



**Australian Government**

**Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development**

## **Updates from the Regional Development Australia Programme Management Team and the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development August – September 2016**

### **For Regional Development Australia Committees**

#### **Updates on the Regional Development Australia Programme**

##### ***Independent Review of RDA Committees***

With changes to the Government's regional programmes announced during the 2016 election campaign, it is timely to review the RDA programme to ensure it is aligned with the broader regional policy agenda.

An Independent Review of the RDA programme will commence shortly and conclude by the end of the year.

Further advice will be distributed to RDA Chairs and Deputy Chairs regarding the review once arrangements are finalised. Information will also be made available on [www.rda.gov.au/review/](http://www.rda.gov.au/review/). If you have any queries, please contact [rdareview@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdareview@infrastructure.gov.au).

##### ***2016 RDA National Forum – 25 October 2016, Albany W.A.***

The 2016 RDA National Forum will be held in Albany, Western Australian to coincide with the Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA) conference. The Forum will be held on Tuesday 25 October at the Albany Entertainment Centre.

The Department has engaged Mr Keith Greaves to facilitate the day. The forum will include updates from the Department, some presentations from RDA Committee members, an interactive panel session, and roundtable workshops that will focus on consultation and seeking input from attendees for the Independent Review of the RDA Programme. An agenda will be circulated in the coming weeks.

Over 77 RDA Committees from all states and territories have registered and will be in attendance at the Forum.

Registrations are now open via [www.2016.segra.com.au/registration/](http://www.2016.segra.com.au/registration/). We would encourage RDA Committees who have not yet submitted registrations to do so.

The Department will provide a single payment of \$1,500 per RDA Committee to assist with accommodation costs to attend the RDA National Forum. To receive this payment, RDA Committees will need to submit evidence of their registration and a valid RDA Committee tax invoice. Detailed advice was emailed to RDA Chairs, Deputy Chairs and EOs on 9 June 2016 regarding the process for registration and payments.

The Department will provide ongoing updates as planning progresses, including via the website at [www.rda.gov.au/national-forum/index.aspx](http://www.rda.gov.au/national-forum/index.aspx).

### ***The RDA Programme Management Team***

Steve Dreezer has commenced in the role of General Manager, Local Government, Mainland Territories and Regional Development Australia Branch, within Local Government and Territories Division, as of 22 August 2016. He is looking forward to meeting many of you at the 2016 RDA National Forum on 25 October 2016 and discussing RDA programme matters. Steve can be contacted on:

Email: [steve.dreezer@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:steve.dreezer@infrastructure.gov.au) or Phone: (02) 6274 7209

The RDA Programme Management Team hosts several group email inboxes. Responsibility for key areas of work within the RDA programme is spread across locations within Australia, so the best 'first contact' is through these inboxes.

- RDA Independent Review [rdareview@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdareview@infrastructure.gov.au) for all matters relating to the independent review.
- RDA EOI inbox [rdaei@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdaei@infrastructure.gov.au) for all matters relating to appointments, expressions of interest, or the new EOI online system;
- RDA inbox [rda@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rda@infrastructure.gov.au) for all contract matters, reports to submit, issues to raise or general questions;
- Update inbox [update@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:update@infrastructure.gov.au) for all matters relating to rda.gov.au website; and
- RDA Communications and Branding inbox [RDACommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:RDACommunications@infrastructure.gov.au) to submit all publications and branding materials for approval, and for assistance with the Branding Guidelines and branding materials.

These inboxes are monitored on a daily basis by the RDA Programme Management Section and emails will be acknowledged and responded to promptly.

### ***RDA Website***

The RDA website homepage is a great tool to promote the work of RDA Committees and we would welcome your submissions to [update@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:update@infrastructure.gov.au). The front page of [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) is reserved for RDA news and stories, and we welcome your articles and updates for publication.

The password system for the member's section of the National RDA website was removed as of 22 July 2016. RDA Committees were informed via both a published article and an email on 27 July 2016. For more information on these updates please visit [www.rda.gov.au/media/announcements](http://www.rda.gov.au/media/announcements).

### ***RDA Committee membership vacancies***

The Department will continue to forward Committee Member Expressions of Interest (EOIs) as they are lodged to RDA Chairs and Deputy Chairs to consider.

When RDA Committees have vacancies to fill, and have assessed the EOIs received, the RDA Chairs and Deputy Chairs will need to complete the summary of preferred appointment template - and forward this to the relevant ministerial adviser, Elizabeth Scott to seek agreement from the Minister for Regional Development before appointing new committee members. Ms Scott can be contacted at [elizabeth.scott@regional.gov.au](mailto:elizabeth.scott@regional.gov.au).

### ***RDA Expression of Interest (EOI) System***

An enhancement to the online RDA Expression of Interest (EOI) system went live from 25 July 2016. The enhancement will allow the Department and RDA Committees to better manage the appointments process and allow for better management and reporting of current membership.

The Department is undertaking a data integrity check and update before promoting use of the system to RDA Committees.

Current information regarding RDA EOIs can be found at [www.rda.gov.au/join-your-rda/](http://www.rda.gov.au/join-your-rda/). Should you have any questions about the appointment process or the new EOI system, please continue to contact the Department at [rdaei@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdaei@infrastructure.gov.au) or by telephoning the RDA EOI helpline on 1800 505 938 (Mon–Fri 9am-5pm AEST).

### ***RDA Insurance***

The Department has recently renewed Management Liability, Voluntary Workers, and Public and Products Liability Insurance for 2016-17. Certificates of Currency were provided to RDA Committees by email on 7 July 2016. A complete Insurance Manual was provided on 29 August 2016. If you have any questions regarding these documents please contact our insurance broker directly at [ryan\\_gooley@ajg.com](mailto:ryan_gooley@ajg.com)

### ***RDA Business Planning for 2016-17***

RDA Committees are required to submit an *Annual Business Plan and Budget* for the 2016-17 financial year to the Department by 31 August 2016.

The *Annual Business Plan and Budget* is the key operational document which brings together each Committee's proposed activities for the coming financial year, including its work program, priorities and resources. It is also a strategic document that underpins decisions made by the Committee and should incorporate clear linkages back to the Committee's three to five-year regional plan.

The five RDA key outcome areas should be embedded in business plans and underpin each Committee's proposed activities. RDA Committees may choose to set their own key performance indicators as measurable targets.

*Annual Business Plan and Budgets* should follow the templates provided in the *RDA Better Practice Guide* and are available to download from [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

### ***RDA Annual Report on Outcomes for 2015-16***

RDA Committees are required to submit *Annual Report on Outcomes* for the 2015-16 financial year to the Department by 31 August 2016.

The *Annual Report on Outcomes* presents RDA Committees with an opportunity to share their successes with governments, including how their activities relate to the strategic priorities of the region and of all levels of government. RDA Committees are required to report annually against each of the five RDA Outcomes. As with the *Annual Business Plan and Budget*, the *Annual Report on Outcomes* uses a consistent national performance and reporting framework.

The *Annual Report on Outcomes* should follow the template provided in the *RDA Better Practice Guide*, available to download from the RDA Committee member's page at [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

### ***RDA Regional Plans***

RDA Committees are not required to provide a revised *Regional Plan* as a result of the extended Funding Agreement. However, RDA Committees should continue to review their *Regional Plans* – as set out in the Funding Agreement – and forward them to the Department for approval if they are updated.

*Regional Plans* should follow the template provided in the *RDA Better Practice Guide*.

## **Other Departmental Programme Information**

### ***National Stronger Regions Fund***

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development is currently providing advice to the Australian Government on National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) Round Three applications. All applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application in line with the NSRF Programme Guidelines.

The Australian Government recently announced that the NSRF will be refocused to be eligible only to regional, rural and remote Australia. The new fund, to be known as the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF), aims to create jobs, drive economic growth and enhance liveability in regional areas through investments in two streams: infrastructure projects and community investments. Guidelines for the BBRF are currently being developed. Interested parties are encouraged to monitor the NSRF website for future announcements regarding the new fund.

Further information is at: [www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/nsrf)

Questions can be directed to: [nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:nsrf@infrastructure.gov.au)

### ***Building Better Regions Fund***

The Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) is an Australian Government initiative that will re-focus the remaining funding under the National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) to better meet the needs of regional and remote communities. By re-focusing funding the BBRF will create jobs and drive economic growth in regional Australia, and will build the kind of regional communities that people either want to stay in or come back to. Grant recipients located outside of the major capital cities will be eligible to apply.

Local Governments and not-for-profit organisations will have access to grants under two streams: the Infrastructure Stream; and the Community Investment Stream. The new fund will assess infrastructure projects in three categories to ensure projects of a similar size will be ranked against each other, and small projects will not compete with major projects for funding.

Guidelines for the BBRF are currently being developed. Future announcements regarding the new fund will be posted on the Department's website at [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au).

For general enquiries, please contact [regional.development@regional.gov.au](mailto:regional.development@regional.gov.au).

### ***Regional Jobs and Investment Package***

The Regional Jobs and Investment Package (Package) is a \$200 million Australian Government initiative designed to create local jobs and growth, help diversify regional economies and build strong communities. Following a local planning process, eligible regions will be able to access between \$20 million and \$30 million in funding under the Package across three streams:

- Business innovation grants;
- Local infrastructure projects; and
- Skills and training programmes.

The Package will be delivered across the following nine regions:

- Bowen Basin;
- New South Wales North Coast;
- New South Wales South Coast;
- Wide Bay Burnett;
- Goulburn Valley;
- Cairns;
- Geelong;
- Tasmania; and
- Upper Spencer Gulf.

The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development will engage with regions in the coming weeks to start this community-led process.

For general enquiries, please contact [regional.development@regional.gov.au](mailto:regional.development@regional.gov.au).

### ***Stronger Communities Programme***

In the 2015 Budget, the Australian Government announced the \$45 million Stronger Communities Programme to fund small capital projects in local communities in each of the 150 Federal Electorates.

The programme is now closed to new applications. The Department is expected to finalise the assessment of all applications in coming weeks.

A list of all approved projects is available at:

<https://infrastructure.gov.au/department/grants/index.aspx>

Further information is at: [www.infrastructure.gov.au/SCP](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/SCP)

Questions can be directed to: [SCP@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:SCP@infrastructure.gov.au)

### ***Drought Communities Programme***

The Drought Communities Programme (DCP) is designed to deliver benefits in targeted drought affected regions of Australia. The Australian Government is providing \$35 million over four years, to fund local infrastructure initiatives that provide employment for people whose work opportunities have been impacted by drought.

Funding will be targeted at projects that stimulate local community spending, use local resources, businesses and suppliers, and/or provide a long-lasting benefit to communities and the agricultural industries on which they depend. Councils have until June 2019 to complete approved projects.

Funding will be directed to declared\* local government areas and 23 Councils have been declared for the purposes of the programme:

*Queensland* - Balonne, Barcaldine, Barcoo, Blackall Tambo, Boulia, Bulloo, Burke, Carpentaria, Diamantina, Flinders, Longreach, McKinlay, Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Richmond and Winton.

*New South Wales* - Brewarrina, Coonamble and Walgett.

*Victoria* - Buloke, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack.

\* Declared Councils that can receive funding of up to \$1.5 million for eligible projects under the DCP are those specified by the Minister for Regional Development in consultation with the Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources.

The available programme funding is now fully committed to these 23 Councils. Information on project eligibility is available in the guidelines at

[http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/publications/dcp/DCP\\_Guidelines\\_300516.pdf](http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/publications/dcp/DCP_Guidelines_300516.pdf)

### ***Department Reports***

Departmental regional publications are available at:

[www.regional.gov.au/regional/publications](http://www.regional.gov.au/regional/publications)

### ***Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics***

The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) provides economic analysis, research and statistics on infrastructure, transport and regional development issues to inform both Australian Government policy development and wider community understanding.

Further information about BITRE's work and access to publications can be found at:

<http://bitre.gov.au/>

## **Other Australian Government Programme Information**

### ***Department of Agriculture and Water Resources/Health - Imported Food Reforms Consultation***

The Department of Agriculture and Water Resources is working with the Department of Health to improve how we manage imported food safety risks without imposing undue costs on importers and consumers, as well as our trading partners. The proposed reform options seek to address the limitations of the current system by providing more flexible and targeted ways to prevent and respond to food safety risks to better protect the health of consumers.

To assess the proposed options, we have released the [Imported Food Reforms – Consultation Regulation Impact Statement \(RIS\)](#) for public comment from 22 August 2016 to 30 September 2016.

Feedback on the consultation RIS will help us better understand and measure the implications of the proposed reform options on affected stakeholders and interested parties. Feedback will also provide input to the final assessment of options and decision making process for further Government consideration. By providing feedback to the consultation RIS you are helping to ensure the reform options considered are practical and viable.

#### **Further information?**

For further information and to keep up to date with how the proposed reforms are progressing, please visit [www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/food/reform](http://www.agriculture.gov.au/import/goods/food/reform) or contact the [Imported Food Reform section](#) or call 1800 900 090.