

SPEECH MADE BY HELEN CREED, BOARD CHAIRPERSON AT THE LAUNCH OF REGIONAL EARLY EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT INC (REED) AT THE SHIRE OF NARROGIN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON 16TH MARCH 2018.

Thanks to Minister Simone McGurk- both for being here today to officially launch REED – Regional Education and Early Development Inc. and for the financial support being provided by the WA Government- both through your own Department with Royalties for Regions funding and through Lotterywest. I can assure you that it is a wise investment- and will be money well spent.

There are over 20 services across the Wheatbelt providing centre based care, family day care, in-venue care and outside school hours and vacation care, who we are anticipating will be part of REED, and already several services have started the formal processes to become part of REED.

I look forward to meeting the people involved with all these services but I would particularly acknowledge the role played by both Brookton and Narrogin services and their local Shires. As you have heard, this project was initially kicked off through Brookton and has been brought to this next stage through Narrogin.

Thank you to the Shire of Narrogin not only for hosting today's launch but also providing the facilities for us to establish a separate REED office.

Throughout this period, Jill Cameron and her team – including the Principal Consultant Michael White- have worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition and I echo the Minister's thanks to Jill for what has been a very long term commitment to ensuring young children receive quality early education and care.

Following this launch we will have the first meeting of the REED Board, and I would like to acknowledge the new Board members who are here today and introduce them to you:

- Heidi Cowcher
- Anika Keeling
- Tom Kendall
- Jane Liu
- Mark Morrissey
- Paul Schutz
- Fleur Wilkinson

as well as Kim Guelfi who is an apology. For those of you who want to know a little more about us, there's a sheet with some brief profiles available.

We have a challenging task ahead of us but we are committed to achieving our goal of creating a regional organisation with a professional governance structure and a cluster model of service management to provide early years services across the Wheatbelt region, reducing the burden on voluntary management committees and Local Governments.

We are expecting that the regional organisation will have improved financial viability due to economies of scale, provide a consistent approach to quality service delivery, look at innovative ways of engaging with Aboriginal families and explore opportunities for local sponsorship and involvement.

The regional cluster model also provides for Family Advisory Groups to ensure that as organisations merge with the regional association, there is ongoing opportunity for families to continue to be involved with their local service.

We are committed to doing this:

For the children- as we know the importance of providing quality care and education during the early years;

For the staff- whose expertise and experience we value and recognise;

For the parents and families who need these vital services in order to work, attend school or training, or volunteer themselves;

For the communities who want to ensure young families remain in their district and enhance workforce participation;

and ultimately to assist in ensuring the economic and social sustainability of this important region of Western Australia.

We know that the task ahead will be complex and challenging, but we have been buoyed by the level of support we have received to date and the widespread interest across the region in seeing this project succeed.

Thank you