



Media Release

Rural Welcoming Communities Exchange Program

Last week Paroo Shire Council welcomed home CEO Cassie White and Communities Team Leader, Rachael Johnson from their trip to America. Following on from the three-year Regional Partnership Program funded by the State Government; the American Rural Welcoming Communities Exchange invitation was an extension and opportunity that was provided to Council from our previous involvement and positive outcomes locally. The CEO has previously accepted invitations to present on the project to the Welcoming Australia conference in Canberra during May 2022, and Developing Northern Australia in July 2022, sharing our stories, journey and success.

The Regional Partnership Program focused on welcoming skilled migrants to Paroo Shire and as a result of our involvement and outcomes, we were invited to nominate two representatives to participate in the Rural Welcoming Communities Exchange Program between America and Australia Local Governments and Not for Profits.

8 rural Australian leaders and 8 rural American leaders were invited to participate in this exchange program which was organized in partnership with Welcoming Australia and Welcoming America who obtained a grant to cover the cost of all flights, accommodation and group meals throughout the program for both the Australian and American cohorts.

The purpose of the five-day exchange program was to connect rural communities across the globe to share leading practices in fostering social inclusion and welcoming of migrants into rural communities. The program included a number of site visits and attendance at the nationwide conference hosted in San Jose, California where 660 American Local Governments and Not for Profits convened to learn and share experiences. Australia will host a learning excursion visit for the American participants later in the year, which is also funded by the American grant funding.

The Council will continue to work diligently to ensure more success is born from the Regional Partnership Program and the Rural Welcoming Communities Exchange program and look forward to incorporating many of the ideas and models into our strategy to attract and welcome new residents to the Paroo Shire. The official Rural Welcoming Communities Exchange program report will be available in due course to share the learnings from this program.

Cr. Suzette Beresford PSM
Mayor - Paroo Shire Council