



Regional Development Australia- NORTHERN RIVERS

ANNUAL OUTCOMES REPORT

JULY 2019 – JUNE 2020



An Australian Government Initiative

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RDA–Northern Rivers would like to acknowledge the Board and Staff for their assistance in preparing the 2019 -20 Business Plan.

I, Donald Page, Chair, certify this is the Business Plan authorised for RDA-Northern Rivers for the period 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020



The Hon Donald Page
Chair
Regional Development Australia- Northern Rivers

We respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples of the Northern Rivers – including the peoples of the Bundjalung, Yaegl and Gumbaynggirr nations – as the traditional custodians and guardians of these lands and waters now known as the Northern Rivers and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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INTRODUCTION

2019-20 will be a year which history records as one wreaked by ongoing natural disasters and a global pandemic. Indeed, many areas of the Northern Rivers experienced the seemingly endless struggles experienced first by drought, then the worst bushfire season in memory, followed by flooding and then COVID 19 pandemic. There have been very few communities left unscathed in some way. Similarly, the interlinkages between industries and businesses has demonstrated the connected nature between and among our own communities and those of our neighbours.

While the physical effects were catastrophic, the economic and social impacts were correspondingly severe felt right across the region. More remarkable, however has been the resilience of people of the Northern Rivers to rise to every occasion, individually and collectively.

Prior to the worst of the disasters, a collaborative group of industries, local government and agencies had ventured down the path to create a brand for the region. After extensive consultation, the brand was finalised during the initial COVID lock down period. While there has been some criticism of focussing on a seemingly inconsequential task of developing a regional brand during these times of devastation, there perhaps has also been no better way to bring the region together by supporting the region- as one region. Something which has not be successfully achieved before. This initiative is explored further in Case Study One.

The future of work and even the basics of the economy may be changed well into the future. The road to 'normalcy' – whatever that may look like – will be challenging. As a leading regional organisation, we lead by example, and demonstrating resilience and innovation will be a key part of RDA NR's activities into the future.

KEY OUTCOMES 2019-20

Despite RDA NR resources and planned activities being diverted to more critical matters related to natural disasters, many outcomes have been achieved of which all Committee Members and staff should be proud. A non-exhaustive list is below and more detail can be found in the Attachment: Outcomes Table.

Core activities and functions

- My Future Workforce Platform: Joined RDA Mid North Coast in rolling out this online employment initiative across the Northern Rivers Region. This platform marks a
- Employment: This year has seen a focus on youth has led to a large number of collaborations and projects, initiatives, activities and committee work. Student to Industry pathways will be key to a resilient economy in the next few years and will be an ongoing focus for RDA NR. Detail below.
- Assisted the development of a regional brand, successfully launched as Northern Rivers NSW (see Case Study)
- Contributed to a large number of Regional Committees which inform program and policy making.
- Ongoing provision of fee-for-service relationships with Destination North Coast and NORJO
- Provision of economic analyses for Local Government and community organisations for grant applications.
- Key organizer for regional leadership event “Future Northern Rivers” which ran as a newscorp sponsored event and a follow up regional Think Tank workshop to determine key regional priorities.

Support and advice to Govt Stakeholders and businesses

- Around 150 substantial meetings, online, via teleconference or face to face was held with Govt agency stakeholders. Topics range from collaborative projects, regional economic issues and strategic matters.
- Approximately 140 meetings and teleconferences were held with local industry and business. A few meetings involved government agencies. Key topics were grants, investment and trade and export related matters.
- Eight interactions were held directly with Ministers to advocate on various issues.
- Ten Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Committee and General Managers meetings were attended throughout the year. Many more interactions were held with LG Economic Development Managers.

Key publications

- Created an online investment attraction profile for Northern Rivers NSW
- Launched online Grants Writing Guide to assist local organisations and businesses improve grant writing
- Developed ‘Economic Scenarios’ outlook with local economist which projected the impacts to the region from COVID 19 under different constraints/impacts.

Industry Development

- Development of Digital Content Industry: Joined a local delegation to visit Qindao, China which hosted 2019 UN Film City Conference and discuss education and film opportunities with Chinese film makers. Australia has a co-production grant dedicated to development of closer ties with the Chinese film industry
- New Industry focus includes Hemp and medicinal cannabis. Local business operators and manufacturers have an opportunity to grow their businesses with the investment entering the region.
- Assisted a number of potential investors seeking to establish operations across sectors prior to COVID.

Submissions, Committees and consultations

- Submissions were made to enquiries into Agriculture Harvest Labour Services, regional Drought impacts and Regional Infrastructure issues.
- Participant in many regional committees including Regional Leadership Executive Economic Sub-Committee, Regional Deals Committee, Employment Pathways Committees, etc
- Organised Cross border meeting between RDA Ipswich & West Moreton and RDA NR, NSW TMR and Qld Main Roads to discuss Summerland Way/Mt Lindsey Highway upgrade. The meeting was cohosted by Federal Member for Page and Kyogle Shire Mayor.
- Attend meetings held with General Managers of LGA's in Northern Rivers Joint Organisation
- Councils were provided support for many granting programs including the Bridges Renewal fund and the Fixing Country Roads fund.
- Supported councils with applications to Infrastructure Australia's Priority Project List
- Participation in Northern Rivers Cooperatives Alliance
- Supported the development of a community grant program and assessed small grants to the Local Health Network "Healthy Communities Grant".

Youth Employment Projects:

With a focus this year on youth employment issues, the Director of Regional Development participated on a range of Steering Committees where RDA NR provides valuable industry linkages to the schools and agencies. All groups are outcome and project focussed for example;

- Introduction of the Blueprint Pathways Platform being explored for use by students, schools and industry. Meetings offer a chance for real opportunities to be provided to the students of careers advisors
- Innovative regional youth training and employment events.
- Maritime Recycling project (Clarence Valley)
- Participated in NSW Education STEM Industry School Program (SISP)
- Interviewer for NSW Education's EPPP TV Channel.

Infrastructure development

At the end of FY 2018, the Northern Rivers Freight and Supply Chain strategy was finalised under a combined initiative with partners State Government and Northern Rivers Joint Organisation and Southern Cross University. This strategy provides an ongoing roadmap for priority list of projects which will improve the efficiency of freight movements across the region. Such a strategy will assist local industry and other stakeholders improve the economic potential of the region.

Our people

Under direction of Don Page, OA Chair of RDA Northern Rivers Committee and the Committee Members, the RDA Northern Rivers staff comprise:

- Tim Williamson continues as Director of Regional Development
- Donna McIntyre is the Administration Manager
- Kyllie Walker continues her role as Research Officer and assists with financial management
- Heidi Bone maintains the RDA electronic communications systems

Governance

- A funding agreement with the Commonwealth Government for the period 2018-2020 is current.

Funding Agreements/Service Agreements

RDA Northern Rivers has two service agreements in place. Contract start and end dates are varied throughout the year.

Activity Progress: Service agreements are on-going with both organisations pleased with the level of service and cost.

Partner	Contract period	Value and payment	Activity to date
Destination North Coast – service agreement	1 July 2017 - current	Insert annual total Monthly invoicing	Provision of secretariat
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation	1 July 2018 – current	Insert annual total Monthly invoicing	Provision of secretariat

Destination North Coast

RISK: DNC being de-funded (Unlikely).

IMPACT: (High).

MITIGATION: Maintain good communication with GM to receive early advice and seek other partners.

RISK: DNC Board decides to relocate (Unlikely).

IMPACT:(Medium High)

MITIGATION: Maintain long term contracts. Ensure secretariat services are maintained

RISK: DNC employ own staff to perform secretariat duties (Unlikely)

IMPACT: (High).

MITIGATION: Ensure servicing levels are high and are cost effective. Secure corporate knowledge and relevant IP.

Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

RISK: NRJO being de-funded (Unlikely).

IMPACT: (High).

MITIGATION: Maintain good communication channels for early warning and seek other potential partners

RISK: NRJO Committee decides to cease secretariat service and take on themselves (Unlikely).

IMPACT:(Medium High)

MITIGATION: Maintain long term contracts. Maintain good working relationship with Chair and provide value-adds as required.

RISK: NRJO employ own staff to perform secretariat duties (Unlikely)

IMPACT: (High).

MITIGATION: Ensure servicing levels are high and are cost effective. Secure corporate knowledge and relevant IP.

CASE STUDY: NORTHERN RIVERS NSW REGIONAL BRAND INITIATIVE

Background

In 2019, a collaboration between industry and regional development organisations, listed below, came together to support the development of a new brand for Northern Rivers region. A professional marketing company was engaged with co-contribution from NSW State Government, Northern Rivers Joint Organisation, Destination North Coast and Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers to design and operationalise a process that extended from broad community consultation to the design elements of the new brand. The beginnings of this new brand was helped through the initial advice from RDA Barossa and the Barossa Brand team.

Committee Members

The committee is comprised of representatives from the following industry and organisations; North Coast Meat Co-op, Northern Rivers Food, NORCO, Northern Rivers Joint Organisation, Destination North Coast, Southern Cross University, Business New South Wales (NSWBC), Regional NSW, and RDA Northern Rivers.

Rationale

All parties agreed to the vision that a regional brand was necessary: to showcase the natural advantages of the region to the world but also with the internal audience in mind. The opportunity exists to promote and support the extensive range of premium products and local makers; to support visitor economy and promote local experiences; to support investment attraction; and to create a platform to celebrate living in one of the most beautiful regions of Australia.

Sustaining the Brand

Taking a strategic view, the Brand Committee prioritised the development and implementation of a sustainable business model. It was agreed from the outset that a co-contribution from all partners was necessary. While the above organisations seed funded the initial stage, industry contribution and other levels of government are now sought to move into the operational phase.

A strategic framework was agreed by the Committee that will underpin key activities: Visitor Attraction, Investment Attraction, Provenance (food and produce) and Liveability (migration and skills).

Benefits

Benefits to the region include increased visitation with more spread of visitors across the LG areas. The brand will support strategic investment attraction activities, understanding different councils have different targets, we are confident the brand underpins the key sectors across the Northern Rivers. The brand will be prominent in domestic promotional events such as Country Week and other proactive and reactive opportunities to attract skills and people from more densely populated areas. National and international trade events that align with the brand values, particularly relating to food and produce will also be key activities, raising the profile of the region but also supporting the world class produce and services that are found in the region.



CASE STUDY: KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED IN CHALLENGING TIMES

COVID-19 information sharing

As a leading and trusted voice for the business community, RDA NR was early to recognise the amount of misinformation and disinformation being spread (particularly through Social Media channels) causing confusion for our local communities. Therefore, from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic RDA Northern Rivers has taken measures to ensure relevant, accurate and current information was broadly distributed and available for The Northern Rivers business community.

COVID-19 Webpage

A dedicated page with links to relevant Government COVID-19 information and updates has been created on the RDA-NR website. This page consistently receives good feedback and is regularly reviewed to ensure information and links are accurate and current. You can access the page here <https://www.rdanorthernrivers.org.au/latest-government-news-updates/>

We have also added a specific web page to link regional businesses to state and federal government business support for COVID-19 recovery programs.

Email and Social Media

From March 2020 RDA-NR sent regular monthly eNews, updates and alerts as necessary to keep our community informed.

Within a 13-week timeframe, RDA-NR posted 13 COVID-specific related updates. This resulted in a high percentage of readers opening the updates (27%). At the time it is notable that there was a lot of 'noise' with a very high number of posts and reposts in the market. The number of opens of our updates is a testament to the quality of information that we provide.

In addition to this we also featured COVID information in our regular eNews for May and June and published a COVID-19 specific eNews edition in April 2020. Funding updates also included information about funding to support businesses through COVID-19 recovery.

From March to June we have posted 44 COVID-19 related social posts on Facebook and Linked In, with 27 posts promoting government programs and support. COVID-19 related posts made up approximately 50% of all posts in the March to June 2020 period. (NB. COVID posts commenced towards the end of March). Average reach for all COVID-19 related posts was 103 and total engagement was 319.

OUTCOMES 2019-2020

This Attachment provides the means for an RDA to advise of their intended Activities and Performance Measures (as part of the **Business Plan**) and to report on those Activities and Performance Measures (as part of the **Annual Report on Outcomes**). Original planning was somewhat overshadowed by the need to divert resources and activity to natural disasters and COVID-19 activities.

Summary

Summary of top 5 strategic priorities for the year:

1. Increase employment opportunities, focusing on youth
2. Attract strategic investment and re-investment, support regional branding and promotion
3. Strategically facilitate emerging Industry opportunities, and encourage a sustainable start up eco-system
4. Develop strategic Freight and Supply Chain initiatives
5. Encourage enabling infrastructure

Summary of top 5 key business activities for upcoming year:

1. Support youth-focussed employment activities including; targeted employment initiatives, pathways projects, jobs expos, SISP program
2. Support activities that grow the entrepreneurial eco-system
3. Revise and implement a strategic investment attraction program for the region
4. Actively work with providers to facilitate increased broadband infrastructure for large organisations
5. Drive high levels of collaboration across the Economic Development Community, eg participate in a Regional Deal

Outcomes measured against key themes

OUTCOME THEME 1	Increased economic opportunities and investment in the Northern Rivers		
OUTPUT i.	Identify economic development opportunities that leverage private and public sector investment in Northern Rivers.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
<p>Activity 1.1:</p> <p>Develop Investment strategies to attract strategic investment targets relevant to RDA priority industry sectors and into emerging industry sectors</p>	<p>Developed and published a regional Investment Attraction (IA) strategy. The strategy focusses on strategic investment attraction, reinvestment, promotion and facilitation and focusses on new industry as key target opportunities.</p> <p>Supported local film industry investment with a visit to Chinese film production areas and attended the UNESCO Creative Cities of Film convention.</p> <p>Committee member of Northern Rivers regional branding committee which IA is a key pillar.</p> <p>Collaborate with Regional NSW, DPI Councils to facilitate combined attraction efforts.</p>	<p>The strategy is ongoing. It also supports council and state government investment attraction strategies and actions. New businesses and industries have been attracted to the region with the support of this collaborative approach. New industry enquiries include: film and tv production, hemp, medicinal cannabis, construction software, algae for human consumption.</p> <p>The visit to China resulted in a number of direct outcomes for local film, television and educational opportunities.</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s)</p> <p><i>Aligns with Charter Item Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and leverage private and public sector investment to the regions</i></p>

OUTCOME THEME 1	Increased economic opportunities and investment in the Northern Rivers		
OUTPUT i.	Identify economic development opportunities that leverage private and public sector investment in Northern Rivers.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
Activity 1.2: Develop reinvestment strategies for growing existing businesses	<p>A key focus of the Investment Attraction strategy is to encourage, promote and facilitate debt, equity and other investment to assist reinvestment by established businesses and industries to scale, or expand into new products or markets.</p>	<p>The series of natural disasters and pandemic which afflicted the economy since Oct 2019 meant the local reinvestment opportunities were curtailed. However, a number of new investments had reached out for assistance once traditional investor channels ceased.</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s)</p> <p><i>Aligns with Charter Item Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and leverage private and public sector investment to the regions</i></p>
Activity 1.3: Develop a sustainable Northern Rivers entrepreneurial and startup Investment eco-system	<p>Assisted the establishment of the start- up eco-system and continue to support the development of founders and entrepreneurs on the one hand and knowledgeable local angel investors on the other.</p> <p>Created linkages with schools to explore and include entrepreneurial curricula.</p>	<p>Supported learning workshops and events,</p> <p>Assisted in a one on one development capacity with entrepreneurs and organisations</p> <p>Facilitated discussions with school-based entrepreneurship program leads.</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s)</p> <p><i>Engage with regional entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in their regions;</i></p>

OUTCOME THEME 2	Increased trade and job creation.		
OUTPUT ii.	Connect Northern Rivers with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs and business leaders to attract investors to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in the Northern Rivers.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
Activity 2.1: Identify new and existing exporters and facilitate export opportunities. This will include partnering with existing export focussed specialist organisations	Supported TRADESTART officer to promote the services and assistance of Austrade and NSW government trade and export services.	We discovered that measuring the increase in regional trade and export activities is not undertaken by lead statistic or export agencies. Therefore, an important impact is a new project to develop the "Trade Profile for the Northern Rivers".	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Connect regional businesses, councils and industry sectors with international trade partners, financial markets and potential investors</i>
Activity 2.2: Assist LGs to develop their capability to achieve their investment attraction and export objectives	This item was heavily impacted by the high level of constraints on LG staff due to overloads from natural disasters.	Impact was limited to providing reactive responses to a low number of enquiries due to the uncertain environment.	

OUTCOME THEME 2	Increased trade and job creation.		
OUTPUT ii.	Connect Northern Rivers with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs and business leaders to attract investors to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in the Northern Rivers.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
Activity 2.3: Lead or contribute to relevant committees and organisations that have jobs growth as their main objective. (eg RLE, Chambers, Sourdough)	Member of a wide range of lead regional and LG committees including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Leadership Executive Economic Sub committees • Cross Border Commissioner’s Business reference group • Cross Border Tourism Group • Regional Branding Committee • School to Industry Committees • Health Network (Industry) Committee • Waste to wages Committee • Lismore CBD redevelopment 	All committees are focussed on strategies which have employment or align with RDA priorities, as an outcome. Committees have directly resulted in increased grant funding, employment opportunities, increased awareness of government programs and RDA services.	Priority Performance Measure(s) All Committees have a number of priority actions and outcomes that align with RDA Charter and Business Plan activities.

OUTCOME THEME 3	Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders leads to improved economic development outcomes.		
OUTPUT iii.	Develop and maintain positive, collaborative, working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders which address identified gaps or needs in economic development activity.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
<p>Activity 3.1:</p> <p>Build and support a highly collaborative network including key agencies, across all levels of government, relevant organisations entrepreneurs and industry.</p>	<p>Studies show that collaborative regions are more successful in a number of key economic indices than those that aren't. RDA-NR has both leads and supports activities through collaboration with regional groups such as: Sourdough Mentoring Group, Northern Rivers Branding Initiative, Founders Northern Rivers, Business NSW, Training NSW, Regional NSW, LG Economic Development Units, AusIndustry, Community organisations, Joint Organisation, Health NSW, Southern Cross University, TAFE, Community College, Industry peak bodies, entrepreneurs and more.</p> <p>The Northern Rivers is a connected region and activities can include a combination of up to eight of these groups at one time</p>	<p>At any one time a range of initiatives are being planned, underway or completed. The centrepiece this year was the Northern Rivers Branding initiative which developed a new regional brand for the region bringing together six key collaborative organisations and two industry representatives. Other initiatives include PRIMEX, Business development workshops, events, and so on.</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s)</p> <p><i>Aligns with RDA Charter Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies in their regions;</i></p>

OUTCOME THEME 3	Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders leads to improved economic development outcomes.		
OUTPUT iii.	Develop and maintain positive, collaborative, working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders which address identified gaps or needs in economic development activity.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
Activity 3.2: Leverage organisational strengths of relevant agencies to initiate major projects (eg NRJO and state govt agencies.) and encourage enabling infrastructure projects	RDA NR is committed to leveraging resources and specialist skills of all organisations. RDA NR continues to assist all LGs with infrastructure planning and funding. For example, RDA NR led the Northern Rivers Freight and Supply Chain Strategy, assists LGs with Infrastructure Australia Priority Project list, provides economic modelling and more.	RDA-NR facilitated a cross border Main Road working group, Co-chaired by Kevin Hogan, MP and Kyogle Mayor to discuss a way forward for relevant projects under the Freight and Supply Chain Strategy.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Aligns with Charter: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies in their regions;</i>
Activity 3.3: Support regional committees and working groups including Cross Border Tourism Working Group, RLE Economic Sub Committee	RDA NR continues to sit as a member on key committees which have outcomes aligned with RDA Charter and business plan objectives. Cross Border Tourism Working Group, RLE Economic Sub Committee,	All Committees have outcomes relevant to key RDA Charter outcomes and RDA NR Business Plan.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and leverage private and public sector investment to the regions;</i>
Activity 3.4: Provide advice and statistics to LG's to better inform their Economic Development strategies and activities	RDA NR is an advisory member to the General Managers' Advisory Committee. This forum considers key regional projects and regulatory issues.	Successful granting applications resulted for a number of LGs including; Ballina, Richmond Valley and Lismore.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies</i>

OUTCOME THEME 3	Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders leads to improved economic development outcomes.		
OUTPUT iii.	Develop and maintain positive, collaborative, working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders which address identified gaps or needs in economic development activity.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
Activity 3.5: RDA-NR to collaborate with NRJO to better align investment attraction and export strategies	RDA NR is an affiliate member of the NRJO Executive and provides secretariat services to the organisation. This level of access creates synergies and increases effectiveness of both organisations.	Integration of strategic objectives, not only with NRJO but other collaborative organisations has increased the effectiveness, performance and created links to opportunities which would otherwise be unknown to RDA-NR	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies</i>

OUTCOME THEME 4	Achieve Government program objectives.		
OUTPUT iv.	Assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs including public and private sector decentralisation.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
Activity 4.1: Actively promote Commonwealth and State agencies programs and information to target audiences	RDA-NR continues to be highly active in this area and as a range of programs were rolled out to assist the disaster and pandemic affected stakeholders, we increased our efforts to promote relevant programs and information in a targeted manner using all available channels.	RDA-NR received recognition by many key stakeholders for providing high level, up to date, relevant and continual information.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors;</i>
Activity 4.2: Develop a pathway for public and private sector organisations to consider Northern Rivers as a viable region to decentralise their operations	As a resource intensive activity, RDA-NR collaborates with other organisations and initiatives such as the NR Branding Initiative and Regional NSW. The Northern Rivers has a compelling story for possible relocates.	A strategic and unified approach by regional bodies was developed which will provide a strong platform for current and future activities.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Facilitate public and private sector decentralisation;</i>
Activity 4.3: Support the development of a Regional Deal	RDA was a member of the Regional Deal Steering Committee. The Committee has since lapsed due to the uncertainty of the program. Other collaborations with similar focus are ongoing.	While the regional deal application is on hold other regional forums will result in similar outcomes.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Support community stakeholders to develop project proposals to access funding</i>

OUTCOME THEME 5	Maximise access to Government programs and grants.		
OUTPUT v.	Promote and disseminate information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders in Your Region to develop project proposals to access funding.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
Activity 5.1: Identify and apply for government grants and programs which contribute to RDA and regional objectives	RDA NR assisted many organisations, individuals, councils to apply for grants during the year. Given the widespread impacts of disasters, we played an important role in establishing connection between affected businesses and individuals to natural disaster grants.	Economic modelling and other advice provided by RDA-NR has proven successful for many regional businesses, councils, community organisations and others.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Report against the priority the performance measure(s) relating to this activity.</i>
			Additional Performance Measures <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>
Activity 5.2.1: Help business and organisations increase success rates of grant applications.	Assisted many individuals, councils, organisations and businesses apply for grants. For example we provided numerous letters of support and assisted councils with understand economic impact of their applications through our REMPLAN modelling. Developed and promoted a grant writing tool kit for the region which is accessed via the website. Hosted a JobKeeper online conference for all Economic Development Officers to understand the Aus Gov COVID business assistance programs in more detail.	Grants and assistance has been awarded to many local businesses and Councils.	Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors</i>
			Additional Performance Measures <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>

OUTCOME THEME 5	Maximise access to Government programs and grants.		
OUTPUT v.	Promote and disseminate information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders in Your Region to develop project proposals to access funding.		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
<p>Activity 5.2.2: Provide workshops delivered by experts to increase quality of grant writing across the community.</p> <p>Activity 5.2.3: Provide an up to date information service and easy access to the range of grant opportunities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the RDA NR website • regular e-newsletters and use social media to promote relevant policies and new grants 	<p>See above</p> <p>Since the onset of the bushfire season in October the number of grants has substantially increased and RDA NR increased its provision of information significantly to ensure relevant and timely information was distributed.</p>	<p>Sent 113 email campaigns. Of these, 3 funding specific updates had 5% increase in open rate and 1% increase in click rate. Funding opportunities are also featured in the monthly eNews that continues to attract a strong readership, including engagement from social media shares.</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s) <i>Charter Item: Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors</i></p> <hr/> <p>Additional Performance Measures</p>

OUTCOME THEME 6	Advice supports development outcomes.		
OUTPUT vi.	<p>For Your Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide evidence-based advice to the Commonwealth on critical regional development issues; and • Provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors. 		
What will we do?	What did we do?	Did it have an impact?	Performance Measures
<p>Activity 6.1:</p> <p>Continue regular channels of communication and distribute to the department, MPs and relevant agencies.</p>	<p>We reviewed our communications and regular communications due to the amount and frequency of important and relevant emergency information. We continued to send out a regular e-newsletter by email to an extensive regional database and supplemented with social media “Updates” at least three times a week as situations and information became available.</p>	<p>We received very good unsolicited feedback for the provision of concise information which was relevant to the individual stakeholder needs.</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s)</p> <p><i>Charter Item:</i> Relevant and timely news and information promulgated in accordance with audience feedback, government announcements and RDA priorities.</p>
<p>Activity 6.2:</p> <p>Seek regular meetings with local MPs and relevant Ministers to advocate for the region.</p>	<p>RDA NR Chair and D/RD met with Federal MP for Page to discuss key regional issues and have since extended an invitation to all state and fed MPs to attend future RDA NR meetings. RDA-NR also attends the regular teleconferences hosted by Nola Marino MP.</p>	<p>RDA-NR finds these meetings a valuable opportunity to advocate on behalf of particular projects and initiatives.</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s)</p> <p><i>Charter Item:</i> Provide evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues positively and negatively affecting their regions</p>

<p>Activity 6.3:</p> <p>Continue to promote our services and the RDA network by growing our social media profile through use of relevant social media channels</p>	<p>RDA-NR increased its Communication efforts to more timely and relevant provision of information to our key stakeholders. Social Media channels, in particular have been utilised to provide updates, complementing the regular distribution cycle of the e-newsletter.</p>	<p>Formal and informal feedback is received from many stakeholders finding the information is relevant and up to date. E-news scheduled at least once per month and updates published as needed. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic this has been up to 7 emails a month.</p> <p>Over the year we featured 290 government news stories, funding programs and consultations.</p> <p>We posted 445 individual post across our social media sites, 32% were government information and program posts</p>	<p>Priority Performance Measure(s)</p> <p><i>Charter Item:</i>. Provide evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues positively and negatively affecting their regions</p>
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