

NEWS RELEASE

South West holiday park being developed for seasonal worker accommodation

A section of a holiday park in Dunsborough is being developed for the exclusive use of workers during peak periods, as part of efforts to increase the supply of affordable accommodation in support of local business and industry reliant on seasonal labour.

The expansion of the Southern Stars Holiday Park for the purpose of providing much-needed accommodation for seasonal workers in 2023-24 has been jointly announced by a group taking a collaborative approach to supporting industry.

The South West Development Commission (SWDC), Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association (MRBTA), Margaret River Wine Association (MRWA), Augusta Margaret River Shire (AMRS), and City of Busselton (CoB) have joined forces to tackle accommodation shortfalls.

Ensuring seasonal workers can stay in the region during peak periods is critical to the operation and growth of local businesses and industry that require temporary workers.

SWDC is providing a \$50,000 grant to Southern Stars Holiday Park towards development of powered sites suitable for tents, vans and campers. Construction is underway on the project which is expected to accommodate up to 50 workers once complete.

Items funded include the initial groundworks, street lighting, and installation of ablutions and kitchen room. The site will be fenced separately from the park's main visitor area and amenities.

SWDC chief executive officer Mellisa Teede said the State Government statutory authority was taking a collaborative approach to addressing land, housing and accommodation issues in the region.

"We are progressing solutions for the purpose of easing local accommodation pressures impacting local business and industry dependant on a seasonal workforce," Ms Teede said.

"We're pleased to have teamed up with local stakeholders to deliver this solution – and we will continue to work with government and industry to unlock accommodation options."

MRBTA chief executive officer Sharna Kearney said the outcome recognised the importance of seasonal workers to the tourism and wine industries.

"This is a longstanding and complex issue for our region, and it is pleasing that industry and government are coming together to progress both short- and long-term solutions for these important industries, and our community more broadly," Ms Kearney said.

MRWA chief executive officer Amanda Whiteland said securing accommodation for seasonal workers was critical for the region to maintain its high-quality reputation.

"By increasing the supply of seasonal workers, wine and tourism businesses will be better placed to maintain and grow the quality of the operation, which is critical to the reputation of the region and our long-term success," Ms Whiteland said.

Southern Stars Holiday Park owner Todd Davidson said he was pleased to invest in the project and support the wine and tourism industries through the provision of accommodation for seasonal workers.

“We know first-hand the impact staff shortages are having on businesses across our region, which is why we were willing to invest alongside SWDC, to bring this project to fruition,” Mr Davidson said.

“I would especially like to acknowledge our team, and all the local trades and suppliers, that have worked tirelessly over the past six weeks to ensure that we are able to deliver these new sites with the intention of welcoming up to 50 additional workers.”

COB Mayor Grant Henley said the City will continue to work closely with the State Government to address housing affordability and availability issues, including advocating for regulatory change, additional social housing investment and further support services for those experiencing housing difficulties.

“While local councils have limited powers to assist residents impacted by a lack of affordable housing, the City has been doing its best with a range of practical and advocacy measures to address short and long-term housing needs,” Mayor Henley said.

“It’s wonderful to see that through the collaborative efforts of government and industry, initiatives such as this can make a real difference to temporary workers and the need for accommodation.”

AMRS chief executive officer Stephanie Addison-Brown said the group’s joint venture plays an important role in supporting local business and seasonal workers in the South West.

“The Shire will continue to collaborate with government and industry to help progress key reforms to the current housing matters and identify future opportunities across the whole region,” Ms Addison-Brown said.

A steering group has been established to coordinate the delivery of short- and long-term accommodation solutions for the seasonal hospitality, wine and tourism workforce in the Margaret River Region.

Membership of the group comprises the SWDC, MRBTA, MRWA, COB, AMRS and Tourism WA.

The work on addressing critical accommodation shortages follows the completion of the Margaret River Region Short Term Worker Accommodation Study Pre-feasibility Assessment commissioned by MRBTA and MRWA, and funded by SWDC and Tourism WA.

Last year, the SWDC facilitated roundtable meetings with key stakeholders to address the issue of housing and worker accommodation.

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