NEDC18

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE
WINNERS AND FINALISTS
Economic Development Australia (EDA) offers members a vast array of benefits and opportunities to:

1. Connect with your industry and raise your visibility
2. Boost your knowledge, skills and practice
3. Drive the development of policy

10 ways to get the most from your membership:

1. Boost skills and knowledge through a range of professional development conferences, webinars, training workshops and masterclasses.
2. Build networks, connections and professional support through State Practitioner Network (SPN) functions and events.
3. Engage in on-line forums offering resources and peer support from fellow economic development practitioners across Australia.
4. Shine a national spotlight on your work by entering the Economic Development Awards for Excellence.
5. Apply for an EDA International Study Tour to gain world class professional development, valued up to $5,000.
6. Boost your career by becoming an EDA accredited economic development practitioner.
7. Recruit professionals, source a consultant or find your next exciting role through EDA's network.
8. Connect, learn and set the direction of economic development at EDA's National Economic Development Conference.
9. Raise your visibility by presenting at EDA's National Economic Development Conference.
10. Drive the development of EDA in your state by joining a SPN management committee and contribute to economic development policy development and advocacy.

New corporate membership offers unlimited access to member benefits for your organisation admin@edaaustralia.com.au

JOIN US AT www.edaustralia.com.au
as we connect, drive the discussion, share knowledge and raise the performance of economic development throughout Australia.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

Established in 2007, EDA is the peak national body for economic development practitioners, strengthening and promoting economic development through state and national events, professional development, advocacy and member support.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair’s Report</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO’s Report</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPECIAL FEATURE: NEDC 2018 Awards for Excellence</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Collaboration in Economic Development</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Initiatives - Single Event or Activity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Initiatives - Rural &amp; Remote Areas</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Strategic Thinking</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Through Partnerships</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Marketing &amp; Promotion</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Initiatives - over 15,000 residents</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Initiatives - under 15,000 residents</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Leadership Award (Elected Member)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Rising Star</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Chaffey Economic Development Leadership Award</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The revitalisation of Bourbon Street</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why We Need a Clear Vision for Australia as a Smart Nation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Economic Development in the Age of Digital Disruption</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Online Economic Profiles for EDA Members</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have just wrapped up another successful National Economic Development Conference with hosts, Rockhampton Regional Council delivering a dynamic and highly engaging program, drilling down into the themes of; Winning in Job Creation and Disruptive Innovation to Diversify Economic Growth.

The Conference also featured the announcement of the winners of the 2018 National Economic Development Awards of Excellence. EDA received an unprecedented number of entries this year and the projects and initiatives which were acknowledged at the stunning Riverside Gala event in Rockhampton illustrated the high quality of economic development work being undertaken across the country. We hope you enjoy the synopsis of winners and finalists in this special edition of the EDA Journal and encourage you to get in touch for more information in regards to any of these excellent economic development case studies.

During the Conference, we also announced Ann Niddrie and Paul Johnson as the winners of the recent round of the EDA Study Tour Program. Ann is the Creative Industries Cluster Manager at Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise and will visit the US and Europe to study and liaise with other globally competitive creative clusters to inform the future direction of this innovative Australian creative industries cluster. Paul Johnson from Wellington Shire Council in Victoria will be visiting the United States and New Zealand to gain much needed insight into the secrets to success of some of the world’s leading digital co-working spaces. He will build on the vast research that already exists to ensure the proposed development in Wellington is globally competitive. This EDA member exclusive program offers funding up to $5,000 for economic development practitioners to undertake research, attend professional development or conferences overseas in order to report findings back to economic development peers.

The National Economic Development Conference is an ideal opportunity for the EDA Board to meet face to face and reflect on the previous 12 months and review the strategic direction of the organisation. We look forward to continuing to add value to the membership offering of EDA and to building the capacity of the economic development sector across Australia through professional development, advocacy and member support. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and great appreciation to each of the current EDA directors, Virginia Miller, Paul Martins, Paula Brennan, Greg Fenwick, David Power, Susie Bower and Jason McFarlane for investing their valuable time and effort in directing the organisation with innovation and vision.

Membership of EDA has now exceeded 580 and continues to grow at a rapid rate thanks to the many initiatives being undertaken by the national executive as well as the fantastic events and projects being run by the wonderful volunteer EDA State Practitioner Networks across the country.

Thank you all for your support for EDA and we look forward to continuing this exciting work together.

Kind regards,

Mark Holdsworth ACEcD
National Chair,
Economic Development Australia
It is my pleasure to introduce this special Awards of Excellence edition of the Economic Development Australia (EDA) Journal.

The 2018 National Economic Development Awards of Excellence finalists and winners are featured in this edition. We look forward to showcasing some of the award-winning case studies in more detail throughout the year through the website, the EDA webinar program and other face to face workshops. These case studies illustrate leadership and innovation and we congratulate them all.

In addition to the winners showcase, we are pleased to include an article by Amanda Goody from Sunshine Coast Council who was a recipient of EDA's Study Tour Program. Amanda's visit to New Orleans provides valuable insight for economic development practitioners seeking to support businesses during disruptive periods of construction.

This edition also features an article by Neil Glentworth with a rallying call for Australia to develop a strong “Smart Nation” vision in order to unlock the economic development opportunities associated with global technological advances.

Simon Molloy provides a fascinating case study regarding work commissioned by Regional Development Australia, Northern Rivers NSW to investigate the potential for the digital sector to act as a growth driver in the Northern Rivers.

This edition also highlights the REMPLAN economic profile which is available for EDA members on the EDA website. Access and analyses of quality data helps EDA members identify risk and opportunity and equips them to better understand the levers for competitiveness.

Thank you to the practitioners and organisations who have contributed to this edition and we encourage other economic development professionals to share their projects and insights for future editions. Information regarding submitting an article for the Journal can be found here.

We hope you enjoy this special edition of the EDA Journal and if you would like further information about any of EDA's activities or initiatives, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Jacqueline Brinkman
CEO
Economic Development Australia
THANK YOU TO ALL THE SPONSORS OF THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE 2018. YOUR SUPPORT IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.
The 2018 National Economic Development Awards for Excellence winners were announced at the Gala event held on the stunning Rockhampton Riverbank as part of the 2018 National Economic Development Conference on October 18.

Congratulations to all the finalists and winners whose success is evidence of the innovative economic development programs transforming Australian communities.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WINNER
CITY OF ONKAPARINGA
Onkaparinga Youth Enterprise Hub (OYEH)

The Onkaparinga Youth Enterprise Hub (OYEH) empowers young people under 30 to develop skills and pathways to unlock and maximise their creative and entrepreneurial potential. With high rates of youth unemployment in the City of Onkaparinga, OYEH aims to provide a positive future for young people by building their enterprise skills and empowering them to create their own self-employment opportunities and contribute to the community and the economy.

Based on research and community engagement, the City of Onkaparinga has created a unique, vibrant and innovative multiple use youth enterprise hub incorporating retail, exhibition, makers and co-working spaces from where they deliver a range of services including entrepreneurial skill development programs, networking events, gallery exhibitions and product launches. In the past 12 months, the City has supported more than 13 businesses, incubated and launched 3 new start-ups with 10 more intenders in the pipeline. 27 young people have completed nationally recognised and accredited barista courses.

Volunteers have invested over 850 hours in OYEH and the program has attracted over 2,300 attendances.

The City of Onkaparinga has created an enabling environment for young people to thrive and develop new skills with a view to changing the narrative on youth unemployment in the region. Pathways have been created to provide an opportunity for young people to be job makers, not just job seekers. The success of this project has been due to focused, deliberate and meaningful collaboration with more than 15 community partners and stakeholders including young people, government, non-government and business sectors.

FINALIST
SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL
Welcoming the Commonwealth to the Sunshine Coast 2018

Sunshine Coast is a destination with outstanding sporting assets and the 2018 Commonwealth Games presented a rare leveraging opportunity. The area was well positioned to offer pre-Games training and acclimatisation camps for visiting Commonwealth countries and to grow the current $442 million sports economy, by:

- increasing the profile of the Sunshine Coast as a training destination for high-performance sports
• strengthening community and business capacity to meet the needs of visiting high performance athletes, and

• stimulating new economic opportunities for local businesses.

To distinguish the Sunshine Coast from other pre-competition training destinations, there was a need to partner with the community to attract enough teams and countries to make Sunshine Coast the number one non-Games destination in Australia for pre-Games training.

Through the Welcoming the Commonwealth project, successful partnerships were forged with a wide and diverse range of community groups and outstanding outcomes were achieved. The Sunshine Coast experienced visitation by 500 international athletes and officials from nine countries; a $1.6 million injection into the local economy; $195,000 worth of free mainstream media coverage; 1,058,591 related likes and engagements from a reach of 4,486,455 people; and skills development across the industry.

The project activities were designed and delivered through collaboration with local Indigenous family groups, 19 community sporting clubs and venues, four cultural groups, 75 volunteers, 17 public and independent schools, two media partners, the Regional Tourism Organisation, the local University, the local Sports Federation and relevant State Government agencies. It also drew on the services of 95 local businesses.

FINALIST
WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL
Beers and Ideas

‘Beers and Ideas’ is a placemaking initiative and collaboration between Warrnambool City Council, a local graphic designer/placemaker and the Warrnambool Community. Beers and Ideas empowers local people to carry out placemaking projects in the city and aims to inspire a sense of fun and possibility by simplifying the process of bringing these projects to life. It believes that improving public spaces will make Warrnambool a more lively and engaging place to be; a place that the community is proud of and connected to; a place where we share unique and positive experiences; a place where everyone wants to be.

The concept behind ‘Beers and Ideas’ is simple. A ‘Beers and Ideas’ event involves a $10 admission fee which gives attendees a beer and a vote. Throughout the night the audience hears a range of local placemaking ideas pitched by members of the community who are willing to project manage their idea. Participants vote for the idea they most wish to see delivered in the Central Business District. The idea with the most votes wins the money raised at the door and this amount is matched by Warrnambool City Council, to use towards making their idea come to life.

The Warrnambool CBD is a more vibrant and vital place because of Beers and Ideas. Economic benefits have been realised in areas where ideas have become reality. Beers and Ideas is making Warrnambool a more innovative and attractive city that draws on the creative talents of its citizens.

DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURS
WINNER
GEOGRAFIA
Empowering Local Governments with Advanced Economic Analytics

For some years now, Geografia has been using bank data as an input to its work.

Spendmapp is a significant leap beyond. It is a software tool that allows economic development practitioners to discover insights for themselves and, in doing so, it is building their analytical capability and enhancing their reputation. As one case study user said: ‘[Spendmapp] has made complex work, simple for us. That means we address problems more efficiently and have time to tackle even more challenging issues.’

Geografia’s intellectual effort has focused on the infrastructure. Now economic development practitioners can focus their efforts on extracting data in the way they need it, running it through their preferred analytical tools, and initiating the right solutions.

By reducing the need for costly, one-off consultants for what should be standard work for council officers, more resources become available for other projects. And as the reputation of economic development practitioners is enhanced, so council initiatives are even more readily endorsed by local stakeholders.

Future iterations of Spendmapp will incorporate more training materials including easy to
understand, yet robust, statistical analysis modules. Some of these are already emerging from collaboration with our early adopters. Case studies are being documented and shared on Spendmapp’s site (spendmapp.com.au). This collaboration with partners, particularly the Cities of Warrnambool and Holdfast Bay, illustrates how Spendmapp has helped economic development practitioners become experts in data analytics.

**FINALIST VENDORPANEL**

**Leveraging Council Procurement to Drive Local Economic Development**

It is generally agreed that local sourcing by Councils and other organisations brings social and economic gain to an area. Yet, when it comes to local procurement, adherence to policy targets and measurement of results are difficult.

The challenge has been to bring local procurement into mainstream Council procurement activity – to make it easy for buyers to source locally.

BuyRegional is a nationwide initiative that helps government and other organisations engage with local suppliers, leveraging procurement as a driver of regional economic development. Over 30 councils have taken part in BuyRegional since its launch, supporting economic growth, while improving governance and reducing risk in their activities.

Platform statistics show that Councils sourcing via BuyRegional have awarded 84.4% of RFxs locally. Other data (independently validated) has shown that they achieved an average Cost Avoidance rate of 9.74%, challenging the widely-held view that procuring to drive local economic development comes at a financial cost. In fact, the opposite is true.

**FINALIST CITY OF BALLARAT**

**Ballarat GiG (Get into Games) Expo**

Ballarat GiG (Get into Games) is a successful initiative of the City of Ballarat’s Economic Development Unit, having celebrated the 10th anniversary of the event in May 2017, with the tagline 10 Years ‘Ahead of the Game’.

This Expo highlights to secondary school students the future career pathways available in the lucrative games development industry. It has two objectives:

- Workforce development: to attract and retain digital skills and knowledge in the region by promoting gaming and other courses available to students through Federation University; and
- Investment development and attraction: promoting Ballarat as a high tech and knowledge-based economy interested in attracting games development studios.

GiG is held in collaboration with the Game Developers Association of Australia (GDAA), Federation University Australia and Highlands LLEN (Local Learning & Employment Network), and in 2017, attracted sponsorship from Telstra, IBM and GUF Games.

GiG 2017 was attended by 230 students from 15 schools from across the Victorian Central Highlands, who interacted with presenters from national and international games development studios (and during their breaks played some fantastic games!). Whilst registration was at capacity for the venue, the reported interest from schools exceeded 600 students. The event also included an industry lunch, which provided the opportunity for games industry leaders to network with local teachers, policy makers and University representatives.

Federation University Australia have reported an increase in enrolments in their gaming courses in recent years; furthermore the ongoing relationship between City of Ballarat and the GDAA has given Ballarat a reputation as a regional city with an interest in digital innovation.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES - SINGLE EVENT OR ACTIVITY**

**WINNER SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL**

**Why You Chose the Sunshine Coast - Business with Benefits**

Sunshine Coast Council takes a collaborative approach to raise the profile of the region as a business destination and gain quality business investment leads.

During 2017-18, activity was designed and delivered under Sunshine Coast Council’s Investment Attraction Plan to achieve the objectives of promotion and awareness, business attraction and retention, support, reputation and confidence, communication and capacity.

The Investment Attraction team took a collaborative approach by working with partners to promote the region to target markets under two initiatives:
1. "Why Youi Chose the Sunshine Coast”. Build on the existing strong relationship with insurance giant Youi, to leverage the opening of Youi’s global headquarters on the Sunshine Coast.

2. “Business with Benefits”. Establish new partnership with NSW Business Chamber to promote Sunshine Coast as a business expansion destination for Sydney companies. This initiative was successful for a number of reasons:

   - Used an existing strong partnership to form stronger, ongoing collaborative alliances.
   - Created a new partnership and event to achieve new investment leads.
   - Built on the successful FY17 “Your HQ with IQ” campaign, using the headline “Why Youi Chose the Sunshine Coast”.
   - Created a fun, cheeky campaign, “Business with Benefits” to describe the positives on offer.
   - Reached business leaders through strategic market segmenting.

The campaign was a component of Sunshine Coast Council’s Investment Attraction Plan, which in 2017/18, contributed to successful investment in the region with an Annual Recurring Economic Impact on the local economy of $255.4 million and the creation of 1032 full time jobs. (Source: Economy.id)

FINALIST
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA (RDA) BRISBANE INC
Queensland and Commonwealth collaboration and showcase event

Touted as “one of the Commonwealth Games’ most exciting events to occur away from the sporting arena”, the Queensland and Commonwealth collaboration and showcase event with accompanying official Trade2018 publication, ‘Queensland’s Regions Trading Globally’ and the Queensland Trade Collaboration Portal, placed a spotlight on trade and investment opportunities in Queensland’s regions.

Listed as an “official Trade2018” event, lead agency RDA Brisbane leveraged the extraordinary marketing reach of the Commonwealth Games trade and investment program in this unique opportunity to bring together Queensland’s regional and economic development leaders and practitioners to discuss trade and investment opportunities, ways of better connecting and collaborating to improve outcomes and address professional development and training needs.

Almost 150 delegates packed a full house at the Southport Yacht club on 12 April 2018 to meet, share, learn and network. The program included a “Queensland Investment Briefing” by Under Treasurer, Warwick Agnew, and an official welcome by Queensland Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk.

A Trade Showcase was followed by a special “Cross-Commonwealth Collaboration Panel” with visiting Commonwealth representatives, moderated by Kyl Murphy, State Director, Committee for Economic Development Australia (CEDA).

Attendees included Commonwealth delegates, economic development practitioners, EDA members, RDAs, the Federal Government’s Industry Growth Centres (IGCs), trade and investment professionals, councils, innovative businesses, chambers of commerce, peak industry bodies and associations.

The event was an example of successful partnering and collaboration to achieve economic development outcomes on a state-wide basis and was considered one of the most important and popular events of the Commonwealth Games’ Trade 2018 program.
MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL
Once in a Lifetime: The Elton Experience

Mackay basked in the glow of its Once in a Lifetime moment last year. In February 2017, the Queensland Premier and Chugg Entertainment announced that Mackay would host music royalty, Sir Elton John, in September 2017.

Dubbed a Once in a Lifetime experience, the concert, one of only four being held in Australia, put the spotlight on Mackay. Hosting an iconic, international superstar generated a buzz and Mackay Regional Council developed a strategy to maximise benefits.

The ‘Elton John Mackay 2017’ concert, attended by more than 15,000, was a sell-out – the biggest ever event held in Mackay. It generated $3 million for the economy and secured national and international exposure.

REGIONAL PLATTERS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES - RURAL & REMOTE AREAS

WINNER
DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL
Regional Platters Program

Regional Platters is an agricultural businesses development and marketing program driven by Dubbo Regional Council and opened up to partnership with other rural and remote Councils in the Orana Region of NSW. The Program aims to support agriculturally based businesses develop their capacity to approach the issues that are preventing their growth and development, provide better more reliable income streams through business diversification and equip businesses with skills for better marketing and communication of their products.

The Regional Platters program focuses on developing paddock to plate business tactics in the primary production industry and those local businesses that engage only local primary produce. This is undertaken through business-led workshops and the opportunity to pitch for funding to positively grow their business or provide solutions to a business problem. The program involves the development of a regional platters guide, providing a platform to market collaboratively and drive the regional economic growth through agricultural business diversification.

WINNER
DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL
Regional Platters Program

The Regional Platters program provides a full solution of business planning and marketing communication development both for sales and investment attraction. Businesses exit the program with their business plan prepared and up to date, a pitch to take to banks or investors and marketing skills as well as platform collateral for active marketing of their business.

FINALIST
WINTON SHIRE COUNCIL
Winton’s Way Out West Fest – Celebrating Waltzing Matilda

To celebrate the opening of the rebuilt Waltzing Matilda Centre, the Winton Shire Council saw an opportunity to provide much needed economic stimulus to the Winton Shire and Western Queensland Region through the running of a four day music festival known as ‘Winton’s Way Out West Fest –Celebrating Waltzing Matilda.’

Winton’s major tourist attraction, the Waltzing Matilda Centre was destroyed by fire in June 2015. At the time of the fire, the Centre attracted over 25,000 visitors to the town of Winton with each visitor staying on average 3.6 nights. After the fire the visitor night stay dropped to 1.8 nights, which severely impacted on the visitor spend.
The opening celebrations for the new $23m Waltzing Matilda Centre highlighted by Winton’s Way Out West Fest saw 8,000 visitors come to Winton. An economic analysis of the event shows that direct spend in Winton and the region for the 4 days of the Festival totalled $1.898m. Media and marketing of the event reached over 86 million, with social media reach in excess of 7.6million.

Every major television network ran news coverage on the event with the ABC televising its new service from Winton and Channel 7 filming its lifestyle programmes Creek to Coast and Queensland Weekender from Winton. Economic analysis estimates media coverage of the event to be $1.6million.

The event was attended by the Governor General of Australia and the Premier of Queensland together with invited guests and dignitaries including direct descendants of Banjo Paterson.

The Way Out West Fest headlined such artists as Jessica Mauboy, Living End, John Williamson as well as USA Country music stars Kip Moore and Lee Brice. In addition to the headline acts, free music entertainment was provided to patrons in each of the Clubs and Licenced premises in Winton.

The REAP is Driving Economic Development with ‘Game Changing’ Community Infrastructure in Regional WA by:

• Attraction of large conferences to the City;
• Direct benefits to small businesses through activation of the City Centre;
• Attraction of touring events to the North West;
• Small businesses hosting community events; and
• Facilitation of the development of the tourism industry through conference and event attraction.

The City of Karratha’s vision is to become Australia’s most liveable regional City. To achieve this vision, the City must ensure that community infrastructure meets the needs of the population now and into the future and that the right conditions are created to encourage growth in business and employment opportunities.

The Red Earth Arts Precinct (REAP) was opened on 28 April 2018 becoming the region’s only dedicated performing arts centre and is having a positive impact on the delivery of events and the performing arts for the local community while also delivering economic development outcomes. The precinct is the only facility of its type in the region, providing a 450+ seat theatre, rooftop cinema, outdoor amphitheatre and state-of-the-art library space. Innovative and unique, the REAP is a focal point for the community, a place to share our creativity and showcases the City to a wider audience.

Youth unemployment is a national issue and youth unemployment in the Hunter Valley (ex-Newcastle) was rising well above national averages, sitting at 20.6% in November 2015. Cessnock City Council’s Economic Development Unit (EDU) made the decision that something had to be done.

The team researched and presented a discussion paper with an open invitation to attend a Hunter Valley Youth Unemployment Symposium. More than 100 people from all three levels of government, industry partners, businesses, agencies and the community came together to develop a robust strategy to tackle youth unemployment. As work turned toward finding innovative solutions, the need for coordinated inter-agency collaboration was clear.

Seeking local action and driven by results, Council’s EDU then developed the Cessnock City Youth First Project and National Toolkit.

Launch of Cessnock City Youth First Project and National Toolkit
Project and trialled the ground-breaking model in their Visitor Information Centre during 2017. The program assisted young jobseekers with work experience, core skills development, mentoring and the development of worker traits that will make them more competitive for employment - using an existing council facility and council staff. The program successfully upskilled the young people, and saw them obtain relevant industry qualifications assisting them into employment.

The EDU then created an innovative Toolkit based on their model. In January 2018 the Toolkit was distributed to all Councils across Australia to support them to implement their own successful programs. If every Council could get 10 unemployed young people into work using the Youth First Employment Toolkit, a minimum of 5,000 jobs can be filled nationally each year.

**FINALIST**

**CITY OF IPSWICH**

Ipswich Economic and Workforce Development Plan

The Ipswich Economic and Workforce Development Plan is the convergence of two major strategic plans and more than three years research and consultation. It consolidates, simplifies and shares the priorities, actions and measures of Council's Office of Economic Development (OED).

The Economic and Workforce Development Plan was developed to align the staff and resources of OED, and Council more broadly, towards a set of clear priorities, actions and measures which it could take responsibility and accountability for.

The Economic and Workforce Development Plan identifies 45 actions which would deliver, facilitate or support positive outcomes aligned with the identified priorities. All of those 45 actions have performance measures, 57 in total, which are reported monthly internally so that the team can track their progress and every quarter, those measures are reported to the industry and community so that stakeholders can transparently engage with our work.

The Plan was designed in coherence with the Queensland Government’s South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017 to generate greater opportunity for partnership collaboration and funding commitment.

The Plan has been consulted with the Mayor and all Councillors, five regional Members of Parliament, ten Queensland Government Departments, six Queensland Statutory Bodies, seven Commonwealth Government Departments, two Commonwealth Statutory Bodies, six Regional Stakeholders and 10 Industry Stakeholders.

The Ipswich Economic and Workforce Development Plan has generated immediate productivity benefits, increased investment, partnership gains, and industry outcomes.

**FINALIST**

**SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL**

Business Continuity during construction, Bulcock Street revitalisation project

To support and activate growing communities, the Sunshine Coast Council is currently creating a vibrant, modernised hub in downtown Caloundra, via the Bulcock Street Revitalisation Project. The fourth, and final stage of the upgrade commenced in April 2018 and is due to finish in December 2018. After a challenging Stage three project in 2016, which included delayed timeframes due to weather, under prepared business owners, and reduction to footfall. Sunshine Coast Council identified an opportunity to better support business owners.

The goal was to; develop a resource that businesses could use and implement that would assist in reducing the impact caused by construction. Following research into other regions, interviews with businesses and uncovering business continuity best practices, a powerful and easy to digest resource was produced by the Economic Development team.

The “Business Continuity - a guide to doing business during construction and road upgrades” (attachment 1) is one of the first of its kind in Australia and aims to encourage business owners to look at steps and actions they can take, to support their own business continuity during construction. It’s also a testament to the Council Economic Development team’s understanding of potential business difficulties during disruptive construction periods and commitment to innovative planning and preparation for these to mitigate impacts.

This Guide and associated activities have been the driving force behind businesses being better prepared, collaborative activation initiatives which have driven visitation to the area and with significantly improved economic outcomes and a measurable decrease in business owner frustration.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

WINNER
CITY OF ADELAIDE
City of Adelaide and TPG Telecom Partnership

Ten Gigabit Adelaide is a revolutionary high-speed, high-performance fibre optic data network that is being rolled out to commercial buildings across the City of Adelaide. The network will enable businesses and organisations to share and receive high volumes of data at phenomenal 10Gbps data speeds.

The City of Adelaide has partnered with TPG Telecom as the ‘Official Network Provider’ to implement the first and most visible element of Ten Gigabit Adelaide: the delivery and installation of a fibre optic network across the City of Adelaide, 10Gbps data transfer capability and a range of high-performance services for the business community.

The transformational network will unleash a wide range of new possibilities for businesses and organisations, without being inhibited by the restrictions and congestion often experienced with traditional internet services. Each service in the Ten Gigabit Adelaide suite has its own, dedicated and uncontested connection, meaning businesses can access the same upload and download speeds via a clean, super-fast, low-latency connection.

The response from businesses and building owners has been extraordinary.

FINALIST
WOLLONGONG CITY COUNCIL
“Advantage Wollongong”

Advantage Wollongong is a partnership between Wollongong City Council, the University of Wollongong and the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. The focus is on attracting new businesses, investment and jobs by promoting Wollongong as a superior business location in key growth sectors. Advantage Wollongong represents a long term, strategic approach and has developed a range of promotional resources and activities, aligned to key target sectors.

Advantage Wollongong has been promoting Wollongong as a superior business location since 2008. It is recognised as a best practice approach to business and investment attraction and has generated significant momentum over the past decade. This long term, strategic approach has allowed the three partner organisations to pool resources, avoid costly duplication of effort and mostly importantly, ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach. Advantage Wollongong has been leading the City’s efforts to diversify the economic base of the region away from its traditional industries of steel making and coal mining.

Over the last decade, Advantage Wollongong has facilitated over 100 projects, and created just over 3,000 jobs for the region. A major recent win was the attraction of global IT solutions and services giant, NEC to Wollongong to established its new corporate office, growing to 180 staff in the past 2.5 years. The new corporate office is the centrepiece of a $40M investment by NEC in the region and supports major customers across Australia. REMPLAN modelling quantifies NEC’s ongoing contribution at $59M annually to the local economy.

FINALIST
GOLD COAST HEALTH & KNOWLEDGE PRECINCT PROJECT OFFICE
Gold Coast Health & Knowledge Precinct Partnership

The Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct (GCHKP) is Asia-Pacific’s emerging health and innovation hub – a unique global business location for high tech industry, research collaboration and jobs of the future, and a transformative initiative for the Gold Coast and region’s economy.

The GCHKP is being developed through a collaborative funding partnership between City of Gold Coast, Griffith University and Gold Coast Health, with the support of the Queensland Government.

The 200-hectare precinct includes an urban renewal of the former Parklands Precinct adjacent to Griffith University, leveraging the co-location of the Gold Coast University and Private Hospitals and the
legacy development of the 2018 Commonwealth Games Athletes Village, now being transformed into a vibrant $550 million mixed-used community.

Already employing almost 10,000 people (including 1000 researchers) and catering to almost 20,000 students, the Precinct leverages a total of $5billion in transport, health and education infrastructure, and will support jobs for up to 26,000 people on the Gold Coast and inject $2.9 billion into the local economy. This has been driven through the creation of a strong collaborative partnership over many years focused on the long-term economic opportunity.

9.5 hectares is available for health & knowledge related development with key investment already earmarked worth over $150 million, including Griffith University’s $80million Advanced Design and Prototyping Institute (ADaPT).

This has been achieved through a partnership Project Office which coordinates investment attraction, marketing and collaboration through a long-term approach to create knowledge-based employment and economic diversification.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING & PROMOTION

WINNER
SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL
Social media and banner advertising campaign

Sunshine Coast Council executed a social media and banner advertising campaign to raise the profile of the region as a business destination by highlighting the stories of two local and successful business leaders.

The campaign was a component of Sunshine Coast Council’s Investment Attraction Plan, which in 2017-18, contributed to successful investment in the region with an Annual Recurring Economic Impact on the local economy of $255.4 million and the creation of 1032 full time jobs. (Source: Economy.id)

The two-phase campaign was designed to raise the profile of the region as a business destination and gain high-quality leads for the Investment Attraction team to follow up and nurture.

Phase 1. October – November 2017: The Smart Place for Business with Will Shrapnel of Helimods.


The campaign kicked goals for a range of reasons. It:

- Built on learnings and successes of the “Your HQ with IQ” FY17 campaign.
- Attracted attention by telling stories of successful and interesting business people.
- Used four different digital media platforms to achieve precise audience targeting.
- Used four different download offers to entice audiences to provide contact details.
- Targeted a portion of the advertising spend for business audience with 200+ staff.
- Resulted in personal contact with a valuable list of C-suite executives and garnered high-quality leads.

FINALIST
PARKES SHIRE COUNCIL
Parkes National Logistics Hub – Business Attraction Campaign

The Parkes National Logistics Hub Business Attraction Campaign was a strategic multi-media marketing campaign, supported by the NSW Government’s Regional Growth - Marketing and Promotion Fund, aimed at attracting major logistics, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution companies to establish operations in Parkes.

The campaign followed on from Parkes Shire Council’s cheeky social media pitch to Amazon in 2017, which attracted close to one million views and highlighted the fact that 80 per cent of Australia can be reached by road from the town within 24 hours.

The Parkes National Logistics Hub is set to be one of Australia’s largest and one of its most exciting
greenfield developments, and the campaign was developed to further highlight the great opportunities that exist in Parkes for importers, exporters and manufacturers.

The campaign involved collaboration with several major logistics operators to champion the message, including SCT Logistics, Pacific National, Linfox and ARTC – all of whom call Parkes home, as well as industry leaders from the National Farmers’ Federation, Australian Railway Association and the Australian Logistics Council.

Their testimonies showcased the region as an attractive place to live, work and invest – offering faster, cheaper access to consumer markets domestically and internationally.

The campaign integrated digital marketing, print media, video content, signage, social media, and a new webpage to promote the benefit of Inland Rail and the opportunities for business to leverage from the Parkes National Logistics Hub to tap into new markets.

**FINALIST**

**CITY OF ADELAIDE**

*Ten Gigabit Adelaide - Now, that’s a Smart City!*

Ten Gigabit Adelaide is an Australian-first high-speed, high-performance fibre optic data network that is being rolled out across the City of Adelaide.

The revolutionary infrastructure project required an integrated and innovative marketing and communications strategy to support its launch and raise awareness about the strengths, benefits and opportunities the network will bring to the city, businesses and the general community. The ‘Ten Gigabit Adelaide – Now, that’s a Smart City!’ marketing strategy covered all facets of marketing, branding, media and stakeholder communications and sets out the approach, messaging and tactics to support the successful launch and rollout of Ten Gigabit Adelaide.

The effectiveness of the strategy came down to the fact that the marketing department was an integral part of the project working group and that the approach, messaging and tactics were developed with the customer in mind. Given the high-tech and innovative nature of the project, all marketing and communications was centred around simplifying terminology, underlying the benefits of the infrastructure for each target audience, a suite of visual assets, clear key messages and a consistent call-to-action.

To date, the marketing and communications strategy has been pivotal to the success of the project, helping to create world-wide media attention and significant interest from all sectors of government, business and industry. The marketing has contributed to substantial economic, social and financial returns for the city, including helping to secure 1,000 building owner registrations, retain and attract several new businesses to the city to access Ten Gigabit Adelaide and generate multiple leads for new customers.

**WINNER**

**DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL**

*Dubbo Region Ignite Program*

Dubbo Regional Council’s Ignite Program is specially designed to support commercial and social activation across the Dubbo and Wellington Central Business Districts (CBD). The Program is based on empowering and enabling people to make the CBD space their own, through targeted activation techniques such as lighting, ambience, safety and security, access, stakeholder engagement, connection and collaboration.
Dubbo Regional Council has connected with business stakeholders and developed a CBD Business Network and provided support to four significant business development or place activation programs annually. An example of this is the improvement of the cultural and physical ambience of the CBDs through public and commercial art, encouraging live music and performance art through streamlining busking approvals.

Council has completed a car parking audit throughout the CBD and encouraged the use of off-street parking through creative promotion and signage as well as encouraging and supporting stakeholders in identification and development of further placemaking projects for delivery. The program also involves facilitating solutions to address community safety concerns and antisocial behaviour.

Dubbo Regional Council established and developed a framework and processes to enable the Ignite Program to be self-sufficient and actively managed by stakeholders outside of Council. The success of the Program has seen the region’s two CBDs become the heart and soul of the Dubbo and Wellington communities, offering exciting events and a space for locals to meet.

In cooperation with Asialink Business, the Warrnambool China Bureau (The Bureau) assisted local businesses by offering end-to-end China market engagement support including:

- one-on-one business mentoring, advice and support;
- Chinese company background checking service;
- translation services;
- market briefings; and,
- China-based market support and interpreting.

The Warrnambool China Bureau resulted in a model that is highly transferrable to other regions throughout Australia. It created an environment where local government took the lead to ensure services and support were easily accessible, low cost and extremely practical. It eliminated the fear of Chinese market engagement and allowed businesses to navigate Chinese market complexity and build Chinese market capability across the region.

The Bureau’s success has been attributed to its innovative approach. For instance, it has been able to attract strategic investment in the form of partnerships with local businesses, thereby facilitating outcomes that stimulate enterprise, investment, job creation, economic resilience and enable environments which are conducive to undertaking business.

Cessnock City Council’s Economic Development Unit (EDU) has driven change through developing the Advance Cessnock City platform. Advance Cessnock City (ACC) is the partnership formed of the Council and local Chambers of Commerce, and a vehicle to enable a strategic and results-oriented economic development approach based on successful business engagement.

ACC has provided the foundation blocks for solid and responsive business engagement, and more critically an advanced understanding of the economic base for better decision making. It has been an instrumental tool which enables rapid action and communication for government and business projects.

The EDU have been able to successfully use the ACC to attract strategic investment in the form
of major capital grants. It has allowed a strategic approach to business investment attraction to target jobs-rich industries that compliment and not compete with existing businesses.

Ultimately, using the ACC, the EDU has been able to reposition Council as a leader and advocate for business in their region, provide targeted and well attended capacity building, provide assured local procurement. Using the ACC, they have been able to take steps to address national economic issues and implement strategies to mitigate risk. ACC has rapidly expanded the capability of Council’s EDU to respond to change, identify emerging issues, and plan for proactive economic development.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES - UNDER 15,000 RESIDENTS**

**WINNER**

**MURWEH SHIRE COUNCIL**

*Development and Provision of Economic Structures for a Remote Community*

Murweh Shire Council has sought to address issues of business attraction, business retention and population drift by focusing its long-term economic development strategy on adding value to the natural resources and existing infrastructure of the region. The main town of Charleville is a Government service town and the main industry of the Shire is cattle and meat processing. It also boasts the clearest skies in the southern hemisphere.

This economic focus has been on maximising transport access corridors through:

a) Construction of a brand new airport terminal to increase capacity for future growth

b) Construction of a $4 million rail loading bay and holding yards, to re-activate rail usage to the region

c) Construction of new Industrial Estate to add further capacity for business attraction and business expansion

Murweh Shire Council has recently:

a) Upgraded the existing Charleville Cosmos Centre to maintain momentum and the interest of visitors in our clear skies and star gazing opportunities

b) Started construction of a new Planetarium to increase revenue and create further employment

c) Partnered with Griffith University to develop a World War II Outback Tour and Museum using state of the art technology and holograms.

d) Partnered with the Sunshine Coast University to develop the Chinese tourism trade.

These recent initiatives have re-energised the shire and brought in extra capacity to support the expected capital growth in the region over the next five years.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AWARD (ELECTED MEMBER)**

**WINNER**

**COUNCILLOR STEPHEN ROBINSON**

*Sunshine Coast Council*

Councillor Steve Robinson was elected in March 2012. At the time, the Sunshine Coast economy was in post-GFC doldrums. Unemployment rates were above 10% with youth unemployment above 15%. There was no new investment in the region and a poor outlook for job growth. Business confidence was at an all-time low.

Steve who came from a business background knew how tough businesses had been doing and knew they needed some help.

The region needed direction and impetus. Despite the Sunshine Coast being an hour north of the State Capital, Brisbane, it had often been left off infrastructure priority lists and State and Federal budget allocations. The only way to change this was to have a plan. A plan that everyone, at all levels of government and industry agreed to. So in 2012, shortly after he was elected, Steve took on the Portfolio Councillor role of Economic Development and Innovation and with the Mayor, set about to transform the economy.

The region’s first integrated economic strategy was developed setting a series of aspirational goals and game changer priorities to transform the economy and to give the region the profile it deserved. While...
The Sunshine Coast had always been known as a great lifestyle/tourism destination, it also needed to be considered a business destination. The Natural Advantage Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2013-2033 was launched in September 2013 featuring a range of game-changer projects. This included the development of a greenfield CBD and the expansion of the Sunshine Coast Airport.

Steve’s love of the environment also saw him champion the Sunshine Coast solar farm from the beginning. Sunshine Coast Council is the first Council in Australia to offset 100% of its energy needs through green energy.

**FINALIST**

**THE HONOURABLE LORD MAYOR MARTIN HAESE**

*City of Adelaide*

Martin Haese is the current Lord Mayor of Adelaide, elected to office in November 2014.

Having had a successful career in retail over three decades, as Lord Mayor, Martin has been focused on enhancing the City of Adelaide’s reputation as an innovative and sustainable city with world class liveability and culture, ensuring the City becomes an even greater place to live, learn, work, play, visit, and invest.

Martin’s leadership has helped reshape the City of Adelaide through a strong focus on advocacy and collaborative partnerships, securing more than $50 million in funding from the State Government for joint-investment public infrastructure, community, and sporting projects.

In partnership with TPG Telecom, the City of Adelaide is rolling out the nation leading, Ten Gigabit Adelaide Network; with more than 1000 buildings registered for connection. Simultaneously, the City of Adelaide is implementing a plan to become one of the world’s first carbon neutral cities through the Carbon Neutral Adelaide partnership with the State Government.

Council has also developed a City Insights Dashboard to make data accessible for business decision making, implemented the Building Upgrade Finance scheme to support the upgrade of ageing commercial building stock, installed cost-reducing LED street lights, is rolling out a Smart Parking app and sensors, has introduced an e-planning portal which simplifies the development application process, and applied a 5-year rate holiday for purchasers of owner-occupied homes off the plan.

The City of Adelaide is also undertaking two generation defining, major real-estate developments; Adelaide Central Market Arcade and 88 O’Connell Street in North Adelaide.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RISING STAR**

**WINNER**

**BEN MASON**

*Arup*

Ben is a passionate economist, transforming cities through better investment. In his career to date he has pushed the economic development agenda through his work with Arup in the UK, UAE and Australia with an emphasis on ensuring that economics provides meaningful insights and advocating evidence-based decision making.

Ben is dedicated to his professional and technical development, investing his time in academic training and being on the cutting edge of the discipline. This is evidenced through his Master’s degree in Economic Development and Policy Analysis from the University of Nottingham, his Better Business Case practitioner qualification and gaining EDA accreditation to be an Australian Certified Economic Developer.

Since coming to Australia, Ben has consistently sought to ensure that economic development is given a voice in sectors which often focus purely on the financial angle. He has presented on economic topics at the AusRail, New Urban Agenda and Waste Management Association of Australia’s conferences, reaching an audience of around 500 with his economic development thought leadership.

Ben has also worked on a number of projects which have challenged the norms/status quo of economic development. One notable project has been leading on the development of an economic theme for the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia’s Infrastructure Sustainability Rating Tool.
Throughout his career to date, Ben has achieved significant success through engaging his peers, clients, and community to advance national and international economic development, and is an asset to the profession.

PETER CHAFFEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

WINNER

DARYL WILSON
Wyndham City Council

Commencing at Wyndham City Council in 2002 as Small Business Development Officer, Daryl soon emerged as a leader at both an organisational, local business community and regional level. Currently he holds the position of Manager Economic Growth & Tourism having led the Economic Development team at Wyndham for the past seven years.

With a passion for promoting the professional growth of the economic development practitioner, Daryl has been one of Economic Development Australia’s greatest supporters.

Daryl served as a member of the Victorian State Practitioner Network for a period of seven years, including three as Chairman; when he led a significant period of change in the adoption of a more professional and commercialised approach by EDA in the delivery of conferences and forums which ultimately delivered high standard professional development opportunities, paired with a significant increase in revenue streams.

Daryl is very much a “hands-on” practitioner and whilst he references theoretical models to underpin his approach it is his capacity to interpret the economic conditions that prevail both globally and within his community, the challenges and opportunities for business and his strong connection to key stakeholder groups and individual business operators that drives his “outside the square” thinking and the implementation of initiatives that deliver on the aspirations of Wyndham’s community.

Daryl has made a profound contribution influencing the growth of Wyndham’s economy through the development of strategic plans, facilitating and attracting investment and jobs, providing advice and implementing innovative programs that enable the growth local SMEs.

FINALIST

PAUL MARTINS
Sunshine Coast Council

As Head of Economic Development, Paul has been instrumental in developing, leading and guiding the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2013-2033, accompanying action plans, High Value Industry teams, industry taskforces, the local business community and community groups toward successfully delivering impressive economic outcomes for the region.

Paul has applied his local, national and international private sector experience during his four years as Head of Economic Development. He is a big picture thinker, a collaborator, strategic thinker, aspirational goal setter and supporter of big vision projects. Nurturing this culture across his team of 25 high-functioning economic development professionals has resulted in projects and economic benefits to their regional economy that would not have been possible without his support and guidance.

Paul sets a bar of aspiring to deliver to world-class standards, and as he leads by example, he is highly respected amongst his peers. Paul is always seeking ideas and technology to support the team and is not afraid to be an early adopter. His branch was the first to pilot mobile devices and technology, raising the team’s efficiencies and service delivery standards.

Paul’s continued acknowledgment of team and individual efforts inspires and motivates members to achieve continued success, and he is highly encouraging of employees’ personal and career development.
EDA is now offering a new Corporate Membership level for a flat fee, which provides unlimited individual EDA memberships to employees within that organisation.

The Corporate Membership fee is $2,200 (inc GST) and benefits include:

- Individual EDA membership with full benefits to all nominated employees within the organisation
- Acknowledgement as a corporate member on the EDA website
- Corporate member case study / project to be promoted via EDA website and social media annually
- Promotion as a corporate member at the National Economic Development Conference through presentations, speeches, collateral
- Promotion as a corporate member at the National Economic Development Gala Awards through presentations, signage, speeches, etc.
- Permission to use the EDA logo on approved collateral
- Inclusion of Corporate Members’ logo on selected EDA marketing collateral
- Discount rate to EDA events and professional development for all nominated employees
- Opportunity to achieve EDA professional accreditation for all nominated employees
- Opportunity to apply for EDA Study Tours for all nominated employees (3 scholarships, up to $5,000 available)

The EDA individual membership remains good value at $400 (inc. GST). Click here for an up to date run down on individual membership benefits.

Each of the EDA State Practitioner Networks (SPNs) are planning a range of events throughout the year, which will connect economic development practitioners with each other, boost knowledge and skills and drive the development of policy.

CURRENT EDA CORPORATE MEMBERS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY OF ADELAIDE</th>
<th>ARUP</th>
<th>CITY OF BALLARAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CITY OF BENDIGO</td>
<td>bmEE</td>
<td>CITY OF BUNBURY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Casey</td>
<td>City of Port Phillip</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture and Fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Geelong</td>
<td>City of Geelong</td>
<td>\n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geelong City</td>
<td>Geelong City</td>
<td>Geelong City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume City</td>
<td>Tasmanian Government</td>
<td>Rockhampton City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Coast Council</td>
<td>Sunshine Coast Council</td>
<td>Walga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Coast Council</td>
<td>Sunshine Coast Council</td>
<td>Walga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Coast Council</td>
<td>Sunshine Coast Council</td>
<td>Walga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Wanneroo</td>
<td>City of Rockhampton</td>
<td>Shoalhaven City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubbo Regional Council</td>
<td>Regional Development South Australia</td>
<td>Shoalhaven City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Burnett Regional Council</td>
<td>South Burnett Regional Council</td>
<td>Shoalhaven City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Made</td>
<td>Australian Made</td>
<td>Australian Made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE REVITALISATION OF BOURBON STREET

BY AMANDA GOODDY

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR:
I’d like to thank Economic Development Australia for the opportunity to participate in the Overseas Study Tour. The tour has provided me with international exposure to the challenges impacting bricks and mortar businesses during construction projects. Together with this research, and what I’ve implemented on the Sunshine Coast, I’ve developed a framework to support business continuity during construction.

THE BEGINNING

A few years ago, I began a journey to look at how business advisors and economic development officers can provide better support to business owners in the lead up to construction projects. This lead to investigating methods and best practices around Australia and the world.

After investigating what support was available to businesses globally, I produced Australia’s first Business Continuity – A guide to doing business during construction and road upgrades guide. The guide aims to better prepare business owners in the lead up a construction project.

Following the roll out of the guide in the Sunshine Coast during one of our major projects, and associated activities, we identified additional opportunities to support businesses. I wanted to develop a framework that provided best practices in three areas, business engagement, business support and activation during construction. A framework that could be applied to projects of all sizes across Australia. With the support from Economic Development Australia Overseas Study Tour, I was able to travel to New Orleans to examine a region that has undergone a decade of construction and rebuilding projects, following the damage that occurred during Hurricane Katrina.

WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

Construction, road works and infrastructure upgrades are happening in all regions across Australia. In many cases, they can have a disruptive output on small business. Small businesses are the backbone of our communities and provide a variety of functions that are important to our growing regions.

Bourbon Street, French Quarter, New Orleans
When investment and upgrades occur around the globe they mostly provide positive economic outcomes for regions and communities. However, it’s during the construction of the projects and the disruption that occurs, that can have negative impacts on small to medium businesses. The disruption caused by noise, detours, and closed footpaths can deeply impact a business’s revenue.

**THE BIG EASY**

While in New Orleans I examined two projects; the Southeast Louisiana Urban Control Project and the City of New Orleans, French Quarter Infrastructure Improvement Project, which is part of the Cities Capital Improvement Program, both projects highly disruptive to small business. The French Quarter Infrastructure Project is a joint venture project between City of New Orleans, Department of Public Works, Sewerage & Water Board of New Orleans which involved the revitalisation of Bourbon Street.

If you’ve been to New Orleans, there’s a good chance you’ve been to Bourbon Street in the world famous, French Quarter.

New Orleans attracts millions of visitors each year, including those visiting for the vibrant Mardi Gras, Carnival or one of the many festivals held throughout the year. Located in the French Quarter is Bourbon Street, renowned for its party atmosphere, door to door bars and parties that overflow out onto the street. The road (closed off to traffic during the evenings) is filled with buskers, jazz bands and visitors celebrating pre-wedding weekends, birthdays, football celebrations and weekends away. This 13-block strip, also happens to be one of the most visited places in New Orleans.

During the day, it’s moderately busy, tourists from all over the world visit, stock up on souvenirs, listen to the jazz, or escape the humidity by popping into one of the many bars on the street.

In some blocks, footpaths are uneven and unsafe. Due to insufficient drainage underneath, muddy old water pools on the road, following the morning wash down from the previous night’s festivities.

During the night it’s a completely different scene, it’s a sensory overload. Hens and bucks partying the night away, football fans celebrating their teams wins, newlyweds with their wedding parties sipping on daiquiris. It’s shoulder to shoulder and noisy with southern charm.

Thousands of visitors are drawn to Bourbon St each night, with many partying into the earlier hours of the morning.

**THE PROJECT**

The Capital Improvement Program includes over 200 road and infrastructure projects across the region. $2.3 billion is being spent of local and federal funds across New Orleans to repair and restore damaged infrastructure. To support the upgrades, the City of New Orleans implemented the Strategic Engagement Office to assist with the communication and outreach of the Capital Improvement Program ensuring the community and business owners were updated about all projects.

Included in the program is the French Quarter Infrastructure Improvement Project which is a multimillion reconstruction on Bourbon St. The project includes:

- Remove and replace the existing pavement
- Replace and upsize the existing drain lines
- Replace the existing water lines
- Repair the existing sewer lines
- Added conduits for safety cameras and moveable bollard system
- Replace existing low-pressure gas lines with high pressure gas lines
- Replace / repair existing underground electrical conduit

To develop the framework, I looked at what processes and procedures were used on each project which included:

- Business engagement process – How and when are businesses engaged?
- Business support services – What is delivered for business owners including upskilling?
- Activation during construction – What if any activities are delivered to stimulate spending

The Bourbon Street project had been talked about...
for some time before the green light was given, so many businesses on Bourbon Street were aware it was going to occur. However, many were underprepared for the length of the disruption. When the budget was allocated, the team began engaging with business owners and communicating project timelines, expectations and how the construction would likely impact the business etc. The team had less than a month before the construction would begin to prepare businesses owners.

Public consultation meetings were held in both the mornings, and evenings, to capture as many businesses as possible. A database was established to update business owners throughout the stages of the project. Businesses were provided with fact sheets with key contact numbers and resources available to support them.

Unfortunately, when the fencing, which was wrapped in a black material, was erected to stop the leakage of dust, it was not well received. The material used, meant the area became darker at night, this caused a perception of an unsafe area to walk.

The construction zone made it difficult for visitors to get to their hotels as the road was closed off to vehicles and taxis arriving from the airport. Pedestrian access had also been significantly reduced. Delivery drivers were unable to deliver stock to business owners, and waste needed to be coordinated at an agreed location. Something that could have easily been coordinated and planned if sufficient timing was allowed.

Delays on the project occurred almost daily, either due to the conditions of the underground utilities or bad weather. New Orleans also experienced severe flooding during the project which caused more delays to the project causing further disruption to business owners.

Despite the many delays, business owners were updated weekly via a status email and the project team also coordinated conversations on the corner, a face to face update by the contractors.

‘Conversations on the Corner’ were implemented through the project, allowing business owners to be updated weekly, direct from the project team on what disruptions would occur and how the business could be impacted.

Radio and marketing campaigns were held across the region encouraging locals to continue to support business owners. The campaigns included the following context:
“Locally owned businesses are the backbone of New Orleans’ culture, economy, and character. While drainage system improvements and road construction make “shopping local” a bit more challenging in the short term, the critical improvements mean our city will be safer and stronger for generations to come. We hope you show love to your community by shopping small and shopping local—even if it takes a little extra time!”

Hotels, accommodation providers and business associations urged visitors to continue to support businesses being directly impacted by the construction. While some savvy business owners leveraged from the disruption and named drinks after the construction.

When speaking with the French Quarter Business Association one of the concerns that was raised was the locations of where the contractors were parking their personal vehicles. The French Quarter has limited parking as it is, when parking was reduced due to the construction zone it left parking more competitive yet in some instances the contractors where using these car parks. (A common complaint in many projects)

Below is a table of some of the key activities delivered in support of small businesses on Bourbon Street.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Engagement</th>
<th>Business Support</th>
<th>Activation and marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Door knocking and face to face engagement</td>
<td>In the initial consultation process, the City’s Roadside Construction Toolkit was provided to business owners, the guide includes steps and initiative business owners can take to assist reduce the impact</td>
<td>Signage and banners were installed to encourage visitors to support businesses impacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public consultation – both morning and night to ensure they capture as many business owners as possible</td>
<td>The City also provided signage for businesses which read ‘Pardon our progress, shops are open for business’. No data was collected by business owners to report on how effective this was</td>
<td>Discounted incentives were offered by some of the business owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly email status updates</td>
<td>Access to business 101 workshops</td>
<td>Bars leveraged from the construction calling their drink specials ‘road rage’ (pictured above)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution via business groups such as the French Quarter Business Association</td>
<td></td>
<td>Radio advertising was organised to support local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood engagement app</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In all the projects I’ve researched and examined over the past three years, this project would have to be one of the most complex and challenging projects I’ve ever come across. It came with an aggressive timeline, ageing infrastructure and large visitor numbers.

LESSONS LEARNED

Following the lessons learned, a new approach has been applied for stage two of the project which began in Sept 2018, some of these include; More efficient work planning, improved fencing with the Arts Council designing a more aesthetically pleasing wrap, highlighting the historical significance of the project. Contractors have been designated a carpark and have been asked to avoid using the car parks in the French Quarter. Contractor incentives have been introduced to encourage a timely finish.

THE FRAMEWORK

The study has resulted in a framework being developed, aimed at directly supporting small businesses in the lead up to construction, Supporting Small Businesses Through Disruption of Major Project – A framework to support business continuity. The framework highlights cases in both the Sunshine Coast and New Orleans, where evidence shows the benefits to small business when business advisors and economic development officers take a proactive lead on this topic. It includes steps and actions to take to prepare business owners, to provide them with the best chance of survival.

It is in my opinion, when a proactive approach is taken, business owners are much more prepared, more informed and more responsible to act to mitigate the impact, reducing the negative media attention.
The global economy is seeing a tectonic shift as technology and connectivity become all-pervasive. Countries are redefining themselves to address the challenges and opportunities provided by the fourth industrial revolution [1]. With its remarkable resources, wide open spaces and an enviable lifestyle, is Australia just a passenger in this revolution?

All sides of the political spectrum understand we must embrace innovation to thrive but are we on the right track or just marking time? The current innovation agenda is providing some glimmers of hope but only if you’re looking hard. Will our Australian luck continue if we just apply a ‘she’ll be right’ approach?

SMART CITIES – ARE WE THERE YET?

A defining part of this industrial revolution is the seamless interaction of physical, digital, and biological environments [2]; for many, this is most evident in their built environment, the smart city. Much is written and quoted about cities, towns and regions being smart. There are many so-called innovation and smart city projects occurring in Australia – some are delivering tangible outcomes, others are merely poorly defined technology projects. With significant funding provided by all levels of government to enable these ‘smart’ projects, the question must be asked, who is getting the value?

In 2016, I published the article ‘What makes a city smart’. My point was that in a true smart city, communities must be empowered to make better decisions through dynamic data at their fingertips. Several Australian ‘smart’ projects built on this premise are seeing social and economic gains for their communities. Through careful planning in collaboration with the community, low cost and high value outcomes are being achieved that are improving the lives of Australians. Alas, many of these projects are occurring in isolation, thus stifling the macro opportunity for Australia.

The surge in ‘smart city’ projects is largely being driven by technology, despite some of the social and economic foundation work provided by the Federal Government [3]. Here lies the problem: what’s the destination?

Without a unifying vision, without genuine community engagement and ongoing collaboration, many smart projects are merely adding cost to their rate/tax payers with no fundamental gain.

A smart program must be so much more; it must be about everyone being smart, not just one aspect of society.

There is an urgent need for a single vision, with clear goals for every Australian: businesses, unions, not-for-profits, governments, communities, young and old – we need a vision for a smart nation of Australia.

SINGAPORE’S UNITED SMART VISION

Singapore is on the ‘doorstep’ of Australia, a mere eight-hour flight, yet it is almost a parallel universe in terms of digital transformation. Over the years I have travelled through, stayed and conducted business in Singapore, and each time I am inspired by what can be achieved.

Yes, a comparison between Singapore and Australia isn’t entirely fair. Singapore is a small, densely populated country with a different political system to Australia – but Singaporeans have some of the highest trust in their government for an advanced nation.

Over the 53 years since the formation of the sovereign nation that is now Singapore, it has reinvented itself many times over, from shipping, banking, tourism and now data. In recent years, Singapore embarked on Smart Nation Singapore [4].
This is a true end-to-end program that has engaged all members of their society, cradle to grave. From healthcare, transport, education, environment, aged care, opening a business, employing people, water and power security, the vision is one that everyone understands and gains value from.

Smart Nation Singapore gives clarity to the future for all generations. It guides the strong collaboration of government services, enables business growth, embraces change and looks after its people. Everyone feels part of the need to do things better with data, from how a meal is paid to how the government service is provided.

GETTING TO SMART IN AUSTRALIA – BEYOND THE POLITICS

Australia must refresh and reframe its current smart agenda – it needs clarity that can transcend pet political projects and ideology. Right now, we need a clear vision of how Australia is going to be smart as a nation.

That vision needs to be enduring and flow through all aspects of the economy, in all parts of Australia; it needs to empower all levels of government beyond the political cycle. It needs to create genuine public value and not a sugar hit of a grant program that the next political cycle will change.

It may be easy to scoff at my very own utopia vision for Australia, but what’s the alternative? Those economies that surround us are growing in capability by embracing the fourth industrial revolution. Their levels of productivity and innovation are leaving Australia behind. To be lucky, we need a vision; we need to define our own smart nation.

REFERENCES


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Neil Glentworth is the founder and chair of information and data management firm GWI, and most recently developed Democracy Intelligence, a data-driven service that understands the political, social and economic activities in a given geographical region.

He is passionate about productivity at a macro level and is an active advocate of economic growth and the creation of public and shareholder value. Neil is known for his no-nonsense advice with a focus on practical ways to leverage data for social and economic benefit.

Working alongside all levels of government, Neil has focused on driving smart city and community strategies at the local government level, helping to grow Australia’s regional economies from the outback to the coast.
The current unprecedented pace of economic change is being driven by digital disruption, globalisation and technological change. This process challenges fundamental notions on which our thinking about opportunities for economic development are based. In a world of more sedate evolutionary change, the past is a good guide to the future. But in a world of rapid and disruptive change, this much less the case.

Today, opportunities for economic development are far less obvious and predictable than ever before. Digital industries as a driver for regional economic growth? If the conditions are right, why not?

In 2017 Regional Development Australia, Northern Rivers NSW, commissioned Ki Media and Systems Knowledge Concepts to investigate the potential for the digital sector to act as a growth driver in the Northern Rivers. This was a good partnership to tackle this problem given SKC’s capability in the economics of digital industries and digital disruption and Ki Media’s extensive knowledge of content industries in Australia and internationally.

The resulting report titled *Digital Content Production as a Driver of Economic Development in The Northern Rivers* was delivered in November 2017 and is available at https://rdanorthernrivers.org.au/digital-content-driver-economic-development-region/

It was by no means obvious at the outset that digital content production was a natural fit for the Northern Rivers regional economy. Regional economies are typically based on primary industries and tourism with elements of service economy activity at regional centres.

The northern Rivers, of course, has Byron Bay, an internationally-visible culture and creativity destination. It also incorporates Southern Cross University, SAE Creative Media Institute, industry facilitator Northern Rivers Screenworks and TAFE. But, further, it has an extensive network of relatively wealthy retirees and ‘pre-retirees’ who are active business people and have experience and networks in media, entertainment, finance and who have an interesting in stimulating new, high value, regional businesses.

The region also has a community of creative producers who choose to live in the region for its amenities but whose businesses are conducted primarily out of Sydney, Brisbane and Los Angeles.

While we were beginning our stakeholder consultation process we also checked in with the economic development guidelines of the NSW Government. In its Economic Development Strategy for NSW (2015), the emphasis in regional economic development is on ‘specialisation and materiality’ – concepts of regions’ competitive advantage, in particular, an industry’s specialisation (as measured by the proportion of total regional employment in that industry compared with that for NSW as a whole) as well as the economic significance of that industry within the region (as measured by the employment share of that industry within the region).

These concepts of specialisation based on traditional industry definitions will always be important in our thinking about economic development but consider the following: when Steve Jobs held the first iPhone aloft at the Moscone Convention Centre in San Francisco, only one technology company, Microsoft, was in the top 10 publicly traded companies in the world. Microsoft then made up 8.9% of the total value of the top ten by market capitalization. In 2018 Apple was the biggest company in the world and seven technology companies occupied the top ten, together representing almost 78% of its total value amounting to $US4.3 trillion dollars of market capitalisation. That’s one decade of economic change!
This represents one of the largest most rapid transformations in industrial structure in the world's history. Value has been destroyed and created at an unprecedented rate. In the emerging digital economy:

- traditional definitions of industry boundaries are being challenged – is Uber in the transport or ICT industry? Is Airbnb in accommodation or technology?
- our current methods of measuring economic activity are now missing large components of consumer benefits which are not 'traded' in the conventional sense – they have become non-monetary exchanges – personal data for technology-based services. Consumers benefit with no impact on GDP
- many digital business are high value but low employment calling into question traditional employment-based measurements of specialisation.

To the extent that forward-looking economic opportunities are based on existing specialisations, the directions of future economic development are relatively easy to divine. In the future however, economic opportunity increasingly arises from networks of talent, capital and dispersed value chains. In this world connections to marketplaces are not necessarily to do with geographic proximity but rather with personal networks, associations and various types of social and economic connections. This raises the economic significance of prominent well-connected individuals and fluid, often-informal ‘innovation communities’.

Not all regions can access, attract and foster such individuals and communities but for those with the right combinations of resources, amenity and reasonable proximity to major urban centres, strategies based on this thinking are increasingly viable. This is particularly the case as rising costs and congestion drive the digital creatives out of our growing global cities and towards regions with lifestyle advantages and enabling networks.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Simon is a consultant economist with over 25 years’ experience and focuses on telecommunications, information technology, education, and the arts and media. He has authored or co-authored multiple papers on digital disruption economics and regulation issues for the International Telecommunications Union and has undertaken numerous business case analyses for investments and program implementation in the arts and education sectors. Besides numerous projects in Australia, Simon undertaken in-country assignments in the numerous countries including South Africa, Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Nepal, Taiwan, China, Indonesia and the Pacific Islands.
FREE ONLINE ECONOMIC PROFILES FOR EDA MEMBERS

REPLAN is a team of economists, planners, demographers, economic development specialists, analysts and software developers who create online analytical tools and information resources.

For almost 20 years we have been supporting thousands of people with data and analysis that is accurate and up-to-date, enabling timely, evidence-based decision making about where to Live, Work and Invest.

REPLAN’s products and services are delivered based on three guiding principles: providing an exceptional level of support for clients; transparency and rigour in the use of data, and; flexibility and ease of access to information. With offices in Bendigo, Victoria; Robina, Queensland and Adelaide, South Australia our team prides itself on providing a service that is second to none.

REPLAN has worked with Economic Development Australia for many years, both at a National and State and Territory level. Many of EDA’s members are also clients of REPLAN including numerous local authorities, state government agencies, regional development organisations and private companies. We greatly value the relationship we have with economic development practitioners across the length and breadth of Australia.

To further strengthen our relationship with EDA, REPLAN has been pleased to partner with EDA National to provide online National and State/Territory Economy Profiles for the benefit of EDA members. These profiles are intended to assist economic development practitioners in delivering economic development outcomes throughout Australia.

Each profile uses REPLAN’s economic modelling to present estimates of Output, Employment, Wages & Salaries, Regional Exports, Regional Imports, Value-Added and Gross Regional Product. In addition, the Profiles provide estimates of the value of Tourism in each region together with an analysis of its workforce by age, education, occupation etc. There is also Trend data displayed providing regular updates on Unemployment rates, Business counts, Population and other key indicators.

Complementary to the online profiles, REPLAN has also created Economic Snapshots for each State and Territory which highlight key changes in these economies between 2011 and 2016. The snapshots examine the differences in Gross Regional Product, Output, Employment, etc. with associated commentary on the significant changes.

Both the online profiles and snapshots can be viewed by EDA members on the EDA website at https://www.edaustralia.com.au/economic-data/

If you have any questions or would like any further information about REPLAN’s products or services please contact us on 1300 737 443 or info@remplan.com.au.