

REGIONAL SERVICES REVIEW

CONSULTATION PAPER | SEPTEMBER 2019



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety**

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Introduction

Customer-centric services and regional jobs are high priorities for the Western Australian Government.

During 2017, the Government conducted a number of public sector reviews including the Service Priority Review, which looked at the functions, operations and culture of the public sector. The report [*Working Together: One Public Sector Delivering for WA*](#) recommended improved engagement with the community to better focus on its needs; increased online service delivery; and improved coordination of service delivery in the regions.

From August 2018 to February 2019, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) Service Delivery Group undertook a Regional Services Review (the Review) to develop proposals for sustainably improving its services to the regions, including digital service delivery and identifying better ways to use the Department's resources. The Review examined customer traffic, operating arrangements and other matters for all 14 DMIRS regional offices (see map). The Review included consultation with internal stakeholders, local and State Government authorities and other relevant agencies to develop proposals for public consultation.

We are seeking your views on the issues and ideas identified by the Review, to inform our future regional service strategies.

DMIRS Regional Offices



How we deliver services today

DMIRS was formed in 2017 by merging parts of the Department of Commerce (DoC) with the Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP).

The creation of DMIRS offers the potential to use its collective resources to deliver its combined services more efficiently and effectively than previously offered.

Amalgamation of services has started to occur, with the co-location of the former DoC staff with the former DMP staff at the Kalgoorlie office in September 2018. At the Karratha office, DMIRS is trialling the mining staff providing a referral service for ex-DoC customers.

Many DMIRS services are available online. About 80% of Resource Tenure (e.g. mining tenement) applications are currently lodged online, with processing handled by the relevant regional office for each mining district. However, many other DMIRS licence and permit applications are not yet able to be lodged online.

What are the current issues?

Delivering a wider range of regional services to an incredibly diverse customer base brings its challenges.

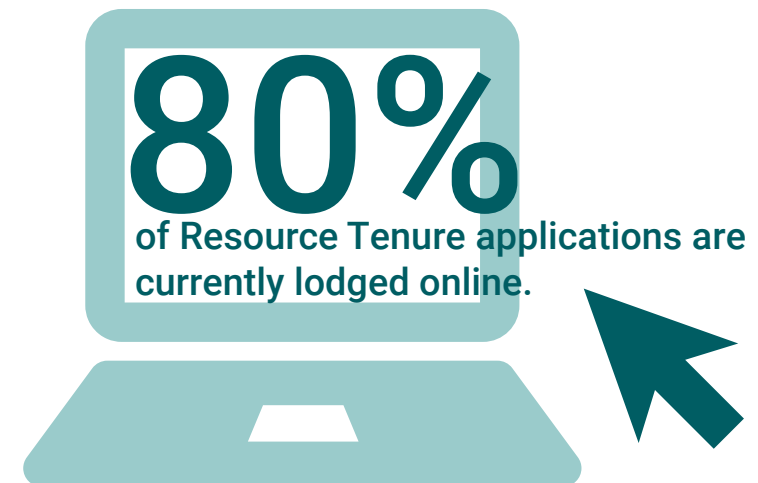
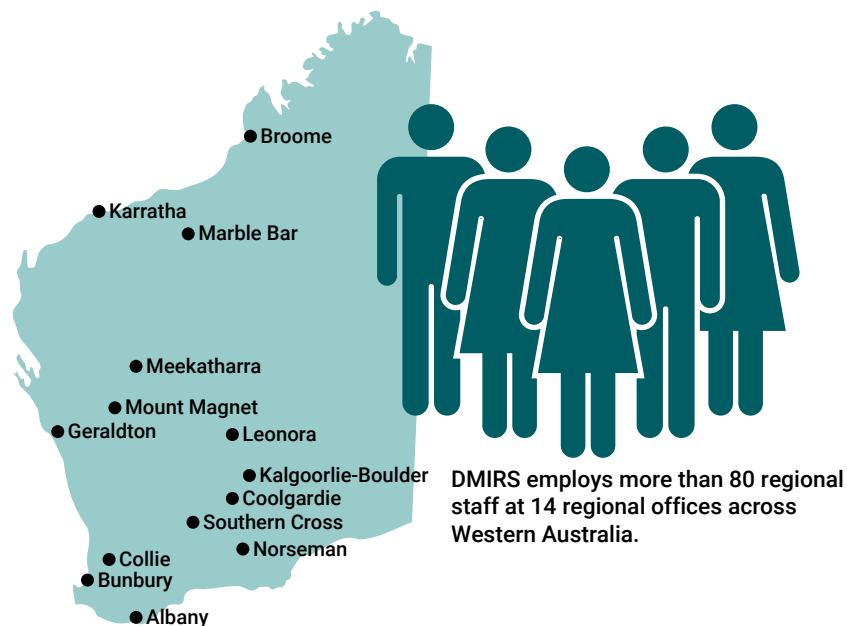
DMIRS regional offices still operate separately, in that they offer services that were in place prior to the former DMP and DoC merger. Most ex-DMP offices still offer mining-related services and ex-DoC offices offer Building & Energy, Consumer Protection and WorkSafe services.

DMIRS staff mostly possess knowledge about services offered by their respective former department. High-quality customer service training is required for staff at customer service hubs and centres, to improve their ability to provide the complete range of DMIRS services.



A few mining-related offices in smaller towns have low customer traffic and workloads, while others have high traffic and excessive workloads. Attracting and retaining technical staff in some locations is difficult, leading to high staff turnover and depletion of resources from other offices to maintain service levels. DMIRS needs to find ways to share the workload more equally and efficiently to sustainably utilize its resources and address its staffing issues.

Some DMIRS digital services are not user-friendly. Information can be difficult to find, or online systems are difficult to use. Some services are not yet available online, or are only available over the counter at specific DMIRS regional offices. Many regional customers have difficulty using computers and smartphones due to internet access or mobile phone coverage issues, limiting their ability to access digital services.



PROPOSAL 1

Implement a tiered approach for service delivery through DMIRS regional offices within five years.

Customer Service Hubs	Customer Service Centres	Resource Tenure Offices	Mines Safety Office
<p>The busiest regional offices will offer a broad range of DMIRS services.</p> <p>Customer service staff will be trained to resolve general customer enquiries at the first point of contact, or be able to provide a seamless transfer to specialist staff, if required.</p> <p>Hubs have a larger number of onsite specialist staff.</p>	<p>These offices will offer a smaller range of DMIRS services than Hubs, but may eventually be upgraded.</p> <p>Customer service staff will be trained to resolve general customer enquiries at the first point of contact, or be able to provide a seamless transfer to specialist staff, if required.</p> <p>Centres have a few onsite specialist staff.</p>	<p>Resource Tenure Offices mostly have a mining customer clientele and will continue to deliver these services.</p> <p>Additionally, they will provide a referral function for customers seeking other DMIRS services and stock a wider range of DMIRS publications.</p> <p>Customer service staff in these offices could be trained to offer a similar level of general enquiry resolution as the Hubs and Centres.</p>	<p>The Mines Safety office currently does not provide customer service, but will in future include a referral function for other DMIRS services and stock a wider range of DMIRS publications.</p>

What changes are proposed?

Tiered Service Delivery

A key concept proposed in the Review is the use of a tiered approach for service delivery through DMIRS regional offices, subject to implementation of the proposed DMIRS Service Delivery Model over the next five years.

Bunbury, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie are proposed as the initial Customer Service Hubs as they are the busiest regional offices for customer transactions and have a large number of onsite specialist staff. Other offices may in future be modified into hubs or customer service centres.

The Tiered Service Delivery Model combines services of the former DoC and DMP regional offices and supports the Government's ['Our Priority'](#) vision to deliver stronger regional economies and increased regional employment.

DMIRS' ultimate aspirational goal is that all regional offices will eventually be able to deliver a similar range of services.

ALBANY – 2/129 Aberdeen Street, Albany WA 6330

Develop Albany as a Customer Service Centre within the next five years, including:

- continuing to offer its existing services and providing a referral function for customers requiring information about DMIRS services not currently offered in Albany; and
- training customer service staff to resolve general customer enquiries at the first point of contact, and providing a seamless transfer to specialist staff, if required.



BROOME – 6/15 Dampier Terrace, Broome WA 6725

Develop Broome as a Customer Service Centre within the next five years, including:

- continuing to offer its existing services and providing a referral function for customers requiring information about DMIRS services not currently offered in Broome; and
- training customer service staff to resolve general customer enquiries at the first point of contact, and providing a seamless transfer to specialist staff, if required.

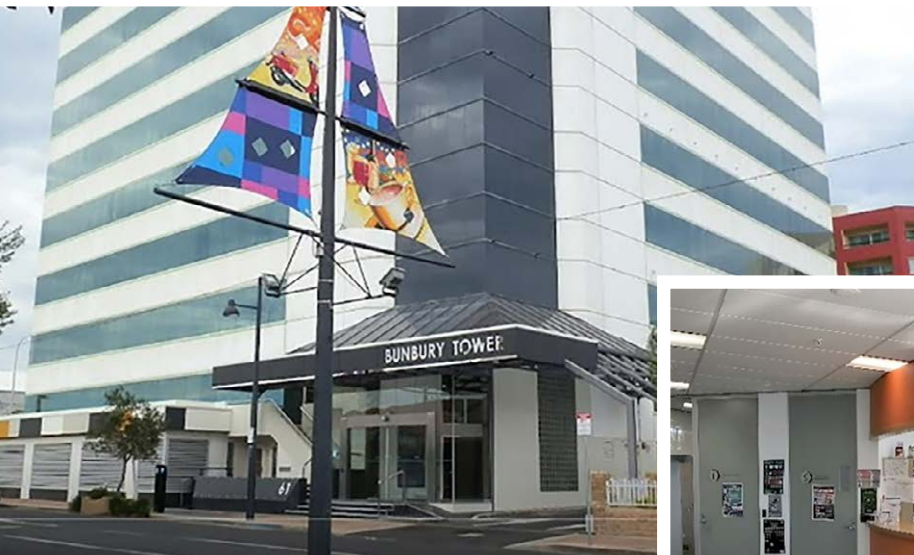


BUNBURY – 8th Floor, 61 Victoria Street, Bunbury WA 6230

Develop Bunbury as a Customer Service Hub within the next five years, including:

- offering a broad range of DMIRS services; and
- training customer service staff to resolve general customer enquiries at the first point of contact, and providing a seamless transfer to specialist staff, if required.

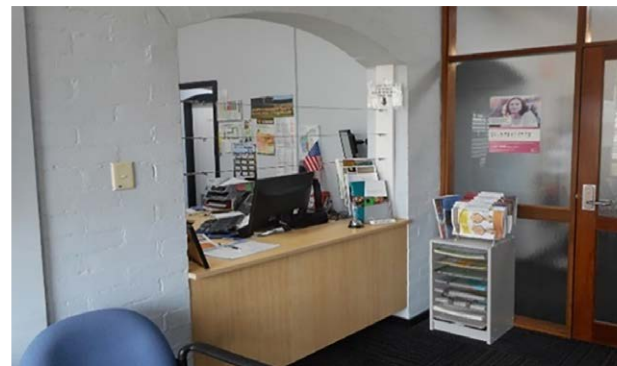
In 2020, the Government's ServiceWA Program will launch a citizen service centre in Bunbury, providing a single point of contact for 85 everyday services, currently delivered by the Departments of Transport, Justice, Communities, Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Western Australia Police Force.



COLLIE – 66 Wittenoom Street, Collie WA 6225

Collie to continue operating as a Mines Safety Office.

Implement a referral service for customers requiring other DMIRS services not currently available at Collie.



COOLGARDIE

In May 2017, DMIRS closed its Coolgardie office due to the need for repairs to the heritage-listed building. In the meantime, Resource Tenure services have been provided by the nearby Kalgoorlie office.

DMIRS plans to re-establish a part-time Resource Tenure office at Coolgardie, with the opening date and location to be determined.

The office will also provide a referral function for customers requiring information about DMIRS services not currently offered in Coolgardie.



GERALDTON – Post Office Plaza, 50-52 Durlacher Street, Geraldton WA 6531

Develop Geraldton as a Customer Service Hub within the next five years, including:

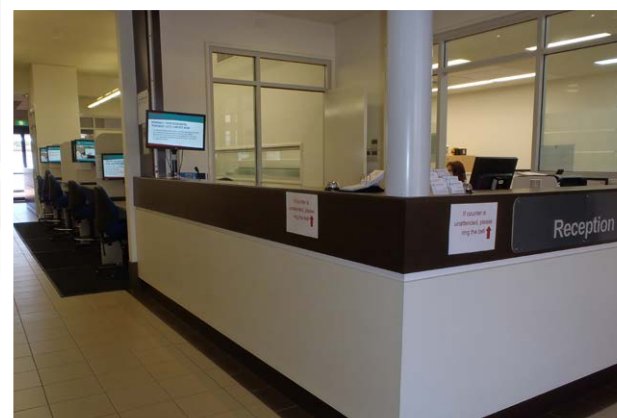
- offering a broad range of DMIRS services; and
- training customer service staff to resolve general customer enquiries at the first point of contact, and providing a seamless transfer to specialist staff, if required.



KALGOORLIE – Corner of Hunter and Broadwood Streets, Kalgoorlie WA 6430

Develop Kalgoorlie as a Customer Service Hub within the next five years, including:

- offering a broad range of DMIRS services; and
- training customer service staff to resolve general customer enquiries at the first point of contact, and providing a seamless transfer to specialist staff, if required.



KARRATHA – The Quarter, 2nd Floor, 20 Sharpe Avenue, Karratha WA 6714

Develop Karratha as a Customer Service Centre within the next five years, including:

- continuing to offer its existing services and providing a referral function for customers requiring information about DMIRS services not currently offered in Karratha; and
- consider Karratha as a future potential Customer Service Hub, as it is a relatively busy regional office with a diverse staff complement.



LEONORA – Rochester Street, Leonora WA 6438

Leonora to continue operating as a Resource Tenure Office.

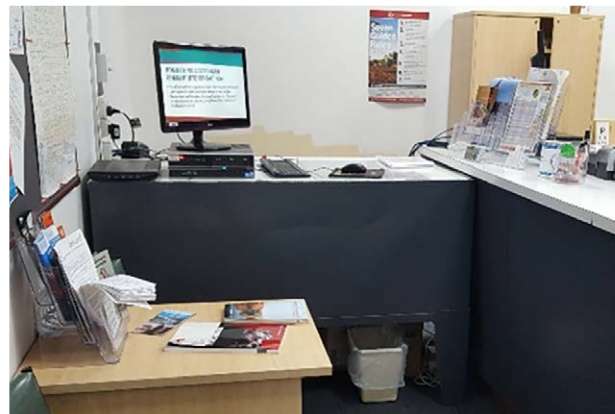
Implement a referral service for customers requiring other DMIRS services not currently available at Leonora.



MARBLE BAR – General Street, Marble Bar WA 6760

Marble Bar to continue operating as a Resource Tenure Office.

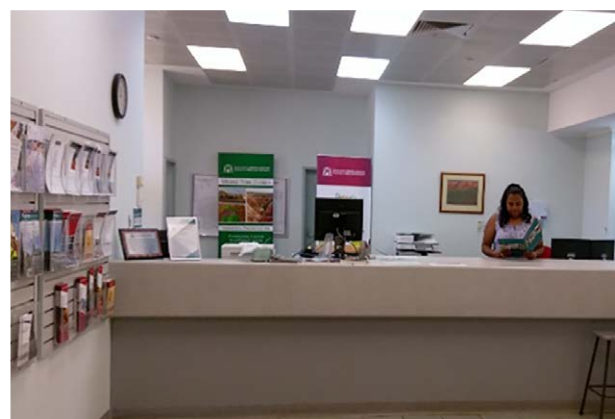
Implement a referral service for customers requiring other DMIRS services not currently available at Marble Bar.



MEEKATHARRA – Savage Street, Meekatharra WA 6642

Meekatharra to continue operating as a Resource Tenure Office.

Implement a referral service for customers requiring other DMIRS services not currently available at Meekatharra.



MOUNT MAGNET – Corner of Richardson & Hepburn Streets, Mount Magnet WA 6638

Mount Magnet to continue operating as a Resource Tenure Office.

Implement a referral service for customers requiring other DMIRS services not currently available at Mount Magnet.



SOUTHERN CROSS – Canopus Street, Southern Cross WA 6426

Southern Cross to continue operating as a Resource Tenure Office.

Implement a referral service for customers requiring other DMIRS services not currently available at Southern Cross.



NORSEMAN – Prinsep Street, Norseman WA 6443

DMIRS had a Norseman Resource Tenure Office that closed in December 2017, due to having the lowest number of transactions. In addition, Norseman also had the lowest number of live mining tenements in Western Australia.

The DMIRS Kalgoorlie office now processes the small number of transactions previously processed at the Norseman office.

The DMIRS-owned building includes a Magistrate's Court, which is still being used by the Department of Justice.

PROPOSAL 2

The proposal is for the Norseman office to remain closed, due to the low number of transactions.

Liaise with the Department of Justice regarding options for service delivery in Norseman, including the future ownership of the office.



Resource Tenure

The Resource Tenure Division of DMIRS is responsible for regulating access, rights and conditions for the use, control and transfer of mining tenements. A mining tenement is a category of licence or lease over a specified piece of land, issued under the *Mining Act 1978*.

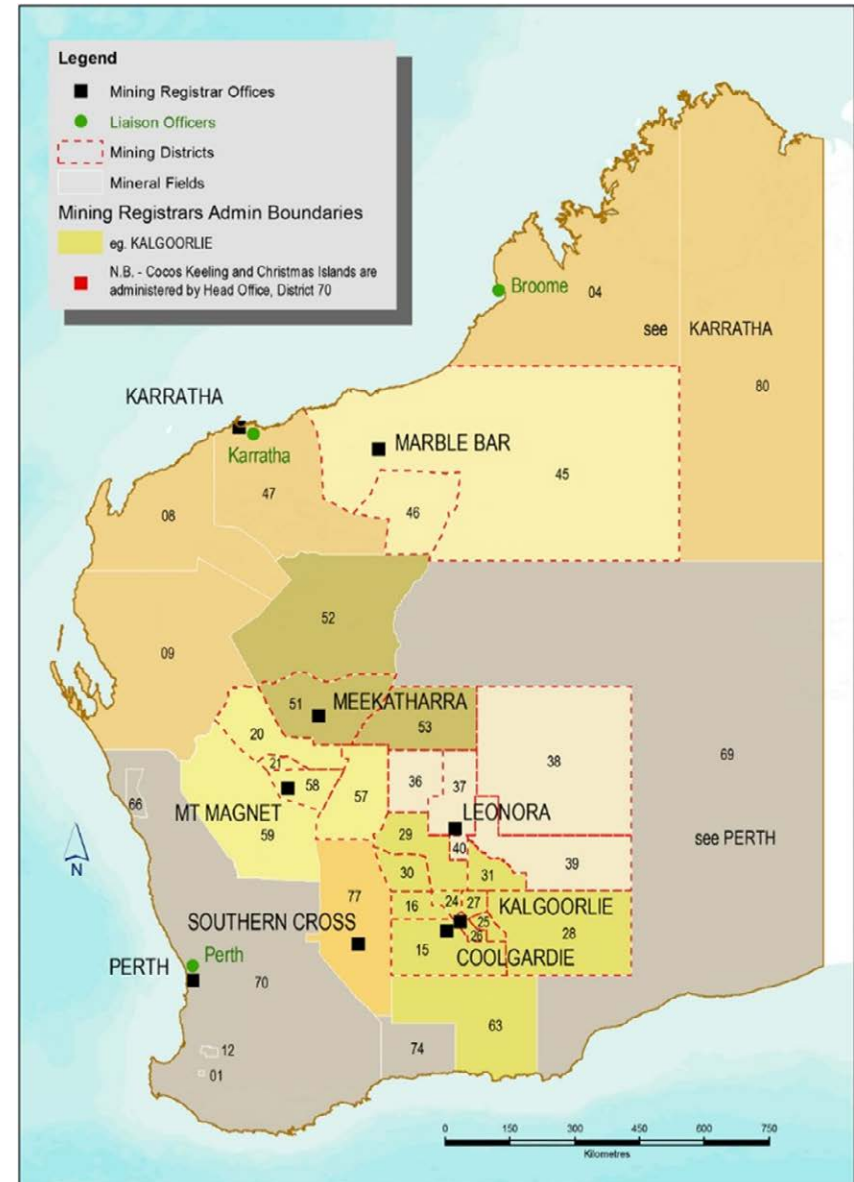
Resource Tenure work is highly technical and errors have the potential to result in legal action. Hence, there is a strong focus on strict legislative compliance when accepting, processing and granting mining tenements.

Due to the complexity of the work, Resource Tenure customer service staff require months of training to reach a basic level of proficiency. These staff can further expand their technical capabilities to become Tenure Officers and ultimately, Mining Registrars.

Mining Registrars have a key statutory role in regional service delivery for the Division. They are responsible for assessing, granting or recommending mining tenement applications, preparing Warden's Court documentation; and representing DMIRS in Resource Tenure negotiations with other agencies.

Approximately 80% of mining tenement applications are lodged electronically, with the balance lodged in person at Resource Tenure offices. Under the *Mining Act 1978*, the State is divided into numbered Mining Districts and Mineral Fields, which are allocated to specific Resource Tenure regional offices (see map).

Regardless of whether an application is lodged online, or in person at the Perth mining information counter, the application is allocated to the regional Mining Registrar responsible for that particular Mining District. This approach aligns with the Western Australian Government's Regional Prosperity objectives under the [Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity](#) initiative.



However, there is room for improvement. Under the current system, the Mining District allocation requirements dictate the amount of work for that district's Mining Registrar. So the busier district's Mining Registrars experience higher workloads than Mining Registrars in less busy districts. For example, during 2017/18, one Mining Registrar processed 276 transactions, while another processed 3,551 transactions. This inequity is an ongoing problem and can negatively impact processing timeframes, delaying the grant of mining tenements and the commencement of mining or exploration operations.

DMIRS is currently considering how its regional Mining Registrars could share their workload better, by co-locating a few Mining Registrars at the busier regional offices.

PROPOSAL 3

When possible, co-locate Regional Mining Registrars at busier regional offices to make more efficient use of these highly specialised staff and share the workload to reduce the risk of delays in processing mining tenement applications.



Regional staff attraction and retention

There are challenges with attracting and retaining a suitably skilled and diverse workforce in some regional areas. These issues are not unique to DMIRS and require a whole-of-Government approach to develop coordinated strategies.

PROPOSAL 4

DMIRS will work with local government authorities, regional development commissions and other State Government agencies on strategies to address regional attraction and retention issues.

Stakeholder engagement

The Government's 2017 Service Priority Review, and discussions with other regional Government stakeholders as part of the Review, highlighted that a 'one size fits all' approach to service delivery does not always work in the regions.

The Regional Development Commissions and local government authorities indicated a need for DMIRS to improve engagement, to assist them in developing regional strategies and managing ongoing day-to-day operational business.

PROPOSAL 5

DMIRS will establish regular (e.g. annual or 6-monthly) stakeholder engagement with regional development commissions, local shires, industries and communities to:

- identify trends and emerging issues relevant to DMIRS services;
- enable DMIRS to identify better ways to deliver services to the regions (e.g. digital services; multi-agency hubs; partnering with Local Government; licensed agents); and
- identify the sorts of data they find useful.



Digital service delivery

DMIRS needs to provide services to its customers wherever they live and work, not just where the Department has physical offices. All customers need easy access to specialised information and advice and while many of the Department's services, information and forms are available online, some are not. This requires improved and expanded digital services.

The Government's 2017 Service Priority Review noted:

"Only 2.5% of WA government services are available online.

The New Zealand Government has 70% of all customer service transactions online.

Many agencies have begun reshaping transactional services and delivering them online where possible. Transactional-type services (e.g. licensing and payments) can be readily moved to online delivery."

Increased digital service delivery is intended to complement, not replace, regional DMIRS staff and enable the Department to give its customers better access, convenience and choice.

Digital service delivery in some regional areas is challenging, especially where customers may have limited or no access to computers, the internet, or mobile phone coverage. This may affect their ability to use digital services.

DMIRS will need to provide customers with access to computers and telephones at regional offices, with support from staff. Systems and websites also need to be co-designed with customers, to help make them more customer-friendly.



PROPOSAL 6

- DMIRS should establish 'Customer Service Kiosks' computers and phones at regional offices, enabling customers to easily access specialist information and advice from DMIRS.
- Investigate the feasibility of offering more services online, to make it easier for more customers in more locations to access DMIRS services.
- Investigate the feasibility of expanding current agent delivery channels. This could also include Australia Post offices, community resource centres, other agencies' offices, and possibly, private businesses.
- Engage customers to co-design DMIRS service delivery functions and systems.
- Use online technologies to enable decentralisation of work from Perth to regional offices, more efficient use of regional resources, greater certainty for regional offices and opportunities for increased regional employment.

Government regional services and agency co-location initiatives

The Government's 2017 Service Priority Review noted:

"There is opportunity for services and agencies to be co-located in more effective ways in regional areas to promote better coordination of services, stronger connections and collaboration between public sector employees, and more targeted service delivery to meet local needs. Co-location approaches could extend beyond State Government to include the Commonwealth Government and regional local governments."

Bringing together government services presents challenges with political and client expectations, resourcing and capability, legal and cultural barriers to information sharing between agencies, geographical dispersion of communities, regional telecommunications access and affordability."

Several regional Local Government Shires and Cities said they either had, or would welcome, multi-agency service centres, noting Government agencies were often scattered across the town/city.

The Government has allocated \$6.9 million over the period 2019-20 to 2021-22 for the ServiceWA initiative. ServiceWA will put citizens at the centre of service delivery, by piloting a simplified way to access transactional government services.

ServiceWA will provide a more contemporary and coordinated experience for citizens and is similar to approaches taken in other jurisdictions to simplify government service delivery.

PROPOSAL 7

- DMIRS should explore opportunities for joint agency representation in regional locations, where appropriate.
- Monitor and participate in broader Government regional service initiatives.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will any regional offices be closed?

Operational DMIRS regional offices will remain open.

However, it is proposed that the non-operational Norseman office remain closed and the facility be transferred from DMIRS to the Department of Justice.

2. Will there be any regional DMIRS job losses or relocations as a result of this review?

DMIRS does not anticipate any regional job losses resulting from this review.

Use of online technologies will enable decentralisation of work from Perth to regional offices, more efficient use of regional resources, greater certainty for regional offices and opportunities for increased regional employment.

A few technical positions (Mining Registrars) may be relocated between regional offices to improve processing efficiency, but this process will be voluntary or through natural staff attrition (e.g. resignations, retirements).

3. Will there be a reduction in Government services to the regions?

No. In fact, the proposed tiered service delivery model and enhanced digital services are intended to provide regional customers with increased access to a broader range of DMIRS services.

4. How will the Review improve customer service to the regions?

DMIRS' services are currently available to customers throughout Western Australia via the DMIRS website, contact centres and regional offices.

The proposed tiered service delivery model, together with enhanced digital services, will increase regional customers' access to all DMIRS services.

Currently, most DMIRS regional offices still reflect pre-merge arrangements (former Department of Commerce services and Department of Mines and Petroleum services).

The tiered service delivery model aims to standardise the customer service functions across all the offices, depending on the type of office (e.g. Hub, Customer Service Centre, Resource Tenure Office or Mines Safety Office).

DMIRS will also explore opportunities for joint agency representation in regional locations and participation in broader Government regional service initiatives.

5. How will you provide customer services to towns and other areas where DMIRS does not have an office?

See Q4 above.

6. How much will it cost to implement the Review proposals?

No net changes are expected regarding staff costs.

Any costs associated with additional digital services or building improvements (e.g. customer kiosk computers or office improvements) depend on the outcomes of this consultation and other approval processes.

DMIRS will also explore opportunities for joint agency representation in regional locations, which may help reduce the cost of service delivery.

Final recommendations will be presented to the Minister for Commerce and the Minister for Mines and Petroleum for approval, prior to implementation.

7. When will the Review proposals be implemented?

Subject to approval from both Ministers, phased implementation will commence in 2020, and should be completed within five years.

8. How will I use digital services if I don't have a computer/smartphone/tablet, or don't know how to use them, or have poor/no internet access?

Customer service will continue to be available:

- by telephone, via the DMIRS contact centres;
- in person, by visiting DMIRS' metro and regional offices; and
- by post (please check the application form first).

DMIRS services are listed under the 'Business and Government' category of the White Pages.

DMIRS staff at regional offices and contact centres can also provide guidance on how to use digital services.

9. What are kiosk computers?

Kiosk computers are computers specially-configured for ease of use by customers.

It is proposed the DMIRS kiosk computers will have touch screens, so the customer can operate them simply without having to use a keyboard or mouse.

The computers will also have a telephone next to them so that customers can request specialised technical advice, if required.

10. What is DMIRS doing to make digital services easier to use?

In addition to introducing kiosk computers for customers, DMIRS will investigate the feasibility of the 'Customer Service Hub' offices also providing a live chat / video conference facility, to enable customers to talk to specialist staff at other DMIRS offices.

DMIRS also plans to engage customers in co-designing its online systems, to make them more user friendly.

11. Why can't all DMIRS offices provide the same level of service?

Various factors were considered in developing the tiered service delivery model, including:

- number and type of customer transactions;
- size and facilities at existing offices;
- number and functions of onsite specialist staff; and
- population.

DMIRS regional offices contain a mix of onsite specialist staff who are subject matter experts on particular DMIRS services (e.g. Consumer Protection, WorkSafe, Mines Safety, Plumbing Inspectors, Electrical Inspectors, Geologists and Environmental Officers). The number and mix of specialist staff varies by office location.

Bunbury, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie have the largest number and variety of onsite specialists. These offices are also the busiest offices in terms of customer transactions and have therefore been designated as the initial Customer Service Hubs.

Albany and Broome are small offices that have a small number of onsite specialists and a lower number of transactions, so they have been designated as Customer Service Centres.

Regional Resource Tenure offices generally have a smaller number of staff, and do not have other DMIRS specialist staff onsite. These offices are mainly used by mining, exploration or prospector customers, who have are mainly using the office for Resource Tenure applications. These offices will retain their current purpose, but will also offer a referral function for customers using other DMIRS services.

DMIRS has an office in Collie which is used by Mines Safety inspectors. This office currently does not provide customer service, but in future will provide a referral function for customers using other DMIRS services.

Offices will continue to be reviewed and others may become future Customer Service Hubs.

12. Are you centralising services in Perth?

No. DMIRS intends to use its regional resources more efficiently and to a greater capacity, under the tiered service delivery model.

Under this model, regional offices will offer an expanded range of DMIRS services. If DMIRS subject matter expert staff are not available for a customer at a particular office, a standardised referral function will be established so customer enquiries can be resolved in an efficient manner.

DMIRS regional Customer Service Hubs and Customer Service Centres will be trained to assist Perth-based staff in handling calls to the DMIRS 1300 phone numbers.

Use of online technologies will enable decentralisation of work from Perth to regional offices, more efficient use of regional resources, greater certainty for regional offices and opportunities for increased regional employment.

A few specialised Resource Tenure staff may eventually be co-located to share the workload more equally and enable more efficient processing of mining-related applications. This will help reduce the risk of delays in processing tenement applications, which can cause delays for mining projects.

13. How can I provide feedback on the Review?

Please download the Feedback Template provided and submit your feedback to customerservice@dmirs.wa.gov.au. If you require a hard copy, please call 9222 3333 or email customerservice@dmirs.wa.gov.au

14. What is DMIRS doing about staff attraction and retention in the regions?

The attraction and retention of a skilled and diverse workforce to our regional communities is critical if they are to remain vibrant and self-sustaining in the future.

In some regional towns, DMIRS has faced challenges in recruiting and retaining suitably-skilled and diverse personnel. The issues are similar for other employers and require a whole-of-Government approach.

DMIRS proposes meeting with all affected stakeholders to develop strategies to address these problems.

Government of Western Australia

**Department of Mines, Industry Regulation
and Safety**

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