

## RIVERINA BUSINESS ACCELERATED

Nine regional businesses are set to create 45 new jobs thanks to Regional Development Australia (RDA) Riverina's first Regional SME Accelerator.

Supported by the NSW Government's Office of Regional Development and delivered by RDA Riverina between March and June 2017, the Accelerator program was met with rave reviews from the businesses taking part.

RDA Riverina's Regional SME (Small to Medium Enterprise) Accelerator combined leading edge online tools with mentoring support, two group workshops, and a graduation 'pitch' where participants showcased all they had learned during the program.

Analysis of growth proposals for the businesses participating in the accelerator forecasted strong sales and job growth over the next two years. The business growth propositions included two enterprises commercialising new technologies, one seeking to consolidate its current operations, two moving to succession management, and four businesses planning on steady expansion.

As one business stated, "I have loved the time I spent to better understand my weaknesses in business, the need for help, the solutions and setting goals. I have also appreciated my time with my mentor."

Summing up the success of the Accelerator, RDA Riverina Chair Diana Gibbs said growth of such Riverina businesses creates jobs and opportunities for further growth and development in the region.

"We were very impressed with the quality of businesses that applied for our Accelerator program and the results they forecast are impressive," Ms Gibbs said.

"We expect that over two years, participating businesses will add approximately 45 new jobs in our region, which is a fantastic outcome for these businesses and our region."

The Accelerator was facilitated by Voyager Strategy's Director John Hemphill assisted by Temora-based mentor Michael Harper.

“I’ve run 30 odd events of this type and Riverina Showcase participants were among the most enthusiastic and professional I’ve seen. Regional entrepreneurialism is alive and well in the Riverina!” Mr Hemphill said.

Businesses will be monitored over the next 12 months with regular checks to assess their progress. RDA Riverina is now seeking partners to offer the SME Accelerator again in 2018.

- Ends -

**MEDIA NOTE: For more information, including to arrange interviews with participating businesses, contact RDA Riverina Executive Officer Rachel Whiting on 0429 444 213.**