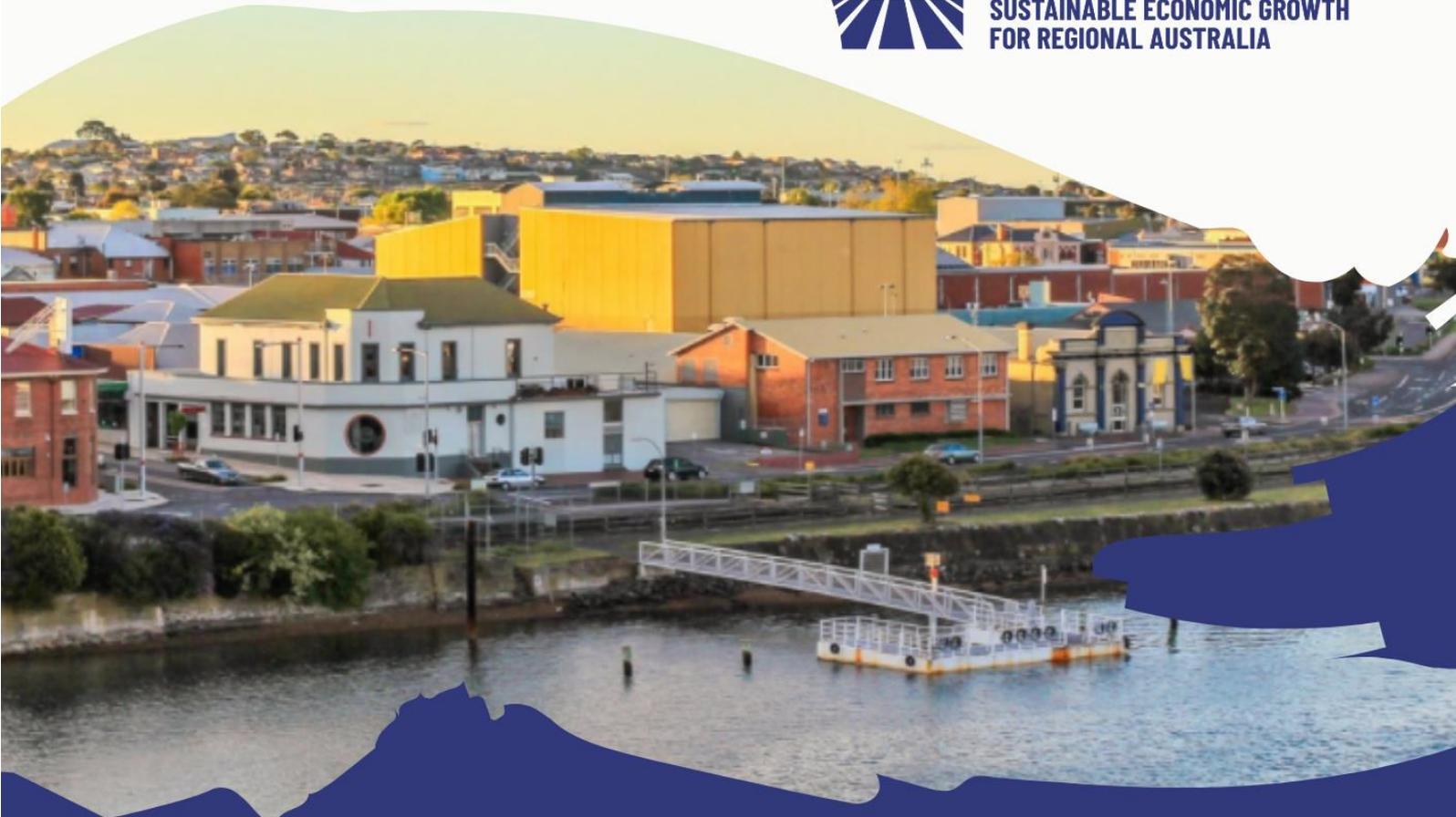




SEGRA

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH
FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA



Cradle Coast Authority SEGRA Conference

THEME AND ACTION AGENDAS

Devonport Wed 31 Aug - Fri 2 Sept 2022

**BUSINESS
EVENTS
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CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY SEGRA 2022 CONFERENCE

Theme: *Regional Activity, Transition and Sustainability*

Action Agendas

1. Regions planning for and preparing, managing, responding and leading recovery from crises

Over recent years regional Australia has experienced natural disasters that have devastated communities – their people, social fabric, businesses, infrastructure, supply chains and services. Preparing, managing and responding to these natural disasters is often led at a local level with first responders, community leaders and emergency services at the forefront of the effort.

Adapting to the changing of the climate and the increasing frequency of natural disasters in regional, rural and remote Australia will require both resilience of communities as well as rebuilding suitable infrastructure (roads, energy, communication systems etc) for future events.

Additionally, regional Australia has also been impacted by health pandemics and economic cycles. Regional, rural and remote Australia is often the most vulnerable in these cycles given their immediate connection to agricultural and commodity cycles. For the same reason regions often lead the economic recovery.

Continuing to invest in the people and places of Australia's regions will ensure regions are accessible, attractive and productive places to live and work. This is an integral part of our national economic recovery.

This action agenda will consider how we can prepare, manage, respond and lead recovery. It will include looking at the role that community development networks play in building social fabric and sustaining our regional and rural communities, The National Steering Committee is particularly seeking papers that address preparing for, acting during and recovery after emergencies, crises, natural disasters and adapting to change.

2. Celebrating and supporting volunteers

Volunteering is a tower of strength in our communities with 5.8 million Australians or 31 per cent of the population volunteering, making an estimated annual contribution of \$290 billion to our economic and social good.

Volunteering touches every section of Australian society including, but not limited to education, emergency services, sport and recreation, arts and heritage as well as social services. The far-reaching contribution volunteering makes builds strong and resilient Australian communities.

However, it must also be acknowledged that the compliance and expectations on volunteers continues to increase so too the shifting of some mainstream responsibilities onto volunteer organisations.

In many regional, rural and remote communities the number of volunteers available to administer associations, clubs, community and emergency services is dwindling and volunteer fatigue is real.

This action agenda seeks to identify regional strategies that support, attract and retain volunteers in flexible, simple and innovative governance models as well as developing not-for-profit skills and leadership to make rural, remote and regional communities safe, creative, healthy and thriving places to live and work.

3. First Nations organisations role in regional development

The recent OECD Case Study into Indigenous Economic Development identified that: strengthening the capacities of local First Nations organisations; building scale in local First Nations businesses; improving the inclusion of First Nations people in decision making; supporting remote economic development and strengthening data statistics and tools were strategies, amongst others, in linking and strengthening First Nation communities roles in regional development.

This action agenda seeks to focus on initiatives, services, policies and activities that provide the opportunity and chance for First Nations representatives to lead the way for others in achieving self-determination, impactful business and economic development as well as participation in meaningful, inclusive decision making and cross-group collaboration across all regions of Australia.

4. Protecting and valuing natural and built assets

Maintaining and building upon integrated sustainable land, water and farming practices for healthy regions continues to be a significant theme at SEGRA. Partnerships between government, industry, community and private enterprise have proved essential in collaborative management of natural resources and to ensure education, information, resourcing, research and technical support is available.

The shifting balance of power in the world has also uncovered challenges in how our regions and leaders are placed in protecting our built and natural resources (land, water, energy, minerals, food etc) and strategic assets, many of which are in rural, remote and regional Australia. Additionally how our regions can add value to the defence industry.

Sustainability involves the interaction of the environmental, economic and social actions, to meet our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability needs to be reflected in wider government and institutional arrangements for example in legislation, governance, and education.

This action agenda provides an opportunity for discussion of innovative ideas to ensure the future of our natural and built assets; their security, sustainability and productivity.

5. Attracting and retaining people in your region

Australia's regions are currently some of the safest places in the world to live and offer a wide variety of employment and business opportunities. What are the attributes that make a community in rural, regional and remote Australia attractive and what are the essential and competitive traits required to attract and retain a workforce? What are the future population demographics, infrastructure and services requirements to ensure the regions remain liveable, competitive, innovative and sustainable? And how does the development of public realm by local government (things to do and participate in after work and on weekends) support people who may be attracted by a job, but need to be confident that the lifestyle available will meet their expectations?

Access to quality affordable accommodation is a key determinant in helping attract and retain permanent and transient workforces and in some areas is creating social divide and workforce supply issues. As populations are attracted and commit to stay, the demographics and priorities of our rural, remote and regional communities will change. How will regions adapt their communication and engagement strategies in leading policy discussions and commitments?

In this action agenda the National Steering Committee are keen to explore how regions have or can attract transient and permanent populations, improve liveability as well as considering the current and future impact of people moving and visiting the regions through practical initiatives, case studies, policy positions and campaigns.

6. The role of regional, rural and remote Australia in renewables and ESG

Rural, remote and regional Australia is well placed to continue its leading role in hosting renewable energy infrastructure. There are however challenges that come with this role.

Renewable energy infrastructure in rural landscapes is a complex social and economic undertaking, renewables must be placed where they will perform best and balance any impact on amenity. Policy and legislation constraints can also hinder developing localised solutions.

Environment, Social and Governance criteria that industry and private enterprise use to determine investment decisions also plays a critical role in where renewables feature. Not only are regulations evolving around ESG governance frameworks but customer expectations for transparency and ethical partnerships are increasing.

The role of government, businesses and communities in regional Australia in influencing the social licence and governance framework is becoming increasingly clear and at SEGRA the National Steering Committee are keen to investigate how industry, private enterprise researchers and community organisations are delivering upon this framework.

7. Integration, collaboration and connectivity

Place based development as a means to develop liveable and thriving communities for our rural, regional and remote populations was at the forefront of the National Farmers Federations (NFF) Regionalisation Agenda 2021. The NFF pitched that the development of a decentralised and geographically diverse Australian economy, that is resilient to shocks and disruptions in our current economic centres must be developed by providing for liveable and vibrant local rural communities; ensuring a skilled, connected and fulfilled workforce; and providing opportunities for ongoing economic development to participate in the local, national and/or global economy.

This action agenda seeks discussion on integration, collaboration and connectivity strategies (including digital technology and working remotely considerations) that can build a rural, regional and remote Australia to attract investment and build capacity and connectivity.

8. Visitor economy

The visitor economy was Australia's fourth largest export sector before the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, the sector:

- was worth \$166 billion
- employed 660,000 people.

The visitor economy covers all visitors who travel to and within Australia for any number of reasons: holidays, visiting friends and family, business, work, education and attending events. It also engages a wide cross section of industries that provide goods and services including accommodation, food and beverage, transport, culture, arts and recreation, business event services and retail.

The visitor economy is exceptionally important to regional Australia's wellbeing and prosperity and in particular geotourism. The visitor economy provides an opportunity for rural, remote and regional communities, leaders, businesses and tourism organisations to educate visitors and tourists about both the natural environment and agri-businesses as well as help them connect with it and the authentic communities around it. THRIVE 2030 (released by AusTrade in 2021) is Australia's national strategy for the long-term sustainable growth of the visitor economy and seeks to address both short and long term challenges.

A priority in THRIVE 2030 is to grow unique and high quality visitor products and regional Australia is well placed to do this.

This action agenda is an opportunity to examine the contribution rural, remote and regional Australia can make to the visitor economy.