



Regional
Development
Australia

LIMESTONE COAST

2019 - 2020 Highlights Report



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CHAIRS MESSAGE



On behalf of Members and Staff of Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast (RDALC), I am pleased to present the 2019/2020 Annual Report.

During the year the work of the RDALC has continued to centre on the six key areas for action, as identified in the 2019/2022 Strategic Plan. Work undertaken by members and staff to address key regional priorities are detailed throughout this report.

The RDALC has achieved significant outcomes during 2019/2020, notwithstanding the impact of COVID-19. The organisation learned quickly to respond and develop new practices to deliver services and implement COVID-19 safe work practices.

A highlight of the year was RDALC engaging CSIRO to undertake a study into the possible reinstatement of rail services in the Limestone Coast. The study showed possible freight savings to local businesses and has been submitted to both Commonwealth and State Governments for consideration as a potential future project.

I take this opportunity to thank the operational funding partners; the Commonwealth Government, through the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Transport; the State Government through Primary Industries and Regions SA; and Local Government through the Limestone Coast Local Government Association. This collaborative approach to regional economic development provides a significant advantage to the South Australian RDA network, as it is unique to South Australia.

I would like to acknowledge the important and valuable role that our volunteer board members undertake annually on behalf of the entire region. Their willingness to dedicate time and effort to oversee the strategic direction of RDALC is to be commended and I thank them for their commitment.

Thank you also to our dedicated group of staff, who drive the day-to-day actions of the RDALC as we look to grow the regional economy. Their efforts are sincerely appreciated particularly in helping our business community deal with the detrimental effects COVID-19 has had on elements of the economy.

2019/2020 has been a challenging but a successful year for the organisation and the RDALC looks forward to continuing to deliver on its mandate to drive economic development in the future.

Peter Gandolfi

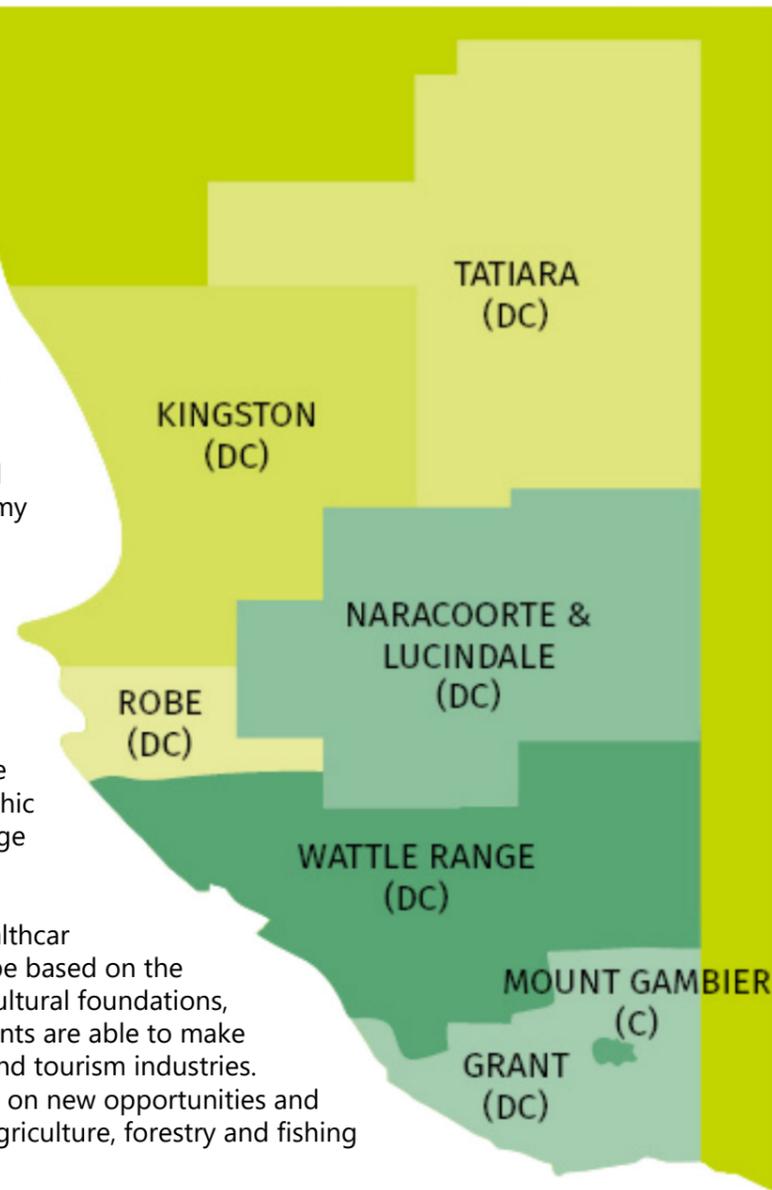
THE LIMESTONE COAST

The Limestone Coast region is located in the south eastern corner of South Australia with an area of over 21,000 square kilometers.

With a population of approximately 67,000 and density of 0.03 persons per hectare, the economy has been built on traditional agriculture-based activities.

Economic growth in the Limestone Coast is highly variable across sectors. Employment growth in traditional industries such as agriculture, forestry, fishing and manufacturing is slowing, whilst employment growth in service and tourism industries is increasing. Demographic changes are putting pressure on the working age population.

There is a strong demand in education and healthcare sectors. Long term economic prosperity will be based on the enduring competitiveness of the region's agricultural foundations, alongside creative approaches to ensure residents are able to make the most of anticipated growth in the service and tourism industries. Economic recovery from COVID-19 will depend on new opportunities and the enduring competitiveness of the region's agriculture, forestry and fishing foundations.



Regional Snapshot:

- Population 67,092 (ABS estimated Resident Population 2019)
- Local Businesses 7,644 (ABS 2019)
- Local Jobs 32,769 (NIEIR 2019)
- Gross Regional Product (GRP) \$3.93 billion (NIEIR 2019)
- Employed residents 34,100
- Largest industry by employment Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (NIEIR 2019)

CEO'S MESSAGE



COVID-19 has completely reshaped the way we live and work and I am proud that my team has continued to deliver for our community in such challenging circumstances.

The impact of the pandemic on our business community was immediate and significant. Through this challenge RDALC refocused its efforts to deliver timely information, advice and support to small business owners. We reached out to hundreds of business owners directly affected by the pandemic, to offer support and assistance. Whilst this was a team effort, it was led by Rachael Ashman with her customary insight, enthusiasm and care.

Prior to COVID-19 we bid farewell to staff members Renee Tichbon, Liz Perkins, Sophie Falting and Taylah McCarthy.

I want to formally acknowledge the significant contribution Renee made to building the foundations upon which our reinvigorated organization stands. She has been a much valued and trusted colleague.

During the year, RDALC captured an investment pipeline valued at more than \$550 million and concluded three important pieces of work for the region: an audit which identified and prioritised 100 potential infrastructure projects; a prospectus outlining ten priorities for future investment; and a report by CSRIO to map and model the region's freight task and supply chains. These tasks were delivered by the indomitable Dr. Liz Perkins who brought rigor and dedication to her work and we wish her well in her new role with the SA Government.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff members for their dedication and positivity: Glenda McInerney for stepping up to a leadership role and guiding RDALC to a surplus for the year; Cathy Ashby for delivering The Weekly every week, more important than ever during the pandemic and closure of local media outlets; and Lyn Howes, Jess Carolane, Mel Garibaldi and Amena Siddiqui who all commenced in February, only to be sent to work from home a few weeks later. Our four new staff have all worked with diligence, dedication and care for one another and the community, to become much valued members of the team.

Throughout the year our dedicated Board members have continued to provide their expertise, time and good will. I am thankful for their stewardship and in particular, Chair, Peter Gandolfi for his leadership and clear direction during uncertain times. I have also appreciated the collegiate support of my RDSA peers and the astute guidance of Rob Kerin.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with businesses, government and the community as we rebuild confidence and foster economic recovery.

David Wheaton

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast Inc (RDALC) is part of a national network which brings together all levels of government, business, and community to enhance the development of the Limestone Coast.

▶ OUR MISSION

We collaborate with government, business and community to attract, inspire and facilitate investment and economic growth.

Our services include working to attract infrastructure and investment, providing assistance with business and workforce development, guiding organisations and businesses who seek government funding and administering the Bioenergy Roadmap Program.

▶ OUR VALUES

- **Integrity** – we do what we say we will do
- **Strategic and forward thinking** - we anticipate change and plan for success
- **Results oriented** - we work together to achieve results

FIVE CAPITALS

RDALC uses a framework of the 'five capitals', encompassing the types of resources we can use to drive regional development and adapt to change:

- ### ▶
1. HUMAN CAPITAL
 2. SOCIAL CAPITAL
 3. NATURAL CAPITAL
 4. PHYSICAL CAPITAL
 5. FINANCIAL CAPITAL

HUMAN CAPITAL

Human capital – labour and influences on the productivity of labour, including work experience, education, skills and health

- 202 business owners provided with digital advisory services
- 50 businesses connected with services such as TradeStart, AusIndustry and FoodSA
- 230 small businesses provided with one-on-one support
- 163 businesses individually contacted and provided with support relating to COVID-19

RDALC facilitated the delivery of the Government's Australian Small Business Advisory Service (ASBAS) Digital Solutions program in the Limestone Coast region. In collaboration with the Adelaide Business Hub (ABH), we coordinated the scheduling, topics and promotion of training. We had a total of 20 workshops in the Limestone Coast (a mix of in-person and online), with over 200 participants.

107 businesses were provided with general information and support and connected to government programmes.

More than 50 proponents were supported with funding applications, providing economic impact reports (. iD), one-on-one assistance in framing applications and letters of support.

Disability Workforce Hub project continued with 215 employment outcomes facilitated since 2018.

230 small businesses received one-on-one support. Assistance included business planning, developing marketing plans, accessing information via www.business.gov.au, referral to Federal and State Government programs, research and HR / recruitment.

163 businesses were individually contacted (Mar/Jun) and provided with support in relation to understanding and accessing Government COVID-19 support.

75 business owners and operators attended a business networking event, 'Reconnect to Recover'; a collaboration between RDALC, Women in Business & Regional Development (WiBRD), Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce and City of Mount Gambier.

56 employers attended an RDALC workshop which was opened by Minister for Innovation and Skills, David Pisoni MP, and delivered by the Department of Home Affairs and ImmigrationSA.

RDALC facilitated a regular meeting of agencies that work across the region to support the business community.



SOCIAL CAPITAL

The ability of a community to co-exist, share ideas and work towards common goals

- Launch of Limestone Coast Prospectus of Priorities
- 3,490 accesses of the economic.iD Data Tool

David Wheaton took part in the Regions Rising 2019 Roadshow on the Regional Community Leaders Panel Discussion

50 editions of RDALC's electronic newsletter, The Weekly, were circulated, in which grant opportunities are highlighted and promoted. RDALC facilitated the first Limestone Coast Joint Business Association meeting on 14 May 2020 via ZOOM; 9 associations and 12 representatives attended.

RDALC attended all quarterly meetings of the cross-border RDA network (RDA Grampians, RDA Barwon South West, RDA Loddon Mallee, RDA Limestone Coast and RDA Murraylands and Riverlands).

RDALC has continued to be an active member of the Limestone Coast Economic Development Group - meeting regularly, advocating for the region's priorities and working closely with the group on the region's COVID-19 response.

RDALC attended regular teleconference meetings with the Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Hon Nola Marino MP to discuss the impact of COVID-19.

RDALC advocated and made 12 submissions (and/or gave evidence) regarding strategic regional priorities to a range of government inquiries



NATURAL CAPITAL

Land, water and other natural resources, attractiveness of the area and location relative to other regions and transport routes

- \$11 million in capital investment by 2 businesses in BioEnergy facilities

RDALC continued to administer the SA Government BioEnergy Connect Program. In total, 23 prefeasibility studies and 4 full feasibility studies have been supported by the program. As a result, there was \$11 million in capital investment by 2 business in BioEnergy facilities.

PHYSICAL CAPITAL

Investment in man-made or modified items, including improvements to the natural environment, infrastructure, equipment and technology

- 100 infrastructure projects identified and prioritized
- Launch of CSRIO's TraNSIT report in March

RDALC commissioned SED Advisory to undertake a Priority Project Analysis for the Limestone Coast region. Extensive consultation and mapping of existing infrastructure and opportunities was undertaken, resulting in the Limestone Coast Prospectus of Priorities which was officially launched in December 2019. As a result, 100 infrastructure projects that support the Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy were identified.

RDALC has continued to attend all meetings and contribute to the development, monitoring and updating of the Green Triangle Freight Actin Plan.

RDALC facilitated an industry consortium to solve regional transport issues. Recommendations were made to cross-border Government bodies to solve regional weighbridge infrastructure issues and improve A-Double uptake.

Commissioned by RDALC in 2019, the TraNSIT Report undertaken by CSIRO, was officially launched in March 2020. The Report found that the reinstatement of the Mount Gambier to Heywood rail line would deliver \$15.6 million in annual freight savings to the region. RDALC estimates that an investment of \$150 million to reinvigorate the line would offer a return on investment within 9 years.



FINANCIAL CAPITAL

The means to invest, including saving and credit

- \$2.5 million facilitated in State and Commonwealth funding
- \$550 million captured by the RDALC Investment Pipeline
- \$44,749 budget surplus for 2019/20

RDALC supported the establishment of the Limestone Coast Fishermen's Cooperative, and funding of \$348,000 was secured through the SA Government Regional Growth Fund.

\$100 million worth of infrastructure projects have been identified and modelled (using Economy. iD) as part of the region's COVID-response

RDALC has continued to work closely with the LCLGA on implementing the Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy. As a result, the Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy Action Plan will be adjusted to ensure the region can best position itself to respond the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

In 2019-20, RDALC employed 8 FTEs and had an annual budget of over \$1.1m (including project funds). All of our funding agreements were successfully delivered and acquitted to the requirements of our funding partners.

An independent and unqualified audit of our 2019 -2020 Financial Reports was conducted by Sinclair Wilson (in accordance with Section 60-40 Of The ACNC Act (2012)) and presented to the RDALC AGM on 12 October 2020.

