



MALLEE'S REGIONAL EXECUTIVES FORUM VISITED

The forum established for business executives in the Mallee by the Champions of the Bush group met in Mildura today, under the Chairmanship of Tony Mathews.

The convenor of Champions of the Bush Geoffrey Carruthers attended today's forum to meet the members and further detail the operations of similar forums across Victoria.

"We are very pleased that the program has the support of the local business community, and we trust that the mentors and shared skills experiences will be beneficial to local enterprise growth and economic development", Mr Carruthers said.

Six Regional Executive Forums were established in regional Victoria earlier this year with the support of Regional Development Victoria, with around 70 participants from all sectors of industry and commerce. The aim of the program is to learn via mutual exchange of experience and skills, and to benefit from guest speakers and mentors.

"Capital city based programs have proved very rewarding for metropolitan business leaders, but none have ever been viable in the country areas. Champions of the Bush believes that the REF's will provide the same opportunities for regional executives," he said.

The Forums are operated by the SED Consulting Group across Victoria under the direction of Champions of the Bush. Local Principal Philip Shugg who hosted today's meeting, has been instrumental in bringing the participants together and engaging Tony Mathews to chair the REF.

Each Forum sets its own agenda to pursue and engage in matters of interest and business skills development, and share experiences in a confidential environment. There is a broad template for how the Forums should operate, but each region has different requirements.

"Our feedback thus far is most encouraging, with participants and the Chairs very enthusiastic about the prospects of learning from one another, and building upon management and leadership skills. This can only enhance the capability of existing businesses, and grow the productivity of the region", Mr Carruthers said.

Champions of the Bush is a group of businesses that principally operate across regional Australia, that promotes and contributes to the enhancement of country communities. Established in 2002 as a not-for-profit association, it run a series of programs and campaigns and makes representation to State and Federal governments.

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