



**Updates from the Regional Development Australia Programme  
Management Team and the Department of Infrastructure and  
Regional Development December 2016**

**For Regional Development Australia Committees**

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

***1.1 2016 RDA National Forum – 25 October 2016, Albany W.A.***

The 2016 RDA National Forum was held in Albany, Western Australia on 25 October at the Albany Entertainment Centre.

The theme for the Forum was 'Reflections on success and looking to the future' which provided a broad scope for discussion on successful regional development activities and explored future opportunities.

There were over 100 attendees, which included RDA Chairs, Deputy Chairs and Executive Officers from 50 of the 55 RDA Committees, as well as some state and territory government representatives.

The Hon Warwick L Smith AM, (retained to undertake the Independent Review of the RDA programme) also attended and provided an update on his review, and listened to feedback from attendees.

The report from the forum provided by the facilitator, Mr Keith Greaves from Mosaic Lab, is available for your reference and review at: [www.rda.gov.au/national-forum/index.aspx](http://www.rda.gov.au/national-forum/index.aspx)

Thank you to all RDA members who attended and participated in the 2016 forum.

***1.2 RDA Website***

Just a reminder that the RDA website homepage is a great tool to promote the work of RDA Committees and we would welcome your submissions about the great work and achievements of your RDA Committee. Please send submissions (including pictures) to: [update@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:update@infrastructure.gov.au).

***1.3 RDA Committee memberships expiring***

With several RDA Committee memberships expiring during February it is timely for RDA Committees to consider their numbers so that there are sufficient members for your Committee to function.

If you are going to canvass your community for Expressions of Interest, suggested shell media releases and other templates are at: [www.rda.gov.au/members/documents/index.aspx](http://www.rda.gov.au/members/documents/index.aspx).

Please remember that appointments must be agreed by the Minister for Regional Development. Please send your proposed new committee member details via email to [elizabeth.scott@regional.gov.au](mailto:elizabeth.scott@regional.gov.au).

Useful information can be found in the *RDA Better Practice Guide* and *Guide to Appointing New Members*, which are also at: [www.rda.gov.au/members/documents/index.aspx](http://www.rda.gov.au/members/documents/index.aspx).

#### **1.4 RDA Skills Needs Information**

When somebody wants to apply to join an RDA Committee they may read how to do so at [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au). Part of the information contained on the website is an overview of your RDA's skill needs, relating to your RDA's priorities. That list was compiled by your RDA.

Some of your RDA skills needs lists on the [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) site may need updating. To review, please go to [www.rda.gov.au/join-your-rda/rda-skills-needs-overview.aspx](http://www.rda.gov.au/join-your-rda/rda-skills-needs-overview.aspx).

Instructions on updating the list template, along with the template itself are at [www.rda.gov.au/join-your-rda/rda-skills-needs-overview.aspx](http://www.rda.gov.au/join-your-rda/rda-skills-needs-overview.aspx). Should your Committee wish to update the skills needs, please send a revised template with your Chair's signature to [rdaei@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdaei@infrastructure.gov.au).

#### **1.5 RDA Business Planning - Budget Review and Annual Audit Report for 2015-16**

As it is five months into the 2016-17 financial year, we encourage RDA committees to review their Business Plans and Budgets including actual expenditure against budgeted expenditure and to make amendments where necessary.

Where Annual Audited Accounts include a final "carry-over" of unexpended Departmental funding from 2015-16 to 2016-17, RDA Committees may need to update their 2016-17 Budget. The 2016-17 Budget may need to be updated if the Auditor's calculation of the carry-over varied from that estimated by the RDA when preparing the 2016-17 Business Plan and Budget.

In keeping with Clause 6.15 of the Funding Agreement, any Budget changes which result in a transfer of funds between expenditure line items of more than 15 per cent of the total Approved budget requires written approval from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

#### **1.6 RDA Mid-Year Acquittal of Budget Report**

RDA Committees are reminded that an unaudited acquittal of our funding and other contributions is required by 31 January 2017. An acquittal template and instructions will be forwarded separately by email to RDAs in the coming weeks.

If there will be delay in submitting the report, you may request an extension by submitting a written request before the due date. You must outline the reason you need the extension.

Mid-Year Acquittals must be submitted and approved by us before we are able to process the second (30 per cent) RDA payment for 2016-17. These payments are processed from 28 February 2017.

### **1.7 RDA Regional Plans**

RDA Committees are not required to provide a revised Regional Plan as a result of the Funding Agreement having been extended to 31 December 2017. 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*, available at [www.rda.gov.au/members/documents/index.aspx](http://www.rda.gov.au/members/documents/index.aspx).

## **2.0 Other Departmental Programme Information**

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

On 23 November 2016, Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, Minister for Regional Development, announced the opening of the new Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF). The Fund will invest \$297.7 million over four years and supports the Australian Government's commitment to create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities into the future.

The program will fund projects in regional Australia outside the major capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, and Canberra.

There are two streams of funding available under the program.

- The Infrastructure Projects Stream – will support projects which involve the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or extension of existing infrastructure that provide economic and social benefits to regional and remote areas.
- The Community Investments Stream – will fund community building activities including, but not limited to, new or expanded local events, strategic regional plans, and leadership and capability building activities. These projects will deliver economic and social benefits to regional and remote communities.

Applicants are encouraged to seek the support of the Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committee for their projects. The RDA Committee can assist applicants to identify and develop a strong project proposal that will contribute to long term economic growth; and prepare a competitive application, supporting documents and evidence. This is outlined in section 8 of the Program Guidelines.

Further to the advice from the Minister for Regional Development's Office to RDA Chairs regarding the launch of the Program Guidelines, the Department will be hosting state-based teleconferences with RDA Committees in early December to provide further information about the program.

Applications for both streams open on 18 January 2017. Guidelines and supporting material are available at [www.business.gov.au/bbrf](http://www.business.gov.au/bbrf).

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

The Australian Government has committed \$220 million to the Regional Jobs and Investment Packages (RJIP) to help regions in Australia diversify their economies, stimulate long-term economic growth and deliver sustainable employment.

Ten pilot regions have been chosen to be a part of the Regional Jobs and Investment Packages. These regions have much untapped potential which, if unlocked could lead to new sources of growth, economic diversity and the opportunity to pursue export markets. RJIP aims to support these regions to meet the opportunities that will help to secure their economic future.

The packages will be delivered across the following ten regions:

- Bowen Basin, will receive \$30 million
- New South Wales North Coast, will receive \$25 million
- New South Wales South Coast, will receive \$20 million
- Wide Bay Burnett, will receive \$20 million
- Goulburn Valley, will receive \$20 million
- Cairns, will receive \$20 million
- Geelong, will receive \$20 million
- Tasmania, will receive \$25 million
- Upper Spencer Gulf, will receive \$20 million
- Latrobe, will receive \$20 million.

Local planning committees will be established in each region to help communities assess their region's economic opportunities and competitive advantages and develop local investment. This will create a community-driven, government investment partnership between the local communities, business and the Australian Government.

Once a planning committee establishes a local investment plan, funding will be available through three streams:

- Stream 1: Business innovation grants.
- Stream 2: Local infrastructure grants.
- Stream 3: Skills and training grants

Wherever possible, grant funding will be used to leverage funding from additional sources including from project proponents, private sector and other levels of government.

### *Next Steps*

The Australian Government is currently considering the establishment of a local planning committee in each region to develop a local investment plan. Appointment of members to the local planning committees will soon be finalised and the critical work to develop a local investment plan will commence with a view to funding rounds commencing early in 2017.

The RJIP programme guidelines are being drafted and are expected to be finalised shortly.

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

### **2.3 Community Development Grants**

The Australian Government has established the Community Development Grants Programme to support needed infrastructure that promotes stable, secure and viable local and regional economies.

The programme will fund projects including the Government's 2013 and 2016 election commitments and Government selected uncontracted projects from the Regional Development Australia Fund and Community Infrastructure Grant Program. As such the programme is not open to applications.

Further information is at:

<http://investment.infrastructure.gov.au/funding/communitydevelopment/index.aspx>

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