

MSEAT Regional Leadership Meeting Notes

4pm - Thursday 27 January 2022

March theme: Coordinating 2022 Goals Across the Region

- What are you aiming for in 2022?
- What can we achieve together?

RDA Murray Update

Mary Hoodless – RDA Murray:

- A major goal for RDA Murray in 2022 is to develop a strategic plan for the Murray region that all can engage with.
- The draft plan is in progress, to be released shortly. RDA Murray will look to MSEAT members as partners to determine how we can work together on this plan going forward.
- Acknowledged the current challenges and impacts on the region of the recent changes to the covid situation and its management.

Edwina Hayes – RDA Murray:

- January's operational focus for RDA Murray is BBRF. RDA Murray provide support for planning and application writing, along with letters of support that are crucial to the success of applications. We expect 12-14 applications in the Murray region for this round.

Member Updates

Geoff Lowe – RDA Murray Deputy Chair and Ikon Suspension.

- Is seeing the same issues flowing on from last year – employment shortages, inflation, logistics constraints and connectivity are among these.

Lynette O'Reilly – RDA Murray Board and Greater Hume Shire Council

- 2022 goal is to have a better understanding of the new local government strategic regional plans, along with building knowledge and networks across local governments.
- In GHSC, building and trades shortages are having an impact. Aged Care services are also a big issue.

Graeme Kruger – Rice Growers Assoc.

- The season is looking good with a 600,000-tonne excess forecasted. That is 200,000 more than 2021. Sun Rice is milling 24/7 at both sites
- Recently engaged with state water and environment minister and had to opportunity to share their roadmap.

. Dan Brear – NSW Farmers.

- Recent rainfall has been positive for the coming season, although a lot of horticulture has been affected by storms, knocking the quality of the crops.

- NSW Farmers now has a number of members in local councils, providing better representation for farmers
- Worth Raising: Attracting people to regions or retaining them and increasing skills: There will be significant reduction in "hands on" training at Riverina region TAFE campus' with emphasis on Connected learning. Have local anecdotal intel around Deni that Aged, Indigenous and Low-income communities are quite concerned about this.

Steve Donaghey – Committee for Echuca Moama and RDA Murray Board Member.

- Wishlist for 2022 is to minimise damage to building companies from the recent price increases, materials shortages, and lack of trades.
- Noted that there have been a smaller number of building businesses going into liquidation than expected.

Brett Millington – Mildura Regional Development

- Light State - a tourism hero product for the region to capture the domestic market. In the process of applying for BBRF funding in this round.
- Regional challenges are still finding people/ workers for open roles.

Edwina Hayes – RDA Murray

- 494 and 491 Skilled migration visa programs are currently open and are a fantastic opportunity to find people to fill skilled roles.
- Businesses are encouraged to utilise 494 sponsorships to attract and retain skilled staff.
- The Murray region has many more migrants with skills than there are available 491 visas. This is a fantastic opportunity for employers to look to 494 visa to fill roles.

Dan – Master Builders NSW

- Still seeing constraints in the industry with price increases and shortages of materials and skilled trades
- MBA NSW are working with groups for new ways to gain apprentices in NSW.

Digby Jacobs – Murray Darling Basin Authority

- Continuing best practice for storage management and working to manage the impact of summer storms on the needs of those on floodplains.
- Working towards gathering more regional intelligence and greater partnerships in the community in 2022.

John Elgin – BEC

- Looking to get more involved with smart manufacturers in the region
- We can no longer rely on overseas providers for everything we need, due to high transport costs and a lack of supply.
- Seeing a trend of retail purchases shifting away from small business to major retailers, who have the capacity to provide 24/7 customer support for online shopping.
- Planning to expand BEC to the west of the region. Councils and regional businesses are welcome to contact BEC to discuss the needs in their area.

Gerard Van Emmerik – Federation Council and RDA Murray Board Member.

- New council has been formed and now going through induction.
- The current focus is on the implementation of the council's economic development strategy.
- There is a focus on the increasing and ongoing growth in the region and the ability of council to fund infrastructure growth. They currently have budget for maintenance, but no forward budgets for growth.

Andrew Cottrill – NBNC Co and President, Business NSW Regional Advisory Council

- BNSW are seeing that small businesses are struggling at the moment with staff shortages, supply issues and a trend where less people are out shopping at present.
- NBNC Co are presently running a grants program.
- A regional connectivity project with underway with GHSC for FTTP in Jindera
- Seeking cross border commissioner investment to convert a large number of satellite users near Tooleybuc to fixed wireless
- This year's focus will be on digital capability and where to focus resources for this e.g., remote communities.
- <https://surveyv8.humanlistening.com/survey/08578e09-5cc0-44ff-915d-72fad9e2b848/0/c0418bd3-30ea-4312-b878-5bffd5089fe2?resetsession=true>

Glenn Stewart – Robinvale Euston.

- Recently held the Jobs Ecosystem Forum. This created 40-50 entry level jobs for region. Collaborating with Workforce Australia to progress these jobs and have also requested funding from the Vic Govt.
- The next step is to attract people into these jobs
- There is a need for cross border governance to work better across local government lines, and to bring community and industry along with that to highlight the issues that have arisen from COVID-19.

Jim Dannock – Ai Group

- There is strong demand for apprentices but there is difficulty finding candidates.
- The current COVID-19 rules around close contacts are causing significant issues e.g., fed government lists of exempt workers not being applied at state levels, causing confusion and inconsistency.
- The cost of access to RA tests is significant for businesses and is a barrier for some.
- Some Ai Group reports
 - Australian Supply Chains: State of Play
https://www.aigroup.com.au/globalassets/news/reports/2021/supply_chains_state_of_play_dec2021.pdf
 - Australian CEO Expectations for 2022
https://www.aigroup.com.au/globalassets/news/reports/2022/australian_ceo_expectations_for_2022.pdf

Jo Hewitt – Albury City Council.

- Focus is on the finalisation of the Albury 2050 community strategic plan. Once complete, and economic development plan will be developed from this.
- A number of business support initiatives in the pipeline, including a retail action plan for the CBD in post recovery phase
- Housing strategy is underway
- Developing a skills board as a resident attraction campaign.
- Focussing also on the environment, circular economy, and domestic tourism.

Marg O’Dwyer – Regions NSW.

- Round 2 of the Regional Jobs Creations Fund will begin in the next couple of weeks.
- It will be the same as last time – minimum of 5 new employees with capital expenditure to be spent within the next 12 months. Fund will suit shovel ready projects.

Veronica Larkin – Master Builders Victoria

- Seeing same issues as other states
- MBV are working with TAFE to get more women into trades

Yvette Myhill – Destination Riverina Murray.

- Working on an extension of the destination inspiration program, identifying businesses in the region that have new products that can be grown.
- Running a digital accelerator program – upskills businesses in their digital presence.
- Running a boost activity in Echuca Moama for business event spaces. The intention is to create a suite of data they can use to promote their services.
- Working with Murray Regional Tourism on Destination Management Planning. This is in-region consultation to understand challenges and opportunities, and to identify regionally significant projects. Also looking at cross border communities and how to keep and retain visitors.

Pip Walker – Helen Daltons Office

- There will be an upcoming housing forum. Also addressing health and education issues.
- Working to activate communities to get the most they can out of state government in terms of funding. Helping to create strategic plans and how to write good grant applications.

Anthony McFarlane – Business NSW.

- Seeing a period of uncertainty in businesses with Omicron
- Working with NSW treasury on target support packages for businesses. Details to be released shortly.
- The BNSW survey was oversubscribed and showed clearly that the disruptions to business are like a shadow lockdown.
- BNSW tourism awards are next week – there are number of Murray finalists up for awards
- Small Business Month will be in March. Albury will host a Ted-X style event for this, with Google or Facebook to attend to discuss e-commerce.
- Working with the state government to help coordinate the timing of major infrastructure projects to avoid the crunch of skills shortages.

Edwina Hayes – RDA Murray

- I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we have met and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging.
- I also acknowledge the passing of Norm Brennan, former Mayor of Edward River and Conargo Councils and wonderful MSEAT supporter. May we honour their faith in us by working hard together for a better region

ACTIONABLE COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES

- Nil

Next Meeting Thursday 3 March 2022 4pm via zoom.

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