



Regional Development Australia Hunter

Quarterly Report to the Region

1 January to 31 March 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Regional Development Australia is a national network of local leaders working with all levels of government, the private sector, businesses and community groups to support economic development within their regions.

From 1 January 2018, RDA Hunter is funded by the Australian Government for a further three years to facilitate a new charter for a Strong, Confident and Vibrant Region.

RDA Hunter's Quarterly Report to the region highlights recent work we have undertaken from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2018 and identifies future economic development opportunities.

January 2018

RDA Hunter – New Charter

RDA Hunter adopted the new RDA charter to focus on our priorities and take an active and facilitative role in the Hunter. Further information can be found here: [RDA Charter](#)

STEM Workforce Initiative

RDA Hunter progressed the three programs in its industry-led STEM Workforce Initiative:

- Mini ME
- ME Program (<http://www.meprogram.com.au/>)
- STEMship

These life-stage specific, education programs create a pipeline of opportunities and activities for students from eight years of age to 18 years old.

In close mutual partnership with local industry, including defence prime contractors, multi-nationals and SMEs, students are immersed in industry focused and designed curriculum as well as professional placements and work experience.

STEM Workforce Conference

RDA Hunter announced Thursday 10 May as the date for the 2018 STEM Workforce Conference.

Announcement of the date was conducted through social media on the RDA Hunter LinkedIn Group, Corporate page and the ME Program Facebook, with registrations opening in February.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/rda-hunter-and-ccgps-stem-workforce-education-conferences-tickets-42779402344>

Regional partnerships

Consultations continued with government agencies, business and industry groups, and community organisations throughout the month of January to build positive relationships for the benefit of the Hunter region. RDA Hunter met with elected representatives in the Hunter, AiGroup, Newcastle Airport, NSW Office of Regional Development, private investors and the team from Where There's A Will: <http://uhwheretheresawill.com.au/>

February 2018

Submissions

- Defence Industry in NSW: Discussion Paper

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2440>

- Optimising STEM Industry-School Partnerships: Inspiring Australia's Next Generation

<https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/optimising-stem-industry-school-partnerships-inspiring-australias-next-generation-issues>

- Inquiry into Zonal Taxation

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2384>

Hunter Investment Prospectus

RDA Hunter in conjunction with the Hunter Business Review released the 2018 Hunter Investment Prospectus to help promote the Hunter's competitive advantages as an investment location.

The 2018 Hunter Investment Prospectus can be downloaded from the RDA Hunter website:

[2018 Hunter Investment Prospectus](#)

STEMship

The 2018 STEMship program was launched in February as one of the three major projects of the STEM Workforce Initiative. The program was launched via a video showcasing 2017 students who completed the Hunter program and are now working locally after gaining apprenticeships.

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/jCy6uXa7Fa4>

Case Study: [STEMship Case Study - Sam Hadley](#)

Regional partnerships

Consultations continued with regional stakeholders throughout February. RDA Hunter met with representatives from AGL, Cessnock Council, Defence NSW, Muswellbrook Shire Council, Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry, NSW Audit Office, private infrastructure investors, RAAF Base Williamtown and Sapere Research Group (regional economic development strategy consultations for NSW DPC)

Director of Regional Development

The Board of RDA Hunter appointed Acting Executive Officer, Trevor John to the dual roles of Director Regional Development and Executive Officer.

Media Coverage

RDA Hunter Aeroskills Cert II recognised in the Singleton Argus and on local ABC Radio.

<https://www.singletonargus.com.au/story/5242663/unique-learning-experience-now-on-offer-aeroskills/>

<http://www.meprogram.com.au/rda-hunters-aeroskills-focus-prepares-students-for-aerospace-jobs/>

March 2018

Appointment of Chair

By the end of March, RDA Hunter had received the welcome news that Mr John Turner had been appointed as Chairman of RDA Hunter by Federal Minister for Regional Development and Territories, the Hon Dr John McVeigh MP.

ME Program

STEM Workforce Initiative Manager, RDA Hunter Chair & Deputy Chair travelled to Canberra to meet with the Department of Defence, funding partner for the ME Program, to discuss the achievements and progress of the program throughout the funding period.

MiniME

RDA Hunter is a partner in the Smart Move Newcastle project, supported by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, with funding through the Smart Cities and Suburbs program. <https://cities.infrastructure.gov.au/smart-cities-program>

RDA Hunter attended the four briefings and workshops conducted by Newcastle City Council as part of their Smart Moves Newcastle Project.

RDA Hunter held an information session with Newcastle LGA primary schools to engage with STEM teachers within the region as an opportunity to put an expression of interest in to participate within the 2018 program.

Regional partnerships

Consultations continued with government agencies, business and industry groups, and community organisations throughout March. RDA Hunter met with potential applicants to the Australian Government's [Regional Growth Fund](#), and representatives from Defence NSW, Hunter Industry Roundtable, Lake Macquarie City Council, Newcastle Airport, Newcastle City Council Smart City program, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Williamtown Advisory Group.

Constitution

A new constitution was adopted by RDA Hunter to align its purpose with the charter and requirements of our funding agreement with the Australian Government.

Media Coverage

The STEMship program which was launched in February 2018 received national recognition through an ABC Radio story which featured Sam Hadley from the 2017 STEMship cohort.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-23/drone-racer-turns-hobby-into-a-career-with-uav-traineeship/9579448>

RDA Hunter Board Member, Ian Pedersen, was featured in the Sydney Morning Herald with an article regarding the benefits of better rail connections between regional NSW and Sydney.

The article was in response to three successful Faster Rail Prospectus projects, including Sydney – Newcastle, announced in a joint media release on 13 March 2018 from Deputy PM Michael McCormack MP and Minister for Urban Infrastructure & Cities, Paul Fletcher MP.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/regional-centres-can-prove-the-answer-for-a-city-bursting-at-the-seams-20180316-p4z4qm.html>

Emerging and potential issues impacting future regional development

Issue	RDA Hunter's responses
<p>Constraints on competitive business diversification at the Port of Newcastle – full capacity container terminal and operations</p>	<p>Advice to Australian Government Department of Industry, innovation and Science through a survey on future opportunities and blockages to regional development</p> <p>Written submission to NSW inquiry into Freight and Ports</p> <p>Monitoring developments and building relationships to define options for a solution</p>
<p>Slow rail connection between Newcastle and Sydney</p>	<p>Worked with Committee for Sydney and stakeholders along the corridor to define and advocate for practical long-term solutions.</p> <p>Contributed to public debate via daily newspaper opinion piece and local radio in Sydney.</p>
<p>Shortage of skilled workforce to maximise opportunities from arrival of Joint Strike Fighter aircraft fleet at Williamstown RAAF Base</p>	<p>RDA Hunter has developed and implemented a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) program for people aged 8 to 18 to be ready for future jobs. This has been an outstanding success lifting participant rates in these areas significantly and developing a skilled work force not only for defence industries but also for like industries, particularly advanced manufacturing. RDA Hunter's STEM Workforce Initiative starts at primary school, with robotics and coding, through to secondary schools with career pathways and curriculum enhancement, and support programs for entry to VET, internships, apprenticeships and university.</p> <p>RDA Hunter is actively seeking funding to continue and expand this Initiative.</p>

RDA HUNTER NEWSLETTERS

DATE	TOPIC
16 January 2018	SAVE THE DATE STEM Workforce Conference
23 January 2018	STEM Workforce Initiative Update
6 February 2018	REGISTRATIONS OPEN STEM Workforce Conference
27 February 2018	STEM Workforce Initiative Update
8 March 2018	Meet the Speakers STEM Workforce Conference
13 March 2018	STEM Workforce Initiative Update
20 March 2018	RDA Hunter Update
27 March 2018	STEM Workforce Initiative Update

REGIONAL CERTIFYING BODY

Responded to and facilitated 26 Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme enquiries from 1 January 2018 – 31 March 2018.