



ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

SNAPSHOT OF OUR REGION



POPULATION GROWTH
122,956 TO 123,051



\$8.46B PROJECT INVESTMENT AS OF JUNE 2020



\$17.9B REGION OUTPUT



\$9.5B GRP



\$194.9M BUILDING APPROVALS



13,326 BUSINESSES



47,116 PEOPLE EMPLOYED



49,871 JOBS



2.7% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (MARCH)





ABOUT RDA ORANA

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT

Regional Development Australia Orana is an organisation focused on supporting the future development of the region through industry growth, public and private investment and collaboration between stakeholders.

The Orana region covers a large portion of central and north western NSW, and includes 12 Local Government Areas.

OUR IMMENSE DIVERSITY

Covering an area of more than 199,000 square km, the Orana has immense diversity, and features productive farmland, rich mineral deposits and a range of services and industries including manufacturing, construction, communications, retail, healthcare and education sectors.



A PLACE WITH PURPOSE

RDA Orana's strategic plan is designed to capitalise on recent successes, while addressing new challenges and taking advantage of new opportunities. RDA Orana is deeply invested in strengthening the region and its vibrant business community. We work with hundreds of companies and regional partners to advocate for public policies that will strategically support our regional priorities and our region's continued growth.

BUILDING TOMORROW TOGETHER

-  107,659 emails sent
-  225,178 website visitors
-  5,698 social interactions
-  783 new contacts



MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CHAIR

It would be remiss to reflect on the past year without acknowledging the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. By bringing the world to a standstill, it has had far-reaching consequences for lives and livelihoods in many countries with the ripple effect certain to be felt for years to come.

In an economic sense, we have been forced to cope with closures, job losses and the ability to trade with other countries has been reduced. Exporting has been heavily impacted and supply chains affected by increased regulatory procedures and restrictions on trade. As such, international commerce will be a different marketplace for some time.

The movement of people in a migratory sense has also changed, which in turn has impacted on the labour market, workforces and local economies. Reduced migration weighs on ability to hire workers and roles that cannot be fulfilled by existing residents.

Overall, this region is showing incredible resilience in the face of the economic downturn. Core industries such as agriculture and mining have remained stable, construction is booming and their ability to continue operating will hopefully lessen the losses felt by other major sectors such as retail. As an organisation, our role has become increasingly necessary, as the conduit between government and the community. Our voice is getting stronger, we are connecting with more people and becoming more representative of what is needed across the region.

Our successes this year have been reflective of what is happening in the Orana and as a direct result of the needs of the community and that is a positive sign of growth.

We have been working with businesses, the migrant community, not for profit groups and government departments to ensure that we are doing the best possible job to create connections, grow industry and increase our workforce.

We have held exporting workshops with the Mining Equipment Technology and Services (METS) sector, we are developing our Orana Opportunity Network (O2N), hosted a roundtable for migration stakeholders which crafted our Welcome Project and hosted the second Inland Growth Summit with a focus on the Future of Water.

COVID-19 communications continued during lockdown and our focus shifted to keeping the community informed about the shifting face of the workplace. As always, partnerships have been integral in our activities, including our ties with the State and Federal Governments and working with our local representatives Federal Member for Parkes, Hon Mark Coulton, Federal Member for Calare, The Hon Andrew Gee, and Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders and Member for Barwon Roy Butler. I also thank the RDA Orana team and committee for their efforts. During what has been a trying time, they have stepped up to the challenge and continued flying the flag for our organisation, coming up with innovative and productive ways to keep moving in the right direction. At a grassroots level, we are also working with Local Government to forward plan, as well as education providers, private enterprise and individuals in our community to ensure we are on the right track for a sustainable future.

Brad Cam,
Acting Chair



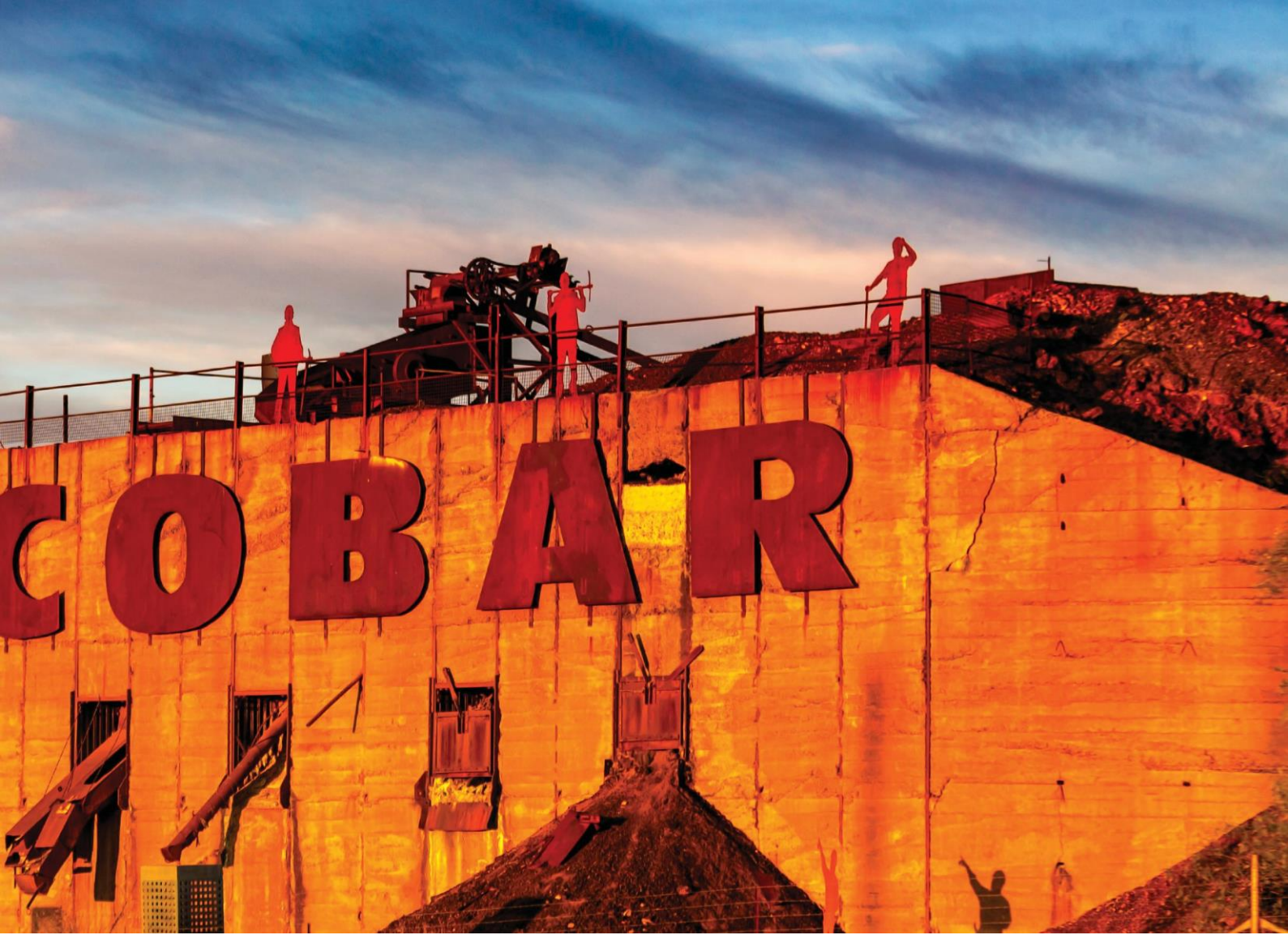
ACHIEVEMENTS

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Launch of Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) as the first in NSW
- Series of METS forums around the Central West and Orana regions, advancing the export hub capabilities
- Instigation of MOU between Austmine and the University of NSW
- Compilation of the Welcome Project
- Recognition in the national RDA survey

COLLABORATIONS

- Western NSW LHD recruitment campaign
- Building Better Business seminar in Bourke
- Mudgee Health Precinct
- Regional Rail JSIP Advisory Group
- Auridian and Global Meet Working From Home webinar series
- Local Government
- Central West Leadership Academy



EVENTS

- Migration roundtable with migrants, business, community representatives
- Resources Forum and State of the Region dinner
- Infrastructure Australia strategic planning, Narromine
- METS Forums in Cobar, Dubbo, Mudgee, Lightning Ridge, Orange and Parkes
- Second Inland Growth Summit in January addressing the Future of Water
- DAMA information sessions

SUPPORT FOR FUNDING

- \$1.5M Tourism Information Centre at Lightning Ridge
- \$4M Cooina nursing home renovations at Coonabarabran
- \$3M Mudgee Art Precinct
- Nyngan Community Homes Association accommodation
- Regional Museum, Warren

MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It's been a challenging year so far, but one in which our region has shown enormous resilience. We have celebrated successes, with the implementation of our DAMA, increased our networks through the METS forums, collaborated with industry and government and helped migrants and business owners through an unprecedented time.

Local businesses in the region have felt the pinch of drought, dust storms and bushfires then the full force of COVID-19 thrust upon them. They have faced uncertainty and difficulties but they've also shown the strength of character for which country communities have become renowned. Hopes of financial recovery have eluded the national economy as the second wave of COVID-19 affects the nation. However, the Orana's mainstay industries of mining, agriculture and health, along with energy construction are keeping us strong.

This year, we reached out to businesses like never before, hosting face to face events before lockdown began, a series of webinars and video conversations with business leaders and politicians along with surveys to the migrant and business communities.

We have written letters of support to attract funding to our region and to initiate assistance for a range of future projects along with supporting Regional Rail, the Renewable Energy Zone and major developments across the LGAs.

The key outcome that has emerged has been that businesses are resourceful and innovative, but that they also need assistance to recruit and retain their staff when the going gets tough. Being able to access the best workforce for their needs, strengthening their networks with other businesses and being open and available for opportunities will in turn grow the region - which is our vision.

As an organisation, we have been able to adapt to change and listen to the voice of our stakeholders, at the same time maintaining our ties with government departments and other organisations. We have created links that never existed and strengthened bonds within existing networks. We are also getting back on the road to visit local communities with a series of think tanks in the region, development of our Orana Opportunity Network (O2N) and launching the Welcome Project.

It's an important time to work together, it's crucial that support systems are in place and it's exciting to look to the future with renewed hope and vigour.

This wouldn't be possible without the RDA committee and team who have worked tirelessly to bring your goals to life.

Megan Dixon,
Director of Regional Development

WORKFORCE - PROJECTS



MIGRATION ADVISORY GROUP

The RDA Orana Migrant Advisory Group is being established to inform, advise and support the delivery of programs that aid successful settlement of migrants in the Orana region.

The aims of this project are to support growth and development of migrant employment by providing broad support and viable links between business, the community, and new residents. This will be achieved through stakeholder engagement, government representation and communication with migration bodies, in turn supporting an active, vibrant community.



WELCOME PROJECT

The Welcome Project's development represents a first for the Orana region. Along with planned activities and workshop opportunities, our welcome guide offers insights into the region including education, employment, housing, medical and a section on each LGA. The guide has received fantastic feedback from a diverse range of migrants who were impressed by the helpful information provided and that their feedback was included in every stage of the process. A Welcome to Orana event is planned in the future and the guide will be published on the RDA Orana website.



O2N UPDATE

The advancement of the O2N network has been done through the export hub's growth, the series of METS forums, ongoing connectivity with stakeholders including government and business representation and developing partnerships. The O2N Export Hub is being crafted to support industry and business development in the Mining Equipment, Technology and Services sector for the Orana and Central West regions.

The upcoming Invest Orana publication will bring an opportunity to highlight industry, economic growth, project construction and future development reflecting the clear advantage of regional investment.

2020/21 PRIORITIES



2020/21



UNITED REGION

Influence all levels of Government as a respected, apolitical and reliable advocate for the Orana region

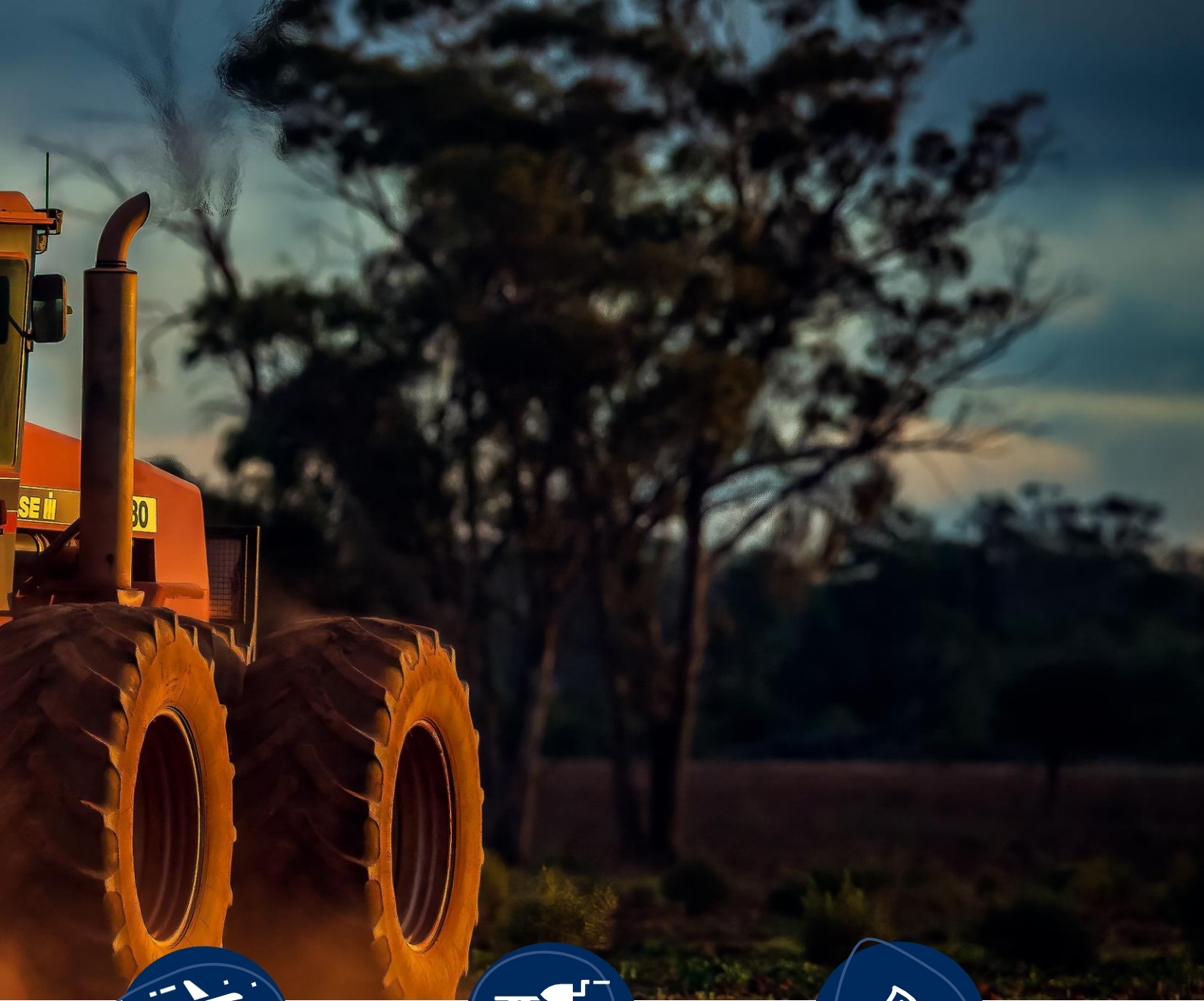
- Inland Growth Summit
- Explore Renewable Energy Zone opportunities
- Think Tanks in each LGA
- EDO meetings
- Investigate a regional leadership program



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Businesses in the region have access to workforce to support growth

- Continue DAMA assessments
- 2021 Orana@Work
- Investigate establishment of a jobs board solution
- Regional settlement strategy



EXPORT DEVELOPMENT

Connect regional businesses, councils and industry sectors with international trade partners, financial markets and potential investors.

- Implement METS export strategy
- Continue export forums
- Building partnerships with organisations
- METS international market report



INVESTMENT SUPPORT

Work with regional Stakeholders to deliver a shared Economic Development Agenda focused on enabling infrastructure, increasing population and investment attraction whilst providing economic information, credible research and insights.

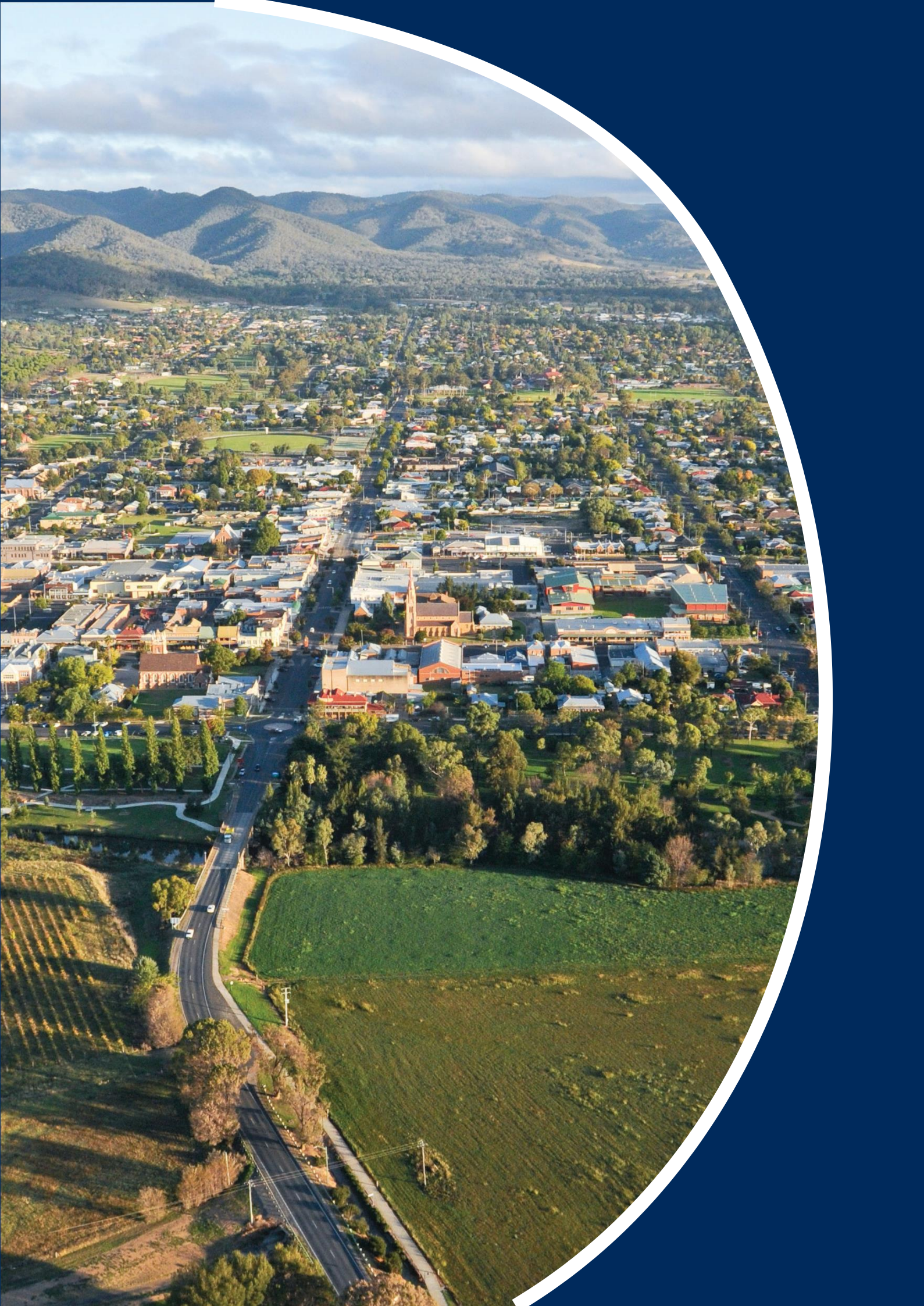
- Invest Orana
- Establish O2N
- O2N Capability Directory
- Grant writing and project development



SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

A financially sustainable, well-governed organisation, with a team of high performers delivering economic development initiatives that enhance regional growth.

- Annual business plan
- Strategic partnerships
- Charity status
- Investigate new entrepreneurial opportunities



CASE STUDY: COVID COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic led to disruption and uncertainty around the globe. While many sectors were forced to shut down, including tourism, entertainment, beauty therapy and hospitality, essential services remained open and RDA Orana's commitment to the region became the impetus for a communications campaign to share information, offer assistance and create a better understanding of the situation and its impact.

CHALLENGE

The past few months have brought changes in the community that no-one could have anticipated. The biggest issue faced by business owners and community leaders was access to information, obtaining the best tools to continue their trade and finding a way to shift their model to adapt to changing circumstances. RDA Orana's focus was to offer leadership, advice and support to those facing the unknown, linking them to events that were happening at a national and global level and making sense of the moving target.

When many businesses shifted to working from home or using minimal contact models, RDA Orana was able to identify and address the common challenges faced by employers and employees including trust, communication, daily disruptions and connectivity.

SOLUTION

To address the situation, RDA Orana quickly began publishing daily debriefs offering links to government initiatives, business support, education and training and recovery solutions. This was accompanied by recorded conversations with business leaders, newsletters, media releases and social media updates including #stilltrading tags. This was followed by a series of collaborative Lunch and Learn sessions aimed at managers working from home and surveys of the Orana business and migrant communities to gauge their situation.

BENEFIT

Many companies have led the way in terms of innovation, adapting their business models to suit the altered working environment. Using collaboration, new services, home delivery and online stores to keep trading, they have shown an impressive level of ingenuity.

RDA Orana has provided the tools to assist them adjust to the 'new normal', with guidance, information and resourceful links at the ready. The organisation helped ease the business community into knowing what entitlements were available, access to government assistance and reassuring them that they weren't alone in the day to day issues they were facing. RDA Orana provided ongoing support, helpful advice and access to other networks and channels.

OUTCOMES

In order to deliver information, RDA Orana collaborated with other businesses to continue providing a service using tools such as videoconferencing, training and consulting through partnerships that were beneficial to both parties. This strengthened what was being provided as well as future connections. The results of surveys that were sent out to gauge the needs of the business community will also be used to understand the broader economic impacts across the region and how to move forward. With many businesses now in recovery mode, RDA Orana can use these findings to better inform all levels of Government about how the region is faring and to ensure that the services being provided are of benefit to businesses and individuals across the Orana region.

CASE STUDY: INLAND GROWTH SUMMIT

INTRODUCTION

In its second year, the Inland Growth Summit focused on the earth's most valuable resource – water. With the region experiencing one of the worst droughts on record, the subject of water has become highly topical with items on the agenda focusing on its retention, preservation, strategic use and future innovations.

The 'Future of Water' theme attracted an attentive audience, with participants from academic, business, agricultural, political and environmental sectors.

CHALLENGE

The broad nature of the theme required some shaping to fit neatly into the one-day session. As such, presenters were able to focus on their particular area of expertise which began with a keynote address by Dr Geoff Beeson whose knowledge of water systems transcends time and geography. Other issues discussed included the water management targets of the agricultural sector, and cities such as Dubbo and Orange adapting to tight water restrictions.

SOLUTION

Dr Beeson's suggestions for the future include long-term planning, clear and consistent policies, recycling of wastewater and introducing greater efficiencies. Other ideas included using new technology to process water for consumption, reinventing water infrastructure, the reuse of water from a tourism perspective, the current research in water capture such as stormwater harvesting and the generation of water reform, transparency, accountability and certainty for the future.

BENEFIT

With the breadth of information given, there was a lot of guidance for participants to gather what they needed from the summit. A workshop at the end of the day gave attendees an opportunity to network with one another and express their opinion about which aspects of the day were most vital towards the future management of water. These included the inability to attain water quality and/or quantity information across the system in real time, concern about water contamination before and after agrisystems, lack of wastewater use or water retention.

OUTCOMES

The summit attracted a good response from participants who were representative of government, business, community, environment and education sectors. Attendees indicated that they were pleased with the event, describing it as excellent. The topic areas of water strategy, business, innovation and community were embraced by participants who were able to share their concerns and ideas with a like-minded audience.

Information on opportunities and strategies pertaining to water use for the future was described as valuable. Participants added that there was a good format and adequate networking opportunities and that the event provided good value for money.



Regional
Development
Australia
O R A N A N S W

build

Our *pose*

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CASE STUDY: EXPORT HUB

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the Federal Government granted RDA Orana with funding to establish an Orana Export Hub under the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Export Hub Program. An exciting new initiative, the O2N Export Hub is being crafted to support industry and business development in the Mining Equipment, Technology and Services sector for the Orana and Central West regions.

CHALLENGE

The greatest challenge for expanding the Export Hub is the sheer scope of this exercise and the level of community engagement required. There is a need to promote government initiatives that assist SMEs with exporting, engage with local industry leaders, demonstrate worthiness to investors and project partners and ensure that the O2N Export Hub gains exposure and recognition across all spectrums.

SOLUTION

A series of workshops and industry consultations were held across the Orana and Central West regions as a way to engage and encourage input from the business community, particularly those companies directly involved in the METS sector. There were six workshops in total, held in Cobar, Dubbo, Mudgee, Lightning Ridge, Parkes and Orange. The consultations included one-on-one mentoring, connection with government export services, matching investment with innovations, business planning for export readiness and advising on product development.

BENEFIT

The style of these workshops created greater engagement with this sector, allowing for increased input at a grassroots level. This has led to greater ability to plan and structure future planning and connectivity within this project.

OUTCOMES

RDA Orana has established a strong foundation for formalisation of a Resources and METS industry cluster that incorporates manufacturing, construction and renewable energy participants. We've also established a blueprint for moving the region forward and formalised partnerships with several organisations to support this important work.

CASE STUDY: MIGRATION ROUNDTABLE

INTRODUCTION

A two-day discussion focussed on migration was held in October 2019 as part of the organisation's commitment to regional workforce shortages. The event included an employer forum to discuss visa options for businesses interested in hiring migrant workers. This was followed by a workshop about migrant experiences and a roundtable to look at regional settlement.

CHALLENGE

It's important to encourage regional migration, and for businesses and migrant workers to feel supported during this process. Issues listed at the roundtable that are faced by migrants included access to housing, exploitation by migration agents, the need for Recognised Prior Learning, racial stereotyping and the need to bridge the cultural divide in rural and regional areas, resume preparation for Australian employers, loneliness, language barriers and misinformation.

SOLUTION

Developing a comprehensive strategy identifying the need for migration and the barriers preventing its course is a key factor for the future.

RDA Orana's Designated Migration Agreement with the Federal Government, the Orana DAMA, is streamlining sponsored migration of skilled workers ensuring an efficient and well-planned approach to this issue.

BENEFIT

The roundtable discussion brought together a range of stakeholders including representatives from government, community organisations, industry leaders, migration agents and migrants. This included Oriscon, NSW Premier and Cabinet, NSW Treasury, Regional Australia Institute and Western NSW Business Chamber, Fletcher International Exports and the mayors of Mid-Western and Gilgandra councils. This ensured input from a broad cross-section of the community.

OUTCOMES

The purpose of the migration roundtable was to gather stakeholders together to discuss issues, challenges and future planning in the area. RDA Orana's focus is on supporting successful settlement and identifying and solving the issues across the region.



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