

Media Statement

Friday 1 February 2019

Economic Development Strategy Programme Manager appointed

The Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy (WEDS) has taken another positive step forward in its implementation with the appointment of a new Programme Manager.

The Programme Manager role was established following funding from the Provincial Growth Fund, the three Wairarapa councils and Greater Wellington Regional Council, and will support the Governance and Steering groups to implement the strategy.

Wellington Region Economic Development Agency (WREDA) Chief Executive and Steering Group Chair Lance Walker, says they are delighted to announce that Marie-Claire Andrews has accepted the role. Marie-Claire will be part of the WREDA team but will be based in Wairarapa.

“Marie-Claire is well known in the Wairarapa as the founder of 3Mile, but also has a strong pedigree in entrepreneurship, business development and marketing. Her mix of skills and experience, along with her personality and drive, will be an asset to driving forward the WEDS programme.”

Marie-Claire will start in the role on the 18th February, and will take over from interim Programme Manager Phoebe Chamberlain, who has been on secondment from her role as Economic Development Manager for Masterton District Council.

WEDS Governance Group chair, Dame Margaret Bazley says she is looking forward to working with Marie-Claire, but would like to take the opportunity to thank Phoebe for her contribution to the strategy’s implementation thus far.

“Phoebe has done a commendable job steering the strategy through the important formation stages. She has established a great platform for Marie-Claire to work from.”

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Notes to editor –

- The Strategy is the culmination of work across the region’s sectors, stakeholders and Iwi – instigated by the Masterton, Carterton, South Wairarapa District Councils, the Greater Wellington Regional Council and WREDA. It targets seven key focus areas; value-added food and beverage; tourism/visitor attraction; knowledge intensive industries, knowledge and skills (particularly primary industries), and business development; water; travel (air and rail); housing; and trees.
- The Steering and Governance Groups exist to govern and manage the implementation of the WEDS, and as part of this to also provide local input and oversight into applications for funding for local projects, including applications to the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF).

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Media Statement

Tuesday 15 January 2019

Strategy's New Year programme

Work will continue on the Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy following the Christmas holiday period. Meetings to discuss the regions priorities will commence again this week.

The strategy's Chair, Dame Margaret Bazley, is eager to continue the swift progress made by the Steering and Governance group late in 2018, to look at the various sections of the strategy and identify the priorities which would make a case for government funding.

"We are in the fact finding stages of the strategy's implementation. Understanding the priorities for the region, and acting on these will be the first steps we make in 2019. We will be seeking input from experts across the sectors to help us achieve this."

Following the announcement of Taratahi Institute of Agriculture being placed into liquidation before Christmas; the governance group will continue its work on addressing the future needs for primary industries in the Wairarapa.

"Although Taratahi's announcement is very sad for our region, and our Mayors are available to offer support, it is not the role of the strategy governance group to comment on Taratahi's future; rather we need to focus on the strategy's goal to encourage more people into careers in the primary sector, and to address skill shortages in primary industries."

A meeting has been scheduled to invite primary industry representatives to participate in a targeted conversation about this.

"This meeting is one of many consultations we will have across the sectors throughout the implementation of the strategy" explains Dame Margaret.

Other priorities that the Steering and Governance Groups will be focusing on within the first few weeks of the New Year will be the appointment of the strategy's Programme Manager, and the process around assisting organisations in placing applications that align with the strategy, to the Provincial Growth Fund.

The strategy and all the latest news can be found via the strategy's official website www.growwairarapa.nz.

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- The Steering and Governance Groups exist to govern and manage the implementation of the WEDS, and as part of this to also provide local input and oversight into applications for funding for local projects, including applications to the Provincial Growth Fund (PGF).
- The meeting mentioned above is not to be confused with a meeting scheduled by Federated Farmers, inviting Mayors to address Taratahi's future.

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Media Statement

Friday 30th November 2018

Economic strategy's implementation phase gets underway.

Work has commenced on the Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy following its launch on Monday 12th November. The Strategy is the culmination of work across the region's sectors, stakeholders and Iwi – instigated by the Masterton, Carterton, South Wairarapa District Councils, the Greater Wellington Regional Council and WREDA.

It targets seven key focus areas; value-added food and beverage; tourism/visitor attraction; knowledge intensive industries, knowledge and skills, and business development; water; travel (air and rail); housing; and trees.

A governance group chaired by Dame Margaret Bazley is made up of the three Wairarapa Mayors, and the chair of Greater Wellington Regional Council, they will be supported by a Steering Group represented by Chief Executives of each council and supporting officials from lead agencies – Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA) and Provincial Growth Fund (PGF).

Dame Margaret explains that strong leadership is needed for the strategy to be successful.

“Each leader has agreed to lead the focus areas, this shows they mean business, and want to lead from the front.

Although the strategy has a long term lens to raise the prosperity of Wairarapa and its people over the next ten years, there is a sense of urgency to maximise the opportunities that the PGF provides, therefore swift action is needed to secure funding for the Wairarapa.

“The key is to prioritise projects in the strategy that are ready to go, especially where work has already progressed, so we can get investment into our region quickly.”

At the launch, Regional Economic Development Minister, Shane Jones showed faith in the strategy by announcing funding for a Programme Manager to oversee its coordination. While the recruitment process for this role takes place, Wairarapa local and Masterton District Council's Economic Development Manager, Phoebe Chamberlain has been seconded into the role. The role is part of the team at the WREDA but will be based primarily in the Wairarapa.

“This role adds real value to the implementation of the strategy. Amongst other responsibilities, the Programme Manager will be able to work with organisations seeking funding from the Provincial Growth Fund. It is crucial to the successful implementation of the strategy to place someone in the role straight away.”

Opportunities to find out more about the strategy will be provided through public workshops early in the New Year.

The strategy and all the latest news can be found via the strategy's official website www.growwairarapa.nz.

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MEDIA RELEASE

STRATEGY SEEKS TO MAXIMISE THE WAIRARAPA ADVANTAGE

Embargoed 7:00pm Monday 12 November

Wairarapa has set itself an aspirational goal to offer the best of rural and urban living in a strategy for economic development unveiled this evening.

The Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy is the culmination of work across the region's sectors and stakeholders – including the Masterton, Carterton, South Wairarapa District Councils, the Greater Wellington Regional Council, WREDA and Iwi.

It targets three key industries to help lift the prosperity of the region overall; value-added food and beverage, knowledge intensive sectors and tourism.

"These are the industries where we know the Wairarapa already has an advantage and the potential for real growth," Masterton Mayor Lyn Patterson said.

"Capitalising on these advantages makes sense; helped by its proximity to Wellington, the Wairarapa is uniquely placed to attract professionals and businesses that work in knowledge-intensive sectors.

"These professions feed other industries and present opportunities for training younger people and skills development."

Key success measures include greater diversification into value-added primary products, continued increase in knowledge-intensive industries (such as information technology) and a year-round calendar of conferences, events and attractions.

The strategy also recognises that the region's knowledge and skills, business and housing/accommodation need to be developed to enable key industries to grow.

It also targets key objectives under infrastructure and environment to enable success, such as improving our rail services, tapping into the One Billion Trees Fund and adequate water storage to ensure reliable supply.

Former Labour Minister and Vice-Chancellor of Massey University Steve Maharey has supported development of the strategy, alongside the region's Mayors, Iwi and key stakeholders.

He said it was pleasing to see traction already being made in some key areas of focus.

"News that an agreement has been reached over developing a significant aviation-focused visitor attraction at Hood Aerodrome is a positive milestone," Mr Maharey said.

Following the launch of the strategy, the next step is finalising arrangements for the oversight of the implementation phase, with Dame Margaret Bazley to head up the governance group.

Each of the region's Mayors will champion one of the key focus industries with Carterton Mayor John Booth leading on food and beverage, South Wairarapa Mayor Viv Napier tourism and Masterton Mayor Lyn Patterson knowledge-intensive industries.

WREDA Chief Executive Lance Walker says WREDA is looking forward to working alongside key stakeholders and partners to help bring life to the strategy.

“Targeting Wairarapa’s value-added food and beverage, knowledge intensive sectors and tourism will help unlock the region’s potential for business growth and make it an even better place to live, work and visit.

“Identifying the correct path forward is half the battle when formulating economic strategies and we are confident that it will bear fruit for the region.”

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MEDIA RELEASE

5 November 2018

Minister to support launch of Wairarapa Economic Development Strategy

The Regional Economic Development Minister, Hon Shane Jones, will join key Wairarapa stakeholders in Masterton for the launch of the region's new economic development strategy.

The Wairarapa's Councils, including Greater Wellington Regional Council, have worked with stakeholders and iwi to develop a strategy for economic growth across the region.

It will be officially launched on 12 November at an event attended by Minister Jones.

Masterton Mayor Lyn Patterson said a lot of work had gone into the strategy and the end result is a positive action plan for how to achieve economic growth.

"We're focussing on growing key sectors in Wairarapa, supporting our people and providing the infrastructure required for our people and industries to flourish," Mayor Patterson said, on behalf of the Wairarapa Mayors.

"This strategy gives us a plan for how we achieve growth in these target areas, with tangible objectives that will help us achieve those goals."

Dame Margaret Bazley will head up the governance group overseeing implementation of the strategy action plan.

Former Labour Minister and Vice-Chancellor of Massey University Steve Maharey has supported development of the strategy, alongside the region's Mayors and key stakeholders.

"The region's vision is to offer the best of rural and urban living; Wairarapa is a special and unique part of Aotearoa. We want to preserve our rural values and quality lifestyle while also creating a thriving, modern and sustainable economy," Mr Maharey said.

"We have focused on the question of what's good for Wairarapa. The result is a realistic strategy and action plan about our people and our financial capacity to do things.

"It focuses on our regional uniqueness and our key opportunities and priorities. It is practical and deliverable."

WREDA chief executive Lance Walker said the strategy was critically important to the Wairarapa and would help focus the region on its key strengths.

"The Wairarapa is rightly considered one of the jewels in the Wellington region's crown. While its fantastic lifestyle is well-known, it also has the potential for significant business growth and WREDA is looking forward to working with its council partners in delivering a strategy that aims to do just that."

The strategy will be made public on 12 November. It will then be presented to the Wairarapa Councils for endorsement.

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