

BRIEFING NOTE

To: The Hon Nola Marino MP and DITRDC
From: RDA Murray NSW
Submitted by: Edwina Hayes – Director Regional Development and CEO, RDA Murray
Information Source: RDA Murray and Murray Socio-Economic Activation Taskforce (MSEAT)
Date: Friday 17 July 2020

Recovery phase and what this looks like:

- NSW-VIC border closure having profound negative impact with
 - uncertainty about rules on a daily basis
 - unnecessary and forced business contraction and closure when customers are in VIC
 - Tourism and Accommodation collapse (80-95% bookings cancelled out to Christmas)
 - Predicted logistics and supply chain issues with reported driver shortages and road transport delays impacting export and Melbourne bound freight.
 - Rail freight increasing and running freely (SA train stow-aways may mean NSW border checks delay trains in future as well)
- Social and mental health impacts are expected after QLD border closure experience (learning from RDA Northern Rivers and NSW Cross Border Commissioner)
- RDA Murray coordinating communication and supporting local govt
- Police/defence presence is notable – road blocks, random stops/ checks. This has a highly tangible impact on general community confidence.
- RDA Murray are working together with regional leaders to predict and assess border closure impacts and what we can do to support the community
- Addressing migrant workforce cross border issues.

How recovery can be effectively implemented:

- Support NSW-VIC border specific economic and social needs with targeted programs such
 - accommodation business support
 - Disability and other service provider support
 - Business support to account for loss of custom and expensive logistics work arounds
- Increase health, disability, migrant/multicultural, social services, welfare and business advice and other services to match need along the border

Impact and effectiveness of the government COVID interventions in your region including identifying what additional support may be needed.

- Border crossing delays are generally reported at 10 mins but reported lived experience among a group of 20+ border residents checked on report 50mins with 1-1.5hours common.
- Calls for local ground truthing of advice informing government decision making needs to be place based from the border. Sydney oriented decision makers are guessing about border communities.



Issues in your region with logistics particularly with any tightening in the supply chain or supply chain shortages

- COVID impacts including NSW -VIC border closure are relatively minor compared to spike in demand impacting shortages
- Fertiliser from Geelong to southern NSW no delays this week
- There may be panic buying occurring from areas expecting further rain but picture not clear yet
- Agricultural chemicals and fertiliser are in higher than expected demand due to widespread favourable seasonal conditions
- Stocks of ag chem and fert was limited across NSW, VIC and SA because of poor seasonal conditions over the last 5-6 years. Low levels of stores reported from on farm, in merchandisers warehouses and at manufacturing plants
- increasing production locally eg. Nutrien Ag purchase of Bayer Glyphosate plant at Kwinana WA
- delays from China manufacturing COVID shutdowns are impacting availability of products and components of local manufacturing (Melbourne Port activity may further impact delays and shortages)
- NuFarm predicting that they can only fill 90% of current orders on one high volume product with massive increases in Northern NSW demand likely to see shortages in high volume chemicals in coming weeks
- Continue to collect info and monitor supply and logistics issues:
 - Predicting Melbourne Port impacts at Riverina cereal harvest time.
 - School cross border access issues next week
 - Sunraysia horticultural -agricultural workforce RDA Murray is following up information and contacts from Dec 2019 crisis meetings held in Robinvale with VIC Gov, DoHA, Prime Ministers' Office, Border Force and other Federal Govt representatives.

Business confidence across your region and good news stories

NSW - VIC Border closure is a disaster for Murray Region economically and socially.

Business and community confidence has plummeted.

People are confused and angry.

Information communication and advice has been slow and people are demanding more from Government.

Anti-Victorian sentiment is rising unchecked

RDA Murray are focussed on

- collecting and sharing information
- Addressing community discord and
- pockets of social issues impacting businesses such as horticultural workforce in Sunraysia.

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