

REGIONAL

COMMUNITIES

CONSULTATIVE

COUNCIL



Government
of South Australia

Department of
**Trade and
Economic
Development**

Office of Regional Affairs

SCORECARD

SUMMARY

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of South Australia

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Office of Regional Affairs

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REGIONAL COMMUNITIES CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

Introduction

This document is a summary of the issues raised by regional South Australians with the Regional Communities Consultative Council (RCCC) during its initial two-year term.

The resulting actions were undertaken by the RCCC, together with the Office of Regional Affairs, in an effort to address the issues raised.

The outcomes that have been documented are the results of collaborative efforts by the RCCC, the Office of Regional Affairs, and other agencies of State and Local Government.

Background

The RCCC is an independent advisory body that makes recommendations to the Minister for Regional Development on ways in which the government and regional communities can work together to strengthen the capacity of communities to respond to local issues and in line with strategic issues as identified by the Minister for Regional Development from time to time.

The Regional Communities Consultative Council has several responsibilities.

- Advise the Minister for Regional Development about the broad impact of decisions on regional communities.
- Advise the Minister for Regional Development of any opportunities for initiatives to advance the social, economic and environmental development of regional SA.
- Advise the Minister for Regional Development on the challenges and opportunities in the provision of government services and programs to regional communities.
- Through the Minister for Regional Development, advise Ministers and Cabinet on matters that may be referred to the Council by them from time to time.
- Advocate change that will improve the quality of life in regional areas.

REGIONAL COMMUNITIES CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

Membership

The Regional Communities Consultative Council currently comprises the following members:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Mr Dennis Mutton (Chair) | Former CE PIRSA Member Regional Development Task Force Extensive experience living and working in regional SA |
| Cr Eddie Hughes | Regional Development Board, Local Government, Whyalla |
| Ms Tracy Spencer | Community Worker, Monarto South |
| Bishop Eugene Hurley | Pt Pirie (diocese includes outback SA) |
| Mr Bill Clifford | Formerly Murraylands Regional Development Board Former Area Manager, Commonwealth Employment Service, Murray Bridge |
| Mr Mark Braes | Local Government and family counsellor, Millicent |
| Mayor Joy Baluch | Mayor Pt Augusta Council Vice President, Local Government Association, Port Augusta |
| Ms Jan Cass | Former Mayor of Loxton/Waikerie, board member of Barossa Riverland Mid North Area Consultative Committee, Ministerial Advisory Board on Volunteers and Ministerial Advisory Board on the Ageing |
| Ms Scharlene Iuliano | Indigenous woman, Birdwood |
| Cr Jeff Burgess | Local Government and farming, Vice President, Local Government Association, Chair SA Region of Councils, Central Local Government Association, Gulnare |
| Mr Timothy Burvill | Winemaker, Tanunda |
| Mr Craig Wickham | Ecotourism operator, Kangaroo Island |
| Ms Karen Kaak | Chief Executive Officer, Fleurieu Regional Development Board |
| Mr Jeff Mincham | Chair, Regional Development South Australia (RDSA), Chairman, Adelaide Hills Regional Development Board |
| Mr Trent Mader | Regional Development Board, Riverland |
| Mr John Legoe | President, Local Government Association, President, South East Local Government Association |
| Mr Colin Cook | Murray Institute of TAFE, Kadina |
| Mr Phil Tyler | Executive Director, Office of Regional Affairs |

Council Meetings

The Council meets quarterly in regional locations. To date, it has met in the Riverland, South East, Coober Pedy, Roxby Downs and Andamooka, Whyalla, Clare, the Murraylands and Eyre Peninsula.

Future visits include Fleurieu Peninsula.

Each Council meeting includes a formal meeting, visits to local businesses and facilities, community forums and a dinner meeting with a guest speaker addressing issues affecting the regions.

Topics include the following:

- the importance of community engagement and the development of partnerships (Jeff Parish, CEO Central Irrigation Trust);
- consultation processes, options for sustainable regional business development and impediments to growth (Elspeth Radford, Regional Business Development Analysis Panel);
- tourism plans and the sustainable tourism package (David Crinion, Manager, Planning and Policy, SA Tourism Commission);
- access to tertiary studies for regionally based young people (Associate Professor Jim Harvey, Former Dean of the Whyalla Campus of the University of South Australia).
- Local Government perspective on challenges and opportunities for a region on the go (Mayor Patricia Jacka, Mayor of Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council);
- transport and road issues (Tim O'Loughlin, CEO Transport Services);
- developing an Eyre of Prosperity (Jane Lowe, Development Manager, Eyre Regional Development Board).

The dinner meetings, together with business and site visits and community forums, are means by which the Council is able to engage with community leaders, service providers and the public in identifying issues and possible solutions.

Issues in the following areas have been brought to the attention of the Regional Communities Consultative Council and are outlined on the following pages, together with measures undertaken in having them addressed.

- **Workforce Issues**
- **Youth Unemployment**
- **Education**
- **Provision of Integrated Services**
- **Regional Facilitation Groups**
- **Outback Areas**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Transport and Road Funding**
- **Housing**
- **Septic Tank Effluent Disposal Scheme (STEDS)**
- **Telecommunications**
- **Water Supply**
- **Social Inclusion**
- **Volunteering**
- **Indigenous Issues**
- **Regional Impact Assessment**
- **Triple Bottom Line for the Bush**
- **Regional Development Boards**
- **Economic Development Board**
- **Contribution of Regional Areas to the Well-being of the State**
- **Spatial Information – Data Collection and Access**

REGIONAL COMMUNITIES CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

The issues raised are consistent with the matters discussed at the *Economic Growth Summit – One Year On*:

- Infrastructure
- Government Efficiency
- Services to Community
 - Deliver on inequities in Social and Support Services
- Population
 - Funding and Resources for Skills Migration and Retention
- Building Business & Community Capacity
 - Developing Leadership Capacity
 - Improved Access to Information for Better Decision Making
- Education/Skills/Employment
 - Support Enterprise Development
- Tourism
- Exports
- Sustainable Use of Our Natural Resource Base
 - Water
 - River Murray
 - Natural Resource Management
- Address Metro-Centric Culture

In bringing these issues to the attention of the Minister, together with suggested ways of resolving them, the RCCC is working towards the objectives of the State Strategic Plan:

- **Growing prosperity**
- **Improving wellbeing**
- **Attaining sustainability**
- **Fostering creativity**
- **Building communities**
- **Expanding opportunity**

WORKFORCE ISSUES

Issues:

- Shortage of skills and tradespeople in regional areas.
- Shortage of vocational training opportunities and alternative pathways for students in regional areas to increase level of skills and trades.

Action taken:

- Discussions held and Minister advised of concerns in relation to trades, attracting professionals, skills, and supply/demand issues for vocational skills training.

Outcomes:

- Strengthened relationships with TAFE and DECS – Further work is required in the management of the interface and matching demand with skills training choices.
- ORA input into skills audit.
- ORA involvement in three-year funding received to create full-time Skilled Migration Officer positions living and working in regional South Australia. Co-located at Regional Development Board (RDB) premises, these officers meet with the local leaders of business and industry to identify actual instances where skilled labour is in short supply.
- ORA input into the Attracting and retaining skilled people in regional Australia: A practitioner's guide publication. The publication includes two case studies from South Australia:
 - the development of online midwifery education and training at the University of South Australia; and
 - the work of the local community to revitalise the community of Cummins.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Issues:

- Retaining and attracting young people back to regional areas by providing opportunities for employment.

Action taken:

- Council informed the Minister of its concerns in relation to youth employment rates and the Youth Employment Program.
- Minister advised the Minister for Employment Training and Further Education of concerns re the Youth Employment Program and the perceived lack of consultation and communication with regional bodies such as RDBs.
- Executive Director, Office of Employment advised of Council's concern about development and implementation of the Youth Employment Program.

Outcomes:

- Change to government employment programs – now targeting disadvantaged youth, including the Regions at Work components of the SA Works: A Framework for Skills and Employment;
- Whyalla RDB facilitates training opportunities to promote employment and education and manages programs funded by the State Government with an emphasis on job creation and access to education in specific areas that can be used as a pathway to employment or further education.

EDUCATION

Issues:

- Low school retention rates.
- Young people having to leave regional areas to study.
- Support for regional students while studying in metropolitan areas.
- Access to education in regional areas.
- Issues concerning access to TAFE courses and processes.
- TAFE review and lack of consultation associated with the review.

Action taken:

- Forum held between RCCC and students at Roxby Downs to hear their views about staying in their community or going away to study.
- Minister advised of issue of access to tertiary education in regional areas and the response from SA universities.
- Ongoing research through ORA re information relating to incentives for country students (accommodation, mentoring schemes, additional scholarships).
- Discussions with Higher Education Council re concern at state of access to education in regional areas.
- Discussion with CEO of DFEEST re the lack of understanding in relation to access of TAFE courses and processes in regional areas.
- Discussions with Social Inclusion Unit regarding relevance of definition of retention rates and recognition of other pathways in regions.

Outcomes:

- RCCC linkage established with the Social Inclusion Unit in relation to retention rates and other social inclusion issues.
- RCCC involvement in definition of retention rates, keeping conventional and alternative streams in the system and lifting the recognition of alternative streams and availability of choice relevant to regional areas.
- Working group established with input from the tertiary education sector.
- Linkage established with Office of the Higher Education Council with the Director of Higher Education Unit now working with Council's Tertiary Study Working Group.
- Linkages established with RCCC/ORR/DFEEST/HEC to further discussions relating to the review of TAFE and access to TAFE courses and processes.

PROVISION OF INTEGRATED SERVICES

Issues:

- Provision of integrated services in regional areas.

Action taken:

- Chair met with Warren McCann to discuss the continuing challenge of the provision of integrated services in regions.
- Chair accepted invitation to attend the Regional Facilitation Groups (RFGs) Workshop held earlier this year.
- Growth management – range of issues identified to be addressed for growth management to occur – work in progress.

Outcomes:

- RCCC Linkage with RFGs established - Improved inter government cooperation.
- RCCC and RFGs agreed to refer to each other issues that need exploring or support.
- RCCC now invites members of the relevant Regional Facilitation Groups (RFGs) to the Community Forums held in conjunction with the quarterly visits of the Council to the regions. In addition, the Forum notes are distributed to all Regional Facilitation Groups following each visit.
- Identification of areas where services lacking.
- South East promoted for national pilot project for “Implementing the Framework for Co-operation”.

REGIONAL FACILITATION GROUPS

Issues:

- The Regional Facilitation Framework is aimed at facilitating improvements at a regional level through the exchange of information, improved interagency communication, coordination and cooperation.
- Interface between the Regional Facilitation Group and RCCC required to assist in the identification and understanding of issues to be addressed.

Action taken:

- Minister informed of Council's support for the RFG initiative and its recommendation that (a) a formal relationship be developed with the collective RFGs, and (b) the use of the framework as a conduit to the mechanisms of State government and hence a means by which issues identified by the RCCC could be addressed.
- Chair discussed with CEOs of DPC, OCPE and DAIS the challenges and opportunities related to the issue of the activities of RFGs. Copies of their quarterly reports have been requested so that Council has an opportunity to gain further information in order to make a response and provide feedback.
- Chair attended annual workshop with RFG Chairs and sponsor agency CEOs to explore the potential for Regional Facilitation Groups to play a greater part in building regional capacity and improving service delivery to communities.

Outcomes:

- Closer working relationships established with RFGs and coordinating agencies.
- Exchange of information between RFGs and RCCC on matters of significance.
- Attendance of RFGs at RCCC Community Forums.
- Copies of the RFGs quarterly reports to be provided to RCCC.

OUTBACK AREAS

Issues:

- Concern at lack of adequate strength in representation at local and regional level in outback areas and ongoing development in economic/environmental/social terms.
- Water supply.
- Solar rebates.
- Roads.
- Identification of Policy conflicts.

Action taken:

- RCCC requested recommendations of the review of the Outback Areas Trust and considered whether further recommendations should be made through the Minister.
- RCCC provided with briefing paper on role, structure and objectives of the Outback Areas Trust.
- Investigation carried out and report prepared on the accuracy of the perception that the Outback misses out on Federal funding because it is unincorporated.
- Chair communicated to the Minister the Council's concern in relation to the effectiveness of unincorporated areas and service delivery in that part of the State in line with the review of the Outback Areas Community Development Trust.
- Minister advised that quality and the pricing structure of electricity is a significant issue for Outback communities not on the main grid.
- Chair recommended to Government through the Minister that the current solar rebate be extended to include various community housing such as rental housing, public housing and aboriginal housing etc. that are not on the national grid.
- Tourism – outback policy identified conflict between priority outback tourism and a percent reduction in priority of relevant infrastructure.

Outcomes:

- Policy conflict matter discussed with Tourism and DTUP with matter now being pursued by those agencies.
- Interagency working group formed to establish recommendations for alternative approach to providing and managing water supplies in the outback.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Issues:

- Ongoing problems with regional infrastructure – Development of State Infrastructure Plan and Infrastructure Fund to address these issues.

Action taken:

- The RCCC, meeting quarterly in regional areas, has met with regional communities to identify issues relating to infrastructure.
- Minister advised of Council's view that RDBs should become the shop front for the Regional Development Infrastructure Fund.
- Minister advised of Council's concern that both a State Infrastructure Plan and Infrastructure Fund are required and that there needs to be accountability measures for RDIF expenditure and transparency of process for applications.
- Minister advised that approach to regional infrastructure development be based on the following key points:
 - a whole of State approach;
 - venture capital or other forms of capital raising;
 - partnerships between RDBs and relevant businesses and agencies.

Outcomes:

- RDBs now shopfronts for RDIF.
- Linkage with OFID for priority setting of issues coming out of the RDBs' audits together with input from local government and industry.
- Partnerships between RDBs, businesses and relevant agencies progressed through linkages established through ORA/RDBs/LGA/OFID.

TRANSPORT AND ROAD FUNDING

Issues:

- Regional speed limits policy.
- Inadequate public transport between regional towns.
- Transport issues:
 - heavy transport through towns;
 - drive tourism requires additional maintenance to roads;
 - inequities in funding between rural/urban areas and between States;
 - transport plan is Adelaide centric, e.g. rail;
 - road classifications and potential cost shifting.

Action taken:

- Minister advised of Council's concern about the Auslink proposal and road funding in general.
- In response to the Regional Speed Limits policy Minister was advised of RCCC's concern about limited amount and shortness of consultation, raising the issue of substituting reduction in speed for maintenance of roads, and expressing the view that the accident rate is also about fatigue and alcohol.
- In response to the Draft Transport Plan, initial feedback provided to DTUP – further feedback to be provided at next level of consultation.
- Minister advised of concerns in relation to transport and roads, and inadequate public transport, particularly between provincial towns for students, employees and access to community and health services.

Outcomes:

- RCCC discussion points and recommendations included in submission to Commonwealth.
- RCCC/ORR established linkages with CEO, DTUP to further discussions.
- Ongoing dialogues between RCCC/ORR and CEO DTUP included at RCCC meeting in May.
- ORR advised DOTARS of SA position and issues through SCORD.
- Transport identified to have high priority in Regional Strategic Plan and State Infrastructure Plan.
- Work being done to develop better use of available data for regional planning and decision making at a regional level.

HOUSING

Issues:

- Proven shortage of housing stock in regional areas for workforce accommodation, housing for disadvantaged groups and people wishing to live in a regional community.
- Shortage of workforce accommodation has been identified as a major impediment to the growth of rural and regional areas.

Action taken:

- Minister advised that workforce accommodation is a major challenge not addressed by the draft State Housing Plan.
- Council recommended that regional scoping studies for housing be done to inform the State Housing Plan.
- *Regional Workforce Accommodation Solutions study*, commissioned by the ORA.
- RCCC reinforced strategic significance of tackling shortages of workforce accommodation at roundtable discussion in July 2003.
- Minister informed of the significant social and economic factors surrounding unavailability of housing in remote communities.

Outcomes:

- ORA advocacy role in Regional Housing and Finance Initiative by the Land Management Corporation and Homestart, now endorsed by Cabinet.
- Workforce accommodation included as a significant issue in the State Housing Plan.

SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT DISPOSAL SCHEME (STEDS)

Issues:

- STEDS issues beyond the quantum of government subsidy available to assist local councils to develop new STEDS and including funding of upkeep and maintenance of existing schemes and increasing pressure from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to comply with the Environmental Protection Act (1993).

Action taken:

- Minister advised of importance of addressing STEDS issues and requested matter be conveyed to Cabinet.
- ORA liaised with EPA and LGA in relation to expectations and positions in relation to STEDS.

Outcomes:

- Endorsement by the STEDS Advisory Committee of a pilot project to test the possibility of constructing and managing STEDS across a regional area to achieve greater efficiencies and the potential for greater involvement of the private sector.
- Representation by ORA to OFID to have matter included in the State Infrastructure Plan.
- State-Local Government Relations agreement entered into 8 March 2004 with ultimate aim of achieving better outcomes for all South Australian communities.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Issues:

- Broadband telecommunications services identified as strategically important infrastructure for regional development.

Action taken:

- Briefing provided to RCCC outlining the issues, what developments are proposed and what benefits these would bring to regional SA.
- Presentation by Telecommunications Reference Group requested to assess whether there are actions that the Council can take to support strategies the Group may have identified.
- RCCC provided comment and feedback to Telecommunications Reference Group.

Outcomes:

- Linkage with Commonwealth established and feedback provided.
- Regional communities have received funding to install broadband infrastructure and undertake business cases to support broadband infrastructure.

WATER SUPPLY

Issues:

- Lack of adequate water supply having a serious impact on people's health and well being in remote areas.
- Implications of water restriction on rural and regional South Australia.
- Equity/access to water supplies in rural and regional South Australia.

Action taken:

- Minister informed of issues relating to water supply in outback South Australia.

Outcomes:

- Review of infrastructure in the outback areas now underway and expected to be completed in August 2004, and solutions being investigated for water supply to Andamooka.
- Executive Director, ORA on interagency committee looking at water supply for the outback.
- RCCC requested a more strategic approach to the development of water restrictions policy in times of drought.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Issues:

- Social Inclusion Unit working on school retention rates, which are of concern in Regional areas.
- Importance of close linkages to further understanding of regional issues by Social Inclusion Unit.

Action taken:

- Open invitation extended to Social Inclusion Unit to attend RCCC's community forums and network.
- Social Inclusion Unit made presentation at Whyalla Community Forum.
- Ongoing invitation and involvement from Social Inclusion Unit at community forums.

Outcomes:

- Links established with Social Inclusion Unit.
- RCCC input into school retention rates project and Youth Employment Initiative.

VOLUNTEERING

Issues:

- Diminishing number of volunteers.
- Demographics of volunteers changing with much higher proportion of older people.
- Difficulty in attracting volunteers because of cost, Centrelink rules and insurance issues.

Action taken:

- Minister advised of issues and problems relating to volunteering especially in regional areas.
- RCCC representative on Volunteer Ministerial Advisory Group, established in August 2003 to provide a direct link and advice to the Minister for Volunteers on issues concerning the volunteer sector.

Outcomes:

- Link established with Volunteer Ministerial Advisory Group whose inaugural report was released in May 2004.

INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Issues:

- Well being of indigenous communities particularly in outback South Australia.

Action taken:

- Minister advised of issues as follows:
 - health and welfare services stretched and inability to meet demand - particular concern about mental health services, aged care support and services to meet the health needs of the indigenous communities;
 - need for a dialysis service at the Umoona Tjutagku Health Service and for locally based early intervention solutions to respiratory problems amongst children;
 - limits of open access as a mode of learning, the importance of appropriate curriculum and methodology for Aboriginal students and the need for greater incentives to attract and retain quality teachers to all areas of the Outback;
 - capacity building for indigenous communities.

Outcomes:

- Links established with Department of Aboriginal Affairs to further discussions and action.
- Development of the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy in conjunction with DAARE.
- Initiatives to increase representation on RCCC.
- Undertaking steps to establish relationships with other peak bodies (e.g. Indigenous Women's Health).

REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Issues:

- Regional Impact Assessment Policy introduced.

Action taken:

- Briefing provided to RCCC on the Policy and its roll-out.
- Minister advised of concerns of Council in relation to the policy, including the ambiguity in relation to what initiatives are subject to the policy.

Outcomes:

- Ongoing reports detailing any regional impact assessment statements being carried now provided as a standing agenda item.
- RCCC to be involved in the review of the policy.

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE FOR BUSH

Issues:

- *Triple Bottom Line for the Bush* report received from the South Australian Farmers Federation.
- RCCC asked by the Premier to provide feedback on the report.

Action taken:

- Discussions held and the Premier advised of issues arising from the report and ways forward for strategic planning for regional South Australia.

Outcomes:

- Request for ORA/RCCC to lead the development of the Regional Strategic Plan for South Australia.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARDS (RDBS)

Issues:

- Review of the Area Consultative Committees and RDBs.

Action taken:

- ORA provided comprehensive briefing on status of the RDSA working group dealing with recommendation four of EDB report at November 2003 meeting of Council.
- Minister advised of Council's concerns in relation to the review, especially in relation to Clause 18.2 of the EDB Report.

Outcomes:

- Consultant appointed and review being undertaken by RDSA with support from ORA and LGA.
- RCCC represented on Steering Group for Review.
- Regional Development Framework Review Forums held.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Issues:

- Regional representation on the Economic Development Board (a recommendation of the EDB Review).

Action taken:

- Minister advised of concern re lack of regional member to the Economic Development Board.
- RCCC Chair involved in "Economic Growth Summit – One Year On".

Outcomes:

- Greater recognition of regional issues at "Economic Growth Summit – One Year On".
- Two Economic Development Board meetings planned for regional areas in 2004 with involvement from Chair RCCC.

CONTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL AREAS TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE STATE

Issues:

- Better understanding of contribution of regional areas to the well being of the State required.

Action taken:

- Economic study commissioned to gain better understanding of the economic contribution made by Regional SA to the well-being of the State.
- Project/funding partners established, terms of reference finalised, consultancy brief written and preferred consultant chosen.

Outcomes:

- Steering Group comprising RCCC/ORR, LGA and RDSA formed to manage the project.
- Project now underway with first milestone due end of July 2004 showing update of State input/output table and the development of regional input/output tables. The study includes the development of a subregional model with related methodology utilising the Upper Spencer Gulf as the pilot.
- Expected project completion October 2004.

SPATIAL INFORMATION - DATA COLLECTION AND ACCESS

Issues:

- Regional businesses and communities require access to data in order to make and implement economic and social decisions.

Action taken:

- Relationships established with agencies developing and integrating spatial information systems.
- Information re status of sophistication and delivery presented to RCCC.
- Minister advised of Council's strong support for the programs undertaken.

Outcomes:

- RCCC strongly supporting integrated approach.
- Links established with agencies developing systems.
- Resource Information Centre similar to that in the South East to be established in the Riverland.
- Identified further opportunities for RDBs to work closely with Regional National Resource Management Boards to establish critical mass for regional nodes.

TABLE OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|---|
| CE | Chief Executive |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| DAARE | Department for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation |
| DECS | Department of Education and Children's Services |
| DFEEST | Department of Further Education, Employment, Science & Technology |
| DOTARS | Department of Transport and Regional Services (Commonwealth) |
| DTUP | Department for Transport and Urban Planning |
| EDB | Economic Development Board |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| HEC | Higher Education Council |
| LGA | Local Government Association |
| OFID | Office for Infrastructure Development |
| ORA | Office of Regional Affairs |
| PIRSA | Primary Industries and Resources SA |
| RCCC | Regional Communities Consultative Council |
| RDB | Regional Development Board |
| RDSA | Regional Development South Australia |
| RFGs | Regional Facilitation Groups |
| SCORD | Standing Committee on Regional Development |
| STEDS | Septic Tank Effluent Disposal Scheme |
| TAFE | Technical and Further Education |

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