



The Hon Gary Gray AO MP

Parliamentary Secretary
for Regional Development
and Northern Australia

11 MAY 2009

Reference: 01879-2009

Mr Neil R. Smithson
Managing Director
Smithson Planning
PO Box 5377
ALBANY WA 6330



Dear Mr Smithson

**RE: RAINBOW 2000 – A REGIONAL PLANNING STRATEGY FOR ALBANY
AND THE GREAT SOUTHERN**

I refer to my letter dated 9 April 2009 concerning your Rainbow 2000 proposal. The Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (the Department) has reviewed this material which appears to be a very comprehensive examination of a range of regional planning and infrastructure issues facing Albany and the Great Southern.

I can advise that the Australian and Western Australian governments are currently working together to establish Regional Development Australia (RDA), which will build on the existing Area Consultative Committee network. RDA will bring together all levels of government and local community representatives to support the growth and development of regional Australia. It is the Australian Government's intention for the Western Australian RDAs to be set up by 1 July 2009.

A key role of the RDA network will be to contribute to the development of regional plans including, for example, to develop strategic regional plans. RDA will become the principal driver and voice of development and infrastructure for regions, communities and government. RDA will also have a strong community engagement role, bringing together stakeholders and communities to develop solutions to regional needs and priorities.

The Government also values the contribution of local government to regional development and is committed to improving engagement through ensuring appropriate representation and consultation with local government on the new RDA arrangements.

RDA will assist the Government by taking on a broad role that includes:

- Advisory/consultative and community functions;
- Regional planning functions;
- Whole of government functions;
- Promotion of government programs; and
- Community development functions.

These new arrangements will facilitate a more integrated strategic approach to regional planning, ensuring that communities, the private sector and governments can develop local solutions together. Further information on this initiative will be available shortly.

Should you require further information prior to the establishment of the RDA, the contact officer in the Department is Mr Brett Harrison who can be contacted at: <Brett.Harrison@infrastructure.gov.au> or by telephone on 02 6274 7217.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop followed by a long horizontal stroke that curves downwards to the right.

GARY GRAY