



Regional Development *Australia*

M I D W E S T G A S C O Y N E

Outcomes Report 2018/2019



Dolphins & Pelicans: Monkey Mia, Shark Bay



An Australian Government Initiative

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EXECUTIVE OFFICER/DIRECTOR REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

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CHAIRS FORWARD

I am again delighted to present the annual report for Regional Development Australia Mid West Gascoyne (RDAMWG) 2018/2019.

A number of things have taken place this year and in particular the appointment of a new Director Regional Development/Executive Officer (DRD/EO) who commenced his role in early May.

At this time the Board also agreed to change the title of the Regional Coordinator to Manager Entrepreneurship and Engagement. This title reflects the importance of maintaining connection with a broad range of stakeholders across a region that covers around 1/3 of Western Australia and supports the Regional Development Australia Charter which includes 'harnessing competitive advantages, pursuing economic opportunities and attracting investment'.

Visiting stakeholders throughout the region and participating in regional working groups has been a priority. Stakeholders include twenty-one local government authorities alone, and whilst the extreme distances present some logistical challenges, regular meetings provide an opportunity to understand the issues and opportunities, identify partnership opportunities and how RDAMWG might add value.

The 2018/2019 year has seen a shift in direction, transitioning to an approach that has a focus on strategic partnerships and capacity building. RDA has the advantage of being able to engage a wide range of stakeholders without the limits of jurisdictional boundaries. RDA is though, a small organisation and it is more important that we strengthen organisations to enable them to better represent communities than manage on their behalf.

The board, along with the EO, have begun developing and implementing policies to assist with good governance and better practice. Best practice governance standards give the Board and our stakeholders confidence that RDAMWG serves the interests of the Commonwealth and our stakeholders in an effective and efficient manner. It is important to the Board that financial integrity and sustainability is maintained, and that the organisation is recognised as having sound decision making, administration policies, procedures and oversight.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Mark Holdsworth for the strong and competent leadership which he has provided RDAMWG since his commencement as DRD/EO in May 2019, Barbara Thompson for her continued hard work as MEE, and to Helen Day for her solid work in finance and in particular the budget preparation.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and commitment from the RDAMWG Board; Leonie Noble (Deputy Chair), Jenny Allen, Tony Turner, Colin Bastow, Tami Maitre, Elizabeth Jones, Jackie Brookes and Margie Robinson (resigned).

I look forward to working throughout the region for the remainder of 2019 and through to 2020, delivering strategies and programs which support growth and enhance the liveability of the communities of the Mid West and Gascoyne.

Yvonne Messina
Chair Regional Development Australia Mid West Gascoyne

1.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND REGIONAL PRIORITIES

1.1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

After significant economic growth and investment off the back of the Western Australian mining boom, the Mid West Gascoyne region is now in a position to reflect on what it means to be a resource and minerals based economy and how this can be leveraged and diversified to benefit future growth opportunities.

The industries which shape the current post boom economy are still the minerals and agriculture businesses, which are the foundation of the Mid West Gascoyne region. However, the industries which make up the region are changing. Tourism, value added food production, fishing and aquaculture, agriculture and social services are growth sectors. Within the small firm sector retail is significant however this sector is increasingly dominated by businesses that can take advantage of economies of scale in product, distribution and marketing. Like broader trends the regions retailers are challenged by online shopping practices and shop rentals.

Like Australia, the business community of the region is characterised by small business, typically non-employing or employing between 1 – 4 persons. Small business is an important contributor to the region as this sector is always recognised as a source of innovation. Whilst some small business is at the cutting edge of technology, it is a sector that is also characterised by volatility with many new entrants and exists each year.

Further value add and innovation is required within each of the key sectors, and importantly the region requires extensive and efficient supply chain infrastructure and transport networks to facilitate access to its domestic and overseas markets. As global demand grows, the region will focus on expanding supply of its products and services to new and expanding domestic and global markets.

Many of the region's natural resource assets are presently stranded by strategic infrastructure capacity constraints (e.g. port, power, roads, rail). These constraints will continue to impede regional productivity and significant investment in physical infrastructure is essential to unlock the region's significant future growth and development potential.

1.2 Spatial Dimensions

Overall the RDAMWG region covers more than 600,000km². Abutting the Indian ocean, the coastline stretches from Green Head to Exmouth and reaches more than 800klm inland to the Gibson desert.

The Gascoyne region itself covers nearly 138,000sq klms, which represents about 5.5% of Western Australia's total land area. The region has more than 600klms of coastline and reaches more than 500 klms inland through to the remote outback.

The Mid West on the other hand covers around 478,000 sq. klms which is around 18% of Western Australia's total land area. The Mid West is divided into three subregions; Batavia Coast, Murchison and North Midlands.

1.3 Administration

The WA Planning Commissions (WAPC) State Planning Strategy 2050 (SPS) provides a settlement hierarchy which includes Geraldton and Carnarvon as Regional Centres and Morawa in the Mid West as a Supertown.

The Mid West Development Commission published the Mid West Regional Blueprint in 2014. The corresponding Gascoyne Blueprint was published in 2015. The Regional Development Commissions are statutory authorities governed by a Ministerially appointed Board and in that capacity function under the provisions of Section 23 of the Regional Commissions Act (1993).

At a local level the region is managed by 21 Local Government Authorities who provide services to communities that range in size from around 90 people to 39,000 people.

Apart from the City of Greater Geraldton the Local Governments in this region are:

- Small organisations in comparison to metropolitan standards.
- Have a small and highly distributed population base.
- Have a small workforce.
- A low revenue base, and
- Below average or declining economic growth.

1.4 Growth Projections

In providing frameworks for the growth and development of the regions the Blueprints propose that by 2050 the Mid West would have a population approaching 189,000 with 71,000 jobs and the Gascoyne 23,000 people and 4,000 jobs.

These projections are aspirational when seen against the more conservative population forecasts contained in the WA Tomorrow population predictions. These indicate that in 2016 the Mid West Gascoyne region had a combined population of 65,000 and at current projections, through to 2031, the population of the region is expected to remain stagnant with a slight decline.

Transformational growth in all sectors requires infrastructure investment including the prioritisation of opportunities, the articulation of investments in businesses cases, identification of funding opportunities at all tiers of government, advocacy and the competitive process of winning funds.

Population predictions also point to the vulnerable and fragile nature of the Mid West Community and the importance of both public and private sector lead interventions to create the conditions for growth and community enhancement.

1.5 Economy¹

Combined the Mid West and Gascoyne have the highest level of economic diversity of all WA regions. Over the medium to long term growth in value and employment is expected however this growth is reliant to a significant extent on infrastructure and services that can secure and support new industries, whilst attracting employees and families as permanent residents.

Key sectors include:

Resources: With diversity in talc, salt, gold, lead, tin, tantalum, zinc, heavy minerals sands, iron ore, copper, clays, pigments, nickel, vanadium, titanium, gypsum, limestone and manganese ore.

Fishing: A dominant rock lobster fishery, significant finfish and mollusc production and an emerging aqua-culture sector.

Tourism: The regions natural amenity underpins the attraction and retention of residents and visitors. The climate, landscape and sea encourage participation in a wide range of pursuits with potential for increased national and international visitors

Horticulture: Intensive and broadacre agriculture including significant livestock, cropping and horticulture production.

Renewables: An emerging renewable energy sector including wind, geothermal and biomass generation.

It is important that the small business sector can participate to the well-being and growth of the regional economy. The growth of the small business sector is critical to economic development and employment in regional centres. With changes in technology and purchasing practices it is imperative that small business operators; existing and potential, are well educated and supported in all aspects of modern business strategies and technology.

1.6 Infrastructure

Supporting infrastructure is essential to investment and growth throughout the region. Whilst different sectors or growth areas require aligned enabling infrastructure, examples include:

¹ The following section is drawn from the 'Gascoyne Regional Development Blueprint' (Gascoyne Development Commission and the 'Mid West Regional Blueprint', Mid West Development Commission.

- Expansion of Oakajee Port and Oakajee Industrial Estate
- Supply chain connectivity to ports
- Power and water supply including renewables.
- Secondary and tertiary education
- Health services
- Infrastructure to support various forms of tourism at Monkey Mia, Shark Bay and Ningaloo Reef world heritage areas, Mount Augustus and Kennedy Range National parks and Abrolhos Islands.

2.0 GOVERNANCE

The Mid West Gascoyne report for 2018 – 2019 will be presented to the Board in November at the Annual general Meeting. This is dependent on the Auditors completion of the 2018 – 2019 financial year accounts.

The Board meets up to six times per year and ongoing oversight of the plan is provided through:

- Project management protocols and the development of operational plans for each program area.
- Budget and financial review against programs,
- Weekly meeting between RDAMWG staff and the RDAMWG Chair

The following people contributed to RDAMWG throughout the 2018/19 financial year.

Yvonne Messina	Chair
Leonie Noble	Deputy Chair
Jenny Allen	Member
Margie Robinson	Member (resigned)
Tony Turner	Member
Colin Bastow	Member
Tami Maitre	Member
Elizabeth Jones	Member

Jackie Brookes	Member
Alan Bradley	DRD / EO: Contract completed 31/03/2019
Mark Holdsworth	DRD / EO: 29/04/2019 onwards
Barbara Thompson	Mgr. Entrepreneurship & Engagement

3.0 RDA CHARTER: STRONG, CONFIDENT AND VIBRANT REGIONS

The Outcomes Report is prepared in the framework provided by the Regional Development Australia Charter (2017) which is to 'work with all levels of government, business and community groups, ... with a clear focus on a strong and confident region that harnesses the competitive advantages, pursue economic opportunities and attracts investment'.

The business plan seeks to facilitate and focus on regional economic development opportunities that:

- Leverage private and public sector investment.
- Connect the Mid West Gascoyne Region with partners and leaders that explore opportunities to grow local jobs,
- Develop and maintain positive working relationships with local government bodies.
- Assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs.
- Assist in the delivery of information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders to develop proposals to access funding.

3.0 OUTCOMES 2018 - 2019

Outcome Theme	Output	Activity / Performance Measure
3.1 Increased economic opportunities & investment in your Region	Identify economic development opportunities that leverage private and public sector investment.	<i>'Developing tourism in the Region in partnership with Progress Midwest.</i>
<i>Progress Mid West Association</i>		

RDA MWG is an invited Member of Progress Mid West which is an incorporated Association with the aim of fostering, facilitating, enabling and supporting economic development and growth in the Mid West Region of Western Australia.

RDA MWG participates in meetings of Progress Mid West which provides an opportunity to identify common priorities for the Mid West and co-ordinate the input and resources of stakeholder organisations.

Tourism Cluster

Participate in the Mid West tourism cluster which includes representatives from Geraldton, Kalbarri, Dongara, Coorow and Greenhead.

Abrolhos Islands

RDA MWG participated in the Houtman Abrolhos Islands 400 Anniversary Celebration Committee that organised the 400'th Anniversary Celebration of discovery of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands. The itinerary for the celebrations which were attended by 100's of people can be seen at <https://www.houtman400.com.au/>.

The celebrations followed the State Government announcement of \$10M in funding to support tourist infrastructure by the Premier on 25th July 2019.

Cruise Ships

In association with Tourism WA attendance of the Australian Cruise Association Conference. This enabled conversation with national cruise ship operators on the potential to include Geraldton in the forward cruise schedule.

Member of the Cruise Geraldton Committee that is Chaired by the CEO of Geraldton Port.

Exmouth Port

Participate in the working group / committee that is overseeing the feasibility for the expansion of the Exmouth Port to accommodate cruise ships, and support defence and oil and gas supply vessels and supply chains.

Sports Tourism: Evaluation Tool

RDAMWG worked with the Mid West Sports Federation to establish an evaluation tool that shows the economic contribution of sporting events. This tool is important to the development of tourism sector and the benefit of sports tourism as a sector.

Huon Fishing

Investment facilitation evaluation and support for a proposed Huon Fisheries King Fish operation in the vicinity of the Abrolhos Islands. Huon is an ASX listed company that has secured an

operational license from the State government. The proposal concerns a 2200 ha site in the Mid West Aquaculture development zone, with capacity for 24,000 tonnes of Yellowtail fish production annually over a 10 – 15-year period. Key international markets include South East Asia.

<p>3.2 Increased Trade and Jobs Creation</p>	<p>Connect with industry sectors, international trade partners, financial markets, regional entrepreneurs to explore new opportunities.</p>	<p>Mid West Gascoyne West Tech Festival</p>
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West Tech Festival

RDAMWG again teamed with the West Tech Fest to promote Innovation and Smart Cities in the Mid West. The Festival is an annual event for the Australian and international start-up and tech community attracting founders, tech leaders and investors from Australia and internationally.

The objectives are to position WA and the Mid West as key tech hub, create opportunities for local entrepreneurs, foster effective collaboration with Universities and stimulate job creation.

The week-long program included events in Geraldton and the opportunity to present investment opportunities in Geraldton and discuss: The Square Kilometre Array Project, the Community Energy Project, Geraldton Innovation Centre and the Geraldton Young Innovators program. The program will be progressed in future years with the Just Start It high school innovation program.

Hydrogen Energy

Participation in a Hydrogen Energy forum that was held at the Geraldton University Centre. Energy and renewable energy are an essential infrastructure component for the Mid West. Power availability is a key factor in investment decision making. Participants included representatives from Woodside, ATCO, Australian Gas Infrastructure Group, Mid West Ports and Central Earthmoving.

Sri Lankan Women Trading Globally

Hosted a delegation of the Sri Lankan Women Trading Globally, including introduction to local businesses and initiated discussions to establish a ‘Virtual Trade fair’ between the Mid West Gascoyne and Sri Lanka.

<p>3.3 Cooperate with all levels of government, industry, community and regional stakeholders.</p>	<p>Maintain positive, collaborative working relationships and partnerships with all levels of government, industry, community and other regional stakeholders.</p>	<p>Work with regional stakeholders to keep them informed of programs and opportunities.</p>
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AusIndustry Workshops

Arranged for AusIndustry to present at workshops that provide information on Federal programs to business.

Gascoyne Business Awards

Coordinated and supported the Gascoyne Business awards which were held at the Monkey Mia Resort. The Business Awards were held in conjunction with the Exmouth and Carnarvon Chambers of Commerce and the Shark Bay Business and Tourism Association. More than 50 businesses from the tourism, horticultural and retail sectors participated in the awards.

Professional Representation

RDAMWG uses representation on several professional organisations, operational committees and working groups to stay abreast of initiatives and issues, contribute and to create awareness of relevant programs and opportunities. These include:

- Invited participant to the Murchison Country Zone of WALGA (Western Australian Local Government Association) incorporating the Shires of Cue, Meekatharra, Mount Magnet, Sandstone, Wiluna and Yalgoo.

RDAMWG staff are represented on the following Boards and Committees: Australian Institute of Company Directors, Women Inspiring Better Business, Cruise Geraldton, Tourism Geraldton, RDA Northern Alliance, Geraldton Universities Centre, Growing Greater Geraldton Working group, Mid West Infrastructure Priority Working Group and Mid West Tourism Infrastructure Working Group.

Cue Parliament November 2018 inaugural-Murchison Calcutta Cup

Initiated the inaugural Murchison Calcutta Cup networking event which raised \$700 for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

<p>3.4 Achieve Government program objectives.</p>	<p>Assist in the delivery of Commonwealth programs including public & private sector decentralisation.</p>	<p>Northern RDA Alliance – Developing Northern Australia.</p>
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RDA MWG is represented on the Northern RDA Alliance (NRDAA) which comprises of eight RDAs whose regions make up Northern Australia. This network, representing the Gascoyne in Western Australia to Gladstone in Central Queensland, has been meeting regularly and providing input to the Australia Government on the development of the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia and the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. The aim is to support all governments to develop policies and to prioritise investment opportunities to ensure the sustainable development of Northern Australia.

Key points about RDA's in the Alliance:

- All independent, apolitical, not for profit organisations.
- Funded by the Australia Government to deliver regional economic development activities and outcomes.
- Willing to facilitate activities across government boundaries and portfolios.
- Flexible, adaptive, efficient and effective at delivering new initiatives.
- Committee members and staff have been appointed based on their extensive networks across governments, industry and communities.
- RDAs have regularly contributed to regional planning in partnership with key stakeholders.
- Have on-the-ground knowledge of how to facilitate and advocate for outcomes in Northern Australia

Areas included by RDAMWG in a 2018 Communique to the Minister for Regional Development, Territories and Local Government were the Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF) and Regional Growth Fund (RGF) and the key role of the RDAs in facilitating outcomes through these programs; it noted the significant uptake of RGF and the strong interest from the private sector, suggesting that a future round would be welcomed and would catalyse private sector investment; and welcomed the announcement in the budget of an additional \$200m in funding for another round of BBRF.

3.5 Maximise access to Government grants and programs	Promote and disseminate information on Commonwealth policies and grant programs and support community stakeholders to develop project proposals to access funding.	Building Better Regions Funding Grants support Women Inspiring Better Business Geraldton Young Innovators Competition
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Building Better Regions Fund

RDAMWG supported applications from several Shires and organisations for Round 3 of the program. Total funding received for all projects was \$3,286,973.

Successful applicants were:

Shire of Mt Magnet:

‘Murchison Region Vermin Cell Fence’: \$2,250

‘Extension of Mt Magnet Mining and Pastoral Museum’: \$58,000

Shire of Meekatharra

‘Development of Lloyds Plaza’: \$500,000

St Johns Ambulance Northampton

‘Beating Heart Project – Building Community Resilience in Northampton’: \$157,285

Shire of Carnamah

‘North Midlands Project for the Exchange’: \$59,738

Shire of Chapman Valley

‘Bill Hemsley Park Groundwater Access’: \$28,000

Shire of Cue

‘Cue Community Resource Centre – Heritage Discovery Centre’: \$133,865

Gascoyne River Foundation

‘Foundation for Gascoyne Aboriginal Tourism Corridor’: \$61,995

Shire of Shark Bay

‘Economic Study of Local Business Sector’: \$20,000

Women Inspiring Better Business

RDAMWG is an in-kind sponsor of the Women Inspiring Better Business (WIBBS) organisation which has a membership exceeding 120.

Events that RDAMWD has supported include:

- The second biennial business expo which included more than 60 stall holders representing businesses from the retail, commercial food, accommodation and home-based sectors.
- Sundowners and business breakfast with speakers including the CEO's of Geraldton Ports and Mid West chamber of Commerce.
- RDA MWG sponsorship of WIBB's has extended to a number of networking events including an international women's day breakfast and the extension of events into the regional areas of the Mid West and Gascoyne.

Geraldton Young Innovators Competition

The Geraldton Young Innovators Competition was run as part of the WestTech Festival and hosted by RDAMWG with the support of the US Embassy Perth. The competition sought to foster a culture of Innovation in secondary school students and encourage these students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and maths.

Between September and November 2018 students in years 5 to 10 were introduced to the program, which focused on Ocean and Waterways health and sustainability. The program included:

- Topic introduction.
- Workshops to define the problem.
- Workshops to develop ideas and presentation posters
- Presenting the ideas and judging.

The finalists had the opportunity to pitch their ideas to a panel of West Tech professional international innovators and a representative of the US Embassy.

Sponsors included: CISCO, Mid West Development Commission, Leaning Tree Steiner School, Museum of Geraldton, USA Embassy.

3.6 Maximise access to Government grants and programs	Provide advice on critical regional development issues and provide information on regional activities and competitive advantages.	Provide advice as required to forums of the Australian Government.
<p>The annual business planning process has been used to keep the Commonwealth aware of important regional development issues.</p> <p><i>Commonwealth Treasury</i></p> <p>Hosted visit and round table discussion between local business community and WA State Director of the Commonwealth Treasury</p> <p>RDAMWG has briefed federal Ministers and maintained relationships with 21 local government authorities throughout the region.</p> <p>It has led briefings and workshops on grants processes and programs in the context of an understanding of regional needs.</p>		

3.7 Capacity Building (Increase in Base Funding)	Increase to base funding: Capacity Building	Carnarvon Economic Development Potential
<p>Context</p> <p>With an area of 135,277 km square and a population of 10,300, the Gascoyne is known to have the lowest population density of any region in Australia. Despite this, the region is a very important contributor to the Western Australian economy, with its gross regional product (GRP) in 2012/13 being \$869 million or 0.4%1 of gross state product.</p> <p>The Gascoyne Regional Blueprint (2017) identified the importance of Tourism, Pastoral, Fishing and Aquaculture, Horticulture and Resources sector to future population and jobs growth. Alongside this the WA Tomorrow: Population Report shows that of the four Local Government Shires in the Gascoyne Region, Carnarvon alone has a predicted declining population through to 2031.</p> <p>The Capacity Building approach was initiated as a way of bringing key Carnarvon based industry sectors together with a view to getting buy in from a range of stakeholders to collaborate on initiatives focused on jobs and growth. It recognises that both the private and public sector both</p>		

play an important role in the development of strategies that require a range of levers that might include both policy and investment.

The Shire of Carnarvon Strategic Community Plan highlights the challenge of growing the local economy through better use of underutilised assets and capabilities. Despite the existing capabilities in horticulture, tourism and seafood the latent potential has not been pursued by existing businesses or investors. It is felt that other forms of economic development intervention are required to unlock and stimulate the growth potential.

Approach to Capacity Building

Clusters as an Economic Development Tool

A report was prepared with a focus on 'cluster development' as a practical economic development capacity building tool. It was felt that the key sectors in the Carnarvon Shire might benefit from an approach that brought different parts of a sector together with a view to developing a common awareness of holistic issues and a coordinated approach.

The Benefits of Cluster Approach

- (i) Although cluster development must be driven by the private sector, there is crucial role for the public sector in cluster facilitation, coordinating government support and importantly acting as the 'honest broker' to manage action amongst companies that might initially see themselves as competitors.
- (ii) There is growing body of evidence that firms in well performing clusters have higher growth than their competitors and accordingly higher levels of innovation, entrepreneurship, skills and productivity.

Carnarvon Chamber of Commerce Capacity Building

RDA MWG has begun working with the Carnarvon Chamber of Commerce with the aim of building the role of the organisation in bringing together the business community and partnering with other organisations to bring about initiatives that benefit the community.

Outputs

Cluster Report and Consultation

The report has progressed to a range of discussions with the Shire of Carnarvon, it has been shared with the Carnarvon Cultural Centre and underpinned discussions with the Carnarvon Chamber of Commerce.

- (i) Discussions with Shire of Carnarvon Executive, with a view to including Cluster development within the Shire Economic Development and Tourism Strategy which is under production.
- (ii) The report has been circulated to the Carnarvon Cultural centre with potential for discussions concerning cultural tourism and Aboriginal economic development.

Carnarvon Chamber of Commerce & Gascoyne Business Awards

Initial engagement has included support to host a regional business awards program. To date, the capacity building has included:

- Sourcing sponsorship,
- Developing award categories and judging frameworks,
- Awards event organisation,
- Advice to businesses on preparing submissions,
- Regional participation and communications frameworks (three Shires participate in the event)

Future activities might include:

- Workshops and discussions on governance frameworks.
- Developing partnership agreements.
- Building membership.
- Finances and fund raising.

Capacity Building Funds: Summary Acquittal.

Income (2018/19):	\$6,621.00
Expenditure (2019/20):	
- Cluster Report:	\$4,950.00
- <u>Gascoyne</u>	<u>\$1,671.00</u>
Total:	\$0.0

4.0 RDAMWG CASE STUDIES

4.1 Women Inspiring Better Business (WIBB's) and Business Expo

Purpose

RDA MWG sponsored and participated in the organisation of the 2018 WIBB's Business Expo. The aim of WIBB's and the Expo was to provide a platform for women across all industry sectors to come together to showcase their goods and services, to strike up potential partnerships, to showcase their businesses, sell their products, form alliances, and network with like-minded women for better economic and social outcomes.

The purpose was to also provide an affordable event, especially for smaller home-based businesses and start-ups to participate in a warm and supportive environment to promote their businesses.

This Business Expo also provided a venue after the day's Expo for all stall holders and participants to network and make connections for future growth by exchanging ideas, product opportunities and contacts.

Context

The background included a survey being conducted to gauge the interest of businesswomen in the region wanting to participate in a Business Expo.

A total 96% responded to the survey with a resounding 'yes' for the Business Expo and expressed the view that it would be most beneficial for their economic growth.

There is no other opportunity of this nature available, so a business expo was deemed a great opportunity for businesses to market and showcase their businesses. It was also considered that the Expo would be valuable for the broader community as it increased awareness of goods and services available locally, with the context that with awareness it would increase local expenditure and reduce the leakages to larger retail and commercial centers.

With a rapidly increasing growth in home-based businesses especially being driven and operated by women the Expo provided an invaluable platform as many home-based businesses can be very isolated and operate in micro market area.

Process

The process included establishing a working committee under the WIBB's umbrella and utilizing local knowledge and skills to begin this massive event.

Suitable venues were identified, prices negotiated, local restaurants approached to cater for the day-long event, extensive marketing plans developed, sponsorship prospectus developed and printed and sponsors secured, cash flow charts were overseen by senior accountants in the community and advertising for stall holders promoted.

We reached capacity for 60 stall holders quickly which demonstrates the demand for this initiative and reconfirmed our efforts were well received.

The range of stall holders was impressive to say the least. They included in the mix of 60, local restaurants, home based businesses, including health practitioners, to larger businesses including the Mid West Ports Authority and AusIndustry.

Outcomes

The WIBB's Business Expo proved to be a resounding success with nearly one thousand people attending. The organising committee was surprised by the overwhelming response.

Stall holders were thrilled with the results many citing in their feedback forms that they had secured new outlets for goods, some that they had formed new relationships with people and businesses cross regionally for economic growth.

Many loved the networking opportunity and made new friends!

The City of Greater Geraldton was busier than normal with the flow on of visitors from the Business Expo continuing into the city center for shopping and meals.

It drew visitors and stall holders from as far away as regional towns (Yalgoo, Morawa) and Carnarvon which is five hours drive away, so that was very encouraging.

It was well planned and set out, all logistics were well managed, which ensured a great event.

The stall holders and Sponsors all had an opportunity to speak publicly about their business and were included in live feed interviews via Facebook, which proved very popular.

Next year looks like there will be more inspiring economic development activities especially for women via the WIBB's group which has been given wings and a strong heartbeat thanks to the continued support of RDA Mid West Gascoyne

4.2 Geraldton Young Innovators Competition

Purpose

The purpose of this program was to run a secondary school innovation program that helps student teams develop ideas that could lead to a technology-based start-up.

Entrepreneurial and innovative thinking can occur at an early age. The program dealt with real world problems and students were given the opportunity to design solutions that have commercial appeal and potential.

Students were given the opportunity to incorporate technology (phones apps) that they use on a day to day basis to the solutions that they designed. They learnt leadership and team skills by working in groups and having to discuss, collaborate and work through their ideas.

Presentation and public speaking skills were enhanced as the students presented in a competitive environment to their peers, business people and a judging panel.

Context

The Young Innovators Competition was run as part of the Perth West Tech festival which is an annual event for the Australian and international start-up and tech community. The festival attracts founders, tech leaders and investors from the US, Europe, Asia and around Australia. Organisers of WestTech agreed to include a seminar in Geraldton as a way of recognising and encouraging innovation in regional WA and discuss opportunities that included: the square kilometre array (SKA – radio telescope), alternative energy, smart cities and regions.

School students are part of the broader Millennial population (Gen Y and Gen Z) and have a natural predisposition to all things digital and the changing use of technologies to support daily life. This includes the use of Apps, gaming software, cloud technologies, drones and autonomous vehicles. It seems natural therefore to include future generations of tech-based decision makers in a festival that supports the start-up and tech community.

Process

Between September and November 2018 students in years 5 to 10 were introduced to the program, which had the Theme of Ocean and Waterways Health and Sustainability. The program included:

Topic Introduction

In groups they were asked to:

- Discuss the problem of Ocean and Waterways health and sustainability. The issues association with pollution including plastics, paper and industrial waste. How waste got into water in the first place and the problems that it caused to marine life and the ability to use for the purposes that it was intended.

Defining Solutions

- Having discussed and developed a broader understanding of the issues the students were then asked to generate ideas on solutions to some areas of Ocean and Waterways Health and Sustainability. This included a name of a solution, a description of what it did and a simple diagram. Ideas included:
 - Chemical catcher: a series of ever decreasing filters placed at the end of drainage pipes capturing everything from large waste to nano particles. This solution also suggested that if river systems were clean there would be less need to transport bottled water around the world. Recognising that plastic bottles were a major source of rubbish in waterways.
 - Oil and Plastic Separator: A machine that floats on the ocean sucks up water and separates the oil and plastic. The Oil and Plastic separator are solar powered.
 - Plastic Killer: An ocean borne robotic net that collects plastic. When the net is full it sends a GPS satellite signal to allow the plastic to be collected.
 - Turtle Specs: Made from seaweed the trackable specs allow the turtle to tell the difference between plastic and jellyfish.

Workshops to develop ideas and presentation posters

Once the ideas were generated students prepared a presentation poster and practised describing their ideas to a panel of judges and a room full of people.

Presenting the ideas and judging.

Initial presentations took place in Perth and then the finalists travelled to Perth where they had the opportunity to pitch their ideas to a panel of West Tech professional international innovators and a representative of the US Embassy.

Learnings and Next Steps

The Young Innovators Competition has shown that secondary school children have great capacity to think about the use of technology to provide solutions to things that they experience on a day to day basis. These might be global problems or simple day to day issues.

The program shows students how to use science and technology and can enable students to think about starting their own business as a valid career path opportunity where solutions have commercial appeal and potential.

The disbenefits of running the program as part of the WestTech festival are that the program runs only once a year, whereas there is potential to offer the program twice a year.

The program relies on expertise from outside the region and there is greater opportunity to train local mentors to deliver the program on a regular basis.

It is intended therefore to form a longer-term partnership with a Perth based innovation program on the basis that this organisation trains and supports people within the region to manage and mentor the program on an ongoing basis. This allows the skills and capacity to be developed and held within the region. RDAMWG would act as the program coordinator and manager.

5.0 END OF YEAR FINANCIAL POSITION: 30 JUNE 2019 (AUDITED)

RDA Name	Mid West Gascoyne
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Funding Sources and Budget												
	Commonwealth Funding (incl. All \$ in FA & Schedules)		Commonwealth 3rd Party Projects		State/Territory Operational		State/Territory Projects		Other		Total	
	Actual to (30/06/2019)	Budget (01/07/18)- (30/06/19)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)- (date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)- (date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)- (date)	Actual to (date)	Budget (date)- (date)	Actual to (30/06/2019)	Budget (01/07/2018) (30/06/2020)
GST Exclusive Amounts												
Income												
Surplus Funding carried forward from previous period (See note 1 below)	0	0									0	0
Funding for this Period	376,338	369,717									376,338	369,717
Young Innovator Comp Grant									13,913	5,936	13,913	5,936
Project Funding (Project 2)												
Interest on funds									4650		4,650	
Total Income (A)	376,338	369,717							18,563	5,936	394,901	375,653

GST Exclusive Amounts	Commonwealth Funding (incl. All \$ in FA & Schedules)		Commonwealth 3rd Party Projects		State/Territory Operational		State/Territory Projects		Other		Total	
	Actual to 30/06/2019	Budget 01/07/'18- 30/06/'19	Actual to 30/06/2019	Budget 01/07/'18 - 30/06/'19	Actual to 30/06/2019	Budget 01/07/'18- 30/06/'19	Actual to 30/06/2019	Budget 01/07/'18 - 30/06/'19	Actual to 30/06/2019	Budget 01/07/'18- 30/06/'19	Actual to 30/06/2019	Budget 01/07/'18- 30/06/'19
	Expenditure Major Budget Items											
Staff Salaries	272,381	257,100									272,381	257,100
Employee Entitlements	-44,875										-44,875	
Superannuation	25,437	25,000									25,437	25,000
Office Lease & Outgoings	5,433	12,000									5,433	12,000
Vehicle Costs	20,658	20,702									20,658	20,702
Operational	30,686	35,000									30,686	35,000
Insurance	5,391	12,000									5,391	12,000
Marketing	4,168	6,000									4,168	6,000
Communications	4,480										4,480	
Committee costs	7,311	12,717									7,311	12,717
Other Supplementary Funding Young Innovator Competition									15,857	6000	15,857	6000
Other Project 1-5												
Other Project 2												
Total Expenditure (B)	331,070	380,519	0	0	0	0	0	0	15,857	6,000	346,927	365,838
SURPLUS (A-B)	45,268	-10,802	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,706	-64	47,974	9,815

Independent Auditor's Statement to accompany the Annual Audited Accounts:

I certify that the statement of receipts and expenditure are fair and true, and that Funding and Other Contributions (if any) were held and expended by the RDA Committee in accordance with the Funding Agreement

Name of Auditor:

Auditor's Company:

Signature:

Date:

Certification:

Annual Budget / Annual Audited Accounts (indicate which) Certified as Correct by:

Name of authorised person:

Signature:

Date:

6.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 Communications Strategy

RDAMWG major stakeholders are the:

- Business and general community,
- 21 local government authorities,
- Mid West and Gascoyne Development Commissions,
- State and Federal Government Departments,
- State and Federal politicians,
- Education providers including Geraldton Universities Centre,
- Other RDA's
- Mid West and Gascoyne Chamber of Commerce
- Mid West Ports
- Progress Mid West – Greater Geraldton Growth Plan
- WALGA
- Murchison Zone of WALGA
- Northern Zone of WALGA
- Pollinators co-working
- Central Regional TAFE
- Women Inspiring Better Business group
- A broad range of working groups and committees.

The Business Plan is aligned with relevant regional and decentralisation policies of the state and federal governments and the regional development commissions.

Importantly over the next year it is important that RDAMWG listens to the voice of the regional and remote communities as this will allow the organisation to provide advice to the federal government on regional priorities and allow consistent and aligned input from all stakeholders.

Face to face communications through regular visits and attendance at regional forums will be vital to success outcomes and adding value in the utilisation of scarce resources.

It is further recognised that alternative ways of communicating with our various stakeholders across a very large and distributed region need to be considered. RDAMWG will evaluate, in partnership with

RDA Perth, the use of social media tools including YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and our own website. Whilst a programmed approach is envisaged program management tools will be used to allow appropriate testing, evaluation and budgeting.

Regular updates of state and federal members are also envisaged and already issue specific approaches to Canberra and Perth are being discussed with key stakeholders.

6.2 Risk Management

The RDAMWG Board has a risk management strategy that allows the organisation to identify potential risks and if necessary, put in place measures to manage and mitigate risks.

Risk management process allows risks to be identified, analysed, evaluated, treated and monitored across a range of category areas that include financial, legal, political, governance, health and safety.

It is noted that the RDAMWG Board has recently endorsed a range of financial, travel, purchasing and authorisations and delegation policies and will consider further governance and operational policies on a progressive basis.