

# New East Werribee precinct push

Star Weekly, Charlene Macaulay

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Mayor Peter Maynard and director Kate Roffey. Photo by Damjan Janevski.

A Wyndham council director has called on the state government to turn around Werribee's dole bludger reputation by committing to the East Werribee Employment Precinct.

Council major projects director Kate Roffey said developing the East Werribee Employment Precinct was the key to tackling high unemployment in Wyndham and reducing traffic congestion to and from the city.

"The key to unlocking capacity in both those areas is to create jobs here, in the municipality, so you don't have to travel all the way to the city for work," she said.

In 2015, the state government identified the Australian Education City consortium as the preferred bidders for the precinct. The consortium, which has a vision for a \$30 billion education, research and employment city at the site, has since been negotiating exclusively with the government.

"The Australian Education City is really critical to that jobs creation, because it's en masse," Ms Roffey said.

"When you've got something of this scale, it brings a conglomeration of jobs into the area across different sectors and from that you get knock-on economic benefits in other areas."

Ms Roffey's comments come after the state Department of Human Services and Australian Federal Police launched a taskforce to crack down on areas known to be hot spots for welfare non-compliance, including Werribee.

"This is the exact reason why we need something like the Australian Education City here," Ms Roffey said.

Ms Roffey said while she wasn't privy to the government's conversations with the consortium, she was still hopeful that the project would go ahead.

A spokesperson from the state Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources said the government was still considering the consortium's employment precinct proposal.

"The proposal is complex and the timing of the process reflects this," she said.

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