

An initiative of the



Australian Government



# Regional Development *Australia*

O R A N A N S W



2018/19 ANNUAL REPORT

# OUR REGION *Snapshot*



122,956  
*People*



12,988  
businesses



49,871  
*jobs*



*Building our region  
together*

# ABOUT RDA ORANA

## *Our Purpose*

To support the development of the Orana Region by facilitating industry collaboration, encouraging public and private investment and promoting cooperation between all stakeholders

## *Our Vision*

A regional powerhouse recognised for production, value-adding, linkages and entrepreneurship

## *Our Mission*

Provision of regional intelligence to:

1. Create connections and growth
2. Grow industry and infrastructure investment
3. Grow our workforce

## *Our Priorities*

### **A United Region**

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

### **Workforce Development**

The businesses in the region have access to workforce required to support growth.

### **Export Development**

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

### **Public and private sector 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 insight.

### **An Inland Powerhouse**

With a \$7.9 B project pipeline, RDA Orana will support the development of business opportunities, corporate relocations, and job growth.

### **A Sustainable Organisation**

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





## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

During the past year, RDA Orana has continued to deliver great outcomes for this region. The organisation's achievements, including the Export Hub and the state's first Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), firmly put the Orana region at the forefront of economic development, employment opportunity and future expansion and growth.

As the largest and most diverse region in NSW, with a population of almost 123,000, covering 12 Local Government Areas across 25 per cent of the State, the Orana's agriculture, mining, manufacturing, energy and transport industries provide strength, agility and resilience.

Companies are finding ways to move ahead, forging connections with international markets and internal pathways, despite crippling drought and concerns for water security.

There is confidence in growth and infrastructure with \$7.9 billion in projects currently spanning the region.

RDA Orana continues to have an active role in development, with a clear focus on growing strong and confident communities

that harness competitive advantage, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.

We play a strategic role in encouraging business connectivity, addressing skills shortages and migration support.

This year, RDA Orana has hosted successful conference and workforce events including the inaugural Inland Growth Summit in January, Recruitment Marketing Masterclass in March and the Mining Energy and Transport Industry Forum and State of the Region Dinner in June.

We have collaborated with government departments, worked with local businesses and assisted with settlement of new residents.

We have used our voice for the development of regional policy and emphasised the importance of population growth, and of bringing together government, industry and the community.

As Chairman, I would like to thank my fellow Committee members as well as the team at RDA Orana who have made outstanding contributions to achieve the results outlined in this annual report.



RDA Orana and our partners exemplify what collaboration in a region can do. I acknowledge the leadership shown by our local MPs, including the Federal Member for Parkes, the Hon Mark Coulton, and outgoing State Member the Hon Troy Grant MP. We look forward to forging similar relationships with incoming Member for Dubbo, Dugald Saunders MP and Member for Barwon, Roy Butler MP. As we move into 2019/20, we need to continue to work together to be even more strategic and regionally-minded and build on the momentum and results RDA Orana has worked so hard to achieve.

**John Walkom**  
*Chairman*



### *Comments from our stakeholders*

**Melissa Fletcher**

*Chief Executive Officer  
Fletcher International Exports*

The strategic partnerships formed with regional business highlight how RDA Orana has connected with its community and leads the way for real solutions that get the best results for our region.



**The Hon Mark Coulton MP**

*Federal Member for Parkes  
Minister for Regional Services,  
Decentralisation and Local  
Government, and Assistant Trade  
and Investment Minister*

It's a great pleasure to work with RDA Orana on a shared vision to make our regions wonderful places to live and work. By working together as a region, we can always achieve more.



**Brad Cam**

*Deputy Chair of RDA Orana  
General Manager  
Mid-Western Regional Council*

RDA Orana continues to lead the way for regional collaboration. Key to our achievements is our united focus and strong working relationship with our state and federal colleagues. To date we've had great success and we look forward to maintaining this momentum.





## ACHIEVEMENTS

### COLLABORATIONS

Bourke, Mid-Western, Coonamble, Narromine, Bogan, Regional Australia Institute (RAI), migration partners, RDA Central West and industry

### 23 Funding support

Initial application support for \$9.5 million from Round 3 of the Building Better Regions Fund for a new state of the art Australian Opal Centre in Lightning Ridge and support for the Maranatha House project, Wellington.

### 6 Representation to Government

Prior to and after the Federal and State elections this year, RDA Orana positioned with Federal, State and Local Governments and has had significant input into regional policy and strategies to assist our communities. We have also worked hard to ensure the Orana is known not only at home, but abroad. These relationships will only continue to grow.

## AWARDS

RDA Orana were the proud recipients of the Federal Agency Awards from the Digital Innovation Advocates in Sydney in February, in recognition of our support to Netstripes and digital advocacy in the last year. We have been working with Netstripes over the past 18 months to facilitate Digital Boot Camps in the Orana and co-hosted Bizruption Goes West in May.

### 5 Industry events hosted

- Inaugural Inland Growth Summit - the aim was to spotlight the real need for regional policy and a plan to support growth centres within inland Australia, the desperate need for population growth to service projects and support sustainable and ongoing economic growth.
- RDA Orana proudly hosted American recruitment marketing expert Tracey Parsons for our Recruitment Masterclass, as part of our annual Orana@Work Employer Forums, which are aimed at assisting businesses in the region struggling to attract appropriate talent to fill vacant positions.
- Bizruption Goes West - the first event of its kind over the Blue Mountains presented by Netstripes in conjunction with RDA Orana, the event was attended by a diverse group of entrepreneurs whose businesses range from software development to boutique bars.
- The 2019 Orana Mining Energy & Transport Industry Forum - this one-day mining and resources conference was a first for the region. With the Orana on the cusp of a major construction boom, the forum was a chance for business owners and managers to hear about opportunities available to them.
- The State of the Region dinner was an evening to celebrate the spectacular Orana region, with attendance from our Members of Parliament, government representatives, industry leaders and local businesses.

## MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Three years ago, RDA Orana embarked on a program of re-engagement with regional stakeholders to better understand the issues faced by business that need to be addressed for the region to truly flourish. Workforce development was the number one issue raised by both business and our local government, along with the quality and quantity of education on offer in the region as well as issues around telecommunications, access and energy.

Two years ago, with the Committee, we repositioned the organisation to be a strong and credible partner of all three tiers of Government, as well as to our regional business community.

Today, as I reflect on the past year, I am incredibly proud of what our model of partnership and advocacy has achieved. The announcement of a Designated Area Migration Agreement for the Orana region along with our Mining Equipment, Technology and Services Export Hub will both have a significant and lasting impact for our partners within the region.

We've worked to increase our presence in the region, established regular contact with most communities which has contributed to positive partnerships with business and importantly local NSW and Commonwealth MPs and Ministers. Importantly we've also built productive partnerships with several State and Commonwealth agencies.

We've also taken big steps forward in other parts of our business. In the past 12 months, we've redeveloped our website to focus on the region; implemented a new CRM system and transitioned our accounting system to Xero. We've also focussed on telling the

stories of the region with our success stories that celebrate business, entrepreneurs, migrants and projects.

The future holds plenty of challenges and opportunities for the region and the organisation. Our advocacy work, particularly around regional inland growth and workforce development, will remain a key focus. Inland Rail and positioning our region to take advantage of this billion dollar project, remains a key priority for us. The issue of water security and reliability of energy and telecommunications will result in key pieces of research being completed in 2019/20, with a vision to gaining a better view of the impacts on the region. Value-added manufacturing and the opportunity to supply Asia also remains important; as does the opportunity to increase international tourism.

We will also continue to strengthen our regional engagement, through local think tanks and roadshows, delivered in partnership with Local Government as well as various State and Commonwealth programs. The development of the Orana Opportunity Network (O2N) is also a key focus. O2N will be used as a vehicle to support businesses to be located in the Orana by promoting their capabilities to local, national and international markets.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of the RDA Orana Committee and staff during the year; along with our partners. Our achievements are yours.

### **Megan Dixon**

*Director of Regional  
Development*



*"We have achieved great results in recent years by working together. RDA Orana will continue to be a strong regional advocate, while being a reliable and credible voice for our region and its stakeholders."*





## PROJECTS

### *Workforce Development*

#### THE WELCOME PROJECT

RDA Orana was granted \$49,500 in February 2019 for the Welcome Project, an initiative for migrants to feel more welcome and encourage social inclusion into the 12 local government areas within the Orana region. The project will include a series of activities and workshops in partnership with the Orana Residents of Indian Sub-Continent Heritage (ORISCON), education on employment for migrants, developing resources to support migrant entry into remote and rural communities and an annual welcome to the Orana event.

#### ORANA DESIGNATED AREA MIGRATION AGREEMENT (DAMA)

RDA Orana and the Australian Government reached an agreement on the Orana Region Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), which was approved by Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Multicultural Affairs David Coleman in April 2019. The Orana DAMA is a five year labour agreement between the Federal Government and RDA Orana, the first of its kind for NSW. The Orana DAMA has been negotiated to provide employers with a specific tool to sponsor skilled overseas workers in specified industries in our region that are currently experiencing critical skills and labour shortages. RDA Orana strongly advocates that employment should be offered to Australians first, however the region has a major skills shortage and we believe skilled migrants are critical to supplement the local workforce.

### *Export Development*

#### ORANA EXPORT HUB

In April 2019, the Commonwealth Government granted RDA Orana with \$235,887, which will be equally matched by RDA Orana over the course of two years to establish an Orana Export Hub under the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Export Hubs program. The aim of the project is to support the development of exports for businesses particularly in the Mining Equipment, Technology and Service industries across the Orana and Central West regions.

The program will incorporate the major mining towns of Cobar, Dubbo, Mudgee, Orange, Peak Hill, Parkes and Condobolin. Export development has been a key pillar for RDA Orana over the past year and this funding provides a unique opportunity for expansion and prosperity in the region.







## 2019/20 PRIORITIES

### *United region*

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

- Local think tanks in the 12 LGAs
- Development of the Orana Opportunity Network and capability directory
- Deliver a second Inland Growth Summit
- State of the Region dinner

### *Workforce development*

To ensure the businesses in the region have access to workforce required to support growth.

- Skill shortage assessment and report
- Delivery of the Welcome Project
- Promotion of migration solution to businesses
- Orana@Work Annual Forum
- Research paper: the future of training and education in the region

### *Export development*

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

- METS export strategy developed
- Four export forums
- Establish research partnership for international tourism strategy
- Establish research partnership for value-added manufacturing strategy

### *Public and private sector investment*

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 insight.

- A regional growth plan with infrastructure priorities
- Research: water security, energy supply, value-added food manufacturing
- Project and investor support
- Fee for service business case development and grant writing
- Regional grant writing and project development workshops

### *Inland powerhouse*

With a \$7.9 B project pipeline, RDA Orana will support the development of business opportunities, corporate relocations and job growth.

- Investment and Orana profile
- Collect and distribute economic data for the region including:
  - » Socio-economic profiles
  - » Industry profiles
  - » Property market profiles
  - » Project stories
- Conduct Resources Forum
- Develop partnerships to conduct a future of food and fibre forum
- Implement a program that supports leadership, entrepreneurship and innovation

# Case Study

## DAMA



### Introduction

A first for NSW, the Orana Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA) was signed by RDA Orana and the Federal Government in April 2019.

Workforce development has been a key priority for RDA Orana for several years, however with extremely low unemployment rates and feedback from employers across the region, the organisation moved the issue to its number one priority.

Through extensive community consultation and our inaugural Inland Growth Summit in January, RDA Orana identified skilled migration as a genuine option for businesses who have offered and advertised positions but are unable to find a suitable local candidate.

### Challenge

In 2017/18 the organisation undertook a survey of 190 employing businesses and organisations across the region to understand key issues affecting business growth.

A key challenge for the region is to work collaboratively with industry, education providers, communities and the State and Australian Governments to actively build the skills needed for future jobs by growing and re-skilling talent, encouraging business opportunities and attracting the best and brightest talent available. However, the data from our survey and subsequent research shows that the Orana region is already faced with challenges recruiting and retraining staff.

With many local government areas recording full employment, an aging regional population and declining participation rates, access to and availability of labour was identified in the data as a critical element to future

growth and development in the Orana region. RDA Orana always support local jobs first, but we only have a small labour pool to draw from to service over 25% of the state, including the local government areas of Dubbo Regional, Mid-Western Regional, Narromine, Gilgandra, Warrumbungle, Bogan, Cobar, Bourke, Walgett, Coonamble, Warren and Brewarrina.

In early 2018, RDA Orana also identified a project pipeline of \$7.9 billion that is a mix of mining, infrastructure, renewable energy, manufacturing and health projects over the next five years. While the development dollars are coming in, the region risks being unable to fulfil the investment potential of this and other projects without a sustainable labour force and without housing and other support structures.

### Solution

RDA Orana strongly advocates that employment should be offered to Australians first. However, where there is a skills shortage, we believe skilled migrants are critical to supplement the local workforce. After extensive community consultation at the end of 2018, an application was made to the Federal Government and the Orana DAMA was granted in April 2019 as a new pathway for employers to access both skilled and semi-skilled migrants alongside existing channels to fulfil the region's significant labour shortage.

The Orana DAMA is a five-year agreement, negotiated to provide employers with a specific tool to sponsor overseas workers in certain industries in our region that are currently experiencing critical skill and labour shortages.

### Benefit

The over-arching nature of this agreement allows Orana employers to streamline access to a broader range of overseas workers than allowed under standard skilled migration programs without the need to individually negotiate terms and conditions.

The DAMA also provides an opportunity to decrease application processes from up to two years to just a few months, reducing training and retention costs and increasing output for Orana businesses. The Orana DAMA includes semi-skilled occupations, cutting retraining costs associated for employers using working holiday visas, and providing a new pathway to permanency for migrants seeking to settle long term in the region.

### Result

Since the Orana DAMA was announced in April 2019, RDA Orana has received a lot of interest from employers in the region, migration agents and skilled migrants looking to relocate to the region permanently. RDA Orana has been working closely with the Department of Home Affairs to implement the system, with the first application due to be processed in September 2019.



## Case Study

# INLAND GROWTH SUMMIT



### Introduction

Under RDA Orana's key pillar, as a United Region, the inaugural Inland Growth Summit's aim was to spotlight the real need for regional policy and plan to support growth centres within inland Australia. The Inland Growth Summit was also a platform for presenters to share their experience and professional visions. It was a sold-out event with attendees from across the Eastern Seaboard, including all levels of Government and the private sector, with a full-day program that received a fantastic response from attendees.

### Challenge

The Orana region is on the cusp of an unprecedented boom, with over \$7.9 billion worth of projects planned for the next five years. These projects will amount to about 2500 direct permanent jobs, which will trigger 2500 flow on roles across the community. Our business community has expressed concern that the current growth rate is not enough to sustain this project pipeline. In partnership with key business leaders, RDA Orana identified the need to differentiate the policy settings for inland Australia.

Through our workforce development work, RDA Orana also put together the Bracing for Change report in 2018, resulting in nine position papers and 34 recommendations for future prosperity in our region. Through our work with RDA, we also identified that we aren't unique in the population challenges we are facing. Our problems are the same as the challenges in the Riverina, Northern Inland and even western Queensland. We compete for growth, yet while we compete and act

in isolation, we make it easy for all levels of Government to be non-responsive.

The Inland Growth Summit was developed to put a spotlight on the challenge facing all of inland Australia, to achieve growth. The one-day event aimed to highlight the future of inland Australia and table best practice from regions that have achieved growth outcomes and better understand the issues holding back inland growth.

### Solution

The Summit was designed to spotlight:

- The need for regional policy and plan to support the growth centres in inland Australia
- The desperate need for population growth to service projects and promote sustainable and ongoing economic growth
- The role of inland regions as viable economic centres and contributors to GDP
- Political positions going into the State and Federal elections

The format of the Inland Growth Summit was interactive, with presentations interspersed with feedback sessions, an afternoon workshop and post-Summit networking event. There were nine outstanding keynote speakers on the day covering the topics of Outlook and Growth Targets, Impediments to Growth and Good Planning Models, as well as Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government, Assistant Trade and Investment Minister and Member for Parkes Mark Coulton providing the welcome address.

### Benefit

The inaugural Inland Growth Summit brought together all levels of Government, and the private sector, giving them a platform to express their views about population growth, the challenges and changes facing inland Australia, and the opportunity to confer with others in similar situations.

Participant feedback indicated that the summit was a success.

### Result

Common themes that came out of the day included:

- changing the perception of what regional Australia has to offer
- liveability
- the importance of migration for inland areas
- guide on policy, connectivity leadership, partnership and champions in our communities,
- available finance
- what cooperation can do.

The five main priorities going forward were listed as:

1. attraction and retention of skilled migrants
2. connectivity and access
3. storytelling, branding and marketing
4. fit for purpose regulation, a flexible regional approach (not a Sydney vision)
5. removing duplication to be more efficient with government monies.



# Case Study

## RECRUITMENT MARKETING

### Introduction

The second Orana@Work Employer Forum provided an opportunity for Orana region employers to improve recruitment practice. The masterclass focused on recruitment marketing with American recruitment expert Tracey Parsons and was the first of its kind in Australia. The workshop focused on new techniques to address barriers faced by employers in their bid to hire staff.

### Challenge

In 2018, RDA Orana published the Bracing for Change report, providing a comprehensive analysis on issues facing employers in the Orana region. The data presented in the report suggested that employers in the Orana region face challenges in recruiting and retaining staff across our communities.

### Solution

This year the Orana@Work Employer Forum focused on recruitment marketing at a half-day masterclass with American recruitment marketing expert Tracey Parsons. The masterclass was an Australian first, designed to assist employers with strategies for talent attraction and was an opportunity for businesses to learn new and innovative recruitment techniques to attract employees.

The masterclass included a presentation by Brooke Lee's of Northparkes Mines, who has led the way locally in recruitment marketing with their very effective Make Your Mark campaign. The campaign has targeted professionals, graduates and skilled workers. Brooke described the approach to develop the campaign, which included input from staff, targeted messaging and ad placements (in communities that held the skills they sought).

With over 20 years of experience in recruitment marketing, Tracey Parsons brought her American expertise to the region. She covered four key topics:

1. an introduction to the concept of building a marketing mindset to attract and retain the best talent
2. an understanding of the audience you are trying to attract and retain
3. understanding what your audience needs to know to apply and stay at your business
4. building a recruitment marketing plan

### Benefit

The half-day recruitment marketing masterclass was a unique opportunity for businesses to learn new and innovative recruitment techniques to attract the employees they need for growth and prosperity in their industries.

Attendees gained a better understanding that recruitment marketing can help organisations become a lot more proactive about the talent personas that they are trying to attract. Whether it's through events, pipelining, content or talent networks, attendees obtained the tools they need to engage the right candidates for their organisations more effectively.

### Result

As a visionary event for RDA Orana, the recruitment marketing masterclass aimed to improve recruitment practices and to examine new innovative recruitment techniques. The event addressed workforce development and some of the barriers faced by employers in their bid to hire staff. Attended by HR staff, government representatives, small business

and government departments, participants received advice on how to be heard above the noise in recruitment with practical solutions to attracting and strengthening their workforce.

Since the masterclass, RDA Orana has seen participants putting into practice the lessons learned, with three organisations investing significantly in their approach to recruitment.

*"The Recruitment Marketing Masterclass hosted by RDA Orana in 2019 was an inspiring influence on the Dubbo Hospital Careers recruitment marketing strategy. The insight from recruitment marketing guru from the USA, Tracey Parsons was priceless, and the inside experience graciously shared by North Parkes Mine was invaluable. RDA Orana is playing a pivotal and leading role in the region to support organisations to attract labour."*

– Rebekah Bullock, Consultant, Dubbo Hospital Careers Recruitment Marketing Strategy







# Regional Development *Australia*

O R A N A N S W

## *Contact Us*

02 6885 1488

[admin@rdaorana.org.au](mailto:admin@rdaorana.org.au)

[www.rdaorana.org.au](http://www.rdaorana.org.au)

PO Box 1357 Dubbo NSW 2830



*Building our region  
together*