

Region gets poor rating for index

■ Josh Nyman

The Great Southern region has rated poorly in a new online index comparing the economic performance of regional Australia.

Regional Australia Institute's [In]Sight ranks the nation's 55 Regional Development Australia regions and 560 local government areas and attracted so much internet traffic on its launch day last week many users could not access the website.

The site, which was developed in collaboration with Deloitte Access Economics, combines data from sources, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Social Health Atlas of Australia, to determine the performance of regional Australia over 10 themes and 59 indicators.

However, the Great Southern's status as an RDA region ranked in the bottom 20 of many themes including institutions (47), infrastructure and essential services (37), economic fundamentals (47), labour market efficiency (43), innovation (42) and market size (47).

But the region showed strength in areas of natural resources (10), business sophistication (14), technological readiness (15), and rated fairly in human capital (33).

Great Southern Development Commission chief executive Bruce Manning said the results indicated the region needed to continue to drive diversification in the area's local economy.

"We are focused on primary industry and a lot of investment by the commission and our partners has been to diversify," he said.

Mr Manning said the region's sizeable infrastructure investment was a backbone to diversification.

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