

# WHEATBELT CONFERENCE

# 18

SMALL TOWNS, BIG DREAMS: TRANSITIONING REGIONAL ECONOMIES

5-6 APRIL 2018 | JURIE BAY SPORT & RECREATION CENTRE



**REPORT TO THE YORK SHIRE COUNCIL  
BY COUNCILLOR KEVIN TRENT**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM

THURSDAY, 5 APRIL 2018

11.30 - 12.15pm	<b>REGISTRATIONS AND LUNCH</b> Jurien Bay Sport & Recreation Centre
12.15 - 12.45pm	<b>CONFERENCE OPENING</b> <b>MS SUE CAMPBELL</b> Master of Ceremonies <b>WELCOME TO COUNTRY</b> <b>MR CHARLIE SHAW</b> <b>WELCOME TO SHIRE OF DANDARAGAN</b> A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE SHIRE OF DANDARAGAN
12.45 - 1.00pm	<b>PRESIDENT OR REPRESENTATIVE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION</b> <i>Current Issues Within Local Government</i>
1.00 - 2.00pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER - MR BARRY UROUHART</b> <i>Changes, Challenges and New Opportunities</i>
2.00 - 2.30pm	<b>MS TRISTY FAIRFIELD</b> New Projects and Stakeholder Relations, Carnegie Clean Energy <i>Future Proofing the Wheatbelt - The Role of Renewable Energy and Battery Storage</i>
2.30 - 3.00pm	<b>MR IAN MCCABE</b> Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Wyalkatchem <i>Fixing Communications the NEWROC Way</i>
3.00 - 3.15pm	<b>MR DARREN LEE</b> Managing Director, Market Creations <i>Embracing the E-Change</i>
3.15 - 3.45pm	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>
3.45 - 4.15pm	<b>HON DAVID TEMPLEMAN DIP TCHG BED MLA</b> Minister for Local Government, Heritage, Culture and The Arts <i>Current Issues in Local Government - The Minister's Perspective</i>
4.15 - 4.45pm	<b>MR KEN HOOPER</b> Secretary, CEACA <i>Innovations in the Delivery of Regional Housing for an Ageing Population - the CEACA Experience</i>
4.45 - 5.15pm	<i>Local Leadership in Dandaragan - A Panel of Local Leaders</i>
Evening	<b>CONFERENCE DINNER</b>

# CONFERENCE PROGRAM

FRIDAY, 6 APRIL 2018

9.00 - 9.30am	<b>MS JO DRAYTON</b> Wheatbelt Suicide Prevention Coordinator <i>Why Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Business</i>
9.30 - 10.00am	<b>MS BRIANNA PEAKE</b> General Manager (Grower and External Relations) CBH <i>Improving Mental Health</i>
10.00 - 10.30am	<b>MS REBECCA TOMKINSON</b> Chair, Wheatbelt Development Commission
10.30 - 11.00am	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>
11.00 - 12.00pm	<b>REPRESENTATIVE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSURANCE SERVICES</b> <i>Contemporary Local Government Issues – A Matter of Risk</i>
12.00 - 12.30pm	<b>MR STEVE JOSKE CSC</b> State Recovery Coordinator, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) <i>Future Directions for Recovery in Western Australia</i>
12.30 - 1.00pm	<b>MR BARRY URQUHART</b> <i>The Next BIG Steps - Formulate, Document, Implement</i>
1.00 - 1.15pm	<b>CONFERENCE CLOSE</b> <b>CR JAN COURT</b> President, Avon-Midland Country Zone

## PARTNERS PROGRAM

The Shire of Dandaragan have kindly put together a delightful Partners Program - the details are enclosed separately.

Peruse this great opportunity and contact the Shire of Dandaragan to sign up.

## PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT

### Arriving Early?

Then join us for an informative bus tour of the highlights of the vibrant Jurien Bay area, commencing at 10am from the Jurien Bay Sport & Recreation Centre, on Thursday 5 April 2018.

## 2018 Wheatbelt Conference

The 2018 Wheatbelt Conference was held in the coastal resort of Jurien Bay over the period 5 - 6 April 2018 in the Jurien Bay Sport and Recreation Centre.

Many of the presentations given by the speakers can be seen on the website

<http://www.dandaragan.wa.gov.au/tourism/wb-18-speaker-presentations.aspx>

The theme of the conference was Small Towns, Big Dreams, Transitioning Regional Economics. I believe the conference was an important venue for sharing ideas and programs.

The conference commenced after lunch on Thursday with the Welcome to Country and a welcome to the Shire of Dandaragan.

The President of the Western Australian Local Government Association, Cr Lynne Craigie addressed the delegates on the current issues within Local Government. Cr Craigie brought news of the progress on the updating of the Local Government Act and the need for Councils to provide feedback to WALGA and the Department. Cr Craigie also promoted training being offered to elected members by WALGA, all subjects leading up to the "student" being awarded a Diploma in Local Government.

Barry Urquhart, the keynote speaker developed his suggestion that the Wheatbelt Region needs to create a theme or item which will draw tourists not only from overseas but also from the Metropolitan area.

This session was titled Changes, Challenges and New Opportunities.

Barry recommended that Councils should be Bold, Daring and Different so that they were unique and could attract visitors with the obvious benefit to the businesses in the town.

Local Government should also be prepared to accept Change, be prepared for the Challenges and grasp Opportunities when they arise. He advised that Council with a well planned and action list which has been shared with the community should reject criticism, it is what the community wants and nay-sayers have no place in a forward thinking Local Government. There needs to be a change of attitude which will come from consultation with change - management consultants. However, the community need to be on side.

Refreshing ideas are to be encouraged. They will build up expectations and improve the image that the Council wishes to project, thus taking the community on board so all have a new expectation.

The Shire of York has many items of interest but do the business houses share and use those points to promote themselves both in the Shire and out to the visitors who will visit.

The Shire needs to attract travellers, especially caravanners from the Eastern States as they make their way towards the West. There needs to be signs directing travellers to take the Goldfields Road from the Great Eastern Highway to visit York where the redeveloped

24 hour caravan park will provide a venue for the visitors to rest and take in the sites of interest in York.

To attract these visitors to stay, the business houses need to be open when the customers require services. While Beverley, Northam and the service station at the Lakes have fuel available 24 hours a day it does not help York in attracting motorists to stop other than find that the two service stations in York are shut outside trading hours which were in fashion in the 1950s.

Care must be taken that expectations are not lifted without improving the level of service being offered.

The things which make York unique must be exploited. The story of York must be told, not only to visitors but also to new comers in the District. All can promote the rural life style.

Barry's address was aimed at all Local Governments in the Wheatbelt, he encouraged Councils to consider using the name Heartlands to give the region a fresh perspective. I have focussed on the things that that the Shires in the Avon Arc can do to promote themselves. While there will be occasions when each council is working to attract visitors e.g. activities over long weekends it is an opportunity to work together and create an memorable experience for the visitors.

In times gone by, signs had been erected along the Great Southern Highway advertising Ballooning, Sky Diving Paragliding and Parachuting as events in the Avon Valley. But the customer's expectations should not be raised if they cannot be satisfied. He pointed out that it is important to maintain the Brand and continue promoting the virtues of the District. These Shires have a diverse history, York being the first inland town with its links to the goldrush which expanded dramatically as the prospectors headed to Kalgoorlie and surrounds.

Ms Tristy Fairfield spoke after Brian and brought information on Future Proofing the Wheatbelt - the Role of Renewable Energy and Battery Storage.

This featured the Solar Farm being developed at Northam and suggested that Local Governments, with small centres of population, can generate sufficient power from solar collectors and wind power to supply all residents and feed into the State Grid. While this may be a few years away it is a feasible proposition.

Ian McCabe of the Shire of Wyalkatchem spoke of the way that the Shire and other members of NEWROC set about solving issues created by poor communications within the area.

Mr Darren Lee, the Managing Director of Market Creations gave a presentation on the opportunities for persons wanting to escape to the country to carry on in their chosen career by using electronic communications. Not only do these persons contribute to the community but they bring skills to the rural areas not previously available. York was seen as a town which will embrace e-change. He suggested that Local Governments use twitter, face book as well as notices in the local papers to keep their communities informed.

The Hon David Templeman MLA, Minister for Local Government addressed the gathering on the Minister's Perspective. He saw a future in Cultural Tourism. During his address he spoke on Local Government Review, waste container collection, the Government's approach on puppy farming and the Auditor General's Finance and Performance and the work of WALGA in keeping him informed on issues facing local governments.

The final speaker before a panel discussion and the Conference dinner was Mr Ken Hooper, Secretary of CEACA, who addressed the conference delegates on Innovations in the Delivery of Regional Housing for an Aging Population. Using Commonwealth funds CEACA have managed to provide houses for the aged across the local governments in the group. These provide independent living accommodation for local residents in rental units.

During the Panel Discussion Garrick Yandle from the Shire of Dandaragan provided an update on the Secondary Freight Routes in the Wheatbelt and the role they play following the development of Strategic Receival Points for handling resulting in larger trucks carrying grain from the farm to the SRPs. The closing of the Tier Three railways and the use of agricultural lime to improve the fertility of farms has resulted in greater reliance on the secondary freight routes by Random Access Vehicles pulling larger trailers.

Garrick gave a detailed coverage of the need to improve the secondary freights routes now that CBH have established their SRPs and eliminated many of their smaller bins resulting in producers having to carry their grains further to the SRPs. The production of stock feed for export also resulted in an increase in the size and weight of vehicles using roads, many of which were not built to carry the volume and capacity of the modern trucks.

The outcome of the review and assessment of the requirements of the secondary freight routes will see:-

- an interconnected road network
- delivering economic benefits and
- improved road safety on Local Government roads.

Catering for the Conference dinner and other meals was provided by the local P&C. They did well.

The second day of the Conference began with Anthony Quahe of Civic Legal, one of the Conference sponsors. He gave conference attendees with information on the services that his company can provide Councils.

Jo Drayton, the Suicide Prevention Coordinator with Holyoake brought some sad facts about suicide and the Suicide Prevention Strategy being presented to the 43 Local Councils, one person per day in Western Australia takes their life and the impact this has on the community. She gave advice that for every "successful" attempt there are 20 who attempt to end their lives. First responders belong to the high risk group and there is a real need to debrief the personnel after an incident. Jo said that suicide prevention is every bodies business and

community training is required to respond to known situations, better to be proactive than reactive. Local Governments have a role to play due the closeness of their communities.

Jo suggested that Councils can be active, by employing a suicide prevention officer whose role is to provide training for the community members or passive with the "Are You OK" campaign. The Council HR Officer needs to be aware of the impact that depression has and can be a precursor to a suicide.

Pingelly Shire have a wellness plan.

Tanya's available on 0436 000 514 or jdrayton@holyoake.org.au

The following speaker, Ms Brianna Peake, General Manager (Grower and External Relations) of Cooperative Bulk Handling spoke on Improving Mental Health. Due to the important role CBH have in ensuring the economy of the State stays healthy they see that they have an important role to play in working with the community to support mental health.

CBH are working with farmers to ensure that the experiences of the farmers who have been in the business for a long time pass on their experiences to the younger farmers who have limited experiences in handling bad years.

Some facts about CBH are as follows:-

- CBH is the largest Co-operative in Australia and the third largest business.
- It is controlled by 4,200 grain grower members and is 100% Australian owned.
- During the peak period of harvest CBH Employs 2,700 employees, being the largest employer in the Wheatbelt.
- CBH is Australia's largest exporter of grain, shipping 90% of the grain grown to South East Asia.
- Generally CBH contributes \$3.5 billion into the Western Australian economy.

Rebecca Tomkinson, Chair of the Wheatbelt Development Commission addressed the audience on the "Wheatbelt Way". She highlighted the following facts about the Wheatbelt:-

\$7 billion produced in the Wheatbelt,

47% of the total value of agriculture,

700,000 visitors annually, from overseas and local tourists with nature based tourism expanding,

Rebecca said that the Wheatbelt is a global leader in Aged Care reform..

Ms Joanne Eggleston from LGIS spoke on the risks faced by Local Government extending from poor work practices through to mental health issues and how each risk should be dealt with before it becomes a major issue for the Council.

Steve Joske addressed the gathering on his role as State Recovery Coordinator from the Office of Emergency Management and Future Directions for Recovery in Western Australia.

While he spoke about rebuilding roads and infrastructure after a natural disaster he emphasised that the expectation was that the costs be shared and often the object was to restore the situation to the standard that existed before the disaster. This would not prevent Councils replacing an old wooden bridge with a new concrete structure because timber is difficult to locate and concrete structures are now accepted as the modern technology. A Council could not expect a sealed road to be funded when the damaged road was only a gravel road.

He spoke of a mutual obligation in restoring infrastructure and acknowledgement of capability gaps. Councils need to plan and then exercise to prepare for catastrophic events so there is minimal disruption to their communities and resilience within their organisation. He said that the State bureaucracy was cumbersome. This along with day labour not trained to deal with such situations and this lack of trained staff made it difficult to respond. In the case of damaged roads Main Road were required to assess the damage which held up it difficult to get on with repairing the damage. The reliance on contractors can limit response time especially when time is lost in marshalling the resources to deal with the situation.

While total costs cannot be met it is possible to obtain advances to start the work.

The National Disaster Relief and Recovery Assistance provides a National safety net to help through the major disasters. the Western Australian Disaster Relief and Recovery Assistance is the first point of contact for Local Governments. The challenge is being prepared for major weather events. As the arrangements stand there needs to be a review of the Commonwealth/State/Local Government processes with payments to Councils being based on actual costs and the State receiving funds based on estimates.

Barry Urquhart gave his second presentation titled "The next BIG Steps - Formulate. Document, Implement". He stressed that the issue to be faced in the Challenge to Change, requiring Councils to reach out and connect to their communities and to engage so that they come along and not miss the essential message and not get left behind.

He recommended that Councils plan for the long range but manage the current situation. It should be noted that long term view should not be forgotten by issues which come along, causing the long term view to be either forgotten or lost in the fog of minor issues which crop up on the journey.

To maintain the momentum the community must celebrate milestones achieved.

Councillor Jan Court, President of the Avon Midland Country Zone of WALGA closed the Conference, thanking all for attending and the Conference Master of Ceremonies Sue Campbell.

The Partners Program included a visit to the rock lobster fishing town of Cervantes with lunch and a visit to view wild flowers in the Mt Lesueur National Park on Thursday afternoon. This was followed by a trip to the Pinnacles on Friday morning.



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5-6 APRIL 2018

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WHEATBELT  
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Cr Denese  
Smythe  
Shire of York



**Report by Cr Denese Smythe**

I attended this two day conference from 5-6 April 2018 in Jurien Bay. The conference theme was Small Towns, Big Dream, Transitioning Regional Economies and had a full program with some very interesting speakers.

The first day commenced at 12.45pm

The master of ceremonies was Sue Campbell and the Keynote Speaker was Barry Urquhart.

On day one we were welcomed by the Shire of Dandaragan, Deputy Shire President after a great Welcome to Country was given by well known and respected local, Mr Charlie Shaw.

Cr Lynne Craigie, President, WALGA , then addressed the attendees and spoke about current issues within local government such as training for Councillors. Although Lynne supports Councillor training she said it would not be made mandatory.

Barry Urquhart presented a session about “Changes, Challenges and New Opportunities” Tourism was a topic he discussed and said it is not about pathways it needs to be a destination. The need is to think digital and International. Old information needs to be looked a through new perspectives and this then creates new information, YES - NOW- NEW Talked about what we are famous for - for instance York was the birthplace of Wesfarmers. Barry also suggested a name change from the Wheatbelt to Heartlands.

The next speaker was Tristy Fairfield from Carnegie Clean Energy. Tristy spoke about looking a renewable energy possibilities such as Solar batteries.

Ian McCabe the CEO of Shire of Wyalkatchem then talked about how NEWROC went out on their own to provide “Fixed Wireless” to help with the lack of communications in that area of the Wheatbelt, they used “Crisp Wireless”.

Darren Lee from Market Creations then talked to the attendees about Embracing the E-Change and using Facebook, Twitter etc to communicate with our communities.

Fiona Bush from Country - WA Primary Health Alliance talked about the grow local training initiative currently being supported by WAPHA.

After afternoon tea we were addressed by Hon David Templeman, Minister for Local Government, Heritage Culture and the Arts. Mr Templeman talked about the Local Government Review, Waste Container Collection, Infrastructure WA, Puppy Farming policy, the Auditor General Finance and Performance review and Partnerships with WALGA.

Ken Hooper from Merredin then talked about the experiences the CEACA group had with delivery of Regional Housing for Ageing Population. Although this project was previously approved for funding it was currently being held up by the new government and Alanah McTiernan and has therefore come to a standstill.

Garrick Yandle from the Shire of Dandaragan then provided us with an update on the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Routes.

Day one ended with a Conference dinner which was provided by the local P&C.

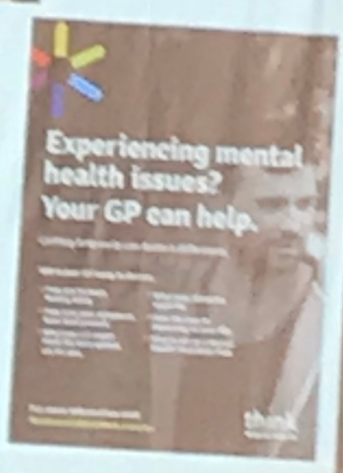
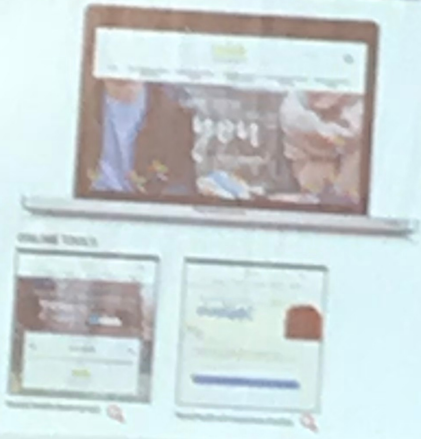
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Day two commenced with Anthony Quahe from Civil Legal providing us with some information about their service to Local Government.

Next we had a very informative session provided by Jo Drayton the Suicide Prevention Coordinator from Holyoake, Jo talked about how Suicide is Everyones Business and the alarming statistics across the Wheatbelt.



Think! Mental  
Health Campaign &  
Website  
[www.thinkmentalhealthwa.com.au](http://www.thinkmentalhealthwa.com.au)



This presentation was then followed by the CBH (Grower and External Relations) General Manager Ms Brianna Peake talking about how they play a role in the Community and Supporting Mental Health. Some facts:

CBH is Australia's largest Co-operative and 3rd largest private business

100% Australian owned and controlled by 4,200 WA grain grower members

One of the Wheatbelt's largest employer, with 2,700 employees regionally during peak harvest

CBH typically contributes \$3.5 billion to the state's economy annually

90% of grain from WA is exported to SE Asia

CBH is Australia's largest exporter of Grain

Rebecca Tomkinson, Chair Wheatbelt Development Commission talked about "The Wheatbelt Way" - she said that nearly \$7 billion was produced from the Wheatbelt, 47% of the total value of agriculture and that the Wheatbelt has 700,000 visitors annually. She also said that Nature Based tourism was expanding. Rebecca also said that the Wheatbelt is a global leader in aged care reform.

After morning tea Ms Joanne Eggleston from LGIS talked about the issues of Risk in local government.

Our next speaker was Steve Joske, the State Recovery Coordinator from the Office of Emergency Management. He talked about rebuilding of roads and how it is a shared obligation. He also told us that when rebuilding roads after a disaster, that the roads can be built back to how it was but using modern technology.

The last session was again Barry Urquhart, this session he talked about focusing on the destination - making a statement and extending it. Don't put it off. Reach out to the media and connect with young people, engage, do something new and innovative. What can we stop doing that is not making a difference.

Cr Jan Court in closing the conference thanked everyone for attending.

