

annual report

2015 / 2016

REROC

RIVERINA EASTERN REGIONAL
ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

annual report contents

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT	2
SPEAKING OUT	8
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	14
BUILDING COMMUNITIES	19
BUILDING STRATEGIC CAPACITY	23
MANAGING WASTE AND PROMOTING RESOURCE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	29
JOINT ORGANISATION PILOT	35
WORKING WITH OTHERS	37
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	39
MEMBERS' DELEGATES TO REROC	41
REROC MEMBER CONTACT DETAILS	42

chairman's report



Cr Rick Firman OAM, REROC
Acting Chairman

It gives me a great deal of pleasure, albeit with mixed emotions, to present the Chairman's report for the last financial year. We have had similar experiences to other levels of Government with changes in leadership, but for us it has been as a consequence of mergers and

retirements, resulting in REROC having three people fill the position of Chair in the past year.

REROC has seen the most significant restructure of local government in our region, for many years. Frankly, when one reflects, it is quite moving when we see what many of the members of our REROC 'family' have had to go through. However, we are a most resilient group and together we can handle all that comes before us. I am delighted to reflect on some of the outstanding activities REROC has delivered during the 2015-16 year.

Fit for the Future has loomed large across the year as our member councils waited to see what their fate was. REROC responded to inquiries, prepared background materials and supported our members wherever possible. The production of REROC's "Achieving Strategic Capacity through Collaboration" at the end of June 2015 was used by all our member councils in their subsequent responses to the IPART-led Fit for the Future review to demonstrate how they had achieved strategic capacity through their membership of REROC. We believed this

document provided ample, concrete evidence of the work our member councils were doing to not only deliver service efficiencies but also to increase service delivery to their communities. It was disheartening therefore to find on 20 October last year that 5 of our member councils were earmarked for forced mergers.

As a result of the forced mergers REROC's membership has fallen from 12 General Purpose councils to 9 and two county councils. We have lost the community of Urana all together from our membership but continue to service Tumut and Tumbarumba as Snowy Valleys Council and Gundagai and Cootamundra as Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council.

Local Government did call for our much loved sector to be strengthened, we have and continue to support that view, in general terms. We applaud our Local Government Minister, the Hon. Paul Toole for having the courage to tackle reform. However, the manner in which the Government handled certain aspects should have been handled better.

The REROC Board salutes all those Mayors



Former Cr Paul Braybrooks OAM, then REROC Chairman opening the 2015 Mapped Out Conference



Cr Lola Cummins participates in a JO Planning Workshop in - July 2015

including Mr Ian Chaffey (Tumbarumba), Mr Abb McAllister (Gundagai), Mr Pat Bourke (Urana), their Deputy Mayors and councillors who were made 'redundant' as a result of a forced merger. We warmly thank them for their commitment, passion and dedication toward their respective councils and communities. The forced mergers also resulted in the loss of our highly respected former Chairman, Mr Paul Braybrooks OAM. Mr Braybrooks, a former Mayor and councillor of Cootamundra Shire, served for 16 years as our leader and REROC was a major part of his life. We are pleased Mr Braybrooks continues to be part of the REROC Board and Executive, as the Administrator's Delegate for the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council.

REROC's long-serving Deputy Chairperson, Cr Lola Cummins stepped in to replace Mr Braybrooks and this resulted in a vacancy in the Deputy Chair's role. I was elected to the position at the June REROC Board meeting. Cr

Cummins' tenure however, was short as she left in early July for a well-earned trip abroad for two months. Mrs Cummins was REROC's Deputy Chairman for some 14 years. Yet another remarkable commitment and her REROC family warmly thanks Mrs Cummins for her significant contributions. We are saddened Mrs Cummins chose not to seek re-election to Junee Shire, which means she will not be returning to the REROC Board, however we wish her well as she realises there is life after local government.

Our Riverina Joint Organisation (JO) Pilot came to an end in December 2015 and we lodged our final report in early 2016. We participated in the pilot as a way of influencing how the new JO organisations were shaped and we believe that the role was valuable. The membership now needs to consider what will ultimately become of our very 'precious' REROC in the light of the creation of JOs. The legislation is expected to come into effect in early 2017.

Although the JO Pilot came to an end the projects initiated during the Pilot continued: an update of the Regional Freight Transport Plan, the Industrial Mapping Project, the Water and Waste Water Regional Infrastructure Demand Report, and Best Practice in Water Management.

A highlight this year was the establishment of 11 Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) across the region, which was a substantial infrastructure project for the Organisation. The project was the result of a regional funding application lodged by REROC with the Environmental Trust, the largest application of its type lodged in NSW. Over \$700,000 was received to build the CRCs, the funding came from the State Government, "Waste Less Recycle More" initiative.



Lockhart Community Recycling Centre

As a result of the project residents will now be able to take low toxic household waste like paint, oil, CFL tubes and batteries to their closest CRC where they can dispose of the materials free of charge. The EPA is funding the collection and disposal of the waste. Although Urana is no longer a REROC member its residents will continue to enjoy the benefit of the CRC that REROC built. I thank our own Executive Officer, Mrs Julie Briggs and her team, for their significant efforts in making this network a reality.

We have again spent substantial time lobbying on issues that impact on council operations. We have consistently lobbied the Federal Government and met with The Hon. Michael McCormack, Member for Riverina about the failures of the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme (NCRS). The Scheme introduced in 2012 aims to provide free e-waste recycling for residents across Australia by requiring the companies that import the products to pay for the collection and disposal of the waste.

The Federal Government has set national targets for the collection of the waste however it has chosen not to set specific regional targets.

This has meant that the companies can meet their targets by focusing on collections in metropolitan areas and providing lip service to their collection obligations in regional and rural Australia. The REROC member councils are in a fortunate position because REROC, realising the shortcomings of the system, implemented a regional approach and entered into a contractual arrangement with DHL and their successor MRI-PSO for the delivery of the NTCRS. Many other regional communities have not been so fortunate.

We have continued to raise Members' concerns about the rising cost of the Rural Fire Service (RFS). NSW councils meet 11.7% of the RFS's total expenditure, the costs rise every year by more than rate pegging and our members believe this is an unsustainable process. REROC has written to and met with the Minister for Emergency Services, Hon David Elliott to raise our concerns, particularly in relation to the rising costs associated with Head Office operations. We will be continuing this fight in the future especially as a new funding methodology adopted by the RFS is unlikely to address the problem. Member for Wagga Wagga, Daryl Maguire has provided us



77,580kgs of e-waste was collected during the year from participating councils. The Tumut CRC is storing their e-waste until the next collection

with a great deal of assistance in our work in this area.

We have continued to be active in lobbying for improved performance and pricing for street lighting. REROC was invited by the Department of Industry to participate in a review of the NSW Public Lighting Code. REROC has contributed to a number of reviews of the Code and strongly advocated that it should be made mandatory. We are hopeful that the outcome of the current review will be the adoption of a mandatory approach to the Code which includes penalties where the Code is breached. We have also participated in Essential Energy's Street Lighting Consultative Committee it is hoped that this participation will improve overall service provision and facilitate the introduction of LED street lighting. In addition, we have been working with Essential Energy on negotiating pricing for LED street lighting and are hopeful that the final, negotiated price will mean that LED lighting will be rolled out across the REROC region over the next 2 years.

We were invited to join the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) Government and Community Consultation Committee on the introduction of the NSW Container Deposit Scheme (CDS). Our Executive Officer, Mrs Julie Briggs participated in a number of meetings to discuss the CDS and our particular focus was how it could work effectively for regional NSW. In addition REROC prepared a submission on the CDS Discussion Paper advocating for Option One which included redemption for containers captured through kerbside collections, we also requested that all beverage containers be included in the Scheme, not just drink containers.



REROC members attend a consultation to discuss the Draft Riverina-Murray Regional Plan with the Department of Planning and Environment

We continued to provide input into the design of the CDS through participating in the EPA's Local Government Working Party. Our aim is to ensure that the final model works well for rural and regional communities.

We have worked closely with the Department of Planning and Environment on the development of the Riverina-Murray Regional Plan. We had a win when, after writing to the Minister, the Plan's name was changed from Murrumbidgee-Murray Regional Plan to Riverina-Murray. The Plan will be a significant tool in the development of our region and we expect to continue our close working relationship with the DPE on the Plan's implementation once it is approved by Cabinet.

We participated in the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Adapt NSW's project. The project addressed climate change issues in the region and identified possible projects that could be implemented by State and Local governments.

In December 2015, IPART launched a review of the Local Government Rating System. This all-encompassing Review was timely as it raised a

broad range of issues including exemptions from rates, rating categories and how rates are levied and collected. REROC lodged a submission to the Inquiry in May and IPART has recently released its Discussion Paper which makes recommendations based on the feedback received through the Inquiry process.

Our professional officer groups have continued to meet throughout the year, the Planning Technical Committee, the Water and Waste Water Technical Committee, the Infrastructure/Engineers Group, Riverina Spatial Information Group (RivSIG), the Workforce Development sub-Committee, the Youth and Community Network and the REROC Waste Forum meet either bi-monthly or quarterly. These groups are important to the professional development of council staff as well as providing a platform for the development and implementation of REROC projects.

We again ran two very successful conferences "Mapped Out" which focuses on spatial data and "No Time to Waste" which addresses issues in rural and regional waste management and resource recovery. In addition we held our third annual "Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum" which aims to build leadership skills in young people across the region; the event was attended by 120 students. We were also invited by the NSW Government's Youth Opportunities to host the Regional Launch of Youth Week in NSW, this was held in April.

We celebrated the 10th Year of "Build a Bridge and Get Over it!". The program that aims to encourage young people to consider a career in local government engineering. Since its inception approximately 220 students have been through program with about 30% of the attendees going on to study engineering.



Build A Bridge and Get Over It! Celebrated its 10th Anniversary in the rain!

We were extremely pleased that REROC's application for Fixing Country Roads funding was successful. The funding will result in 25 bridges and culverts across the region being assessed for HML use. The project was identified through REROC's Regional Freight Transport Plan and when completed should remove significant impediments to HML transport in the region.

We continued our work in waste management and resource recovery. Our Safe Sharps website has grown to over 2,100 locations across Australia, we launched the Compost Doctor website which allows users to ask questions about composting and get answers from an expert. We organised visits by the King and Queen of Green to every LGA in the region and launched a new education program called "Trash Talk" for high school students.

This is an overall 'snap shot' of the very busy programme that REROC immerses itself in. On reflection, there is a great deal that has been achieved because we made the choice to work together, and every REROC member can be justifiably proud of the results.

The REROC Board formally acknowledges our much loved and respected, Mrs Julie Briggs and her team. Mrs Briggs is essentially the glue that holds the REROC family together. Her respect and affection for every member council of REROC runs very deep, and I have witnessed this first hand, particularly over recent months.

To conclude, I would like to thank the entire REROC Board for their confidence and support in me, whilst being in the Acting Chairman's role. I have learned a great deal, have tried my very best, and have enjoyed it immensely. Let us

always remember, those of us who are honoured to be involved in local government, we are a 'family'. We have our occasional disagreements, however they pale into insignificance when we reflect on what worthwhile and significant projects REROC has delivered and continues to achieve.

Thank you very much.



Cr. Rick Firman OAM
ACTING CHAIRMAN - REROC



Former Cr Paul Braybrooks OAM, then REROC Chairman speaks to attendees at the REROC AGM held at Parliament House in October 2015.

Advocacy, representation and lobbying are important activities that REROC undertakes on behalf of its membership. We pride ourselves on our ability to reach consensus and to speak as one on issues that are of vital importance to local government. We are stronger for it and we believe that by providing a regional platform from which to advocate for our councils and the communities they represent, we are able to have a significant impact on outcomes for the region.

REROC tackled a wide range of issues during 2015-16 from the perennial issues of concern such as street lighting and the rising costs of the Rural Fire Service to new issues in regional planning and the roll out of the NBN.

Fit for the Future

The Fit for the Future caravan rolled through the region during 2015-16 with devastating results for the REROC "family" when the forced mergers of Urana, Tumut, Tumbarumba, Gundagai and Cootamundra councils were announced and implemented in May.

We had hoped that the councils and REROC had demonstrated to the Government's satisfaction that by working together in a ROC councils were achieving the strategic capacity that was demanded by Fit for the Future. REROC had prepared an extensive document demonstrating the initiatives that had been implemented for and by the Member Councils over the previous years that created savings in excess of \$45 million.

REROC also raised strong concerns, writing to the Premier and the Local Government Minister, about the rushed nature of the IPART review of the Fit for the Future submissions. We gave voice to our doubts as to whether IPART had sufficient time to properly consider each council submission which in most cases ran to hundreds of pages. Nevertheless, the process which started with such hope at Destination 2036 ended as a black cloud which hung over the Organisation from October 2015 when the initial merger proposals were put forward until the final announcements were made in May 2016.

As a consequence of the forced mergers



Tim Hurst, Acting CEO of Office of Local Government speaks to Cr Ian Chaffey, Mayor Tumbarumba and Kay Whitehead GM of Tumbarumba, Graeme Haley GM of Riverina Water and Bede Spanagle Director of Engineering at Riverina Water at NSW Parliament House after the announcement of the forced council mergers.

REROC's membership has fallen from twelve General Purpose councils to nine. Tumbarumba and Tumut have merged to form Snowy Valleys Council and Cootamundra and Gundagai are now the Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council. Urana has been merged with Corowa to form Federation Council and as a result the Urana community is no longer part of REROC.

An important part of the Fit for the Future program is the introduction of Joint Organisations, every council in regional NSW will be required to be a member of a Joint Organisation. REROC participated in a Joint Organisation Pilot which ran from November 2014 until December 2015. Members wanted to ensure that they were part of the Pilot process because we believed that would be the best way in which the ROC could provide input and advice on the structure of the JOs.

We worked closely with the OLG and the other four Pilot organisations, meeting regularly, reviewing progress and providing input into the developing JO structure. The OLG released a Discussion Paper on the JOs towards the end of 2015 and following the conclusion of the REROC Pilot we provided a comprehensive report on the JO's activities as well as identifying issues in relation to its adoption. Originally the Minister had planned that legislation for JOs would go to Parliament in about April 2016 with JOs kicking off in September 2016. However, delays ensued and as a result it is now anticipated that JOs will finally come into operation in early 2017.

Improving our Level of Interaction with State and Federal Government

REROC members agreed that it was important we raise our profile with State Members of Parliament and the decision was made to hold last year's AGM in the Strangers' Dining Room at Parliament House.



Hon Rick Colless MLC, Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Planning, in discussion with Cr Pat Bourke, Mayor of Urana Shire and Cr Lola Cummins, Mayor of Junee, at Parliament House

Ministers and members were invited to attend to hear about REROC's involvement in the Joint Organisation Pilot and to view progress on some of the JO's projects: the revision of the Regional Freight Transport Plan and the Industrial Mapping Project.

While the Deputy Premier Hon Troy Grant was not able to stay for lunch, he did drop in and meet with members. Hon Jillian Skinner, the Hon Duncan Gay, the Hon Rick Colless attended while local members Hon Katrina Hodgkinson, Daryl Maguire and Greg Aplin were in all attendance. Tim Hurst, the Acting CEO of the Office of Local Government also attended.

The lunch was an excellent opportunity to raise REROC's flag with State politicians, unfortunately a lot of the gloss of the event was taken away when the Government decided that the Premier and the Minister for Local Government would announce the outcomes of the Fit for the Future on the same day.

Daryl Maguire, Member for Wagga Wagga, was invaluable in providing assistance in the organisation of the lunch and hosting the lunch.

We have also taken the opportunity during the year to meet more often with our local members and also to take opportunities to meet with Ministers when the opportunity arises. We have met with Hon Michael McCormack, Federal Member for the Riverina to discuss issues as diverse as the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme, the loss of indexation on FAG's funding and the lack of access to telephony services during a blackout once NBN is in place.

We have met a number of times with Daryl Maguire in his role as Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services and as our local member to talk about concerns with the Rural Fire Service, the ongoing council merger issues and the loss of the Community Sharps Management program.

Street Lighting Issues

Every year councils in our region pay many thousands of dollars for the cost of street lighting. The bulk of the cost is in the maintenance charges, which are approved by the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) in Pricing Determinations which are set for 5 year periods REROC participated in consultations and lodged a submission in relation to the 2009-2014



Tony Donoghue, GM at Coolamon and REROC Treasurer has represented REROC at meetings reviewing the NSW Public Lighting Code

Determination and the 2014-2019 Determination.

This year the focus has been on pricing for the introduction of LED lighting. The introduction of LED lights will substantially reduce the amount of energy used for street lighting and consequently reduce the amount of money councils expend on energy. Overseas and local LED experiences also indicate that LEDs should also reduce the cost of maintaining street lighting.

The last AER Determination did not set a price for the maintenance of LED street lights therefore REROC together with CENTROC, and Canberra Region JO have entered into negotiations with Essential Energy to set a price for maintenance on LED lighting. Many of our councils want to introduce this type of lighting, however as the maintenance costs represent about 80% of the total cost of the lights it will be the maintenance charge that will be a significant determinant in whether we look at a bulk roll out of the lighting.

This year REROC was also invited to participate in a Working Group put together by the Department of Industry to consider a review of the NSW

Public Lighting Code. REROC embraced the opportunity because we have long held the belief that Code needed to be mandatory if it was to have any authority at all.

NSW councils rely on the Code to ensure that organisations like Essential Energy provide services at the levels equivalent to the undertakings they provided to the AER at the time of the relevant Pricing Determination. There is a disconnect between the setting of the price for street light maintenance and the enforcement of the service levels. The AER can only set the price based on the promises that the service provider gave when it made its pricing submission, councils must turn to the Code to enforce the service levels. The Code is not mandatory but a guide, so in reality there is nowhere to go. We are hopeful the latest review of the Code will result in the introduction of mandatory requirements.

IPART Review of the Local Government Rating System

In December 2015 IPART launched a significant review of the Local Government Rating System. The Review is considering every aspect of the system with the exception of rate pegging.

An Issues Paper was released in April 2016 that looked at everything from whether the Unimproved Value of land or the Capital Improved Value should be the basis of the rating system to how councils collect bad debts. REROC responded to the Issues Paper in May following an extensive consultation with the member councils.

IPART's released its Draft Report on the Review in August 2016 and will release its Final Report in

December 2016.

Rural Fire Service

REROC member councils continue to be concerned about the rising costs of the Rural Fire Service (RFS). The RFS appears to enjoy immunity from the requirements of other State agencies to provide efficiency dividends and to do more with less.

RFS charges have consistently increased beyond rate pegging and CPI, a situation which Member Councils believe is unsustainable. We have written to Minister for Emergency Services, Hon David Elliott in relation to the problem, particularly raising our concerns about the increasing costs of the VASS, which is primarily used to fund Head Office operations.

While the RFS is supposed to negotiate with councils about the level of service provision, we are consistently finding that the negotiation is a one-sided activity and that the projected expenditure for councils is usually much less than what is finally billed.

Councils pay 11.7% of the cost of the RFS, the State Government pays only 7.6% while insurance holders pick up the rest of the tab. The estimated budget for the RFS in the 2015-2016 Financial Year is \$315 million, the budget increases by over 3.5% every year. REROC firmly believes that the RFS should, at least in relation to its Head Office expenditure, be held to the same level of fiscal discipline as other State agencies.

A new funding methodology introduced by the RFS, without consultation, on 1 July will ingrain local government contributions at a much higher

level than was previously the case and result in less input from local councils about the service levels and equipment needs for their local brigades.

REROC will continue to lobby about this issue to try and obtain a better outcome not just for our Member Councils but for councils across NSW.

NSW Container Deposit Scheme

REROC took up the opportunity to participate in the EPA's Government and Community Advisory Committee on the roll out of a Container Deposit Scheme in NSW. REROC has been advocating for the introduction of the Scheme, as have many others, for over a decade and it was pleasing that the Government finally recognised the many benefits that a CDS would provide for the State.

In February the EPA released its CDS Discussion Paper, REROC responded, supporting Option One which included that redemptions be applied to containers captured through kerbside collections. We also asked that all beverage containers be included in the Scheme. The Final Regulatory Structure was released in August 2016 with a view to further consultation on the final delivery mechanism.

REROC is excited by the opportunities that CDS provides, particularly as the Final Structure includes redemptions for containers collected through household, kerbside recycling. This will completely change the economics of recycling for local government across regional and rural NSW where subsidising kerbside recyclable materials' collections is the norm.

We will continue to provide input into the design of the CDS through participating in the EPA Local

Government Working Party. Our aim is to ensure that the final model works well for rural and regional communities.

National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme

We continue to lobby for a rural and regional collection target to be set for this Scheme. We firmly believe that until the Federal Government takes this step rural and regional communities across Australia will continue to receive a second-rate service.

The National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme (NTCRS) is supposed to provide all Australians with reasonable access to free disposal of their e-waste. The reality for rural and regional communities is that the legislation only requires that they be provided with a collection within 150kms of where they live at least once a year. The effect is that most communities are not



Tim Macgillcuddy, Operations Manager of Kurrajong Recyclers talks to councils about processing e-waste

benefiting at all from the Scheme.

In the REROC region we have been able to create a situation where it is easier to operate the NTCRS because REROC provides all the logistics for the collections including organising transport. However, our situation is unusual and we are aware that we are on short term contracts in relation to the service.

We have met with Hon Michael McCormack to raise the problems with the Scheme, we believe the only workable solution is to force service providers to come to the country by setting a collection target for regional areas. Currently providers are set a national target and are able to meet that target through services delivered in metropolitan areas.

NSW Upper House Inquiry into Regional Planning

We responded to this Inquiry, with the Planning Technical Committee providing much of the input. One of the issues that the Inquiry specifically considered was whether there was a need in NSW for planning legislation that was specifically for rural and regional areas.

REROC's submission concluded that this was not required, however we have advocated for a greater role for the State in making investments in infrastructure such as electricity, gas, water and roads that leads to development. We believe that first movers are discouraged by the cost of establishing baseline infrastructure which is usually gifted to the utilities' supplier and then subsequently shared with industries and businesses that move later. This is a disincentive to being a first mover particularly when locating

to a greenfield site.

REROC believes there is room for the State to provide this baseline infrastructure as a catalyst for industrial development.

workforce development

REROC delivers a number of projects that are intended to support workforce development. The Workforce Development Committee has continued its work to identify ways to support councils in their human resource functions and to promote careers in local government.

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

No Time to Waste

This Conference was established by REROC to specifically address the challenges faced in delivering waste management and resource recovery solutions in regional and rural locations. REROC's Waste Forum members identify issues, initiatives and ideas that are of interest, particularly to local government, we engage speakers who will be able to provide examples of projects that have worked in rural and regional areas.

Almost 80 people attended the 2016 Conference which was held at the CSU Conference Centre on 1 June. The Conference was sponsored by the NSW EPA and showcased a wide breadth of



Participants at this year's No Time to Waste Conference.



Garry Stoll from Leeton Shire Council and Mark Bradley from Snowy Valleys Council at this year's No Time to Waste Conference

projects that had been or could be implemented in rural and regional locations. Once again the Trade Show area was completely booked out, giving attendees the opportunity to see some of the latest technological innovations, products and services in the waste management and resource recovery field.

Keynote speaker for 2016 was Dr Ron Wainberg. Dr Wainberg has had a long career in waste management and resource recovery and most recently worked with Hyder Consulting before joining MRA Consulting. Dr Wainberg's topic was "Waste – where did we come from and where are we now?" His address looked at the 25 years of waste management in NSW, the success stories and failures and drew out some of the lessons learned.

Alex Young from the EPA also attended to provide an update on the NSW Container Deposit Scheme just weeks after the NSW Premier's 8th May announcement that NSW would introduce a CDS by July 2017. The CDS will be one of the biggest reforms in waste management and resource recovery in NSW and Alex was able



2016 No Time to Waste Conference

to provide attendees with details about the containers that would be captured by the CDS as well as the processes that would be undertaken to design the Scheme and the legislation. The Conference included a Panel Discussion with Dr Wainberg, Alex Young and Tim Macgillycuddy from Kurrajong Recyclers about the CDS implementation.

Other speakers which came from across NSW and interstate were:

- Bianca Richards, from the NSW EPA who spoke about Energy from Waste and the Implications for councils.
- Paul Somerville, from the Rural City of Wangaratta who talked about the development of the City's Waste Management Strategy.
- Colin Kane, from Greater Hume Shire. Colin spoke about the Council's Rural Landfill Consolidation project which was conducted with a grant from the EPA.
- Adam Faulkner from East Waste in South Australia. Adam works with six councils

in Adelaide to deliver 180,000 kerbside collections every week. Adam's presentation talked about the issues associated with regional contracting.

- Julie Briggs, REROC's Executive Officer spoke about the benefits of regional procurement for waste projects, drawing on REROC's experience with regional contracts for the construction of 11 CRCs in the eastern Riverina.
- Tim Macgillycuddy from Kurrajong Recyclers spoke about the problems created by contamination in the recycling stream.

Speaker presentations from the Conference can be downloaded from the REROC Waste Forum website.

Mapped Out

This annual conference focuses on the use of spatial data and mapping as a planning tool and a mechanism for delivering services more efficiently. The Conference showcases the



REROC's Executive Officer, Julie Briggs, opening the 2015 Mapped Out Conference



Cr Paul Braybrooks OAM cutting the cake for the 10th anniversary of Mapped Out. Joining him are the Mapped Out Working Party and Julie Briggs

applications, technologies and spatial services that can be applied to government services and operations.

The event is organised by the Riverina Spatial Information Group (RivSIG) and REROC. It is an important professional development activity for staff working in the spatial data field, providing them with the opportunity to meet staff from other councils and build networks as well as learn from a diverse range of guest speakers.

The 2015 Conference was the 10th anniversary of the event, which drew almost 100 people from across southern NSW and northern Victoria. Our Trade Show stands were also booked out. The Trade Show is an important part of the event as it allows attendees to see the latest in services, technology and equipment.

Speakers that presented at the 2015 Conference were:

- Peter Florent, Department of Human Services who spoke about the impact of addressing standards on the delivery of Commonwealth payments and services.

- Tony Gill, NSW OEH, who spoke about mapping the changes in vegetation cover in NSW.
- Rob Owers and Andrew Haley from Wagga Wagga City Council talked about using mobile mapping to reduce trenching disasters.
- Aparna Lai from the National Centre for Geographic Resources and Analysis in Primary Health Care spoke about enabling location privacy without losing location accuracy.
- Peter Holt from NSW DPE who spoke about progress on ePlanning and the challenges ahead.
- Michael Haines from VANZI spoke about the role of Spatial Surveyor in creating digital built environments.
- Suzie Holbery and Michael Leane from Riverina Local Land Services talked about their aerial survey project which utilised infrared camera technology to track vertebrate pests in the Riverina.

Presentations from the Conference can be downloaded from the REROC website. The 2016 Conference will be held on 10 November 2016.



Participants at the 2015 Mapped Out Conference

GROWING OUR OWN

Build a Bridge...and Get Over It!

This year was a milestone, when Build a Bridge hit its 10 year anniversary. The Program which aims to encourage high school students to consider a career in civil engineering is an initiative of the REROC Engineers' Group and Compact, delivered in partnership with Compact.

Build a Bridge is a 3 day camp held at Borambola Recreation Centre, the Camp is sponsored by the NSW IPWEA. Entry to the Camp is competitive, students are required to complete an application for admission outlining what they think a civil engineer does and why they think they would like a career in the field. Schools sign-off on the applications, validating that the student would be able to meet the requirements of an engineering degree program.

The Camp runs under the guidance of Nigel Worne. Nigel is a highly experienced construction engineer who has worked on the Camp since its inception, designing the course materials and activities the students undertake. He is supported by engineers from the REROC member councils who attend each day of the Camp to mentor the students and assist them in their tasks. The IPWEA and the RMS also provide engineers to assist with the Camp.

The students are divided into four teams each team is required to design and cost a bridge that will be constructed across an anabranch of the Borambola Creek. The students assess each of the bridge designs against an agreed criteria and the winning design is constructed across the creek on the final day of the Camp.



Students work in teams during the 3 day Camp and start off with team building exercises to get to know each other



Students continue to work in teams to produce a model of the bridge they have designed



The size of the creek bed that the students must work across to construct their bridge



Wet weather at Build a Bridge presented an extra challenge for students

Usually students walk across the bridge they have built to collect their certificates at "graduation" however during this year's Camp it was too wet and muddy so graduation was moved inside.

Work Inspirations

Work Inspirations is a program that aims to encourage young people to consider a career in local government. Greater Hume piloted the program in 2014-15 and again delivered it in 2015-16. Students from Billabong High School attended the day long program which provided students with the opportunity to hear and see some of the career opportunities that local government provides.

The day involved on-site activities, practical demonstrations, and explanations of the different areas of Council and the employment opportunities available. Work Inspirations assists participating councils to develop long-

term relationships with local students who may be interested in council-based traineeships, apprenticeships or cadetships to meet future recruitment needs.

The Work Inspirations Project is a three phased approach; the first being a day-long, group activity introducing students to the work of councils, the second stage is work experience, the third stage work placements and then finally school-based apprenticeships or trainee-ships. It is based on successful Work Inspirations projects carried out in other parts of Australia.

Managing Difficult Conversations Workshop

The Workforce Development Group organised two workshops on Managing Difficult Conversations which were held in March. The workshops focused on how staff in supervisory positions could have a conversation with their staff.

Delivered by Time2Talk the workshops were completely filled and feedback from participants was very positive.

Compact Careers Day

The Workforce Development Group participated in the Compact Careers Day which was held at Kyeamba Smith Hall in October. We joined other local employers and training institutions to promote careers in local government.

Students were scheduled to attend throughout the day, unfortunately numbers attending were smaller than anticipated. Members of the Workforce Development Group were rostered on throughout the day to speak to attendees.

building communities

Local government plays an important role in building communities. REROC supports this role mainly through the operation of the Youth & Community Development Network which brings together council staff working in community services and community development. Eastern Riverina Arts plays an important role in the delivery of the Networks' projects assisting in the formulation of ideas and supporting the development of projects. REROC has also formed a productive relationship with NSW Youth Opportunities and this year we jointly delivered the Get Ready Forum as part of the launch of NSW Youth Week.

As advised in last year's Annual Report, REROC was fortunate to receive a second Youth Opportunities grant of \$37,000 in early 2015 to continue to hold the Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum and the Take Charge and Volunteer project.



Cindy Smith from the former Gundagai Council addressing students in the Linking with your Local Government Youth contact at the Youth Leadership Forum

Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum

The third Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum was held on Friday 28 August 2015 at Joyes Hall, Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga. 152 people participated in the day which included 116 students and 15 teachers from 17



Students flying their paper planes at the Youth Leadership Forum



Thom Paton from Eastern Riverina Arts conducting a workshop on Taking a Project from Concept to Fruition

schools. Students came from across the REROC region and listened to inspirational presentations including Aiden Harrison, the founder of "Swish Start" - an initiative aimed at educating youth about mental health through basketball, Zoe Lamont, who has been involved in a number of social impact programs including being the founder of "10thousandgirl", a financial literacy program for women across Australia and "Future Map", a financial wellbeing program for the workplace. Dylan Parker and James Norton - THE PAPER PILOTS - the only Paper Plane Educational team in Australia and the inspiration behind the Australian movie Paper Planes provided an address about their amazing journey and ran workshops on making paper planes.

Students also had the opportunity to participate in the following workshops:

- Taking a Project from Concept to Fruition - Thom Paton, Eastern Riverina Arts
- Linking with your Local Government Youth contact - all the council representatives from the Youth & Community Development Network

- Paper Plane workshops which included a competition at the end of the day to see whose plane covered the greatest distance.

The aim of the day was to bring together young people who had shown leadership qualities to have a voice locally and build self-esteem. The day was a huge success with student and teacher evaluations strongly supporting the event.

Take Charge and Volunteer

Take Charge and Volunteer, which REROC launched in August 2014, aims to make it easier for young people to volunteer by connecting them with volunteer organisations.

The website can be found at www.takecharge.org.au

This year our goal was to promote the project more heavily to young people and volunteer organisations. We engaged Georgia Briggs who has substantial volunteering experience to visit schools across the region to talk about the benefits of volunteering and the Take Charge website. Georgia, as the Take Charge & Volunteer Ambassador, visited 14 high schools and spoke to



Georgia Briggs & Claire Donoghue from REROC promoting the Take Charge & Volunteer website at the Get Ready Forum

approximately 3,000 students across the REROC region. As a result of the schools' visits, there was an increase in sign-ups on the website by students.

We set up a stand at "Get Ready" and took the opportunity to explain the website to the students and sign them up on the day.

We have also written to community organisations across the Region explaining the Take Charge and Volunteer project and encouraging them to sign up.

Get Ready Forum

In February, the team from NSW FACs that is responsible for Youth Opportunities approached REROC to host the Regional Launch of Youth Week in NSW. The Launch event was themed

"Get Ready" and focused on young people's preparedness for emergencies. The Forum was held on Tuesday 5 April 2016 at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga.



Marilyn Gilbert from the former Tumut Shire Council talking with the students participating in the Get Ready Forum



Students participating in the Get Ready Forum



"Get Ready" was sponsored through the Office of Emergency Management and was an all-hazards' disaster preparedness and resilience building initiative. The aim of the Forum was to enable young people in the Riverina to provide input and advice on creative, collective, innovative and sustainable approaches to disaster preparedness.

93 students attended the event from years 7 to 12 and they were accompanied by 9 teachers. The students came from 10 schools across the region with almost all our member councils represented at the event



The event included demonstrations of emergency services equipment. The attendees were able to crawl through and over apparatus, use the equipment and talk to the emergency services' workers. There were information stands available on the day for each of the emergency services' groups and we also had one for the Take Charge and Volunteer

We received a lot of positive feedback from the event with Youth Opportunities and the Office of Emergency Management very pleased with the outcomes



Students were able to try the equipment from RFS and SES

building strategic capacity

One of REROC's major activities is in assisting councils to build their strategic capacity through creating economies of scale and scope by working together. Since its inception in 1994 REROC Member Councils have actively sought out ways in which they can work collaboratively to improve the services they deliver to the communities they serve. Over the years resource sharing activities as they became known have covered almost every facet of council operations from spatial data activities to aged care and youth.

REROC and its Member Councils have a strong commitment to working collaboratively to achieve both direct costs savings but also to ensure that we do not duplicate efforts, where more than one council needs to undertake the same activity it makes sense to work together. We have found consistently over the years that by working together we build the strategic capacity of our Member Councils, their staff and the communities they service.

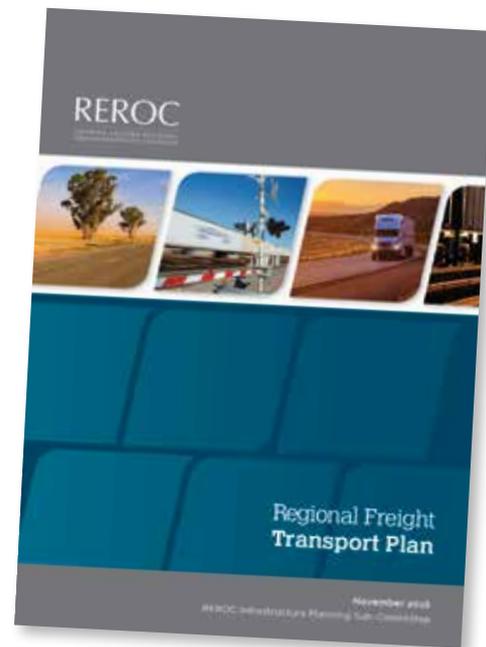
The JO Pilot which was completed in December 2015 focussed on building strategic capacity and the Member Councils made the decision to invest in projects that we knew would benefit from collaborating not just with other Member councils but also with State agencies. Our collaborative efforts with State agencies, particularly Department of Planning and Environment on the Riverina-Murray Regional Plan and planning issues generally, with RMS on the Freight Transport Plan, the Department of Industry on our Industrial Land Mapping Project and DPI Water on our Water and Waste Water project have been very fruitful. We continue to work with the DPC locally to build our networks with State agencies

in order to enhance and improve our services to our Member Councils.

COLLABORATING STRATEGICALLY

REROC Regional Freight Transport Plan

The goal of the Regional Freight Transport Plan is to deliver an integrated, regional approach to freight transport planning for the eastern Riverina region in order to achieve a network of efficient and effective freight transport routes. The Plan, which identifies the constraints to network efficiency in the region, is supported by a mapping tool that can be accessed at www.reroc.giscloud.com.



The REROC Regional Freight Transport Plan has been updated this year.

The Plan has been used by our Member Councils to support applications for funding for road improvements and particularly to support applications for Fixing Country Roads. The Plan demonstrates the seriousness with which our Member Councils approach the need for regional solutions to freight transport.

Throughout this year we have been working on refining both the written plan and the mapping tool. Eventually REROC expects that the mapping tool will be the primary source of information for the Transport Plan as we will be able to update it more easily.

In preparing the latest version of the Plan we have consulted with the South-east Softwoods Working Group and industry particularly through the Port of Melbourne, where David Bardos' support has been invaluable. We have also worked with the RMS on the development of the Plan.

The Plan is a great example of the benefits of collaboration at a regional level. It is a highly detailed document with every council having provided input. It brings all the issues impacting on freight transport in the region together in a single document and the use of the mapping tool which runs on the Cloud has enhanced the integrity and accessibility of the project.

The Freight Transport Plan is continually held up as an exemplar of councils working together. The project was showcased at the ALGA National Local Roads and Transport Congress held in Ballarat in November 2015 and at the Municipal Association of Victoria's 2016 National Local Government Infrastructure and Asset Management Conference.

Industrial Land Mapping Project

This project was initiated as a result of discussions with the Department of Industry about their needs in relation to promoting the region to potential incoming businesses. It was agreed that the most effective way to provide information on the location of industrial land in the region would be spatially.

It was decided that we would use the existing Freight Transport Plan mapping capability and build on that by adding a new layer of information that contained data on industrial land in the region. Each Member Council provided data on the land they had zoned for industrial use, in addition information was provided on whether services were connected and if the land was already developed.

The data created a layer of planning information that can be accessed at www.reroc.giscloud.com. The layer is connected to the Freight Transport



Azaria Dobson from the Department of Planning and Environment leads a consultation on the Riverina-Murray Plan in Wagga Wagga

Plan which means that users are able to access information on the land and then use the Freight Transport data to see how close the land is to HML routes, grain storage, railways and major roads.

We believe that once the project is finalised it will become a very powerful economic development tool, putting our region ahead of many others in regional NSW.

Riverina-Murray Regional Plan

We have worked very collaboratively with the Department of Planning and Environment on the many iterations of this Plan. The Plan focuses on land use issues but also considers bigger issues in relation to our vision for growth in the region and how we might support that.

The Planning Technical Committee has provided a lot of feedback into the Plan and the DPE has also organised numerous consultations on it. It is hoped that it will reach finalisation by the end of 2016 and that we will then look at the ways we can collaborate on its implementation.

Water and Waste Water Infrastructure Demand Project

This is a project of the Water and Waste Water Committee which is compiling a document that collates all the infrastructure plans for water and waste water in the region. The goal of project is to identify opportunities for Member Councils to work together on delivering that infrastructure and particularly to seek opportunities for joint procurement.

Contaminated Land Project

REROC and RAMROC successfully submitted a joint application for funding to deliver this project across the Riverina-Murray region. The project which is funded by the NSW EPA specifically addresses the way in which councils manage the problem of contaminated land.

The project which is led by Jacqui Bright has focused on building the capacity of councils to deal with contaminated land. At the end of last year, a Working Party was established to develop a generic Contaminated Land Policy which could be customised and adopted by the participating councils. A very collaborative work has resulted in a high quality document that is meeting the needs of the participating councils. The development of the Policy was supported by training in Contaminated Land Management organised by Jacqui and delivered by the EPA and a local law firm.

REROC and RAMROC have funding for the project until mid-2017 and it is planned that there will be a stronger focus on capacity building for councils through the provision of more training opportunities.

COLLABORATING OPERATIONALLY

REROC has a number of special interest groups and sub-committees that draw their membership from Member Councils' operational staff and in some instances, General Managers. These groups provide a valuable platform by which Members can learn from each other and also identify projects that can be implemented at a regional level by REROC.

REROC Waste Forum

The Waste Forum is one of 8 Voluntary Regional Waste Groups (VRWG) operating in NSW and consequently receives on-going funding from the EPA, through the "Waste Less Recycle More" initiative to deliver programs in waste management and resource recovery. In addition, it takes on activities that deal with environmental issues. The Forum is chaired by Coolamon Shire Council General Manager, Tony Donoghue with Greg Ewings from Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council providing support as the Deputy Chair.

The Group meets on a bi-monthly basis and its activities are showcased in the section Managing Waste, Promoting Resource Recovery and Environmental Sustainability.

Riverina Spatial Information Group (RivSIG)

RivSIG is unusual because it draws its membership from beyond the ranks of REROC member councils. Although the Group started as a professional development initiative for staff from Member Councils working in the spatial data field it has grown to become a truly regional group drawing members from across the Riverina and from State agencies as well. The Group is chaired by Laurie Thiele from Wagga Wagga City Council.

RivSIG takes the lead role in the organisation of the "Mapped Out" Conference and provides staff working in spatial data with much needed networking and professional development opportunities.



Chair of RivSIG, Laurie Thiele welcomes delegates to the 2015 Mapped Out Conference

Infrastructure/Engineers Sub-committee

The Infrastructure sub-committee was established to fulfil the infrastructure goals contained in the REROC Action Plan. During 2016 it was decided that it would be more efficient to combine this committee and the Engineers Group together to form a single committee. The Committee is chaired by Coolamon Shire Council General Manager, Tony Donoghue.

The Committee considers major infrastructure issues in the region and is primarily concerned with the delivery of the REROC Regional Freight Transport Plan as well as our Mobile Phone Black Spot project. The Committee has also continued to monitor issues such as the Grain Harvest Management Scheme and the NHVR consent regime.

Planning Technical Committee

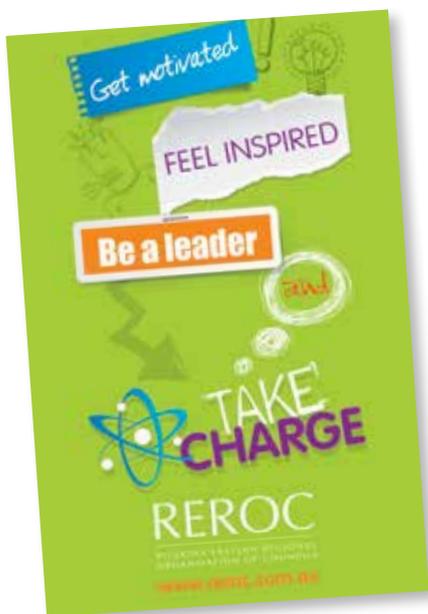
This Committee was established as a result of the JO Pilot and has continued with its quarterly meetings following the conclusion of the Pilot.

The Committee brings together staff working in planning in Member Councils and representatives from the Department of Planning and Environment also attend meetings when possible.

The Committee has had a key role in providing input to the Riverina-Murray Regional Plan and the Industrial Mapping Project as well as providing feedback on activities like the Upper House Inquiry into Regional Planning.

Youth and Community Development Network

The REROC Youth & Community Development Network brings together all the council staff working with youth and community development in the REROC region. The Network meets bi-monthly and aims to assist member councils by working together to enhance youth and community development services in the region.



Take Charge is an initiative of the Youth and Community Development Network

The Network continues to invite service providers as guest speakers to the meetings as this allows both the providers and the member councils to work together to provide youth focussed services to local council areas.

Water and Waste Water Technical Committee



Water and Waste Water Committee meets to discuss Best Practice in Water Management and IWCM with NSW DPI Water

This Committee was established during the JO Pilot and has continued to meet intermittently during the year. The Committee is comprised of council staff from the General Purpose councils that are working in water and waste water and from the both county councils. NSW DPI Water also attend meetings when appropriate to provide support in areas such as Best Practice in Water Management.

The Committee is looking at ways to introduce more energy efficiency into the operation of water and waste water plants, meeting Best Practice, meeting Integrated Water Cycle Management guidelines and developing a Regional Infrastructure Demand Study.

Workforce Development Sub-committee

This committee meets on a quarterly basis to address issues that relate to Member Council's human resource and workforce development issues. The Committee is chaired by Steve Pinnuck General Manager of Greater Hume Shire Council

The Committee is the driving force behind increasing engagement with high school students and the promotion of careers in local government. It was responsible for the introduction of the Work Inspirations program and also worked on the Compact Careers Day.

COLLABORATIVE PROCUREMENT

Community Recycling Centre Project

There were a number of collaborative procurement opportunities that arose throughout this project:

1. Construction of eleven CRC sheds – the construction of the sheds was put out to a group tender. Tenderers could bid to build all eleven sheds, or bid for a cluster of sheds or more than one cluster of sheds. This proved to be a very successful approach as substantial savings were generated through this approach. The most competitive bids came from local suppliers, which was pleasing because it meant that the money stayed in the local area.



Collaborative procurements for the regional CRC project generated substantial savings. The Lockhart CRC is pictured here.

2. Purchase of Forklifts - each of the CRCs required a forklift we were again able to use the economies of size generated through a group purchase to gain purchasing benefits.
3. Personal Protective Equipment and Safety Equipment – again we were able to aggregate our purchasing needs for equipment like spill kits, first aid, fire extinguishers and eye wash facilities to obtain substantial savings for our Member Councils.
4. Signage – each CRC required up to 14 signs per site. Again REROC put together group purchasing opportunities, sought quotes from a variety of local suppliers in order to achieve competitive pricing for the products.

While putting together multiple quotes and tenders for multiple sites and a vast array of products was very challenging, we believe we were able to generate substantial savings that we were able to utilise to improve the project's outcomes.

managing waste and promoting resource recovery and environmental sustainability

The Waste Forum continued to develop and promote projects under its current Regional Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy 2014-2021. The strategy includes an Action Plan which guides the Forum's projects until 30 June 2017. This strategy has been supported by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) with funding from the Waste Levy. The strategy projects are implemented and managed by Tracey Cornell, REROC's Waste Forum Co-ordinator.

The Waste Forum continues to meet every second month and the projects undertaken by the Forum are included on the website www.waste.reroc.com.au. A written report on Waste Forum activities is included in the REROC Board papers and a verbal report is given at each bi-monthly meeting.

Information on the Forum's response to CDS and its very successful No Time to Waste Conference are mentioned in other sections of this report.

COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRES

As reported in last year's Annual report, REROC was successful in receiving \$705,720 in funding to develop 11 Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) in the REROC region. Along with the original funding, we received an additional \$138,430 to install signage at all CRCs and to implement our education strategy. It must be acknowledged that both REROC and each participating council also contributed funding to the project by way of site preparation, roadworks, PPE and contributions towards the building of the sheds.



Tumut's completed CRC shed



After the signage has been installed at the Culcairn CRC site

The CRCs will collect low toxic problem wastes such as paint, oil, batteries, gas cylinders, smoke detectors and fluorescent tubes. The Centres are free for residents to use with the EPA covering the cost of the collection and disposal of the materials.

The CRCs are located in: Coolamon, Cootamundra, Culcairn, Gundagai, Junee, Lockhart, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Urana and West Wyalong.

All 11 CRCs have been completed and additions such as signage and PPE installed. We are currently waiting on launch dates however we



The inside of Lockhart's CRC

anticipate having all CRCs up and running by October 2016. Included in our funding is a mobile trailer which will be available for councils to use for collections from small towns and villages. The trailer should be operational at the same time the CRCs are launched.

Once the CRCs are operational, REROC will undertake an education campaign across the 11 sites to ensure residents are aware that they now have access to the centres. We will be joining with RAMROC Waste Groups to run the TV and radio ads to ensure consistency across the Riverina/Murray region.

Building 11 sheds across 11 sites has been a huge undertaking for both REROC and the participating councils. We would like to thank all the members of the Waste Forum for their assistance and willingness to undertake this project as a team.

E-WASTE COLLECTIONS

REROC has continued to manage the collection logistics for e-waste by receiving a per tonne amount to manage the transport of e-waste for the participating councils into Kurrajong

Recyclers.

Free council e-waste collection points are available in Coolamon, Cootamundra, Culcairn, Gundagai, Junee, Lockhart, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Urana and West Wyalong. Kurrajong Recyclers is the collection point in Wagga Wagga. The initiative is funded through the National Television and Computer Recycling Scheme and is also part funded by the REROC Waste Forum.

During the 2015/16 period, 77,580 kgs of e-waste was collected from the participating councils. This is less than previous years as there were periods of time where we were unable to enter sites due to weather and we changed transport providers once all landfills received forklifts on-site as part of the CRC project. DHL advised us in late January that they had transferred their role in the scheme to MRI PSO who then agreed to continue with the DHL-REROC contract until mid July. We are currently in negotiations with MRI PSO for a new contract to begin from 18 July, we are positive that we will come to an arrangement for the e-waste collections to continue.

SAFE SHARPS



The aim of the Safe Sharps' project is to assist sharps' users to easily find approved sharps'

disposal locations so that used sharps can be properly and safely disposed of.

The website, www.safesharps.org.au is continuing to grow with 2,160 safe disposal locations listed. We have continued to advertise

the website wherever we can and consistently advertised on TV throughout the year.

We have written to all NSW councils again reminding them about the site and that if they have multiple sites that they can have their own log-in to the site to manage their own data.

Julie Briggs was appointed as a representative on the NSW Community Sharps Advisory Committee however this was unfortunately disbanded by the Department of Health in mid-2016. REROC has made representations to our local members and the Minister for Health about the program and how it acted as coordination and dissemination role for sharps management in NSW.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

Over the last twelve months, we have continued to deliver programs into schools and the community:

Compost Doctor Project



As reported last year the Waste Forum was successful in receiving funding from the

Environmental Trust to develop and deliver the Compost Doctor project. Level 1 of the project involved all councils promoting home composting to residents via the website www.compostdoctor.org.au The website allows residents to either look for answers to questions or ask the Compost Doctor a question. Residents



Compost Doctor Workshop at Erin Earth in Wagga Wagga

can also text in a question to the Compost Doctor. Level 2 involved the councils of Cootamundra, Greater Hume, Urana and Wagga Wagga hosting Compost Doctor workshops. 33 workshops were held across the 4 participating council areas promoting home composting. Free composting bins and kitchen tidy bins were given to selected residents who attended the workshops. Residents were given the opportunity to receive information on home compost and to have all their questions answered. The REROC Waste Forum will continue to host the Compost Doctor website now that the project funding has ended.

Recycling Education Campaign



Over the past few years, councils and local MRFs have noticed an increase in contamination in recycling bins. As a result, the REROC Waste Forum decided to undertake a recycling education campaign to try and assist reduce contamination in recycling bins. The project, "Recycle Night? Recycle Right!"

is currently in development and will consist of a website containing information on what can and can't be recycled along with a TV, radio and social media campaign. We hope to have the project up and running by the end of 2016.

Kindy Kits

2,600 kindy kits, consisting of a library bag and information on road safety and the environment, were distributed to Kindergarten students throughout the REROC region during the first few weeks of February. This project has been running since 2004 and is still well received by the schools.

School Visits to Promote Sustainability

Due to successful visits in 2015, the King and Queen of Green show, developed by Eaton Gorge Theatre Company, came back to the region in March 2016. Over 4 days Eaton Gorge delivered workshops that promoted recycling to 1,000 primary school students from 4 council areas. The King and Queen of Green show will come back to

the region in October of this year.

Talking Trash

Last year we engaged Eastern Riverina Arts to develop a new waste education program that targets high school students. "Talking Trash" utilises multi-media and animation to sell the recycling and reuse message to students. After two pilot workshops we learnt that "Talking Trash" is going to have to be a flexible program to fit in with high schools both in terms of delivery (ie 2 x 1 day workshops or one day a week for a term) and on content (some schools want to focus on waste, or waste and recycling or one school was on sustainability). As a result, Eastern Riverina Arts re-worked the project to make it more flexible. To date we are working with 8 schools and are in contact with more schools, working out dates and programs. We are developing a website where all the finished school projects will be showcased. This project will run until the end of June 2017.



The King and Queen of Green performing their show at Kapooka Public School in Wagga Wagga



Kerry Geale presenting a Compost Doctor session at Erin Earth in Wagga Wagga

NEW PROJECTS

The REROC Waste Forum has commenced some new projects this financial year which will be rolled out during the third year of this current Action Plan:

Organics Case Study

To encourage councils to consider introducing organics, the Waste Forum has commissioned a Case Study on Coolamon Shire Council and their organics' system. The Case Study will include how Coolamon made the move to a full organics collection, how their organics system operates, what they accept, a review of on-site processing and Council's advice on setting up a similar, small scale systems. The Case Study will be published to assist other councils who might be thinking of introducing an organics collection.

Working with Businesses

To inform our Business program, we have employed a consultant to contact businesses who participated in last year's Bin Trim program



Paul Mullins from Snowy Valleys Council enjoying the No Time to Waste Conference

to check on the uptake from the program and to find out what information we can provide to assist businesses to recycle and/or improve their waste practices.

Litter Regional Implementation Plan & Strategy

The REROC Waste Forum was successful in receiving funding to produce a Litter Regional Implementation Plan & Strategy. The REROC Waste Forum developed 3 projects that they were interested in and applied for funding to implement a project around roadside litter at rest stops on regional roads. We were successful in receiving \$35,000 to run the project during 2016/17.

YOURS2TAKE

Even after the extensive work that was undertaken with the Yours2Take website over the previous 12 months, in February 2016, the decision was made by the Waste Forum to close the site. This was done for several reasons. Firstly, the REROC Member Councils were not utilising the site and as a membership based organisation there was no point continuing to provide the service if it wasn't of benefit to the Member Councils. Secondly, the site usage generally was not sufficient to justify the amount of money it was costing. It was a hard decision as the site has won the Waste Forum many awards over the years however it was the right decision. There are also many other commercial websites that offer a very similar service that we were just not able to compete against.

joint organisation pilots

In September 2014 the REROC Board resolved to embrace the Joint Organisation (JO) Model by volunteering to trial the concept as one of five pilot organisations. Emboldened by a strong foundation of success gained over 20 years of continuous collaboration, the REROC member councils threw their considerable abilities behind a trial of the new JO Model, believing that the goal of the exercise was to demonstrate better ways of working together to bring wide ranging benefits to all stakeholders.

The members agreed that for the duration of the Pilot the REROC Board would provide the oversight for the JO Pilot. Activities undertaken by the JO were reported to every REROC Board meeting and the REROC Executive together with a representative from the DPC took on the direct oversight of the project.

REROC prepared JO Charter which was adopted at the February 2015 REROC Board meeting. The Charter addressed the operation of the JO including issues such as representation on the JO Board and voting rights. In March a Statement of Regional Priorities was finalised, the Statement dictated the projects that would be undertaken by the JO. The Statement was formulated after extensive consultation with the member councils and formally adopted by the Board in April. In summary the Regional Priorities and projects were:

- Freight Transport – the preparation of Version Two of the REROC Regional Freight Transport Plan and associated mapping. The Plan was to be improved by the introduction of volume and value data for the network and a more robust multi-criteria assessment matrix.
- Regional Planning – the focus was on the



REROC Members participate in a consultation with the OLG on JOs

development of the Regional Growth Plan and taking a more pro-active role in regional planning.

- Water and Wastewater – the focus was on achieving Best Practice in Water Management and addressing outstanding issues in relation to the implementation of Integrated Water Cycle Management

REROC adopted a three tiered approach to the delivery of the projects. The Board and Executive providing overall direction, Working Parties comprised of State agency representatives, REROC elected representatives and staff providing strategic direction and Technical Committees made up primarily of council staff, agency staff and some industry representatives that addressed the operational issues. The approach was very successful providing the projects with strong strategic, technical and operational input.

The projects facilitated substantial interaction with State agencies, however most remained uncompleted at the conclusion of the Pilot. This was in part due to the short timeframe for the Pilot and the fact they had to compete for council time and resources with Fit for the Future. Timing really

worked against the project.

Communication was a very important part of the JO Pilot, with so many councils involved the Board agreed that we should ensure that councillors and staff were fully informed about the JO's progress and should be part of the decision making. REROC committed to a strong communications strategy for the Pilot to ensure that members felt included in the project. This included workshops with all councillors and senior staff, regular newsletters and updates on the activities. The approach successfully engaged with councillors and staff and improved the input and information to the project.

As the project progressed concerns were raised by members in relation to the cost of operating the JO. Preliminary costings developed by the REROC Treasurer and the Executive showed that if REROC was required to give up its current management arrangements in favour of employing staff and providing office space, equipment, car etc. the membership fees for councils would double. Our members are firmly of the belief that as the State will directly benefit from the operation of the JOs that it should contribute towards the cost of their core operations. The financial contribution will recognise the importance of the JOs in partnering with the State to improve service delivery.

Adequately resourcing the JO projects was a challenge throughout the Pilot. Two of the JO project areas drew on engineering staff. This together with the tight timeframe for the Pilot created conflicting priorities for the staff, more so for those that were also on the Working Party. In the future it is more likely that the JO will attempt to address this by not creating multiple projects that draw on the same staff members.

In addition, the process of deciding on the regional priorities did not engage sufficiently with State agencies, consequently projects were viewed as "local government priorities" and agency engagement reflected this. Agency staff are also busy and unless there is a reason for the agency to expend resources on projects it is unreasonable to expect that they will. Consequently, members agreed that the most effective approach would be for the State and the JO to each identify their regional priorities and then come together to identify where those priorities overlapped. Overlapping priorities would be considered to be regional priorities for the forthcoming 12 months with the JO and State agencies agreeing on what projects should be jointly undertaken.

A major challenge for JOs moving forward is ensuring that they are able to be more than just a conduit to State agencies; that genuine partnerships can be formed with the State that improve services to local communities. We believe that unless agencies can see outcomes that will provide a direct benefit in terms of agency KPIs there is a real risk that JOs could degenerate into a "talkfest" between councils and agencies, with agencies simply using the JO to convey information to member councils.

Our members believe that it is imperative that the JO be a servant organisation to its membership. In addition REROC maintains that a JO does not service a community but services its member councils who service and represent their communities. If this distinction is lost, then the JO is in real danger of becoming a fourth level of government wedged between the State and Local government.

EASTERN RIVERINA ARTS



REROC has a permanent position on the board of Eastern Riverina Art which is currently filled by Gary Lavelle, Temora Shire's General Manager.

Eastern Riverina Arts and REROC share a common footprint which facilitates collaboration between the two organisations as we service many of the the same councils and communities. Scott Howie, the Eastern Riverina Arts RADO and Thom Paton the project officer attend REROC's Youth and Community Development Network meetings providing invaluable advice and assistance to member councils as well as working with them to develop joint projects. Both Scott and Thom have been actively involved in the development and delivery of the "Take Charge Riverina Youth Leadership Forum".

This year REROC engaged Eastern Riverina Arts to develop and deliver "Trash Talk", an environmental education program for high school students, using animation as a learning tool.

RENEW NSW



The REROC Waste Forum is one of eight Voluntary Regional Waste Groups (VRWG) operating in regional NSW. RENEW NSW is the banner organisation for the VRWGs which are partially funded by the NSW EPA.

RENEW members meet on a quarterly basis generally alternating between a Sydney location and a regional location. RENEW is convened by NSW EPA, Tracey Cornell is REROC's representative on RENEW and she is regularly joined at meetings by Waste Forum Chair Tony Donoghue, Deputy Chair Greg Ewings and REROC Executive Officer Julie Briggs.

RENEW is an important and influential group as it is often first in line to receive information and advice from the EPA about directions, funding and issues relating to waste management and resource recovery. REROC's involvement in RENEW is invaluable in ensuring that we are at the forefront of developments in the environmental sector.



The relationship between the Compact and REROC has operated over a considerable number of years. Compact is REROC's conduit into high schools across the region where we promote a number of career initiatives such as Build a Bridge, Work Inspirations and work experience programs.

Increasingly Member Councils are embracing the opportunity to grow their own staff and critical to this is engaging with young people about to embark on their future careers. Compact's role in engaging with schools is vital to member councils' success in bringing young people a greater understanding of the potential careers in local government.

Compact is our primary partner for the delivery of the Build a Bridge...and Get Over It! Project and was instrumental in the development of the Workplace Inspirations project

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA



REROC maintains a strong and on-going relationship with RDA-Riverina. The RDA has an important role in furthering the economic development of the region a goal that is important to our member councils.

REROC works with the RDA on the development of plans relating to infrastructure in the region and particularly road and rail transport issues. We believe that it is important that the region puts forward a cohesive voice on these issues in order to have a chance to attract much needed funding. RDA representatives are invited to attend REROC Board meetings. RDA Executive Officer, Mark Ritchie and Chairperson Dianna Gibbs, regularly attend REROC meetings where they are able to provide an update on RDA activities.

NSW DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET (DPC)

Our working relationship with the DPC has strengthened as a result of the JO pilot. The DPC played an important role in the JO Pilot acting as conduit to state agencies and convening meetings of the JO's Working Parties.

Julie Briggs attends the Regional Leadership Group and Regional Leadership Network meetings which are convened by the DPC for the Riverina-Murray region. Julie also attends the annual Regional Leadership Group meeting which is held in Dubbo.

In addition DPC Regional Manager Trudi McDonald regularly attends REROC Board meetings and events where she is able to provide updates on activities at a State level.

CSU REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

REROC is represented on this committee by Julie Briggs. The Committee meets 2-3 times a year to discuss regional issues and CSU's role in the region. It is an opportunity for regional organisations to raise opportunities for new courses, identify skills' shortages that could be addressed by CSU and to consider ways in which the CSU's activities can be supported.

NSW ROCs

Increasingly NSW ROCs are looking for opportunities to work together on issues of common concern to member councils. We have started to combine forces in relation to responding to street lighting issues, discussing JO structures and looking for opportunities to share in procurement and training.

NSW ROCs regularly discuss common issues, share information and resources, ROC executive officers regularly interact and contact each other for support and advice.

financial statements

INCOME STATEMENT 2015/2016

INCOME

COUNCIL CONTRIBUTIONS		222,971.00
SUNDRY INCOME		1,220.03
INTEREST ON INVESTMENTS		872.48
SPECIAL PROJECTS		
	- Training	7,400.00
	- Youth Network	5,000.00
	- Bitumen Emulsion Rebate	9,516.45
	- Streetlighting	12,000.00
	- JO Pilot Support	136,945.45
SPECIFIC PROJECTS INCOME		
	- Sustainability Project	0.00
	- Youth Project	20,000.00
	- EPA Waste	279,632.00
	- Illegal Dumping Project	0.00
	- Compost Doctor Project	49,650.18
	- CRC Education	57,500.00
	- L-RIP	20,000.00
	- Waste Management	45,300.90
	- Scrap Metal/CRC	116,631.38
	- No Time to Waste Conference	11,720.00
	- e-Waste Transport	6,729.60
	- "Build a Bridge" Project	5,000.00
	- GIS/Mapped Out Income	10,625.00
	- JO Pilot	150,000.00
	- CRC Project	327.14
TOTAL INCOME		\$1,169,041.61

EXPENDITURE

EXECUTIVE SERVICES		198,056.89
PHONE		3,591.70
PRINTING/STATIONERY/POSTAGE		6,644.00
ADVERTISING		210.96
INSURANCE		7,256.35
RENT		20,400.00
TRAVEL		3,157.77
WEB SITE		3,610.00
MEETINGS/CATERING		4,898.17
REPRESENTATIONS		3,753.91
LEGAL/ACCOUNTING/AUDIT		3,737.00
SUBSCRIPTIONS		580.91
SUNDRY		1,400.28
SPECIAL PROJECTS	– Training	8,394.46
	– Action Plan Projects	4,437.37
	– Youth Network	2,140.78
	– Careers in Local Government	104.17
	– REROC Scholarships	0.00
	– Streetlighting	538.75
SPECIFIC PROJECTS	– Sustainability Project	34,817.99
	– Youth Project	33,164.41
	– EPA Waste	286,180.88
	– Illegal Dumping Project	0.00
	– Compost Doctor Project	84,022.00
	– CRC Education	0.00
	– L-RIP	20,000.00
	– Waste Management	4,877.41
	– Waste Management Depreciation	7,809.10
	– Scrap Metal/CRC	119,802.31
	– No Time to Waste Conference	9,538.00
	– e-Waste	9,280.00
	– "Build a Bridge" Project	10,866.05
	– GIS	817.64
	– Mapped Out Expenditure	6,764.81
	– JO Pilot	188,758.73
	– CRC Project	648,130.30
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		\$1,737,743.10
OPERATING RESULTS		(\$568,701.49)

BALANCE SHEET 2015/2016 FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30 JUNE 2016

Current Assets		
	- Cash at Bank REROC	703,684.09
	- Cash at Bank CRC	65,102.50
	- Sundry Debtors	93,061.04
	- Sundry Debtor - ATO - GST Receivable	22,271.91
	TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	884,119.54
Non-Current Assets		
	- Plant & Equipment	19,298.31
	TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	19,298.31
TOTAL ASSETS		903,417.85
Current Liabilities	Sundry Creditors Accrued Expenses	65,144.97
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		65,144.97
Non-Current Liabilities		
	TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	0.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES		65,144.97
NET ASSETS		838,272.88
EQUITY		
	- REROC	200,967.53
	- Strategic Collaboration	206,945.45
	- Sustainability Projects	47,991.30
	- Youth Project	14,461.35
	- EPA Waste	58,941.40
	- Illegal Dumping	20,000.00
	- Compost Doctor	0.00
	- CRC Education	57,500.00
	- Waste Management	66,544.66
	- Scrap Metal/CRC	158,944.05
	- "Build a Bridge" Project	2,087.43
	- GIS	16,413.10
	- JO Pilot	0.00
	- CRC Project	(12,523.39)
TOTAL EQUITY		838,272.88

members' delegates to reroc

As at 30 June 2016

Bland Shire Council

Cr. Neil Pokoney
Mr. Ray Smith

Coolamon Shire Council

Cr. John Seymour
Mr. Tony Donoghue

Cootamundra – Gundagai Regional Council

Mrs. Christine Ferguson (Administrator)
Mr. Paul Braybrooks OAM

Goldenfields Water County Council

Cr. Peter Speirs
Mr. Phil Rudd

Greater Hume Shire Council

Cr. Heather Wilton
Mr. Steve Pinnuck

Junee Shire Council

Cr. Lola Cummins
Mr. James Davis

Lockhart Shire Council

Cr. Peter Yates
Mr. Rod Shaw

Riverina Water County Council

Cr. Gary Hiscock
Mr. Graeme Haley

Snowy Valleys Council

Mr. Paul Sullivan (Administrator)
Mr. Bob Stewart

Temora Shire Council

Cr. Rick Firman OAM
Mr. Gary Lavelle

Wagga Wagga City Council

Cr. Rod Kendall
Mr. Alan Eldridge

As at 12 May 2016

Cootamundra Shire Council

Cr. Paul Braybrooks OAM
Mr. Ken Trethewey

Gundagai Shire Council

Cr. Abb McAlister
Mr. Phillip McMurray

Tumbarumba Shire Council

Cr. Ian Chaffey
Ms. Kay Whitehead

Tumut Shire Council

Cr. Trina Thompson
Mr. Bob Stewart

Urana Shire Council

Cr. Patrick Bourke
Mr. Adrian Butler

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REROC

RIVERINA EASTERN REGIONAL
ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

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