

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

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Economic Development Australia (EDA) proudly acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and their rich culture and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's first peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We recognise and value the ongoing contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities to Australian life and how this enriches us. We embrace the spirit of reconciliation, working towards the equality of outcomes and ensuring an equal voice.



FROM THE CEO

Jacqueline Brinkman, Chief Executive Officer

It is my pleasure to present the final edition of the EDA Journal for 2021. The National Economic Development Conference (NEDC21) has just wrapped up and although we were disappointed to not be able to welcome delegates in person, our hosts, Mackay Regional Council delivered the most interactive and engaging virtual conference experience possible.

The theme of NEDC21, Regional Transformation – An evolution of the Circular Economy could not have been more relevant or timely. The recently released IPCC Report, which is based on thousands of research studies by hundreds of leading climate scientists over 8 years and builds upon more than three decades of prior research, tells us many things but give us one clear and consistent message; We are running out of time.

The report confirms that the traditional, linear economy is not useful when we are presented with the effects of climate change, on a planet with finite resources. The Circular Economy presents the opportunity for us to rethink what we consider to be 'progress' and redesign our economic model. By gradually decoupling economic activity from consumption and designing waste out of the system, together with a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model presents us with the opportunity to build economic, natural and social capital.

While there is no doubt, we need global and national policy leadership, and we hope to see that outcome from the UN

Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), often transformational change can be implemented at a local level as well. NEDC21 showed us that economic development professionals have a pivotal role to play in transitioning local ecosystems to a circular economy model.

This is the ideal opportunity to prove that economic development professionals can be change agents. EDA will continue to support the economic development sector learn, adapt and adopt best practice in the coming months and years.

In this edition, NSW Circular Chief Economist, Dr Kar Mei Tang illustrates the important role economic development professionals can play by reminding us that over 40% of local governments have made commitments to reach a zero-emissions target by or before 2050 for their community emissions, with a number aiming to reach net zero emissions by 2030.

Respected leading economist and Climate Councilor, Nicki Hutley outlines how acting sooner on climate change can deliver greater economic benefits, particularly for regional Australia.

Melissa Miller presents a practical case study demonstrating how the team at the City of Marion in SA are building foundations for a local circular economy, driven by manufacturing and addresses some of the challenges in facilitating a transition from traditional business models.

This edition also features articles covering a range of other themes, including RDA Hunter's experience of establishing a Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals (MTP) cluster. This is a fantastic example of a ground-up cluster development and an exemplar of specialisation in action.

The AsiaLink Business team provides great advice for regions preparing to leverage the opportunities that exist now as Australia begins reopening its international borders.

This edition also showcases all the finalists and winners of the 2021 National Economic Development Awards for Excellence. This is a wonderful repository of best practice, illustrating the ways in which the economic development sector is driving Australia's economic recovery.

Thank you once again to all our authors and advertisers in this edition.

Jacqueline Brinkman
Chief Executive Officer
Economic Development Australia



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National Economic Development Conference (NEDC21)

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
13-15 OCTOBER 2021



NEDC21 WRAP UP

The National Economic Development Conference (NEDC21) wrapped up on Friday October 15 after 3 days of global and national experts leading the discussion on the theme “Regional Transformation – An Evolution of the Circular Economy”.

Hosted virtually by Mackay Regional Council, this conference provided practical tools for economic development professionals seeking to understand what the circular economy is, how it can be implemented and what benefits it will bring to local economies, communities and the environment.

NEDC21 delegates are reporting that the event has inspired them to immediately start adopting a more circular approach to their economic development work. EDA will build on the learnings and discussion at NEDC21 and develop further circular economy professional development.

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NEDC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Economic Development Australia and Mackay Regional Council thank the following organisations for their fantastic support of the National Economic Development Conference (NEDC21).

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HIGHLIGHTS

- NSW Chief Circular Economist, Dr Kar Mei Tang - why local economies need to go circular.
- An exclusive conversation with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation – how economic development professionals can accelerate the transition to a circular economy.
- A robust debate - Circling the economy, or circling the wagons?
- Professor Ian O’Hara - how the bio-economy creates jobs.
- Lucy Heales - how to track, measure and report circular economy impacts.
- Gus Balbotin - simple tricks to take action and drive change in our industries, businesses and lives.
- Professor Veena Sahajwalla - how economic development professionals can lead economic transformation.
- Announcement of Economic Development National Awards for Excellence winners.
- Meeting hub to connected delegates, friends and colleagues.
- Virtual exhibition to connect with economic development leaders and support services.



Dr Kar Mei Tang



NEDC21
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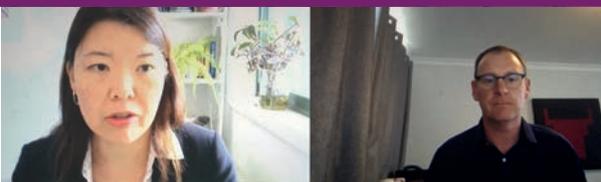
Debate
Dr Kevin Johnson
& Dean Magee



**Gus
Balbotin**
Sharing simple tricks
to take action and
drive change



**Professor
Veena
Sahajwalla**



**THANK
YOU!**



Merete Daniel
Nielsen



**Panel
Discussion**

Dr Kar Mei Tang
Tim Ellis
Kylie Porter
Rowan Kendall



**Morning
Yoga**

From the foreshore
of Blacks Beach in
Mackay



CIRCULAR ECONOMY SPECIAL FEATURE





ACCELERATING LOCAL CIRCULAR ECONOMIES:

KEY LEVERS FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

By Dr Kar Mei Tang, Chief Circular Economist, NSW Circular

WHY GO CIRCULAR?

Australia has urgent challenges in three areas: jobs, environment, and productivity.

Any recovery and growth strategy needs to address all three of these. We need a jobs and productivity boost. And the circular economy is the key.

It involves tackling the point that we continue to waste resources -- whether throwing them away or leaving them idle -- at a time when those resources could be used by others, be recycled and put back into our supply chains, and be more sustainable alternatives to using virgin resources.

Rising public debt and zero wage growth mean increasing pressure on both household and government budgets.

We need to get more mileage out of the resources we consume to drive these pressures down. This is the very definition of productivity improvement.

Modelling by the Centre for International Economics shows that even a 5% improvement in materials efficiency can increase real wages by 2.85%.¹

Increasing our use of scarce resources enhances our resilience to production squeezes and supply chain shocks, as well as reducing the environmental impacts of extracting these virgin resources.

Recognising this, Australia's global counterparts such as the US, Canada and the UK have all already allocated billions in funding towards a green recovery.

Australian federal and state governments are also starting to pivot in this direction.

Importantly, these investments are also job creation opportunities.

A recent report on the City of Sydney, for example, identifies five sectors with particularly strong growth prospects in the City: green buildings; sustainable finance; sharing economy; environmental advisory; and green research.² Modelling and analyses by a swathe of experts and think tanks including the Grattan Institute, KPMG, PwC, the Centre for international Economics, Beyond Zero Emissions, the Climate Council, and Centre for Policy Development, all similarly show that investment in renewables and CE initiatives have triple bottom line outcomes and net positive job creation.

Economic leaders understand the need to develop the sector, and to create equitable transition pathways for sunset industries.

How can local councils support the transition towards circularity?

DECARBONISATION

Many councils approach the circular economy in tandem with strategies to reduce their carbon footprint.

In this respect, the approach taken by many local councils to support the circular economy and decarbonisation has been to set clear targets and flightpaths to transition towards net zero.

In Australia, it is estimated that over 40% of local governments have made commitments to reach a zero-emissions target by or before 2050 for their community emissions, with a number aiming to even reach net zero emissions by 2030.³

Of all of the sectors that contribute towards decarbonisation, electricity is probably the only one that is 'on track' towards net zero 2050. Moving forward, the following offer promise:

- Standardised certification of renewable energy that meets consistent environmental and regulatory standards, providing councils with certainty and consistency of green credentialling.
- Availability of commercial solutions for councils to access renewables on a large scale, e.g. Flow Power enables customers to contract directly with wind and solar farms to buy power at lower cost than what is available through traditional retailers. It also offers active management of electricity contracts to help businesses further cut their power costs.

However, decarbonisation of electricity supply only goes part way towards net zero emissions. Local economies can get to 100% renewables to power its streets, assets and amenities – examples include the cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. However, this represents only part of local economies' emissions profile.

Zero carbon is much more complex. The settings to get there are different for urban versus regional areas, and for residential versus industrial centres. Cities also

present additional complexity, as they don't have vast tracts of vegetation that act as carbon sinks. Other interventions are needed, particularly in the built environment, transport systems, urban form and design, public spaces and urban greening, and water use. Councils can support this by:

- **Circular economy procurement.** Procurement of circular economy goods and services. Closed loop solutions for materials and products like plastics and e-waste.
- **Leveraging local infrastructure pipelines** including the planning and design of the built environment and green spaces, and use of smart technologies to optimise traceability, productivity, and recyclability.
- **Incentives for households and businesses** which may take the form of, for example, concessions, low-interest loans and rebates to transition, free smart meters and energy assessments, replacement for inefficient appliances.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROCUREMENT

Procurement frameworks can explicitly consider and seek circular economy outcomes to achieve environmental, social and economic outcomes. This could involve, for example, assigning weights in the procurement evaluation criteria to the environmental impacts, circularity benefits, risks of reliance on unverified virgin product (particularly of materials of indeterminate origin or which are difficult to recycle) and costs of disposal in major procurement decisions.

Councils can also use joint procurement activity to achieve better value-for-money outcomes. For example, Victoria's Metropolitan Waste and Resource Recovery Group (MWRRG) procures and manages collaborative contracts to deliver waste and recycling services on behalf of 31 councils across Melbourne. It manages 14 contractors for waste and recycling services, valued over \$130 million annually. By doing so it can aggregate larger volumes of waste and recycling to bring to the market, delivering economies of scale for councils and greater investment certainty for service providers. This in turn helps drive more cost-effective procurement (creating savings which can be passed on to the community), opens the market to

more players and reduces reliance on international markets.

Circular procurement can also leverage the increased buying power from collaborative procurement to create cost-effective closed-loop markets for local waste streams. In South Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils' (SSROC) "Paving the Way" initiative, 16 councils collaborated to procure asphalt with recycled crushed glass (RCG) as substitute for natural sand. SSROC generates 71,000 tonnes of municipal glass waste annually. This was the largest council-led procurement of its kind in NSW. The Sustainable Pavements contract resulting from the procurement commenced 1 July 2021 and is expected to lead to the creation of a local closed-loop market for all remaining recoverable domestic glass in SSROC, equivalent to recycling 80 million glass bottles a year back into local roads.

Finally, circular procurement can explore the use of service models such as shared benefits arrangements, where the savings from performance-based outcomes are reinvested into procuring organisations. These can largely be developed from traditional performance-based contracts in the energy and waste sector. For example, the Batesville school district in Arkansas (US) used the annual savings of nearly \$300,000 from their energy performance contract – including from their solar energy installation – to pay for the project costs and generate additional savings, with part of the money going toward increasing teachers' salaries.

LEVERAGING LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINES

There are three major circular economy opportunities from the infrastructure sector: planning and designing for circularity, reducing the disposal of waste in the system; and creating new markets in the use of low-carbon materials.

First: Planning and designing for circularity

Local economies are particularly well suited to circularity, especially with regard to the planning and design of local infrastructure such as land use planning (including land zonings and permissible uses) and key development standards relating to building standards such as floor space ratios, heights and subdivision land sizes.

This includes, for example, relatively straightforward initiatives like the design of car parks to improve traffic flow and land use. Market research by NRMA shows that, on average, we spend nearly a year of our lives searching for an available, cost-effective car parking space. Global research shows that drivers looking for a parking space can account for up to 40 per cent of all inner-city traffic. And with just one parking space for every eight workers, Sydney's CBD ranks in the top 10 most expensive places to park in the world, with Brisbane and Melbourne not too far behind. That is a lot of time and energy wasted, not to mention the traffic congestion and pollution contribution created by driving. However, even relatively simple interventions like introducing diagonal parking allows more parking bays to fit into a given space. Drivers also need to change their direction of travel much less, making reversing out of the bays easier and safer.

Second, reducing construction waste.

Australia's waste generation has risen by 10 per cent in the two years to 2018-19. Building and demolition activity has been a key driver of this increase: not entirely surprising given the national infrastructure boom in recent years. This is expected to grow even further in the coming years with additional state and federal government stimulus measures contributing to a record-breaking \$300 billion public infrastructure pipeline across the country.

Masonry, metal and timber are already commonly recycled and reused across construction sites. For example, over 90% of all demolition waste in the construction of Sydney's 5.8-hectare Central Park development was recycled, making it one of the largest recycling projects in Australia.

Third, generating critical mass in low embodied carbon materials. Infrastructure development presents a significant opportunity to deploy recovered materials. Australia's infrastructure pipeline is a prime opportunity to deploy recycled materials - as inputs into building materials, road base, fill, among others.

There is a significant untapped opportunity to recycle key problem waste materials - such as plastics, glass, textiles and organics - as inputs into the construction sector. This includes using recycled content in building materials such as concrete aggregate, pipe

bedding, footpaths, fence posts, garden edging, furniture, fittings, acoustic panels and so on.

For instance, property developer Mirvac recently launched a residential development project in the inner-city suburb of Marrickville with specific goals for using recycled materials in its construction wherever possible. Going beyond using recycled masonry and aggregate in road and footpath bases, they partnered with UNSW SMaRT Centre and NSW Circular to bring together design and engineering technology to develop fittings, furniture and art works made entirely from waste materials.

Greater supply chain management to reduce the drain on natural resources is also a commercial necessity for resilient development.

A 2019 study for Geoscience NSW found, for example, that there will be insufficient reserves of natural sand to meet local demand up to 2036.

However, trials which have been ongoing for over a decade have now shown that recycled materials can meet required performance standards, be a cost-effective alternative to using virgin quarried material, and often a superior choice for major road and water infrastructure projects.

This delivers multiple benefits: from reduced waste transport costs and landfill fees, environmental benefits of reusing low-impact materials, to harvesting the commercial value and demand for sustainability certifications such as Green Star ratings (the environmental certification for buildings set by the Green Building Council of Australia that incentivises the use of sustainable practices and products in the property sector).

THE OPPORTUNITY FROM RECOVERING WASTE ALONE

Australia's pivot towards the circular economy gained momentum with the acceleration of the Chinese Government's Operation Green Fence (a policy introduced in 2013) to prohibit the importation of contaminated recyclables, followed by its National Sword program commencing 2018 cracking down on the illegal smuggling of foreign waste into China and the importation of certain recyclables, including plastics waste, unsorted waste paper and waste textiles.

On 1 Jan 2021, Australia's own ban on waste exports commenced, starting with a ban on exporting waste glass, followed by mixed plastics, tyres, single-polymer plastics, and finally mixed paper and cardboard.

However, while welcome, the export bans only scratch the surface of Australia's circular economy opportunity. With many other materials heading to landfill, we are still missing out on the economic benefits of keeping them in productive use longer, while addressing the nation's waste problem.

There is an even more significant onshore opportunity for materials recovery and emissions reduction that is five times the size of the waste export market: the 20 million tonnes of materials being landfilled every year. Some of the biggest opportunities for waste recovery are in organics, masonry and plastics, which together make up over half the materials currently going to landfill (Figure 1).

INCENTIVES FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES

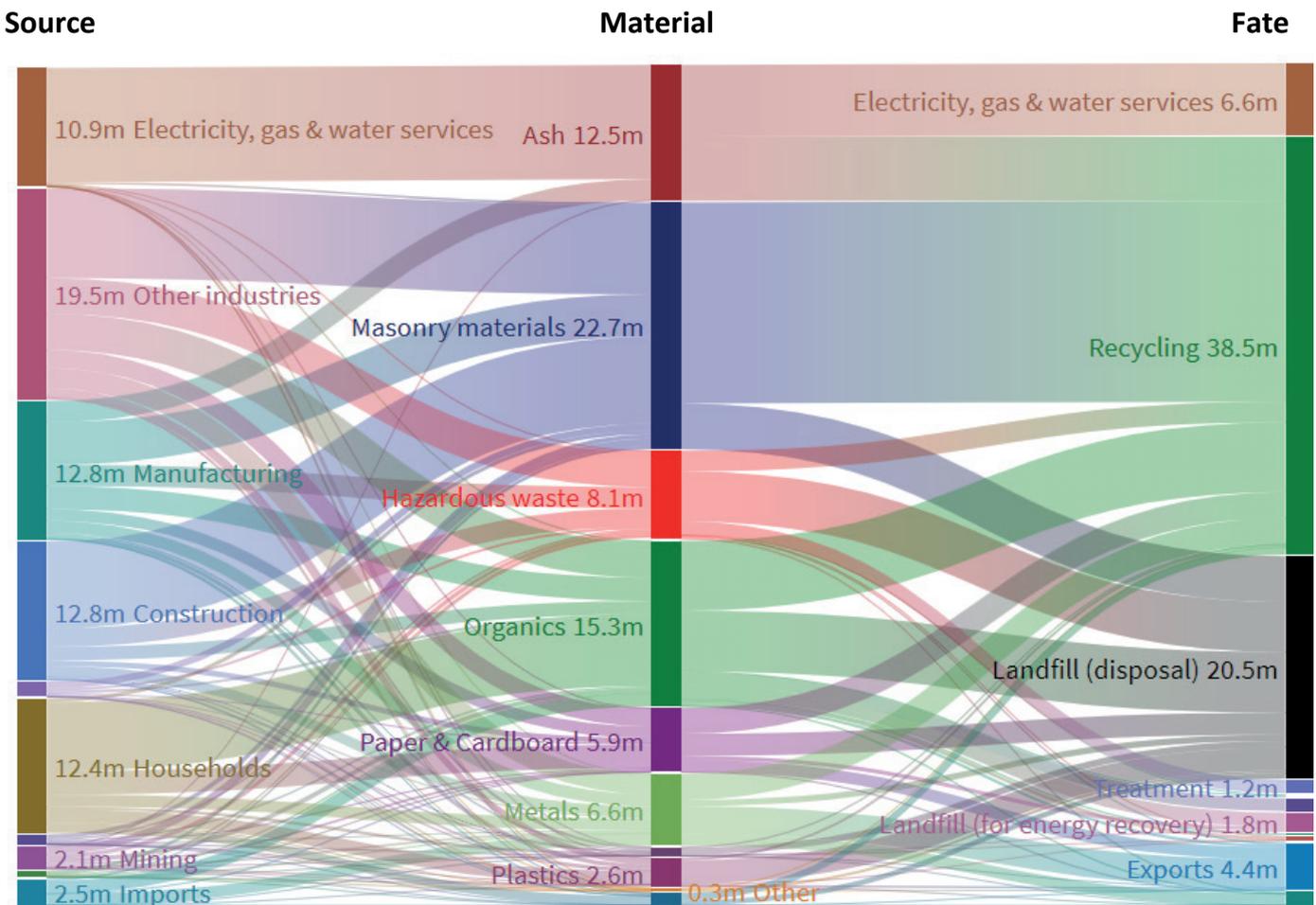
Households account for only 16% of waste generation in the Australian economy but are responsible for the highest amounts of food and garden waste, plastics, and textile waste of any sector in Australia.

According to Rabobank's 2020 Food Waste report, 13% of Australians' weekly grocery shop becomes food waste, with the coronavirus pandemic derailing Australia's progress in reducing food waste (given a pre-pandemic statistic of 11%).

This is akin to the average Australian household throwing away \$1,043 per year (and \$10.3 billion nationally) into the bin as food waste. The research shows that using food delivery services correlates to individuals wasting twice as much food.

Local councils can help reduce food waste going to landfill by, for example, offering food scraps bins and collections to local households, providing communal composting facilities, diverting food waste to energy recovery through biomethanation (e.g. through anaerobic digestion), or even trialling new ways of recycling such as through insect-based bioconversion of food waste into a soil improver and insect protein (to be used as an animal feedstock), such as that piloted in the Barangaroo precinct in Sydney's CBD.

Figure 1: Sources of waste, types of waste materials and fates of waste materials in Australia (2018-19)



Sources: ABS Experimental Waste Account 2018-19, NSW Circular analysis

Collective initiatives by households and local councils to reduce and recycle their food and garden waste will not only help reduce the 8 Mt of greenhouse gas emissions from solid waste in landfill annually, but also help create long run savings from the \$600m paid by Australian households to manage their waste in 2018-19.

Additionally, business incentives are important to drive circular outcomes that can only be achieved at the business level. The NSW Government's business recycling program Circulate, for example, provides grants from \$20,000 to \$50,000 to businesses, not-for-profit organisations, local governments, and industry bodies to fund innovative, commercially oriented industrial ecology projects that will recover materials that would otherwise be sent to landfill. Since its inception, the program has contributed over \$7.2 million of funding across 55 projects.

BUILDING BACK BETTER

Further research is important to inform the development of new sustainable markets for recycled products, so that we can capitalise on these circular economy opportunities for sustainable growth.

As Australia rebuilds from the economic effects of the pandemic, there has never been a better time to focus on turning our waste problem into an opportunity for a stronger, more sustainable Australian economy.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR KAR MEI TANG



Dr Kar Mei Tang was appointed Chief Circular Economist with NSW Circular in 2020, a body established by the NSW Office of the Chief Scientist and Engineer to fast-track NSW's transition to the circular economy.

Prior to this she was Executive Director, Circular Economy in the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Environment Protection Authority, where she led circular economy policy, strategy and grants management functions.

This followed several years as Director of Economic Policy in the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet. Prior to joining the NSW public sector she was Head of Policy and Research with the Australian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (now Australian Investment Council).

Kar Mei has a PhD in Economics and is the current Chair of NSW Women in Economics Network, as well as a Council Member of the Economic Society of Australia (NSW).



THE EARLY BIRD GETS THE WORM:

CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Nicki Hutley, Independent Economist and Councillor, Climate Council of Australia

To quote Charles Dickens' opening lines from *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It is the best of times, it is the worst of times, it is the age of wisdom, it is the age of foolishness... It is the spring of hope, it is the winter of despair." These lines could well have been written about the critical point at which we now find ourselves on the climate action journey; and we can choose to be foolish and despair, or to be wise and hopeful.

The world's climate scientists could not be clearer: human-induced climate change is accelerating and poses severe environmental, social and economic risks to us all.¹ Our response must match the scale and urgency of this challenge.

Fortunately, the economic message is clear: acting on climate change sooner, through a planned transition, can reap enormous benefits. This is particularly true of regional Australia which stands much to gain from progressive thinking – and much to lose from standing still.

ACUTE AND CHRONIC CLIMATE EVENTS HAVE HIGH COSTS

We are already counting the costs from climate-driven disasters such as bushfires, droughts, cyclones, and flooding. These worsening climate impacts cause physical damages to property and infrastructure, but their impact goes well beyond what we can see. Economic activity is disrupted, productivity is lost, and health costs –

both physical and mental – rise. Even education is being disrupted as a result of increased absenteeism, when schools cannot adequately cool classrooms², which can affect lifetime employment and earnings opportunities. The loss of life and biodiversity can be challenging to measure precisely in economic terms, but we know these costs are unacceptably high.

All told, climate-related disasters are estimated to have led to global economic losses of A\$272 billion in 2020 alone, according to Munich Re research.³ In Australia, the estimated cost to the Australian economy is currently A\$38 billion per year.⁴

Economic research is giving us an increasingly good understanding of the extent of damages from these extreme events and their mounting costs.

For example, the 2009 "Black Saturday" fires in Victoria are estimated to have had economic and social costs of \$7 billion, while the more recent NSW "Black Summer" fires in 2019-20 are estimated to have cost \$100 billion when the impact of the fires on business disruption, health and well being, as well as physical damages and environmental losses are taken into account.⁵

Longer term chronic events, such as rising average temperatures and sea-level rise, add to the damage bill. Since 1890, heatwaves have killed more Australians

than bushfires, cyclones, earthquakes, floods, and severe storms combined.⁶ They also lead to increased hospitalisations and strains on the health system.

In the US, research just published suggests climate-related health costs are now more than a trillion Australian dollars each year. This study also notes that the economic burden of health-related climate costs is unevenly distributed, with the greater burden falling on vulnerable communities.⁷

And these costs will continue to rise over time. For Australia, under a high emissions scenario, the costs of extreme weather events coupled with acute risks such as rising sea levels and higher average temperatures, could amount to \$94 billion per year by 2060⁸ and \$129 billion per year by the end of this century.⁹ We are already bearing considerable costs from the 1.44°C of warming in Australia. Global costs are estimated to be a staggering \$24.1 trillion per year by 2100, or around 2% of GDP.¹⁰

For some, these costs may seem too far away. However, there are other more immediate and damaging costs that Australia faces from failure to act.

OTHER COUNTRIES ARE LOSING PATIENCE

The European Union has recently announced a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and this is expected

to be the first of many such schemes as countries seek to re-level the playing field on climate action. A CBAM acts address international differences in carbon price, by ensuring imports to and exports from countries with a carbon price don't lose businesses or competitiveness to "free rider" countries. The EU scheme is set to cover iron, steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium, and electricity in its first iteration, but will be expanded to cover coal, gas and other emissions-intensive goods down the track.

Recent modelling by the Climate Council looks at the implications of CBAMS being adopted by the EU, by the G7 and South Korea, and by China.¹¹ The economic impact of the EU acting alone and with only a narrow group of goods covered, is relatively small (less than half a billion dollars in GDP). This is largely because Australia does not export much to the EU in the way of targeted products.

However, once we look at the G7 and South Korea, and also China, the story gets more concerning, with losses of A\$2 billion and \$2.5 billion in GDP respectively. And a declining Terms of Trade means national income is hit harder, with falls of \$6 billion and \$6.7 billion respectively. Several thousand jobs are lost under both of these scenarios. These figures may not seem large, particularly in face of the billions of dollars lost to COVID-19 lockdowns, but they are still meaningful.

The greatest worry, however is for the people of NSW and Queensland, whose economies will bear the brunt of the adjustment, given their reliance on the targeted sectors, especially coal. In these two states, tens of thousands of jobs are at risk.

Australia is also at risk of a rising cost of capital as investors in both the private and public sector increase their risk assessment and required interest rates. This will result in falling public and private investment, dragging down growth and employment further.

Research shows that worsening climate change has already had an impact on the cost of capital in climate vulnerable developing economies, raising borrowing costs from 1991 to 2017 for private sector firms by 0.63%.¹² For sovereign debt (government borrowing) over the past decade borrowing costs in climate vulnerable countries have increased by 1.17 percentage points on average.

TRANSITION CAN BE PLANNED OR CHAOTIC

The gradual demise of our fossil fuel sectors is inevitable, but ideally would occur within Australia's control with appropriate support for communities and workers directly affected. The NSW Government reached similar conclusions in its 2021 Intergenerational Report stating that a transition plan is vital for communities and workers to adjust to a new, post-carbon economy.

EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES, ADVANCING AUSTRALIA

A planned transition means that we can take a first mover advantage of the opportunities presented by living in one of world's sunniest and windiest countries, with a smart, educated workforce and access to capital. For example, Sweden is already providing green steel for Volvo¹³, while the Canadian Government has announced a partnership with its cement industry to be a world leader in carbon neutral cement.¹⁴ This is a model we should follow.

Australia could grow a new green export mix worth \$333 billion per annum, almost triple the value of existing fossil fuel exports.¹⁵ Modelling by Deloitte Access Economics suggests support for a low carbon economy in Australia will add \$680 billion in economic growth and 250,000 new jobs by 2070.¹⁶ In the UK, the green economy has now grown to an estimated \$400 billion, which is four times bigger than the manufacturing sector. Growth in the sector is forecast to increase by 6.7% a year over the five years to 2025-26.¹⁷

Across Australian states, we are seeing the seeds of development to grow new, green industries, such as the Eyre Peninsula's hydrogen and ammonia hub, and to reinvent old fossil-fuel sectors, such as Tomago's aluminium. We are leading research into low-emissions cattle and soil carbon. Economic Development officers can support this transition by identifying opportunities and gaps, such as supporting infrastructure that are needed to access those opportunities.

Across the world, consumers, business and governments are demanding action on climate change. Australia can embrace this challenge and reap the rewards, supporting communities to transition as smoothly as possible. Or we can bury our heads in the sand and face economic, social and environmental chaos.

Australia has successfully transformed itself in the past and we can do so again.

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FOSTERING CIRCULAR BUSINESS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

Melissa Miller

The Economic Development team at the City of Marion in South Australia are building a solid understanding of circular economy among local businesses.

Through persistence and trial and error, the team are discovering what works best in engaging business, and in particular in traditional manufacturing businesses. At the same time, the team are building foundations for a local circular economy and addressing some of the inherent challenges in the transition from traditional business models.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

One of the key projects for the Economic Development team at the City of Marion is the Revitalisation of the Edwardstown Employment Precinct. The project began in 2018 and forms part of the City of Marion's

four-year business plan. Each year a 12-month action plan has been created to revitalise the precinct from an access, amenity and activation point of view.*

As part of this project, the team wanted to encourage interested businesses to consider circular economy approaches.

While the initial approach was to hold a group workshop, it was found that some organisations self selected but did not maintain the enthusiasm for and allocate resources to participating in the planned sessions. This is an all too familiar challenge when working in business engagement, where participants often have many issues competing for their attention.

Undeterred, the team at Marion continued with the initiative and identified an

opportunity during their regular business visits in the Edwardstown business precinct. On the lookout for suitable candidates, they found a forward-looking business in Garon Plastics that had an appetite to learn more about circular economy. To support the business' journey, the Council provided a series of three one-on-one circular economy workshops, with the aim of identifying circular opportunities for the business.

This latter approach found fertile ground and Garon Plastics is now busy exploring next steps and a series of exciting projects that go well beyond the initial idea of what to do with the small amount of surplus plastic they had identified. Senior personnel are leading circular projects that will have a knock-on effect in the business. Without the initial 'kickstarter' support of the City of Marion, it is unlikely

that the business would have identified the opportunities that it now sees as part of its strategic future.

This first successful case has led to some momentum, and gained the attention of other businesses. Following this trial, the Council plans to expand the program to a number of other candidates.

THE PROGRAM

Senior leaders at the business participated in the series of three, two-hour workshops on circular economy, policy and regulation, and grant opportunities. This intensive process was interactive and linked to in-depth analysis of the business' existing activities.

Focusing on a single business enabled a greater concentration of activity and a strong emphasis on next actions. This contrasts the alternative approach of undertaking group workshops, in which many individuals learn about circular approaches, but don't necessarily take them forward in the business and implement circular projects.

THE BUSINESSES: GARON PLASTICS AND SEAPA

Garon Plastics is a leading custom injecting moulding business in the local Edwardstown precinct with clients from a range of industries, including the telecommunications, medical and aquaculture sectors.



The business has been supplying custom injection moulding for over 40 years. With its depth of experience, high quality product, focus on design, and diverse activities, a broad range of circular economy opportunities are ripe for exploration.

Garon Plastics has experimented with regrind (recycled material) primarily for polycarbonate and polypropylene. In recent years there has been a general shift in customer perceptions, from viewing recycled content as lower quality, to requesting the material for their products. Even so, a number of clients will not allow recycled material in their product, often due to long established product specifications. From a technical perspective, there are also a number of issues to be solved if the business is to scale up production.

Garon Plastics' sister company and major client is SEAPA, an innovative business that designs and produces injection moulded oyster basket systems that are exported from Edwardstown across Australia and the globe.

SEAPA has a wealth of experience, having produced equipment for the oyster industry since 1998. Between 60 and 70 per cent of SEAPA's product is exported to markets including Japan, France and the United States.

Through the circular economy workshops, a large range of opportunities were identified for Garon Plastics and SEAPA. These were assessed and whittled down to five pilot projects that kickstart the circular economy journey for the businesses.



The projects include but are not limited to scaling up the recycled content of products. By gaining an understanding of the broader circular economy through the workshops, the group was able to identify projects that develop the business' capacity across other areas of the circular economy. This approach supported pilot projects that include shifting manufacturing capacity, working more closely with customers, and exploring product stewardship in greater depth. These projects will introduce or develop new skills and expertise in the business, and involve key circular economy concepts such as greater collaboration and a focus on local 'loops' of economic activity.

CITY OF MARION, EDWARDSTOWN AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The City of Marion is a local government area in the southern and western suburbs of Adelaide, South Australia. The City is undertaking a revitalisation project in the Edwardstown Employment Precinct. This precinct is home to over 1800 businesses and according to the Australian Industrial Transformation Institute is one of the most diversified regions in Australia, with an industrial comparative advantage in 41 industries. It is a significant contributor to the local economy, with 37% of regional output produced by the manufacturing sector, compared to the state's output of 18%.

Much of this advantage derives from the area's past role supporting the automotive manufacturing industry. The resulting diversity, investment and expertise is an excellent launching point for circular initiatives, which require collaboration and integration across a business community, and rely on a broad range of skills, expertise and maturity in business to succeed. Edwardstown Precinct project objectives include:

- foster local commercial activity and business prosperity
- present increasing employment opportunities for all local residents
- promote environmental responsibility through low-carbon initiatives and sustainable business practices
- promote environmental responsibility through low-carbon initiatives and sustainable business practices
- support economic recovery.

The manufacturing strengths of the region are a legacy of the diverse business ecosystem that grew to support the Mitsubishi Motors factory at Clovelly Park (now Tonsley Innovation District, also part of the City of Marion). The local vibrant network of small, medium and large enterprises was dealt a shock with the cessation of car manufacturing in Australia. In Adelaide, this was represented by the closure of the Mitsubishi factory in 2008 (at Tonsley in Adelaide's south) and Holden's

withdrawal in 2017 (from the city's north). This structural shift has been seen in manufacturing across the nation.

Unlike global automotive manufacturers, for many local businesses it was not a matter of 'closing up shop' as car production declined. The path ahead for successful and resilient local business has been to build on their strong expertise and skill sets to develop new products and services and reach new customers as the economy transforms. The circular economy offers yet another opportunity to chart a path to prosperity for regions faced with declining industries and transformational shifts.

WHAT IS A CIRCULAR BUSINESS?

A circular business is primed to maximise and reuse resources and materials through methods such as designing for longevity, recycling, leasing, maintenance and repair.

Such a business will continue to improve the 'circularity' of its activities over time. The business may begin by including more recycled content in its packaging and products, then continue the push toward circular approaches by, for example, ensuring its recycled product is itself recyclable, or can be responsibly managed, at 'end of life', or by implementing a leasing model. Such



businesses will progress on to measure and monitor and continually improve their activity.

In the transition from a 'linear' economy (in which products and materials have one 'life') to a 'circular' economy (in which they have second, third, and more lives), opportunities arise for savvy businesses to develop new revenue streams, achieve cost savings and protect themselves against future market shocks.

WHY SUPPORT CIRCULAR BUSINESSES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS?

Not only has circular economy been demonstrated to achieve growth and create new jobs**, it also requires a number of elements that are crucial to the economic wellbeing of local areas, and which are aligned with strategic priorities in many regions around the country.

Circular elements include:

- **Economic resilience.** Circular economy potentially reduces reliance on imported raw materials through the treatment and use of recycled materials, and builds diverse capabilities within the economy.
- **Fostering local economic 'loops'** such as through local recycling and repair businesses. National and multinational businesses are looking for local businesses to support the recycling, repair and reuse of their products. This provides circular business opportunities for localities and businesses across the country. Local economic loops can also support resilience through the production of items such as critical medical products, or other forms of manufacturing deemed a national priority.
- **Increasingly diverse job profiles.** The wide range of skills needed in a more complex circular economy provide new opportunities to specialise. Some of the skills will be needed in repair and maintenance jobs, many of which have effectively become dormant in the current 'linear' economy. Others will necessarily be in the recycling and waste management industries, and circular economy jobs also include a large number of service roles from design through to customer relationship roles.

- **Building collaboration.** Businesses in a circular economy collaborate more closely to make the most of their assets and resources yet often traditional businesses have built their success by operating in a siloed way. In a circular economy, businesses may be sharing the use of an asset, or passing on resources that would otherwise have gone to landfill for the use of another business. To do this, the business community needs to collaborate more effectively than in the current 'linear' system.

- **Renewable energy and carbon neutrality.** These are key features of circular economy and the focus of local government areas across Australia. Fostering a circular economy is yet another string in the bow in the work toward these goals.

- **Economic transition.** Circular economy is all about economic transition, so for regions such as Edwardstown, it is a path that can provide necessary development and economic activity.

Economic development teams can play a critical role in fostering circular economy across the country to achieve the economic growth goals of local areas. These teams closely understand the economic make-up of their area and what makes it distinct from its neighbours. They also have strong skills in engagement, communication and collaboration, which are all essential in a circular economy, yet may not be in the skillset, or perhaps mindset, of traditional businesses.

Thanks to an incremental approach, Marion Council is now well positioned to support the businesses on their circular economy journey, providing connections to key people inside and outside the local government area and advice on next steps. Through this initial support, strong local case studies are being generated, which then help to promote further circular initiatives.

The lesson here has been: starting small can lead to big outcomes.

Selecting the right participants through the expertise of the economic development team and their in-depth understanding of the local area, and offering a step into the circular economy can achieve momentum and greater results over time.

NOTES

* The circular economy project is a deliverable for the City of Marion's 'Revitalisation of Edwardstown Employment Precinct Project' <<https://www.makingmarion.com.au/edwardstown-project>> managed by Donna Griffiths, Unit Manager Economic and Cultural Development and Kate Silkstone, Edwardstown Project Coordinator.

** Ellen MacArthur Foundation, supported by the World Economic Forum and McKinsey and Company put the economic benefit of shifting to a circular economy at one trillion per year in USD globally. The 2017 South Australian study commissioned by Green Industries SA showed that nearly 25,700 jobs would be created by 2030, along with greenhouse gas savings of 27%, with a shift toward circular economy in the state. The cost of food waste throughout the Australian economy (or conversely, cost saving in preventing food waste) is estimated at over \$20 billion a year. pwc has recently shown \$1,860 billion in direct economic benefits could be generated over twenty years and 165 million tonnes of CO2 saved per year by 2040 through circular economy. While studies vary on the models used and headline figure, they are unanimous that jobs, growth and economic benefit will be generated in a transition to a circular economy.

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Melissa's goal is to help businesses successfully navigate the circular economy. With a

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BUILDING PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES WITH PEOPLE- CENTRED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Patrick Fensham, Principal and Partner, SGS Economics and Planning

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated many of the challenges and inequalities experienced by disadvantaged communities. As governments continue to develop economic development and recovery strategies, an opportunity exists to drive change through a more equal and sustainable economic model centred on purpose and place: community wealth building.

Community wealth building (CWB) is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which looks to increase the flow of wealth back into local economies and places by giving more control to local people and businesses (CLES 2020). It is a response to a broken, consumptive, extractive economy that has concentrated wealth in too few hands, marginalised and alienated communities, and wrought environmental destruction and collapse.

Recognising the limits of the current system, CWB is a maturing of economic development, with a core focus of growing social and environmental benefits into all economic activity.

Traditionally, the focus has been on the redistribution after wealth is created – whether it's the idea of trickle-down economics or tax and transfer systems of the modern state – they are either failing or are not sufficient. CWB shifts this paradigm by considering pre-distribution, during and before wealth is created.

ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS AND 'STICKY' CAPITAL ARE VITAL FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY WEALTH

Anchor institutions have a significant role in CWB. These public, and sometimes private, organisations are bound to or fixed in place and often have a special role as service providers in local communities.

Their capital is 'sticky', which means money is often sourced from and expended in local communities. Anchors have a special obligation to seed sustainable activities and local economies – they are crucial to CWB because of their significant local budgets, land and assets, and their role as purchasers and employers.

In the Australian context, anchors include local government, police, hospitals, housing providers, business and community anchors, education providers, community sports clubs, water authorities, universities, TAFEs, public and private schools, Aboriginal corporations and land councils.

This article explores the potential for anchor institutions in Australia to adopt a community wealth building approach, looking at the five key principles of community wealth building (CLES 2020):

- 1. Plural ownership** spreading wealth and democratising it by supporting SMEs, and local businesses and encouraging a flourishing cooperative and employee-owned business sector.
- 2. Making financial power work for local places** by increasing investment flows within local economies by harnessing the wealth that exists locally.
- 3. Fair employment and just labour markets** working with anchor institutions to engage disadvantaged and

marginalised groups, and create fair, stable employment opportunities.

4. Progressive procurement of goods and services to ensure social, economic and environmental value is being maximised.

5. Social productive use of land and property to add social value.

EXPANDING PLURAL OWNERSHIP OF WEALTH

By definition, SMEs, local businesses, cooperatives, and employee-owned businesses are rooted in local economies and provide local employment opportunities.

The Business Council of Cooperatives and Mutuals (BCCM) found there were more than 2031 co-ops and mutuals (CME's) in Australia in 2020, with a combined active membership of more than 31.1 million people and a combined turnover of \$35.3 billion (BCCM 2021). The cooperatives operate in almost every sector, with the highest number in financial services, health insurance, agribusiness, mobility services, retailing, medical services, health services, purchasing services, wholesaling and utilities.

The BCCM (2021) identified three key characteristics that make co-ops and mutuals sustainable contributors to economic and community life:

- they can take a more patient, long term view of growth, unlike listed firms who need to maximise short term profitability. In the banking sector, this is reflected in relatively low levels of loan defaults
- the balance sheets of cooperatives and mutuals typically carry less debt than shareholder-owned businesses, and
- the 'mutual mindset' – a focus on members and the community – seeks to deliver value to their core stakeholders despite adverse economic conditions.

While the BCCM promotes the cooperative sector, this sector is almost invisible in economic development strategies and state and federal government policy.

At a time when resilience and recovery are front of mind, supporting and encouraging cooperatives, which by definition are social purpose businesses, fosters local employment and creates opportunities for ethical investment. As the investing



community is increasingly concerned with their total investment impact, CME's provide an attractive local investment proposition.

We are also seeing a rebound from the 1990-2000's era move to outsource everything with a shift back to insourcing and where it makes sense, bringing services back in house. Previously outsourced activities could be a focus for cooperative enterprises, rather than necessarily becoming local government enterprises.

MAKING FINANCIAL POWER WORK FOR LOCAL PLACES

Access to credit is critical for many small businesses; however, the banking sector typically focuses on national or global markets rather than local investment. CWB recognises there are opportunities to redirect savings, pension funds and superannuation for local investments. This starts by supporting credit unions and community banking.

Small businesses have long reported they find it challenging to access finance (Connolly and Bank 2018, as in Lewis & Liu 2020). In general, they find it harder than other borrowers to access finance due to their relative risk profiles. Research by the Reserve Bank of Australia in late 2020 found banks were cautious about lending to new customers and to sectors significantly affected by the pandemic, such as smaller retailers, tourism and commercial property. For local economies, the ability to access finance is critical. Credit unions and community banks are more likely to work with local businesses and evaluate loans based on an in-depth knowledge of the local economic context.

Small businesses have long reported they find it challenging to access finance... Research by the Reserve Bank of Australia in late 2020 found banks were cautious about lending to new customers and to sectors significantly affected by the pandemic, such as smaller retailers, tourism and commercial property.

Australia has a strong credit union sector and some community banking initiatives, such as Bank Australia which is a cooperative and Great Southern Bank, formerly a credit union. There are small examples of 'putting back' from the banking sector but much more could be done to harness our savings and super for sustainable local community economic development.

EMBEDDING FAIR EMPLOYMENT IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Anchor institutions are often the biggest employer in a place. As such, the approach they take to employment can have a defining effect on a local area, such as providing a living wage, good terms and conditions, and stable employment. Targeted employment practices can be used to create opportunities for marginalised groups and disadvantaged communities.

Social procurement frameworks are a particularly effective tool for employers to target their procurement while also making clear their intentions when it comes to ethical practice. Encouraging anchor institutions to adopt social procurement frameworks and working collaboratively to address shared challenges can be particularly effective. More so when, as a result of being part of the local community, they have a clear view of the specific challenges and opportunities within that community.

GROW 21 was a direct response to the recognition that economic benefits were not being shared equally. A joint initiative between Give Where You Live and G21 – Geelong Region Alliance, GROW G21 comprises businesses, government and community organisations working together to change the outlook for areas of high unemployment in the G21 region. GROW's four core strategies are to increase and target jobs – social procurement, place-based investment, demand-led employment brokerage and tracking and measuring job outcomes. GROW's Social Procurement Guidelines provide practical direction for improving local content and social outcomes through the procurement cycle.

Melton City Council included a 10 per cent target for suppliers to offer employment to local people experiencing unemployment when seeking procurement of open space services. This led City Wide, the open space service provider, to partner with the Brotherhood of St Laurence who connected with currently unemployed potential employees to provide the necessary pre-employment training and mentoring.

At the state level, the Victorian Government's Social Procurement Framework aims to ensure government spending is distributed more equally across the community. The framework explicitly seeks to increase supply chain opportunities for businesses owned by Victorian Aboriginals and social enterprises that support disadvantaged or disabled Victorians and increase employment opportunities for these marginalised groups. The framework identified the need to improve market access and increase the visibility of Victorian social enterprises and Aboriginal business sectors. The Victorian Government has also developed guides to support and educate business and social enterprises so they can effectively tender for Victorian government contracts.

Social Traders is a not for profit that seeks to promote social procurement and works with social enterprises to achieve certification and help them take advantage of social procurement schemes.

While there is still more to be done to increase employment in disadvantaged areas – and with COVID-19 having deepened some of these inequalities – initiatives such as GROW 21 and the Melton City Council procurement provide examples of how anchor institutions, including local government, can begin to create change.

PRIORITISING PROGRESSIVE PROCUREMENT

Anchor institutions, and large local businesses, can use their procurement processes and decision making to deepen local supply chains and encourage socially virtuous business development, spending and investment.

While there are many Australian examples which prioritise local purchasing, such as Gold Coast City Council's Buy local procurement policy, they need to go much further. There needs to be a program of working actively with local suppliers to build capacity, the creation of formal networks between anchors, and the setting of clear expectations from anchors that suppliers are creating social, economic and environmental value in accessing procurement opportunities.

Anchors should begin by forensically examining their spend to understand the share that could be met locally while still meeting cost and quality requirements. The next stage is to publicise those opportunities and work with local businesses to make them aware of upcoming procurement opportunities, develop their local offer, and build capacity to bid for the work. Progressive procurement seeks to use the resources and assets in the public sector to create a fairer economy. A coordinated approach among anchors could increase procurement impact by bundling opportunities for local suppliers.

While CWB is focussed on local procurement, values are as important as where the money goes. The City of Sydney's Sustainable Procurement Policy seeks to embed social and environmental purpose in the procurement decision making by emphasising 'the purchase

and use of products, services and suppliers with good environmental and social responsibility records'. This includes schedules that guide contractors and against which procurement has to be reported, including targets for sustainability, social inclusion (e.g. First Nation Peoples and disadvantaged groups) and local purchasing.

Purpose-driven procurement does place the burden on anchors to interrogate bids they receive from suppliers to ensure they meet the requirement, and for suppliers to provide evidence of their values. A move towards certification would allow businesses to easily show they can meet those purpose standards.

For example, Reconciliation Action Plans provide a framework for organisations to support the national reconciliation movement and provide a way for organisations to show the values. Supply Nation works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to build their capacity and at the same time applies a strict verification process that gives suppliers confidence that those businesses are Indigenous owned.

The State of Social Procurement in Australia and New Zealand survey (CIPS 2021) found organisational values and strategic goals were cited as the most important factor in developing social procurement strategies, followed by government policies and legislation. Eight six per cent of respondents felt social procurement would become even more important, with 78 per cent stating it will become more important for managing organisational reputation and providing an opportunity for ethical investment, which is on the rise.

SOCIAL PRODUCTIVE USE OF LAND AND PROPERTY

As significant land owners, anchor institutions should be looking to ensure where possible that this land is used to add social value. This could be using it for affordable housing, underpinning creative activities, providing opportunities for community use and building social and human capital.

There are some positive emerging initiatives around use of public land for affordable housing, and many councils provide access to facilities at no cost for community uses. However, it is a very

unsystematic approach. It often occurs when surplus assets are identified or when asset sales are required for budgetary reasons, or when an opportunity to partner with a community or social enterprise arises.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

As yet, no Australian Council has prepared a comprehensive CWB strategy that looks at all aspects, however the City of Sydney is moving in this direction. It is developing an overarching CWB framework and policy to guide all their future activities and spending. This framework should help drive the CWB purpose more clearly in service and infrastructure delivery and serve as a clear statement of the council's values and how they will conduct themselves.

Adopting a CWB approach is about decision making that is much broader than financial cost. To be effective, it requires building relationships across communities and between local institutions. It requires access to tools and strategies to build up local suppliers and implement social procurement policies. For local government, it begins with recognising that traditional models aren't working, setting the CWB vision and then working with partners to change the culture.

As the name implies, Community Wealth Building needs to start by looking at the circumstances of the specific community and asking, how can we use these principles of place-based economic justice in the way that suits and meets the needs of our community? It will be based on a response to local communities and their needs and the development of sustainable,

fair and inclusive local economies. While Australian local governments has been slow to adopt CWB to drive their local economic development activities, the benefits of doing so are significant and the post-Covid context provides the perfect opportunity for this shift .

Note : *CLES is working with cities and jurisdictions in the UK to implement Community Wealth Building. SGS Economics and Planning has an MOU with CLES to promote CWB in local economic development in Australia.*

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CONNECTING WITH ASIA:

HELPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO REBUILD AND REBOUND

Catherine Mudford and Shahira Papat, Asialink Business

International tourism has long been a powerhouse of the Australian economy, alongside energy and resources, and education. With a peak of 9.3 million international visitors in 2018-19, prior to the COVID pandemic, it was a A\$45 billion industry, and, with one in twenty people working in the sector, directly employed 5% of Australia's workforce.¹

The global pandemic and the closing of Australia's international borders caused unprecedented disruption bringing the sector to an (almost two year) standstill. But as Australia now begins to reopen its doors to international travel, it is timely to consider how to best prepare local operators and communities for success.

This is particularly pressing for regional Australia where the contribution of tourism to the local economy and job creation

is even greater, providing twice the proportion of jobs in comparison to the major cities.²

So, what might this next phase of 'post-COVID' travel to our regions look like and how can local operators upskill?

Prior to COVID-19, countries in Asia accounted for 7 out of 10 of Australia's top tourism markets.³ This growth was in part due to rising household disposable income in Asia and policy changes which contributed to an almost fourfold increase in airline capacity directly between Australia and China, amongst other source countries.⁴

In the 12 months from July 2018 to June 2019, over 1.4 million Chinese tourists visited Australia contributing about A\$12 billion to the Australian economy.⁵ Australia

was also increasingly seeing visitors from Southeast Asia (including Singapore) and India. In 2019, India was Australia's fastest growing market for visitor spend and Australia's seventh largest inbound market for visitor arrivals.

Tourism businesses with the products, services and service culture to cater for Asian visitors will be well positioned for future growth. The case for investing in this now is further strengthened by the opportunities presented by the growing Asian-Australian domestic travel market.

For example, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, in 2020, over 700,000 people living in Australia were born in India, which has more than doubled in the last 5 years, and over 650,000 born in China.⁶

PARTNERING FOR SUCCESS

Asialink Business is the National Centre for Asia Capability, and is at the forefront in supporting organisations to deepen their Asia capabilities - the skills, knowledge, insights, networks and connections needed to succeed when doing business with the Indo-Pacific region.

Asialink Business in partnership with Victoria's Warrnambool City Council saw the opportunity to prepare local businesses for the return of international travel to Victoria's world-famous tourism destinations, and with this the Connecting With Asia program was born.

The program was specifically designed to assist tourism operators in Victoria's iconic Great Ocean Road Region, extending from Torquay on the Surf Coast to the South Australian border, recover from the impact of COVID-19. It focussed on building the capability and skills to engage with the growing domestic Asian-Australian and Asian diaspora communities and to build an understanding of the needs of travellers from key markets, including the actions tourism operators could take to respond to these.

COLLABORATION ACROSS LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Given the size and diversity of the Great Ocean Road region, the program was able to draw on a unique collaboration between the five local government areas (LGAs): Colac Otway, Corangamite, Moyne, the Surf Coast and Warrnambool, supported by Regional Development Victoria and Warrnambool's Deakin University.

Economic Development professionals across these councils saw the program as an opportunity to support businesses to successfully pivot to the diverse domestic international market. They wanted to equip tourism operators in their LGA to adjust to the different types of travellers and visitors likely to be seen over the next few years while international borders were shut and also allow them the opportunity to prepare for the long term once international borders reopen. These councils understand that it is essential to ensure businesses along the Great Ocean Road are able to deliver exceptional standards of visitor servicing to the Asian market in order to gain and retain a share of this lucrative sector. Local council support was important to the program and assisting tourism operators to capitalise on the growth opportunities presented by Asia.

CLOSING THE GAPS

Even without the challenges of a pandemic, regional tourism operators faced their own headwinds in attracting the Asian tourist market. Asian travellers have limited visibility of regional tourism destinations and additionally many regions were not ready to meet the demands of international Asian tourists.

Along the Great Ocean Road, tourism operators were underperforming in providing relevant and quality products, services and experiences for Asian travellers. The opportunity to shop, focus on health and wellbeing, experience both new but also familiar cuisine, and find value for money, are all core considerations for this market. There were gaps in marketing and the use of digital tools, and businesses were not yet ready to provide offerings or payment options suited to the needs of visitors from different Asian markets.

BUILDING THE CAPABILITY AND CONFIDENCE TO WORK WITH ASIAN TRAVELLERS

The Connecting With Asia program was a five-month journey for selected businesses across the Great Ocean Road region and comprised of a series of digital and in person workshops. The program brought together expert speakers and mentors, and shared examples of businesses in the region and beyond who had successfully developed strategies to attract and serve Asian visitors. Although select businesses were chosen by their LGAs to be part of the Connecting With Asia program, there was an intention to build the knowledge and skills of the broader community.

To do this, the program included a series of public events to build interest in the Asian market and to share key elements of the program. The Connecting With Asia program also encouraged networking, insight sharing and mentoring to build a community with a collective and ongoing interest in improving their capability and skills to engage with Asian travellers after the formal program was over.

WHAT BUSINESSES NEEDED

At the start of the program, participating businesses shared that they hoped to better understand the Asian visitor segment and what was important to this market. They wanted to expand their offerings to suit this market and develop a visitor experience that would be meaningful to travellers from Asia. The businesses were also keen to know how they could improve their ability to communicate with visitors from different backgrounds and where they could adapt their current processes and business practices to be more responsive to expectations of Asian visitors. Over the course of five months the Connecting With Asia program, delivered by Asialink Business and a specialist team of cultural capability and tourism experts set out to help them do just that.

The program introduced the tourism potential of the Asian-Australian market as an important domestic audience and a bridge to the international Asian visitor market, and focussed on the key markets of China, India and Southeast Asia. In addition to workshop sessions which explored traveller profiles, preferences and

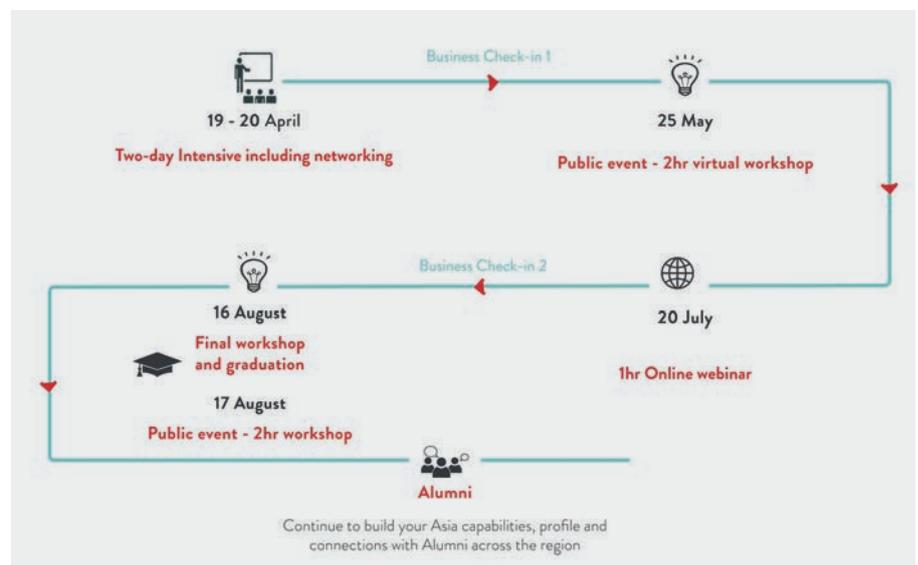


Figure 1. Connecting With Asia program journey

expectations for each market, the program focused on practical experiences that built understanding and inspired new thinking, including interviews with potential travellers, masterclass sessions with industry experts in Australia, China, India and Indonesia, a case study site visit to consider how best to tailor their own offerings to targeted Asian tourist markets, and the opportunity to meet and learn from alumni of an earlier initiative focused on working with Chinese visitors.

With the increasing importance of digital capability, the program explored the digital landscapes for China, India and Southeast Asia and the ways technology and digital tools are used to inspire and plan travel and in booking and payment. The aim of the program was to build skills participants could apply immediately.

For example, the program included practical sessions on using the sophisticated functionality of WeChat, an introduction to Chinese language, tips for translation and working with translation services. During the program participants generated their own insights into what would be key for their businesses to attract and service Asian travellers and conducted a personal audit in light of this.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM

Participants all agreed that the program strengthened their understanding of differences that exist between Australia and Asia and that their ability to engage with Asia had improved. The participants used the learnings from the program to identify practical changes they could implement and ways their LGA could support them.

The Economic Development team from across the local councils joined the final workshop of the program and provided helpful tips to support businesses in accessing resources and grants if financial assistance was required to implement some of the changes identified. A core sentiment amongst the Connecting With Asia graduates was that they did not only want to attract more Asian visitors to the Great Ocean Road region but they wanted to find ways to encourage Asian travellers to stay longer in the region. The program culminated in participating businesses and councils working together to create a collaborative regional itinerary for travellers to the Great Ocean Road. The itinerary had a slant towards the

multi-generational family with a range of suitable accommodation and experiences to choose from. It also provided families or groups the option of how long to stay, for example, a weekend or a longer period of time with an overall intention to keep visitors coming back for more.

CASE STUDY: SUFFOIR

Suffoir is a working farm which houses a micro-winery, brewery, cidery, distillery and a cellar door. It is situated amongst the stunning landscape of MacArthur, a town in the Western District of Victoria and in the Shire of Moyne local government area. Two years ago, Suffoir owners, Michelle and Pieter Badenhorst, were on the verge of selling their business, finding themselves at a crossroad of either completely scaling back or developing further to be able to justify expanding and taking on staff.

Although COVID added financial pressure they used the time to reflect and “go full steam ahead”, adapting their offerings for Asian travellers.

“Before the Connecting With Asia program we were oblivious to the Asian market, their needs and their traits. We always knew this was a market we wanted to tap into, but needed to learn more to do so. The program did an excellent job at creating customer profiles for businesses to relate to. It was practical, which is key when you are looking at implementing new strategies aimed at targeting and serving this market. We now understand the Asian market better and feel confident to make business decisions that will influence a visitor experience.”

Michelle and Pieter undertook a personalised analysis of Suffoir as a result of the Connecting With Asia program and identified they needed to “step up a notch” to better serve Asian customers and connect with the Asian community in Australia. They started implementing a range of strategies to suit their Asian visitors aligned with learnings from the program. In particular these related to Chinese millennial “flexible and independent travellers” who are active on



Designated photo point

Suffoir's adapted menu offering



social media and socially connected with peer networks (micro-influencers in their own right) and Indian market segments in Australia, including multi-generational families.

These strategies included:

- Designated points for customers to take photos and share on social media
- An authentic and unique experience for visitors to engage with animals
- An increased outside space to cater for larger families
- An adapted menu, including, platters for takeaway, vegetarian options, warm snacks and Chai

In the future, Suffoir will add more signage in different languages and look to use popular Chinese apps WeChat and Alipay.

Michelle and Pieter are beginning to see more engagement on Facebook and Instagram after inviting customers to take photos and asking them to share these on socials. "Visitors enjoy taking photos of the food, drinks and animals and will share these with their networks. We also encourage visitors to leave a review, which they often do". This helped Suffoir to gain

a larger stream of visitors from their local community which they hadn't seen before.

Their advice to other businesses whose economic activity is curtailed due to COVID, "Tourism operators can use the time to understand their customer demographics and better improve on their customer experience for the Asian market which is predicted to grow significantly."

Their advice to other businesses whose economic activity is curtailed due to COVID, "Tourism operators can use the time to understand their customer demographics and better improve on their customer experience for the Asian market which is predicted to grow significantly."

When international borders re-open, Suffoir is ready!

CONCLUSION

While COVID continues to challenge the industry, working collaboratively and focusing firmly on the future has allowed LGAs along the Great Ocean Road to use this time where economic activity is curtailed, to invest in local tourism operators and help prepare their local communities to prosper once borders reopen.

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PLANNING AHEAD:

INDUSTRIAL LAND SUPPLY IN THE MACKAY REGION

Philip Grobler, Principal Strategic Planner, Mackay Regional Council

What do you do when you experience historic economic growth followed by a period of economic adjustment and have to plan for sufficient industrial land supply into the future?

The Mackay Regional Council area experienced a significant economic growth period between 2002 and 2013 related to a coal mining boom in the Bowen Basin in Queensland. The 11-year growth period added 24% to the Mackay Regional Council population, 30% to its housing stock and 52% more jobs.

The growth period saw significant expansion of developed industrial land. Over this period, gross raw coal production from the wider region totalled 3 billion tonnes, of which 34% was derived from new mines. Most of the heavy industries to support this growth is located in the Paget industrial estate in Mackay, which doubled in size by adding 161 hectares. This meant an annual increase of 14.6 hectares per year over the 11-year period – the most significant increase in industrial land in the history of Mackay.

By 2014, the Mackay Region braced itself for the economic adjustment that followed the boom period and Council was forced to learn from the lessons of the rapid growth period and plan ahead. Council proceeded to develop a new planning scheme, reconsidered its infrastructure provision strategy, developed a new economic development strategy and implemented a facilitating development policy to support the local economy.

By 2017, the economy turned a corner towards stabilisation and confidence in the region was reflected in increased jobs and a return to positive population growth. Council continued to invest in infrastructure to support the economy and improve liveability in the Mackay Region, but more importantly took further action by planning for sufficient industrial land supply to accommodate future growth.

In 2019, Council started the investigation into the drivers of the demand for industrial land and to plan ahead for future industrial land supply to 2040. Council appointed Ethos Urban to undertake the significant

amount of market and industrial land analysis and scenario planning required to deliver an independent report on their findings.

The key pieces of work and related analysis included:

- Understanding the Mackay economy and sectors driving industrial land demand,
- The development status and use of each parcel of industrial land,
- Historical annual industrial land take-up patterns,
- Targeted stakeholder consultation,
- Developing scenarios for future industry land demand,
- Testing adequacy of industrial land supply against scenarios, and
- Recommending clear action to ensure sufficient industrial land supply to 2040.

The market analysis highlighted the unique local economy compared to other regions up and down the Queensland coastline. Since 2000, the Mackay economy expanded significantly to service the coal mining activities in the Bowen Basin, which became the key driver of demand for industrial land. Mackay's economy now has a strong industrial base with world class companies in the Mining Equipment, Technology and Services (METS) sector.

The analysis exposed the dependence and risk associated with international export-orientated coal markets. Around 80% of coal exported from the Bowen Basin between 2000 and 2020 was metallurgical or coking coal that is used in blast furnaces to manufacture steel in mostly Asian countries. Changes in demand for coking coal and the related coal export price directly impacted on local industrial activity and the demand for industrial land. Even with uncertainty around future demand for coking coal, the METS sector will continue to be a key driver of demand for specifically high impact industrial land in Mackay.

Council undertook a detailed survey of the use of each parcel of industrial zoned land, including the type of existing use, an unused building or vacant site. The resultant Geographical Information System (GIS) map database provided an insight into the use of each property using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC).

This showed the dominant type of business on industrial land was manufacturing at 56.1% followed by transport, postal and warehousing at 9.9%. The survey also showed that 30% of industrial uses were directly related to coal mining activity and that 34 ha of industrial land were used for outdoor storage of machinery and equipment related to mining activity.

The analysis of the historical take up of industrial land showed a direct correlation with periods of rapid economic growth. This included analysis of development applications over time and the use of aerial photography to verify development and construction on each parcel of industrial land.

Although Mackay has several industrial areas, the Paget industrial area contains the heavy industries at the heart of the economy. Over a 20-year period, the developed industrial land in the Paget industrial estate increased from 110.2 ha (2000) to 333 ha (2020). However, the most rapid increase of 160 ha was between 2005 and 2014, which corresponds to the growth in coal mining in the nearby Bowen Basin. Figure 1 shows the annual industrial land take-up in the Paget industrial estate that corresponds with the growth period between 2003 and 2014.

A key learning was understanding the past timeframe and infrastructure cost to develop the Paget industrial estate to its current 333 hectares of developed

industrial land. The expansion of Paget in the rapid growth period required significant trunk infrastructure investments in roads, water, sewerage and stormwater to an estimated value of \$200 million. In the absence of detailed planning, this is an indicator to potential costs should Council proceed to plan and develop a similar sized industrial area. Importantly, the analysis also highlighted the 5 to 7-year lead time required to gain planning approvals and establish fully serviced industrial lots.

Ethos Urban assisted in conducting targeted interviews with state government departments, development bodies, regional resource networks, port authorities and industrialists to gain an on-the-ground perspective of the drivers of historical industrial land development. The interviews confirmed the strong linkage between the coal mining construction boom and demand for high impact industrial land. It also provided an insight into the cost of industrial land over time and reasons behind expansion of industrial activities.

To plan ahead, three scenarios for future industrial land demand were developed based on assumptions of growth per industry sectors and population growth to the year 2040 – being a low, steady state and high growth scenario. It recognised the different drivers for low versus high impact industrial land. Low Impact industry land being driven by population growth and household demand as opposed to

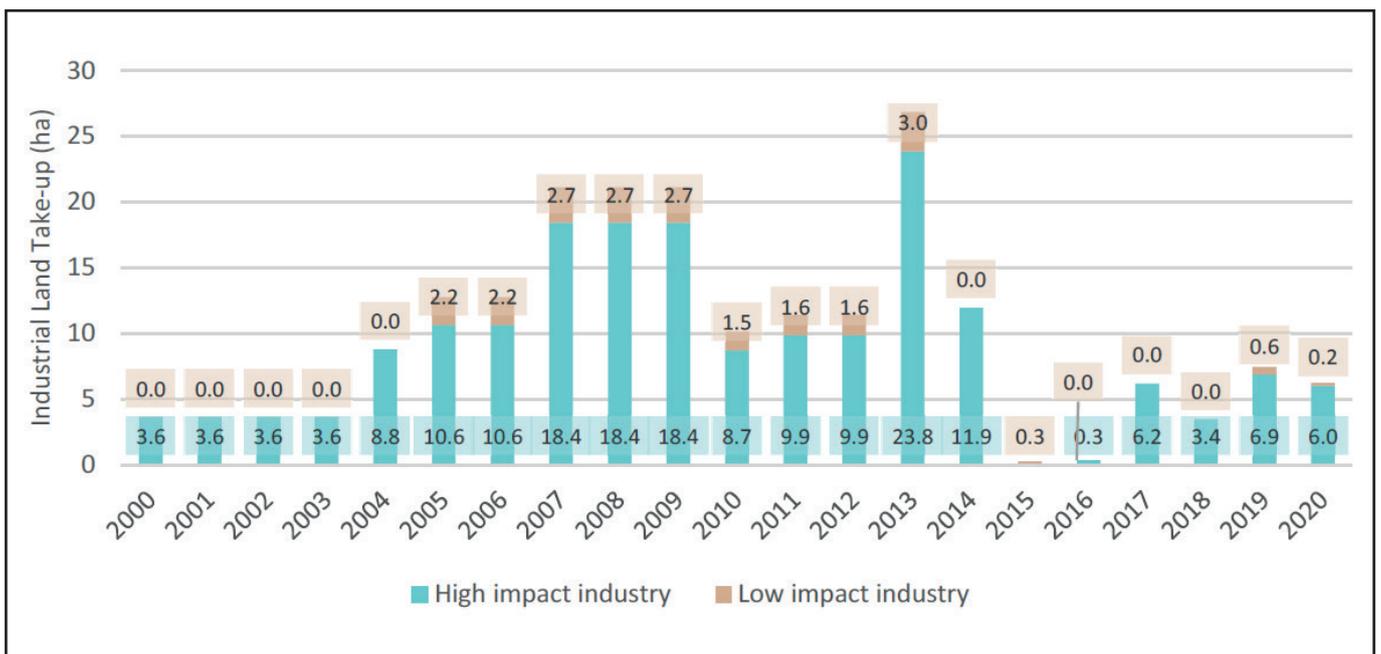


Figure: Annual Industrial Land Take-up, Paget Industrial Area, 2000 to 2020 (Mackay)



Paget Industrial Estate, Mackay (Queensland)

high impact industry demand driven by increased activity in specific industry sectors that require space for heavy industrial activity.

In reality, the low growth scenario was deemed unrealistic, as it is unlikely that exceptionally low growth or a period of contraction would persist for a 20-year period. The steady state scenario was deemed most likely, although subject to economic fluctuations and economic cycles. The high growth scenario was deemed unlikely as it was predicated on a similar historic mining construction boom, as experienced in the Bowen Basin between 2003 and 2013.

The 3 scenarios were then used to stress test the adequacy of available industrial land supply. This analysis considered current vacant serviced land and future zoned industrial land that can be brought to market under the Mackay Region Planning Scheme 2017. The result challenged the thinking around the servicing and sequencing of industrial precincts, especially under a high growth scenario.

In addition to the above, Council investigated the development potential of the six future Industry Investigation areas as identified in the planning scheme. This

included determining the industrial land yield, constraints and trunk infrastructure cost implications of developing these areas. This provided Council with additional information to consider the sequencing of these areas to satisfy future industrial land demand.

The net result of all this work was: a sufficient supply of low impact industrial land to 2040, and with a sequential approach to development, a sufficient supply of high impact industrial land to 2040.

The work to ensure sufficient industrial land supply is on-going. In view of international trade exposure risk and uncertainties in predicting future demand for industrial land, Council has to keep its finger on the pulse. This means annual monitoring of industrial development activity, calculating the annual hectares of take-up of industrial land, updating the database of industrial land supply and drawing on publicly available market intelligence, trends in manufacturing and even population growth patterns. This annual action is important to determine which of the low growth, steady state or high growth scenarios is emerging.

Council has seen the value of the analysis undertaken and learned several lessons

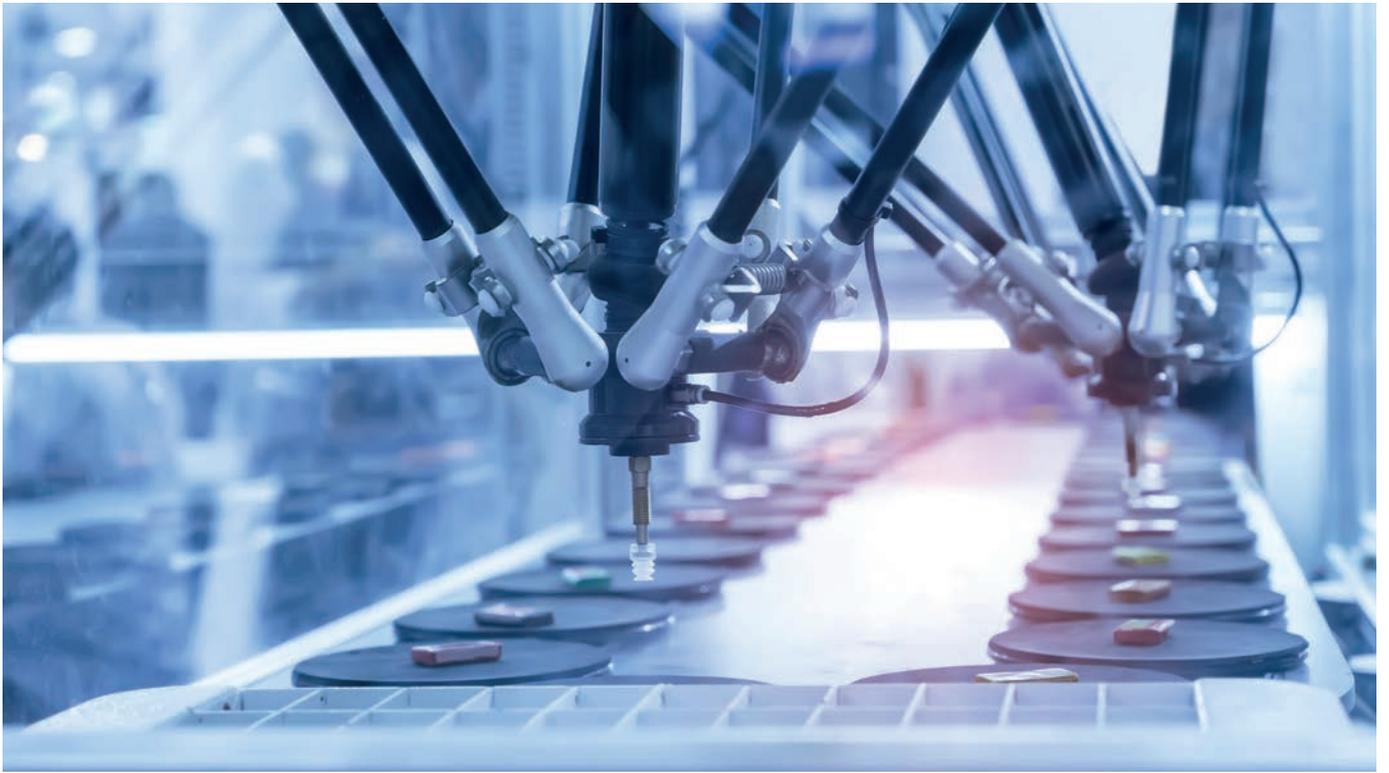
along the way. This includes: Know the drivers in your local economy and linkages to industrial land demand; Know the actual use of industrial land in your area; Know the different drivers of demand for low versus high impact industrial land; Talk to industrialists to improve your local knowledge; Build a detailed GIS supported database of industrial land; Monitor industrial land activity on an annual basis; and continue to plan ahead!

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Philip Grobler has worked in state and local government for 30 years. He is a qualified town planner and has worked across many fields of interest. He joined Mackay Regional Council in 2010 and assisted in developing an urban growth allocation model, industrial and residential land provision studies, development statistics and regional planning to support economic development. Philip can be contacted on 07 4961 9096 or philip.grobler@mackay.qld.gov.au



MEDTECCH – BUILDING A REGIONAL INDUSTRY CLUSTER

A CASE STUDY OF COMPETITIVE STRENGTH

Kate O'Mara and Trevor John

Building capacity, creating high-skill jobs and attracting investment are key tenets of economic growth. But, in a complex, diverse economy how do we know the industries to back; the ones that will stand us in good stead for the future: deliver new jobs and future growth?

Regional Development Australia (RDA) Hunter contemplated these questions in 2014 in the face of a new round of economic transition in the Hunter region of NSW.

Traditional industries like mining, manufacturing and energy production are the bedrock of the region's economic success. Shifting to new renewable energy sources marked the start of another round of change in a region well accustomed to 'pivoting'.

RDA Hunter, as the Federal Government's vehicle to support economic development in the Hunter region, was challenged to plan for and support economic and industrial diversification in these changing times. We looked to other countries and, particularly, regions that had successfully navigated to new economies, noting that building on their strengths and specialisations were significant success factors.

We identified the OECD's (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) Smart Specialisation framework as applied to European Union regions was potentially an effective technique to identify the Hunter's key strengths. During 2014 and 2015, the smart specialisation platform for strategic economic planning provided us with a blueprint for ascertaining the

region's sectors of economic strength. It helped us narrow down the sectors that had potential to deliver innovation-driven jobs growth and that would benefit from triple helix interactions to foster economic development.

Our 2016 report identified seven sectors of strength: Food and agri-business; Mining Equipment, Technology and Services; Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals; Oil, Gas and Energy Resources; Advanced Manufacturing; Defence; and Creative Industries. Since then, we have been working to make connections and identify growth opportunities within and, sometimes, between these areas.

Looking back, we recognise the essential elements of building a regional industry

cluster are: know your region's strengths, be aware of changes, see threats as opportunities and take an active role in helping like-minded parts of the ecosystem combine resources to achieve shared goals.

In 2020, we had explored five of the seven sectors in depth and turned our attention to Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals (MTP). Given the Hunter's competitive strength in this area which is delivered through the right combination of medical excellence at both clinical and research levels, its world leading research and innovation capability and precincts, and its advanced manufacturing prowess, we examined the potential to establish an industry network to leverage this advantage by building connectivity within the existing ecosystem.

So, together with the local AiGroup, we engaged with a small, diverse group of the region's known MTP industry contributors to help us better understand (a) the need for an initiative of this nature and (b) their appetite for being involved.

Large and high-calibre companies like Whiteley Corporation and Jurox – mainstays of the Hunter's MTP sector - pledged their time and support while mature and well-respected companies like Ampcontrol, that had taken the leap into new and different product manufacture during the first wave of COVID-19, recognised the value of information exchange and collaboration to advance and diversify the region's economy and attract new business opportunities.

Given the Hunter's size and tightknit community, news travels, and we were approached by other organisations such as NSW Health Pathology, the world's largest provider of patient point of care testing, the University of Newcastle and Hunter Medical Research Institute, keen to be involved.

As well as overwhelming support for the concept and strong interest in participating, this initial group provided insights into the Hunter's MTP corporate neighbourhood, exemplars of national and international MTP clusters that we could look to for advice, and experts with whom we should connect. They also agreed that an industry-led, industry first approach would achieve the commercial outcomes they sought.

RDA Hunter had formed a warm association with Professor Roy Green, long-term, world renowned advocate of industry clusters as a way of modernising and diversifying economies, during development of our Smart Specialisation Strategy in 2015. Prior to the second meeting of our newly formed group, we sought Prof Green's expert opinion to test our thinking and guide our planning.

Professor Green is Chair of the Port of Newcastle, former Chair of the Federal Government's Innovative Regions Centre, CSIRO Manufacturing Sector Advisory Council and NSW Manufacturing Council, and has served on the Prime Minister's Manufacturing Taskforce. He is widely published on the topic of industry clusters as drivers of economic growth, and is quoted as saying that the Hunter has huge potential for further growth as it diversifies its skills base in collaboration with the University of Newcastle and the Hunter Medical Research Institute.

Buoyed by Professor Green's support and thankful for his ongoing guidance, RDA Hunter started the journey to understand, map and develop the region's MTP industry base through, what we first dubbed, The Hunter Central Coast MTP Industry Network. We canvassed widely, and built connections with governments at all levels, our Central Coast counterparts and the national industry growth centres.

Our next steps centred on communication, listening, creating opportunities to get together, and learning from our subject matter experts.

Once we had sufficient evidence of genuine interest, we knew we had to better understand the Hunter's advantage. What made us a viable contributor in MTP?

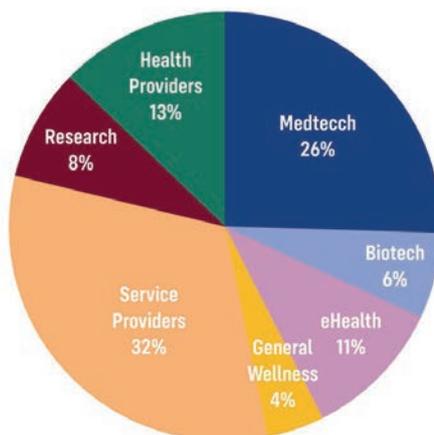


Figure 1: Ecosystem composition

As those in regional areas can attest, data and statistics that prove regional capability can be difficult to source - and the Hunter's MTP industry base, we discovered, was no different. The only solution, and the essential means by which other notable global regions like Massachusetts, Stoke-on-Trent and Germany's Mittelstand investigated their competitive strengths, Professor Green urged, was via a sector mapping exercise. Again, we eagerly accepted expert advice and developed a capability audit: quite simply, a set of electronically accessible questions that we disseminated to our known MTP contacts, who in turn sent it to their networks and so on.

The results of this exercise were both enlightening and uplifting. Mark Flynn assisted us to find real insights into the strengths of the region's MTP sector: employees, skills, capabilities, collaborations and markets. The audit introduced us to a larger and more diverse set of businesses that were working under the 'loose' MTP banner. More excitingly still, we discovered that the majority of these businesses were interested in joining the groundswell of interest that our network was quickly gathering.

At about this time, we also became aware that our name, The Hunter Central Coast MTP Industry Network, was a little cumbersome! It was time for something shorter and cleverer. We considered a few options, but again with Professor Green's wise counsel, settled on MedTeCCH – incorporating the CCH for Central Coast Hunter. It stuck, and some simple awareness building collateral followed – www.medtecch.org.au and social profiles.

The final part of the first phase in constructing a new regional industry cluster is arguably the most important. With the leadership of Chair of RDA Hunter, Mr John Turner, the Board backed the appointment of a dedicated Project Lead.

Phase Two became telling our regional story. We had some of the data we needed to start promoting that the region has a viable MTP sector, eager to engage and grow, but we needed to gather the backstory. What is it about the Hunter's workforce, industrial history and business environment that completes the picture for an investor looking at a location to conduct its MTP business?

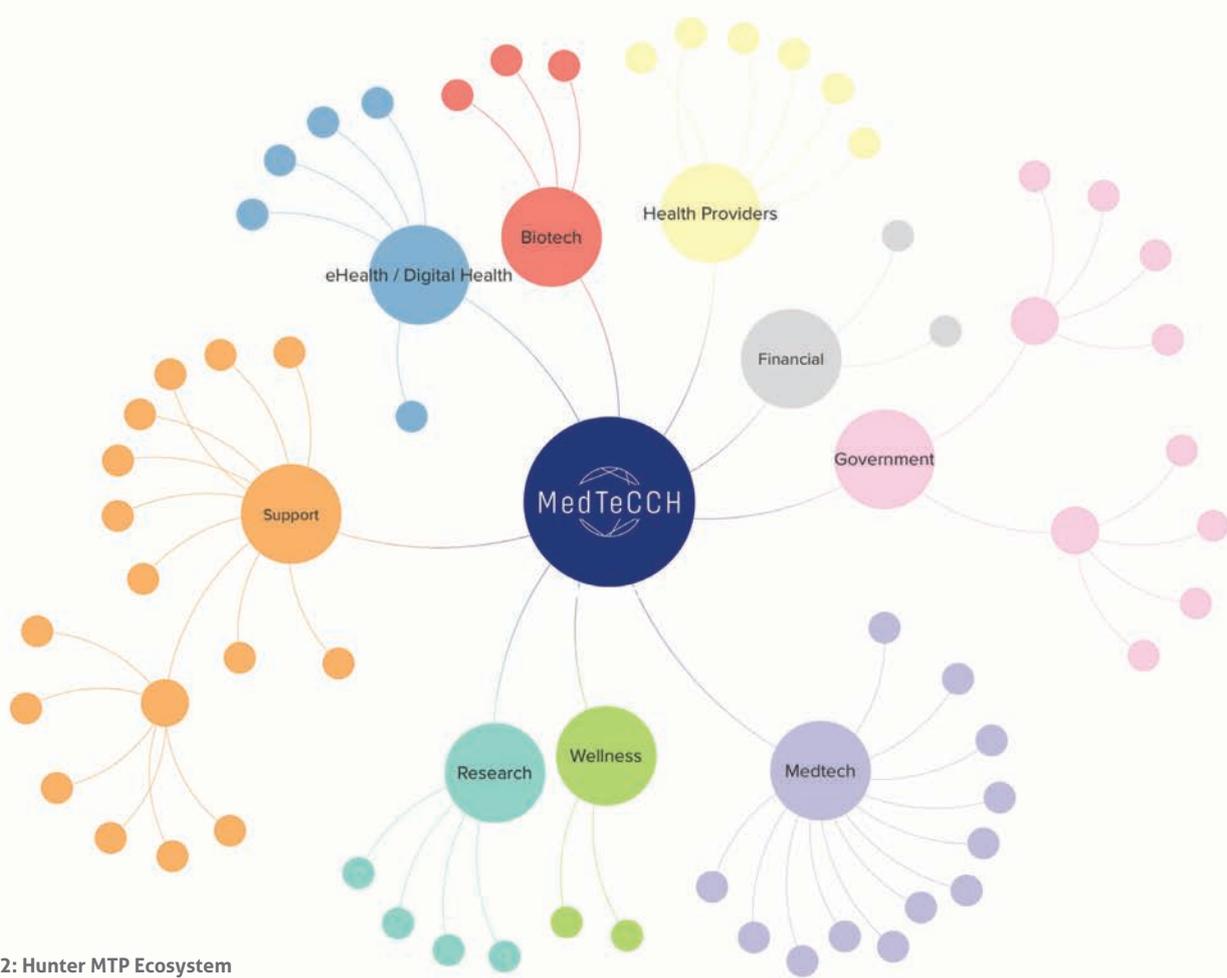


Figure 2: Hunter MTP Ecosystem

CAN THE HUNTER REALLY CLAIM THAT MTP IS A SPECIALISATION?

Having lived the Hunter's history as a manufacturing hub where shipbuilding was a mainstay of the region's thriving manufacturing base; steelmaking underpinned its economic strength, and its billion-dollar mining and defence sectors still call on the region's high-performing SME base to produce vital equipment and technology, we recognised the region's quality engineering and manufacturing pedigree.

But what is the connection with MTP – how do engineering and manufacturing relate? Our history in traditional industries and regulated fields means the region also has an increased concentration of people with relevant skills at both technical and trade levels. These skills, coupled with a track record of adaptability due to economic shocks and the steady transition to Industry 4.0 processes, has increased the ease with which the region's industry is able to pivot and apply transferrable skills and knowledge into new, high-tech industry sectors like medical technology. The region's engineering know-how and regulatory/governance/quality management systems skills delivers an experienced approach that results in smart, technically sophisticated solutions. For instance, RDA Hunter supports Whiteley

Corporation's aspirations to commercialise research and manufacture novel medical products at a purpose-built human therapeutics plant.

Skills, of course, belong to people and our workforce is the fundamental ingredient for industry success: skilled, motivated people deliver quality production, service and meaningful collaboration. The Hunter and Central Coast region (HCC) boasts world class clinical experts who are delivering medical breakthroughs; doctors and researchers engaged in new to the world projects, patient-facing nursing and support staff; Medical Engineering graduates; international industry cluster development experts; industry and manufacturing leaders; and many others. These experts engage at all levels to identify and solve patient-centric problems, unmet clinical needs and industry sector challenges.

Additionally, Hunter firms and organisations are recognised as great competitive collaborators - demonstrated by long-established and successful network organisations like the HunterNet Co-op, which was founded when competitor companies joined forces to facilitate knowledge exchange, solve industry problems and plug skills gaps - but can we prove it? What does the data say?

Well, our capability audit showed that 88% of HCC's MTP companies actively collaborate with other organisations to add value to their products and services. Importantly, of those, 85% found their collaboration partner/s within the region. Driven, in part, by the size of the region which is large enough to support the innovation environment but not too large that organisations are disconnected or experts difficult to engage, collaboration is a common approach to complex problem solving.

We also discovered that our MTP ecosystem comprises:

- **MTP companies** that produce and/or manufacturer biotech and medical technology;
- **Enabling organisations** that facilitate translation from invention to clinical innovation such as research organisations, industrial prototyping labs and health systems; and
- **Supporting organisations** offering professional support and increasing sector capability, such as governments, incubators, clinical research organisations and consultants.

In the Hunter, these organisations are in close proximity, often co-located, which encourages greater collaboration and leads to rapid acceleration of innovation and commercial outcomes.

Having clarified our bona fides, the next step was to think about opportunities for growth in the sector: act where the gaps are, and do what is going to underpin future growth. Again, in consultation with our MedTeCCH partners, we identified eight opportunities that would lead to new partnerships, attract investment in the sector and generally build capacity. They are: Key MTP Precinct Tenant; Digital Health – Coalition of Health and Technology Partners; Clinical Trials; Workforce Development – QMS + Cyber; Additive Manufacturing; Small batch pharmacology production for clinical trials; Rapid prototyping, production and testing; Research funding (e.g) ARC, Federal and State Governments.

So, now that we had a fairly complete picture of the region's MTP industry base – we'd tested and analysed it – it was time to compile some material to promote it. We developed *MTP: A Growth Sector for the Hunter Central Coast* which converted our facts and stats into a holistic and consumable set of information to make the case for the Hunter Central Coast as a viable location for MTP research, production, investment and employment.

MTP: A Growth Sector for the Hunter Central Coast (our capability statement) has given us a reason to start conversations with governments and decision makers and the regional data has provided a level of legitimacy. Although there are gaps and there's always more to do, it's a start and a statement of purpose: it shows that the Hunter's MTP sector is agreed on what we want our future to look like and how we're going to get there.

And, it has already caught the attention of the NSW government. Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, The Hon Gabrielle Upton MP commended RDA Hunter and local MTP companies for taking the initiative, saying it was a great example of industry, research and government collaborating to create more jobs, services and products. She said it is especially gratifying to see the Central Coast Hunter precinct draw on its industry

strengths to positively contribute as a hub for research commercialisation and as an investment location.

Now, more than eighteen months into RDA Hunter's journey to help strengthen the region's MTP sector, its scoping project has grown into a thriving MTP cluster.

Truly industry-led and functioning on a ground-up approach to identifying and addressing industry need, MedTeCCH is agile and responsive. It represents and coordinates the Hunter Central Coast's diverse and sophisticated MTP cluster and acts as the catalyst to achieving real, commercial outcomes.

MedTeCCH comprises more than 60 companies and organisations across industry, research, government and education, and over 120 people. It has generated strong and productive partnerships and is:

1. The local voice and champion for the Hunter Central Coast MTP sector;
2. Building direct links to end-users and investors, including local and global health systems, with support for infrastructure, skills translation and R&D acceleration; and,
3. Leading the growth and development of a sustainable, commercially successful MTP ecosystem to create and capitalise on research and innovation opportunities.

MedTeCCH is managed by RDA Hunter and supported by MTPConnect, AiGroup, Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre, NSW Health Pathology, Ampcontrol, Global Edge MedTech Consulting, Jurox, Whiteley Corporation, University of Newcastle, Hunter Medical Research Institute (HMRI), John Hunter Health Innovation Precinct, The Ideas Hub, Central Coast Local Health District, RDA Central Coast, Genesis Research Services, Paratus Clinical, Logikal Health, NSW Smart Sensing Network, Bosch Manufacturing Australia and Emeritus Prof Roy Green + many more partners and affiliate companies and organisations.

Actions are guided by a 10 person Executive representing the University of Newcastle, the John Hunter Health Innovation Precinct, Whiteley Corporation, Ampcontrol, NSW Health Pathology, Global

Edge MedTech Consulting, and Australia's MTP Industry Growth Centre – MTP Connect. It is managed by a dedicated officer with a background in regional economic development.

It continues to develop close working associations with Investment NSW, the Australian Industry Growth Centres, Australian and NSW Ministers and relevant government departments to raise the profile of MedTeCCH and the Hunter as a base for MTP.

It is providing valuable support to industry, Health, government, education and its wider partner base during the design and implementation of projects that will significantly and positively impact the Hunter Central Coast, NSW and Australia. And it is facilitating industry partnerships that have the potential to lead to regional manufacturing opportunities.

MedTeCCH is an important initiative in the transitioning economy of the Hunter region. It is a case study of ground-up cluster development and an exemplar of specialisation in action: shared knowledge, relationships, motivation and place combining to create competitive strength.

More information: Trevor John
trevor.john@rdahunter.org.au

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

KATE O'MARA



Kate has a particular interest in identifying, building on and raising awareness of the Hunter's competitive advantages. She has worked as a project director and communications specialist in regional development for more than 20 years. Kate has enjoyed a long association with RDA Hunter, managing projects including Hunter Innovation Festivals, Innovation Scorecards and Smart Specialisation. She continues to work on the organisation's special projects. Kate is leading the MedTeCCH initiative and has been instrumental in its development.

TREVOR JOHN



Trevor John, B.A.(Adel), Dip. App. Psych., B.A. (AFTRS) RDA Hunter's CEO and Director of Regional Development. With an industry-first mindset, he brings together local partners and economic development professionals to support the evolution of the regional economy to assist the Hunter to be globally competitive. Trevor has been with RDA Hunter for 10 years.

NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

2021 FINALISTS AND WINNERS SHOWCASE

EDA was delighted to announce the winners in the 2021 National Economic Development Awards for Excellence at the National Economic Development Conference (NEDC21), hosted virtually by Mackay Regional Council on October 13-15.

EDA received a record 114 submissions this year. Judges in all categories described how impressive and humbling it was to gain insight into the best practice, innovation and creativity being employed by the economic development sector across the country.

The last 12 months have continued to present significant challenges for Australian economic development professionals. EDA members have mobilised to insulate local businesses from the immediate impacts of COVID-19, retain commercial activity and local jobs, while planning for an unpredictable future.

EDA is thrilled to be recognising the remarkable organisations and individuals demonstrating leadership and excellence throughout this challenging period.

Congratulations to all the finalists on their achievement in a large and highly competitive field.

CATEGORY 1. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC THINKING

This award recognises strategies where economic development outcomes are the leading factors and basis influencing the approach adopted. This award is seeking outcomes such as employment / workforce / investment / industrial and commercial development.

Finalist - City of Newcastle

The City of Newcastle's new Economic Development Strategy provides vision and leadership for the coming decade.



Responding to the local economic impacts of COVID-19, the City's strategy illustrates a transformative approach to economic development and has been informed by the "New Local" theoretical framework, which advocates for a people-centred and place-led approach.

The framework recognises that the success of the local economy is built on the talent, skills and ingenuity that exists in the City of Newcastle community.



<https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/business/business-in-newcastle/economic-vision>

Finalist - Shire of Murray

Dwellingup is a small regional town in Western Australia undergoing transformational change that is driving economic recovery within the town, Shire of Murray and Peel Region.



Partnering with the Shire of Murray, the community set about envisioning a new prosperous future, to become WA's Premier Trails Town. This future was highly ambitious, would require considerable expertise, significant resources and unprecedented collaboration and partnerships. The resultant economic outcomes being realised in Dwellingup demonstrate what can be achieved with a shared vision and real collaboration across all levels of government, the private sector and community.



<https://dwellingup.destinationmurray.com.au/visitor-services/contact-us/>

WINNER - Moreton Bay Regional Council

Development and delivery of the Regional Economic Development Strategy was a first 100-day election commitment by Mayor Peter Flannery in April 2020. The strategy

identifies opportunities to support the development of existing businesses and attract new investment. The region's three aspiration goals - Bigger, Bolder and Brighter - are regional goals, and require a unified and collaborative approach by #TeamMoretonBay to achieve the outcomes. This strategy also features a unique and impressive measurement framework.



<https://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/Services/Business-Investment/REDS>

CATEGORY 2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Marketing and promotion is a vital skill for many economic development practitioners. This award focusses from the planning stage through to implementation stage. It is not influenced by the size or budget of a campaign but the effectiveness of the methods and approach adopted.

Finalist - The City of Newcastle "The New Move Program"

City of Newcastle was facing population challenges and the loss of skilled young professionals. New Move is a novel approach to addressing those challenges and capitalising on disrupted work patterns due to COVID-19 to generate a knowledge and economic boost by promoting the city's innovation ecosystem and lifestyle

points of difference, to a high value market. New Move incentivises highly skilled people to relocate to the city and share knowledge with the community.



Successful applicants who relocate receive a \$10,000 grant, access to co-working spaces and valuable networks. They then become city ambassadors, helping to develop local skills and playing an important role in supporting growth and diversity of the city's economy.

New Move is showcasing the city of Newcastle as an economic hub driven by innovation and skills, supported by a vibrant and eclectic culture with modern infrastructure.



<https://movetonecastle.com.au/>

Finalist - Wellington Shire Council "The Middle of Everywhere"

2020 presented a year of challenge and adversity across Australia, particularly for the Wellington region in Victoria. Devastating bushfires in 2019 followed years of drought, coupled with lengthy COVID restrictions have provided sustained and significant hardship for this community.

To drive recovery, the campaign: The Middle of Everywhere was launched. The branding initiative showcases Wellington Shire as the ultimate place to explore, live, work and invest by highlighting the diversity of experiences, encouraging locals to be proud of where they live.



The campaign's name and messaging ultimately focused on the region's proximity to major attractors including metropolitan Melbourne, the high country, the coastline, wetlands and lakes plus southern NSW; premising the region as, quite literally; The Middle of Everywhere.



<https://themiddleofeverywhere.com.au/en>

WINNER - Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

“Treasure Trail Campaign for Economic Recovery”

The Treasure Trail Campaign for Economic Recovery is the holistic tourism and economic development recovery and resilience initiative, developed and launched in the aftermath of the 2019/20

bushfire season which decimated trade in that region. The campaign was developed in partnership with industry partners with significant pro-bono contributions.

This initiative moved the region from a highway stop, to a recognised day trip and short break destination. It also built capacity of the local industry and has proudly shown locals the importance of shopping within the region and supporting the local economy.



This project has undoubtedly mitigated the impact of the bushfire and COVID-19 pandemic. Data demonstrates that the recovery was swift and that individual components within the Treasure Trail not only brought expenditure back to pre-COVID levels, but significantly improved them.



<https://visitqueanbeyanpalerang.com.au/>

CATEGORY 3 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

This award recognises excellence in economic development through meaningful collaboration. Entrants were required to demonstrate that there has

been an enhanced economic revitalisation of a region or industry by taking a partnership approach.

Finalist - C-Res

Creating a Local Buying cycle in regional Australia

The Local Buying Program is delivered through a strategic partnership between BHP/ BMA and C-Res, a cost-neutral entity to support the regional economic development of the communities in which BHP/ BMA operates. The program provides opportunities for small local businesses, to competitively supply goods and services to BHP, BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) and BHP Mitsui Coal (BMC).



A percentage of every transaction through the program is then contributed to the Local Buying Foundation which provides funding to organisations to deliver programs and projects that aim to build better businesses and communities.

The program operates in various regions including the Hunter Valley, Upper Spencer, the Pilbara and the Bowen Basin. Over \$635 million dollars has allocated to small, local businesses in these regions as well as over \$9 million deposited into the Local Buying Foundation.



<https://c-res.com.au/>

Finalist - The City of Greater Geelong
Supporting creative industries through collaboration – Geelong Design Week

Geelong Design Week is a 10-day community event celebrating Geelong’s global recognition as Australia’s only UNESCO City of Design. The event highlights Geelong’s creative industries and the role design plays in supporting economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability.

Starting as a partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria as part of Melbourne Design Week, the event has evolved into a stand-alone program which (after COVID disruptions in 2020) officially launched in 2021 with the theme, ‘Unpredictable’.



Over 6000 people were inspired, challenged and delighted by 69 events, in collaboration with more than 50 local designers, artists, small businesses, organisations and community groups. The event connected people from diverse backgrounds and across several industries, boosting business capacity and providing an inclusive and accessible platform to highlight our region’s design excellence.

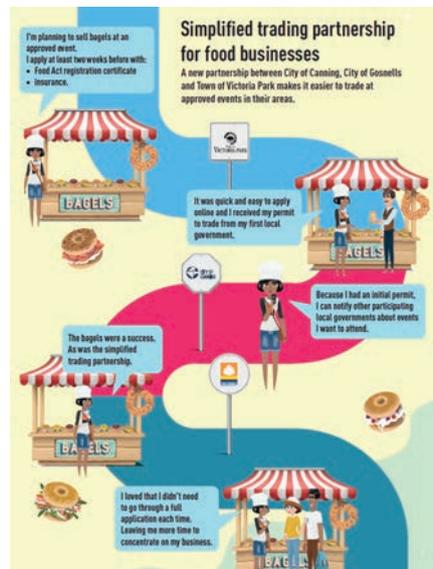


<https://www.geelongcityofdesign.com.au/geelong-design-week/>

WINNER - The Town of Victoria Park, City of Canning and City of Gosnells.

The Simplified Trading Partnership Permit- a red tape reduction collaboration

Mobile food vendors add vibrancy and diversity of offerings at events across each local government area (LGA). However, the transient nature of their operations mean they must repetitively complete a set of forms and provide documents to be permitted to trade at events in each LGA they visit, which is a red tape burden.



Economic development teams from the City of Canning, Town of Victoria Park and City of Gosnells sensed an opportunity to streamline this process- providing benefit to businesses and local governments. Collaborating with their respective Environmental Health teams, the complex processes were simplified, different local

planning laws assessed, data shared and fees and revenues standardised.

Since its launch, 247 mobile food vendors have applied for the Simplified Trading Partnership Permit with the data proving success and satisfaction amongst vendors and customers.



<https://www.canning.wa.gov.au/residents/living-here/health-services/simplified-trading-partnership>

CATEGORY 4 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES - REGIONS UNDER 15,000 RESIDENTS

This award recognises programs or projects that have stimulated economic development activity in smaller regions. Entrants were invited to show how their contributed to economic development in the region.

Finalist - Dubbo Regional Council #BuyLocalorByeLocal Wellington

Dubbo Regional Council’s #BuyLocalorByeLocal Wellington initiative was specially designed to support and reinforce the ‘Buy Local’ in Wellington message.





Located in regional NSW with a community of just over 900 residents, Wellington was heavily impacted by drought and bushfires before facing the unprecedented widespread economic and social impacts presented by COVID-19 during 2020.

The initiative rewarded residents for shopping locally and stimulated the Wellington economy by creating employment and attracting spending. A highly collaborative project, the six-week campaign featured local businesses, targeted local residents and the Central West and Western consumer markets and included the chance to win \$500 Shopping cards which ensured prize money remained in the community and further stimulated the local economy when redeemed at participating local stores.



<http://mydubboregion.com.au/>

**Finalist - Greater Whitsunday Alliance
The Isaac Business Support Program**

The Isaac region, covers an area of 58,000 square kilometres and features 17 distinct communities, all with their own small business precincts. Established in 2018, the Isaac Business Support Program (IBSP) connects small businesses across the entire area to a range of resources to address key local challenges, build capability, capacity, and resilience.

The Support Program has a dedicated resource to work with businesses to assist them be sustainable and successful long term.



As well as capacity building, the program connects small businesses and promotes collaboration across the region. The program also contributes to fostering sustainability and diversity of Isaac region businesses. Now in its third year of delivery, the project has demonstrated its value to SMEs in the region, growing its reach, with hundreds of participants accessing its programs and events.

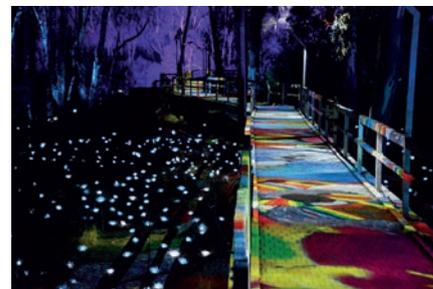


<https://www.greaterwhitsundayalliance.com.au/isaac-business-support-program>

**WINNER - Murray River Council
Moama Lights, Lighting up the Murray in Echuca Moama**

Moama Lights is one of three projects within the drought and COVID-19 Stricken Communities within Murray River Council Program.

The 15-day celebration of art and light which launched in May 2021 on the Murray in Echuca Moama was funded through the NSW State Government's Streets as Shared Spaces Program.



The inaugural festival offered an immersive sound and light trail, commencing at the underside of the Echuca Moama bridge before highlighting the natural beauty of Horseshoe Lagoon then finishing on the banks of the Murray River.

The show, curated by entertainment design firm Mandylights, showcased the local stories of Echuca Moama through projects, installations, theatrical fog plus strobe and cutting edge moving light technology.



<https://www.echucamoama.com/moama-lights-2021>

**CATEGORY 5 - ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES –
REGIONS OVER 15,000 RESIDENTS**

This award recognises programs or projects that have stimulated economic development activity in larger council regions.

**Finalist - Advance Rockhampton
Rockynats Car Festival**

Rockynats, held over the Easter weekend in 2021 is Queensland's largest car festival and successfully engaged the local community, businesses, and car and bike enthusiast clubs to deliver a signature event that promotes the Rockhampton region whilst providing something new and exciting for the community.



The inaugural event was a resounding success with event attendance of over 45,000 across the weekend, over \$6 million generated for the Queensland overnight visitor economy and now boasting the biggest car street parade ever held in Australia. Rockynats delivered a significant economic boost for Rockhampton region and will continue to be a must do event on the Motorsport calendar.



<https://www.rockynats.com.au/Home>

**Finalist - The City of Karratha
Try Local Cash Initiative**

In response to COVID-19, the City of Karratha Council introduced a "Try Local Cash" concept which involved \$100 digital vouchers being sent to over 8500 households which could be redeemed at local businesses.



TRY LOCAL
LATEST STATS
Monday, 14 September 2020

- Activated households: 4,953 (58%)
- Households spending: 3,174
- Businesses to receive income: 109
- Value of local spend: \$292,877
- Days remaining to use voucher: 16

This initiative disseminated funds through the business community, supported jobs, and presented a unified message to locals whilst also educating the community of the need to support the local business community.



<https://karratha.wa.gov.au/try-local-cash-vouchers>

**Finalist - Frankston City Council
Frankston City Place Activation Program**

Frankston City's Place Activation Program is an exciting program focussed on revitalisation and activation of commercial precincts. The program has created public spaces that are safe, vibrant, and welcoming places that contribute to a positive, community experience.

Programs under this initiative have improved streetscapes, public amenity and provided support to businesses to enhance economic prosperity.

**WINNER - Dubbo Regional Council
Supporting Regional Airports and Regional Tourism: Dubbo - Ballina/Byron Bay**

When the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions were at their tightest, it brought the airline industry to a stand-still. With collaboration and innovation Dubbo Regional Council were able to take the travel silver lining that was occurring in regional markets and take it to the skies!



Through passion and collaboration across Council teams, and with the confidence of Airline operators, Dubbo Regional Council were able to provide support to what is now a sustainable, successful regional travel route. The Dubbo - Ballina/Byron Bay trial took creative thinking and focused, data led business planning to bring all objectives to the table for three separate organisations, and the benefit of this collaboration has been felt both across the airline industry as well as the tourism sector and travellers themselves.



<https://www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au/news-and-media/news-and-resources/media-releases/2020/joining-forces-to-deliver-a-new-air-service>

CATEGORY 6 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

This award recognises successful economic development programs, initiatives or activities implemented following a disaster, crises or economic downturn. This award also recognises economic development programs which are focussed on resilience building and mitigation.

**Finalist - Melbourne Innovation
Business Recovery Advisory Service**

Melbourne Innovation Centre has been delivering the Small Business Victoria, Business Recovery Advisory Service since May 2020 in response to the bushfire disaster. Business owners in bushfire affected regions are provided access to a qualified, local adviser to receive help with all aspects of business operations,

recovery planning and resilience building strategies. This program connects local business owners and operators to the right services and provides them with administrative support where needed.



These business recovery strategies are unique to each participant and designed to help reactivate their business and develop sustainable business models to strengthen and grow through the recovery period and beyond.

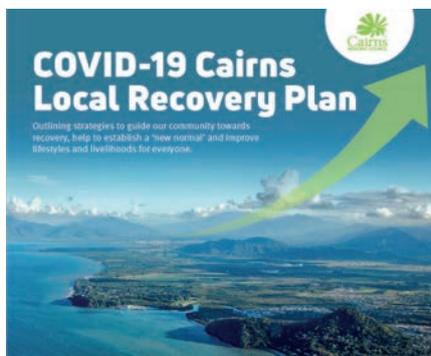


<https://www.melbourneinnovation.com.au/business-recovery-advisory-service-advisers>

Highly commended - Cairns Regional Council

Cairns COVID-19 Local Recovery Plan

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cairns economy was in a strong position. Gross Regional Product (GRP) growth was above Queensland and Australian averages with unemployment well below both the State and National levels. However, due to reliance on tourism and aviation connectivity, the Cairns economy was severely impacted by COVID-19.



Led by Cairns Regional Council, using a proven recovery planning methodology from the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) and incorporating significant stakeholder engagement, the COVID-19 Cairns Local Recovery Plan was formulated as the road map for Cairns' economy to return to 'pre COVID-19' levels but with a stronger, more resilient foundation.

The plan includes economic, human and social pillars as well as a diverse range of industries and initiatives to further diversify Cairns' economic base and inform long-term strategic economic outcomes for the Cairns region.



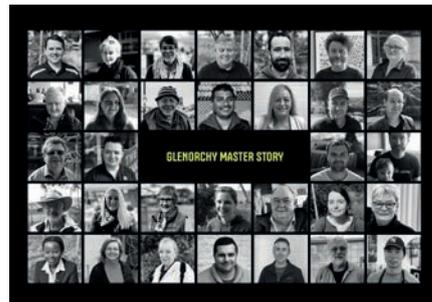
<https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/council/covid19/cairns-recovery-planning>

**WINNER - Glenorchy City Council
Glenorchy Economic Recovery Program**

Glenorchy's first economic development strategy in thirty years was endorsed in February 2020, and just three weeks later Australia's borders were closed to all non-residents and lockdowns were introduced to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Council's economic development team immediately initiated a triage of local economic impacts through phone and online surveys, revealing common issues facing businesses across the City. This informed the strategy which would address these issues and mitigate the worst impacts of COVID-19 restrictions.

By late April 2020, the team had developed an Economic Recovery Program to deliver both emergency measures and strategic investments for the City and secured a \$5million interest free loan from the Tasmanian Government to fund its implementation.



By June 2021, the City's economic resilience was significantly bolstered by the Economic Recovery Program through direct investment and building business confidence. Glenorchy has emerged from the economic crisis with a confident business community, record levels of development and plans in place for \$1.9billion of private and public investment.



<https://www.gcc.tas.gov.au/business/growing-glenorchy/economic-recovery-plan/>

CATEGORY 7 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

This category recognises economic development strategies and projects which foster equity, diversity and inclusion. EDA invited projects where the community’s cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic diversity underpin the economic development initiative. Examples which centred around gender diversity and or supporting greater economic participation for young people were also encouraged.

**Finalist - City of West Torrens
The Think, Buy, Be Local Initiative**

The Think, Buy, Be Local Initiative started life as a community assistance voucher scheme, but it quickly evolved when staff saw the potential for economic stimulus. More than 1160 residents took up the call to action, to “Think, buy, be local” at one of 24 participating local small businesses.

The first iteration of the initiative was designed to assist those residents who were working in frontline emergency services; or facing vulnerability and financial hardship; while at the same time providing economic stimulus to participating businesses.



The project evolved and harnessed the power of group purchasing- by distributing vouchers to ethnically diverse community groups. Economic stimulus of around

\$95,000 was generated from Council’s investment of \$42,000 which was more than matched by resident contributions.



<https://yoursay.westtorrens.sa.gov.au/belocal>

**Finalist - Port-Macquarie Hastings Council
Bicentenary event**

Port Macquarie’s Bicentenary event showcased the region, its people and stories and successfully delivered over 50 activities across 9 days for approximately 18,000 attendees in April this year.



Photo credit Lindsay Moller Productions

The Council acknowledged that the Bicentenary caused suffering and displacement for the traditional owners. Recognising this long, diverse and challenging history, Council and its Bicentenary Working Group invited residents and visitors to participate in a wide range of activities designed to reflect on the past, celebrate the present, and look forward to an inclusive and positive future.



<https://www.pmhc.nsw.gov.au/Community-Culture/Arts-Culture-and-Heritage/Port-Macquarie-Hastings-Bicentenary-2021>

**WINNER - Glenorchy City Council
Showcase Moonah Creative Hub**

The Beyond the Curtain campaign identified the activity centre of Moonah as a particular point of pride because of the diversity, inclusivity, and cultural richness that they called the Moonah-effect



You’ve heard of the MONA effect? It’s like that, only Moonah! While bigger shops are shutting down, small, eclectic, and locally owned shops are opening up. The area has become a haven for young families and new migrants.

The Greater Glenorchy Plan synthesised this identity with on-the-ground analysis to create a precinct plan for the centre. The next step was to leverage the diversity of assets already in place to implement the precinct plan and showcase the Moonah-effect to stimulate economic development outcomes.

By enabling local business, innovators, and creatives to showcase Moonah with their own activities and events, Council leveraged these assets to see the identity and precinct plans come to life.



<https://activitycity.com.au/showcase-moonah/>

CATEGORY 8 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES

This award recognises best practice economic development initiatives delivering positive environmental and social outcomes. EDA invited submissions where circular economy and sustainability principles underpin economic development strategies and / or projects.

Finalist - City of Greater Geelong
Age-defying bridges - transforming our economy one cleantech product at a time

Cleantech Innovations Geelong’s vision is to position Geelong as a Centre of Excellence for clean technologies in Australia by attracting investment, creating jobs and building skills around low carbon economic growth.

Since its establishment, 25 projects have been delivered, which have created and maintained over 650 jobs (directly and indirectly), developed skills amongst over 2000 people, and increased sales in businesses by over \$18 million.



The program is a partnership funded through the Victorian State Government, the Geelong Manufacturing Council and the City of Greater Geelong.

The zero maintenance recreation bridges tender was the first in Australia to use a procurement for innovation process, which aims to encourage the development and viability of clean technology – economically viable products that harness renewable materials and energy sources while reducing emissions and waste – using the substantial buying power of public sector procurement.



<https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/news/item/8d5eb3702bbb658.aspx>

Finalist - Super Yacht Group - Great Barrier Reef

The Great Reef Census

The Great Reef Census aimed to establish the most comprehensive snapshot ever captured of the Great Barrier Reef. The event took place over a 12-week period, beginning in September 2020. The Super Yacht Group gained special permission from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to access normally non-accessible areas of the reef for this purpose.



Luxury super yachts were recruited into the world’s biggest research fleet for the massive survey. Superyachts are in a unique position to access these more remote reefs and to help gather vital data on their status. Every superyacht visiting the Reef was able to serve as a research

vessel, ready to collect valuable data.

They joined dive boats, research vessels, island ferries, fishing charters and cruise catamarans in the Great Reef Census, which includes 100 priority reefs from Lady Elliot Island in the south to the northernmost reaches of Australia. Citizen scientists from around the world will then help analyse images online.



<https://greatreefcensus.org/>

WINNER - RDA Barossa, Gawler, Light, Adelaide Plains
Barossa Recycling Initiative

The Barossa Recycling Initiative improves recycling and circular economy opportunities for Barossa wine-based businesses.

Members of the Wine Industry Sustainable Packaging Alliance (WISPA) worked with RDA Barossa Gawler Light Adelaide Plains (RDA BGLAP) to secure a grant through Green Industries SA to improve waste streams within the wine industry.



The project revealed that the wine industry already has a high rate of responsibility regarding waste, at 94%, yet the Barossa wineries were committed to do even better. Their aim is to divert 200 tonnes a year from landfill into a recycling facility.

The project uncovered an opportunity for SMEs without the ability to aggregate on site to collectively purchase equipment to aggregate and process recyclable plastics currently going to landfill. The recycling equipment will be stationed at and operated by an existing social enterprise, Father’s Farm in Nuriootpa, where young people are supported by mentors to engage, have meaningful work and learn practical skills.



<https://barossa.org.au/>

CATEGORY 9 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RISING STAR LEADERSHIP

This award recognises outstanding achievement by a young, emerging leader in the economic development profession.

WINNER - Mairead Whelan



Mairead Whelan's work leading and fostering an important creative entrepreneurial community has achieved tangible outcomes for both the Great South Coast region and the economic development profession making her an ideal winner of the Rising Star Category in the Economic Development Awards for Excellence.

Mairead was a key advocate for the creation of a space in the region to support start-ups and entrepreneurs to follow their creative dreams. The space was labelled 'The Hive' and became a new and unique coworking innovation hub that allowed the creative, entrepreneurial and innovative community to interact, share, build ideas and collaboratively create in a space for the first time in South West Victoria.

Upon becoming the first coordinator of this space, Mairead commenced connecting the regional start-up, entrepreneurial and creative community to resources, mentors and a space to work in.

Mairead's leadership and strategic vision during her secondment allowed her to recognise the challenges facing entrepreneurs across the region and find innovative and practical solutions to them.

A trusted and supportive leader, Mairead has built significant relationships across industry, education and business. Warrnambool is a better place for having Mairead Whelan serving in the economic development space and the innovation hub located in the South West is a recognisable outcome of that.

She has established herself as a trusted, supportive leader within the community and has built significant relationships

across industry, education and business. Warrnambool is a better place for having Mairead Whelan serving in the economic development space and the innovation hub located in the South West is a recognisable outcome of that.

CATGOGORY 10 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD

This award recognises an individual(s) who has displayed dedication and commitment to their community as a leader and advocate for economic development. They will have demonstrated sustained and effective efforts to work with community groups and industry leaders in the development of projects as a business leader, elected official or volunteer.

Highly Commended – Jenny Pursehouse & Todd Taylor nominated by Port-Macquarie Hastings Council Motorcycle Friendly Town Wauchope (WARHOPE) Champions



Motorcycle Friendly (WARHOPE) Wauchope is a unique initiative that launched in 2016, after Port Macquarie-Hastings Council and the local community identified an opportunity to establish Wauchope as an acknowledged mecca for motorcycle enthusiasts.

Community volunteers, Jenny Pursehouse and Todd Taylor stepped forward at the launch event to ultimately lead and drive the campaign and, over the last 5 years have invested countless hours of their own time to create economic opportunities for tourism operators and local businesses. They also activated Motofest - an annual motorcycle festival attracting a dedicated audience of around 1,000 bike riders and spectators each year. In 2021, Motofest celebrates its 5th consecutive year.

In 2020, through the tenacity and innovation of Jenny and Todd, Motofest was one of only a few events that went ahead (albeit in a modified format) despite COVID-19.

Through strong leadership, creative thinking and diligent risk management, Jenny and Todd took Motofest online to deliver a unique event that enabled local, national and even international viewers to engage with the event.

Not only did they hold the event while others cancelled, they drew an audience of over 60,000 with engagement recorded locally, nationally and even internationally.

At least 3 Wauchope cafes now also trade on Sundays to service the increased number of motorcycle tourists visiting Wauchope throughout the year due.

Motorcycle Friendly Town Wauchope and Motofest are a unique example of a community led, Council supported initiative with its success directly attributable to Community Champions – Jenny Pursehouse and Todd Taylor.



WINNER – Patrice Brown *nominated by Advance Rockhampton*



Patrice Brown has demonstrated her dedication and commitment as a leader for sustainable economic development through her strong voice for local content, work with First Nation groups and her various board and advisory roles including on the Qld Premier’s Business Advisory Council.

Growing up on a cattle property in Central Queensland gave Patrice an optimistic outlook, combined with a strong work ethic. A determination to see women succeed saw Patrice begin a career focused on pushing boundaries and becoming a leader and role model in traditionally male dominated industries.

Her passion for regional areas underpins the success of her business, CQG Consulting (CQ Environmental Pty Ltd), which is one of regional Qld’s largest environmental consultancies employing over 30 professionals.

Patrice established CQG in 2003 to fill a niche in the market to provide practical, value for money environmental, planning and engineering services for regional clients.

Patrice is an advocate for protecting environmental and cultural values through partnerships and ensuring First Nations people and local businesses have genuine opportunities to secure jobs and employment.

In 2019, Patrice was instrumental in CQG forming a business partnership with the Darumbal People resulting in the creation of Tunuba Pty Ltd. Tunuba is a Central Queensland Indigenous business which has successfully achieved employment,

training and business development opportunities for Darumbal People and local contractors that otherwise wouldn’t been possible, competing with foreign owned firms.

Patrice has worked tirelessly on behalf of regional Queensland for decades to grow and strengthen the economy. She has dedicated her time working pro-bono on not-for-profit economic development boards, environmental and business committees. She is an outstanding spokesperson for regional Australia, a strong advocate for protecting cultural and environmental values and continues to work with community groups and industry leaders in securing opportunities and promoting the benefits of investing in QLD.

CATEGORY 11 - THE PETER CHAFFEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

Recipients of the Peter Chaffey Leadership Award have had a significant impact on revitalising communities, and will have been at the forefront of developing and delivering projects that drive innovation and change. They have played a major role in shaping and improving the practice of economic development.

WINNER - Martin Darcy
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council



Martin’s journey in economic development began as Service Manager Business and Innovation with Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council (QPRC). He was charged with creating the new Economic Development branch in the freshly merged QPRC. He created and implemented a vision of economic change for revitalising

the local community through strategy development, collaboration, tactical response and leadership. This has been delivered during a complex and challenging period of amalgamation and natural disaster.

Martin has led the Council’s Transformation and masterplan development and place focused strategy development to create both social and economic change to the Queanbeyan CBD.

He led the development of the Digital Economy and Smart Community Strategy repositioning Queanbeyan as a smart and innovative regional centre.

In an immediate and targeted response following drought and the 2019/20 bushfires, Martin and his team created the Treasure Trail campaign for economic recovery. This was recognised with the 2021 NSW LG Excellence Award for Supporting Local Enterprise.

For the last two years, Martin has worked diligently on progressing the economic development potential of the South Jerrabomberra Innovation Precinct, recently declared a Regional Jobs Precinct that will be a champion of innovation and jobs growth in SE NSW. Martin also leads regional advocacy through his role as Chair of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Economic Development Working Group.

Martin is a deserving recipient of the Peter Chaffey Leadership Award and EDA congratulates him on this achievement.



BECOME AN **EDA MEMBER**

Established in 2007, EDA has over 1200 members and is represented by State Practitioner Networks across Australia.

VISION

EDA is a nationally recognised network of economic development professionals, fostering prosperity in communities across Australia.

MISSION

EDA is the national peak body for economic development professionals; building capacity, promoting excellence and providing leadership on issues that matter to our members.

OUR 4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Fostering a community of economic development professionals



Promoting a culture of economic development excellence



Delivering leadership on issues that matter to our members



Operating at best-practice governance standards

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER BENEFITS

- Discounts for EDA's National Education & Training Program
- Achieve accreditation as an Australian Certified Economic Developer (ACEcD)
- Free registration to EDA's Webinar Program
- Free access to EDA's Economic Development Evaluation and Measurement Toolkit
- On-line economic recovery and resilience hub
- Member discounts for the National Economic Development Conference
- National recognition through the National Economic Development Awards for Excellence
- Local networking through State Practitioner Networks
- Best practice research and case studies through EDA's Journal
- Economic Development Jobs Board
- EDA online Knowledge Hub
- Strong advocacy and policy development

CORPORATE MEMBER BENEFITS

- Unlimited EDA memberships for all nominated employees
- Acknowledgement as a Corporate Member on the EDA website
- Opportunity for case study / content / project to be promoted via EDA website and social media
- Promotion as a Corporate Member at the National Economic Development Conference
- Promotion as a Corporate Member at the National Economic Development Gala Awards
- Permission to use the EDA logo on approved collateral
- Inclusion of your logo on selected EDA marketing collateral



RATES



INDIVIDUAL \$400_{+GST}

CORPORATE \$2,000_{+GST}

VISIT US AT
edaaustralia.com.au

APPLY AT edaaustralia.com.au/membership

CONGRATULATIONS - AUSTRALIAN CERTIFIED ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS (ACEcD)

Economic Development Australia's Accreditation Program is the national industry designation for Australian economic development professionals.

Accredited members are recognised as Australian Certified Economic Developers and are authorised to use the nominals ACEcD and the new ACEcD logo in their email signatures and on business cards, etc. to demonstrate their achievement and position themselves as leaders in their field.

To achieve recognition as an Australian Certified Economic Developer (ACEcD), EDA members must complete 4 core and 2 elective modules of the National Education and Training Program, within 3 years.

Recognised Australian Certified Economic Developers then need to earn 50 CPD points over a two year period to retain accreditation.

For further information regarding training and accreditation: <https://www.edaaustralia.com.au/training/acecd-accreditation/>

Congratulations to the following graduates of the EDA National Education and Training Program who have recently achieved recognition as Australian Certified Economic Developers (ACEcD).

Alana Smith ACEcD	Janelle Lamont ACEcD	Melissa Moseley ACEcD
Alison McKenzie ACEcD	Janine Rolles ACEcD	Michael Krassner ACEcD
Alison Vandenberg ACEcD	Jarrold Delahunty ACEcD	Michael Pengelly ACEcD
Amanda Goody ACEcD	Jeanette Seignior ACEcD	Michael Shillabeer ACEcD
Angela Larkin ACEcD	Johanna Bennett ACEcD	Mike Thomas ACEcD
Ankica Elder ACEcD	Juliet Grist ACEcD	Nadine Connolly ACEcD
Brandon McIntosh ACEcD	Karlie Lane ACEcD	Nele Hahne ACEcD
Carol Catherwood ACEcD	Karly Herighty ACEcD	Robert Bristow ACEcD
Darrin Collins ACEcD	Kevin Lowe ACEcD	Sarah Blyton ACEcD
Elouise Lamb ACEcD	Kristy Forche-Baird ACEcD	Sarah Kahle ACEcD
Emily Davies O'Sullivan ACEcD	Kylie Bradley ACEcD	Sasho Dimcevski ACEcD
Emily Moskwa ACEcD	Lisa Pearson ACEcD	Simon Massey ACEcD
Emma Kilkelly ACEcD	Lydia Sorensen ACEcD	Sonja Johnson ACEcD
Eulonda Bolger ACEcD	Marissa Clift ACEcD	Tamas Deutsch ACEcD
Gabrielle Troon ACEcD	Mark Adams ACEcD	Teona Cousin ACEcD
Gary Parsons ACEcD	Mark Lourigan ACEcD	Thomas Michel ACEcD
Heidi Willard ACEcD	Martin Darcy ACEcD	Tony Siviour ACEcD
Helder Guerreiro ACEcD	Matt Thomas ACEcD	Tracy Lee ACEcD
Jacob Carter ACEcD	Matthew Stojanovic ACEcD	



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

The Economic Development Australia Journal is produced by EDA for EDA members. Submissions are welcome from practitioners, academics and other interested parties.

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