

STATEMENT OF FOUNDER'S INTENT

Author: Chris Reichstein - Founder, Mt Burdett Foundation

Date: 1st April 2021

This document is to provide guidance and to function as a reference document to future Directors and Managers of the Mt Burdett Foundation, as it is impossible to predict the future. The Statement of Founder's Intent can give broad guidance and general ideas as to my goals and aspirations for the Foundation and the Esperance region.

Why the Foundation was created

Since my family arrived in Esperance in 1962, as contractors and later new land farmers, there has been significant growth, development, and adoption of innovation in the agriculture sector. This has contributed in a large part to the expansion and prosperity of the region.

Due to its isolation and pioneering spirit, the town has been resourceful and resilient. Good leadership coupled with the actions of volunteers have been vital elements in the town's character and continued prosperity.

Despite the good intentions of government, civic leaders, and the leadership within the community, there will always be areas that are under resourced. By creating the Foundation, it is my intention to return some of my good fortune to the community and hopefully encourage others who have prospered in the region to invest in initiatives and people, creating a vibrant and resilient future for the Esperance region.

What the Foundation will do

It is my belief that as a community, isolation should not mean deprivation. The areas of investment that I believe the Foundation can offer to result in sustained benefit to the community are: Healthcare, Arts and Public Amenity, Youth, Education, Human Capacity Building and supporting research, development and extension in broadacre agriculture.

As agriculture has been a cornerstone of Esperance's growth and prosperity and a passion of mine, the Foundation, through its management of the Mt Burdett Farming Trust, will be tasked with operating the property Mt Burdett as a commercial operation to generate income for the Mt Burdett Esperance Community Foundation and the Rural and Regional Advancement Foundation. Resources are also to be allocated to agricultural research and innovation, as progress in agriculture is reliant upon proven science, research, development and extension of knowledge. It is my intention that the property Mt Burdett will function as a revenue stream for the Mt Burdett Esperance Community Foundation and the Rural and Regional Advancement Foundation, while being a Centre of Excellence in agriculture; helping identify research priorities, demonstrating best practice and trial innovations, with the intention of finding future breakthroughs in profitability and/or productivity in broadacre agriculture for the Esperance region.

One of the greatest threats to agriculture is the disconnect between producers of food and fibre and the consumer. I see Mt Burdett as having a role to play to address this issue, which I see becoming more prevalent over future generations. This can be done by using Mt Burdett as a vehicle to provide the opportunity to educate the wider community about on-farm activities and the benefits of modern agriculture practices.

The Foundation should seek durable change through fostering and investing in game changing initiatives for the benefit of the community, rather than supporting good intentions or existing projects of questionable value, all the while targeting its resources to areas of high impact. The Foundation should not take on too many projects at once, causing it to operate at an insufficient scale to make a significant difference.

I believe that, where necessary, the Foundation should take a long-term view on investment in change, however, be willing to change methodologies or funding mechanisms should reviews indicate desired outcomes aren't being achieved.

The areas I believe the Foundation can have the greatest impact are:

Healthcare

By improving the quality of healthcare and the resources available to the healthcare sector we may be able to ensure better outcomes for patients and in some cases avoid the need to travel for treatment. Having seen my parents relying on the hospital system prior to passing away, an area of interest is end of life care and whether a hospice is feasible in the Esperance area. Due to the magnitude and complexity of healthcare it is my hope that investments from the Foundation can be used to leverage funds from Government in order that successful initiatives can be implemented. The Foundation should be conscious of limiting its involvement to where it can make a unique contribution.

Youth

Young people are our future. They have a critical role to play in our leadership, both today and in the years to come, with a huge potential to positively impact and shape our region. As such, I see initiatives that help develop well-rounded citizens, who are able to make a contribution to society, as critical. It is also important that we invest in creating an environment and opportunity base in Esperance that supports or entices young people to build their lives and careers in our region. In my view, projects falling into the category of youth may include those aged up to 30 years.

Education

Access to education is key to accessing opportunity and breaking poverty cycles. Being a lifelong learner I believe that education opportunities should be available to all age groups. Like healthcare, it is somewhat of a behemoth, so any initiatives should be carefully targeted to ensure effective impact.

Human capacity building

Is integral to the development of youth and the wider community. Efforts in human capacity building should be targeted across the broad socioeconomic and community spectrum and age ranges,

rather than those who we see as our natural leaders in order that the Foundation have an impact throughout the wider community.

Arts and public amenity

My intention in supporting the arts scene in Esperance is partly driven by seeing the good work of the Esperance arts community in being vital to ensuring Esperance was exposed to visiting performing artists and the benefits of events and activities such as The Festival of the Wind which help bring the community together. I see any investments or initiatives by the Foundation to be targeted at those activities which have the greatest impact in the community and enrich our social fabric, rather than benefitting a narrow spectrum. By investing in public amenity, I see creation or improvement of public spaces (such as the foreshore redevelopment) for the purposes of either recreation, entertainment or leisure that either visually enhance a precinct or be designed to bring people together for interaction and social benefit.

It is my belief that by utilising art as a means of space activation and as a way to showcase the natural beauty of the Esperance region, we can drive economic development through tourism.

Rural and regional advancement

People and strong communities are the backbone of rural and regional Western Australia. There has been a steady decline in rural populations and subsequent loss of businesses, government services, employment opportunities and change in social fabric. The Rural and Regional Advancement Foundation has been established with the aim of empowering people in rural and regional areas with the skills and confidence to help grow vibrant and resilient communities.

What the Foundation won't do

I expect that the Foundation will be requested to fund and invest in a varying array of well-intentioned projects due to its ability to operate under an agile, self-determining framework. As such, I feel that defining what the Foundation will not support will be helpful to future Directors, Advisory Board members, applicants and any employed staff.

I expect that the Foundation will remain apolitical, meaning it may seek to lobby the different levels of Government to help achieve desired outcomes or collaborations to benefit the Esperance Community but must remain neutral in its political stance.

The Foundation will not act as a welfare agency or an economic redistribution agency as I feel this is the role of government and there are already enough organisations involved in this space. The resources of the Foundation are far better directed to undertake activities that create a lasting impact addressing the root cause of problems rather than applying band-aids.

The Foundation should not fund "more of the same" or become a replacement source for recurrent funding of existing projects in the Esperance region, as defined by the Esperance Shire boundaries.

How the foundation will seek to make a difference

The Foundation will not operate as a 'hand out' organisation, but rather seek to offer a hand up,

The Foundation will operate as an investor and provider of funding to organisations to undertake projects rather than act as an operating Foundation. As such, it will resource other organisations with good initiatives and the ability to execute and accomplish the task.

The Foundation will have an independent perspective where it proactively chooses its goals, strategies, programs and then selects the best organisations to undertake the work.

Emphasis should be placed on programs with measurable outcomes. Regular reviews should be carried out to assess the impact of investments in projects in order that the same mistakes aren't repeated, or alternatively, changes can be made to achieve the desired outcome.

Key Parameters for Foundation support

As mentioned earlier, I have no doubt that there will be numerous requests for funding which will require rigorous assessment. As such, I see four key criteria should be assessed.

- Is it important?
- Can we make an enduring difference?
- Can we measure the outcomes and impacts?
- Does it contribute to a portfolio effect or not? For example, are there synergies between projects which enhance outcomes across multiple areas of investment.

In Conclusion

My intention is that this document provides direction to future Directors, members of the Advisory Committees, employees, potential donors and partners of the Foundation. It is my hope that in future years, the Foundation would be recognisable to myself, that it would continue to be innovative, judge projects and initiatives on their merit in an intellectually rigorous manner, take some appropriate well managed risks, operate efficiently, exercise humility and remain focussed on outcomes to benefit rural and regional communities and the Esperance Region.