

# Mid North Coast Regional Development Board

## 2004 – 2005 Annual Report

### CONTENTS

Chairperson's Message	2
Regional Development Board - Role	3
Board Governance	5
Regional Development Objectives	6
Economic Development Strategies	7
Board Programs & Projects 2004-2005	8
Board Administration	14
Board Finances	15
Board Members' Profiles	16

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## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to report that the 2004/05 year has been a period of substantial progress for the Mid North Coast Regional Development Board. The Board aspires to be a catalyst for change, and has adopted collaboration and partnering as its key regional development strategy.

Over this twelve-month period the Board has significantly advanced its strategic planning agenda, and achieved outstanding outcomes in its specific industry development activities. In partnership with the Mid North Coast Area Consultative Committee and TAFE NSW North Coast Institute, the Board published a draft discussion paper "Growing jobs on the Mid North Coast" in January 2005. The paper is a vital step in the development of a credible regional agenda and a widely endorsed set of regional development priorities.

During 2004/05 the Board actively progressed industry development initiatives in the organics, herbs, timber, manufacturing, visual arts and film/multimedia sectors. Each program is based on a strategy of facilitating and supporting the establishment of collaborative industry networks that are able to determine and drive their own industry development activities.

Without doubt the most successful of these has been the Emerging Industries Development Program (EIDP) that focussed on the herbs and organics sectors (details later in this report). This success was in no small part due to the innovative, professional, committed and flexible approach of the Project Officer, Lyndell Stone. The program concluded on 30 June 2005 and the production of a case study on the project methodology should ensure that the expertise developed and lessons learned are shared widely.

The Board, a diverse group of business and industry professionals, meet on a bi-monthly basis and all members consistently exhibit a strong and unwavering commitment to the sustainable development of the MNC region. It is clear to me that the work of the Board could not be realised without the extraordinary contribution of our professional team: Bill Calcutt (Executive Officer); David Ledgerwood (Administration & Forestry Project); Lyndell Stone (EIDP); and Christina Hyde (Film MNC/Armidale). Thank you all for working way 'above and beyond the call of duty'.

In June 2005 Ron McDermott resigned as Board Chair, and Minister Campbell's subsequent comments are worth repeating. *"As Chairperson Ron has been instrumental in consolidating the Mid North Coast Regional Development Board as a highly cohesive and effective team. As Chair Ron encouraged the open discussion of sometimes complex and sensitive issues while maintaining absolute respect for different views. Ron was also able to bring an invaluable business perspective to Board considerations"*.

I close in applauding the valuable contributions of my fellow Board members, our professional team and our many and varied regional partners.

Jan Strom

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD – ROLE

The Mid North Coast Regional Development Board is an independent not-for-profit organisation sponsored by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD), one of thirteen throughout NSW. The Board is comprised of ten business and community leaders from across the NSW Mid North Coast, appointed by the NSW Cabinet for two and four-year terms. Profiles on Board members appear at the end of this report.

Regional Development Boards are tasked to advance and champion the economic development interests of their regions. Board activities are broadly governed by a series of performance obligations under a funding contract with DSRD. These obligations require Boards to:

1. Promote regional economic development initiatives (and hence sustainable jobs) in the Mid North Coast through:

- Encouraging communities to work together to attain the necessary critical mass to be competitive international investment locations;
- Marketing local government areas & regions as business locations;
- Hosting Commonwealth & State initiatives or programs which have as their aim the strengthening of the profile of non-metropolitan regions as business locations or the attraction of skilled labour;
- Co-hosting initiatives of the NSW Government aimed at attracting investment and developing exports.

2. Provide advice to the NSW Government and the Minister for Regional Development on important regional development issues.

3. Involve local government and key stakeholders in regional economic development through:

- Project partnerships;
- Providing advice to Government on local government & key stakeholders economic development initiatives;
- Encouraging participation of local government & key stakeholders in NSW Government regional economic development forums;
- Encouraging collaborative marketing of the Mid North Coast.

4. Provide advice to the NSW Government and the Minister for Regional Development on strategies for regions and communities to better plan for drought and natural disasters, including the development of generic business recovery measures.

5. Develop local leadership.

6. Champion major investment projects.

7. Promote key initiatives to improve the region's business climate, including infrastructure.

8. Host other NSW Government business related initiatives.

The Mid North Coast Regional Development Board's responsibilities cover the Local Government Areas of Greater Taree, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour. The region is extended to include the Great Lakes and Gloucester LGAs in joint initiatives with the Board's Federal counterpart, the Mid North Coast Area Consultative Committee.

The Board's mission is "to be an effective and influential body that articulates and advances the Mid North Coast's economic development interests, in partnership with the community and the public and private sectors". The Board's motto is "enhancing our region by supporting sustainable enterprise". The Board's activities are primarily directed towards increasing private sector employment by identifying and progressing opportunities to enhance the business and investment environment and support private enterprise.

The Board also manages a number of specific industry development projects (one-off) and programs (ongoing), using funding from relevant State and Federal Government programs where appropriate. The Board does not directly assist individual businesses, but supports networks and industry groups.

More detailed information on the Board and its activities are available at [www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au](http://www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au).

## BOARD GOVERNANCE

The Board's primary goal is to increase private sector employment through effective action to enhance business and investment opportunities in the Mid North Coast region. In undertaking its work the Board has adopted a set of principles that guide the conduct of its regional economic development activities. These principles include that the Board and its staff will:

- Operate in an ethical, respectful, transparent, accountable, socially responsible and non-partisan manner
- Determine its priorities in consultation with Local Governments, communities, industries and other economic development stakeholders
- Use partnerships where appropriate
- Undertake initiatives that will be of significant economic benefit and have strategic and environmentally sustainable outcomes, and
- Progress economic development initiatives that are realistic and outcomes focussed.

On taking up their duties all Board members and staff are required to endorse a Code of Conduct and Ethics. In participating in Board activities Members are required to put aside personal, local and business interests, and consider only the broader interests of the region and the community. The Board has adopted protocols for managing potential conflicts of interests that are applied scrupulously, including the requirement for individual declarations of any actual or perceived conflict of interest at every Board meeting.

Regional development is always a team activity, requiring constructive partnerships with both the public and private sectors. As a relatively small volunteer-based organisation with two full-time employees, the capacity of the Board to play an effective role in facilitating regional economic development is largely dependent on its ability to influence and gain the support of others. The Board aims to act as a catalyst to initiate sustainable economic growth.

The Board is fundamentally committed to responding to real industry and community needs with effective and practical strategies, not arbitrarily "picking winners" or trying to impose "top down" solutions. In determining its regional development objectives the Board has made considerable efforts to consult widely with public and private sector stakeholders, and has particularly valued the input and support of constituent LGAs.

The longer-term viability of industry development initiatives is dependent on the formation of resilient and inclusive networks willing to take responsibility for determining the future of their sectors. The Board seeks to engage with industry at an early stage, to encourage the formation of enterprise networks, and to support the formulation of development plans where there is a high level of industry ownership and commitment to implementation.

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following regional development objectives for the Board have been determined in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders.

- **Diversify & expand the region's agricultural base** - support and facilitate private investment in emerging agricultural industries (specifically the organics, herbs & aquaculture sectors)
- **Expand the region's private forestry industry** - in partnership with growers & the industry, & consistent with triple bottom line principles, facilitate the growth of the private forestry industry & associated value chain
- **Expand the region's manufacturing base** - in partnership with industry facilitate the growth & profitability of existing manufacturers & attract new clean green businesses
- **Encourage the establishment of creative & knowledge-based industries within the region** - in partnership with industry facilitate the growth of existing and attract new creative & knowledge-based businesses to the region
- **Enhance the essential infrastructure required to support industry competitiveness (ICT, transport, roads, energy, education, health, aged care, water)** - identify & address deficiencies in the region's infrastructure; secure universal access to cost-effective broadband
- **Enhance the business & investment environment** - raise the professionalism & competitiveness of businesses in the region, enhance their access to a diverse range of skills and expertise
- **Effectively market the region** - assist existing industries & businesses to access broader markets through collaborative promotion; raise the profile of the Mid North Coast as a business investment destination; communicate the region's economic development needs to Governments
- **Enhance regional planning & coordination** - improve decision-making through the provision of credible economic advice; advance a regional strategy that is widely accepted as a blueprint for integrated regional development

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The Board has adopted a range of strategies that provide practical and realistic ways of advancing economic development priorities. These include:

- **Establish collaborative industry networks** - support the formation of mutual interest industry networks (typically as not-for-profit incorporated associations or cooperatives). Industry networks are particularly important in a regional economy dominated by small businesses, where individual businesses lack the resources and “critical mass” to gain adequate access to consumers and markets

Industry network benefits can include initiating cost-effective collaborative marketing; sharing information and expertise, and raising skill levels and awareness of new technologies; realising clustering opportunities; implementing industry development plans; undertaking collective bargaining; leveraging additional resources; and lobbying and gaining Government recognition of the value of the industry sector

- **Sponsor the formulation of industry development plans** – a natural progression from the establishment of industry networks is the formation and implementation of industry development plans. Such plans can identify opportunities for industry growth and provide a framework for ongoing cooperation and coordination and the achievement of mutually beneficial objectives (eg building shared facilities/infrastructure, value adding, meeting minimum volume requirements, penetrating new markets etc)
- **Provide credible information to reduce investor uncertainty** – it is apparent that one of the obstacles to private investment in many industries and areas is uncertainty. The Board is strongly committed to the publication and dissemination of credible information that assists potential investors to evaluate potential risks and returns. This is also the rationale for the Board’s sponsorship of research on the drivers of and trends in the region’s economy
- **Convene and support regional stakeholder networks** – to facilitate information sharing, improve coordination and build support for regional initiatives, the Board and its Federal counterpart, the Area Consultative Committee, have established a regional development network that meets quarterly to progress regional initiatives
- **Sponsor “pilot” projects** – the Board initiates a variety of “pilot” projects to demonstrate how innovative collaborative solutions can increase the commercial viability of specific industry sectors
- **Advocacy** – the Board has a responsibility to advise Government on a range of issues that may be inimicable to the region’s economic development interests

## **BOARD PROGRAMS & PROJECTS 2004-2005**

### **AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION**

Commencing in late 2000 (and in partnership with the Area Consultative Committee) the Board undertook a program directed towards the needs of rural communities adversely impacted by the deregulation of the dairy industry. The program commenced with a survey of all dairy farmers in the region, followed by a series of information expos across the region on rural diversification options in 2001 that attracted over 1200 landholders. This was followed up in 2002 with a series of five intensive one-day workshops on specific agribusiness diversification options. Several of the workshops concluded with growers identifying industry development opportunities and/or proposing the formation of grower networks.

Jointly funded by the NSW and Federal Governments, the Emerging Industries Development Program (EIDP) commenced in September 2003 and focussed on assisting the herbs, organics and aquaculture sectors to establish and gain benefit from the formation of enterprise networks. The program involved the employment of a Project Officer (Ms Lyndell Stone) and an active engagement with the various target industry sectors, with the aim of identifying specific industry development needs and opportunities and supporting the establishment of viable and sustainable grower networks.

Networks are regarded as a key industry and business development tool that can provide considerable benefit to new industries and new industry entrants. Small agribusinesses in particular often find that profitability and investment confidence is impeded by a lack of scale, market knowledge and power and access to industry infrastructure. The establishment of enterprise networks leading to clear industry development objectives and plans, better information sharing, supply chain partnerships and strategies to improve a regional industry's ability to better access domestic and international markets was the key objective of the EIDP.

The program concluded on 30 June 2005, and the major outcomes include:

- the formation of a growers network called Mid North Coast Organics Inc with plans to establish a cooperative marketing entity
- grower reports that the collaborative activities initiated under the EIDP program have opened up new commercial opportunities and enhanced industry profitability
- the establishment of an on-line discussion group for organics growers at [www.organicagriculture.org.au](http://www.organicagriculture.org.au)
- the publication and wide distribution in July 2005 of a survey of organics growers titled "Profile of the Mid North Coast Organics Industry". This report provides valuable insights into the capabilities, challenges and attitudes within this sector
- the publication in July 2005 of a case study on the program methodology titled "Building new industries through collaboration".

## **PRIVATE FORESTRY**

Since 2000 the Board has managed one of a national network of Federal/State funded Regional Plantation Committees. More recently these bodies have been renamed Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDC). The PFDC in this region is called the Forestry Investment Program Advisory Committee. The FIP Advisory Committee comprises representatives from a range of public and private sector organisations.

In 2003 the FIP decided not to continue to employ a full-time project officer, but instead redirect resources to a local farm forestry network called the Mid North Coast Farm Foresters (MNCFF). The FIP had identified the MNCFF as the most direct and successful conduit to timber growing landholders whose support was vital to industry expansion. The FIP funded a strategic review of the local timber industry during 2003-2004, resulting in publication of a final report and a strategic action plan in August 2004.

The MNCFF has been implementing that action plan during 2004-2005 and has used the plan to secure ongoing funding support from other sources. MNCFF provides a wide range of services to existing and potential farm foresters in the region including extension, training and networking. Training courses have been developed jointly with the TAFE NSW North Coast Institute and delivered at their Coffs Harbour Campus.

In November 2004 a part-time project officer was appointed to the FIP working two days a week, and membership of the Advisory Committee was extended to include Local Government economic development officers.

In December 2004 CARE Pty Ltd was commissioned to undertake a scoping study preliminary to developing a timber industry profile for the region. The scoping study identified the lack of comprehensive data that is a prerequisite to formulating a business plan to facilitate economic growth of the industry. Collection of that data and preparation of the business plan has commenced and will be completed during 2005-2006. There are more than 90 timber industry businesses whose principals will be interviewed during this process.

The FIP and MNCFF have been jointly developing feasibility plans leading to the establishment of a timber aggregation centre in the region, training and resourcing of mobile millers and a certification program, which will lead to higher returns for and increased re-investment by farm foresters.

MNCFF has been invited by the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority and Coffs Harbour City Council to provide technical advice and training for Council staff to enable them to establish and manage an irrigated trial plantation of rainforest/cabinet timbers using effluent water. In return MNCFF can use the property as a teaching site and promotional tool for farm forestry. The objective is to show banana farmers alternative land use options.

## **MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS**

Manufacturers on the Mid North Coast play a vital role in the economy of the region, and provide precious opportunities for stable employment in a range of skilled trades. However, like the rest of Australia the region has experienced shortages in a number of vocations.

With the aim of quantifying the nature and extent of skills gaps and shortages on the NSW North Coast (ie Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers regions) the Board and TAFE NSW North Coast Institute initiated a survey of manufacturers across the region during 2004. The project, managed by the North Coast Institute, involved face-to-face interviews with manufacturers across a range of industry sectors.

The subsequent report titled "A review of the skills and training needs of the emerging manufacturing sector on the NSW North Coast" was published in March 2005 and widely circulated to manufacturers across the region. The report analysed the range of influences on skills gaps and shortages, and identified possible local strategies to address these. The Department of State and Regional Development has recently entered into a memorandum of understanding with TAFE NSW North Coast Institute on joint action to address skills shortages in some sectors.

## **CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

A major challenge for many small to medium enterprises is accessing adequate demand/customers for their goods and services. Many small businesses lack the scale to be able to spend what is required to adequately market their goods and services, and in particular to expand their markets through exposure to potential customers out of their local area.

In 2002 the Board initiated a "pilot" collaborative marketing project for commercial visual artists based in the Hastings LGA. Artists from throughout the area were offered the opportunity to participate in a high quality A5 booklet titled "Hand made in the Hastings". Feedback from participants indicated that the booklets had been successful in generating significant business. During subsequent years the "Hand made" exercise has been replicated in the Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and Greater Taree LGAs.

This initiative has been important in highlighting the significant contribution of the creative industries to the region's economy. It has also demonstrated how an innovative and carefully tailored approach to cost-effective collaborative marketing can directly support the commercial viability of a significant number of small businesses. Unique aspects of the project included the nature of the "product", the target market (local), the marketing vehicle (a collectible booklet), and focussed distribution.

## **REGIONAL FILM PROGRAM**

For several years a regional film program, involving a partnership between a number of Local, State and Federal agencies, has been managed by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council. In mid-2004 the Board agreed to assume responsibility for managing a new regional film program, encouraged by the announcement by the Minister for Regional Development of a further three years of funding support from the NSW Government. The Board subsequently secured funding support for the new program from six Local Government Areas and DSRD. Film Mid North Coast Armidale extended the objectives of the original program beyond a focus on production attraction to include a greater emphasis on local industry support and development.

The program commenced in March 2005 with the appointment of Ms Christina Hyde as the Project Officer. Ms Hyde brings with her a wealth of experience in the film, television and multimedia industries. Since her appointment Ms Hyde has moved quickly to establish links across the region and facilitate the establishment of industry networks. A CD Rom containing over 850 location shots has been produced and is being used to market the region's filming opportunities, and a new web site developed at [www.filmmnca.org](http://www.filmmnca.org).

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

The role of appropriate infrastructure in supporting or constraining economic development has been the subject of considerable public discussion over the last twelve months. In late 2004 the Board sought the in-principle support of the Mid North Coast Group of Councils to commence work on an Infrastructure Masterplan. The Board has been exploring the feasibility of commissioning work on a masterplan, and has proposed that this be progressed as a component of an overarching regional strategy for this region to be progressed by the NSW Department of Planning in 2006.

From the outset the Board has identified Information Communications Technology (ICT) as a key facilitator of economic development. ICT is pivotal in providing opportunities for improved efficiencies in existing businesses and for the establishment of location-independent new enterprises.

The Board previously made representations to the Federal Government's two inquiries into the adequacy of regional telecommunications services. The main thrust of the Board's submissions was to express concern about the adequacy of community and business access to cost-effective high-speed Internet services in areas outside the major urban centres. The region's ageing telecommunications infrastructure and topography mean that "the last mile" remains a challenge to providing moderately priced high-speed internet access to many outlying rural areas. The Board has actively supported LGA-based proposals to trial wireless broadband systems as an answer to the limited reach of existing technologies.

Surveys and research have demonstrated that the rate of broadband uptake by businesses in regional and rural areas continues to lag behind the major urban centres. A national survey by A.C.Nielsen revealed that low levels of business awareness of the benefits of broadband were a major contributor to this relatively low level of uptake. During the 2004/2005 period the Board was active in promulgating information on the cost savings offered by broadband-enabled applications, in particular the potential benefits of Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP). The Board is currently a member of the Australian Telecommunications Users Group (ATUG).

### **COMMUNITY SKILLS REGISTER - [www.skillsregister.org.au](http://www.skillsregister.org.au)**

With the constant influx of new people into our region the Board has recognised a need to assist people who are not necessarily seeking conventional employment but would like to continue to make an active contribution to their respective communities. Many members of our communities possess valuable and unique skills that are often unknown and under utilised.

In November 2004 the Board launched a public access database that aims to match Mid North Coast residents' skills and experience with community groups and businesses needing these skills. The community skills register at [www.skillsregister.org.au](http://www.skillsregister.org.au) provides residents with the opportunity to list their skills on a free public database, and offer their services in either a voluntary or paid capacity. As at June 2005 there had been almost 100 registrations on the database, and DSRD support has been sought to more actively publicise the site.

### **REGIONAL MARKETING**

The Board has a number of objectives that require the development of a clear, distinctive and widely accepted and recognised regional "identity" (or brand). One is the external marketing of the region as a dynamic and viable business investment destination. Another is assisting existing industries and businesses to access broader markets through collective marketing, and to demonstrate the cost-benefits of a collaborative approach. A third is gaining Government recognition for the distinctive economic development needs and challenges of this region.

The task of raising the profile of and gaining recognition for the Mid North Coast region has been complicated over recent years by a degree of internal and external confusion over the region's name, location and boundaries. In response to this complex situation the Board has worked to gain support for and consolidate a region name that appears to have "resonance" within the business and broader communities, and to progress integrated regional marketing. The name Mid North Coast appears to be most widely and consistently used in the community and the media to refer to the area that extends north beyond the Hunter to the start of the Northern Rivers.

In terms of external marketing and investment attraction, in March 2005 the Board secured funding of \$8,000 from the NSW Department of State and Regional Development in order to produce 10,000 copies of an A5 booklet to be called "World Class Business on the NSW Mid North Coast". The booklet will showcase some of the region's world-class businesses nationally and internationally. Up to forty exceptional businesses will feature in the publication that will be used to demonstrate the diversity and innovation of private sector enterprises in this region. The booklet is expected to be launched in early 2006.

## **REGIONAL PLANNING & COORDINATION**

The Board remains strongly committed to the development of a comprehensive, contemporary, research-based regional plan that will provide a sound foundation for consensus on and a coordinated response to the region's major economic development challenges. An inclusive regional planning process can provide a collaborative framework to progress sustainable economic and social development by defining specific roles, delineating relationships and responsibilities and as a basis for implementing agreed strategies. A regional plan would be complementary to and would support strategic plans developed at the Local Government level.

In 2004 the Board (in partnership with its Federal counterpart, the Mid North Coast Area Consultative Committee, and TAFE NSW North Coast Institute) commissioned the Hunter Valley Research Foundation to undertake research into the dynamics and drivers of the Mid North Coast economy, predominantly using existing information sources.

The subsequent draft discussion paper titled "Growing jobs on the Mid North Coast" was published in January 2005 and widely circulated to a broad range of economic development stakeholders. The discussion paper identifies a number of key issues that have the potential to impact on future economic growth in this region. The discussion paper also identifies a number of potential regional development opportunities that could be realized through a planned collaborative approach. A copy of a consultative draft of the discussion paper is available as a .pdf file at [www.mncacc.com.au](http://www.mncacc.com.au).

The issues and options identified in the discussion paper provide a useful start point for widespread stakeholder consideration of viable and acceptable regional economic development objectives. It is intended to use the discussion paper's observations as the basis for a series of regional planning workshops with public and private sector stakeholders in early 2006, with the ultimate aim of formulating a Regional Industry and Economic Plan.

## **BOARD ADMINISTRATION**

The current Board was appointed by the NSW Minister for Regional Development in August 2003, and first met in November 2003. The Board meets at different venues throughout the region every two months, and at these meetings considers ways in which it can make a significant and effective contribution towards regional economic development. The Board normally meets with local Councils and/or Council-sponsored economic advisory committees at the same time as it conducts its bi-monthly meetings.

During the 2004/2005 financial year the Board met at:

- Taree in July 2004;
- Bellingen in September 2004;
- Macksville in November 2004 (including Annual General Meeting);
- Kempsey in January 2005;
- Port Macquarie in March 2005; and
- Coffs Harbour in May 2005.

The Board also met on other occasions to undertake training and strategic planning.

The Board seeks and welcomes submissions from both the public and private sectors on opportunities to facilitate regional economic development, and can seek funding to undertake specific projects from Federal and State funding bodies. Projects are typically undertaken in partnership with industry and other Federal, State and Local Government bodies.

The Board is supported by a full-time Executive Officer, Bill Calcutt, who can be contacted on 6583 5647, facsimile 6583 5285, email [mncrdb@betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mncrdb@betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au). Further information on the Board's activities is available at [www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au](http://www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au) .

## **BOARD FINANCES**

Regional Development Boards are provided with an annual (financial year) grant by the Department of State and Regional Development in order to maintain an administrative/functional capability independent of the Department. This funding enables the employment of a full-time Executive Officer and part-time Project/Administration Officer, and facilitates the operation of the Board. DSRD also assist by providing (gratis) office facilities at Port Macquarie for Board staff and some administrative support.

The Board currently employs two full-time and one part-time staff on twelve-month contracts. The contracts are renewable subject to satisfactory annual performance appraisals and ongoing funding. Bill Calcutt is the Board's Executive Officer, and Christina Hyde is the Project Officer for Film Mid North Coast Armidale. David Ledgerwood is employed as a part-time (4 day/week) Project/Admin Officer. Up until 30 June 2005 Lyndell Stone was employed as the Project Officer for the Emerging Industries Development Program.

The Board can and does seek funding from DSRD and other bodies to undertake or participate in specific regional development projects. During this financial year the Board utilised funding of \$68,600 from Agriculture Fisheries Forestry Australia (AFFA) and \$45,700 from DSRD for the continuation of its Forestry Investment Program.

The Board previously secured total funding of \$157,000 from DSRD and the Federal Department of Transport and Regional Services in order to undertake an eighteen-month program to assist several emerging agribusiness sectors (called the Emerging Industries Development Program). The program concluded on 30 June 2005.

The Board previously secured funding of \$22,000 from DSRD as a 50% contribution towards a joint project with TAFE NSW North Coast Institute to assess the training and technology needs of manufacturers across the North Coast (Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast regions). A report titled "A review of the skills and training needs of the emerging manufacturing sector on the NSW North Coast" was published and distributed in March 2005.

The Board also secured total funding of \$118,000 from DSRD and the Local Government Areas of Greater Taree, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Kempsey, Bellingen, Coffs Harbour and Armidale Dumaresq in order to undertake a twelve-month regional film program. The program commenced in March 05.

The Board also secured funding of \$8,000 from DSRD to produce and widely distribute 10,000 copies of a booklet titled "World Class Business on the NSW Mid North Coast" that will showcase 40 of the outstanding businesses in this region. The A5 booklet is due to be published in early 2006.

A copy of an audit of the Board's finances for the 2004/2005 financial year by Potts Davis Duncombe is available on request.

## BOARD MEMBERS' PROFILES

### CHAIRPERSON

**Mr Ron McDermott** (resigned June 2005) is the General Manager of Taree boat builder Stebercraft Pty Ltd, and has had management experience in the commercial fishing, information technology and health service industries. He is a member of the Manning Valley Economic Development Planning Group, and a member of the Minister for Regional Development's Advisory Council. This is Ron's second term on the Board. Mr McDermott lives in the Greater Taree LGA.

### DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON

**Ms Jan Strom** describes herself as a "catalyst", and her consultancy business specialises in Local Government, communications, marketing and community liaison. Jan has played an active role in both local government and the business community over a number of years, and from 2000 to 2004 she served as Deputy Mayor of Coffs Harbour City Council. This is Jan's second term on the Board. Ms Strom lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

### MEMBERS

**Mr Graham Emzin** has forty years experience in the tourism and hospitality industry, and most recently owned and operated a tourism accommodation small business for fifteen years in Coffs Harbour. He has a strong interest in social justice issues. This is Graham's second term on the Board. Mr Emzin is of Aboriginal/Islander descent, and lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

**Ms Carmel Hong** was Director, Educational Programs, TAFE NSW North Coast Institute, Coffs Harbour Education Campus. In addition to her varied vocational, educational and training roles, Ms Hong has had extensive strategic planning experience on committees at local, regional and state levels, contributing to the social and economic development of communities across the region. This is Carmel's second term on the Board. Ms Hong lives in the Nambucca LGA.

**Ms Janet Hayes JP** has a substantial record of involvement in community and Local Government, with a particular interest in environmental and educational issues. She has been appointed to the Department of Correctional Services' Community Consultative Committee for the new correctional facility recently built in Kempsey, and chairs the Board of Community Housing Mid North Coast. This is Janet's second term on the Board. Ms Hayes is currently the Mayor of Kempsey Shire Council, and lives in the Kempsey LGA.

**Richard Kelloway** is a principal of a private planning and management consultancy practice, with clients across Australia. The practice specialises in participatory development processes and has consulted firms in manufacturing, agriculture and the services sector. Mr Kelloway has previously worked in a range of senior public sector roles in Australia and overseas, and has extensive experience in integrated social and economic development amongst indigenous peoples in Australia and the Pacific region. He brings wide experience in a range of innovation and knowledge-based development activities to regional development. Mr Kelloway lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

**Mr Mark Livermore** has had extensive experience in the dairy industry, and in a variety of roles has had to manage the challenges of organisational change. This is Mark's second term on the Board. Mr Livermore lives in the Hastings LGA.

**Mr Michael Mowle** is a partner in Hopkins Consultants in Port Macquarie. He was raised on the Macleay River, then spent sixteen years as an officer of the Royal Australian Engineers. His work with the Australian Army included involvement in a number of major overseas aid projects. Mr Mowle lives in the Hastings LGA.

**Mr Paul Sekfy** was Executive Officer with the Mid North Coast Regional Council for Social Development. He has been active in regional economic and social development policy, projects, management and training for many years. He has been a member of previous Regional Development Boards, and has been a member of the Mid North Coast Area Health Service Board since 1996. Mr Sekfy lives in the Nambucca LGA.