Shire of Cranbrook, hosted
Regional Development Forum,
and EDA Economic Development Toolkit

23 / 24 October 2012 Cranbrook Western Australia
Introduction

The Shire of Cranbrook is located 300km south of Perth and 100km north of Albany Western Australia. It is predominantly an Agricultural and Viticultural based economy.

For the past 7 years the Shire of Cranbrook has been a leader in economic development in the Great Southern Region being the only Shire with an economic development practitioner. The council has had a positive economic focus and shows great vision for the future of the Cranbrook Shire. A great deal has been achieved in the past few years.

The Regional Development Forum and Economic Development Tool Kit event was conceived, not so much to gain information for Cranbrook, but to demonstrate what small communities are capable of achieving. This Shire and some of its surrounding neighbours were named in a desktop study by Professor Andrew Beer from Adelaide, as some of the most vulnerable in the country to climate change. The report is titled Beer, A., Tually, S., Kroehn, M. and Law, J. Australia’s Country Towns 2050: What Will a Climate Adapted Settlement Pattern Look Like? Cranbrook was named as the most vulnerable town in Western Australia. Following the release of this report some media articles appeared with headlines like “Death Knocks” and resultant cartoons. Local concerns were that this coverage would impact on the image of the area and its residents. This type of negative press may have had the ability to negate some of the development efforts being undertaken..

Within this background of the Shire of Cranbrook being a leader within the region on economic development it was decided to host a Regional Development Forum, to showcase all that can be achieved by small communities and this one in particular. The forum had been discussed for the two previous years and the timing seemed appropriate after the recent media. The forum was conceived by Shire President Jan Pope and put into place by Manager of Economic and Business development Cassandra Stipanicev.

The forum bought together some eminent speakers in their fields and will be discussed in the body of this report. EDA were invited to present their Economic Development Toolkit on day 2 for the many Shires in the region (and neighbouring regions) who do not yet have a practitioner. EDA National Board member Simon Millcock supported by EDA member Cassandra Stipanicev presented the toolkit.

The Regional Forum achieved a number of objectives,

- It highlighted the ability of small communities to deliver big outcomes.
- Promoted the Shire of Cranbrook and its leadership
- An issue emerged during the planning phase in relation to support of the forum and highlighted a need for greater belief in what these communities can achieve and the leadership provided in the region.
- It has opened discussion on regional leadership and forged tighter relationships between agencies and organisations
- The issue regional leadership has been highlighted and bought into general conversation
- The need for the region to have more Economic Development Officer’s and a greater understanding of what economic development is was also strongly articulated by the many Shires present.
• The Shire of Cranbrook was congratulated for the quality of the program it developed and presented and that the program was truly regional and not about Cranbrook but about Regional Development.

In all there were 68 people at the forum. The diversity of participants was very positive and noticed by a number of those attending. The group included;
• Shire presidents and CEO’s
• Private business owners
• CEO Chamber of Commerce
• RDA board members
• Development Commission staff
• Students
• Councilors

A number of industry sectors were represented
• Agriculture
• Viticulture and wine production
• Retail
• Service
• Government - Local, State and Federal
• Transport
• Health
• Banking and many others

Day 2 - Economic Development Toolkit,
Simon Millcock presented the toolkit and was supported by EDA member Cassandra Stipanicev which was a streamlined version of the EDA Regional and Remote Areas Training Program. This provided practical examples of the type of work and outcomes that practitioners can achieve. The toolkit built on the outcomes of the forum the day before and further reiterated the need for small local governments to have or at least have access to Economic Development Practitioners. 16 people attended the Toolkit, 14 from the previous day.

The Shire is delighted with the outcome of the Forum and Toolkit Workshop, and certainly showcased the region and this shire. It played a very low key role during the day with only the Shire president involved in discussion. Staff hosted and undertook other tasks but deliberately chose not to speak on the program to ensure a very regional and unbiased focus was maintained.

Regional Development Forum topics
Professors Helen and Colin Armstrong, Curtin University
Presented on Network Science. How understanding the science behind networks can help us to identify where issues lie within a particular network and also where opportunities can come from. This session was widely acclaimed by the audience.

Rob Edkins, CEO and Managing Director of Carbon IQ.
The opportunities from the Carbon Economy - Rob spoke about the emerging carbon market and the many opportunities that are presenting as a result, not just in agriculture and trees, but in waste and other areas. The session generated a number of questions on how the market will progress, specific opportunities and what might a change of government bring.

Diversity Panel
Stephen Frost, CEO Western Mineral Fertilisers
Keith McLuckie, Bendigo Bank WA
Charles Reynolds, Floresco

These three panelists presented interesting information on how the companies they own or work for have used innovation in regional Australia. Each presented a very different model and base of innovation but all are unquestionably inspirational and of great benefit to regional development. Very well received, with over 20 minutes of questions from the audience on innovation.

Debra Bishop – Media Consultant - Managing Perceptions
Debra presented a media overview, how to deal with the media and some practical strategies to achieve that. The presentation did not quite cover the brief, which was to discuss the multiple strategies for managing perceptions, rather than just the use of the media. The information was none the less useful, but this session received less positive feedback.

Simon Millcock – EDA Director and Indian Ocean Territories EDO
Leveraging Opportunities and maximizing your competitive advantage.
Simon was invited to share his experiences in South Australia and Indian Ocean territories. His examples inspired the audience to what is possible if you work together; understand what you have and how to use it. Wonderful presentation.
Kate Charters - Managing Director, Management Solutions and Convener SEGRA. Advocacy and Policy Making

This presentation was full of practical advice on how to use your advocacy skills to best advantage. Kate presented a number of models on how to undertake advocacy, what your strategy should be and how you influence the policy makers.

The forum closed with a moderated panel discussion on Leadership.
- Jan Pope Shire President, Shire of Cranbrook
- Graham Harvey, CEO, Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Sue Bennet Ng, Director, Great Southern Institute of Technology
- Chris Pavlovich, Owner Great Southern Haulage and Cr at Shire of Plantagenet
- Bev Gilbert, Winery Owner and Chair, Great Southern Region Marketing Network

Questions were posed by participants during the day and put forward by a moderator. From the questions posed, it was clear that in particular the Great Southern Region is perceived to be suffering from a lack of coordinated leadership, and questions were centered on how to overcome that.
Outcomes

There were many outcomes and opportunities identified by the forum and workshop. The challenge for the Shire of Cranbrook is to determine which of those outcomes it is and wants to be responsible for, and which it will engage and inspire others to take on and how.

The key messages to emerge from the Forum and Toolkit were:

- A need for coordinated, more consultative leadership across the region.
- There needs for a united – but inclusive voice on the future of the region and its growth.
- The need for more Economic Development Practitioners, not just in this region but in others that attended.
- The need to lobby and advocate, and the need to clearly understand the process for that to be most effective
- That there is a need for more engagement and consultation at the issues stage
- It is imperative that everyone (relevant to an issue) is taken along the journey
- Imperative to have good project management skills in the region
- There is huge potential in the region and a renewed sense of pride and possibility
- That we must sell the benefits of this region
- Ensure everyone is engaged in regional planning
- Groups must be on board to make any vision work
- There is a need for a clear vision for the Great Southern – needs coordination
- A youth forum should be convened
- There is a need to recognize people
- More work can be done on tourism in region and better coordination

It was clearly evident throughout the two days that the key issues were around more practitioners and the best way to achieve that with many small shires, and the need for coordinated approach to leadership across the region.

KEY POINTS FOR FURTHER PROGRESSION

The immediate steps: How to go about it?

There are a number of actions to improve the local and regional economic outcomes and the prioritising using the economic development strategy needs to have a compelling vision, a realistic understanding of the economy and well-thought through strategies that will have the ability to capture the imagination of the community, investors and Government. A diagram outlining an economic development framework showing the steps was provided to the Shire.

As the host organization the Shire of Cranbrook Council may consider discussing these potential actions and is making them available to the RDC, RDA and other Great Southern Shires to assist in making a determination as to how to progress.

The Shire of Cranbrook and others will need to decide:
- What they are responsible for
- What they will take responsibility for
- How they will manage the expectation for the elements they want
- How to keep the momentum, for more regional leadership and economic development

Following are some of the possible actions identified from the forum.

**A youth forum. 16-25’s**

- Would have a two fold effect – continue momentum and engage new leaders, as well as start to deliver on communities wishes for leadership development
- Could be held in April/May 2013
- Would appeal to our next group of leaders.
- Same scale of presentation as the forum
- Taking opportunity to explain what regional development is, and what economic development is
- Similar topics but with speakers relevant to their age group.

*This could be Cranbrook run and lead but again for region.*

**Develop Mentoring program.**

Shire of Cranbrook MBD has been asked to coordinate a mentoring program

Steps

- Research if there is one already available.
- Find out who would be willing to mentor
- Advertise for mentees

*This could be Cranbrook lead in conjunction with GSIT (Great Southern Institute of Technology)*

**Linked in page.**

Shire of Cranbrook will develop a Great Southern Region, Development Group page on Linked in.

- To be a site where people can discuss regional issues.
- Share information
- It would also provide valuable research for a network project

*This will be Cranbrook created and controlled*

**MAJOR PROJECT - Network map the Great Southern Region**
Utilise the services of Curtin University, and Professors Helen and Colin Armstrong to map the Great Southern region and its many networks which would identify many opportunities for the Region. This would also leverage well with the current research project the Shire of Cranbrook is undertaking with Curtin.

- Apply for Royalties funding / and or RDAF
- Use as leverage funding for Curtin funds access
- Map all elements of the GS network
- Would identify opportunities
- Weaknesses
- Strengths

This could be undertaken via a regional approach and managed or auspice through Shire of Cranbrook, due to its links with Curtin and the relevance to the existing research project being undertaken.

**Increase the number of Economic Development Officers in the region.**

- This was a clear message from the Forum that all Councils attending want an ED person and consideration could be made how some resource sharing or regional approaches could allow this to occur. Feedback and suggestion has been received from Matt Bird that the Development Commissions could provide a shared resource rather than all Councils having their own.
- This idea has already been presented at the Regional Cabinet Breakfast on Monday 29 October
- Cranbrook Shire could facilitate meetings to discuss relevant issues and help Shire identify needs.
- The opportunity for other towns to undertake the EDA Regional and Remote Area Training Program which is delivered pro-bono by EDA members is worthy of consideration.
- Could come out of the linked in page.

*Degree of responsibility of the Shire of Cranbrook to be determined*

**Regional Economic Development Strategy**

A regional economic development strategy has recently been produced by the Development Commission and forum recognised a need for greater understanding and knowledge of this important resource for key businesses and agencies.

- Consultation and feedback phase will be very important and regional organisations, business, local governments need to ensure they take time to consult.
Tourism

The formation of the new Coastal Tourism organization needs to consider linkages with those Shires of the “hinterland”.

- Regional Cooperation needed
- Much discussion in Albany, but it needs to be wider
- Hinterland shires need to be at the table
- Hidden treasures representative to represent the rest of the region – the HT group already represents the other 8 shires of the hinterland, so possibly it could have a seat at the table and represent all the Shire of the Great Southern.

A meeting has already occurred between Shire of Cranbrook MBD and City of Albany Manager for Tourism to discuss the upcoming plans.

Regional Business Dinner

- Regional Dinner
- Possible sponsor and participant Bendigo Bank (Wayne Simpson)
- Possibly engage Ferngrove and their Chinese owner to speak on opportunities, or other large investors in Shire, such as developers.
- Only one guest speaker – not a lecture – open forum for local business to provide updates on what they are doing
- Guests from businesses across the region
- Must be a break even event
- To be held in Cranbrook due to central location and relationship with Bendigo

Shire of Cranbrook to coordinate and run in association with ACCI and Bendigo

Regional Leaders Group

- Form a regional leaders group
- Meet twice a year
- No particular persuasion, just people interested in leadership of the region,
- Purpose to discuss synergies, current projects, impending opportunities
- Opportunities for regional cooperation.

What role would/Should Shire of Cranbrook Take?
As is always the case, there are lessons and tools that come out of any forum. For the Shire of Cranbrook, a number of in-house activities have also been identified.

**Buy Local Campaign**

- Investigate this - have been asked about this many times.

An email has already been sent to Graham Harvey ACCI asking a range of questions
  - Is CB big enough,
  - how would be do it,
  - what level of involvement does Shire assume

*MBD to coordinate depending on the response from ACCI.*

**Economic Development Bulletin**

- 4 times a year.
- Include information on businesses
- Updates on best practice
- What is happening in region
- Key issues
- Links to important sites

*MBD to produce*

**More Regular Media Releases**

- Aim to produce a release every 8 weeks.
- Keep good news stories on file
- Ensure we get images
- MBD to get out more and get photo opportunities with businesses

*MBD to produce*

**Momentum as we move forward.**

A lot of energy was generated at the forum and it is imperative that we find ways to foster that energy to further regional and economic development.

Some potential actions will result from the list above, however as the event was run by one Shire for the Region, the Cranbrook Council must determine how much of their resources they are willing to expend on regional issues. However there are some specific actions that will be undertaken at the outset:

- Widely promote the energy and success of the forum, through media and papers;
• Development of the Linked in Discussion page to bring out more leaders, issues and opportunities;
• The development of regular meetings focusing on economic development issues that include representation from across the region, and more discussion with GSAC

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Regional and Economic Development Forum a HUGE success.

With 68 delegates from far and wide, the Inaugural Regional and Economic Development Forum was a huge success for both Regional Development and the Shire of Cranbrook. The Shire of Cranbrook successfully brought together and outstanding program of speakers who delivered outstanding messages relating to development of regions.

The day opened with an inspiring and informative presentation from Dr’s Helen and Colin Armstrong from Curtin University on network science and how it can relate to regional development. With many examples Colin and Helen surprised the audience with information on how understanding they ways in which networks operate such as; who is in them, what is included in the network, and how the network functions can help us to understand where there are gaps and opportunities for regional growth. With fascinating examples from Terrorist networks, to criminal investigations and organizational analysis the presentation showed real opportunities for the Shire and the regions.

Leigh Wallace, Mt Barker Community Bank Manager said “Great event, opened up lots of ideas” “I thought the speakers and topics were most relevant to the occasion and it was interesting to see the diverse group of people in attendance. I must say the ‘The Science of Networks’ session was rather mind boggling and one wonders what lessons and opportunities our local Community Bank network could take from this.”

Rob Edkins followed with an interesting discussion on the future opportunities that will come out of the carbon economy and how it can relate to our farmers and organizations. This presentation generated many questions from the audience on applicability in particular regions and what might be possible. The continuing focus on appropriate tree plantations, waste processing and other key carbon topics were discussed.

After a fantastic morning tea from the Cranbrook Sporting Club Catering team, the delegates enjoyed a panel discussion on how important innovation is to regional Australia. The panelists included Stephen Frost from Western Mineral Fertilisers, Tenterden, Keith McLuckie from Bendigo Bank and Charles Reynolds from Florencence in Albany. All presented case studies on the innovations their companies are engaged in and the value of that innovation to the region. Again, great discussion and questions were put to the panel in regard to the value of innovation. Being creative, delivering something different to your market and finding new ways to engage were common themes, as well as the critical importance of research and development. Stephen Frost said that “the Shire was also to be congratulated on its innovation in putting on such a big and important event in Cranbrook for the benefit of this and other regions.”
The panel were followed by Debra Bishop, experienced journalist and media consultant who talked about how you work with the media to get your message out. Debra’s presentation highlighted the ability to work with the media and to promote the positive messages about community and regional growth and development. In addition to providing the audience with professional media message. Debra also commented on the quality of the event and said “from a presenter’s perspective – the day was a ‘dream run!’ From having delightful Murray greeting me at the airport to getting that powerpoint and audio up and working! The other speakers were fabulous – engaging, relevant and professional. Well done – and I mean it, because I know how almost impossible these things are to organise.”

A delicious lunch was then enjoyed by all and there was a great deal of conversation between the delegates. After lunch Simon Millcock from the Indian Ocean Territories, Christmas Island gave an interesting presentation and case studies on how organisations can make the most of their opportunities and can develop a competitive advantage. Kate Charters from Brisbane, spoke to the audience on how to understand working with government and how to advocate for the needs of communities and regions. Kate presented some practical tools on how advocacy works and how you can achieve the best outcomes from your efforts.

The closing session of the day was full of interesting points of view on leadership, what it is and who should provide it and how we are tracking. Panelists Graham Harvey, CEO Albany CCI, Jan Pope, Cranbrook Shire President, Sue Bennet Ng, Great Institute of Technology, Chris Pavlovich, Southern Haulage and Bev Gilbert, Gilberts Wines, offered answers to questions posed by delegates.

The outcomes from the forum were many and varied, but the overarching messages were;

- the value of understanding what a network truly and how best we can map the Great southern region in the future,
- the need for coordinated regional leadership across the Great Southern and
- the message from many Shires present, that Economic Development is gaining importance in the region.

Just some of the other feedback received includes;

- Kerry Stone, Shire President, Gnowangerup “I learnt a lot, it was a great mix of people which you don’t often see, and I would really like to see you do it again”

- John Deburg, Owner Cranbrook Supermarket “Very enlightening, lots of positive messages and I’m really proud of what has been achieved here”

- Paul Alexander, Curtin University, “Amazingly relevant, great speakers,”
• Andrius Budrikis Councillor, Plantagenet Shire, “very impressed, diverse, good breadth and coverage of issues”

• Rosemary Madacsi, Councillor, Shire of Toodyay, “Fantastic event, well worth the travel was informative and invaluable”

• Delma Baesjou, Ayton Baesjou Planning said “The forum was informative, relevant and timely”

The day not only delivered a lot of valuable information, but really showcased Cranbrook and what can be achieved by communities, irrespective of size. “The scale of the community is not the measure, the level of sophistication, dedication and passion is and this forum is evidence that communities of any size can achieve great things, especially with great support from sponsors and partners” said Jan Pope, Shire President.

The Shire of Cranbrook acknowledges the partnership and sponsorship from Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Regional Development Australia Great Southern, Bendigo Bank, Green Valley Nursery, Curtin University, Alkoomi Wines, Ferngrove, Trevelen Farm Wines, Frankland Estate. The sponsors made the event possible.