



MEDIA RELEASE

Official Launch of the Hotham – Williams Economic Development Implementation Plan 20th June 2016

Marradong Country is a shining example of how communities can work together for the greater good of their region. The brand, 'Marradong Country', is an initiative of Hotham-Williams Economic Development Alliance (HWEDA) and is a collaborative effort between the Shires of Boddington, Wandering and Williams.

HWEDA's official launch of its Economic Development Implementation Plan '*Our Plan to develop the Hotham-Williams Regional Economy*' took place in Williams on 20 June. HWEDA Chair, Greg Cavanagh, welcomed invited guests including the Hon. Terry Waldron MLA, Member for Wagin, CEO of the Wheatbelt Development Commission, Representatives of the Peel Development Commission, Shire Presidents, Councillors and CEOs of the Shires of Williams, Wandering and Boddington together with HWEDA Board Members.

Mr Cavanagh gave a brief history behind the Plan's inception. In 2011, under a Royalties for Regions initiative, Boddington was identified as a 'Super Town' and the Shire of Boddington worked collaboratively by consulting with its neighbouring Shires of Williams and Wandering. Subsequently, a Growth Plan was created to assist the sub-region, known as Hotham-Williams, to plan and identify economic opportunities in order to take advantage of WA's population growth which is predicted to double by 2050. After securing funding during 2013, the Shire was able to establish HWEDA and it met for the first time in March 2014. It is now an independent incorporated body funded jointly by the three Shires.

In 2015, grants were secured from both Peel and Wheatbelt Development Commission's Community Chest funds to prepare the Economic Development Implementation Plan and the Strategic Plan for the sub-region. The plan has seen the identification and prioritisation of over 50 projects and the final selection of 6 flagship projects that the group will focus on implementing in the next few years.

"HWEDA was also fortunate to have access to a group of UWA students from the Wheatbelt Service Learning Centre who provided research assistance for the project and provided information used in the development of the final plans we are launching today", said Mr Cavanagh.

HWEDAs next focus is on the continued development of the 'Marradong Country' brand in order to market the sub-region beyond the local government borders including the development of a self-drive tourism trail.

The Hon. Terry Waldron MLA, Member for Wagin, received the Plan on behalf of the WA State Government. Mr Waldron congratulated the HWEDA Board in breaking down barriers and looking beyond their local communities and coming together for the benefit of the wider community. "Due to its proximity to Perth in an age where people are more mobile than ever, the area is well placed to capitalise on the tourism we already have. I believe we can build on tourism and the Indigenous culture more in order to achieve this outcome", said Mr Waldron.

For further information about this media release please contact Heidi Cowcher, Executive Officer, HWEDA at heidicowcher@williams.wa.gov.au or 9885 1005.

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