



Newsletter

November 2011



Director of Infrastructure Australia visits Region

Road, rail and port infrastructure in the Goldfields-Esperance region came under the spotlight during a visit by the Director of Infrastructure Australia, Michael Deegan.

Regional Development Australia Goldfields Esperance (RDAGE) organised the visit by Mr Deegan which allowed him to see first hand the reliance of the resources sector in the Goldfields Esperance region on current transport infrastructure. The visit was significant for the region as Mr Deegan advises the Federal Minister for Infrastructure & Transport, Hon. Anthony Albanese, on infrastructure issues nation-wide.

One of the most critical challenges facing the Goldfields Esperance region is to ensure that road, rail and port infrastructure keeps pace with the expanding resources sector. Quality infrastructure facilities are also essential for the agricultural sector, which requires first class transport networks to deliver its' product to world markets.

RDAGE arranged for representatives from Esperance Ports Sea & Land, QR National Freight, Main Roads WA, the Esperance Chamber of Commerce, the Goldfields Esperance Development Commission, the Shire of Esperance and Mining and Pastoral MLC Wendy Duncan to meet with Mr Deegan to discuss issues impacting the road, rail and port network. Regional representatives stressed the necessity for continued long term government investment in these facilities.



Michael Deegan with Regional Development Australia Goldfields Esperance Chair, Mal Osborne



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Minister announces Round Two of the RDA Fund

The Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Simon Crean MP has announced the opening of Round Two of the RDA Fund worth \$200 million. Key aspects of Round Two include a two-stage application process that will reduce costs for applicants. Local decision making is embedded in the process which will provide early certainty for proponents about their application.

The RDA Goldfields Esperance (RDAGE) committee will review Expressions of Interest (EOI) from all potential applicants in the region and select three viable priority projects to progress to full application.

The new process for RDAF Round Two is:

- Interested applicants are required to email an EOI form to RDAGE by Thursday 1 December 2011
- The RDAGE committee will review each EOI and select three viable priority projects for the region that will proceed to full application
- Full applications will be assessed by the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
- Applications will be considered by the RDAF Advisory Panel which will provide advice to the Minister. The Minister will make decisions on projects to be funded.

A number of changes have been made to the RDA Fund Program Guidelines, these include:

- One EOI per applicant for a single project
- A maximum grant value of \$15 million
- Preference given to applications that demonstrate partnership funding on a dollar for dollar basis for grant requests of \$5 million and less, and on a 1:2 basis for grant requests of more than \$5 million
- At least 50 per cent of partnership funding must be cash
- Not-for-profit organisations must have a minimum annual income of \$1.5 million.

More information about Round Two of the RDA Fund can be found at www.regional.gov.au



Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme

One of the most significant challenges facing employers in the Goldfields Esperance region is the shortage of skilled labour which means that many businesses cannot operate at maximum capacity or efficiency. The ability to source workers with specific skill sets is a determining factor in projects being delivered on time and on budget.

Employers in the Goldfields Esperance region can now seek assistance from RDA Goldfields Esperance (RDAGE) to fill skilled labour positions through the Federal Government's Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS). RDA Goldfields Esperance has become a Regional Certifying Body, and will now be the first step in assessing migration applications for the RSMS.

RDAGE will assess the eligibility of applications for the migration scheme, after which, applications will go to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) for approval.

RDAGE will only consider applications for the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, and cannot provide advice on general migration matters outside the scope of the RSMS. For further information about the RSMS please see the RDAGE website:

<http://www.rdage.com.au/regional-certifying-body/>

Information on all migration schemes can be obtained from the DIAC Regional Outreach Officers on 08 9415 9705 or 08 9415 9128.

Regional Consultation: *Goldfields Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011-2021*

RDA Goldfields Esperance have contracted Bevan Bessen, a consultant with Tuna Blue Pty Ltd, to undertake the first review of the *Goldfields Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011-2021*. The Plan, which was launched in April 2011, is under review to ensure it remains relevant, current and valuable to all stakeholders in the region.

A Regional Forum will be held in Kalgoorlie on Thursday 1st December from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm to gain input from key regional stakeholders.

Further details about this important forum will be circulated to all key agencies and organizations in November.

To find out more please contact RDAGE on 08 9091 6051

A New Disability Policy Framework

In April 2008, the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, the Hon Bill Shorten MP, established the Disability Investment Group (DIG). The Group have proposed the National Disability Insurance Scheme to make it easier for people to access essential care, support, therapy, equipment, early intervention and training. To find out more about the proposed scheme go to www.everyaustraliancounts.com.au

To view the RDAGE Annual Report 2010-2011 go to www.rdage.com.au



The Digital Economy

A Board member and the Executive Officer of RDA Goldfields Esperance recently attended the National Economic Development Conference held in Adelaide. The theme of the 2011 Conference was *The Digital Economy* which looked at the opportunities that broadband will offer to government, business and regional organizations.

Speakers from the National Broadband Network (NBN), international communications companies and several local government organizations presented information about business and community development using digital economy applications. Leading Australian examples were presented, outlining lessons that have been gained through practical implementation.

The Conference highlighted the importance of local councils leading the way to ensure regional Australia benefits from the roll-out of high speed broadband.

Chair of RDAGE attends National Tax Forum

The Chair of RDA Goldfields Esperance, Mal Osborne, was invited to attend the 2011 Tax Forum held in Canberra on 4-5 October. The Forum brought together around 180 representatives from community, business, unions and government, as well as academics and other tax experts, to discuss priorities and directions for further tax reform.

Input from participants helped identify further reforms to make the most of the opportunities and challenges ahead for Australia such as the shift in global economic weight from West to East, the ageing of the population and the transition to a clean-energy future. Discussions also helped identify further reforms which build on the Government's priorities of:

- making our economy stronger by boosting participation and productivity, and providing better incentives to work, save and invest
- making our tax system fairer by ensuring concessions are appropriately targeted and tax rules achieve their original policy intent
- making our tax system simpler by removing unnecessary complexity.

Health Boost for the Bush

The Australian Government has invited rural and remote health professionals, Indigenous organizations and local government organizations to apply for grants up to \$500,000 to improve their local health equipment or build new facilities. To find out more about the National Rural and Remote Health Infrastructure Program go to: <http://www.health.gov.au/nrrhip>

Applications close at 2.00 pm on Thursday 15th December.

