

# Nationals to target regional projects

■ **Keir Tunbridge**

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FEDERAL Nationals Leader Warren Truss could push for a Federal funding program targeting small regional projects if the Coalition wins government, following the disappointing failure of the Great Southern to gain any Regional Development Australia funding last month.

Only WA four projects were successful in the latest round of Federal RDA funding.

The City of Albany and the Shire of Plantagenet had both been short-listed to receive RDA money to go towards sporting precinct upgrades, along with the Shire of Kattanning for a regional entertainment centre.

At least one Great Southern project was expected to receive funding; however, \$15 million – 75 per cent of the RDA money earmarked for WA – went to the Shire of Carnarvon for major flood mitigation projects.

Speaking in Albany last week, Mr Truss said he had received a lot of contact from groups which had missed out on RDA funding, and flagged he would support a national program similar to WA's Royalties for Regions targeting smaller regional projects.

He praised RDA as "useful" but said many smaller organisations and groups did not qualify for funding.

"I think it is important we have a program to support regional communities," he said.

"When you visit Western Australia it's impossible not to be impressed by Royalties for Regions and what it's actually achieved in country towns right throughout the State."

Following the funding announcement last month, RDA Great Southern executive officer Simon Lyas said there had been talks within the RDA about a second tier of the program geared towards smaller regional projects, but nothing had come of it as yet.



Albany's Peter

Picture: Laurie Benson

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## Penguin visitor fattens up to prepare for its release

■ **Toyah Shakespeare**

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DENMARK'S 10-month-old Fiorland penguin visitor has been steadily gaining weight and will be ready for a release back into

The penguin, at 1.3kg, could barely stand when it arrived, but now weighs 2kg.

"He can hop up the steps and he hoots at us for food at the back stairs," she said.

"Penguins are imprintable so