



SEGRA 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention News Editors / Chief of Staff
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW REGIONAL DEAL WILL SHINE LIGHT ON COST SHIFTING

Simon Crean is an excellent choice for Regional Affairs Minister according to **SEGRA**, the national think tank dedicated to speaking up for regional Australia.

An experienced senior minister in Cabinet is a very favourable outcome, and the agreement reached with the two independents MPs will go some way to correcting entrenched accounting practices that have systematically disadvantaged regions.

Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA) has been championing the

regional cause since 1997, and is welcoming the breakthrough the recent election outcome has created.

“Regional Australia is front and centre on the political and media agenda for the moment,” said Ms Kate Charters, SEGRA founding Member.

“While it is heart-warming to have the spotlight, SEGRA is looking for some meaningful outcomes and a paradigm shift in regional governance.

“Piece-meal policy and funding has stunted all aspects of life in regional Australia for a long time now. Politicians have failed to get up close to regional Australia, and have opted to let sectoral interests of mining, grazing and the like, domineer policy decisions.

“SEGRA Steering Committee has been advocating for cohesive and multi-disciplinary policy for regional Australia and we will continue to pursue this with the new Minister, Simon Crean,” said Ms Charters.

“Building vibrant and viable regions whether they are country, coastal or remote, has got to be the ultimate goal and recognizing regions have divergent needs will be very important.”

Having a dedicated ministry is a major breakthrough according to SEGRA, and the funding assigned to the Regional Development Authority (RDA) network established under Kevin Rudd is very positive.

“It will be very interesting to see if the regions can get a ‘multiplier effect’ with this funding, by drawing in funding from State and local levels into pivotal projects,” said Simon Boughey, SEGRA Steering Committee.

“This should be a natural consequence given the State, Territory and local governments have signed up to the RDA agreement with the Federal government.

“Additionally, all federal agencies have been directed to look at how they are responding to the regions

“All federal agencies have been directed to look at regions and the introduction of a spatial accounting model will be very revealing. It will highlight the cost shifting that has been endemic with State governments, and make them more accountable.”

SEGRA is also very supportive of the wholesale pricing for broadband being kept the same in the regions as it is in metropolitan areas.

“This will bring rural and remote Australia into the fold and make it much easier for them to access tele-health and tele-education. It will allow people to remain in their communities,” said Mr Boughey.

“On top of the funding for the Building the Education Revolution, which has been an important investment across all of the regions, this is like drought-breaking rain.”

SEGRA will hold its national conference under the banner, *Delivering a Big Australia*, in Townsville from 19 – 21 October. Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Regions Minister Simon Crean have been invited to attend.

The full conference program is available at www.segra.com.au

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0432 334 994 *SEGRA 2010 is proudly supported by the Townsville City Council; the Queensland Government; James Cook University; Regional Futures Institute, Southern Cross University; Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation; and Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government; James Cook University; Townsville Enterprise; Port of Townsville; Indigenous Business Australia and the Australian Rainforest Foundation, National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia*