



North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils

Dowerin | Koorda | Mt Marshall | Mukinbudin | Nungarin | Trayning | Wyalkatchem

Council Meeting

Tuesday 27 September 2022

Shire of Wyalkatchem, Council Chambers

MINUTES

www.newroc.com.au

ANNUAL CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

| MONTH | ACTIVITY | MEETING |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| January | | Executive |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Council refreshes itself on NEWROC Vision, Mission, Values (review Vision and Mission every other year) 👉 Council reviews NEWROC project priorities / strategic plan | Council |
| March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 WDC attendance to respond to NEWROC project priorities 👉 Submit priority projects to WDC, Regional Development and WA Planning | Executive |
| April | 👉 NEWROC Budget Preparation | Council |
| May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 NEWROC Draft Budget Presented 👉 NEWROC Executive Officer Contract/Hourly Rate Review (current contract expires June 2027) 👉 Local Government Week agenda to be discussed at Executive meeting to determine if EA should attend | Executive |
| June | 👉 NEWROC Budget Adopted | Council |
| July | | Executive |
| August | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 Information for Councillors pre-election 👉 NEWROC Audit | Council |
| September | | Executive |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 NEWROC CEO and President Handover (every 2yrs) 👉 NEWROC Dinner | Council |
| November | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 👉 NEWROC Induction of new Council representatives (every other year) 👉 Review NEWROC MoU (every other year) | Executive |
| December | 👉 NEWROC Christmas / End of Year Drinks | Council |

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Compliance

Media Releases

Newsletter

NEWROC Chair and CEO Rotation

Shire of Mt Marshall

Shire of Nungarin

Shire of Wyalkatchem

Shire of Koorda

Shire of Mukinbudin (Oct 2021 – Oct 2023)

Shire of Trayning

Shire of Dowerin

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NORTH EASTERN WHEATBELT REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF COUNCILS

Minutes for the Council Meeting held at the Shire of Wyalkatchem Council Chambers on Tuesday 27 September commencing at 2.01pm

MINUTES

1. OPENING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members nominated Cr Davies to chair the meeting.

Cr Davies welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 2.01pm.

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

2.1. Attendance

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cr Jannah Stratford | President Shire of Koorda |
| Cr Quentin Davies | President, Shire of Wyalkatchem |
| Cr Pippa De Lacy | President, Shire of Nungarin |
| Cr Robert Trepp | President, Shire of Dowerin |
| Cr Mark Lesley | Shire of Trayning |

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Darren Simmons | CEO, Shire of Koorda |
| John Nuttall | CEO, Shire of Mt Marshall |
| Leanne Parola | CEO, Shire of Trayning |
| Leonard Long | CEO, Shire of Nungarin |
| Rebecca McCall | CEO, Shire of Dowerin |

NEWROC Officer

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Caroline Robinson | Executive Officer, NEWROC |
|-------------------|---------------------------|

Guests

| | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Cr Buster Cooper | Shire of Koorda |
|------------------|-----------------|

2.2. Apologies

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cr Gary Shadbolt | NEWROC Chair, Shire of Mukinbudin |
| Dirk Sellenger | NEWROC CEO, CEO Shire of Mukinbudin |
| Cr Melanie Brown | President, Shire of Trayning |
| Peter Klein | CEO, Shire of Wyalkatchem |
| Cr Tony Sachse | President, Shire of Mt Marshall |

2.3. Leave of Absence Approvals / Approved

Nil

3. Declarations of Interest and Delegations Register

Nil

3.1. Delegation Register

Please find below a delegations register as per the new policy adopted in March 2017:

| Description of Delegations | Delegatee | Delegated to | Approval |
|--|-----------|--------------|-------------------|
| Records Management | CEO | NEWROC EO | Council |
| NEWROC Financial Management | CEO | NEWROC EO | Council Dec 2017 |
| Bendigo Bank Signatory (NEWROC) | CEO | NEWROC EO | Council Dec 2017 |
| Bendigo Bank Signatory (Shire of Mukinbudin) | Council | CEO | Council Oct 2019 |
| NEWROC Website | CEO | NEWROC EO | Council June 2017 |

4. Presentations

Nil

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

5.1. Council Meeting

Minutes of the Council Meeting held 26 July 2022 have previously been circulated.

RESOLUTION

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 July 2022 be received as a true and correct record of proceedings.

Moved Cr Stratford

Seconded Cr Trepp

CARRIED 5/0

5.2. Executive Meeting 29 August 2022

Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on 29 August 2022 have previously been circulated.

RESOLUTION

That the Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on 29 August 2022 be received.

Moved Cr De Lacy

Seconded Cr Trepp

CARRIED 5/0

5.3. Business Arising

Nil

6. FINANCIAL MATTERS**6.1. Income, Expenditure and Profit and Loss**

FILE REFERENCE: 42-2 Finance Audit and Compliance
REPORTING OFFICER: Caroline Robinson
DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST: Nil
DATE: 23 September 2022
ATTACHMENT NUMBER: #1P and L
CONSULTATION:
STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT: Nil
VOTING REQUIREMENT: Simple Majority

COMMENTS

Account transactions for the period 1 July 2022 to 31 August 2022

| BB NEWROC Funds-5557 | | | Credit | Debit | Running Balance |
|--|--|---------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Opening Balance | | | 56,310.78 | 0.00 | 56,310.78 |
| 01 Jul 2022 | Xero Australia | XEROAUSTRALIA | 0.00 | 25.65 | 56,285.13 |
| 01 Jul 2022 | Bendigo Bank | | 0.00 | 4.95 | 56,280.18 |
| 01 Aug 2022 | Xero Australia | XEROAUSTRALIA | 0.00 | 51.30 | 56,228.88 |
| 02 Aug 2022 | Payment: 150Square | INV-0158 | 0.00 | 4,015.63 | 52,213.25 |
| 02 Aug 2022 | Payment: Alyce Ventris | 2022 | 0.00 | 2,427.15 | 49,786.10 |
| 02 Aug 2022 | Payment: Alyce Ventris | 2018 | 0.00 | 4,132.42 | 45,653.68 |
| 02 Aug 2022 | Payment: Alyce Ventris | 2023 | 0.00 | 2,463.45 | 43,190.23 |
| 08 Aug 2022 | Payment: Bencubbin Community Resource Centre | INV-1670 | 0.00 | 100.00 | 43,090.23 |
| 08 Aug 2022 | Payment: Wyalkatchem Weekly | 41 | 0.00 | 25.00 | 43,065.23 |
| 08 Aug 2022 | Payment: KTY Book Club | 1043 | 0.00 | 500.00 | 42,565.23 |
| 08 Aug 2022 | Wyalkatchem Weekly | | 25.00 | 0.00 | 42,590.23 |
| 19 Aug 2022 | Bank Transfer from ATO | | 5,072.00 | 0.00 | 47,662.23 |
| 19 Aug 2022 | Payment: Shire of Dowerin | INV-0091 | 14,300.00 | 0.00 | 61,962.23 |
| 24 Aug 2022 | Payment: Shire of Wyalkatchem | INV-0092 | 14,300.00 | 0.00 | 76,262.23 |
| 24 Aug 2022 | Payment: Shire of Mukinbudin | INV-0095 | 14,300.00 | 0.00 | 90,562.23 |
| 28 Aug 2022 | Payment: Alyce Ventris | 2026 | 0.00 | 2,453.55 | 88,108.68 |
| 28 Aug 2022 | Payment: 150Square | INV-0167 | 0.00 | 4,270.63 | 83,838.05 |
| 28 Aug 2022 | Payment: Shire Of Kellerberrin | 290822 | 0.00 | 33.00 | 83,805.05 |
| 28 Aug 2022 | Payment: Strike Point | RB9818246200 | 0.00 | 313.10 | 83,491.95 |
| 28 Aug 2022 | Payment: Shire Of Kellerberrin | 290822 | 0.00 | 50.00 | 83,441.95 |
| 30 Aug 2022 | Bendigo Bank | | 0.00 | 30.00 | 83,411.95 |
| 30 Aug 2022 | Payment: Shire of Mt Marshall | INV-0097 | 14,300.00 | 0.00 | 97,711.95 |
| Total BB NEWROC Funds- 5557 | | | 62,297.00 | 20,895.83 | 97,711.95 |
| Closing Balance | | | 97,711.95 | 0.00 | 97,711.95 |
| Total | | | 62,297.00 | 20,895.83 | 41,401.17 |

Balance Sheet

North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils

As at 31 August 2022

Cash Basis

31 AUG 2022

Assets

Bank

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| BB NEWROC Funds-5557 | 97,711.95 |
| BB Term Deposit Account-1388 | 295,712.15 |
| Total Bank | 393,424.10 |

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Total Assets | 393,424.10 |
|---------------------|-------------------|

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| GST | 3,305.84 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 3,305.84 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Total Liabilities | 3,305.84 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Net Assets | 390,118.26 |
|-------------------|-------------------|

Equity

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Current Year Earnings | 37,155.73 |
| Retained Earnings | 352,962.53 |
| Total Equity | 390,118.26 |

Shire of Nungarin has issued Crisp Wireless for a purchase order for \$33,000 (in GST) for the Shire of Kellerberrin connection

RESOLUTION

That the income and expenditure from 1 July 2022 to 31 August 2022 and the P and L and balance sheet as at 31 August 2022 be received.

Moved Cr Stratford

Seconded Cr De Lacy

CARRIED 5/0

6.2. Audit

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| FILE REFERENCE: | 42-2 Finance Audit and Compliance |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Caroline Robinson |
| DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST: | Nil |
| DATE: | 23 September 2022 |
| ATTACHMENT NUMBER: | #2 Audited Statements |
| CONSULTATION: | |
| STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT: | Nil |
| VOTING REQUIREMENT: | Simple Majority |

COMMENTS

The NEWROC Audit is attached.

RESOLUTION

NEWROC Audit is adopted and received

Moved Cr Trepp

Seconded Cr Stratford

CARRIED 5/0

7. MATTERS FOR DECISION

7.1. ENERGY

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| FILE REFERENCE: | 107-1 Power |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Caroline Robinson |
| DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST: | Nil |
| DATE: | 23 September 2022 |
| ATTACHMENT NUMBER: | #3 Meeting Agenda #4 Correspondence to Minister for Energy |
| CONSULTATION: | Minister for Energy Cr Tony Sachse John Nuttall Peter Klein |
| STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT: | Nil |
| VOTING REQUIREMENT: | Simple Majority |

COMMENT

PART ONE

The NEWROC EO met CBH in person on August 23rd to discuss the scope of works by POS. CBH will provide some commentary on the scope of works. The NEWROC EO requested financial support towards the cost of the scope of works and CBH was not adverse to supporting the NEWROC, dependent on their feedback regarding the scope.

PART TWO

The below email was received from Hon Mia Davies MLA, following up on issues the NEWROC has had with our energy project. Nicole Gibbs, CEO Shire of Quairading was copied into the email. The Shire of Quairading has had significant issues with power reliability and has expressed interest in local power generation and distribution for the townsite. Nicole has been speaking to Western Power and Mia.

From: **Davies, Mia** <Mia.Davies@mp.wa.gov.au>

Date: Thu, 18 Aug 2022 at 12:09

Subject: Microgrid - Grievance to Minister

To: caroline@solum.net.au <caroline@solum.net.au>, ceo@quairading.wa.gov.au
<ceo@quairading.wa.gov.au>

Cc: Brown, Kathleen <Kathleen.Brown@mp.wa.gov.au>, Lawrence, Rhonda
<Rhonda.Lawrence@mp.wa.gov.au>, Chambers, Wendy <Wendy.Chambers@mp.wa.gov.au>

Hello Caroline & Nicole

I have presented the Grievance this morning (just waiting for the Hansard to come through) and the Minister did the following:

- 1. Apologised that there had been no follow up from his office*
- 2. Offered to clear his diary for the 16th September to travel to the Wheatbelt to meet with concerned stakeholders*

I will send the Hansard through, but I think we should take advantage of this opportunity if possible. Unfortunately, I cannot be in attendance on 16th September as I have a Workshop for a course that I have committed to through Monash University and it's the day before the North West Central by-election (so I will be in Carnarvon). That doesn't mean this shouldn't go ahead – if the Minister is clearing his diary then lets make the most of it.

I am happy for my office to liaise with the Minister's office and yourselves if this date can be locked in.

Rgds, Mia

HON MIA DAVIES MLA

Member for Central Wheatbelt | Leader of The Nationals WA | Leader of the Opposition WA

RESOLUTION

NEWROC host the Minister for Energy on 16 September 2022

NEWROC representatives at the meeting to include: NEWROC President, members of the NEWROC energy sub committee, NEWROC EO and any other interested members of the NEWROC Council and Executive

NEWROC EO prepare the agenda for the meeting and a summary of key issues to present to the Minister for Energy on the 16 September 2022

Moved J Nuttall

Seconded R McCall

CARRIED 5/0

UPDATE SINCE AUGUST EXECUTIVE MEETING

The NEWROC has since met with the Minister for Energy on Friday 16 September. The meeting was generously hosted by the Shire of Quairading. The NEWROC EO prepared an agenda for the meeting (attached). NEWROC representatives at the meeting in Quairading included Cr Sachse, John Nuttall, Peter Klein and the NEWROC EO. Others in attendance included Minister for Energy, Yhana Lucas (Senior Policy Advisor), Zane Christmas (Western Power), Brent (Western Power), Cr Smith, Cr Hippisley and Cr Stacey from the Shire of Quairading, Nicole Gibbs (Shire of Quairading CEO), Liz Aitken (Empire Energy), Tirthankar Banerjee (Oztron Energy), Kathleen Brown (Mia Davies Office) and Hon Darren West MLC.

A verbal update of the meeting will be provided at the NEWROC Council meeting. Key advocacy points by the NEWROC included:

- Desire to have reliable power to NEWROC communities
- Collaborative approach to work with Western Power to achieve reliable power supply and continue to work towards renewable energy generation and distribution
- Request for load profiles for NEWROC communities and outage frequency so solutions can be tailored

NEWROC EO has provided updates of the meeting to:

- Hon Mia Davies MLA (Zoom Friday 23 September)
- Wheatbelt Development Commission (Phone and email)
- Positive Offgrid Solutions (email and will meet with them on Zoom on Wednesday 28 September)

Correspondence to the Minister following the meeting is attached. An email response has been received.

RESOLUTION

NEWROC receives the information. NEWROC engages with Western Power to investigate a VPP for NEWROC towns. NEWROC EO meet with CBH and Positive Offgrid Solutions to discuss energy meeting with the Minister

Moved Cr De Lacy

Seconded Cr Trepp

CARRIED 5/0

Discussion:

- Cr Trepp will forward details of US battery companies that POS may benefit from

7.2. REGIONAL SUBSIDIARY

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| FILE REFERENCE: | 041-5 Strategic and Future Planning |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Caroline Robinson |
| DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST: | Nil |
| DATE: | 23 September 2022 |
| ATTACHMENT NUMBER: | #5 Regional Subsidiary Submission #6 NEWROC Response |
| CONSULTATION: | Sam McCleod (Senior Policy Advisor) Kirsty Martin (DLGSC) Liam McNeill (DLGSC) |
| STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT: | Nil |
| VOTING REQUIREMENT: | Simple Majority |

COMMENT

NEWROC member Councils have all adopted the Regional Subsidiary Charter and Regional Subsidiary Business Plan.

The NEWROC EO received one written submission (attached) and prepared and sent a response to the submission (attached).

DLGSC and Sam Macleod (Policy Advisor) met with the NEWROC EO on 23 August 2022.

The Department indicated that the proposed amendments to the regulations will not occur in 2022 and has recommended we submit a revised Charter to the Minister inline with current regulations. By doing so, the NEWROC can become a regional subsidiary and when the regulations are amended in 2023 the NEWROC can submit a revised Charter with amendments to borrowing, auditor and objectives (if necessary).

Members to note - any amendments to the current Regional Subsidiary charter are not required to go back out to member Councils or for community consultation. If there are any changes to the Business Plan, these are required to go back out.

The Charter has been updated following feedback from DLGSC. Major amendments have included:

- Objectives narrowed to community and economic development (does not exclude us from advocacy, governance or environment as these areas are often linked to community services and economic development)
- Borrowing clauses removed (not in line with current regulations)
- Auditor is from the OAG
- Addition of how profits of the Regional Subsidiary are dealt with. Added that these will be kept in a reserve fund.
- Power of the Regional Subsidiary to become a member of another organisation is not possible (not in line with current regulations)

DLGSC made comment that they would like to see the Charter be considerate of future growth of the NEWROC Regional Subsidiary.

RESOLUTION

Revised NEWROC Charter be sent to DLGSC following the Executive Committee meeting (and any further updates from this meeting) for further review before the NEWROC September Council meeting where it will be recommended for adoption

NEWROC prepare correspondence to DLGSC regarding the group's position on the current regulations and recommendations for the future

Moved L Parola

Seconded D Simmons

CARRIED 5/0

EXECUTIVE MEETING DISCUSSION

At the Executive meeting it was agreed that a revised NEWROC Charter be sent to DLGSC following the Executive Committee meeting for further review before the NEWROC September Council meeting. Additionally the Executive discussed:

- NEWROC EO to enquire as to the costs and process for the audit with AOG – with the Regional Subsidiary be audited as a Local Government?
- Will we have to follow the Financial Management Regulations?

UPDATE SINCE EXECUTIVE MEETING

NEWROC EO updated the Charter and sent it to DLGSC. The NEWROC has received feedback on the revised Charter from DLGSC on Friday 23 September. The NEWROC EO will work through some additional amendments.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

NEWROC EO work with the NEWROC Executive to respond and amend the Charter following feedback from DLGSC. The Executive be delegated the authority to submit the Charter to the Minister subject to the amendments not altering the intent of the Charter in a substantial manner and after the Charter individual member local government feedback

NEWROC prepare correspondence to DLGSC regarding the group's position on the current regulations and position should the Charter not be accepted by the Minister.

RESOLUTION

NEWROC EO work with the NEWROC Executive to respond and amend the Charter following feedback from DLGSC. The Executive be delegated the authority to submit the Charter to the Minister subject to the amendments not altering the intent of the Charter in a substantial manner and after the Charter has been reviewed by individual member local governments.

Moved Cr Stratford

Seconded Cr Trepp

CARRIED 5/0

ACTION: NEWROC EO to meet with DLGSC and Policy Advisor to discuss our updated Charter

7.3. WORKFORCE PLANNING

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| FILE REFERENCE: | 035-6 Federal Grants |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Caroline Robinson |
| DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST: | Nil |
| DATE: | 25 August 2022 |
| ATTACHMENT NUMBER: | #7 RDA Wheatbelt Letter #8 Working draft Workforce and Housing Discussion Paper |
| CONSULTATION: | WEROC EO, RDA Wheatbelt, WBN |
| STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT: | Nil |
| VOTING REQUIREMENT: | Simple Majority |

COMMENT

RDA Wheatbelt received feedback from 30 Shires regarding the proposed Wheatbelt Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA). Six were not interested with some respondents indicating interested subject to cost and the WEROC and NEWROC members indicating support subject to a subregional geographical boundary.

Since the survey there have been developments at a State Government level and additional on ground operational feedback which have led the working group to reconsider whether a DAMA is the most appropriate tool to address the immediate and longer-term workforce needs.

On Sunday 21st August, the Premier announced new arrangements for skilled migrants applying to work in WA. The measures presented include more than 100 occupations added to the WA skilled occupation list (bringing the total list to 276); a temporary relaxation of migration criteria and the \$200 application fee waived. Other temporary measures included halving the requirement to have an employment contract from 12 to 6 months; reducing the requirement for applications to demonstrate sufficient funds; removing English requirements; and reducing work experience requirements.

These measures go some way to achieving what we were hoping to do by establishing a DAMA. Regional skills are being supported through the addition of 33 new occupations on the skilled migrant list which align with occupations in the four existing DAMAs across regional WA.

In addition to this development, on ground intelligence was sought from existing Designated Area Representatives (DAR). There has been low uptake of DAMA allocations because of the complexity of applications.

It appears the most useful step forward for us now is to work with the Department of Home Affairs to identify a toolbox of visa options that businesses and local government can use to access the skilled workforce they need.

Throughout consultation and data collected through the DAMA survey we have significant evidence demonstrating the scale and impact of current skilled and unskilled workforce shortages. It has become clear in our discussions over the last four months that the challenges around workforce availability go hand in hand with the challenges around regional housing availability.

It is being recommended that the NEWROC, WEROC, Wheatbelt Business Network and RDA Wheatbelt prepare a position paper and solution piece to pitch to State and Federal Government agencies and this will include housing solutions, as this was a significant inhibitor to workforce attraction and retention.

RESOLUTION

NEWROC EO support WEROC, RDA Wheatbelt and WBN prepare a position and solutions paper on workforce attraction and retention (to be presented to Council for comment and adoption in September)

Moved D Simmons

Seconded L Parola

CARRIED 5/0

EXECUTIVE MEETING DISCUSSION

NEWROC EO to connect with CEACA on accommodation

UPDATE SINCE EXECUTIVE MEETING

- NEWROC EO has sent DAMA results to CEACA CEO for initial discussion
- NEWROC EO and WEROC EO have prepared a draft position paper on housing and workforce attraction and retention. Currently with RDA Wheatbelt and WBN for their feedback.

RESOLUTION

Information is received

NEWROC Council provide feedback on solutions identified in the working draft discussion paper

Moved Cr De Lacy

Seconded Cr Stratford

CARRIED 5/0

ACTION: Members to read and provide comments on the discussion paper as soon as possible

WORKER AND HOUSING DISCUSSION PAPER

September 2022

DRAFT

ABOUT US

WEROC

The Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils (WEROC) Inc. is an incorporated not-for-profit organisation whose membership is comprised of representatives from the Eastern Wheatbelt Shire's of Bruce Rock, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Tammin, Westonia and Yilgarn. WEROC Inc. exists to support the growth and development of the Eastern Wheatbelt through:

LEADERSHIP: Taking an active interest in and being a strong partner and voice on all matters impacting on the people and industry of the Eastern Wheatbelt.

ACTION: Delivering projects and services considered beneficial to the whole of the Eastern Wheatbelt region.

PROMOTION: Gaining greater recognition of the Eastern Wheatbelt as an ideal place to visit, do business and live.

COLLABORATION: Achieving real outcomes for the Eastern Wheatbelt through strengthened partnerships and understanding that we work smarter and better together.

NEWROC

The North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils (NEWROC) is a voluntary regional organisation. The NEWROC region consisting of the Shires of Dowerin, Koorda, Mount Marshall, Mukinbudin, Nungarin, Trayning, and Wyalkatchem is located in the north-east of the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia.

OUR PURPOSE: Working together for successful communities.

OUR VISION: Enabling and creating progressive, healthy and prosperous communities achieved through regional collaboration to champion opportunities for our communities.

WHEATBELT BUSINESS NETWORK

We support business in the Wheatbelt to create a thriving region where people and businesses want to be.

We aim to work proactively with members to grow their business and their communities while creating a positive atmosphere through professional development, one on one business support, networking events, and economic development initiatives.

RDA WHEATBELT

The vision for our organisation is to actively shape the future of the Wheatbelt Region.

To realise this vision, we commit to our mission of collaborating across communities, advocating with key decision makers and harnessing innovation to create local opportunity, growth and impact.

And we do this because our purpose is to be the Wheatbelt's local voice to Federal Government to facilitate social and economic development.

Future of Regional Australia

The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) has set a target of 11 million people living prosperously outside the capital cities by 2032, a key goal announced as part of the Regionalisation Ambition 2032 launched at its National Summit in Canberra in September 2022.

Achieving this target will see an extra 500,000 people living in the regions, above the estimated prediction of 10.5 million. The Wheatbelt wants to be a preferred region and attract new populations to see our businesses and communities realise their potential. To be in a position to help reach this goal, there are a number of areas that need to be addressed.

Australia's skills and labour shortage

“The most pressing challenge facing business today is a shortage of skills and labour. With workplaces under enormous strain, it is placing a handbrake on economic growth.” Andrew McKellar Chief Executive, Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) workforce policy position paper released in March 2022ⁱ, suggests businesses of every size, in every industry, in every corner of the country, are experiencing the worst skill and labour shortages in decades - a challenge that is worsening by the day. The ACCI states that beyond the day-to-day impact, businesses are feeling the financial pain of staff shortages with substantial losses being reported as businesses strain to keep up with demand, turn down work and reduce operations. Skills and labour shortages are also acting as a significant barrier to business growth and threatening the viability of major resource and infrastructure projects. This, according to the ACCI not only acts as a hand break on the economy but reduces future job opportunities for Australians.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA's (CCIWA) quarterly business confidence survey demonstrates the extent of the labour supply shortage with more than 4 out of 5 (83%) businesses in Western Australia identifying that they are struggling to fill a skilled positionⁱⁱ. The latest survey also found that profits are the lowest they have been since the start of the pandemic and a big part of the story is that businesses are boosting wages in response to persistent labour shortages.

While labour shortages are having an impact across the board, smaller businesses are more acutely affected than larger organisations. In a Financial Review article from May 2022ⁱⁱⁱ, Alexi Boyd, Chief Executive Officer of the Council of Small Business Organisations, highlighted the strain on small businesses unable to compete for staff:

“Economists are saying things are going gangbusters, but small businesses can't take advantage because they don't have the workers and [they have] issues with supply chains constraining their ability to grow and to innovate. It's a contraction, that's a real concern. We're seeing it across business sectors – they can't take advantage. It's almost like a profitless boom. In a lot of cases, those small businesses are completely overwhelmed and may very well, through sheer exhaustion, walk away from strong, viable businesses because they're just getting to that tipping point”

The National Australia Bank SME Insight Report: Labour Shortages (Q2 2022)^{iv} reveals that 43% of Western Australian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) believe labour shortages are having a 'very significant' impact on their business and 44% expect this impact to remain substantial over the next 12 months. As a region with over 9,200 small to medium enterprises^v labour shortages pose a material risk to the Wheatbelt's economic and social prosperity and must be addressed for the region to realise its potential.

Current state of the labour market in the Wheatbelt

To gauge the impact of the current labour market on Wheatbelt Businesses, Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt in conjunction with the Wheatbelt Business Network, the Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Inc. and the North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils conducted a survey in May and June 2022. The intent of the survey was to better understand the extent of labour shortages in the region, the impact on businesses and the barriers to attracting and retaining workers.

The survey garnered 73 responses from across the Wheatbelt representing 14 industry sectors. Eight out of 10 (80%) respondents indicated that their business did not have enough employees to function efficiently. Over half (55%) of businesses also indicated that they did not have enough employees to function profitably.

The impact on businesses as a result of inadequate employee numbers is significant. 85.5% of businesses believe that it has decreased their business productivity, 62% that it has resulted in failure to meet deadlines and 61% that it has decreased their capacity to take on new work/contracts. Roughly half of respondents (46%) also felt that it was impacting on the long-term sustainability of their business.

“Our government needs to realise that the 4% unemployment rate is the new 0% unemployment rate. A large number of small businesses will close their doors over the next 12 months as a result of burnout”

The National Skills Commission forecast that Australia will need to fill more than one million new jobs over the next five years^{vi}. The National Workforce Strategy 2022-2027 notes that for people wanting work, this presents a great opportunity if they have the right skills. However, it could also result in workforce shortages for some employers looking to grow their business and constrain economic growth if sufficient workers are not available or do not have the required skills to meet employers' needs.

Over the next five years amongst the 73 businesses that responded to the survey, there is a requirement for an additional 802 workers (refer to Table 1). Given that the 73 respondents only represent a very small portion of the ~3,800 employing businesses in the region^{vii}, the demand for workers over the coming five years is likely to be considerable. Solutions are needed now to not only deal with current workforce shortages but to future-proof the local labour market against longer-term shortages.

Table 1. Future Workforce Requirements by Industry Sector and Sub-Region

| Industry sector | Avon | Central Coast | Central East | Central Midlands | Wheatbelt South | TOTAL |
|--|------|---------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Agriculture | 5 | 17 | 22 | 36 | 60 | 140 |
| Manufacturing | 13 | | 131 | 2 | 10 | 156 |
| Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services | 2 | | 3 | | | 5 |
| Construction-Building | 13 | | 15 | 17 | 4 | 49 |
| Construction Civil | 10 | 5 | | | | 15 |
| Retail trade | 4 | | 3 | | 6 | 13 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Accommodation and Food Services | | | 13 | 5 | 18 | 36 |
| Transport postal and warehousing | 3 | | 1 | 12 | 22 | 38 |
| Automotive Mechanical | 28 | | 121 | 4 | 4 | 157 |
| Information Media and Telecommunications | 2 | | | | 8 | 10 |
| CBH | 25 | | | | | 25 |
| Administrative & support services | 9 | | 4 | | | 13 |
| Public administration | 14 | 15 | 18 | 37 | 23 | 107 |
| Education & Training | | | | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| Arts & Recreation Services | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 8 | | | | 1 | 9 |
| Community services | 7 | | 5 | | | 12 |
| Total | 143 | 37 | 336 | 126 | 160 | 802 |

Authors of this paper acknowledge that the State Government has hosted a Skills Summit in Northam and developed Regional Action Plans, supported by Regional Coordinating Committees (RCC). The Wheatbelt RCC is currently comprised of Central Regional TAFE, the Wheatbelt Development Commission, Wheatbelt Business Network and supported by the Department of Training and Workforce Development. It is very important that the Wheatbelt Action Plan be resourced to enable the achievement of its strategies and shared across government agencies.

Local labour force challenges

Population

“Slow population growth and an ageing population, combined with projected jobs growth and skill demand over the coming years suggests there will be little relief from skill and labour shortages”^{viii}

The 2021 Intergenerational Report^{ix} identifies that Australia’s population is expected to grow slower and age faster. The ageing of the Australian population and falling fertility rates mean that across a wide range of industries, a significant number of workers have either retired or are about to retire, leading to substantial long term participation issues.

According to REMPLAN^x, the median age of people living in the Wheatbelt region as of 2021 is 47 years and of the 72,924 residents in the region the 60–69-year age cohort is the most common with 11,438 people (15.7%). The 70–79-year age cohort recorded the largest change in the Wheatbelt region since the last census, increasing by 1,590 persons (refer to Table 1). The largest decline was in the 40 – 49-year cohort (-1,186) followed by the 0-4 years cohort (-737). These statistics mirror the national trend and are indicative of the Wheatbelt’s vulnerability to recurrent workforce participation issues.

Wheatbelt Region

Age

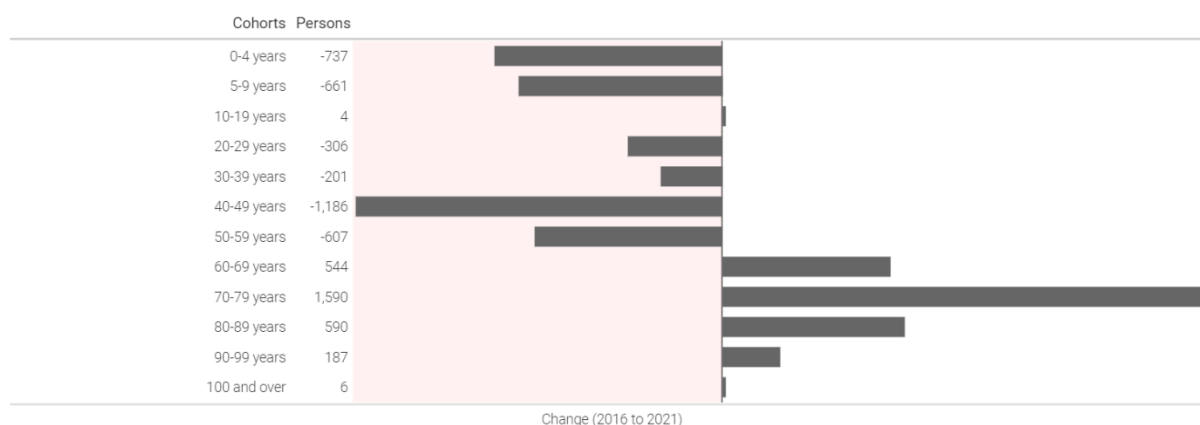


Figure 1 Wheatbelt Age Profile 2016 – 2021. Source REMPLAN

Workforce Participation

As of March 2022, there were 37,697 people in the Wheatbelt labour force and 1,444 unemployed persons^{xi} resulting in a region wide unemployment rate of 3.83%. This is comparable with the national unemployment rate which was around 4% in the March quarter, and which dropped further to 3.5% in June 2022^{xii}. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics this is the lowest unemployment rate since August 1974 and reflects that more people than usual are entering employment and lower than usual numbers of employed people are becoming unemployed. The flow on effect is “an increasingly tight labour market with high demand for engaging and retaining workers, as well as ongoing labour shortages”^{xiii}.

A closer look at the working age population (persons aged 15-74) and labour force participation in the Wheatbelt over the previous 10 years (2011 – 2021) identifies the following trends at a sub-regional level:

- The Avon sub-region has experienced positive growth in both their working age population and the proportion of that population in the labour force over the past 10 years (5% increase respectively). At a sub region level, it could be proposed that labour supply currently is sustainable but there will be a need for increased growth in the 15-74 years population in the future or an easing of labour demand for the status quo to be maintained.
- Between 2011 and 2021, 5% more of the 15-74 years population comprised the labour force due to labour demand outstripping population growth by 9%. With still a relatively moderate proportion of the 15-74 years population comprising the labour force, labour supply could be deemed sustainable at present.
- In the Central East there has been a 5% decrease in the 15-74 years population in the previous 10 years and the 5% increase in the labour force. This reflects the proportionately higher percentage of 15–74-year old’s in the labour force which at 77% is nearing peak local content labour supply.
- Between 2011 and 2021 the Central Midlands labour force increased by 24% while the 15-74 years population increased by 12%. This resulted in an additional 8% of the 15-74 years population entering the labour force in 2021. At a sub-regional level, it could be said that local labour supply may still be sustainable but with new mining ventures coming online and increased industry output associated principally with agriculture and mining, supply of local content could be severely challenged.

- From an overall perspective, the Wheatbelt South sub region has not reached unsustainable limits of local labour supply yet, but if the 15-74 years population continues to decline and labour demand continues to increase, local labour supply will become comprised. Six shires in the sub region already have 80% or more of their 15-74 years population in the labour force.

Housing

The Wheatbelt workforce survey conducted in May and June 2022 asked respondents if they had advertised a vacant position in the previous 12 months and if so, were they able to fill the advertised position. The majority (96%) indicated that they had advertised for staff in the past year and only 4% were able to fill a vacancy.

Businesses that were unable to fill a vacant position were subsequently asked to identify the factors they believe may have prevented them from recruiting staff. The most commonly cited reason was that workers did not want to live and work in regional, rural and remote areas (73.5%), closely followed by the lack of housing/workers accommodation (64%).

"One of the issues impacting our Shire is that there are no houses available to rent which means you can only employ people from within driving distance, limiting the talent pool"

"In Wongan Hills housing is a huge issue, currently there are no houses available for rent and not a lot on the market for sale"

"Need housing for people to live in. Need a marketing campaign for our region to convince people the lifestyle is worth more than chasing big dollars on the mines"

"We need programs to promote labour force attraction specific to the regions that includes relocation packages and incentives for skilled labour to move to the regions. Investment into housing is a priority for many small towns. Programs to assist small business to invest in worker housing (new or purchase existing) and providing fully furnished accommodation could be beneficial"

An ABC Midwest and Wheatbelt article posted on Thursday 28 April 2022^{xiv}, suggests that the housing shortage in the Wheatbelt has reached a 'critical point'. The article quotes Managing Director of Avon Valley Toyota, Leonie Knipe as saying that housing shortages have left her business, which employs around 50 people, understaffed:

"We've had these roles that need to be filled and haven't been able to do so, and lack of housing has definitely been a barrier to that. "I've looked at it myself and thought, 'Well, I'll just build a couple of houses for staff'. That's not a doable option either. It takes a minimum of about two years to get any building erected at the moment. So I think we're all looking at each other going 'Help, we don't have the answers'."

The shortage of worker housing is not new. The Wheatbelt Workforce Development Plan 2013-2016 which was developed through widespread engagement in 2012, observed that:

"The Wheatbelt region is currently experiencing a housing shortage across many regions, with a lack of volume and diversity of land and a lack of affordable accommodation for young people, due to increasing populations, competition for land uses and inadequate land planning strategies".

The workforce development plan suggests that in order to cope with these issues, and to enhance regional development, local governments need to ensure that an appropriate supply

of lots is available to the market to meet demand. The State Government's Regional Land Booster Package, announced in July 2020 was intended to do just that. As part of the Wheatbelt's COVID-19 Recovery Plan, the package has made a limited number of residential and commercial lots available to purchase at an affordable rate, across 30 different Wheatbelt towns. While the provision of serviced residential lots is part of the solution, in the current constrained labour and supply chain the reality is that even if the land is available, without the trades and materials to build, these lots could remain vacant for years to come. Exploring alternatives to traditional construction such as modular and prefab construction, compact housing and converted housing and looking at options for mixed-use housing, affordable ownership and affordable leasing may fill in the missing piece.

Underutilised Labour

The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines underutilisation as the extent to which all available labour force resources are not being fully utilised in the economy^{xv}. Underutilised labour includes people who are not working but want to work (unemployed) and those who are working but want to work more (underemployed). Nationally, the underutilisation rate as of July 2022 was 9.4%^{xvi}.

Underutilised labour (i.e., those that are unemployed or underemployed) are an important resource as they provide a pool of potential workers that have the capacity to ease local labour shortages. Whilst labour market data from the 2021 ABS Census has not yet been released, we know from the 2016 Census that across the Wheatbelt there were 9,653 people employed part-time (potentially underemployed) and 1,386 persons unemployed looking for full-time work and a further 541 unemployed looking for part-time work^{xvii}. Based on these statistics it can be assumed that there is spare capacity in the local labour market and removing barriers or disincentives for these people to work should be a focus.

At a national level the underemployment rate is much higher for women (7.3%) compared to men (4.8%)^{xviii}. The ACCI workforce policy position paper suggests that workforce participation dips for women in their thirties when many start having children. When women with children do undertake paid work, they are much more likely to work part-time than in comparable OECD countries. This the ACCI suggests is not necessarily by choice – Australian women have one of the highest rates of involuntary part time employment of all OECD countries. Whilst there are a myriad of factors that might influence this, a 2022 Productivity Commission review in to early childhood education and care found that of the 272,000 people aged 15 years and over who in 2021 reported that they were not in the labour force due to caring for children, 32.1% reported that this was due to a childcare service-related reason^{xix}. Making it easier to access affordable child care may at least in part, expand the potential availability of women and primary carers to participate in the workforce and provide access to this untapped labour supply.

Suitability of the Labour Force

The Wheatbelt workforce survey identified that 97% of the 73 businesses that responded had advertised for staff in the previous 12 month period and only 4% were able to fill vacant positions. A high proportion revealed that they only received one or two applications for their position and 80% indicated that they were either 'very dissatisfied' (26%) or 'dissatisfied' (56%) with applicants. The main driver of employers dissatisfaction with job applicants was that for the most part applicants lacked the skills, experience and qualifications required for the position. Attracting a small number of ill suited applicants presents a risk to businesses as they may be tempted to employ under skilled employees on the basis that it is the only labour available. This has the potential to compromise the businesses credibility and exposes the employer and employee to a range of other risk factors.

"Our business is diversifying and expanding. Not being able to attract a skilled mechanic (at least 3 years' experience) we are unable to continue to grow and service current and new customers. We have offered trade upgrades, above award wages, housing subsidies and uniforms and we simply receive minimal to zero interest in our advertisements. If we were able to employ another qualified mechanic we could then consider the employment of an apprentice. Unfortunately we simply can't compete with mining wages and people just don't seem to want to move to the regions"

Migration Pathways

Migration is a key strategy of Government to provide access to skilled workers that are needed to fill gaps in the domestic workforce.

At the National Jobs Summit the Federal Government announced an increase in the permanent migration cap from 160,000 to 195,000 for this financial year. The announcement was welcomed by Regional Capitals Australia (RCA) Chair and Mayor of Ballarat, Daniel Moloney, who said it was a welcome step for businesses currently struggling with labour shortages:

"With this announcement, regional Australia will have access to 34,000 permanent migrants, an increase of 9,000... With nearly 87,000 vacancies recorded in July across Australia we know that this isn't a quick fix, and we will continue to work with the government on broader initiatives to meet the skills needs of our regions"^{xx}.

While the increased cap is a positive step forward, when you consider that these additional migrants will be spread across all of regional Australia, the potential for this policy change to alleviate issues being faced in the Wheatbelt is substantially diluted.

In August 2022 the Western Australian government announced that it was introducing a range of measures to ease the requirements for state nomination for a number of skilled positions. While this will open the door for more skilled migrants to move to WA, it will not solve the problem of attracting workers for unskilled or semi-skilled positions which are in greatest need in the Wheatbelt.

As articulated in an article in the Countryman newspaper on 22 August 2022 ^{xxi} the Commonwealth only allows for skilled positions to be included on the state nomination list. This means that "WA cannot include what the Commonwealth regards as semiskilled and unskilled occupations, such as truck drivers, agricultural workers, drillers, train drivers and care sector workers". Effectively this eliminates migration as a realistic response to the labour needs of many Wheatbelt based businesses.

In addition to limitations on occupations eligible under skilled migration schemes, local businesses have reported the process and cost to employ temporary visa holders is a deterrent. The Wheatbelt workforce survey asked respondents if they have or would consider employing temporary visa holders. Almost a third of respondents had employed temporary visa holders and 85% would continue or would consider employing visa holders. Respondents however highlighted the following issues:

“Yes....but it's exhausting. We have TSS 482 visas but then what happens when their visas are up, and we can't replace them.... When they are over 45, they can't stay... and the whole business is in jeopardy”

“We have looked into this but at \$20,000 per candidate it is a considerable up-front cost for a small - medium business with no guarantees of the candidate you will receive”

“Yes, would consider. Our knowledge is limited in this area, and we have found it very difficult to source information and support when interest has been received from visa holders”

“Yes, it is just a long process to get paperwork sorted. If you could employ, start them working while the paperwork is being processed would vastly improve the situation”

“Please make special visa arrangements for rural areas. You do it for doctors and nurses.... why not extend it to all rural jobs?? Anyone who is fit and able and willing to stay in the rural area should be accepted even if over 45”

“Increased availability of visas to entice skilled employees to our business; an increase in the time visa holders can work for us. Currently the 6-month restriction for working holiday makers means employees gain the necessary skills to be useful within the business then have to leave due to the visa restriction”

“Recognise the skills required to be a general farmhand as varied and not easily accessible and becoming more skilled and specialised by the year. Place a general farmhand category on the lists of required professions that we are trying to attract as permanent residents”

Recommendations

The issues identified in this paper are all interlinked, complex, and equally important, but we cannot solve the skills issues without addressing housing.

The Wheatbelt Business Network, RDA Wheatbelt, WEROC and NEWROC want to work together to develop appropriate place-based strategies that will enable workers to come to Wheatbelt communities and stay. Focusing on the actions that are likely to have the most immediate impact, it is recommended that these strategies include:

Workforce Participation:

- Resource the Regional Coordinating Committees (Rik XXX)
- Increase State Government financial support to Wheatbelt childcare providers (community owned, local government delivered or REED) so that parents and caregivers can continue to participate in the workforce and there is not a 'childcare desert'

Migration:

- Federal Government to review the inclusion of semi and unskilled occupations under the regional nominated visa categories to ensure migration programs are responsive to all skill needs specifically XXXX
- Temporary Visa Holder changes XXX
 - Revision of age limitations in recognition that people work later in life
 - Extension of time allowed to work under working holiday visa's
 - Federal Government to address the second year working holiday visa requirements. Backpackers working in hospitality anywhere in rural WA should be able to accrue working days towards a second year working holiday visa. Currently, if you are located above the Tropic of Capricorn, hospitality work counts towards your second-year visa. This is a huge incentive for young backpackers and something that they work toward achieving. However, in Wheatbelt towns hospitality work does not count towards a second-year visa.
 - Improved pathways to permanent residency
- Improve Australia's visa system by simplifying the process, speeding up response times and helping local businesses navigate existing migration programs which are complex

Housing:

- State Government to invest in upgrading its current housing stock in the Wheatbelt as Local Government accommodation has been occupied by State Government employees due to the poor quality of GROH stock
- Funding WEROC and NEWROC to hold an Inland Growth Summit on Housing to address the short, medium, and long-term housing issues for workers, identify solutions, pathways and how to work together as well as stimulate behind the scenes conversations on this issue
- Funding the establishment of an Eastern Wheatbelt Worker Housing Taskforce, with membership from WEROC, NEWROC, RDA Wheatbelt, WBN and CEACA to focus on:
 - how the planning system and other government levers can be established to address housing needs in the communities of WEROC and NEWROC
 - investigate how local governments and businesses can partner to invest in housing stock together
 - investigate and engage with BCCM to determine whether the cooperative housing model could resolve housing supply issues^{xxii}
 - work with housing innovators such as Ian Ugarte
- Seed funding RDA Wheatbelt to investigate the Queensland Governments' establishment of a Housing Ideas Bank^{xxiii} which invites proposals for innovative and unique services and programs that will inform future budgets and trial projects that address a central housing concern (e.g., social housing, innovation in construction and design, tenancy support options, etc.). Where the Bank's Steering group supports the formal proposal, the Department of Housing and Public Works will seek approval from the appropriate department delegate to support the delivery of the idea.

References

- ⁱ Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2022). Overcoming Australia's Labour and Skills Shortages Through Skills Development, Workforce Participation and Migration
- ⁱⁱ Chamber of Commerce & Industry WA (2022). CCIWA Business Confidence Survey: June Quarter 2022
- ⁱⁱⁱ [Banks warn Australia's labour shortage at crisis levels \(afr.com\)](#)
- ^{iv} National Australia Bank (2022). NAB Business Insights, July 2022
- ^v Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021). 8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, June 2017 to June 2021
- ^{vi} Workforce Australia (2022). National Workforce Strategy 2022-27
- ^{vii} Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) 8165.0 Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exits, June 2017 to June 2021
- ^{viii} Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2022). Overcoming Australia's Labour and Skills Shortages Through Skills Development, Workforce Participation and Migration
- ^{ix} Treasury (2021). 2021 Intergenerational Report: Australia over the next 40 years
- ^x [REMPAN](#)
- ^{xi} National Skills Commission (2022). Small Area Labour Markets, March quarter 2022
- ^{xii} [Unemployment rate falls to 3.5% | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)
- ^{xiii} [Unemployment rate falls to 3.5% | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)
- ^{xiv} [Housing shortage at 'critical point' as Wheatbelt gets left behind - ABC News](#)
- ^{xv} [Underutilised labour | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)
- ^{xvi} Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022). Labour Force, Australia, July 2022
- ^{xvii} [REMPAN](#)
- ^{xviii} Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022). Labour Force, Australia, July 2022
- ^{xix} Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2022, Early childhood education and care, Latest Update June 2022
- ^{xx} [Highlights from the Jobs and Skills Summit - Infrastructure Magazine](#), August 2022
- ^{xxi} Shannon Verhagen, Josh Zimmerman & Kate Purnell in the Countryman (22 August 2022). 'Disappointing': Header drivers and truck drivers not among 100 jobs added to WA's skilled migration list
- ^{xxii} [Housing - BCCM](#)
- ^{xxiii} [Housing Ideas Bank | Homes and housing | Queensland Government \(www.qld.gov.au\)](#)

7.4. NEWROC ANNUAL DINNER

FILE REFERENCE: 042-27 NEWROC Dinner and Functions
REPORTING OFFICER: Caroline Robinson
DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST: Nil
DATE: 23 September 2022
ATTACHMENT NUMBER:
CONSULTATION:
STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT: Nil
VOTING REQUIREMENT: Simple Majority

COMMENT

The NEWROC moved a resolution to hold the 2022 NEWROC annual dinner on Sunday 2 October at 7pm at Boston Brewery Victoria Park.

Since this resolution there has been discussion that some members would like the opportunity to network longer at the Local Government event on Sunday 2 October.

Members are asked whether they would like to proceed with the dinner at Boston Brewery on Sunday 2 October or pursue a different option:

- Dinner following the NEWROC Council meeting in November
- Dinner following the NEWROC Strategic Planning session in February 2022 (we are due to review our Strategic Plan in 2023)

Koorda – attending

Jon drinks

Dowerin - attendings

RESOLUTION

Submitted for discussion

Moved Cr De Lacy Seconded Cr Stratford

MOTION

NEWROC dinner venue to be amended to the Merrywell, commencing at 7.30pm

Moved Cr Stratford Seconded Cr De Lacy CARRIED 5/0

7.5. FRRR - COMMUNITY IMPACT GRANT

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| FILE REFERENCE: | 130-1 Economic Services General |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Caroline Robinson |
| DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST: | Nil |
| DATE: | 23 September 2022 |
| ATTACHMENT NUMBER: | #9 Wheatbelt Rising Project Outline |
| CONSULTATION: | Dean Cracknell Jimmy Murphy Alyce Ventris Rebekah Burges (WEROC) |
| STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT: | Nil |
| VOTING REQUIREMENT: | Simple Majority |

COMMENT

Following the announcement by Senator The Hon. Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) and the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation (ARLF) have opened the "[Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiative](#)".

The Initiative is funded through the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund and designed to help agriculture-dependent communities across remote, rural and regional Australia enhance their preparedness for drought. The Funds desired outcomes will include:

- Communities identify and adopt innovative and transformative ways to build drought resilience;
- A change in awareness of and attitudes to drought preparedness at the community level;
- Communities learn and share innovative ways to build drought resilience;
- An increase in the reach and activities of community leaders, mentors, networks, and organisations driving action on drought resilience;
- Improved access to and greater utilisation of community infrastructure;
- Communities build their local leadership, networks, and social support; and
- Community leaders, networks and organisations have stronger capability to undertake strategic drought resilience planning.

There are five elements to the Initiative, the first of which is the Community Impact Program. This is a place-based program designed to support community members and not-for-profit organisations in 35 regions across remote, rural and regional Australia to drive local action that helps prepare for drought.

Community Impact Grants: FRRR will award 35 grants of between \$200,000 and \$500,000 and work with locally led community organisations to develop, co-design and deliver projects that strengthen community networks, capabilities and facilities that support drought preparedness.

The NEWROC expressed an interest in applying for this fund, however local governments can not apply for the Fund, it must be an incorporated not for profit.

The NEWROC EO shared with the NEWROC Executive a proposal to build upon the work already undertaken in partnership with the Town Team Movement and seek to apply for the funding under Town Team Movement. The Project Plan is attached. As the grant opened (26 August) and closed (26 September) between the Executive and Council meeting, the Executive agreed to the Project Plan and application to be submitted by the Town Team Movement.

The NEWROC EO proposed working with WEROC, Tammin and Narembreen as they have been included in the sub region where only one grant will be successful. Town Team Movement will

request Dowerin and Wyalkatchem be included in the sub region as they were not identified in the (FRRR has indicated it is possible to request their inclusion).

At this stage no funds have been requested to support the application however it is anticipated the NEWROC may need to contribute some funds to the project, additional hours for the Town Team Builder or time from the NEWROC EO if the application is successful.

RESOLUTION

NEWROC supports the Town Team Movement application to the FRRR Community Impact Grant

Moved Cr De Lacy

Seconded Cr Stratford

CARRIED 5/0

8. MATTERS FOR DECISION

9. EMERGING NEWROC ISSUES as notified or introduced by decision of the Meeting

10. GENERAL UPDATES

- Cr Trepp shared information on the Shire of Wongan Hills promotional video. Will forward details to the NEWROC EO to share with NEWTRAVEL.
- NEWTRAVEL to be invited to present to the NEWROC Council in November.
- Shire of Koorda and Shire of Wyalkatchem met recently to discuss improved events communication amongst the two Shires. Possibly a role with NEWTRAVEL / NEWROC in the future (events coordination and support).

11. 2022 MEETING SCHEDULE

| | | |
|------------|-----------|------------------|
| 25 October | Executive | Shire of Dowerin |
|------------|-----------|------------------|

| | | |
|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 29 November | Council | Shire of Trayning |
|-------------|---------|-------------------|

MOTION

NEWROC Council will not meet on 13 December 2022. The NEWROC Council meeting on the 29th November will be the final NEWROC meeting for 2022.

Moved Cr Trepp

Seconded Cr De Lacy

CARRIED 5/0

12. CLOSURE

Cr Davies thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 2.59pm.