



# CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY

CRADLE COAST  
SUSTAINABLE REGIONS INVESTMENT PLAN  
OCTOBER 2002



A COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT  
INITIATIVE IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

## The Sustainable Regions Program

The Sustainable Regions Program is the major initiative under the Commonwealth Government *Stronger Regions: A Stronger Australia* statement announced by the Hon. John Anderson, Minister for Transport and Regional Services, on 29 August 2001.

Under this program, a total of \$100.5 million has been allocated for investment in sustainable development of eight 'prototype' regions across Australia that were identified as undergoing major economic, social and environmental change. Up to \$12 million has been allocated for investment in the Cradle Coast region over the three-year life of the program.

The Minister has appointed Advisory Committees to provide recommendations for the use of the funds in each of the eight regions. The Cradle Coast Sustainable Regions Advisory Committee includes the eight members of the Cradle Coast Authority Board, plus one representative from the Tasmanian Employment Advisory Committee.

The Minister approved the **Cradle Coast Sustainable Regions Investment Plan**, developed by the Advisory Committee to guide investment of program funds in this region, on 20 October 2002.

## The Cradle Coast Sustainable Regions Investment Plan

### IDENTIFYING REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Economic recovery and development of the Cradle Coast region has been the subject of numerous reports, surveys and public consultation processes over recent years. Many in the community have become disillusioned with repeated consultations that have not led to significant outcomes for the region.

For this reason, the Advisory Committee decided first to review the outcomes of previous consultations to identify issues of major concern to the region, then provide opportunities for more focussed involvement of specific sectors in the development of regional responses to these issues.

Through this process, the Advisory Committee shortlisted six issues that had been repeatedly identified as regional priorities, matched the purpose of Sustainable Regions funding and represented a balanced mix of social, economic and environmental issues.

The six shortlisted regional priorities are:

- participation in education, training and employment;
- investment in existing growth industries;
- value-adding of traditional industries;
- creation of new long-term industries;
- protection of the natural environment; and
- reversing population decline.

The Advisory Committee acknowledges that other important issues also need to be addressed, but decided that a broader range of priorities would reduce the investment possible in any one area. The six priorities chosen provide a strategic approach to investment of Sustainable Regions funds and a framework for rebuilding the region's economy, from which other opportunities will flow.

## A TARGETED APPROACH

Six major initiatives have been developed to focus investment in the six regional priorities. Each initiative requires further input from sectors of the region's community to guide this investment.

Investment and community involvement in each initiative will be provided through either targeted grants or a targeted investment approach, described in more detail on the following pages.

For initiatives based on industries and sectors already well-established in the region, funds will be made available as **targeted grants** for proposals developed by existing participants in those sectors.

For initiatives dealing with industries and development opportunities that are new to the region, the Advisory Committee has adopted a two-staged approach to **targeted investment** of program funds.

These initiatives will initially involve an intensive research and consultation stage to identify specific investment priorities that will create long-term benefits and opportunities for the region. The Advisory Committee will assess the results and recommendations from this stage of each initiative before recommending major investment proposals to the Minister for approval.

This targeted approach maximises the impact of Sustainable Regions funding by channelling major investment into fewer, larger initiatives that comprehensively address key regional issues. While this also means that many worthwhile proposals will not be funded, the Advisory Committee is committed to ensuring that investment is driven by the region's needs, not the availability of funds.

## TURNING \$12 MILLION INTO \$36 MILLION

Twelve million dollars of Commonwealth funds is a significant once-off commitment, but will not be enough to change the long-term fortunes of this region. On this basis, the Advisory Committee has set a target of tripling the Commonwealth's investment from other sources within and outside the region.

All grant proposals funded by the program will require at least equal contributions from other sources. The Sustainable Regions Program is unique because matching contributions can be from other Commonwealth programs, and the Advisory Committee will help to identify these sources.

All targeted investments will be based on business case proposals that include other funding partners. By focusing on larger, strategic projects, the Advisory Committee aims to attract major corporate and government investment that might otherwise have been committed elsewhere.

To achieve its aims, the Sustainable Regions Program requires significant levels of management, coordination and administration within the region. Many of its initiatives also need further research and planning before they reach investment stage. Under normal circumstances, these needs would be paid for from the total Commonwealth allocation, reducing the funding available for projects.

In this region, the Cradle Coast Authority is able to perform most of these roles as part of its normal operations. The Advisory Committee has also secured additional Commonwealth funding for the research and planning activities associated with some initiatives. The combined value of these contributions is estimated to be around \$1 million over three years.

On this basis, the Commonwealth's \$12 million is 'quarantined' for projects that will create and attract new investment for the development of this region over and beyond the life of the program.

# Cradle Coast Sustainable Regions Investment Plan

## Summary of Regional Initiatives

*The funding allocations shown below are notional allocations approved in principle by the Minister. The Advisory Committee is responsible for monitoring these allocations, and may recommend changes to individual allocations over the life of the program to ensure the best possible use of program funds to maximise long-term outcomes and additional investment.*

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*Regional Priority: Participation in education, training and employment*

### **Stronger Learning Pathways**

Education and employment participation rates in the Cradle Coast region are among the lowest in Australia. This is possibly the most important regional development issue facing the region today, affecting the region's social fabric as well as its prospects for establishment of new technology and service-based industries. There is a strong awareness of this issue in the region's community and education and training institutions, but there is an urgent need for coordination of activity between institutions and flexible funding for strategies that address local needs and involve the wider community and emerging industry groups.

**Investment Strategy:** The Advisory Committee has allocated **\$2 million** over three years for **targeted grants** for innovative, partnership-based initiatives that increase participation and retention in formal learning pathways. A qualified project officer will be appointed to provide a first point of contact and assist eligible groups with development of partnerships, projects and proposals.

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*Regional Priority: Investment in existing growth industries*

### **Tourism Investment Program**

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the region. Recent improvements to Bass Strait visitor access will challenge the industry to compete with interstate destinations and provide visitor experiences, services and attractions that

grow its market share. To meet this challenge, the industry needs to build its capacity to attract visitors and support private investment through strategic development of key areas including infrastructure, planning, market research and training. This will demand better alignment of planning and investment at local, regional and state levels, and a greater focus on the region's ability to meet the needs and expectations of visitors and private developers.

**Investment Strategy:** The Advisory Committee has allocated **\$3 million** over three years for **targeted grants** for projects that have the support of relevant local, regional and statewide tourism bodies. One million dollars has been set aside for non-infrastructure projects and two million dollars is available for major infrastructure developments over the three-year life of the program. The Cradle Coast Authority Tourism Manager is the contact person for individuals or groups wishing to develop proposals.

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*Regional Priority: Value-adding of traditional industries*

### **Food industry value-adding**

The Cradle Coast region produces some of the world's best primary produce, much of which is exported in commodity form with minimal value-adding. Tasmania is gaining international recognition for clean production of quality foods and the potential exists for establishment of a high-value food products sector based in this region. Value-adding through further processing and branding of local produce and by-products will increase returns to producers and processors and create new employment in a range of fields, from food technology to marketing and research.

**Investment Strategy:** The Advisory Committee will appoint specialist consultants to work with existing food industry participants to review options for strategic investment to enhance the food value-adding sector in this region, including establishment of dedicated business incubators and industry clusters. **Three million dollars** has been allocated for **targeted investment** in approved priority projects identified through this process and supported by industry.

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*Regional Priority: Creation of new industries*

### **Windfarm-related industry clusters**

Plans for the establishment of Australia's largest windfarms and associated export manufacturing

facilities in this region provide its greatest opportunity yet to capture new investment, jobs and training in a wide range of manufacturing, technology and related service sectors. To ensure that these developments contribute to the region's economy beyond the life of the current windfarm projects, it is essential to invest in the creation of a skilled workforce, complementary business activity and research capabilities to establish this region as a recognised centre for windfarm manufacturing and related industries in the Asia-Pacific region. Without this investment, reliance on a small number of large, foreign-owned employers could leave the region vulnerable to further episodes of sudden economic decline, as have occurred in the past.

**Investment Strategy:** The Advisory Committee will appoint industry development specialists to work with major windfarm stakeholders, education and training providers and existing businesses to identify strategic investment priorities to establish and support windfarm-related industry 'clusters' in this region. The Advisory Committee has allocated **\$3 million** over three years for **targeted investment** based on the outcomes of these preliminary investigations.

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*Regional Priority: Environmental management*  
**NRM careers**

The economy of this region is heavily reliant on primary industries that, in turn, depend on the sustainable management of the region's soils, vegetation, waterways and other natural resources for their long-term viability. Over the past decade, natural resource management (NRM) has evolved from a community-based activity and regulatory issue to a central element of policy, property and business planning for all land users. NRM is now an important growth sector in its own right, with thousands of people employed and millions of dollars spent on NRM-related activities in this region each year. There is a growing need to manage the education, training, and employment aspects of NRM more effectively to create career pathways for new recruits, retain qualified staff and maximise its potential as a legitimate part of the region's economy.

**Investment Strategy:** The Advisory Committee will appoint specialist consultants to work with providers and users of funding, training and skilled labour for the NRM sector to develop strategies that increase

employment, long-term career options and business opportunities. **Five hundred thousand dollars** has been allocated for **targeted investment** in approved strategies and initiatives over three years.

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*Regional Priority: Population decline*  
**Family and business migration**

The population of the Cradle Coast region has declined and aged over the past two decades, reducing the market for regional businesses and the rate-base required to maintain local infrastructure and services. Young people are leaving the region for education and employment opportunities elsewhere, while employers in the region find it hard to recruit qualified people locally and attract suitable candidates from interstate. The new industries needed to rebuild the region's economy require immediate access to new skills and investment from outside the region as well as a longer-term supply of local candidates for skilled positions. Access to skilled labour and services is a critical factor in attracting new capital to this region. While each industry must invest in its own training and future labour requirements, there is an urgent need to attract new customers, investors and employees to address the region's current population trends and imbalances.

**Investment Strategy:** The Advisory Committee will appoint a skills-based taskforce to conduct initial research into current population trends, consult with the regional community and propose strategies for targeted interstate family and business migration and support for employers to attract skilled applicants. Based on the outcomes of this research, the Advisory Committee will allocate up to **\$500,000** over three years for **targeted investment** in one or more strategies as a basis for ongoing regional programs.

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## General funding criteria

The Advisory Committee will assess all funding proposals on a case-by-case basis and provide recommendations to the Minister for the approval and release of program funds.

Whilst the Advisory Committee has developed specific assessment criteria for each initiative, all proposals must meet the following requirements set down by the Minister for all program funding:

- Consistency of proposal with identified regional priorities as determined by the futures planning process and other planning processes.
- The sustainability of the project and the extent to which it will be of benefit to the region.
- The extent to which Commonwealth funding is needed to realise the project and the absence of relevant programs from other Commonwealth agencies and other tiers of government to fund the project.
- The provision of sufficient funds and other involvement by the proponent to ensure success of the project.
- The level of support for the proposal from within the region, and support from other sources including other spheres of government and the private sector.
- Demonstrated project management experience to undertake the project, including the provision of a project budget and ability to meet government reporting requirements.
- The project does not compete directly with existing businesses, unless it can be shown that there is an unsatisfied demand for the product/service or the product/ service can be provided in a new way.
- Retrospective funding will not be permitted for any projects.
- The project should not be inconsistent with other Federal Government policy objectives and relevant law.
- Proposals must comply with relevant planning and environment laws.

## More information

This brochure provides a general introduction to the Cradle Coast Sustainable Regions Program.

More details on each of the initiatives, including guidelines for development of grants proposals, will be provided in separate information sheets developed for each regional initiative, which are available from the Cradle Coast Authority and all Council offices in the Cradle Coast region.

All funding approvals will be announced publicly through the regional media, and additional information sheets, including progress reports and profiles of major projects, will be produced from time to time. Information sheets include contact details for each initiative.

### **FOR GENERAL ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:**

#### **Cradle Coast Sustainable Regions Advisory Committee**

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#### **Sustainable Regions Program**

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Latrobe Council



Waratah  
Wynyard  
Council



## CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY

The Cradle Coast Authority is a joint authority created to coordinate and drive economic development across the nine local government areas of north-west and western Tasmania.

Its primary role is to identify priorities for economic development and to broker partnerships between levels of government, industry and community groups to address them at regional scale.

The Authority's member councils contribute to its annual budget for core operations. All regional development activities are funded through partnerships and funding agreements with other bodies.

The Authority is currently engaged in a wide range of regional initiatives including tourism, natural resource management, industry development and infrastructure projects. It has formal partnership agreements with all levels of government, including the Federal Government's Sustainable Regions Program, and is continually seeking new opportunities to represent and serve its region's interests.

The Authority's Board includes members with experience in agriculture, industry, commerce, education, tourism and local government. The Board is proud to form the nucleus of the Cradle Coast Sustainable Regions Advisory Committee and looks forward to the program's achievements in this region.

**For more information, contact  
the Cradle Coast Authority  
on 03 6431 6285.**