

ADMINISTRATOR'S NEWSLETTER

INDIAN OCEAN TERRITORIES

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THIS ISSUE

Topical issues

IOT Regional Development Summit

Economic Development Consultative Groups

Regional Development Funding for the IOT

Current projects

CONTACT DETAILS

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WELCOME

Joan and I are pleased to confirm that we will be spending another year with you in the Indian Ocean Territories. It is difficult to believe that two years have passed since we arrived on Christmas Island. We appreciate the welcome and support we have received from the communities of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands and look forward to serving you for another year.

CHRISTMAS GREETING

As Joan and I will be departing Christmas Island on 5 December 2011 to spend the Christmas season with our family in Melbourne, I take this opportunity to extend to the people of Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands our sincere best wishes for the festive season. We wish you all a safe and merry Christmas and happiness and peace throughout 2012.

TOPICAL ISSUES

Since my Newsletter in August there have been a number of significant events and social occasions. Time and space do not permit me to address all of the events and occasions. I do however wish to mention a few. The Christmas Island Charity Ball on 3 September was attended by more than 300 people and raised \$20,000 for the Christmas Island's voluntary emergency services. I thank the generous people who contributed to the success of the occasion and congratulate the members of the Ball Committee. I extend my special thanks and congratulations to Vicki Ford for her leadership as Chair of the Committee for the second year in a row.

Christmas Island Arts and Culture kicked off the Territory Week celebrations with a wonderful exhibition on 1 October. I am amazed by the depth of artistic talent we have among us on Christmas Island. We were very fortunate to have Emma Washer from Cocos (Keeling) Island join us for the exhibition and for a week before the exhibition to run art courses for the residents of Christmas Island. Congratulations to Arts and Culture for a successful and entertaining exhibition. Congratulations also to Chris Su and the Territory Week committee for a week of fun culminating in a day of excitement at the Cove.

Congratulations to the Christmas Island District High School on another wonderful sports carnival. It was an excellent social occasion providing yet another opportunity for community interaction and social discourse. I attended the sports carnival and have since had the pleasure and honour of attending the year 12 graduation ceremony and the students' art exhibition.



ADMINISTRATOR'S NEWSLETTER

PAGE 2



It is unfortunate that I do not manage to be on Cocos (Keeling) Islands for the many successful events and social occasions celebrated in the community. One event that I did witness on my most recent visit was the Rumah Baru wharf in operation. It is a welcome addition to the island's infrastructure and social capital.

IOT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

The IOT Regional Summit was held on Christmas Island over the course of three days with several information sessions and a day of formal presentations on Sunday, 13 November 2011 followed by a formal dinner that evening. Presentations came from an excellent line up of speakers, including Stephen Chapple, Chairman Economic Development Australia, Alan Bradley, Executive Officer Regional Development Australia MidWest Gascoyne, Don Holbrook, Creative Economist and Kelvin Matthews and Peter Clarke, the Chief Executive Officers of the Shires of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands respectively.

Two recurring themes in the presentations were first the need for community engagement in identifying and resolving local problems and, secondly, partnerships between Government and private interests in implementation of solutions. Regional Development Australia funding is available to assist regional communities in satisfying needs, but only where the community has clearly defined the problem to be addressed and formulated a well thought out sustainable solution. It is important to note that there are 55 regions in Australia competing for Regional Development Australia funding.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands' communities, businesses, Economic Development Consultative Groups, Regional Development Australia Mid West Gascoyne and the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government for their participation in the Summit held on the Sunday.

Your participation helped make the Summit the success that it was. I wish to thank and congratulate Simon Millcock for his work in organising what has been widely described as a very successful event.

Among the many presentations was a report on the progress of the IOT Economic Development Strategic Plan 2010-2015.

The report reviewed the work of the Economic Development Consultative Groups (EDCG) and other key stakeholders in the implementation of the plan. After consultation with the communities the EDCG developed and adopted the plan in 2009 and have since been engaged in its implementation and monitoring its progress.

Simon Millcock and members of the CKI EDCG also provided updates to members of the CKI community following the summit.

Some of the exciting achievements during the past twelve months have been:

- Alignment by both Shires of their vision documents with the plan
- CI and CKI community capacity assessment audits
- IOT accommodation needs assessment
- IOT marketing plan
- Tourism catalyst project
- Urban design master plans
- Changes to the EDCG terms of reference
- Increase in funding to the IOT economic development fund from \$150,000 - \$300,000
- \$340,300 funded for 6 economic development projects in 2010/2011 worth over \$4m.

There are a number of new and exciting programmes being planned to help build local capacity and a sustainable economy, including a youth retention programme, a community leadership programme, corporate governance workshops and the establishment of an IOT regional development organisation.



ADMINISTRATOR'S NEWSLETTER

PAGE 3



To assist the EDCG in finalising the second review of the IOT Economic Development Strategic Plan 2010-2015 the joint meeting of the CI and CKI EDCG's held on Monday 14 November 2011 resolved to invite public comment on the plan by Friday 2 December 2011.

To view copies of the updated plan please visit www.rdamwg.com.au

For further information or feedback please contact IOT Economic Development Officer Simon Millcock on simon.millcock@regional.gov.au or phone 08 91647959

I take this opportunity to remind residents of CI and CKI of the call for expressions of interest to be considered for membership of the CI EDCG (4 vacancies) and the CKI EDCG (1 vacancy). Written expressions of interest outlining why you would like to be involved in the EDCG including a resume must be received by the Administrator by Friday, 25 November 2011.

For further information on expressions of interest please contact the IOT Economic Development Officer Simon Millcock on 08 91647959 or simon.millcock@regional.gov.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This has been a challenging year for all of our agencies in the Indian Ocean Territories. I acknowledge and thank all officers and staff of IOT Administration, AFP, Customs, IOTHS, AQIS, Parks, DIAC, Schools and the Shires for their hard work and for the support they have afforded me. I acknowledge also our volunteers and our business leaders for the contribution they make to our island life.

IOT REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

I am excited by the recent announcements of funding available for the IOT through a number of programs.

The Economic Development Funding Program (EDFP) for the Indian Ocean Territories is an Australian Government initiative supporting the development of self-reliant communities. The EDFP aims to promote economic development and enhance business opportunities by providing financial support to eligible organisations and activities. The EDFP is specific to the IOT.

This year the EDFP has seen a 100% increase in its budget to now be \$300,000.

Some more welcome news is that the Guidelines for Round 2 of the Regional Development Australia Fund have been released and I am pleased to report that they are open to entities in the IOT.

The EDCG have been strong advocates for the increase in funding to the EDFP and in securing IOT eligibility for the RDA Fund. The challenge now is to ensure that appropriately scoped and planned projects, which align with the IOT strategies, are received to access the funds to help build our communities' capacity, the islands' social capital and a sustainable economy.

For further information about these programs and how to apply for funds please contact: **Simon Millcock – Economic Development Officer** Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government
Ph: (08) 9164 7959, Mob: 0428 437 474
Email: Simon.Millcock@regional.gov.au

The Indian Ocean Territories State-type Grants Program

This is an Australian Government initiative supporting the communities of the IOT and administered by the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government on behalf of the Australian Government.



ADMINISTRATOR'S NEWSLETTER

PAGE 4



The Program enables local government authorities, community groups and community members located in the IOT to apply for grant funding from the Australian Government similar to that which is available to Western Australians under grant programs operated by the WA Government.

I was extremely pleased to hear of the recent work by Anne Petch who was funded through a State type grant through the Shire of CKI to work with six community groups on CKI in developing their strategic plans. I encourage those groups to put their plans into practice and seek the funding available to help build capacity.

For further information about the IOTs State-type Grants Program and how to apply please contact:

Hilary Owens

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Taking the combined effect of the numerous funding agreements that the Department of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government has with organisations such as Indian Ocean Group Training Association, CI and CKI Tourism Associations significant government investment is occurring at the local level. There are also signs of a growing confidence in the community with increased private investment in construction and infrastructure development.

CURRENT PROJECTS

There are a number of new and exciting initiatives underway including the IOT Marketing Plan, Urban Design Master Plans and a Tourism Catalyst Project. These initiatives are funded through the Economic Development Administrative Budget on the recommendation of the EDCG.

The EDCG is also working with Regional Development Australia Mid West Gascoyne and local tourism associations to secure tourism development initiatives.

Marketing of the IOT has also been significant since my newsletter in August including:

- A presentation and a booth at the Mid West Gascoyne Economic and Resources Summit in Geraldton; and
- Australian Geographic and Fact Not Fiction Films filming documentaries on CKI and CI.

Fact Not Fiction Films is filming a documentary on remote airfields and promotional material for the Centenary of HMAS Sydney/SMS Emden, which is to be held in 2014. It was a great pleasure for me to have met **Retired Rear Admiral Henning Bess** from the SMS Emden Association while he was visiting the IOT during filming for the centenary celebrations on Cocos. Henning is a member of the Centenary Working Group, of which I am the chair.

Simon Millcock whilst on leave was actively promoting the IOT in the United States of America at the International Economic Development Conference when he was invited to present at one of the Conference sessions.

SIEV 221 COMMEMORATIVE MEMORIAL SERVICE

A commemorative memorial service for those who perished in the SIEV 221 disaster is being planned for December 2011. Catherine Wildermuth is Chair of the Planning Committee.

VALE

It is with some sadness that I close my Newsletter acknowledging the passing of Mr Ho Tak Wah. I first met Mr Ho Tak Wah at a Christian Fellowship service soon after my arrival on Christmas Island. He was a gentle man with a wonderful disposition. I feel honoured to have known him albeit for such a short time. My wife and I send our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends for the sad loss they must feel.