Executive Officer Update

We are pleased to provide the September edition of our RDA Newsletter that includes the latest information on the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF), ANZAC commemorations, the National Broadband Network (NBN) and our new strengthened partnership between South Coast NRM.

While our three applications vying for a total of $9.54m funding via the second round of the RDAF program from the City of Albany (Enhanced Village Green Community Facilities), Shire of Katanning (Upper Great Southern Regional Entertainment Centre) and Shire of Plantagenet (Sounness Park Community Recreation Development) were unsuccessful, another funding round will be available in the future.

RDA Great Southern anticipates that the third RDAF funding round will be announced shortly. After the announcement, we will hold two public information sessions to inform Local Government and potential applicants of the new guidelines and how applicants can improve their chances of success.

Recently, I attended the first WA RDA Executive Officer Network round table on the 26 to 27 July 2012 in Perth to discuss future directions of the State RDA Network. Key issues including improved linkages with the Commonwealth was an important outcome of the meeting, as well as the identification of similar cross regional issues to improve cooperation between the RDAs.

At a recent NBN information seminar I went to in Esperance, Consultant David Bartlett from Explor.com.au informed the Goldfields/Esperance community of the many benefits arising from improved information technology communications. It is exciting to see the new business opportunities arising through the Digital Economy; information that will help inform our own Digital Economy Strategy in the Great Southern.

Simon Lyas  
Executive Officer

RDA Great Southern and South Coast NRM sign MOU

RDA Great Southern and South Coast NRM have formalised their partnership for the purpose of working jointly to support the sustainable use of resources and better management of natural and social assets in the Great Southern region.

RDA Great Southern Chairman, Milton Evans said that the memorandum will maximise the effectiveness of engagement between RDA Great Southern, South Coast NRM and the community to promote and achieve sustainable development in the region.

“By working together, both RDA Great Southern and South Coast NRM aim to share resources, skill and research to maximise and deliver outcomes that will bring long term benefits to the region”, he said.

The Chair of South Coast NRM, Alex Campbell said “the MOU strengthens the linkages between both organisations and will benefit community, industry and government support for activities organised under the five major themes; Land, Biodiversity, Cultural Heritage, Coastal and Marine”.

The information will also be used by RDA Great Southern to articulate to Government what is needed in the region to address identified priorities and will form an integral part of the RDA Great Southern future operations to create an environment that supports our economy and lifestyle.

Regional Plan

The RDA Great Southern WA Regional Plan 2012-2020 will be released shortly and we have widely consulted and sought expert opinion on different sections of the plan. Preparation of the Plan is well advanced but we value any further input from interested parties into what they believe are the key issues facing the region. This high level document identifies
the key opportunities, initiatives and projects that is important to the region over the next eight years.

As a ‘living’ document, the Plan can be updated as needed and will assist both RDA Great Southern and South Coast NRM in its operations to support Great Southern communities to plan and leverage funds in the future.

For access to a copy of the Plan please contact our office on (08) 9842 5800 or admin@rdagreatsouthern.com.au.

ANZAC Commemoration Funding

Australia’s colonial and military history is set to be preserved with funding commitments of $14.54 million now confirmed from the Federal and State Governments to retell the story of the ANZACS that left Albany to defend the country.

The Centenary of ANZAC will be the first major national event to commemorate the troops from 1914, and through the provision of this funding, there is scope for Great Southern businesses to participate in the infrastructure build and over time is expected to add value to both local communities and the tourism industry.

The multi-million dollar commitment will be used to create a world-class facility through the provision of restoration works, improved public access and infrastructure, including revitalisation of the Avenue of Honour, improved area around the Desert Mounted Corps memorial and construction of a new ANZAC Interpretive Centre in early 2013 at the top of Mt Clarence.

Albany Centenary of ANZAC Alliance Chair Peter Aspinall said that funding would be made available immediately and serves to create a historic monument that would last for hundreds of years.

“All over Europe and America they have memorials 400,500, 800 years old, so why shouldn’t we have one”, he said.

“Unlike any other location in Australia, Albany has been special in creating the sense of mateship between WA, Eastern States and New Zealand troops to provide the foundations for the close military affiliation present today”.

Premier of WA, Colin Barnett, revealed on the 16 August that the Department of Premier of Cabinet, along with the Alliance, would create and lead a specially formed task force to plan and coordinate events during the ANZAC centenary commemoration.

The Alliance will include representatives from Federal and State Government Departments, RSL members and the City of Albany.

Great Southern Digital Economy & NBN

RDA Great Southern is currently working with the WA Government’s Department of Commerce and the Great Southern Development Commission in progressing the Digital Economy and uptake of new Information Communication Technology, including NBN, in the Great Southern.

The Department of Commerce’s Digital Economy Branch has developed tools and provided guidance to enable industries and communities in the Great Southern to map out its logical digital pathway and assist residents to be prepared for the benefits arising from the digital future over the next 30 years.

RDA Great Southern sees this as a key investment opportunity that will lead to substantial changes to our economy and lifestyle in the future.

Interested Great Southern members representing business, industry or community (including Local Government) sectors of the region wishing to register their interest in the development of this project can contact our Project Officer, Pene Cuthbert, from the RDA Office on (08) 9842 5800.

Taste Spring – 30 September & Bloom Festival

A number of the region’s top culinary products will be showcased at the annual Taste Spring Food and Wine Festival this year through providing a smorgasbord of premium wine and food in the Great Southern in the one vineyard on the 30 September.

Willoughby Park Winery and Boston Brewery will showcase 20 wineries and one brewery, local produce, interactive cooking demonstrations and loads of entertainment from 12 to 6pm.

See www.greatsoutherntastewa.com or call the Denmark Visitors Centre on (08) 9848 2055 for further information.

The Hidden Treasures Great Southern Bloom Festival will showcase local talent and products on the 16 September to 24 October and will celebrate wildflowers, gardening, spring, Year of the Farmer and food in a fun-filled family event.
Further information on events, products and tourism businesses featured can be found through contacting the Bloom Festival Coordinator, Karen Birdseye on (08) 9842 8434 or Karen.birdseye@bigpond.com.

RDA Great Southern has provided $2,000 in sponsorship to support the Taste Spring and Bloom Festivals.

For any information surrounding employment or training needs for your organisation, please contact Geoff, from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace relations at the RDA Albany office on geoff.belz@deewr.gov.au.

Katanning Supertowns and Saleyards Projects

The Final Copy of the Katanning Growth and Implementation Plan has been recently completed and is available from the Shire of Katanning’s website www.katanning.wa.gov.au. The initiative will provide better community facilities and assist the town to accommodate new investment and residents in the future.

The Plan identifies a number of potential employment growth drivers including:

- The development of a gold mine at Jinkas with further scoping anticipated in 2013;
- Development of an agrifood precinct capitalising on the new Sheep Saleyards Facility under construction through the RDAF (Round 1) to create an employment increase of around 300 people;
- Development of a Migrant Transition Centre or prison;
- Utilising the NBN hub located at Katanning and servicing the South West of the State;
- Developing a Regional Health Campus; and
- Capitalising on multiculturalism and boosting tourism.

MEGT is the largest Apprenticeship Centre in Australia and with the Albany branch has over 60 businesses nationwide. Contracted by the Federal Government, the organisation provides a free service to industry employers, apprentices and trainees to assist with the sign-up of new apprentices, administration and program management.

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New MEGT Australian Apprenticeships Centre

Around 40 business representatives from around Albany gathered on 10 August 2012 to officially welcome the MEGT Australian Apprenticeships Centre to the region at its new Peels Place office.

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The majority of successful businesses delivering services on the project have come from the Great Southern including Katanning, Gnowangerup and Albany. Katanning Shire CEO and Project Manager Dean Taylor and Shire President Cr Richard Kowald led a guided tour where guests could see the enormous size of the build first hand.

Keeping the build mainly local has been important to local employment prospects, with 35 positions created on site during construction. The project has provided opportunities from the Katanning Senior High School to develop skills through the structured workplace learning program.

New Funding Programs and Initiatives

Commercialisation Australia Grants
Commercialisation Australia Grants, an initiative of the Australian Government offers competitive merit-based assistance through a range of funding and networking mentoring options to assist the various stages of commercialisation that are on offer. Please see www.commercialisationaustralia.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx for the full range of grants available.

Innovation Vouchers Program
The Innovation Centre WA, an initiative of the WA Department of Commerce, provides up to $20,000 to support small businesses to overcome some of the barriers that exist on the path of commercialisation. Funding can be used towards accessing professional skills, services or knowledge to advance your idea or commercial activity in WA. Please see www.innovation.wa.gov.au for further information.

Researchers in Business Grant
The Australian Government program co-funds the placement of researchers from universities or public research agencies into businesses, to help develop and implement new ideas with commercial potential. Funding of up to 50% of salary costs, to a maximum of $50,000, for each placement between 2 and 12 months is available. See www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au/services/pages/researchersinbusinessgrant.aspx for full details.

RIRDC Rural Women’s Award
The Corporation rewards outstanding achievement by women in the primary industry sector, whether you work in broadacre farming or intensive livestock, cropping, horticulture, fisheries, forestry, natural resource management or related service industries. Entries close 15 October 2012 and details of how to enter can be viewed at www.ruralwomensaward.gov.au/Howtoenter.htm.

Sidney Myer Fund - Poverty and Disadvantage Small Grants Program
The Sidney Myer Fund’s Poverty and Disadvantage Program provides funds up to $50,000 to small and charitable projects that alleviate the negative effects of poverty and disadvantage in rural and regional communities. Priority projects include; meeting the needs of the community, experiencing social and economic exclusion and youth from impoverished backgrounds. Further information is available from www.myerfoundation.org.au/programs or contact Sarah Hardy from the Fund about project eligibility via enquiries@myerfoundation.org.au.

Sport Incentive Program
The Australian Sports Foundation (ASF) enables sporting groups, schools, governments and not-for-profit organisations to register projects as a deductible gift recipient to collect donations and receive discretionary grants using the Foundation’s tax deductible status. Projects eligible must be aim to increase opportunities in sports participation through; facility development or feasibility study, equipment, team travel, hosting a major sporting event or sport development. For further information and an application pack please visit www.asf.org.au/how_register/apply or contact the ASF’s Project Officer, Dale Bertram on (02) 6214 7868.

Tourism Industry Regional Development $48.5m Fund
The Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund will provide matching funding of up to $250,000 to support tourism industry development projects in regional Australia. Projects that align with Tourism 2020 and have community benefits that stimulate private sector investment and assist in the attraction and retention of tourists to regional areas will be targeted. Initial details about the Fund can be viewed at www.treasurer.gov.au/wmsDisplayDocs.aspx?doc=pressreleases/2012/049.htm&pageID=003&min=wms&Year=&DocType=0

To access details of grant opportunities visit our website at www.RDAgreatsouthern.com.au

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