



Date & time: Monday 20th June 4pm-6pm, Council Chamber, Civic Centre

Participants:

- Kim Bailey (Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce)
- Craig Wilson (Port Hedland Port Authority)
- Andrew Ducas (Water Corporation)
- Wanda Kaucz (Dep. Planning)
- Trish Brennan (Pilbara Development Committee)
- Denise Bevans (Small Business Centre)
- Bill Dziombak (Pilbara Chamber of Commerce)
- Craig Holland (TAFE)
- Leeuwin Beeck (Many Rivers Small Business Finance)
- Kelly Howlett (Mayor of Port Headland)
- Paul Martin (CEO ToPH)
- Leonard Long (ToPH)
- Eber Butron (ToPH)
- Brye Holland (ToPH)
- Michael Campbell (AEC Group)
- Owen Hightower (RPS)
- Daniel Marsh (WorleyParsons – Facilitator)
- Ned Baxter (WorleyParsons- Scribe)
- Cassandra Woodruff (ToPH – Scribe)

Session Objectives & Process

The session objectives were to ground-truth the consultants' analysis of employment and economic activity challenges, and to obtain stakeholder reaction to focus questions posed by the study team.

A short presentation (attached) was made to overview the Growth Plan process, summarise relevant work done to date and present the context for key focus questions.

The key issues identified by the consultants were:

- **Mono Economy:** Dominance of mining which accounts directly for 73% of Gross Regional Product and is growing faster than the rest of the economy so that the realistic task is not diversification (the economy will tend to concentrate around mining) but supporting growth on the non-mining sector
- **Minimal local investment:** The group were shown that, unlike many other regional towns and cities, most business investment in Port Hedland is external and that data on aborted investment is not readily available
- **Adding value to resources supply chain:** In addition to the pursuit of large scale external investment, opportunities exist in the supply chain for



'quick wins' that will help the economy capture more of the value-adding in the resources sector

Confirming Key Issues and Opportunities

The group was invited to add additional issues perceived as key for consideration by the Growth Plan, or to qualify or redirect the consultant team on the key issues and opportunities.

Inward Investment Proposition

Key to understanding the competitive advantage offered by Port Hedland was to understand the reasons why proponents had not sanctioned investment including what perceptions were held by proponents. The group discovered little data is readily available on any due diligence outcomes or fatal flaw analysis.

Adding Value to Resources Supply Chain

There was a feeling expressed that investigation of supply chain opportunities in the resources sector has not be thorough or strategic.

Tourism

Port Hedland was seen as the 'gateway to the Pilbara' with potential strengths being the natural aesthetics and traditional culture of the Pilbara region but also the town itself.

“We have the biggest, or soon to be biggest, operating Port in the World, we should be celebrating this fact by capitalising on it as key component of our community's development”

Sport tourism – a major centre for country sporting events – was seen as an economic opportunity which would support greater levels of amenity and community facilities.

Education

There may be an opportunity to capitalise on the strong mining industry presence in the area by the creation of an education and research centre for the industry with a strong research base.

“It would have the ability to practically apply research theories. It makes sense to have a research centre in the same place.”

Primary industry

The development of value adding opportunities in sectors including agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture and bio-fuels were recognised as desirable.

National Defence

A strategic review to increase capability in Northern Australia to increase its coastal and national defence force presence is an opportunity for Port Hedland.





Advice on Direction

Learning from Inward Investment not Progressed

The Growth Plan should consider strategies for better coordination of investment attraction, realistic assessment of cases where investment does not proceed, and a systematic exploration of the iron ore and oil & gas supply chains for local value-adding. An industrial laundry was provided as an example of where resources sector procurement could be leveraged to the advantage of local businesses and employment opportunity, yet despite much discussion, this enterprise has never materialised.

There is a role for a body to support the Town of Port Hedland in driving systematic business attraction strategies.

“We can’t do this on our own. The Town of course, will play a pivotal role in driving these initiatives but it will need support and this includes not only State and eventually Federal Government ‘buy-in’ but on the ground support from all members of the community... we have got to keep looking at the bigger picture”

Accommodation

The recurring theme regarding restraints to the growth in all these areas was the issue of lack of accommodation.

“We certainly would support these initiatives; the problem is, where are you going to put all of the people?”

All forms of accommodation are lacking: permanent, semi-permanent and short stay / tourism.

Transient Population

The frequent ‘turnover’ of residents was seen as a major inhibitor to greater economic diversity because building up enterprises takes time and commitment to a place.

“People come for a job and then go, but what is being done to make people stay?”

Provision of high quality public services such as education and health was seen as a key factor in encouraging greater economic development. In particular high school and higher education were critical to families staying in the region.

“I know many families who have lived in [Port] Hedland, and enjoyed it, and the only reason they have moved away is for the sake of the kids and their education.”

ends