

# REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA SOUTHERN INLAND

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-20



# THE SOUTHERN INLAND REGION



## ■ SNAPSHOT OF OUR REGION

### HIGHEST EMPLOYING INDUSTRIES IN THE SOUTHERN INLAND REGION



### SOUTHERN INLAND ECONOMIC DATA

LOCATION	GRP 2016 (\$m)	BUSINESSES 2016	JOBS 2016	POPULATION 2016	POPULATION FORECAST 2036	FORECAST GROWTH RATE 2036
WINGECARRIBEE	2,400	5,212	17,913	49,070	51,800	5%
QUEANBEYAN-PALERANG	2,362	4,425	14,711	58,128	78,786	26%
GOULBURN MULWAREE	1,441	2,334	11,560	30,150	37,202	19%
SNOWY MONARO	1,093	2,511	9,764	20,617	21,885	6%
HILLTOPS	864	2,230	6,959	18,841	19,922	5%
YASS VALLEY	692	1,719	3,783	16,870	27,315	38%
UPPER LACHLAN	28	1,375	2,483	7,841	7,760	-1%
<b>SOUTHERN INLAND REGION</b>	<b>8,880</b>	<b>19,806</b>	<b>67,173</b>	<b>201,517</b>	<b>244,670</b>	<b>18%</b>

Source: Census 2016

## ■ MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



When the challenges of 2020 peaked in March with the arrival of Covid-19 onto our shores, the Southern Inland of NSW had already endured extended drought, catastrophic bushfires and devastating floods. RDA Southern Inland needed to quickly become the information super-highway between all levels of Government, industry, business and the community to provide support, knowledge and understanding both top down and bottom up. With tentacles throughout local business and community organisations, RDASI was perfectly positioned to be the on the ground disseminator.

At the core, RDASI's ability to create change in the region stems primarily from our role as a facilitator, highlighting opportunities and bringing together key stakeholders involved in regional economic development initiatives.

This report details our achievements over the past 12 months during the 2019-20 financial year. As a lead advocate and promoter of growth for our region, we have worked collaboratively with all levels of Government, providing sound arguments for investment in infrastructure and services as well as facilitating dialogue on regional workforce needs and growth strategies to ensure the highest level of liveability outcomes now and in the future.

Communication has been key to re-establishing trust in the RDASI brand, therefore increasing its relevance to stakeholders. Engaging and collaborating to create strong relationships built on our values of integrity, cooperation and trust has strengthened this.

So, despite being one of the most challenging times in living memory, RDASI has found itself in a position to take advantage of the increased need for support and assistance in the community. Being on the front line of collating and disseminating critical information throughout this past year's crisis, RDASI has cemented its reputation as a leader in regional development outcomes.

The new financial year will be like nothing we've seen before. The new normal is still something we're trying to discern. Zoom committee meetings and working from home were part of RDASI's essential pivots to continue supporting our regional communities. The fact we've been able to maintain and even extend our influence in the region through this time, has been an unexpected result.



Carisa Wells  
CEO and Director of Regional Development  
RDASI

## OUR COMMITTEE



**Hugh Cooke**  
*Chair*

Hugh Cooke was appointed as Chair of RDA Southern Inland in March 2018. Hugh is a primary producer in the Yass district having previously worked as a

Director with the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources and a Director and CFO of Wheat Exports Australia.



**Sue Whelan OAM**  
*Deputy Chair*

Sue Whelan served as a Councillor on Queanbeyan City Council for many years. Sue has served as Deputy Mayor, most recently September 2008 until

September 2011. Regional Development has been a long-term interest. Sue was appointed to the Australian Capital Region Development Council (ACRDC) as Deputy Chair in 1998 and Chair in 2001. In October 2003 Sue was appointed the inaugural Chair of the NSW Regional Development Advisory Council (RDAC) by NSW Minister David Campbell.



**Mark Bradbury**  
*Committee Member*

Mark Bradbury is a solicitor, establishing Mark Bradbury Legal at the beginning of 2014 in Goulburn. Having served on the School Council

of Hurlstone Agricultural High School between 2002 and 2005, Mark is also presently a Board Member of Southern Tablelands Arts and was the President of the Goulburn Chamber of Commerce from 2017-2020.



**John Bell**  
*Committee Member*

John Bell is the former General Manager of the Upper Lachlan Shire Council based at Crookwell. John has 40 years' experience in Local Government

working with a range of government authorities, that all coincidentally, fell within the current RDASI footprint. He continues to employ his considerable local government skill base, expertise and experience, working closely with associated community groups and organisations, in the fields of district health, tourism and economic development for improved regional outcomes.



**Terry Oakes-Ash OAM**  
*Committee Member*

As a civil engineer, Terry has had wide ranging managerial experience, with extensive knowledge of the construction materials industry in

Australia, South East Asia and the USA.

He worked for Boral for 24 years (10 years as CEO of Boral Resources Ltd) and 15 years as a consulting business advisor.



**Jenny Calkin**  
*Committee Member*

Jenny Calkin is an economist with more than 30 years' experience in the fields of strategic tourism planning and marketing, business advice and

government liaison for tourism projects. She has had extensive experience at local, state, federal and international levels of government and of industry. Jenny lives in Sydney but owns The Nebula Motel in Cooma, in the Snowy Monaro region of NSW. She is a member of the Cooma Monaro Tourism Advisory Committee, Tourism Snowy Mountains; Cooma Chamber of Commerce and the NSW Business Chamber.

## OUR STAFF

**Carisa Wells**  
*CEO and Director of Regional Development*

**Camilla Staff**  
*Project and Communications Officer*

**Jayde Butz**  
*Skilled Migration Officer*

**Daryl Smith**  
*Business Development Manager*

**Louise Hadfield**  
*Grants Officer*

## RDASI COMMITTEE REGIONAL VISITS

Each alternate Committee meeting, the RDASI team ventures into the region to explore one of our local towns or areas. Conducting the meetings outside of the Goulburn office and on the ground allows us to meet businesses and organisations to better understand the issues they are facing and how we can assist. In 2019-20, committee meetings were held in Queanbeyan and the Wingecarribee. Conversations with local business

owners revealed a consistent issue; skills. Finding skilled workers in areas of manufacturing, construction, engineering and other trades is a constant struggle for local employers. RDASI is committed to working closer with TAFE, education providers, schools and local businesses in 2020 to address this issue. Our regional migration program is also key in helping to fill skills shortages in critical areas.



## RDASI STAKEHOLDERS

RDASI works with a variety of key stakeholders across local, state and federal government, industry, business and community representatives. These relationships have only strengthened over the last 12 months. Some of our key stakeholders are listed below:

STAKEHOLDER	RELATIONSHIP
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Communications	Primary funding source & reporting structure which provides the Charter and Better Practice Guide
NSW Treasury	Administration of 494 Visa as an RCB
Department of Education	Partner to provide industry engagement for the SISP education program
Canberra Region Joint Organisation	Collaboration on regional issues
Destination Sydney Surrounds South	Collaboration & partnership on regional events
Destination Southern NSW	Collaboration on regional campaigns
Southern Region Business Enterprise Centre	Partner in projects and cross referral of services
Training NSW	Partner & collaborator on workforce issues & projects
Department of Regional NSW	Collaborator on regional issues
Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group	Participant in working groups
Business Australia	Participant on regional Jobs Taskforce & refer support and services
Illawarra Business Chamber local chambers of commerce and business associations	Collaborate, support, promote and partner
AusIndustry	Collaboration, cross referrals
RDA's ACT, Illawarra, Riverina, Murray, FSC, NR, MNC	Collaboration on working groups, projects & regional issues
Local Councils	Collaborate on events, projects & provide support for infrastructure approvals
Council of Small Business Organisations	Partner in events
Regional Australia Institute	Collaborate on regional issues & projects
Economic Development Australia	Member

## EVENTS HOSTED

### REGIONAL CONNECT EVENTS

These networking events have provided business owners and managers the opportunity to engage with each other, discuss potential collaborations, speak to their local council, state or federal government representatives, ask questions, or share innovative ideas.

They are held monthly, with an average of 25-40 businesses attending each event.

Events are currently held in Goulburn and Jindabyne, with the intention to launch new Connect events in the Southern Highlands, Braidwood and Crookwell next financial year.

### AG DAY 2019

139 people attended the 2019 Ag Day Gala Dinner to network, communicate and celebrate the contribution agriculture makes to our community. The menu on the night showcased local produce in a paddock to plate fashion and recognised the supply chain needed to provide such fare. Glenn McGrath, former Australian cricketer, was the guest speaker, with his talk focusing on his regional upbringing, career, personal highs and lows and connection with rural NSW. Via a silent auction and raffle, over \$5000 was raised for the McGrath Foundation.

Taralga farmer Andrew Connor said, *"The event gave me the opportunity to get off-farm and enjoy a night out. The night was so enjoyable for me as I was able to catch up with a number of farmers that were friends with my father who I had not seen in years. My Dad passed away over 10 years ago so it was great to be able to have a chat to them about Dad and how farming has changed since then. Glenn McGrath was fantastic."*

The event was a partnership between Goulburn-Mulwaree Council, Local Land Services, NSW Farmers, Goulburn Post, Tablelands & Monaro Farming Systems and DPI delivered the third Ag Day in Goulburn.

### FIREAID 2020

Held in Bowral on 24 January, the FireAid 2020 event raised over \$350,000 for the local fire affected community. Over 6000 people attended the day and it ran without incident. We had the support of the local police, fire brigade and RFS and we procured local food and beverage suppliers in order to showcase their products to the audience. The show was incredible, and our team chose to work long hours on a voluntary basis at the actual event, a further display of our dedication to benefit the local community.

The money raised was distributed on EFTPOS cards linked to local Southern Highlands businesses to families who lost their homes during the bushfires. This approach, also helped to stimulate the local economy during a very challenging time.

### CIRCULAR ECONOMY CONFERENCE

RDA Southern Inland (RDASI), Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre (AMGC), Regional Development Australia ACT (RDA ACT) and the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) hosted The Path to a Circular Economy forum in Goulburn on the 26th February 2020.

The event provided an introduction to recycling for the Circular Economy and how to maximise the use of valuable resources to contribute to innovation, growth and job creation.

Panellists shared examples of their innovative work in waste and the re-use of materials and how this has economic and social benefits. Professor Veena Sahajwalla, one of Australia's leading engineers, was the keynote speaker

The panel included:

- Steven Richards, Managing Director, Industry Waste Recovery
- Henry Gundry, Manager, Woodlawn Bio Reactor
- Olympia Yargar, Founder and CEO of Goterra
- Michael Claessens, Regional Development Australia ACT
- Graham Knowles, iQrenew

## ■ EVENTS HOSTED

### BUSINESS RECOVERY WORKSHOPS

RDASI assisted to organise and sponsor three Business Recovery Workshops in the region where business owners were invited to hear from all levels of Govt on funding and support which became available immediately after the Bushfire crisis in early 2020. Additionally, a professional marketing company provided insights and tips on how to develop a resilient social media presence.

At each of the three events, over 40 businesses attended. Council, ServiceNSW, TrainingNSW, RDASI & BCr8ive Media presented at each event. Businesses who registered (regardless of whether they attended) were provided the slides so they could refer to them frequently and pass them on to other contacts who may find them helpful.

## ■ KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

### SISP PROGRAM 2019 & 2020

The SISP Program sees RDASI working closely with other RDAs, industry and schools to improve STEM future outcomes. In 2019, the number of schools increased to nine and transactional industry partnerships have increased from three to eight. As well as a heavy focus on the renewable energy sector, RDASI also partnered with engineering firms, education providers and an innovative waste management business, GoTerra.

502 students from Boorowa, Murrumburrah, Goulburn, Yass and Crookwell participated in SISP in 2019, an increase of 28% from 2018. Over 47 events were held throughout the year, including 41 separate industry interactions.

In 2020, 26 schools signed up to the program and we reached over 900 students, with 16 industry partners on board. We increased our scope from two to four regions – now including Upper Lachlan Learning Community, Goulburn-Mulwaree Learning Community, Southern Highlands Learning Community and Hilltops Learning Community.

Covid-19 restrictions meant that activities planned for Term 1 and 2 in 2020 were cancelled, with the program moving to an online format. Industry engagement sessions and STEM Challenge Days were hosted via zoom. Our industry partners were extremely accommodating and were able to engage and excite the students despite not being able to visit them in person.

When restrictions eased later in the year, a highlight was the Biala Blade viewing excursion hosted in Crookwell. Students from Crookwell High and Crookwell Public were treated to an up close and personal look at a 70m wind turbine blade. The blade was on its way from Port Kembla to BJCE Australia's Biala Wind Farm and stopped at the Crookwell Showground for students to admire.

### REGIONAL MIGRATION PROGRAM

In the 2019-20 financial year, RDASI sponsored:

- 167 x 489 Visas
- 42 x 187 Visas
- 8 x 494 Visas

In total, RDASI assisted to bring 217 Skilled migrants into the region, filling roles that were unable to be recruited within the local workforce.

## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Increased engagement has been achieved across all communications channels.



Followers increased from **988** to **1408**, an increase of **43%**



Followers increased from **383** to **420**, an increase of **10%**  
**128,537** impressions over 12 months



Followers increased from **130** to **163** from Jan 2020-June 2020, an increase of **25%**



**223** followers since our launch in February 2019

## INVESTMENT SUPPORT

### GRANTS OFFICER

RDASI employed a part-time grants officer to monitor, research and write grant applications for RDASI and external stakeholders. This role was fully funded by RDASI, with no cost to grant applicants.

The RDASI grants and research officer assisted 12 organisations to apply for over \$450,000 in funding within the Southern Inland region over a three-month period. When surveyed at the end of the process a

majority of applicants responded they were satisfied and would use our service again.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 financial restrictions RDASI was unable to continue funding this role. However, if feasible, we will reinstate the role in the new year, to continue assisting businesses with funding opportunities in the future.

SUPPORT	VALUE
Investment advocacy and support	Provided to 15 organisations seeking over \$59 million in funding
Letters of Support provided	27 Letters of Support provided for projects valued over \$25 million
Building Better Regions Fund support	3 Letters of Support provided and \$9 million in grant funding secured for the region

## ■ COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS KEY STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

This Group met monthly prior to Covid-19, and weekly during the pandemic to discuss issues and initiatives to advance the Southern Highlands.

### SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIA TRANSPORT STRATEGY COMMITTEE (SEATS)

This Committee is attended by our Deputy Chair, Sue Whelan, with their core purpose to advocate for transport infrastructure in the region.

### REGIONAL INNOVATION NETWORK

The RDASI CEO and Project Officer attend monthly Regional Innovation Network meetings via zoom, to discuss innovation opportunities in the region and how we can support and encourage the local start-up network. RDASI is also an active contributor to the Snowy-Monaro Innovation Network (SMIN), Goulburn Innovation Network (GRIN) and Canberra Region Innovation Network (CBRIN)

## ■ PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

### OUR VISION

To create a strong and vibrant Southern Inland community with abundant investment, business, employment, and educational opportunities

### OUR PURPOSE

RDASI drives innovation, growth and development in Southern Inland NSW through the facilitation of regional projects, collaboration, communication and advocacy

### OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY ■ HONESTY ■ TRANSPARENCY ■ COMMITMENT ■ COLLABORATION

### OUR 5 PILLARS

ADVOCATE ■ INNOVATE ■ FACILITATE ■ COLLABORATE ■ COMMUNICATE

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2021

- 1 BUSINESS SUPPORT**

Disseminate support and opportunities available, while driving business innovation to Southern Inland businesses and organisations
- 2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Engage with all levels of government, industry leaders, key stakeholder and community organisations to advocate for regional issues and provide connections to develop improved economic outcomes
- 3 INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

Advocate for infrastructure projects that will contribute to the growth and development of the region's economic recovery and jobs growth
- 4 MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS**

Communicate the benefits of regionalisation to those outside the Southern Inland and build RDASI's value and relevance within the region
- 5 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Deliver programs and facilitate partnerships to address current and future skills needs in the region

## ■ CASE STUDIES

### SOUTHERN INLAND AG DAY GALA DINNER 2019

National Ag Day is recognised on the 21st of November each year and brings awareness to the importance of Australia's farmers and our agricultural sector. For the past 3 years, RDA Southern Inland has organised Ag Day celebrations in Goulburn. On the 20th November 2019, RDA Southern Inland, with support from various sponsors, organised the Southern Inland Ag Day Gala Dinner in Goulburn to celebrate local farmers and agricultural businesses residing in the Southern Inland region. The Dinner provided farmers with an opportunity to come together, network and relax with a night away from the farm.

This event was a true example of local collaboration amongst local businesses, not-for-profits and government agencies. Sponsors and partners for the night included NSW Farmers, Coordinare, Department of Primary Industries, Tablelands Farming Systems, Divalls Bulk Haulage, Southern Region Business Enterprise Centre, Agnew Building Supplies, Local Land Services and the Goulburn Post. A number of these organisations also contributed on the organising committee and assisted in the lead-up to the event.

Our special guest speaker was former Australian fast-bowler and President of the McGrath Foundation, Glenn McGrath. The Southern Inland Agriculture Gala Dinner celebrated farmers' overall contribution to agriculture and the community, and the resilience they have shown over the past 12 months. Glenn McGrath's speech largely focused on resilience –throughout his adolescence, cricket career and family life. Glenn also found time in the afternoon to host a cricket clinic with up-and-coming young local cricketers before the gala event.

For dinner, guests enjoyed their delicious 3 course meal, highlighting the local Marianvale Blue – Australian Murray Cod, Dewsburys Pork Belly, Windellema Asparagus and Parkesbourne berries. A key focus was providing guests a paddock to plate style dinner showcasing predominately local produce.

A raffle was held to raise funds for the McGrath Foundation, with the main prize being 2 tickets to the Pink Cricket Test in Sydney and a night accommodation, sponsored by Tablelands Farming Systems. A cricket

bat signed by the 2018 Prime Minister's XI was also auctioned off with a purchase price of \$2,300. In total, over \$5000 was donated to the McGrath Foundation, including a portion of the dinner ticket price.

139 people attended the dinner from across the region. Feedback from the evening was extremely positive.

Results of a mobile survey taken at the event found:

- 100% of respondents enjoyed the evening and felt they got value from the ticket price
- 86% of respondents would like to see the event remain as a formal style dinner, as opposed to an informal BBQ (as per previous years)

This event is becoming well known throughout the local community, now being in its third year. This longevity contributed to the success of the event, as well as being able to capitalise on the National Ag Day initiative.



## CASE STUDIES

### SISP IN 2019

The STEM Industry Schools Partnership Program (SISP) Program has been running in the Southern Inland region since 2018, when the Southern Inland was selected as one of three regions to pilot the program. In 2018, Regional Development Australia - Southern Inland (RDASI) developed partnerships with Crookwell High School and its five feeder schools, as well as three local wind farms. In 2019, the number of schools increased to nine and transactional industry partnerships have increased from three to eight. As well as a heavy focus on the renewable energy sector, RDASI also partnered with engineering firms, education providers and an innovative waste management business, GoTerra.

502 students from Boorowa, Murrumburrah, Goulburn, Yass and Crookwell participated in SISP in 2019, an increase of 28% from 2018. Over 47 events were held throughout the year, including 41 separate industry interactions.

The Southern Inland SISP Program was built around a long-term school project, where all participating students worked in groups to design and build a product that enhanced the use of renewable energy. Ideas ranged from a solar powered dairy farm, a wind and solar powered house and a gas-free solar BBQ. Throughout this project, industry partners mentored and assisted students with their projects, as well as hosted students on site. This approach to SISP meant that students worked on the one problem and project for over 2 terms on a regular, weekly basis. This allowed students to build their confidence and ability in the 4 Cs and future focused enterprise skills. Industry partners visited the same schools on numerous occasions meaning rapport and relationships were built, rather than just the hosting of one-off events.

Prior to the SISP Program, 59% of students felt confident in their abilities in Maths, Science or Technology. This increased to 69% at the conclusion of the program.

Numerous successful events were also held, including the University of Newcastle's SMART Science Shows and Discovery Days, Central Queensland University's Ag-Tech workshops and workshops run by the Canberra Institute of Technology.

The inaugural Southern Inland SISP STEM Awards were held in Goulburn on the 4th December, with over 100 students, teachers, industry partners and special guests attending. This was a fantastic way to conclude SISP for 2019 and to recognise the STEM work that has occurred across schools in the Southern Inland region in 2019.







Shop 5, 158-162 Auburn St Goulburn  
All mail to: PO Box 775 Goulburn NSW 2580  
Ph: 02 4822 6397  
[admin@rdasi.org.au](mailto:admin@rdasi.org.au)  
[www.rdasi.org.au](http://www.rdasi.org.au)