

LIMESTONE COAST

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

RDALC and Local Government
Working together to create opportunity in our region
2025/26



Introduction

Over the past twelve months, Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast (RDALC) has delivered strong outcomes aligned with national, state and local regional development objectives through sustained focus on three strategic priorities: we support businesses where they're at, we encourage investment; and we grow the leaders of tomorrow. We also ensure that the voice of the Limestone Coast is heard on the state and national stage.

Through targeted program delivery, stakeholder engagement and coordinated regional advocacy, RDALC has supported economic resilience, improved regional capability, and advanced sustainable development outcomes. The organisation continues to play a critical role in ensuring regional priorities are effectively communicated across local, state and Commonwealth levels, contributing to evidence-based policy development, investment readiness, and coordinated regional planning.

Through the Limestone Coast Regional Growth Strategy, RDALC in conjunction with the Limestone Coast Local Government Association (LCLGA) identifies four key goals for the region:

Live – a region people love to live in;

Work – a productive region people love to work in;

Visit – a region people love to visit; and

Build – a region enabled by quality infrastructure.

These goals provide a clear framework for population and planning priorities.



RDALC's place-based approach supports the alignment of regional opportunities with national priorities by fostering collaboration between government, industry and community stakeholders. This work strengthens the Limestone Coast's capacity to respond to economic challenges, leverage emerging opportunities, and drive long-term regional prosperity.



WORKING TOGETHER

How RDALC works with local government

RDALC works in partnership with local government to support regional priorities, strengthen local capability and deliver practical outcomes across the Limestone Coast.

Four Key Local Government Deliverables

Limestone Coast Grant Finder



Providing the Limestone Coast Grant Finder free for all businesses and community groups.

Informed Decisions



Access to the Informed Decisions economic modelling tool, providing demographic and industry information, as well as economic impact analysis and event impact analysis used to inform grant applications.

Small Business Support



Support for small business across the district.

Regional Advocacy



Advocacy on regional issues including infrastructure, services, workforce development and investment.

Our broader regional work

In addition to the four key deliveries, RDALC delivers a range of programs and initiatives across the Limestone Coast including:

Leadership and
Workforce
Development



Environment &
Water



Investment &
Infrastructure



Tourism &
Visitor Economy



> GRANT SUPPORT

RDALC has 519 total registrations for Grant Guru, with 326 business, and 274 community. 2,350 email alerts were generated and sent to people requesting specific profile of grants as 30 June 2026.

RDALC advertises grants ongoing through a weekly newsletter, professional development opportunities, small business coordinator mentoring and advisory services, and social media to support the needs of the Limestone Coast region.

1,106 eligible applicants were contacted directly by email or phone about relevant grant opportunities, with the majority reached via bulk email campaigns promoting childcare and energy efficiency grants for eligible businesses. RDALC has supported 51 stakeholders with grant suitability assessments, identification of suitable funding opportunities and eligibility advice.

Grant Guru is available for our local government partners to support them and their community to locate and access grants. RDALC can then support grant applicants with information about the economic impact of their proposals.

Grant Support at a glance



519
Grant Guru
registrations



326
Business
registrations



274
Community
registrations



2,350
Grant email
alerts sent



1,106
Eligible applicants
contacted directly about
relevant grant opportunities



51
Stakeholder engagements
supporting grant suitability,
identification of suitable grants
and eligibility.



INVESTMENT, ECONOMIC DATA AND ANALYSIS

RDALC maintains an investment pipeline report which collects data and tracks progress of public and private investment projects in the Limestone Coast region. The data demonstrates the Limestone Coast region's contribution to the South Australian economy. The data is also used to monitor and plan construction workforce activities and inform capacity planning for operational workforce needs, housing and infrastructure.

As of 30 June 2026, there were 210 total projects in the Limestone Coast with 113 public and 97 private. Communication with proponents for the investment pipeline also provides opportunity to promote grants and government services.

RDALC undertakes economic analysis using tools such as Profile ID and Economy ID, which are made available to local government partners through their funding contributions.

During the reporting period, RDALC completed nine major economic analyses across the Limestone Coast's council areas, supporting councils, businesses and community organisations with evidence to inform planning, investment and decision making. These covered a range of areas, including community services, infrastructure development, industry opportunities, workforce needs and regional events. The analysis provides valuable economic insights to support local priorities and future development.

Throughout 2025/26, analysis covered the following sectors



Infrastructure Development



Agriculture



Workforce needs



Childcare



Event impact



Housing



Community Services

> Small Business Support

BUSINESS PLANNING

GRANT WRITING

BUSINESS EFFICIENCY

MARKETING

E-COMMERCE

TECHNOLOGY + AI

Between July 2025 – June 2026 a total of 118 mentoring and advisory services were delivered by RDALC staff to small and family business across the Limestone Coast.

These sessions supported drought-affected small businesses with practical guidance in business planning, marketing, grant writing, e-commerce, business efficiency, and the adoption of technology and AI tools to strengthen their resilience and growth. Strong participant experiences have also driven an increase in referrals, with many new engagements arising through word-of-mouth recommendations from existing clients.

In July 2025, RDALC successfully delivered two events for small and family business with 42 eligible participants, in partnership with Adelaide Business Hub. The Smartphone Photography and Videography workshop in Coonawarra was attended by 25 eligible participants, who learnt to turn their smartphones into powerful marketing tools, capturing professional-quality photos and videos. The workshop was well received, earning an average participant rating of 4.8 out of 5. Additionally, 85% of attendees reported increased confidence in applying creative techniques to photography and videography in their business.

That same month, the E-Commerce Reality Check workshop held in Bordertown also saw strong engagement, with 17 eligible participants. These attendees received practical advice on selling products and services online, managing shipping costs, creating standout content and marketing effectively without burnout. Feedback was positive, with an average rating of 4.6 out of 5. Notably, 73% of participants reported significant learning outcomes and increased confidence in using e-commerce platforms.



In September 2025, the Smarter Business Panel convened at The Riddoch Arts and Cultural Centre in Mount Gambier. The session attracted a total of 36 registrations with 28 business owners and operators in attendance, of which, 17 were eligible participants. Attendees represented a broad spectrum of sectors, including those less commonly involved in business development initiatives. The format encouraged open discussion and practical knowledge exchange, receiving highly positive feedback for its relevance and diversity of expertise.

In October 2025 RDALC hosted the Summer Sales Playbook – Social Media Workshop in two locations. The Beachport session attracted 26 participants (17 eligible), and the Mount Gambier session drew 25 participants (23 eligible). The workshops supported local businesses in preparing for the upcoming holiday trading period, including the Mount Gambier Christmas Wrap-Up event coordinated by the Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce. Participants were also introduced to foundational AI tools for marketing, covering prompt writing, privacy considerations, and productivity applications.



During November 2025, RDALC partnered with the Mount Gambier Chamber of Commerce to assist with promotion of the Christmas Wrap-Up event, aiming to stimulate local expenditure during the peak trading period and sustain community engagement in a conservative trading environment. As part of this collaboration, RDALC coordinated with community organisations and high-reach social media pages to share event information through low-cost organic channels, significantly extending the campaign's reach and contributing to the overall success of the initiative.

Throughout December 2025, RDALC worked to identify opportunities for regional tourism operators to access marketing, business development and tourism support. This informed the development and delivery of the Agritourism Workshop in May 2026 in collaboration with the Limestone Coast Local Government Association and the Tourism Industry Council South Australia, ensuring the content reflected local business needs, drew on specialist tourism expertise and aligned with regional tourism priorities.



February 2026, formal collaboration with the Office of the Small Business Commissioner strengthened regional support pathways, particularly for businesses requiring advocacy or mediation assistance. RDALC staff also engaged with Business for Good to explore social enterprise development models suited to the region, generating strong local interest and initiating a structured demand assessment.

During March 2026, Padthaway Safe on the Land 2026 was delivered as a practical information session focusing on what helps on working farms. The sessions provided clear guidance on common safety risks, recognising fatigue and stress, and understanding what to do if an injury or incident occurs. Delivered by Josh Ingham (Ingham & Co), alongside ReturnToWorkSA specialists Mardi Webber and Houda Peters, the session brought together on-farm experience and clear guidance on safety, wellbeing and work injury claims.

March 2026, RDALC attended the Lucindale Field days networking and hearing first hand from agribusiness the impact the drought has had and continues to have within the Limestone Coast region.

In May 2026, the two day Bordertown Regional Forum was held, with RDALC, Tatiara District Council, the Office for Small and Family Business and the Small Business Commission SA collaborating to strengthen engagement with regional businesses. The forum enabled the Small Business Commissioner to hear local concerns and discuss available support.

A poster titled "SMALL BUSINESS FUNDAMENTALS" with the subtitle "PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR YOUR BUSINESS". The poster features three circular images: a woman holding a laptop, a person walking in a field, and two women working together. To the right of the images are three green circular icons with text: "FREE Business support", "1:1 MENTORING Focused on your business", and "LOCAL WORKSHOPS Build skills and confidence". At the bottom, it says "Supporting stronger businesses across the Limestone Coast." and includes logos for the Australian Government, Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast, Drought Response, Office for Small & Family Business, and the Government of South Australia.

Case Study – Business Support

Building Agritourism Capability in the Limestone Coast

In May 2026, RDALC worked with Tourism Industry Council South Australia (TiCSA) and the Limestone Coast Local Government Association (LCLGA) to deliver an Agritourism Workshop at Bellwether Wines, Coonawarra, through the Small Business Fundamentals Drought Program. The workshop engaged 27 participants from across the Limestone Coast, including the Wattle Range, Naracoorte Lucindale, Tatiara, Robe, Mount Gambier and Southern Limestone Coast council areas.

The initiative responded to sustained drought conditions and the associated financial and operational pressures facing primary producers across the region. RDALC identified agritourism as a practical diversification opportunity that could help farming businesses strengthen resilience, generate supplementary income and build on the Limestone Coast's established visitor economy. By working in partnership with TiCSA and LCLGA, specialist tourism knowledge into the region while ensuring the workshop remained grounded in local business conditions and aligned with regional visitor economy and destination-management priorities.





ADVOCACY FOR THE LIMESTONE COAST

July 1, 2025, to 30 June 2026 RDALC completed 9 submissions to Parliamentary enquiries and 1 public hearing invitation at Parliament House, Canberra:

Limestone Coast Regional Plan - STATE	July 2025
Waste Strategy 2025-30 STATE	July 2025
Limestone Coast Local Network 10 year plan	August 2025
SA Public Health STATE	October 2025
Skilled Migration FEDERAL	January 2026
Productivity in Australia FEDERAL	February 2026
Critical Minerals FEDERAL	February 2026
Determinants of Regional Airfares FEDERAL	March 2026
Blance BESS Battery STATE	March 2026
Select Committee on Productivity in Australia - RDALC invitation to give evidence at public hearing at Parliament House, Canberra on population and planning	April 2026

Case Study - Advocacy



A comprehensive report into early childcare demand, opportunities and future investment priorities in the Limestone Coast region was released on 7 July 2026.

The Limestone Coast Early Childhood Education and Care Report was compiled by RDALC with funding from the Office for Early Childhood Development. The report identifies significant gaps between existing childcare provision and demand, with communities including Robe, Millicent, Naracoorte and Keith experiencing clear and sustained need for additional childcare places. The findings also highlight the importance of supporting childcare solutions in smaller regional communities such as Beachport, Glencoe and Padthaway, where access to childcare can play a critical role in attracting families, supporting local businesses and enabling future growth.

Childcare is critical to the future of our region. It enables parents to participate in the workforce, helps businesses attract and retain staff, and supports vibrant and sustainable communities. The findings provide the evidence, direction and practical tools needed to support future investment across the Limestone Coast.

Recent investment in childcare infrastructure in Kingston SE and Bordertown demonstrates the positive progress already being made across the region. The report helps identify opportunities to strengthen childcare access in other communities where demand remains high.

The report combines regional data and analysis with extensive engagement undertaken by RDALC across the Limestone Coast. Through direct consultation with early learning centres, kindergartens, councils, businesses, families and community partners, the project captured local experiences and on-the-ground insights to build a comprehensive picture of childcare needs, challenges and future opportunities.

Alongside the report, a practical regional toolkit was developed to help councils, service providers and communities assess local needs, explore solutions and strengthen future funding and investment proposals.



> Limestone Coast Leadership Program

- Successful completion of the 2024-26 Leadership program with new funding for the leadership program in 2026-2028.

- May 2025, RDALC, in partnership with the Stand Like Stone Foundation, offered two scholarships to support local participation in the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Company Directors Course™. This intensive course was held in the Limestone Coast for the first time, attracting 11 participants from across the region.

- March 2026, RDALC hosted 'Lead Local' a conversation about leadership, opportunity, and building your future in the Limestone Coast. The panel consisted of five leaders across the region, a mix of alumni and non-alumni who are future leaders of business and community. 43 participants attend with inspiration and networking opportunities for current and future leaders.



- An identified gap from the 2024 gap analysis was the underrepresented cohorts. A two-part pilot was delivered targeting the migrant community. During 2025-2026 part one involved attending migrant meetings, identifying areas where support was needed and presenting an education session to the executive committee ensuring content aligned with specific needs. Part two focused on delivering two sessions. The first being an educational program, running governance session for the executive committee, covering risk management, policies and procedures. The second session was available to the entire migrant community members, focusing on committee basics, writing agenda, minutes, presentations and public speaking.

Case Studies - Leadership

Alumni Workshop - Leadership at all Levels

On 16 September 2025, RDALC brought together all five cohorts of the Leadership Development Program for a full day of connection and learning in Naracoorte. The first three iterations of the program were delivered by the Limestone Coast Local Government Association, highlighting a strong legacy of leadership development in the region.

The workshop was attended by 20 participants, with representation from every cohort. The program included a review of self-awareness, activities designed to broaden perspectives, and discussions about the next steps in participants' leadership journeys. The event emphasised the importance of bringing participants together in a meaningful and deliberate way, fostering both connection and thoughtful conversation across the different program groups.

By creating a space for shared experiences and open dialogue, the workshop strengthened networks, encouraged collaboration, and reinforced the continuing value of leadership development in the Limestone Coast region.



Case Studies - Leadership

Building Your Brand

February 2026 the 'Brand You' workshops were held in Naracoorte, Mount Gambier and Keith, with over 60 participants stepping into a space designed to challenge thinking and expand how personal presence is understood. Guided through a practical workbook, participants explored how personal brand lives between intention and impact, how we mean to show up and how others experience us. Through short reflections and simple tools, the focus was on noticing patterns, understanding energy and recognising the values that shape everyday interactions. These workshops form part of RDALC's ongoing commitment to strengthening leadership capability across the Limestone Coast, supported by the Department of Primary Industries and Regions.



KEY OUTCOMES AND HIGHLIGHTS

2025–2026

- Small Business Fundamentals Drought Project delivered 118 tailored mentoring and advisory sessions across the Limestone Coast, supporting drought-affected small businesses with practical guidance in business planning, marketing, grant writing, e-commerce, business efficiency, and the adoption of technology and AI tools to strengthen their resilience and growth. Strong participant experiences have also driven an increase in referrals, with many new engagements arising through word-of-mouth recommendations from existing clients.
- E-Commerce Reality Check workshop – July 2025 educating regional businesses marketing, 19 participants.
- Smarter Business Panel – August September 2025 – panelists from Comm Bank (business banking), Elders (business insurance) Alpha 8 (Cybersecurity) - 28 participants.
- Summer Sales Playbook – 15 and 22 October 2025, educating business for growth during peak periods with digital platforms with 26 at Beachport and 25 at Mount Gambier in total.
- Safe on the Land 2026 - Farm Safety Info Session Friday 13 March 2026, facilitated by RTWSA and INGHAM CO. with 12 participants.
- Personal Brand 2 day Workshop – February 2026 - total of 64 participants.
- RDALC invitation to give evidence at public hearing at Parliament House, Canberra on population and planning in April 2026.
- Completion of the Limestone Coast Childcare Report (July 2026). The report identified areas of limited childcare accessibility and workforce participation barriers, providing an evidence base to inform future service planning, workforce strategies and investment priorities.
- Promotion of programs, funding opportunities and strategic initiatives through The Weekly e-newsletter and integrated communications channels. Recognised as a trusted regional information platform, the publication supports dissemination of information to businesses, community organisations and industry stakeholders, reaching more than 1150 subscribers.



118

Businesses supported

Practical mentoring across business planning, marketing, grants, e-commerce, technology and AI.



1,150+

Regional subscribers

Connecting businesses, community organisations and industry with opportunities and information.



64

Personal brand workshop participants

Building confidence and capability through a two-day practical workshop.



5

Business education sessions

Covering e-commerce, sales, business growth and farm safety.

