



May 12, 2016

MEDIA RELEASE

Outback Shire Committed to Supporting Community

In Western Australia's Northern Goldfields, more than 800km from Perth, is a small town doing its best to provide a sustainable, enjoyable and safe community for its residents to live and work.

Leonora has a diverse cultural mix, including mine workers and a strong Aboriginal population, many who would classify as being from a low socio-economic situation. The town has seen highs and lows, from the heady days of the gold rush in nearby historic Gwalia, to the quiet state of affairs currently affecting the mining business.

Towns with such geographical isolation are faced with unique problems and unfortunately, Leonora is no different. Dubbed the Leonora Hope Bus, a group recently drove 3,500km through the desert in search of answers to the suicide of four young people in the Goldfields town since Christmas. They attended the Inaugural National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Conference in Alice Springs.

In addition to these recent sad matters, alcohol consumption has long been an issue in Leonora and Shire of Leonora chief executive Jim Epis has campaigned, to no avail, to introduce a cashless credit card system in an effort to abate the problem.

Mr Epis said residents of the Northern Goldfields were already disadvantaged compared to their city cousins, through geographical isolation. Fourteen years ago the Shire initiated a project that sought to offer locals entertainment and sporting opportunities they otherwise might never have experienced.

The Leonora Golden Gift was born and each year brings quality entertainment and first class sporting competition whilst providing an opportunity for residents of Leonora and its surrounding communities to come together.

Special athletic events and workshops are also organised for school children, providing them with competition, raising self esteem and encouraging them to become more physically active, therefore providing additional health and social benefits.

"The event provides a social occasion rarely experienced in remote towns and adds to the social and emotional wellbeing of visitors and locals, while promoting a harmonious atmosphere," Mr Epis said.

"The weekend also provides us with an iconic national event, which increases the tourism appeal whilst raising the regions profile.

"But it is what the event brings to our community that is most important, a sense of pride, opportunity and security."

Available for comment:

Shire of Leonora President Peter Craig - 0418 950 572

Shire of Leonora CEO Jim Epis - 0418 118 220

ENDS

Media contact:

Frances Thornton

Ph: 0405 135 304

Email: frances@frances Thornton.com.au

frances thornton
MEDIA

www.leonoragoldengift.com