



## SMART TRANSFORMATION

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#### Smart Transformation Advisory Council (STAC) Meeting – Dysart

13 February 2023 – Meeting 16

#### **Attendees**

Royce Bailey  
Jasmine Cadd  
Chris Cowan  
Liz Fox  
Brianna Jahnke  
Sandy Moffat  
Cherryl Perry  
Jacqueline Smith  
Seamus Taylor  
Richelle Toshack

#### **Apologies**

Glenn Kirkpatrick  
Rhiannon Rowe

#### **Guests**

Sgt Tim Fahey, Qld Police  
Mel Comerford, CLA  
Jonathon Pavetto, AEC

#### **Secretariat**

Mitchell Innes (Facilitator)  
Melanie Stott

### MEETING NOTES

- Meeting commenced at 6.12pm with apologies advised.

### MINUTES

- Minutes from Meeting 15 were moved by Sandy Moffat, seconded by Chris Cowan and approved by all.

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### COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

- Database is steady at 263.
- The Dysart Attraction and Retention video has had over 11,500 views on YouTube, although numbers have slowed since the paid YouTube campaign ended (15,000 views for the Moranbah video, making 26,500 views jointly).
- The December free media campaign focused on the Innovative Futures Project with good results. The February free media campaign focuses on the Dysart bus service, with articles sent to The Coalface and the Moranbah Community News. An ad for the Dysart bus service was already featured in the Dysart Diary for February but another story will appear in that publication in March.
- There has been a reduction in use of the Smart Transformation website and the STACs are urged to think about a new communications plan for Phase 4 of Smart Transformation. STAC members asked how they could produce simple and easy project updates on the website. Chris Cowan suggested a quarterly newsletter drop about ST projects might work well (*see Actions*).

### YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

- MI reported that the first meeting of the new YAC went well and they are a lovely group of kids who are really engaged.
- BMA Saraji GM and Dysart STAC member Glenn Kirkpatrick talked about the mining industry, took questions and photos, and presented the new YAC members with their 2023 shirts.
- MI gave feedback that the students got a lot out of Glenn's speech about his career path since leaving Dysart High School.
- A date is being sought for a Rockets event with a provider in Mackay (*see Actions*).
- The first YAC meeting was particularly well received on social media with strong engagement (30+ responses) from both schools.
- YAC members developed a plan to achieve their goals in the 4IR, called You 2.0.
- They also voted on their top priorities out of all the projects currently being pursued by Smart Transformation.
- Digital Connectivity was the highest ranked, with 4IR Skills and Training listed second, followed by Childcare and Housing Availability. Industrial Land Strategy rounded out the Top 5.
- MI: "They are great kids and it was a great start to the year."

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### ROADMAP PROJECT UPDATES

- Digital connectivity – discussion of delays being experienced in Moranbah. Dysart is less impacted by these delays but STAC members have requested MI to ask IRC for a clear timeframe for the completion of works (*see Actions*).
- Industrial Land Strategy – on hold.
- 4IR Skills and Training Strategy – Careers Navigator strategy has been updated.
- Childcare – Mel Comerford will brief today's meeting.
- Housing – Jonathon Pavetto will brief today's meeting but 15-20 people attended each of the seven workshops held in December.
- Community Wellbeing Funding – framework for advocacy plan; Mackay Hospital and Health Service's Isaac community reference group is looking for a new Dysart member (*see Actions*).
  - STAC members noted it's a significant problem that there are job vacancies across the state in key government roles, particularly in Mackay.
- Innovation Project – general positive discussion of draft report compiled end of last year.
- Transport Options – Kinetic service is now underway. Discussion of review of hours of bus service (*see Actions*).
- Further discussion that numbers were low over Christmas because of the holiday period.

### HOUSING PROJECT – DRAFT ACTION PLAN

Jonathon Pavetto from AEC spoke to the meeting via Zoom:

- Progress since Jonathon's last update: the working groups successfully looked at issues such as construction, finance, liveability, planning, land development and ownership.
- Some of the challenges:
  - 1st issue – towns finding it difficult to attract staff; people don't know what future demand will be for the towns, therefore there's a lack of investment.
  - 2nd issue – there is a high proportion of vacant residential and commercial properties.
  - 3rd issue – there are unique supply and demand issues with increased risk due to population turnover in Dysart, which has double the regional average of turnover; 40% of residents in Isaac Region were not residents five years ago. People don't stay, so they don't want to build/invest because they are only here short-term.
  - 4th issue is a large amount of existing stock on the market for sale, and these are cheaper than the cost of building new stock.

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- 5th issue is the high proportion of employer-provided housing, including government, small businesses and industry.
- The combination of all these issues makes it challenging, but there is still a way forward.
- There is a concentration of demand in private rental market; JP suggests perhaps it's time for some new ways of thinking about the rental market.
- Where to from here? Making the case for future population – what does the future hold for Dysart and Moranbah?
- The 'vibe' in the STAC is that there's demand for housing, but developing a business case is challenging when it comes to bank finance.
- The focus on what AEC has been looking at is the prime rental market; AEC hasn't been focusing on emergency or social housing.
- Research so far has shown that construction costs are currently above valuation, so it's not worth spending the money. It's difficult to justify significant investment at the moment.
- Next step is to do a demand study, also looking at the future as well as today, to work out what the housing demand will be in five years.
- Housing availability is a complex problem and we are a while away from working out when the first slab will go down.

### Agreed next steps:

- Smart Transformation will push the Housing Action Plan out to all participants/ stakeholders and then start a Housing Demand Study - that's where we'll find a solution if there's one to be had.
- The Census data shows there are 500 vacant homes in Dysart and 1,000 vacant homes in Moranbah; the Housing Demand Study will try to look at why they're vacant and what we can do to get them back into the market.
- MI said there will also be a follow-up Housing Summit.
- JP said we do have a few viable courses of action moving forward; there are ways to work on the problem but not just one way. More work to be done.
- SM hopes any Housing Demand Study supports what residents hear 'on the ground'.

## CHILDCARE PROJECT – PLAN AND RESULTS

Mel Comerford spoke to the meeting in person:

- Mel Comerford is a childcare consultant who has been working on Childcare in this region for five years; her company Astute has been engaged to establish the Childcare Leadership Alliance.
- In childcare terms there are not too many spaces in our history that we can say is an exciting, transformative time for childcare; but this year is a rare point in time that's exciting for childcare.

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- The CLA’s vision is “to strategically enable and support the provision of high quality, sustainable early childhood and school age care in the Isaac Region, with initial programs piloted in the townships of Moranbah and Dysart.”
- Chairperson is Melissa Westcott; board consists of volunteers.
- CLA’s mission (summarised) is to ensure the successful rollout of the project in Moranbah and Dysart, establish the CLA, provide support to attract, retain, recruit and retain childcare staff, develop a sustainable model and actively advocate for the childcare sector.
- There are many things CLA wants to do, but the first is to ensure that the childcare centres we have can be fully occupied by children, because they currently can’t be due to low staff numbers.
- Currently 45 job vacancies including family day care; if you have less staff, you must have less children due to laws about staff-to-children ratio laws.
- Staffing arrangements led to some centres being considered as ‘in crisis’.
- There is a post-Covid staffing crisis across the sector nationally; by July this year there’ll be 15,000 vacant positions due to burnout, lack of recognition, low wages.
- Most childcare educators are female of child-bearing age, which also adds pressure to childcare centres.
- In Moranbah and Dysart, those issues are amplified because of a shortage of housing.
- Some providers are paying \$50,000 to \$60,000 in staff housing costs, which comes off their bottom lines.
- One of the barriers to finding childcare staff is the high wages being paid by industry; it is difficult for childcare centres to compete for staff.
- CLA is looking at visa sponsorship options but it’s very expensive and complex.
- CLA also has a strategic plan and a marketing plan; planning some advocacy work with Commonwealth and State governments.
- It’s hoped that CLA will be supported by other childcare centres in regional Australia.
- Website launched in January 2023; 123 survey responses, Facebook 93 followers, Instagram 59 followers, LinkedIn 132 followers, EDM mailing list of over 3,300 email addresses.
- Professional development is a big attraction strategy; the CLA is using the Smart Transformation attraction and retention videos for job applicants.
- Meeting with childcare leaders every month (next one Feb 23rd).
- CLA Official launch April 18 and 19; the launch key initiative is ‘this is our childcare’.
- STAC members are encouraged to support the new CLA through socials and the launch (*see Actions*).
- Seamus Taylor said he has two staff members whose job hours depend on whether they can get childcare.
- MI noted it’s a very challenging space.
- Mel’s PowerPoint presentation will be emailed to the STACs (*see Actions*).

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### NEW PROJECT DISCUSSION – YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

- Project 'placemat' has been written to give direction to this new initiative.
- MI said it's looking likely we will put an EOI out to the market to provide the service (see *Actions*).
- It's planned that the new role will be dealing with people in need, in their homes.
- Families/recipients would be identified by Dysart Community Support Group, school principals and police.
- The work so far was well received by STAC members.

### SMART TRANSFORMATION MEASUREMENT – SURVEY DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL

- MI sought comments on the draft survey provided to the meeting.
- The plan is to set a baseline about where Smart Transformation is at the start of this new phase.
- STAC members agreed they were happy for the survey to go out in its current form (see *Actions*).

### NEXT MEETING DATE

Monday 3rd April, 6pm.

Meeting closed at 8.03pm.

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