

BRIEFING NOTE

To: The Hon Nola Marino MP and DITRDC
From: RDA Murray NSW
Submitted by: Nina O'Brien on behalf of Edwina Hayes - DRD-CEO
Information Source: RDA Murray and Murray Socio-Economic Activation Taskforce (MSEAT)
Date: Friday 05 June 2020

Recovery phase and what this looks like:

- MSEAT convened by RDA Murray is progressing infrastructure priority list focusing on region wide benefits, local procurement opportunities & maximum job creation.
- RDA Murray is developing proposal for Infrastructure Database to enable interrogation for investor key issues. Collaborating with Canberra JO (Gabrielle Cusack and Jillian Kilby).

How recovery can be effectively implemented:

- RDA Murray is providing information for Digital Connectivity priorities that are remote and or bushfire affected (Riverina Highway, Upper Murray and Balranald/Buronga areas)
- Departmental investment sought on proposal for Infrastructure Database to accurately develop infrastructure list (up to 800 projects)

What support may be needed.

Business Support for events

- Government investment required to assist event organisers to pivot business models and meet administration of health requirements. Events are a significant driver to regional tourism visitation and economic spend eg: Henty Field Days (60,000-100,000 annual attendees that inject \$94 million into small regional economy)

Confirmation of COVID-19 Health Requirements for large scale regional events (Urgent)

- Events scheduled for October onwards are desperately seeking detail on social distancing requirements as this will affect their business model, style of event delivery & administration required. Many events are volunteer run with minimal paid staffing. eg: Deniliquin Ute Muster with 20,000 annual attendees resulting in \$15 million annual spend, Riverboats Music Festival with 5000 attendees resulting in \$17million spend in small regional communities) The lead time to budget, book artists, seek staff and ensure health responsibilities are met is becoming critical. It should also be noted that when events are cancelled, significant costs are still incurred with no return.

2020/21 NDIS Price Guide review of criteria relating to regional telehealth providers and remote consumers.

- Issue: Tele practice providers (allied health) are no longer able to claim the additional loading for remote and very remote NDIS participants.
- Impact to regional Tele practice Business in Deniliquin NSW: Innovative employer of 25 regionally based allied health professionals (all women) whose demand for services have significantly increased during COVID-19, can no longer establish services with remote and very-remote children and families across Australia (eg: Weipa) as it is not commercially viable to do so in 'thin-market' areas.



- Impact to children with disability and their families in regional and remote Australia: A significant increase to wait times, or total loss of access to early intervention services to complex and vulnerable children and families; many of which are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.
- Outcome sought:
 - A review of 'remote-loading' criteria relating to regional and remote NDIS service providers who provide services to regional and remote NDIS consumers (ECEI children and families) to ensure that equity of access to the NDIS is prioritised for both regional based consumers and providers.
 - Remote loading be re-established for regional NDIS providers to encourage regional business innovation, adoption of new technologies and employment of regional women.
 - Remote loading be re-established for regional and remote NDIS consumers across Australia to ensure they are not unfairly disadvantaged by their geographical location or specific disability care needs.

See request attached from Therapy Connect; an innovative award-winning telehealth provider based in the mid-Murray region of NSW who employ regional and remote female allied health practitioners (Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, Dietetics and Physiotherapy) and specialise in remote and very remote service delivery to everywhere in Australia.

Business confidence across your region and the ongoing effectiveness of government interventions.

- Retail, hospitality, and tourism warming up, particularly leading into June Long Weekend.
- Construction, manufacturing, and exporters (Ag) are cautious and looking for security. Ongoing confidence in future orders are low.
- Construction has welcomed this week's announcement for home renovations.
- Cross Border inconsistencies re: Hotel restrictions are creating inequitable business environment in border communities such as Echuca Moama eg: Pubs in Victoria are allowed 20 people per dining area, and NSW allows 50 people per dining area.

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