



SMART TRANSFORMATION

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Smart Transformation Advisory Council (STAC) Meeting – Moranbah

14 February 2023 – Meeting 16

Attendees

Vaughn Abrahms

Brianna Baggow

Jasmine Cadd

Ash Dowd

Anthony Edwards

Michelle Pole

Amanda Raymond

Apologies

Carolyn Fritz

Melissa Westcott

Guests

Mel Comerford, CLA

Jonathon Pavetto, AEC

Secretariat

Mitchell Innes (Facilitator)

Melanie Stott

MEETING NOTES

- Meeting commenced at 12.10pm with apologies advised.

MINUTES

- Minutes from Meeting 15 were moved by Michelle Pole, seconded by Ash Dowd and approved by all.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

- Database is steady at 263 with a couple of new subscribers this week.

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- The Moranbah Attraction and Retention video has had 15,000 views on YouTube, although numbers have slowed since the paid YouTube campaign ended (11,500 views for the Dysart 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, and an ad featured in the Dysart Diary. Another bus story will appear in that publication in March.
- Great results from the Facebook pages of both high schools when the new YAC pictures were posted last weekend.
- The Smart Transformation website numbers have dropped off and the STACs are urged to think about a new communications plan for Phase 4 of Smart Transformation. Discussion of simple and easy project updates on the website. (*see Actions*).
- Ash Dowd suggested any new Comms Strategy should look at widening the YouTube campaign for the Attraction and Retention videos to avoid “preaching to the converted – how far is our net cast? Should we try a TV ad in Brisbane?” (*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 said the feedback from the students was that they 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.
- In the meeting, YAC members developed a plan to achieve their goals in the 4IR, called You 2.0, and 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.”
- Briana Baggow discussed the ongoing problem of high costs of housing for young people in the region.

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ROADMAP PROJECT UPDATES

- Digital connectivity – discussion of delays to this project in Moranbah. The DA is yet to be approved because IRC is responding to a petition; this means the construction window was missed and now the project is delayed. A planned launch for May will no longer be possible; IRC to meet in Glenden on 22/02/2023. STAC members discussed the fact that the petition numbers represent one per cent of the Moranbah population. MI to ask IRC for a clear timeframe for the completion of works (*see Actions*).
- 4IR Skills and Training Strategy – Careers Navigator strategy has been updated to reflect the feedback from the STACs. Significant discussion on the strategy, with MI to action the STAC feedback (*see Actions*).

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.
- There were a lot of very knowledgeable people joining the working groups, to get to the bottom of what the solutions are likely to be to this very complex problem of housing affordability and availability.
- It's clear that the housing market in Moranbah is very different to the rest of Queensland, so we can't expect the standard rules of supply and demand to work.
- A key point is that 40% of the Moranbah population did not live there five years ago, so it's a very transient population (most other resource communities have a maximum of 25% population turnover). This means that when people want a house, they're not likely to buy or build because they're not planning to stay long-term.
- In the rental market, there are issues with investment because of the volatility of the market with price cycles.
- Where to from here? Making the case for future population – what does the future hold for Dysart and Moranbah?
- The end goal is to increase the supply of housing in Moranbah and Dysart.
- There isn't a clear articulation of the demand for housing or the type of housing that's in demand.
- We know we need houses, but how many – we haven't been able to put a finger on that number yet. Before we can get governments to do anything about it or attract someone to start building houses, we need to know what that number is, which is why there needs to be a Housing Demand Study.

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- In summary, AEC has worked out a range of potential solutions but the issues are very complex and the problems will not be solved by doing just one thing.

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.

PRIORITY PROJECTS AND STATUS – JANUARY 2023

- Innovation Project – general positive discussion of draft report compiled at end of last year. Brianna Baggow said the feedback has been positive and the report is very big and very broad, but the project is progressing really well and a lot of work in the Action Plan is already underway. Another Steering Committee meeting is being planned by GWI; another option to consider is for an Isaac-focused Steering Committee to meet more often.
- Transport Options – Kinetic service is now underway; however the feedback has been that the day is too long for older residents. Discussion of review of hours of bus service (*see Actions*).

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, “to ensure there is a thriving early childhood base in the two towns.”
- 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.
- CLA’s goal is to become self-governing and self-sustaining, advocating for bush children as a niche market.
- 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 as well.
- Some providers are paying \$50,000 to \$60,000 in staff housing costs, which comes off their bottom lines.
- Staffing candidates pay \$150 per week for a room or \$360 per week for a whole house but the childcare centres are paying twice that in rent for the property.
- 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; anecdotal story about a 53-year-old childcare staffer who recently left to work in the mines for twice the pay.
- 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’ with filming to take place in Moranbah in March.
- STAC members are encouraged to support the new CLA through socials and the launch (see *Actions*).

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- CLA will require additional funding to continue its work.
- Mel's PowerPoint presentation will be emailed to the STACs.

NEW PROJECT DISCUSSION – COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERING

- Project 'placemat' has been written to give direction to this new initiative.
- We are looking at building an online tool where clubs looking for volunteers can post roles and attract people who are new to town; this may also attract people in camps.
- Meeting planned with Touch Football Association; timeline unclear.
- Amanda Raymond looking at options for volunteer engagement.
- Ash Dowd suggested an online campaign to help out volunteer groups, like a video or a series of short videos to be shared on social media (*see Actions*).
- STAC members discussed that when people volunteer they want a clear task, so clubs need to be organised with a full plan of what's required.
- Some information is already available on the ST website from the last training sessions.
- AR said one of the problems is that people are looking for small tasks and it's difficult when people are not having a good time as volunteers.
- A survey is being written to generate data and define the issues.
- MI suggested getting survey data and determining what the options are from there.

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

Tuesday 4th April, 12pm.

Meeting closed at 2.07pm.

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