



SEGRA 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention News Editors / Chief of Staff
EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2009

REGIONAL AUSTRALIA FACES NEW FRONTIERS

Having delivered the resource boom, regional Australia must now look to secure a thriving and sustainable future in the current global economic climate, with the full support of all tiers of government.

Landing this political message and regrouping regional economies will be the core theme of *Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA)* conference to be held in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Western Australia, 27-29 October – ‘exploring new frontiers’.

“Government, business and non-government sectors must work together to make sure spending delivers increased productivity in regional Australia,” said Ms Kate Charters, *SEGRA* convenor.

“Equitable funding arrangements must be made for regional Australia including incentives for regionally-based business investment. Regions must look at a range of new frontiers that will impact future development, such as the potential of green industries, and how to respond to a decreasing reliance on oil and the shift in agricultural patterns resulting from climate change, for example.”

More continues...

Regional Australia faces new frontiers continues...

Ms Charters has overseen the **SEGRA** conference for the past 12 years and she says it is timely the conference is held in Kalgoorlie this year.

Mayor Ron Yuryevich said “Kalgoorlie-Boulder was the ideal destination for the conference, with a proven capacity to host large scale events.”

“There is strong community support for the **SEGRA** conference, and the benefits it will have for Kalgoorlie-Boulder are immeasurable. Although our local economy has slowed, the diversification of our mining industry means that Kalgoorlie-Boulder is weathering the current economic situation better than many other regional centres.”

“By having this opportunity to showcase our City to a wider and more varied demographic, we can make significant inroads into changing the nation’s perception of Kalgoorlie-Boulder from an outback mining town to the thriving cosmopolitan centre that it is. We want more and more people to realise that our City is a great place to live, work and play.”

Riding the boom-bust cycle puts enormous strain on regional communities. Securing investment and government support to position small to medium businesses for the next round of opportunities is a key challenge for regions and highlights the need for regional Australia to have a strong political voice.

“Federalism and how it can deliver for regions is an important issue for regional Australia, and we will be exploring new regional paradigms as a way forward” said Ms Charters.

“**SEGRA** is the only national forum for regional development professionals, policy-makers and academics to get together, share experiences and ideas, and to send a message to governments that regions can’t be ignored.”

SEGRA also takes on a forecasting role, looking to identify emerging issues into the next decade.

More continues...

Regional Australia faces new frontiers continues...

The subject of climate change has been closely tracked by **SEGRA** for many years, and the conference will again flag the need for pro-active strategies to be implemented at a regional level to ensure appropriate planning and mitigation are not overwhelmed by complacency.

Emerging issues such as food and water security will also be discussed, so regions start planning with these factors in mind, and at the same time looking for opportunities to gain a competitive edge.

Another key frontier looming for regional Australia is unlocking the potential of green technologies and translating that into thriving industries that are supported by a readily-available, skilled workforce.

Indigenous enterprises also offer potential with regions looking to share experiences and successful frameworks to capitalise on the skills and talents of aboriginal communities.

While the economy will be a dominating concern, **SEGRA** will pursue a wide range of action agendas, with submission of papers now open at www.segra.com.au/segra

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SEGRA 2009 is proudly supported by the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Goldfields Esperance Development Commission

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