



ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004



1. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I present the annual report for 2003-2004 as Chairman of the New England North West ACC. It has taken some time to gain a full understanding of our role in the community and how best we can take advantage of the opportunities opened to us through Regional Partnerships and associated Australian Government programmes.

I can honestly say since the introduction of the Australian Government's Regional Partnerships I have witnessed a number of key factors that place the New England North West ACC in the position of being one of the most effective in the country.

Community members want a central point of contact with which to connect with Government agencies. The coordination of services must have local cooperation, reduce competition and be effective in addressing regional development and regional issues. Co-ordinated service delivery addresses demonstrated community needs in order to be effective in making changes that is valued by our communities.

This can be measured in a number of ways none the least in the manner in which staff have and continue to work building skills and communication with communities, Government and private enterprise, a service that is held in high esteem in our region and beyond.

The staff of the New England North West ACC are respected by their peers and within the regional support network, building a reputation on working with the community and delivering opportunities. This is no easy task and relies on passion and commitment, teamwork and leadership.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank Rebel, Jo, Donna, Ildu, Paul, and Alec for their diligence and ability to focus on all aspects to achieve tangible project outcomes. In particular I would thank Rebel in her role as Executive Officer and bringing the 'team' of staff and Board members together.

The key component to our strength is our evolving regional structures, driven by our diverse communities. The New England North West ACC undertook a significant restructure at the beginning of 2003-2004, defining of our region into three distinct areas and co-locating Project Officers and Board members. This approach recognised the local knowledge of our Board members and focuses our activities to communities on the ground activity.

This financial year also saw the development of a comprehensive Strategic Regional Plan identifying nine key regional priorities. I believe we have the capacity to work more closely with communities encouraging them to set their own agenda.

The philosophy of the Australian Government through Regional Partnerships is about; 'doing things with people not necessarily for them', our aim is to develop both large and small projects in and across our region, evenly distributing opportunities and meeting our targeted outcomes.

The New England North West ACC is operating at a time that is critical to Regional Australia we have been given the privileged opportunity to help facilitate growth, capacity, diversity and planning within our communities. To this extent I would like to thank the members of my Board for their time and commitment to issues relating to regional development. There is considerable scope to take full advantage of our charter across the region, and the role of the Board, both at the local and regional level, is critical in helping communities to identify their needs and meet those challenges.

The Board and staff of the New England North West ACC can proudly say they are making a difference growing our region, providing strategies and a pathway in converting ideas and proposals into real outcomes.

To The Hon John Anderson MP, Deputy Prime Minister for Regional Development and The Hon De-Anne Kelly MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister, the support staff from the Department of Transport & Regional Services Maree Cooper and John Bowmer our sincere thanks for your continued support.



Kevin Humphries
CHAIRMAN

2. INTRODUCTION

In July 2003 the Department of Transport & Regional Services (the Department) tasked the New England North West ACC with the responsibility of facilitating access to the Australian Government's Regional Partnerships Programme.

The Australian Government's approach to regional development is to work in partnership with communities, government and the private sector to foster the development of self-reliant communities and regions. This approach is consistent with the Australian Government's framework for developing Australia's regions: Stronger Regions, A Stronger Australia. Regional Partnerships is a programme that delivers on the Australian Government's approach to regional development.

The programme was complementary to the activities of the New England North West ACC and built on the successes of the 2002-2003 financial year.

Through Regional Partnerships the Australian Government and the New England North West ACC will partner projects that focus on:

- *strengthening growth and opportunities* by investing in projects that strengthen and provide greater opportunities for economic and social participation in the community;
- *improving access to services* by investing in projects that, in a cost effective and sustainable way, support communities to access services. In particular those communities in regional Australia with a population of less than 5,000;
- *supporting planning* by investing in projects that assist communities to identify and explore opportunities and to develop strategies for action;
- *assisting structural adjustment for communities* by investing in projects that assist specifically identified communities and regions to adjust to major economic, social or environmental change.

The role of the New England North West ACC was further defined as the primary source of information and assistance in the development of applications under Regional Partnerships. The New England North West ACC is also the Department's primary provider of independent advice on all applications from their region. Specifically the New England North West ACC can:

- provide project proponents with advice on obtaining and providing evidence of broad community and business support for projects;
- assist with identifying and connecting with other project partners; and
- ensure that all the relevant areas of Regional Partnerships applications are completed in sufficient detail.

The New England North West ACC plays a major role in providing the Department with advice, in the form of comments and a recommendation, on projects. Involving the New England North West ACC in the project and application development phase can reduce the assessment time with the Department, so it is in the best interests of proponents to consult with the New England North West ACC.

The programme is impacting positively on the region however external considerations and the regional situation are impeding impacts.

The New England North West region was in a severe drought throughout 2003-2004 and in some parts it continues into 2004-2005. The recent drought has increased unemployment, stress and pressure on communities, people are leaving and there is increased demand on support services. The New England North West ACC is conscious of the social, economic and environmental impacts of the drought on business, individuals and communities.

The extent of the drought was recently highlighted in a recent article in the "Wee Waa News" (5 May 2004) revealing the current gross turnover of some Wee Waa businesses has fallen by 47% from 2001 levels, equating to \$100million not circulating in the economy. Wee Waa is a major contributor the local and regional economy, but during the same period permanent employees decreased by 31% and casual by 48%.

The figures include the relocation of one of Wee Waa's major cotton companies to Toowoomba, however the impacts of the drought was a factor in the decision to move the company. Cotton production is down 50% on 2001 figures, and cattle, grain and sheep production have also been impacted upon. Trade and labouring positions have borne the major brunt of the employment reductions. Of the terminated employees, one third remained in town, one third have left the region, and one third are unaccounted for.

The cumulative effect of the downturn in one of our major cotton centres is compounded when considered in a regional context. The situation described is typical of every community in the New England North West region but 79% of the Wee Waa respondents to a regional survey indicated they have not accessed any drought support or assistance services.

Adding to ongoing drought, there is significant uncertainty over natural resource management in the North West of the region which is hindering investment. NSW Government policies on water reform and native vegetation remain unclear. Domestic and commercial water supplies are at historically low levels.

The agriculture sector represents the largest industry in the NENW with 7.86% of the total population employed in this area. Retail (5.97%), Health and Community Services (4.01%) and Education (3.59%) are the other major industries. Manufacturing is also a significant industry for the region, particularly in the Northern Slopes where it employs 2,684 people.

The 2003-2004 Business Plan was formed on the basis of the evolving Regional Partnerships programme, the activities of the New England North West ACC, and the core responsibilities of ACCs set out by the Department in the National Charter for Area Consultative Committees.

3. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

In July 2003, the New England North West ACC initiated a restructuring plan reflecting the diversity of the region and communities of interest, focusing on providing excellence in customer service and capitalising on local knowledge to drive regional development initiatives.

3.1 REGIONAL STRUCTURE

The restructure defined three distinct areas within the New England North West region, provided dedicated Project Officers supporting each region and is complemented by three Board members providing valuable local comment and knowledge of projects and proponents.

Central Projects Area	Tamworth, Gunnedah and Liverpool Plains Local Government Areas	Rebel Thomson	David Brownhill Georgia Parkin Gary Pollock
New England Area	Tenterfield, Glen Innes, Severn, Guyra, Armidale Dumaresq, Uralla and Walcha Local Government Areas	Joanne Stead	Nick De Stefani Hugh Harris Andrew Locke
North West Area	Narrabri, Moree, Inverell and Gwydir Local Government Areas	Donna Karam	Robyn Barrett Kevin Humphries Steven McIntosh

Each of the project areas is supported by the activities of the Small Business Answers Officer and Indigenous Development Officer. The Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Project Officer coordinated projects in the Local Government Areas of Quirindi, Gunnedah, Narrabri and Walgett providing additional opportunities across the Central and North West Projects Area as well as into the Orana ACC.

3.2 DELEGATION TO SUB-COMMITTEES

The New England North West ACC recognises the importance of managing public financial resources and this year saw a delegation made to a Finance and Audit Committee. The responsibilities of the Finance and Audit Committee are; to review the income and expenditure accounts for the organisation, provide questions and advise to the Executive Officer on income and expenditure, endorse or not the financial report to the Board and provide assistance to an accountant and auditor. Members appointed to the Finance and Audit Committee for the 2003-2004 financial year are; Gary Pollock (Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Sub-Committee), Hugh Harris, Andrew Locke and David Brownhill.

The new structure of the New England North West ACC provided an avenue for board members to focus on projects and activities in three distinct areas, the New England, the North West and the Central Projects areas. Members of the groups are tasked with supporting their Project Officer and providing valuable local knowledge into projects and initiatives being development. The tasks of the project groups vary according to the value of a project.

Another Committee introduced this financial year was the committee for the Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Package. The Board authorised the formation of a specific sub-committee to be known as the Namoi Valley Advisory Committee (NVAC). The sub-committee was formed in response to the Australian Government's Structural Adjustment package designed to help the community cope as a result of the introduction of a water-sharing plan across the Namoi Valley catchment.

The members of the sub-Committee were appointed by the Minister for Transport and Regional Services and included members of the New England North West ACC, the NSW Government, Local Government and community interest groups. The key role of the sub-committee was to recommend projects to the New England North West ACC and subsequently the Minister responsible for funding under the package. The members in the 2003-2004 financial year were: Kevin Humphries (Chairman), Deputy Chair - George Paul, Cr

Paul Nankivell – Quirindi, Cr Gae Swain – Gunnedah, Cr George Sevil – Narrabri, Jono Phelps – Irrigator Merah North and Chris Guest – NSW Representative Department of Land and Water Conservation.

In order to develop the profile and media activities of the New England North West ACC, a Marketing Reference Group was established. Although not a sub-committee of the Board, the structure is less formal and is responsible to developing an annual marketing plan, provide input into media and media releases and increase public exposure of the ACC's activities. Marketing and media is a standing item on the Board meeting agenda and reports are presented tabling media release take-up, website hits and customer enquiries.

3.3 2003-2004 BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

Chairman	Kevin Humphries	Moree	▪ Management Consultant
Deputy Chair	Hugh Harris	Armidale	▪ Director, Ecoresource Development
Treasurer/ Secretary	Gary Pollock	Tamworth	▪ General Manager
			▪ New England Institute of TAFE
			▪
Board Members	Robyn Barrett	Narrabri	▪ Director Narrabri Rural Lands Protection Board
	David Brownhill	Quirindi	▪ Member New England Health – Narrabri Health Advisory Committee
	Nick De Stefani	Tenterfield	▪ Chair Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation
	Andrew Locke	Walcha	▪ Former Senator for NSW
	Steve McIntosh	Boggabilla	▪ Deputy Mayor Tenterfield Shire Council
	Georgia Parkin	Gunnedah	▪ Proprietor – Reedy Creek Wines
			▪ Finance and Project Management Consultant
			▪ Indigenous community representative
			▪ Manager Boggabilla CommunityLink
			▪ Marketing and communications
Staff	Rebel Thomson		Executive Officer
	Joanne Stead		Project Officer - Central
	Donna Karam		Project Officer – New England
	Ildu Monticone		Project Officer – North West
	Paul Craigie		Small Business Answers Officer
	Alec Macintosh		Indigenous Development Officer
			Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Officer

4.

**CORE RESPONSIBILITY 1
TO FOSTER AND BE A KEY FACILITATOR OF CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT**

4.1 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Conduct a review of the New England North West ACC to ensure Board members will be representative of industry and communities.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West ACC secured additional operational funding from the Department to implement its structural review. The restructure recognised the three distinct areas within the New England North West, consolidated Board member support and provided experienced staff resources to the three regions.

The New England North West ACC relocated its central administration offices in Tamworth to 429 Peel Street, a prime CBD location with access to shared reception resources. In November 2003, the Hon John Anderson MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport and Regional Services officially opened the office and recognised the services of retiring Board members after the Annual General Meeting. The achievements of the three outgoing Board members were significant.

Warren Barnes was an inaugural Board member of the New England North West ACC, appointed in 1996, and served as the Indigenous community representative on the Board contributing significant expertise derived from his roles as the founding Chief Executive Officer of the Gwydir Valley Cotton Growers Association, involvement with the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and as an Indigenous Community Consultant. Warren not only represented the interests of Indigenous people across the region but also the communities of Tamworth and Moree during his membership.

Doris Kelly was also an inaugural Board member appointed in 1996 and served for her community of Narrabri and the interests of the region. Doris had previously held the roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Narrabri between the years 1991 and 1994. Doris's experience in small business and governance was recognised as an outstanding contribution to the activities of the New England North West ACC since its inception.

Genevieve Harrison was appointed to the Board of the New England North West ACC in 1999 to represent the Tamworth community and provided expertise in urban and regional planning from a Local Government perspective. Genevieve served as Treasurer to the New England North West ACC for the period of her appointment.

In addition to a structural review of the organisation, the Board introduced changes to the constitution to develop continuing leadership and representation. From 2003-2004 Board members are appointed for a period of three years and are able to serve two consecutive terms. New Board members are proposed by Board members and each current member is encouraged to provide leadership in seeking a suitable replacement.

Three new members were appointed to the Board during 2003-2004.

Andrew Locke has extensive financial and project management experience through his work in the banking sector and is currently employed as a consultant. Andrew represents the community of Walcha and is a member of the New England Projects Group and the Finance Committee.

Georgia Parkin from the Gunnedah and Boggabri districts was appointed to the Board to provide support to the marketing and communication functions of the Board. Georgia was a participant in the inaugural NENW Rural Communities Leadership Programme and the Board has sought to assist participants in this program to become involved in community and leadership roles. Georgia is the Board representative assisting with marketing and media functions as well as a member of the Central Projects Group.

Steven McIntosh from Boggabilla is the Indigenous representative on the Board. At the time of his appointment Steve was the Chief Executive Officer of the Tamworth Aboriginal Employment

Strategy. Steve has returned home to Boggabilla and is currently the Manager of the Boggabilla Rural Transaction Centre and CTC. In his role as the Indigenous representative of the Board and a member of the North West Projects Group, Steve's role is to provide links with and advice to Indigenous communities and projects across the region.

The current Board appointments total nine and under the constitution of the organisation there are three vacancies remaining.

4.2 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Staff and Board members will continue to gather information, knowledge and expertise on a range of existing and emerging issues across the region. The staff and Board will record and assess quantitative data relating to enquiries, referrals, workshops and project development.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West region covers some 100,000 km and over 150 communities in the North West of NSW. Staff of the New England North West ACC drive over 240,000km each year in order to fulfil the responsibility of linking community, business and Government.

In addition to the activities of staff around the region, the Board conducts its meetings around the region to understand issues and communities. In developing the Board's understanding of projects and communities, presentations have been incorporated into the meeting agenda. This financial year meetings have been held in the following locations;

28 August 2004	Quirindi	Presentation by the Director of Economic Development for the Quirindi Shire and presentations on conference venue studies conducted by the Regional Small Business Centre and activities of the Tamworth & District Chamber of Commerce.
26 September 2004	Armidale	Annual General Meeting and presentation of findings from the Socio-Economic Study into the Namoi Valley. Visit to the region by the Hon John Anderson, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport & Regional Services.
28 November 2004	Tamworth	Visit to the region by the First Assistant Secretary of the Department, Leslie Riggs.
19 December 2004	Tamworth	Visit to the region by the Hon De-Anne Kelly MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services.
6/7 February 2004	Narrabri	Commencement of planning for the 2004-2007 Strategic Regional Plan. Inspection of the proposed Namoi Valley Aqua Farming project.
26 March 2004	Barraba	Barraba Shire Council, issues and details of community planning and the impending Local Government amalgamations. Tour of a proposed cinema and community facility.
28/29 May 2004	Tenterfield	Presentation from the Tenterfield Shire Council, function for projects funded under Regional Solutions and Regional Partnerships and tour of the Tenterfield School of the Arts funded by the Australian Government. Review of the 2004-2005 Annual Business Plan and visit to Steinbrook Community Hall.

In reviewing its structure and responsibilities and relocating its central administration in Tamworth systems and databases have been created on a central network to create an integrated enquiries and contacts database. The database is an Access system that can generate reports and analyses on a local and regional levels. The results for the 2003-2004 financial year include 165 new project enquiries logged, equating to approximately 3 new enquiries each week.

4.3 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The new organisational structure for 2003-2004 will improve access to services across the region. The improvements include the employment of a project officer in partnership with Small Business Answers programme (through the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources) located in Moree to service the North West region.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

In October 2003 the New England North West ACC opened a second office in Moree co-located with the Moree Business Enterprise Centre, which is the base for the North West Project Officer, Donna Karam. The appointment process was completed in October and Donna commenced her duties in early November. The position is a partnership with the Small Business Answers programme. The activities to support the Small Business Answers programme are dedicated to Moree and Wee Waa.

4.4 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Accessing regional statistics and information will assist the staff and Board to develop a broad profile of the region, its strategic advantages and areas of disadvantage.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Board and staff of the New England North West ACC participated in a strategic planning session in February at Narrabri. The processes involved project sub-groups analysing and reviewing ABS information on their communities and their relationship to regional statistics.

By the time that the Strategic Regional Plan was finalized, the relationship between the outcomes of the February planning session were integrated with community priorities developed via over 30 grant writing workshops which assessed areas of need across the region. The information included in the 2004-2007 Strategic Regional Plan¹ highlights key strategies, actions or objectives to be pursued from 1 July 2004, and a situation analysis and barriers to development for each key priority area.

4.5 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will facilitate opportunities to engage communities in processes of self-analysis, helping them set priorities recognising issues identified by community are community driven and community owned.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West ACC has conducted project planning workshops with the following organisations;

Tamworth Family Centre	An application for a support officer was submitted to Regional Solutions and referred to the New England North West ACC after the program was integrated into Regional Partnerships. Rebel Thomson conducted two planning sessions with staff and Board members which indicated the service could support an outreach service from user payments received from DOCS.
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Wee Waa Golf Club	Rebel Thomson conducted two initial workshops with the Management Committee to investigate future business planning potential and infrastructure improvements to the Club house.
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4.6 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will liaise regularly with representatives of Local Government discuss opportunities and communities.

¹ Refer 2004-2007 Strategic Regional Plan.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The guidelines surrounding Regional Partnerships strengthen the relationships between the ACC and Local Government Authorities ensuring projects and opportunities are strongly supported by planning requirements of the Council.

The New England North West region was involved in significant Local Government boundary changes this financial year. The uncertainty created by discussions and negotiations throughout the region was evident and in some circumstances have hindered the regular communication with Local Government representatives, project development and the ability of Local Government to financially contribute to projects.

At the beginning of the 2003-2004 the New England North West region incorporated 19 Local Government Areas. The number of Local Government Areas has now been reduced to 14 and more amalgamations are expected in 2004-2005.

Local Government Areas amalgamated;

Tamworth Regional Council - Tamworth City, Parry, Nundle, parts of Nundle and Barraba and Manilla

Gwydir Shire Council - Yallaroi, Bingara and part of Barraba

Liverpool Plains Shire Council - Quirindi, parts of Nundle and Murrurundi Shire

The New England North West ACC regularly conducted meetings with all Local Government authorities throughout the year. Project Officers regularly report meetings held in written reports presented at each meeting.

The New England North West ACC initiated a long-term skills assessment of Local Government in the region. The response rate the survey was approximately 40% and will be included in the development of the ACC's Skills Project for 2004. The objective was to assess the training and professional shortages within Local Government and feed this information back to educational institutions in order to create strategies to address local and regional professional shortages.

4.7 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Facilitate community capacity building through training and education opportunities, developing the capacity of communities and develop the ACCs role in delivering information on Australian Government initiatives and programmes.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West ACC commenced discussions with the University of New England (UNE) to develop a 'Memorandum of Understanding' to and develop partnership opportunities and avoid resource duplication. The New England North West ACC believes there are opportunities to develop the higher education resources in the region and to partner in developing community driven initiatives. A working group of staff and Board members have been formed and include; Rebel Thomson, Gary Pollock, Hugh Harris and Andrew Locke. Preliminary discussions have centred on the organisations working together in partnership to foster the development of self-reliant communities, determining their needs and futures, working toward developing community projects and initiatives, developing a climate that reduces impediments to growth, building skills, infrastructure and delivering targeted assistance and utilizing expertise in research and development.

The New England North West ACC engaged a solicitor and the assistance of Dr Judith Winternitz from the Bureau of Transport & Regional Economics to complete contractual obligations with the consultant engaged for the New England North West Skills Audit. The project funded under the Regional Assistance Programme has been extended and will be completed in December 2004.

During 2003-2004 the New England North West ACC redefined the project outcomes in light of activities conducted nationally and across NSW into skill shortages.

The New England North West ACC assisted Swinbourne University (contracted by the Department of Science Education and Training) to conduct regional consultations in Tamworth on the impediments to mature workers gaining employment and undertaking training.

4.8 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Assist communities to develop relationships with other Government and non-government agencies in planning projects under Regional Partnerships. Assist communities to develop projects under Regional Partnerships that meet assessment criteria and show broad regional benefit. Assist communities to develop projects under Regional Partnerships that reflect their identified priorities and areas of need.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West ACC considers project partners as integral to their success. Project summaries provided at meetings include an evaluation of project partners, rating the partnerships against objectives and outcomes. The New England North West ACC Project Officers provide advice and facilitate access to project partners during the development of the application.

The basis of Project Officers work is to firstly identify the most appropriate funding source for the proponent, and then either refer the proponent(s) to that programme or commence the development of a Regional Partnerships application.

Projects submitted to Department this financial year, where the New England North West ACC has been integral in establishing stronger partnership support, identifying appropriate funding partners and securing financial contributions are;

- Armidale Cultural Centre and Keeping Place have been encouraged to develop partnerships with the community and conduct an expansive business planning processes.
- The proposal to develop an Indigenous Talent Agency in Armidale has been linked to the activities of the Aroonba Aboriginal Corporation and the Indigenous Small Business Fund.
- Glen Innes Learning Centre, Mungindi Community Service Centre, Merrimborough Landcare Inc, Country Week, Regional GP Access Project, Hanging Rock Information Café and the Deepwater Woolshed project are some that have required assistance to identify and articulate project partners and contributors.
- Private enterprise proponents have been linked to NSW Department of State and Regional Development programmes.
- Local Government in the region is being encouraged to collaborate with surrounding Local Government authorities.
- In partnership with the proponent the New England North West ACC has assisted in securing Local Government financial contributions to the Moree Plains Gallery and the Mungindi Community Service Centre
- Where appropriate projects have been linked to training programmes within TAFE.

The Access enquiries database captures information when the ACC staff have referred a client to a more appropriate programme, provided advice or established a relationship that will be ongoing. By developing and articulating this process the New England North West ACC has had significant results in developing projects and opportunities throughout the region included in this report. All projects submitted under Regional Partnerships this financial year include a significant (40% or above) partner or proponent contribution.

The New England North West ACC is a member of the management group for the Food and Wine Industry Strategy project funded under the Regional Assistance Programme. The management group is responsible for the strategic direction of the project and contract management. The project is also supported by an industry reference group linked to the Project Officer and management group.

The New England North West ACC continued its association and membership of the Australasian Pacific Aeronautical College (APAC). The New England North West ACC remains committed to the

development of the college under its 'Memorandum of Understanding' with project partners and funding provided by the Australian Government. Gary Pollock is the appointed Board member to APAC and Rebel Thomson continued to provide administrative and accounting support to the Board. The project is in its third year of funding from the Australian Government and moving toward sustainability post Government assistance. In March, the New England North West ACC withdrew administrative and accounting support for APAC as the organisation in partnership with TAFE and Tamworth Regional Council employed full-time administrative assistance.

**5. CORE RESPONSIBILITY 2
TO PROVIDE A VITAL LINK BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS
AND THE COMMUNITY.**

To achieve this the New England North West ACC will develop and maintain constructive regional alliances and partnerships with community, business and all levels of government, particularly the Australian Government by; developing and maintaining partnerships to facilitate economic, social, cultural and environmental development in the region; promoting and disseminating information on Australian Government policies and programmes, particularly those oriented towards business and communities; informing the Australian Government of community needs, service and development requirements including the impact of its policies and programmes on business and the community; provide comment on and endorsement for project proposals submitted for funding consideration under Government programmes and; developing a partnership approach with Indigenous communities to bring about Whole-of-Government solutions to local Indigenous problems.

5.1 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will liaise regularly with regional parliamentary representatives, key regional bodies, institutions and organisations developing an awareness of regional issues tapped by other organisations and developing opportunity to partner on activities and projects.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The main regional body the New England North West ACC participates as a partner is the Northern Inland Regional Alliance (NIRA). NIRA membership includes the NSW Premiers Department, the New England North West Regional Development Board, the New England North West Regional Tourism Organisation, the University of New England and Arts NW. The approach to NIRA throughout the year, has been to communicate activities and encourage the network to plan into the future to create integrated regional strategies recognised by the partners and being pursued in partnership.

The New England North West ACC participates in the Regional Priorities Framework which represents a continuance of a Rural Plan project which collated and provided a discussion forum for issues in the region.

The New England North West ACC also participated in community consultations conducted by ATSIC.

The New England North West ACC assisted the Regional Coordinator of the CTC Programme to make quality assurance assessment of four CTCs within the New England North West region. The New England North West ACC was also invited to judge the Moree & District Chamber of Commerce Business Awards – Employee of the Year Category.

As a participant in the inaugural New England North West Rural Communities Leadership Programme, Rebel Thomson is part of a network of young, emerging leaders across the region. The participants in the programme are from a range of different backgrounds and are a constant source of information. The New England North West ACC in supporting this network appointed Georgia Parkin, another inaugural Programme participant, to the Board.

The New England North West ACC initiated a report to the community on achievements from strategies developed during the 2001 Regional Forum funded under the Regional Forums Programme. The initial report included 19 strategies in 6 areas and designated lead agencies to drive change. The process reaffirmed issues with coordination across agencies and those 'All of Government' responses to issues in the region are being tackled on a project rather than a holistic basis.

The New England North West ACC initiated the development of an integrated regional plan and submitted the 2004-2007 Strategic Regional Plan to members of NIRA as a consolidated and independent document.

In February 2004 the New England North West ACC commenced discussions with the Southern Inland Queensland ACC to develop an interagency relationship, information resource and Board member exchange across the Queensland/New South Wales border.

The New England North West ACC provided support for a number of applications submitted under the Australian Tourism Development Programme administered by AusIndustry.

In January 2004, the New England North West ACC was contracted by AusIndustry to provide interim support services for AusIndustry programmes in the absence of a Regional Manager in the region. The service included continuous client contact and administrative functions.

In April 2004, Rebel Thomson and Joanne Stead participated in a two-day workshop the UK-Australia Future Leaders Dialogue to develop an awareness of regional issues. The workshop was targeted at metropolitan and social issues, incorporating 140 participants from the UK and Australia. This network is continuing.

In May 2004, Rebel Thomson participated in a 'Women and Water' Conference convened by the Deputy Prime Ministers Regional Women's Advisory Council in Armidale. The network of women involved in the debate surrounding the uses of water and regional communities is an ongoing network.

The New England North West ACC has continued to develop a positive relationship with the NSW Department of State and Regional Development to understand opportunities to partner for social and economic development.

The New England North West ACC continues to be an active participant in the ACC national network participating in local, state and national meetings. The New England North West ACC was integral in initiating meetings between NSW Project Officers and Joanne Stead assisted in coordinating the inaugural gathering in June in Sydney.

The New England North West ACC also liaised regularly with Economic Development Officers and the Chambers of Commerce in the region.

The New England North West ACC worked closely with leaders of the Moree community to assist in developing their strategies toward attracting 20,000 people by 2020. The North West Project Officer provides assistance in the business and employment components. The North West Project Officer is also a member of the Moree Place Management team.

The New England North West ACC enjoys positive relationships with all parliamentary representatives in the region. The relationship involves referral and advisory services to and from the New England North West ACC.

The New England North West ACC has assisted the regional BEC network to develop applications under the Small Business Cultural Enterprise Programme (SBCEP). Glen Innes BEC was successful in obtaining funding. The New England North West ACC also assisted the Moree BEC in the coordination of the Women's in Business Mentoring Network funded last financial year under the SBCEP.

In April the Executive Officer attended a meeting with the New England Area Health Service to plan and develop further understanding of resources available from Regional Partnerships. The New England North West ACC and the New England Area Health Service have an informal understanding to prioritise services and facilities for health. The parties have agreed to encourage communities to pursue long-term health service planning prior to developing plans for facilities which may seek funding under Regional Partnerships.

5.2 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will coordinate information workshops to promote the ACC, the Regional Partnerships program and grant writing skills. These processes will build the capacity of communities to address

regional issues and support initiatives. The New England North West ACC will create awareness of grant opportunities from a number of Government and non-government organisations.

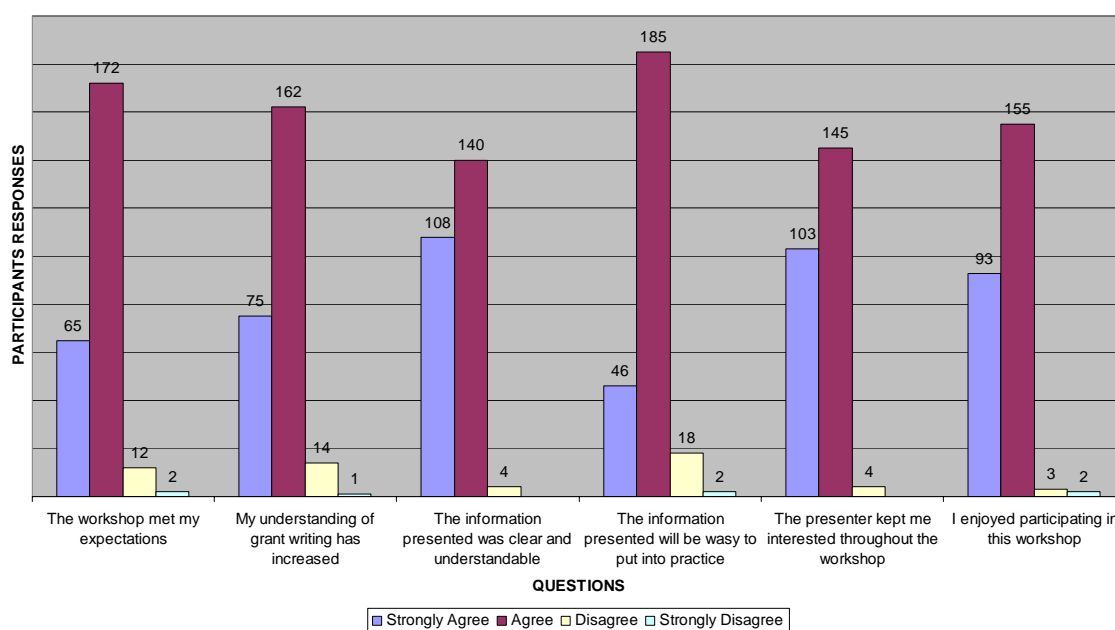
ACHIEVEMENTS:

In the third quarter of this financial year the New England North West ACC commenced conducting Grant Writing Workshops across the region. The workshops were attended by over 400 people and a further 250 contacts for Australian Government and programme information have been added to the database of contacts.

The workshop focused on project development to address issues with strong and sustainable outcomes. The process involved developing the capacity of a small group (between 15-20) to identify community issues, select a priority issue and develop a project plan. The promotion of Regional Partnerships was integrated into the sessions by using the application form as a sample and the information required to complete a form for Government funding. The process was intended create a community skills that were generalisable to any application for funding.

The results of the Grant Writing Workshops were outstanding and were measured by feedback provided on evaluation sheets. The New England North West ACC has collated issues and projects identified under this process and included the documents in planning and supporting documents for the 2004-2007 Strategic Regional Plan.

EVALUATION OF GRANT WRITING WORKSHOPS



The New England North West ACC is aware of clients who have been successful in achieving funding from other sources however this information has not been collated.

The New England North West ACC continues to utilise Access database systems to capture client information, new project contact and grants information.

At the end of the 2003-2004 financial year the databases contained;

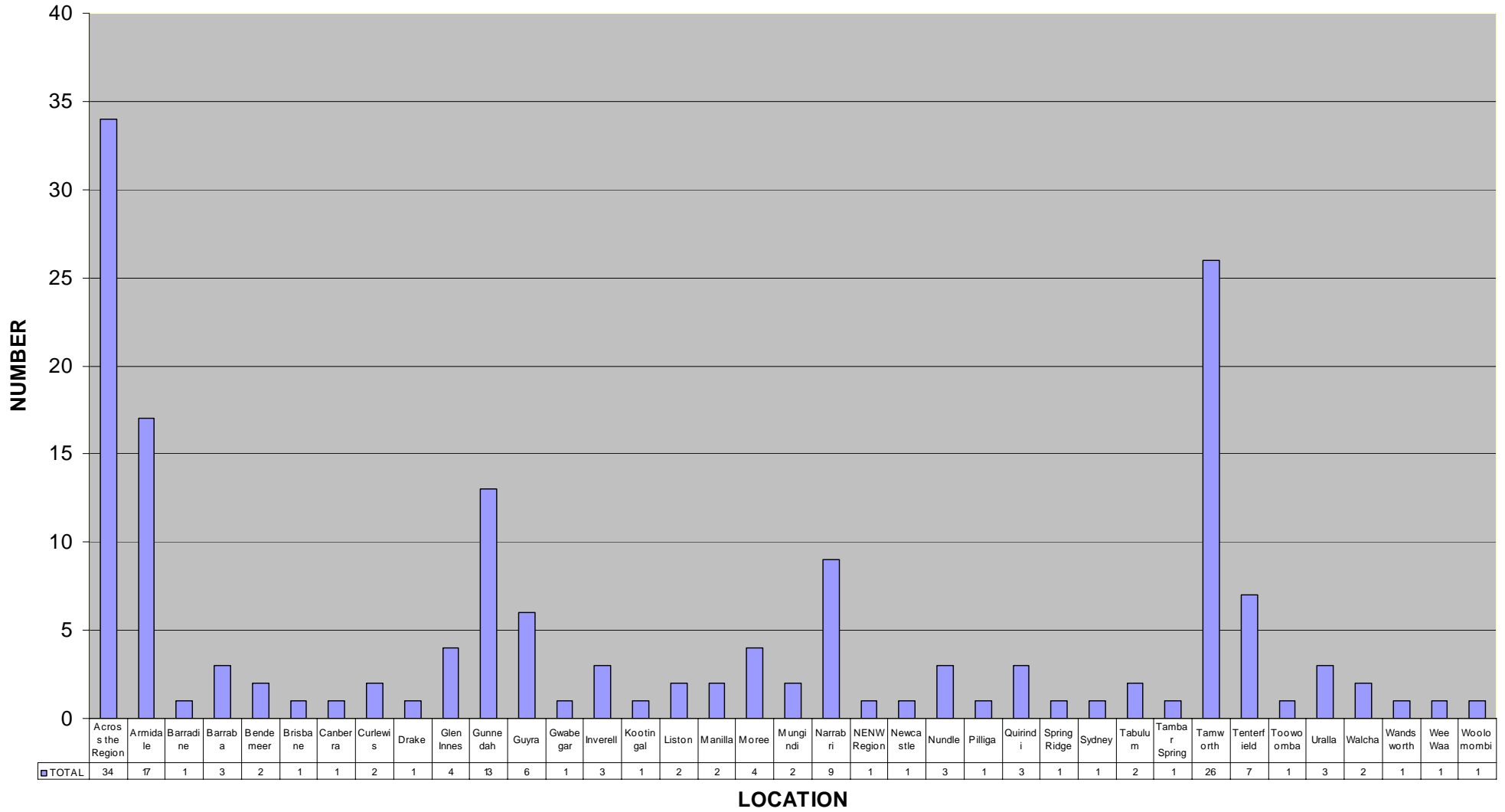
- Contacts Database - 1534
- Enquiries Database - 272

The New England North West ACC distributes weekly an email synopsis of grants and funding initiatives advertised through newspapers and the Australian Government media releases. Approximately 254 contacts receive information on grants and initiatives each week. The grant emails allow the distribution of Australian Government information to a broad cross-section of the

regional community and new requests for inclusion on the email distribution list are received regularly.

The following table details the number of new enquiries received this financial year.

2003-2004 TOTAL ENQUIRIES



5.3 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will maintain a number of information channels for accessing funding information and remain aware of opportunities for funding and regional development. The New England North West ACC will implement a communication and marketing strategy including newsletters, website, and email circulated information developing an awareness of the ACC, its programs and managed contracts.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The information channels maintained by the New England North West ACC include;

- Quarterly newsletter circulated to approximately 250 mailing addresses in hard copy and a further 250 by email
- Weekly broadcast emails
- Departmental weekly emails
- Active grants database accessible by the public on the ACC website
- Internal enquiry database for recording of direct contacts
- Media releases

Broader strategies included in the Marketing and Communications Plan have been completed.

The development of a working group to address marketing and media communications strategies and reporting to Board meetings has increased community awareness of ACC activities. Reports presented at each Board meeting include; media release take up across regional news media, website hits, broadcast emails distributed, enquiries, promotional material, feedback and complaints.

The New England North West ACC's internal databases are regularly updated and include information on all ACC activities, projects, contacts and a grants database. Board reports include a database of news articles in regional papers that are relevant to community and economic development.

The marketing and communication reports to the Board measures hits on the website. The average² website hits each month during the 2003-2004 financial year;

▪ Home Page Hits	308
▪ Board Members	72
▪ ACC Charter	43
▪ Strategic Regional Plan	56
▪ Annual Business Plan	54
▪ Projects	63
▪ Small Business Answers	61
▪ Indigenous Development	51
▪ Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Package	54
▪ Newsletter and Media	71
▪ Links	46

On average the New England North West ACC receives 3 new enquiries for advice on services or programmes each week, many of these are referred to the appropriate Australian Government resources, while a proportion go on to be developed into Regional Partnerships applications.

In August 2004 the ACC participated as an exhibitor in the 'Whole of Government' pavilion at Ag-Quip, Gunnedah. The value of participating in large exhibitions is difficult to quantify however the results in terms of enquiries and names added to the ACCs database are strong.

In May 2004 the New England North West ACC in partnership with AusIndustry, participated as an exhibitor in the 2004 Australian Cotton Trade Show in Moree.

² Based on figures presented in April 2004.

The North West Project Officer assisted the 'Moree on a Plate' committee to coordinate a food and wine festival and promoted the activities of the ACC and Regional Partnerships.

The Small Business Answers programme and the New England North West ACC promoted the ACC at an information stand at the Wee Waa Agricultural Show.

Also in May the New England North West ACC and Small Business Answers Officers promoted the ACC via an information stand at the Narrabri Innovations Festival.

5.4 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will manage and coordinate activities for the Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Package, creating links between Government, the ACC and the businesses and communities affected by the Namoi Valley Water Sharing Plans.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

In August 2003, the Socio-Economic Study into the Namoi Valley was completed. The project was a partnership between the New England North West ACC, the Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics and CARE Australia. The study highlighted the impacts of the Water Sharing Plan and outlined strategies to assist the New England North West ACC in considering applications for assistance. The Study reports have been distributed to the community via an internet link on the DOTARS website. The New England North West ACC has adopted the recommendations for project activity and priorities for endorsement.

In March the Namoi Valley Project Officer attended the 21st Australian Agricultural Conference in Albury focusing on 'The Power of Water'. In June 2004 the Project Officer also attended the ABARE Regional Outlook Conference in Gunnedah.

Projects funded in the 2003-2004 financial year under the Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Package were;

Longpoint Irrigation	Gunnedah	\$345,000
Namoi Valley Citrus Growers	Gunnedah	\$350,000
Michell Leather	Gunnedah	\$1,000,000
"Manoka Park" Gourmet Rabbit	Narrabri	\$36,134
Natural Gas For Narrabri	Narrabri	\$17,000
Castle Mountain Zeolite Stage 3	Quirindi	\$195,000
Tailwaggers	Walgett	\$246,477
Nomads Cryon Outback Café	Walgett	\$36,000
Britto's Engineering	Wee Waa	\$50,000
Seplin Estate Irrigation	Wee Waa	\$93,500
Gunnedah Ethanol (funded 2004-2005)	Gunnedah	\$1,000,000

In September 2003 no further applications were submitted to the Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Package because of negotiations between the States and the Australian Government for a National Water Initiative to be adopted.

The Committee for the Namoi Valley met until activities were suspended however project reports were submitted to the New England North West ACC at each Board meeting.

28 August 2004 Quirindi
29 July 2004 Narrabri

Early in 2004 the assessments of projects under the Namoi Valley Structural Adjustment Package was transferred to the Orange Regional Office of Department of Transport & Regional Services.

Although the programme incurred some changes this financial year the New England North West ACC pursued some projects through Regional Partnerships. Applications under consideration are;

Quirindi	The proponents of the Paradise Farms application are requesting assistance to expand facilities of a sunflower confectionary business in Gunnedah. The proponent is seeking funding for a seed colour sorter totalling \$274,500 of \$549,000.
Narrabri	The project is to expand the business opportunities in aqua farming at Narrabri. The private enterprise project is seeking funding for infrastructure for fingerlings and to develop relationships with cotton growers to utilise irrigation channels for fish. The proponent is seeking \$500,000 of \$2,480,000 from Regional Partnerships.

The New England North West ACC continued to support initiatives that create awareness of natural resource management and specifically included articles on water saving and the National Water Initiative in its newsletters.

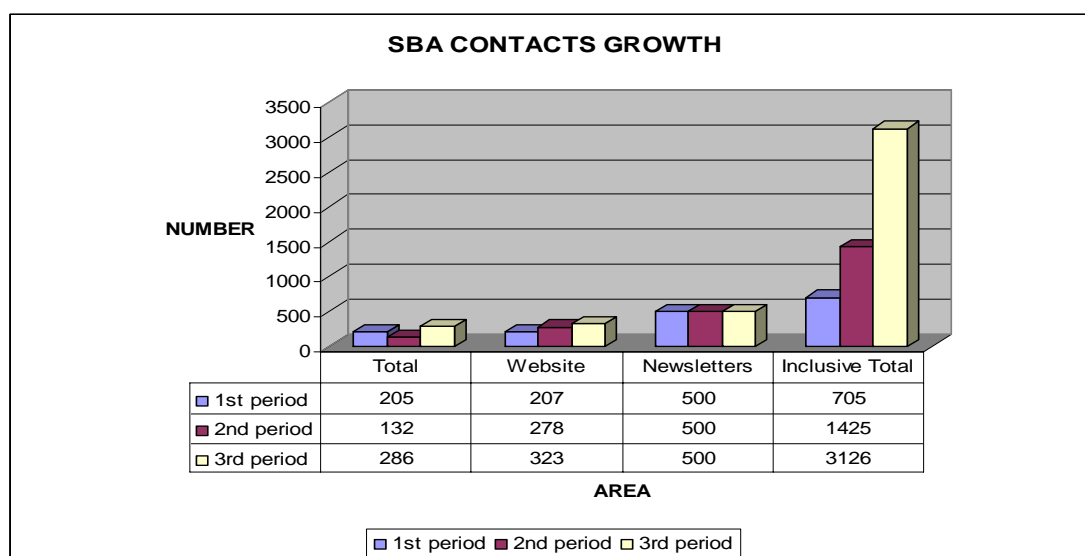
In April 2004 the New England North West ACC submitted an application to the Small Business Enterprise Culture Programme (SBECP) to assist in training and business development of the 70 irrigators identified to be most affected by the introduction of the Water Sharing Plans. The project plan involves group and individual training and mentoring to develop information sharing and business clustering in the region. (A decision is expected in September 2004.)

5.5 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will manage and coordinate the activities of the Small Business Answers contract on behalf of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources creating links between Government, the ACC, and the business community.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

In June 2004 the New England North West ACC conducted a review of Small Business Answers activities and provided a report to the Department. The report indicated the substantial support for the project and the effectiveness of Project Officers. The graph indicates the contacts for the three periods funded. The figures indicate increases in areas of direct contact, website hits and overall totals. The number of newsletters is a standard order and is reviewed during the preparation of budgets.

The growth in numbers can be linked to the commencement and momentum of the Project Officers across the region. In Period 2, direct contacts reflect a slowing of business activity at the height of the drought and the survival instincts expressed to officers. The distribution of information throughout this period has contributed to the continued growth in Period 3. The website contact is measured monthly from the Small Business Answers pages on the New England North West ACC website.



Activities undertaken by Small Business Answers Officers included; seminars conducted in partnership with IP Australia, the New Industries Development Programme, the Industry Capability Network, AusIndustry, AusTrade promotion of activities at Primex (Casino), Home Based Business seminar conducted in Coffs Harbour, meetings with Chambers of Commerce, conducted workshops and fielded direct enquiries. The Small Business Answers are linked to LGA Economic & Tourism Development Officers located in Quirindi, Gunnedah, Tamworth, Armidale, Uralla, Walcha, Inverell, Tenterfield and Wialda.

The Small Business Answers services and activities have been promoted by a television advertising campaign on the Prime television network. The Small Business Answers activities have been featured in a new Regional Business Magazine distributed to approximately 3,500 businesses in Tamworth, Manilla, Nundle and Quirindi. The promotion in the magazine included editorial space and advertising.

The programme coordinated and facilitated 'Business Planning' Workshops in Moree and Wee Waa. These activities were a direct result of community contact with the Small Business Answers and requests for Business Planning information sessions. The sessions were well attended in both towns with 20 participants in Moree and 6 in Wee Waa.

In partnership with NSW Tourism and Tourism Moree the Small Business Answers coordinated and facilitated a Customer Service and Marketing Seminar with Linda Hailey. The information session was held in Moree and attended by 100 people.

The Small Business Answers program has been successful in building the recognition of the business and small business in generating economic and employment growth in the NENW. Small Business is a large contributor to the NENW region, to employment and productivity, with two-thirds of small businesses being home-based. There is little prospect of a significant change in the depressed rural economy around the region in the immediate future, against this background, survival is the main topic in the minds of many business operators rather than diversification or expansion.

The Small Business Answers Programme has had a positive impact in resolving client enquiries quickly or directing them straight to the correct point for a proper resolution. The Small Business Answers officer initiated and developed drought workshops in partnership with DAFF, NSW Farmers, Centrelink, the New England North West ACC and other social support networks.

The Small Business Answers programme received many enquiries from clients who have been laid off and cannot find alternative work, and are intending to either start their own business or buy an existing business to create an income.

This financial year the Small Business Answers initiated facilitation of a regional network of economic development agencies in the New England North West region. The network was established to provide a forum for discussion, networking, peer-based learning and referrals. The forum was hijacked by a local agenda and since has been disbanded. Developing and implementing strategies is impeded without integrated structures, understood and complementary roles between local governments, agencies and regional authorities. The lack of coordination and cooperation between economic development plans is ranked highly in the community, followed by the lack of a recognised lead agency in regional development in the NENW and competition and conflict between agencies. There is a clear need for coordination between Government jurisdictions and agencies throughout the region and this will be instigated by the Small Business Answers in the next funding period.

The Small Business Answers Officer coordinated meetings with regional bankers to conduct a second series of Credit Card Fraud seminars across the region.

The Small Business Answers representatives attended national and state cluster meetings with the Department.

5.6 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will manage and coordinate the activities of the Indigenous Development Officer contract creating links between Government, the ACC and the Indigenous communities of the region. Facilitate links between Indigenous project development to bring holistic solutions to the projects and areas of disadvantage identified by Indigenous communities. The ACC Board Indigenous sub-committee will meet to review and endorse Indigenous projects and provide advice to Indigenous Development Officer.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Indigenous Project Officer was successful in securing funding for the Yinnarr Health and Wellbeing Group in Tamworth to conduct a feasibility and business plan into establishing a community centre in Coledale. The project is being driven by a community of Indigenous women looking to improve opportunities for young people in Tamworth. Funding received under the Indigenous Small Business Fund was \$30,000. The New England North West ACC is continuing to assist Yinnarr with the implementation of the contract and completion of the project.

The Indigenous Project Officer and the New England North West ACC have worked with an Indigenous organisation in Armidale attempting to establish a youth talent agency in the region. The project has been submitted through the Indigenous Small Business Fund for a business plan to be developed.

Funding was provided to the Red Chief Local Aboriginal Lands Council for feasibility into establishing a cypress pine thinning plant in Gunnedah. The project has the potential to be a major employer in the Gunnedah area.

The New England North West ACC in partnership with the NSW Department of State and Regional Development has assisted in the development of an application under Regional Partnerships for Warialda Engineering Pty Ltd. Mick Davis is an Indigenous Australian, inventing engineering solutions for the agricultural sector. The project is a partnership proposal between the Australian Government, NSW Government and private enterprise. The project provides significant opportunities to increase employment, apprenticeships and traineeships within the business. The indirect benefits to business in the Warialda and surrounding areas are evident. The proponent has the opportunity to significantly grow his business and export opportunities from rural Australia.

The New England North West ACC and the Indigenous Development Officer attended the regional meeting of ATSIC councilors promoting the activities of the ACC and opportunities under the ISBF programme.

The New England North West ACC and the Indigenous Development Officer were initiators of the Regional Aboriginal Advocacy Group.

PROJECTS UNDER DEVELOPMENT INTO 2004-2005

Armidale	Creating a training program to allow Indigenous people to manage properties owned by the Land Council and the ILC.
Armidale	Armidale Cultural Centre & Keeping Place requires a Business Plan and feasibility to be completed into the proposed extensions.

5.6 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The New England North West ACC will include “messages to Government” in quarterly and/or Board reports and send messages directly to Ministers when particular issues arise.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West region had visits from Ministers and Departmental representatives throughout the year.

The New England North West ACC contributed to consultations and distributed information locally for;

- Department of Transport and Regional Services providing advice on establishing an Executive Officers' Reference Group, negotiated with CRIS and other Australian Government Departments on Ag-Quip activities, comment on operational funding contracts, COAG National Water Initiative, conducted official opening functions on behalf of the Government, proposed KPIs for ACCs, QAA framework, ACC Executive Officers Professional Development survey, Beyond the Farm Gate - a report on ACC drought survey findings, BTRE Spatial Patterns Project, ACC Research Study, Regional Partnerships application form, Rural Students in the Community, Living Murray Project, Rural Transaction Centres, Aviation Security Package, water reform case studies, ACCs views on bulk purchasing, Regional Business Development Analysis Action Plan, AusLink White Paper and ACC Boundary Review
- Department of Science Education and Training Adult Learning in Australia and regional judge for the Ministers Awards
- Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs regarding regional migration initiatives
- Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources information on Tourism economic modeling, the Tourism White Paper and Home Based Business Seminars
- Department of Family and Community Services on the Volunteer Small Equipment Grants, and other programmes under the Stronger Families and Community Strategy
- Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' National Indigenous Forestry Strategy, National Food Industry Strategy (NFIS) and Wineskills Program

In addition to the above the New England North West ACC communicated local issues in response to community concerns.

NSW Department of Infrastructure Planning and Resources
NSW and Australian Governments
NSW Government

PlanFirst Initiatives
Local impacts of drought
Impacts of LGA Amalgamations

5.7 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: The Committees and the Board will meet to review and endorse projects providing an avenue for regular feedback from Board on projects, comment on local situations and endorse or reject projects.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West ACC established a framework for providing information to Board members and proponents and evaluating projects against the programme assessment criteria.

Board members are provided with a summary of an application addressing the assessment criteria and local comment as well as a full copy of the application form. The Board may or may not meet with the proponent to discuss the project. The New England North West ACC utilises the following as a guide to assessing applications;

Priority Rating of 1: A project receiving a priority rating of 1 from the Board is not recommended for funding. A project that receives a priority rating of 1 will not have involved the expertise of the New England North West ACC, not adequately addressed the assessment guide in relation to outcomes, partnerships and project or applicant on-going viability.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The project is not submitted to the Department and the New England North West ACC should work with the proponent to understand and develop the project.

Priority Rating of 2: A project receiving a priority rating of 2 is recommended to the Department with a low priority. A rating of 2 reflects inconsistencies between the project and the Regional Partnerships guidelines and the 2004-2007 Strategic Regional Plan. The development of this project will usually not have involved the expertise of the ACC.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The project is not submitted to the Department and the New England North West ACC should work with the proponent to understand and develop the project.

Priority Rating of 3: A project receiving a priority rating of 3 is recommended to the Department with a medium priority. A rating of 3 reflects that the project addresses some areas of the Strategic Regional Plan, include economic, social or environmental outcomes, involves at least two project partners and the project sustainability and applicant viability is sound.

Priority Rating of 4: Any project receiving a priority rating of 4 is recommended with a high priority. The project will be strongly consistent with the ACC's Strategic Regional Plan, have strong social, economic and environmental outcomes, involve at least 3 partners and have strong project sustainability and applicant viability.

The staff of the New England North West ACC work with proponents to develop quality projects. The results for this financial year are outstanding and reflect the work of project officers and Board members across the region.

- Applications endorsed, submitted and funded by the Australian Government.

Bendemeer	The Bendemeer Community Cooperative submitted an application to Regional Partnerships and was the first application approved under the new programme. The project was to develop a community art and craft co-op in Bendemeer. The project received \$8,997.
Ben Lomond	The project submitted under Regional Partnerships was to purchase trestles to widen the stage, provide fire fighting equipment and improved lighting. The improvements will enable more activities to be conducted in this community facility. The project received \$3,328 of \$4,097 from Regional Partnerships.
Gunnedah	The Gunnedah Country Women's Association submitted an application for funding to assist with renovations to their building in Gunnedah. The building is occupied by the Gunnedah Toy Library and outreach child care service. Funding received from Regional Partnerships was \$48,253 of \$64,080
Legume	The project at the Legume involved the restumping of the Community Hall which is the primary place of community interaction in Legume. The community of Legume is isolated and required infrastructure to be repaired. Legume Progress Association received \$16,845 of \$26,845 from Regional Partnerships.
Mungindi	The Mungindi Progress Association in partnership with the Moree Plains Shire Council and the Mary McKillop Foundation received funding through Regional Partnerships for the purchase of a community mini bus. Mungindi is approximately 100km from their nearest centre and the bus will provide transport. Funding provided was \$14,850 of \$46,750.

Regional	The proponents of Country Week submitted an application to the Department to support an innovative promotion campaign showcasing rural NSW through partnerships with employers and Local Government in Sydney. The project is a partnership with Local Government, NSW Government and the Australian Government. Funding of \$110,000 has been provided.
Spring Ridge	The community of Spring Ridge submitted an application for assistance to renovate kitchen facilities in the Community Hall. The Hall is used for pre-school, as a gym as well as for community functions. The project is a partnership between the proponent, the Liverpool Plains Shire Council and the Australian Government. Funding was provided of \$6,500 of \$14,008 through Regional Partnerships.
Steinbrook	The project to attract larger functions to the Steinbrook Community Hall involved Regional Partnerships funding to complete restumping of the hall and purchase a commercial kitchen. The project received \$18,118 of from Regional Partnerships.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Applications endorsed, submitted to the Department and under assessment. 	
Tamworth	The Regional GP Access Project is a project developed by the North West Slopes Division of General Practice to address the severe shortage of doctors in Tamworth. The project is seeking \$378,588 of \$646,440 from Regional Partnerships to establish a medical centre providing access to general practitioners and a training facility for Registrars in a rural location. The project is a partnership between the Tamworth Regional Council, the proponent and the Australian Government.
Severn	The Committee of the Deepwater has worked hard to develop a strong project proposal for the development of a tourist attraction at Deepwater. Deepwater is located on the New England Highway and is proud of its wool industry. The project is seeking \$146,974 of \$319,444 from Regional Partnerships to relocate historic woolsheds to the site, establish visitor and community services in this small community.
Nundle	The Australian Grocery and Corner Store project is a private enterprise initiative to build on the niche tourist attractions at Nundle. The project proposal is seeking \$157,500 of \$470,500 from Regional Partnerships to build and establish a major attraction for a nationally significant collection of grocery and corner store memorabilia. The project will create employment in this small community and increase tourist activity.
Warialda	The Warialda Engineering Pty Ltd project is a partnership between the NSW Government, the proponent and the Australian Government to expand an engineering business in Warialda creating employment, embracing innovation and developing ongoing opportunities. The project is seeking \$169,171.04 of \$85,585.50 from Regional Partnerships.
Regional	The New England North West Rural Communities Leadership programme is a partnership between Local, State and the Australian Government to continue the development of leaders in the region and the Centre for Social Leadership in Sydney. The project involves coordination and marketing opportunities. The project is seeking \$172,396 of \$343,516 from Regional Partnerships.
Glen Innes	The project is to build the Glen Innes Learning Centre to collocate services of TAFE, the UNE and community infrastructure to enable flexible delivery and access to skills and learning in the community. The project is for the development of infrastructure and is seeking \$500,000 of \$2,036,280 for the project.
Mungindi	The Mungindi Progress Association submitted and was unsuccessful with an application for a Rural Transaction Centre. The New England North West ACC worked with the community to develop an application for Regional Partnerships accurately depicting the partnerships and services to be provided.

	The proponents were seeking \$289,392 of \$582,724 and were advised in August that their application was successful.
Hanging Rock	The project will create a place for tourists to stop and visit Hanging Rock. As an information café the project will also be a meeting place for local business and events. The proposal to Regional Partnerships for the Hanging Rock Information Café requested \$26,779 of \$71,284. (The project has been funded in August 2004.)
Moree	The project submitted to Regional Partnerships is to support the workshop and training space and access inside the Moree Plains Gallery. The project is a partnership with the local art gallery foundation, Moree Plains Shire Council, NSW Ministry of the Arts and Regional Partnerships. The application is requesting \$ of \$ from Regional Partnerships.
Warialda	The Warialda CTC is well managed and is a developing business in the Warialda community. The application submitted under Regional Partnerships is to upgrade and enhance facilities available at the Centre. The proponents are seeking \$6,871 of \$18,286 from Regional Partnerships.

- Applications rejected, withdrawn by the proponent and not endorsed to the Department

Wee Waa	St Josephs School developed an application for Regional Partnerships to assist with repairing the recreation area at the school. The project was assessed by the Department and considered to the retrospective as the proponent commenced and completed the project.
Ashford	The project will take advantage of a water license given to the community developing an agricultural and horticultural enterprise in Ashford. Application withdrawn by the proponent.
Armidale	The proponents of the Armidale Cultural Centre and Keeping Place were encouraged to undergo Business Planning for their proposal prior to applying for assistance from Regional Partnerships.

Projects funded that the New England North West ACC continues to assist proponents post funding are;

- Drake RTC, Drake
- Waterfall Track, New England
- Australasian Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Moree

6. **CORE RESPONSIBILITY 3
TO FACILITATE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO OPPORTUNITIES
THROUGHOUT THE REGION.**

To achieve this, the NENWACC will act as a facilitator, catalyst and co-ordinator for regional development by; drawing together a range of avenues and resources by which communities and regions can foster development; working to maintain constructive alliances with all levels of government, business and the community; actively identifying opportunities to bring Whole-of-Government solutions to community and regional issues; facilitating the development and submission of suitable project proposals by local proponents and sharing ownership of the results; and actively seeking out those opportunities that achieve triple-bottom-line sustainability and lend themselves to development through strategic partnerships.

6.1 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Develop a regional services directory for the region to advise communities of services available and reduce duplication.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

Due to Local Government amalgamations the development of a regional services directory has not been completed. The New England Area Health Service adopted a new telephone system and changed numbers for services across the region.

The Indigenous Development Officer has completed a regional services directory for Indigenous communities however the information will be distributed when New England Area Health Service telephone numbers are confirmed.

6.2 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Facilitate and support interagency data gathering and distribution of information for planning.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West ACC collected information for interagency planning in developing the 2004-2007 Strategic Regional Plan and encouraged the regional interagency network NIRA to adopt strategies and initiatives as a regional plan.

Information on population planning is being completed by the NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources which will be available to the New England North West ACC when completed.

6.3 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Develop and maintain links with key natural resource and environmental groups and agencies.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

This report details the activities of the New England North West ACCs links to key natural resource and environmental groups and agencies in sections 5.1, 5.4 and 5.6.

The coordination of natural resource management in the region has been affected by changes to NSW Government Departmental structures. The PlanFirst initiatives announced in 2003-2004 have been replaced by the introduction of Catchment Management Authorities. The ACC will be developing an ongoing relationship with the Catchment Management Authorities in 2004-2005.

6.4 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Facilitate appropriate referral to other agencies as necessary and following up on the results. The ACC is seen as the lead agency in facilitating partnerships in the region.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The achievements in this area are measured by the enquiries database and an equal spread of enquiries across communities. The new structure has contributed greatly to successes in this area. The New England North West ACC has developed a new vision statement "Leading development and diversity in the New England North West region", to be incorporated into marketing and promotional activities.

The vision of the New England North West ACC is to be the leading agent in regional development across the region. With the success of the 2003-2004 financial year the New England North West ACC believes it is positioning itself to be a leader in regional and local development.

6.5 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Facilitate industry and business clusters where appropriate.

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The New England North West ACC has facilitated a number of projects for the development of business or industry clusters.

Pilliga	Merrimborough Landcare Incorporated is located in the Narrabri Shire and have conducted a number of land trails to address soil and production in the region. The New England North West ACC commenced working with the Landcare Group to support the development of agricultural clustering and profitability amongst the 23 members.
Gunnedah	Longpoint irrigation group has established a working relationship with Paradise Farms to assist with growing of sunflowers for the confectionary industry.

To ensure all processes and decisions comply with corporate governance requirements and are transparent and open to scrutiny. The NENWACC will achieve this by; ensuring all activities will comply with good governance practices including sound administrative decision-making, and open and accountable financial management ensuring all members understand what constitutes 'conflict of interest' and openly declare any conflict of interest, perceived or actual; in relation to any discussion or decision of the ACC, ensuring that all matters are handled with integrity and honesty, and in accord with relevant legal obligations, ensuring all activities are conducted in apolitically, non-partisan manner and in such a way as to be beholden to no individual, group or organisation; ensuring all processes and decisions are transparent and open to scrutiny by communities and individuals; ensuring all activities have clearly defined and measurable performance goals and are evaluated against these goals in a timely manner; and seeking to establish the NENWACC as a model of best practice leadership in community development and capacity building.

7.1 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Management will ensure all Board members and staff has a copy of the ACC Handbook and that updates are distributed, Board members and staff need to be aware of corporate governance procedures and responsibilities.

The New England North West ACC provided Board members and staff with an introduction package at the November meeting. The introduction package included roles and responsibilities, contact details, business cards, meeting dates, the constitution and the ACC Handbook.

The ACC Handbook was amended and distributed to members in May 2004. The New England North West ACC is preparing a Handbook that includes all ACC network information as well as operational and policy documents specific to the New England North West ACC.

Information provided to the Board included;

- 'What happens when an election is called?'
- Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet 'Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia's Priority Challenges'
- Possible KPIs for ACCs

Information obtained at meetings with the Department is distributed with Board reports.

7.2 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Management will ensure the administration of ACC is in line with requirements set out in the New England North West ACC Manual and ACC Handbook also ensuring activities are well managed and quality standards adhered to. Management will ensure the constitution of ACC is in line with ACC Handbook.

Information in relation to administration and management is provided in written reports to the Board by the Executive Officer.

The development of the New England North West ACC is in draft form and will be completed in 2004-2005.

7.3 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Staff meetings will be held weekly updating and reviewing internal initiatives.

Staff meetings are held each week. Each staff member provides a written report that forms the basis of minutes and actions.

7.4 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Reports provided to DOTARS are timely and satisfactory. Prepare financial statements and acquittals as per contract schedule.

The New England North West ACC tables reports against the Annual Business Plan to the Board at each meeting. These reports are provided to the Department and become part of the reporting processes.

The letter from the auditor indicates the management of public monies has been completed satisfactorily and the funding has been expended appropriately.

7.5 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Review and evaluate processes and procedures in line with administration of the Regional Partnerships programme. Review and evaluate roles and responsibilities in line with administration of the Regional Partnerships programme.

The staff and Board have developed a number of new procedures and processes to administer and review applications for Regional Partnerships. The procedures and processes are listed on the website of the New England North West ACC. The organisation believes processes and procedures should be transparent and communicated regularly to clients.

New procedures and processes for reviewing applications based on value will be introduced in 2004-2005.

As part of its Marketing and Communications strategy the New England North West ACC receives feedback and comment on processes and reports positive or negative in written reports. The majority of feedback received this financial year has been positive and only 1 complaint was tabled.

7.6 BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVE: Review administration systems, data and information collection.

Procedures and office processes were reviewed in December 2003.

