

Editorial

The Bush Christmas?

Even before the lights had dimmed on Kerry O'Brien's election set, regional Australia had been thrust into the spotlight of the political post-mortem, and a tantalising opportunity presented itself.

But while our agenda enjoys some airtime, regional Australia needs more than a Santa sack.

The reality is a new chapter needs to be written on governing regional Australia. We need to leave behind the traditional sectoral approach of responding to agriculture, mining, water management etcetera, as separate entities.

I believe regional Australia will be best served by taking a fresh perspective, using a cohesive and multi-disciplinary approach to govern in a mature and case-sensitive way.

We need policies that recognise regional characteristics, tax policies that discourage fly-in, fly-out workforces, environmental policies that encompass the entire country and aren't limited by borders or artificial territories.

Australians deserve to have decisions about their regions made as close to home as possible, to reflect the priorities of their communities and to ensure services are responding to their needs.

Current infrastructure funding models are largely inappropriate and will always struggle to be financially viable for regional Australia, just as mining companies cannot and should not be relied on to underwrite entire communities, replacing appropriate governance.

Infrastructure, be it road, rail or internet is critical to the connectivity of regions and consequently the prospects of long-term economic vigour. Education in the bush goes hand in hand with economic growth and opportunity.

None of this can be achieved without a cross- sectorial and multi-disciplinary approach to governance, looking to build a vibrant, viable regional Australia.

As Convenor of the national **SEGRA** conference, I look forward to these issues coming up for discussion at the next conference in Townsville from 19 - 21 October.

We have a wide range of topics to cover with a really thought-provoking line-up of speakers.

I hope you can join us.

Kate Charters.



Relocate Business to Regions

Spending \$250 million relocating government agencies and businesses to regional New South Wales is the most popular of the 10 Big Ideas to Grow NSW launched by NSW Business Chamber.

The business relocation concept received twice as many votes as the next most popular idea (a whole-of-government audit), in the online poll run through the NSW Chamber of Business website.



Mr Stephen Cartwright, CEO NSW Business Chamber, presents at the 10 Big Ideas launch. Image courtesy of NSW Business Chamber

“There are a variety of options for government departments to be moved - Penrith would like Transport NSW because of the congestion problems they face for example. But more importantly we propose a Develop Regional NSW Fund that businesses can submit an application to, to receive government support in helping them relocate to regional areas” said Mr Stephen Cartwright, CEO NSW Business Chamber.

[Read more](#)

The Real Australia of the Future—Governing a Hollow Country



Governments need to learn to govern a large ‘hollow’ country in which most people live on or near the coast, according to Associate Professor Geoff Cockfield, of the University of Southern Queensland.

Speaking ahead of next month’s Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (*SEGRA*) annual conference, where he will be presenting a paper on this topic, Associate Professor Cockfield said recent policy approaches have been based on romantic platitudes and sporadic and widely dispersed funding.

“Governments, for understandable political reasons haven’t publicly acknowledged and widely discussed the real, future picture of our country” he said.

“There is not one regional Australia, but sea change areas, tree change areas, remote indigenous communities, large-scale agricultural and pastoral areas, mining hot spots and regional cities and they all need different approaches”.

[Read more](#)

Associate Professor Geoff Cockfield, University of Southern Queensland

Best Practice

Making Regional Development Happen

It sounds like the Holy Grail - pulling a diverse community together, garnering co-operation across Council boundaries and speaking with one voice to government at State and Federal level.

But G21 is delivering, with major investment in infrastructure such as a multi-million dollar ring-road and significant new industry attracted to the region. Currently 53 projects are underway.

The G21 test case was launched in the Geelong region of Victoria in 2007 encompassing five Councils, and is now the blueprint for the Brumby government's State-wide regional development policy Ready for Tomorrow, backed by \$630 million.

[Read more](#)

Elaine Carbines, CEO G21



Rural Australia Putting Out the Welcome Mat

It might be as simple as a 'welcoming committee', to secure skilled workers including professionals such as doctors, police and teachers, for rural Australia.

Skilled workers are slipping through the fingers of rural communities and the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) has released a report based on Australian-first research that explains how to hang on to these prized new residents.

The research was borne out of SEGRA 2006 in Launceston, when regional development professional Martin Homisan from Mackay-Whitsunday- Isaac region, teamed up with some academics to try to understand the lack of commitment from mobile workers.

[Read more](#)

Image Courtesy RIRDC Publication Number: 10-077



Building Soul into Suburbs

SEGRA (Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia) will examine the X-Factor that builds community spirit at the upcoming conference in Townsville 19 - 21 October.

“The problem with new suburbs is there is no-where to make a mess. One thing I know about community groups like theatre groups, pottery co-ops, Girl Guides and the like, is they need a shed - some where to store all of their gear, and it may not always look pristine.”

Lorna Hempstead AM will address the upcoming **SEGRA** conference focusing on the social infrastructure deficit and the looming volunteers crisis - both critical ingredients for vibrant communities.

New suburbs, country towns and remote areas all strive to create a buzz of activity and amenity.

[Read more](#)

Around the Regions

SCU Leads the Way

Southern Cross University (SCU) has taken a lead role in regional development dialogue in Australia, hosting a Byron Bay symposium in August.

SCU's Regional Futures Institute attracted more than 70 professionals from around the region under the banner of 'Big Ideas, Innovative Thinkers and Future Directions for Regional Australia'.



Stephen Cartwright presents at the SCU Symposium in Byron Bay. Image courtesy of SCU.

"The speakers raised some very interesting arguments and issues that stimulated lively discussion and thinking," said Professor Bultjens, Director of the Institute.

Northern New South Wales, home base of SCU, is exploring the potential of the region, with a paper being developed by the NSW Business Chamber under its 10 Big Ideas for Growth project.

[Read more](#)

Country Spirit Motivates the Motivator

She's supposed to be the one doing the inspiring, but a chance trip to country New South Wales was an epiphany for Motivational Speaker, Janine Shepherd.

With a stellar career on the corporate circuit, Janine Shepherd has been inspiring well-heeled professionals with her story of will and determination, following her near fatal accident while training as an Olympic cyclist.

After a presentation to a small group of country women, a young mother of two who's family was about to lose their farm, asked Janine if she had ever thought about suicide.

She realised how desperate things could get in the bush, the enormous toll years of drought and adversity have taken, and how brave that woman was to approach a near stranger with her fears.

[Read more](#)



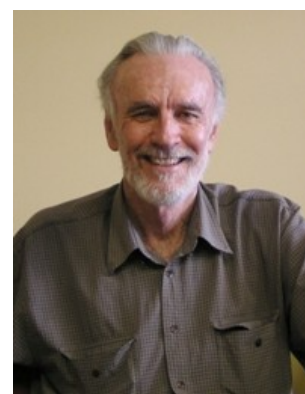
Janine Shepherd.
Image courtesy Janine Shepherd

Regions Missing Grey Dollars

Every six minutes a new recreational vehicle (RV) is rolling off a production line in Australia, with the owners touring for longer than ever before. But the majority of regional Australia is not ready for the lucrative invasion, according to industry insider, Mr Gary Rebgetz.

A critical mass of travellers is expected to hit next year, according to Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) research, with continued growth of up to 30 per cent predicted to 2016.

[Read more](#)



Gary Rebgetz. Image courtesy CMCA

Events

Regions to Drive National Outlook

Serendipity has landed regional and rural Australia ringside seats in the next government, raising hopes of a radical redirection of governance for the regions.

Championing a 'new take' on regional management is Brisbane-based think-tank, SEGRA (Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia).

[Read more](#)

Image courtesy Tourism Queensland



Workshop with Global Ecotourism Leaders on Noosa Beach

Leading national and international tourism identities will gather next month in Noosa, Queensland, for the Global Eco Asia-Pacific Tourism Conference (25-28 October 2010). Outstanding speakers will represent Australia, New Zealand, China, Cambodia, South Africa, USA, UK, France and more.



Images courtesy Tourism Queensland

This is a unique opportunity for the whole tourism industry to receive leading advice from global experts on sustainability, ecotourism marketing and product development.

[Read more](#)

Publications

More than Luck: Ideas Australia needs now

"It's time for Australia to show that we are not just a lucky country but a country that knows how to make our luck last."

- Mark Davis and Miriam Lyons, Editors *More Than Luck: Ideas Australia needs now*

More than Luck: Ideas Australia needs now is the latest book released by the Centre for Policy Development, in an effort to stimulate public discussion about policies to position Australia for the future.

Many of the chapters address issues that directly impact on regional Australia, such as delivery of health and Australia's reliance on a resource-led economy.

[Read more](#)