



Launch of the new steel hull in 2015

Building a framework for success

Bowhill Engineering in the Murraylands has proved that you can strut the national stage without giving up your small-town quality of life.

The family-owned company has worked on some of South Australia's major structural steel projects and is helping to connect people along the River Murray after building the steel hull for the new river ferry that left the dockyard in November.

Another steel hull is under construction, and Bowhill Engineering managing director Jeremy Hawkes said the delivery of the first for fit-out in mid-2015 was an emotional moment.

"Bowhill has never built anything like this before, and to launch one here with everyone watching is so special," he said.

The company won the State Government contract in 2014 to build the steel hulls for the new ferries, as part of a \$6 million government commitment.

Mr Hawkes said a recent State Government move to specify increased local content in major projects was already delivering benefits for local firms.

"It's made a massive impact on the way construction companies are

engaging with local suppliers," he said.

Bowhill Engineering employs about 20 people and specialises in finding solutions for engineering challenges.

It delivers about \$5 million worth of structural steel projects each year for the government infrastructure, mining, water, defence and commercial building sectors.

Above all, there is a determination to remain in Bowhill.

"We are passionate country people; we love where we live and we've never considered moving elsewhere," Mr Hawkes said.

"I think we've done a good thing and I'd like to be an example to others to show you don't have to leave your region to be successful."

In addition to winning major contracts, Bowhill has garnered numerous awards, including being named Small Employer of the Year at the 2015 SA Training Awards and taking out the Regional Business Award at the 2014 Telstra Business Awards.

The company started as a mechanical repair workshop in the 1970s when Jeremy's father Brendon needed to repair his farm machinery. He soon took on other farmers' equipment while continuing to farm near Karoonda, until his older son Simon refocused the company on structural steel engineering.

Jeremy took over after Simon's sudden death in a car accident in 2002.

"It took a lot of effort and our clients took some time to trust that we could do it without Simon," he said.

But after the company delivered its next major project, \$1.2 million of work on SA Water's River Murray locks for York Civil, the tide turned.

"York Civil were very impressed with what our team was able to do, and that gave us the belief we could do it," Mr Hawkes said.

"We are known for specialising in helping our clients visualise and collaborate to bring their dreams to life. We engage with the client and their other consultants in the process, and what we end up with is a well-balanced and

smart design. We love being the underdog and surprising people with what we can do."

The results of Bowhill's work can be seen in a number of Australian states, and in Adelaide people have been crossing its Riverbank precinct pedestrian bridge for a decade. The company also contributed to the transport frame that enabled the 1860s-built clipper, City of Adelaide, to be brought from Scotland in 2014 for restoration.

Other projects have included a floating access system for the Dolphin Explorer at Port Adelaide, pedestrian bridges and gantries for major overhead signs on the Southern Expressway, a pedestrian overpass at Wayville train station and major road bridges.



Minister's Message

This edition of Regions SA News marks the newsletter's first anniversary, and I'm very pleased to have had some great feedback on it, from across the state. It's good to hear how much people appreciate reading some of the truly interesting and positive stories of regional South Australia, brought into a single, statewide newsletter.

As we embark on the new year it's timely to reflect on some of the successes we've had over the past 12 months in stimulating economic growth and ensuring our regions are sustainable.

The Regional Development Fund (RDF) has continued to offer grants across regional South Australia to boost investment in regional infrastructure and create new jobs and new opportunities in the regions.

In 2014-15 the RDF was increased from \$1.6 million to \$15 million a year, and since then over 50 projects have been approved, which will generate investment of around half a billion dollars in economic growth across our regions.

Recent grant announcements include one to the Lower North's Greenheat Freekeh – a great South Australian success story that you can read about in this edition.

The third round of applications has closed and included a \$5 million allocation to specifically assist communities in the Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback.

The Government is working to assist the area in its recovery from the closure of Alinta Energy's Leigh Creek coal mine and Port Augusta power stations, and this is one of a number of initiatives introduced to help achieve this.

Another is the \$2 million Upper Spencer Gulf and Outback Futures Program which is offering additional grant funding in the form of smaller grants.

57 young people will start their careers this year with regional youth traineeships in local government across the state; the new Regional Youth Traineeship Program supports entry level employment and training to a trainee for two years, providing valuable on-the-job experience, further education and the opportunity to remain local when embarking on their career. I am looking forward to meeting these trainees and hearing their stories, so look out for a newsletter story on that soon.

A key commitment made to our regions in 2014 when I first took on the Regional Development portfolio was to provide greater direct engagement opportunities with the Premier and Ministers.

During 2015 we held three Country Cabinets – in the state's Mid North, Barossa, Light and Lower North, and Limestone Coast. These have provided a valuable opportunity to meet with and listen to local people on the issues that are most important to them.

Country Cabinets will continue in 2016 and I look forward to meeting with more regional community members through the public forum and other activities. In addition, individual ministers and senior executives will continue to visit regional locations through the year, and I for one am looking forward to getting around to as much of South Australia as I can.

I am committed to giving regional South Australia a strong voice in Parliament, and to continue the push to recognise our regional successes and challenges, supporting the regions in their drive to achieve strong economic and social development.

Geoff Brock
Minister for Regional Development

AT PARTICIPATING FIREARMS DEALERS

AVOID PENALTIES FOR UNREGISTERED FIREARMS

Take your unregistered or unwanted firearms to a participating firearms dealer for surrender or free registration.

CONDITIONS APPLY.

For more information visit:
www.police.sa.gov.au

Firearms amnesty to trigger a safer community

South Australia Police (SAPOL) is urging the owners of unregistered, illegal or unwanted firearms to take advantage of a firearms amnesty running until 30 June 2016.

In a first for South Australia, firearms dealers will play a significant role in the amnesty, with people able to surrender firearms at participating licensed dealers. This includes more than 30 dealers situated in regional areas.

The firearms amnesty encourages all people in possession of unwanted, unregistered or illegal firearms, firearm parts, ammunition, fittings, mechanisms, prohibited firearm accessories and silencers to surrender those items at a participating licensed firearms dealer or their nearest police station. Those holding a current South Australian firearms licence can apply to register the firearm(s) fee-free through a licensed firearms dealer.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Philip Newitt says the amnesty aims to reduce the number of unwanted, unregistered and illegal firearms in the community, making it safer for all.

"In the last three financial years (2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 year to date) 670 firearms were reported stolen in South Australia," he said.

"Of those, more than 55 per cent were stolen from people living in rural areas.

"We know that criminals value firearms and so all guns are at risk of being stolen and falling into the wrong hands.

"We're calling on all registered gun owners to hand in any firearms no longer used – such as inherited or old firearms gathering dust."

Possessing an unregistered or illegal firearm is against the law and tough penalties – up to \$50,000 or imprisonment for up to 10 years – apply.

"With licensed dealers coming on board to help in this amnesty, handing in an unwanted firearm couldn't be easier," AC Newitt said.

The Sporting Shooters Association (South Australia) President David Handyside welcomes the campaign.

"As a group, the Association has been working with SAPOL for more than a year to bring in this specific amnesty model," he said.

"The revamping of the state Firearms Act has accelerated the whole business and involving the firearms dealers will further facilitate a successful amnesty.

"We believe the mechanics of the scheme are designed to make it simpler for all."

Further information and a full list of participating dealers is available on the SAPOL website at www.police.sa.gov.au. You can also email sapol.firearmsbranch@police.sa.gov.au or telephone the Amnesty Information Line on 1800 586 945 (staffed Monday – Friday from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm).

Regions SA news

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Interested in more regional news?

The Regions SA e-Update keeps subscribers informed of activities aimed at building stronger regions, enhancing the profiles of our regions, and promoting social, economic and lifestyle opportunities for communities.

To receive this monthly e-newsletter subscribe at www.pir.sa.gov.au/subscribe

Also, don't forget to follow @SA_PIRSA on Twitter for the latest news from PIRSA, and use the hashtag #SAregions ■

Rockit rocks the community

The opening of a new performing arts studio in Mount Barker celebrated the power of dance – and the power of community – with some very special guests in November.

The new Rockit Performing Arts community dance studio will provide a safer, more comfortable and energetic performing space for the group's dancers, with students ranging from six months to 90 years of age, including students with special needs.

The studio fit out was made possible thanks to the community voting it to the top of the list in the Adelaide Hills, Mount Barker and Alexandrina round of the Country Cabinet 'Fund My Idea' program, part of the State Government's Regional Development Fund. The \$31,470 grant enabled the installation of a sprung floor in the new studio, as well as providing occupational therapy equipment for students with special needs.

"The Rockit Performing Arts group is very grateful to the community for making our idea a winner," Rockit Performing Arts Director Noni Vassos said.

"Our previously sparse performing area has now turned into something really special because of this.

"The dance and movement programs we offer the Adelaide Hills community will be so enriched with these improved facilities."

The new Rockit Performing Arts dance studio officially opened its doors on 14 November with international guests Haley Huelsman and Ashtin Roth from Candy Apples, as seen on the TV show 'Dance Moms', along with Australia's Got Talent finalists the Rybka Twins and The Dream Team Australia. The trio toured Australia in November as part of the 'Edge of Dreams' tour.

The opening featured celebrations of dance including performances by Rockit's own dance community as well as its special guests.

"We showcased dances by students of all ages and abilities, really highlighting the inclusiveness of our studio and the empowerment it gives to participants," Ms Vassos said.

"To have the 'Edge of Dreams' tour take time out of their tour schedule to visit us and perform as part of the studio opening at our newly furnished Mount Barker studio was a real coup.

"We are thrilled that they wanted to see our studio, meet our students and find out more about the work we do with the community.

"A main goal of Rockit's is to use dance to improve the community's sense of wellbeing. We were lucky enough to introduce our international guests to the way our studio works, and to show how we use dance to empower our community.

"Haley, Ashton, the Rybka Twins and the Dream Team had the opportunity to test out the new swing set installed in the studio, and we were able to explain the importance of this swing set and how Rockit utilises it to improve student health, coordination and wellbeing.

"The event really solidified who we are as a dance company and drove home the impact we are having as a community group on community members."

For more information about Rockit Performing Arts visit www.rockitperformingarts.com.au



Top: The official opening of the Rockit Performing Arts community dance studio featured some special international and national guests
Bottom: Sam Rybka of the Rybka Twins tests out the new swing set in the studio made possible through a Fund My Idea grant.
Photos courtesy of Steph Devlin Photography



Peterborough Community Development Officer Nicole Lewis with Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock

Ideas and prosperity on the agenda

Nicole Lewis has returned to her regional roots to become an agent of change in the southern Flinders.

Nicole, who grew up at Yunta, arrived in Peterborough in early October to take on the newly created position of Community Development Officer with Regional Development Australia Yorke & Mid North.

After a decade in Adelaide working in health and fitness research, she's excited about returning to a smaller community to help local ideas come to fruition.

"In this role, I want to speak to as many people in Peterborough as possible; to ask the community what they want on the development agenda," she said.

"Peterborough is a really friendly and positive community. I spent the first few weeks talking with businesses and community members about what they want for the future of Peterborough. There are a number of clear areas of interest for residents, including access to services and the development of youth programs, and the rejuvenation of the main street is going to be a strong focus."

The new role was created with the support of Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock, who heard from people in the region of the need for a coordinating role.

Nicole is based in the community hub on the main street and will be responsible for promoting small-scale economic development initiatives and working with the Peterborough Council and community groups on a range of projects.

"There are lots of young people here and I want to encourage them to use their ideas and maybe start a local business," Nicole said.

"I also hope to encourage existing businesses to expand so it will stimulate the economy to allow better opportunities and encourage more people to stay or to come here."

A new group of future Barossa leaders

The 2015 Barossa Future Leaders program culminated in a presentation of big ideas for community projects to benefit the Barossa community.



Sixteen promising future leaders from the Barossa undertook the latest round of the seven-week Barossa Future Leaders program, which aims to upskill future community leaders to ensure the region retains a vibrant, resilient and creative economy.

Participants attended a week-long intensive residential program and undertook a six-week group community project to strengthen their leadership skills and investigate community topics where local leadership could make a difference in the region.

Program coordinator Brooke Howell said that 2015 was another successful year for the community led, not for profit program.

"All of our 2015 graduates put in a huge amount of work in a short period of time to complete the program," Ms Howell said.

"In addition to the full time, week-long commitment, participants collaborated outside of work hours on a strategic project focusing on a chosen community topic."

Ms Howell said that since the program's inception in 2012, 48 community leaders have completed it.

"The program was established after a group of local leaders identified the need to support young people coming through the ranks," Ms Howell said.

"It focuses on upskilling young people so they can participate in the community in a leadership capacity."

The two components of the program encourage participants to think about how they will lead their community, addressing current issues and future opportunities that will challenge and strengthen the Barossa.

These strategic projects were presented to sponsors and stakeholders during an event at the end of October 2015.

This year's participants explored topics of:

- using the Hill & Son organ as a tourist attraction to generate revenue for other arts and culture projects

- proposing an agricultural enterprise that could generate a revenue stream to support the Barossa community
- how the Southern Barossa Community and Business Alliance could operate and facilitate effective communication and decision making within the Barossa infrastructure
- a proposal for pop-ups in the Barossa that demonstrates feasibility and benefits.

2015 program participant Heidi Helbig said the program was a wonderful example of what can be achieved when people collaborate and work together for the betterment of the region.

"The calibre of guest speakers was amazing and we gained many insights into what makes leaders effective and how we can unlock the talents of others to achieve great outcomes," Ms Helbig said.

"The content was seamless, relevant and applicable to all of us, regardless of what industries or background we come from."

Rosi Wendt said she was grateful for the opportunity to be involved in the program.

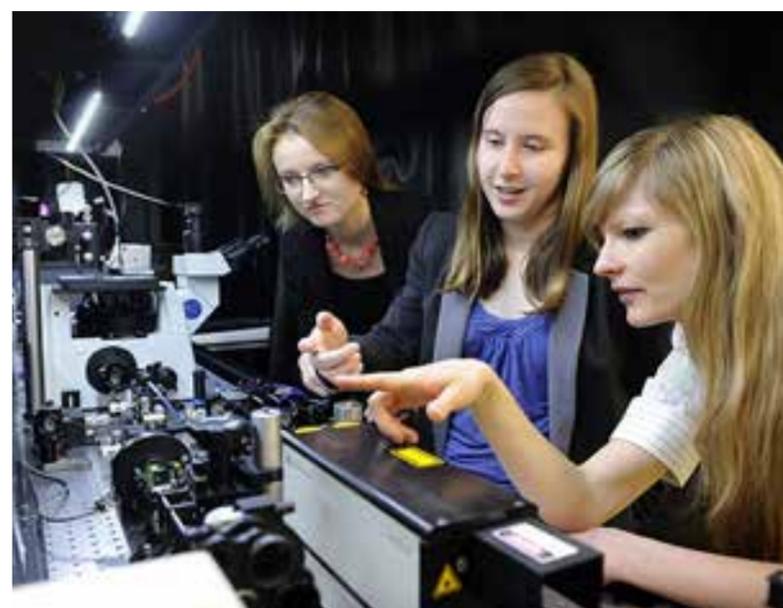
"The Barossa Future Leaders program gave me invaluable information that I can now apply to my business to significantly raise performance level," Ms Wendt said.

The business cases compiled by the 2015 graduates for their strategic projects are available at www.barossa.org.au/regional-leadership/barossa-future-leaders-program

The next program will run in 2017 and is open to all community members over the age of 18.

The Barossa Future Leaders program is supported by Primary Industries and Regions SA.

Above: Barossa Future Leaders 2015 participants with Barons of the Barossa Alistair Ashmead, Aaron Penley and Barbara Storey.



Science hubs are being established across a number of regions to raise awareness about science and its opportunities

Science hubs for regional SA

A new Limestone Coast science hub aims to inspire young people to investigate careers in science and research

The region is sharing in \$70,000 of State Government funding to establish science hubs to promote science and technology events in rural communities.

The hub will bring together educators, science and research agencies, industry and community leaders to develop

a coordinated approach to raising awareness about science and its opportunities.

Emma Handford, Department for Education and Child Development Business Partnership manager and representative for the Limestone Coast Science Hub, said the hubs were part of Inspiring South Australia.

"This is the state's new science engagement initiative and is a partnership between the Australian Government, the Department of State Development, the SA Museum and the three state universities," she said.

"We want to connect students with relevant, real-life industry examples and opportunities."

A reference group has been set up to administer the Limestone Coast hub, which will be delivered as part of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) South East Action Plan.

"STEM skills are essential in creating and turning new ideas and inventions into lucrative, internationally competitive Australian products, services and exports," Ms Handford said.

"STEM studies also develop generic skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and creativity, which are used in a wide range of occupations and everyday actions."

The hub aims to engage industry to support local economic and future employment prospects through promoting the benefits of science and technology skills, along with innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial themes.

Hubs are also being established in the Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Murray and Mallee, and Yorke and Mid North regions.

For more information about the Limestone Coast initiative, contact Emma Handford at emma.handford@sa.gov.au

More information about the regional science hub grants is available at www.statedevelopment.sa.gov.au/science/stem-skills-strategy/regional-science-hubs

Off-grid solutions for Seal Bay Visitor Centre

Seal Bay Conservation Park is one of Kangaroo Island's iconic tourism destinations. It's where visitors from all over the world travel to observe the most accessible colony of endangered Australian sea lions in their natural environment.



The Seal Bay Visitor Centre

When the visitor facilities at Seal Bay were given a major upgrade, South Australian company ZEN Technologies was asked to provide a solar and battery storage energy solution. When added to the facilities' rainwater collection and storage, this would make the centre completely self-sufficient.

The Seal Bay site was equipped with a new expanded solar power system utilising novel lithium ion battery technology providing all the energy needs for this off-grid site.

ZEN Technologies currently has 40 staff based at its Tonsley headquarters; however, business expansion is expected, including specialist and technical roles in the wider community.

South Australia has set a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and is prioritising investment in low carbon industries such as renewable electricity generation and storage.

The innovative work at the Seal Bay Conservation Park features as a case study in a new website called 'The Climate Challenge', which was launched ahead of the Paris climate change talks in late 2015.

For more information about low carbon innovation opportunities in South Australia visit the Climate Challenge website www.climatechange.sa.gov.au

Latest survey shows more South Australians fishing

Regional coastal towns and communities are reaping tourism and economic benefits from the recreational fishing sector, with a recent year-long survey revealing more South Australians are participating in this popular past time.

PIRSA Director Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy Sean Sloan said the survey, conducted between December 2013 and November 2014, shows marked changes in recreational fishers' behaviour since the last survey in 2007-08.

"Nearly one in six South Australians – or 277,000 people – participated in recreational fishing during the 12 month survey in 2013-14," he said.

"This is an increase of 40,000 people since the survey was undertaken in 2007-08.

"Recreational fishing remains a vital economic driver for coastal towns and communities, and businesses such as tackle shops and boating operators, as well as local shops, hospitality and tourism operators, all benefit."

The Spencer Gulf has been revealed as the most popular fishing location, while the group with the greatest increase in participation rates was five-to-14-year-old females, with the rate almost doubling 14.8 per cent to 26.2 per cent since the last survey.

Boat-based fishing has surpassed shore-based fishing as the dominant fishing platform, while fishing with a rod and line remains the preferred fishing method for 84 per cent of fishers.

Mr Sloan said the results showed fishing was capturing the attention of more young people.

"It's great to see so many young South Australians getting out on the water with their families and developing a healthy respect for our fisheries," he said.

"Importantly, these results help our fisheries managers and scientists sustainably manage and preserve fish stocks."

View the complete South Australian Recreational Fishing Survey 2013-14 report at www.pir.sa.gov.au/fishing



HAVE YOUR SAY ON RECREATIONAL FISHING

Recreational fishing is an important part of the South Australian way of life and a vital economic driver, particularly for our coastal and river communities. To ensure this much-loved pursuit can be enjoyed by future generations, regular assessments of management arrangements are needed.

The State Government is currently looking at a range of measures – including changes to some size, bag and boat limits – in order to manage recreational fishing.

South Australians are invited to comment on three papers, which outline the proposals:

- Draft management plan for recreational fishing in South Australia
- Review of size, boat and bag limits in South Australia's recreational fishing sector, marine and freshwater
- Management options for King George Whiting in South Australia

Feedback can be submitted until 5pm Friday 29 April 2016.

For more information and details on how to have your say visit www.pir.sa.gov.au/recfishingreview

Grant grows greenwheat

Greenwheat Freekeh, based at Dublin on the Adelaide Plains, is in a race against time to cement its position as world leader in processing green grain into freekeh, a premium food product.

Managing Director Tony Lutfi says the State Government's Regional Development Fund (RDF) grant has boosted his confidence in winning that race.

"We're currently processing about 400-500 tonnes of grain a month, producing 450 tonnes a year of a premium food product that is the number one supergrain in the world today," Tony said.

"We need to expand rapidly to build that capacity to produce 2500-3000 tonnes a year. Growing slowly isn't an option because there are companies in other parts of the world who are trying to catch up and match the technology that we've developed first over the past 20 years.

Dublin's Greenwheat Freekeh was awarded a \$900,000 Regional Development Fund grant to expand its production plant.



"So our options are very simply to grow fast or run behind. Thanks to the RDF grant, we're growing fast."

Greenwheat Freekeh currently employs ten people working 24/7 producing freekeh, a dried cereal-based food originating from the Mediterranean region. Demand far exceeds supply and the Australian market alone has grown by 220% per annum for the past three years.

The \$900,000 RDF grant will assist the company to build a new plant and create new jobs in processing, storing, cleaning, cracking, milling and packing freekeh on site at Dublin.

"We want to get the first phase of the plant operational by September," Tony said.

"This will increase capacity to 1250 tonnes. The final phase will be completed twelve months later and will increase capacity to about 2500 to 3000 tonnes. Significant employment will be created in construction and building equipment, and operational aspects will also create roughly 15 to 20 jobs (direct and indirect) when the cleaning plant comes into operation."

In the longer term, Greenwheat's business plan includes investing in freezer technology and licensing or franchising its intellectual property around the world. The company has already signed an agreement with a Malaysian company to develop GreenRice Freekeh for Asian markets.

"We're a technology company and our strength is in our world-first process know-how," Tony said. "I'm an engineer, not a farmer, but I know that as we grow, our demand for grain will increase and that's going to help the local economy and the local community."

"There's no way we could achieve the growth rate we need without the support of the SA Government through the RDF grant program. In turn, we're creating construction jobs in the short term and operating jobs in the long term, as well as purchasing from local suppliers."

"We have the number one product in the world and we're here for the long term."

Cheese expansion creating opportunities in the Barossa

Barossa Valley Cheese Company has tripled the size of its retail area and doubled its production.

"We got the grant, but Angaston is the winner," is how Barossa Valley Cheese Company director and head cheesemaker Victoria McClurg thinks of her Regional Development Fund (RDF) grant.

Victoria's business was awarded \$200,000 through the RDF in 2014 and has used the money to double production and triple the size of its retail area in the main street of Angaston.

The expansion has generated six new jobs in the Barossa town and has given Angaston another iconic tourism attraction.

"We get local, national and international visitors. With a range of 25 cow and goat milk cheeses, everyone is satisfied," Victoria said.

"The RDF grant meant that we were able to complete our planned production and retail expansions much earlier than we'd ever hoped. All up, it was close to a million-dollar project so the grant was obviously a huge help.

"The larger production capacity is obviously important to us but it also means we're buying more milk from our local supplier. As we've grown we've been able to give more support to other local businesses – we try to share the love!

"The retail facility means we now offer a more extensive and deeper cheese experience to our customers, whether they are locals or tourists."

Victoria had the idea for The Barossa Cheese Company while working as a winemaker in Bordeaux surrounded by fine wines and cheeses. She and her mother Frances opened the doors in 2003 and haven't looked back since.

"It's a passion. We will always be artisans, we will never be a cheese

factory," Victoria said with an unquestionable determination.

She and her small team are always seeking innovative ideas and refining traditional methods in cheesemaking. Their washed rind cheese has become a speciality, receiving a number of top awards in artisan cheese competitions.

Victoria urges any kind of regional business to apply for an RDF grant.

"It was a game changer for us and for Angaston," she said.

"We are so pleased to be able to give something back to the community and become part of the Barossa's wine and food culture – it's been well worth the time and effort of applying for the grant."





Transport project moves up a gear

The wheels continue to turn on the State Government and industry's agricultural transport project, with industry estimating at least \$36 million in benefits to have flowed to the South Australian agricultural sector so far.

Last year the agriculture, food and wine sector generated \$18.2 billion in revenue, accounted for 46% of the state's merchandise exports, and employed about 144,000 people or one in five working South Australians.

Agriculture Minister Leon Bignell said the 90 day project has addressed ongoing limitations and restrictions to these industries and identified solutions such as regulatory changes or capital works.

"Never before has the agricultural transport industry, in partnership with the State Government, achieved as much in a single year," Mr Bignell said.

Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock said the benefits would also be felt more broadly in regional communities.

"By making our agricultural transport sector more efficient, we are freeing up \$36 million to be spent on other things in our regional economies," Mr Brock said.

"The initiatives are also making life safer for heavy vehicles operators by reducing the double handling of stock and produce, and that in turn makes our regional roads safer for all."

Recommendations already acted on include the use of quad road trains between Port Augusta and the Northern Territory border, the introduction of tri-axle dollies for use in road train combinations, and a change to the system of common registration dates for farm vehicles.

Primary Producers SA Executive Chairman Rob Kerin said the project was a strong partnership between government agencies and the industry through Primary Producers SA.

"Transport costs are a major part of the cost of primary production, and the efficiencies gained by this project will make a major contribution to driving those costs down – helping our competitiveness and viability," Mr Kerin said.

The project was given a boost in the State Government's mid-year budget review in December, with commitment of a \$19.2 million

package to deliver a number of 'last mile' projects identified in the project report *A Modern Transport System for Agriculture: a new partnership approach*, released in March 2015.

"The report found last mile access issues were restricting farm productivity by preventing larger heavy vehicles from travelling on local roads at the beginning and end of journeys," Transport and Infrastructure Minister Stephen Mullighan said.

"Last mile issues usually involve local council access roads, but are relatively expensive given they need to be constructed for heavy vehicles. This can often put them beyond the reach of councils to fund."

The agricultural transport project was a collaboration between Primary Industries and Regions SA, Primary Producers SA and the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

A list of progress and achievements is available at www.pir.sa.gov.au/roadtransport

Sweet taste of success

A new way of measuring the quality of stone fruit was the catalyst for a Riverland company's new premium nectarine brand.

The recently launched upmarket brand, The Chosen Ones, also represents a new business phase for Renmark North's Quality Fruit Marketing (QFM).

Executive Chairman Michael Trautwein said the 20-year-old company was the only one in Australia using the new technology for grading stone fruit.

The equipment, worth \$360,000, uses four near-infrared spectroscopy cameras to measure the sugar content in the fruit, giving a more accurate indication of eating quality.

"Research has shown that if consumers are disappointed in their purchase of stone fruit they do not re-purchase for six to eight weeks," Mr Trautwein said.

"When the season is only 16 weeks long that is a big problem for the industry.

"This system is not a guarantee but it does eliminate a large percentage of the unsatisfactory fruit."

Stone fruit is usually graded based on visible quality, but even an experienced eye cannot assess the fruit as accurately as the new electronic fruit sorting equipment added to the existing fruit grader.

The Chosen Ones has been launched through Foodworks supermarkets in Victoria, but will also be available at the Barossa Co-op at Nuriootpa.

Mr Trautwein said the plan was to expand the range to include peaches and to add local retailers.

"This is a very exciting time. Long-term growth for us will come from this brand expansion," he said.

"It is about consumers getting value for money by enjoying their stone fruit purchase. It will also help us in the Asian market because they like very sweet fruit, so we will be able to segment the product to the taste preferences of each customer base."

The company has planted more orchards in anticipation of the increased consumer demand, including varieties of stone fruit bred in France that are exclusive to the QFM group.

QFM received a grant of \$189,630 under the former Riverland Sustainable Futures Fund to enable it to purchase the new equipment.



The Chosen Ones, a new premium nectarine brand from Renmark's Quality Fruit Marketing

SA regions shine in Regional Awards

With 2,160 nominees, 602 entrants, 167 finalists, 14 Hall of Fame inductees and 87 ultimate winners across seven award ceremonies through October, regional South Australia has proven its mettle yet again in the 2015 South Australian Regional Awards.

The awards, held annually and coordinated by Brand South Australia, celebrate and promote the achievements of individuals, groups and organisations that have made significant contributions to regional South Australia.

CEO of Brand South Australia Karen Raffen said the awards provided a standard for excellence within regional South Australia in all sectors including arts, food, wine and tourism.

"The Regional Awards are a wonderful opportunity to recognise the strength of South Australia's regional communities," Ms Raffen said.

"They truly bring to light the wealth of activity happening right across our state, and the diversity and excellence of what our regional communities are involved in.

"In each of South Australia's regions, the 2015 awards honoured 13 categories for excellence in fields such as small and large business, arts and creative industries, food and wine, community contributions, events, health, education and sport.

"Thanks to the support of the awards' major sponsor, Primary Industries and Regions SA, we can toast the successes of businesses, communities and individuals right across the state," said Ms Raffen.

A full list of winners can be found at www.brandsouthaustralia.com.au



Flinders Ranges Premium Grain, represented by Diana Barrie, Peter Barrie, Gilmour Catford, Michael Wurst and Carey Wurst, was inducted into the Department of State Development Hall of Fame by Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock. Flinders Ranges Premium Grain also received the Foodland Premium Food and Wine from our Clean Environment – Food Award for the Yorke and Mid North.



Hollick Estates was awarded the Statewide Tourism Award for the Limestone Coast. Jing Xie, Marion Patterson, Matthew Ma and Wendy Hollick received the award, presented by Regional Development Australia Chief Executive Officer Mike Ryan.



Barossa Lower North Futures, represented by Yvonne Cloke and David Hodge, was inducted into the Department of State Development Hall of Fame by Mayor of Gawler Karen Redman (left). Barossa Lower North Futures also received the Flinders University Education Award for Barossa.



Janet Klein and Sarah Carlson of Ngeringa Vineyards received the PIRSA Premium Food and Wine from our Clean Environment – Wine Award for the Hills and Coasts, presented by Premium Food and Wine from our Clean Environment Ambassador Mark Laucke (left). Ngeringa Vineyards was also inducted into the Department of State Development Hall of Fame.



Mypolonga Primary School, represented by Rita O'Brien and Anne Martin, received the Flinders University Education Award for Murraylands and Riverland from Lee Pope, Flinders University. Mypolonga Primary School was also inducted into the Department of State Development Hall of Fame.



Dayna Duncan, who won the Leukaemia Foundation Emerging Leader Award for Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula, was presented with her award by Mikaela Sellen, Community Relationships Manager, Leukaemia Foundation. Dayna was also inducted into the Department of State Development Hall of Fame.



Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock presented Ellenor Day-Lutz of Port Augusta Cultural Centre – Yarta Purtli with the Dr+Group Arts and Creative Industries Award for the Far North. Port Augusta Cultural Centre – Yarta Purtli was also inducted into the Department of State Development Hall of Fame.

Hills alive with talent

The Adelaide Hills region continues to win accolades for its food and wine and the expertise of its producers.

Woodside Cheese Wrights head cheesemaker Kris Lloyd was recently named one of Australia's Women of Influence, taking out the Business Enterprise category in the Australian Financial Review and Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards for 2015.

Nominees were judged on their outstanding ability to demonstrate vision, leadership, innovation and action in and beyond their fields.

Kris, who founded CheeseFest and is a multi-award-winning producer, said she believed the award showed

the growing importance of women in the artisan cheese industry.

She was also excited to be recognised for her management and development expertise.

"When you are being judged on your business acumen it is fabulous to be included in such a line-up and it's great to have a third party acknowledge your business philosophy," she said.

"This industry is largely based in the Hills region and that is great news for food tourism opportunities as well.

"The cellar door is not just owned by wineries now – there are cheese and honey producers, charcuterie and fish smokers with cellar doors, plus apples, stone fruit, cider, craft brewers and market produce.

"All this just 30 minutes from the city means we are spoilt for choice and we have an unbelievable tourism opportunity."

Meanwhile, Hills winemaker Michael Downer was joint winner of the Winemakers' Choice Award at the 2015 Young Guns Wine Awards in October.

Longview Vineyard's Epitome Late Harvest Riesling won the trophy for Best Sweet Wine at the Royal Melbourne Wine Awards in October.

And Bird in Hand Winery took out Winestate's Australia and New Zealand Wine of the Year in November with its Nest Egg Adelaide Hills Chardonnay 2012. The company also was named Australian Wine Company of the Year and Australian Winemaker of the Year.



Kris Lloyd has been named one of Australia's Women of Influence.