Regional Development Australia Murray

# STRATEGIC PLAN

July 2019 – June 2021

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## Traditional Custodians

RDA Murray acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land in the Murray Region. RDA Murray appreciates the contribution of Elders, past and present and emerging leaders with deep respect. RDA Murray acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal people within the Murray Region and the communities it works with.

## Funding

## Preparing the Plan

This Strategic Plan was prepared by the Committee and staff in consultation with stakeholders throughout the Murray Region. RDA Murray would like to thank all those who contributed; their thoughts, ideas and insights have been invaluable in forming a clear and robust path of action for the duration of the plan.

Preparation of the plan was conducted by:

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## Disclaimer

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# FORWARD

RDA Murray is a Not-for-profit Incorporated Association with a strong volunteer Committee. RDA Murray has recruited a diverse Committee from every corner of the Region. Committee members' skillsets, place of origin and leadership networks dovetail to reflect the wide ranging and diverse mix of industry, development, social, geomorphological, cultural and economic opportunity drivers of the Region. Our team is committed to growing our Regions economic prosperity and importantly achieving this through the lens of liveability and sustainability. We have focused on our governance and leadership model to underpin our teams drive for connectedness to the development of the Murray region.

The committee has worked with all members of our team and a broad range of industry and community stakeholders to develop our key directions for our 2019 -2021 strategic plan. Our committee is excited to be able to present this plan to support the development of the Region through the period and beyond. We also believe this plan will allow us to focus on the longer term sustainability for our small, medium and large enterprises to create a dynamic environment as a leading area in the RDA network.

The leadership of our executive officer and the dedication of her team will underpin our success in achieving the goals of our 2019-2021 Strategic plan.

We are committed to use our networks and connections to further the cause of a vibrant economically and socially enabled community.

RDA Murray is the 'go to' organisation to connect people with opportunities to build economic and social advantage in the Murray Region.

We are committed to catalysing opportunity from a strong and resilient community living in an area that comprises Upper Murray, Albury, South West Slopes, southern Riverina, Western Murray Valley, Sunraysia and Rangelands socioecological systems of southern NSW.

RDA Murray has well qualified staff with diverse networks to collect information, organise and activate on economic and social issues raised in the Murray Region. RDA Murray has built a communications network of over 13,000 individuals and organisations engaged in understanding, activating and delivering on regional opportunity and advantage.

RDA Murray is focussed on connectedness creating a foundational community and culture of optimism and mindfulness within and for the region.

Brian Millar
Acting Chair

Edwina Hayes
Executive Officer

# OUR PLAN ON A PAGE
## Activating Growth and Innovation

### Vision

The Murray Region is a skilled, well connected community that is empowered for innovation, opportunity, inclusion and economic prosperity.

### Mission

To provide leadership, facilitate new thinking and support collaborative action to realise the region's potential.

### Strategic Goal

By June 2021, the Murray Region will be better connected, further resourced (financial and human capital) and have made measurable impacts toward improving economic, environmental and social prosperity.

### Strategy 1 – Business Adaptation and Development

| GOAL | KEY INITIATIVE / OUTPUTS |
|---|---|
| To facilitate the attraction of new business investment and growth of existing business across the Murray Region in a way that maximizes opportunities, reduces costs and builds economic resilience. | ➤ Regional Profile of assets and investment opportunities<br>➤ Facilitate and advocate for business diversification, innovation or expansion support<br>➤ Leadership Development |

### Strategy 2 – Workforce Development and Population Growth

| GOAL | KEY INITIATIVE / OUTPUTS |
|---|---|
| To enable a skilled workforce and support population growth in the Murray Region. | ➤ Regional Skills Audit<br>➤ Skilled Migration Program<br>➤ Secondary Settlement Program<br>➤ Increasing Aboriginal Environment Teams |

### Strategy 3 – Network Development

| GOAL | KEY INITIATIVE / OUTPUTS |
|---|---|
| To improve the ability of our region to make smarter decisions, maximise opportunities and work together to deliver on our economic, environmental and social aspirations through improved information sharing, stronger relationships and increased collective capacity. | ➤ Quality Information sharing within strong working relationships<br>➤ Robust key stakeholder communication network, system and strategy<br>➤ Maximize funding support and advice<br>➤ Major projects database and portal |

### Strategy 4 – Contemporary Governance

| GOAL | KEY INITIATIVE / OUTPUTS |
|---|---|
| To facilitate RDA to achieve its strategic objectives and drive improvement by having a framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled in RDA Murray | ➤ Robust governance systems and processes<br>➤ Accountable board performance<br>➤ A healthy culture |

**Values** - Leadership, connectedness, action oriented, and regionally focussed

# ABOUT RDA MURRAY

## Purpose

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Murray is a Committee of local people delivering local solutions to local social, economic and environmental issues. The Committee works with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the growth and development of the Murray region.

RDA Murray has a leadership and facilitative role with a clear purpose of growing a strong and confident regional economy that harnesses competitive advantage, seizes on economic opportunity and attracts investment.

RDA Murray is a provider of information, an advocate for the region, a partnership builder and a driver of change.

## RDA Charter

Working in close partnership with fellow RDA Committees, all levels of government, and the private sector, RDA Committees will:

1. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to identify economic opportunities and leverage private and public sector investment to the regions;
2. Connect regional businesses, councils and industry sectors with international trade partners, financial markets and potential investors;
3. Promote and disseminate information on Australian Government policies and grant programs to state and local governments and industry, business and community sectors;
4. Support community stakeholders to develop project proposals to access funding;
5. Develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies in their regions;
6. Facilitate public and private sector decentralisation;
7. Assist in the delivery of Australian Government programs, where relevant and where requested by the Minister;
8. Engage with regional entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in their regions;
9. Provide information on their region's activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors; and
10. Provide evidence-based advice to the Australian Government on critical regional development issues positively and negatively affecting their regions

## Federal RDA Outcome Expectations

Regional Development Australia must deliver actions that align with the following federal outcomes.

1. Increase economic opportunities and investment in the Murray Region.
2. Increase trade and job creation.
3. Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders
4. Leads to improved economic development outcomes.
5. Maximise access to Government programs and grants.
6. Advice supports development outcomes.

## ■■ Governance

RDA Murray is one of fifty-two (52) not for profit incorporated organisations funded through the Australian Government's Regional Development Australia Initiative. RDA Murray is governed by a local volunteer committee. The chair is appointed by the Minister for Regional Development Australia.

### Committee Members

- Brian Millar – Acting Chair
- Alexandra Anthony – Treasurer
- Adam McSwain
- Andrew De Graaff
- Belinda Anderson

- Frank Zaknich
- Geoff Lowe
- Leigh Byron
- Mary Hoodless
- Nina O'Brien

## ■■ Region

RDA Murray covers 87,738 square kilometres and works across 10 local government areas incorporating the Upper Murray, Albury, Riverina, Western Murray Valley and Sunraysia regions. RDA Murray currently takes in four (4) Joint Organisations of Councils (JO), two (2) State and two (2) Federal electorates.

## Our 2018-2019 Dashboard

| OUTCOMES | METRICS | MEASURES |
|---|---|---|
| Increased economic opportunities and investment in the Murray Region. | 149 | Organisations engaged/assisted, and investment opportunities created |
| Increased trade and job creation | 155 | Organisations assisted directly or indirectly to create jobs |
| | 212 | Organisations/entrepreneurs/emerging business leaders connected with business support, investment and growth programs. |
| | 7 | Organisations connected with export opportunities or export readiness support. |
| Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders leads to improved economic development outcomes. | 32,708 | Collaborative working groups/projects/partnerships with governments and regional stakeholder and economic development outcomes. |
| Achieve Government Program objectives | 84 | Decentralisation opportunities identified and facilitated. |
| | 1,167 | Initiatives to assist the delivery of Australian government programs. |
| | 90 | Skilled Migration 489-Visas issued |
| | 16 | Employer sponsored 187-Visa's issued |
| Maximise access to Government Programs and grants | 1,155 | Enquiries received/generated, and proposals assisted. |
| | 5 | Successful proposals |
| | 26,983 | Organisations assisted to connect with government programs. |
| Advice supports development outcomes. | 26 | Reports/submissions to the Australian Government about critical regional development issues |
| | 913 | Communication of regional activities and competitive advantages to regional stakeholders. |

# OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

## Activating Growth and Innovation

### Vision

The Murray Region is a skilled, well connected community that is empowered for innovation, opportunity, inclusion and economic prosperity.

### Mission

To provide leadership, facilitate new thinking and support collaborative action to realise the region's potential.

### Values

Our decisions and actions are underpinned by the following core values

Leadership - We are courageous in our leadership; bringing people together, inspiring new thinking and activating innovative solutions, being a voice for our region and absolutely making a difference together.

Connectedness – We understand the benefits of collective capacity and act as connectors and conduits for information sharing and partnership building.  We activate and optimise this potential to bring greater value to the region.

Action Oriented – Economic, environmental and social prosperity are complex and require an ongoing commitment.  Our holistic view, constant pursuit of solutions and results focussed action makes a difference to our region.

Regionally focussed – We are successful because we capitalise on the strengths and advocate for the needs of the Murray region.

### Strategic Goal

By June 2021 the Murray Region will better connected, further resourced (financial and human capital) and have made measurable impacts toward improving economic, environmental and social prosperity.

# STRATEGY 1 – Business Adaptation and Development

## ▦ Goal

To facilitate the attraction of new business investment and growth of existing businesses across the Murray in a way that maximises opportunities, reduces costs and builds economic resilience.

| Objectives | Initiatives |
|---|---|
| 1. **To attract and leverage** private and public sector **investment** in the Murray by **identifying, promoting and facilitating** economic development opportunities. | a. Develop and promote a Regional Profile that includes the identification of regional assets, investment opportunities and development barriers.<br>• Data set analysis<br>• Meta-analysis of existing plans e.g. Regional Economic Development Strategies<br>b. Develop and promote an online resource centre of key data set sources and relevant plans.<br>c. Work together with key stakeholders to identify, prioritise and activate local investment opportunities (including the decentralisation of government and non-government enterprise).<br>d. Facilitate connections between private and public sectors to leverage economic development opportunities.<br>e. Work with government to decentralise and invest in regional economic development e.g. Albury Wodonga Regional Deal.<br>f. Further develop relationships with industry leaders and connect the Murray Region with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs and business leaders e.g.<br>• Assist TradeSmart Officers to encourage local companies to attend International Trade Shows and outbound missions.<br>• Work with organisations that have jobs growth as their main objective e.g. Department of Industry Innovation and Science, BDM Xchange, NSW Regional Development Defence Group, TradeSmart, AusTrade.<br>• Business diversification, innovation or expansion support |
| 2. **To facilitate economic resilience** by assisting communities to adapt to a complex and changing environment e.g. climate change, environmental factors, and changing local and global markets. | a. Engage agri-business in planning for impacts of reduced water availability in the region including assisting to raise the understanding of water policy and implementation.<br>b. Assist attract business investment that is not affected by seasonal conditions.<br>c. Assist agri-business to diversify and value-add to primary production e.g. manufacturing and processing<br>d. Work together to increase tourism opportunities across the region e.g.<br>• South West Arts - Cultural asset mapping and promotion<br>• Murray Regional Tourism – Visit the Murray, Farm to plate promotion and events<br>• Upper Murray Inc. - Upper Murray 2030<br>• Destination Riverina Murray – Strategic Plan |
| 3. To facilitate business success through **leadership development** and connection to **supports** and **networks**. | a. Support small enterprises to transition to their desired goal with access and assistance with grants, other funding, government programs and strategic connections.<br>b. Leverage the expertise of local large enterprise leaders to benefit their own enterprise, each other and the region.<br>c. Explore the need for an activating Regional Leadership Program |
| 4. To identify and advocate for investment in **enabling infrastructure** to support economic growth. | a. Work with all levels of government and private industry to improve enablers such as digital connectivity, transport connectivity, energy affordability. |

# STRATEGY 2 – Workforce Development and Population Growth

## ■ Goal

To enable a skilled workforce and support population growth in the Murray Region.

| Objectives | Initiatives |
|---|---|
| 1. To develop a better understanding of job vacancy and skills demand and supply for both the immediate and longer-term future with well researched evidence. | a. Work with key stakeholders to conduct a skills audit across the region.<br><br>b. Share the Skills Audit Results with industry, education, government and community and use this to activate funding, initiatives and strategies to support the growth of skilled workers in the Murray Region. |
| 2. To increase access to a skilled workforce and address long-term skills gaps. | a. Promote the skilled migration program to industry across the Murray Region.<br><br>b. Deliver the skilled migration program across the Murray Region.<br><br>c. Support women to participate more highly in the workforce with a focus on:<br>• micro-business;<br>• entrepreneur development; and<br>• women in agribusiness.<br><br>d. Implement the "Increasing Aboriginal Environment Teams" project. |
| 3. To build social capital across the region. | a. Support opportunities for the secondary settlement of migrants with a refugee background.<br>• Advocate for programs and support services that assist migrants to be welcomed and supported in new communities<br>b. Promote the benefits of multicultural diversity and inclusion across the Murray Region.<br><br>c. Advocate and enable liveability to improve population growth and mitigate decline in targeted areas |

# STRATEGY 3 – Network Development

## ▌▌ Goal

To improve the ability of our region to make smarter decisions, maximise opportunities and work together to deliver on our economic, environmental and social aspirations through improved information sharing, stronger relationships and increased collective capacity.

| Objectives | Initiatives |
|---|---|
| 1. To **facilitate working relationships for robust information sharing and collaborative problem solving and action** across the Murray Region. | a. Develop and maintain positive and current working relationships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders and ensure they are abreast of current and emerging issues, activities and opportunities within the Region. This includes regularly participating and working together with; <br>• individual Councils and the Joint Organisations of Councils <br>• NSW Riverina Regional Leadership Executive and NSW Regional Planning Forum <br>• Commonwealth agencies such as Murray Darling Basin Authority, Tourism Australia, Department of Industry-Innovation and Science, AusIndustry, Department of Industry-Transport-Cities and Regional Development, AusTrade etc. <br>• Community advocacy groups and associations <br><br>b. Facilitate working relationships between Commonwealth Departments and people/organisations within the Murray Region. <br><br>c. Promote significant networking opportunities such as the SEGRA conference (being hosted in the Murray Region in 2019). <br>d. Participate in Regional Australia Institute initiatives |
| 2. To improve our ability **to gather, make accessible and disseminate valuable, timely information and evidence** for activating increased economic prosperity. | a. Further develop and expand a robust communication <u>network</u> of key stakeholders that includes a larger number and breadth of contacts/followers. <br><br>b. Develop a robust communication <u>system</u> that; <br>• is structured to enable information to be tailored to specific target audiences and includes automation. <br>• enables two-way communication that is timely and ensures information is not missed. <br>• enables systemised collection, collation and reporting of real time information and evidence about critical issues, needs, barriers, opportunities and activities. <br>• includes more user-friendly methods for promoting and disseminating government and other grants, funding, programs and policies, as well as news, emerging issues and events. <br>• Improves and optimises the RDA Murray Newsletters and e-funding advice. <br>• Measures the effectiveness of information provided (internal) <br><br>c. Further develop our communication <u>strategy</u> to ensure the right information reaches the target audience in a timely manner and in the way they prefer. <br><br>d. Develop a central database/portal of regional information about prospective, planned and existing economic development activities including; infrastructure development, major projects, key construction activities, development applications, business development, key likely policy impacts. <br><br>e. Work with key stakeholders to ensure information and evidence of critical issues (etc) is current, robust, validated and fully scoped. |
| 3. **To strengthen the capacity of Economic Development** planning and activity across the Murray Region. | a. Support the development of Economic Development Officer Clusters across LGA boundaries to facilitate both professional develop and collective strengths for improved planning and action. <br><br>b. Ensure the provision of timely information and resources that better informs economic development planning and activities. |

# STRATEGY 4 – Contemporary Governance

## ▖ Goal

To improve regional governance by developing and sharing how RDA Murray facilitates achieving its strategic objectives and drives improvement by having a framework of rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which authority is exercised and controlled.

| Objectives | Initiatives |
|---|---|
| 1. To **address regional economic development opportunities** by developing and role modelling robust governance systems and processes | institute a Governance Improvement Plan |
| | develop and maintain rules, relationships, systems and processes eg. establish specific sub-Committees |
| | review internal systems to ensure alignment with Committee |
| 2. To **leverage private and public sector investment** by increasing accountable Committee performance | establish Board performance indicators – attendance, meeting effectiveness, conduct |
| | measure and review compliance and effectiveness of Committee and organisational rules, relationships, systems and processes |
| 3. To **connect the region to explore new opportunities to grow** by sharing a healthy organisational culture | describe, communicate and role model an optimistic, transparent, inclusive, accountable Committee mindset |
| | subscribe to a leading, external HR and Policy agency |