

## **Riverland's first purpose built backpacker resort open**

Quality seasonal worker accommodation in the Riverland is getting a boost with the opening today of the new purpose-built 236-bed Paringa Backpackers' Resort by Regional Development Minister Geoff Brock.

The new complex is the first dedicated purpose-built seasonal workers' resort to be built in the Riverland and includes 28 cabin-type accommodation units, wifi internet, a swimming pool, two separate barbecue areas, a recreation lounge, a gym and a staff training centre.

The \$3.6 million project, built by Rockford Homes, received funding of \$1.2 million under the Regional Development and Innovation Fund (RDIF).

The RDIF is part of the Regional Economic Development element of the \$265 million South Australian River Murray Sustainability Program (SARMS). SARMS is funded by the Australian Government and delivered by Primary Industries and Regions SA.

### **Background**

Four full-time positions will be created upon the completion of the project with additional employment opportunities possible in peak season.

The training rooms at the resort will be used by registered training organisations for pre-employment training.

As part of the accommodation package for workers, the resort will help promote available seasonal job opportunities in the Riverland and offer a transport service to places of employment.

Clever design and building principles have been employed in the build, including:

- Northerly aspect of cabins for energy efficiency
- High quality insulation throughout all buildings
- Light coloured roofs to reflect heat
- Solar systems to generate daytime electricity
- Reverse cycle heating and cooling
- Water efficient irrigation systems.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Geoff Brock**

Accommodation for seasonal workers was an issue raised at the very first Country Cabinet public forum in the Riverland in June 2014. I am pleased that an RDIF grant has been able to support such a quality project to fill that need.

This new backpackers' accommodation will help local businesses attract the seasonal workers who are integral to their operations and the Riverland economy, and will also give these visitors a great base from which to appreciate all the Riverland has to offer.

I want to congratulate John and Leane Pearce for designing and building a complex which delivers such a high quality accommodation option for seasonal workers.

The RDIF has invested almost \$10 million into the South Australian River Murray region, supporting the creation of more than 1000 jobs during construction of funded projects and more than 1000 longer term operational jobs for the region.

**Quotes attributable to Rockford Homes Pty Ltd John Pearce**

The SARMS RDIF grant was a very valuable part of getting this project underway, it allowed us to think outside the square and turn our ideas into reality.

We are also extremely proud of the fact that other local businesses also benefitted from this project. Wherever possible we used locally sourced materials and labour.

We conducted a lot of research talking with local councils, employers, job agencies and other accommodation providers throughout the Riverland to make sure we understood what was needed – and as a result the level of support from the very beginning has been fantastic.