

1. Deficiencies in infrastructure which currently impede development in South East New South Wales.

Transport

Roads - Need for upgrade of Princes Highway, Kings Highway and Brown Mountain.

Sea - Development of Eden Wharf. Improvements to the safety of coastal bars eg Narooma

Air - Upgrade of Moruya Airport. An international airport at Canberra would have a positive effect on our region. Increased air services to Merimbula and Cooma.

Rail - non-existent in the south east of NSW

The cost of getting goods to market and products from major centres makes this region disadvantaged compared to many other regions that are connected by quality highways and/or rail.

The South East Australia Transport Strategy of Nov 1996 still has useful information regarding transport development in this region.

Telecommunications

There is need for an improved telecommunications systems for the region, to cover:

Internet access

Mobile phones

Cheaper telephone calls

Health Services

Doctors - Need to attract doctors to local towns. Improvement to health, equipment, facilities and services is needed due to our increasing, ageing population.

Hospital at Jindabyne

Need for the provision of nursing home places in the region.

Youth Services

More youth services are needed - literacy, access to youth workers, training, as well as cultural/entertainment activities.

Education

Lack of tertiary facilities in all towns , particularly in the smaller towns without TAFE facilities, eg Bermagui.

Need for high school in Jindabyne.

Education and Training facilities need to be of a quality to attract youth from other areas also.

This area needs cross-flow of ideas, experiences etc to overcome inbreeding of thought processes.

Community Leadership

Lack of “Can Do” attitude. There is a need to develop a flow of skilled people and leaders. Lack of coordination between different levels of government and organisations is a problem.

2. Factors that would enhance development

- The funding of applications under the Rural Plan from the from the Snowy Monaro area and South Coast /East Gippsland is necessary to set directions for future land use.
- There must be a will to take action on this inquiry; State Government has good programs, through Dept of State and Regional Development, but limited funds.
- The community must be consulted and invited to express views on infrastructure and the development of the region. Communities must be given ability to have real input not just token input.
- There needs to be quantum research of overseas development - not just that of the United States.
- There are concerns locally about the Federal Government being serious about regional development when they axed the Department of Regional Development on coming into office.
- Variety of regulations (three levels of government)
- Government authorities must be encouraged to increase current services in regional Australia and recognise the importance of investing in solid capital. Decentralisation of government departments to regional communities would be a good start.
- Leadership skills need to be developed by small towns and shires. A ‘Can Do’ attitude needs to be developed/maintained.
- Development of jobs for the unemployed.
- Call centre opportunities need investigation.
- Re-evaluation of traditional industries – the development of value adding
- Examination of prospects for new industries.
- Development of small business - link to telecommunications.
- Promotion of lifestyle benefits of the bush.
- Expansion of tertiary and distance education. Give rural children in the bush the opportunity for education and training for as long as possible.
- Youth issues. Young people must have hope and constructive activities in rural and regional Australia.

3. Potential for development in regional areas

- Aboriginal employment generating projects like Jigamy Farm at Eden and Umbarra Tours at Wallaga Lake need to be developed further. Other Aboriginal employment opportunities must be developed.
- Use of telecommunications
- New industry development - Bombala sawmill, aquaculture, horticulture

- Infrastructure needed: Eden Wharf, expansion of airport at Moruya, upgrading of Princes Highway, various tourism opportunities
- Need for community centres to provide for a range of activities for youth and the aged - possibly integrated with sporting or cultural facilities.
- More public housing needed - permanent and emergency
- More qualified workers in welfare field.
- Investment in regional Australia needed – can the superannuation funds be tapped into to any degree?
- Better use of natural assets - e.g. gas pipeline, coastline, national parks, the beauty of the area.
- Balanced sustainable development is required
- Health facilities is a major issue. More doctors needed.
- Easier access to specialist treatment needed. It is very difficult to tee up more than 1 specialist visit in one day. They don't seem to appreciate that you're 3 or 4 hours away.
- Leadership is essential.
- Encourage industry investment - incentives, legislation, money for research and development.
- Labour market programs that lead to jobs needed.

4. Extent to which infrastructure would generate employment.

Any infrastructure development in this area would generate employment, and would have a multiplier effect, particularly (or only if) local firms/ businesses are used. If outside firms get the work, money and opportunities leave the region.

5. Role of different levels of government and the private sector in providing infrastructure in regional areas

- Coordination needed among NSW agencies.
- Need for partnerships between government and the private sector.
- Need for a government (at all levels) to have a 'We Can Do' attitude.
- Need for incentives to private enterprise to invest/participate.
- There are concerns that too much infrastructure money is going to the Sydney Olympics rather than to needy areas in regional Australia.

6. Planning, Coordination and Cooperation in the provision of infrastructure in regional areas

- There is concern that there are too many players involved, leading to confusion. There is a need for clarification of each players role.

Industry involvement is essential, but there is no regional industry body in South East New South Wales. A current example is the Eden Wharf proposed development where the

following bodies are involved: Timber Industry, State government departments - State and Regional Development, Forestry, Premiers, Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and others - Federal government, Defence, Tourism, Transport and Regional Services, Australian Capital Regional Development Council, local government and the Area Consultative Committee.

7. Benefit to the national economy of developing regional infrastructure

- Increase in employment
- Fewer people on welfare
- Pressure taken off cities
- Pollution reduction in cities
- Quality of life improved – less health issues
- Hope for youth and indigenous Australians.

South East NSW Tourist Loop

The South East NSW Area Consultative Committee made a proposal to the Federation funds to develop a tourist trail around our region. This concept would have developed quality projects that would attract tourist both domestic and international to visit our region. The concept relied on quality project to be developed and then promoting the tourist trail to Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra markets. Unfortunately the proposal was not funded. Brief details follow.

- Moruya Heritage Centre, as a tourism development project.
- Development of a business incubator in the Batemans Bay/Moruya area, aimed at developing manufacturing in the region.
- Whale Discovery Centre at Eden, where there has been a devastating effect from the loss of timber jobs and reduced labour in the fishing industry.
- Jigamy Farm – This Aboriginal project needs to be completed as a tourist destination and to improve self image of Aboriginal people.
- Development of an Eco Skills Centre in the Bega Valley to compliment the growing demand for this type of training with the emerging small producer sector.
- Sapphire Coast Community and Recreation Centre at Merimbula, including auditorium, indoor sports, training kitchen and NPWS interpretive centre.
- Building of Brown Mountain Old Growth Forest Centre by NPWS
- Bombala Old Railway development to link a new woollen mill tourist attraction with steam engine displays and landscaping works.
- Multicultural and Interpretation Centre at Cooma.

The aim is to network a number of organisations to make this happen. Local government will play a vital role. Work for the Dole providers are also essential partners.

If the Commonwealth provides funds for this approach, it will be more than offset by the savings on Newstart allowance in the years to come. In addition, these projects will offer significant jobs to unemployed now which will have a positive social and health benefit for our communities.