



Australian Government



Regional  
Development  
*Australia*

# Regional Development Australia

## Better Practice Guide (the Guide)

This guide provides information for Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committee members and staff.

This guide is to be used in conjunction with the 2018 – 2020 Funding Agreement, and sets out the obligations which accompany RDA funding, administered by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

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The Guide, Attachments and Templates are available at [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

RDA Committees should access [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) to ensure that the most up to date version of the templates is used.

Terms defined in an RDA Committee's Funding Agreement will apply to the Guide unless otherwise specified.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Regional Development Australia Better Practice Guide

The Guide assists RDA Committee<sup>1</sup> Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members and employees to manage their RDA Committee and its business.

The Guide provides information and guidance on governance, administration and operational matters. It also provides more detail on aspects of the Funding Agreement, which sets out the funding for RDA Committees provided by the Commonwealth and the obligations which accompany provision of this funding. As Funding Agreements may vary between States and Territories and RDA Committees, this *Guide* should be read in conjunction with the Funding Agreement for each RDA Committee. Where there are differences between the Guide and the Funding Agreement, the Funding Agreement takes precedence. Where there are differences between the Funding Agreement and the Guide and State and Territory incorporation legislation, the relevant legislation takes precedence.

The information in this Guide promotes principles of good governance. As RDA Committees receive Commonwealth funding, they must operate in an open and transparent manner that reflects their accountability for the expenditure of government funds.

The Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, or equivalent (the Department), encourages RDA Committees to build on the information in this Guide and to make use of the suggested references. This Guide is designed to support RDA Committees to meet conformance and performance expectations, however it is not exhaustive. The Guide is a living document and may be updated from time to time to reflect changes in Commonwealth policies and programs or variations to the Funding Agreement.

Questions about any aspect of the Guide or the Funding Agreement can be directed to [rda@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rda@infrastructure.gov.au).

The Department will undertake a formal review of this Guide annually, at the start of each calendar year. In addition, the Department may amend this Guide at any time by providing written notification of changes to all RDA Committees. This notification should normally provide 15 working days' advance notice of changes, to give RDA Committees an opportunity to provide comment in advance of their application. A minimum of five working days' notice will be provided in all cases.

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Development Australia Committees are known as Regional Development Australia Boards in South Australia.

## **SECTION 1 – REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA**

### **1.1 Overview**

RDA is a national network of committees made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support and broker economic development opportunities for their regions.

RDA Committees have an active and facilitative role in their regions and a clear focus on growing strong and confident regional economies that harness their competitive advantages, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.

RDA Committees are incorporated, not-for-profit community-based organisations (with the exception of the Victorian-based RDA Committees, which are not incorporated). RDA Committee members are volunteers drawn from the region and who bring leadership, skills and experience from the community, business, local government and not-for-profit organisations. Each RDA Committee has a broad and diverse skills base, with demonstrated networks and alliances.

### **1.2 RDA Charter – Outcome and Outputs**

RDA Committees have an active and facilitative role in their communities and a clear focus on growing strong and confident regional economies that harness their competitive advantages, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.

This Outcome must be delivered via the following Outputs, as summarised from the RDA Charter:

- identify economic development opportunities that leverage private and public sector investment in Your Region;
- connect Your Region with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs and business leaders to attract investors to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in Your Region;
- develop and maintain positive working relationships with the local government bodies in Your Region;
- assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs including public and private sector decentralisation;
- promote and disseminate information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders in Your Region to develop project proposals to access funding;
- for Your Region:
  - provide evidence-based advice to the Commonwealth on critical regional development issues; and
  - provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors.

Section 3.4 of the Guide, 'Annual Report on Outcomes and Annual Audited Accounts', discusses information on the Performance Measures RDA Committees are required to report against in providing evidence of achievement against each of the Outputs. Locally, additional relevant Performance Measures may also be set by RDA Committees in their Annual Business Plan and Budget and reporting against them will form part of the Annual Report on Outcomes.

### 1.3 The Commonwealth's Role in the Management of RDA Committees

The Commonwealth Minister may be jointly responsible for government support of the RDA network with State and Territory counterparts. RDA Committee Chair appointments are also made by the Commonwealth Minister, and these may be made jointly, or in consultation with, State and Territory Ministers, depending on whether or not the State/Territory is a funding partner of the RDA program. In South Australia, appointments are made on a tripartite basis, involving the Local Government Association of South Australia. Detailed information on appointments processes is contained in Section 2, 'RDA Committee Governance and Appointments Guide'.

The Department assists the RDA network and monitors both the expenditure of Commonwealth funding and RDA Committee performance. It does this to help RDA Committees achieve their goals within the Commonwealth's announced policy intentions and in accordance with the obligations set out in the RDA Charter and in the Funding Agreement. The Department strategically develops and reviews the national governance framework for the RDA network, promotes the RDA network to other government agencies, assesses RDA Committee Outcomes and strategies, and distributes key messages.

The Department also provides some administrative and operational support to RDA Committees, including providing advice about sound governance practices, and managing the Funding Agreement.

A key part of the Department's support is communication, both within the RDA network and about the RDA network. It maintains the national [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) website and prepares promotional products from time to time. The RDA website enhances communication and the dissemination of information between RDA Committees, regional communities and the Department. It contains RDA maps by State, Territory and region, and provides up-to-date information on RDA Committee application processes and current membership. The website is also a repository for the program's important governance, operational and communications documents, such as RDA Committee membership application forms, branding guidelines and logos and this Guide.

Each RDA Committee will have various liaison points within the Department (identified in the Funding Agreement as 'Our Liaison Officer'). All Department liaison officers are bound to behave ethically and in line with Australian Public Service Values and Employment Principles, and the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct<sup>2</sup>.

Departmental officers undertake to:

- manage the Funding Agreement in a manner that is proactive and transparent;
- provide advice on the provisions of the Guide;
- make any necessary variations to the Funding Agreement, including drafting and consulting RDA Committees;
- receive feedback on the Guide and amend it as necessary;
- remind RDA Committees of their Outcome and Output requirements and Reports as they arise, and to receive and assess these Reports, and advise the results of assessment in a timely manner;
- pay RDA Committees in accordance with the Funding Agreement and without unnecessary delay and to then advise when payments have been approved;
- monitor, support and assess the performance of RDA Committees in relation to the Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures identified in the Funding Agreement and provide constructive feedback;
- provide timely responses to enquiries either verbally or in writing;

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<sup>2</sup> These documents are available at <http://www.apsc.gov.au/working-in-the-aps/your-rights-and-responsibilities-as-an-aps-employee>.

- manage Chair vacancies and appointments process, including provision of a dedicated phone line; 1800 505 938 (Monday–Friday 9am–5pm AEST) and email address, [rdaapplications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdaapplications@infrastructure.gov.au); and
- provide open and regular communication, including through RDA Alert e-mails and the [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) website.

The RDA Coordinator, together with the Department's liaison officer are your primary points of contact within the Department and play a facilitative role to link RDA Committees with other sections of the Department as appropriate.

## 1.4 Partnership Arrangements

The Commonwealth has the following partnership arrangements in place across Australia to support the RDA network:

- in South Australia, a tri-partite arrangement includes significant financial support for RDA Committees from the South Australian Government and the Local Government Association of South Australia;
- Victorian RDA Committees are supported by Victorian Government funding and staffing with RDA Committees operating as part of the Victorian Government's regional and economic development structures;
- the Northern Territory Government provides in-kind support for RDA Northern Territory in the form of rent free accommodation for the Alice Springs office and works closely with that Committee on development issues;
- RDA Tasmania receives in-kind accommodation and administrative support from the Tasmanian Government and is collocated with the Department of State Growth;
- RDA Committees in Western Australia work closely with the Western Australian Government's Regional Development Commissions (RDCs). In some cases, the Committees are collocated and/or have common Board/Committee membership and cooperate closely on regional planning with their RDC; and
- there are no formal arrangements currently in place with the jurisdictional governments in New South Wales, Queensland or the Australian Capital Territory.

## 1.5 Legal Framework

*Note that this section 1.5 does not apply to Victorian RDA Committees as they are not incorporated and receive funding from the Commonwealth via Regional Development Victoria.*

### 1.5.1 Incorporation and Australian Business Number

#### Incorporation

To receive funding, each RDA Committee must be an incorporated not-for-profit association under the relevant State or Territory incorporated association legislation.

Incorporated association legislation takes precedence over this Guide and the Funding Agreement. It is the responsibility of RDA Committees and their employees to remain informed of their obligations and responsibilities under the relevant State or Territory legislation and the Committee's constitution. Such responsibilities may cover governance requirements, conflict of interest arrangements, record and account keeping, auditing obligations, and taxation arrangements.



## Australian Business Number

All RDA Committees must also:

- hold an Australian Business Number (ABN);
- notify the Department within 14 days if they cease to hold an ABN; and
- correctly quote their ABN on all documentation to the Department and any other Commonwealth agency.

### 1.5.2 RDA Committee Constitution and Rules of Association

Legislation requires incorporated associations to develop a *constitution* or *rules of association* (depending on the jurisdiction). The constitution<sup>3</sup> of incorporated RDA Committees includes the rules for running an incorporated legal entity.

It is the responsibility of each RDA Committee to periodically review its constitution and to make necessary amendments to ensure that it conforms to:

- current State and Territory laws relating to incorporated associations, as these can be subject to regular changes;
- the Funding Agreement, including any variations made from time to time; and
- the requirements of this Guide, which also are subject to amendment.

To give effect to amendment to their constitutions (and rules of association), RDA Committees should:

- consult the Department (and State or Territory and local governments, if appropriate) on any proposed significant changes to their constitution. In doing this, the RDA Committee should write to the Department's liaison officer, as prescribed in the Funding Agreement; and
- only alter their constitution (including an alteration to the Association's name) by special resolution of the members.

RDA Committees must provide a revised copy of their amended constitution to the Department within 30 days of the amendments being registered with the relevant State or Territory government authority.

## RDA Name Changes

Where an RDA Committee is considering changing its name it should also give consideration to the following:

- 'Regional Development Australia (RDA)' must be retained in the name;
- the proposed new name should reflect the geography and characteristics of the region. Generic names or names which do not reflect the nature and location of the RDA Committee are not appropriate; and
- the proposed re-naming should be discussed with, and supported by, key stakeholders including the Department, and State, Territory and local government partners.

Once the name change has been discussed with all parties, RDA Committees should undertake the necessary legal processes to formally change their incorporated name with the relevant State or Territory bodies and advise the Department in writing within 30 days of the formal name change being implemented.

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<sup>3</sup> Called Rules of Incorporation or Rules of Association in some States and Territories.

### **1.5.3 Funding Agreement**

The Funding Agreement for each RDA Committee sets out the funding that the Commonwealth provides, the terms and conditions attached to the provision of funding, and agreed Outcomes and Reports. The Funding Agreement also sets out standard obligations for RDA Committees.

If an RDA Committee breaches its obligations under the Funding Agreement, the Commonwealth may terminate the Funding Agreement and cease providing funding to the RDA Committee. Grounds for termination are set out in the Funding Agreement.

Arrangements with State and Territory governments vary. In most jurisdictions the Funding Agreement is between the Commonwealth of Australia (as represented by the Department) and each individual RDA Committee. In Victoria, a single Funding Agreement with the State of Victoria (as represented by Regional Development Victoria (RDV)) covers all Victorian RDA Committees.

The Funding Agreement sets out the commitments and obligations of all parties to that Funding Agreement.

#### **Variations to the Funding Agreement**

The Department may, from time to time, vary the Funding Agreement. It will endeavour to give RDA Committees adequate prior notice of all proposed variations.

Copies of a formal deed of variation document will be sent to the RDA Committees concerned, with a request that they be signed by a delegated officer of the RDA Committee and then returned to the Department for signature by a representative of the Commonwealth. The variation will come into effect once both parties have signed. A copy of the fully signed version will be returned to the RDA Committee.

Deeds of Variation should normally be accompanied by covering correspondence from the Department clearly explaining the aims of the proposed variation.

#### **Applicable Law and Jurisdiction**

ACT laws apply to the Funding Agreements. This only concerns interpretation of the Funding Agreement in and of itself. This should not be taken to mean that RDA Committees are subject only to ACT law on other matters. The relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation still applies to RDA Committees in the normal manner on matters such as workplace relations, occupational health and safety, planning and the environment.

More broadly, Commonwealth and State and Territory legislation that RDA Committees will typically need to be aware of includes (but is not limited to):

##### State and Territory Legislation and Regulations

- Associations Incorporation
- Planning and Development Act and Environmental Protection
- Equal Opportunity
- Fair Work or Industrial Relations
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare
- Whistleblowers Protection
- Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation
- Anti-Discrimination

- Freedom of Information, and
- Regional Development.

#### Commonwealth Legislation

- *Age Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Archives Act 1983* (for Commonwealth records only)
- *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*
- *Copyright Act 1968*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and Sex Discrimination Act 1984.*

## **1.6 RDA Committee Funding**

### **1.6.1 Funding Sources**

#### **Commonwealth funding**

RDA Committees receive funding from the Commonwealth, under the Funding Agreement, which is administered by the Department. Subject to the provisions of the Funding Agreement, the Commonwealth may change the level of funding it provides to an RDA Committee in response to administrative or government policy changes.

#### **State or territory government and local government funding**

RDA Committees may also receive funding from State or Territory governments and local government bodies, either in cash or in-kind form.

#### **Third Party Arrangements**

Subject to provisions of the Funding Agreement on third party arrangements, RDA Committees may, at their own initiative, obtain contributions from other sources. This includes from Commonwealth agencies other than the Department. As outlined in the Funding Agreement, RDA Committees must provide the Department with at least 15 business days' notice in writing of significant proposed arrangements that they intend to enter into with a third party, including those involving major payments. A major payment is regarded as \$50,000 or greater. RDA Committees should write to their Department liaison officer about such proposed arrangements.

### **1.6.2 Commonwealth Funding**

Funding is provided to support the RDA Committees in delivering Outcomes, Outputs and Reports, as set out in Schedule A of the Funding Agreement. Funding amounts, any additional terms or restrictions and a payment schedule are also set out in Schedule A of the Funding Agreement.

RDA Committees prepare annual budgets to use these funds in undertaking their Approved Annual Business Plan. The RDA Committee must submit the Annual Business Plan and Budget to the Department for approval. See the Annual Business Plan and Budget template in the Attachments to this Guide. The template must be used.

RDA Committee expenditure must be clearly aligned with their Approved Annual Business Plan and Budget. The Department generally regards as reasonable, expenditure costs such as accommodation, staff salaries, office supplies and equipment, marketing expenses, motor vehicle costs and travel costs, and providing for stakeholder consultation or information sessions.

Clause 6.14 of the Funding Agreement sets out that the RDA Committee must seek the Department's approval if it wishes to transfer more than 20 per cent of the total Approved Budget from one funding expenditure item to another funding expenditure item in the one financial year. The main purpose of this requirement is so that the Department is aware of any intention to substantially change the RDA Committee's activities from those approved in the Approved Annual Business Plan and Budget.

### **International Travel**

While it is generally a matter for an RDA Committee to decide whether costs to be incurred in achieving Outcomes are reasonable, the Department does not generally regard international travel as reasonable.

If an RDA Committee believes that an exceptional case can be made for international travel, the RDA Committee should write to their Department liaison officer for consideration of approval. This must include a business case that demonstrates the relevance of the travel to the Outcomes and Approved Annual Business Plan and the implications for the rest of the work as set out in the Annual Business Plan, and provide any other information requested by the Department. The Department may impose terms and conditions.

### **End of Financial Year**

The Funding Agreement requires that RDA Committees write to the Department if more than 20 per cent of the total Budget remains unspent at the end of the financial year and the RDA Committee wishes to treat that unspent amount as funding for the following year (note: this refers to funding to support the Committee to deliver the Outcomes, rather than specific Project Funding).

The Department's preference is that you identify any unspent funding at the end of the financial year when you are preparing your Annual Business Plan and Budget. It is permissible that you present your business case to carry over these funds later in the year after you have completed your Annual Audited Accounts.

The following information should be included when writing to the Department with that request:

- the amount;
- the reason for delay in completing the approved activity;
- what the carry-over amount would be used for and by when if approved;
- the impact on delivering the Outcomes, Outputs and Reports; and
- the benefit of the carry over to the RDA program as a whole and to the RDA Committee's region.

### **1.6.3 Project Funding**

Project Funding is provided by the Commonwealth to particular RDA Committees from time to time to undertake specified activities, as agreed by both parties and set out in a schedule to the Funding Agreement.

The broad requirements for the management of such funding are the same as for annual funding, but the timing of payments and reporting requirements will be as specified in the relevant schedule(s) to the Funding Agreement. Acquittals and reporting may be additional to that provided for in the main body of the Funding Agreement.

## **1.7 RDA Boundaries**

The geographic area an RDA Committee is Funded to service (its Boundaries) is defined in the Funding Agreement at Schedule A and Schedule B of the Victorian Funding Agreement.

RDA Boundaries have been set to generally accord with State regional development boundaries or structures where possible, and currently do not cross State/Territory borders. In most cases they incorporate complete local government areas and, where necessary, Commonwealth Territories and/or unincorporated areas in any State.

In a small number of cases a local government area may be divided between two RDA Committees where a clearly definable district aligns better with one RDA Committee, whilst the remainder aligns better with another RDA Committee. Such arrangements are only entered into with the agreement of both RDA Committees and the support of relevant stakeholders such as the local governments affected and partner State or Territory governments.

### **1.7.1 RDA Boundary Adjustments**

RDA Boundaries may be adjusted where changes to local government boundaries, changing demographics or other relevant factors make such changes desirable.

RDA Committees, and partner State or Territory governments and local governments, may request RDA Boundary adjustments. The Department may initiate boundary changes where necessary. Boundary adjustment requests must be made in writing to the Department's liaison officer specified in the Funding Agreement, and include:

- a clear business case for the proposed change;
- written support from all RDA Committees affected by the proposed changes;
- where relevant, written support from a partner State or Territory government; and
- written support from other relevant stakeholders such as local chambers of commerce, local members of parliament and the like.

Consideration of requests for boundary changes will be on a case-by-case basis by the Commonwealth Minister with responsibility for the RDA program, in conjunction with their State or Territory Ministerial counterpart in partner jurisdictions, and with the President of the Local Government Association of South Australia for RDA Committees in South Australia.

Changes to funding to support any changes resulting from boundary adjustments will be negotiated with the affected RDA Committees prior to a decision to change a Boundary. The views of partner State or Territory governments may also be considered in any changes to respective RDA Committees' Funding allocations.

Any changes to Boundaries of an RDA Committee will require a variation to their Funding Agreement(s) to reflect the changes to the area covered.

The Boundary Change Request form is provided at **Attachment 1.A** of the Guide.

## SECTION 1 ATTACHMENT – BOUNDARY CHANGE REQUEST FORM

### Attachment 1.A – Boundary Change Request Form



## Boundary Change Request Form

April 2019

### Regional Development Australia (RDA) Boundary Change Request Form

#### Before you begin

This form should be read in conjunction with Boundary Adjustment information at Section 1 of the Better Practice Guide.

#### Submitting the Request Form

The request form can be lodged between **15 January and 15 February of each calendar year**.

Requests should be made by at least one of the impacted RDA Committees.

Requests for changes to **intra-state** and **inter-state boundaries** should be directed to the Department to obtain current State or Territory contacts and the Commonwealth Minister details.

Requests for changes to **intra-state boundaries** should be directed to the relevant State or Territory Minister.

Requests for changes to **inter-state** boundaries should be directed to the Commonwealth Minister.

If you require further information about the form please email [rda@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rda@infrastructure.gov.au) or telephone the RDA Helpline 1800 505 938.

A government response will be provided by 30 May of the same year.

Your request form should address all of the items in the section below.

**Please complete the following**

- 1. Name of RDA Committee/s making the request** *(Must include at least one of the RDA Committees impacted by the boundary change).*

- 2. Contact person** *(e.g. Chair of the requesting RDA Committee. Please provide name, title, and contact details).*

- 3. Summary of reasons for altering the RDA Committees' boundary/ies** *(Note that evidence of broad consultation will strengthen the RDA Committee's request).*

#### **4. Attachments - Please tick which documents have been attached.**

##### **Essential attachments**

- ☐ Written support from all RDA Committees impacted by the proposed changes.
- ☐ Views of local government organisation impacted by the proposed changes (excluding the ACT).
- ☐ Views of lead State agencies responsible for delivery of regional development.

##### **Recommended attachments**

- ☐ Written support from relevant organisations (e.g. local Chambers of Commerce).
- ☐ Summary of any broad consultation undertaken (e.g. who provided an opinion, what the opinion is).



## **SECTION 2 – RDA COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE AND APPOINTMENTS GUIDE**

### **2.1 RDA Committee**

RDA Committees have an active and facilitative role in their communities and a clear focus on growing strong and confident regional economies that harness their competitive advantages, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.

RDA Committees are made up of a Chair, Deputy Chair and several ordinary Committee Members, with typical committee sizes varying from 6-8 members in most cases, taking into account the legislative requirements of that jurisdiction.

### **2.2 Committee Meetings**

RDA Committees should hold regular meetings to discuss key issues and make decisions in accordance with the requirements of the Committee's constitution and the Funding Agreement. Meetings should take advantage of teleconferencing facilities to maximise participation.

RDA Committee meetings should be based on an agenda that has been approved by the Chair. Committees should ensure that the following matters are addressed during their meetings:

- reiterate conflict of interest procedures at the commencement of the meeting, and record all declarations of conflicts of interest in the Minutes and the action taken to address the conflict of interest. Best practice has conflicts of interest as a standing agenda item;
- report on year-to-date expenditure against the operational budget;
- report on progress against achieving Outcomes, Outputs;
- record all RDA Committee decisions and document any actions taken as a result of decisions; and
- include informed strategic discussion of regional economic priorities and solutions, and the RDA Committee's ongoing role in these.

RDA Committees should keep accurate Minutes of meetings, including action items, and may be required to provide these to the Department.

#### **2.2.1 Attendance at RDA Committee Meetings by Departmental Staff**

Clause 10.5 of the Funding Agreement provides for Departmental staff to attend RDA Committee meetings in an observer capacity. Clause 10.5 provides for RDA Committees to provide notices of meetings and agendas in advance of meetings if requested, as well as minutes, reports and financial statements. Departmental staff must provide adequate notice of their intention to attend and, in attending, will engage in such a way that provides support to the RDA Committees but does not inhibit RDA Committee discussions of strategic matters.

Departmental staff attend in an observer capacity only and should not participate in decision-making by RDA Committees on their internal management. They should provide factual advice relating to the obligations of the RDA Committee under the Funding Agreement, on wider Commonwealth policy or other matters for which the Commonwealth may have information that will assist RDA Committees in achieving their objectives. Departmental staff should ensure they are in a position to provide advice that might be requested prior to attending the meeting and should actively follow up on advice requested

by the RDA Committee after the meeting if they were not in a position to provide advice at the meeting.

## **2.3 Role of RDA Committee members**

### **2.3.1 Chairs**

#### **Position Description**

The RDA Committee Chair will lead a diverse organisation of individuals working in a complex environment to deliver high value Outcomes for the community and the region. The Chair will be a recognised business or regional leader who will champion local jobs and regional growth.

They will network widely across industry sectors and attract and facilitate opportunities and investment in their region. They will be very knowledgeable about the economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities and challenges facing their region; be well connected and a strong advocate for their regions; and draw their regional communities together to build and drive economic growth.

The RDA Chair will provide strategic direction and leadership to the RDA Committee and ensure corporate governance arrangements are effectively designed and implemented. They will demonstrate strong leadership to the Committee and have a sound understanding of board or committee performance management, including people and organisational management processes.

#### **Accountabilities and Responsibilities**

The RDA Committee Chair will be accountable to:

- Their communities for delivering Outcomes that meet regional needs;
- The Minister for meeting the Government's expectations of the RDA;
- The funding providers for ensuring that agreed objectives are achieved and resources invested are expended as efficiently and effectively as possible; and
- RDA Committee staff for providing a safe and healthy workplace.

The RDA Committee Chair will have primary responsibility for ensuring that the RDA Committee grows a strong and confident regional economy that harnesses competitive advantages, seizes on economic opportunity and attracts investment.

The RDA Committee Chair will also ensure the RDA Committee and delivers against the Outcomes, reporting requirements and Performance Measures specified in the RDA Funding Agreement. The RDA Committee Chair will also be responsible, along with the other Committee Members, for the good operational and financial governance of the overall organisation.

### **2.3.2 Deputy Chair and members**

#### **Position Descriptions**

The Deputy Chair and Members of the RDA Committee will be active contributors to the outcomes of a diverse organisation of individuals working in a complex environment to deliver high value outcomes for the community and the region. They will be active in their regional communities and contribute to supporting local jobs and regional growth.

They will be expected to leverage existing networks and develop new networks across industry sectors. RDA Committee members will be required to support the Chair to attract opportunities and investment to their region. They must be knowledgeable about the economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities and challenges facing their region; be well connected and a strong advocate for their regional communities; and draw their communities together to build and drive economic growth.

The RDA member will work as an effective member of the RDA Committee toward a common goal or strategy and drive projects that target specific areas of economic development for the region. They will actively support RDA Committee governance and management processes.

The role of the Deputy Chair is to assume the role and duties of the RDA Chair, whenever the Chair is not available. The Deputy Chair also plays an important role in supporting the Chair in day-to-day matters and will have similar skills to the Chair.

### **Accountabilities and Responsibilities**

RDA Deputy Chair and Committee Members will be accountable to:

- the Chair for supporting the activities of the Committee;
- their communities for delivering outcomes that meet regional needs;
- the funding providers for ensuring that agreed objectives are achieved and resources invested are expended as efficiently and effectively as possible; and
- RDA Committee staff for providing a safe and healthy workplace.

The RDA Deputy Chair and Committee Members will be responsible for supporting the RDA Committee to meet the requirements of the RDA Charter, deliver against the Outcomes, reporting requirements and Performance Measures specified in the RDA Funding Agreement, and for the good operational and financial governance of the overall organisation.

## **2.4 Role and Functions of the Director of Regional Development**

RDA Committees must employ a Director of Regional Development (DRD). This is a remunerated position appointed by the Committee Chair. In Victoria the DRD is recruited according to Victorian Government Public Sector recruitment processes.

The 2018 extension of the RDA program to the Indian Ocean and Jervis Bay Territories and Norfolk Island includes the appointment of a Regional Investment Officer (RIO). The functions of the RIO are similar the role of the DRD.

The DRD is responsible for being active in the community and delivering the RDA Charter. This includes managing the RDA program objectives and Outcomes. Subject to the needs of the RDA Committee, the DRD may also be responsible for leading the whole organisation (i.e. an Executive Officer style role). The scope of the DRD role is determined by the RDA Committee and the DRD will either report directly to the Committee, or they may report to an Executive Officer (if the RDA Committee establishes a separate Executive Officer role).

## **Position Description**

The role of the DRD is to:

### **Connect Stakeholders and Facilitate Opportunities**

- facilitate the connection of business proponents to financial markets or other private and public sources of project funds;
- bring together key stakeholders to drive change by identifying key skills gaps and shortages hampering growth and facilitate local industry based solutions;
- Develop, support and lead regional capacity building initiatives, including grant writing workshops and individual interventions focused on high priority projects;
- facilitate the connection of regional businesses and industry sectors with international trade partners and be an ongoing point of contact for advice;
- engage with regional entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders to create business forums and support networks to exchange ideas which lead to opportunities for job creation and growth;
- promote the region's activities to all governments, industry, business and community sectors to highlight competitive advantages and encourage decentralisation and relocation opportunities;

### **Identify Needs and Facilitate Strategic Planning**

- identify local drivers of infrastructure investment to respond to key regional infrastructure needs and support business growth;
- communicate effectively with governments, business and regional communities to develop strategies to address service gaps to improve the liveability, viability and prosperity of regions;
- provide linkages to up-to-date and contemporary information on best practice regional development initiatives and support regional leaders to develop tailored local growth strategies;

### **Advise Government**

- provide evidence-based advice to governments on critical issues negatively affecting their region, or emerging or current opportunities that can be harnessed with strategic intervention;

### **Committee Governance and Management (include if DRD is also the Executive Officer)**

- manage the day-to-day affairs of the RDA Committee and its personnel in a manner consistent with the Guide, the Committee's Annual Business Plan and Budget, the Funding Agreement, and its constitution (for incorporated committees);
- develop the RDA Committee's Annual Business Plan and Budget; Annual Report on Outcomes and Annual Audited Accounts; and associated management delivery strategies;
- provide management advice and support to the RDA Committee consistent with the Funding Agreement and the Guide, including:
  - keep the RDA Committee informed of the status and progress of its business;
  - undertake the accountable and transparent management of RDA Committee funds under the oversight of the Chair;

- ensure that all RDA Committee reporting and compliance requirements are met;
- ensure that the RDA Committee operates in accordance with the applicable State or Territory incorporation legislation;
- ensure that the RDA Committee meets its obligations under the Funding Agreement;
- implement office policies and procedures;
- lead and develop RDA Committee personnel (where agreed by the Committee) and be involved in the recruitment of staff; and
- Implement decisions and activities as determined by the RDA Committee Chair or Committee.

### **Accountabilities and responsibilities (to be tailored as appropriate)**

#### ***DRD as Executive Officer***

The DRD is will be accountable to the RDA Committee for the successful achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives. The DRD is also be accountable to:

- the region for delivering outcomes that meet regional needs;
- the funding providers for ensuring that agreed objectives are achieved and resources invested are expended as efficiently and effectively as possible; and
- RDA Committee staff for providing a safe and healthy workplace.

The DRD is responsible for:

- supporting the RDA Committee to meet the requirements of its RDA Charter;
- delivering the Outcomes and meeting the reporting requirements and Performance Measures specified in the RDA Funding Agreement and any other agreements the RDA Committee has with funding partners; and
- the good operational and financial governance of the overall organisation.

#### ***DRD as Program Manager***

The DRD is accountable to the Executive Officer for the delivery of RDA Program Outcomes as set by the RDA Committee.

The DRD is responsible for:

- supporting the RDA Committee and the Executive Officer to meet the requirements of the RDA Charter; and
- delivering the Outcomes and meeting the reporting requirements and Performance Measures specified in the RDA Funding Agreement.

In developing the employment contract between the RDA Committee and the DRD, RDA Committees could use the services of an independent employment expert, such as an industrial relations consultant, legal employment specialist or the Fair Work Ombudsman. The employment contract should include the duty statement and clearly outline the conditions of employment. The conditions of employment should be comparable to other similar positions, especially with regard to termination clauses – an independent employment expert can advise on these matters. The Department does not provide guidance on remuneration rates as this would vary across regions.

Details on performance measures and reviews and reporting requirements should be clearly stated. Recruitment should also take account of Section 5, Code of Conduct and Ethics for Committee Members and Personnel (the Code).

The position must be advertised as the contract of the incumbent in the position approaches its end date and if the position is vacated at any time.

## **2.5 Selection and Appointment Processes**

### **2.5.1 Procedures for Chair, Deputy Chair, Committee Member and DRD Appointments**

Procedures for Chair, Deputy Chair and Committee Member and DRD appointments are set out in the separate *RDA Appointments Guide*. The appointments guide also provides position descriptions for RDA roles.

### **2.5.2 Filling Vacancies**

Interested community members can only submit an application to become a Committee member of an RDA Committee when a position has been advertised. From time to time calls for applications for RDA Chairs may be advertised by the Department with a specific closing date, usually when the term of an RDA Chair expires. A similar process should be conducted by Chairs, when advertising for new Deputy Chairs and Committee members.

Submissions received after the closing date for advertised rounds may not be included during the specific appointment phase unless they have been provided late due to unavoidable or exceptional circumstances. The Selection Panel Chair should determine what constitutes unavoidable or exceptional circumstances and document these considerations.

A new application will be required each time positions are advertised. Applications for Chair, Deputy Chair or Committee member positions must be submitted by completing the appropriate application form.

Past applications can be held on file and evaluated again without the need to readvertise if another vacancy in the position arises in the short term. The Chair should determine the period that applications can be held for without readvertising. As a guide, it is suggested that past applications could be reconsidered for up to six months following their initial submission.

Chair applications must be submitted to [rdaapplications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdaapplications@infrastructure.gov.au) and Deputy Chair and Committee Member applications must be submitted to the relevant RDA Committee, any applications submitted to the Department will simply be forwarded to the RDA Committee. Copies of each of the application forms can be downloaded from the [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) website or interested applicants can email [rdaapplications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdaapplications@infrastructure.gov.au) and request a copy of the application form and relevant documents.

The Department manages all administrative requirements concerning Chair appointments.

The administrative requirements for appointing Deputy Chair and RDA Committee members will be the responsibility of the Chair and the RDA Committee as outlined in the *RDA Appointments Guide*. Chairs will complete the process of assessing applications for new Deputy Chair and RDA Committee members and seek agreement of the proposed new Deputy Chair from the Commonwealth Minister and the relevant State/Territory

Minister and local government bodies where that State/Territory/local government contributes significant financial or in-kind support to RDA Committees. Chairs can appoint members without seeking agreement except for the RDAs in jurisdictions where significant State/Territory/local government support is provided. In these jurisdictions, Chairs are required to seek agreement for member appointments from the Minister and the relevant State/Territory Minister and local government body.

Applications for any position will go through a merit based process, being assessed against selection criteria and skills and expertise requirements of the relevant RDA Committee. The selection process also considers the following representations on the RDA Committee as it relates to each individual region:

- the geographic coverage;
- cultural diversity;
- demographic profile;
- gender balance; and
- age ranges.

Consideration should be given to the Government's target for 50% Women on Boards and the target of 3% Indigenous representation or increased representation if the RDA Committee has already these targets.

At the conclusion of every process, successful Chair applicants will be made an offer of appointment in writing by the Commonwealth Government Minister and where relevant the State or Territory Minister and the appropriate local government organisation. The Department will write to unsuccessful Chair applicants.

Successful Deputy Chair and Committee member applicants will be made an offer of appointment in writing by the Chair who should also notify unsuccessful applicants.

#### **2.5.4 Public Sector Appointees to RDA Committees**

There is no necessary legal impediment to a person holding a position as a member of an RDA Committee in an individual capacity (i.e. not *ex officio*) while they are a public servant or other paid employee in the public sector. However, they should take care to ensure that their duties as an RDA Committee member do not otherwise interfere with their duties and obligations to their employer and vice versa. This may include disclosing their appointment to their employer. They should also seek to avoid any conflict of interest, by not improperly using their employment to gain a benefit or advantage for the Committee through the provision of information that would not normally be available outside the organisation.

Although a conflict of interest may be more apparent than real, even the appearance of such a conflict of interest may harm public confidence in the RDA Committee concerned. RDA Committee members who are public servants should ensure that any real or potential conflicts of interest are declared. The Australian Public Service Commission provides advice on such issues for Commonwealth public servants that may also be of broader interest to RDA Committees—see for example the publication *In Whose Interest?*, at <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/in-whose-interest>

Further information on conflict of interest is at section 5.7 of this Guide.

## **2.6 Absences, Resignations and Terminations**

### **2.6.1 Leave of Absence**

The RDA Chair may take leave at any time and should follow relevant procedures set out in the constitution/rules of their RDA Committee. During any absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair will act as Chair and will assume the position and duties of the Chair. The Chair should notify the Department of all periods of leave.

For periods of leave over one month, the RDA Committee Chair should also write to the Commonwealth Minister responsible for regional development and, where relevant, the State or Territory Minister (and in South Australia, the President of the Local Government Association), advising the period of leave and the selected Member's availability to fill the vacancy. In the case of absences exceeding six months, the appointment of the Chair may be reviewed by the Department.

### **2.6.2 Resignation of the Committee Chair, Deputy Chair or Committee Member**

RDA Committee members may resign at any time, but should follow relevant procedures set out in the constitution/rules of their RDA Committee. This should include details of arrangements and procedures for advising the Committee about the resignation and the timing of acceptance. The Committee Chair should ensure that all resignations are consistent with the Committee's constitution/rules. The Chair should inform the Department of all resignations within 5 days of receiving notice of a resignation. Until a new Chair is appointed the Deputy Chair is expected to assume the position and duties of the Chair.

In addition, a Chair or Deputy Chair may resign at any time by providing written advice to the Commonwealth Minister, the State or Territory Minister where relevant and the Department.

### **2.6.3 Termination of Appointment**

The Commonwealth Minister may, in accordance with the RDA Committee's constitution/rules, terminate the appointment of a Chair at any time through the provision of written advice. The termination of appointments is taken seriously by governments and will normally be preceded by consultations and discussion about issues of concern.

Reasons for the termination of appointments could include, but are not limited to:

- breaching the Code, as outlined in Section 5;
- concerns regarding the administration or performance of the RDA Committee; or
- a change in the Commonwealth's regional priorities and/or policies.

An RDA Committee Chair may, after consultation with and agreement of the Commonwealth Minister and in accordance with the RDA Committee's constitution or rules, suspend or terminate the appointment of a Committee member through the provision of a written notice. The RDA Committee is expected to demonstrate that they have applied procedural fairness in the suspension or termination of a member, seeking legal advice where deemed necessary.



## SECTION 3 – RDA COMMITTEE FUNDING AGREEMENT PLANS, REPORTS AND ACQUITTALS

### 3.1 Overview

The Funding Agreement requires each RDA Committee to submit the following documents to the Department on the due dates specified in the Funding Agreement:

- Business Plan and Budget;
- Annual Report on Outcomes; and
- Annual Audited Accounts or Annual Certified Accounts in Victoria.

Guidance for these documents is provided below and in the attachments. Some elements of this are **mandatory**, however the majority is provided as better practice guidance only, and RDA Committees can determine how they choose to complete their documents.

RDA Committees **must** complete the mandatory elements in the format specified by the Department. Your RDA Liaison Officer can assist you in the preparation of these documents by reviewing drafts and providing timely, constructive feedback during the preparation process.

### 3.2 Business Plan and Budget

Each RDA Committee must prepare an annual Business Plan and Budget. This is an operational document, which brings together all aspects of the RDA Committee's activities for the coming financial year, including its work program, priorities and resources. It should provide operational parameters for the Director of Regional Development, Executive Officer and staff, and assist with determining staffing structures and required skill sets.

RDA Committees can determine how they set out the majority of their business plan. We have identified some key elements below that the department considers a better practice business plan should either address or be informed by. You may choose to utilise this guidance in the preparation of your business plan, and augment this with additional information that you feel is needed for your RDA. Alternatively, you may choose your own format for your business plan.

Please note that we believe that consideration of your region's short, medium and long term priorities and challenges is critical to determining your annual business plans and if this strategic context is not addressed, we will ask you about it. We also believe that effective communication with your stakeholders is critical to the successful achievement of Outcomes and we will also ask you for details of your communications strategy if this is not provided.

Once the Department has accepted an RDA's Business Plan, changes to it can be proposed during the financial year but require the Department's approval where they represent a significant shift in activity or focus (whether a shift is significant will be judged on whether the changes result in more than 15 per cent of the total Approved Budget being moved between activities as a result of the change).

## ***Key Elements of the Business Plan and Budget***

### Chair's Foreword or Executive Summary

The Chair may wish to set the scene by reflecting on the lessons learned from the previous year and summarising the RDA Committee's key focus areas for the coming year. This section could also provide an overview of how the skills of RDA Committee members and staff will be used to deliver the RDA's business plan and how the RDA will work with other regional development stakeholders to facilitate economic development.

### Strategic Context and Regional Priorities

Consideration should be given to the strategic priorities and needs of the region over the next 3-5 years and the potential impacts of external influences (such as local, national and international market forces and public policy changes) on these. Based on this, the short, medium and long term Outcomes and Outputs of the RDA could be outlined in this section (please note that these should align with the Funding Agreement Outcomes and Outputs).

### Annual Work Plan

This section could operationalise the strategic context identified in the previous section and include the activities that will be completed in the year to commence, continue or complete the delivery of the RDA's identified Outcomes and Outputs.

It is acknowledged that some specified Outcomes and Outputs will be higher priority than others and this mix will change for each RDA Committee throughout the duration of the Funding Agreement. Therefore the Funding Agreement specifies that your Business Plan and Budget should clearly detail those Outcomes and Outputs that you consider to be high priority or focus areas for your RDA Committee during the coming year.

When preparing your Business Plan and Budget you may also wish to specify any Outcomes and Outputs that you believe are **not** relevant to your region or are addressed by other economic development stakeholders. Analysis should be provided which explains the reasons why you have chosen to focus on particular Outcomes and Outputs and also why you believe others require a lower (or no) level of activity by your RDA. We will agree this position with you via our acceptance of your Business Plan and Budget.

Reporting against the Funding Agreement Outcomes, Outputs and Priority Performance Measures will then be tailored accordingly in your Annual Report on Outcomes, with a greater level of performance being demonstrated against those areas that you have defined as high priority and a lower (or no) level of performance being reported for areas that are low priority or not relevant to your region.

You may also wish to address your internal corporate governance and process improvement needs in this section. A number of RDAs use a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to assist them with this aspect of their planning as it helps to identify areas of their business that may need attention and opportunities for improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

### Guidance for Victorian and South Australian RDAs **(mandatory)**

State governments jointly fund RDAs in these jurisdictions. Local governments also provide funding to South Australian RDAs. It is acknowledged that for these states, some outcomes and outputs that are being sought by funding partners will be the same, and others may be different but complementary.

Therefore the business plans of Victorian and South Australian RDAs should provide commentary regarding:

- the Outcomes and Outputs being sought by state and local governments;
- the activities that will contribute to the achievement of common Outcomes and Outputs; and
- the activities that will contribute to the achievement of state and local government specific outcomes and outputs.

### Communications Strategy

Including a Communications Strategy in your Business Plan and Budget is better practice as it assists in ensuring that communication is integrated with RDA Committees' overall operational strategy and work plans.

The Communications Strategy should analyse how communication can be used to support the achievement of your Outcomes and Outputs during the coming year and outline the various communication processes that will be implemented.

Regular maintenance of the information contained on RDA Committee websites and a plan for how social media will be used should also be factored in to ensure that current and accessible information is continuously available to stakeholders.

Some RDAs provide regular, structured information to regional stakeholders generally in the form of updates or newsletters, and this could also be considered as part of your Communications Strategy. This information typically addresses:

- significant consultations undertaken with regional stakeholders, such as community groups, industry associations, businesses, government agencies and local government;
- conferences attended by RDA Committee members or staff, forums hosted, or submissions invited;
- activities undertaken, especially significant activities initiated or completed. This includes papers or submissions prepared by the RDA Committee, research commenced or completed and progress on priority issues;
- recent achievements including media coverage of the RDA Committee, grants or contracts awarded to or successfully supported by the RDA Committee, new partnerships formed and major projects completed; and/or
- emerging 'hot' issues for the region and/or the RDA Committee, including significant changes in employment levels, new industries moving into or out of the region, and the local impact of significant natural events and the RDA Committee's role in addressing these issues.

### Outcomes and Budget Tables **(mandatory)**

You must complete the Table of Outcomes, Outputs, Activities and Performance Measures. This information enables the Department to effectively acquit the program funding that we provide to you. Critically, it allows us to determine whether you are addressing the Ministerial charter for RDAs and delivering the outcomes required by the Funding Agreement.

We have provided RDAs with three options at **Attachment 3.A** for presenting this information and you may choose the template that best suits your needs. The first two templates use the Funding Agreement Outcomes and Outputs as the starting point for detailing activities and reporting performance. The second table allows RDAs to use their strategic priorities as the starting point, with activities to be reconciled to the Funding Agreement Outcomes and Outputs so that we can ensure RDA work programs are consistent with the Government's policy directives (i.e. charter) for RDAs.

As part of the Outcomes Table, we have also asked that RDAs provide us with their top 5 strategic priorities and business activities for the year. This will assist us in reporting key focus areas for RDAs to Ministers and government agencies.

You must also provide a detailed budget for the year in the format provided at **Attachment 3.B**. This provides the Department with assurance that you are planning on spending Commonwealth funding appropriately and also provides a consistent format for summarising other funding that you receive.

### **3.3 Annual Report on Outcomes**

The Annual Report on Outcomes presents RDAs with an opportunity to share their successes, including how their activities relate to the strategic priorities of the region and of all levels of government. RDAs are required to report annually against each of the Outcomes and Outputs that were included in the Business Plan and Budget for the period.

As with the Business Plan and Budget, RDAs can choose how they set out the majority of their Annual Report on Outcomes, with the exception of some mandatory items.

#### Outcomes Table (mandatory)

RDAs must complete the Outcomes table in the same format that was used in the Business Plan. The Funding Agreement Outcomes table (three options) is provided at **Attachment 3.A**. Reporting should detail activities and achievements against the Outcomes, Outputs and Priority Performance Measures specified in the Funding Agreement and as refined and agreed via the Business Plan and Budget.

RDA Committees may also wish to set their own locally relevant Performance Measures in their Business Plans and report against them in the Annual Report on Outcomes.

#### Case Studies (mandatory)

RDAs must include two case studies in their Annual Report on Outcomes. These should focus on key achievements during the last year and demonstrate examples of where RDAs have made a difference in their region. Case studies are extremely valuable for the Department, as they assist us in promoting your work to Ministers, government agencies and community stakeholders. RDAs may also wish to provide a further summary of their activities and lessons learned during the year. The format and amount of detail provided is up to each RDA to determine.

#### Third Party Arrangements (mandatory)

The Funding Agreement (clause 10.6) also requires that you provide information in your Annual Report on Outcomes regarding significant third party arrangements that you have in place (i.e. those with a contract value of \$50,000 or greater). This information should include:

- a description of the activity being undertaken;
- risks to the RDA in completing the activity and the mitigation strategies for these;

- contract start and end dates; and
- the contract value and payment milestones; and
- activity progress to date.

You may choose to reference this information in the body of your Annual Report on Outcomes or in an attachment.

### **3.4 Annual Audited Accounts**

You must provide us with a complete copy of your RDA's audited financial statements (Annual Audited Accounts). The Annual Audited Accounts allow the Department to determine if the financial management practices of the RDA Committee have been effective and financial risks are being controlled. Certification that RDA program-related revenue and expenditure has been reported correctly by your auditors also gives us assurance that funding has been recorded correctly and spent appropriately.

The Annual Audited Accounts must include a completed version of the table provided at **Attachment 3.B**. Certification by the Chair and the auditor regarding the accuracy of this table is required.

### **3.5 Ad Hoc Reports to the Department**

#### ***3.5.1 Requests from the Department***

The Department may request ad hoc reports, verbal or written information from RDA Committees from time to time for the purposes of briefing content for the Minister, the Department or the wider Government, or for departmental engagement and program management activities. If any particular format is needed with such a request, that will be conveyed to the RDA Committee by the Department.

#### ***3.5.2 Critical Regional Development Issues***

If critical regional development issues (positive or negative) are identified by RDA Committees, it would also be appreciated if these were reported to the Department. This allows the Department to proactively respond to these issues.

Critical issues are those which are likely to have a significant impact on the current or future economic performance and growth of the region. They can be positive or negative in nature. For example, identified critical issues could be those which:

- have a major impact on key industries in the region, or could have flow on impacts to related industries, which in turn have consequences on the comparative advantage and business competitiveness of the region;
- relate to infrastructure, which could affect access to key international, national and regional markets;
- have a relationship to human capital in the region, particularly education and skills;
- affect the sustainable growth of the region. This may include major changes in the political, physical or regulatory environment, which may impede economic growth;
- impact effective cross-sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships in the region; and
- stop or adversely affect the RDA Committee completing key activities.

Where possible, critical issues should be supported by evidence or data.

RDA Committees can also provide advice on critical regional issues via their Business Plan and Annual Report on Outcomes, through discussions with your Departmental liaison officer and through correspondence to the Minister (please provide a copy of the correspondence to the Department so that we are aware of the issues).

The Department will also bring issues to the attention of RDA Committees, through teleconferences, Departmental liaison officers, the [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) website and through other means, as appropriate.

### **3.6 Risk Management Strategy**

#### **3.6.1 Importance of Risk Management**

Risk management is an important part of good corporate governance and sound management practice. The business of RDA Committees involves some degree of risk which must be managed. Identification and management of risks which must be managed by each Committee:

- provides a more confident and rigorous basis for decision-making and planning;
- creates a clearer understanding of opportunities and threats;
- improves the ability to manage uncertainty and variability;
- supports active consideration of change;
- supports effective allocation and use of resources;
- improves the security of assets; and
- improves stakeholder confidence and trust.

The methodology used to identify risk and procedures to be implemented for managing these should be documented and endorsed by the RDA Committee. It is considered better practice for RDA's to prepare a Risk Management Plan and review this annually.

#### **3.7.2 Developing a Risk Management Strategy**

When developing a risk management strategy, the RDA Committee should consider the following (not an exhaustive list):

- Outcome and Outputs – whether there are any risks that would impact the achievement of the RDA Committee's Outcome and Outputs;
- financial matters – procedures to authorise and monitor expenditure;
- budget matters – procedures to monitor expenditure against agreed budget items and identify unauthorised expenditure;
- contractual matters – procedures to ensure that funds are expended in accordance with the Funding Agreement, monitoring of the Funding Agreement and prevention of breaches of the Funding Agreement;
- insurance coverage – for litigation or professional misconduct, occupational health, safety and welfare, workers' compensation and motor vehicle;
- taxation matters – procedures to ensure adherence with Australian Tax Office requirements and the maintenance of full records for the purposes of fringe benefits and other taxes;

- assets – procedures to ensure accurate recording of and accounting for assets, prevention of misuse of assets, and that leasing arrangements are entered into only after approval by the Committee;
- administrative matters – procedures to ensure that accurate financial records are kept, breaches of financial policies are identified and addressed, audit reports are obtained and supported by complete documentation, and that appropriate back-ups of electronic records are kept; and
- employment of staff – procedures and processes to ensure fair and transparent recruitment, workplace safety, and the use of employment contracts which meet government regulations and enable performance monitoring.

RDA Committees could draw on the *Australian Risk Management Standard (AS/NZS ISO 31000–2009 Risk Management—Principles and Guidelines)*. (The full text of this document is available only for purchase, but some websites provide summaries.)

## SECTION 3 ATTACHMENTS – OUTCOMES AND BUDGET TABLES

### Attachment 3.A – Outcomes Tables

This Attachment provides the means for an RDA to advise of their intended Activities and Performance Measures (as part of the **Business Plan**) and to report on those Activities and Performance Measures (as part of the **Annual Report on Outcomes**)

**RDAs are required to provide a brief summary of the key strategic priorities and business activities and complete their preferred version of the Outcomes Tables provided below.**

#### Summary

Please complete the following:

Summary of top 5 strategic priorities for upcoming year:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Summary of top 5 key business activities for upcoming year:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



**Option 1:** Use the Funding Agreement Outcomes and Outputs as the starting point for detailing activities and reporting performance. Activities are grouped together on one row.

<b>OUTCOME THEME 1</b>	Increased economic opportunities and investment in Your Region
<b>OUTPUT i.</b>	Identify economic development opportunities that leverage private and public sector investment in Your Region.
<p><i>(Complete this section only for your Business Plan. Rows below this can be removed in your Business Plan)</i></p> <p><b>What will we do?</b></p> <p>List in this row Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Outputs and meet the Outcomes.</p>	<p>Outline Your planned Activities as part of the Business Plan process - List in this row the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and to meet the Outcomes. It is important to identify if RDA is taking a lead or supporting in an activity, the timeframes for the completion of the activity and the expected outcomes from this.</p>
<p><i>(Complete this and following sections for your Annual Report on Outcomes)</i></p> <p><b>What did we do?</b></p> <p>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</p>	
<p><b>Did it have an impact?</b></p> <p>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</p>	
<p><b>Priority Performance Measures</b></p> <p>1. Number of organisations or potential investors engaged and/or assisted with, and investment opportunities created.</p>	
<p><b>Additional Performance Measures</b></p> <p>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed below.</p>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 2</b>	Increased trade and job creation.
<b>OUTPUT ii.</b>	Connect Your Region with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs and business leaders to attract investors to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in Your Region.
<p>(Complete this section only for your Business Plan. Rows below this can be removed in your Business Plan)</p> <p><b>What will we do?</b></p> <p>List in this row Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Outputs and meet the Outcomes.</p>	<p>Outline Your planned Activities as part of the Business Plan process - List in this row the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and to meet the Outcomes. It is important to identify if RDA is taking a lead or supporting in an activity, the timeframes for the completion of the activity and the expected outcomes from this.</p>
<p>(Complete this and following sections for your Annual Report on Outcomes)</p> <p><b>What did we do?</b></p> <p>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</p>	
<p><b>Did it have an impact?</b></p> <p>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</p>	
<p><b>Priority Performance Measures</b></p> <p>1. Number of organisations assisted directly or indirectly including the number of potential and/or actual jobs created.</p>	
<p>2. Number of organisations, entrepreneurs and emerging business leaders connected with business support, investment and growth programs.</p>	
<p>3. Number of organisations connected with export opportunities or export readiness support.</p>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 2</b>	Increased trade and job creation.
<b>OUTPUT ii.</b>	Connect Your Region with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs and business leaders to attract investors to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in Your Region.
<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed below.</i>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 3</b>	Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders leads to improved economic development outcomes.
<b>OUTPUT iii.</b>	Develop and maintain positive, collaborative, working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders which address identified gaps or needs in economic development activity.
<p><i>(Complete this section only for your Business Plan. Rows below this can be removed in your Business Plan)</i></p> <p><b>What will we do?</b></p> <p><i>List in this row Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Outputs and meet the Outcomes.</i></p>	<p><i>Outline Your planned Activities as part of the Business Plan process - List in this row the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and to meet the Outcomes. It is important to identify if RDA is taking a lead or supporting in an activity, the timeframes for the completion of the activity and the expected outcomes from this.</i></p>
<p><i>(Complete this and following sections for your Annual Report on Outcomes)</i></p> <p><b>What did we do?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i></p>	
<p><b>Did it have an impact?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i></p>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 3</b>	Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders leads to improved economic development outcomes.
<b>OUTPUT iii.</b>	Develop and maintain positive, collaborative, working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders which address identified gaps or needs in economic development activity.
<b>Priority Performance Measure</b>  1. Number and nature of collaborative working groups/projects/partnerships with governments and regional stakeholders and economic development outcomes resulting from this.	
<b>Additional Performance Measures</b>  <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed below.</i>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 4</b>	Achieve Government program objectives.
<b>OUTPUT iv.</b>	Assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs including public and private sector decentralisation.
<p><i>(Complete this section only for your Business Plan. Rows below this can be removed in your Business Plan)</i></p> <p><b>What will we do?</b></p> <p><i>List in this row Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Outputs and meet the Outcomes.</i></p>	<p><i>Outline Your planned Activities as part of the Business Plan process - List in this row the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and to meet the Outcomes. It is important to identify if RDA is taking a lead or supporting in an activity, the timeframes for the completion of the activity and the expected outcomes from this.</i></p>
<p><i>(Complete this and following sections for your Annual Report on Outcomes)</i></p> <p><b>What did we do?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i></p>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 4</b>	Achieve Government program objectives.
<b>OUTPUT iv.</b>	Assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs including public and private sector decentralisation.
<b>Did it have an impact?</b> <i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i>	
<b>Priority Performance Measures</b> 1. Evidence of identification of decentralisation opportunities and facilitation undertaken to deliver these.	
2. Number and description of initiatives to assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs.	
<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed below.</i>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 5</b>	Maximise access to Government programs and grants.
<b>OUTPUT v.</b>	Promote and disseminate information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders in Your Region to develop project proposals to access funding.
<i>(Complete this section only for your Business Plan. Rows below this can be removed in your Business Plan)</i> <b>What will we do?</b> <i>List in this row Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Outputs and meet the Outcomes.</i>	<i>Outline Your planned Activities as part of the Business Plan process - List in this row the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and to meet the Outcomes. It is important to identify if RDA is taking a lead or supporting in an activity, the timeframes for the completion of the activity and the expected outcomes from this.</i>

<b>OUTCOME THEME 5</b>	Maximise access to Government programs and grants.
<b>OUTPUT v.</b>	Promote and disseminate information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders in Your Region to develop project proposals to access funding.
<p>(Complete this and following sections for your Annual Report on Outcomes)</p> <p><b>What did we do?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i></p>	
<p><b>Did it have an impact?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i></p>	
<p><b>Priority Performance Measures</b></p> <p>1. Number of enquiries received/ generated and proposals assisted with.</p>	
<p>2. Number and value of successful proposals.</p>	
<p>3. Number of organisations assisted to connect with government programs.</p>	
<p><b>Additional Performance Measures</b></p> <p><i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed below.</i></p>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 6</b>	Advice supports development outcomes.
<b>OUTPUT vi</b>	<p>For Your Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence-based advice to the Commonwealth on critical regional development issues; and</li> <li>• Provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors.</li> </ul>
<p><i>(Complete this section only for your Business Plan. Rows below this can be removed in your Business Plan)</i></p> <p><b>What will we do?</b></p> <p><i>List in this row Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Outputs and meet the Outcomes.</i></p>	<p><i>Outline Your planned Activities as part of the Business Plan process - List in this row the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and to meet the Outcomes. It is important to identify if RDA is taking a lead or supporting in an activity, the timeframes for the completion of the activity and the expected outcomes from this.</i></p>
<p><i>(Complete this and following sections for your Annual Report on Outcomes)</i></p> <p><b>What did we do?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i></p>	
<p><b>Did it have an impact?</b></p> <p><i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i></p>	
<p><b>Priority Performance Measures</b></p> <p>1. Number of reports or submissions to the Commonwealth about critical regional development issues.</p>	
<p>2. Effectiveness of communication of regional activities and competitive advantages to regional stakeholders.</p>	

<b>OUTCOME THEME 6</b>	Advice supports development outcomes.
<b>OUTPUT vi</b>	<p>For Your Region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence-based advice to the Commonwealth on critical regional development issues; and</li> <li>• Provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed below.</i>	



**Option 2:** Use the Funding Agreement Outcomes and Outputs as the starting point for detailing activities and reporting performance. Multiple activities relating to an Outcome/Output are reported separately and assigned individual assessments.

<b>OUTCOME THEME 1</b>	Increased economic opportunities and investment in Your Region		
<b>OUTPUT i.</b>	Identify economic development opportunities that leverage private and public sector investment in Your Region.		
<b>What will we do?</b> <i>(Complete this column only for your Business Plan)</i>	<b>What did we do?</b> <i>(Complete this and the columns to the right for your Annual Report on Outcomes)</i>	<b>Did it have an impact?</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<b>Activity 1.1:</b>  <i>List in this column each of the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and meet the Outcome.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support  <i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i>	<i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i>	<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>  <i>Report against the priority the performance measure(s) relating to this activity.</i>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>  <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed here.</i>
<b>Activity 2.1:</b>  <i>Add additional rows for activities as required.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support		<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>

<b>OUTCOME THEME 2</b>	Increased trade and job creation.		
<b>OUTPUT ii.</b>	Connect Your Region with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs and business leaders to attract investors to explore new opportunities to grow local jobs in Your Region.		
<b>What will we do?</b> (Complete this column only for your Business Plan)	<b>What did we do?</b> (Complete this and the columns to the right for your Annual Report on Outcomes)	<b>Did it have an impact?</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<b>Activity 2.1:</b> <i>List in this column each of the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and meet the Outcome.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support <i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i>	<i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i>	<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b> <i>Report against the priority the performance measure(s) relating to this activity.</i>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i> <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed here.</i>
<b>Activity 2.2:</b> <i>Add additional rows for activities as required.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support		<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>

<b>OUTCOME THEME 3</b>	Cooperative effort with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders leads to improved economic development outcomes.		
<b>OUTPUT iii.</b>	Develop and maintain positive, collaborative, working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders which address identified gaps or needs in economic development activity.		
<b>What will we do?</b> (Complete this column only for your Business Plan)	<b>What did we do?</b> (Complete this and the columns to the right for your Annual Report on Outcomes)	<b>Did it have an impact?</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<b>Activity 3.1:</b> <i>List in this column each of the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and meet the Outcome.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support <i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i>	<i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i>	<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b> <i>Report against the priority the performance measure(s) relating to this activity.</i>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i> <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed here.</i>
<b>Activity 3.2:</b> <i>Add additional rows for activities as required.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support		<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>

<b>OUTCOME THEME 4</b>	Achieve Government program objectives.		
<b>OUTPUT iv.</b>	Assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs including public and private sector decentralisation.		
<b>What will we do?</b> (Complete this column only for your Business Plan)	<b>What did we do?</b> (Complete this and the columns to the right for your Annual Report on Outcomes)	<b>Did it have an impact?</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<b>Activity 4.1:</b>  <i>List in this column each of the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and meet the Outcome.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support  <i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i>	<i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i>	<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>  <i>Report against the priority the performance measure(s) relating to this activity.</i>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>  <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed here.</i>
<b>Activity 4.2:</b>  <i>Add additional rows for activities as required.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support		<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>

<b>OUTCOME THEME 5</b>	Maximise access to Government programs and grants.		
<b>OUTPUT v.</b>	Promote and disseminate information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders in Your Region to develop project proposals to access funding.		
<b>What will we do?</b> (Complete this column only for your Business Plan)	<b>What did we do?</b> (Complete this and the columns to the right for your Annual Report on Outcomes)	<b>Did it have an impact?</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<b>Activity 5.1:</b> <i>List in this column each of the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and meet the Outcome.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support <i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i>	<i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i>	<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b> <i>Report against the priority the performance measure(s) relating to this activity.</i>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i> <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed here.</i>
<b>Activity 5.2:</b> <i>Add additional rows for activities as required.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support		<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>

<b>OUTCOME THEME 6</b>	Advice supports development outcomes.		
<b>OUTPUT vi.</b>	For Your Region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide evidence-based advice to the Commonwealth on critical regional development issues; and</li> <li>• Provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages to all levels of government, industry, business and community sectors.</li> </ul>		
<b>What will we do?</b> (Complete this column only for your Business Plan)	<b>What did we do?</b> (Complete this and the columns to the right for your Annual Report on Outcomes)	<b>Did it have an impact?</b>	<b>Performance Measures</b>
<b>Activity 6.1:</b> <i>List in this column each of the Activities You plan to undertake to perform the Output and meet the Outcome.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support <i>Provide a description of your activities during the year relating to this outcome and output. Please note whether your RDA has played a lead or support role in the activities.</i>	<i>Provide a description of how the activities contributed to the achievement of the outcome and output.</i>	<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b> <i>Report against the priority the performance measure(s) relating to this activity.</i>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i> <i>You may choose to set additional Performance Measures as part of the Business Plan process and report against these in the Annual Report on Outcomes. Additional measures should be listed here.</i>
<b>Activity 6.2:</b> <i>Add additional rows for activities as required.</i>	RDA role: Lead/Support		<b>Priority Performance Measure(s)</b>
			<b>Additional Performance Measures</b> <i>(delete cell if N/A)</i>

**Option 3:** RDAs use their strategic priorities as the starting point, with activities reconciled to the Funding Agreement Outcomes and Outputs.

What will we do?	RDA role Lead/ support)	Timeframe	Expected outcomes	Funding Agreement Outcome No.	What did we do?	Achievement against Priority Performance Measure (you may also include your own additional measures)
<b>Outline Strategic objective 1</b>						
Outline Activity 1.1						
Outline Activity 1.2						
<b>Outline Strategic objective 2</b>						
Outline Activity 2.1						
Outline Activity 2.2						
<b>Outline Strategic objective 3</b>						
Outline Activity 3.1						
Outline Activity 3.2						
<b>Outline Strategic objective 4</b>						
Outline Activity 4.1						
Outline Activity 4.2						

## Attachment 3.B – Annual Budget and Annual Audited Accounts Reporting Table

<b>RDA Name</b>	(Insert RDA name here)
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This template is to be completed for the Business Plan and Budget and the Annual Audited Accounts. Dates should be amended as appropriate for future financial years.

Funding Sources and Budget												
	Commonwealth Funding (incl. All \$ in FA & Schedules)		Commonwealth 3rd Party Projects		State/Territory Operational		State/Territory Projects		Other		Total	
	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)
<b>GST Exclusive Amounts</b>												
<b>Income</b>												
Surplus Funding carried forward from previous period (See note 1 below)												
Funding for this Period												
Project Funding (Project 1)												
Project Funding (Project 2)												
Interest on Commonwealth funds												
<b>Total Income (A)</b>												

**Note 1:** the Management of Funding clause of the Funding Agreement requires that an RDA Committee must write to the Department if more than 20% of the total Budget remains unspent at the end of the Financial Year and the RDA Committee wishes to treat that unspent amount as Funding for the following year. This refers to Funding to support Your Committee to perform the Outputs and achieve the Outcomes as opposed to Project Funding. Please identify below the estimated Unexpended Funding from previous years as a percentage of your previous year's Funding. The actual carry-forward is to be confirmed in your Annual Audited Accounts. The RDA Better Practice Guide provides advice on the process for approval of carry-forwards greater than 20%.

% Funding carried-forward

Please refer to the RDA Better Practice Guide for advice on the process for approval of any carry-forward greater than 20% of your previous year's Funding (excluding Project Funding).



	Commonwealth Funding (incl. All \$ in FA & Schedules)		Commonwealth 3rd Party Projects		State/Territory Operational		State/Territory Projects		Other		Total	
	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)-(date)	Actual to (date)
<b>GST Exclusive Amounts</b>												
<b>Expenditure Major Budget Items</b>												
Staff Salaries												
Employee Entitlements												
Other Staff Expenses												
Office Lease & Outgoings												
Vehicle Costs												
Operational												
Financial, Legal & Professional												
Marketing												
Asset Acquisition												
Committee costs												
Other Supplementary Funding (if any)												
Other Project 1												
Other Project 2												
<b>Total Expenditure (B)</b>												
<b>SURPLUS (A-B)</b>												

<p><b>Certification:</b></p> <p>Annual Budget / Annual Audited Accounts (indicate which) Certified as Correct by:</p> <p><b>Name of authorised person:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Date:</b> .....</p>	<p><b>Independent Auditor's Statement to accompany the Annual Audited Accounts:</b></p> <p>I certify that the statement of receipts and expenditure are fair and true, and that Funding and Other Contributions (if any) were held and expended by the RDA Committee in accordance with the Funding Agreement.</p> <p><b>Name of Auditor:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Auditor's Company:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Signature:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Date:</b> .....</p>
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## SECTION 4 – COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 Corporate Governance

The Australian National Audit Office *Better Practice Guide on Public Sector Governance* (Volume 1, page 6) defines corporate governance as the “processes by which organisations are directed, controlled and held to account. It encompasses authority, accountability, stewardship, leadership, direction and control exercised in the organisation”.

Good governance arrangements are essential for an organisation to demonstrate to stakeholders that it can deliver on its intended outcomes. Such arrangements inspire confidence in stakeholders that the organisation has the necessary skills and expertise to run its business, and that it has established robust administrative arrangements efficiently, effectively and ethically. There are three main areas of good governance requirements for organisations:

- Performance—whereby the organisation uses its governance arrangements to contribute to its overall performance and the delivery of its goods, services or programs;
- Risk management—whereby the organisation manages risk and has contingencies in place to deal with identified risk (see section 3.10);
- Conformance—whereby the organisation uses its governance arrangements to ensure it meets the requirements of the law, regulations, published standards and community expectations of probity, accountability and openness.

RDA Committees should adopt best practice corporate governance procedures, notably:

- clear definitions of responsibility, roles of the RDA Committee Chair and Committee members and personnel, with clear lines of reporting;
- transparent management processes and procedures for addressing conflicts of interest of those entrusted to manage resources and deliver Outcomes;
- delegations must be clear, formalised and reviewed to ensure they are still appropriate;
- open, transparent and independent merit-based recruitment processes; and
- accountability in all operations, particularly in management of expenditure in accordance with the Funding Agreement.

Corporate governance is underpinned by a values system and specifically the Code, which outlines minimum standards of integrity and ethical behaviour and highlights the transparency and consistency in actions of RDA Committee members and staff. Good corporate governance also requires sound risk management and reporting to the Commonwealth on the findings of conformance reviews.

The basic responsibilities of individual Committee members include:

- understanding and complying with all formal obligations;
- meeting specific roles and responsibilities as outlined in governance documentation;
- formulating strategies, goals and business plans including Committee Reports;
- reviewing progress towards achieving those goals; and
- ensuring adequacy and efficacy of internal controls and reporting systems.

Further information and resources on good corporate governance is in the **Section 4 Attachment**.

## **4.2 Financial Management**

### **4.2.1 Financial Records**

Each RDA Committee should implement financial management controls, guidelines and management information reports consistent with Australian Accounting Standards. They should also maintain financial records that comply with the requirements of the Funding Agreement.

### **4.2.2 Interest on Bank Accounts**

Any interest earned on funding should be used as if it were a part of the funding. It should be recorded separately from interest earned from Other Contributions. An estimate of interest to be earned on Commonwealth funds should therefore be included in the relevant parts of the Annual Budget. Actual interest earned on Commonwealth funds should be included in the relevant part of the Acquittal of Budgets Report.

### **4.2.3 Taxes, Duties and Government Charges**

In resolving or clarifying any issues relating to taxation, it is the responsibility of RDA Committees to obtain financial and legal advice. This may include gaining advice or a Private Ruling from the Australian Tax Office on matters which are particular to the Committee. See [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au).

The Department does not include Goods and Services Tax on Funding Agreement payments, based on section 9–17(3) of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* which deals with payments made between government-related entities. With regard to income tax, the Department refers RDA Committees to the Australian Taxation Office publication—*Income tax guide for non-profit organisations* (Product ID: NAT 7967-03.2007). Committees should also seek advice from a financial adviser.

## **4.3 Reimbursements, Honoraria, Sitting Fees and Travel Costs**

Funding may be used, with Committee approval, to reimburse reasonable<sup>4</sup> travel expenses incurred by Committee members and personnel when they attend meetings related to the work of the RDA Committee or perform RDA Committee activities. Reasonable expenses mean items such as domestic travel and accommodation, meals and motor vehicle allowances. In all cases the RDA Committee must ensure that the principles of reasonableness, accountability and value for money are upheld. International travel is generally not regarded by the Department as a reasonable expenditure of Commonwealth funding.

Funding may not be used for payment of Chair or Committee Member honoraria or sitting fees. Sitting fees or honoraria may be paid from funding sources other than the Department's funding where that source permits such fees to be paid from their funding, and where the RDA Committee's Constitution or Rules of Association allow such payments.

See section 1.6, above, for further information on reasonable expenditure and travel.

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<sup>4</sup> In some States/Territories, a cap on expenditure which can be reimbursed to Committee members may be in place.

Committees can refer to the current travel allowance remuneration rates are set out in the Remuneration Tribunal's determination 'Official Travel by Office Holders' and can be found at [www.remtribunal.gov.au](http://www.remtribunal.gov.au)

An RDA Committee member, including the Chair is not entitled to claim the cost of employing a person to look after their business while they are performing RDA Committee duties.

#### **4.4 Other Contributions, Third Party Arrangements and Sponsorships**

##### **4.4.1 Contributions by Other Commonwealth Agencies**

RDA Committees should also be alert to the very wide range of programs managed by other Commonwealth agencies which they may be able to access as support for specific activities. There may be opportunities, for example, for RDA Committees to obtain funding for investment and industry attraction. Such funding is also subject to the advice in section 4.4.3 on third party arrangements.

##### **4.4.2 Contributions from State or Territory Agencies**

Other Contributions may be provided to an RDA Committee from a State or Territory government. This may be for operational purposes or for specific activities. Advice about such funding should be set out in the State or Territory columns of the RDA Committee's Annual Budget and the Acquittal of Budgets Reports. Such funding is subject to the following advice on third party arrangements.

##### **4.4.3 Third Party Arrangements and Contracting**

The Funding Agreement at the Reporting and Third Party Arrangements clause requires RDA Committees to provide the Department with advance notice in writing of any significant proposed arrangement that they intend to enter into with third parties. This does not cover the provision of day to day supplies or services. 'Significant' proposed arrangements include those with potential to have a notable impact on the RDA Committee's activities, such as by involving major payments (regarded as \$50,000 or greater), necessitating the re-allocation of resources, taking up considerable amounts of Committee personnel time and/or having potential to alter the RDA Committee's relations with stakeholders.

Third party arrangements often involve the provision of goods or services to the RDA Committee. Where this involves the performance of any of the RDA Committee's obligations under the Funding Agreement, such an arrangement amounts to subcontracting, which requires the Commonwealth's written approval in all cases.

Some third party arrangements may involve generating income for the RDA Committee. These activities should as far as practical be fully costed to the third party, including a proportion of office expenses (such as rent, telephone, equipment and salaries). Committees should ensure that any third party contracts do not require the support or use of RDA funding from the Commonwealth. Clause 6.3(g) of the Funding Agreement requires the Department's written permission for any use of Funds to undertake any activity for which the RDA Committee receives Other Contributions.

RDA Committees should be confident that any additional business undertaken on behalf of other organisations does not compromise their activities, including those set out in the Funding Agreement and the Annual Business Plan and Budget.

RDA Committee's party to income-generating arrangements with third parties **must** complete the 'other' funding column set out in the Annual Budget template and Acquittal of Budgets Report, and submit this to the Department as part of the budget submission and the budget acquittal processes.

Clause 10.7 of the Funding Agreement prohibits RDA Committees from negotiating for or entering into any arrangement which may bring the Commonwealth into disrepute. This encompasses a very wide range of scenarios. These could be expected to cover anything perceived to be contrary to law, the policies of the Commonwealth, or the values that it promotes. RDA Committees should consult the Department as early as possible if they have any concern that a prospective arrangement could raise any such concerns.

#### **4.4.4 Sub-leasing of Premises**

RDA Committees should advise the Department before sub leasing office space to third parties. The Department prefers such sub-leases to be with a 'like' body, particularly where there are opportunities to support and build networks or to build a relationship to progress the priorities identified in the Annual Business Plan and Budget.

#### **4.4.5 Sponsorships**

##### **RDA Receiving Sponsorship Funds**

If an RDA intends to seek sponsorship, the RDA Committee should consider developing a sponsorship policy. This section includes a few things the RDA Committee should consider in developing a sponsorship policy.

If RDAs will seek sponsorship funding from third parties, this should be done in accordance with the *Sponsorship in the Public Sector (2006)* (link below). Such sponsorship should be sought using a stringent broad, open process appropriate for the targeted sponsorship activity. RDA Committees should note the types of sponsorship appropriate to their RDA Committee, before seeking sponsorship, including the types of activities that would not be appropriate for sponsorship.

RDA Committees should also give consideration to the desirable attributes of an acceptable sponsor. For example:

- potential sponsors are reputable individuals or bodies;
- the objectives and products of potential sponsors do not conflict with the values and the objectives of the RDA;
- potential sponsors have an acceptable sponsorship record with your RDA or other agencies;
- goods or services provided would benefit your RDA and/or the general public and be of the type and quality that you require; and
- the objectives and missions of potential sponsors' parent companies or subsidiaries do not conflict with those of your RDA.

RDAs Committees should be clear on the benefits they will provide to sponsors, and must ensure these benefits are consistent with their Funding Agreement and the RDA Charter, and the Code.

For further information, it is suggested that RDA Committees refer to *Sponsorship in the public sector—a guide to developing policies and procedures for both receiving and granting sponsorship*, available at <http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au>.

## **RDA as a Sponsor (must be defensible)**

The provisions in the Funding Agreement at Clause 10 on arrangements with third parties include sponsorships. Sponsorship is a commercial arrangement in which a sponsor provides a contribution of money or in-kind to support an activity in return for certain specified benefits. Sponsorship can be provided by the corporate sector or private individuals in support of an RDA Committee's activities, or may instead involve the RDA Committee itself granting sponsorship. This does not include unconditional gifts, donations, bequests or endowments. Sponsorship is not philanthropic—a sponsor expects to receive a reciprocal benefit beyond an acknowledgement.

Although there is no prohibition on RDA Committees entering into sponsorships, they should be mindful of any implications for their obligations under the Funding Agreement. This includes, but is not limited to, Clause 10.7 of the Funding Agreement concerning arrangements that may bring the Commonwealth into disrepute, and Clause 10.6 concerning third party arrangements. Entering into sponsorship arrangements either as a recipient of a sponsorship or as a sponsor involves potential risks for the RDA Committee. These can include conflicts of interest, or perceived conflicts of interest.

Prior to entering into any sponsorship agreement, the RDA Committee should have developed a sponsorship policy in accordance with the guidelines provided below, and have assessed the proposal against these principles. The principles should be published by the RDA Committee in advance or circulated to organisations interested in sponsoring or receiving sponsorship.

- a sponsorship agreement should not impose or imply conditions that would limit, or appear to limit, an RDA Committee's ability to carry out its functions fully and impartially. Instead, sponsorship agreements should be of assistance to carrying out the activities in the RDA Committee's Annual Business Plan and Budget;
- there should be no actual conflict between the objectives and/or mission of the RDA Committee (and the Commonwealth Government) and those of the sponsor;
- sponsorship should not be political or contentious;
- sponsorship of an RDA Committee activity should not involve explicit endorsement or advertising of the sponsor or the sponsor's products;
- where sponsorship involves the sponsor providing a product to the RDA Committee, the Committee should evaluate that product for its fitness for purpose against objective criteria that are relevant to the RDA Committee's needs;
- it is inappropriate for any employee or member of the RDA Committee to receive a personal benefit from a sponsorship;
- in most circumstances, the public interest is best served by making sponsorship opportunities widely known. To this end sponsorship should be sought and granted by using broadly based, open processes that are not limited solely to invited sponsors;
- a sponsorship arrangement is a contract and should be described in a written agreement;
- any sponsorship being granted by the RDA Committee should be within the RDA Committee's budget; and
- all sponsorship arrangements should be approved by RDA Committee and described in the RDA Committee Reports (i.e. the Annual Business Plan and Annual Report on Outcomes) in a form commensurate with the significance of the sponsorship.

For further information, it is suggested that RDA Committees refer to *Sponsorship in the public sector—a guide to developing policies and procedures for both receiving and granting sponsorship*, available at <http://www.icac.nsw.gov.au>.

## **4.5 Insurance**

### **4.5.1 Insurance Coverage**

The Commonwealth provides three types of insurance cover:

- Management Liability (also referred to as Not for Profit Organisation Liability) to a limit of \$10,000,000 for each claim;
- Voluntary Workers/Personal Accident (also referred to as Personal Accident) to a limit of \$100,000 for each claim; and
- Broadform Liability (also referred to as General and/or Products Liability) Insurance of up to \$20,000,000 for each claim.

The policies for all three of these types of insurance coverage and the Certificates of Currency are available by contacting the RDA Helpline on 1800 505 938. It is important for all RDA Committees to familiarise themselves with the content of these insurance policies. Each of these forms of insurance includes coverage of RDA volunteers.

Note that there is no age limit for insurance coverage for Broadform Liability Insurance coverage and Management Liability Insurance however Voluntary Workers/Personal Accident Insurance is only provided for Committee members who are under 85 years of age.

Extraneous 'out of pocket' expenses incurred while undertaking RDA Committee activities, such as damage to or loss of personal property, should be managed within the RDA Committee's budget where these incidents are not covered under the existing insurance policy. The Commonwealth will not pay for this type of additional cover.

It should also be noted that, under the terms of the insurance cover maintained by the Department for the benefit of RDA Committees, the 'Insured' (the RDA Committee) is required to pay the 'Deductible Amount' (the excess) specified in the policy. The Commonwealth will not pay the excess for any insurance claims. RDA Committees must also ensure that sub-contractors of the RDA Committee are covered by insurance under either the RDA Committee's insurance policies or separate insurance policies.

If an RDA Committee has any questions when an incident arises, the matter should be discussed directly with the insurance broker, Arthur J. Gallagher Pty Ltd, whilst also informing the Department. Contact details for the insurance broker are:

Mr Matthew Hackett  
Client Manager  
Tel: (02) 6283 6525  
Email: [matthew.hackett@ajg.com](mailto:matthew.hackett@ajg.com)

RDA Committees will be advised by the Department of any updates to insurance coverage.



#### **4.5.2 Workers' Compensation Insurance**

RDA Committees are responsible for taking out and maintaining Workers' Compensation Insurance under the relevant State or Territory legislation to cover their employees. RDA Committees must be aware of and comply with their legal responsibilities regarding Workers' Compensation Insurance and Workers Health and Safety.

#### **4.5.3 Asset Insurance**

RDA Committees are responsible for taking out and maintaining comprehensive and contents insurance for all assets owned or controlled by the Committee. This would include contents insurance for the RDA Committee premises and specific cover for items not located within the premises.

#### **4.5.4 Motor Vehicle Insurance**

RDA Committees are responsible for taking out and maintaining comprehensive insurance of any motor vehicle leased (subject to the terms of the lease) or owned by the Committee. The use of personal motor vehicles is not covered by the insurance which is procured by the Department, for example driving a personal motor vehicle to and from an RDA Committee meeting.

### **4.6 Assets (where required)**

#### **4.6.1 RDA Committee Responsibilities for Assets**

The Funding Agreement requires RDA Committees to use assets for the purposes of the Activity, to safeguard their assets, to have regard to sections on assets in this Guide and follow any processes in it, and to maintain an Asset register. This also applies to assets that are owned by a third party and are under lease, hire or finance arrangements. , assets that are lost, damaged or destroyed should be promptly reinstated including from the proceeds of asset insurance referred to in the Insurance clause of the Funding Agreement.

RDA Committees are responsible for purchasing, leasing, managing and disposing of the assets which they acquire with funding:

- the purchase or lease should be in accordance with the Funding Agreement, and not compromise the RDA Committee's ability to comply with the Funding Agreement;
- all assets should be held securely to prevent theft, loss, damage or unauthorised use; and
- RDA Committees should keep appropriate documentation of all assets, including of their purchase or lease, as well as an assets register.

Asset purchases or leases should also provide value for money, so competitive quotes should be obtained and kept on file. The Department may ask to see these quotes and your assessment of them.

The following provides an outline of good practice asset management that RDA Committees are encouraged to follow.

#### **4.6.2 Asset Management System**

RDA Committees should implement an asset management system that sets out procedures to record, monitor and manage assets. Such a system should cover:

- purchasing assets;
- registering assets on the Asset Register (see below);
- testing the assets for impairment as per Australian Accounting Standard AASB 136 'Impairment of Assets' [www.aasb.gov.au/Pronouncements/Current-standards.aspx](http://www.aasb.gov.au/Pronouncements/Current-standards.aspx);
- monitoring and recording the replacement of assets; and
- disposal of assets.

#### **4.6.3 Register of Assets**

The Register of Assets should record details of all significant assets (such as those valued over \$10,000) and all portable and attractive items. The following is an outline template for RDA Committees to follow:

- a description of the asset;
- the date of purchase or lease of the asset;
- the purchase or lease price of the asset;
- the amount of funding used to purchase or lease the asset;
- details of lease arrangements (if applicable);
- the location of the asset;
- the amount of depreciation on the asset;
- details of disposal of the asset (such as the date and method of disposal, sum received and sales particulars); and
- a separate addendum listing all portable and attractive items i.e. those with a high inherent risk of theft, are easily portable or transferrable, and are attractive in terms of their personal use or for resale. This includes mobile telephones, laptops, iPads, tablets, televisions, DVD players and other similar communication tools.

The Register of Assets should be updated whenever assets are acquired or disposed of by the RDA Committee. A copy of the Register of Assets must be provided as part of the RDA Committee's Annual Audited Accounts.

#### **4.6.4 Stocktake of Assets**

RDA Committees should complete a stocktake of their assets every 12 months. This should involve:

- confirming that all items are correctly recorded in the Register of Assets and still in the custody of the Committee;
- checking on the condition of assets, including testing for impairment as per Australian Accounting Standard AASB 136; and
- adding any unrecorded existing assets to the register and removing assets no longer held.

#### **4.6.5 Asset Replacement Account**

An important part of asset management is making provision for the replacement of assets as their useful life expires. RDA Committees should budget for the replacement of assets from their funding and, to support this, may maintain an Asset Replacement account. The dollar value of this account should reflect the accumulated depreciation recorded in the Committee's General Ledger and needs to reconcile to the Register of Assets.

#### **4.6.6 Asset Disposal**

All RDA Committees should have clear procedures for the disposal of assets. Appropriate means of asset disposal include through sale at auction, tender, trade-in or via a second hand dealer. If sale is not practical, another option is to gift the asset to a charitable organisation, local school or library. To ensure a fair return to the RDA Committee and to avoid any actual or perceived preferential treatment, any disposal transaction should be transparent and at arm's length from RDA Committee members and personnel. Assets should therefore not be sold to:

- the RDA Committee Chair;
- RDA Committee members;
- personnel or staff engaged by the RDA Committee;
- officers of the Department;
- contractors; and
- friends or relatives of any of the persons set out above.

The sale process should be clearly documented. Profit from the sale of any asset (disposal price less accumulated depreciation) should be deposited into the RDA Committee's operating account on receipt. That profit remains part of the funding and must be used for the Activity.

When the Funding Agreement expires or if it is terminated, the Department may require the RDA Committee to deal with an asset in a particular way and will notify the RDA Committee in writing what it must do. This advice does not apply to assets that are owned by a third party.

### **4.7 Records Management**

Records refer here to information in any form that is created, received and maintained as evidence and documentation by the RDA Committee or its personnel in pursuance of legal obligations, including undertaking RDA Committee Activities. Record keeping is an important part of transparency and accountability. RDA Committees should implement a records management system, keep accurate records of operations, and store records securely. Some information recorded may be considered sensitive or 'in-confidence', for which particular care should be exercised to ensure integrity and security.

RDA Committees must maintain records and documents consistent with relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation and the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement requires RDA Committees to make and keep full and accurate records of their conduct of Activities and retain them for a period of no less than seven years after the end of the Activity Period.

The Australian and international standard for records management, AS ISO 15489, provides guidance on records policies and procedures to help meet business needs, legal

requirements and stakeholder expectations. It is widely used in Australia and internationally in both private and public organisations. AS ISO 15489 may be purchased from Standards Australia ([www.saiglobal.com](http://www.saiglobal.com)).

The National Archives of Australia also provides advice at <http://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/>—although meant for Commonwealth agencies, much of this advice may also be useful for bodies such as RDA Committees.

Records may be subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cth) and the relevant State or Territory equivalent. Some RDA Committee records may also be deemed to be Commonwealth Records and must be treated accordingly. The *Archives Act 1983* provides further details and clarification of responsibilities. See: [http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/download.cgi/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/aa198398](http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/download.cgi/au/legis/cth/consol_act/aa198398)

#### **4.8 Complaints Management Policy and Procedures**

Complaints management is an important part of good corporate governance and sound management practice. All RDA Committees should have a complaints management policy that sets out how it will handle any grievances.

Feedback, including formal complaints, can be vital in improving the quality of services to a community. All formal complaints should be dealt with in a professional and accountable manner, even where the Committee believes a complainant is vexatious.

When developing a complaints management policy, Committees may find the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Better Practice Guide to Complaint Handling and other guidance at: [Better practice guides - Commonwealth Ombudsman](#).

Complaints regarding RDA Committees should initially be directed to the RDA Committee concerned.

If the RDA Committee is unable to resolve the complaint to a complainant's satisfaction, the complainant may then contact the Department. The Department will investigate and may require the RDA Committees to account for how it:

- gave the complainant the opportunity to be heard by the full Committee;
- investigated the complaint, deliberated on the course of action and recorded the deliberations;
- chose to act in response to the formal complaint; and
- responded to the complainant.

Evidence such as minutes of meetings may also be sought.

Any feedback or complaints concerning the Department itself can be made using the feedback facility located on the Department's website – see: <https://infrastructure.gov.au/utilities/contact.aspx>

#### **4.9 Privacy Requirements**

RDA Committees should be aware of all their legal responsibilities under privacy legislation, as well as those specified in the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement requires that RDA Committees not do anything which, if done by the Department, would be a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle.

The Australian Privacy Principles that were introduced in March 2014 regulate the handling of personal information by Commonwealth agencies, businesses with a turnover of more than \$3 million or those trading in personal information and all private health service providers. For further information, see the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's website: <http://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-news> .

Each RDA Committee should develop a privacy plan for handling Personal Information. Consistent with privacy legislation and good management practice, RDA Committees should:

- ensure that any RDA Committee personnel who are required to deal with Personal Information for the purposes of this Funding Agreement are made aware of the privacy obligations set out in this Guide and the Funding Agreement; and
- immediately notify the Department if they become aware of a breach or possible breach of any of privacy obligations.

#### **4.10 Disclosure**

The Funding Agreement prevents RDA Committees from disclosing any material designated by the Commonwealth as confidential without its permission (except where that disclosure is required by law).

The Commonwealth will seek to use this power cautiously and with restraint. It will usually bear in mind the exemption provisions of Freedom of Information legislation in considering what sorts of documents are to be designated as confidential. The types of documents that could feasibly involve RDA Committees include (but are not limited to) the following broad categories:

- personal privacy;
- business affairs;
- trade secrets or commercially valuable information;
- research by CSIRO or the Australian National University;
- enforcement of law and protection of public safety;
- documents subject to legal professional privilege;
- documents containing material obtained in confidence; and
- documents, disclosure of which would be in contempt of Parliament or in contempt of court.

## **SECTION 4 ATTACHMENT – GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

### **Further Guidance on Corporate Governance**

#### **High Performing Boards—Key Components**

High performing boards typically demonstrate skills in the following four key areas. RDA Committees should consider how their management and operations demonstrate these skills.

People – RDA Committee members hold a combination of skills and expertise including strong social interaction and interpersonal skills. Committees should have strong, but clearly defined relationships between board members and executive staff and clear performance measures and expectations for members and staff. The RDA Committee should promote independence of thought amongst its members.

Information – RDA Committees should develop clear and concise agendas and agenda papers. All information should be provided in a timely manner and appropriately checked before distribution. Committees should have adequate systems and manage resources efficiently, effectively and in an appropriate manner.

Monitoring – RDA Committees should regularly monitor the implementation of strategy and set clear goals and objectives. They should evaluate performance against agreed Outcomes and Performance Measures as well as undertaking robust assessment of RDA Committee member and senior executive staff performance. Committees should develop and adhere to a complex stakeholder management plan and risk management framework.

Decision process – RDA Committee members and RDA personnel should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in the decision making processes and follow clearly developed and agreed processes for decision making. Good decision-making typically takes account of the following:

- Will anyone be adversely affected by the decision?
- Is there legal authority for the decision?
- Who has legal authority to make the decision?
- Why is the decision being made?
- Has natural justice been observed?
- Do the supporting papers identify the individual merits of the decision?
- Is the decision based on facts, or on generalisations?
- What is the critical or turning factor in the decision?
- Has the decision been made expeditiously?
- Is it appropriate to review the decision?
- Avoidance of informal decision-making; informal discussion of matters on the agenda often happens outside meetings, but decisions should be taken formally at the meeting after all members have had the opportunity to receive information and put their views.

## **Effective Committee Meetings**

Effective committee meetings can typically involve:

- clear agreement on the way the committee conducts its business;
- a carefully prepared agenda indicating the purpose of each item (i.e. for decision, for discussion, for information);
- preparation of papers relevant to particular agenda items, which are circulated in good time before meetings;
- frank and open discussion, in which everyone has a say;
- rules about access to information;
- meetings which are as short and “tight” as possible;
- alternation of largely procedural meetings with planning meetings to allow time for a full discussion of strategic issues; and
- accurate, timely records of decisions, discussion and dissent, that make clear what has been decided.

## **Resolving Differences**

RDA Committees must produce the required Reports to a standard acceptable to the Department. Such quality implies rigorous and sometimes robust interaction, but also the harnessing of the experience and creativity of all members and staff. Strong performance over time implies good working relations between members and staff.

Disagreement is an expected part of discussion between committed members of RDA Committees. However, disputes can become unhealthy if they start to become costly in terms of delays, uncertainty and stress on relationships.

### **Toolkit for Resolving Differences**

- Refer to the Code.
- Clarify roles and boundaries.
- Tackle issues through support and supervision.
- Focus members on their commitment to the organisation.
- Review how meetings are run.
- Plan a team-building exercise.
- Seek advice and guidance from third parties.

## **Techniques for Separating People from the Problem**

Responsible assertion:

- Accurately describe what has happened.
- State your feelings about what has happened.
- Say what you would prefer to happen now.

Common interests:

- Use open questions—what, when, who, why.
- If someone states a position, summarise it i.e. employ active listening; and then ask why (i.e. what's behind the position).

Address the problem not the person:

- Listen to concerns—active listening e.g. summarise the main points the speaker has made.
- Use responsible assertion.
- Revisit the agenda.
- Emphasise areas of agreement.
- Use the 'ladder of inference'—where observable data is the bottom rung.

Generating creative options:

- Raise options, not positions.
- Ask hypothetical questions.
- Avoid critical comments—brainstorm instead.
- Be patient, don't give up at the first acceptable option—go on improving it.

## Resources on Corporate Governance

There are a number of available resources on corporate governance that committee managers may find helpful to draw on in developing procedures and reviewing their own practices. Those available from public sector sources include:

- the **Australian National Audit Office** produces a series of Better Practice Guides, including one on public sector governance— [www.anao.gov.au/Publications/Better-Practice-Guides](http://www.anao.gov.au/Publications/Better-Practice-Guides);
- the **Australian Public Service Commission's** *Building Better Governance*— [www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/archive/publications-archive/better-governance](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/archive/publications-archive/better-governance).

Advice is also available from numerous **private sector sources**, including:

- <http://betterboards.net/articles/good-governance/>;
- [www.womenonboards.org.au/](http://www.womenonboards.org.au/);
- [www.boardcheckup.com](http://www.boardcheckup.com);
- [www.effectivegovernance.com.au](http://www.effectivegovernance.com.au);
- Australian Institute of Company Directors, Director Tools provides clear and comprehensive guidance on four key aspects of Board operations - <http://aicd.companydirectors.com.au/resources/director-tools>;
- <http://www.companydirectors.com.au/~media/cd2/resources/director-resources/nfp/pdf/nfp-principles-and-guidance-131015.ashx>;
- St James Ethics Centre, Guidance on ethical decision making, is a concise guide to the key considerations you can use to assist decision-making in an ethical framework— <http://www.ethics.org.au/about/what-is-ethics>;



- The Good Governance Code is a toolkit to accompany the British Good Governance Code can be downloaded free – <https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en>
- Crowe Horwath Corporate Governance Framework™ is a model of the interaction between the many elements of governance – [www.crowehorwath.net/crowe-horwath-global/services/risk/Corporate\\_Governance.aspx?terms=Corporate%20Governance%20Framework%e2%84%a2](http://www.crowehorwath.net/crowe-horwath-global/services/risk/Corporate_Governance.aspx?terms=Corporate%20Governance%20Framework%e2%84%a2;);
- DIY Committee Guide, UK site was originally developed in 2005 by the Volunteer Development Agency (now Volunteer Now) in partnership with other organisations. It provides a central point of access to a wide range of resources developed by groups across the sector and beyond— [www.diycommitteeguide.org/quick-reference](http://www.diycommitteeguide.org/quick-reference);
- The Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance, Ensuring your organisation abides by its Fiduciary Responsibilities - [www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view\\_help\\_sheet.do?articleid=501](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=501);
- Standards Australia provides many resources (but note that users are required to pay for access to these publications)— [www.standards.org.au/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.standards.org.au/Pages/default.aspx):
  - AS ISO 10002-2006 Complaints Handling;
  - AS 8000-2003 Corporate governance—Good governance principles;
  - AS 8002-2003 Corporate governance—Organizational codes of conduct;
  - AS 8003-2003 Corporate governance—Corporate social responsibility;
  - AS 8004-2003 Corporate governance—Whistleblower protection programs for entities;
  - AS 8015-2005 Corporate governance of information and communication technology;
  - HB 254-2005 Governance, risk management and control assurance;
  - HB 407-2006 Corporate governance for small business;
  - AS 8001-2008 Fraud and corruption control;
  - AS/NZS/ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management: Principles and guidelines;
  - ISO 31010-2009 Risk Management—Risk assessment techniques;
  - HB 266:2010 Guide for managing risk in not-for-profit organisations;
  - AS3806:2006 Compliance Programs;
  - AS8000:2003 Corporate Governance: Good Governance Principles; and
  - Prevention of Workplace Harassment Advisory Standard 2004.

## **SECTION 5 – CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND PERSONNEL**

### **5.1 Introduction**

RDA Committee members and staff are required to be people of good character who reflect accepted standards of behaviour. They need to be open, honest and accountable, and to act in good faith. RDA Committees and staff members need to be aware of the responsibilities attached to their roles.

The Code chapter should be read in conjunction with relevant State or Territory incorporated associations legislation. In some jurisdictions legislation may differ from the Guide, particularly with respect to the timeframe for reporting conflicts of interest. It is the responsibility of each RDA Committee to be familiar with the legal requirements in their jurisdiction.

Please also see **Section 8** Communications, in particular Public Comment and Public Comment on Political and Social Issues.

### **5.2 Principles**

RDA Committee members and staff are expected to always act in the best interests of the community in their dealings with government agencies, the business sector, other organisations and individuals by:

- being honest and exercising all due care and diligence in the performance of their duties and functions;
- maintaining the confidentiality of information made available in the course of their duties and of RDA Committee decisions;
- never making improper use of their position, or the information gained through that position, to the unfair advantage of themselves or any other person;
- never taking any course of action that would bring into disrepute or otherwise disadvantage the RDA Committee, the Department or the Commonwealth, the relevant State or Territory government department, the relevant State or Territory Minister responsible for regional development or local government in the RDA Committee region;
- disclosing any material or personal interest in RDA Committee or regional economic development matters, and subsequently abstain from any discussion or vote on those issues;
- being bound by, and committed to, decisions legitimately taken by the RDA Committee, whether or not they agree with the decision;
- demonstrating loyalty to the public interest and to the standards set out in the Funding Agreement and this Guide; and
- providing authorised persons, fellow members and auditors when asked with complete, accurate and correct information, which is not misleading in any respect.

### **5.3 Personal and Professional Behaviour**

Duties must be performed diligently, impartially and conscientiously to the best of each member's ability. Members must comply with all relevant State or Territory and Commonwealth legislation.

## **5.4 Fairness and Equity**

It is important that the principles of fairness and equity are both complied with and are seen to be complied with. These principles are:

- taking all relevant information into consideration and not taking any irrelevant information or opinion into consideration;
- dealing with like situations in a consistent and fair manner, but treating each matter on its merits;
- acting in a reasonable, just and non-discriminatory manner;
- taking all reasonable steps to ensure that the information upon which decisions or actions are based is factually correct; and
- only acting for proper and relevant purposes, and on proper and relevant grounds.

## **5.5 Use of Information**

Information provided to an RDA Committee may come with the understanding that the information will be treated as confidential, commercial-in-confidence and/or sensitive. It is important to ensure the integrity and security of official documents for which Committee members are responsible and to respect the rights of the providers of information. In accordance with the Disclosure of Information clause of the Funding Agreement, RDA Committees should not disclose information that the Commonwealth has designated as confidential. Confidential information must not be released unless:

- required by law;
- freedom of Information / Right to Information legislation requires the release; or
- permission has been granted by the Commonwealth or, where relevant, the State or Territory government, local government, or the provider of the information.

The above does not affect the application of specific contractual arrangements to particular confidential information under any contract entered into by the RDA Committee.

## **5.6 Conditions of RDA Committee Membership and Employment**

RDA Committee members are expected to represent the Committees' interests in the region, rather than those of any particular organisation(s), business or local council, and must be available to participate in Committee meetings and activities. Committee members and staff must:

- as a matter of principle, be excluded from tendering for consultancy or contract work for or on behalf of the RDA Committee (see also 5.7.5 below);
- comply with the relevant State or Territory associations' incorporation legislation, and the conditions stipulated by the Department and the relevant State or Territory government department in the Funding Agreement(s) with the RDA Committee regarding the allocation of administration and/or project funds; and
- be people of good character who reflect accepted standards of community behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to, not having a civil or criminal conviction punishable by a period of imprisonment and not being an undischarged bankrupt.

## 5.7 Conflict of Interest

### 5.7.1 Overview

Conflict of interest is one of the most important governance issues for RDA Committees. As recipients of Commonwealth funds, it is essential that RDA Committees undertake their activities in a fair, non-biased and apolitical manner, without actual or perceived conflicts of interest in their decision-making.

As some conflicts of interest may be unavoidable, RDA Committees need to manage all conflicts of interest within an ethical, open and transparent framework that requires the Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, members and personnel to act with integrity, impartiality, good faith and in the best interests of the RDA Committee at all times.

Transparency is fundamental to the principles of good governance and managing conflicts of interest. RDA Committees should build an ethical culture by consistently requiring conflicts of interest to be identified, recorded and dealt with properly. The Funding Agreement requires RDA Committees to take all reasonable steps to identify any conflicts of interest and to maintain a register of these. Declaration of conflicts of interest should be a standing item on all RDA Committee agendas.

Declaration and discussion of conflicts of interest should appear early on the RDA Committee agenda and prior to the discussion on any substantive issues.

### 5.7.2 Conflict Defined

A Conflict is defined in the Funding Agreement as an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest arising through an RDA Committee member or RDA personnel engaging in any activity or obtaining any interest that is likely to or has potential to conflict with or restrict the RDA Committee in engaging in the Activities fairly and independently. When assessing conflicts of interest, the RDA Committee should always take a conservative approach and carefully consider the perception of a Conflict by the general public. The test should always be: *Could a member of the community, on the face of it and with limited information, consider the matter to be a conflict of interest?*

### 5.7.3 Identifying a Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when an RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or personnel:

- has a personal, business, or financial interest that could be considered to influence their work with the RDA Committee, their contribution to debates by the RDA Committee, and/or decisions taken by the RDA Committee; or
- uses information and/or contacts gained through working in a professional capacity for the RDA Committee to benefit their own personal business interests in any way, or inform other organisations that they are involved with outside the RDA Committee where those organisations could benefit directly or indirectly from the information.

Conflicts of interest can be direct or indirect, for example:

- the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employees owning or having an interest in a business that is under consideration to provide goods or services to an RDA Committee;
- a close family member being employed by an organisation applying for support for a project;

- the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employees participating in a decision that results in their gaining an economic or financial benefit or a non-financial benefit, such as a gift being given to the individual involved in making the decision;
- the RDA Committee employs a partner, relative or close friend of a Committee member or an employee, who is then responsible for approving benefits such as reimbursement of travel or salary increase for that person; and
- progressing personal business or personal business relationships through the course of RDA Committee professional business.

RDA Committees should contact the Department's liaison officer if they have any questions about conflict of interest arrangements or whether a particular activity constitutes a Conflict.

#### **5.7.4 *Disclosing a Conflict of Interest***

The Commonwealth expects all RDA Committees to have clearly documented principles and procedures for handling conflicts of interest, consistent with their constitution, the Funding Agreement and this Guide. In addition, declaration of conflicts of interest should be a standing agenda item for all RDA Committee and sub-committee meetings.

If, while performing RDA Committee business, the Committee Chair believes that he or she has a conflict or potential conflict of interest, he or she must disclose the nature of the conflict to the Committee. Similarly, the Deputy Chair, Committee members or personnel must disclose any real, perceived or potential conflict to the Chair of their RDA Committee as soon as that conflict or potential conflict becomes apparent. Such declarations should be made immediately after the Committee has received the agenda and papers for its next meeting. The interests of immediate family members and close associates should also be disclosed to the extent that they are known and could be considered to lead to a conflict of interest. All disclosures, discussions and decisions on conflicts of interest must be recorded in the Minutes of the relevant Committee meeting.

If a situation arises where any member of the RDA Committee (or employee) believes that there is an undisclosed conflict or potential conflict of interest, the matter should, in the first instance, be raised with the party who may be conflicted. Such a discussion should be sufficient to suggest that a potential conflict exists and the matter should then be listed for discussion by the Committee at its next meeting. If doubt continues to exist, the matter should be raised with the Chair of the Committee or with the Department if related to the Chair.

Following disclosure, the remaining RDA Committee members must determine whether or not there is a conflict of interest. Where it is determined that a conflict of interest exists, or may be perceived to exist, the RDA Committee must determine a course of action which ensures that any subsequent decisions and/or actions are, and are seen to be, free of undue influence or bias.

In doing this, the RDA Committee should refer to its Constitution, which may prescribe arrangements with respect to voting on decisions where a conflict or the perception of a conflict of interest exists. In the absence of such direction, the RDA Committee must take action to preclude the member with the identified conflict from:

- receiving any subsequent or related papers;
- being present and/or participating in the consideration, discussion or debate on the matter;

- voting on the matter;
- being counted in quorum for the vote on the matter; or
- being privy to the record of discussion of the matter, including the record which is set out in the Minutes of the meeting.

The decision of the RDA Committee (and the steps taken to resolve or deal with the perceived or actual conflict of interest) must be recorded in the Minutes of the RDA Committee meeting.

Where a conflict of interest arises or is perceived to arise, the Department may investigate the circumstances of the conflict to determine that the action taken to address the conflict is appropriate.

### **5.7.5 Managing an Ongoing Conflict of Interest**

A different situation arises when a conflict of interest is ongoing and may continue to affect an individual's ability to perform RDA Committee business or contribute to Committee discussions, deliberations and/or decision-making.

In the case of ongoing conflicts of interest, RDA Committees should conduct an initial investigation into the conflicts of interest, including the evaluation of any potential remedies, and a risk assessment which:

- identifies the risks;
- evaluates the nature of the risks (for example, if the risk eventuated, would the consequences be serious?);
- evaluates the likelihood of the risks (for example, is it probable that the risk will occur?);
- considers whether the risk may be acceptable to the Commonwealth, relevant State or Territory governments, and the public;
- determines whether the proposed remedies (if any) would adequately resolve or otherwise manage the risk; and
- leads to the RDA Committee notifying the Department immediately if it is determined that a conflict restricts the RDA Committee from undertaking activities in a fair and independent way, including advice of what measures are being taken to prevent any such restriction.

All action taken to address these situations must be documented and readily accessible. Where the risk cannot be mitigated, the RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair or Committee member should be excluded from all discussion on the matter, including receiving papers and records of discussion and decision.

Some general advice on procedures to manage conflicts of interest and conflicts of role is available from the Australian Public Service Commission's website, at the following link: [conflicts of interest](#).

Section 5.6 of this Guide requires that, as a matter of principle, Committee members and staff must be excluded from tendering for consultancy or contract work for or on behalf of the Committee. In rare cases, however, the RDA Committee may be able to substantiate that a Committee or staff member is the only provider that can reasonably provide a service in that region due to the nature of that service and the location of the RDA Committee. In such a case, the RDA Committee must follow the requirements of this

section 5.6, including that the RDA Committee approves the work, the terms are reasonable and comparable with those elsewhere and that the selection process is open and transparent, documented and stored in the RDA Committee's conflict of interest records.

## **5.8 Gifts, Benefits and Assets**

A Committee member or employee of the RDA Committee must never demand or request any gift or benefit for the member or anyone else in connection with his or her Committee work. A member or employee should not accept any gift or benefit if he or she thinks, or a reasonable person would think that the person offering the gift is likely to expect the member or employee to be influenced in the way that he or she does his or her RDA Committee work as a result of the gift.

Generally, non-token gifts should be accepted only in exceptional circumstances. Where non-token gifts are accepted, it would be appropriate to inform the Chair of the RDA Committee or the next meeting of the Committee. If the member or employee is in any doubt about whether or not a gift is token, he or she should notify the Chair. As set out in the guidance on asset disposal, RDA Committees should follow proper procedure for the disposal of assets, including not selling these to Committee members, RDA personnel, contractors, or to friends or relatives of any of the foregoing.

## **5.9 Public Comment**

With respect to activities funded by the Commonwealth, State or Territory or local governments, the RDA Committee should not make any statements or give any undertaking that could be interpreted as committing the Commonwealth Minister or relevant State or Territory Minister or the Commonwealth, State or Territory or local governments to a particular action or expenditure. This position should be made clear in any negotiations which the RDA Committee, its members, staff or representatives undertake with any company, firm or other body, or member of the public.

Whilst it is recognised that RDA Committee members as members of the community have the right to make public comment and enter into public debate on political and social issues, care must be taken not to convey the impression that such comment is an official comment made in their capacity as a RDA Committee member or member of RDA staff.

If it is not possible for the RDA Committee member or member of RDA staff to make it clear that he or she is speaking personally, it may be appropriate not to make any public comment.

While constructive criticism of the operations of RDA and the departments is welcome, it is inappropriate for such criticism to be reflected in press releases, public documents or statements. The Chair has the role of channelling matters of this nature to the State, Territory or Commonwealth Ministers and/or senior staff of their departments.

## **5.10 Corrupt and Unethical Conduct**

If a Committee member or employee of the RDA Committee is aware of any possible corrupt or unethical conduct by another Committee member(s) or employee, it must be reported to the Chair of the Committee. The member or employee does not need to have proof that corruption or unethical conduct is occurring. He or she needs merely to suspect it on reasonable grounds. The RDA Chair can then seek specialist advice for managing the particular issue. Corrupt and unethical conduct can also be reported to the Department, or the relevant State or Territory departmental manager responsible for regional

development, where appropriate. This does not alleviate any right or obligation of the relevant Committee member or employee to also report the conduct to relevant authorities (for example, the police) as required under relevant legislation.

People who report possible corrupt or unethical conduct will not be penalised for reporting possible misconduct.

### **5.11 Breaches of the Code**

RDA Committees should be vigilant for any actual or perceived breaches of the Code, and be prepared to take their own disciplinary action as necessary. Breaches of the Code are likely to result in disciplinary action. Sanctions, including termination of a Committee member's appointment by the Chair or termination of a Chair appointment by the Minister(s), will be considered in the event of a serious breach of the Code.

In addition, the Commonwealth can make use of formal powers under various provisions of the Funding Agreement to help ensure that RDA Committees meet the standards of the Code. In particular, the Conflict clause of the Funding Agreement requires RDA Committees to have regard to the Code, and specifies that the Department may investigate the circumstances of the handling of the conflict or breach of the Committee Code and determine the action that You or the Committee must take to resolve or otherwise deal with the conflict or breach. Failure to do so can lead to removal of Committee members(s), removal of personnel, the withholding or recovery of funds, or the termination of the Funding Agreement. Grounds for termination for default expressly include an RDA Committee undertaking any act, including relating to its internal management procedures, that the Commonwealth considers will seriously compromise the efficiency and effectiveness of the RDA Committee's conduct.

More broadly, the You Are Required To Carry Out The Activity clause of the Funding Agreement requires all RDA Committees to:

- comply with all relevant laws and, in particular, maintain robust practices and procedures regarding fraud control; and
- ensure that their internal management practices, including governance documents such as their constitutions, give effect to and remain consistent with their obligations under the Funding Agreement.

Under the Management of Funding clause of the Funding Agreement, all RDA Committees are required to carry out the Activity in accordance with the Funding Agreement and 'diligently, effectively and to a high professional standard.'

Depending on the nature of the breach of the Code, referral to appropriate authorities may also be necessary.

### **5.12 Allegations of Impropriety**

It is important that the conduct of RDA Committee members and employees is at all times perceived in the community to reflect the principles and ethical requirements set out in the Code. If allegations concerning the conduct of a member or employee are made or aired in the public domain that, if true, would constitute a breach of the Code, the member concerned must stand down from the Committee upon request by the Commonwealth and relevant State or Territory governments and relevant State or Territory local government association where appropriate.



Allegations made in the public domain include being:

- referred to in sworn evidence (either oral or written) in any court or tribunal proceeding in relation to an act of impropriety;
- the subject of or named as a person of interest in any investigation by a State or Territory ombudsman or Commonwealth ombudsman; or
- the subject of or named as a person of interest in any investigation or proceedings by any other governmental or quasi-governmental body in any jurisdiction.

The member may resume his or her membership of the RDA Committee when the relevant court, tribunal or other body makes a finding of fact that the allegations are unfounded, or otherwise when the Commonwealth and relevant State or Territory governments and where appropriate the relevant State or Territory local government association, so determines.

## **SECTION 6 – POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

### **6.1 Contesting Elections and Political Participation**

The Commonwealth acknowledges the involvement of RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members and employees in community organisations and institutions, such as service clubs, Chambers of Commerce and local government. However, all levels of government expect that RDA Committees will ensure that their operations remain apolitical at all times. RDA Committees should be particularly alert to incidents that may compromise the apolitical nature of the RDA Committee's operations leading into a federal, State, Territory or local government election.

### **6.2 Campaigning by RDA Chairs, Members and Employees**

Where RDA Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members or employees are playing a significant part in a political campaign there is potential for a perceived or actual conflict of interest between issues raised in the campaign and their involvement with the RDA Committee. Significant political campaigning includes, but is not limited to:

- running as a candidate in an election for public office;
- acting as a Campaign Director, or similar, for a candidate for public office; or
- providing full-time, or substantial part-time (over 15 hours per week), administrative or other support to such a candidate.

It may also be difficult for individuals who are involved in campaigning to maintain their commitment as an RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair or member. The Funding Agreement (Clause 17.5) provides for RDA Committee members or personnel who have a significant involvement in an election campaign for office in a federal, State or Territory election to stand aside from the Committee from the date that caretaker conventions apply until such time as these conventions cease to be in force (caretaker conventions begin when the Parliament is dissolved and end when the result of the election is clear, or if there is a change of government, when the new government is appointed).

Where this circumstance arises the individual should advise the RDA Committee in writing. The RDA Committee should then write to the Department to confirm the date that a Committee member or employee has stood aside. Advice on alternative arrangements for employees should also be communicated to the Department. Where a Chair is aware that an executive Committee position may become temporarily vacated due to this provision, the Chair may offer a replacement at that time.

Committee members or personnel playing a significant part in a local government election campaign can maintain their involvement with the RDA Committee. However, they should be aware that in participating in an election for any level of government they need to avoid creating the impression that they are representing the RDA Committee. They should not, for example, use clothing, badges or letterhead featuring the RDA Committee name or logo, or introduce themselves as a Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employee of the RDA Committee.

### **6.3 Launches, Seminars or Other Public Events**

RDA Committee launches, seminars or other public events that may take place during the caretaker period should avoid hosting Ministers, other politicians or local government representatives. Flyers, speeches or media releases about the event must be apolitical. RDA Committees should also take steps to address a situation where a politician has been invited to a public event prior to the election having been called, with the result that the

event takes place during the caretaker period. This may involve cancelling the invitation, deferring the event or inviting representatives of other parties that could form government.

#### **6.4 Information Campaigns and Promotional Activities**

Some information and promotional campaigns related to government programs and initiatives may need to be suspended or curtailed depending on the nature of the campaign and whether they are likely to affect voting. Caution should be exercised to ensure that material used on RDA Committee websites is not political material and printed material produced and distributed by RDA Committees is not electoral matter (that is, matter which is intended or likely to affect voting in an election). Information that is of a political nature should not be added to websites or included in RDA Committee printed material.

Events, items on websites and newsletter articles which highlight the role of particular Ministers or other government representatives or which address issues which are matters of controversy between the major political parties should be avoided in the caretaker period.

#### **6.5 Provision of Information**

During the caretaker period, an RDA Committee Chair, Deputy Chair, member or employee should not give any member of any political party information that may be used for political advantage.

#### **6.6 Fund Raising Events**

RDA Committees are apolitical and should not, at any time (caretaker period or otherwise) contribute funds or resources towards any political party or candidate for election—this is either directly through a donation or attendance at or contribution to fund raising events.

The provision of equal contributions to all parties is not an acceptable use of Committee funds and clearly not an RDA Committee activity. RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members or employees may make a contribution to a campaign in a personal capacity but not from RDA Committee funds.

#### **6.7 Advertising**

RDA Committees can advertise consultation meetings in the press where such advertisements relate to their usual business. The RDA logo and the Australian coat of arms can be used. The coat of arms should be used *without* tag lines such as “An Australian Government Initiative”.

#### **6.8 Use of RDA Facilities**

RDA Committee assets and premises must not be utilised for support of any political party or candidate. This includes producing or disseminating political material using Committee equipment or resources, for example photocopiers, fax machines and office supplies. Party political material should not be put on the RDA Committee’s website and requests from political candidate to visit RDA Committee premises for electioneering purposes should be declined. Party political meetings must not be held on RDA Committee premises.

RDAs are to remain apolitical at all times. Display of party political material including posters, leaflets and badges is not permitted on RDA Committee premises or on the RDA Committee website.

## **6.9 Practical Application of Pre-Election Guidelines**

When the Commonwealth assumes its caretaker role, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet normally issues “Guidance on Caretaker Conventions” which will apply during the caretaker period and is available on its website [www.dpmc.gov.au](http://www.dpmc.gov.au). Several of these conventions apply to the operations of RDA Committees, and assist in the maintenance of the RDA Committee’s apolitical status during the pre-election time.

As the employer of the Executive Officer and other staff, the RDA Committee needs to develop a policy, and/or operational arrangements that reflect these guidelines, and which set out actions to be taken when a member of the Committee or other employee is significantly involved in election campaigning.

## SECTION 6 ATTACHMENT – WORKING WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT



### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

### WORKING WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

April 2019

#### **Communicating with Members of Parliament and Senators**

RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs, members and employees should seek to work cooperatively with local Members of the Federal Parliament (Members of the House of Representatives and Senators). RDA will be an effective conduit between governments and regional communities, and will provide advice to governments about the strengths and weaknesses of regional Australia.

#### **Attendance at Meetings**

The RDA Chair may invite local MPs or Senators to attend an RDA meeting each year. Local MPs and Senators will, however, only have observer status when attending the RDA meeting. In some cases, RDA Committee business may need to be considered privately and, in such cases, the Chair should request any observers or guests to absent themselves from the meeting.

MPs and Senators do not have an active role in the decision making processes of the Committee and must not attempt to influence proceedings. MPs and Senators should not seek to give, and nor should RDA Committees take, direction on matters relating to the committee's work.

RDA Chairs should note that conflict of Interest procedures for MPs and Senators are to be observed. MPs and Senators are required to declare any personal or professional conflict with any item on the agenda. In cases where a conflict is identified, the MP or Senator will not receive papers or background information on that item nor participate in the discussion on that item.

#### **Advice on Outcomes of Consultations**

It would be reasonable for the RDA Chair to meet annually with its local MP or Senator to update them on the Committee's work. This meeting could also provide an opportunity for the Committee to present a copy of its Annual Report or other public document. Advice and information provided to MPs and Senators should be in writing and refer only to publicly available material.

## SECTION 7 – RDA COMMITTEE AS AN EMPLOYER

*This section only applies to incorporated RDA Committees.*

Drawing on operational funding provided by the Commonwealth, RDA Committees will employ a Director of Regional Development (or equivalent) and such other staff as they require to provide management skills and support to deliver Outcomes.

### 7.1 Legal Obligations as an Employer

Each RDA Committee, as a separate legal entity, is required to meet its contractual and legal obligations as an employer. Committees should as necessary seek professional and/or legal advice on human resource management issues, such as recruitment and management (including contracting), wages and conditions, workplace relations, performance reviews and grievance procedures, workplace health and safety, staff training, and superannuation.

#### 7.1.1 Legislation

Commonwealth legislation that applies directly to the workplace includes:

- the *Fair Work Act 2009* <https://www.fwc.gov.au/about-us/legislation-regulations-0>
- the *Work Place Health and Safety Act 2011*
- [https://www.comcare.gov.au/the\\_scheme/the\\_whs\\_act](https://www.comcare.gov.au/the_scheme/the_whs_act)  
—see section 7.3 below.
- the *Privacy Act 1988* <https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy-law/privacy-act/> ;
- the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* [https://www.comcare.gov.au/the\\_scheme/the\\_src\\_act](https://www.comcare.gov.au/the_scheme/the_src_act) ; and
- Commonwealth racial, sex, disability and age discrimination legislation [www.humanrights.gov.au/about/legislation/index.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/legislation/index.html) .

Comprehensive information about an organisation's obligations to its employees can be found via the Australian Government Business Entry Point website, see: <https://www.business.gov.au/Info/Run>

Various State and Territory legislation also applies to workplaces. All State and Territory governments have websites that provide further practical information on employer responsibilities, many of which can be accessed via the Australian Government Business Entry Point website, see: <http://www.business.gov.au/business-topics/employing-people/Pages/default.aspx>

#### 7.1.2 National Employment Standards

Most Australian workplaces are governed by the system created by the *Fair Work Act 2009*. On 1 January 2010, the National Employment Standards (NES) replaced the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard. Together with modern awards (also applicable from 1 January 2010), the NES make up a safety net for employees covered by the national workplace relations system. In addition to the NES, an employee's terms and conditions of employment generally come from an award or agreement.

The NES are set out in the *Fair Work Act 2009* and comprise a safety net of ten minimum conditions for all employees in the national workplace relations system. The NES apply to all employees covered by the national workplace relations system (but only certain

entitlements apply to casual employees). Employer obligations under the NES include giving every new employee a copy of the Fair Work Information Statement before or as soon as possible after they start work.

Further information is available at these websites:

- the Commonwealth Department of Employment - <https://employment.gov.au/>;
- the Fair Work Commission - <http://www.fwc.gov.au/>; and
- the Fair Work Ombudsman - <http://www.fairwork.gov.au/>.

## **7.2 Management of RDA Committee Personnel**

### **7.2.1 Main Obligations as an Employer**

RDA Committees should aim to position themselves as employers of choice, capable of attracting and retaining skilled staff in a competitive labour market. They should provide a safe and supportive work environment, and present staff with learning and development opportunities. For further information regarding general good practice see the following website – [www.fairwork.gov.au/resources/best-practice-guides/pages/default.aspx](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/resources/best-practice-guides/pages/default.aspx)

All staff are to be engaged under an employment contract. In developing the employment contracts between the RDA Committee and its employees, RDA Committees could use the services of an independent employment expert, such as an industrial relations consultant, legal employment specialist or the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Each RDA Committee should maintain a human resources policies and procedures manual that is provided to all personnel. This could cover the following:

- recruitment procedures;
- employment conditions, including probation, remuneration and leave;
- workplace health and safety, covering general provisions and also workplace specific security and safety procedures;
- policies and legislation on ethical behaviour, including privacy, harassment, discrimination and conflict of interest;
- management of funds;
- workplace grievances;
- appropriate use of workplace technology by employees; and
- staff resignation and termination.

### **7.2.2 Job Description and Duty Statement**

The RDA Committee should develop job descriptions and duty statements for all staff positions. Job descriptions should reflect the core business of the RDA Committee and the Committee's role as defined by the Funding Agreement and Annual Business Plan. These should also set out the role of the employee, duties and responsibilities and reporting arrangements. RDA Committee staff may not be members of the RDA Committee.

When advertising a position, by law employers should not use discriminatory language that may exclude potential employees on the basis of race, age, sex, marital status, family status or responsibility, pregnancy, religious and political beliefs, disability, gender history or sexual orientation.

### **7.2.3 Selection of Committee Personnel**

The selection of all RDA Committee personnel should be based on the merit principle and follow a transparent and public process. This means that selection decisions are based on merit having regard to the qualifications, skills and experience of candidates in relation to the duties of the position and that the process is, and is seen to be, fair and open with all candidates having an equal opportunity for success.

Positions should be advertised and interviews conducted by a panel. It is desirable that this panel includes a person who is independent of the RDA Committee.

### **7.2.4 Employment Arrangements**

The RDA Committee should agree to the terms and conditions of employment of the Director of Regional Development, or their equivalent, and of all other Committee employees prior to the positions being advertised and appointments made.

The Funding Agreement stipulates that the Director of Regional Development position must be advertised at the conclusion of each contract period or when the position is vacated and that the Department must be notified when the position is to be advertised. RDA Committees should take their known and anticipated budget into account when employing staff.

All RDA Committee employees are to be engaged under a formal employment contract that has been developed independently of the employee (for example by an independent organisation such as the Fair Work Ombudsman, an industrial relations consultant, a legal employment specialist, or as agreed by the Department) and endorsed by the RDA Committee Chair and/or the RDA Committee.

Employment arrangements should be clearly recorded and documentation retained. RDA Committees should ensure that each employee has a copy of the agreed terms and conditions prior to commencement of his or her employment.

The employment contract for the Director of Regional Development should include a duty statement and clearly outline the conditions of employment. The conditions of employment should be comparable to other similar positions, especially with regard to work arrangements, pay, leave, notice and termination clauses – an independent employment expert can advise on these matters. Details on performance measures and reviews and reporting requirements should be clearly stated.

### **7.2.5 Remuneration, Leave and Entitlements**

RDA Committees should determine and document remuneration rates and processes, including non-cash items and reimbursement of expenses for employees. Increases in remuneration should be in line with industry standards and clearly linked to performance assessments.

As an employer, each RDA Committee is responsible for complying with all relevant legislative requirements for employees such as annual leave, sick leave, long service leave, maternity leave, superannuation and other post employment benefits. RDA Committees are provided with funding to cover all employment costs. RDA Committees must maintain an employee entitlement account, which holds funds to meet accrued employee liabilities and entitlements in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

RDA Committees should allocate a portion of their budgets for staff training and development. Individual staff development plans should be negotiated between the



RDA Committee Chair and the Director of Regional Development, or between the Director of Regional Development and other employees as appropriate. Specific training and development activities should be linked to each employee's performance agreement.

### **7.2.6 Employee Performance**

RDA Committees should have a staff performance management framework in place. Individual performance agreements should be negotiated between the RDA Committee Chair and the Director of Regional Development, or between the Director of Regional Development and RDA Committee employees as appropriate, and be linked to training and development activities, and ensuring efforts are directed toward delivery of the RDA Charter.

Performance reviews should be conducted at least every six months throughout the employment contract. Performance reviews are an opportunity to provide two-way performance feedback, assess a staff member's overall performance, identify strengths and weaknesses, develop a plan to address weaknesses, reward performance and to manage performance where it does not meet expectations or agreed outcomes.

### **7.2.7 Grievances**

Organisations with an effective formal grievance procedure that is open and accessible to staff will encourage the early reporting of grievances. This means that grievances can be resolved early and will be less likely to escalate into more difficult management problems. Unresolved grievances can be financially expensive to organisations because they result in increased absenteeism, increased leave due to stress, low morale within the workplace, high turnover of staff and underperformance. RDA Committees should implement a documented formal grievance procedure which is open and accessible to all their employees.

### **7.2.8 Termination of Employment Contracts**

If the employment contract of an RDA Committee's employee is terminated before the end of a funding period, the liability to meet the early release costs will have to be met by the RDA Committee out of its Operational Budget. It is recommended that each Committee maintain an employee redundancy account to hold funds to meet any potential employee redundancy entitlements should they be required under the relevant award or the individual's employment contract, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

Although management of such staff is up to RDA Committees, Clause 23.9 of the Funding Agreement provides the Commonwealth with the power to give notice in writing requiring an RDA Committee to remove RDA Committee Personnel from activities relating to the Funding Agreement. This is subject to reasonable grounds and relevant legislation. Without limiting this power in any way, it is expected that Clause 23.9 will only be used where there is a compelling case for removal and after consultation with the RDA Committee concerned.

## **7.3 Work Health and Safety (WHS)**

As the Department and RDA Committees share duties relating to the Funding Agreement, each has a joint responsibility to consult, co-operate and to co-ordinate their activities as they relate to Workplace Health and Safety (WHS). To achieve this, RDA Committees should prepare an annual WHS risk assessment and plan, and also report against this plan. The risk assessment, plan and report should only focus on RDA Committee activities that fall under the RDA Funding Agreement, and RDA Committees and personnel should consider WHS matters when undertaking these activities.

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), the Department and RDA Committees share responsibility for WHS. Section 46 of the WHS Act provides that;

*If more than one person has a duty in relation to the same matter under this Act, each person with the duty must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with all other persons who have a duty in relation to the same matter.*

As part of these shared responsibilities, RDA Committees are to:

- comply with all duties under applicable work health and safety laws;
- undertake risk assessments of all safety issues for their workers arising from the carrying out of the Activities that fall under the Funding Agreement; and
- implement appropriate control measures, including putting in place an appropriate management system to address health and safety; and
- provide the Department with a copy of their risk assessment and plan and a copy of their implementation report, if requested by the Department.

At any time, the Department may wish to discuss with RDA Committees risks associated with undertaking activities relating to the Funding Agreement, and revisions to any activities which have been identified in the RDA Committee's WHS risk assessment, plan and reports as posing unmanageable risk.

More information on the WHS Act is available by accessing the Comcare website, see: [www.comcare.gov.au/WHS](http://www.comcare.gov.au/WHS), or the Safe Work Australia website, see: [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA).

## **SECTION 8 – COMMUNICATIONS**

### **8.1 Public Comment**

Refer to Section 5.9.9 of the RDA Code of Conduct and Ethics for Committee and Staff.

### **8.2 Public Comment on Political and Social Issues**

It is understood and welcomed that RDA Committee Chairs or their appointed delegate will make public comments on issues relating to economic development and programs in their region and that this may include advocating support for or opposing a change in Commonwealth law, policy or practice. Nothing in the Funding Agreement or this Guide is intended to inhibit this. In commenting publicly, Committee members and personnel should consider the opportunities for their RDA Committee to promote Commonwealth programs and facilitate the take-up of appropriate funding opportunities to progress regional economic growth in accordance with their Funding Agreement. Public comment should complement the role of the RDA Committees, be constructive in resolving an issue, and recognise the contribution that the RDA Committee is seeking to make to progress an issue for the community.

Committee members and personnel should also take care when they are speaking on behalf of the RDA Committee to uphold its status as an apolitical organisation that is not aligned with any particular political party. The conduct of operations of RDA Committees should remain politically neutral at all times, and be undertaken in an impartial and professional manner.

### **8.3 Regional Development Australia Website—[www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au)**

The Regional Development Australia website is maintained by the Department for the purpose of enhancing communication, raising the profile of the RDA network, and disseminating information between RDA Committees, regional communities and the Department. The website contains RDA maps by State, Territory and region. One of the key features of the website is the Members tab, which allows RDA Committees to access important operational and governance documents, such as branding guidelines and logos. The website also contains information for people considering applying for a position on an RDA Committee, including the application process and selection criteria for all positions.

### **8.4 RDA Committee Communications and Branding Guidelines**

The *Communication and Branding Guidelines for RDA Committees* is attached here and also available on the RDA website at [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

This is a living document that provides information on the use of logos and protocols surrounding all RDA Committee communications activities, including the development of, and reporting of, communications strategies.

Queries about communications and branding issues can be emailed to [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au).

#### **8.4.1 RDA Committee websites**

Each RDA Committee must create and maintain a public website. The website must include:

- information about the RDA Committee's role and activities, in terms of the Activity as set out in the Funding Agreement;
- a current list of Committee members and key staff and the RDA Committee contact details (including links to the Committee's social media pages);
- a link to the Commonwealth's website at [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au);
- a copy of the RDA Charter;
- copies of all newsletters or updates that RDA Committee's send to stakeholders and any other significant reports that you produce or are produced by others and are relevant to Your Region; and
- any other information that the Department may ask you to include from time to time.

#### **8.4.2 RDA Committee social media presence**

Each RDA Committee must establish and maintain a social media presence to promote the RDA network and the activities and outcomes of their Committee.

Further guidance on using social media to promote the work of your RDA Committee and the network more broadly is provided in the attached *Communications and Branding Guidelines*.

## **SECTION 8 ATTACHMENT – RDA COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING GUIDELINES**

### **Background**

The Regional Development Australia (RDA) Communications and Branding Guidelines (the Guidelines) have been produced as a reference guide for RDA Committees when conducting communications activities. They outline the correct use of the RDA national brandmark and the expectations of the Commonwealth regarding the quality, format and standard of the communications activities to be produced by RDA Committees.

RDA Committees should also consider guidelines developed by other funding partners in the preparation of any materials.

The Guidelines have been developed to:

1. Equip RDA Committees with the information and tools needed to effectively deliver their communication roles and responsibilities.
2. Ensure a consistent, national approach to the RDA national brand.
3. Ensure Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government support and involvement in the delivery of the initiative.

These Guidelines work in accordance with the Australian Government Branding Guidelines, which should be referred to for any further clarification and is available at <https://www.pmc.gov.au/resource-centre/government/australian-government-branding-guidelines-use-australian-government-logo-australian-government-departments-and-agencies>.

The Guidelines also work in conjunction with the Trade Mark Protocol for RDA.

If you require assistance or further information regarding the Guidelines, please contact the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities (the Department) via email at [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au).

### **Communication Aims and Objectives**

The overarching aim of RDA communication products and activities is to encourage community support for, and regional stakeholder engagement with, RDA Committees.

The objectives of RDA communications activities are to:

- increase understanding and awareness of RDA Committees and of the benefits the national RDA network offers to regional communities;
- promote the achievements of the national RDA network;
- encourage and promote joint government, business and stakeholder support in promoting the network; and
- promote the achievements of the RDA network.

### **Target Audiences**

The target audiences for RDA communication products and activities include:

- business, industry and community peak bodies and associations

- national and regional electronic and print media
- people living in regional communities (general public)
- local government
- State and Territory Government; and
- the Commonwealth.

### **Key Messages**

The key messages that can be conveyed via RDA communication products and activities include:

- RDA Committee members are local people developing local solutions to local issues;
- RDA Committees work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the growth and development of their regions; and
- RDA Committees have an active and facilitative role in their communities and a clear focus on growing strong and confident regional economies that harness their competitive advantages, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.

### **RDA Communication Products and Activities**

All RDA communication products and activities are required to follow advice provided in the:

- RDA Procedures and Better Practice Guide;
- Funding Agreement; and
- RDA Communications and Branding Guidelines.

RDA communication products and activities should acknowledge the financial and other support that the RDA Committee has received from the Commonwealth. Where applicable, they should also acknowledge support from State and Territory governments and local government and, in doing so, consider guidelines developed by these funding partners.

Outlined in this section are the communications products and activities that RDA Committees are encouraged to develop and undertake, as well as the branding requirements. The Department will also produce communication products and activities that Committees can draw on to further promote themselves.

For guidelines on communication activities during caretaker periods (i.e. in the lead up to elections) see Section 6 of the Guide available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

### **Branding**

All RDA communication products and activities should carry the RDA landmark (national or localised) and the Commonwealth Coat of Arms.

The RDA landmark has been designed to symbolise the partnership between the Commonwealth and Australia's States and Territories. The RDA landmark is bright and fresh, the colours are primary and distinctive, and the stylised map of Australia draws attention to the landmark.

While there is no tagline, the vision statement for the network can be used in documents/promotional items with the landmark but not as part of it: Local people developing local solutions to local issues.

Design files are available from [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

Co-funding State, Territory and local government logos should be obtained by RDA Committees from relevant government authorities.

Approval of placement of the RDA landmark and affiliated logos must be obtained from the Department prior to use or publication by emailing [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au). RDA Committees with co-funding partner arrangements must also seek the approval of the relevant funding partner for the placement of the funding partner's logo.

### **The RDA national landmark**



The RDA national landmark has been created for use on all materials about the network issued by the Commonwealth. The RDA logo in this case always appears with the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and is available in inline configuration only.

Where reasonable, the Commonwealth Coat of Arms should appear before the national RDA landmark. It must always appear before any other logos, e.g. State or Territory Government logos.

Note: The minimum width for the Commonwealth Coat of Arms is 20mm. Please see the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's [Australian Government Branding Guidelines](#).



**Australian Government**

## The RDA localised landmark

The RDA localised landmark has been created for use by all RDA Committees. It incorporates the name of the Committee as part of the design and always appears with the 'An Australian Government Initiative' logo. It does not generally include a State or Territory government logo but may have other funding partner logos appear in subordinate positions.

It is available in inline configuration only. The 'An Australian Government Initiative' logo can appear at various subordinate positions on items to the RDA localised landmark – but it must appear before any other logo.



An Australian Government Initiative

The RDA localised landmark may be adjusted in size to appropriately fit onto materials of varying size, but cannot have its proportions adjusted.





## The full colour landmark

It is intended that the RDA landmark be reproduced in full colour wherever possible. However, it may be reproduced in one colour – mono (or other colour if prior permission is sought from the Department).





In keeping with these guidelines, the 'An Australian Government Initiative' logo can only be used as stipulated in Commonwealth branding guidelines.

NATIONAL NETWORK LOGO



LOCAL RDA NETWORK LOGO



			
PMS 289 C	PMS 364 C	PMS 382 C	PMS 356 C
C 100 M 64 Y 0 K 60	C 65 M 0 Y 100 K 42	C 29 M 0 Y 100 K 0	C 95 M 0 Y 100 K 27
R 0 G 44 B 90	R 65 G 119 B 48	R 190 G 214 B 0	R 0 G 120 B 56
WEB 002B5C	WEB 417630	WEB BED600	WEB 007836

## One colour brandmark

In the case of one colour used, the brandmark can be used as black or mono – or other colour (if prior permission is obtained from the Department).

NATIONAL NETWORK LOGO



LOCAL RDA NETWORK LOGO



## Reversed landmark

The landmark can be reversed out of black or another **dark** colour if necessary.

It is essential that the background colour be of sufficient contrast to not jeopardise the integrity of the landmark.

Pastel or light coloured backgrounds should not be used if the mark is reversed, as this application will not create sufficient contrast.

NATIONAL NETWORK LOGO



LOCAL RDA NETWORK LOGO



BRANDMARK REVERSED OUT OF BLACK



BRANDMARK REVERSED OUT OF A SUITABLE BACKGROUND COLOUR



BRANDMARK REVERSED OUT OF AN INCORRECT BACKGROUND COLOUR, THERE IS NOT ENOUGH CONTRAST

## Typeface

### Primary font

The typeface featured in the brandmark is 'Rotis Sans Serif'.

Rotis Sans Serif should be used for all applications where ever possible - address panels on both letterhead and with compliments slips, internal and external signage.

The recommended weight is regular 45 light, with 55 and 65 bold also available.

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp  
QqRrSsTtUuVvXxYyZz0123456789

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp  
QqRrSsTtUuVvXxYyZz0123456789

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp  
QqRrSsTtUuVvXxYyZz0123456789

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp  
QqRrSsTtUuVvXxYyZz0123456789

### Local RDA Logo font

Rotis Sans Serif 821em tracking

### Supporting font

The supporting typeface chosen for the brand is 'DesertDogHmk', which ideally should only be used as headings.

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPp  
QqRrSsTtUuVvXxYyZz0123456789

### Positioning

The brandmark should always have prominence over and above all other images and graphic elements.

The brandmark should be placed at the top of an item it appears on.

Please note the With Compliments slip example below has been reduced to fit the page. The minimum width for the Commonwealth Coat of Arms is **20mm**. While there is no minimum width for the RDA logo it should not appear in such small sizing that the letters become illegible or the map indistinguishable to the viewer.



**CORRECT POSITIONING OF BRANDMARK ON STATIONERY, AT TOP OF DOCUMENT**



**INCORRECT POSITIONING OF BRANDMARK ON STATIONERY, AT BASE OF DOCUMENT**

### Clear space

It is essential that the brandmark always appears with sufficient clear space to ensure that its integrity is not jeopardised. The clear space measure is defined by [Australian Government Branding Guidelines](#).

The clear space measure 'X' is based upon the difference between the bottom of the capital 'R' in Regional and the top of the capital 'A' in Australia as illustrated on this page.





## Usage of brandmark

The RDA brandmark should only be used in the formats and colours stipulated in these guidelines. A localised brandmark is used in the below examples.

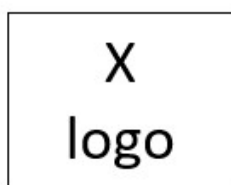


The elements which make up the brandmark should not be altered or adjusted in any way. For example:

1. The brandmark should not be reproduced in colours that are light or pastel which do not provide sufficient contrast.



2. The brandmark must appear entirely in the same colour application. The brandmark should not appear partially in colour and partially in black and white.
3. State, Territory and local government logos must not appear before either the RDA brandmark or the 'An Australian Government Initiative' logo.



4. The brandmark should not be placed on a pastel coloured background that does not provide sufficient contrast.



4. THE BRANDMARK SHOULD NOT BE PLACED ON A PASTEL COLOURED BACKGROUND THAT DOES NOT PROVIDE SUFFICIENT CONTRAST.

5. The brandmark should not be placed on a background image or photograph.



5. THE BRANDMARK SHOULD NOT BE PLACED ON A BACKGROUND IMAGE OR PHOTOGRAPH.

6. The wording of the brandmark must not be edited for any purpose.



6. THE WORDING OF THE BRANDMARK MUST NOT BE EDITED FOR ANY PURPOSE.

7. The fonts used in the brandmark must not be changed or other fonts added to the brandmark.



7. THE FONTS USED IN THE BRANDMARK MUST NOT BE CHANGED OR OTHER FONTS ADDED TO THE BRANDMARK.



## Communication materials

All communication materials produced by RDA Committees should be supplied to the Department for branding approval (excluding pre-approved templates and media releases). Please supply to [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au) at least three working days prior to printing and/or distribution.

When using photographs, it is important that the RDA Committee has written permission of the photographer and those represented. A Commonwealth photograph consent form is available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

## Brochures

The Department has developed a suite of RDA promotional brochures at the national, State and Territory level. An allocation of State/Territory and national brochures has been sent to each RDA Committee. Additional copies may be requested from [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au).

RDA Committees may also choose to produce their own promotional brochure outlining their role, activities and contact details.

A brochure template is pictured below. Design files are available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).



## Stationery

RDA Committees should develop Committee stationery, such as letterheads and business cards, to support the operation of their Committee.

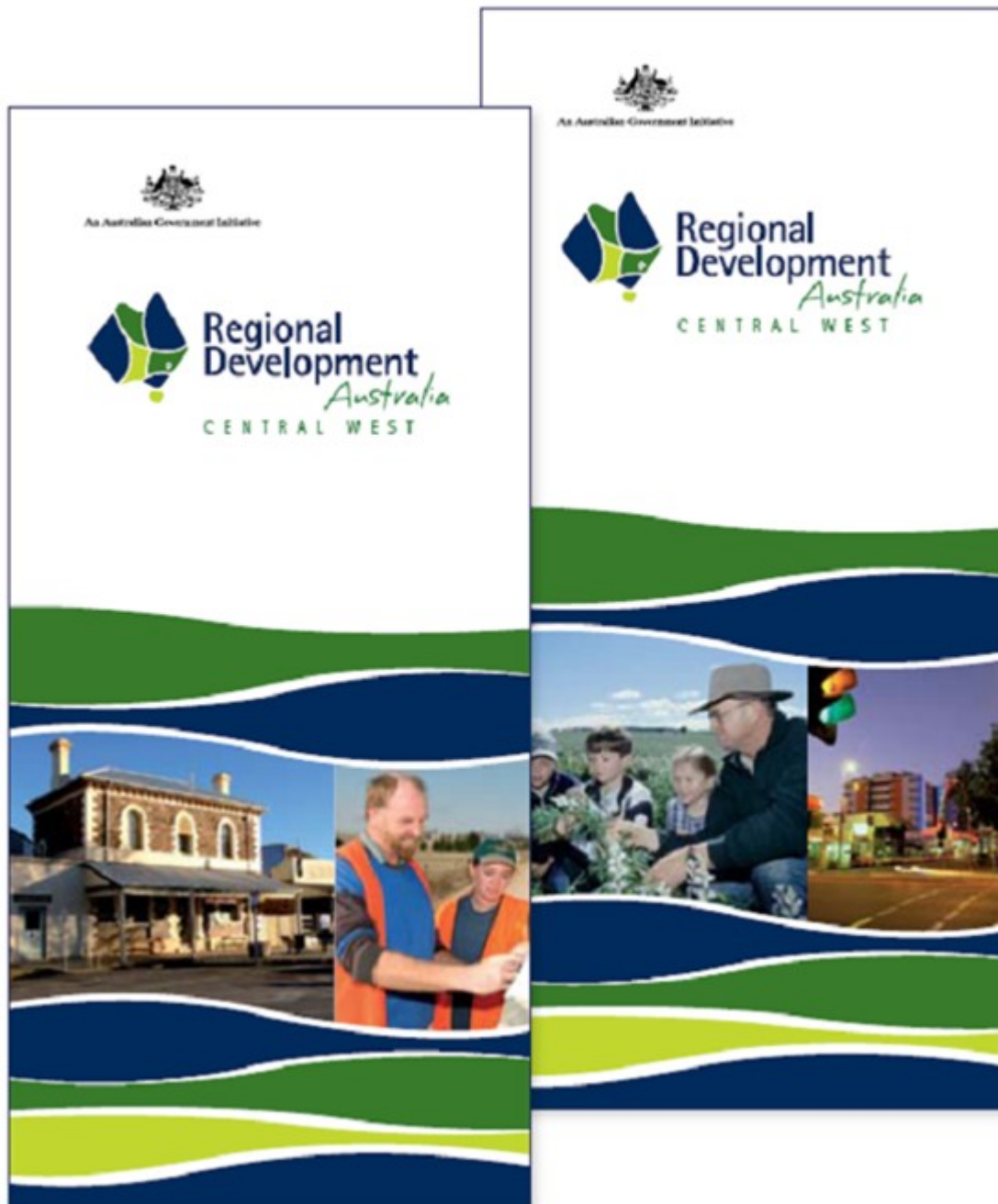
Letterhead and business card templates are pictured below. Design files are available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).



## Promotional banners

Having a promotional banner with your RDA Committee logo provides RDA Committees with a higher level of visibility at events, such as workshops, launches or expos.

A banner template is pictured below. Design files are available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).



## Office signage

RDA Committees must arrange office signage featuring their localised RDA logo.



## Publications

In addition to the branding approval requirement, all publications produced by RDA Committees need to be supplied to [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au) for information at least 24 hours prior to distribution.

### Reports

Reports released by the RDA Committee must include, where requested by the Commonwealth, the following words (or other such words as requested by the Commonwealth):

“This report was produced by RDA [insert RDA name] and does not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth, its officers, employees or agents.”

Inclusion of this statement does not preclude acknowledgment of the Commonwealth’s support and contribution, which should be reflected through branding or through text if additional funding has been supplied.

### Presentations

Presentations are an important element of communication which informs various stakeholders about an RDA Committee’s role and activities.

A PowerPoint slide template is available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

## Online

### Websites

The Department maintains a national RDA website, [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au). In addition, each RDA Committee is required to establish and maintain a public website which includes:

- information about the RDA Committee's role and activities, in terms of the Activity as set out in the Funding Agreement;
- a current list of Committee members and key staff and the RDA Committee contact details (including links to the Committee's social media pages);
- a link to the Commonwealth's Regional Development Australia website at [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au);
- a copy of the RDA Charter;
- copies of all newsletters or updates that RDA Committee's send to stakeholders and any other significant reports that you produce or are produced by others and are relevant to Your Region; and
- any other information that the Department may ask you to include from time to time.

The address and domain for RDA Committee websites should take the following form: <www.rda[insert RDA acronym].org.au>.

As an Commonwealth initiative, RDA Committees should refer to the GOV.AU Content Guide (available at <https://guides.service.gov.au/content-guide/>) for guidance on how to establish and maintain their online presence.

The branding of the national RDA website and the RDA Committee websites are slightly different. The national website is branded with the Commonwealth logo at the top left to indicate that it is a website created and maintained by a Commonwealth agency.

Localised RDA websites must be branded with the 'An Australian Government Initiative' logo in a subordinate position on the web page and with other State/Territory/local government logos following.

A website template is pictured below. Design files are available on [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au), if needed.





## Social Media

Each RDA Committee must use social media to promote their activities and the RDA network and program more broadly. Committees are encouraged to utilise the various functions and capabilities of different social media platforms to engage with their communities and each other.

All RDA Committees are required to regularly report on their social media use as part of the reporting framework under the 2018-2020 Funding Agreement.

Social media refers to a set of internet-based tools used for sharing and discussing information. It refers to user-generated information, opinion and other content shared and discussed over open digital networks.<sup>5</sup> Social media may include, but is not limited to:

- social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+;
- photo sharing, infographics and video websites such as Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube;
- blogs, and video blogs (vlogs) including corporate, government and industry blogs;
- micro-blogging such as Twitter;
- forums, discussion boards and groups such as Google groups, Whirlpool, Reddit and Digg;
- wiki sites and forums such as Wikipedia;
- video on demand (vod) and podcasting; and
- email and instant messaging.

Social media also includes other emerging electronic/digital communication applications.

It is recommended that RDA Committees utilise two or three different social media platforms for broader audience and stakeholder reach. The Department suggests also using a video sharing site such as YouTube to ensure all forms of content can be shared across platforms. The use of other platforms is also encouraged, but this can become resource intensive and may lead to accounts becoming stagnant.

### *Developing social media policies*

Social media accounts operated by RDA Committees are considered to be official RDA communication channels. Comments made on these accounts by Committee members and staff could be considered to represent an official statement or position of the RDA Committee. Care must be taken to ensure that any criticism of the RDA program, departments and governments is not reflected in comments or statements posted by RDA Committee members and staff on RDA Committee-operated social media accounts.

The Department strongly recommends that each RDA Committee develop its own internal policies for social media to clarify roles and responsibilities (including internal moderation and approval policies) for staff and Committee members on the appropriate use of social media accounts operated by RDA Committees. Policies should be prepared with reference to the guidelines on public comment and RDA social presence set out under Section 8 – Communications of the Guide.

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<sup>5</sup> This definition of social media is from the Australian Communications and Media Authority, with minor amendments.

As a basis, RDA Committees should consider the following when developing rules or policies on social media activity:

- Committee members and staff should consider opportunities to promote their activities and government programs and facilitate the take-up of appropriate funding opportunities to progress regional economic growth;
- public comment on social media should complement the role of RDA Committees, resolve any issues constructively and recognise the contribution that the RDA Committee is seeking to make to progress an issue for the community;
- Committee members and staff should take care to uphold the RDA Committee's status as an apolitical organisation that is not aligned with any particular political party or ideology;
- comments and statements made on social media should be impartial and of a professional nature and
- with respect to activities funded by the Commonwealth, State or Territory or local governments, the Committee should not make any statements or give any undertaking that could be interpreted as committing the Commonwealth Minister or relevant State or Territory Minister or the Commonwealth, State or Territory or local governments to a particular action or expenditure.

Other factors RDA Committees need to consider in developing social media policies are:

- copyright – only use or reproduce copyright material or the intellectual property of others if permission has been provided from the creator or the owner. This includes applications, sound and music recordings, video footage, graphics, artworks, images photographs and publications. If someone else's work is used, always make sure it is properly attributed and linked back to the original source. Never post images without permission;
- defamation – Defamation laws are actionable regardless of the medium. Even if the RDA Committee did not create the defamatory material, anyone who shares information on social media can also be liable for defamation action. There are some exceptions to defamation, including that the statement was an honest opinion or was true. Always uphold acceptable content standards; and
- privacy - Be sure to maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy and property of others. Only discuss publicly available information and preserve the confidentiality of internal discussions and personal or private information about people. Seek the permission of anyone who appears in any photographs, video or other footage before sharing it via any form of social media and, if asked, remove materials as soon as practicable.

RDA Committee members and personnel should also keep their professional and personal social networking accounts separate. As with any public forum, when participating in social media RDA Committee members and staff should adhere to the Code at Section 5 of this Guide and also available on the website [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

#### *Establishing and securing social media accounts*

RDA Committees should be clearly identifiable through usernames and branding. Usernames should reflect the name of the RDA Committee, e.g. @RDAKimberley. Usernames that misrepresent a Committee as a national body, instead of a regional body, should be avoided, e.g. @RDA.

RDA Committees should make sure social media accounts are appropriately secured and are controlled and managed only by authorised employees. Like other forms of communications, social media communications coming from official RDA social media accounts will be considered as official communications from the RDA Committee. RDA Committees should therefore ensure appropriate measures are in place to adequately protect this mechanism for delivering official messages.

#### *Appropriate use of social media by RDA Committees*

It is appropriate for RDA Committees to use social media to promote the range of activities, programs and interests they are involved in. The Department expects that RDA Committees will use their social media platforms to:

- engage with private and public industry sectors to promote RDA activities and leverage regional investment opportunities;
- promote and disseminate Commonwealth policies, grant programs and projects, particular those which are located in your RDA Committee's region;
- advertise for applications for Chair, Deputy Chair and Member positions and to publicly announce Committee appointments;
- provide information, updates and progress on RDA Committee activities;
- engage with and grow online communities on issues relevant to Your Region and its economic development;
- facilitate real-time communication with stakeholders; and
- promote official visits to RDA regions by Commonwealth Ministers, Members of Parliament and Senators.

In line with the RDA Charter, RDA Committees should actively promote social media engagement with:

- fellow RDA Committee members and staff across the RDA network;
- all levels of government;
- public and private sector stakeholders;
- regional businesses;
- industry sectors with international trade partners;
- community stakeholders; and
- regional entrepreneurs.

The above lists are not exhaustive but are intended as a guide for RDA Committees to begin building relevant and effective social media networks to promote the work of their Committees and to facilitate economic development within their regions.

#### *Benefits of social media*

Used effectively, social media can have all the benefits of word of mouth on a large scale, helping to broaden the reach and prominence of your RDA Committee. Potential benefits include:

- increased publicity and awareness;
- reduced marketing and advertising costs;
- increased traffic to your RDA Committee website;



- promote recruitment of RDA Committee members and staff;
- greater engagement with business, community and government, including the Commonwealth Minister specifically;
- greater access and engagement with the international community;
- opportunities for business and community feedback;
- opportunities to conduct research; and
- improved networking opportunities with community, business and government.

### *Risks of social media*

Some of the risks associated with social media include:

- lack of clear social media strategies may result in reduced benefits;
- the immediacy of social media requires daily monitoring;
- unwanted or inappropriate behaviour; and
- exposure to negative feedback, information leaks and hacking.

As with traditional media, ill-considered comments and poor responses to particular issues and circumstances can rapidly develop into negative issues which may reflect negatively on an RDA Committee's reputation. A particular nuance of social media is that both negative and positive articles, comments or posts can spread rapidly and may require an organisational response at a speed that is difficult within traditional organisational structures.

Having a social media strategy and carefully preparing social media policies and procedures beforehand can help manage risks.

Further information from the Commonwealth on using social media can be found by visiting the following sites:

- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA); and
- [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au).

### Email Addresses

RDA Committee members and staff are encouraged to maintain an email address at their individual domain, which can be used for all work related to RDA, e.g. [john.smith@rda\[insert acronym\].org.au](mailto:john.smith@rda[insert acronym].org.au).

## **Media**

### Media releases

The Commonwealth reserves the right to announce Government policy or program decisions, including project funding. RDA Committees may distribute media releases that complement or provide more details after the announcement has been made. These media releases may provide information on how the announcement relates to their region.

In addition, RDA Committees may wish to issue media releases to highlight achievements, activities, consultations or events, such as:

- local RDA office launches;

- local events/launch announcements and invitations;
- regional and other national conferences;
- visits to RDA Committee premises;
- visits to major initiatives and projects driven by RDA Committees; and
- other major achievements.

Media releases need to acknowledge funding support from the Commonwealth, e.g. 'The RDA program is an Australian Government Initiative.' They also need to include the RDA logo (or the localised RDA Committee logo, if appropriate) and the 'An Australian Government Initiative' logo.

Media releases do not require approval from the Department, however media releases need to be supplied to [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au) for information at least one working day prior to distribution to allow for further promotion of initiatives through channels such as [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au).

### Media queries

Communication with the media about your RDA Committee is encouraged and topics for discussion may include, but are not limited to, the role, work, aims, goals, or progress of initiatives of the RDA Committee; the regional or local context/situation/experience (including anecdotal); or the overall RDA network initiative in broad terms.

When engaging with the media it is also important to note that:

- while the Chair is the official spokesperson for the Committee, they may nominate a spokesperson from the Committee as a representative;
- Committee members are not federal, State or Territory public servants or elected officials and, as such, do not speak on behalf of the Commonwealth or State and Territory governments. While some Committee members may be elected officials of local government they need to be clear that they are representing the RDA Committee, not their local council;
- comments or discussion regarding the policy and programs of the respective governments should be fair and balanced;
- spokespeople should be well-versed in the key messages and aims of the RDA initiative;
- when speaking as a Committee spokesperson, views expressed will be taken as those of the Committee and not the individual; and
- anything said, even in general conversation, can be used by the media.

RDA Committees should contact [rda@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rda@infrastructure.gov.au):

- for advice on matters for discussion or information on government initiatives;
- to provide advance notification of intention to speak to the media where practical; and
- to provide a subsequent debrief of media contact (short email of matters discussed).

When representing the RDA Committee, a member should not express their personal opinion on a political or social issue if that is not the opinion of the RDA Committee.

## Events

RDA Committees should notify the Department of upcoming events (openings, launches, award ceremonies, etc.) at least one month prior to the event via an email to [rda@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rda@infrastructure.gov.au), c.c. [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au).

If you would like to have ministerial representation at an event, you must provide a letter of invitation to the relevant Minister's Office ([c.c.rda@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:c.c.rda@infrastructure.gov.au)). The contact details of all Commonwealth Ministers is available at [https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators\\_and\\_Members/Guidelines\\_for\\_Contacting\\_Senators\\_and\\_Members](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Guidelines_for_Contacting_Senators_and_Members).

## Departmental communication Products and Activities

The Department supports RDA Committees by providing:

- guidelines for branding and communication, including a suite of design files;
- a national website, including latest news and operational announcements; and
- communication materials, including national and state RDA brochures and posters.

## Digital file formats

The file format reference and application guide is provided to assist with the use of the brandmark.

Individual suppliers may have preference for other formats depending on applications and programs used – it is recommended that you consult with your supplier before supplying artwork.

### Adobe Illustrator EPS format

CMYK, RGB, spot colour, one colour, greyscale, monotone and reversed versions are supplied in EPS format.

This format is best suited for use with all offset press, screen printed and large format printed applications, as this is vector art and can be scaled to any size required.

### TIF format

CMYK, RGB, one colour, greyscale, monotone and reversed versions of the brandmark are supplied in TIF format.

This format is suitable for all printed applications, but should not be scaled larger than 100 per cent as image quality will be lost.

### JPEG format

RGB, one colour, greyscale, monotone and reversed versions of the brandmark are supplied in JPEG format.

Due to its small file size, this format is most suited for use in screen applications, for example PowerPoint presentations. It is not suitable for offset printing.

**GIF format**

RGB, one colour, greyscale, monotone and reversed versions of the brandmark are supplied in GIF format.

Due to its compression qualities, this format is most suited for web application. It is not suitable for offset printing.

**BMP format**

RGB, one colour, greyscale, monotone and reversed versions of the brandmark are supplied in BMP format.

This format may be placed in programs such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint as an alternative to a JPEG. It is not suitable for offset printing.

**Further information**

Any further queries regarding RDA communication products and activities should be directed to [rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:rdacommunications@infrastructure.gov.au).