



Regional
Development
Australia
SOUTHERN INLAND

REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
AUSTRALIA
SOUTHERN INLAND
**STRATEGIC
PLAN**

2017-2020

REVISED JANUARY 2019



An Australian Government Initiative

ABOUT RDASI

OUR ROLE

RDASI's role is to facilitate the regional development efforts of all levels of government, Southern Inland businesses and the broader community. Our aim is to maximise economic development opportunities for the region by attracting new businesses, individuals and investment to the region, growing our local business potential and encouraging innovation.

To fulfil our role we will:

- advocate on behalf of the region
- facilitate community and economic development and discussions regarding regional priorities
- endorse initiatives and projects that promote development
- inform businesses and governments of the opportunities available for regional development
- act as a partnership broker bringing government and business together
- build alliances with the other organisations who are also seeking to improve the economic and social outcomes for the region

PARTNERS

RDASI recognises that cooperation and collaboration with key stakeholders is critical for regional development. To achieve best outcomes for the region we will work closely with other organisations.

These organisations include, but not limited to:

- All RDA's across NSW
- Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO)
- Local Governments of Hilltops, GoulburnMulwaree, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Snowy Monaro, Upper Lachlan, Wingecarribee and Yass Valley
- Federal and state government agencies
- Southern Region Business Enterprise Centre (SRBEC)
- NSW Farmers Association
- Community groups
- Business and industry groups



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OUR VISION

We will attract and advocate for investment and industries and promote enhanced liveability.

We will be a regional leader for 21st century infrastructure and economic development with the community.

The 2017-2020 Strategic Plan provides a path to generate jobs and growth in the Southern Inland region.

We will engage and facilitate with all stakeholders to build a confident and vibrant region

OUR PEOPLE

BOARD MEMBERS



Hugh Cooke



Sue Whelan, OAM



John Bell



Terry Oakes-Ash OAM, FAICD, FIQ



Warwick Bennett



Jenny Calkin



Mark Bradbury



Hui Wang

OUR STAFF

Chief Executive Officer and Director of Regional Development
 Business Attraction and Development Manager
 Projects and Communication Officer
 Regional Migration Officer

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



*Hugh Cooke
Chairman RDASI*

As the Chairman of Regional Development Australia Southern Inland (RDASI) it is a pleasure to present this revised and updated 2017-2020 Strategic Plan.

This revised Plan is based on the Commonwealth Government's new Charter for Regional Development Australia. In brief, our clear focus is on growing strong and confident regional communities. Apart from articulating our values as a Board, our vision statement and goals, it also highlights some of the methods we intend to achieve those goals.

The Plan also defines our unique geography and demography. It has been designed to be a valuable reference source of regional information that business leaders and all levels of government can use for infrastructure and investment decisions, which will have a positive impact on the future of our Southern Inland area.

RDASI is one of 52 Regional Development Boards across Australia funded by the Commonwealth Government to bring together all levels of government to enhance the economic development potential of Australia's regions. RDASI currently takes in seven local government areas, three State and two Federal electorates rich in agriculture, tourism and services capabilities.

The RDASI Board is made up of informed, experienced, enthusiastic and connected community members committed to unlocking the region's economic potential and capability. Doing this should produce more employment opportunities, promote infrastructure growth and lay the ground work to enhance the quality of life we currently enjoy through investment, both private and government.

To support this goal the RDASI Board will:

- maintain and keep current a regional plan that focuses on economic development of our region and facilitate decentralisation, taking into account Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government plans,
- advise on those priority activities that will drive regional economic development and take advantage of comparative advantages, based on collaboration and engagement with community leaders, governments and other Regional Development Australia Boards,
- assist local community stakeholders to develop project proposals and help guide them to appropriate public and/or private funding sources in areas such as Agri Business and Innovation,
- provide advice to the Government on critical issues affecting each region,
- increase awareness of Australian Government programmes in their communities that can be used to stimulate economic growth, and
- Articulate environmentally sustainable communities and promote job skills development and regional education to complement this.

Together with our Board, I look forward to the coming years, as RDASI's influence grows across the Southern Inland region and use this Plan as a valuable tool to stimulate future economic development activities. As we all know, stronger regions make a stronger Australia as they are the key to economic success.

KEY POINTS

Three clear and concise strategic directions delivered over four years.

RDASI is developing a holistic collaborative approach by advocating for regional economic development.

Southern Inland is a diverse and growing region.

Key industries will continue to be supported.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The strategic direction that will be the focus of this Plan over the four years are:

1. Be a leader and main facilitator in business development, skills matching and jobs growth.
2. Influence policy and advocate on behalf of the region for services and infrastructure.
3. Strong governance and organisational effectiveness.

This Plan replaces our Regional Plan 2013-16 and builds on previous strategic work.

Our aim is to maximise economic development opportunities for the region by attracting new businesses, individuals and investment to the region, growing our local businesses and encouraging innovation.

We recognise that cooperation and collaboration are critical for regional development. We will work in partnership with key stakeholders to deliver the best outcomes for the region.

We are seeking to achieve a vision that supports the desire and aspirations of the region's diverse communities whilst also recognising the role and resources of the RDASI Board.

It will not be possible to achieve this vision without the support and collaboration of key stakeholders in the region. We must work together to gain the infrastructure, investment and services that the broader region needs.

As a united voice we have the opportunity to attract investments and new industries that can take advantage of the commencement of international flights from Canberra Airport and the soon to be constructed Badgery's Creek airport. This is a potential game changer for the region as it strengthens the South East NSW-ACT region's competitive advantage as the freight transport and logistics hub of south eastern Australia.

The continued development and growth in regional food production and increased demand for 'clean and green' food products also creates significant economic development opportunities to be harnessed for the region.

We look forward to the opportunity to play a significant role in ensuring the ongoing economic development and improved liveability of the region.

THIS PLAN

The Regional Development Australia Southern Inland Strategic Plan 2017-2020 provides a clear statement of the strategies that will generate jobs and growth in the region. Our Plan is designed to provide information for businesses and industry groups and to find support from our elected representatives and community leaders.

This revised version of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan reflect the new RDA Charter and change of Chair and several board members and builds on previous strategic work. Our Plan states a clear vision for the region and identifies a number of strategic directions and actions. These will be our primary focus to ensure the effective employment of resources and the fulfilment of long term objectives.

We have three strategic directions for this Plan. The strategic directions are encompassing in nature rather than sector or issue specific.

The strategic directions also take into account the changing regional development landscape in NSW.

These changes include local government reforms which involved council amalgamations and the establishment of Joint Organisations to provide a forum for local councils and the State to work together to deliver regional priorities.

RDASI believes that our strategy and the priorities articulated in this Plan are critical to advancing the Vision we have for the region.

The audience for our Plan includes

- business (large and small)
- new and emerging business
- business looking to relocate to the region
- existing business
- community organisations
- community groups
- industry
- business incubators
- current residents
- prospective residents
- all levels of government.

Cooperation and collaboration with other key stakeholders is vital. Our Plan helps us to identify where this cooperation and collaboration can occur.

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We act as a conduit between all levels of government, business and the broader community to support the economic development of the region.

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We will attract and advocate for investment and industries and promote enhanced liveability.

We will be a regional leader for the promotion of 21st century infrastructure and economic development with the community.

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STRONG, CONFIDENT & VIBRANT REGIONS

A NEW CHARTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

Working in close partnership with fellow RDA Committees, all levels of government, and the private sector, RDA Committees will:

1. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and leverage private and public sector investment to the regions;
2. Connect regional businesses, councils and industry sectors with international trade partners, financial markets and potential investors;
3. Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors;
4. Support community stakeholders to develop project proposals to access funding;
5. Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies in their regions;
6. Facilitate public and private sector decentralisation;
7. Assist in the delivery of Australian Government programs, where relevant and where requested by the Minister;
8. Engage with regional entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in their regions;
9. Provide information on their region's activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors; and
10. Provide evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues positively and negatively affecting their regions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITY ACTIONS

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

BE A LEADER AND MAIN FACILITATOR IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, SKILLS MATCHING AND JOBS GROWTH

Within the scope of this Plan, we will aim to act as a main facilitator between industry, business, government and the broader community to facilitate growth and development.

We can lead the discussion by acting as a facilitator, providing connections and 'opening doors' for industry and government. RDASI may also provide background research or business cases to support a project.

The Commonwealth Department of Employment (2016) has estimated that for the Capital Region, the highest expected growth will be experienced in the Education and Training Sector (+1700), Health Care and Social Assistance (+1400), and Construction (+1000). These projections are consistent with the projections for NSW as a whole.

The 2017 South East and Tablelands Regional Plan identifies additional growth sectors:

- tourism
- public administration and defence
- primary industries and renewable energy
- freight and logistics.

We also believe that opportunities exist for innovators and high tech start-ups recognising the significant knowledge economy and supporting academic infrastructure in the ACT.

PRIORITY ACTIONS: RELOCATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN WOOL SALES

This is an opportunity to relocate to a new location. The discussion paper has informed the initial process of relocating Australian Wool Sales to the Southern Inland. The next step will be to prepare a formal business case in support of the move.

INNOVATION HUBS

RDASI has identified the potential for the development of smart work hubs in the region. Smart work hubs will allow the knowledge economy of the region to telecommute to larger urban centres without compromising on their chosen lifestyle and location.

Developing improved information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure in the region is the key to creating viable smart work hubs. RDASI has established this as a priority and will continue to negotiate the investment into ICT infrastructure.

INTERMODAL TERMINALS

RDASI has identified that intermodal terminals are a significant opportunity for Southern Inland. We will facilitate the establishment and development of intermodal terminals.

Freight activities could be grouped to form freight precincts. This allows for the co-location of supporting infrastructure and production or processing facilities and the necessary economies of scale to support sustainable and competitive operations.

FACILITATING JOBS AND GROWTH

RDASI's 2018 Skills Audit Report explores and highlights the gaps that are constraining growth, job retention and job creation in our region.

This report found that there are critical skills shortages in many of the Southern Inland's growth industries, including, tourism, education, health, primary industries, IT and construction. If businesses are to prosper, the critical skills issue must be addressed through a coordinated approach amongst relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders including, education and training providers, Councils, Business Chambers and RDASI, must work together to develop coordinated strategies to fill the skills gaps present in the region. At the heart of a skills strategy should be education – rejuvenating the TAFE system and ensuring that people have the appropriate skills and knowledge to meet skill demands in the Southern Inland region.

RDASI will continue to work closely with training organisations and direct them to the findings and outcomes of this research to specifically tailor courses to the needs of individuals and businesses in the region.

Promoting the region to skilled workers outside the region is also one of our key focuses in addressing skills shortages. Our Jobs and Growth Insight Report does this by highlighting key industries and competitive advantages of each LGA. It is a vital tool for effective advocacy on behalf of the region, showcasing the region to potential investors, businesses and workers.

RDASI will continue to leverage and promote these reports in order to:

- Achieve improved job opportunities in the region
- Develop and maintain a skilled workforce meeting the needs of industry and businesses
- Attract national and international business activities to the region
- Improve the business environment to foster, retain and grow industries.

These reports can be accessed at www.rdasi.org.au or please call our office on 4822 6397 for a hard copy.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

INFLUENCE POLICY AND ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF THE REGION FOR SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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.

Over the coming three years RDASI will also focus our efforts on influencing policy and advocating on behalf of the region for services and infrastructure.

RDASI will work collaboratively to provide sound arguments for investment in infrastructure and services and facilitate dialogue on regional workforce needs and growth strategies. We will work with all levels of government to help identify infrastructure and services required to support jobs and growth in the region and ensure a high level of liveability.

We recognise that advocacy is most effective as a joint venture. We will therefore nurture existing relationships and build new connections. Advocacy is also about education and providing accurate and timely information about the economic development opportunities and constraints so that decisionmakers can make knowledgeable decisions regarding establishing or growing their business in the region.

PRIORITY ACTIONS: IMPLEMENTATION OF A REGIONAL ADVOCACY STRATEGY

RDASI will develop and implement an advocacy strategy. An advocacy strategy is a combination of approaches, techniques and messages by which an advocate seeks to achieve the advocacy goals and objectives.

The strategy will be action orientated clearly defining key stakeholders to be engaged or collaborated with in order to meet the objectives of the strategy. It will include a phased approach commencing with the building of relationships, through to the provision of trusted advice and ultimately to the ability to influence policy.

Key focus areas for the strategy will include information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, transport infrastructure and services, agriculture and associated industries. The strategy will cover all key stakeholders including local members; relevant ministers and shadow ministers; peak organisations, associations and businesses; and community groups.

This priority together with the establishment of networking with key stakeholders will assist with the achievement of the following objectives:

- Attract new and increased investment in regional infrastructure,
- Explore opportunities to encourage business innovation and improvement
- Becoming known as the regional lead in economic development activities.
- Support the Agribusiness sector
- Become known as the regional lead in economic development activities by engaging with stakeholders to promote collaboration and establish partnerships.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

STRONG GOVERNANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The Board has set itself a number of priority areas under this Strategic Direction. Many of these priorities will also assist with the achievement of Strategic Direction 1 - Facilitate business development and jobs growth and Strategic Direction 2 - influence policy and advocate on behalf of the region for services and infrastructure.

PRIORITY ACTIONS: IMPLEMENT A COMMUNICATION AND RECOGNITION STRATEGY

In order for the Board to advocate on behalf of the region and facilitate business development and jobs growth both the region and the Board need to raise their profile. Through the implementation of a communication and recognition strategy the Board will consistently be reminding key stakeholders including government and industry groups that the Board is actively looking to assist with regional development initiatives and that prime opportunities exist in the region.

MAINTAIN A COMMUNICATIONS AND RECOGNITION STRATEGY WITH THE COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY

One of the most effective ways to gain indepth understanding about potential new business opportunities, areas for jobs growth and infrastructure needs and to identify opportunities for improvement is through the open communication of information.

RDASI will act as a conduit for information exchange with the community and industry. In addition members of the Board will use their strategic thinking skills to identify new opportunities or networks of individuals and organisations who could work collaboratively together for positive regional outcomes.

The Board will then help to facilitate the achievement of these outcomes by collaborating with all stakeholders.

STRONG GOVERNANCE REFLECTS BEST PRACTICE

This will help to ensure an agile organisation that can readily react to new opportunities that will benefit the region.

EXPLORE NEW INCOME STREAMS

This priority relates to the identification of possible new funding streams to support the RDASI in regional economic development work. New funding, whether through grants or a new business enterprise, could be utilised to undertake a specific project, for example related to agri-processing, exploration of export opportunities, or projects to support start-up businesses.

SOUTHERN INLAND

Our main focus is to achieve economic development and growth for the Southern Inland Region. We will be a regional leader for 21st century, acting as a link between all levels of government, industry and our community. We will work to achieve this through

- Supporting local businesses to grow and develop
- Attracting and advocating for local and international business investment
- Connecting local businesses and other stakeholders with international markets
- Facilitating and advocating for decentralisation
- Engaging with and supporting entrepreneurs to develop their business
- Promoting the Southern Inland region

Under the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS), RDA Southern Inland also assist businesses to employ skilled migrants to fill skills shortages in the region. RDA Southern Inland certify RSMS Visa applications (187) and also sponsor State Sponsored Migration (489) Visa applicants to allow skilled migrants to live and work in the Southern Inland Region.

OUR REGION

The Southern Inland Region is made up of seven local government areas (LGAs) in the South East of NSW, encompassing 45,000 square kilometres of NSW land area.

The Southern Inland region has an estimated residential population of 201,517 (2016). It is uniquely located between the two biggest population centres and domestic economies in Australia – Sydney and Melbourne, and surrounds the Australian Capital Territory.

The seven Local Government Areas are; Wingecarribee, Goulburn Mulwaree, Yass Valley, Upper Lachlan, Hilltops, Queanbeyan-Palerang and Snowy Monaro.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	SIZE (KM ²)
WINGECARRIBEE	2,689
QUEANBEYAN-PALERANG	5,319
GOULBURN MULWAREE	3,220
SNOWY MONARO	15,162
HILLTOPS	7,139
YASS VALLEY	3,999
UPPER LACHLAN	7,110
TOTAL LAND AREA OF REGION	44,639

REGION SUMMARY

LOCATION	GRP 2016 (\$m)	BUSINESSES 2016	JOB'S 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%
SOUTHERN INLAND REGION	8,880	19,806	67,173	201,517	244,670	18%

Source: Census 2016

KEY INDUSTRIES



TOURISM

There are 4.7 million visitors to the region annually who spend more than \$1 billion in the region each year. There are more than 2,300 tourism businesses in the region. Importantly, these businesses add to the social and cultural fabric of the region's cities, towns and villages that can be enjoyed by residents. Tourism in the region is not just confined to the major cities, it is spread throughout the region



HEALTH CARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The second largest employer in the region and likely to continue to grow.



MANUFACTURING

Within the top 10 of the region's largest employers. Hi-tech product manufacturing is a regional strength.



CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Third largest employer of residents of the Southern Inland region and has grown by 11% in the past 5 years (2011-2016).



PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Region's largest employer, with a significant proportion of the region's residents working in Canberra.



EDUCATION & TRAINING

The Region's 5th largest employer. Distance education continues to grow, with a Country Universities Centre now open in Goulburn and Cooma.



PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Wool, cattle and sheep contribute 57% of the total value of agricultural production in the Southern Inland. The region accounts for 34% of NSW's cherry production.



RENEWABLE ENERGIES

The Southern Inland region is home to the largest network of renewable energy stakeholders in Australia. The SE NSW-ACT region has around 5,000 MW of installed large-scale renewable energy generation capacity across commercialised technologies.



TRANSPORT

The Southern Inland has the busiest freight corridor in Australia. The region is strategically and geographically well placed to support the growth of the freight and logistics sector.





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