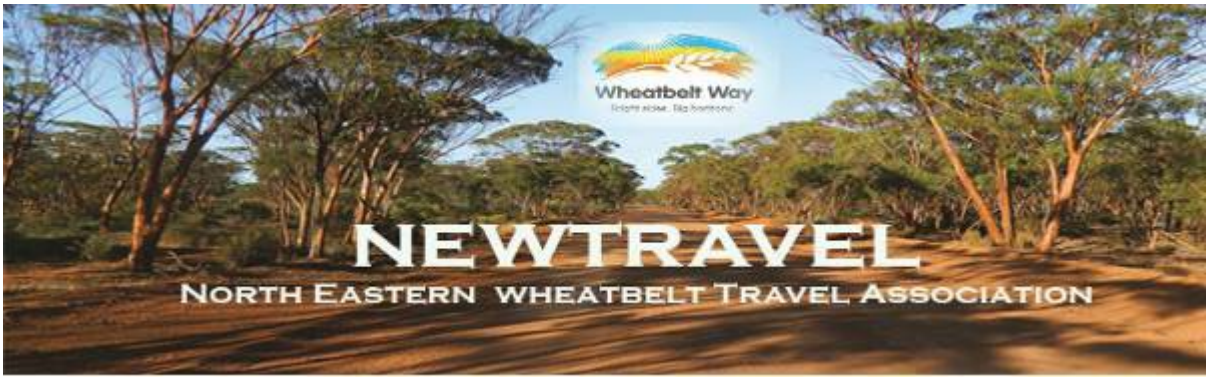

Minutes – GENERAL MEETING

General Meeting held on Thursday 26th October 2023, at Wyalkatchem Shire Council Chambers

Opening 10.57am

Invited Attendees:

NEWTRAVEL MEMBER	MEMBER VOTING DELEGATE	ASSOCIATE MEMBERS & OTHERS
		Linda Vernon (NEWTRAVEL TO)
Koorda CRC	Kim Storer (NEWTRAVEL Chair)	
Mukinbudin CRC		Jessica McCartney
Shire of Mukinbudin	Kerry Walker	
Shire of Dowerin	Linley Dreghorn	
Shire of Mt Marshall	Cr Tanya Gibson (Deputy Delegate)	Phoebe Sachse
Shire of Nungarin	Cr Kerry Dayman	Georgina McKay
Shire of Trayning	Leanne Parola (CEO)	
Shire of Wyalkatchem	Stephanie Elvidge	Cr Christy Petchell

Apologies:

Shire of Westonia		Stacey Geier
	Cr. Bill Huxtable	Lani Hale
Nungarin CRC		Tanya Stobie
AGO	Marcus Falconer	
Shire of Mt Marshall	Cr Megan Beagly	

1. Previous Minutes

1.1 Confirmation (Previous Meeting Minutes click Here)

RESOLUTION:
That the Minutes of the NEWTRAVEL Meeting held in Dowerin on 27 July 2023 be confirmed as a true and correct record of proceedings.
Moved: Cr Kerry Dayman Seconded: Linley Dreghorn CARRIED

1.2 Business arising from previous minutes –
Jessica raised that the next CRC Cluster meeting will be held in Merredin in November and may be an opportunity to re-visit content creation through CRC support. Linda to speak with Rik Soderlund.

ACTIONS	UPDATE
• ACTION – Linda to keep all members informed on this projects (Event Support Project) progress via email updates.	Linda apologised for lack of information forthcoming, but very little had occurred in this area until the last 10 days due to Dowerin Events Management wanting to defer discussions until after the Dowerin Field Days.
• ACTION – Megan suggested that Linda contact the Beacon CRC and have a chat about this (Content Creation).	Linda has reached out to Beacon and other CRCs but no clear path has shown itself on how to progress content creation from the Wheatbelt region.

2. Correspondence

2.1 Correspondence In

2.1.1 Various Emails inward.

2.1.2 FRRR - Project "17 WA Events Officer" in the Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought Initiatives' Community Impact Program, Application No: 38682 – signed agreement.

2.1.3 Caroline Robinson – NEWROC, request to take NEWTRAVEL motions to next NEWROC Meeting.

2.1.4 AGO AGM and Board Nominations

2.2 Correspondence Out

2.2.1 Various Emails outward.

RESOLUTION:
That the NEWTRAVEL inward correspondence is accepted, and the outward correspondence be endorsed.
Moved: Cr Tanya Gibson Seconded: Cr Christy Petchell CARRIED

2.3 Business arising from Correspondence

3. Financial Report

Cheque Acc Opening Balance 1 July 2023		**$35,164.78**
INCOME		
Other Income	Shire of Goomalling – Storytowns Marketing contribution	$2,090.00
	FRRR Drought Funding Grant – Payment 1	$31,777.00
	Total Income	**$33,867.00**
EXPENSES		
Brochures	Vanguard Press – Printing of 5000 Maps & 3000 Guidebook	$6,990.50
Marketing	Meta Advertising	$100.00
Tourism Officer	Vernon Contracting – Tourism Officer, June 2023	$3,967.73
	Vernon Contracting – Tourism Officer, July 2023	$4,161.59
	Vernon Contracting – Tourism Officer, August 2023	$4,533.26
Website	Annual Website Hosting	$77.32
	Domain Central – Annual renewal	$25.95
Postage	Muka Mail & Merchandise - July	$26.85
	Shire of Merredin – Annual Postage contribution	$197.00
	Muka Mail & Merchandise – Aug-Sept	$16.95
Signage	Turbo Signs - Banner Flag Nungarin CRC	$264.00
	Total Expenditure	**$20,361.15**
Cheque Acc Closing Balance 30 September 2023		**$48,670.63**
Other Income		
Outstanding Payments	*Vernon Contracting – Tourism Officer, September 2023*	*$4,196.31*
	Baxter Backpacks, Social Media Content September 2023	*$1,500.00*
	Baxter Backpacks, purchase additional 10 images	*$500.00*
	Alyce Ventris – Social Media July/August/September	*$825.00*
Ending Financial Position on 19 October 2023		**$41,679.32**

Signage Funds Remaining

Turbo Signs – Banner Flag Nungarin CRC	$264.00
Total Signage Funds Remaining	**$1,377.10**

RESOLUTION:
That the NEWTRAVEL financial report is accepted as presented.
Moved: Leanne Parola Seconded: Linley Dreghorn CARRIED

4.0 NEWTRAVEL Tourism Officer (0.4FTE) August 2023 – October 2023 Report

Main Activities	Description	Progress/Update
1. NewTravel Administration		
a. Organise, attend and minute NEWTRAVEL meetings. Attending to any correspondence or motions at these meetings.	Organise and attend NEWTRAVEL Meetings	• Attended July NEWTRAVEL meeting •
b. Undertake governance and financial reporting activities.	Prepare Agendas and Minutes; attend to correspondence and motions as directed.	• July Meeting Minutes prepared and circulated.
	Undertake financial responsibility for NEWTRAVEL including invoicing, paying accounts, preparing and presenting financial reports.	• Monthly financials completed and accounts paid.
2. Marketing		
a. Implement the Wheatbelt Way Marketing Plan	Develop, adopt and implement annual marketing plan.	• Continued implementation of 2022-23 Marketing Plan
b. Support NEWTravel to undertake tourism marketing activities to the benefit of the members.	Promote the Wheatbelt Way through press advertising and any other opportunities as they arise.	• 2023 Wheatbelt Way Wildflowers Campaign prepared and implemented. • Attended 2023 Dowerin Machinery Field Days. • Spring Wheatbelt Cooperative Wildflower Campaign
	Update and distribute Wheatbelt Way Brochures and Booklets.	• Distributed as required. • 2023 Guidebook and Map re-print.
	Arrange for the preparation of promotional packages for individuals, groups, companies and arrange appropriate distribution	
3. Website and Social Media		
a. Develop and maintain a presence for the Wheatbelt Way on internet and social media.	Maintain the Wheatbelt Way website	• Updated weekly as required.
	Answer all Wheatbelt Way enquiries via the website and respond to requests for merchandise as required.	• Wheatbelt Way enquiries (website, email, socials, chat and phone).
	Create a Wheatbelt Way Facebook Page and maintain it regularly.	• Posting and sharing of Wheatbelt Way content daily on Facebook and Instagram weekly.
4. Stakeholder Communications		
a. Maintain relationships with Central Wheatbelt Visitors Centre and Australia's Golden Outback	Attend Regional Working Group Meetings	• Attended and participated in monthly Wheatbelt Tourism team meetings developing a Destination Development direction/plan with stakeholders. • Presented to Wheatbelt CRC Tourism Cluster in Corrigin – 9th August • Participated in monthly AGO zoom meetings. • Member of AGO Agri-tourism Working Group – attended first online meeting 21 September
b. Communicate with members.	Quarterly Newsletter to Stakeholders	• Bi-Monthly E-news to NEWTRAVEL stakeholders sent. • Quarterly newsletter subscribers sent.

	Provide information and updates as identified.	•
5. Maintenance and Monitoring		
a. *Assist in the maintenance of the Wheatbelt Way Infrastructure and monitoring of Tourism across NEWROC*	Coordinate and collate tourism data for the region.	• Compiled the March 2023 – July 2023 Visitor Statistics • Quarterly Marketing Report produced
	Coordinate annual auditing of Wheatbelt Way sites with individual shires and reporting of recommendations back to shires.	•
6. Supporting additional activities		
a. *Any other duties within the Contractors range of abilities as directed by the Director of Economic Services if time and resources allow.*	Assist with planning and conducting tourism initiatives as required (incl. local famils and trade shows).	-
	Carry out research and manage projects as required	• Follow up meetings with DRS and Trails WA about the unsuccessful NEWTRAVEL Trails grant held and feedback sort. • Successful FRRR funding agreement executed, attended ARLF Change Makers Workshop in Merredin 18 September as a part of this.
	Other	• Developed NEWTRAVEL Events Support project proposal and commenced engagement with NEWROC and Dowerin Events Management as potential project partners to deliver.

Linda provided an update on the newly formed AGO Wheatbelt Agri-tourism Working Groups. Discussion was held. Tanya Gibson raised concerns and suggestions around:

- Liability
- Assistance with the planning, coordinating and organising of local agritourism initiatives.
- The need for some guidance/guidelines.

5.1 Wheatbelt Way Visitor Statistics

A reminder that the reporting periods are:
1. July – October
2. November – February
3. March – June

*If Shires could please submit their complete Excel spreadsheets for the period July – October 2023 and email them in by the **14th November** it would be greatly appreciated.*

Linda presented the March 2023 – June 2023 Visitor Snapsnot Report and it can be viewed here.
It was noted that again the Wheatbelt Way region had the most number of visitors for this period.

5.2 Social Media and Marketing Report

NEWTRAVEL's primary purpose is to market and promote the Wheatbelt Way self-drive route and the tourism assets in the NEWTRAVEL area. We also engage with visitors and tourists through our promotional activities.

Linda presented a full report on NEWTRAVEL's Social Media analytics and marketing activities to the meeting, it can be viewed here.

General discussion was held on the future of NEWTRAVEL 's marketing activities for the next 12 months which included reviewing the draft 2023-2024 Marketing Overview, can be viewed here.

Linda was pleased with the work of Influencer Alex Baxter on how it was created and received. Alex's work was viewed by the meeting as not all had seen it. Linda felt that we had pivoted our marketing well to reduce the focus on Wildflowers this spring as they were not so spectacular this year due to the lack of rains. The Salt Lake drone footage that Alex created as a "Art of the Wheatbelt" theme was really well received.

Linda raised her concerns that the quality of content that Alex Baxter created is what is needed to elevate the Wheatbelt Way social media marketing in the future, but she does not have the skills required to do this, nor do we have a budget to purchase this type of content on a regular basis.

The strength of the Wheatbelt Way social media was that it was authentic and genuine of what is happening in the region right now. Concerned about the lack of Wheatbelt content on social media. This year Linda had poor/no uptake from any locals to be paid to create local Wheatbelt Way content. View the Working With Wheatbelt Way proposal here.

Jessica McCartney offered her knowledge of using Instagram and reels and discussion was held about the Tik Tok platform.

6.0 General Business

6.1 NEWTRAVEL 2023 – 2024 Marketing Plan

BACKGROUND:
NEWTRAVEL annual develop and endorse a marketing plan for promoting the Wheatbelt Way region and its members.

COMMENT:
The NEWTRAVEL marketing year is from 1 October – 30 September.

The draft 2023-2024 Marketing Plan is here.

Discussion was held about the planned activities and the limited ability to move or change funding allocations as the budget was very tight.

RECOMMENDATION:
The 2023-2024 Marketing Plan was endorsed as presented.

6.2 NEWTRAVEL/NEWROC Events Support Project

BACKGROUND:
NEWTRAVEL has been successful in receiving $63,554.00 from Future Drought Fund's Helping Regional Communities Prepare for Drought – Community Impact Program. This project is to be delivered by 30 June 2025.

COMMENT:
Linda has been in discussions with NEWROC and Dowerin Events Management and will provide an update to the meeting.

The Project Proposal can be viewed here.

Discussion was held including:

- Tier 2 Events to be added are: Wylie Arts Expo, Koorda and Districts Agricultural Show (instead of Koorda Community Show), WAORRA Car Rally, Bencubbin.
- Leanne raised concerns about the unconfirmed Travel Budget Line (approx. $10,000 over two financial years) being requested from NEWROC as it does not include the Shire of Westonia contributing. Felt that perhaps it would be fairer for NEWTRAVEL to ask all the individual NEWTRAVEL member Councils to contribute to the Travel Budget item.
- Georgina raised that Mt Marshall was supportive of the project but perhaps would not get as much value out of it as other member Councils as they employed Phoebe in the Community Development role that already provides some of the identified project outcomes for their community.
- Concerns around the perceived heavy reliance on and potential benefits to Dowerin Events Management if they agree to come on board as project partners.
- Linda expressed her concerns that she felt the project could not be delivered for any less funds than outlined in the proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:
NEWTRAVEL endorsed the Events Support Project proposal as presented, and directed that if NEWROC did not endorse and agree to contribute the unconfirmed funds that NEWTRAVEL to approach the member Councils individually.

6.3 Destination Development Plan

BACKGROUND:
Goal 2.1 of the NEWTRAVEL Strategic Plan is to work with AGO to encourage dispersal around our region. It has an action of developing a destination development plan for the Wheatbelt Way road trip.

COMMENT:
A Wheatbelt Tourism Destination Development group have been meeting monthly to progress this concept.

Linda will provide verbal update to the meeting, including on the Visitor Information Centre Project Proposal.

RECOMMENDATION:

Linda advised that the Wheatbelt Tourism Working Group had not met recently due to members availability, there was meeting set for November. The Visitor Information Centre Project Proposal had been seeking information from CRCs and Visitor Information points to further bolster any proposals.

7. Reports

7.1 Member Reports

Opportunity for members to provide meeting with an update or exchange on key tourism related activities and initiatives. A quick verbal report to be presented by member delegates. Full written reports or information can be found if link is indicated on name below.

Mt Marshall

- Anecdotally Beacon visitor numbers are up.
- The two new cabins for the Caravan Parks are nearly installed (has been a long process)!
- The Mt Marshall Centenary celebrations was very successful.
- Mrs Medlin (wax mannequin) has finally arrived for the Beacon Museum.
- Mt Marshall and Districts Show will be held on the 9th March 2024.

Trayning

- The Caravan Park has been closed for a large amount of this last period to allow for the new ablutions to be installed.
- The Smoke n' Dirt Motor Sport Event was successfully held in September. Date set for 2024 as the 7th September.

Nungarin

- Anecdotally there was a steady flow of visitors at the Caravan Park.
- Held one Wildflower Bus tour which was successful.
- The Mangowine Concert and Harvest Festival Weekend activities were all held and well received.
- Aunty Jim (wax mannequin) has also arrived and is now on display at the Nungarin Army and Heritage Machinery Museum.
- Held a Community meeting with Peter Kenyon from Community Builders to seek interest and discuss the possibility of co-operative purchase and ownership of the Woolshed Hotel (currently closed and for sale). This business not being open is having a large negative impact on the community and it is hoped that this could be a possible solution.

Mukinbudin

- The Caravan Park is busy as usual and new shelving has been installed in the Camp Kitchen.
- New signs and banners have been installed around the town.
- New public bins are soon to be installed around town.
- The public toilets on the main street have been upgraded and are now open to the public again.

Dowerin

- The new CEO David Singe has started.
- Dowerin Hotel is now open but days/hours are ad hoc.
- Community Art Workshops currently being held and well received.
- Current decline in visitors at the Dowerin Short Stay at present, not sure why.
- Holding an Intergenerational bowls event in November (received grant funding to do this).

- Community Harvest Festival event – 15th December
- Movember Ball being held by the Dowerin Community Club
- Community is also working on plans to improve the playground in town.

Wyalkatchem

- The Pub sold and is now re-opened under new management serving lunch and dinner 7 days a week.
- Shire is working with stakeholders to look at options to get the Café back open.
- The Wyalkatchem rodeo had approx. 3,500 people in attendance. 90% of the people stayed the night in Wyalkatchem.
- Wyalkatchem Cemetery improvements completed.
- New town signage has arrived, just waiting to be installed.
- The Wylie Art Expo was popular.
- Currently investigating an aged-care support system called Mabel.

Koorda

- The Recreation Ground renovations have finally commenced, which will include a new bowling green.
- The Koorda Drive In has been going okay, monthly numbers are inconsistent.
- Had a variety of Caravan Groups visit the community.
- The Youth Group continues to provide activities for kids in the community.
- CBH new accommodation is complete, and staff are utilizing.
- This year, a small community event was held at the Drive In instead of the Koorda Show this year.

7.0 Other Business

<u>Mainstreet Gallery, Mukinbudin</u>

Linda gave an update on the Mainstreet Gallery in Mukinbudin in her voluntary work she does with this group, they had 1,143 visitors for the 88 days that they were open in 2023.

<u>Destination WA</u>

Georgina let everyone know that the Shire of Mt Marshall has made the decision to participate (at a cost of $5,500 for 3-minute segment, plus socials and raw data) in the new season of Destination WA filming to be release in early 2024. Unfortunately, they have now been advised by Guru productions that they will not come out to the Shire of Mt Marshall unless they have three other Wheatbelt stories. Are any other Shires interested?

Linda thanked Kim Storer for her commitment to NEWTRAVEL over the last six years as Chairperson and presented her with a small flower arrangement as a token of appreciation. ‘

8.0 Next Meeting

A General Meeting on Thursday 29th February 2024 in Trayning, 10am.

9.0 Meeting Close 1.07pm