



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA

The Transition from Area Consultative Committees

Key messages from the network for consideration

Presentation Notes

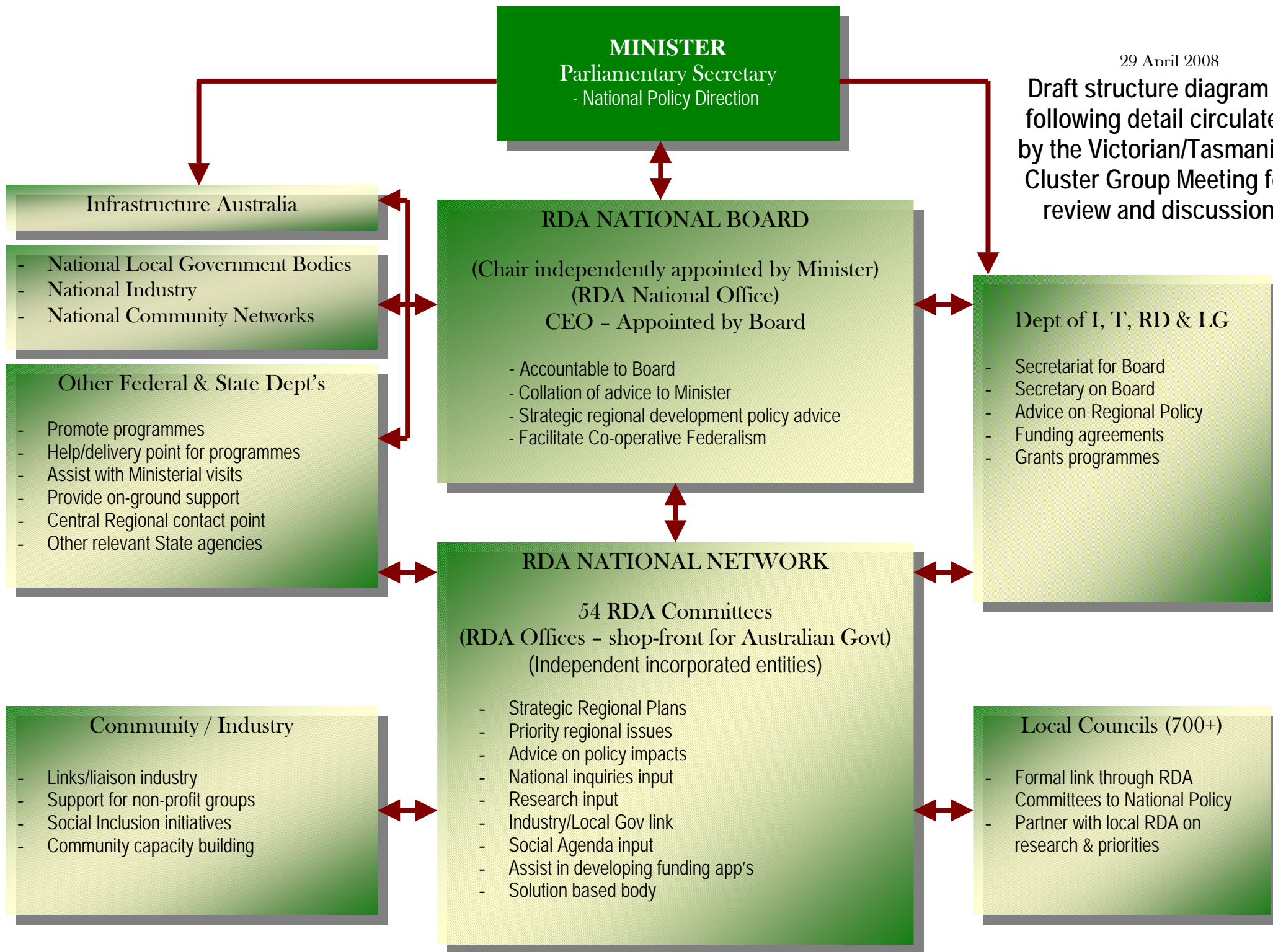
- RDA can be a cost effective mechanism to implement the Government's Regional Development Policy.
- RDA can assist in driving the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda, improving environmental and social health outcomes and enhancing education, employment and economic growth across regional Australia.
- Towards this end though, individual RDA's should be able to determine their own region's focus/priorities in line with the "bottom up", "one size does not fit all" approach to Regional Development. They should also not be dictated to by the central bureaucracy without appropriate consultation/input as things progress. We also do not expect RDA's to be an extension of any Government Department.
- An RDA National Board should be created with supporting resources (Infrastructure Australia model). The RDA Network should democratically elect the National Board members, with the Chair appointed by the Minister.
- RDA Office could be resourced by re-allocation of resources from Departmental Regional Offices.
- The RDA National Board will facilitate co-operative Federalism.
- MOU's to be signed by the RDA National Office with all Government agencies to formally recognise and implement our "whole of Government" role.
- Departmental programmes should be discussed and then implemented through the RDA National Office to the RDA network.
- RDA must be outcomes/performance focused. The RDA National Office to actively review/assist to achieve increased effectiveness of local RDA Boards in their strategic role and in implementing Government policy.
- The audit / contract management role of the Department would be its main focus.
- It will be for the interim RDA National Board and Government to look at the urban issue. If "urban" is also on the agenda of RDA, then the charter needs to define Regional Australia as urban, rural and remote, not continually talk about Regional Australia - which by most people's definition is non urban.
- ACC's should be re-branded as Regional Development Australia via an extensive national and local marketing campaign, with individual RDA offices being provided one-off funding for this re-branding exercise. This would be the only extra cost associated with the transition of ACC's to RDA offices in the initial stages.
- Specific Programme funding based on agreed performance-based (preferably 5 year) contracts to be negotiated, as appropriate and regionally relevant, with the various portfolios based on the real cost of doing business, not an imposed figure.

- The RDA network Offices would become the "one-stop" shop front for all Federal Government information.
- Local RDA's, other than a name and role change, should remain as the not-for-profit, existing constitutional structure with volunteer boards to minimise costs and maintain independence.
- Minister should appoint Chairs. Chairs should then select suitable local RDA members based on a limited number, appropriate to workload and specific skill sets relevant to each regions needs e.g. Senior Regional Local Government Representatives, Economic / Industry, Training / Skilling, Health and Ageing, Environment and other regional representation etc.
- Currently most ACC'S have very close engagement with Local Government, however, this should be formalised by RDA local Chairs sitting on Regional Mayor / GM meetings and members' involvement with LGA economic development boards or the like.
- The RDA National Board (through its RDA network) would be the key source of advice / input for COAG, Ministers and Departments; and on specific local issues such as infrastructure priorities for Infrastructure Australia.
- For the RDA National Board to have a strategic input and impact at the national level, RDA should have positions on significant and relevant national committees such as the independent "Skills Australia" advisory body being established under the "Skilling Australia" banner.
- RDA must be seen to, and in practice, have "teeth" so as not to be just another (token) advisory board. The RDA network should therefore have a facilitation / review / recommendation role on all Regional Development programmes and projects.
- Notional allocations per region - in line with priority, need, and the overall national Regional Programmes budget - should be a target for Programme funding of projects that address specific regional priorities based on evidence based data and analysis; i.e. SRP and annual BP based on a RIEP. A regional research capability may also be appropriate.
- RP, if it is still to exist, and the Better Regions Programmes need to be streamlined and more client / outcomes focused. EO's Reference Group should work with the Department to address issues.
- To minimise timeframes and process with Programme decisions, it is recommended that the RDA National Office or Departmental Regional Offices, as appropriate, have a \$100K approval authority (precedent already exists with ICC Regional Managers).
- In the longer term, logically and for cost effectiveness, an agreement should be progressed with the States via COAG that RDA's undertake the role of State Regional Development Boards and be co-funded by the States, both administratively and on an appropriate Programme basis.

To really play a strategic role you need genuine (equal) partnerships and good information. Organizations can do things unilaterally, but realistically they will never really amount to much without millions of dollars invested. To maximize leverage using finite resources, we need to influence and mobilize all of the stakeholders, including State, Local, industry and the community. Sometimes it is not a question of money but coordination of effort and a shared vision.

29 April 2008

Draft structure diagram & following detail circulated by the Victorian/Tasmanian Cluster Group Meeting for review and discussion



ROLE

Regional	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide independent, impartial advice across all levels of government. The 'honest' broker. • Provide regional leadership. • Interpret regional data and provide 'intelligence'. • Identify and advise on regional priorities. • Identify and comment on effectiveness of government spending. • Deliver programs through a national network that is embedded in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the voice and viewpoint of Australia's regions. • Provide direct advice to Minister. • Identify emerging issues or gaps in policy. • Provide advice back to the 54 regional entities from this discussion. • Be independent from the Federal bureaucracy. • Act as a peak body.

FOCUS

Regional	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a co-operative federalism that takes a whole of government approach. • Disseminate regional knowledge • Influence regional decision-making. • Develop a strategic regional plan that underpins activities. • Communicate broadly with stakeholders and the community. • Facilitate project development and manage a pool of funding. • Facilitate closer ties, with particularly, local government. • Facilitate regional responses to whole of government issues. • Facilitate change and action around these issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage directly with the Minister in the development of policy related to the regions. • Read the political climate and advise regional bodies accordingly. • Improve the economic capability of the community. • Draw best practice from the international context on issues aligned with the national agenda, for example climate change. • Suggest change around blockages that occur due to the three levels of government. • Assess the effectiveness of government programs • Provide the Minister with an overview of RDA operations and delivery. • Act as a national board that sets standards for solution based organisations in the regions.

STRUCTURE

Regional	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial appointment of Chairs only • Five-year contract for RDAs and Chair appointment aligned with this term. • Board numbers at the discretion of the Chair depending on regional needs. • Incorporated bodies that report to the peak body through the statutory authority board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory authority, governed by a Board with Chair appointed by Minister. • Independent advisory -body with a funded secretariat. • National Board representatives chosen, by election, from RDA Chairs. • State and local government represented. • Unaligned with a government department. • Metropolitan and regional representation.

*** Detailed descriptions are also available