

# Mid North Coast Regional Development Board

## 2007 – 2008 Annual Report

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## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

At the outset I wish to formally acknowledge the people who are the traditional custodians of this region, and pay my respects to the elders both past and present of the Gumbainggir, Dunghutti, Birpai and Worimi nations.

The Mid North Coast Regional Development Board has, for a number of years, championed a strategic regional economic development agenda that aims to leverage practical support for those industry sectors with real potential to grow in this region. During this period the industry sectors in which the MNCRDB has sought to play an ongoing development role have included private forestry, organics, screen media and aged services.

The NSW Government's adoption in late 2006 of a State Plan has had important implications for the MNCRDB's economic development work. The State Plan highlighted the need for region-specific economic data as the basis for future industry development priorities, and commits the NSW Government to support "those high-wage high-skilled industries that have the greatest potential to thrive in each region of NSW".

In response to the State Plan the MNCRDB commissioned independent research on the major characteristics and drivers of the regional economy, and on future industry development opportunities. The report, titled the Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile, was published in April 2008 and identifies a series of priority industry development opportunities based on a set of criteria devised by the region's economic development stakeholders.

In addition to providing an evidence-based blueprint for industry development over the next five years the profile provides an objective basis for identifying future industry growth prospects for this region. The MNCRDB intends to use the report to garner public and private sector support for collaborative action to grow these priority industry sectors. The challenge for the MNCRDB is to secure the necessary human and financial resources and stakeholder support to realise the industry development opportunities identified in the report.

The other major development during the 2007-2008 reporting period was a change in Federal Government and a subsequent review of Federal regional development policies, processes and structures. This has impacted on the work of the MNCRDB through the withdrawal of access to a vital source of co-funding for regional and industry development projects. The MNCRDB is optimistic that impending changes to regional development arrangements will enhance the region's future economic and industry development capabilities.

Finally, a new Board was appointed by the Minister for Regional Development in January 2008. I would like to welcome the new Members and extend my sincere thanks to the current and retiring Members for their outstanding and selfless contribution to the economic development of the Mid North Coast. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment and expertise of Board staff.

Mark Livermore

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD – ROLE

The Mid North Coast Regional Development Board (MNCRDB) is an independent not-for-profit body auspiced by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD), one of thirteen throughout NSW. The MNCRDB is comprised of ten business and community leaders from across the region, appointed by the NSW Cabinet for two and four-year terms.

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

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

- encouraging communities to work together to attain the necessary critical mass to be competitive international investment locations
- marketing Local Government Areas and regions as business locations
- hosting Commonwealth and State initiatives or programs which have as their aim the strengthening of the profile of non-metropolitan regions as business locations or for 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 business and economic development issues.

3. Involve Local Government and other key stakeholders in regional business and economic development through:

- project partnerships
- acting as a point of advice to Government on Local Government and key stakeholders' economic development initiatives
- encouraging participation of Local Government and key stakeholders in NSW Government regional economic development forums and initiatives
- 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 other natural and economic challenges, including the development of generic business recovery measures.

5. Develop local business and economic development leadership.

6. Work with DSRD to implement the State Plan initiatives relevant to P1 and P6, and the NSW Government's Innovation Statement.

7. Collaborate with other regional development organisations, including the Regional Tourism Organisation.

8. Host NSW Government business related initiatives.

The MNCRDB's responsibilities cover the Local Government Areas (LGAs) 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 MNCRDB's Federal counterpart, Mid North Coast Regional Development Australia

The MNCRDB's mission is "to advance and champion the economic development interests of the Mid North Coast in partnership with the public and private sectors". The MNCRDB's motto is "enhancing our region by supporting sustainable enterprise". The MNCRDB's activities are primarily directed towards increasing private sector employment by identifying and progressing opportunities to enhance the business and investment environment and supporting sustainable industry growth.

Within the constraints of its limited resources the MNCRDB initiates and/or participates in specific industry development projects using funding from relevant State and Federal Government programs. Projects are typically undertaken in partnership with industry and other Federal, State and Local Government bodies. The MNCRDB does not directly assist individual businesses, but supports networks and industry groups. More detailed information on the Board's activities is available at [www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au](http://www.betterbusiness.nsw.gov.au).

The MNCRDB seeks and welcomes inquiries and submissions from the community, businesses and industry on opportunities to facilitate regional economic development. Inquiries should be directed to:

Mid North Coast Regional Development Board  
PO Box 2537  
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## MNCRDB GOVERNANCE

The MNCRDB's primary goal is to increase private sector employment through effective action to support sustainable industry growth in this region. The MNCRDB has adopted a set of principles that guide the conduct of its activities. These principles include that the Board and staff will:

- operate in an ethical, respectful, transparent, accountable, socially responsible and non-partisan manner
- determine its priorities in consultation with Local Government, 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 and industry development initiatives that are realistic and outcomes focussed.

On appointment to the Board, members are required to complete statutory declarations confirming the absence of criminal records and the accuracy of information provided in their applications. Board members are also required to endorse a Code of Conduct and Ethics that sets out personal standards of behaviour. Members are expected 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 that are applied scrupulously to manage potential conflicts of interests, 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 few paid staff, 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 MNCRDB 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 Local Government.

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 MNCRDB 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 economic development objectives for the MNCRDB were determined in 2004 in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, and are encapsulated in the Board's 2004-2007 Strategic Plan.

- **Diversify and expand the region's agricultural base** - support and facilitate private investment in emerging agricultural industries
- **Expand the region's private forestry industry** - in partnership with growers and the industry, support the growth of the private forestry industry and associated value chain
- **Expand the region's manufacturing base** - in partnership with industry, facilitate the growth and profitability of existing manufacturers and attract new clean green businesses
- **Encourage the establishment & expansion of creative and knowledge-based industries within the region** - in partnership with industry, facilitate the growth of existing and attract new creative and knowledge-based businesses to the region
- **Enhance the essential infrastructure required to support industry competitiveness** - identify and address deficiencies in the region's infrastructure, including universal access to cost-effective broadband
- **Enhance the business and investment environment** - raise the professionalism and competitiveness of businesses in the region, enhance their access to a diverse range of skills and expertise
- **Effectively market the region** - assist industries and 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 development needs to Governments
- **Enhance regional planning and coordination** - improve decision-making through the provision of reliable economic data; advance a regional strategy that is widely accepted as a blueprint for integrated and sustainable economic and industry development
- **Respond proactively to the economic, social & environmental implications of climate change** – raise community awareness of possible economic challenges & opportunities posed by climate change
- **Expand the region's aged services sector** - increase the capability & expertise of the aged services sector; raise the skills & capabilities of the existing aged services workforce; increase employment in the aged services sector; attract new investment in the aged services sector.

These objectives are under review following the appointment of a new Board in early 2008; in response to the recommendations of the State Plan; and to reflect the priorities identified in the MNC Regional Economic Profile.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The MNCRDB has adopted a range of strategies that provide practical and realistic ways of advancing regional economic and industry development. 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 and implementation 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
- **Provide credible information to reduce investor uncertainty** – one of the obstacles to private investment in many industries and areas is uncertainty. The MNCRDB is strongly committed to the publication and dissemination of credible information that assists potential investors to evaluate potential risks and returns. (The publication in April 2008 of a Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile provides valuable contemporary information for investors on economic conditions and industry growth prospects in the region).
- **Convene and support regional stakeholder networks** – to facilitate information sharing and coordination and build support for regional programs, the MNCRDB and its Federal counterpart, MNC Regional Development Australia, convene a network of economic development stakeholders that meets quarterly to progress regional initiatives
- **Sponsor pilot projects** – the MNCRDB initiates a variety of pilot projects to demonstrate how local innovative and collaborative solutions can increase the commercial viability of specific industry sectors
- **Advocacy** – the MNCRDB has a responsibility to advise the Minister and Governments on a range of issues that may impact on the region's economic development needs and opportunities.

## **MNCRDB PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS 2007-2008**

### **OVERVIEW**

As a program of the NSW Department of State and Regional Development, Regional Development Boards share the same aim of achieving jobs and investment outcomes. However, because Boards rarely work one-to-one with individual businesses it can be difficult to attribute immediate jobs and investment outcomes to Board projects. Board initiatives are primarily directed towards the longer term goals of supporting the growth of those industry sectors with the “greatest potential to thrive” in each region and building a climate conducive to business investment.

With limited resources the MNCRDB strives to achieve a balance between managing specific industry development projects and advancing a broader regional economic development agenda. While the MNCRDB’s project activity is important in supporting sustainable industries to grow and is more likely to result in measurable outcomes, some of the most meaningful and long term strategic/policy/economic/regional outcomes are achieved indirectly through influence and collaboration.

The MNCRDB’s economic input to the Department of Planning’s Mid North Coast Regional Strategy, through the publication of the Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile, is an example of the close alignment of the MNCRDB’s activities with the State Plan priority of “increased business investment in rural and regional NSW”.

In addition to its economic input to the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy the MNCRDB makes submissions and/or representations to appropriate Government inquiries pursuant to the Board’s advocacy, advisory and policy-development responsibilities. During this reporting period the MNCRDB provided input to: the NSW Government’s Rural and Regional Taskforce; and the Federal Government’s inquiry into new regional development funding programs.

### **Objective 1 - Diversify and expand the region’s agricultural base**

In response to the deregulation of the dairy industry in 2000 the MNCRDB initiated a program to support agricultural diversification. This evolved into a project called the Emerging Industries Development Program (EIDP) in 2004 and 2005 that provided specific support for a number of emerging agricultural industries including herbs, aquaculture and organics. Of these industries the most responsive and successful was the organics sector, covering a diverse range of agricultural products.

The most important outcome from the project was the establishment of a growers' network called Mid North Coast Organics Inc that has since developed as a representative industry body. During this reporting period the network launched a commercial marketing entity called the Organic Marketing Company to further expand the group's collaborative marketing capabilities and increase the return to individual producers. At the launch the network publicly expressed its appreciation for the support provided by the MNCRDB, and the Board continues to pass on information on linkages and potential opportunities whenever possible.

*Objective 1 Key Performance Indicators - Increase in numbers employed in emerging agricultural sectors; increase in investment in emerging agricultural enterprises; increase in value of emerging sectors' output as measured by its contribution to Gross Regional Product; establishment and consolidation of grower networks; increase in return to growers through value adding; access to new markets*

## **Objective 2 - Expand the region's private forestry industry**

Commencing in 2000 the MNCRDB managed one of a national network of Federal/State funded Private Forestry Development Committees (PFDC). The PFDC in this region was called the Forestry Investment Program (FIP) Advisory Committee. The FIP Advisory Committee comprised representatives from a range of public and private sector organisations.

Acknowledging the limited opportunities in this region for large scale private plantations and the significance of the timber resource available in private native forest, the focus of the program's activities over recent years had been support for a local farm forestry network. The FIP had identified the local network as the most direct conduit to timber growing landholders whose support is vital to industry expansion. A primary aim was to strengthen the value chain (and benefits to local economies) by increasing the commercial return to timber growers. In late 2004 the FIP funded a strategic review of the local timber industry, leading to the publication of a strategic action plan.

In mid 2005 the State partner in the PFDC program transferred from the Department of State and Regional Development to the Department of Primary Industry. Funding for the FIP ceased in mid 2006, and activities initiated under the program were largely concluded by mid 2007.

One report that was outstanding when the project was concluded in mid 2007 was on market development. The objective of the report was to test the theory that a profitable and growing market for timber from private native forests exists, and that gross returns to growers can exceed \$600/cubic metre for those prepared to oversee and control the value-adding and timber marketing processes.

The report author, Geoff Cullen of Cullen Timber Solutions, found that the objective was achievable but, among other things, it was harder to generate a supply of quality timber than to identify buyers. Other conclusions in the Cullen report were that timber growers require:

- Management, coordination and supervisory skills
- Working capital to fund six months of logging, transport and milling before revenue was received
- Time to supervise all processes in the value chain, and
- The ability to maximize returns from all parts of the tree.

*Object 2 Key Performance Indicators – value of existing and new investment in commercial timber plantations in the region; quantification of the volume and potential value of the private native forest (PNF) resource in the region; enhancement of the sustainable management of PNF, including an expansion in the commercial uses of native species; increase in the financial return to PNF growers, and the contribution of this sector to Gross Regional Product; enhancement of the timber supply chain, and increase in the level of value-adding; consolidation of a resilient and effective growers’ network; progress in the implementation of an industry development plan; enhancement in growers skills and the adoption of sustainable silviculture practices*

### **Objective 3 - Expand the region’s manufacturing base**

MNCRDB activities to support the region’s manufacturing sector during the 2007/2008 reporting period were limited to:

- the continuing distribution of a high quality regional marketing and investment attraction booklet titled “World Class Business on the NSW Mid North Coast” that features a number of the region’s key manufacturers
- participation in a multi-region project by Re Engineering Australia to broaden career pathways into manufacturing by involving senior high school students in a computer aided design competition.

*Objective 3 Key Performance Indicators – growth in the contribution of manufacturing to Gross Regional Product; maintenance of the level of employment in the manufacturing sector; increased investment in new products and an expansion in the boutique/specialist manufacturing sector; increase in the profitability of manufacturers; expansion in the external markets of manufacturers; resolution of the impediments to the growth in manufacturing enterprises, including action to address skills gaps and shortages; establishment of industry networks able to pursue clustering, resource-sharing and value-adding opportunities*

#### **Objective 4 - Encourage the establishment and expansion of creative and knowledge-based industries**

A program to attract film productions into the area was originally initiated by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council in 2001. The program subsequently evolved into a regional film program involving a partnership between a number of Local, State and Federal agencies. In mid-2004 the MNCRDB assumed responsibility for managing the program following the Minister for Regional Development's announcement of a further three years funding support for regional film programs across NSW.

Film Mid North Coast Armidale commenced in March 2005 with twelve months funding support from six Local Government Areas and DSRD. Ms Christina Hyde, a highly experienced film professional, was appointed as the film officer, and the objectives of the original program were extended beyond production attraction to include a greater emphasis on local industry support and development.

In the first twelve months the program secured \$120,000 in investment on production-related activities in the region; facilitated and supported a number of significant productions in the region; conducted industry networking functions in each of the LGAs; produced and widely distributed a CD Rom containing over 850 potential filming locations across the region; established an on-line resource directory of local screen industry skills and services; and circulated a regular industry e-newsletter.

In mid 2006 the Board successfully negotiated a further twelve months corporate sponsorship for the program, ensuring a continuation of the investment, production attraction and industry development activities commenced under Film Mid North Coast Armidale. As part of this new funding arrangement responsibility for management of the program and employment of Ms Hyde was transferred to the Enterprise and Training Company (ETC) in July 2006, and the program was renamed ScreenLinks.

The ScreenLinks program continues to this date, with the MNCRDB contributing to the program's direction through representation on the project steering committee.

The MNCRDB continues to make an active contribution to other creative industry initiatives in this region, including participation on a multi-stakeholder steering committee overseeing a Creative Industries Research Project being undertaken under the aegis of Arts Mid North Coast.

*Objective 4 Key Performance Indicators – increase in the value of the creative industries to the region in terms of Gross Regional Product; increase in numbers employed in the various sectors; increase in the financial viability of creative enterprises; value of screen productions attracted to the region; an increase in the external profile of the region as a production destination; an increase in the capacity of the local screen industry*

## **Objective 5 - Enhance the essential infrastructure required to support industry competitiveness**

Infrastructure is universally recognised as an essential facilitator that underpins virtually all economic development. Essential infrastructure includes communications, high speed broadband, transport, roads and bridges, airports, ports, energy, water, health, education and aged services. The issue of investment in infrastructure has been the subject of considerable public discussion over recent years, as well as the focus of a number of wide reaching public inquiries and reports.

In order to gain a better understanding of the complex issues and to facilitate a constructive discussion amongst key stakeholders in the region, the MNCRDB commissioned Ms Karen McFadyen from Southern Cross University to undertake a review of a number of recent major reports on the infrastructure issue to determine their relevance for the Mid North Coast.

Ms McFadyen's review was completed in August 2006, and the resultant report titled "Mid North Coast NSW – Review of Infrastructure Reports" has been widely circulated. The report examined the various types of infrastructure and found a disappointing lack of information on the specific infrastructure needs and priorities of the Mid North Coast. During this reporting period the McFadyen report was provided to the Federal Government in response to a request from the newly-established Infrastructure Australia for advice on this region's infrastructure deficiencies.

*Objective 5 Key Performance Indicators – progress on the recommendations of the NSW Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Public Works November 2005 report titled "Inquiry into infrastructure provision in coastal growth areas", and specifically a State-wide infrastructure audit and the identification of priority infrastructure projects for the Mid North Coast*

## **Objective 6 - Enhance the business and investment environment**

With the Mid North Coast region experiencing consistent population growth 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 local communities. Many members of our communities possess valuable and unique skills that are often unknown and under utilised.

The MNCRDB has established and administers 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 to offer their services in either a voluntary or paid capacity. While the utilization of the regional database has settled to a constant stream of enquiries, a number of the Local Governments in the area have established their own local databases.

*Objective 6 Key Performance Indicators – Establishment and growth of industry and business networks; adoption locally of national benchmarks and best practice; emergence of industry “champions”; external recognition of successful local enterprises; enhanced business access to training and skilled employees; adoption of contemporary governance standards; identify and address impediments to business growth*

### **Objective 7 - Effectively market the region**

The Board has a number of objectives that require the development and projection of a clear, distinctive and widely accepted and recognised regional identity (brand). These include:

- raising the profile of the Mid North Coast as a dynamic and viable business investment destination
- assisting existing industries and businesses to access broader markets through collaborative marketing
- effectively communicating the region’s unique economic development needs to Governments.

The name Mid North Coast appears to be most widely and consistently used in the community and the media to refer to the region that extends north beyond the Hunter to the start of the Northern Rivers. The Board takes every opportunity to encourage use of the Mid North Coast name and logo, and the MNCRDB and its Federal counterpart MNCRDA use the same regional logo.

In respect to promoting the region as an attractive business investment destination, research has shown that prospective investors require reliable and current information on business conditions and growth opportunities if they are to make informed decisions about business expansion or the establishment of new enterprises. In April 2008 the MNCRDB published the Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile, a report that provides detailed contemporary information on the regional economy and future industry growth opportunities. 1500 copies of the report have been printed and are being widely circulated to the community, industry and Governments.

Finally, in terms of the MNCRDB’s obligation to provide informed advice to the Minister and Government on important regional economic development issues, the Chair participates in the Regional Development Advisory Council, a Ministerial committee that meets quarterly.

*Objective 7 Key Performance Indicators - Widespread support for and use of a single regional brand; level of external (positive) awareness of the region; gross annual increase in business investment in the region; prospective investor satisfaction with available economic data; increase in the level of visitation to the region*

## Objective 8 - Enhance regional planning and coordination

In late 2006, following widespread community consultation, the NSW Government developed a State Plan. The State Plan endorsed a broad range of goals, priorities and objectives, including a priority of “increased business investment in rural and regional NSW”. The State Plan highlighted the need for region-specific economic data, and committed the NSW Government to “consider regional innovation strategies where appropriate to focus Government attention on those high-wage high-skilled industries that have the greatest potential to thrive in each region of NSW”.

In order to address the State Plan requirement for region-specific economic data and evidence-based industry growth priorities, the MNCRDB commissioned independent research on the major characteristics of the regional economy and on future industry development opportunities. The Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile was produced by the AEC Group and published in April 2008. Jointly funded by the Department of Planning and the Department of State and Regional Development, the report is expected to complement a Mid North Coast Regional Strategy being developed by the Department of Planning. 1500 copies of the profile’s Executive Summary have been produced and are being widely distributed.

The Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile aims to be a catalyst and blueprint for collaborative action to advance industry and employment growth in the region over the next five years. The report evaluates the growth potential of a diverse range of industry sectors, using a set of criteria devised by the region’s economic development stakeholders. The MNCRDB intends to use the report to garner public and private sector support for collaborative action to support those industry sectors identified as having growth potential.

**Table 4.1. Prioritisation Criteria and Scoring System**

Criteria	Description	Assessment Score
Sustainable Development	Does the opportunity facilitate the sustainable utilisation of resources and maintain the functionality of the natural environment (i.e. is resource use improved without impacting negatively on the environment)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 = Yes</li> <li>• 0 = No</li> </ul>
Increases Employment / Skills	Does the opportunity result in a long term increase in employment opportunities and / or labour force skills?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 = Increases both employment &amp; skills</li> <li>• 1 = Increases either employment or skills</li> <li>• 0 = No</li> </ul>
Increases Average Income	Does the opportunity create high value employment prospects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 = &gt; 1.25 x MNC average</li> <li>• 1 = &gt; 1 &amp; &lt;= 1.25 x MNC average</li> <li>• 0 = &lt;= 1 x MNC average</li> </ul>
Value Add	Does the opportunity provide opportunities to increase the value of production per unit of input and build on existing business/ industry production? This can be in terms of generating a new product (i.e. value adding existing agriculture or horticulture production etc) or by increasing productivity of an enterprise or business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 = Yes</li> <li>• 0 = No</li> </ul>
Competitive Advantage	Does the opportunity capitalise on or enhance the region’s competitive advantage (i.e. does the opportunity build upon or utilise a strength of the MNC)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 = Yes</li> <li>• 0 = No</li> </ul>
Return on Investment	What is the potential of the opportunity to generate a high return on investment and encourage private investment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 = Expected to occur</li> <li>• 1 = Could occur</li> <li>• 0 = Unlikely to occur</li> </ul>
Global Connection	Does the opportunity enhance the region’s participation in the global economy (i.e. develop and extend markets beyond regional consumption)?	Market predominantly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 = International</li> <li>• 1 = Interstate</li> <li>• 0.5 = Elsewhere in NSW</li> <li>• 0 = MNC region</li> </ul>

Finally, in partnership with its Federal counterpart the Board convenes the Regional Development Network, a forum for the exchange of information and ideas amongst a diverse range of economic development stakeholders. The MNCRDB is a member of the Economic and Environmental Subcommittee of the Premier's Department's Regional Coordination Management Group.

*Objective 8 Key Performance Indicators – finalisation and implementation of a regional industry and economic plan that provides a catalyst and blueprint for collaborative action to advance industry and employment growth in the region over the next five years; provision of contemporary data on the region's economy to the community, industry, prospective investors and Governments (and as valuable input to the State Plan); progress on the formulation and implementation of specific industry development plans; level of collaboration and coordination between diverse economic development stakeholders*

### **Objective 9 - Respond proactively to the economic, social & environmental implications of climate change**

During the reporting period the MNCRDB played an active role in widely disseminating information on the evolving policy responses to climate change and the prospective economic implications. Opportunities for climate change-related projects are likely to increase as new Federal and State Government programs are introduced.

*Objective 9 Key Performance Indicators – level of business awareness of and action taken to respond to changes, challenges and opportunities likely to result from climate change; level of business and community awareness of the full range of implications from climate change; proactive initiatives that address the implications for agriculturally productive land use in the region*

### **Objective 10 - Expand the region's aged services sector**

In late 2006 Regional Development Boards across NSW were invited to apply for funding for inter-regional projects under the Targeting Skills Needs in Regions (TSNR) program, initiated by the Council of Australian Governments. In conjunction with its Northern Rivers counterpart the MNCRDB secured funding for a three year program called the Innovative Development of Excellent Aged Services (IDEAS) under the aegis of the Aged and Community Services Association of NSW and ACT.

The MNCRDB is represented on a multi-stakeholder steering committee overseeing the IDEAS program, and during the reporting period a broad range of mainly skill-related activities were progressed by a part-time project officer based in the Northern Rivers.

*Objective 10 Key Performance Indicators – increase in the capability and expertise of the aged services sector; increase in the skills and expertise of the existing aged services workforce; increase in employment in the aged services sector; level of new investment in aged care facilities and services.*

## **MNCRDB ADMINISTRATION**

The current Board was appointed by the NSW Minister for Regional Development in January 2008. 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 also met on other occasions to undertake training and strategic planning, and Board Subcommittees meet when required.

The Board usually meets with local Councils, Council-sponsored economic advisory committees and local business and industry representatives at the same time as it conducts its bi-monthly meetings in order to discuss matters of mutual interest.

During the 2007/2008 financial year the Board conducted meetings at:

- Wingham in July 2007
- South West Rocks in September 2007
- Coffs Harbour in November 2007 (including Annual General Meeting)
- Port Macquarie in February 2008
- Coffs Harbour in March 2008
- Port Macquarie in May 2008 (informal).

Bill Calcutt (PSM) is the Board's Executive Officer, and has been in this role since 2000. After a distinguished career in the Federal public service in research, planning, policy and human resource management roles in Sydney and Melbourne, Bill moved into the private sector (and into the Mid North Coast region) as a small business operator in 1997. Bill is married with a son and lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

David Ledgerwood is the Board's part-time Administrative Assistant and Project Officer. After a career in journalism and public relations he established several retail businesses in Queensland before returning to NSW to assist in the transition of several business arms of the Department of Land and Water Conservation to customer ownership. David has been involved in enterprise and regional development for many years. He is also a part time business facilitator for the Mid North Coast Business Advisory Service.

## **MNCRDB FINANCES**

Regional Development Boards are provided with an annual (financial year) grant of \$150,000 by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development in order to maintain an administrative/functional capability independent of the Department. This funding enables the employment of staff and the operation of the Board. DSRD also assist by providing (gratis) office facilities at Port Macquarie for Board staff and some administrative support.

During the 2007/2008 financial year the Board employed two part-time staff on fixed-term contracts, an Executive Officer (4 days) and Administration/Project Officer (3 days).

In addition, in April 2007 following a public tender process the Board entered into a contract with the AEC Group from Brisbane to produce the Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile. The total value of the consultancy, which concluded with the report's publication in April 2008, was \$52,500 (GST excl).

The Board seeks funding from DSRD and other bodies to undertake or participate in specific regional development projects. Pursuant to entering into a Memorandum of Understanding, the Board received funding in the previous reporting period of \$50,000 from the NSW Department of Planning in order to produce the Mid North Coast Regional Economic Profile. The Board also received \$20,000 from the NSW Department of State and Regional Development for the same purpose.

A copy of an audit of the Board's finances for the 2007/2008 financial year by Potts Davis Duncombe is available on request.

## BOARD MEMBERS' PROFILES

**Mr Mark Livermore (Chairperson)** has worked at senior levels in both the public and private sectors, contributing to the development and implementation of national policies and guidelines for a major agricultural industry, as well as leading the expansion of a major regional manufacturing operation into national and international markets. Mark is a director of a consultancy working in the fields of strategic planning, change management, mentoring business development, community liaison, food safety auditing and the development of quality systems. Mark has an extensive background building networks and relationships that benefit all parties and sustain their future.

As Chairperson Mark is committed to the economic, social and environmental growth of the region through the development of a clear strategic approach to the challenges and opportunities facing regional Australia. Mark lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

**Ms Janet Hayes JP (Deputy Chairperson)** has a substantial record of involvement in community and Local Government, with a particular interest in environmental and educational issues. Janet has been a Councillor with Kempsey Shire Council for ten years, five and a half of them as Mayor. Her participation in Local Government has seen her elected to the Executive of the Shires Association of NSW, and she sits on their Social and Natural & Built Environment Committees. Janet is one of two Councillors who represent NSW on the Executive of the National Sea Change Taskforce. She was appointed to the Department of Corrective Services' Serious Offenders Review Council and was previously Official Visitor at the Mid North Coast Correctional Centre. In 2008 she was appointed to the Regional Community Consultative Council, Country Energy's Rural Advisory Group and is the community representative on Sydney Water. Janet chairs the Board of Community Housing Mid North Coast and is the Administrator of the Kempsey Showground. Janet lives in the Kempsey LGA.

**Mr Grant Burtenshaw (appointed January 2008)** has over 20 years in senior general management and business development positions in the telecommunications, tourism and education sectors and is Chair of the Mid North Coast Advisory Board of the NSW Business Chamber and a member of the Mid North Coast Regional Tourism Organisation. Grant lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

**Mr Peter Clark** has a Masters degree in Science, a Masters degree in Nutrition and Dietetics and a Post Graduate Certificate in Marketing. He is a self employed dietician. Peter was previously employed in the pharmaceutical industry for 17 years during which time he had various sales and marketing roles, including as Director of Marketing for Australia and New Zealand for a company with sales of \$250M. He also spent three years in the United States completing roles in Global Marketing and Corporate Strategy and Business Development. He has lived on the Mid North Coast for four years. He is married and has 3 children. Peter lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

**Ms Carmel Hong (retired December 2007)** was formerly 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. Ms Hong is currently a member of the Nambucca Shire Council's Structure Plan Shirewide Reference Group, a member of the Coffs Coast Business Womens Network, a member of the Australian Institute of Management, and a Director and Treasurer of the Warrina Women and Children's Refuge Cooperative Society Ltd. Ms Hong has a Masters Degree in Educational Studies and is a Bachelor of Commerce.

**Mr Richard Kelloway (retired December 2007)** OBE has Masters Degrees in Business Administration and International Politics, is a Certified Management Consultant, and a Member of the Society of Organisational Learning. He is the principal of a private consultancy practice that specialises in integrated social and economic development with a focus on Australia's Indigenous communities, and has participatory development experience in the Pacific region. His practice has also over a decade's experience consulting firms in the manufacturing, agriculture and services sectors. Mr Kelloway previously worked in a range of senior Defence and public sector roles in Australia and overseas. He brings wide experience in a range of knowledge and innovation-based development activities to regional development.

**Mr John Meyers (appointed January 2008)** spent his working life as a business strategist in the food, horticultural and agricultural industries and recently retired as Managing Director of the Meyers Strategy Group. He has held positions on various boards including the Australian Horticultural Corporation as a government appointment and the Port Macquarie Hastings Development Board. His other activities involve several working groups and committees of Port Macquarie Hastings Council. John is vice president of the Greater Port Macquarie Tourism Association and a judge for tourism awards on the Mid North Coast and NSW. John lives in the Port Macquarie-Hastings LGA.

**Ms Kay Morrison** has a background in small/medium business management having been a Financial Controller and Director of a number of businesses. Kay has been on the Board of several natural resource management instrumentalities in Victoria, South Australia and NSW, and is currently a Director of the Pet Porpoise Pool in Coffs Harbour. Kay has a particular interest in issues affecting working women, and is the immediate past National President of Business and Professional Women Australia, and Deputy Chair of the women's secretariat, Security for Women. Kay lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

**Ms Alison Page (appointed January 2008)** is an interior designer, artist and planner with a multi disciplinary practice working on various projects in health, education, office design, exhibition design, cultural art centres and public art. After studying Interior Design and graduating from the University of Technology in Sydney, Alison joined Merrima Design an architectural practice delivering culturally appropriate design services to aboriginal communities in urban and rural areas of Australia. In 2001 Alison moved her consultancy practice with Merrima Design to the Coffs Coast. In 1999 Alison received an award from the International Federation of Interior Architects for making a “contribution to the design environment with an emphasis on social awareness and responsibility.” She is currently working with aboriginal communities to foster business enterprise and is a panelist on the ABC television show The Inventors. Alison lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

**Mr Paul Sekfy (resigned October 2007)** operates his own consulting business in the security industry. He has been active in regional economic and social development policy, projects, management, research and training for over twenty years. He has worked for or been an active member of several regional organisations and Boards including health, social development and Local Government covering the Mid North Coast.

**Ms Jan Strom** currently works for the Office of Regional Engagement at Southern Cross University, and describes herself as a “speaker, facilitator and catalyst”. She has a Master of Professional Management and is undertaking a PhD in regional engagement at Southern Cross University. Jan regularly presents at various forums, seminars and events as well as at regional and national conferences. She is an active contributor to regional development, was Deputy Mayor of Coffs Harbour City Council (2000-2004) and has been a director of the Enterprise and Training Company (ETC) in Coffs Harbour since 2004 and was chair of ETC (2005-2007). Jan previously operated her own fitness businesses and since 1995 has been principal of a consultancy business specializing in communications (personal and business), events management, marketing and local government. Jan lives in the Coffs Harbour LGA.

**Mr Richard Wilson (appointed January 2008)** has a Masters Degree in Business Administration and a Bachelors Degree in Engineering and is a Fellow of the Institution of Engineers Australia and former member of the Institutes of Management and Project Management. Richard was an engineer and project manager in the public and private sectors for 30 years and is on the Committee of the Mid North Coast Group, Engineers Australia. He was a Councillor on Greater Taree City Council from 2004 to 2008 where he chaired the Economic Development Planning Group. He is also a keen private pilot and bird watcher. Richard lives in the Greater Taree LGA.