

MEDIA RELEASE

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GROW \$20.1 million injection creates jobs: Report card

The Give Where You Live Foundation and G2I – Geelong Region Alliance’s innovative GROW initiative is reporting a \$20.2 million increase of local procurement among 16 of GROW’s participating organisations across the G2I region.

Economic modelling by Remplan shows that this local procurement, generated through the GROW initiative, has led to 179 jobs in the G2I region more broadly.

Equally important is the creation of 75, on the ground, specific jobs or placements in disadvantaged target communities, a major GROW objective.

These achievements were celebrated today (May 3) at GROW’s second annual ‘report card’ event.

GROW was established jointly by the Give Where You Live Foundation and G2I – Geelong Region Alliance to address disadvantage in the region through creating jobs, especially within areas of high unemployment.

One of the key principles of GROW is to encourage enterprises to buy and employ locally, keeping the economic benefits of spending within the community and specifically assisting areas of disadvantage.

There are 82 organisations who have signed the GROW compact, committing to procure and employ locally wherever practical. Today’s announcement is based on expenditure and employment data collected from 16 of these GROW Compact signatories.

Give Where You Live Foundation CEO Bill Mithen says the results demonstrate that GROW is creating an environment that nurtures job opportunities in Colac, Corio, Norlane and Whittington, where unemployment is at double-digit levels, and well above regional and state averages.

“Shifting \$20.2 million of non-local expenditure to local suppliers is growing the economy within the region, which in turn is creating employment opportunities in targeted disadvantaged areas,” Mr Mithen said.

“This is clearly evident through the 75 job seekers who have successfully gained employment. Of these 75 jobs created, 16% of the workers came from Colac, 52 % from Corio and Norlane and 32% from Whittington.

“Importantly, we have also identified that of the 56 jobs created in target areas last year, in our first reporting period, 72% of these are still employed. That is a very strong retention rate, of which we are extremely proud. “This indicates that not only is this project creating jobs for people in target areas, it is also providing a network that will support both the employer and employee.”

GROW has worked in partnership with local Jobs Victoria providers Whitelion, Whittington Works Alliance, Northern Futures and the Give Where You Live Foundation’s Colac Jobs Victoria.

Over 80% of compact signatories have worked closely with local employment support services to assist people into employment.

GROW’s expanding collective of 82 compact signatories are committing to procure and employ locally wherever practical to ensure our region’s growth is inclusive. Already, 46 of these signatories have made commitments through their Compact Action Plans and are choosing a range of actions that support the GROW initiative. These include commitments to a future shift in local spending as well as a commitment to strengthen employment and training opportunities for targeted job seekers.

G21 CEO Elaine Carbines said addressing long-term entrenched disadvantage is in many ways about cultural change and collective action. “Our GROW compact signatories continue to illustrate why our region has flourished as it undertakes such an initiative,” Ms Carbines said.

“These plans are a catalyst for change in disadvantaged communities with many signatories identifying and developing innovative opportunities in which they can drive transformation.

“With the available support and resources, our compact signatories are delivering actions that will collectively create change.”

Steps to incorporate the GROW project across the G21 region and a copy of the Remplan data and ‘economic dashboard’ can be found on the GROW website: www.grow.g21.com.au

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GROW is a joint initiative of the Give Where You Live Foundation and G21 - Geelong Region Alliance.

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