



SMART
TRANSFORMATION



THE TRANSFORMER

DECEMBER 2023

Welcome to the 17th edition of *The Transformer* - an update from the Smart Transformation Project.

Smart Transformation works to future-proof the communities of Dysart and Moranbah, as we face rapid technological changes being experienced globally, and build the sustainability of our towns.

Smart Transformation operates independently, with support from BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA), and is driven by the two towns' Smart Transformation Advisory Councils (STACs) and Youth Advisory Council (YAC). Council members capture feedback and advice from the communities they call home, to direct resources and effort into projects important to local residents.

Happy 21st meetings of Smart Transformation!

Moranbah and Dysart's Smart Transformation Advisory Councils (STACs) celebrated their 21st bi-monthly meetings in November, recognising their significant achievements over the past four years.

Smart Transformation has tackled projects including the construction of new mobile digital connectivity infrastructure in both towns, a major campaign to attract more childcare workers, and numerous initiatives aimed at improving skills and training options for local high school students, supported by BMA.

Moranbah STAC member Melissa Westcott said Smart Transformation's work has been truly invaluable to the people of her town.

"Being future-focused and looking for sustainable solutions for the community – not quick fixes – has been at the centre of the work Smart Transformation has done," Melissa said.

"It's important that we are on the front foot as a community, with the technological changes that are knocking on the door.

[Continued page 2.](#)



The Moranbah (top) and Dysart (bottom) STACs celebrated their 21st meeting milestones and the results they've achieved.

From page 1

“We need to ensure that our kids have options and opportunities, and that our community is here for generations to come.”

Other current Smart Transformation projects include working to address housing affordability and availability, and an Innovative Futures report looking at new economic opportunities in the region.

Dysart STAC member Jacky Smith said Smart Transformation’s work has clearly been a boost for Dysart.

“It’s important for the future, and for people who live here now to tell their relatives and friends who are thinking of moving here – that we are working to future-proof Dysart and make our community stronger,” Jacky said.

“We can’t and won’t give up on Dysart. We need to keep focusing on our projects and we need more group events and community workshops so we can all work together on planning a stronger, better future for our town.”

In 2024, Smart Transformation will kick off a new major project for Moranbah – the Volunteer Project – aimed at increasing the number of volunteers putting up their hands to assist community groups across the town.

Melissa Westcott agrees there’s still much work to be done.

“We are prioritising many new economic opportunities and there is still lots to do, but when you look back over the past four years it is exciting to see how far we’ve come and what’s in front,” she said.

We are LIVE!

Smart Transformation’s Digital Connectivity Project is now up and running, tripling mobile data capacity in Dysart and doubling it in Moranbah.

The Project has seen new infrastructure built in the towns through a multi-million dollar partnership between BHP, Telstra and Greater Whitsunday Alliance (GW3), supported by Isaac Regional Council.

Both Smart Transformation Advisory Councils and the Youth Advisory Council prioritised this project as critical to the community, with STAC Project Lead Sandy Moffat saying upgrading the network was a huge achievement for Dysart.

“Having the ability to draw in two big corporations – BHP and Telstra – was a massive win,” Sandy said.

“It also started a further conversation with Telstra about black spots, regional isolation, access to communications services and expanding the network so it’s really a very positive outcome for our community.”

STAC Moranbah Project Lead Brianna Baggow is just as thrilled with the outcome for her town.

“We have all worked so hard on this project, and it’s really fantastic to have delivered it for the people of Moranbah,” Brianna said.

BMA Asset President Adam Lancey congratulated the Smart Transformation Advisory Councils for initially prioritising improved digital connectivity for Dysart and Moranbah.

“The community has driven this project from its inception, and BHP was proud to be a partner in its delivery, and work alongside Telstra, GW3 and Isaac Regional Council,” Adam said.

“Our investment in this project was an investment in the towns – the businesses, the families and the schools who will all be able to access new opportunities through improved digital connectivity.”

GW3 Digital Program Coordinator Vicki Smith also hailed the project a great success.

“The future is bright for our communities in Moranbah and Dysart – they now have great connectivity, which keeps them able to run businesses, and our workers that come to town can stay connected with their loved ones when they’re away from home,” Vicki said.



The new Digital Connectivity tower was wired in October and is now live, doubling capacity in Moranbah.



A new day for Dysart with new tower infrastructure now online, tripling the town’s digital connectivity.

Co-ordinating a housing response

Smart Transformation is progressing its Housing Project, engaging with potential partners to ensure a co-ordinated response to address the challenges of local housing affordability and availability.

Following our Smart Transformation Housing Summit and follow-up Roundtable, Smart Transformation has built a draft Action Plan and is working with the team from Greater Whitsunday Communities (GWC) and its Regional Housing Alliance.

GWC Housing Project Manager Tonia Wilson received a copy of the draft Action Plan to support the regional efforts earlier this year.

“There is significant alignment between Smart Transformation’s Action Plan and the Greater Whitsunday Housing Summit’s Action Plan,” Tonia said.

“There is therefore tremendous opportunity for co-ordinated activity to progress both Action Plans.”

STAC Project Lead Carolyn Fritz is keen to see greater collaboration between various organisations working on the accommodation challenges.

“We must co-ordinate our efforts because we all need to work together to improve housing affordability and availability, for the future of our towns,” she said.

“We’ve had this body of work that’s been completed for some time and we need people to take notice of it, really look at the recommendations and work with us to do something about them.”

“

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CAROLYN FRITZ – STAC PROJECT LEAD

New YAC+ for 2024

Great news! Smart Transformation’s popular Youth Advisory Council (YAC) program is expanding in 2024.

Dysart and Moranbah State High Schools received nominations for the 2024 YAC program, and the new representatives have now been chosen to provide a youth voice into Smart Transformation’s priorities and projects.

Next year’s YAC program will be expanded – called YAC+ - and we are working with local high schools on ways students outside the YAC can access information about technological change, the impact on the jobs market and most importantly how to access new career opportunities.

New Dysart YAC member, Year 12 student Ryan Smith, is looking forward to the challenge.

“I’d like to gain further leadership experience and represent the youth of Dysart by providing ideas to support local community and business opportunities, and help future-proof our town,” Ryan said.

Moranbah High School Year 11 student Jixie Navarro is also excited to join YAC in 2024.

“I want to contribute to a positive transformation in my community and in the youth community,” Jixie said.

“Participating in the YAC next year will give me the privilege of representing my peers to amplify the voices of our youth, and also develop my interpersonal, professional and leadership skills.”

Outback Futures

Smart Transformation's plans to improve community wellbeing in Dysart have taken another step forward, with a successful 'scoping' visit conducted by renowned regional support group Outback Futures.

The Outback Futures team interviewed over 30 Dysart residents and also conducted a community forum in November.

Smart Transformation Advisory Council member and Dysart librarian Jacky Smith believes the visit was a very promising start.

"The team was friendly, engaging, professional and genuinely interested in Dysart and the residents of Dysart," Jacky said.

"The forum has certainly opened the conversations of what our town is lacking in services and facilities, and what the future Dysart could provide.

"It also started conversations about how we get people to be more involved, especially in relation to engaging younger people and younger families to become community leaders."

Outback Futures CEO Brent Sweeney said the response to the team's visit had been very positive.

"Thank you everybody for the opportunity to come to Dysart - a lot of the issues that Dysart is facing are common in a lot of small bush towns, so you are not alone," Brent said.

"Dysart has a lot going for it. There is little doubt, Dysart is a small town with a big heart and passion for its people."

The Outback Futures team is now working on some options for Dysart, which will be considered by the Smart Transformation Advisory Council members in the New Year.

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BRENT SWEENEY
- OUTBACK FUTURES CEO



Dysart STAC member Liz Fox opening the Outback Futures Community Forum, attended by over thirty people.



Outback Futures' Brent Sweeney facilitated the Community Forum, drawing out information on the strengths, challenges and opportunities for Dysart.



Get involved in Smart Transformation

The Smart Transformation Project is a community initiative to shape our own future for ourselves. If you would like more information, please drop us a line at smarttransformation@outlook.com or check us out at www.smarttransformation.com.au

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