



An Australian Government Initiative



Regional  
Development  
Australia  
SOUTHERN INLAND

# Grow Our Own Proposal 2024-2025

## Overview

The Grow Our Own (GOO) program aims to bring together local business owners, education and employment providers and government agencies who seek to inform and inspire high school students and early school leavers with opportunities to live, learn and earn in the Southern Inland region of NSW.

Regional Development Australia Southern Inland (RDASI) has been successful in establishing a recognisable brand that advocates for our region's youth, connects aspiring employees and business owners, and develops and supports learning pathways into local careers.

## Background

In 2016, in response to a growing concern that workforce shortages were creating an impediment to business growth and expansion, Deakin and Bendigo Bank formed a national partnership to improve the level of education participation and skills retention in regional communities.

Soon after, a national workforce development pilot program launched in western Riverina (NSW), with our peer committee, RDA Riverina, a founding member. A working group consisting of representatives from 16 businesses, industry, education, and employment organisations was formed to guide the development and implementation of the program.

In 2017, the group grew to 25 representative organisations, from which a steering group was formed. An action plan was developed and by 2018 Grow Our Own was also officially imbedded in the RDA Riverina Workforce Plan.

Grow Our Own attracted the attention of NSW Department of Education and, in 2019, an opportunity to further fund the program was made possible through the STEM Industry School Partnerships Pilot Program (SISP), of which Southern Inland became a pilot region, creating one of the key successful outcomes with

Crookwell High School, by establishing the Crookwell Academy of STEM Excellence. In the same year, RDA Riverina took on the management of Grow Our Own.

Attracted by the overwhelming success of the program, RDA Southern Inland (RDASI) ran a pilot program in the Goulburn-Mulwaree Local Government Area (LGA), intending to promote a variety of occupations and opportunities through workplace and educational facility visits.

Through our partnerships with government, educational institutions, businesses, and community organisations, RDASI connected participants to local employers to develop and retain a skilled workforce. Participants gained valuable insights into the career prospects available to them through industry visits and onsite interactive activities. From just one event (minimised due to covid) 15 applications were taken by the partner employer.

## Regional Development Australia - Southern Inland

RDASI is part of a national network of committees across Australia. These committees are made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business, and community groups to support the development of regional Australia.

We are a Board of local leaders and staff, passionate about the communities we live in and committed to the RDASI vision - that the Southern Inland region is the most desirable place in NSW to invest, work, live and play by 2025.

## 2024 Boundary Change

Following a review in 2023 by the Hon Kristy McBain MP of Regional Development Australia (RDA) boundaries in NSW, the ACT and Jervis Bay Territory, a restructure will take place that will impact the Southern Inland region. RDA Southern Inland and ACT will merge, and include two Far South Coast local government areas (LGAs) to form RDA Southern NSW and ACT (RDASNA).

Moving forward, the RDASNA region will represent 9 NSW LGAs, including Wingecarribee, Goulburn-Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan, Hilltops, Yass Valley, Queanbeyan-Palerang, Snowy Monaro, Eurobodalla, and Bega Valley, plus the Australian Capital Territory, making it an incredibly diverse area.

These new arrangements will officially commence on April 1, 2024, with our current service delivery contracts remaining unaffected throughout the process.



RDA Southern Inland (RDASI) will be known as RDA Southern NSW and ACT (RDASNA).

## **Our Vision**

By 2025, Southern Inland will be the most desirable region in NSW to invest, work, live and play.

## **Our Purpose**

RDASI drives jobs, investment, and innovation in Southern Inland NSW through collaboration, communication, advocacy, and the facilitation of regional projects.

## **Our Values**

Integrity, Collaboration, Trust, Passion, Courage.

RDA Southern Inland is administered by the [Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development Communications, and the Arts](#).

## Workforce Development

Funded by the Australian government, RDASI is an experienced project delivery partner and funding recipient. The Grow Our Own program aligns directly with our organisation's Strategic Objective and the [Regional Investment Framework \(RIF\)](#) of the Federal Government:

*Investing in People - by listening to local voices and partnering with communities – targeting investment in skills, education, training, and local leadership capacity.*

This strategic objective recognises that **our regions are our people**. Listening to and supporting our community members develop their capacity by improving soft and hard skills acquisition, while concurrently encouraging the retention of a skilled workforce will lead to improved economic and social outcomes across the region.

RDASI has developed strong relationships and built a reputation for adding value by providing access to information and experts through our contacts and connections. We see ourselves as the all-important conduit in creating valuable outcomes through the programs and projects we create, facilitate and support.

Having previously run workforce development programs such as Young Change Agents, STEM Industry Schools Partnership Program, The Welcome Experience, Jobs Southern Inland (JobsSI) and Regional Migration programs in partnership with the NSW Department of Education, Department of Regional NSW and Department of Employment, Workplace Relations, the RDASI team have both the expertise and contacts to continue to facilitate the Grow Our Own program successfully.

## Grow Our Own Program

### Vision

Young people are supported to access education, training and workforce connections and confidently transition to further education and local employment within the RDA Southern Inland region.

### Purpose

To encourage:

- young people to build a career locally,
- our young people to stay in region,
- local businesses to invest in local people employment, training, mentoring, and
- workforce expansion, development and sustainability.

### Core Values

Collaboration | Leadership | Inclusiveness | Sustainability | Commitment | Optimism

## Objectives

- develop, mentor, and retain local skills,
- strengthen the relationship between industry and schools,
- assist participants to undertake tertiary studies while staying and working in the region, including local pathways to access:
  - education and training opportunities that lead to sustainable jobs,
  - employment into local growth industries,
  - financial support for underrepresented groups,
- maintain a strong connection to regional education and industry networks, with representatives who are collaborative, progressive, and responsive to the changing industry needs of the region.

## Grow Our Own Strategies

Strategies	What we do	How do we do it
<p><b>Promote pathways business, industry, education, training, employment.</b></p>	<p>Connect young people with local employers during school and tertiary education to promote local pathways, so that young people remain in the region and gain sustainable employment.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fund and produce the creation of a video to promote industry partner's opportunities (valued at \$5000).</li> <li>2. Screen above videos of Southern Inland industry partners within schools and upload to Grow Our Own YouTube channel.</li> <li>3. Coordinate industry speakers in schools to attract students to the sector.</li> <li>4. Grow Our Own postcard in all school leavers folders.</li> <li>5. Presentations to school leavers on learning pathways and financial assistance.</li> <li>6. Coordinate collective communication, expertise and experience of business and industry, local employment, education and training providers and government agencies through steering committee and stakeholder meetings quarterly.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Attract talent and local workforce</b></p>	<p>Encourage employers to attract locally qualified workers into growth industries.</p> <p>Assist Local employers to develop relationships with their future employees through coordinated and targeted local engagement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordinate Southern Inland industry tours with our active partners.</li> <li>2. Assist with connecting participants to available apprenticeships, traineeships, cadetships, scholarships, industry tours and work experience.</li> <li>3. Support the development of key ready to work skills including CV creation and interview techniques.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Local community understands local labour market</b></p>	<p>Educate schools, parents, and young people to provide a strong understanding of the Southern Inland labour market, and the local pathways to education and training that lead to sustainable local jobs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote opportunities through collaboration with key stakeholders, schools, expos, social media, etc.</li> <li>2. Encourage more industry partner learn and earn opportunities.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Inclusion of the underrepresented</b></p>	<p>Assist young people from underrepresented groups to access education, training and workplace opportunities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote and support opportunities via schools, expos, social media, etc.</li> <li>2. Encourage more industry learn and earn opportunities.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Regional outcome</b></p>	<p>Southern Inland NSW continues to experience economic growth through encouraging people to live, learn and earn locally, building a resilient and sustainable economy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a local workforce funnel into critical sectors.</li> <li>2. Provide direct connections between students, industry partners, education and training providers.</li> </ol>

## Industry Partner Contribution

### The Objective

RDA Southern Inland is seeking support via voluntary financial contribution as nominated by you, our valued industry partner to bolster our ongoing efforts in the Grow Our Own program. Your participation will enable us to deliver initiatives within the Southern Inland region, including:

- designing and implementing youth-centric, career-oriented activities
- expanding our network of employers and fostering pathways for employment
- contributing to the cultivation of a robust regional workforce.

### The Benefits

The financial contribution to the Grow Our Own Program will provide our industry partners with the following benefits and opportunities:

- Connection to a regionally based skilled workforce.
- Support from careers advisors with access to students to fill work experience, apprenticeships, traineeships, and placement opportunities.
- Provide insights into the outcomes of Grow Our Own activities that are developed and implemented.
- Business showcase on a careers video which will be broadcast in regional schools, and across RDASI social media channels and website.
- Access to raw video footage to use in-house and across digital channels.
- Business and job showcase at Careers and Employment Expos when held.
- Introductions to other workforce programs and initiatives.

### Conclusion

With your assistance and support, RDA Southern Inland (soon to be RDA Southern NSW & ACT) will be able to continue to develop and implement the Grow Our Own Program across our region and encourage our young people to live, learn, and earn locally.

***Together we can build a resilient and sustainable economy.***

Thank you for the opportunity to present our proposal for your consideration. We greatly appreciate your time and support.



Carisa Wells  
CEO and Director of Regional Development  
“Local People Creating Local Opportunities”

## Pledge your support

Organisation Name \_\_\_\_\_

ABN \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

Representative's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Pledge amount, + \$1,500

GST, please circle \$3,000

Other pledge amount, + GST \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_