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POSITION STATEMENT - MOORA RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE

The Wheatbelt Business Network is the region's largest business association and aims to connect businesses and grow the Wheatbelt.

We acknowledge the economic contribution that the Moora Residential College plays to the town of Moora and surrounding districts in the Central Wheatbelt.

The current economic contribution of Moora Residential College to the town is significant. The college currently employs 11 staff and spends significantly with local businesses within the town of Moora.

The College in its current form warrants improvements, in both an operational and management capacity; and we actively encourage all Moora Residential College stakeholders to come together in a 'solution-focused' manner to further investigate the scope for a reformed service model.

However, closure of the College **will** directly cut employment and expenditure within Moora, resulting in significant economic loss throughout the Central Wheatbelt.

Employment

The College directly employs a total of 11 staff, including five full-time employees and six part-time employees. Combined the current employment equates to 7.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. These positions will cease once the college closes.

Direct Local Spend

The closure of the Moora Residential College will have a direct economic impact including the loss of 15 jobs (directly and indirectly) as well as an estimated reduction in the value of the local economy of \$1.5 million (in GRP terms). This reduction in economic activity will essentially see the direct removal of \$1.8 million in local turnover within the economy.

Long Tem Impact

Additional negative impacts associated with the closure of the Moora Residential College and subsequent reduced funding to the High School would include:

- Lower business confidence
- Business closure; and questionable long-term viability of many businesses
- Reduced ability to attract new residents, workers and businesses
- Pressure on local sporting clubs and community organisations (reliant on local volunteers and members)

- Reduced availability of local young people for apprenticeships
 - Potential loss of local services
 - Pressure on housing prices
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Our Position

The WBN acknowledges that

- The State Government needs to deliver upon a savings plan and return the budget to surplus.
- The State Government has a focus on improving the economy and generating jobs.

However, the State Government have made a decision to close a facility that **currently generates significant employment and contributes positively** to the economy of a regional town.

Irrespective of the figures being presented, **loss of employment and a diminished local spend** will occur. This will significantly damage the local economy within Moora and local businesses will suffer.

We appeal to the State Government to acknowledge the negative economic impact that the closure of Moora Residential College will create. We ask the State Government to assess this long term economic damage to the region relative to the short-term budgetary savings from the closure.

We call on the State Government to demonstrate a firm commitment to regional development for the Wheatbelt, which includes positive, pro-active, solution-focused measures; not just budget cuts.

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