

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

WORKPLAN TASK 1

Regional Engagement Report:
**Improving the engagement of
regional communities**



**Response Prepared by:
Area Consultative Committee Tasmania**

August 2008

REPORTING TEMPLATE 1

Regional Engagement Report – Work Plan Item 1: Due 31 August 2008

TASMANIA

1. CONTEXT

1. Brief “snapshot” of the region

As of June 2008, the Tasmanian population has reached a record level of 495,772. Tasmania currently has the second highest median age of all states and territories behind South Australia. Given the tendency for young people to leave the State and an under-representation of women of child-bearing age, Tasmania has aged faster than the other jurisdictions in recent years and is likely to overtake South Australia as the jurisdiction with the oldest population in the near future. (source: http://www.iris.tas.gov.au/activity_economics/population_demographics/outlook)

While population ageing will present numerous challenges for Australia over the coming years, there are several reasons why demographic change is a more urgent issue for Tasmania than for other states and territories.

- Tasmania is ageing more rapidly than any other jurisdiction and is expected to have the oldest population by the end of 2007.
- Tasmania already has the lowest labour force participation rate of any jurisdiction and so is more vulnerable to a future decline in participation due to ageing.
- Tasmania’s labour productivity rate, which is a key driver of economic growth, has been below the national average.

(source: <http://www.dcac.tas.gov.au/>)

Within Tasmania there are 29 local Government areas, three regions (North, North West, South), and the majority of towns with populations of less than 5000. Nearly 60% of the Tasmanian population lives outside the capital city statistical division, making Tasmania the most decentralised state in Australia.

The main industries, in relation to number of employees, across Tasmania include education, food services, State government administration, health services and retail. In addition, agriculture/fishing/forestry, manufacturing and construction play a significant role in Tasmania’s economy.

The Tasmanian demographic and social context includes a changing population through the relocation of people to and from the mainland. It also includes an ageing population, and relatively low income, training and employment levels. Some demographic challenges facing Tasmania include the following:

- At June 2005 Tasmania’s median age was 37.8 years. This is 2.1 years higher than the Australian median age;
- The proportion of people aged over 65 and over 85 in the population has increased significantly. 43% of Tasmanian electors are aged over 50 years;

- There has been a significant reduction in the proportion of under 15 year olds over the past decade;
- Approximately 43.9% of the workforce has not completed Year 12, compared with the National average of 33.5%;
- Tasmania's workforce was 222,100 people in December 2006, with the labour force participation rate at 60%. This is an increase of 0.9% since 2001. The national rate at December 2006 was 64.5%. (*ACCT Strategic Regional Plan 2007-2010*)

These issues represent significant challenges in terms of community infrastructure, sustainability and economic growth for remote residents, small towns, local government areas, cities, regional areas and as an entire State as Tasmania seeks to retain and sustain its people in healthy, liveable communities.

As summary of the Tasmanian economy is:

(source: ABS 1307.6 - Tasmanian State and Regional Indicators, Jun 2008)

Mining

In 2005-06 total mineral commodities were worth \$1,011.0 million compared to \$577.0 million in 2001-02. In the previous twelve months, mineral production increased by 43.2%, up from \$706.0 million. The most substantial increase was in metallic mineral production, which reported a 47.0% increase from the previous year, increasing from \$634.0 million in 2004-05 to \$932.0 million in 2005-06.

Retail Turnover

In 2006-07, the value of retail turnover in Tasmania was \$4,828.3 million. This represented an increase of 3.6% from the previous year, and an increase of 32.4% over the last 5 years. Food retailing industry contributed \$1,945.9 million of the total value of retail turnover (40.3%), followed by household good retailing \$840.2 million (17.4%) and hospitality and service industries \$510.4 million (10.6%).

Tourist Accommodation

Guest arrivals peaked in 2004 with 1.3 million persons, and have remained relatively stable ever since. Takings from accommodation establishments have increased 45.9% over the 5 year period 2002 to 2006. In 2006, takings were \$170.8 million, compared to \$117.1 million in 2002, with the average taking per room per night \$124.80 in 2006 compared to \$100.37 in 2002.

Building and Construction

In 2006-07, the number of dwelling units approved for construction recorded an increase for the first time in three years. Total approvals numbered 2,848, an increase of 8.2% from the 2005-06 total of 2,633. This increase was mostly in new house approvals which were up by 10.1% (2,507) from the 2005-06 figure of 2,276.

The private sector accounted for over 90.0% of the value of all building work done in 2006-07. Over half of this was from residential building of new houses. Less than 2.0% of the value of public sector residential building was invested in new houses.

The total value of engineering construction work done in Tasmania in 2006-07 was \$885.8 million, an increase of 3.7% from the previous year. In 2006-07, 48.7% of all engineering construction work was carried out by the private sector (\$431.4 million). Electricity generation, transmission and pipelines represented 40.1% of the total value of engineering construction work (38.1% of the private sector and 41.9% of the public sector) followed by roads, highways and subdivisions 20.9% (10.0% of the private sector and 31.1% of the public sector) and telecommunications 14.9% (24.4% of the private sector and 5.8% of the public sector). Heavy industry accounted for

only 7% of the total value of engineering construction work done in Tasmania in 2006-07.

Rateable Land Use

Tasmania has a total land area of 6,840,000 hectares. As at November 2007, the total rateable land use area in Tasmania was 4,164,353 hectares (ha), or 60.8% of total land. Primary production accounted for 3,678,107 ha or 88.3% of this land, 193,957 ha was residential (4.7%), 123,082 ha was used for sporting facilities and recreation (3.0%) and 100,989 ha was vacant land (2.4%). Industrial land accounted for only 0.2% of the total rateable land use area. (Source: Information and Land Services, DPIW).

Business Counts

At June 2006 there were 15,012 (41.0%) employing and 21,582 (59.0%) non-employing businesses operating in Tasmania. The majority of employing businesses, 8,088 (53.9%) employed less than four employees with 5,058 (33.7%) businesses employing 5 to 19 employees. 1,266 businesses (8.4%) employed 20 to 49 employees while only 600 businesses (4.0%) had 50 or more employees.

2. Summary of existing activities and plans

The primary focus of Area Consultative Committee Tasmania is to encourage and assist community, business and government to access government programmes, particularly focusing on the economic, social and environmental profile of Tasmania.

ACC Tasmania Strategic Regional Plan identifies the following regional priorities for Tasmania:

Improved infrastructure and services within local communities by

- developing projects that can address inadequacies and the sharing of local community infrastructure and services;
- developing infrastructure for young people, the ageing and Indigenous communities;
- developing improved health and well-being services.

Increased downstream processing, value adding, innovation and access to niche markets

- for environmentally sustainable projects that directly relate to value adding within Tasmania's Agrifood industries (i.e. agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture).
- for the expansion of business opportunities which can demonstrate downstream processing, value adding, innovation, and access to niche markets (where this does not result in competitive advantage).

Labour market initiatives, including job creation, skill development, industry and enterprise changes

- to assist the attraction of business investment which strengthens the local economy (with a particular focus on reducing barriers to employment in small communities) and contributes to sustainable job creation and employment-related skill development.

Access to regional transport services and infrastructure

- that improve the utilisation of existing community transport infrastructure, and services that enhance social participation and increased access to employment, thereby encouraging economic growth.

We do not have formal relationships with other organisations; however, we have very strong informal relationships with like organisation that support a consistent purpose. For example, very strong relationships with the Tasmanian Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Our membership also includes 'associate members' from organisation such as the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and The Department of Economic Development and Tourism.

We consider the transition to Regional development Australia an opportunity to formalise some of these relationships and strengthen our ties. For example, with a formal relationship with the Department of Economic Development, both the State and Federal Governments could have, using the RDA, worked through the recent events at Scottsdale (sawmill closure and significant job losses). We are aware that the Department of Economic Development are very committed to working with RDA Tasmania as soon as our new role is defined. We also have considerable support within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

3. Partnerships

Committee Member/Staff Member	Name of External Organisation/Committee/Board/etc
<p>Dr Tim Cory - Chairman and member of the Executive. A member of the Interim RDA Board.</p>	<p>Tim has held numerous senior Executive positions in the Global Corporate World (IBM Corporation & Mobil Oil Corporation) in Europe, Africa and Asia in Information Technology, Marketing, Engineering and General Management before coming to Tasmania in 2003.</p> <p>Since then he has become an elected member of George Town Council, the President of George Town Chamber of Commerce (building the Chamber from 32 members to its current 135), President of Port Dalrymple School P&F, Chairman of GT Sports Council, Chairman of George Town Safety & Security Committee, Chairman of George Town on Show Festival, Chairman of George Town Access Committee, President of George Town Junior Soccer Club, and Curator, and Director of Marketing & Public Affairs at the Bass & Flinders Museum in George Town.</p> <p>Tim was also Chairman of the ACCT/TCCI sponsored Skills Shortage Strategy Study, is a Director of the Community Alliance and is the publisher of the "What, When, Where" book for George Town.</p> <p>Tim had a Doctorate in Engineering (specialising in micro hydraulics) and a Bachelor of Arts in Media & Public Affairs.</p>
<p>Lou Clark - Deputy Chair and member of the Executive</p>	<p>Lou is the Executive Officer of the Launceston Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is an independent organisation with over 300 member businesses and individuals with the '63' telephone region (Northern Tasmania). The Chamber's mission is to promote economic and social well being of the region. Contact in this role is with business, all levels of government and community stakeholders. Lou has Bachelor of Law from University of Tasmania and has been appointed as a practitioner</p>

	<p>of the supreme court of Tasmania. Lou also has 14 years experience with WIN Television in media, sales, advertising and marketing in Tasmania and still maintains very strong media relationship.</p> <p>Lou is a member of Tamar Sunrise Rotary club (current secretary and past president). Lou is also the current chair of the Rotary District 9830 (Tas) publicity Committee</p> <p>Lou as been on the Launceston Festivale Committee Inc., one of Tasmania's premier food and wine events, since 2000 and is the current chair of the committee.</p> <p>Lou is also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a member of the Australian Marketing Institute (certified practising market CPM and fellow of AMI). • A board member of Cityprom (a Launceston business promotional body) • Members of Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry small business policy committee
<p>Geoff Fader - Finance Director member of the Executive</p>	<p>Geoff has a breadth of experience in the private sector with a strong focus on strategic management and marketing, plus some 30 years holding high-level positions in numerous vocational education and training organisations at both state and national level.</p> <p>Geoff was a founding member of The Tasmania Committee, is Chair of Tasmanian Shipping Supplies (ships provedores) and Group Training Australia – Tasmania Inc. and Vice President of the Council on the Aging – Tasmania.</p> <p>Geoff has recently been elected Chair of the Council of Small Business Associations in Tasmania.</p>
<p>Gil Sawford - member of the Executive</p>	<p>Gil is a business consultant, coach and facilitator assisting groups and individuals achieve their objectives. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree, has 12 years of consulting experience and 15 years as a manager in career and employment services. Currently Human Resources Coordinator for Wise Lord and Ferguson, his work focuses on building desirable futures for communities, organizations and individuals. He developed the Right placement process that focuses on the strategic match and alignment between an organisation's business direction and the career goals of its people.</p>
<p>Michael Gordon</p>	<p>Michael, who is one of the founding Directors of a management consultancy company – PDF Management Services Pty Ltd. The company was established in 1999 and undertakes a range of planning, evaluation, resource development, training and business development projects for all levels of government and the community and private sectors. The company philosophy of 'can do' and making the impossible probable is reflected in the name PDF (Pigs Do Fly).</p> <p>Michael is active in managing a 1,400 property at Tea Tree with his mum, where a lifelong interest in horses means that there are nearly as many horses on the place as there are sheep. Michael's other work and life experiences include 14 years working for fire services in Tasmania and South Australia; owning and operating a country newsagency and</p>

	<p>supermarket; owning and operating a travel agency and limousine business; and working for eight years as the Training and Employment Manager for a Hobart based community organisation, Colony 47.</p> <p>He has also held a number of community roles including the State and National President positions for the Rural Youth Organisation and a past executive member of the Agfest Organising Committee. Michael has qualifications in business, human resource development and the Antarctic and southern oceans.</p>
Shandell Elmer - member of the Executive	<p>Shandell is a lecturer in the University Department of Rural Health based in Launceston. In addition to her research projects, she is also involved in the teaching of nursing students. Shandell has a keen interest in fostering the development of community-based health services in accordance with primary health care principles. She has been able to pursue a career in this area through her work with organisations contracted to conduct reviews utilising standards developed by the Quality Improvement Council.</p> <p>Shandell has established strong networks with community-based organisations and within the health sector. She is keenly interested in community participation processes and is undertaking a PhD in this area. Shandell enjoys the challenge of combining study and work with looking after her young family.</p>
Rod Tremayne - member of the Executive	<p>Rod is General Manager of The Advocate Newspaper in north-west and western Tasmania since September 2006. The Advocate is part of the Fairfax Media Group, Australasia's largest integrated metropolitan, regional and rural print, online and digital media business.</p> <p>Previously Accounting and Special Projects Manager, Tasmania for Rural Press Limited. Position involved working with two Tasmanian newspapers, The Advocate and The Examiner, with responsibility for financial and accounting functions as well as undertaking feasibility analysis for identified projects.</p> <p>He has worked in both radio (8 years) and newspapers (18 years), including as Accounting Manager at The Canberra Times – between 2002 and 2003.</p> <p>Rod was Chief Accountant and Company Secretary for The Examiner between 1991 and 2002.</p> <p>Prior to rejoining Rural Press (now part of the Fairfax Group) he was the Development Services Manager at the Meander Valley Council, managing economic development, planning, building control, tourism and natural resources.</p>
Julie Sharman	<p>Julie is an ex-dairy farmer having supplied winter milk to Lactos for 5 years and has previously grown potatoes for McCains and Poppies for Glaxo.</p> <p>Currently Julie runs beef cattle on her property at Rocky Cape and also grows raspberries for the summer market.</p>

Ross Giles	<p>Ross is a West Coaster with great pride in the region and a desire to assist in its future economic growth. He is General Manager of Schulze Engineering and Building Services in Queenstown. The company has a strong training focus, employing local young people in traineeships and apprenticeships to build and maintain a range of heavy equipment used in the mining industry.</p> <p>Ross is also an elected member of the West Coast Council.</p>
Ally Mercer	<p>Ally represents North East Tasmania and has links to community through many groups (Scottsdale Tennis Club, Scottsdale Choir North East Tasmania Tourism, Trail of the Tin Dragon Steering Committee, North East EcoCentre Inc Management Group, Derby History Group, Scottsdale History Group, Ringarooma History Group Derby Community Development Group, North East Chamber of Commerce (through Council))</p> <p>Ally also participates in the regions development through association with the Dorset Economic Development Group, Gladstone Future Group (community progress group), Bridport Strategic Vision group North East Education Profile and Springfield Hall.</p>
Simon Boughey	<p>Simon is currently Senior Adviser to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water in Tasmania, prior to which he managed the promotion, communication, marketing implementation and community partnerships area of Tasmania Together, a community vision and plan for Tasmania to 2020.</p> <p>Simon is a board member of the Alcorso Foundation which is a philanthropic organisation that provides funding for arts, environment and social justice programs in Tasmania.</p> <p>Simon holds a BA in Geography and Psychology, a Graduate Diploma of Recreation Planning Natural Resources Management and Graduate Diploma with Honours in Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies was the National President of Greening Australia from 2000 to 2003 and has been involved in community and regional development since 1982.</p> <p>Simon provides a good link into other State government ministers and agencies in relation to community, local and regional development issues and funding programs.</p>
Bob Frost	<p>Bob represents the Huon region and is a member of Franklin Township Development committee and Franklin Progress Association.</p> <p>Bob also has strong relationships with the Huon Valley Council and staff as well as with the State Department of Economic Development and Tourism through the minister and her staff</p> <p>Past Advisor to Huon Eldercare (Franklin) and the MS Society Hobart.</p>

<p>Craig Perkins (CEO) and member of the EORG</p>	<p>Craig has been with the ACC for 4 years (3 as a project officer and 1 as the organisation Chief Executive Office).</p> <p>Craig has strong networks within the Tasmanian government (State and Local) as well with business and industry and community sectors.</p> <p>He is a member of Rotary, chairman of his children’s school board and active in sport.</p> <p>Craig has a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing and International Business) from the University of Tasmania as well a Master of Business Management from Monash University.</p> <p>Craig is a 2008 participant in the Tasmanian Leaders Program.</p>
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4. Summary of consultation strategy

Our consultation process included the following:

- Four externally-facilitated forums/workshops in the major regional areas of the State - in Burnie (North West), Launceston (North/North East), and two in Hobart (South Metro, South Regional).

The five-hour workshops were held on July 24, 25, 29 and 30.

In addition participants were asked to complete a survey on the Role of RDA, and the principles and priorities of a new community infrastructure funding program. The responses in relation to the role of RDA have been collated and are attached to this report, and summarised in Section 2 of this Work Plan.

The responses addressing a new funding program will be detailed and analysed as part of Work Plan 2 and 3. The number of participants at the workshops averaged 30.

- Two internally-facilitated regional meetings – in St Helens (East Coast) with 10 attendees, and Queenstown (West Coast) which received 9 attendees.

These forums were conducted on August 5th and 18th, respectively. These meetings focused on the role of Regional Development Australia and the Principles and Priorities of a new community infrastructure funding program.

A summary of the responses in relation to the role of RDA is provided in section 2 of this Work Plan. Participants’ responses regarding the new funding program will be included in Work Plan 2 and 3.

Lists of attendees at each of the forums and regional meetings are attached to this Work Plan.

- Face-to-face meetings with individual local government, regional development body and state agency representatives, conducted May-August.
- On-line survey conducted during August on the ACCT Website, focusing on the key questions outlined in “Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program Discussion Paper - Preparing A Response to RDA Work Plan Task

2". The outcomes of this survey will be reported in Work Plan 2 and 3, in October.

- DITRDLG Regional Office meetings to garner the views of the regional office and their experience and thoughts on what has worked in the past and what they expect the needs of the Tasmanian community are.

Evidence and details of all consultations are attached to this report. A list of attendees is included in appendix 1.

Consultation Forums: Summary

During each of the community consultation forums, participants were consistently asked to be mindful of the purpose for which they were participating. This purpose was to establish how they could be:

...working with RDA and the Australian Government to develop opportunities for Regional Communities.

With this purpose considered by all participants during all forums, we believe that we have received meaningful feedback and insight from a strong community representation regarding the role of RDA in Tasmania, and how the Government can best work with the community in creating and developing opportunities.

In the four externally facilitated forums held around the state of Tasmania, the facilitator asked participants to work predominantly in small groups, with occasional times of whole group discussion and input. The basic framework of these forums was as follows:

- Participants publically recorded their desired outcomes from the consultative process;
- Participants discussed and grouped their three wishes for Tasmania as a region in the future;
- Participants reflected upon past Federal Government funded projects / initiatives that had been successful and recorded common success factors;
- Participants looked at potential change factors that would affect Tasmania in the future and then recorded needs and opportunities associated with a range of identified priorities for the region; and
- Groups then discussed and selected three potential strategies for each of the priorities.

The common themes emerging in relation to these topics are summarised below.

Emerging Themes

Desired Outcomes:

Participants in the forums discussed and recorded a series of desired outcomes they wished to result from their involvement. Common themes relating to their expectations included:

- Participants want to provide advice on a funding program, and be heard by Government
- A new program should be
 - Needs-based;
 - Provide on-ground support;
 - Clear and well-directed/targeted;
 - Avoid duplication;
 - Encouraging of governments, agencies, organisations and communities working together; and

- Simple and transparent in its assessment process.
- Participants require a clarity in linking opportunities between community and Government
- Participants want to advocate regional and community differences and therefore avoid a 'one size fits all' approach to regional development

Wishes for Tasmania as a Region:

Common themes emerging from participants across all of the forums included:

- A desire to have stronger alignment, links and common purpose within and between the three tiers of government
- Increased economic growth and community infrastructure
- Clear pathways to flexible funding programs
- Cooperative, rather than competitive, approaches to regional development
- Increased access to skills and education/training opportunities
- Liveable, sustainable, healthy and engaged communities
- Environmental sustainability and increased clean-green education

Success Factors of Past Government-Funded Projects:

The majority of forum participants had had significant involvement in one or more government funding program, and had either been an instigator, applicant, or beneficiary of Commonwealth funding.

There were several key success factors relating to what made a 'good' project in a community, and whilst it is difficult to capture the enthusiasm exhibited during the discussions on paper, it was evident that the participants had gained, or witnessed, a great deal of community pride and increased capacity as a result of the respective projects and their outcomes.

Common factors of successful, government funded projects included:

- Community ownership and engagement;
- Appropriate partnerships;
- Achievable outputs *and* outcomes;
- Well-planned, viable and sustainable projects; and
- Support in working through the project development and funding application process.

There was also a strong message that there was a role for RDA in delivering the following in relation to a Federal funding program:

- Project development support
- Partner links
- Application guidance; and
- Application assessment

Priorities for Tasmania in Regional Development

The priority issues identified at each forum are listed below.

<p><u>Launceston</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population • Youth • Governance – 3 tiers • Infrastructure and Investment • Energy • Education/Skills 	<p><u>Burnie</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurism • Social-Lifestyle – inclusion • Water and Environment • Community Infrastructure • Government Policy – Regional and 3 tiers • Education and Training
<p><u>Hobart – Metro</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Transport – inclusion • Energy/Water/Climate Change • New Business Opportunities • Skills and Learning • Health • Communications • Community Infrastructure • Regional Coordination and Cooperation 	<p><u>Hobart – Rural</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Engagement / Social Community • Transport • Investment • Environment/Climate Change • Community Infrastructure • Employment – Skills • Water

The common Priorities across all four forums included:

- Skills / Education / Learning
- Energy / Climate Change / Water
- Investment and business opportunities
- Community engagement and inclusion
- Community Infrastructure

Strategies Aligned with RDA and the Australian Government

A complete record of all strategies identified by forum participants is attached in appendix 2. The following strategies emerged as key themes during the forums, and were seen by participants as being associated with RDA and the Australian Government.

SKILLS / EDUCATION / LEARNING

- RDA to assist in the delivery of medical/health infrastructure funding to recruit and retain health professionals
- Develop a strategy for a local trades/skills area including an assessment of skills required based on regional industries, and identified potential training bodies.

ENERGY / CLIMATE CHANGE / WATER

- RDA to host think tanks to review reduce/re-use and recycle alternatives, develop incentive programs for public and private sector and develop a model/demonstration/trial
- RDA to support grants or other environmental schemes that develop demonstration or pilot schemes
- RDA to broker/mediate funding and/or partnerships to make greater Hobart a model city (recycling all its effluent for irrigation)
- RDA to be assist in identifying local sources of energy (micro) for regional communities

INVESTMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop network of potential funding sources for entrepreneurs
- Investment Tasmania's strategies that will protect and strengthen our existing assets and maintain our point of difference (socially and environmentally)
- RDA to be a key player in development of bank style brokering investment model.
- Investigate strategic partnerships between RDA, Institute for Regional Development, Cradle Coast Authority and key players to deliver regional development support
- Investigate new forms of governance which includes NGO's, research organisations, regional organisations, education etc, to enable partnerships

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Whilst the participants recognised engagement and social inclusion as a key theme and priority, they did not identify any specific strategies involving RDA *and* the Commonwealth Government. They did however recognise the need for action in relation to:

- Access to housing:
 - Private and public affordability
 - Support networks for isolated and strained communities
 - Infrastructure development around emerging communities
- Diversity:
 - Supporting changing population – migrants, refugees, demographics, aging
 - Diversity of interest – arts, culture, sport
- Strong communities
 - Supporting community participation and consultation
 - Supporting integration and relationship building between community sector, local government and industry
 - Strengthening organisations and volunteers
 - Role of schools and young people in community

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

It is recognised that the term "Community Infrastructure" is a broad topic that includes both 'hard' and 'soft' infrastructure. Participants in the consultation process identified the following types of projects/programs that would be classified as community infrastructure:

- Communal venues, including town halls
- Leadership programs (especially in small communities)
- Recreation, health and well-being facilities
- Public amenities
- Facilities and initiatives to encourage social participation and engagement – particularly of youth and ageing population
- Community capacity building – support and assistance
- Public transport to enable inclusion
- Cultural/arts facilities
- Recognition of, and action in relation to, demographic change
- Improved telecommunications access and access to on-line centres
- Housing availability and affordability

Participants identified the following strategies:

- RDA to provide assessment advice on proposals for community infrastructure development

- RDA to provide advice to federal government and other relevant bodies on local community infrastructure needs (i.e. housing)
- RDA to facilitate and link stakeholders to identify and develop opportunities for funding to assist with provision of aged accommodation in rural communities
- RDA to be a 'one-stop shop' to provide identification and information on federal government and other funding opportunities
- RDA to administer a funding program which encourages partnership between business and the community to introduce infrastructure which promotes long term viability
- RDA to continue consultation to flexibly refine roles and responsibilities of tiers of Government
- RDA to provide input in to a review of existing transport strategy in light of fuel/oil changes
- RDA to fund shared trails/cycle ways
- Identify future changing needs of ageing population and planning for these changes
- Greater emphasis on 'whole of community' health and well-being;
- Identify, promote and value community elder knowledge.
- Support the development of fitness trails (programs run by youth for the aged)
- Facilitate the development of a centre of excellence in the art lead by a 'hero'
- RDA to be involved with a regional community health and allied services audit (ensure State health plan meets community needs and requirements);

Other Emerging Themes

In addition to the above strategies, the relationship and co-ordination (or lack there of) between, and within regions and the three tiers of Government emerged as a strong theme across three of the regional forums. Public and freight transport was also identified as a priority in two of the forums.

Clearly, participants across government, business and community sectors recognise that for Tasmania to grow and be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable there is a series of priorities upon which to focus. There is also a recognised opportunity for the Federal Government, and RDA, to be involved in developing and delivering a series of strategies and programs based around these priorities, to deliver strong community outcomes to Tasmania.

It was proposed by many participants that RDA Tasmania should have a regional coordination role, prioritising activities and projects under identified grant program objectives, including: road/rail infrastructure; recreation and community activities facilities; tourism/industry development.

Participants also demonstrated a strong desire that the new Commonwealth community and regional infrastructure funding program:

- Be flexible;
- Include on the ground support for project and application development
- Require demonstrated partners (without prescriptive quota);
- Allow for rolling and carried forward funding;
- Have pre-defined and efficient assessment periods;
- Involve delegation of decision-making (either through RDA or Regional DITRDLG office staff);
- Recognise significance of local knowledge and advice;
- Simplified and open processes;

- Match funds according to need/merit (as opposed to a pre-described percentage of total project cost))
- Examine other ways of distributing federal funding.

2 ENGAGEMENT

2.1. Future vision

RDA Tasmania Vision

Strong Tasmanian Communities and Positive Futures.

RDA Tasmania Mission

RDA (Tasmania) will support sustainable community and regional development by directly assisting groups, enterprises, industries and communities to achieve positive economic, social, cultural and environmental outcomes.

2.2. Proposed charter – role from 1 January 2009

The RDA Charter comprises three core responsibilities from which all activity is derived.

1. **RDA (Tasmania) is a key facilitator of change and development in our region.**

RDA (Tasmania) demonstrates knowledge of our regions and communities by:

- identifying issues that are affecting our communities and how the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program can address these issues;
- understanding the dynamics of our communities and region in terms of investment patterns and demographics;
- searching out unique strategic advantages in the region that generate growth and development; and
- identifying and working in partnership with leaders in the community.

2. **RDA (Tasmania) is the link between Government, business and the community.**

RDA (Tasmania) creates and sustains regional, cross-sectoral networks by:

- fulfilling our responsibilities under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program
- facilitating the development of suitable project proposals by local proponents and their submission to the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program and where appropriate to other Government programmes.
- promoting and disseminating information on Government policies and programmes, particularly those orientated towards business and communities;
- informing Government of the impact of policies and programmes on business and the community; and
- providing constructive and regular advice and feedback to Government on community needs, service and development requirements.

3. **RDA (Tasmania) facilitate whole of government responses to opportunities and needs in our communities.**

RDA (Tasmania) acts as a catalyst to encourage and facilitate a collaborative approach by government departments and agencies to achieve integrated regional development responses by:

- drawing together the range of avenues and resources through which communities and regions can foster development;
- working to maintain constructive alliances with the community, business, local development organisations and all levels of government;
- actively identifying opportunities to bring whole of government solutions to community and regional issues; and
- engaging the community, business, local development organisations and all levels of government in coordinating Strategic Regional Plans and solutions.
- Responding to needs of our community that are affected by changes that create economic or social uncertainty.

In pursuing its core responsibilities RDA (Tasmania) will contribute to regional development by actively seeking opportunities to:

- promote a planned and cooperative approach to regional development;
- encourage the growth of regional business and employment;
- identify pressing social and economic issues; and
- sustain our natural resources and environment
- assist communities manage significant and unplanned industry specific events as they arise from time to time

2.3. Committee structure and membership

Currently the ACC network is based on not for profit incorporated organisations with Board representation that is volunteer based. Our stakeholders are of a common view that the current structure serves Tasmania well and see no reason to change it.

The “not for profit, volunteer aspect” of the ACC network since its inception has delivered to the Government a strong local network, and importantly, local ownership and credibility. The current framework enables each ACC to establish their structures to meet their local needs, and be adaptable to their local needs. It has also provided an Australian Government regional network at a very low cost compared to many other Federal and State structures.

With respect to membership, the Rules of Association allow for the ACC to have two levels of membership (General Members and Associate Members). General Members play an active role in supporting the achievement of strategic regional plan and are appointed as “eyes and ears” of the region which they represent. They also ensure that the organisation has a good balance of skills and knowledge to cover the range of issues which need to be addressed from time to time. Associate Members are generally senior government officers from relevant departments or industry representatives. Associate Directors provide input and context to our strategic regional plan as well as link to key people in their area of expertise.

It is the responsibility of the members to ensure that all regions within Tasmania have representation on the committee.

2.4. Governance – management and administrative arrangements

The Governance of the ACC is prescribed within the Rules of Association and is compliant with the Associations Incorporation Act (Tas). An executive committee is selected to oversee the governance of the organisation.

With respect to future management and administrative arrangements, it is the view of Area Consultative Committee Tasmania that this will be defined once the future role of the RDA network has been defined.

With respect to the selection of Chair and Deputy-Chair, it is our view that the RDA committee provides a nomination for ministerial appointment.

2.5. Boundaries

Currently Area Consultative Committee Tasmania is the only ACC in Tasmania. We see no logical reason to change this. Similarly, our stakeholders are of a common view that the current structure serves Tasmania well and see no reason to change it.

The past achievements of the ACC clearly demonstrate that we have worked well as a single state-wide body for Tasmania. Our ability to access and work with State and Federal agencies to support and assist communities is well documented and respected. We believe that the current size of the Tasmanian ACC is very practical which is why the ACC currently aligns well with the Tasmanian community.

We have the capacity to adapt our committee structure to meet and represent all Tasmanian regions very well. Our all-of-Tasmania coverage enables us to be 'within' regions (the canary in the coal mine) as well as 'across regions' (helicopter coverage).

2.6. Reporting requirements

The feedback received from the consultations focussed mainly on the how RDA should engage with the Tasmanian community on behalf of the Australian Government, rather than what the reporting mechanism to Government should be.

The general view was that it mattered more that the community consultations, regional forums or other advice was responded to and/or acknowledged by government.

Previously, the RDA Interim board has proposed how RDA should report to Government; we continue to support this approach.

2.7. Priorities for ways to improve communication between the Australian Government and the region

It was apparent observing the discussion at the stakeholder forums as well as reviewing the collated feedback that the Tasmanian community recognise that Area Consultative Committee Tasmania have credibility and capacity to be able to bring to together relevant stakeholders. Using RDA to facilitate government engagement and provide the results of the engagement (back to the Government) was consistently seen as a logical extension of the RDA's role.

The feedback from the consultations workshops were consistent in the responses on how the Australian Government can be best be informed of regional issues and priorities, and how the Australian Government should consult with regions.

Responses with respect to how the Government can be informed of issues and priorities proposed the following activities. (A full summary of stakeholder feedback relating to communication and engagement is contained with appendix 3).

- RDA Facilitate regional meetings a manage stakeholder consultation
- RDA Provide precise advice on community infrastructure
- RDA conduct community/stakeholder forums
- RDA Report on project outcomes
- Government engaging with local leaders that emerge at times of local issues
- The developing projects for funding is a way of identifying need
- Ensuring direct contact between RDA and GM's of councils requirements
- RDA recognising past activities and feeding back to Government. For example.
 - Examine outcomes of other forums
 - Examine local government strategic plans
 - Examine local and state government partnership agreements

The imperative here is that this will only work with commitments across all government agencies /portfolios supporting the role of Regional development Australia.

The recent example where the Australian government re-directed significant funding to the Scottsdale community is a great example of how RDA can support the direct communication and provision of advice to a community in need of support.

2.8. Rationale/explanation for these priorities

The priorities to improve communication came directly from the consultative process. The stakeholders identified these priorities as part of feedback. The explanation of these priorities was a logical extension workshop outcomes explained in item 1.4.

These priorities reflect the view that the Tasmanian community identified a gap in this area of Commonwealth Government engagement. Whilst not identifying a specific portfolio area (e.g. health, education etc), it has been recognised that commonwealth engagement can be enhanced using the demonstrated non-political brokerage role of the RDA network. In fact this consultation process for Regional Development Australia was often cited as an example of the networks capacity to bring a diverse group of people together.

The most significant part of this feedback was that for the engagement to be of sufficient value to the community there needs to be appropriate recognition and/or acknowledgment of the engagement process and input provided.