



Joint News Release



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Federal Member for Cunningham

David Campbell MP
Minister for the Illawarra

Jennie George MP
Federal Member for Throsby

Noreen Hay MP
Member for Wollongong

Matt Brown MP
Member for Kiama

Lylea McMahon MP
Member for Shellharbour

Paul McLeay MP
Member for Heathcote

State of the Illawarra Regional Leadership Initiative

We are pleased to announce today that Regional Development Australia Illawarra will convene an inaugural *Regional Leaders Summit* to dramatically re-shape the Illawarra's approach to regional economic, social and environmental development.

The *Regional Leaders Summit* will be convened over two days on Monday, 30 November 2009, and Tuesday, 1 December 2009, at the Novotel Wollongong.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, will provide the inaugural keynote address at a luncheon of the Summit on 30 November 2009.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, Maxine McKew, will be participating in the Summit.

New South Wales Government Ministers will also play key roles in Summit activities.

The New South Wales Government will provide \$35,000 in funding for the Illawarra Regional Leadership Initiative.

The objective of the *Regional Leaders Summit*, which will be convened annually at the same time, is to identify practical strategies and projects that will contribute to the growth of the Illawarra economy.

The region's political, business, trade union, and community leaders will determine strategies and projects that should be given the highest priority for action, and identify key partners for project delivery.

The *Regional Leaders Summit* will generate ideas, strategies and projects by consideration of sound, evidence-based proposals.

The days of regional stakeholders submitting 'wish-lists' for projects are over.

We expect that requests will be made for government investment in strategies and projects. We will always listen to and consider these requests. But we also expect that regional stakeholders will identify ways and means where the private sector can - and should - participate in these investments.

We expect that the private sector in the region will have 'skin in the game', as the Prime Minister said during his visit to Wollongong on 11 May 2009.

University of Wollongong Vice-Chancellor, Gerard Sutton, has been asked to present a case study at the Summit on the success of the University in preparing projects and obtaining the funding support of Commonwealth and State Governments.

RDA Illawarra has started extensive community consultations throughout the Wollongong, Shellharbour and Kiama local government areas and will shortly invite ideas and proposals from individuals on-line. Further details will be announced shortly.

The Summit will also unveil a new economic model of the Illawarra to assist regional stakeholders to accurately estimate the impact of strategies and project proposals, including costing.

At the conclusion of the *Regional Leaders Summit*, a State of the Illawarra Report will be published outlining the discussions, agreed priorities and recommended actions, including key accountabilities.

We are very pleased that the regions key stakeholder organisations have enthusiastically welcomed and support the *Illawarra Regional Leadership Initiative*.

This is an ambitious initiative for the Illawarra.

Further details of the *Regional Leaders Summit* will be provided shortly by RDA Illawarra, including details of the program of events and registration.

18 September 2009

MEDIA RELEASE

18 September 2009

State of the Illawarra
A regional Leadership Initiative

This year will see the establishment of Australia's first, truly national, economic development network, to operate across all levels of government. The network is being created by the Australian Government in partnership with State and Territory governments.

Recently appointed Chairman of RDA Illawarra, Eddy De Gabriele, explained that the local RDA committee would work with regional communities to work out the most effective ways of meeting RDA's responsibilities as a key facilitator of change and development in the Illawarra.

Mr De Gabriele said "The RDA Illawarra board is determined to exceed expectations in its first year of operation".

"The ground-breaking *State of the Illawarra* Initiative is intended to give our region another competitive advantage." Mr De Gabriele explained that the initiative will combine thorough economic research, with information gathered from business and the community, to help identify genuine opportunities for economic and social development.

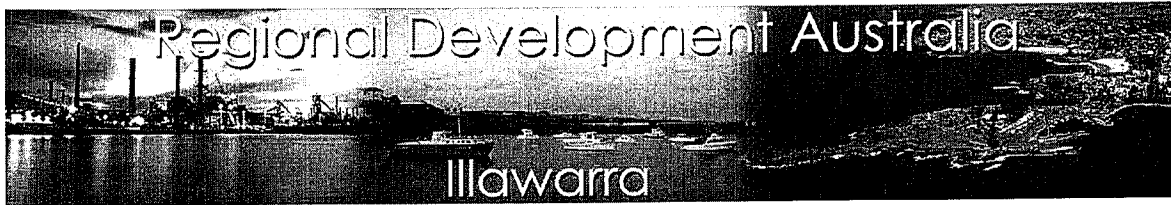
"This initiative will also provide Illawarra organisations with an opportunity to show real leadership in developing evidence-based proposals for investment in the Illawarra region and its infrastructure" said Mr De Gabriele.

Mr De Gabriele said that RDA Illawarra is seeking corporate partners to sponsor the State of the Illawarra Leaders Summit which will take place on 30 November and 1 December. Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard will deliver the keynote address at the Summit. Members of the community will be able to actively participate in the initiative by contributing ideas online at www.rdailawarra.com.au/summit.

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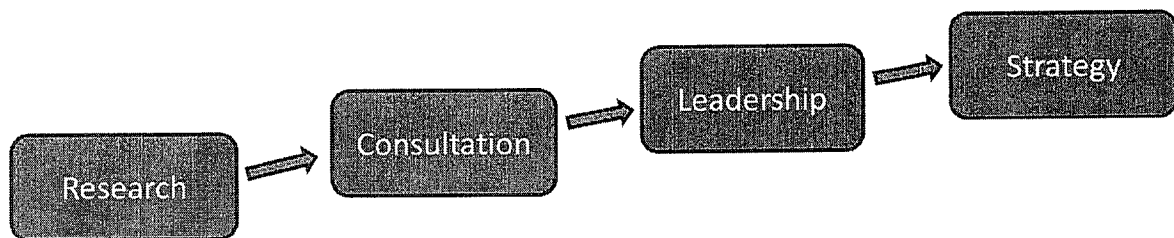
Further information on the *Regional Development Australia* network is available at www.rda.gov.au



The State of the Illawarra *A regional leadership initiative*

The *State of the Illawarra* initiative is an ambitious new project that seeks to do no less than re-shape the Illawarra's approach regional economic development.

It is a totally integrated project that encompasses:



The research stage is now underway, led by RDA Illawarra, in cooperation with the University of Wollongong, Wollongong City Council and IRIS. The consultation stage will commence on 14 September. The *State of the Illawarra* initiative will culminate in a peak regional summit to be held at the Novotel Northbeach, Wollongong, on 30 November and 1 December 2009.

The Regional Leaders Summit

The Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, will be the key-note speaker at the inaugural *State of the Illawarra* Regional Leaders Summit.

The Regional Leaders Summit will draw together fresh research data about the structure of the Illawarra economy, as well as detailed information gathered through a process of consultation with regional business and the community.

Regional leaders will be asked to identify practical strategies and projects that will contribute to the growth of the Illawarra's economy. Leaders will decide on projects and strategies that should be given the highest priority for action, and identify key partners for project delivery.

AIMS

Leadership

One of Australia's most significant studies on the development of Australia's regions, the McKinsey Report (1994), identified the quality of regional leadership as the most important ingredient in developing a regions' potential. *The Regional Leaders Summit will be a vehicle to encourage strong leadership to emerge from within the business and community sectors.*

Evidence-based arguments

Inevitably many regional development proposals will require investment by Government and the private sector. Peak organisations in the Illawarra have recognised the need to prepare well-researched business cases when submitted requests to Government on behalf of the region. Sound, evidence based arguments are much more likely to succeed than 'wish-lists'.

The *State of the Illawarra* initiative is based on gathering credible data as well as detailed industry and community knowledge.

Not a 'flash-in-the-pan'

The *State of the Illawarra* initiative is intended to become an annual activity. This will help to build a platform of local economic data, and knowledge based on community and business engagement. It will better prepare the Illawarra as it competes with other regions to get a share of finite investment resources.

OBJECTIVE

In 2009, the *State of the Illawarra* initiative will help stakeholders to identify and prioritise a number of key strategies and projects that target potential growth areas in the Illawarra economy. Partner organisations to be involved in the delivery of specific projects will also be identified.

The ultimate objective of the *State of the Illawarra* initiative is to reduce unemployment and social disadvantage, by building on the work that has already been done to develop a more vibrant, self-reliant economy.

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