

Regional Plan 2013-2016
Regional Development
Australia Orana
NSW



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Regional Development Australia Orana acknowledges and pays its respect to the Traditional Owners and their Nations of the Orana region. The contributions of earlier generations, including the Elders, are also valued and respected. RDA Orana recognises and acknowledges that the Traditional Owners have a deep cultural, social, environmental and spiritual connection to their lands and waters.

RDA Orana's key goals have been developed in recognition of the demographic of the entire region and with respect to the significant Indigenous cultural history that contributes to the Orana and recognising the importance of social inclusion for all people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION OF ORANA COMMUNITY

Regional Development Australia Orana would like to express formal appreciation to the many communities and local government authorities that comprise the Orana, along with the many stakeholders, for their participation in the regional consultations and the time taken to contribute to this Regional Plan.

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1. Message from the RDA Chair

I have great pleasure in presenting the Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana NSW Regional Plan 2013-2016 to you. I have been in the position as Chair of the RDA Orana Committee since 2009 and over these four years I have seen many changes within our region and within the RDA organisation itself. It is an exciting time for RDA Orana as I believe we are on the cusp of achieving some wonderful things. The RDA Orana team has been working hard over past months to drive momentum in economic development through various projects and initiatives with the purpose of strengthening and leveraging from our region's comparative and competitive advantages. The emerging carbon farming and bio-industry, fast speed broadband, addressing the skills gaps within the mining and agriculture sectors, and facilitating partnership initiatives that will assist individuals at a community level, are some of the exciting areas we have been working in.



Mr John Walkom
Chair, April 2013

RDA Orana has also placed a much stronger emphasis on utilising data and applying evidence-based reason to inform priorities and direction. To enable this, RDA Orana is presently developing an Orana Economic Profile to provide a single and all-inclusive source of information relating to the current economic status, the key drivers of long-term regional economic growth and the new and emerging opportunities that are specific to our region. This is expected to be finalised by the end of July 2013, and will be updated annually to provide a 'State of the Region' report. This resource will be made available to the public through the RDA Orana website.

The Orana region has a robust economic environment which is supported by the agriculture, mining, health, retail and government sectors, and many more. There are also various challenges that we face as a region, however, there is room to diversify and grow our economy by exploring new business concepts and ways to expand our

existing industry base in order to mitigate these challenges. By embracing the digital economy, for example, we can leverage maximum benefit for our region and our communities. I see limitless opportunities for the Orana region in this regard in terms of using technology to effectively raise the profile of our region and to reach new domestic and international markets for existing and emerging commerce. We will have the ability to showcase our region, to diversify business and expand tourism and to promote our quality agricultural produce to the world.

In the last 12 months, RDA Orana has positioned itself strongly with Federal and State Government departments and has had significant input into regional policy and strategies to assist our communities. This relationship will continue to be built upon and we have some important items on our agenda to impact government decisions and see change in some areas of the economy such as improvements to infrastructure, regional policy development and access to ports and new markets.

It is important to RDA Orana that we connect directly with our community and to ensure that our Regional Plan accurately reflects the matters highlighted across the Orana to assist the community in driving long term economic development so that we can secure a vibrant, growing and sustainable economy.

I am pleased to commend the Regional Development Australia Orana NSW Regional Plan 2013-2016, and I am proud and pleased to commend the Orana region.

ROLE OF REGIONAL PLAN FOR REGION

The Regional Plan is an important tool for the RDA Orana Committee and organisation as it sets out its economic, environmental and social vision for the region, identifies its key goals and priorities, outlines the strategic direction and describes the actions that will be taken to capitalise on opportunities and address the barriers to economic growth in the Orana.

The Plan will be the basis for RDA Orana Committee activities for a period of three years (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16). During this period the Committee will update key information, including regional priorities, where necessary.

The Regional Plan will:

1. Describe the region, its attributes, industry and employment base and key strengths and weaknesses.
2. Articulate the RDA Orana Committee's economic, social and environmental vision for the region and the Regional Priorities.
3. Aim to inform all levels of government of the strategic direction of RDA Orana and the Orana region.



It is intended that residents, community groups, business, service providers and government agencies will use the plan as a source of information on programs, initiatives, resources and opportunities to assist in forming partnerships to realise the vision for the Orana region.

RDA Orana will also identify and consult the strategic plans of government departments and regional organisations that have an impact on the development of the Orana, and will reflect the goals and objectives of those plans in the RDA Orana Regional Plan. Some of these include:

- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet – Orana Action Plan 2021
- NSW Department of Industry and Investment – State Plan 2010-2020
- Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC) Strategic Plan 2010-2015
- Local Government Community Plans
- Federal Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – RESJ Orana Plan
- Federal Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism – Tourism 2020 Plan
- Federal Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy – National Digital Economy Strategy 2011

To achieve its strategic priorities, RDA Orana will support the COAG Regional Australia Standing Council's Principles for Regional Economic Development, which are to:

- Use evidence-based decision making to target and prioritise investment;
- Engage regional stakeholders to inform decision-making and maximise the value of place-based initiatives;
- Develop comprehensive strategies that link and strengthen regional outcomes;
- Coordinate across and between governments and sectors;
- Encourage partnership funding, leverage opportunities and identify new models for financing projects; and
- Integrated regional planning and the Principles for Regional Economic Development.

Supplementing the Regional Plan is an annual Business Plan that is an operational document which sets out the RDA Orana Committee's operational work plan for the year.

RDA ORANA NSW COMMITTEE 2013

The RDA Orana Committee comprises 12 members which includes a Chair and Deputy Chair. Members are leading individuals of the community who are committed to the development of their region, specifically they:

- are knowledgeable about the economic, social, cultural and environmental opportunities and challenges facing their region;
- provide strong leadership to promote the work of the committee and are strong advocates for their region;
- build networks within the community, business and government to facilitate wide consultation, articulate priorities, develop solutions and provide input to government; and
- are skilled in financial management and organisational governance.

The key roles for the Chair of an RDA Committee are to provide strategic direction and leadership to the committee and develop and maintain adherence to sound governance arrangements. Chairs oversee financial management, direct work plan priorities and monitor progress in implementing the strategic priorities.



The Deputy Chair plays an important role in supporting the Chair and assumes the role and duties of the Chair when the Chair is not available. The RDA Orana Committee meets generally every two months to develop policy and plans, review KPI progress on relevant projects, monitor the operational budget and provide advice and support to the RDA Orana team.

Committee members play an equally important role and are expected to have a strong understanding of their region's strengths and challenges and of the key issues facing local communities. They provide information and evidence to the committee and actively contribute to committee debates.

They are effective communicators and have interpersonal skills which enable them to create linkages within the community and to support local community organisations, small businesses, and other relevant stakeholders. Committee members may also have experience in regional planning or development and delivery of whole-of-government or other local initiatives.

Members of the RDA Orana Committee also work closely with the RDA Orana CEO and team to provide continuing advice and direction on existing projects, and to further develop strategies and initiatives to address the various regional priorities.

Committee members support the Chair, Deputy Chair and the RDA organisation by respecting the confidentiality of committee discussions, debates and decision making processes and by valuing the contributions and views of fellow committee members. They are expected to adopt a whole of region perspective in their activities with and on behalf of their committee. They will also have a keen awareness of good governance principles and the legislative framework in which they work, for example, the RDA Constitution and the RDA Operational Funding Agreement which outline the legal, financial and employer obligations. Appointees to committees are also required to comply with the RDA Code of Conduct and Ethics.

A list of current membership of the RDA Orana Committee can be found at **Attachment A**.

2. Executive Summary

THE ORANA

The Orana region covers the central and north western sectors of New South Wales – an area of over 199,000 square kilometres, or around 25% of the state, and has an estimated population of 115,643¹. The region, which extends from the hilly western slopes of the Great Dividing Range including the Warrumbungle Ranges in the east, to the flat plains of Cobar and Bourke in the west, and north to the Queensland border, provides the perfect combination of relaxed country living, coupled with exciting new opportunities and attractions. Set amongst some of Australia’s most beautiful landscapes, the region comprises quaint townships full of history and beauty.

The RDA Orana Regional Plan 2013-16 sets out the Orana’s Regional Priorities for the next three years, which build on the region’s strengths of its people and diverse industry base, the rich history and geographical uniqueness of the region, and the many beautiful natural assets it surrounds.

There are many opportunities apparent for the Orana that are most exciting. Expanding our already significant agricultural and mining industries, for example, and developing the new carbon farming and bio-industries will provide opportunity to diversify our economy and bring new income prospects to the region. Further opportunities exist around tourism and hospitality, transport, renewable energy, on-line commerce and accessing new domestic and international markets, which of course, will become more attainable with the current roll-out of the National Broadband Network in our region. Focussing on strategies to develop our human capital, infrastructure, technological readiness, innovation and institutions will also assist in strengthening the region’s overall competitiveness.

The Regional Plan also identifies the various challenges that present for the Orana over coming years and strategies in which to address these to ensure the Orana continues to grow and prosper. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring adequate infrastructure is available to support existing and future population and industry needs into the future, as well as working to better align government policy, legislation and funding in order to improve regional economic and social outcomes. High levels of disadvantage, an ageing population, critical skills gaps and educational requirements are also key areas that RDA Orana will be focussing on over the next three years, with a view to developing strategic partnerships and communicating with all three tiers of government to establish strategies that address these challenges.

A full summary of the Regional Priorities for the Orana can be found at **Item 6**.

Felicity Taylor-Edwards
CEO
RDA Orana
30 July 2013



Ultralight plane, Narromine

¹ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

3. Vision for the Region

Vision

By 2020, elevate the value of the Orana region, advance economic development and embrace new opportunities to create communities where people want to invest and live.

Mission

To build relationships with stakeholders and work in partnership with our communities to drive regional development, investment and diversification of our economy to ensure the Orana is a vibrant, growing and sustainable region.

THE FUTURE OF THE ORANA

It is the wish of the RDA Orana Committee that all Orana people will be able to take advantage of the opportunities that are available now through equal access to education, training and employment, through the digital economy and through strengthening our existing industry to contribute to a growing and sustainable economy, enjoy a liveable lifestyle and achieve their dreams.

RDA Orana's vision is that, into the future, the Orana region will:

- Be a region with a clear and common identity;
- Have a fair and just community that provides equal opportunity for all;
- Be a progressive society dedicated to the development of all people to their full potential by recognising and nurturing the diverse talents and strengths within our populations;
- Enjoy an increase in living standards for all, across health, education and recreation services;
- Experience an increase in population and qualification levels across the region and a reduction in the current skills gaps across industry;
- Be a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable region dedicated to innovation, collaboration and peace;
- Be a strong and independent economy, self-sufficient in energy, water, food and industry and free of global constraints;
- Effectively support and grow existing business and key industries such as agriculture, mining, health and tourism in order to be able to participate in a global economy;



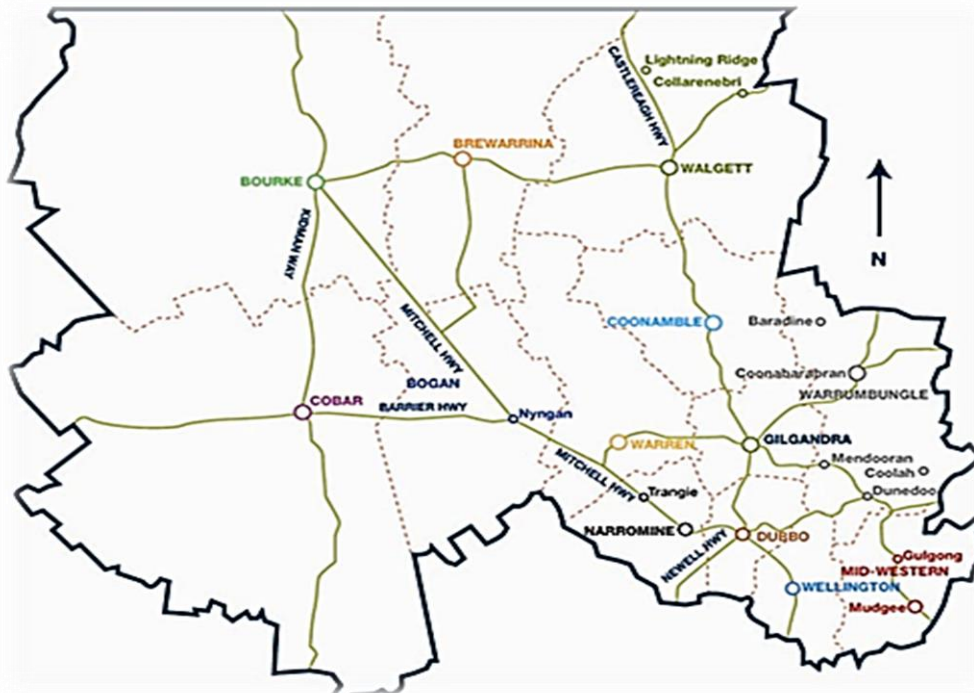
- Successfully diversify its industry base to create new income streams and more jobs;
- Be an engine of innovation and a place where entrepreneurs take early opportunities of emerging industries and new opportunities;
- A vibrant community dedicated to identifying, developing and nurturing our combined natural wealth and our human ingenuity to equal our capacity to create;
- Experience the benefits of better developed regional government policy, with local input;
- Enjoy a thriving economy where adequate infrastructure exists to support continued growth.

“The healthiest place on Earth; proud of its heritage, sure of its identity, excited about its future”.

There are 13 Local Government Authorities (LGAs) that comprise the Orana:

Bogan Shire Council
 Bourke Shire Council
 Brewarrina Shire Council
 Cobar Shire Council
 Coonamble Shire Council
 Dubbo City Council
 Gilgandra Shire Council

Mid-Western Regional Council
 Narromine Shire Council
 Walgett Shire Council
 Warren Shire Council
 Warrumbungle Shire Council
 Wellington Council



4. Role of the RDA

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Orana NSW is an association under the *Associations Incorporations Act (NSW) 1984* incorporated in July 2009. The RDA network of 55 organisations was established as a partnership between the Federal, State and Local Governments to provide a strategic framework for economic growth in each region throughout Australia. RDA Orana is a non-profit organisation led by a Committee appointed by both Australian and State government Ministers, comprising business, community and local government representatives.

The RDA network will ensure that input is provided to all levels of government on regional development issues and priorities, promote regions to secure sustainable long term jobs, promote investment and regional prosperity and raise awareness of programs and services available to regional communities.

THE RDA ORANA CHARTER AND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

RDA Orana will support the growth and development of the Orana region and focus on the economic, social and environmental issues affecting our community. Government priorities are reflected in RDA Orana's charter. RDA Orana will be an important contributor to, and driver of:

- Orana's business growth plans and strategies, which will help support economic development, the creation of new jobs, skills development and business investment;
- Environmental solutions, which will support ongoing sustainability and the management of climate change (including the impact of drought, flood or bushfires); and
- Social inclusion strategies, which will bring together and support all members of the community.

In delivering our charter we will:

- Work with all sectors of the community, including women, young people, Indigenous Australians and people from a variety of cultural backgrounds;
- Consult and engage with our community, business, non-profit organisations and all three levels of government (and their relevant government departments and agencies);
- Articulate local priorities, identify and align resources, engage stakeholders and promote solutions;
- Support, promote and disseminate information on government policy initiatives for the benefit of our community;
- Attempt to reduce duplication and overlap in regional activities;
- Develop a strong understanding of federal, state and local government policies and initiatives, and mechanisms for our community to engage with us;
- Take a leadership role in bringing together organisations to take advantage of government programs, policies and initiatives;
- Act as an effective conduit between governments and our community to ensure they are able to provide input to governments about the strengths and weaknesses of our region; and
- Work in partnership with other RDA Committees on projects and other activities where we have common interests and common boundaries.

RDA Orana is focused on the following strategic priorities:

Advice, consultation and community engagement

- Consult with regional stakeholders on needs and priorities
- Provide a two-way conduit for information and advice between communities and government
- Engage with all levels of government, regional stakeholders and communities in developing solutions to regional needs and priorities

Regional planning

- Develop strategic regional plans in collaboration with Australian, State/territory and local governments
- Annual reporting against milestones/performance indicators
- Annual analysis against a different area of Government policy each year


Whole of government activities

- First point of contact for agency consultations
- Information provider for Australian government services/programs
- Contribute to other national agendas from a regional perspective (eg. social inclusion, climate change)
- Administer third party contracts for other agencies as required

Promotion of Australian Government programs

- Provide information to regional stakeholders about government programs, particularly regional
- Identify and assist in the development of regional projects
- Provide advice/assistance with leveraging additional funding towards regional projects
- Provide relevant advice on applications/applicants to assessors in the department (as required)

Community and economic development

- Regional advocacy role
 - Provide support and training
 - Network building and leadership development
 - Partnership broker role
- 

5. Analysis of the Region

FIVE DETERMINANTS OF LONG-TERM REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

At its inaugural meeting in July 2012, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) committed to a common approach to promoting regional economic growth and guiding regional economic development across all jurisdictions. The Regional Economic Development Framework promotes coordinated and sustainable regional development at all levels of government, and with community and industry sectors. The framework builds on the key determinants of economic growth and acknowledges the importance of facilitated collaboration across jurisdictions for long term economic and social prosperity.

The five key determinants of long-term regional economic growth are:

1. **Human capital;**
2. **Sustainable (economic, environmental and social) communities and population growth;**
3. **Access to international, national and regional markets;**
4. **Comparative advantage and business competitiveness; and**
5. **Effective cross-sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships.**

5.1 Human Capital

“Human capital is the stock of competencies, knowledge, social and personality attributes, including creativity, embodied in the ability to perform labor so as to produce economic value. It is an aggregate economic view of the human being acting within economies, which is an attempt to capture the social, biological, cultural and psychological complexity as they interact in explicit and/or economic transactions. Many theories explicitly connect investment in human capital development to education, and the role of human capital in economic development, productivity growth, and innovation has frequently been cited as a justification for government subsidies for education and job skills training.” Wikipedia 2013

There is significant research available to show direct links between investment in human capital and consequential economic growth. Where human capital is strong, generally there is strong economic growth, innovation, enhanced entrepreneurial efforts and better social attitudes. With this knowledge in hand it is imperative that, in order to provide for existing economic needs and to prepare for future and long-term economic growth and sustainability, a region must support the development of its human capital. Getting the balance right and increasing a region’s knowledge capacity and skill set can provide a stimulus for substantial economic and socio-economic shifts.



Brewarrina Shire

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Investment in adequate education and training is important to enhancing human capital and supporting long-term economic growth.

A key message that came out of the 2013 RDA Orana Regional Plan consultation process across regions was the challenge in retaining children in schools beyond Year 7, the lack of in-region tertiary education facilities and the mismatch of existing training to the reality of skills demands in the region.

Quality education remains one of the most powerful levers that can be used by government to support strong economic growth within regions. The rudimentary flow-on benefits of a skilled workforce is the stimulation of employment and the creation of economic development. A healthy economy that is based on driving and sustaining development also has positive social impact in that it creates employment, reduces the reliance of social welfare and improves living standards and social cohesion.

Most towns of 500 or more residents are serviced by several primary schools operated by both state and private providers and by state run high or central schools.

The Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan for the Orana Region 2011-2014 reports the following:

- There are 108 Primary and Secondary schools in the Orana region;
- In addition, Dubbo has two special schools: 'Mian School' for young people with emotional disturbances and behavioural disorders; and 'Lincoln School', a community care facility for male students situated within the Orana Juvenile Justice Centre;
- There are three distance education facilities based in Walgett, Bourke and Dubbo. The Dubbo facility provides a virtual selective high school service to Western NSW; and
- There are currently (2012) 45 child care centres and 36 pre-schools in Orana.

Privately run high schools are found in five of the larger regional towns. The Western Institute of TAFE has colleges in 13 towns in the Orana region and offers vocational courses through some regional schools as well. Charles Sturt University (CSU) has a campus in Dubbo delivering degree level courses in nursing, education and community health, and the University of Sydney delivers some aspects of its medical courses through the School of Rural Health, in Dubbo.

The Orana is currently not competing with the rest of Australia in terms of qualifying its residents. In the 2011 Census, data showed that in the Orana the percentage of young people completing Year 11 or 12, or equivalent, still significantly lagged behind the rest of NSW and Australia. The data showed that the highest level of schooling that the majority of young people achieved in the region was Year 10, whereas, in the rest of NSW and Australia as a whole, it was Year 12 (refer **Table A** below).

TABLE A - HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOLING FINISHED

	Year 12	Year 11	Year 10	Year 9	Year 8	No School	Not Available
Orana	31.75%	6.05%	32.88%	10.14%	8.49%	0.51%	10.18%
New South Wales	49.24%	5.00%	23.92%	6.57%	5.59%	1.03%	8.65%
National	49.23%	8.90%	20.89%	5.68%	5.92%	0.85%	8.53

Source: ABS 2011 Census [myregion.gov.au]

The consequences of this performance on the Orana economy can be dramatic. Where young people do not remain in the school system, their ability to continue on to tertiary studies and subsequently enter into the workforce is significantly impeded. This can result in an inadequate local employment pool and skill set within the region, lower productivity performance, increased skills gaps and a heightened risk of developing communities that rely heavily on government assistance, which in turn can create dysfunctional communities.

The population of young people over 15 years with post-school qualifications in the Orana is also well below the NSW State average. The table below demonstrates that over the past 10 years, the Orana post-school qualification rate has consistently been 6-8% lower than the rest of NSW and Australia as a whole.

TABLE B – POPULATION AGED OVER 15 YEARS WITH POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS

	2001	2006	2011
Orana	27.70%	31.82%	36.51%
New South Wales	35.82%	40.25%	45.32%
National	34.27%	38.97%	44.39%

Source: ABS 2006 Census, Population and Housing, Population and Housing, Time Series Profile [myregion.gov.au]

At the 2011 Census, the highest post school qualification completed in the Orana was most commonly:

- Certificate III or IV (14%);
- Bachelor Degree (6%)

An under qualified population can also significantly affect a community, both in regard to economic growth and social cohesion, impacting the long-term sustainability of a region.

The causes for below-average qualification levels across the Orana can be put down to many factors. The large region is constrained somewhat by its geographical location, the tyranny of distance and isolation, inadequate infrastructure, cultural differences and high levels of socio-economic disadvantage.

In 2012 the ABS reported that there were 176,057 school students in Australia who had identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander at enrolment. Of these, NSW had the largest number of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students (55,056), representing an increase of 10,456 (23%) of Indigenous students over 4 years.

Walgett, which is in the Orana region, is one of two communities in New South Wales identified as a remote service delivery (RSD) community. RSD is a commitment by governments to work with Indigenous communities to improve the delivery of services. The aim is to improve access to government services and facilities, raise the quality of those services, and better support Indigenous community governance and leadership. A formal local implementation plan has been negotiated with the Walgett Aboriginal community, identifying projects and priorities that the community would like addressed.

Investment in education and training, along with partnerships within a community, will result in improved economic outcomes. Access to locally qualified and trained staff is one of the key requirements for any business to invest in a region. Providing access to training facilities for local people to up-skill and which will provide an increased number of professional and trade qualified people, will contribute significantly to the region's economic prosperity and sustainability.

EMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate varies across the region due to climatic and geographic influences and the proportion of agricultural enterprises. There is also a high percentage of Indigenous disadvantage across the Orana with long-term generational unemployment in particular LGAs. As at December 2012, the unemployment rate for all of Orana was 6.3% with a labour force of 62,045 persons².

The DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets Report 2012 shows that the unemployment rate across the region, over the last two years varied from as little as 3.4% in Cobar – a mining town, to as high as 18.5% in Brewarrina – a non-mining town, representing a patchwork economy that makes up the Orana Region.

² Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

TABLE C – UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY LGA

	Mining LGA	Unemployment Rate %				
		Sep-11	Dec-11	Mar-12	Jun-12	Sep-12
Bogan (A)	NO	6.60	5.90	5.60	5.30	5.10
Bourke (A)	NO	12.50	12.20	12.40	12.60	13.30
Brewarrina (A)	NO	18.50	17.60	17.40	17.10	16.80
Broken Hill (C)	YES	8.50	8.30	8.10	8.00	8.00
Cobar (A)	YES	4.60	4.20	4.00	3.70	3.40
Coonamble (A)	NO	7.20	7.20	7.70	7.90	8.00
Dubbo (C) - Pt A	YES	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.60
Dubbo (C) - Pt B	YES	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.70	4.60
Gilgandra (A)	NO	5.50	5.00	5.10	5.10	5.50
Mid-Western Regional (A) - Pt A	YES	5.80	5.50	5.40	5.20	4.70
Mid-Western Regional (A) - Pt B	YES	8.80	8.70	8.70	8.70	8.70
Walgett (A)	NO	13.90	13.30	13.40	13.10	12.50
Warren (A)	NO	6.60	6.20	6.30	6.00	5.50
Warrumbungle Shire (A)	YES	7.00	6.70	6.70	6.50	6.10
Wellington (A)	YES	9.80	9.30	9.20	9.00	8.90

Source: DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets report [December 2012]

The unemployment rate for the entire Orana is generally higher than the rest of NSW and nationally, and this trend has increased over recent years (refer Table D).

TABLE D – UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN ORANA COMPARED TO REST OF NSW AND AUSTRALIA

	Dec 2008	Dec 2009	Dec 2010	Dec 2011	Jun 2012
Orana	5.26%	6.38%	6.11%	6.42%	6.46%
New South Wales	5.25%	5.85%	4.57%	5.60%	5.13%
National	4.60%	5.52%	4.92%	5.22%	5.28%

Source: ABS Labour Force, DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets, SLA data used to compile RDA estimates [myregion.gov.au]

The top sectors in terms of numbers of employees were:

- Agriculture;
- Health & Community; and
- Retail.

The most significant changes were experienced in Agriculture, where employment decreased by 2 percentage points and in Coal Mining, where employment increased by 2 percentage points.

As at the 2011 Census, the median personal incomes across the Orana region ranged from \$31,200 per annum in Bourke Shire to \$19,188 in Brewarrina Shire. Between 2006 and 2011, growth in median personal income was greatest in Bourke LGA (up by 45%), Bogan LGA (up by 31%) and Cobar (up by 28%). The top earning occupations across the Orana region were Professionals and Machinery Operators and Drivers.

In order to improve the region's human capital value, strategies must be put in place to increase the proportion of young people completing Year 12 and progressing on to tertiary studies and further education, and by providing clear pathways to employment. Initiatives to support the re-skilling of mature-age workers can also be undertaken to raise workforce participation rates.

WORKFORCE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Skills shortages across industry are a major challenge within the Orana. The region is moving away from its dependencies on traditional industries such as agriculture and experiencing a shift to other industries such as resources, energy and health. Major changes in farming practices, and associated technology, is believed to have led to reductions in basic labour requirements on many farms throughout regional areas. The demand for skilled labour in these areas, however, continues to grow in an environment that is experiencing an ageing workforce and loss of youth from the regions as a result of population shift and an ineffectiveness to engage and retain youth in education and employment.

“By 2015, it is estimated there will be a shortfall of 500,000 skilled workers despite the fact that 1.6 million Australians will have completed a vocational education and training (VET) qualification by that time.” NWDF, Skilling Your Business 2012, DIISRTE

The challenge in the Orana surfaces in various forms. In the smaller, remote centers it is most evident for doctors and medical professionals to be lacking. In areas where mining is active, skilled tradespeople (particularly electricians and motor mechanics) and professionals such as engineers are in short supply and in other areas there are skills shortages in the service sectors, as well as the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Where these professional and trades people are present in the small communities, many are approaching retirement age and their communities are concerned about a relative absence of skilled young people to replace these workers.

RDA Orana is currently developing a strategy to address these issues in the Skills Mining Centre of Excellence (SMCE) project. The purpose of the SMCE project is to develop relationships and bring together stakeholders by encouraging collaboration within industry and the education system to engage school students, adult learners and existing workers to undertake appropriate education and training to skill up for work in the mining industry and to provide a direct pathway to employment. The SMCE is also expected to expand into the future to provide skills training in other key sectors including agriculture, energy, trade services, transport and logistics, construction and even health. It will be unique in bringing resources together to engage school children in primary, secondary and young adults in tertiary institutions and the workforce to highlight the options of careers and to provide clear pathways to employment through a virtual framework.

The digital economy and the roll-out of the National Broadband Network is another exciting development for the region as it has the potential to transform the way education is delivered, especially in overcoming distance, isolation and disadvantage and it has the potential to shift some development activity from the capital cities to the regions. TAFE Western and other educational institutions have IT infrastructure that leverages from this opportunity, providing connectivity to residents throughout the Orana. RDA Orana has obtained agreement, through partnership, to use this infrastructure in the SMCE project.

Education, however, is only one component of the broader concept of human capital, which also involves on-the-job training and learning as well as developing cognitive skills. It is important to be able to provide young people with the opportunity for hands-on experience. The SMCE will provide this through its partnership framework where mining companies will provide direct work experience and engagement, commencing in the early schooling years. It is expected that up to 100 school students and at least 210 TAFE and University adult learners will progress through the SMCE in the first year and as the scope expands, more students will come on line in the years thereafter.

In addition to this, over the next three years, RDA Orana will undertake to work with stakeholders to reduce the disconnect between tertiary education organisations and the training needs in the regions in order to develop a place-based approach to better align with the local skills needs and current gaps including rural skills, information technology, mining, agriculture and hospitality. It will communicate with relevant government departments and training and employment organisations to increase education and training options across the region, support programs that improve youth engagement and school retention and increase participation in post-secondary education to provide options for further training, apprenticeships and employment.

RDA Orana is a Regional Certifying Body for the Regional Skilled Migration Scheme. This program, however, can only partly resolve skill shortages in the region. The Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme (RSMS) allows Australian employers in regional and low population growth areas of Australia to recruit workers from overseas, or who have temporary visas and are currently in Australia. This is a permanent Employer Sponsored visa which once granted is not dependent on that employment.

The occupations which are eligible for the RSMS are determined by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) through the ANZSCO list of occupations. Employers may only nominate positions which are classified as Level 1 – 3, where one is a degree qualified professional and three is a fully qualified trade. Many skills in demand in Orana do not meet this criteria and further flexibility of this aspect is being explored by RDA Orana in order to meet the demand across the Orana.



Cobar Shire

The Skilled Regional Sponsored (SRS) visa is a temporary visa by which migrants support themselves in their migration, independent of an employer. This visa is currently four years in length. RDA Orana has utilised this visa to address predicted skill shortages and increase the pool of job seekers applying for advertised positions. To be eligible for nomination, applicants must have a valid skills assessment in an occupation which appears on the Orana 'Skills in Demand' list. The occupations on the NSW list are selected from the national list of occupations which have a national skills shortage. The drawback with this process is that the region cannot sponsor skills unless they have a recognised national and state shortage. In a number of instances there are regional shortages which are not reflected on the State or National listing.

The Federal Government recognises that workforce skills development is imperative in sustaining and driving long-term economic development in Australia. Through the National Workforce Development Fund (NWDF) the Australian Government will provide \$700 million over five years to industry to support training and workforce development in areas of current and future skills needs. The NWDF enables businesses to partner with the Government to train and up-skill workers in areas of skills shortages.

Quality human capital is necessary to generate economic activity, employment and a vibrant community and therefore much emphasis must be placed on providing access to relevant education, training, apprenticeships and traineeships and workforce development in areas of current and future skills needs. RDA Orana will be focussing on initiatives that assist in developing the human capital in the Orana through the implementation of its key priorities, projects and the promotion of relevant government programs.

5.2 Sustainable Communities and Population Growth

Sustainability is the capacity to endure. A sustainable economy is one that has diversity and does not rely on one industry alone but leverages from the economy's mix of industries, human capital quality, its natural assets and comparative advantage to become competitive and buoyant.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The Orana region has a robust economic environment which is sustained by the agriculture, mining, health, retail and government sectors. The Gross Regional Product (GRP) for the region in 2012 was estimated at \$4,946 billion with³:

- Other mining (non-coal) contributing 10% to value added and 4% of FTE employment;
- Agriculture contributing 9% to value added and 15% of FTE employment;
- Health and community contributing 9% to value added and 13% of FTE employment; and
- Education contributing 7% to value added and 10% of FTE employment.



The most significant growth in businesses, over the period between 2008 - 2011 in the Orana, occurred for:

- Administrative and support services (up 20%);
- Health care and social assistance (up 19% to 409 businesses);
- Wholesale trade (up 17% to 317 businesses); and
- Retail trade (up 14% to 772 businesses).

The most significant decline in businesses occurred for:

- Arts and recreation (down 12%); and
- Mining (down 18% to 121 businesses).

Currently, a significant portion of the Orana income depends on the production and sale of agricultural product. In 2012, agriculture was the dominant sector in nine out of thirteen of the LGAs that comprise the Orana. However, across the region employment in the sector fell by 14% between 2006 and 2011, compared to a 9.5% fall of employment in the sector across NSW.

A diverse range of agricultural activities are undertaken across the Orana, which include:

- Dry land winter crops such as wheat, canola and grain legumes throughout the plains in the central and northern parts of the region;
- Irrigated viticulture and horticulture in the southern and central parts of the region;
- Cotton in the central and northern parts of the region; and
- Beef cattle and sheep for meat and wool across the region.

Ten years of drought impacted severely on the rural communities in the region previously and farmers face a more water constrained future with the foreshadowed implementation of legislation to adopt the Murray-Darling Basin Plan. Good rainfalls from 2009 until 2012, however, have driven a strong return to agricultural production across the region that includes wine growing in the east, and grain, cotton and livestock production across the north, west and south of the region.

³ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

There is potential in Orana for greater value adding and diversification of agricultural production providing unrealised business opportunities. The further development of grain, other broad-acre cropping and sheep farming for meat and wool could provide more opportunity, however, barriers to expanding in these areas exist. These include restrictions around clearing native vegetation; the recent withdrawal of funding of research into grains; costs associated with production; the decline in product prices and obstacles around transport and water infrastructure.

To ensure the continuing sustainability of the agriculture sector, and to capitalise on the region's strengths and comparative advantage that the Orana has, government must develop policy to help safeguard the industry in a more competitive, water constrained and carbon conscious environment. Through the Carbon Farming Futures initiative, the government is working to ensure that advances in land management technologies and techniques for emissions reduction and adaptation will lead to enhanced productivity and sustainable land use under a changing climate. Government must also develop measures to support the industry to continue to grow by addressing the barriers that currently exist, particularly around regional infrastructure, production costs and existing government policy.



Relying heavily on one industry, such as agriculture, to support an economy can heighten risk in terms of impact to communities and quality of life for residents if a downturn in that sector occurs. For example, severe weather conditions and the impact of fluctuating prices of produce can cause considerable impact, and this has been experienced to a degree with the recent shift from sheep/wool production to grain, due to price down-turns in some regions. Farm expansions and amalgamations have also reduced access to the industry causing barriers for new businesspeople wanting to enter the sector and resulting in a smaller number of operators and larger farms.

The mining industry is also a major contributor to GRP and employment numbers, and there is significant mining activity in the Orana, contributing more than \$740m⁴ to the local economy, with operations currently in 6 of the 13 LGAs. Over coming years, growth in this sector is expected to triple, with at least 12 new mines and 6 expansions to existing operations expected across the wider Orana region⁵. The employment and other economic impacts of mine development in the region are not just those that come directly from the mine development and operation. Businesses that supply services to mining companies, including drilling, surveying, environmental management, construction, transport, human resources and training are also being established in the region. Many of the Orana mines are relatively new developments with long forecast production "lives" and there is perceived to be major potential to develop and apply innovation in mining practices in these sites.

Recognition of the opportunities that this inevitable growth will bring is high on the agenda for RDA Orana in developing and diversifying the economic base of the region. In order to harness the opportunities and to prepare for the change that the mining sector growth will have in the economic profile of the Orana, it is important that leaders take measures now to position it best in order to leverage maximum benefit.

⁴ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

⁵ NSW Trade & Investment – Resources and Energy website

Supporting strategies that will skill up and employ local people, support business, improve infrastructure, drive economic growth and retain dollars and workers in our region will help to achieve diversification of our economy. However, presently, we do not have the services or infrastructure to support continued growth at this rate and the repercussions of losing a key industry contributor due to these limitations may be at risk.

There are new opportunities being developed in the mining sector across the region today. Alkane Resources' Tomingley Gold Project, in the shire of Narromine, is currently under construction and is employing approximately 100 FTE staff and is expected to employ 90 FTE⁶ once mining operations are underway. The Dubbo Zirconia project, another of Alkane Resources' operations, is a rare metals and earth extraction operation that is in the pipeline and anticipated to employ up to 400 FTE staff. The challenges with supporting new mining operations in the region are largely around road, rail, water and gas requirements and limitations of existing infrastructure.

Ageing and inadequate infrastructure across the entire Orana region is at a critical state and is a major barrier to continued regional economic growth. The infrastructure currently in place to support water pipelines, sewerage works, gas, electricity lines, telecommunication and road infrastructure is largely inadequate to support existing needs across the region. The additional pressures that mining operations have placed on these systems over recent years has further affected efficiencies and this will exacerbate with new mining operations. Infrastructure across the region must be improved to support the sustainability and development of the region and to assist in diversification and decentralisation measures. RDA Orana has highlighted this matter as a key priority for government, recognising the inadequacies that are currently the state of play and the potential economic costs to the economy in terms of population and economic loss if it is not rectified.



In 2012, Orana's Gross Regional Product (GRP) value was \$4.946 billion⁷. Two of the largest industry contributors to this figure were agriculture and mining. When the Gross Regional Product or Gross Domestic Product value per capita for the region is considered in comparison to other regions, cities and urban areas within Australia where current government infrastructure funding is being allocated, it raises questions as to relative equality. Given that the Orana's contribution to GDP is significant, RDA Orana considers that the method to determine where infrastructure funding is distributed should be reviewed to take into

consideration the value of GRP per capita and its contribution to Australia's income. This argument shall be explored further with responsible government agencies whilst highlighting the general state of infrastructure in the region.

The Orana region is undergoing great change, and around that change there are enormous opportunities. Emerging industries and new opportunities are apparent and RDA Orana is working to best position the region to maximise benefit from these new prospects. Carbon farming and the bio-industry for example, are exciting prospects for the region as the Orana is well placed to become a major player in these sectors. Already RDA Orana has moved forward in initiating projects in these areas – for example, RDA Orana is currently working in partnership with key industry leaders across Australia to bring together a major strategic project that will

⁶ & ⁷ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

utilise the region's comparative advantage in the ability to provide large amounts of bio-mass to market. The Innovation Precinct is an extremely exciting project which could potentially bring enormous benefit to the region.

There are many other areas of opportunity for diversification in our region and these include leveraging from the National Broadband Network, which will be available from 2014. Once this technology is in place, Australia is expected to rank in the top five nations in the world with the highest proportions of households connected to broadband. This in itself will enable connectivity throughout Australia and the world, promising new opportunities on a global scale. Through this new infrastructure we can grow our economy by investigating new business concepts and ways to expand our existing businesses and industry. We can use technology to effectively raise the profile of our region, to drive tourism, and to reach new domestic and international markets for existing and emerging commerce. We will have the ability to showcase our quality agricultural produce to the world and become leaders in this industry and others such as the bio, carbon, renewable energies and the resource sector. This is an exciting prospect and it is important that we take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen our regional competitiveness.

Over time, many of our regional townships have lost major businesses and employers including local bank services, government agencies and other large business. RDA Orana understands the importance of the presence of these organisations in regional towns in terms of contributing to the economic and social fabric of a community. RDA Orana supports the Government's '*Decade of Decentralisation*' Policy which is aimed at stimulating regional development and delivering greater opportunities to rural and regional communities through the creation of jobs in regional centres.

Although the region has many opportunities to realise, it also has many challenges and certain inequalities to overcome. Localised economic development can often be overridden by the urgency of social welfare needs and it is important that appropriate strategies are implemented to address the challenge of providing both social assistance and supporting economic growth to avoid stifling development into the future. All levels of government must take on the responsibility to identify, develop and re-align policy, to develop initiatives that increase the ability of individual communities to leverage from their human capital, comparative advantages, and new opportunities and to effectively manage the capital generated in their region.



Joint initiatives across local, state and federal governments would be most effective in addressing some of the issues that the Orana region faces. RDA Orana has worked some way on this in initiating the Skills Mining School of Excellence, the Innovation Precinct, the Carbon Farming Initiative project and working closely with all three tiers of government to focus on improving current regional policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Water

The Macquarie and Cudgegong rivers are regulated systems with major dams at Windermere near Mudgee on the Cudgegong (368,000ML capacity) and Burrendong near Wellington on the Macquarie (1.2 million ML capacity). Other rivers in the region are unregulated and include the Bogan, Castlereagh, Barwon and Darling. All river systems in the region are part of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The majority of the region's urban areas are dependent on water supplies from these rivers, including Nyngan and Cobar that are dependent on water pumped from the Macquarie River near Warren and transported by open channel (the Albert Priest channel) to Nyngan and by pipeline to Cobar.

Irrigation dependent cropping industries have developed in some parts of the region, particularly since the 1970's. These include viticulture in the Mudgee area, vegetables in the Wellington/Dubbo/Narromine/Bourke areas, cotton in the Narromine/Warren/Walgett/Bourke and Brewarrina areas and citrus in the Bourke and Narromine areas. These industries have licensed entitlements to extract up to approximately 20% of average flows in the regulated sections of the region's rivers. Low storage levels and low river flows over the period 2001 to 2009 resulted in much reduced water access and extraction – such that cotton production in the lower Macquarie Valley declined by up to 80% over that period. Such changes in water availability had significant socio economic impacts in the region, leading to a decline in population. A recovery in both dry land and irrigated crop production has occurred in 2011-2012 with a major improvement in water storage levels following high rainfall and runoff across the region in late 2010 and again in early 2012. Since the 1980's, mining developments in the Mudgee, Nyngan and Cobar regions have required access to significant bulk water supplies mainly sourced through purchase of regulated surface water license entitlements from farmers.

The recent prolonged drought has brought to light some current and potential future water supply concerns in the region. Short and longer term climate changes have reduced further the reliability of water supply to irrigation farmers throughout the region.

Water access and water security were key issues raised by the communities within the Orana. The draft Murray-Darling Basin (MDB) Plan released in mid-2012 continues to raise concerns about the social and economic impacts of reduced access to water supplies by agriculture and other industries. It raises the necessity for basin-communities to diversify in order to continue to be sustainable and competitive in a water constrained economy. Currently, the 'blanket' government regulation approach to water accessing and licensing does not allow for the uniqueness of our many differing water systems and access to expand existing agricultural crops. Water licensing in some areas is inadequate and effectively stifle economic growth in regions where further access could result in a significant increase in produce yield and productivity, having a substantial direct economic and social impact to the local communities.

Urban water security rated as a key concern, particularly with regard to the current inadequate and ineffective infrastructure to transport water, the consequential water loss suffered as a result in some systems and the reduced levels of water available to these communities in an already water constrained environment. There is also some apprehension around the proposed 'Sustainable Diversion Limits' (SDLs) under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan⁸. As the Orana's waterways are all linked to the MDB, they therefore have limited access to water under state water resource plans. The foreshadowed SDLs will be used to set sustainable diversion limits for each catchment in the Basin, as well as an overall limit for the Basin as a whole ensuring a balance between the water needs of communities, industries and the environment from 2019. The Basin Plan sets new long-term average sustainable diversion limits that reflect an environmentally sustainable level of water use (or 'take'). An environmentally sustainable level of take (ESLT) is the amount of water that can be taken for town water supplies, industry, agriculture and other human or 'consumptive' uses, while ensuring there is enough water to achieve healthy river and groundwater systems.

⁸ www.mdba.gov.au/what-we-do/water-planning

The SDLs essentially 'cap' urban water use. They regulate the amount of water that can be used for consumptive purposes in the Basin. The SDLs in the Basin Plan also apply to groundwater and mean that for the first time there are comprehensive limits on groundwater take across the Basin. It is important that adequate urban water supply is available to cater for projected growth in the regions.

National Parks

Restrictions to national parks and waterways were also raised as a significant barrier to economic growth with regard to the tourism industry. Many national parks and waterways are 'locked', prohibiting communities to promote eco-tourism and water sports, leaving them underutilised and a missed opportunity for tourist attractions.

National Parks do not pay rates to the local councils, however, cover a large percentage of the Orana region. A key message that came through from those local councils that have National Parks in their region, as part of the consultation process, was that it would make a significant difference for council sustainability if a rate contribution was made.



Carbon and Bio-Industry

RDA Orana considers that the region is very well placed to benefit from the emerging carbon farming and bio-industries, however, a relaxation of the *Native Vegetation Act 2003* may be necessary to exploit the full potential of this opportunity. Changes to the Act could also assist in expanding the agriculture industry in providing new cropping areas.

Land Planning

Another challenge in progressing regional development, which was highlighted through the Regional Plan consultation process, were the various restrictions and regulations around land planning. Managed by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure, Local Environmental Plan (LEPs) were developed to guide planning decisions for local government areas⁹. Through zoning and development controls, they allow councils and other consent authorities to manage the ways in which land is used. LEPs are the primary planning tool to shape the future of communities and to oversee the estimated \$20 billion worth of local development that is determined each year.

Some regions within the Orana felt that the restrictions placed on planning options and abilities unnecessarily impeded development within LGAs. For example, planning restrictions in some shires have resulted in a reduced ability to build new houses and to increase local populations. In other shires, the delay and amount of bureaucracy experienced in the LEP progress has reported to be inefficient and ineffective. There are various concerns with the LEP process which State Government must improve upon in order to support regional growth and development.

The future development of legislation and regulation around National Parks, water access and land planning must be 'place based' in order to cater for the needs of regional Australia and to support the growth and sustainability of our economy. RDA Orana will be working to raise these issues as a matter of urgency with relevant government authorities.

⁹ www.planning.nsw.gov.au/LocalPlanning

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Population

The Orana region has an estimated population of 115,643. The Dubbo City Shire has the highest town population at just over 38,805, followed by the Mid-Western Regional Shire with around 22,318¹⁰. Overall, 14.3% of the region's population is of Indigenous heritage.

A key issue around population statistics in our region is the method of determining numbers in regional NSW, which is thought to produce inaccurate figures and contradictory projections. In a recent Government report, for example, it was predicted that populations would decrease somewhere in the vicinity of 15,000, between now and 2020. The ABS also projects that the population of the Orana will fall by 5.63% between 2011 and 2036, while its working age population is projected to fall by 16.5% in the same period¹¹. However, others report that growth is inevitable in regional centres, for instance, the Regional Universities Network reports that¹²:

- 36% of Australians live outside capital city statistical divisions and 31% live outside major cities.
- Despite common misconceptions, the population of regional Australia is rising. The Australian Bureau of Statistics projects that the population outside capital cities will grow by 26% between 2007 and 2026.
- Regional economies are based on a diversity of industry sectors, with the majority of employment concentrated in the services, health, education and infrastructure sectors.
- Regional Australia is the major source of Australia's export earnings, with the agricultural and resources sectors representing over 60% of the value of Australia's exports in 2009-10.
- Regional Australia plays a critical role in the Australian tourism industry, which makes a direct contribution to Australia's GDP of \$34 billion. Regional areas account for around 55% of domestic visitor expenditure and almost 20% of international visitor expenditure.
- Regional Australia holds the keys to a sustainable future for Australia. It is where solutions can be found to key national and global challenges such as: food security; biodiversity; climate change; water solutions; preservation of Indigenous cultures, Indigenous economic development and, social inclusion.

It is evident in contradictory reports such as these that statistics on population and population decline in the west is inaccurate or certainly depends on methodology and/or boundary interpretation. It is feared that a misrepresentation of population statistics in the region, based on differing boundaries, may impede Government investment decisions in terms of infrastructure and other economic impetus in the Orana region.

Based on their boundary analysis, the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that there has been a loss of population over the last decade in the region, however, it also shows that there has been a small increase over the last two years (refer **Table E**).

TABLE E – POPULATION GROWTH BY YEAR

	2001	2006	2009	2011
Orana	123,463	119,920	120,587	120,760
New South Wales	6,575,217	6,816,087	7,069,707	7,211,468
National	19,413,240	20,697,880	21,778,845	22,323,933

Source: ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2010-2011 [myregion.gov.au]

¹⁰ & ¹¹ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

¹² Regional Universities Network, Regional Australia Fact Sheet 2011

Ten Local Government Areas (Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Narromine, Walgett, Warren, and Warrumbungle) have experienced population decline over recent years and three LGAs (Dubbo City, Wellington and Mid-Western Shires) have experienced growth.

The demographic of regional NSW is representative of an increasing ageing population nationwide. Although the largest group in the Orana is small children aged between 0-14 years, the next largest group are those aged 65 years and over and this is growing steadily. The smallest age group in the Orana is the younger working adults (aged between 25-44 years), which has contracted approximately 5% between 2001 and 2011¹³. This trend has been caused by many factors including the overall ageing population of Australians and the increasing loss of young people and families from regional communities due to a lack of services, education options post primary school and the desire to obtain a more competitive income elsewhere.

The loss of younger working aged populations in a community can cause many issues for a regional economy. These include the inability to effectively plan for succession in business, farming and other family operations, to recruit skilled staff, to encourage entrepreneurship and investment in the region and to grow and sustain the social fabric of the community.



Healthcare & Childcare services

With a growing older generation, there will be increasing requirements for medical services, health and aged care systems, causing further pressure being placed on local services. The accessibility and quality of medical and para-medical services and infrastructure is one of the major issues of community concern in the Orana region. Part of this concern is explained when the demographic features of the region are considered. The proportion of Indigenous people, very young and aged people in the region are significantly higher than state averages and all of these groups have higher health care needs.

The National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health (2012) highlights that a large proportion of the Orana region (7 of the 13 LGAs in the region) is classified as remote or very remote and that in such regions the following general health statistics apply:

- Higher reported rates of high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity
- Higher death rates from chronic disease
- Higher prevalence of mental health problems
- Higher rates of alcohol abuse and smoking
- Poorer dental health
- Higher incidence of poor antenatal and post-natal health

Health services in the Orana region are coordinated or delivered as part of the Western NSW Local Health District (LHD), which also incorporates the Central West region of the state. Most towns in the Orana region have hospitals or multi- purpose health centres. There are 24 hospitals/multi -purpose health centres across the Orana region. In most of the smaller towns in the western and north western parts of the region, there has been a significant contraction of the services available in the local hospital (e.g. maternity, surgery) and many local residents are now required to travel three or more hours to a hospital in Dubbo to access these services, formerly available at their local hospital.

¹³ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

Attracting and retaining doctors and other medical professionals in smaller Orana region towns is a major challenge for government and the communities. Targeted resourcing of Aboriginal medical services in communities of high indigenous populations (e.g. in Bourke, Walgett, Brewarrina) has been an important initiative for these areas. Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services are located in Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonamble, Dubbo, Walgett and Wellington.

Dubbo has comprehensive medical and para-medical services as well as one major public base hospital (150 beds) and a private hospital (50 beds) and the Royal Flying Doctor Service operates from a base in Dubbo.

Private sector and community organisations, and some local government councils, have developed aged care facilities in most towns in the Orana region. Expanded facilities will continue to be demanded as evidenced by the continual increase ageing population.

There are also challenges presented for the 0-14 year old population, with the lack of availability of child care services in the regions. It is important that all three tiers of government identify these matters as priorities in creating strategies to adequately support our very young and to attract and retain youth in our region to ensure social sustainability and the development of a healthy economy. One opportunity that presents itself is the prospect of encouraging further immigration to regional Australia, bringing families, younger workers and desired skill sets with them.

Affordable housing

The proportion of dwellings owner-occupied in the Orana region in 2011 was 62% compared to 63% in 2006. The proportion of dwellings rented in the Orana region in 2011 was 29% compared to 28% in 2006.

In 2011, the Gilgandra, Mid-Western Region and Narromine LGAs were the most expensive LGAs in which to rent, relative to median weekly incomes, with costs having risen substantially since 2006.

Local Infrastructure

Local infrastructure and services such as road improvements and maintenance, and public transport and telecommunication networks are in need of attention to support and improve the connectivity of residents in and around town, to provide links to other nearby towns and villages and to ensure there is access to adequate information technology infrastructure in line with the rest of Australia.

Social Capacity

A number of the shires within the Orana have also seen a distinct decline of local clubs, sports organisations and volunteer groups. The causes of this can be put down to a handful of key reasons.

1. Ageing population, therefore, lack of young people to take over the reins;
2. Break-down of the social fabric of a community;
3. Generational changes and traditional views;
4. Constraints and level of responsibility placed on individuals through government regulation; and
5. People leading busier lifestyles.

A decline of local sporting clubs and volunteer groups can also be an indicator of a suffering economy. Volunteer groups, clubs and sporting clubs form the social fabric of a community as they provide a sense of belonging and of working for one cause. It is important to cultivate the social fabric within a community as the social and economic benefits can be powerful. When residents of a community are connecting well, they can work together and provide the resources necessary to better the community as a whole.

Some mining communities reported certain negative social and economic effects of fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in-drive-out (DIDO) workers. In many cases, these workers return home to spend their income at their place of residence, taking dollars earned out of the region. As some of these workers have established their networks in other places, in some cases they are also less inclined to engage in community activities such as participating in the local sporting groups or volunteer groups, which can contribute to the reduction of the social function and capacity of the local community.

Definition of social capacity: *“the ability of individuals, organisations and communities to manage their own affairs and to work collectively to foster and sustain positive change.” (Howe and Cleary 2001)*

Just like human capital, social capital is needed in communities to build partnerships, sustain programs and build problem-solving capability in communities. Social capacity is the degree to which members of the community share values and a common goal. Social capacity grows positive attitude, willingness and self-motivation, enthusiasm, optimism and forms self-reliant communities rather than dependent ones.

Social capital is focused on the development of relationships that ultimately result in individuals and groups working side by side who may not ordinarily cross paths. A characteristic of a community that has strong social capacity are its leaders. Good leaders have power, the ability to influence and the ability to move the community.



Cobar Shire

Although the Orana region demonstrates many strong communities that are enthusiastic, innovative and connected, some regions need to develop their social capacity further. In some shires, the social issues apparent directly affect the quality of the social fabric of the town and in some cases it has eroded to the point where many sporting clubs, social activity and community events have ceased altogether. This has expedited further social breakdown in the community.

Currently much government policy inadvertently promotes economic consumption to drive regional, rural and remote economies and fails to support true economic drivers which can lead to a break-down in the social fabric of a community. Economic consumption occurs in communities where there is a high reliance on social welfare and a high contribution to the local economy from government through the funding of social welfare services. Although government support is largely necessary for the current populations, the consequences of continuing to support an economy in this way can be adverse. The reliance on social welfare support can lead to generations of the same, a reduction in qualifications, skills, employment, self-confidence and social attitude. This pattern can lead to the decline of regional towns. In the recent RDA Orana Regional Plan consultations, it was clear that some regions were consumed with managing social matters and economic development was severely impeded.

It is important that Government at all levels identify what the economic drivers are in the individual communities across the regions. Through facilitation by entities such as RDAs and existing agency planning, they need to focus and better align resources to bring attention to supporting entrepreneurship through a healthy economy, instead of creating an economy that relies heavily on social welfare. Support may not

always necessarily be monetary and can also take the form of facilitation and “trouble shooting” the systemic and sometimes in the reduction of irrelevant bureaucratic barriers to successful regional entrepreneurship and initiatives such as offering reduced interest rates, venture capital and establishing development banks. It could also offer other business supports that may currently exist but require realignment with a regional business development approach and incentives could be offered to local business entrepreneurs wanting to create and/or grow businesses to improve local economies through business diversification and job creation which will enable the people in these communities to lift themselves from a reliance on social services and benefits delivered by governments.

It is also important that policy development has input from these communities so that policy mis-match, duplication and place-based decisions are made to sustain a growing and healthy economy instead of causing unsustainable economies, based on government social assistance and loss of resilience and leadership.

RDA Orana will be addressing some of these matters with government over time in order to strive to create long-term sustainability for the region.



Bourke Shire

5.3 Access to International, National and Regional Markets

There are many opportunities yet to be explored in the Orana region and ways in which we can more effectively raise our profile to reach new domestic and international markets for existing and emerging commerce.

Success in accessing new markets often depends on investing in the right relationships and using initiative and resources to identify needs in the marketplace and to develop a product or service that will meet that need. One of RDA Orana's goals is to promote an innovative, competitive and productive region that can assist in identifying new markets and industry opportunities.

Currently, in the Orana, there are existing opportunities around:

- Mining;
- Agriculture;
- Food and Beverage Manufacturing;
- Light industry;
- Carbon/Bio-Industry;
- Renewable Energy;
- Transport and Logistics;
- NBN;
- Supporting existing business and industry to diversify;
- Tourism and Hospitality; and
- On-line commerce.

INDUSTRY

RDA Orana can help to drive economic development in the region by encouraging innovation in industry, supporting the diversification of our economic base and competition for new markets. It can support existing business and industry by providing an information service to industry on the availability of government and non-government programs and services and providing input to relevant policy development. Through understanding the obstacles that inhibit economic growth in regional communities and working with government and other stakeholders to identify ways in which to overcome these barriers, regional capacity and competitiveness can be developed.

National Broadband Network (NBN)

Encouraging businesses to foster innovation through research and collaboration and to strive for global competitiveness through the use of information technology is a key strategy of RDA Orana. RDA Orana is



**'Orana to the Digital Economy'
Conference and Texpo, April 2012**

currently working with the Australian Government and NBN Co. to encourage uptake of the NBN by promoting the economic and social benefits of the digital economy to local government and communities in our region in order to stay competitive and access global markets. This important new infrastructure will provide us with the ability to showcase our region's products and services and will provide unlimited opportunities for new online commerce.

RDA Orana has encouraged the region to take advantage of this exciting technological advancement. In fact, in April of this year, RDA Orana held the inaugural 'Orana to the Digital Economy' Conference and Texpo. The Texpo, which was held at the Dubbo

Regional Theatre and Convention Centre and streamed live to venues in Bourke and Mudgee, was aimed at showcasing the many benefits and opportunities of higher broadband speeds to business and industry, health, education and the general public. RDA Orana secured an exciting line-up of key note speakers over the two-

day event, with the Conference Program featuring Dr. Tim Williams, who spoke on the opportunities of higher broadband speeds to the Orana region, Geof Heydon of the CSIRO who spoke about the 'Digital Future', Professor David Lamb who presented information on the impacts and opportunities for the Agricultural Industry and Mr Brad Howarth, co-author of 'A Faster Future'. The two day event also featured exhibitors from a range of industries to provide demonstrations of new technologies and how they could be integrated into industry and business. The Conference provided an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas on how to take advantage of new opportunities and strengthen regional competitiveness.

The '*Orana to the Digital Economy*' Conference and Texpo was a huge success and RDA Orana is continuing to promote the opportunities that will come with the NBN with the next stage working to establish an Entrepreneurial Hub in Dubbo.

Carbon Farming and Bio-Industry

RDA Orana recognises many other opportunities for the region to access new domestic, national and international markets. The organisation has recently conducted work on a project aimed at providing an extension service to farmers and land managers in the Orana regarding Carbon Farming land management practices and the benefits, both economically and environmentally that can be reaped through implementing these new methods. The Carbon Farming industry is expected to play a key role in our region into the future, given the region's large geographical location and the enormous agricultural activity present.

Similarly, the emerging bio-industry is of great interest to RDA Orana in that it could have huge potential as a new large industry base. RDA Orana has taken the lead role in designing a program that will bring together best industry and research capability from across Australia to develop a bio-mass integrated system and comprehensive infrastructure as a priority to supply the emerging new technologies and industries. The Bio Mass Industry Innovative Precinct will resolve issues, connect stakeholders, focus research and development, coordinate market development, bio mass selection, supply chains, systems and infrastructure to minimise overall logistics costs and will support new jobs all along the supply chain and international investment. The Precinct will create new growth opportunities and enhance the competitiveness of the region.

Renewable Energy

The Orana region has plentiful sunlight, wind and potential access to natural gas. The implementation of the carbon tax and its direct and indirect implications for the cost of traditional fossil fuel based electricity generation has created increased interest in decentralised, alternative electricity generation infrastructure development. A large commercial solar farm due to be built this year in the Bogan Shire, 10kms west of Nyngan, is the first of its kind to leverage from the region's natural asset of sunlight. Expected to employ around 200 people over 2 years, the large-scale solar PV power project will occupy approximately 250 hectares of land north of the Barrier Highway and will have a total nominal capacity of 100 MWac, being the largest solar farm in the southern hemisphere.

Further opportunities are yet to be realised in this field, however, where possible, and working with our partners and stakeholders, RDA Orana will support the development of this industry through the progression of feasibility studies, community consultation and planning approval processes for proposed new developments utilising solar, wind, biomass and natural gas to drive new electricity generation facilities in the region.

RDA Orana recently engaged the Western Research Institute to undertake a comprehensive economic profile for the Orana region. In their analysis, they identified several areas for potential opportunity, these include:

Agriculture and Mining

Agriculture and mining are two significant contributors to the Orana regional economy and will continue to be so into the future. There are opportunities to access new markets with the expansion and diversification of these sectors. Grain and broad-acre cropping has potential to grow, extending into areas once considered marginal for these types of activity. Similarly, further development of the sheep farming industry could present good opportunities as it does not rely on irrigation and there is potential for more grazing land to be reclaimed if government restrictions around the clearing of native vegetation are relaxed. Further, the growing of legumes could present new opportunity to reach international markets, particularly with the high demand for chickpeas and other commodities in the Asian market.

New mining operations are currently in sequence across the region, with several new operations and exploration mining in the pipeline.

Food and Beverage Manufacturing

Development of large scale food processing operations, for instance, milling specific varieties of wheat sought by the Asian market. The region's competitive advantage is in the ability to produce high quality and sustainable product, however, costs associated with production in Australia still present a major barrier to this kind of development.

Tourism and Hospitality

The corporate group tourism market was identified as one that could be expanded in the region, particularly in the Dubbo LGA. The compatriots and wanderers (grey nomads) market was also seen as a segment not currently adequately catered for in the region. Given the large number of tourists and recreational vehicles travelling through the region at any one point, opportunities present themselves in this regard. In order to encourage expansion across these areas, certain infrastructure and services would need to be improved such as quality accommodation, recreation areas along major highways and motor home service points.

Indigenous heritage and eco-tourism also has potential for development with the region's natural assets considered to be currently under-utilised.

Transport

Dubbo's competitive advantage as a distribution hub for the Orana stems from its location at the intersection of the Mitchell, Newell and Golden Highways and the level of established infrastructure that already exists in the LGA. Further development of Dubbo as a distribution hub would provide expanded opportunities in the provision of product from Sydney to throughout the Orana region and beyond.

With the level of transport movement in the region, opportunities also exist around the establishment of facilities to serve driver stop-overs and vehicle maintenance services.

NEW MARKETS – REGIONAL BRANDING AND INTERNATIONAL PROMOTION

The Orana region has much to offer in terms of product, services and tourism. In order to promote our wares to the nation and to the world we must continue to develop ways in which to raise our profile even further. This can be achieved in many ways, and the impending NBN roll-out provides us with the perfect opportunity. The NBN essentially offers a level playing field in accessing the global economy and it offers new opportunity to reach international markets and to connect regional NSW to the world.

Through innovation and knowledge, our region has the potential to grow and prosper. For instance, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that city people are yearning for a connection to the bush. Through generations, Australian's have always had a link to the bush and that sense of connection is making a come-back. This need presents opportunity to market our regional, rural and remote communities to the larger cities to encourage uptake of agriculture product sales and tourism opportunities.

Further opportunities present themselves in accessing new international markets. Chickpea and other legume production, high quality meats, for example, have been identified as opportunities that could be explored in the Orana agriculture industry in order to meet certain Chinese niche markets.

RDA Orana will support promotional campaigns and initiatives that elevate the Orana region through branding and will work with stakeholders to access new markets founded on appropriate research and identified markets.

RDA Orana also supports Destination NSW's strategies to grow the visitor economy, drive tourism and double overnight visitation expenditure in NSW by 2020, and has contributed to Inland Tourism NSW's Destination Management Plan for the region.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

All three tiers of government are responsible for supporting and advancing initiatives to attract new industry to the region by promoting local investment and through offering incentives for the relocation of businesses and industry and to attract new residents. Strategies may include:

- Offering low-cost sites or affordable land options for businesses to re-locate and set up in a regional town;
- Providing a Development Bank - the establishment of a facility such as a Regional Development Bank which specialises in concessional loans with longer maturities and other financial products is another way to support the funding of expansions to business, new enterprises and affordable housing in regional communities. Such a concept would provide the opportunity for new businesses to be established in areas that need economic activity to be stimulated and investment in housing developments;
- Working with stakeholders such as Austrade to identify opportunities in international markets and develop strategies to meet those needs;
- Attracting international business investors by offering investment visas with funding and timeframe limits;
- Leveraging from the NBN in encouraging regional communities to expand existing businesses or to start-up new commerce; and
- Implementing the strategies set out in the NSW Government's *Decade of Decentralisation* policy which has been designed to stimulate regional development, manage the State's predicted population growth and deliver greater



Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo

opportunities to rural and regional communities by initiating long term projects and relocating public sector functions from the metropolitan areas to regional NSW.

INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the most significant barriers to attracting and supporting new industry in the region is the inadequate state of current infrastructure. Regional economic development requires strong emphasis on reliable and modern 21st Century infrastructure. Most of the infrastructure that exists in regional Australia remains from the nation's post-war construction boom which occurred between the 1940's and 1970's. Since these days, however, government funding has lent to focussing largely on social welfare, education and health in regional NSW. Nominal public spending on infrastructure such as roads, railways, water pipelines, sewerage works, electricity and gas needs has left the country with an out-dated infrastructure system. Regional Australia is suffering the effects of this.

Funding of infrastructure is a long-term issue, however, in order for regional Australia to be able to move forward to reach international markets and be competitive on a global scale, there needs to be sufficient infrastructure to access it and to freight product to ports, through adequate roads, train, air and routes to market.

Upgrading of infrastructure is critical to improving economic and social development and to increase industry and population investment in our region. Over a third of the Australian population live and work in the regions with the Orana contributing almost \$5 billion to the NSW Gross Regional Product¹⁴. The future prosperity and sustainability of regional Australia is linked completely to the adequacies of sufficient infrastructure.

Associated with agriculture and mining, the inadequacies of transport infrastructure (road, rail and air) across the region is a key concern. Strong production in the region can only translate to economic benefit when agricultural and mining products can be efficiently and cost effectively transported to markets, accessing new markets and having access to ports. Continued development of the region is heavily reliant on transport infrastructure and its significant improvement into the future.

Major interstate highways intersect the Orana region including the Newell (north/south) and the Mitchell (east/west). Other Highways that cross the region are the Golden, Castlereagh, Oxley, Kamilaroi and Barrier highways. The Kidman Way is a major north/south transport route through the west of the region.

Major interstate north/south and east/west railway lines also intersect the region. Many other former branch railway lines servicing most regional towns are now unserviceable although the line from Coonamble to Dubbo has recently been upgraded to enable grain transport. A daily passenger rail service operates between Sydney and Dubbo with connecting bus services to some regional centres. Extensive, daily commercial air services operate between Dubbo, Mudgee, Cobar and Sydney. Bourke, Walgett, Coonamble and Coonabarabran were formerly serviced by commercial air services but are not at present.

There are two routes to ports from the Orana, the Bells Line Expressway through the Blue Mountains to Sydney ports and the Golden Highway to Newcastle ports. The Golden Highway provides connectivity to a number of critical markets – movement of grain and other agricultural products from Western NSW for



Bogan River and Bridge

¹⁴ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

processing and packing for supply to domestic and export markets; movement of non-coal minerals from north-western NSW to Newcastle and Sydney; distribution of consumer and industrial goods and agricultural inputs in the north-west of NSW and long distance movements to other states.

The upgrade of the Golden Highway may have broader relevance beyond the Orana-Newcastle transportation linkage. The Golden Highway may have an increasing appeal for freight moving from Sydney to the NSW North West if sufficient upgrades can meet some of the transportation needs of the Orana region. Supporting and strengthening our two key routes to market in the Great Western and Golden Highways will provide additional economic benefits to the region¹⁵.

RDA Orana has recently partnered with the RDA Hunter to look at ways our regions can work together to identify the potential synergies that could be developed between the Hunter and Orana regions to improve and strengthen areas around trade, tourism and investment.

The two RDAs have held discussions regarding new trade routes, access to ports, freight and non-freight transport, tourism, mining, new opportunities, existing barriers and the infrastructure that is imperative to connecting regional NSW to the rest of Australia and ports to the world.

In particular the two organisations have discussed the Golden Highway and its significance in terms of providing a direct line of access between Regional NSW and the eastern seaboard, and have recently jointly funded a consultant to assess the issues that exist now, and the possibilities that could be found in improving infrastructure links, and to provide a comprehensive study. This study will focus on the Golden Highway, and also what an increased connection between the Newcastle airport and Dubbo airport could bring.



Wellington

RDA Orana will continue to communicate with both Australian and State governments on these issues.

¹⁵ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

5.4 Comparative Advantage and Business Competitiveness

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Comparative advantage is having the ability to create a product, to provide a service or leverage effectively from an opportunity at a lower cost, in comparison to anyone else. Comparative advantages are opportunities that can be optimised in order for a region to benefit by focussing on, or specialising in, this area to ultimately increase their income. Identifying the comparative advantages in the Orana is one method in considering options to diversify its current economic base.

Some of the identified areas in which the Orana has comparative advantage include:

- Agriculture
- Mineral resources
- Renewable Energy
- Carbon Farming and Bio-Industry
- Transport network
- Indigenous and Eco-Tourism

Successfully translating comparative advantage into a business venture to reach regional, domestic or international markets would need to be analysed as any other business concept. The potential and viability to meet a market need and to earn an income translates directly into competitive advantage.

BUSINESS COMPETITIVENESS

A region and nation's prosperity depends on its competitiveness, which is based on the productivity with which it produces goods and services. Businesses need to continually adapt to the marketplace, improve what they offer and increase efficiencies and productivity in order to remain competitive.

Currently, the region is outperforming in high growth industry sectors. These include the areas of transport, health care and social assistance, and coal mining. The Orana is also outperforming in low growth industries such as fabricated metal product manufacture and basic metal wholesale. There are opportunities, however, for the region to strengthen business competitiveness in areas that are high growth such as food and beverage services, residential care services, repair and maintenance and further opportunities in the metal ore mining area¹⁶.

The Orana region has many competitive advantages across many industry bases. In order to maintain this advantage, it is important for government to provide essential information and support to encourage innovation, foster entrepreneurs, as well as working to reduce the burden of compliance obligations that are required to operate a business. Each level of government in Australia currently offers support for business and industry to operate and be competitive in the Australian domestic and international markets. Business.gov.au offers businesses simple and convenient access to all the government information, presenting a whole-of-government service that provides essential information on planning, starting and growing a business. Agencies such as Commercialisation Australia, AusIndustry, Enterprise Connect and the Business Enterprise Centre networks, and an array of other information services and advice is provided to business and industry at the federal, state and local government levels.

Although there is a tendency to look to government to play a role in maintaining the competitiveness of Australian business, ultimately it is a matter for individual firms.

¹⁶ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

Regional, domestic and international competitiveness can be strengthened through developing strategies to identify the comparative advantages and opportunities for the region, to explore ways to leverage from these, grow existing business and establish new industry, attract new investment and connect to new domestic, national and international markets.

Human Capital, Infrastructure, Technological Readiness, Innovation and Institutions

The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) reports that “..the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has clearly demonstrated that smaller, less populated and less historically successful regions have made larger than expected contributions to overall growth in developed economies in the past decades. When the influence of being a large city is taken out of the picture, it is the relative status of the established drivers of endogenous growth (human capital, infrastructure, technological readiness, innovation and institutions) that explains much of the variation in growth between regions across the OECD. These findings are reinforced by the RAI's findings (ref. [In]Sight1) which lists the correlations between each theme and the overall competitiveness of regions. Positive correlations indicate an association between competitiveness in the theme and overall competitiveness. While the expected differences in the competitiveness of Australian regions are evident between our largest cities and less populated areas (market size correlation), differences in the status of technological readiness, human capital (health and education) and innovation also correlate closely with results for overall competitiveness.”

RDA Orana will work to support local councils and the community in each region to identify ways in which to build on the key drivers of regional economic competitiveness, to diversify existing industry in the region and to connect to new markets within the agricultural, mining, tourism, carbon, renewable energy and transport industries.

RDA Orana will also work to facilitate partnership arrangements and pursue funding options to drive projects that will leverage new opportunities to grow regional economic development, encourage investment in the region and promote the benefits of the National Broadband Network to become a leading digital economy, increase productivity and domestic and global competitiveness.

5.5 Regional Strengths, Challenges, Needs and Opportunities

A short summary of the Orana's strengths, challenges, needs and opportunities are as follows:

STRENGTHS

- The Orana people
- Agriculture and Mining
- Transport hub
- Geography, natural assets
- Indigenous history
- Central location in regional Australia
- Affordable and quality lifestyle

CHALLENGES

- Infrastructure – both regional and local transport, telecommunications and services
- Education and training to fill skills shortages and increase qualifications and unemployment levels
- Geographical disadvantage to access ports
- Difficult rural trading conditions
- High levels of disadvantage
- Secure water supply
- Government policy and regulations for social, economic and environment
- Ageing population



Windmill sunset, Gilgandra

NEEDS

- Adequate infrastructure for economic and population growth
- More place-based government policy development – a stronger regional voice
- A better balance between government funding of social and economic drivers
- More jobs/new industry and investment
- More education and training options

OPPORTUNITIES

- New agricultural markets
- New Mining and Mineral developments
- Food and Beverage Manufacturing
- Carbon Farming and Bio-Industry
- Tourism – eco and Indigenous
- Hospitality
- Transport and Logistics
- NBN to facilitate new on-line commerce and growth of existing business
- Renewable Energy
- New business investment
- Expanded education services
- Aged care
- Light industry and manufacturing
- Diversification of existing business and industry

6. Regional Priorities

OVERVIEW

The Orana region is defined by its size and diversity and the importance it plays in the economic and social fabric of New South Wales and Australia. The region is the largest and most diverse region in the State, covering an area of almost 199,078sq kms (approximately 25% of the land mass of NSW) and services a population of around 115,643.

The Orana region comprises 13 Local Government Areas that stretch from Mudgee in the centre of the state up to the Queensland boarder past Bourke and Lightning Ridge and west to Cobar. The 13 major towns are: Dubbo, Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonamble, Coonabarabran, Cobar, Walgett, Warren, Wellington, Gilgandra, Narromine, Nyngan and Mudgee.

Dubbo has the highest town population at just over 38,805, followed by the Mid-Western Regional Shire with around 22,318. There are over 13,000 businesses in the Orana region in total, with the majority of these concentrated in the Dubbo and Mid-Western Regional LGAs. The Orana region contributes almost \$5 billion to the NSW Gross Regional Product¹⁷.

While distance presents challenges, the vast open spaces provide the people of Orana with lifestyle, business and employment opportunity in agriculture, mining and service industries such as health and education with increasing opportunity around agriculture, mining, alternative energy production, carbon farming, the bio-industry and the digital economy with the roll out of the NBN to the region this year.

The RDA Orana Committee recognises the unique role of local government in a region such as ours. Local government is the largest employer and the major provider of services in many LGAs and often is required to absorb costs when Commonwealth or State government budgets are reduced. RDA Orana works closely with the 13 local governments through several networks and has considered each of their community plans in developing this Regional Plan. It also works in close proximity to the Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC). OROC comprises the Shires of Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonamble, Gilgandra, Narromine, Walgett, Warren, Warrumbungle, Wellington and Dubbo City Councils and works together as a partnership to collaborate on matters of common interest for the long term viability, well-being and sustainability of local government and communities in the OROC region by supporting the delivery of infrastructure and services.

Like other regional centres, the Orana faces many challenges. These include:

- an ageing population;
- inadequate and ageing infrastructure;
- persistently high unemployment in a number of regions;
- the loss of localised government services and large businesses;
- difficult rural trading conditions;
- significant under-class which causes huge social services consumption; and
- ineffective government policy and legislation based on centralised decision making.

In June 2013, RDA Orana conducted a series of consultation sessions with local government and the public within the Orana to hear directly from the important people in our region about the issues they face in their communities regarding growing and sustaining business and industry, infrastructure needs, service provision and other matters regarding economic development.

¹⁷ Orana Economic Profile – Western Research Institute July 2013 draft report

The organisation also learnt about the new and emerging opportunities that are present across the regions, now and into the future, and those that are present, but are difficult to access.

The consultation sessions raised many topics and the following key themes were derived:

KEY THEMES FOR THE ORANA

- **Diversification:** The need to diversify the economic base of the Orana to support the growth of new business and strengthen existing industry, to spread risk and generate additional income streams.
- **Social Policy/Economic Development balance:** The need to work with Federal, State and Local Government to better align policy, legislation and funding in regional communities to reduce funding duplication and to improve economic and social outcomes with a strong economic base through focussing on key economic drivers.
- **Place-Based Policy:** Work with government agencies to improve regional policy, legislation and regulations to create 'place-based' policy, recognising the uniqueness of each shire and its relationship to the rest of the region as well as the importance of local input to policy to increase productivity, outcomes and innovation, and to create new opportunity.
- **Infrastructure:** The need to improve ageing and inadequate infrastructure to support existing populations and industry and targeted continued growth into the future.
- **Sustainability:** The importance of supporting our existing industry base to grow and diversify, particularly in the agriculture, mining, tourism industries, education and health and other essential state government services. Create strategies to address the critical skills shortages across industry and the region.
- **Promotion:** Encourage an innovative, competitive and productive region leveraging on existing industry, comparative advantage, tourism, new opportunity, our natural assets and the NBN to become a leading economy, increase productivity, competitiveness and access to domestic and global markets.
- **Communities:** Support our people by ensuring they have access to adequate health, education and housing services and employment and culture.
- **Social Capacity:** Work to improve social capacity, a strong knowledge base and leadership.
- **Environment:** Improve the legislation, policy and access around water ways, National Parks, water security, land planning, native vegetation restrictions and support effective urban service delivery and community infrastructure development.
- **Social Inclusion:** Recognise the demographic of the entire region and have respect to the significant Indigenous cultural history that contributes to the Orana, recognising the importance of social inclusion for all people.



These key themes have formed the basis of RDA Orana's Regional Priorities for 2013-2016.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES - ORANA

- 1 **DIVERSIFICATION: DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMIC BASE OF THE ORANA TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, SPREAD RISK AND GENERATE ADDITIONAL INCOME STREAMS.**
 - Identify comparative advantage and new opportunities to diversify the economic base of the Orana region.
 - Develop strategies to identify the comparative advantages and new opportunities for the region and explore ways to leverage from these, grow existing industry, establish new industry, attract new investment and connect to new domestic, national and international markets
- 2 **GOVERNMENT POLICY: WORK WITH FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO IMPROVE AND BETTER ALIGN REGIONAL POLICY, LEGISLATION AND FUNDING IN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES.**
 - Work with Federal and State Government to better align policy, legislation and funding in regional communities to improve economic and social outcomes and reduce funding duplication
 - Provide evidence-based advice, direction and input to government policy to emphasise the importance of supporting key regional economic drivers and realigning social funding to stimulate economic growth, drive independence, reduce duplication and improve social outcomes
- 3 **INFRASTRUCTURE: IMPROVE AGEING AND INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT EXISTING AND FUTURE POPULATIONS, INDUSTRY AND GROWTH.**
 - Facilitate the improvement of regional infrastructure to ensure it adequately supports existing population, industry and future growth
 - Work with all levels of Government to prioritise the upgrade of ageing infrastructure including water pipelines, sewerage works and gas and telecommunication lines to ensure they can support current and future needs, whilst also taking into consideration the additional requirements placed on roads, water and electricity by Mining operations
- 4 **SUSTAINABILITY: SUPPORT OUR EXISTING INDUSTRY BASE TO GROW AND DIVERSIFY, PARTICULARLY IN THE AGRICULTURE, MINING AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES. CREATE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL SKILLS SHORTAGES ACROSS INDUSTRY AND THE REGION**
 - Ensure the continued sustainability and diversification of the Agricultural industry in the region
 - Support Mining and Related Industry Development
 - Assist at a strategic level the growth of domestic and international tourism throughout the Orana region
 - Support the decentralisation of Government agencies and large business
 - Develop and support initiatives to meet identified skills shortages within key industries to build workforce capacity and increase local employment

- 5 PROMOTE: AN INNOVATIVE, COMPETITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE REGION LEVERAGING ON EXISTING INDUSTRY, COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE, NEW OPPORTUNITY, OUR NATURAL ASSETS AND THE NBN TO BECOME A LEADING DIGITAL ECONOMY, INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS**
- Promote an innovative, competitive and productive region
 - Support existing business and industry by providing an information service to industry on the availability of government and non-government programs and services and providing input to relevant policy development
 - Build regional capacity through understanding the obstacles that inhibit communities, government and industry in reaching their full potential and identifying ways in which to overcome these barriers
 - Promote the benefits of the National Broadband Network to become a leading digital economy, increase productivity and domestic and global competitiveness
-
- 6 COMMUNITIES: SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES BY ENSURING ADEQUATE HEALTH, EDUCATION, HOUSING SYSTEMS AND TRANSPORT LINKAGES ARE AVAILABLE.**
- Improve increased options and access to primary, secondary and tertiary education
 - Support a better serviced and more effective Regional Health System
 - Support initiatives to create affordable housing
 - Transportation at a local level
-
- 7 LOCAL PLANNING**
- Negotiate planning restrictions and LEP process adjustment to support regional growth
-
- 8 SOCIAL CAPACITY: WORK TO IMPROVE SOCIAL CAPACITY, KNOWLEDGE AND LEADERSHIP**
- Foster capacity in regional leadership
 - Facilitate State and Nationwide initiatives to encourage families and young people to move to and remain in the region
 - Encourage initiatives to encourage seniors to move to the region and leverage opportunities in this market
-
- 9 SOCIAL INCLUSION**
- Recognise the demographic of the entire region and have respect to the significant Indigenous cultural history that contributes to the Orana, recognising the importance of social inclusion for all people
-
- 10 ENVIRONMENT**
- Improve the legislation, policy and access around water ways, National Parks, water security, land planning and native vegetation restrictions
 - Realise the economic opportunities through the development of the renewable energies and carbon farming industries in the region
-
- 11 INTEGRATION AND ENGAGEMENT GOALS**
- Enhanced Whole of Government Approach
 - Enhanced Community Engagement and Consultation
 - Improved Regional Planning
 - Enhanced Awareness of Government Programs

7. RDA Activities, Projects and Initiatives

DIVERSIFICATION: DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMIC BASE OF THE ORANA TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR, SPREAD RISK AND GENERATING MORE INCOME STREAMS	RDA Orana Projects and Initiatives	STAKEHOLDERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies to identify the comparative advantages and new opportunities for the region and explore ways to leverage from these to grow existing industry, establish new industry, attract new investment and connect to new domestic, national and international markets. • Facilitate partnership arrangements and pursue funding options to drive projects that will leverage new opportunities to grow regional economic development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Industry Innovative Precincts – BioMass → Orana Economic Profile → Skills Mining Centre of Excellence → CFI Round 2 → Orana to the Digital Economy Conference & Texpo → Entrepreneurial Hub → Engage industry and business and government agencies eg. Austrade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Local government-Orana</i> ❖ <i>The Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC)</i> ❖ <i>Austrade</i> ❖ <i>Industry/Peak Bodies across industry</i> ❖ <i>Destination NSW</i> ❖ <i>NSW Trade and Investment</i> ❖ <i>Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport</i> ❖ <i>NSW Department of Primary Industries</i> ❖ <i>Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</i> ❖ <i>Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education</i>
GOVERNMENT POLICY: WORK WITH FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO IMPROVE AND BETTER ALIGN REGIONAL POLICY, LEGISLATION AND FUNDING IN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Federal and State Government to better align policy, legislation and funding in regional communities to improve economic and social outcomes (and reducing funding duplication) • Provide evidence-based advice, direction and input to government policy to emphasise the importance of supporting key regional economic drivers and realigning social funding to stimulate economic growth, drive independence, reduce duplication and improve social outcomes • Highlight with Government the importance of working with communities to develop appropriate policy that includes local input and advice as opposed to using a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach, providing more control over regional decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Orana Economic Profile → Ongoing consultation with all levels of Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>All levels of Government</i>
INFRASTRUCTURE: IMPROVE AGEING AND INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT EXISTING AND FUTURE POPULATIONS, INDUSTRY AND GROWTH		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the improvement of regional infrastructure to ensure it adequately supports existing population, industry and future growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Orana Economic Profile → RDAs Orana and Hunter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Local government-Orana</i> ❖ <i>The Orana Regional Organisation of</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with all levels of Government to prioritise the upgrade of ageing infrastructure including water pipelines, sewerage works and gas and telecommunication lines to ensure they can support current and future needs, whilst also taking into consideration the additional requirements placed on roads, water and electricity by Mining operations • Work the Government of the day and the NBN Co. to ensure that the NBN infrastructure is delivered on time and to resolve any issues that may arise with the roll-out to ensure access is provided to all residents across the region • Identify and leverage economic opportunities with the upgrading of key infrastructure relevant to trucking routes, truck stops, freight, heavy vehicle inspection and bypasses across the region 	<p>work on the Golden Highway and Airport links</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → RDAF Funding → Ongoing consultation with all levels of Government 	<p>Councils (OROC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure ❖ NSW Transport (NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan) ❖ Department of Infrastructure and Transport ❖ Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport
<p>SUSTAINABILITY: SUPPORT OUR EXISTING INDUSTRY BASE TO GROW AND DIVERSIFY, PARTICULARLY IN THE AGRICULTURE, MINING AND TOURISM INDUSTRIES. CREATE STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL SKILLS SHORTAGES ACROSS INDUSTRY AND THE REGION</p>		
<p>Ensure the continued sustainability and diversification of the Agricultural industry in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with agricultural industry organisations, producer groups, government and others to capitalise on the region’s strengths in agriculture and to support and grow existing activity • Work to ensure the regions farmers and land managers are presented with adequate information and opportunity to diversify business in terms of remaining sustainable in a water constrained economy and having the ability to benefit environmentally and economically from carbon sequestration, biomass production and carbon trading <p>Support Mining and Related Industry Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the careful negotiating of differing views within community regarding newly proposed mining operations and/or coal seam gas in an impartial and balanced manner in order to reach middle ground in considering the benefits and concerns regarding these topics • Support regional stakeholders to realise the regional opportunities for social and economic development resulting from the mining industry through providing clear evidence of economic sustainability of regional mining communities • Collaborate with education and training institutions to develop training opportunities and employment pathways to meet the skills needs within the local mining industry <p>Assist at a strategic level the growth of domestic and international tourism throughout the Orana region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with relevant government agencies, major tourism organisations, industry groups and local councils across the region to improve tourist attractions, tourist accommodation and increase tourist numbers • Facilitate a partnership approach which is cohesive in developing cross-regions strategies to grow the tourism industry in specific areas such as eco-tourism, Indigenous, history and heritage and the environment to take advantage of our natural assets located in the region. <p>Support the decentralisation of Government agencies and large business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and initiate the Government’s ‘Decade of Decentralisation’ Policy to stimulate regional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Industry Innovative Precincts – BioMass → Orana Economic Profile → Skills Mining Centre of Excellence → CFI Round 2 → RDAs Orana and Hunter work on the Golden Highway and Airport links → Drivers Licence Program → Orana to the Digital Economy Conference & Texpo → Entrepreneurial Hub → Country Week → Skilled Migration Program → RDAF Funding → Ongoing consultation with all levels of Government → Skills audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ All levels of Government, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Department of Primary Industries; - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry - NSW Department of Primary Industries -Destination NSW -Local government-Orana - The Orana Regional - Organisation of Councils (OROC) ❖ NSW Minerals Council ❖ Education Institutions ❖ Primary Industries/Peak Bodies ❖ Business and Industry groups ❖ Tourism agencies and groups ❖ Local Land Services

<p>development and deliver greater opportunities to rural and regional communities through creating new jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with key stakeholders to explore new strategies to encourage the relocation of large business to increase employment, improve local services and to generate economic activity <p>Develop and support initiatives to meet identified skills shortages within key industries to build workforce capacity and increase local employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake to effectively identify the skills needs across industry, develop stronger links between education and training organisations and target these needs in skilling up local people to fill the unskilled labour shortages. Where local people cannot fill skills gaps, support business and industry to source skilled labour through skilled migrants • Support initiatives to achieve better skills development and employment outcomes for disadvantaged groups and populations across the region 		
<p>PROMOTE: AN INNOVATIVE, COMPETITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE REGION LEVERAGING ON EXISTING INDUSTRY, COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE, NEW OPPORTUNITY, OUR NATURAL ASSETS AND THE NBN TO BECOME A LEADING DIGITAL ECONOMY, INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS</p>		
<p>Promote an innovative, competitive and productive region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive long-term economic development in the region by heightening the importance of appropriate place-based government policy supported by evidence, championing leadership, encouraging innovation in industry, supporting the diversification of industry and creating competition for new markets • Support existing business and industry by providing an information service to industry on the availability of government and non-government programs and services and providing input to relevant policy development • Support and advance initiatives to attract new industry to the region by promoting local investment and through offering incentives for the relocation of businesses and industry • Support promotional campaigns incorporating a branding of the Orana region, founded on appropriate research and identified markets • Work with the Government of the day and NBN Co. to encourage uptake of the NBN by promoting the economic and social benefits of the digital economy to local government and communities in our region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Industry Innovative Precincts – BioMass → Orana Economic Profile → Country Week → Skills Mining Centre of Excellence → CFI Round 2 → RDAs Orana and Hunter work on the Golden Highway and Airport links → Orana to the Digital Economy Conference & Texpo → Entrepreneurial Hub → RDAF Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Local government-Orana</i> ❖ <i>The Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC)</i> ❖ <i>Department of Regional Development, Local Government, Arts and Science</i> ❖ <i>Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education</i> ❖ <i>NSW Trade and Investment</i> ❖ <i>Austrade</i> ❖ <i>Department of Broadband</i> ❖ <i>NBN Co.</i>
<p>COMMUNITIES: SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES BY ENSURING ADEQUATE HEALTH, EDUCATION, HOUSING SYSTEMS AND TRANSPORT LINKAGES ARE AVAILABLE</p>		
<p>Improve increased options and access to primary, secondary and tertiary education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with relevant government departments and training and employment organisations to increase education and training options and to improve access for all communities across the region • Support programs that improve youth engagement, school retention and increase participation in post-secondary education. Provide clear pathways to tertiary and further education, training, apprenticeships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Orana Economic Profile → Skills Mining Centre of Excellence → Drivers Licence Program → RDAF Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>All levels of Government, in particular:</i> -<i>Local government-Orana</i> -<i>The Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC)</i>

<p>and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to reduce the disconnect between tertiary education organisations and the training needs in the regions in order to develop a place-based approach to better align with the local skills needs such as rural skills, information technology, mining, agriculture and hospitality • Support strategies that work to improve access to early childhood education and care places <p>Support a better serviced and more effective Regional Health System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support initiatives to build a better coordinated and more effective regional health system that particularly takes into consideration the future needs that will continue with an ageing population • Support local tertiary training in all relevant aspects of health care in collaboration with the University of Sydney, Charles Sturt University, the School of Rural Health and other education institutions as well as support initiatives to encourage medical professionals to relocate to remote regional centres, particularly with regard to supporting solutions to attract mental health specialists to the region <p>Support initiatives to create affordable housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with State and Local Governments to explore options for affordable housing • Identify State Government constraints and work in partnership to streamline the development application process, regulations and possible obstacles for development around the region • Encourage private investment in housing initiatives to meet the existing and future market needs <p>Transportation at a local level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with all levels of government to improve local infrastructure and services including maintenance and sealing of key roads, public transport and telecommunication networks to ensure that residents have access to adequate transportation networks and connectivity in line with the rest of Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ongoing consultation with all levels of Government → Support of community health and housing initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Department of Regional Development, Local Government, Arts and Sport</i> - <i>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)</i> - <i>NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure</i> - <i>NSW Transport</i> - <i>NSW Department of Health</i> - <i>NSW Department of Housing</i> - <i>NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet</i> - <i>NSW Department of Education and Communities</i> - <i>NSW Department of Communities</i> ❖ <i>Relevant Education Institutions, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Western Institute of TAFE</i> - <i>University of Sydney</i> - <i>Charles Sturt University</i> - <i>the School of Rural Health</i> ❖ <i>Health Groups, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Western NSW Local Health District, Aboriginal Medical Services, the Dubbo Plains and Outback Divisions of General Practice</i>
<p>LOCAL PLANNING</p>		
<p>LEPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with state government to assist in streamlining the LEP process and to work towards removing impediments to economic development through land planning and management regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Ongoing consultation with all levels of Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>NSW Department of Planning</i>
<p>SOCIAL CAPACITY: WORK TO IMPROVE SOCIAL CAPACITY, KNOWLEDGE AND LEADERSHIP</p>		

<p>Foster capacity in regional leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate frameworks to encourage and strengthen leadership in the wider community in order to develop local capacity Work with local councils and the community to encourage participation, ownership and responsibility of community issues and activities to strengthen leadership, build the social fabric and unite cultures in regional communities <p>Facilitate State and Nationwide initiatives to encourage families and young people to move to and remain in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategic promotional campaign, founded on appropriate research and the identification of a target market and strategy to attract the relocation of people and families to the Orana region Work with local government to improve the beautification of regional towns and to encourage positive city and town images <p>Encourage initiatives to encourage seniors to move to the region and leverage opportunities in this market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategic promotional campaign, founded on appropriate research and the identification of a target market and strategy to attract the relocation of seniors to the Orana region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Orana Economic Profile → Skills Mining Centre of Excellence → Drivers Licence Program → Skilled Migration Program → Country & Regional Living Expo (Regional promotion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Local government-Orana</i> ❖ <i>The Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC)</i> ❖ <i>NSW Department of Trade and Investment</i> ❖ <i>NSW Department of Communities</i> ❖ <i>NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure</i> ❖ <i>The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</i> ❖ <i>Department of Regional Development, Local Government, Arts and Sport</i>
SOCIAL INCLUSION		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise the demographic of the entire region and have respect to the significant Indigenous cultural history that contributes to the Orana, recognising the importance of social inclusion for all people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Orana Economic Profile → Drivers Licence Program → Skilled Migration Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>All levels of Government</i>
ENVIRONMENT		
<p>Improve the legislation, policy and access around water ways, National Parks, water security, land planning and native vegetation restrictions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Government to develop a more effective way to legislate water management, to recognise the individual needs of regional townships and the importance of regulating and licencing water through a place-based approach. Provide evidence-based reasoning to demonstrate the significant economic benefits that could be realised through more effective water management, particular in relation to expanded agricultural activity Work with Government to provide better access to water ways in order to utilise them in a way that can provide significant benefits for tourism through eco-tourism, water sports and environmental tourism Work with Government to ensure adequate urban water is accessible to growing communities under the SDLs and to negotiate current land planning restrictions in order to open up significant economic opportunities in the agriculture and carbon farming industries <p>Realise the economic opportunities through the development of the renewable energies and carbon farming industries in the region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with regions to explore the opportunities available through the development of wind, solar and other alternative energies. Support and encourage the development of alternative energy generation in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Industry Innovative Precincts – BioMass → Participation in further negotiations and roll-out of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>NSW Department of Primary Industries</i> - <i>Catchment Management Authorities</i> ❖ <i>- Local Land Services</i> ❖ <i>Department of Environment</i> ❖ <i>Department of Climate Change</i> ❖ <i>Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry</i>

<p>the region to realise environmental targets and business opportunities in Orana.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the development of the Carbon Farming and Bio-Industries. Realise the comparative advantage and therefore enormous potential the Orana has in producing biomass based commodities for domestic and international markets. Through strategic partnerships, support and extend information services of the Government's 'Clean Energies Futures', Carbon Farming Futures and the Carbon Farming Initiatives. 		
INTEGRATION AND ENGAGEMENT GOALS		
<p><i>Enhanced Whole of Government Approach</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Government at all levels to ensure a cohesive approach to economic, social and environmental issues across the region, keeping in mind the uniqueness of the region and the importance of place-based policy Inform and advise Government of the issues and factors that are affecting regional economic growth and of new opportunities that can be realised with the formation of effective policy and informed, regionally focussed decision making Support the goals set out in relevant Federal, State and local government strategic and community plans <p><i>Enhanced Community Engagement and Consultation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work and consult with regional communities, Government and other stakeholders to ensure RDA Orana is committed to developing key partnerships and working in collaboration to drive development in the region Facilitate key projects through partnerships and collaboration regarding significant regional issues and joint projects to increase economic development <p><i>Improved Regional Planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDA Orana will identify and consult the strategic plans of government departments, regional organisations that have an impact on the development of the Orana Region and reflect the goals and objectives of those plans in the RDA Orana Regional Plan RDA Orana will work with stakeholders where opportunities present to engage in regional planning around specific areas of social or economic development or the environment <p><i>Enhanced Awareness of Government Programs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDA Orana works actively to identify funding opportunities and distributes information through its Website, the monthly newsletter, through email "blasts" to stakeholders across the region Where possible, funding information is forwarded directly to key organisations and businesses RDA Orana works with local government and other stakeholders to provide advice and information about the RDA Funding and will work with the Department to ensure probity and integrity of applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Economic Profile → Regional Leaders Network, Regional Managers Group, Strategic Coordination Group participation → Ongoing consultation with all levels of Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>All levels of Government</i>

8. Sources/References

	PUBLICATION/REFERENCE	AUTHOR
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2	2011 Census	Australian Bureau of Statistics
3	Orana Regional Action Plan, NSW 2021	NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
4	State Plan 2010-2020	NSW Department of Industry and Investment
5	RESJ Orana Plan	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
6	DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets Report 2012	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
7	Tourism 2020 Plan	Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
8	Framework for Regional Economic Development	COAG Regional Australia Standing Council
9	RAI InSight Report – Australia’s Regional Competitive Index, Snapshot of Major Findings for 2013	Regional Australia Institute
10	RDA National Charter	Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport
11	OROC Strategic Plan 2010-2015	Orana Regional Organisation of Councils (OROC)
12	Decade of Decentralisation policy	http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/doing-business-in-nsw/have-your-say-on-the-nsw-governments-decentralisation-efforts
13	Local Councils Community Plans	Orana LGAs
14	Sustainable Diversion Limits	http://www.mdba.gov.au/what-we-do/water-planning/sdl
15	National Digital Economy Strategy 2011	Federal Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
16	National Workforce Development Fund - Skilling Your Business 2012	Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education
17	Regional Universities Network	http://www.run.edu.au/cb_pages/regional_australia.php
18	Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency	http://www.awpa.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx
19	The impact of Skilled Labour Shortages on the Pilbara Region Date: 17 September 2010 Author: Gavin Briggs, Research Manager, North Australian Research Programme	http://www.futuredirections.org.au/admin/uploaded_pdf/1284704458-FDI%20Strategic%20Analysis%20Paper.%20The%20Impact%20of%20Skilled%20Labour%20Shortages%20on%20the%20Pilbara%20Region.pdf
20	solar-project-moves-one-step-closer	http://www.nynganobserver.com.au/story/1659167/solar-project-moves-one-step-closer/
21	National Strategic Framework for Rural and Remote Health (2012)	Department of Health and Ageing
22	New South Wales Department of Education and Communities report 2011 – Indigenous Students	New South Wales Department of Education and Communities

RDA ORANA NSW COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013

NAME	POSITION	RESIDES	BACKGROUND	APPOINTED
John Walkom	Chair	Dubbo	Company Director, Community Services	2009
Belinda Colless	Deputy Chair	Brewarrina	Economic Development Officer – Brewarrina Shire Council	2009
Bill Burnheim	Committee Member & Treasurer, Finance & Risk sub Committee	Coonamble	Agri Business	Feb 2012
Allan Smith	Committee Member & Finance & Risk sub Committee	Dubbo	Councillor, Dubbo City Council	2009
Ian Stanford	Committee Member & Finance & Risk sub Committee	Dubbo	CEO Orana Education and Training Cooperative Ltd	Feb 2012
Kim Williams	Committee Member & Finance & Risk sub Committee	Dubbo	Businessperson	2009
Louisa Kiely	Committee Member	Goolma	Director, Carbon Farmers of Australia	2009
Peter Shinton	Committee Member	Coonabarabran	Mayor, Warrumbungle Shire	2011
Peter Gibbs	Committee Member	Dubbo	Aboriginal Educational and Employment initiatives	Feb 2012
Des Kennedy	Committee Member	Mudgee	Mayor, Mid-Western Council	Feb 2012
Stan Single	Committee Member	Dubbo	NSW Police Service, Social Justice, Law & Order	Feb 2012
Peter Yench	Committee Member	Cobar	Councillor, Cobar Council	Feb 2012

REGIONAL PROFILE - ORANA

Size of Orana:	199,000 square kilometres (nearly 25% of the state of NSW)
Traditional owners	The region is the traditional lands of a number of Aboriginal groups, including the Wiradjuri, Tubbagah, Wailwan, Kamilaroi, Wongaibon, Barranbinya, Gunu, Muruwari and Ngemba peoples
Population	115,643
Median age	39 years
Average income	Ranges from \$65,468 per annum in Cobar Shire to \$35,828 in Warrumbungle Shire
Value of GRP	\$4.9 billion in 2012
Unemployment Rate	6.3% (as at December 2012)
Key industries	Agriculture, mining, retail, health services, transport, tourism, education, government

The Orana region stretches across the Central West and Western region of NSW. The region is the largest and most diverse region in the State, covering an area of around 199,078sq kms and servicing a population of 115,643 people. The Orana comprises 13 Local Government areas.

Dubbo (approx. 38,805 people) is the largest urban centre in the region, with other major towns being Mudgee, Cobar, Coonabarabran, Wellington, Coonamble, Bourke, Warren, Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Narromine, Gilgandra, Nyngan and Brewarrina. When it is considered that the Orana region provides services to residents and businesses beyond the Orana region boundaries, the total “catchment” of the Orana region is estimated at over 200,000 people.

The Orana region has a very strong, and increasingly valued Aboriginal cultural history. The Wiradjuri, Kawambarai, Weilwan, Wongaibon and Gamilaroi Aboriginal nations and language groups, in conjunction with organisations such as Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Catchment Management Authorities, are making significant progress in identifying and protecting aboriginal artefacts and sites of cultural significance across the region, for example, the famous Brewarrina Fish Traps, a significant feature that is believed to be at least 40,000 years old, possibly the oldest surviving human-made structure in the world.

Over 1.8 million people visit the Orana region each year to see attractions such as the Warrumbungle National Park, Mudgee wineries and the Taronga Western Plains Zoo.

Major Physical Features, Natural Assets and Climate

The region measures approximately 500 kilometres from the undulating hilly western slopes of the Great Dividing Range in Warrumbungle, Mid-Western Regional and Wellington shires in the east, to the predominantly flat plains of Cobar and Bourke shires in the west; and approximately 400 kilometres from the Bogan and Macquarie river systems in the south, to the Queensland border in the north.

The major river systems in the region include the Castlereagh, Barwon and Darling.

The Warrumbungle Mountains in the central east of the Orana region provide the greatest elevation relief (up to 1000m) in what is, overall, a relatively flat regional topography (200-400m).

Goobang National Park in the south of the region and Warrumbungle and Coolah Tops National Parks in the east and north of the region are important areas of conservation, as are state forest and nature reserve areas across the region.

The Macquarie Marshes nature reserve in the centre of the region is a Ramsar recognized wetland of international significance.

Introduced weed species, feral animals (rabbits, foxes, feral pigs, cats and goats) and invasive native scrub are identified as major environmental threats by residents of the Orana region. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing energy consumption and costs, increased carbon sequestration in agricultural soils and agroforestry are seen as opportunities for positive environmental initiatives in the region.

The climate is hot and dry with average summer temperatures ranging from a minimum of 10.5 degrees Celsius in Coonabarabran to a maximum of 36 degrees in Brewarrina. Winter temperatures range from a minimum zero degrees in Coolah to a maximum of 19 degrees in Coonabarabran.

Attached is a full Economic Profile for the Orana region:

(Western Research Institute (WRI) Ltd)



Warrumbungle Mountains

ECONOMY

The GRP for the RDA Orana region in 2012 was estimated at \$4.946 billion.

Key sectors in 2012

- Other mining contributed 10% to value added and 4% of FTE employment
- Agriculture contributed 9% to value added and 15% of FTE employment
- Health & Community contributed 9% to value added and 13% of FTE employment
- Education contributed 7% to value added and 10% of FTE employment
- Public administration contributed 6% to value added and 7% of FTE employment

The top sectors in terms of numbers of employees were:

- Agriculture;
- Health & community; and
- Retail.

The largest 15 sectors are shown in Figure 1.

The contributions of each LGA to the overall regional economy are shown in Figure 2.

Refer to Appendix 5 for a detailed composition of the economy of each LGA comprising the Orana region.

Changes in sectoral employment between 2006 and 2011

The most significant changes were experienced:

- in Agriculture, where employment decreased by 2 percentage points;
- in Coal Mining, where employment increased by 2 percentage points;
- in Health & community, where employment increased by 1 percentage point; and
- in Retail, where employment decreased by 1 percentage point.

Fig 1. Key contributors - sectors

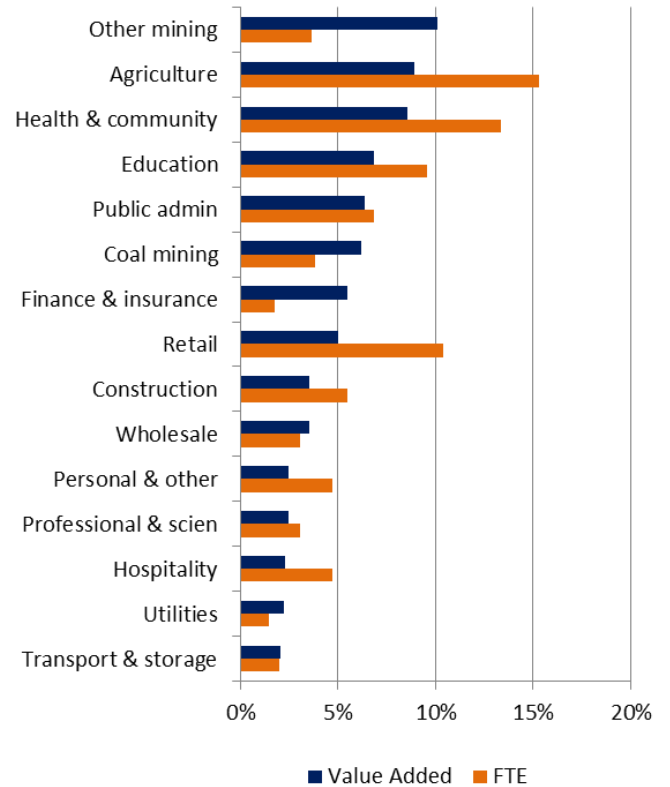
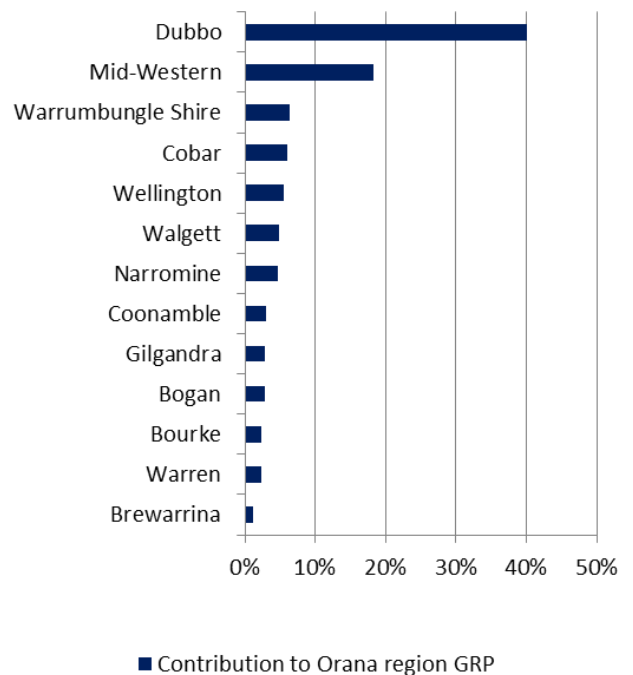


Fig 2. Contribution by LGA



Based on an analysis of industries at the subdivision (2-digit industry) level, the top employment sectors in 2011 were:

- Agriculture (13% of employment);
- Pre-school and school education (8%);
- Public administration (6%);
- Other store based retailing (5%);
- Food and beverage services (5%);
- Food retailing (4%);
- Hospitals (4%);
- Professional, scientific and technical services (3%);
- Social assistance services (3%); and
- Construction services (3%).

Key Shift Share results between 2006 and 2011

In 2011:

- Type I industries (outperforming in high growth sector) provided 6% of regional employment;
- Type IV industries (outperforming in low growth sector) provided 2% of regional employment;
- Type II industries (underperforming in high growth sector) provided 33% of regional employment;
- Type III industries (underperforming in low growth sector) provided 59% of regional employment.

Based on an analysis of industries at the subdivision level, strong local factors for employment growth were experienced in the following key sectors:

- Coal Mining
- Heritage Activities
- Other transport
- Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
- Basic Material Wholesaling

Note: key sectors are those that generate value added directly, rather than those that facilitate or support the generation of value added.

Results for other sectors are shown in the adjacent table.

Table 1. Key shift share results

Industry	Growth
Type I – Outperforming in a high growth industry	
Other transport	431%
Health Care and Social Assistance, nfd	172%
Coal Mining	158%
Heritage Activities	59%
Public Order, Safety and Regulatory Services	30%
Type IV – Outperforming in a low growth industry	
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	34%
Basic metal wholesaling	12%
Type II – Underperforming in a high growth industry	
Food and Beverage Services	1%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	4%
Social Assistance Services	28%
Medical and Other Health Care Services	2%
Residential Care Services	24%
Road Transport	-4%
Repair and Maintenance	11%
Metal Ore Mining	20%
Administrative Services	35%
Tertiary Education	6%
Type III – Underperforming in a low growth industry	
Agriculture	-15%
Preschool and School Education	6%
Public Administration	2%
Other Store-Based Retailing	-9%
Food Retailing	1%
Hospitals	-9%
Construction Services	7%
Accommodation	0%
Food Product Manufacturing	-9%
Personal and Other Services	7%

Top 10 sectors only shown for Type II and III industries.

Table 2. Average income by occupation

Occupation	Orana	% Change From 2006	Northern Inland
Managers	\$48,072	20%	\$47,697
Professionals	\$63,823	19%	\$63,508
Technicians and Trades Workers	\$48,450	26%	\$43,002
Community and Personal Service Workers	\$39,605	24%	\$36,748
Clerical and Administrative Workers	\$42,082	22%	\$41,133
Sales Workers	\$30,335	18%	\$28,623
Machinery Operators And Drivers	\$58,111	31%	\$48,785
Labourers	\$30,636	22%	\$31,390

Table 3. Employment mapping

Occupations – Sourced from:	Outside Orana region	% of sector
Machine and Stationary Plant Operators	204	14%
Farmers and Farm Managers	152	3%
Health Professionals	102	5%
Education Professionals	73	3%
Construction and Mining Labourers	71	13%
Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers	67	4%
Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals	65	8%
Road and Rail Drivers	64	5%
Specialist Managers	52	3%
Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers	48	2%
Sales Assistants and Salespersons	37	1%
Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians	36	6%
Mobile Plant Operators	31	5%
Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers	29	3%
Carers and Aides	22	1%
Protective Service Workers	22	3%
Factory Process Workers	22	3%
Storepersons	21	9%
Other Labourers	21	3%
Food Preparation Assistants	20	3%

Average Income by Occupation

In 2011, the top earning occupations across the Orana region were Professionals and Machinery Operators and Drivers.

The largest increases in incomes were reported for those working as:

- Machinery Operators and Drivers;
- Technicians and Trades Workers; and
- Community and Personal Service Workers.

When compared to average incomes across the RDA Northern Inland region, average incomes were higher in the Orana region for all occupation categories except for labouring.

Employment mapping by occupation

Employment mapping was conducted at the sub-major group level.

As at the 2011 Census, the most common occupations in the Orana region sourced from LGAs outside Orana were:

- Machine and stationary plant operators;
- Design, engineering, science and transport professionals; and
- Construction and mining labourers.

The top 20 occupations that were in part sourced from outside the Orana region are shown in the adjacent table.

Count of businesses

ABS Count of Australian Businesses data, including Entries and Exits between June 2008 and June 2011 is available at Statistical Area Level 2. Statistical Areas comprising the Orana region were aggregated to determine business growth between 2008 and 2011. The most significant growth in businesses occurred for:

- Administrative and support services (up 20% to 277 businesses);
- Health care and social assistance (up 19% to 409 businesses);
- Wholesale Trade (up 17% to 317 businesses); and
- Retail Trade (up 14% to 772 businesses).

The most significant decline in businesses occurred for:

- Arts and recreation services (down 12% to 85 businesses);
- Mining (down 18% to 121 businesses).

LABOUR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS

Key employment data

Small Area Labour Market data from DEEWR for Dec Qtr 2012 reported:

- A labour force of 62,045 persons
- An unemployment rate of 6.3%

The unemployment trend since December 2006 is shown in Figure 3 opposite, revealing that unemployment in the Orana region has trended slightly above that of the Rest of NSW since December 2009. Orana’s unemployment has trended around 0.6% below that for the RDA Northern Inland region since June 2008.

In recent times the unemployment rate for the Rest of NSW has fallen slightly, however, Orana’s unemployment rate has remained steady.

At the 2011 census, the Orana region reported:

- A youth labour force of 8,143 persons, with the youth unemployment rate at 12.4%, lower than that for RDA Northern Inland (13.4%).
- An Indigenous Labour force of 4,934 persons, with the Indigenous unemployment rate at 19.9%, lower than that for RDA Northern Inland (33.3%).

Educational profile

As at the 2011 Census, the highest year of school education completed amongst residents of the Orana region was most commonly:

- Year 10 or equivalent (26%)
- Year 12 or equivalent (24%)

(30% not stated or not applicable)

The level of Year 10 completion is similar to that reported for RDA Northern Inland and the Rest of NSW, however, the level of Year 12 completion is slightly lower than that for the comparison regions.

Fig 3. Recent unemployment trend

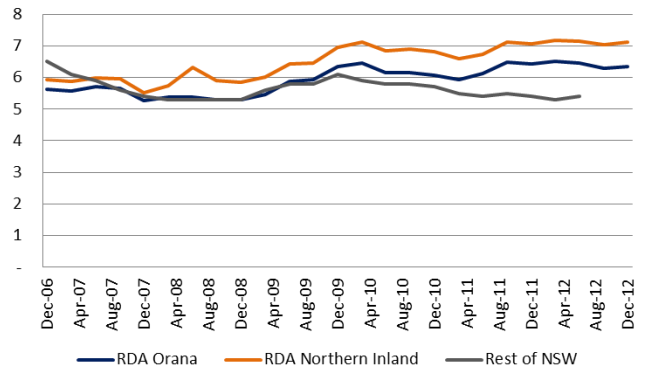


Fig 4. Highest year of school completed

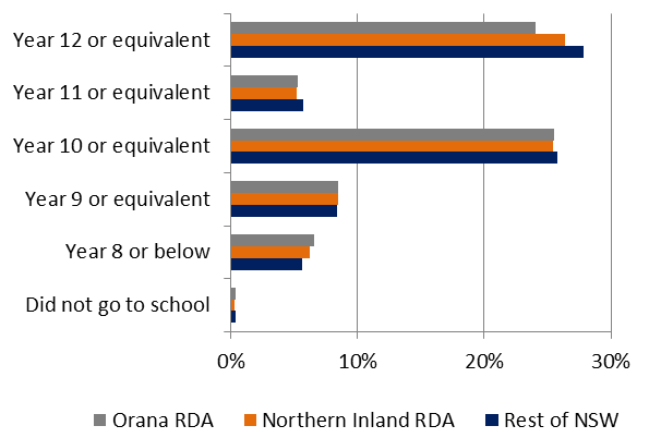


Fig 5. Post school qualifications

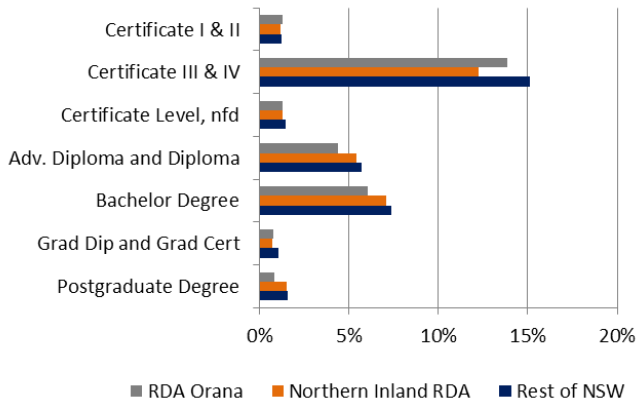


Table 4. Current study patterns

	RDA Orana	RDA Northern Inland	Rest of NSW
Attending University			
15-24 years	5.2%	12.3%	12.5%
25 years and over	1.3%	2.0%	2.0%
Attending other tertiary (TAFE)			
15-24 years	8.7%	7.6%	9.0%
25 years and over	2.2%	2.2%	2.0%

Results are as a proportion of the total population for the age bracket.

Post school qualifications

As at the 2011 Census, the highest post school qualification completed was most commonly:

- Certificate III or IV (14%)
- Bachelor Degree (6%)

The level of Certificate III / IV completion is similar to that reported for the Rest of NSW (15%), however is slightly higher than that reported for RDA Northern Inland (12%).

The level of Bachelor degree completion is slightly higher in the Rest of NSW and RDA Northern Inland (both 7%) compared to RDA Orana.

Growth in qualifications

In the Orana region between 2006 and 2011, those holding:

- Postgraduate degree qualifications increased by 39% (to 941 people);
- Bachelor degree qualifications increased by 19% (to 6,987 people);
- Certificate III and IV qualifications increased by 19% (to 16,013 people);
- Advanced diploma and diploma qualifications increased by 17% (to 5,051 people).

Current study patterns

- The proportion of residents aged 15-24 years from the Orana region attending university is significantly lower than for the Rest of NSW and the RDA Northern Inland region (which is on a par with the Rest of NSW).
- Results for other tertiary attendance for those aged 15-24 years is slightly higher for the Orana region compared to the RDA Northern Inland region, and only slightly lower than for the Rest of NSW.

Fig 8. Personal income by LGA

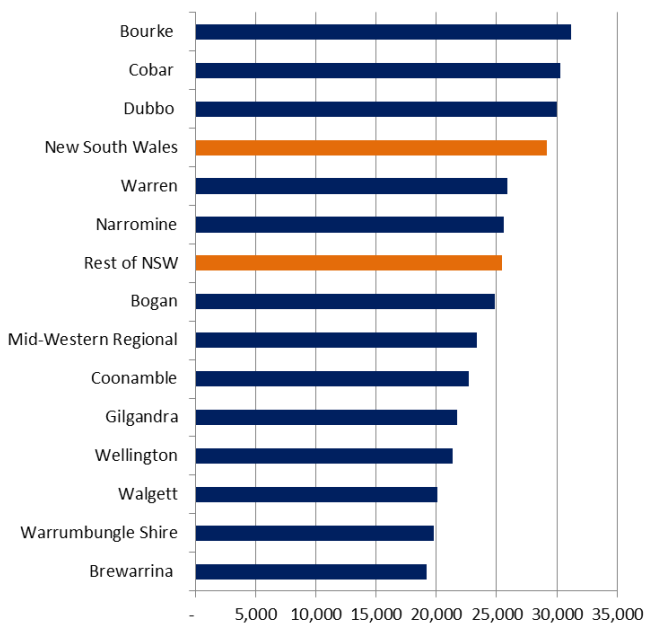
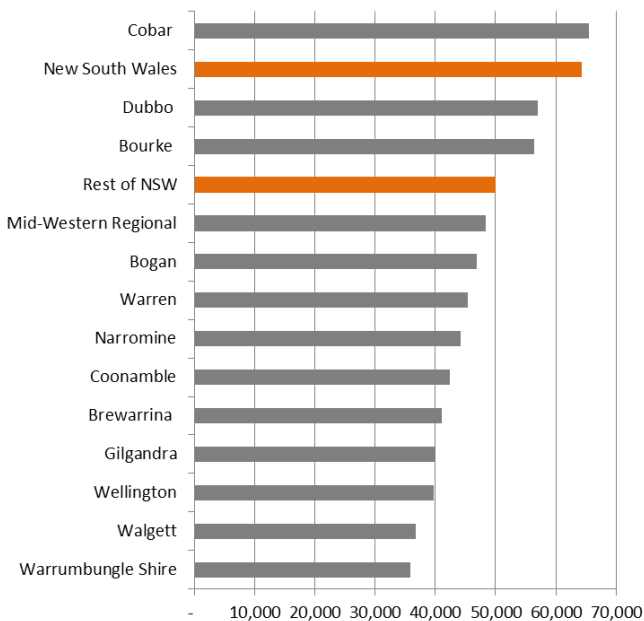


Fig 9. Household income by LGA



HOUSEHOLD DATA

Personal Income

- As at the 2011 Census, the median personal incomes across the Orana region ranged from \$31,200 per annum in Bourke Shire to \$19,188 in Brewarrina Shire.
- Bourke, Cobar and Dubbo LGAs reported higher median incomes than that reported for NSW as a whole.
- Warren and Narromine LGAs reported median incomes marginally higher than that reported for the Rest of NSW.
- The remaining eight LGAs reported median incomes lower than that reported for the Rest of NSW and NSW.
- Between 2006 and 2011, growth in median personal income was greatest in Bourke LGA (up 45%), Bogan LGA (up 31%) and Cobar LGA (up 28%).
- By comparison, median personal incomes across the RDA Northern Inland region ranged from \$29,016 per annum in Moree Plains Shire to \$19,604 in Tenterfield Shire.
- In the RDA Northern Inland region, no LGAs reported median personal incomes greater than the NSW median, whilst four LGAs reported median incomes greater than that reported for the Rest of NSW.

Household Income

- As at the 2011 Census, the median household incomes across the Orana region ranged from \$65,468 per annum in Cobar Shire to \$35,828 in Warrumbungle Shire.
- Between 2006 and 2011, growth in median household income was greatest in Mid-Western Regional LGA (up 33%), followed by Bourke LGA (up 32%).

HOUSING

Housing affordability

The affordability of housing was examined using a ratio of median house prices to median taxable income and median weekly rental as a percentage of median weekly taxable income.

- House prices were highest relative to median income in Mid-Western Region LGA. House prices in Narromine and Dubbo LGAs were also relatively high, though no LGAs recorded housing costs higher than those for NSW as a whole.
- Despite the high cost of housing in Mid-Western Region LGA, housing costs there have actually fallen (relative to median income) substantially since 2006. Housing costs have fallen in nine out of the thirteen LGAs since 2006.
- In 2011, the Gilgandra, Mid-Western Region and Narromine LGAs were the most expensive LGAs in which to rent, relative to median weekly incomes, with costs having risen substantially since 2006.
- Rental costs decreased relative to median weekly income in Bogan, Cobar and Wellington LGAs since 2006.

Home ownership vs. rental

- Ownership status in the Orana region and NSW as a whole appears to have been quite stable between 2006 and 2011.
- The proportion of dwellings owner-occupied in the Orana region in 2011 was 62% compared to 63% in 2006 (63% in RDA Northern Inland region).
- The proportion of dwellings rented in the Orana region in 2011 was 29% compared to 28% in 2006.

Fig 10. Median weekly rental as percentage of median household weekly taxable income by LGA

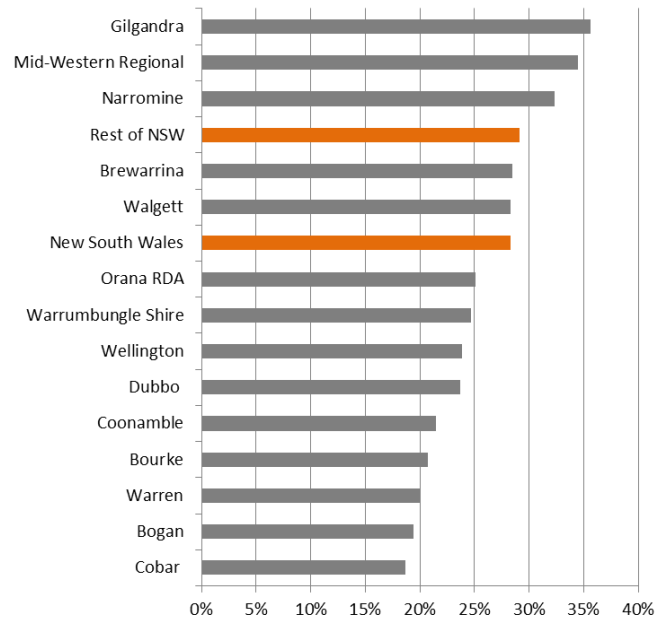
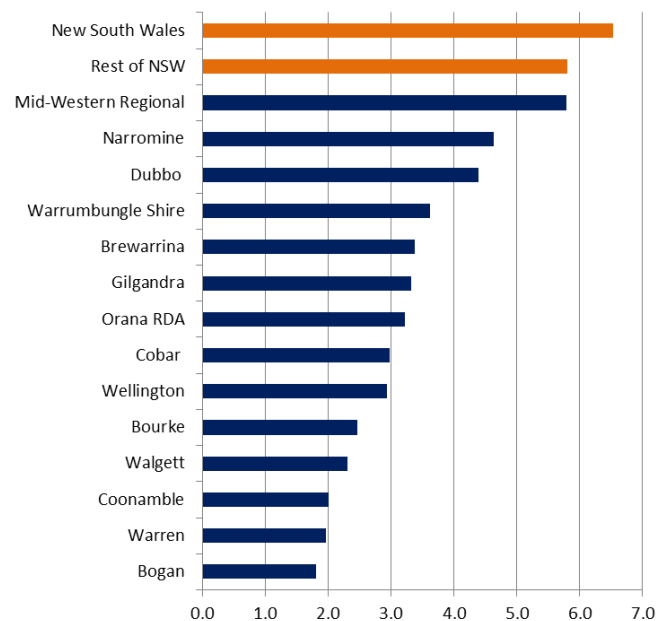


Fig 11. Ratio of median house price to median household taxable income by LGA



Value of construction

Table 6 shows that for the overall Orana region:

- Residential construction decreased between 2010 and 2012 by approximately 10%, whilst non-residential construction fell sharply by approximately 73%.
- Total construction fell by 51% during this period.
- In comparison, over the same period total construction in the RDA Northern Inland region fell by 43%. In contrast to the Orana region, both residential construction and non-residential construction fell sharply during the period (39% and 46% respectively).

Table 6. Value of construction

	Residential \$000	Non- residential \$000	Total \$000
2010	109,305	200,136	309,441
2011	98,001	82,606	180,607
2012	97,922	54,424	152,346
% change 2010 to 2011	-10%	-59%	-42%
% change 2011 to 2012	0%	-34%	-16%
% change 2010 to 2012	-10%	-73%	-51%

Crime Statistics

Crime rates are normally reported in terms of rate per 100,000 head of population. The top reported offences in the Orana region in 2012 were:

- Malicious damage to property;
- Break and enter dwelling;
- Breach bail conditions.

The top ten most regularly occurring offence categories in the Orana region recorded higher rates of incidence than in NSW overall. The rate of crime incidences per 100,000 along with the percentage change in these offences between 2008 and 2012 are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Top 10 offence categories

	Orana			NSW		
	2008	2012	% Change	2008	2012	% Change
Malicious damage to property	2830	2289	-19%	1,560	1,129	-28%
Break and enter dwelling	875	1151	32%	327	222	-32%
Breach bail conditions	652	1081	66%	338	417	19%
Steal from motor vehicle	787	1003	27%	825	645	-22%
Assault - non-domestic violence related	1101	995	-10%	610	482	-21%
Assault - domestic violence related	872	966	11%	365	375	3%
Harassment, threatening behaviour and private nuisance	771	891	16%	376	410	9%
Steal from dwelling	558	556	0%	305	299	-2%
Trespass	557	550	-1%	132	123	-7%
Other theft	678	546	-20%	537	476	-11%

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Regional Development Australia Orana recognises it is essential to ensure that its regional plan reflects the needs and opportunities of as many of the Orana regional residents, communities and organisations as possible.

For development of the Orana Regional Plan 2013-16, the following regional stakeholder groups and organisations were targeted for consultation.

- All local government councils in the Orana region
- Public members, business and industry across the region
- Chambers of Commerce (or equivalent) in regional towns
- Rural industry organisations
- Mining industry organisations
- Community service organisations
- State and Australian Government agencies
- Indigenous organisations
- Environmental organisations
- Major business operators
- Major utility service providers
- Education and health service providers
- State and federal elected representatives



Cotton growing, Warren

The RDA Orana Chair, CEO and staff visited each community within the Orana to consult with these groups prior to the development of the plan. Two consultation sessions were held in each shire with the purpose of engaging with local councils and the community on subjects regarding economic, social and environment matters. In total, 26 separate formal consultation sessions were held, in which the community provided important input and views on these key themes, forming the fundamentals of the Regional Plan 2013-16.

Engage | Invest | Grow

