



An Australian Government Initiative



NORTHERN RIVERS

RDA Northern Rivers Letters of Support Policy

Purpose

This policy provides a framework for RDA Northern Rivers (RDA NR) to assess community and industry projects and determine the circumstances under which a Letter of Support may be provided.

Policy Statement

RDA NR is committed to supporting projects that align with its mission to connect the Northern Rivers to opportunities through partnerships focused on the community, environment, and economy.

Project Consideration and Endorsement

1. Board Members and project proponents may present community projects and initiatives from agencies, organisations, or businesses for RDA NR's endorsement or a Letter of Support, provided they align with RDA NR's strategic objectives.
2. To assess the suitability of a project for support, proponents must submit a written report (a template is available) detailing:
 - Alignment with RDA NR's strategic direction.
 - Consistency with the RDA NR Committee's views on relevant regional issues.
 - Project details (name, description, purpose, and relevant background).
 - Project proponent information (organisation/individual responsible).
 - Project's contribution to regional development.
 - Significance and impact within the Northern Rivers region, including adjacent local government areas (LGAs).

- Financial details (to assist evaluation; RDA NR does not assess financial feasibility).
 - Grant or funding applications related to the project.
 - Support received from other agencies.
3. The Letters of Support Procedure (outlined below) defines the process for determining support. The Letters of Support Determination Criteria (Appendix 6.3) may be used as a guideline, but it is not mandatory. While some projects may require direct RDA NR Board consideration, this policy and its criteria allow the Director of Regional Development (DRD) to assess the majority of requests.
 4. Approved projects will be recorded in RDA NR's Outcomes Reports and a Register of Letters of Support.
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Letters of Support Procedure

To request a Letter of Support, project proponents or Board members must submit the required information as outlined in the Letters of Support Template. RDA NR staff are not responsible for researching or sourcing this information.

Assessment Process

1. The DRD will conduct an initial review to ensure all required materials have been provided. If information is missing, the proponent or Board member will be asked to complete the submission.
2. Once all required information has been received, the DRD will assess the proposal against the Letters of Support Determination Criteria (if necessary). Based on the assessment, the following actions may occur:

a. The project fully meets the Determination Criteria.

- The DRD will recommend support and issue a Letter of Support to the proponent.
- The expression of support will be recorded in the Register of Letters of Support.

b. The project aligns with the Determination Criteria but requires clarification or further information.

- If additional details are needed or sensitive/controversial issues are identified, the DRD may refer the project to:

1. The proponent for further clarification or information. Upon submission, the DRD will issue a final determination (resulting in either action 2a or 2c).
2. The RDA NR Executive Committee for further review and clarification. The Executive Committee will then issue a final determination (resulting in either action 2a or 2c).

c. The project does not meet the Determination Criteria.

- The proponent will be informed that RDA NR is unable to provide a Letter of Support at this time.

Monitoring and Review

Review Date: March 2027

Responsibility: RDA Northern Rivers Board

Previous Versions: August 2018

Letters of Support Determination Criteria

Project Overview

Name, Description, and Purpose of Project

- Is there sufficient information to clearly identify the nature and purpose of the proposed project?
 - **Yes (1) / No (0)**
 - *Minimum Score: 1*

Project Proponent Details

- Does the proponent have the capacity to successfully deliver the project outcomes?
 - **Yes (1) / No (0)**
 - *Minimum Score: 1*

Contribution to Regional Development

Does the project result in:

- No net loss of existing infrastructure (both hard and soft)?
- Enhancement or expansion of infrastructure in the region or local area?
- No net loss of current employment?
- Increased job opportunities in the Northern Rivers region?
- Flow-on benefits to existing regional industries?
- Opportunities to add value to existing regional industries?
- Alignment with RDA Northern Rivers' strategic priorities?
- Consistency with key directions outlined in the Regional Industry and Economic Plan (RIEP)?
 - **Yes (1) / No (0)**
 - *Minimum Score: 4*

Project Significance and Impact

Does the project demonstrate:

- Alignment with State Plan priorities, including (P1) increased business investment and (P6) increased investment in rural and regional NSW?

- Benefits extending across multiple LGAs (local government areas)?
 - Opportunities to retain and capture expenditure within the region through import replacement?
 - Value-adding approaches that enhance productivity?
 - Innovation and creativity?
 - Potential for wealth generation through exports of products or knowledge?
 - Increased digital trade or online business activity?
 - Energy and/or water efficiency?
 - Reduction in resource consumption?
 - Waste reduction initiatives?
 - Other environmental enhancements, such as restoration efforts?
 - Contributions towards building social capital?
 - Recognition of local community needs and concerns?
 - Opportunities for community involvement and development?
 - Enhanced social inclusion outcomes?
 - **Yes (1) / No (0)**
 - *Minimum Score: 3*
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Letters of Support Template & Required Information

Project Overview

- Clearly define the nature of the proposed project.
- Provide a broad description, including objectives, current status, and potential for encouraging new investment or industry in the region.
- Outline how the project aligns with RDA Northern Rivers' strategic goals and contributes to the regional brand and identity.

Project Proponent Details

- Identify the proponent (individual, committee, organization, etc.).
- Demonstrate the proponent's capacity to successfully deliver the project.

Contribution to Regional Economic Development

Describe how the project supports:

- Infrastructure development necessary for further investment and economic growth.
- Job creation, with quantification where possible.
- Increased profitability of existing businesses in the region.
- Value addition or sustainability of existing regional industries.
- Alignment with RDA Northern Rivers' strategic priorities and key directions in the Regional Industry and Economic Plan (RIEP).

Project Significance and Impact

Explain how the project provides substantial regional benefits, considering the following:

- Alignment with State Plan priorities, particularly (P1) increased business investment and (P6) increased investment in rural and regional NSW.
- Sustainable economic development, including:
 - Benefits across multiple LGAs.
 - Retention and capture of local expenditure through import replacement.
 - Value-adding strategies for productivity improvement.
 - Innovation and creativity in business practices.
 - Export potential for products or knowledge.
 - Digital trade and online commerce expansion.
- Environmental benefits, such as:
 - Conservation of natural landscapes.
 - Efficient resource usage.
 - Waste minimization and reduced environmental impact.
 - Other ecological enhancements, including restoration efforts.
- Social and community contributions, including:
 - Building social capital.
 - Addressing local community needs and issues.
 - Providing community engagement and development opportunities.

- Promoting social inclusion and support for disadvantaged groups.

Financial Information

While RDA Northern Rivers does not assess financial feasibility, a brief overview of funding sources and financial requirements is essential for evaluation.

Additional Supporting Information

- Evidence of support from key agencies and stakeholders is highly beneficial.
- Any other relevant documentation that strengthens the case for project endorsement should be included.