

Working with rural communities to harness economic social and environmental opportunities for country NSW



The Office of Rural Affairs provides support to the Minister for Rural Affairs and government to achieve the government's objectives and commitments to the people of New South Wales.

The Office of Rural Affairs undertakes this role by providing secretariat and policy support to the Regional Consultative Communities Council (RCCC), which is the peak rural community advisory body in NSW.

The RCCC is an independent body, providing advice on a wide range of community matters and reports to the Premier and the Minister for Rural Affairs.

The Office of Rural Affairs has developed close links with stakeholders and communities across the state. Working within the framework of government objectives, the Office assists in the identification of issues, policy gaps and opportunities and develops solutions that enhance service provision to the people and communities in country New South Wales.

Senior Manager

Fran Schonberg, Manager, Office of Rural Affairs

Management strategy and performance review Financial

The Office of Rural Affairs, Lands budget allocation includes funds related to the

operation of the Regional Communities Consultative Committee (\$150,000) and employee and related operating costs of the Office itself (\$265,000).

No capital works funding was allocated to the Office in 2005/06.

The Regional Communities Consultative Council (RCCC)

Established in August 1996, the RCCC is a standing advisory body comprised of thirteen members representing community interests, with an independent Chair and Deputy Chair.

A new Council was appointed in March 2005 for a two year term.

Members of RCCC	Role or interest	Attendance
Diana Gibbs	Chair	5
Lynda Summers	Deputy Chair	6
John Ainsworth	Representing farmers' interests	5
Fr Tim Carhill	Representing religious interests	3
Michael Schultz	Representing environmental interests	4
Rashmere Bahatti	Representing ethnic community interests	4
Dr Jock Fletcher	Representing health interests – resigned December 2005	3
Iris White	Representing Aboriginal community interests	5
Michael Madden	Representing trade union interests	2
Simon Davies	Representing youth interests	4
Tim Sheed	Representing business and industry interests	4
Peter Quarmby	Representing social services interests	3
Ruth Shanks	Representing women's interests	3
Jenny Bonfield	Representing local government interests	3
Lyall Wilkinson	Representing education interests	5

SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN 2005/06

Developing a model for coordinated humanitarian refugee settlement in rural and regional NSW

Humanitarian refugee arrivals to rural and regional communities will continue to rise to fulfil Australia's commitments to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. To assist rural and regional communities to be able to support new arrivals requires a coordinated approach by governments and community. Through the Regional Communities Consultative Council (RCCC) a coordination model has been developed that clearly identifies all levels of government and non-government organisations roles and responsibilities. Only through coordinated and collaborative approaches can governments and communities put in place the support mechanisms required to ensure a smooth settlement process into rural and regional communities.

Facilitating a Rural Communities Impact Statement on the listing of the town of Braidwood and its setting on the State Heritage Register

During 2005/06 the town of Braidwood and its setting was listed on the State Heritage Register. As this was the first rural town and its setting listed, there was a very high level of community interest and debate.

The primary issues of concern were:

- the direct impacts of the proposed Heritage Listing on properties and landholders
- the broader community impacts, both socially and economically

- the pressures for development and the potential for inappropriate developments to impact on the historic and unique character, appearance and integrity of Braidwood
- the role of community (and to some extent, Council) in determining their own future
- the process involved in the proposed listing.

The Office of Rural Affairs facilitated the Rural Community Impact Statement to ensure that government, council and community issues were addressed within the decision making process.