry clusters' and 'BSAL' by the State

Government, so if CSG or other resources are found there is a safe guard for critical industries that have substantial infrastructure and value adding that would be detrimentally impacted by such a development in the region.

Impact:

- The NSW Government continues to commission high level investigations into six major areas of investigation associated with CSG exploration and mining, particularly in relation to locations, property access and water quality studies, together with economic and social considerations.
- Grainger Energy PELA declined due to concerns with the company's financial resources and their ability to carry out exploration activities.
- NSW Government imposed six month freeze on all new exploration licences in March 2014. This has been extended to September 2015. The extended timeframe will allow the Office of Coal Seam Gas (OCSG) to properly examine current PELAs and assess the application process for petroleum titles.
- The Government intends to be both exhaustive and balanced in its investigations, so as to ensure that future advice and actions are in accordance with best scientific conclusions and in the best national and state interests.

3

To ensure all people have the capacity & confidence to contribute to the regions growth

Early Childhood Works

(formerly the Early Childhood Strategic Leadership and Development Network 2012 - 2013)

Early Childhood Works brings together Industry Champions from the region to develop creative thinking, assist with problem solving, and develop improvements and potential growth opportunities to achieve workforce development outcomes for the profession and the region. It also aims to highlight the importance of the Early Childhood sector in the wider community and to service users (ie: parents & carers of young children).

The group meet monthly and monitor progress against the Early Years Workforce Strategy and the RDA Riverina Regional Plan.

The group consists of list:

- * RDA Riverina
- * Leeton Early Childhood Centre
- * Good Start Early Learning
- * Dorothy Waide Centre for Early Learning

- * Western Riverina Family Day Care
- * TAFE NSW Riverina Institute
- * State Training Services
- * Families NSW

2014/2015 projects included :

1. Cert IV Front Line Management Training – completion & graduation
2. Establishment of a website.
3. Development of a Strategic Plan for the group.
4. Development of a Strategic Plan facilitated by RDA Riverina
5. Support of ongoing Professional Development for the sector – RAP, use of technology within ECEC settings.

Education & Skills Plan Western Riverina: Grow Our Own

Education & Skills Plan Western Riverina: Grow Our Own is a national partnership of Deakin University and the Bendigo Bank designed to improve the level of education participation and skills retention in regional communities.

In 2015 Deakin University & Bendigo Bank commenced their first national pilot – in the Western Riverina. A working group has now formed with representatives from 15 organisations or networks including Griffith Bendigo Bank, Hillston Colleambly Bendigo Community Bank, RDA Riverina, Griffith Business Chamber, Yenda Producers Co-op, Councils in Griffith, Leeton and Carathool, Riverina Institute, GetSet Inc, the Western Riverina Careers Advisors Network, Marian Catholic College, Griffith and Wade High Schools. The vision for Western

Riverina by 2020 is :

- Greater local access to a broad choice of tertiary education courses with diverse delivery models.
- Local employers attract locally qualified workers into growth industries.
- Development of local pathways to access education and training that leads to sustainable local jobs
- Scholarship support for under represented groups.
- Economic growth from increased human capital due to improved educational access.

Agricultural Options

As the wine industry embarks on challenging times with wineries reducing their intake as sales plateau, RDA Riverina have assisted Riverina Winegrapes Marketing Board, identify options for the growers to diversify farming practice and opportunities for government support. Two Agricultural Options Days were held in March 2014 and 2015 and presented 70 growers and agribusiness with alternative farm practices and business opportunities that they may find well worth considering.

3 To ensure all people have the capacity & confidence to contribute to the regions growth

Capacity Building

Riverina First Community Fund Round 13

Riverina First Community Fund Round 13 successful applicants were announced in May 2014.

developing some great projects for the benefit of many.

From 34 applications across the RDA Riverina region, 9 regional groups were successful in receiving up to \$2000 a broad range of community projects such as community space pathways, a dressage equipment trailer, audio visual equipment and hall kitchen & disable toilet upgrades.

The Riverina First Community Fund Committee assessed project submissions amounting to \$1,489,000 in total and choosing the most worthy recipients was very difficult. The increase in applications in Round 13 reflects a very active community in the Riverina with local organisations

Round 13 saw a broad range of projects from Erin Earth – development of disable access to their sustainable living complex, Mirrabooka Community Hub pergola for outdoor living space, Griffith Menshed kitchen renovation to Barellan Museum audio visual equipment to enhance and update the presentation of historical events in the Barellan district.

Riverina First Fund, Round 13 successful applicants were:

Organisation	Project	Requested Excl GST	Shire
Kikoira Public Hall	Kitchen Upgrade	1977	Bland
Coolamen Men Shed	Disabled Toilet	2000	Coolamon
Griffith Shed for Men	Kitchen Renovations	2000	Griffith
Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre	Mirrabooka Community Hub Shade Pergola	2000	Gundagai
Barellan Museum	Audio Visual Equipment	788	Narrandera
Mirrol Creek Landcare & Arah Park Central School	Brophy Place - The Place to Be	1883	Temora
Erin Earth	Disable Access to Garden Pathway	1607	Wagga
Riverina Equestrian Assoc Horse Trials	Dressage Trailer	1500	Wagga
Hands on Weavers Inc	Workshops	2000	Wagga
		TOTAL	15 755

Recently we benefitted from the extra outdoor covered space when the NAIDOC family fun day was transferred from Yarri Park to Mirrabooka.

- **Mirrabooka Peggy Elliot**

Disable access to Erin Earth Pathway



Organisations now visiting ErinEarth are The Leisure Company, Intereach & WW Base Palliative Care volunteers and clients.

- **Erin Earth**

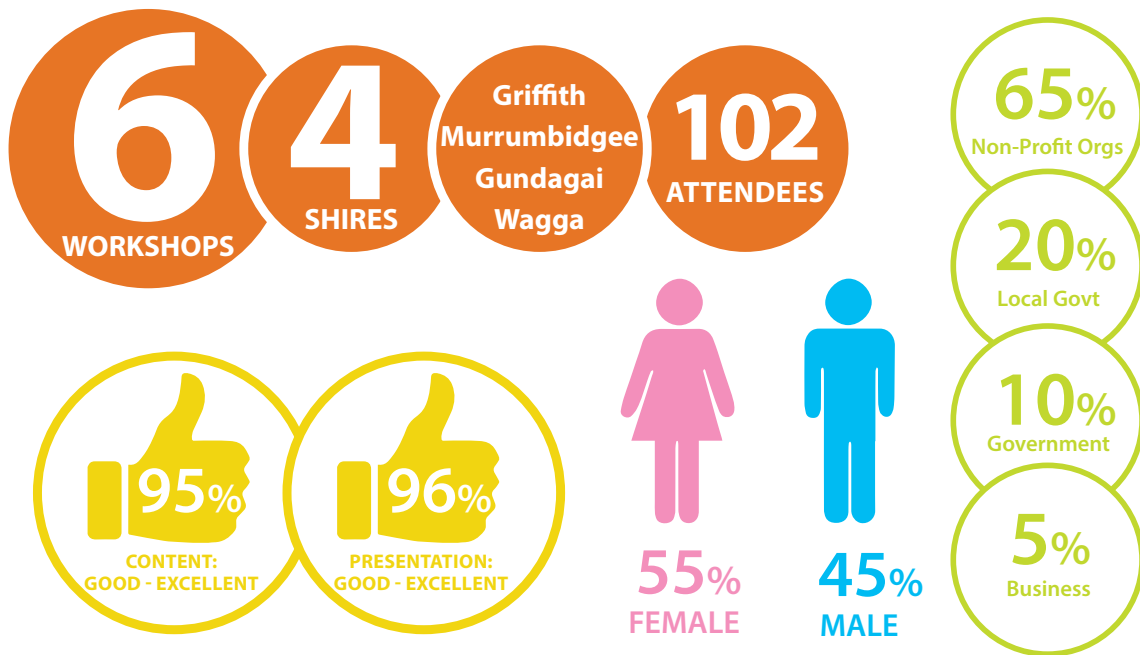
3 To ensure all people have the capacity & confidence to contribute to the regions growth

Introduction to Grant Writing

RDA Riverina recognise that many of our community volunteers discover the role and skill required in a community committee changes as the organisation grows. Community volunteers are eager to support their charities, community organisations or sporting clubs through accessing extra funds to progress the organisation and its activities.

The role of grantwriter in many community organisations comes accidentally and RDA Riverina recognise that writing funding applications from

scratch is not an easy task. In 2014 we offered free Introduction to Grantwriting workshops to all RDA Riverina shires. The workshops are designed for those community organisations embarking on the process for the first time. The aim is for the community volunteers is to be Grant Ready. In addition to these workshops RDA Riverina have developed tools to assist beginner grantwriters through the application process. These can be located by linking to www.rdariverina.org.au/grants



Asset Based Community Development

In June 2014, RDA Riverina partnered with NSW Dept. Communities & Education and Wagga Wagga City Council to present Asset Based Community Development, a workshop facilitated by Peter Kenyon.

Peter is the founder and Director of Bank of I.D.E.A.S. and promotes the power of communities to determine their own future. He believes that one cannot develop communities from the top down or from the outside in. It requires communities to build from the inside out, and for community members to invest themselves, their ideas, assets and resources

in the process.

The workshop was open to senior managers and operational staff from across the community services sector and 60 attendees travelled from Hay, Lockhart, Temora, Cootamundra, Young, Griffith and Wagga for the full day workshop.

Creating a positive future begins in human conversation. The simplest and most powerful investment any member of a community or an organisation can make is to begin talking with other people as though the answers mattered.
- William Greider

4

To ensure a collaborative approach between all tiers of government, business and community to solve the challenges of the region

A number of youth focused sponsorship opportunities were offered to young people with a passion for self-improvement and contribution to their communities. The major component in this development is the building of leadership capacity to adjust to change and the strengthen the ability of communities to work together.

In 2014- 2015 RDA Riverina participated and/ or sponsored:

- The Regional CEO for a Day
- Wagga Wagga Women in Business Mentoring Program
- Rural Women's Gathering Coolamon
- 2014 Western Division Councils NSW Annual Conference – Leading the Change
- NSW Local Government Aboriginal Conference 2014

The **Regional CEO for a day** program was coordinated by Compact Wagga and linked Year 12 aboriginal students from secondary schools in Wagga. Ashleigh Little was paired with RDA Riverina CEO and attended the Development Officers forum in Coolamon. Both Ashleigh and a friend, also accompanied RDA Riverina staff at the 2014 NSW State Training Awards – Riverina Regional Dinner held in Wagga Wagga. This event showcased outstanding attainment by young and mature aged people across the Riverina.

Wagga Wagga Women in Business Mentoring Program. This year long program is designed to help guide and encourage women in Wagga to achieve the best in their careers through one-on-one meetings and exclusive events. Samantha Neal, Student Communications Officer, Division of Marketing at Charles Sturt University Wagga Campus was paired with RDA Riverina CEO to gain further insight into regional development activity across the Riverina. To date Samantha has attended a RDA Riverina committee meeting and region planning sessions in Narrandera.

RDA Riverina also selected 2 nominees - Lara Belford and Joanna Chauncy, through an expression of interest, to attend the Rural Women's Gathering in Coolamon. This conference focused on the importance of women in agriculture, community



RDA Riverina Staff and mentees at NSW State Training Awards, Wagga

and social issues. Nadia Clarke, Carrathool Shire Council Finance Officer, was also sponsored to attend the 2014 Western Division Councils NSW Annual Conference - Leading the Change held in Hillston.



Lara Belford

School Teacher - Leeton

I will be using the connections, skills and inspiration from 2014 Rural Women's Gathering to encourage other rural women, particularly young women, to be actively involved in their communities.



Nadia Clarke -

Carrathool Shire Finance Officer

An eye opening experience, meeting so many council employees, sharing the challenges and networking opportunity

4 To ensure a collaborative approach between all tiers of government, business and community to solve the challenges of the region

Regional Planning

RDA Riverina have participated and contributed to the following planning activities in 2014 - 2015:

- Regional Arts NSW strategic planning
- Murrumbidgee Medicare Local Needs Analysis & Strategic Planning
- NSW RDA Network planning to discuss operational activity and determine regional activity that could be worked on collectively by the network
- Charles Sturt University Riverina Regional Consultation Committee discussion regarding future education and training requirements across the region. Training within the agriculture sector particular opportunities for training that begins at certificate level through TAFE and then articulates with a degree program at CSU
- NSW Dept. Premier & Cabinet, Riverina Murray Regional Action Plans Strategy Planning Day on 9th July for the REROC & RAMROC. The outcomes from this process may be able to feed into RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013-2016
- Wagga Wagga Case Study that will form part of the Growing Regional Australia research project being undertaken by Regional Capitals Australia and the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government.
- Murrumbidgee Irrigation (MI) Strategic Planning. MI are interested in working with other stakeholders working in the MIA. Potentially there are opportunities for MI & RDA Riverina to work together.
- Updated RDA Riverina Regional Plan 2013-2016 and Business Plan 2015-2016.
- Murrumbidgee Murray Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan
- Taskforce to re-establish the Murrumbidgee College at Yanco
- Rebuilding NSW \$20 billion Infrastructure Fund from the partial lease of NSW electricity networks. RDA Riverina emphasised the importance of transport, telecommunications and water



Riverina Murray Infrastructure Group (RMIG) Left to Right: Marg O'Dwyer (Office Regional Development, NSW Trade and Investment), Julie Briggs (REROC), Lani Houston (RDA Riverina) and Jason Collins (Department of Premier and Cabinet)

4 To ensure a collaborative approach between all tiers of government, business and community to solve the challenges of the region

RDA Riverina Activity by LGA						
LGA	DO Forum	RDAR Committee	Grantwriting	WRRSN	RCRN	Country Change
Bland	26/02/14 Lake Cowal Centre, West Wyalong				25/02/14 Shire Chambers West Wyalong	
Carrathool		21/05/14 Carrathool Pub, Carrathool		15/10/14 Community Hall Hilston		
Coolamon					18/03/15 The Arts Centre, Cootamundra	
Griffith	26/11/14 Griffith Regional Theatre, Griffith		2/04/14 16/06/14 20/10/14 9/03/15 RFS, Griffith	25/03/15 RFS, Griffith		12/02/15 RDA Riverina, Griffith
Gundagai			30/04/14 Shire Chambers, Gundagai			
Hay	17/06/15 Golf Club, Hay					
Junee	10/09/14 Junee Theatre, Junee					
Leeton		10/08/14 Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre Yanco		4/03/14 Leeton Lands Council, Leeton		
Lockhart		12/02/14 Shire Chambers, Lockhart			13/06/14 Shire Chambers, Lockhart	
Murrumbidgee			26/03/14 Shire Chambers, Darlington Point	13/05/14 Community Club, Coleambally		
Narrandera		14/04/15 TAFE Riverina Narrandera 13/05/15 Binya Hall, Binya				26/05/14 23/06/14 14/07/14 2/10/14 Shire Chambers Narrandera
Temora	12/03/15 Town Hall, Temora					
Wagga		19/11/14 Botanical Gardens Wagga 26/02/15 Dept Premier & Cabinet Wagga				

5

To encourage a proactive approach to health and living.

Health and Well Being

A dependable health system is a critical factor in attracting people to the Riverina region as well as servicing the increasing aging population. Health impacts on all facets of the region including economic activity, job creation, education & training and the liveability of the region.

RDA Riverina supported CSU/La Trobe University in their proposal to establish the Rural Murray Darling Medical School. This facility will be based in Wagga, Orange and Bendigo with the aim of addressing the medical workforce shortage - focusing on GP's and procedural carers.

WRRSN/ RCRN Meetings (Attendees)

25/02/2014 Shire Chambers West Wyalong (40)
 4/03/2014 Leeton Lands Council, Leeton (33)
 13/05/2014 Community Club, Coleambally (34)
 13/06/2014 Shire Chambers, Lockhart (15)
 18/03/2015 The Arts Centre, Cootamundra (30)
 25/03/2015 RFS, Griffith (42)

Other activities in 2014 -2015:

- Facilitation of Riverina Communities Rural Network (RCRN) and Western Riverina Rural Services Network (WRRSN)

Focus topics & guest speakers were:

- **Heather Ritchie** - Sector Development Officer (MML) – Partners in Recovery Program
- **John Dean** – Murrumbidgee Local Health District – Temora Drug & Alcohol Service

- **Kay Hull**— Retired Politician. Member for Riverina - Ensure the wellbeing of Riverina communities through strong leadership.

- **Donna Argus**- Safe Home For Life Regional Project Manager (FaCS) Patchwork and The Collective NSW Murrumbidgee

- **John Pocius** – Australian Red Cross – Regional Manager Riverina Murray Importance of Red Cross, Centenary of Service and Changes to service provision

- **Terry Williams** –Wiradjuri Cultural Centre Condobolin - Sustainable Cultural Development

- **Colleen Lord** – Healthy Lifestyle Health Promotion Services – Healthy Ageing & Wellbeing

- **Andrew Whales** – Murrumbidgee Shire Council – Economic Development Officer - Benefits of Rebranding Murrumbidgee Shire to include a Wellbeing Shire

- Promotion of the Rural Wellbeing Survey -**

The first report of the 2014 Regional Wellbeing Survey was launched in June, and now the University of Canberra have released detailed tables of data for local regions. This data can download the report and the data tables at: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/research/faculty-research-centres/ceraph/regional-wellbeing/survey-results/2014-survey-results>

- Partners in Recovery Reference -**

Partners in Recovery improves the systemic response to the needs of individuals with a severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs. The aim of Partners in Recovery is to pull together a range of services and supports necessary for recovery which will be tailored to the needs of individuals. Some examples of such services are; income support, housing, employment, medical care and education.



WRRSN Meeting Griffith 2015

6

To act with honesty, integrity, transparency and in accord with relevant legal and financial obligations, sound corporate governance procedures and to fulfill Departmental funding requirements.

RDA Governance

RDA Riverina use the following documents to ensure it achieves this goal.

These documents include:

- RDA Riverina Business Plan
- RDA Riverina Policy & Procedures Manual
- RDA Riverina Rules of Incorporation
- RDA Australia Government Committee Handbook
- RDA Better Practice Guide

The RDA Riverina Committee meets approximately 4 times year, rotating the location across RDA Riverina's 14 shires. The local council Mayor and General Manager are invited to present a brief snapshot on their local government area and in some cases project site visits are organized.

RDA Riverina Committee Meetings held in 2014 – 2015:



LGA	PRESENTATIONS	DATE
Lockhart (Shire Chambers)	Agriculture in Education Review Outcomes - Jim Pratley	12th February 2014
Carrathool (Carrathool Pub)	Murray Darling Basin Authority - MDBP Implementation Update - Phil Townsend	21st May 2014
Leeton (Murrumbidgee College of Agriculture Yanco)	Update on Murrumbidgee Agriculture College, Yanco - Peter Hermann Chair Yanco Agricultural Institute Reference Group Murray Murrumbidgee Regional Growth & Infrastructure Plan - Daniel Wagner Dept Planning and Environment RIRDC Project Importance of Agriculture in the Riverina - Amanda Kenyon, Strategic Economic Solutions P/L	20th August 2014
Wagga Wagga (Botanical Gardens Restaurant) AGM	Charles Sturt University Update - Miriam Dayhew University Ombudsman & Head of Campus Kapooka Comandment Army Recruitment Training Centre - Colonel Stehen Jobson	19th November 2014
Wagga Wagga (Dept Premier & Cabinet)	Endorsement of Chair & Deputy Chair Ministerial Appointments and appointment of interim Treasurer	26th February 2015
Narrandera TAFE Riverina Institute	RDA Riverina Committee Regional Planning	14th April 2015
Narrandera (Binya Hall)	Barellan Beer - Stuart Whytcross	13th May 2015

The RDA Riverina Team 2015-2016

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RDA Riverina 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. We value community driven, innovative, inclusive and sustainable initiatives.

RDA Riverina develops 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: <http://www.rdariverina.org.au/projects.aspx>, complete the Project Outline Form and submit to RDA Riverina Project Officer, Marg Couch po@rdariverina.org.au.

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