

MSEAT Regional Leadership Meeting Notes **4pm Thursday 27 May 2021**

Agenda

- What Strategic Regional Plan(s) do you work from?
- When are they being reviewed and how?
- What are your immediate Strategic Regional Priorities for economic development?
- Would you participate in RDA Murray workshops and monitoring to deliver 2021-2025 Strategic Regional Planning?

RDA Murray Update

Edwina Hayes – RDA Murray:

- Many surveys are out for response now, ranging from infrastructure to JO's.
- RDA Murray is working to encourage the government to develop a visa pathway to residency by moving to regional Australia.
- There is a backlog of migrants who are unable to enter Australia at present.
- The Department of Infrastructure, Trade, Regional Development and Communications will be releasing another stakeholder survey soon. Members are encouraged to complete this survey. The last DITRDC survey resulted in the continued funding of RDA's and a change to how we work.
- THRIVE – a philanthropic group assisting refugees to start or build businesses in regional areas – are rolling out a pilot program in 4 locations including Albury Wodonga. RDA Murray have identified the Sunraysia area as a high priority for their activities.
- Inland Growth Housing Summit 2021 will be held in Wagga Wagga on 13 August. Hosted by RDA Riverina and RDA Orana.
- NBN Co will be sending out a self-assessment survey shortly as a response to feedback from regions about access to services. RDA Murray are assisting with these activities and will have access to the data collected from this survey.
- RDA Murray are in process in the next 6 months developing our next strategic plan. MSEAT members are encouraged to be a foundational group and have input into the plan.

Member Updates

Brian Millar – TAFE NSW

- NSW are working on their strategic plan with several different options to support training for employment growth.

Glenn Stewart - Robinvale

- Focus is on skill, workforce, and housing.
- Cross boarder commissioner's roundtable
- REDs are currently being developed.

- There are significant blockages to growth that we need to advocate e.g., housing shortage.
- The Victorian government are funding businesses through grants to build accommodation for workers.
- Big projects continuing in the region – mineral sands and the power interconnector.

Michael Pisasale - MIL:

- Main project at present is further buy backs under the basin plan.
- MIL is proposing to the government that channel systems could be used to deliver the water they have recovered as environmental assets. This is strongly supported by landowners and is of environmental and economic benefit for the region, with significant positive impacts.

Mary Hoodless – RDA Murray Chair

- Main issues in the upper Murray are cross border issues.
- Upper Murray ag plans and economic recovery plans are in development. Councils are also developing their strategic plan as are SWSWG.
- RDA Murray has a key role in supporting and activating these plans.

Anthony McFarlane - BNSW

- BNSW released a report call “Back on Track” in 2020. The report had 10 recovery drivers with 4 immediate priorities.
- BNSW are focussed on workforce skills and have sent out a 2021 workforce skills survey to stakeholders.
- Highlighting housing issues in the region.
- New CEO – Dan Hunter – started with BNSW 3 weeks ago. Previously CFO from NSW Health.
- Strategic planning will continue in June.

Brett Millington – Mildura Regional Development

- Moving away from a Covid recovery program into longer term investment to stimulate the local economy.
- The local economy in his region has been ok during Covid due to agriculture and the return of tourism to the region (before this current VIC lockdown).
- Challenges ahead will be how to create certainty for people who wish to travel to the region.
- An announcement regarding finding for the broader Loddon Malle region to be announced soon.
- REDS are being developed for the region.
- Mildura regional development are working on their strategic plan with a focus on a hero product for tourism.

RDA Murray note: The new chair of RDA Sydney is Anna Guillan, formerly of Destination NSW and Tourism Australia. Anna is very keen to promote our region for tourism.

Josh Bergamin – Helen Daltons office

- Planning and strategy are generally looking bright.
- There is plenty of work in the region, but labour is diminishing across the board from unskilled to skilled positions.
- Renewable power investments to the region
- Housing is hard to establish. Investment in affordable housing is needed along with the services to support this growth.

Marg Killalea – Great Hume

- All local government partner councils in the Murray region are gearing up for LGA elections.
- Within 12 months all new councils will be responsible for building community strategic plans with 30-year horizon. That planning will be an overriding governing document to be made into a 4-year delivery document and 12-month operational plans.
- Greater Hume are very focussed on skills and housing shortages. Participating in a thinktank with RIVJO group to take a wide lens to look at options.
- Short term plans for GH - rezoning land, residential land projects.
- Rolling out town and entrance signage for branding as a region.
- Welcoming cities will be doing a presentation in the region - providing a helping hand at a high level with councils and other organisations to maximise the benefits of migrants and how we bring them into local communities.
- Greater Hume are expanding their children's services sections - 4th centre to be established at Culcairn.

Phil Stone – Edward River Council

- *nb: zoom connection was poor.*
- Council is waiting for election outcome before strategic planning.
- Price spikes for housing in Deniliquin
- Skills and housing shortages are an issue.
- 4-5 residential subdivisions underway
- Major projects – retirement village and streetscape upgrades

John Elgin - BEC:

- BEC Working to engage unsecured migrant cohort to connect the with THRIVE funding.
- Working on strategic plan. Staff moving to casual employment to continue to supply services.
- Inland Rail Conference in Albury this month was well attended. Huge long-term potential. Councils along the route feel that it will be helpful in retaining youth in the region.
- Smart manufacturing – will provide many opportunities in the future.

Claire Butler – National Resilience and Recovery Agency

- Used to be the National Drought and Flood Agency. As the agency grows there is the opportunity for officers to be more active out in the regions.
- Her role is to talk and provide info out to communities around recovery support and report back to the government departments.

Deanne Armstrong C4EM:

- C4EM strategic plan review is looking at collaboration on plans, skills, and jobs to 2035 with councils.
- Housing shortages in the area for both sales and rental. Looking at short- and long-term strategies. There are a huge number of jobs locally but cannot accommodate people.
- Manufacturing and agriculture have stayed strong. Tourism is recovering.
- Outcome of COVID-19 impact will not be seen yet - forward bookings to next year will be challenge as the money is already spent.
- Education and future workforce – C4EM are doing skills mapping to inform strategies to attract workforce.
- Murray River Council have identified that investors are stockpiling land. They are trying to get land released quicker. New release this week went to auction and 42 of 52 blocks sold the morning of the release. Time frame for building is also lengthy.
- Bridge Arts project in Moama – a museum to connect back to the indigenous culture and heritage of EM.
- Moama development of the main street - 40% of traffic going through main street will be diverted around the second bridge.
- Construction of the Moama police station going to tender soon.

ACTIONABLE COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES

- Edwina to confirm RDA Murray Strategic Planning process and MSEAT member support to lead and monitor accountability and quality of delivery with DITRDC
- Please contribute to RDA Murray National Survey from DITRDC

Next Meeting Thursday 1 July 4pm via zoom

Please contact Edwina 0427267753 edwina.hayes@rdamurray.org.au for further clarification or information