



NEWROC ECONOMIC PROFILE



Prepared for:

NEWROC

On behalf of the Western Australian Shires of Mukinbudin, Mount Marshall, Nungarin, Koorda, Trayning, Wyalkatchem & Dowerin

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY 1

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR NEWROC 2

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND PROFILE 5

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES 17

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION, DESIRED OUTCOMES AND PROGRAMS.... 21

IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASUREMENT 23

FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1 NEWROC Context Map 3

Figure 2 Strategy Structure 4

Figure 3 Global Mega-Trends 5

Figure 4 Historical and Projected Population, NEWROC, 2001-2031..... 6

Figure 5 Share of Population by Age, NEWROC, WA, 2021..... 7

Figure 6 Unemployment Rate, NEWROC, WA, Dec 2010 - Jun 2022 8

Figure 7 Number of Jobs, NEWROC, 2011-2021 8

Figure 8 Share of Jobs by Industry, NEWROC, WA 9

Figure 9 Count of Locally Registered Business, NEWROC LGAs, 2023 9

Figure 10 Value of Agricultural Production, NEWROC LGAs, 2020/21 10

Figure 11 Value of Agricultural Exports, NEWROC LGAs, 2020/21 13

Figure 12 GRP per Resident, NEWROC, Wheatbelt, WA, 2022 15

Figure 13 NEWROC Economic Output, Supply Chain and Household Consumption Impacts, by Scenario, Present Value over 20 Years at 7% 15

Figure 14 Porter’s Diamond Model of Competitiveness 17

Figure 15 Key Challenges and Issues 20

Figure 15 Key Strengths and Opportunities 20

Figure 15 Role of Local Government in Economic Development..... 21

Figure 15 Economic Development Programs 22

Table 1 Agriculture Production Indicator, NEWROC, Wheatbelt and WA 10

Table 2 Gross Value Added by Industry, NEWROC, 2022..... 14

Table 3 NEWROC’s Competitiveness Assessment..... 18

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This document is the Economic Development Profile that supports the NEWROC Economic Development Strategy 2024- 2029 for the North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils (or NEWROC) covering the Shires of Dowerin, Koorda, Mount Marshall, Mukinbudin, Nungarin, Trayning, and Wyalkatchem.

This document details the current and future profile of the economy. The Strategy establishes the framework for the joint and collaborative progression of economic development actions, initiatives and priorities across the region.

KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Key indicators of the NEWROC economy include:

- Population of 3,200 in 2023 and projected to decline
- Older population than Wheatbelt and State averages
- 22,700sqkm land area
- 180km by road to Perth
- 570+ businesses in 2023
- 1,460+ jobs in 2021
- \$460m+ in agricultural production
- \$250m+ per year in regional exports
- \$300m+ Gross Regional Product in 2022

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following economic challenges and opportunities have been identified from an assessment of the region’s economic competitiveness.



Key Challenges and Issues



Key Strengths and Opportunities

VISION FOR THE NEWROC ECONOMY

The following vision is proposed for the NEWROC economy:

Growing Prosperous and Sustainable Communities Through Collaboration, Leadership and Investment

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

To deliver on the vision of the Strategy, the following Economic Development Programs are identified. These Programs represent areas of focus or priorities for NEWROC.

- 
Infrastructure Investment and Service Delivery
- 
Tourism Sector Growth
- 
Small Business Development
- 
Local Communities Revitalisation
- 
Regional Brand Establishment

Economic Development Programs

IMPLEMENTATION AND MEASURES OF SUCCESS

To facilitate the delivery of the Economic Development Programs, it is recommended that each Shire prepare a concise Economic Development Action Plan. These Plans should take the form of a schedule of actions and initiatives that the Shire seeks to progress under each of the NEWROC Economic Development Programs. The Action Plans should include all existing and future actions and initiatives and be reviewed and updated annually.

Monitoring Progress and Measuring Outcomes

The Profile and Strategy should be reviewed and renewed after 5 years, accounting for new evidence and information and the progress of the region against economic development indicators and measures of success.

Potential measures for monitoring include:

- Positive annual population growth rate (Annual - ABS)
- Positive growth in population aged 15-24 (Annual – ABS)
- Increased day trip and overnight visitation (Annual - Tourism Research Australia)
- Improvement in Socio-Economic Status of Shires (5 yearly – SEIFA, Annual – ABS Incomes)
- Value of residential and non-residential building approvals (Annual – ABS)
- Growth in locally registered employing businesses (Annual – ABS)

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR NEWROC

What is an Economic Development?

"Economic Development" refers to:

any endeavour, project, investment, or strategy aimed at enhancing the financial and communal welfare of individuals. This acknowledges the idea that we exist within a community, not solely an economy, and that economic undertakings should contribute to the betterment of people's lives.

Effective economic advancement initiatives aim to expand and improve the capabilities of a local economy to generate long-term wealth and prosperity, thereby supporting enhancements in the well-being of residents.

The concept of economic development has evolved over time, transitioning from a focus on mere economic growth and employment metrics to more intricate and comprehensive wellbeing-related goals such as sustainability, quality of life, resilience, social harmony, and integration.

About NEWROC

The North Eastern Wheatbelt Regional Organisation of Councils (or NEWROC) is a voluntary regional organisation of councils comprising 7 Local Government Areas and is located in the north-east part of the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia.

The Local Governments that comprise NEWROC include the Shires of:

- Dowerin,
- Koorda,
- Mount Marshall,
- Mukinbudin,
- Nungarin,
- Trayning, and;
- Wyalkatchem.

NEWROC is a united voice advocating, promoting and marketing these communities as a great place to live, work and invest. NEWROC is committed to retaining and growing their population through successful and collaborative partnerships, promoting and engaging in civic leadership and investment into member communities.

The NEWROC region covers approximately 22,720 square kilometres with a majority of available land area being utilised for a range of State and nationally significant agricultural production.

The region is located only 180km by road to the west of Perth (capital city of Western Australia) and is within the same timezone as Perth (+8 GMT).

The NEWROC area has a Mediterranean-style climate, with temperatures ranging from very hot and dry summers of 30C and often surpassing 40C to cold wet winter temperatures falling to well below 10C¹.

In 2023, NEWROC was home to over 3,200 people (almost 1 in 4 are aged 65 and over), over 570 businesses and has an economy worth almost \$250m in gross value added each year.

The agricultural sector plays significant historical and economic roles within NEWROC. It is the largest source of gross value added, regional exports, employment and business registrations. In particular, the sheep industry has played a pivotal role in the development of the region, contributing significantly to the national sheep production and trade².

The progression of NEWROC’s economy represents a joint commitment, embodying the combined and concerted efforts of crucial stakeholders involved in economic development, spanning all tiers of government, Traditional Owners and other Indigenous groups and communities, local and national businesses, major economic asset owners, investors, workers, and residents.



Figure 1 NEWROC Context Map

¹ Regional Weather and Climate Guide – Wheatbelt (2019), BOM, accessed at <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/climate-guides/guides/034-Wheatbelt-WA-Climate-Guide.pdf>

² NEWROC Media Publications (2021), accessed at <https://newroc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NEWSLETTER-June-2023.pdf>

Alignment with Policies and Strategies

The Economic Profile and Economic Development Strategy seeks to supplement and build upon current and previous economic development policies, strategies and plans and provide a single, cohesive and coordinated approach to economic development within the region.

The Economic Profile and Strategy have been prepared with consideration of the following policies, strategies and plans:

- Western Australian Local Government Association – Local Economic Development
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development – Primary Industries Plan
- Infrastructure Western Australia – State Infrastructure Strategy
- Diversify WA Economic Development Framework
- Wheatbelt Blueprint
- NEWROC Regional Subsidiary Business Plan

Each of the 7 LGAs within NEWROC have their own strategic planning policies, plans and strategies that will assist NEWROC in addressing identified challenges and leveraging economic opportunities. Examples of relevant Local Government strategic documents include:

- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan,
- Integrated Strategic Plans and Strategic Community Plans,
- Corporate Business Plans,
- Local Planning Documents (strategies and schemes),
- Community, recreation, health,
- Investment strategies, and
- Emergency management plans.

Strategy Structure

The Economic Profile supports the Strategy by establishing an evidence-based aspirational and narrative driven framework to guide economic development initiatives, investments, actions and projects by NEWROC and associated Local Governments.

The Economic Profile is comprised of the following key sections:



Figure 2 Profile Structure

This structure recognises the importance of understanding the context in which the NEWROC economy will develop over the next 10 to 20 years and identify key competitive advantages and opportunities that underpin the aspirational Vision, Outcomes and Pillars of economic development activity in the region.

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND PROFILE

Global Mega Trends and Drivers

The Economic Development Strategy 2024 – 2029 is being implemented at a time when a series of mega trends and global drivers are converging to transform the local, national and international economic environment. Key global megatrends of note, as identified by the CSIRO, include:



Figure 3 Global Mega-Trends

These trends are highly relevant and impactful for the future economic development and prosperity for NEWROC Shires. Key impacts may include:

- CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREEN TECH** – climate change is expected to impact agricultural production in the region as well as subject local communities and industries to more frequent and more destructive extreme weather events. However, the growing prominence of “green tech” offers a potential to mitigate against the worst effects of climate change, so too opportunities to improve soil and agricultural practices, while opening up economic opportunities for the region’s natural climate and weather advantages to support green energy production and environmental offsets (with minimal impact on productive agricultural land).
- DIGITAL AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES** – consistent, reliable and high capacity telecommunication infrastructure has long been a challenge for the region. As digital and ecommerce becomes the standard for business and industry, particularly in the post COVID-19 era, such technologies provide an opportunity for local businesses to directly engage and interact with global customers. Advanced technologies, including improved GPS, AI and automation also present transformation opportunities for industry, particularly in agriculture.
- SKILLED WORKFORCE NEED** – the trend of ageing demographics across Australia is more acute in regional areas including NEWROC. Such ageing represents a particular challenge in terms of skilled workforce access, with a smaller proportion of the population expected to be of working age over the next two decades. At the same time, immigration strategies and access to tertiary and applied education institutions will be critical to ensuring workers of the future have the skills and qualifications needed to support emerging industries.

- **ONSHORING AND GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS** – COVID-19 demonstrated the challenges of relying on traditional global supply chains. In response, countries such as the US and Australia are implementing active onshoring policies to attract and establish domestic industrial capacity in critical sectors. These investments include renewed capacity transport and port infrastructure as well as development of critical minerals and resources. There is opportunity in the NEWROC for local manufacturing and simplifying supply chains.
- **FOOD AND ENERGY SECURITY** – growing global populations coupled with improving socio-economics in developing countries is driving demand for sustainable food and energy supplies. Security of supply is also increasingly at risk by the impacts of climate change, government intervention and global safety and security risk. This environment will place increased emphasis on the role of NEWROC as a nationally significant food producer and as well as support the development of latent sustainable energy resources.

Socio-Economic Profile Of NEWROC

This Economic Profile outlines key economic and social indicators and trends of the NEWROC economy. The profile is broken into four broad categories:

- **PEOPLE** – population, demographic and socio- economic attributes of the people who call NEWROC home;
- **LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT** – local labour force, jobs and unemployment;
- **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY** – employment by industry, business registrations and agricultural production;
- **TOURISM** – key tourism assets and attractions of the region; and
- **TRADE AND ECONOMY** – regional exports, industry value added and gross regional product.

³ ABS (2023) Regional Population by Age and Sex, accessed at abs.gov.au

People

Estimates from the ABS are that NEWROC was home to 3,204 people in 2022.³ This is down from 3,553 in 2007, representing a decrease of 349 people or 9.8% over the 15 years at a rate of 0.62% per annum⁴. The majority of the region’s population reside in the Shire of Dowerin, which accounts for 23% of NEWROC’s population.

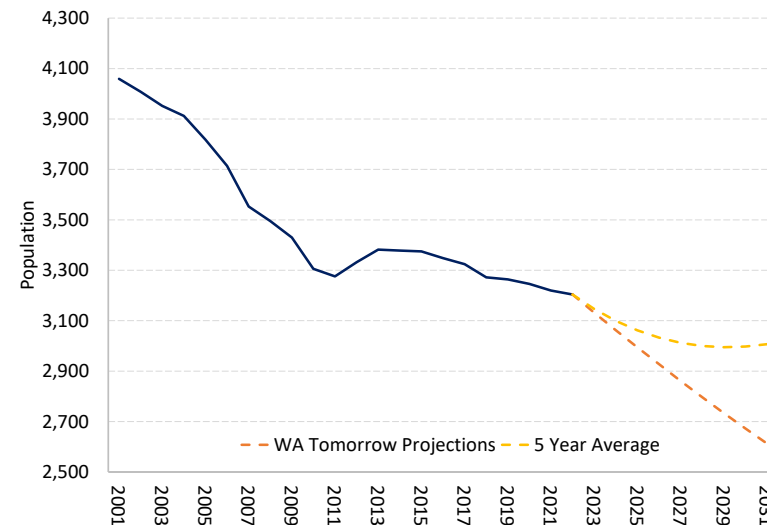


Figure 4 Historical and Projected Population, NEWROC, 2001-2031

Rebased projections using growth rates in the medium series from WA Tomorrow (2016) indicate the population will continue to decline at current rates. This will result in the population of the catchment reaching, 2,613 people by 2031.

It is noted that the current LGA level WA Tomorrow projections are outdated and not necessarily representative of the population growth profile. Assuming the continuation of the most recent 5 year average growth rates across each of the

⁴ WAPC (2017) WA Tomorrow No 10 Population Projections accessed at wapc.wa.gov.au

NEWROC LGAs and the of population in each LGA and the projected decline in the population stabilise in 2029 at approximately 3,000 residents.

The residential population of the region is older than the rest of Western Australia, with 65+ years accounting for almost one in four residents in 2022. This results in an older median age across the NEWROC LGAs, ranging from 44 to 55 (compared to 35 for Western Australia). This corresponds with NEWROC having a below average share of residents aged 0-14 and 15-24, with younger people currently moving away from the region for education and employment opportunities.

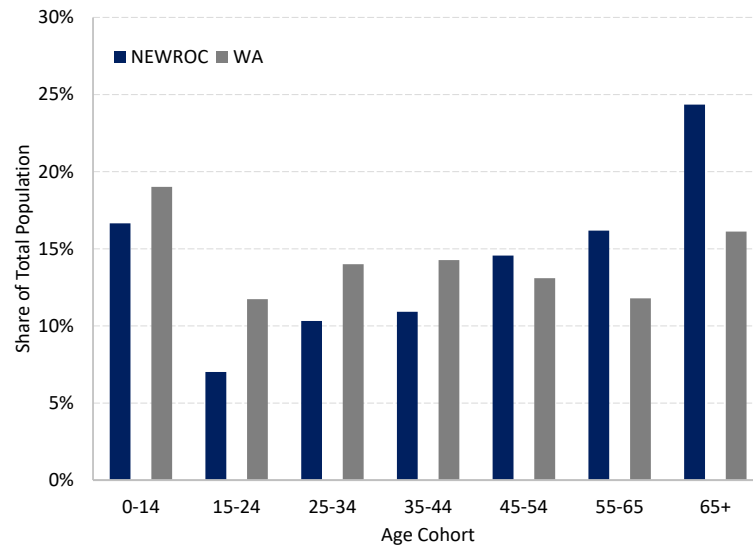


Figure 5 Share of Population by Age, NEWROC, WA, 2021

The 2021 Census of Population and Housing (Census) provides information on a range of social and economic characteristics of Australia’s population. SEIFA is one of the commonly used summary measures. SEIFA combines Census data such as

⁵ ABS (2023) Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia accessed at <https://abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release>

income, education, employment, occupation, housing and family structure to summarise the socio-economic characteristics of an area.

Each area receives a SEIFA score indicating how relatively advantaged or disadvantaged that area is compared with other areas. A review of the headline SEIFA Index for Advantage and Disadvantage confirmed that all LGAs had overall socio-economic status levels below or approaching national averages⁵. This partly reflects the impact of the older age of the population and the impact of this demographic on average education outcomes and a higher exposure to fixed incomes (i.e. pensions).

Labour Force and Employment

Unemployment rates in NEWROC decreased significantly in late 2020, as a combination of an increasingly strong labour market, including high job vacancies and ongoing labour shortages due to a slowing in previously strong population growth. The unemployment rate of NEWROC has been significantly lower than Western Australia’s unemployment rate⁶ for most of the past 15 years, with the only exception being in 2015/16.

⁶ Small Area Labour Markets (2022), National Skills Commission, accessed at <https://www.nationalskillscommission.gov.au/topics/small-area-labour-markets>

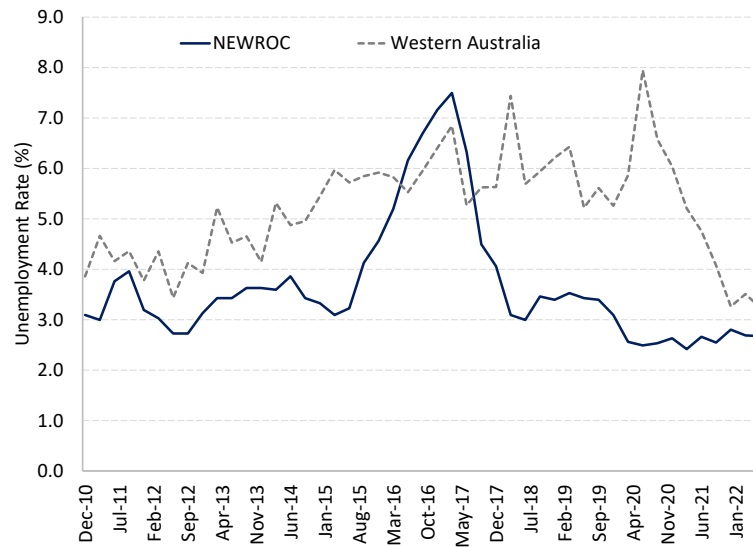


Figure 6 Unemployment Rate, NEWROC, WA, Dec 2010 - Jun 2022

In 2021, the NEWROC region experienced a notable upswing in job opportunities, with employment totalling 1,466 jobs, a 28% increase compared to the 2011 figure of 1,140.⁷

⁷ ABS (2021), General Community Profile accessed at <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/LGA52940>

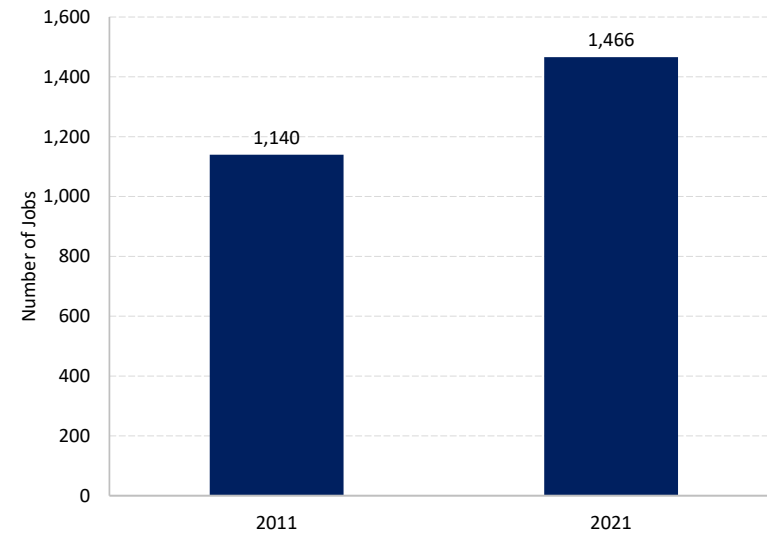


Figure 7 Number of Jobs, NEWROC, 2011-2021

Business and Industry

An examination of the employment within the NEWROC economy highlights the prominence of the Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing sector in local jobs. This underscores the region's current heavy reliance on agricultural activities. This employment industry mix is supplemented by other key sectors such as Health Care and Social Assistance, Education and Training, and Public Administration and Safety servicing the population of NEWROC.⁸

⁸ ABS (2021), General Community Profile accessed at <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/LGA52940>

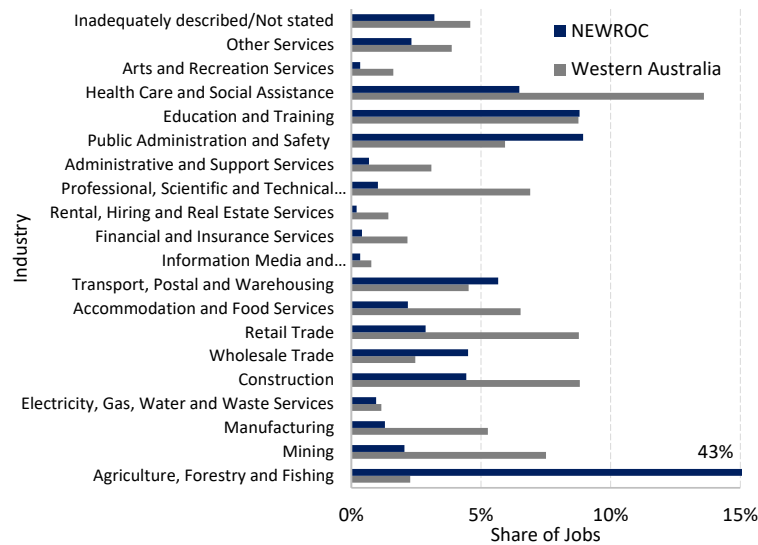


Figure 8 Share of Jobs by Industry, NEWROC, WA

Employment growth in recent years has been primarily driven by Health Care and Social Assistance – which grew by 53 jobs between 2011 and 2021 or 126% over the decade. Other strong growth sectors since 2006 include:

- Education and Training – up 86% to 129 jobs;
- Wholesale Trade – up 69% to 66 jobs; and
- Accommodation and Food Services – up 77% to 32 jobs.

At the same time, several sectors saw declines in total employment including:

- Manufacturing – down 45% to 19 jobs;
- Administrative and Support Services– down 37% to 10 jobs;

⁹ General Community Profile (2021), ABS, accessed at <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/LGA52940>

- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services – down 33% to 14 jobs.

Rates of business registrations in NEWROC are well above the State average, with 178 registered business in NEWROC for every 1,000 residents, compared to 91 for Western Australia as a whole⁹. In 2023, Dowerin was home to the largest number of locally registered businesses with 130, with both Mukinbudin (112) and Mount Marshall (109) also significant.

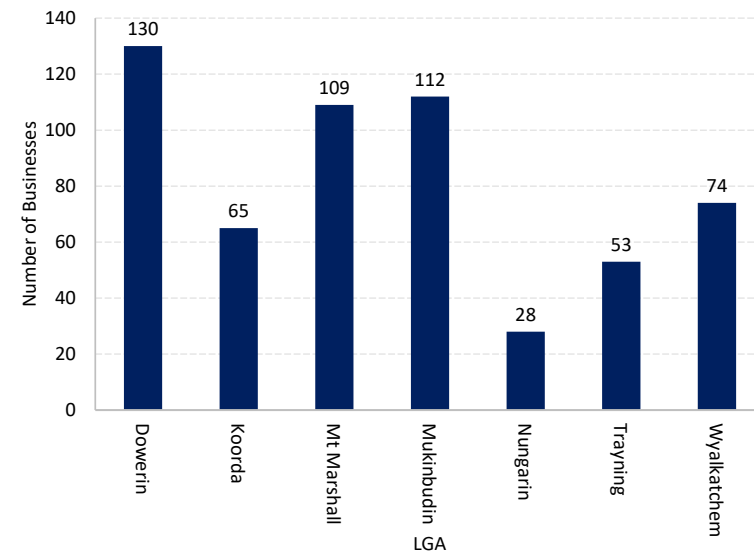


Figure 9 Count of Locally Registered Business, NEWROC LGAs, 2023¹⁰

NEWROC, however, has a higher share of employing businesses, with 56.1% of businesses classified as “non-employing” compared to 65% at State and national levels. A review of employing businesses confirms a higher share of businesses employing 1-4 workers (compared to the Wheatbelt and WA) but a below average share of businesses employing more than 4 workers.

¹⁰ ABS (2023) Count of Registered Businesses, accessed at <https://www.abs.gov.au>

The largest number of businesses in NEWROC are in the Agricultural sector (349 businesses), followed by Real Estate, Rental and Hiring¹ (54), Construction (29) and Transport, Postal and Warehousing (25).

Agriculture, particularly livestock production and broadacre cropping, plays a central role in the value added of the NEWROC. The value of agricultural commodities in the Wheatbelt accounts for 61% of Western Australia, with NEWROC accounting to 8% of the Wheatbelt and 5% of Western Australia¹¹.

Table 1 Agriculture Production Indicator, NEWROC, Wheatbelt and WA

Agriculture Indicators	NEWROC	Wheatbelt	WA
Total Agricultural Land Use (ha)	3,883,820	35,671,315	253,723,433
Total Production of Crops (t)	1,203,839	11,366,932	16,518,238
Total Value of Crops (\$)	\$427,263,142	\$4,535,497,649	\$7,342,052,634
Total Livestock Production (No.)	1,177,243	18,234,114	44,346,817
Total Value of Livestock (slaughtered) (\$)	\$21,169,862	\$977,450,974	\$2,027,478,940
Total Value of Livestock Products (\$)	\$18,066,758	\$538,403,304	\$831,809,746

In 2020/21, the NEWROC LGAs generated over \$1.8b in agricultural production, with Koorda and Mount Marshall Shires each producing in excess of \$400m.

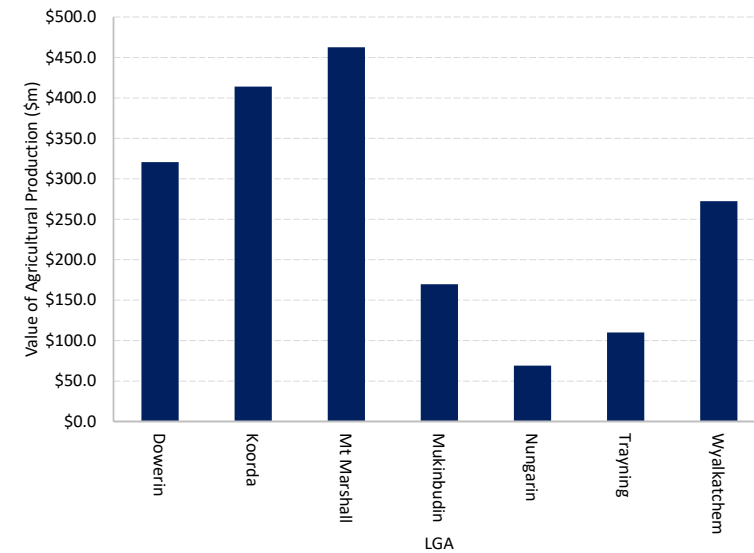


Figure 10 Value of Agricultural Production, NEWROC LGAs, 2020/21

Tourism

Tourism is a growing industry within the NEWROC economy with an increasing number and diversity of tourism assets playing a critical role in attracting overnight and day trip visitors to the region. Key tourism assets of illustrated below.

¹¹ Agricultural Commodities (2021), ABS, accessed at <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/value-agricultural-commodities-produced-australia/2020-21>



Rusty and Rosey – Shire of Dowerin



Wildflowers and Minnivale Discovery Centre



Dowerin Machinery Field Days



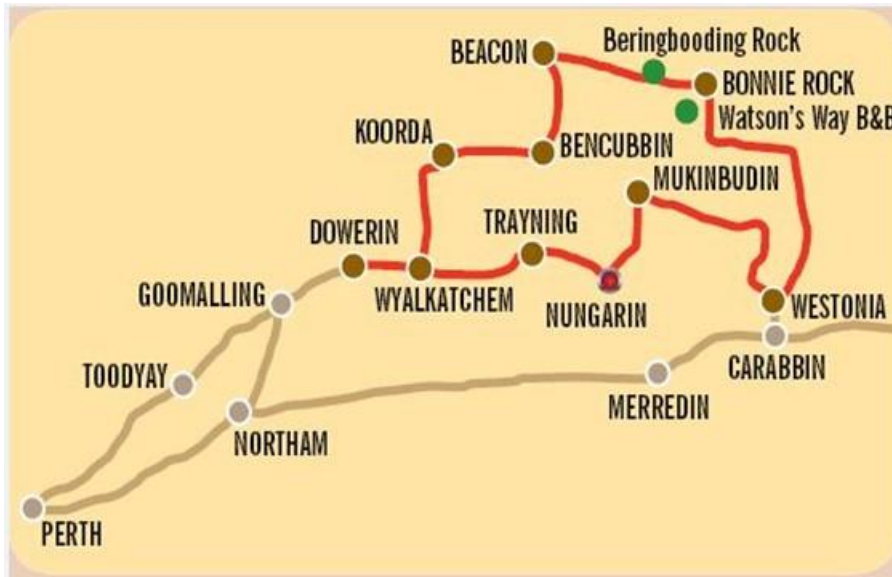
Koorda Museum



Marshall Rock



Beringbooding Rock



The Wheatbelt Way Self Drive trail



Nungarin Heritage Machinery & Army Museum



Wyalkatchem CBH Museum



Billyacatting Hill

Local tourism accommodation is principally limited to Shire run caravan parks across the region as well as traditional publican hotels and camping. There are also a range of B&B and farm stay options as well.

Trade and Economy

NEWROC represents a major agricultural asset to the Wheatbelt in regard to both crop farming and livestock production. Its strategic regional location relative to Perth (including major key export infrastructure of Fremantle Port and Perth International Airport), means that NEWROC industries have ready access to global markets.

In 2022/23, the NEWROC economy exported over \$416m in goods and services out of the region to other parts of the state, country and global economies. Dowerin was once again the largest exporter with \$84.6m, though this was closely followed by Mount Marshall (\$78.7m) and Mukinbudin (\$75.2m).

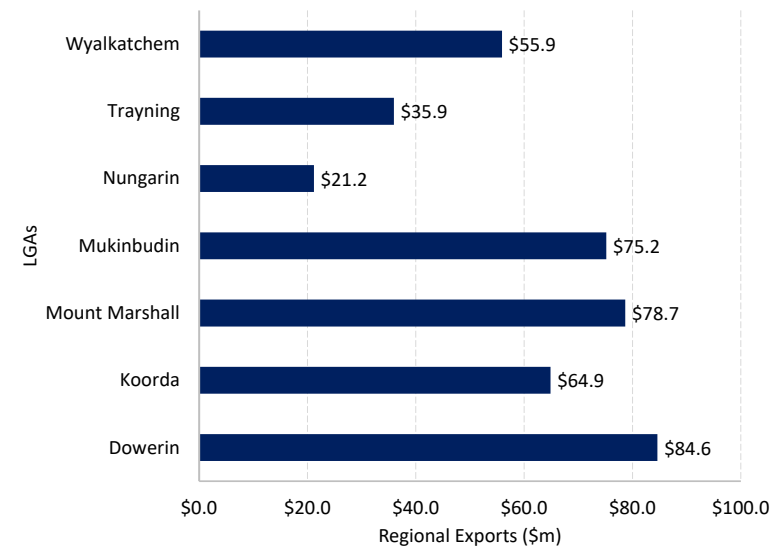


Figure 11 Value of Agricultural Exports, NEWROC LGAs, 2022/23

This trade profile, along with business and residential demand, supports an economy generating more than \$250m in Gross Value Added for the NEWROC economy in 2022, with the largest shares in the Agriculture and Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services.

Table 2 Gross Value Added by Industry, NEWROC, 2022¹²

Industry	Gross Value Added (\$M)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	122.426
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	29.324
Public Administration and Safety	24.573
Education and Training	15.587
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	12.403
Health Care and Social Assistance	10.716
Wholesale Trade	10.567
Construction	8.739
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	7.403
Retail Trade	2.875
Accommodation and Food Services	2.333
Other Services	1.862
Information Media and Telecommunications	1.833
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1.667
Financial and Insurance Services	1.616
Administrative and Support Services	1.406
Manufacturing	1.085

This results in a Gross Regional Product for the NEWROC economy in 2022 of over \$300m or approximately \$97,200 per person. This is a sizeable economy for a population of over 3,200 people, though Gross Regional Product per capita for the region is lower than Wheatbelt (\$119,400) and WA (\$167,422) economies, both of which have a higher exposure to mining activity.

¹² REMPLAN (2022), Economy Insights – Wheatbelt Region, accessed at <https://app.remplan.com.au/wheatbeltregion/economy/industries/value-added?state=Ln3lSo!WMq2cdMaVfyzN6vtE72DoTyTpS0eX0ie9OCNAvA5cqBaQi8lIaaUZIESXXkNTNyX>

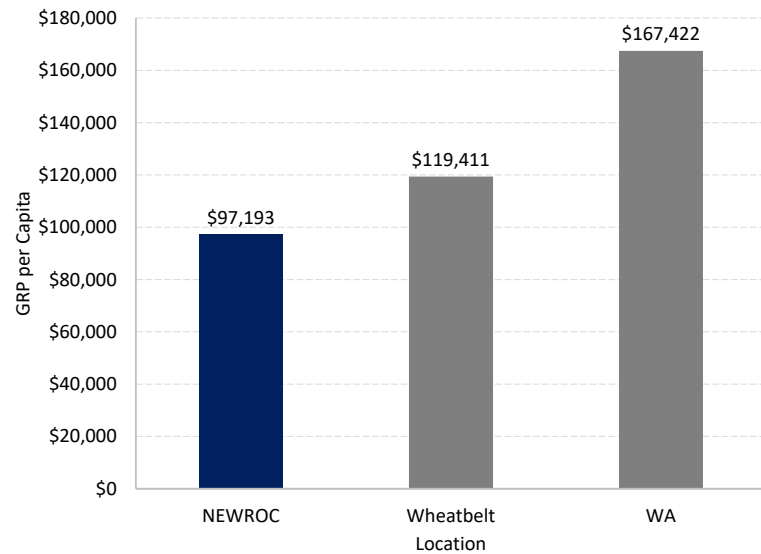


Figure 12 GRP per Resident, NEWROC, Wheatbelt, WA, 2022¹³

CASE STUDY – ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PHASING OUT OF LIVE SHEEP EXPORT

The proposed phasing out of live sheep export policy is expected to have significant economic implications for the NEWROC farmers, communities and local economies. The sheep industry generally accounts for a larger share of NEWROC economic activity than both WA and Australia.

Estimates by Econisis using unit price/value and economic multiplier approaches indicate the potential impact on the NEWROC economy at up to \$163.4m in economic output over 20 years (at a 7%) discount rate. This is based on both price and overall flock size impacts as well as the further impact to local

¹³REMPAN (2022), Economy Insights – Wheatbelt Region accessed at <https://app.rempplan.com.au/wheatbeltregion/economy/industries/value-added?state=Ln3lSo!WMq2cdMaVfyzN6vtE72DoTyTpS0eX0ie9OCNAvA5cqBaQi8lIaaUZIESXXkNTNyX>

communities and households from the loss of farm-related consumption and expenditure.

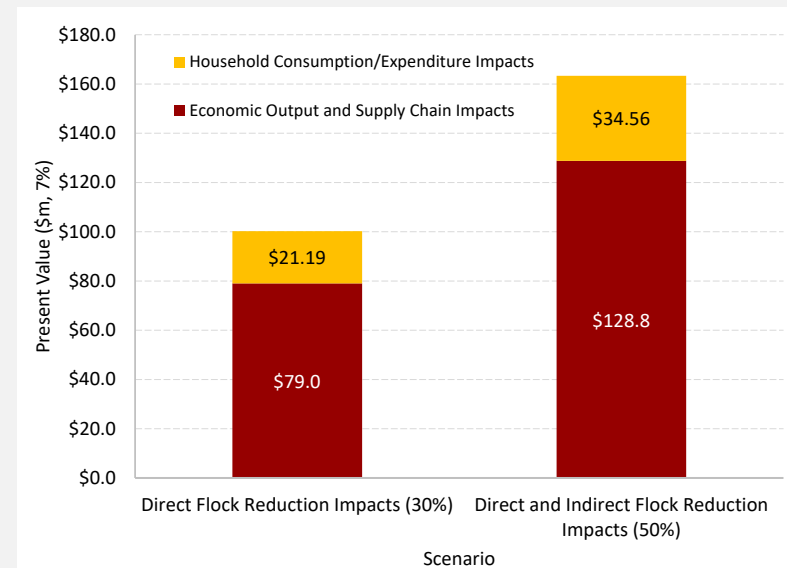
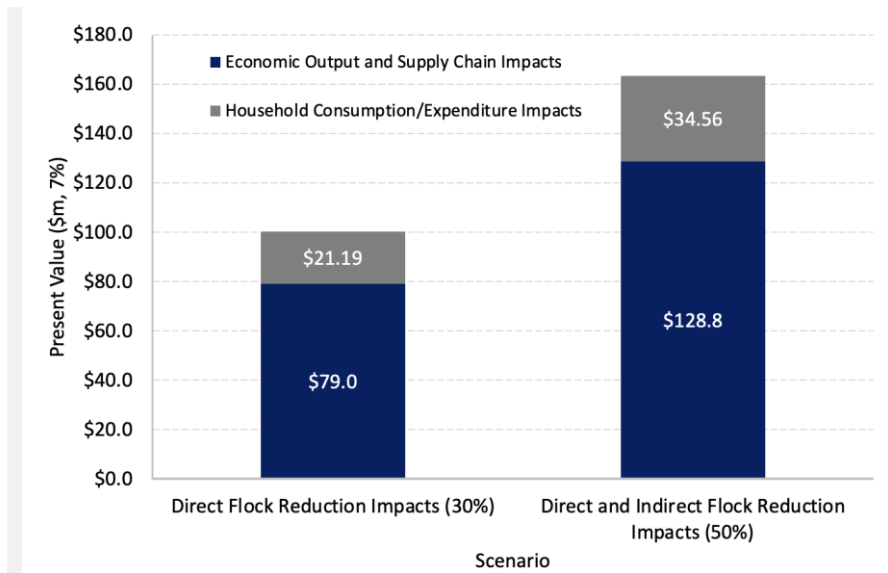


Figure 13 NEWROC Economic Output, Supply Chain and Household Consumption Impacts, by Scenario, Present Value over 20 Years at 7%



Given the importance of the sheep industry to the NEWROC economies and the high level of interrelationship between live export, sheepmeat and wool segments, the proposed live export ban is expected to have a negative economic impact on the region.

And this only represents the impact on the 7 regional local government areas in Western Australia. The scale of the impact across the State’s wider sheep farming industry is likely to be much greater and will require significant investment and compensation by the Australian Government for the introduction of the market-limiting policy¹⁴.

¹⁴ Econisis (2024) Live Sheep Trade By Sea Policy Impact On The NEWROC Economy, NEWROC

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES

Assessing Local Competitiveness

The economic success of a town, shire or region is increasingly dependent on its level of regional, national and global competitiveness. Competitiveness means the ability of a region to compete effectively in global markets.

Competitiveness is more than how effectively an economy can compete– it also reflects the level of innovation, business and industry dynamism, sustainability, resilience and skills in an economy.

A leading method for assessing competitiveness is the *Porter’s Diamond*. This model is designed to help understand the competitive advantage that towns, regions or even countries possess due to certain factors available to them.

The groups of conditions that can be assessed include:

- **FACTOR CONDITIONS** – factors of production such as land, climate/environment, resources, labour and infrastructure and their relative quality, accessibility and suitability;
- **DEMAND CONDITIONS** – the state of the market for goods and services;
- **RELATED AND SUPPORTING INDUSTRIES** – the depth and diversity of businesses that input into the supply chain of the principal activity.;
- **FIRM STRATEGY, STRUCTURE AND RIVALRY** – the impact of local competition on the propensity of businesses to innovate; and
- **INNOVATION** – includes core facilities, technologies, processes and services that support innovation

The assessment tool helps to explain and justify the role that different levels of government can play as catalysts and drivers of a region’s prosperity, by identifying competitive advantages that can be leveraged and challenges and constraints that can be removed or mitigated.

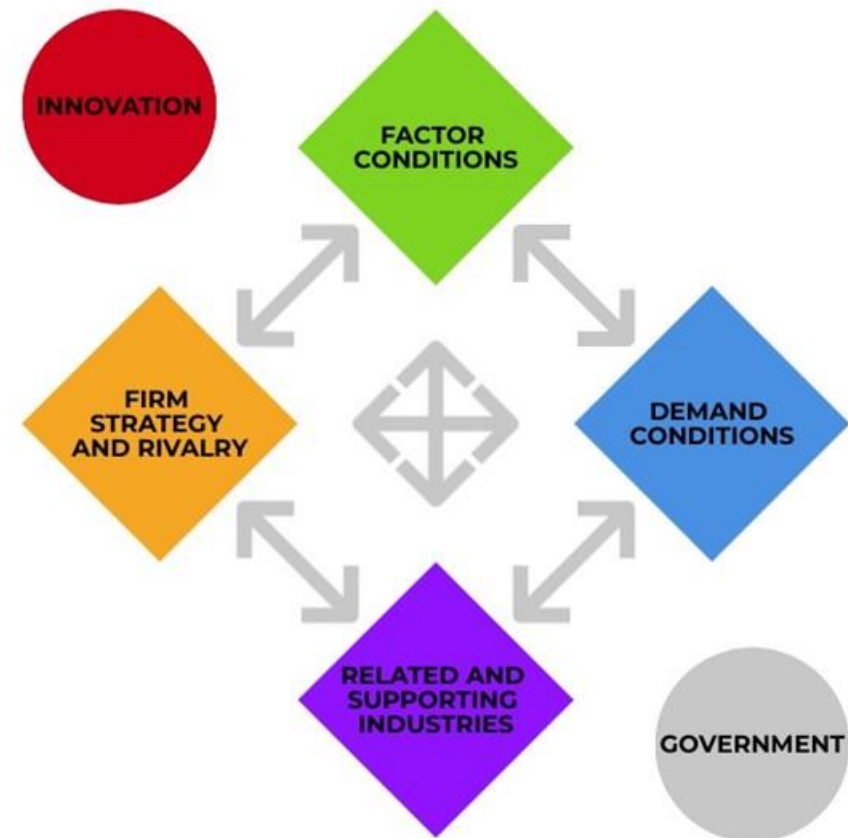


Figure 14 Porter’s Diamond Model of Competitiveness

Advantages and Challenges of the NEWROC Economy

Based on the evidence and analysis presented in this Profile, along with input from key economic development stakeholders in the region, the following assessment outlines key competitive advantages and challenges affecting the NEWROC economy.

Table 3 NEWROC’s Competitiveness Assessment

Conditions	Advantages	Challenges
Factor Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive land area used for valuable export oriented agriculture Established and nascent tourist visitation assets which attract visitors Relative proximity to Perth providing reasonable accessibility Timezone alignment with major Asian export markets. Strong renewable energy potential Underdeveloped mineral resource availability Affordable land for development Rural landscape attractive to key visitor cohorts (agricultural tourism, wildflowers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small residential population reduces the size of the local labour force for new and expanding businesses Increased exposure to extreme weather events and risks to energy and telecommunications. Location just outside of current peri-urban ring around Perth, creating some accessibility cost challenges for businesses.
Demand Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ageing population increases demand for health care and social assistance services Strong and growing international demand for agricultural products and growing food security Agriculture industry expenditure supports demand for business, technical and commercial good and services. Opportunities for local small businesses to access global markets through ecommerce. Opportunities for simplified supply chains. Perth access and port and airport proximity to leverage global markets. Nascent tourism opportunities linked to local environmental, landscape, historical/cultural and event attractions (e.g. Wheatbelt Way Self-Drive, Heritage Museums, Beringbooding Rock, Koorda drive-in, festivals and events) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small residential population (3,200 people in 2023) across 6 Shires impacting the depth of local demand for goods and services Limited new housing supply impacts availability of housing for key workers. Government intervention may disproportionately impact capacity of local producers to access global markets. Limited dedicated tourism-related infrastructure

Conditions	Advantages	Challenges
<p>Related and Supporting Industries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant opportunities in local agricultural supply chains and supporting businesses ▪ Existing extensive transport infrastructure for crop and livestock to enable access to global and national markets (e.g. Grain Freight Network). ▪ Tourism accommodation options available in most towns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distance from Perth has the potential to impact supply chain access. ▪ Energy and telecommunication infrastructure reliability and quality constrains investment and economic development. ▪ Agricultural production and market access dependent on investment decisions and service offerings by CBH and other transport providers. ▪ Constraints on the availability and viability of abattoirs to replace live sheep export. ▪ Tourism accommodation options typically limited to publican hotels and caravan parks.
<p>Firm Strategy, Structure and Rivalry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Export focused economy supports strong exposure to new investment and business models in key sections (namely agriculture). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small size of regional non-agriculture markets reduces local business competition and consumer choice. ▪ Trend of increased farm consolidation ▪ Agricultural “mono-economy” raises risks for resilience against economic shocks and local terms sustainability ▪ Business growth and expansion constrained by local labour force
<p>Innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growing investment by agricultural producers and farmers in technologies. ▪ Desalination of water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of local tertiary education and research and development institutions.

Summary of Challenges and Opportunities

Key Challenges and Issues Facing the NEWROC Economy

Major challenges and issues facing the NEWROC economy, now and into the future, are summarised below.



Figure 15 Key Challenges and Issues

NEWROC has a small and ageing population that impacts both local service need and the availability of workers (and housing to accommodate new workers). This is partly a reflection of both the existence of an agricultural mono-economy in the region (exposing NEWROC to the impact of trends in farm consolidation) as well as emerging targeted policies at a Federal level impacting core industry viability (namely live sheep export phasing out).

NEWROC has also recently experienced (as of January 2024) the devastating impact of extreme weather events, resulting in extended power and telecommunication outages. This event not only shows the risks to the NEWROC economy of the worsening implications of climate change but also the need for investment in critical, catalytic and enabling infrastructure and community services to drive future growth.

Strengths and Opportunities for Growth

However, NEWROC also possesses a range of key economic strengths and opportunities for growth, as summarised below.



Figure 16 Key Strengths and Opportunities

NEWROC is presently a \$300m economy with strong alignment to major food security and renewable energy megatrends. The region’s proximity and accessibility to Perth, existing tourism assets and a diversity of regional destinations and townships represent significant opportunities and strengths upon which growth and prosperity can be enhanced and sustained into the future. This will require leveraging the entrepreneurial nature of the community and facilitating increased population growth and workforce access through industry attraction, housing supply availability and critical infrastructure investment.

VISION, OUTCOMES AND PROGRAMS

Vision for NEWROC Economy

The following vision is proposed for the NEWROC economy:

Growing Prosperous and Sustainable Communities Through Collaboration, Leadership and Investment

Elements of the Vision and Desired Outcomes

This vision is comprised of a series of elements and desired outcomes. These include:

- **GROWING PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES...** – this element recognises the importance of fostering economic growth in a way that ensures all residents share in the prosperity over the long-term. This growth “dividend” will help to drive the dynamism, attractiveness and diversity of NEWROC communities.
- **...THROUGH COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP...** – this reflects the collaborative nature of NEWROC and the opportunities a whole-of-NEWROC approach to economic development provides all shires and communities. This element positions NEWROC as the “voice” of economic development for the region,
- **...AND INVESTMENT** – this element recognises that to realise the economic development potential of the NEWROC region, investment is required. This includes both public investment in critical and enabling infrastructure capacity and essential services as well as private and community investment in new housing, industries and businesses. Facilitating, fostering and advocating for this investment is a key role and function of NEWROC.

Role of Local Government

NEWROC Shires in partnership with NEWROC itself, fulfil a range of roles and functions in meeting the local economic development needs of the region:



Figure 17 Role of Local Government in Economic Development

Economic Development Programs

To deliver on the vision, the following Economic Development Programs are identified. These Programs represent areas of focus or priorities for NEWROC and associated Shires.



Figure 18 Economic Development Programs

Each of these Economic Development Programs are examined below:

- **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY** – NEWROC will advocate for investment from state and federal governments in critical, enabling and catalytic infrastructure and essential services including telecommunications, electricity, regional waste and health care.
- **TOURISM SECTOR DEVELOPMENT** – NEWROC will facilitate the development and growth of the tourism sector within the region. This may include tourism product development, visitor accommodation attraction, sector strategy and planning development and tourism asset and attraction investment.
- **SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT** – NEWROC will foster the creation, and growth of the small business sector within the region, by facilitating grant access, promoting small business establishment and encouraging small business networking and clustering.
- **LOCAL COMMUNITY REVITALISATION** – NEWROC will facilitate the revitalisation of and investment in local communities in the region including promoting precinct planning, community facility funding attraction and regional-level strategic planning.
- **REGIONAL BRAND ESTABLISHMENT** – NEWROC will seek to establish a clear and compelling “brand” for the region to facilitate investment, business, funding, new resident visitor attraction and increase general State and national awareness of the region and associated Shires.

These Programs do not preclude NEWROC and the Shires from undertaking any and all economic development activities, initiatives, policies and strategies as is required or beneficial for communities. Where possible, all such activities should be pursued collaboratively to maximise community benefit, economic impact and value for money.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Partnering for Success

The successful implementation of the Strategy will require NEWROC and associates Shires to partner with a diverse range of stakeholders. These may include:

- Australian Government agencies
- State Government Departments
- Wheatbelt Development Commission
- RDA Wheatbelt
- Community and not for profit organisations
- First Nations Groups and Aboriginal Corporations
- Private sector businesses and investors

When partnering, NEWROC will seek to clearly define its role and function within the partnership.

Shared Implementation Responsibility

To facilitate the delivery of the Economic Development Programs within the Strategy, it is recommended that each Shire prepare a concise Economic Development Action Plan. These Plans should take the form of a schedule of actions and initiatives that the Shire seeks to progress under each of the NEWROC Economic Development Programs. The Action Plan should include information on each action including:

- Name of the Action
- Location
- Responsible Party

- Role of Council and NEWROC
- Relevant Economic Development Program
- Details on the Action
- Expected timeframe (short, medium or long term)
- Relative importance or priority
- Known or Potential Funding Sources
- Next steps

This schedule should include all existing and future actions and initiatives and be reviewed and updated annually.

Monitoring Progress and Measuring Outcomes

The Profile and Strategy should be reviewed and renewed after 5 years, accounting for new evidence and information and the progress of the region against economic development indicators and measures of success.

Potential measures for monitoring include:

- Positive annual population growth rate (Annual - ABS)
- Positive growth in population aged 15-24 (Annual – ABS)
- Increased day trip and overnight visitation (Annual - Tourism Research Australia)
- Improvement in Socio-Economic Status of Shires (5 yearly – SEIFA, Annual – ABS Incomes)
- Value of residential and non-residential building approvals (Annual – ABS)
- Growth in locally registered employing businesses (Annual – ABS)

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