



# Community leadership is the key to successful regions

Susan Benedyka  
Chair, RDA Hume

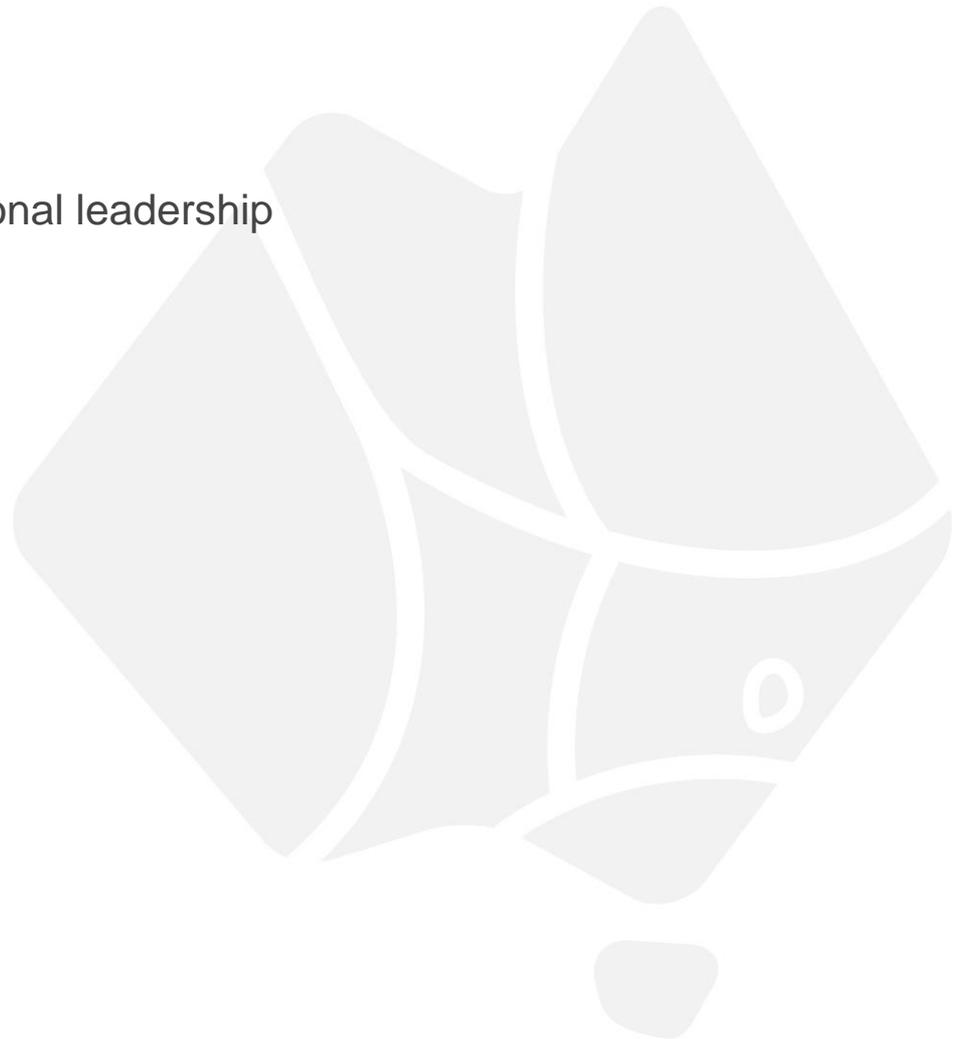


An Australian Government Initiative



# This presentation

- A practitioner's view
- The challenge of community and regional leadership
- The leadership imperative
- About the Hume region
- Leadership at different levels
- Building connected leaders



# The challenge of community and regional leadership

- Need for distributed leadership – not one age group, echelon, centre/town, elite
- Leadership renewal
- Understanding broad range of issues and perspectives
- Unclear direction and competing priorities and voices
- Parochial view vs regional view
- No common goals
- Lack of leverage
- Being 'picked off'
- Can be seen as too hard to solve



# The leadership imperative

McKinsey Report (1995) Lead Local Compete Global

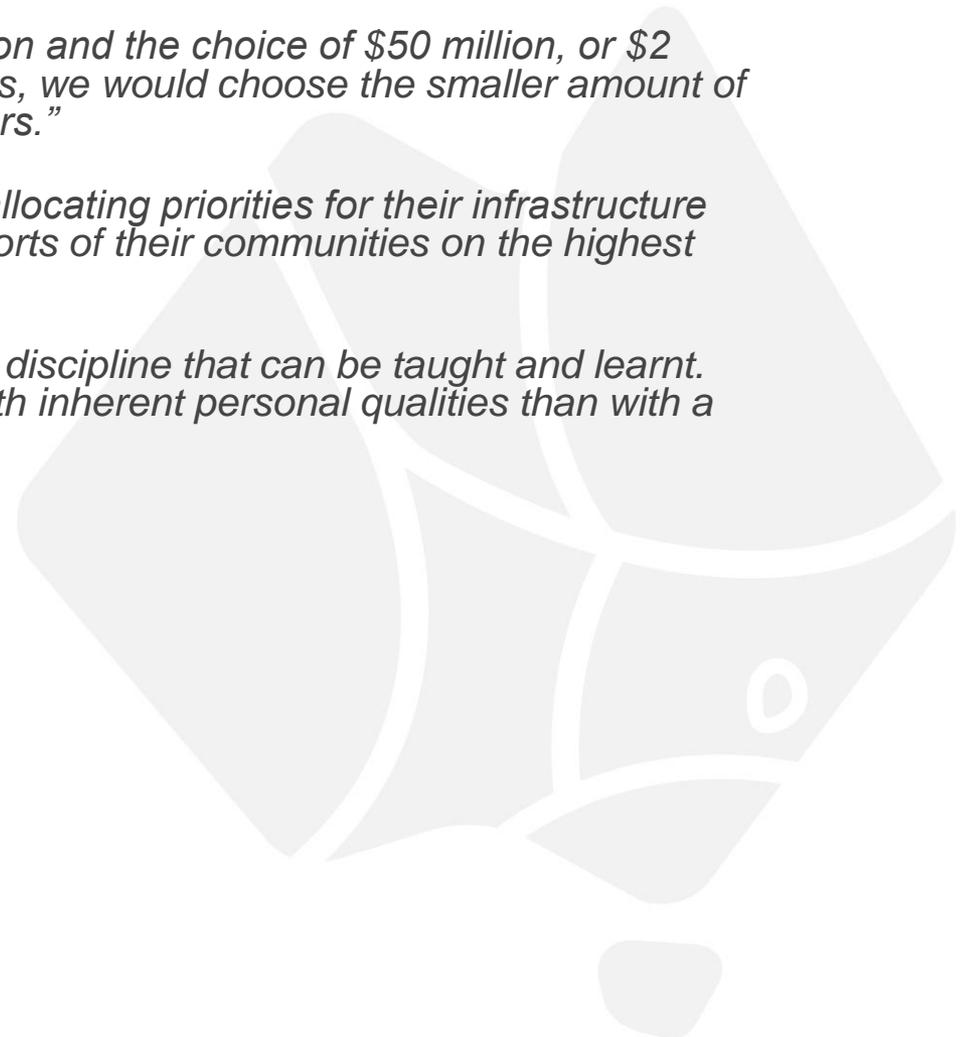
*“Given the task of rejuvenating a region and the choice of \$50 million, or \$2 million and 20 committed local leaders, we would choose the smaller amount of money and the committed local leaders.”*

*“Leaders can play a valuable role in allocating priorities for their infrastructure needs and focusing the combined efforts of their communities on the highest priorities.”*

*“Leadership is not a sacred art, it is a discipline that can be taught and learnt. Effective leadership has less to do with inherent personal qualities than with a major commitment to action.”*

Six key leadership actions:

- *Creating vision*
- *Forming a leadership team*
- *Taking symbolic actions*
- *Breaking bottlenecks*
- *Establishing tough but achievable goals*
- *Leveraging community interest*



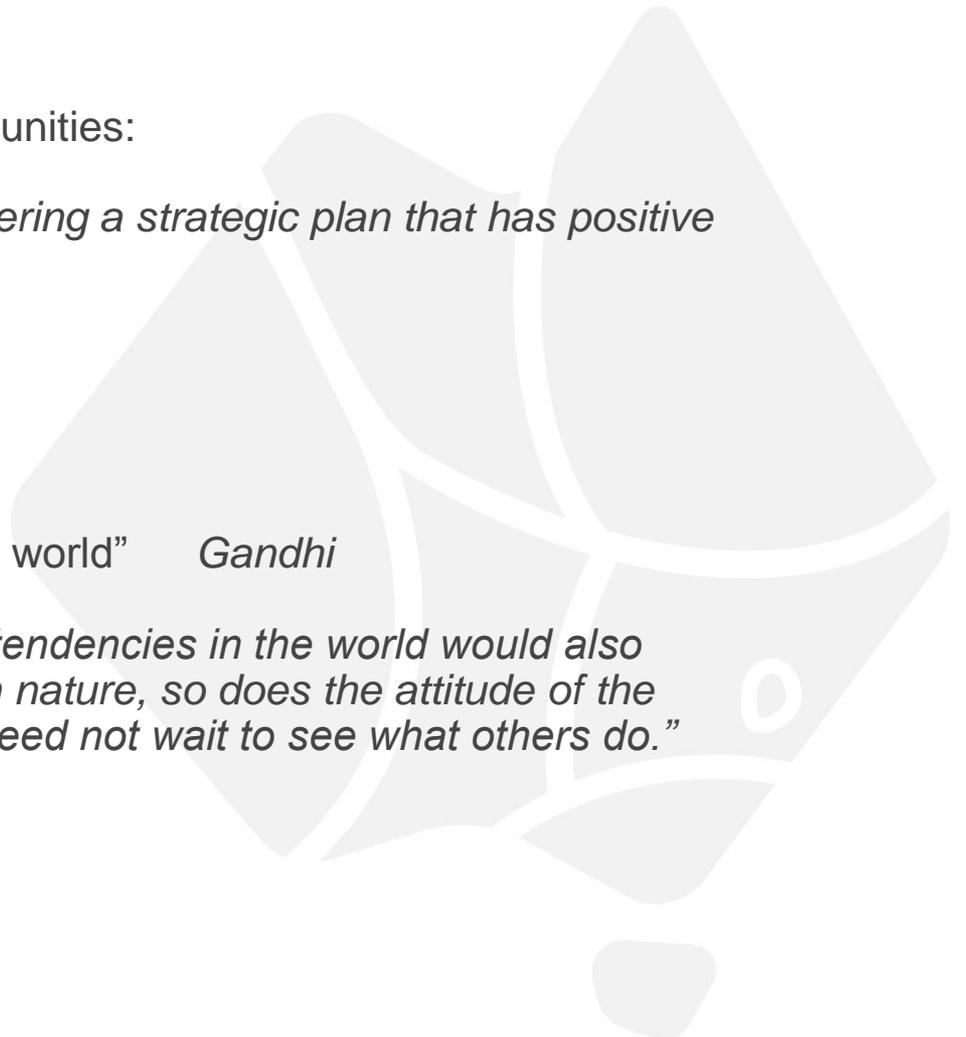
# The leadership imperative

- Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities:

*"Leadership is fundamental to delivering a strategic plan that has positive long-lasting impacts for the region."*

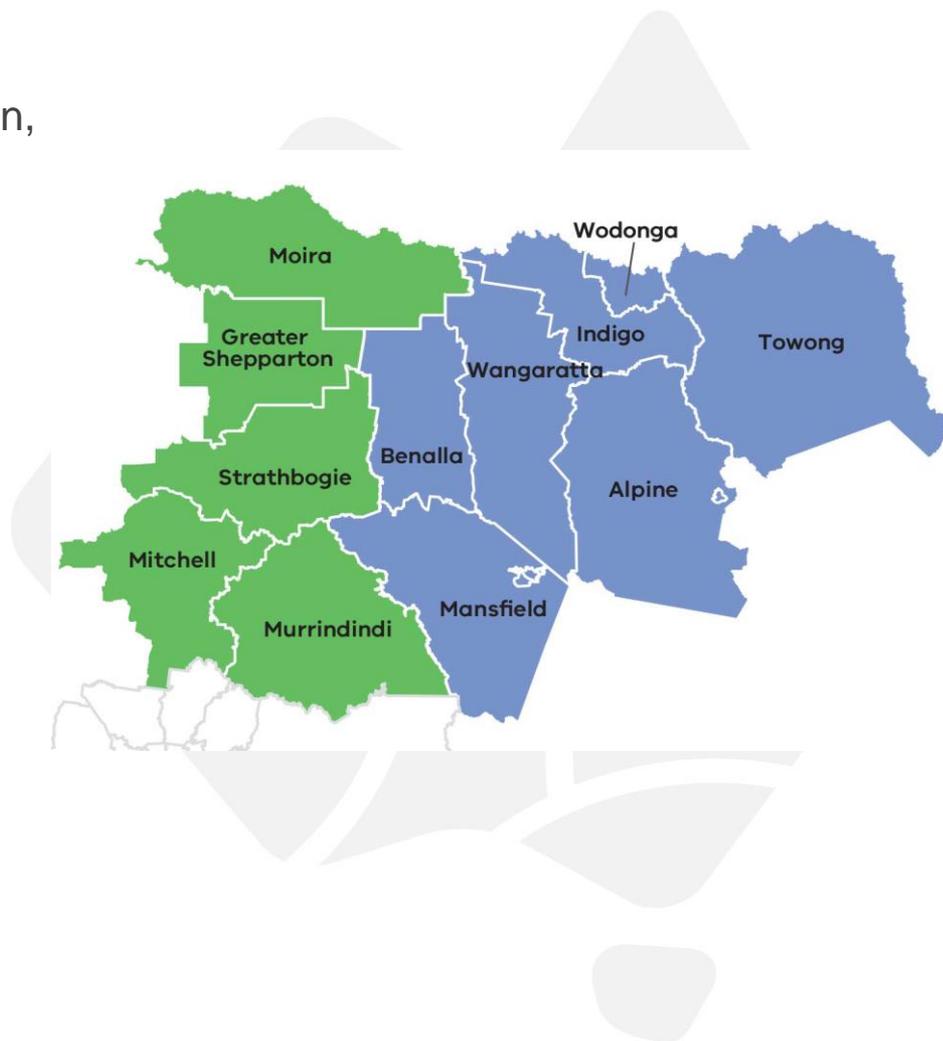
- "Be the change you want to see in the world" *Gandhi*

*"If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. ... We need not wait to see what others do."*



# The Hume region

- Includes the local government areas of Alpine, Benalla, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga
- Population – 300,000
- 114,710 jobs – approximately 20% of regional Victoria's jobs
- Top three industries by value-add – Agriculture, forestry and fishing, Manufacturing, and Health care and social assistance.
- Top three industries by employment – Health care and social assistance, Manufacturing, and Retail trade.



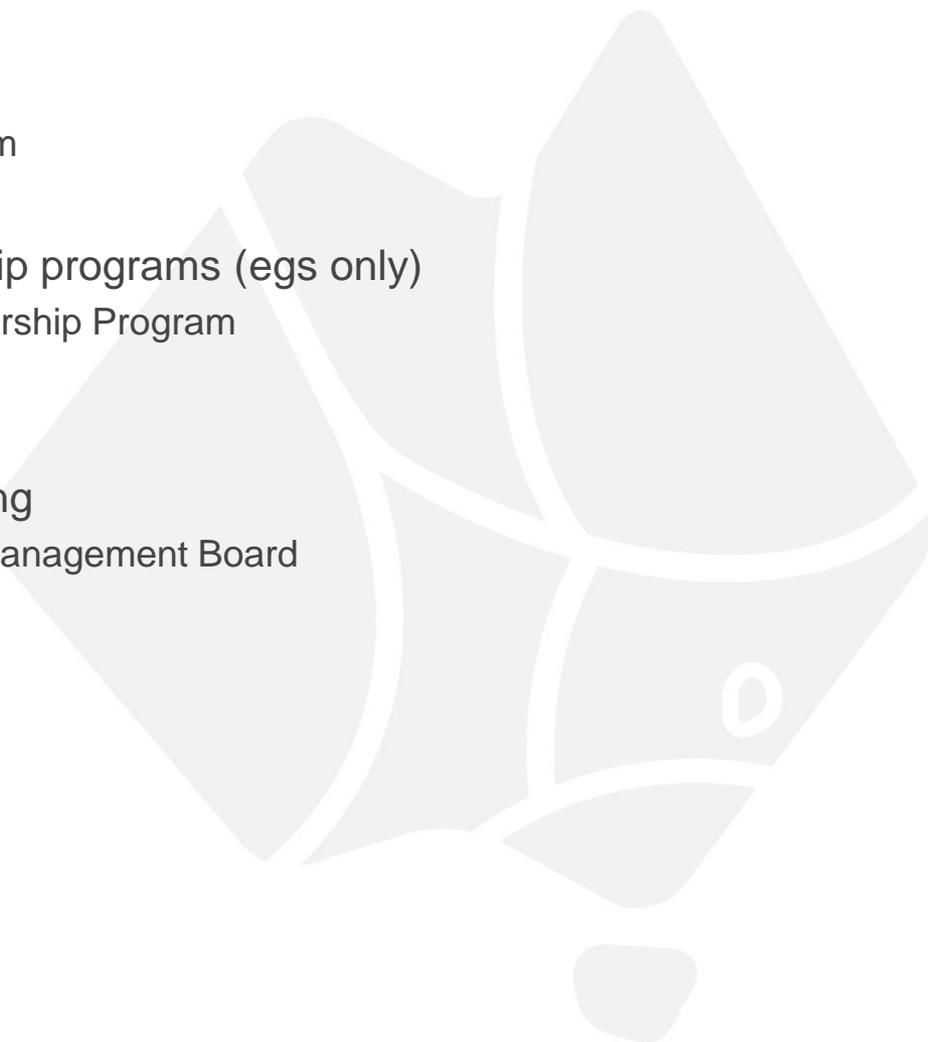
# Regional structures

- Hume Regional Development Australia (RDA)
- Regional Partnerships
  - Ovens Murray
  - Goulburn
- Hume Local Government Network
- Community led-initiatives e.g.
  - 14 sustainability groups and community renewable energy networks



# Developing leaders

- Community Leadership Programs
  - Alpine Valleys Community Leadership
  - Fairley Community Leadership Program
- Local government community leadership programs (egs only)
  - Greater Shepparton Community Leadership Program
  - Wodonga Youth Leadership Program
- Economic development capacity building
  - Local government and Alpine Resort Management Board Economic Development Officers
  - Local government CEOs
- Regional alumni
  - Australian Rural Leadership Program
  - Williamson Leadership Program
  - LG Pro Emerging Leaders



# Australian Rural Leadership Program



- Established 1992 (first course 1993)
- Over 700 graduates
- Developing leaders to influence change across organisations, across industries as a whole, and across rural communities in general
- Leaders developed to:
  - take an ethical approach
  - challenge assumptions, and
  - seek to respectfully influence change for the greater good of Australia
- Impact evaluation conducted by Deakin University (2016):
  - increased levels of self-confidence to lead
  - desire and capacity to initiate and achieve change
  - capacity to mobilise resources and networks to advocate for rural and regional Australia
  - progression into leadership positions where influence can be exercised
  - enacting the principles of values-based leadership

# Fairley Leadership Program

- Goulburn Valley Community Leadership program launched in 1997, based on the Williamson Community Leadership Program
- The Sir Andrew and Lady Fairley Foundation provided a long-term funding base for the program, and it has been known as Fairley Leadership since 1998
- Objectives:
  - Explore the major issues and opportunities for the region
  - Provide an environment for emerging leaders to develop links and understanding
  - Enable emerging leaders to meet and learn from existing leaders
  - Establish leaders as a resource of skills and influence to enrich the community



# Fairley Leadership Program

- Launch and graduation, two weekend retreats, 15 seminar days, dinners, and study tours to Melbourne and Canberra
- More than 500 graduates
- Independent evaluation found that graduates, compared to the average adult Australian, were:
  - Three times more likely to do community volunteering, and to put in twice as many hours
  - Much more likely to be involved in public speaking, lobbying, influencing, and public relations on behalf of community groups
  - More likely to have an understanding of the region and passion for the community, with confidence and skills 'to step up to the next level'



# Alpine Valleys Community Leadership



- Since 1998, Alpine Valleys Community Leadership has assisted thousands of people to develop their leadership potential through its annual program, short courses and skills workshops
- Purpose:
  - Enhance local leadership capacity
  - Offer a range of programs and workshops
  - Develop and strengthen regional community leadership networks
  - Engage and link alumni with community networks and partnership
  - Promote community conversations about regional issues
  - Enable people to make a difference and enhance their contribution to the community

# Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program

- Annual program is the flagship program – “learning by doing”:
  - Develops personal leadership skills
  - Increases knowledge of the region
  - Creates a network of professional and community contacts
- Fortnightly meetings, three retreats, study tours to Melbourne and Canberra to meet State and Federal leaders
- 417 graduates



# Shared regional leadership

- Understanding vision and strategy
  - Values-driven leadership
  - Ability to work across boundaries – connecting community, business, government for shared purpose
  - Shared view of the need to create leaders of the future
  - Ready-made and engaged consultation base – eg Hume Strategy for Sustainable Communities
  - Board members – RDA, Regional Partnerships
  - Contribution – communities, local government, regional organisations, state agencies
  - Common strategies – eg Hume Renewable Energy Roadmap
- 



The role of leaders is to create other leaders, and it is beholden on us as regional leaders to ensure that we have leader-full communities to shape our regions for the future.

