



Councillor Information Bulletin

For the Ordinary Council Meeting
held on Thursday 21st December 2023

INDEX

1. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT**

2. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Wellbeing Update

Tourism Update

Hood-Penn Museum Update

3. **COUNCIL INFORMATION**

- **CASH FOR CONTAINERS**

Collection Schedule

- **RICK WILSON MP**

Nurse Practitioner letter

- **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Rick Wilson Health Care Speech

- **GROWING REGIONS PROGRAM**

Round 1 Application

- **WHEATBELT WAY**

November Information

- **WESTERN POWER**

Investing in WA's Electricity Network

- **WMSIP MEETING**

Medical Student Immersion Program

CEO'S REPORT

- **GENERAL MATTERS**

- I participated along with several other staff a Senior First Aid Course held in the Old Miners Hall on Monday 20 November.
- Various follow ups and information provided to Rick Wilson, Federal MP and Mia Davies State MP on the decision not to fund the Westonia Health Centre NP Pilot Program.
- On Tuesday 28 November Cr Simmonds, Scott Huggett and myself met with representatives from Infinity Pools to discuss the design of a concept for the future pool construction. Considerations for the design needed to include a 4 x lane lap pool incorporating a resort style beach entry kids activity pool. Wet deck sides, low maintenance and operational costs, and a design for the new plant. Infinity have provided a first up concept for Councillor consideration at the meeting.
- Along with the Shire President attended the WEROC meeting held in Bruce Rock on Wednesday 29 November.
- The new Kenworth Prime Mover was delivered to Council on Friday 1 December with a lunch and drinks celebrated by the outside works crew and a few Councillors.



- A concept plan for the proposed Seniors Leisure Centre (Old School Site) has been circulated in an effort to get some feedback from the community. A survey was conducted at the Seniors luncheon with responses collated as per attachment. Quotations are currently being obtained for the construction of the Warm Water Pool, Pool enclosure, Men's Shed conversion, relocation of the Nursery structure, refurbishment of the existing Gazebo, and general fit out items. Funding applications are being completed for the following funding agencies – Lotterywest, Elders, Bendigo Bank, FRRR and CBH in the new year with an anticipated commencement date being mid next year. Highway Construction and MRWA have indicated that they will be vacating the premises at the end of January.
- The Westonia Swimming Pool closure day has been moved to Thursday instead of Tuesday to accommodate shift change employees that rotate on Tuesdays.
- The annual Medical Staff appreciation dinner was held at the Wanderers Stadium on Monday 4 December, which was appreciated by all.
- The annual Christmas dinner for the Senior Citizens was held at the Westonia Tavern on Tuesday 5 December which was attended by 61 residents this year.
- Along with Crs Crees, DellaBosca, Geier, DCEO and myself attended a zoom conference with the auditors Dry Kirkness and OAG for the exit Audit meeting held on Thursday 14 December.

- All the siteworks, electrical and fencing has been completed at the EVC Station with only the chargers to be installed prior to Christmas. Asphalt works will be coordinated with other areas requiring the same in the new year.



- **DELEGATED AUTHORITY ACTIONS**

- Approval of 2 x new school bus stops.

- **ROADCREW**

- The construction crew have completed gravel sheeting projects north of the M040 being 4.5km of Echo Valley Rd, 1.5km Geelakin Rd, and 3.5km section of Rabbit Proof fence Rd.
- Cartage of garden/top dressing soil stockpile from Baladjie Lake.
- The maintenance grader is doing drains and batters on the western section of the M040.

- **TOWN**

- Town crew continued with general maintenance activities around the town including HCS.
- An Excavator has been hired to dig new trenches and bury existing rubbish at the Rubbish Tip. It is still amazing how much rubbish is being dumped from outsiders at the site. I intend to meet with the CEO of the Shire of Yilgarn, Avon Waste, Merredin Skip Bins early in the new year to progress the regional waste disposal proposal.



- The container recycling bins have been provided to all households within the townsite with the first kerbside pickup to be 16 January 2024.

- **PLANT HOURS**

The following is a list of plant and vehicle kilometre and hour readings for the period ending 1.12.23

Item		1.11.23	1.12.23
P1	<i>CAT 140 GRADER</i>	2,032hrs	2,123hrs
P2	<i>CAT 12M GRADER</i>	8,426hrs	8,557hrs
P3	<i>PRIME MOVER (OLD FREIGHTLINER)</i>	226,420kms	230,468kms
P4	<i>ROAD TRAIN (NEW FREIGHTLINER)</i>	107,917kms	111,633kms
P5	<i>JOHN DEERE LOADER</i>	4,625hrs	4,712hrs
P6	<i>CAT ROLLER (SKIP)</i>	1,372hrs	1,449hrs
P7	<i>MINI-EXCAVATOR</i>	1,101hrs	1,119hrs
P8	<i>TELEHANDLER JCB</i>	2,707hrs	2,732hrs
P9	<i>TOYOTA (GRADER UTE)</i>	33,801kms	36,330kms
P10	<i>mitsubishi CANTER</i>	14,001kms	14,588kms
P11	<i>TOYOTA HILUX (GARDENER) WT 35</i>	104,074kms	104,832kms
P12	<i>JOHN DEERE (5100)</i>	2,564hrs	2,564hrs
P14	<i>TOYOTA LANDCRUISER GXL (CEO)</i>	31,469kms	33,777kms
P15	<i>TOYOTA HILUX D/CAB (W/SUPER)</i>	26,104kms	29,738kms
P16	<i>TOYOTA RAV4 (ADMIN)</i>	92,111kms	92,549kms
P17	<i>TOYOTA HILUX DUAL CAB</i>	28,829kms	30,468kms
P19	<i>FAST ATTACK</i>	16,799kms	17,352kms
P20	<i>FIRE TRUCK</i>	6,877kms	6,882kms
P18	<i>WESSY BUS</i>	143,999kms	144,311kms
P22	<i>KUBOTA RIDE ON MOWER (OVAL)</i>	2,045hrs	2,051hrs
P23	<i>TOYOTA MINI-BUS (WT COM V)</i>	39,111kms	39,788kms
P24	<i>CAT ROLLER (LOLA)</i>	1,808hrs	1,870hrs
P25	<i>MICK's BEAUT UTE</i>	165,780kms	166,591kms
P27	<i>TOYOTA PRADO GXL (DCEO)</i>	25,884kms	28,582kms

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND WELLBEING REPORT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

What a year 2023 has been with three very different, but major events bringing in 400 - 500 people to Westonia for each event. We have run up to 20 community activities/classes/information sessions per month since June thanks to Wellbeing Officers Kerry Hermon and Emily Menz. We have assisted in creating and developing Westonia CRC and Westonia Aged Care.

We are looking forward to the new challenges 2024 will bring, but for now we are going to take a well earned break for a week or two through January. Activities will wind down, though will still continue, on a smaller scale through January. We aim to catch up on some planning and grant writing to bring us into the New year.

Grant applications & award nominations submitted:

Grant opportunities to be sought through December - February to go towards Wellbeing programs and events for 2024

Future grant opportunities & award nominations:

- Department of LG, Sport & Cultural Industries – Active Regional Communities Grants (up to \$5000) categories; Capacity building, Event hosting and Participation. Applications open all year.
- Healthways and Lottery West

WELLBEING REPORT

Age Care

With the assistance of Kate from Alchemy Technology, Lani & Stacey have completed the November claim from Services Australia. Our Client base is continuing to grow and the Service requirements are rising with it. More of our clients are choosing to take up regular services and with growing confidence in our service, are increasing the number of services they require from their packages.

Our Clients through January will still receive their services. However over the Christmas/New Year break, for clients who have higher needs, we have made other arrangements for them during this period.

Westonia Home Care Services Clients: 14

Clients approved for HC package and waiting to sign up: 1

Clients waiting for ACAT approvals and to join Westonia HCS: ?

Clients moving from another Provider: 0

Staff delivering services: 10

Services: Administration and Package management, Cleaning and Household tasks, Medical, Personal Care, Social Support, Support work, Gardening & Maintenance

Continuing to deliver Meals on Wheels thanks to Ramelius Resources, Northern Rise for catering services and Lani Hale, Emilie Menze, Kerry Hermon, Liz Richter for donating their time to deliver three days a week. Currently have 10 people on board receiving meals.

Community activities and resources

November Activities:

1st Movie – Heart of a Champion & Lunch @ Gallery 6 pax

2nd Water Aerobics 4pax

6th Water Aerobics 1pax

7th Melbourne Cup at the Stadium 40pax

- 9th Bingo 3Pax
- 10th Plonk and Donk Crochet – Cancelled due to Harvest
- 13th Water Aerobics 4pax
- 14th Scrabble - 4pax
- 15th Pauline Guest talking recycling 6pax
- 16th Bingo 5pax
- 21st Scrabble – 4Pax
- 22nd Water Aerobics 3pax
- 23rd Bingo 8Pax
- 28th Scrabble 5Pax
- 29th International day of Fairy Bread Morning tea 1 Pax, Water Aerobics 4pax
- 30th Bingo 7Pax

Upcoming events and projects

Pauline Guest talks Recycling, Seniors Christmas Lunch, Shire end of year Christmas party, Various workshops, Activities and outings, Car boot sale, Movies & Wandering Tours.

WESTONIA TOURIST PARK

The 2024 tourist season has been a little quiet at times this could have been due to the dry winter we had this year and the lack of wildflowers on display that bring the tourist in droves, however we have had multiple visitors returning and making Westonia a frequent stop in their travel itinerary.

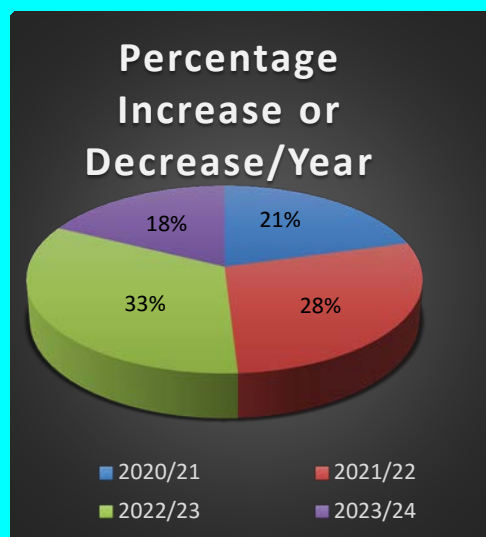
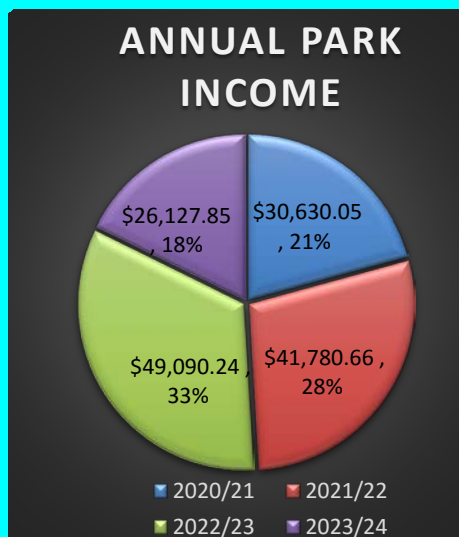
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

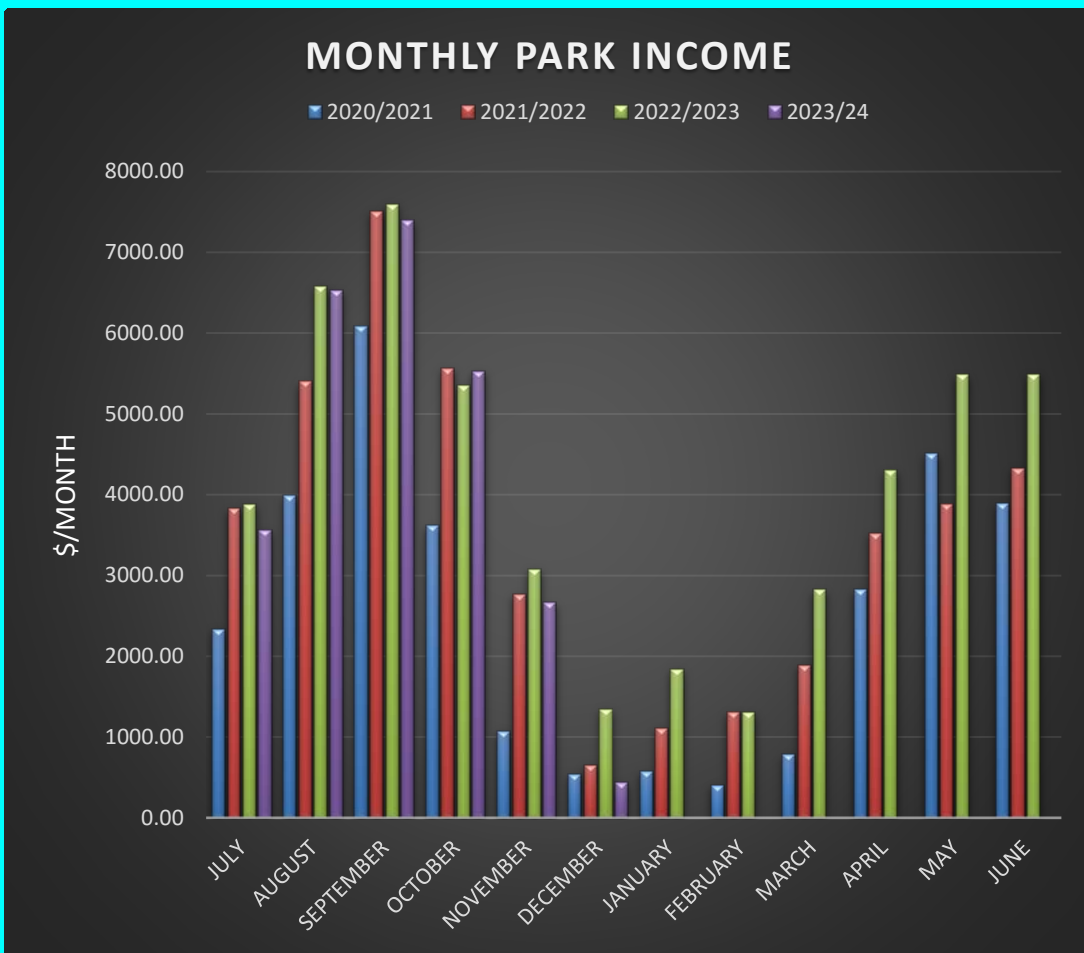
- Various minor repairs and maintenance ongoing. Focal area being bathroom maintenance (fixtures and disabled bathroom upgrade)
- Disabled toilet drainage will need some major work as tree roots have made their way into the pipes.

FUTURE PROJECTS

- Permanent signage required to say “If office is unattended, please ring the caretakers phone or Shire office alternatively you can visit the Shire office during business hours Monday to Friday to complete your booking”.
- Overflow – new signs needed for sites and information sign needed to describe who to ring or see to book in and outline that you must un-hook. Defined bays might be a good idea for this area.

STATISTICS





HOOD-PENN MUSEUM

The Muesum has had a great season with everyone visiting thoroughly enjoying the experience many returning with friends and family who had not yet been out to visit, the farm scene has been a work in progress with a quirky addition soon to be installed on the out side of the museum keep a look out for it. A thankyou lunch was held for all the museums wonderful volunteers. These volunteers give nine months of the year so visitors can enjoy and learn about Westonia and its history, Our volunteers are an integral part to the success of our little gem in the town and they are so greatly valued and appreciated. We all look forward to what 2024 has install for us.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

- Various minor repairs and maintenance ongoing

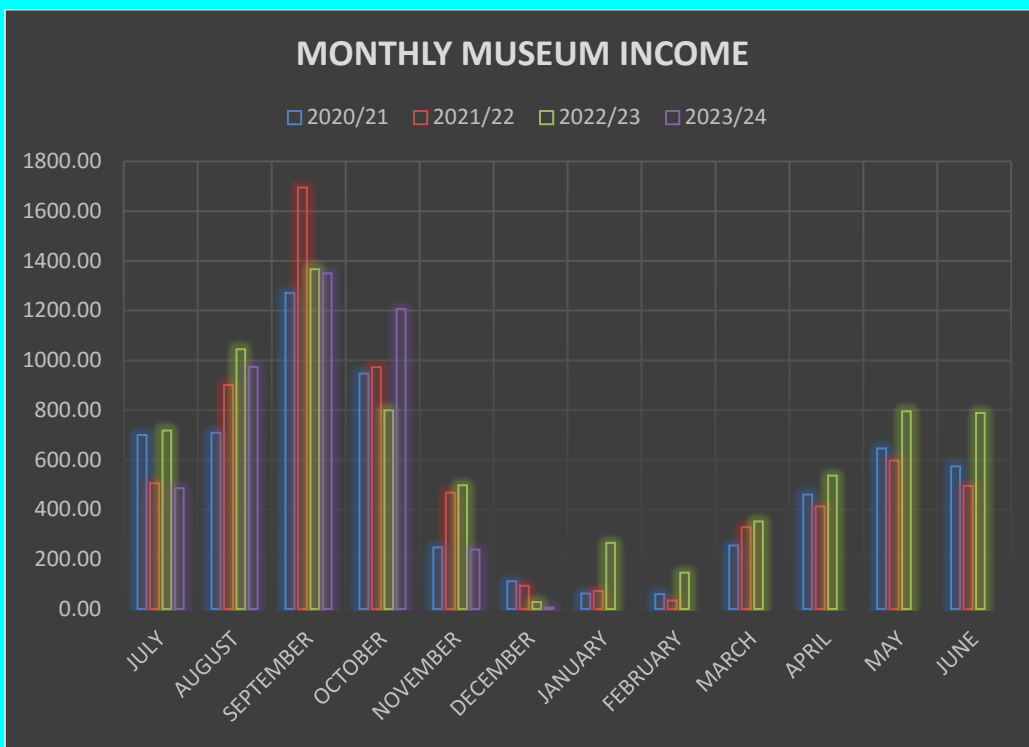
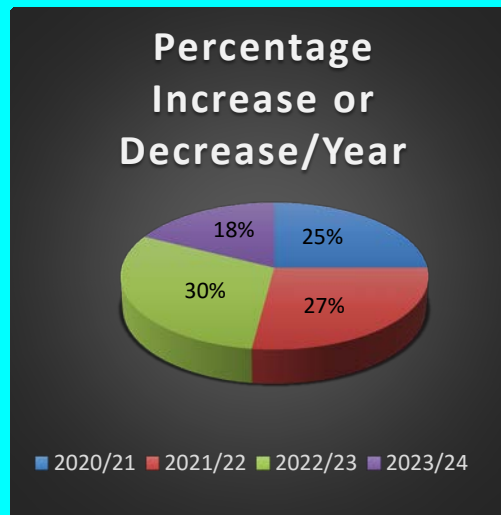
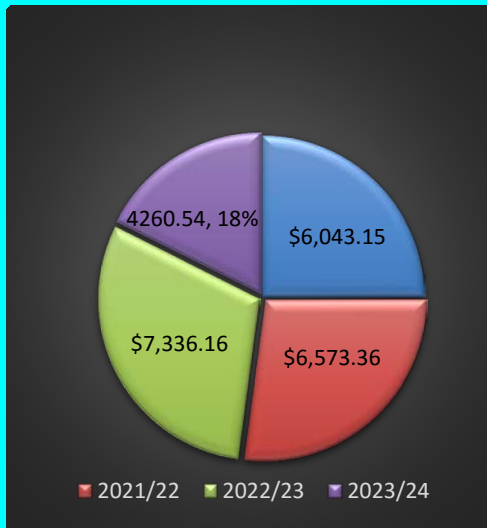
RECENT PROJECTS

- Old Truck modification for farming scene and Back drop in-place.

FUTURE PROJECTS

- New scenes to be created in the existing space of the old storage room to tell the stories of our primary industries of which Westonia was founded on.
-

STATISTICS





WHEATBELT CASH FOR CONTAINERS

3 BENSON ROAD, MERREDIN

PHONE: 0429 467 178

CASHFORCONTAINERS@OUTLOOK.COM



WESTONIA TOWNSITE RESIDENTIAL COLLECTION SCHEDULE 2024

TUESDAY 16 JANUARY

TUESDAY 13 FEBRUARY

TUESDAY 12 MARCH

TUESDAY 16 APRIL

TUESDAY 14 MAY

TUESDAY 11 JUNE

TUESDAY 16 JULY

TUESDAY 13 AUGUST

TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY 15 OCTOBER

TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER

TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER

PUT BIN OUT BY 8.30AM ON COLLECTION DAY PLEASE

IT IS BECAUSE OF THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE SHIRE OF
WESTONIA AND WESTONIA PROGRESS ASSOCIATION THAT WE ARE ABLE TO
OFFER THIS INNOVATIVE SERVICE. THANK YOU.



SHIRE OF
WESTONIA
A vibrant community lifestyle





RICK WILSON MP

Federal Member for O'Connor

16 November 2023

Honourable Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Minister.Butler@health.gov.au

Dear Minister

Nurse Practitioners are a valuable asset to the medical profession, and I believe they play a critical primary care role in rural, regional and remote communities like those of O'Connor, where it is challenging to secure and retain the permanent services of GP's, pharmacists and other medical professionals.

However, the current Nurse Practitioner Pilot program in WA which has been co-developed by the WA Department of Health and their federal counterpart, seems destined to fail our remote and disadvantaged remote communities due to the apparent mismatch of available Nurse Practitioners (NP's) and eligible supporting medical practices in demonstrated areas of need.

By way of example, I cite the small Wheatbelt community of Westonia, 310 kilometres east of Perth, and 50 kilometres from the nearest medical centre in Merredin. The pro-active Shire of Westonia have worked hard to retain an incredibly well-qualified and much-loved NP, Laura Black. The Shire have provided her with consulting rooms, administrative support and a salary for some years now. For two of those years WAPHA provided around \$40,000 per annum to fund the health services provided by Laura, which were supported by monthly visits from the Royal Flying Doctor Service clinician Dr Olga Ward.

Laura has been successful in securing one of the 20 WA NP Pilot positions, but unfortunately the Shire of Westonia was not successful in their application to be the supporting body in conjunction with RFDS/Dr Ward.

Laura has subsequently been "matched" with an Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation, Bega Garnbirringu Health Service (*Bega*) which is based in Kalgoorlie 250 kilometres away from where she resides. Whilst *Bega* is a reputable and efficient organisation, it is my belief it is well-staffed with medical professionals, including NP's, who provide comprehensive city-based Aboriginal health services to the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and outreach health services to some of the most remote Aboriginal communities of O'Connor.

Kalgoorlie Office 345 Hannan St, PO Box 10415, Kalgoorlie WA 6430 Phone 08 9021 2044 Fax 08 9021 2033

Albany Office Shop 5, The Link, St Emilie Way, PO Box 5077, Albany WA 6330 Phone 08 9842 2777 Fax 08 9842 2577

Web www.rickwilson.com.au **Email** rick.wilson.mp@aph.gov.au **Facebook** RickWilsonMP

Unfortunately, accepting this opportunity with *Bega* is logistically impossible for Laura, and consequently neither she nor the Shire, nor the surrounding Wheatbelt communities have the prospect of continuity of NP care for existing and future patients.

Ironically this is at complete odds with a response Dr Ward received following her appeals to the NP Pilot/Primary Care Team: *Specifically, the aim of the NP Pilot is to determine what funding levels and structures are required to enable NPs to deliver free services to primary care patients, particularly for priority and disadvantaged populations.*

I hope this letter may help inform decisions on future Nurse Practitioner funding going forward.

Yours sincerely

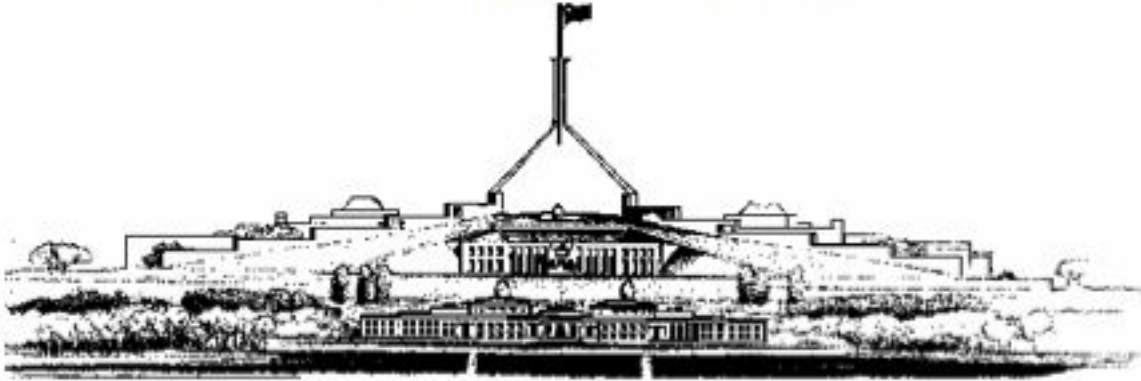


RICK WILSON MP
Federal Member for O'Connor
Shadow Assistant Minister for Trade



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

O'Connor Electorate: Health Care

SPEECH

Tuesday, 28 November 2023

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Tuesday, 28 November 2023 Page 91 Questioner Speaker Wilson, Rick MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Mr RICK WILSON (O'Connor) (19:40): Delivering first-class health care in the bush is always a challenge and, with an electorate spanning over 1.1 million square kilometres of regional, rural and remote Western Australia, O'Connor has had its share of health hits and misses in 2023. First a hit: last Tuesday I was privileged to speak, along with the assistant minister, who is here with us tonight, at the opening of the Goldfields University Department of Rural Health, a satellite campus of Curtin University co-located in the legendary WA School of Mines, in Kalgoorlie. This opening was a culmination of many years of lobbying by Curtin University, in particular by Professor Helen McCutcheon, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Health Sciences, and Vice-Chancellor Harlene Hayne. I'm proud to have played a small role in securing \$13 million for Curtin through the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program.

The Goldfields UDRH currently hosts metropolitan students for residential placements in nursing and occupational therapy and supports Goldfields allied health students in realising their dreams of a tertiary education close to home and community. The UDRH will also play a critical role in attracting health professionals to the Goldfields and growing a strong and capable local allied health workforce. I commend Curtin University and their project partners, the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (Western Operations) and the WA Country Health Service, who together with Bega Garnbirringu Aboriginal health service are embarking on a new journey in health education provision for the greater Goldfields.

Finally, I take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Helen McCutcheon on her retirement and thank her for seeing this project through to fruition. Helen, I hope you can retire secure in the legacy of an allied healthcare training pipeline that will benefit the Goldfields for a long time into the future.

Now to a miss: the northern Goldfields town of Laverton is home to one of the most remote hospitals in O'Connor and the country. It services the town and many mine sites, pastoral stations and remote Aboriginal communities between Laverton and the tri-state border. On 3 April 2019, the coalition government committed \$16.8 million to rebuild Laverton Hospital, which was no longer fit for purpose. Over four years later, not even a single sod has been turned, and the WA Labor government continues to make excuses for why this federal funding has not been spent.

On ABC Radio recently, Laverton Shire President Patrick Hill asked Premier Cook directly when exactly this hospital would be built. Premier Cook acknowledged that the project had been delayed under his watch as health minister in the name of budget repair, and the shire had been very understanding at that time. Now the excuse is that they can't find a tenderer, and the budget has apparently blown out to over \$30 million. But, despite the shire tipping in an extra \$4 million, the project remains at a standstill. Tonight I urge Premier Cook to make good on his long-overdue commitment to deliver a much-needed hospital service to Laverton and the community beyond.

Another miss: a headspace for the Warren-Blackwood region was promised by the coalition government back in 2022 after years of lobbying by the Blackwood Youth Action group, chaired by Dr Sarah Youngson. This Labor government did not honour that promise, despite clear indications that the communities of the region were in crisis, with youth suicide rates in Manjimup up to 50 per cent higher than the state average. The WA Primary Health Alliance recognised the unmet need for local youth mental health services, and BYA demonstrated the professional capacity in the region to support a headspace. I joined BYA in making separate appeals to Minister Butler, who, despite commending BYA on their terrific work, did not offer funding certainty—only platitudes that their youth in crisis could access eheadspace or travel over 120 kilometres to the nearest face-to-face headspace. I urge Minister Butler to pay more than just lip service to BYA and put the Warren-Blackwood region on a priority list for mental health funding before young lives are tragically lost.

I close with a mixed hit and miss. Nurse practitioners are an amazing asset to the medical profession, being able to consult, diagnose, prescribe and write referrals. The Wheatbelt Shire of Westonia has an accomplished, popular and award-winning local nurse practitioner who recently secured a place through the federal government nurse

practitioner pilot program. Unfortunately, despite providing medical premises, a regular stipend and monthly support from a visiting doctor, the Shire of Westonia has not secured their bid to be a provider. Instead, their nurse practitioner has been matched with an Aboriginal health service 250 kilometres away in the Goldfields. This nonsensical mismatch will see the shire lose a valued medical practitioner after 11 years of faithful service to her community. I once again call on Minister Butler to address how this pilot can better meet the needs of communities who don't have a doctor but do want to support the services of their capable nurse practitioner.

From: [Bill Price](#)
To: [Chantelle Pedrotti](#)
Subject: FW: Growing Regions Program - Round 1 application
Date: Wednesday, 13 December 2023 1:47:16 PM

Bulletin

From: Mail@business.gov.au <Mail@business.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2023 11:41 PM
To: Bill Price <ceo@westonia.wa.gov.au>
Subject: Growing Regions Program - Round 1 application

This email was automatically generated. Please do not reply to it.

SHIRE OF WESTONIA

Your reference no: GRIEOI000196

Growing Regions Program - Round 1 - application

Thank you for your Growing Regions Program - Round 1 application.

The Growing Regions Program was highly competitive and a large number of Expressions of Interest (EOIs) were received for Round 1. As this is a competitive grant opportunity, a successful application had to rate highly against the Stage One – EOI assessment criteria and against other applications in this round. Consistent with the grant opportunity guidelines, projects were assessed and ranked on how strongly the project aligns with the regional priorities for the area to be invited for Stage Two of the application process. As part of this assessment only the highest-ranking applications were invited to submit a Stage Two - Full Application. Unfortunately, your application was not successful in this round. All unsuccessful applicants from Round 1 are encouraged to reapply for the Growing Regions Program Round 2 to be announced in 2024. Decisions are final and will not be reviewed. Please refer to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts website www.infrastructure.gov.au and GrantConnect to keep updated on when Growing Regions Program - Round 2 will open.

Thank you for your interest in the Growing Regions Program - Round 1 grant opportunity and for taking the time to apply.

If you have any questions, you can email us at Growing.Regions@industry.gov.au and a member of the team will be in contact with you.

You can also visit [GrantConnect](#) for other current and forecast Australian Government grant opportunities that you may be eligible for.

Department of Industry, Science and Resources

business.gov.au 13 28 46 (8am - 8pm local time, Monday to Friday)

We recognise the First Peoples of this nation and their ongoing connection to culture and country. We acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living culture and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

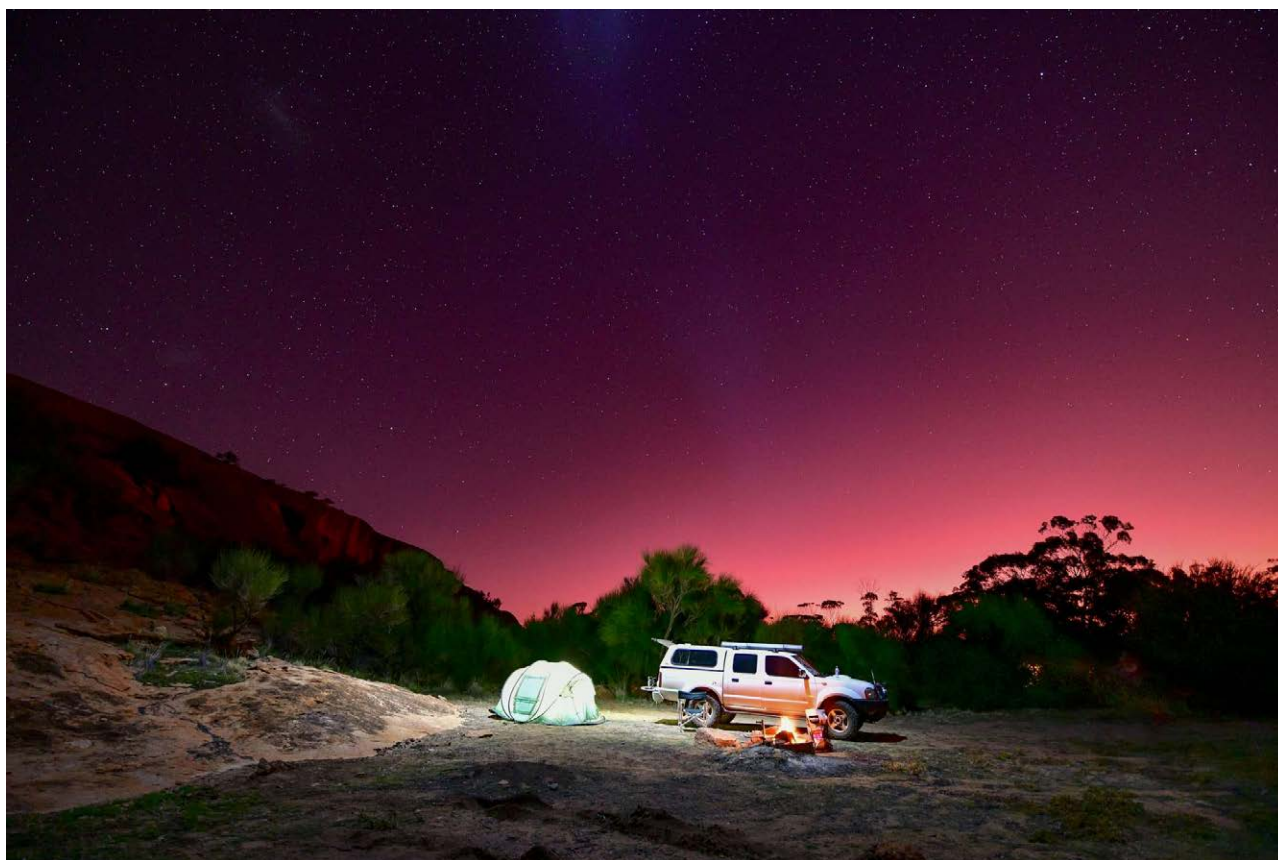
Bill Price
Chief Executive Officer

41 Wolfram Street, WESTONIA WA 6423
Phone: (08) 9046 7063
Fax: (08) 9046 7001



November 2023 Newsletter

All things tourism in the Shires of Dowerin, Koorda, Mt Marshall, Mukinbudin, Nungarin, Trayning, Westonia and Wyalkatchem.



Winner of the 2023 Wheatbelt Way Photo Competition taken by Lex Porebski

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP

At our recent AGM, we thanked Kim Storer from Koorda CRC who after six years stepped down as Chairperson of NEWTRAVEL and we welcomed Stacey Geier from the Shire of Westonia who is the incoming Chair.

MARKETING

NEWTRAVEL has again successfully implemented our annual marketing calendar. \$41,906.54 was spent on direct marketing initiatives for the Wheatbelt Way region which included:

- Attending consumer shows
- Re-printing the Wheatbelt Way Brochure and Guidebook
- Digital Marketing campaigns
- Press Advertising
- Storytowns Podcasts

NEWTRAVEL has adopted a 2023-2024 Marketing Plan to continue the marketing of the Wheatbelt Way.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

The Wheatbelt Tourism Working Group has continued to meet regularly to further progress the vision of exploring a collaborative partnership model that will enable a pathway to facilitate destination development in the Wheatbelt. Thank you to the WBN CRC Cluster for participating in collecting visitor data and engaging with us over the last few months to help inform us on how we can continue to improve and support Visitor Information Points across the Wheatbelt.

VISITOR SNAPSHOT REPORT

The November 2023 Wheatbelt Way Visitor Snapshot report is available to [view here](#). For our reporting purposes, the calendar year is 1 November 2022 to 31 October 2023. A total of 13,833 visitors stayed an average of 1.5 nights in a Wheatbelt Way community in 2023, spending approximately \$1,950,453.00 of money in our communities. This year 441 fewer visitors stayed in local government caravan parks in the Wheatbelt Way compared to 2022. This is the second year in a row that we have seen an overall decline in visitor numbers, but overall we are pleased as there is still an increase in visitors when compared to pre-COVID (2019) visitor data to the Wheatbelt Way.

NEXT MEETING

The next NEWTRAVEL meeting is on **Thursday 29th February 2024, at 10 am in Trayning** and all members and stakeholders are welcome. If you would like any assistance or further information on anything Wheatbelt Tourism please also feel free to reach out to me.

Linda Vernon

Tourism Officer, Wheatbelt Way

E: linda@wheatbeltway.com.au

29 November 2023

Investing in WA's electricity network

As WA progresses towards net zero, Western Power is preparing our electricity network to support industry and the community in reaching their decarbonisation goals.

To facilitate this once-in-a-generation transition, I'm thrilled to share that Premier Roger Cook recently announced an investment of \$708M to Western Power to enhance the existing transmission network for future renewable generation.

The benefits of this major investment are phenomenal. Not only does this work have the potential to reduce emissions by around 2.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum and pave the way for how we increase the power flow to our communities and industry, it has the potential to create significant opportunity for communities – particularly regional communities.

We understand WA's accelerated pathway towards decarbonisation and the important role our network plays in enabling industry and the community to achieve their decarbonisation goals. That's why earlier in the year we refreshed our corporate strategy to acknowledge the collective effort involved in this exciting and challenging phase of WA's energy transition and our ongoing drive to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Our new vision, *Working together to power a cleaner energy future*, is underpinned by our commitment to people and safety, transmission network growth, distribution transformation, reliable supply and efficient customer service, and business and financial sustainability.

As our transmission network undergoes expansions and upgrades to meet the decarbonisation agenda, Western Power will remain firmly focused on continuing the maintenance and upgrades to our existing network required to improve distribution reliability and resilience to increasing climate change impacts. This includes continued investment in undergrounding in urban areas, and in stand-alone power systems and micro-grids in some regional areas.

Community consultation is paramount in achieving mutually beneficial outcomes, and we're committed to working closely with you, our key stakeholders, and the community throughout this energy transition. I look forward to collaborating and sharing this exciting journey with you as we continue to successfully deliver a cleaner energy future for the community.

For more information on Western Power's network upgrade projects, please visit our [website](#).

Yours sincerely

Sam Barbaro
Chief Executive Officer



363 Wellington Street Perth 6000
GPO Box L921 Perth WA 6842
westernpower.com.au



† 13 10 87
f (08) 9225 2660
TTY 1800 13 13 51
TIS 13 14 50

Electricity Networks Corporation
ABN: 18 540 492 861

Community Engagement

Concerns raised:

- The program does not seem to engage each individual community to give a true indication of what life is like living here. Every town has a different story to tell. The itinerary is much more regimented and doesn't seem to allow interaction with the general community as much as it has done in years gone by.
- We want to be able to show off our rec centres and local sporting activities. We want to be able to show off our aquatic facilities and let the students engage with our swim clubs. Sport is a huge part of living in the region.
- Understanding that there is limited time and certain requirements for the program, if there is an opportunity to lessen the tight schedule and allow more time to see the community it would give the students a much more genuine experience. We want to show how diverse our communities are in race, culture, age, education, and occupations. And we want to be able to, in an informal setting, talk to the students about why we choose to live here and let them believe what we say by what they see.

Questions asked:

- If there is scope to, can we include a sport-based or social activity in the itinerary (e.g., basketball, swimming, bowls) in each town?
- Is there a possibility of having the students attend a playgroup to talk to mothers about their experiences of having a baby and accessing care for their children when living in a regional area.
- Would it be possible to have the students talk with staff at the schools to better understand their journey? Many are originally from the metro area and have moved out to the region for work and chosen not to leave.

RHW/UND response: We would love to have a social/sporting activity incorporated into the itinerary. The best time for this is the Tuesday afternoon. This would be a great way to introduce the students to their billet families. It would also be a good opportunity for the students to interact with other members of the community and hear their stories. We would also like to continue with the town tours as part of the itinerary as a way of showing off the facilities in each community. There is scope to send some students to a playgroup instead of all attending the primary school for the teddy bear hospital session.

Actions: Each Shire will be responsible for coordinating a social/sporting activity for the Tuesday afternoon. RHW will incorporate this into the itinerary once the details are confirmed.

Student interactions with billet families

Concerns raised:

- We have heard from billet families that sometimes the students do not interact with the families. This is not all the time, but it has made at least some billets choose not to participate again after having a few experiences where students stay in their room/don't speak much or go out with other billet students rather than interacting with the family.
- There appears to be a fair amount of judgement that is brought to host families and that seems to be what has now deterred some families from volunteering. We are tight knit communities and people talk. People that have not hosted before will hear about the experience's others have had and it will continue to get harder to find volunteers.

Questions asked:

- How do you prepare billet families and students on what to expect?

- How do you match families and students?

RHW/UND response: Students need to be willing to embrace the experience but hosts also need to understand that the students come from very different backgrounds. Expectations of behaviour for the students is clearly set out in a briefing the week before the program. Hosts and students receive an email of introduction and are given detail of the program and what to expect during their visit. Students are expected to call their host before the visit to introduce themselves. In preparation for the visit the students also complete, in their first week, a population study on the Wheatbelt to give them some understanding of the region.

Actions: RHW will send a copy of the billets that have been recruited so far. Shire's will review the lists and identify any other potential families that they think might be willing to host students and speak with them directly.

Debrief

Concerns raised:

- When we have a debrief, we would like what we say to actually be valued. At the moment it feels like it is just ticked off as a job to do.

Questions asked:

- Is there scope to have a debrief with WEROC after the program so that we have an opportunity to directly raise any thoughts or concerns rather than having to relay these through our Executive Officer or Shire staff?

RHW/UND response: Yes. The debrief we currently run includes all academic and support staff as well as Shire staff so it can be difficult to capture all the information. Holding a debrief with WEROC separate to this, is a good idea.

Actions: WEROC EO will liaise with RHW and UND to arrange a time in late March/early April for a debrief.

Cultural Engagement Activities

Concerns raised:

- Cultural engagement activities seem to be a huge focus of the program but for some of our towns the few Aboriginal people who live here are not originally from the area and are not able to speak as representatives. The work around to this is that students stop in other towns for this element of the program. In the past some students have questioned why we have not done more regarding cultural awareness/information in our own town, so I am not sure that this is communicated very well to students.
- There have been instances where an elder has been asked to speak with the students but it is not the right elder and it has created conflict in the community.

Suggestions:

- Can we be more transparent with students about why cultural engagement might be limited in some communities.
- Can the person responsible for organising cultural engagement activities please liaise with the Shire's so that we can ensure they are speaking with the right representatives from our community.

RHW/UND response: We will try to make it clearer to students in their briefing, why cultural engagement is not the same in each town. The UND staff member responsible for organising the cultural engagement activities will be asked to communicate with the Shires.

Farm visits

Concerns raised:

- We are explicitly asked to organise farm visits and given a suggested list of questions the farmers should try to answer. We have had some students appearing to be visibly distressed and others who have disengaged from the tour (i.e., returned to the bus) when dealing with farms animals, particularly seeing sheep being shorn or in pens.
- To avoid future incidences of students being distressed by the on-farm experiences, should there be more specific parameters around what the students can/should be shown?

**Note. This concern was not actually discussed in the meeting.*