

## WHEATBELT SNAPSHOT SERIES: EDUCATION

Version 1 – July 2014

### DISCUSSION PAPER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to outline the educational infrastructure and service delivery in the Wheatbelt. This document highlights the issues and limitations of existing services and infrastructure. The information contained within this document is correct to the best of the Wheatbelt Development Commission's knowledge. Should you believe that any information is incorrect or have queries relating to the document please contact the WDC to further discuss these matters.

### REGIONAL LOCATION

The Wheatbelt comprises an area of 154,862 kms<sup>2</sup> and encompasses 43 Local Governments. The Region is home to almost 74,000 people, making it the third most populous region in the State. There are 81 schools in the Region covered by four education regions (Wheatbelt, Mid West, Goldfields Esperance and North Metropolitan). This includes 47 Primary Schools, 21 District High Schools, 3 Senior High Schools, 2 campuses of the WA College of Agriculture, one K-12 College and one Education Support Centre. There are also 8 non-government schools in the Wheatbelt. There is currently no university presence (physically) in the region although Muresk Institute is delivering an Agribusiness Degree and is working to deliver more post compulsory education offerings.



## KEY DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

Key issues for Education in the Wheatbelt include:

- Introduction of 15 hours kindergarten and compulsory pre-primary is impacting viability of child care facilities through decreased numbers.
- National quality framework measures require education and care (childcare) centre staff to have higher qualifications. Training can be difficult and costly to access impacting availability of appropriate staff to operate facilities. Additionally, staff with higher qualifications are able to demand higher wages again impacting viability of centres.
- Daily commute to the metropolitan area for students in the Shires of Gingin, Chittering and Toodyay, impacting the potential expansion of existing schools and diversity of course delivery.
- Limited bandwidth and high cost of access affecting the ability to host virtual classrooms in the region.
- Economic and socio-emotional impact of introduction of year 7 into secondary schooling system. Particularly in parts of the region with no access to secondary school as a day student.
- The significant cost burden for families where secondary education is only accessible through SIDE, boarding at residential college or through families relocating to a larger urban centre.
- Out-migration of students (and their families) due to a perceived lack of education options, quality and curricular choice.
- Participation and achievement benchmarks lower than metropolitan counterparts.

- Lack of tertiary options (Bachelor level and above) in the region. This is impacting participation and achievement benchmarks at this level. (Population aged 15+ with post school qualifications: Wheatbelt 34%; WA 45%)

## WHEATBELT NETWORK SCHOOLS PROFILE AND RESOURCES

### Schools and Networks

The Wheatbelt Education Region covers the majority of the WDC's region. The 70 schools of the Wheatbelt Education Region are incorporated into six networks.

The majority of essential support services to schools now operate through schools and networks. Networks also maximise each School's opportunity to share ideas, resources and professional support.

The Wheatbelt Education Regional Office (Northam) and the Local Office (Narrogin) provide operational, administrative and support services for all public schools in the Wheatbelt education region.

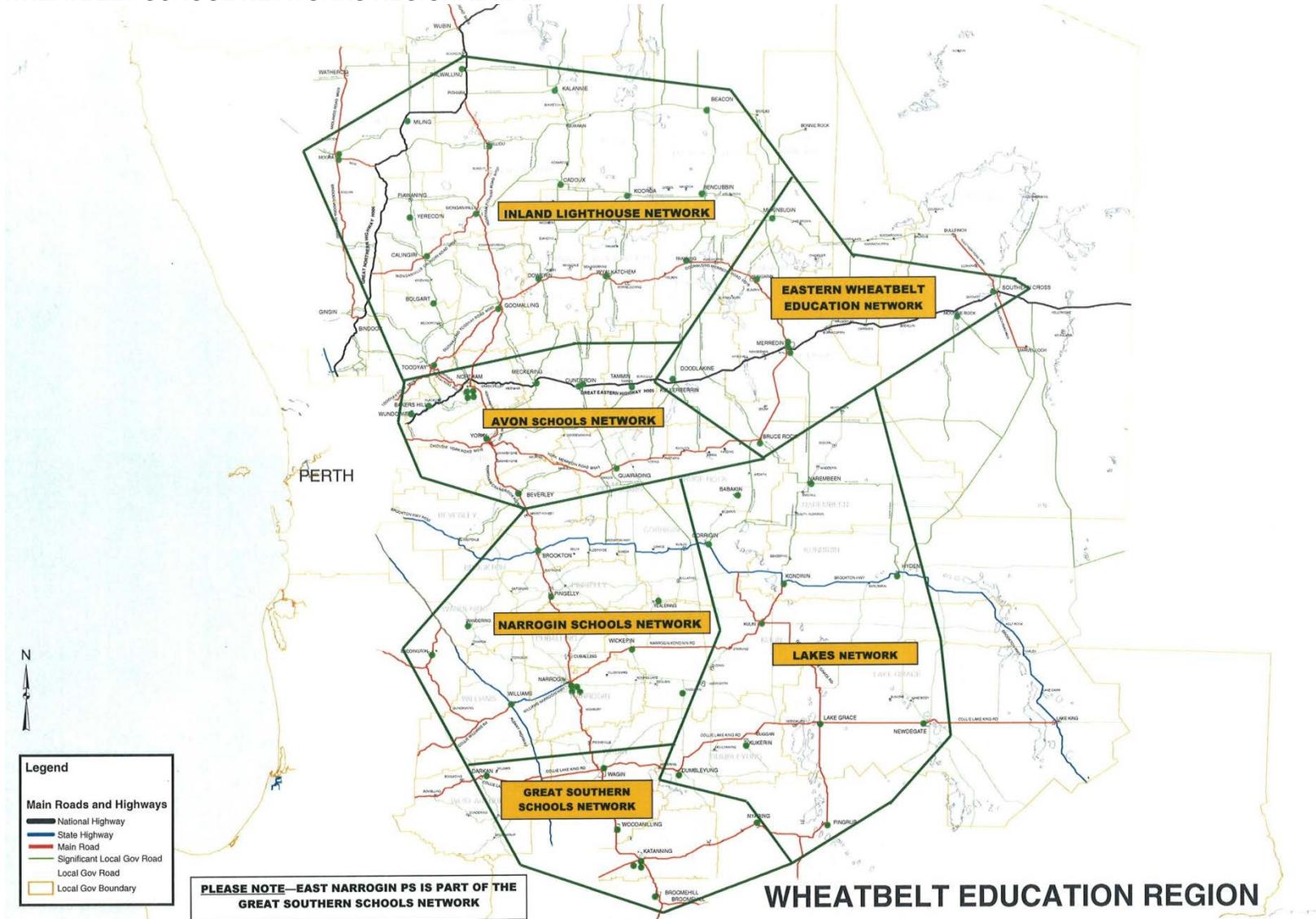
The Mid West Education Region covers the Wheatbelt coastal area, including 6 schools (Five Primary Schools and one District High School). These are within the Mid West regions Southern network and are supported through the Geraldton office.

The North Metropolitan Education Region includes a number of schools in the peri-urban coastal areas of the Wheatbelt, including 3 schools (Two Primary Schools and one District High School). These schools are supported through the Stirling office.

Lake King Primary School is a part of the Goldfields Esperance Education Region and is supported from the Esperance office. Lake King Primary School forms part of the Mallee Network.

A full list of schools and networks is at **Appendix 1**.

# WHEATBELT SCHOOL NETWORKS REGIONAL MAP



Source: Department of Education Website (<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/regions/wheatbelt/detcms/navigation/schools-in-our-region/>)

## **INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

In collaboration with their school community, Independent Public Schools set their own strategic directions, have authority for day-to-day decision making and are in an ideal position to make decisions that best cater for their students. Parents and community members have an important and enhanced role in this initiative.

In the Wheatbelt, the following schools operate as Independent Public Schools;

- Cervantes Primary School (part of Turquoise Coastal School Alliance)
- Corrigin District High School
- Dowerin District High School
- East Narrogin Primary School
- Jurien Bay District High School (part of Turquoise Coastal School Alliance)
- Kulin District High School
- Lake Grace District High School
- Narembeen District High School
- Narrogin Primary School
- WA College of Agriculture – Cunderdin
- York District High School

## **Non-Government Schools**

There are 8 non-government schools in the Wheatbelt which all operate within the Catholic Education System. A list of these schools is at **Appendix 1**.

## **Residential Colleges**

The Country High School Hostels Authority is committed to the achievement of high standards and being recognised throughout Australia as being at the forefront in the care and development of students boarding away from home. Boarding

services include accommodation, meals, student care and development, educational and recreational resources and programs, and parent and school liaison. Federal and State allowances and subsidies provide significant savings to the cost of boarding for eligible families.

The Authority has four residential colleges in the Wheatbelt including, Merredin, Moora (St James'), Narrogin and Northam. Predominantly students come from isolated areas within the State where they have no access to a secondary school. However, enrolment is open to all secondary age students from Australia and overseas on a full fee basis.

The Authority also has a boarding facility in the metropolitan area. City Beach Residential College was established to support non-metropolitan students being offered places in gifted and talented education programs in the metropolitan area.

The Western Australian State Government continues to support improvements to college boarding facilities and the Authority has an ongoing building and improvement plan to ensure all residential colleges continue to provide the optimum environment for students.

## **BOARDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

There are a number of financial assistance schemes available to families of students who attend boarding school in Western Australia.

### Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme (AIC)

A basic boarding allowance, \$7,667 in 2014 and indexed annually, is provided by the Australian Government to children who:

- live at least 16 kilometres from the nearest appropriate government school via the school bus route or public transport and at least 4.5 kilometres from the transport pick up point;
- live at least 56 kilometres from the nearest appropriate government school via the school bus route or public transport service route;
- have to travel more than 3 hours daily, to and from school, via the school bus route; or
- meet one of the Scheme's other isolation or special needs criteria.

Subject to an income test an additional boarding allowance, indexed annually, may be payable (up to \$1,466 from 1 January 2014 for primary and secondary students. AIC is administered by Centrelink.

### Boarding Away from Home Allowance (BAHA)

All recipients of the basic AIC allowance are eligible for the State Government Boarding Away from Home Allowance amounting to \$2,105 in 2014.

### Youth Allowance

Depending on parental income, actual means and family assets, a student may receive a higher level of Commonwealth assistance if he or she is eligible for Youth Allowance.

### ABSTUDY

Indigenous students can apply for ABSTUDY which assists with boarding, travel and tuition costs of those eligible. ABSTUDY is administered by Centrelink.

### Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Boarding Allowance

Country students who are offered a place at Perth Modern School or in one of the other metropolitan gifted and talented education programs and who are not eligible for any of the abovementioned allowances may be eligible for this allowance which amounts to \$2,105 in 2014 and is adjusted annually.

Students living in "defined remote areas" of the State are eligible to apply for subsidized transport (air, bus or rail) between home and school at the beginning and end of each school term each calendar year.

For up to eight round trips each year a 'Road Travel Subsidy' is paid at the rate of 19.98 cents per kilometre, for kilometres travelled in excess of 56 kilometres each way, to:

- the nearest appropriate school with boarding facilities offering classes in the grade or year in which the student is enrolled, or
- the nearest regular passenger transport or school bus service operating between the student's home and school attended (whichever is closer).

Regular passenger transport access and car pooling affect the amount paid.

Subsidised Student Travel and the Road Travel Subsidy are administered by the Department of Transport.

## **SCHOOL BUS SERVICES**

School Bus Services (SBS) is responsible for providing eligible rural students and students with special needs, free transport assistance to and from school on contracted 'orange' school buses. These services are critical to ensure students are able to attend school.

When a contract bus service is not available for an eligible student, SBS may assist the student's family by providing a conveyance allowance as a contribution towards the costs of transporting their children to and from school.

With respect to providing transport assistance to rural students, attending mainstream schools, the SBS branch:

- Negotiates and administers contracts relating to the use of contract school buses to provide transport for students to schools and education facilities, and remunerates contractors for such services.
  - Provides direction and advice on the selection, construction, modification and maintenance of contract school buses according to the specifications required at law and by SBS.
  - Inspects contract school buses and follows up any queries resulting from vehicle inspections.
  - Ensures that contract services and routes are safe, cost efficient and regularly maintained.
  - Supports and guides School Bus Advisory Committees (SBACs) in applying the Government's policies on transport assistance for students.
- Considers recommendations from SBACs. Reviews approved routes to determine whether the level of service could be provided more efficiently, and informs SBACs of route changes that may improve the service or reduce the cost to Government.
  - Advises the Minister responsible for the Public Transport Authority on matters relating to transport assistance for students.
  - Supervises the payment of conveyance allowances.
  - Maintains policies relating to the provision of transport assistance.
  - Develops procedures covering the operational aspects of providing transport assistance.

## HIGHER EDUCATION FACILITIES

The CY O'Connor Institute is the primary provider of higher education in the Wheatbelt. Campuses are located in Merredin, Moora, Narrogin and Northam. CY O'Connor Institute offers a range of course types including Apprenticeships, Awards, Certificates, Diplomas, Pre-Apprentices, Short Courses and Traineeships.

CY O'Connor Institute is delivering a degree course in Agribusiness (auspiced through Charles Sturt University) at the Muresk Institute. The region is also home to the University of WA's Future Farm at Pingelly and the University of Notre Dame and UWA Rural Clinical School. Residents wishing to complete University education must relocate from the Region or complete studies on-line (if courses are available).

## EDUCATION AND CARE (CHILDCARE)

Child care provides the foundations for children to develop in a safe environment while also having the opportunity to socialise with other children. In addition to benefiting the child's early years' development, child care also aids working families to return to work.

Throughout the Wheatbelt there are a number of Child Care options available. The following outlines the models of child care currently operating and the towns in which they are available. A detailed table of services is at **Appendix 2**.

Long Day Care (LDC): Provides centre based care under federal government priority of access guidelines (primarily provided to children of parents undertaking work/study). Service must participate in Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA).

There are 22 LDC centres in the Wheatbelt. These are located in Brookton, Bruce Rock, Corrigin, Darkan, Jurien Bay, Goomalling, Hyden, Kulin, Merredin, Moora, Narrogin, Northam, Quairading, Toodyay, Wagin, Williams, Wongan Hills, Wundowie and York. Part time Local Day Care is located in Beverley, Cunderdin and Dalwallinu.

Occasional Care (OCC): Historically established for the purposes of providing flexible centre based care for parents and to enable children to socialise and interact in a positive learning environment. Model has evolved to provide flexible care to meet work and non-work related care needs.

There are 3 OCC centres in the region located at Mukinbudin, Narembeen, and, Southern Cross.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC): Outside school hours care services provide care before and after school and/or during vacations. Services must participate in Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA).

The region has three OSHC centres which operates in Bakers Hill, Jurien Bay and Northam.

Family Day Care (FDC): Family day care is operated from an individual's own home. This model is designed to accommodate varying work hours and provide a home like environment for children in care. Services must participate in Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA).

Family Day Care centres are located in Beverley, Cuballing, Kukerin, Merredin, Bencubbin, Mukinbudin, Narrogin, Northam, Toodyay, Wagin, Darkan and Williams.

## **APPENDIX 1:**

### **SCHOOLS AND NETWORKS WITHIN THE WHEATBELT EDUCATION REGION**

Avon Schools Network	Great Southern Schools Network	Inland Light house Network	Eastern Wheatbelt Network	Narrogin Network	Lakes Network
Avonvale ESC	Braeside PS	Ballidu PS	Bruce Rock DHS	Boddington DHS	Babakin PS
Avonvale PS	Broomehill PS		Merredin College	Brookton DHS	Corrigin DHS
Bakers Hill PS	Darkan PS	Bolgart PS	Moorine Rock PS	Narrogin PS	Dumbleyung PS
Beverley DHS	East Narrogin PS	Beacon PS	Mukinbudin DHS	Narrogin SHS	Hyden PS
WA College of Agriculture – Cunderdin	Katanning PS	Bencubbin PS	Nungarin PS	Pingelly PS	Kondinin PS
Cunderdin DHS	Katanning SHS	Cadoux PS	Kellerberrin DHS	Tincurrin PS	Kukerin PS
Meckering PS	Nyabing PS	Calingiri PS	Southern Cross DHS	WA College of Agriculture – Narrogin	Kulin PS
Northam PS	Wagin DHS	Central Midland SHS		Wandering PS	Lake Grace DHS
Northam SHS	Woodanilling PS	Dalwallinu DHS		Williams PS	Narembeen DHS
Quairading DHS		Dowerin DHS		Yealering PS	Newdegate PS
Tammin PS		Goomalling PS			Pingrup PS
Toodyay DHS		Kalannie PS			
West Northam PS		Koorda PS			
Wundowie PS		Miling PS			
York PS		Moora PS			
		Trayning PS			
		Wongan Hills DHS			
		Wyalkatchem DHS			
		Yerecoin PS			

**NB: Schools in red text are outside the Wheatbelt Development Commission boundaries**

**SCHOOL OUTSIDE OF THE WHEATBELT EDUCATION REGION BUT WITHIN THE WHEATBELT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BOUNDARY**

Mid West Region	Goldfields Esperance Region	North Metro Region
Badgingarra PS	Lake King PS	Bindoon PS
Buntine PS		Gingin DHS
Cervantes PS		Lancelin PS
Dandaragan PS		
Jurien Bay DHS		
Watheroo PS		

**NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN THE WHEATBELT REGION**

School	Structure	Year Groups
St Joseph's School, Northam	Co-Ed; Catholic	K-10
Catholic Agricultural College, Bindoon	Co-Ed; Catholic	7-12
Immaculate Heart College, Lower Chittering	Co-Ed; Catholic	K-5
St Matthew's School, Narrogin	Co-Ed; Catholic	K-7
St Joseph's School, Moora	Co-Ed; Catholic	K-7
Sacred Heart Catholic School, Goomalling	Co-Ed; Catholic	K-7
St Joseph's School, Southern Cross	Co-Ed; Catholic	K-7
St Mary's School, Merredin	Co-Ed; Catholic	K-7

## APPENDIX 2: CHILDCARE FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN TOWNS WITHIN WHEATBELT

Local Government Area	Town	LDC	OCC	Fed OCC	Mobile	OSHC	FDC
Shire of Beverley	Beverley	*					*
Shire of Brookton	Brookton	*					
Shire of Bruce Rock	Bruce Rock	*					
Shire of Corrigin	Corrigin	*					
Shire of Cuballing	Cuballing						*
Shire of Cunderdin	Cunderdin	*					
Shire of Dalwallinu	Dalwallinu	*					
Shire of Dandaragan	Jurien	*					
Shire of Dumbleyung	Dumbleyung						
	Kukerin						*
Shire of Goomalling	Goomalling	*					
Shire of Kondinin	Hyden	*					
Shire of Kulin	Kulin	*					
Shire of Lake Grace	Lake Grace						
	Newdegate						
Shire of Merredin	Merredin	*					*
Shire of Moora	Moora	*					
Shire Mount Marshall	Bencubbin						*
Shire of Mukinbudin	Mukinbudin		*				
Shire of Narembeen	Narembeen		*				
Town / Shire of Narrogin	Narrogin	*					*
Shire of Northam	Bakers Hill					*	
	Northam	*				*	*
	Wundowie	*					
Shire of Pingelly	Pingelly				*		
Shire of Quairading	Quairading	*					
Shire of Toodyay	Toodyay	*				*	*
Shire of Wagin	Wagin	*					*
Shire West Arthur	Darkan	*					*
Shire of Williams	Williams	*					*
Shire of Wongan-Ballidu	Wongan Hills	*					
Shire of Yilgarn	Southern Cross		*				
Shire of York	York	*					
<b>Total services</b>		<b>22</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12+</b>

