

MEDIA RELEASE

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Collaboration tackles skill shortage for Eyre Peninsula councils

The impact of a chronic shortage of skilled planning professionals on the Eyre Peninsula is being overcome through an innovative resource sharing arrangement that allows councils to access services without having to incur the costs associated with a full-time employee.

The District Council of Kimba and District Council of Cleve are the latest small Eyre Peninsula local governments to enter into a resource sharing arrangement to utilise the expertise of District Council of Streaky Bay Manager Regulatory Services Jennifer Brewis.

Kimba Chief Executive Officer Deb Larwood explained that while sharing services was not a new concept across the region, it had become necessary to avoid the financial burden of engaging a consultant or recruiting a permanent staff member to assess and approve development applications after Council's Manager Development Services became unavailable at short notice.

"Council suddenly found itself without its usual development officer for a three-month period, so we were left with the option of either using a consultant or putting a new assessment manager on a contract, neither of which were deemed financially viable," Mrs Larwood said.

"On average, we receive less than 30 development applications a year, so there's no business case to engage someone at a full-time level to manage such a small workload."

District Council of Cleve CEO Peter Arnold echoed the sentiment and said that changes to planning legislation would put even more pressure on regional councils to source professionals who met the proposed accreditation requirements.

"The reality is that it's already incredibly difficult to attract and retain professionals to address the skill shortage in places like the Eyre Peninsula," he said.

"Changes to the state's planning legislation aren't going to make the situation any easier, so councils like ours are left with few alternatives to entering into a resource sharing arrangement with those who already have a development officer on their team."

Streaky Bay CEO Joy Hentschke said collaborating with neighbouring Eyre Peninsula councils was a "win-win" for both the organisations and local ratepayers.

"By sharing our Manager Regulatory Services on an as-needed basis, we can offset the cost of her employment, which is a benefit to Streaky Bay ratepayers, while also ensuring that

councils we regularly work closely with have cost-effective access to professionals in a region renowned for skill shortages,” she explained.

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For more information, contact the District Council of Kimba Manager Corporate Services Lyndon Keane on 0419 891 666 or lyndon@kimba.sa.gov.au.

Photo caption

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COLLABORATIVE APPROACH: District Council of Kimba Chief Executive Officer Deb Larwood discusses with District Council of Streaky Bay Manager Corporate Services Karina Ewer and Manager Regulatory Services Jennifer Brewis how a resource sharing agreement is allowing small, rural councils on the Eyre Peninsula to overcome a skill shortage of planning and development professionals.