

Quarterly Progress Report to Council Members July - September 2019

1. Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) - Update

The draft REDS was progressed with the Office of Coordinator General and Department of State Growth over this quarter.

The REDS replaces the Regional Economic Development Plan (REDP) as it was noted by stakeholders that a lot of the detailed plan components have been removed at the request of the State Government, so therefore the document becomes more of a strategy which outlines the priority actions.

The State Government and NTDC are scheduling workshops that intend to develop an Implementation Plan that the State will support via reallocation/refinement of State programs or by overtly supporting applications from Federal Government/City Deal.

A communications plan was developed including direct email contact with over 1,100 stakeholders and business contacts to advise them of the release of the draft and ask for their feedback.

Next Steps:

- a) 1 October - Draft REDS (no 5) is finalized and distributed according to the Communications Plan
- b) 22 October – Consultation deadline for feedback of the Draft REDS
- c) November/December – Workshops with Council Members and State Government to commit to supporting specific actions and programs to deliver on the REDS.
- d) February 2020 – Draft Implementation Plan available for review (this is dependent on agreement of State Government and Council Members)

2. Population Action Program

The Population Taskforce met in April and endorsed the Final Population Strategy. The request for a \$50,000 contribution by Council Members for one year was supported and has been paid for the 2019/2020 financial year. Edward Obi, Population Coordinator, is working to implement the Population Action Plan.

Work underway between July – September included:

- **Assisting Skilled Migrants** - Edward is seeing between 5-10 skilled migrants per month that have been referred to us via the State Government program. Edward assists these migrants to revise their CV's and connect them to potential employers.
- **MakeitTasmania Website** – the State Government's website for potential interstate and international migrants has developed a 'Launceston and the North East' section to better reflect the regional variation to the otherwise 'Hobart' focus. To ensure this website reflects the images and content that the Council Members require – consultation is underway with each Council to better reflect the key messages and images to further enhance the website to our regional needs.
- **Jobs in Northern Tasmania (FaceBook page)** – Edward has developed a FaceBook page for people looking for jobs in Northern Tasmania to connect with employers – and also to receive tips and support from NTDC.
- **Population Symposium** - Edward led/contributed to a roundtable session at the Population Symposium.
- **Migrant Case Studies** – these profiles of interstate and international migrants that have successfully settled in Northern Tasmania region, provide real examples of how people have settled into the region. The case studies are then used by NTDC to educate our employers and

residents of the type of people that have moved to the region.

- www.australiamagazine.co.uk - an article organized by State Government was provided by NTDC with a focus on the Greater Launceston area for the UK market considering relocating to Australia.
- **Population Network/Steering Committee** - the Terms of Reference for a Population Network/Steering Committee is being finalized (the next iteration of a taskforce) that will have more emphasis on ensuring the work already underway in our community is better connected and can offer new arrivals a more seamless level of support.
- **Population Program Funding** – NTDC has submitted a funding request for the Regional Jobs Trial – but was unsuccessful due to funds being already allocated. Also the alignment of this funding stream with the ‘Welcoming Region’ proposal may not have met the needs of the program. The ongoing identification of new revenue streams is still underway.

3. Hydrogen Energy Plant (Bell Bay)

The development of a hydrogen energy hub concept at Bell Bay was endorsed by the Northern Tasmania Development Corporation (NTDC) 7 Member Councils as one of the priority projects for the region in early 2019. John Pitt the Chair of NTDC has been actively promoting the opportunity for the past 18 months, including lobbying State and Federal politicians to consider the opportunity.

This was in response to the Federal Government’s investigation of the potential for Hydrogen as a new export sector in Australia, and the quickly developing interest of green hydrogen as a way to reduce emissions domestically, and for developing a new export industry as a result of increasing interest in Asia. A COAG sponsored National Hydrogen Energy Strategy is now due for release in December.

NTDC has been working with Council Members to position Bell Bay as a potential green hydrogen energy hub that could attract support from the Federal Government for demonstration and early stage commercial projects.

High-level economic modelling by ACIL Allen estimates that hydrogen exports could provide around \$4 billion direct and indirect economic benefits to Australia by 2040 based on a medium growth assumption and up to 7000 jobs. A Hydrogen Energy Hub at Bell Bay could ramp up to a \$1.3B export industry with 2,300 jobs by 2040. Construction of demonstration projects is occurring in other states now, with small scale commercial plants possibly operating as early as 2022.

Bell Bay has been identified by various proponents, and by a recent Geoscience Australia study as a competitive location for hydrogen production because of the abundant and competitively priced renewable energy, coupled with Bell Bay’s industrial port infrastructure and skills base.

A green hydrogen energy hub at Bell Bay also complements the Battery of the Nation and Marinus projects and also aligns with Tasmania’s clean green brand. NTDC has been actively working with the Office of the Coordinator General, lobbying State Government Ministers to be more explicit in the support for the hydrogen energy as a complementary energy project, and working with various proponents to support their efforts to secure investment for Bell Bay as their preferred hydrogen energy site.

Activities over the last quarter have included:

- **Site inspections** – by two proponents to Bell Bay with OCG and meetings with stakeholders
- **Green Ammonia Conference** – the CEO attended a conference in Melbourne to better understand some of the technical aspects of using ‘green’ ammonia as a carrier of hydrogen energy, and the potential to use green ammonia as a marine bunker fuel.
- **Tasports** – with OCG we met with Tasports to ensure they understood the strategic nature of any investment and to clarify tanker access for hydrogen transport into the future.

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preferred hydrogen energy site.

4. Lamb Tasmania

In response to the concerns regarding meat processing in Northern Tasmania over the past 12 months, NTDC organised a guest facilitator, Richard Webb, to work with farmers and potential meat processors to consider alternative processing, marketing and distribution of meat products.

There have been two sessions to date that have outlined the possibility of farmers considering alternative and direct distribution of quality 'Tasmanian' branded products including details of the provenance of meat products to premium markets (such as direct to international hotel chains, restaurants, etc). Next steps include a branding workshop with Brand Tasmania with agricultural producers looking to add greater value to their products and assist them to develop their provenance and branding.

5. LoRaWAN 'Internet of Things'

NTDC is assisting with facilitating opportunities to integrate the LoRaWAN 'Internet of Things' into the municipalities across the region. Definium has installed a number of gateways across Tasmania (with an aim to provide full coverage) creating wireless sensor networks that with a small battery powered IoT device can remotely monitor assets and collect data.

During August Definium presented an overview of the LoRa network and its potential to relevant council staff and Councilors at WTC and GTC. The presentations focused on an overview of the product & the opportunities it presents, sharing some specific case studies that may have potential municipal applications, discussing the value and opportunities that can be derived from the available data, small business opportunities and to provide a clearer understanding of the costs involved.

6. Policy Submissions

NTDC made submissions to the following Federal Government enquiries on behalf of the Region:

- Parliamentary Committee on Migration into Regional Australia
- Select Committee on Regional Jobs

7. Funding Submissions

NTDC made the following funding submissions:

- Regional Jobs Trial – Welcome Region Program (unsuccessful)

NTDC assisted the following funding submissions by other proponents that will positively impact on the region:

- Tasmanian Food Incubator Funding Submission (by Hazel McTavish West)
- Tasmanian Food Export Hub Funding Submission (By Van Diemen Project)

If any elected or Council staff members have any questions please make contact with us.

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