



ANNUAL REPORT

2017



Above: Former Chair of WRI Mark Burdack with current Chair Juliet Duffy at the 2018 International Women's Day Awards where Juliet was awarded Regional Woman of the Year.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

**In 2017 WRI embarked on our ambitious 2016-2020 Strategy of strengthening our role as a leading contributor to research and policy for inland communities.**

It has been a challenging year of renewal and laying foundations for future growth. In 2017 our board of Directors reaffirmed their commitment to WRI's vision and mission at a strategic retreat in July. At the retreat we set an ambitious target of achieving \$1.5 million turnover by 2020.

Achieving this target will set WRI on a path of long term growth that will enhance our capacity to service our regional communities and expand our contribution to the Inland Research Fund.

WRI contributed a further \$50,000 to the Inland Research Fund in 2017 and undertook wide consultation with stakeholders on the priorities for the IRF agenda. This would not be possible without the continued support of our clients, who are our partners in regional development.

As an organisation we are committed to ensuring inland communities continue to have

access to high quality advice that is informed by independent, credible and objective research, and we demonstrate this by returning our surpluses back to regional communities through the Inland Research Fund.

In 2017 this commitment was recognised at Bathurst's Carillon Business Awards where WRI was awarded Excellence in Social Enterprise. This is a significant achievement for our organisation and highlights the quality of work produced by our research team and the contribution our research makes to the broader regional community.

I congratulate our staff and Directors on their achievements in 2017 and for their ongoing commitment to sustainable regional development. Particular thanks to our former Chair, Mark Burdack, who stepped into the role of interim CEO late in 2017 during the recruitment phase for our new CEO.

I would also like to congratulate and thank our stakeholders who, through choosing to use WRI's services, also choose to invest in the growth and development of regional communities.

**Juliet Duffy**  
Chair

# RENEWED COMMITMENT TO OUR VISION



Photo: WRI's Board and General Manager with guest speaker Mr Grant Simpson, Foundation Director at NeuRA, Australia at the Board's strategic retreat in July, 2017.

## OUR VISION

We aim to be a trusted partner of business, government and communities in regional development.

Our integrity, local knowledge and strong collaborations ensure that our advice is highly sought after.

We help grow regional businesses and services, support better decision making and help to attract investment for the benefit of our clients and stakeholders.

In July 2017 our Board held a strategic retreat and committed to an ambitious growth target of achieving \$1.5 million in turnover by 2020. This ambitious growth target also includes annual revenue contributions to the Inland Research Fund.





**Juliet Duffy**

*Chair*

Juliet is an award winning, regional entrepreneur and can add WRI's first female Chair to her growing list of achievements. Juliet is founding director of the start-up Regional EnviroScience.



**Andrew Everett**

*Deputy Chair*

Andrew has extensive experience as a senior executive in the telecommunications, data and IT sectors and is currently Director, NSW Department of Industry.



**Jo-Anne Strader**

*Treasurer*

Jo-Anne is an accountant with senior level executive experience and is the Financial Controller for the global company DSM Nutritional Products Australia Pty Ltd.



**Mark Burdack**

*Director*

Mark is an expert in corporate governance, tertiary education, health workforce and regional development. He is Principal Consultant at Cultivate Solutions Pty Ltd.



**Kate Baxter**

*Director*

After over seven years service on WRI's Board, we farewelled Kate Baxter in 2017. Kate's substantial management, governance and vocational education expertise will be missed.



**Lesa Dunn**

*Director*

WRI farewelled Director Lesa Dunn in 2017. Lesa brought critical financial expertise and insights into the not-for-profit sector. We thank her for her exceptional contribution to WRI.

***Thanks,  
and farewell***

# \$10 MILLION FOR VELOCITY PARK A 'MAJOR BOOST'

## DELIVERING OUTCOMES

Using WRI's robust and objective research, Bathurst Regional Council secured \$10 million in Federal funding through the Building Better Regions Fund. WRI conducted an independent economic appraisal of a proposed second racing circuit 'Velocity Park' at Mount Panorama, Bathurst, NSW.

***"In a major boost for the regional economy, this project will create 220 jobs during construction and another 247 ongoing jobs. All this in addition to the inevitable tourism a development like this brings to the region."***

***This is the single biggest grant of its type that has been delivered by the Federal Government to our area."***

Mr Andrew Gee, Member for Calare, at the announcement in August 2017.





# \$100,000 CONTRIBUTION TO INLAND RESEARCH

WRI Director Andrew Everett, General Manager Wendy Mason, Director Mark Burdack, with the Honourable Mark Coulton, Member for Parkes and WRI Director Jo-Anne Strader.

In October WRI announced another \$50,000 contribution to the Inland Research Fund, totalling \$100,000 in seed funding to date.

***“I commend the Institute’s commitment to the Inland Research Fund. This is an excellent initiative of the Western Research Institute and one that will deliver strong outcomes for the community and economy of Western NSW,”***

The Hon Mark Coulton, Member for Parkes.



Above Ian McAlister, Linda Christof, Matt Wright and Kathym McAlister.



Above Robyn Coulton, Michael Sutherland with WRI Director Andrew Everett at the announcement in Dubbo.

# Our Research

WRI thanks all our clients for their continued support, collaboration and dedication to regional economic and social development.

2017 Research Consultancy Projects
Junee Shire Council Community Profile and Grant Application
Dubbo Regional Council Wellington Pool Grant Application
Dubbo Regional Council Horticulture Centre for Excellence Grant Application
Bathurst Regional Council Blayney2Bathurst Cycling Festival Impact
Warrumbungles Shire Council GeoPark Economic Assessment
Blayney Shire Council Sport and Recreation Plan
Australian Paper Waste Feasibility Assessment
NSW Department of Primary Industry Young Farmer Business Project Survey
Weddin Shire Council Workshop Facilitation
Skillset Spark Tank Review
Glenray Industries Grant Application
CENTROC Workshop Facilitation
Housing Plus Homelessness and Housing Support Services Cost Benefit Analysis
Bathurst Regional Council Winter Festival Economic Impact
Hort Innovation Australia Turf Industry Statistics and Benchmarks
Dubbo Regional Council Water and Waste Community Survey
Dubbo Regional Council Collections Facility Grant Application
Dubbo Regional Council Sport and Recreation Precint Assessment
Farming Together Economic Impact
VERTO Skills Week Infographic
Charles Sturt University Riverina Shift Share Analysis
Charles Sturt University Research Impact
Shepparton Regional Medical Training Centre Economic Impact Outline

# RECOGNITION



## Excellence in Social Enterprise

In 2017 WRI was recognised for our significant contribution to the social and economic development of regional communities at Bathurst’s Carillion Business Awards in 2017.

*Above: General Manager Wendy Mason accepts WRI’s award for excellence in Social Enterprise from Sally Palmer of AusIndustry.*



## Working Together

In partnership with VERTO, WRI analysed Aged Care workforce data to uncover that future aged care skills shortages will be experienced most acutely in regional NSW. In these areas the aged population will likely face the lack of adequate service provision, requiring the elderly to travel long distances to other care services.

Whilst certain areas of regional NSW appear to be well placed to manage the increased care requirements with strong care workforces, other regions will require significant investment in local skills to manage a larger aged population. The full snapshot report can be accessed [here](#).



**IDENTIFYING FUTURE  
WORKFORCE DEMANDS**



# OUR TEAM



**Wendy Mason**

*General Manager*

Sadly Wendy departed WRI at the end of 2017 after an exceptional few years building our profile in Western NSW. Wendy is highly skilled in business development and management.



**Alistair Maclellan**

*Senior Research Consultant*

Alistair has a strong focus on fully understanding our clients needs and providing tailored research solutions that create value. Alistair is experienced in data analysis, economics and business analysis.



**Dale Curran**

*Executive Officer*

Dale understands our business, the needs of our clients and how to best deliver outcomes for them. Dale is experienced in administration, finance and marketing.



**Wai Matthews**

*Research Consultant*

WRI farewelled Wai during 2017. Wai delivered key insights for our clients using her strong skills in economic modelling and expertise in regional business and finance.



**Danielle Ranshaw**

*Senior Research Consultant*

Danielle's deep expertise in delivering large research projects will be sadly missed, as she moves on from WRI in 2017. Over her 10 years with WRI Danielle made a substantial contribution to WRI, serving as CEO for three years and providing leadership and expertise to our research team.

## AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2017 WRI called on the knowledge and expertise of key associate consultants to delivery added value to our clients, in particular we thank Kath Beherendt of Agorum Consulting, Jenni Greig of CSU, Kylie Ledger of StartleArt, Brendan Cooper of Cooper Films and Lesley Arthur of RedeConsult.

Our research team was also complemented with key Fieldwork skills provided by Zoe Newman, Isabella O'Mally, Arthur Klonis and Ben Peters.

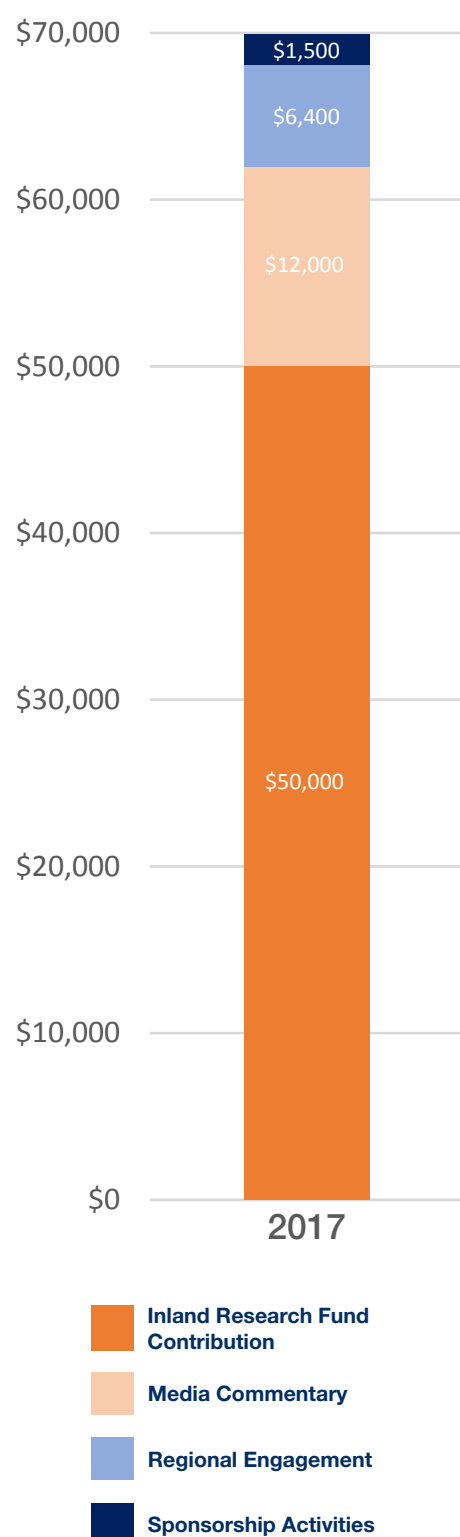
# RETURN TO OUR COMMUNITIES

## Investment Activities

As a regional organisation WRI is committed to supporting regional businesses through our purchasing and sponsorship activities. We also contribute our insights through media commentary and presentations.

Including our contribution to the Inland Research Fund, we contributed 11% of our annual expenditure to regional development activities, including:

- Media commentary on a wide range of issues including marriage equality, the 2016 Census data releases, Government funding rounds and budget announcements,
- Providing thought leadership and insights at key economic development conferences and Business Forums including the Australian Regional Development Conference and Parks and Leisure Australia (NSW/ACT) grants and funding seminar, and
- Sponsorship of similar organisations such as the Illawarra Regional information Service.



## Investing in Regional Expertise

WRI is committed to investing in regional knowledge and expertise because we believe that this delivers better outcomes for our communities and stakeholders. In 2017 we expanded our intellectual and human capacity through increased investment in regionally based associates and staff.



↑ **27%**  
In 2017 we increased our regionally based team of consultants.



↑ **84%**  
In 2017 we added value to our research by engaging regionally based associates.



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