

## Blueprint sets strategic direction

Minister launches key document

After two years of research, analysis and consultation by the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC), the region now has its overarching strategy for growth and development.

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman launched the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint* in Albany on Thursday 29 October at a function marking a significant advance on one of the project areas identified in the document.

Mr Redman acknowledged the extensive stakeholder consultation that underpinned the development of the Blueprint and commended the Commission on the quality of the final document.

"The strategic approach of the Blueprint is already informing investment and decision-making by public and private entities, and over the decades ahead will lead to investment in economic infrastructure that will support growth," Mr Redman said.

"A total of \$35 million of priority projects identified in the Blueprint are now under way in the Great Southern, supported by almost \$15 million in Royalties for Regions funding."

The *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*, co-badged with Regional Development Australia - Great Southern, identifies seven project areas that will help the region achieve its vision to be a sought-after location based on economic opportunity and lifestyle.

It asserts that primary production will continue to be the backbone of the regional economy for decades to come, but the document also identifies tourism, tertiary education and engagement in the digital economy as opportunities for growth.

The launch of the Blueprint took place at an event marking the first stage of a student accommodation project in Albany.

The \$3 million project in the Norman House precinct on Stirling Terrace is supported by



Regional Development Minister Terry Redman launched the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint* in October. Photograph courtesy Great Southern Weekender.

\$1.17 million in Royalties for Regions funding through the Growing Our South initiative.

Mr Redman said construction of dedicated and affordable student accommodation facilities was a project identified in the Blueprint.

"This project, by the Great Southern Community Housing Association, will encourage more international and domestic students to attend tertiary and vocational institutions in the region," Mr Redman said.

Each of Western Australia's nine development commissions was tasked with putting together a Regional Investment Blueprint based on the development aspirations and predicted population growth in each region.

The regional blueprint initiative is supported by a \$362 million investment through the State Government's Royalties for Regions program. The *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint* can be downloaded from [www.gsdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gsdc.wa.gov.au). For more about the Blueprint, see the Special Report on pages 4-7.

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## Snake Run start for festival

New artistic director launches 2016 program

A celebration of Albany's historic Snake Run skateboard track in Hare Street will mark the start of the 2016 Great Southern Festival.

The Snake Run Project is a free festival event featuring skateboarding, dance, parkour (urban freestyle obstacle running) and street art on Saturday 13 February. A welcome to country will take place at the track to signify the start of the 2016 program of Perth Festival events.

The 2016 Great Southern Festival program was launched at the Albany Entertainment Centre by new Perth International Arts Festival (PIAF) artistic director Wendy Martin on 16 November 2015. The 2016 program includes trumpet virtuoso Wynton Marsalis with his Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra.

Actor Jonny Donahoe stars in the play



Artistic director Wendy Martin outlines the 2016 Great Southern Festival program. Ms Martin will lead the Perth Festival for the next four years.

*Every Brilliant Thing*, promoted as "One of the funniest plays you'll ever see about depression – and possibly one of the funniest plays you'll ever see, full stop".

Musical offerings include Corsican vocal group A Filetta, classical music by Tinalley Quartet, and the prodigious talents of

Band of Brothers, a collaboration between brothers Slava and Leonard Grigoryan, and brothers Joseph and James Tawadros.

The Playmakers program, unique to the Great Southern, focuses on the talents of local luthiers. Literary events feature authors Simon Winchester (*The Surgeon of Crowthorne*), Paolo Bacigalupi (*The Windup Girl*) and Patrick deWitt (*The Sisters Brothers*), among others. Twelve films from around the world comprise the cinema program, which include Tamil, French and Italian titles.

Full details are at [www.perthfestival.com.au/great-southern-festival](http://www.perthfestival.com.au/great-southern-festival). Tickets are available through the Perth Festival website, at Paperbark Merchants for most events, and at the Albany Entertainment Centre for events at that venue.

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## Medal search begins

Nominations sought for prestigious award

Across the Great Southern, the search has started for nominees for the 2016 GSDC Medal.

Nominations for the prestigious award opened on Monday 2 November and will close on Wednesday 17 February 2016.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the medal was first awarded in 2002.

"We are now calling for nominations for the twelfth recipient," Mr Rundle said. "Winners of the medal receive a total of

\$12,000 in grant support for their NRM work.

"I encourage anyone connected to natural resource management in the Great Southern to consider nominating someone who stands out in their field and deserves recognition and support for their work.

"Nominees could come from any kind of resource management activity, including agriculture, research, business, education, environmental care or related endeavours," Mr Rundle said.

Nomination forms and guidelines are available on the GSDC Medal page of [www.gsdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gsdc.wa.gov.au) or by phoning the GSDC.

Upon the close of nominations, a judging panel will select and assess three finalists. Each finalist will receive a \$2,000 grant to support his or her NRM activities. The winner of the 2016 GSDC Medal will be announced at a function in Albany on Friday 27 May 2016.

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## CEDA to explore region's future

Challenges and opportunities facing the Great Southern will be under the microscope during the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) conference on Tuesday 16 February at the Albany Entertainment Centre.

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman will deliver the keynote presentation at the conference.

Mr Redman will be followed by a series of speakers addressing issues in community

development, infrastructure and future industries. Details of the program and registration options are available at [www.ceda.com.au](http://www.ceda.com.au).

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## Clipper yachts breeze in

### Albany welcomes world race fleet

Albany opened its arms to the intrepid crews of the Clipper Round the World yacht race at the end of November.

Funding through the GSDC supported the welcome events staged for the fleet by the City of Albany. The GSDC support included \$20,001 in Royalties for Regions funding through the Regional Grants Scheme.

The Clipper Round the World race started in London on 30 August. The first two legs took the 12-strong fleet of identical 21m yachts to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and then to Cape Town, South Africa.

The third leg, from Cape Town to Albany, started on Saturday 31 October. On this leg, the fleet competed for the Warden Whip trophy, named with reference to the Noongar for 'ocean of southern winds'.

At the prize-giving function on Thursday 26 November, City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington presented the Warden Whip trophy to the crew of winning yacht LMAX Exchange. The yacht is skippered by Olivier Cardin, the first French skipper in the history of the race.

Albany sailor Nicola Edwards is a crew member on PSP Logistics, which arrived in Albany in tenth place.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the race generated international publicity for the Great Southern.



Left: The Clipper fleet sailed out of King George Sound on Tuesday 1 December.

Below: GSDC Deputy Chairman Ross Thornton greeted Albany sailor Nicola Edwards at the prize-giving function on Thursday 26 November.

"The GSDC's long-term interest in the development of the Albany waterfront certainly pays off when the Clipper fleet ties up in the marina," Mr Rundle said.

After arriving in port, the crews kept busy preparing for the next leg, from Albany to Sydney, but also enjoyed the hospitality of Albany and the Great Southern.

Some crew members left the race in Albany and were replaced by new arrivals who joined for the next leg.

On Tuesday 1 December, the fleet contested a flying start in King George Sound and began the voyage to Sydney.

The crews will spend Christmas in Sydney



and then take part in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race.

The event continues with races to the Whitsundays, Da Nang, Qingdao, Seattle, Panama, New York and London.

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## Funding builds stronger communities

### Commonwealth grants for Great Southern projects

Commonwealth funding will support projects aligned with the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*, and will augment Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC.

Regional Development Australia – Great Southern recently welcomed the announcement of \$2.075 million in National Stronger Regions Fund (NSRF) support for three Great Southern projects.

The grants will support a regional

community hub in Cranbrook (\$300,000), a sports pavilion upgrade in Tambellup (\$950,000) and a community hub in Nyabing (\$825,000).

RDA Great Southern and the GSDC signed a Memorandum of Understanding in August to co-brand the Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the projects supported through the NSRF aligned with the aims of the Blueprint's

transformational projects in building stronger communities.

In June, through the GSDC, the Nyabing community hub project gained \$150,000 of Regional Grants Scheme (RGS) funding made possible by the State Government's Royalties for Regions program.

The Tambellup sports pavilion project was supported by \$200,000 through the RGS.

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## SPECIAL REPORT: BLUEPRINT AT A GLANCE

### *Inside the Blueprint*

The *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint* is a 184-page strategic guide for the future of the Great Southern out to 2040.

It begins with a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the region, a presentation of the Great Southern's geography, economy, infrastructure, community and environment.

Factors outside the region are also examined in a section titled 'Megatrends'. In this section, there is a focus on the influence on the region of Asian economies, global demand for food and resources, climate change, international tourism, Australia's ageing population and the growth of digital technologies.

From this analysis of the Great Southern as it is now and the likely effects of national and international trends, the Blueprint identifies the region's comparative advantages, its emerging opportunities and its most pressing challenges.

It identifies four main themes or 'regional imperatives' that will drive the Great Southern towards its vision of being recognised internationally as a natural choice for opportunity and lifestyle.



From the regional imperatives, the Blueprint draws seven transformational project areas that will be the keys to a strong and bright future for the region.

In each transformational project area, short, medium and long-term ambitions are identified. Each also includes measures by which progress towards these outcomes can be monitored.

The following pages of this special report summarise the seven transformational project areas, which all take in a variety of project components.

Some of the components of the transformational projects are already being implemented, including projects funded through the Growing Our South initiative.

### *Transformational Project One*

## *Growing Value*

Growing Value is focused on premium food production and value adding. This transformational project aims to further expand production, value adding and international marketing of the region's food products.

Global demand for food, including premium products, is expected to rise strongly in the near to medium future. The Great Southern is a consistent and productive food region.

Existing sectors have the capacity to expand production, add value and further promote the region's food products.

To achieve this, the region can boost its land use planning, develop a central Great Southern food processing precinct, expand aquaculture, increase horticulture opportunities and build better links to emerging markets.

As this vision is progressed, the Great Southern will build a highly productive regional economy, with more jobs and better primary production infrastructure.

*A central Great Southern food processing precinct is a Blueprint project component.*





## SPECIAL REPORT: BLUEPRINT AT A GLANCE

### Transformational Project Two

# Access to Energy



*Renewable energy will continue to develop in the future Great Southern.*

Access to Energy is focused on ensuring the energy security of the region. The Great Southern needs access to a range of energy sources that are affordable, secure and able to meet the requirements of current and future industry and the community.

The region's current power infrastructure could become a constraint to residential and industrial growth.

Providing safe and efficient power, with sufficient capacity for the region's growth, is essential for the Great Southern to achieve its goal.

To achieve this, the region could build the Bunbury to Albany gas pipeline, enhance the electricity grid (particularly at the edge of the grid) and further develop sources of renewable energy. This will mean more reliable power in the region, access to natural gas in key places, and more renewable energy.

The region will become more productive and support more industry activity and more manufacturing.

#### Who funds it?

The *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint* will inform investment decisions made by private enterprise, the public sector and community organisations. Public funding is not assumed for the projects identified in the document.

Development of the Blueprint was supported through the State Government's Royalties for Regions program.

### Transformational Project Three

# Water for Growth

Water for Growth is aimed at ensuring the long-term security of the Great Southern's water supply to meet industry and community requirements.

Secure water supplies will enable the Great Southern to support a growing population and the steady expansion of industry and agriculture.

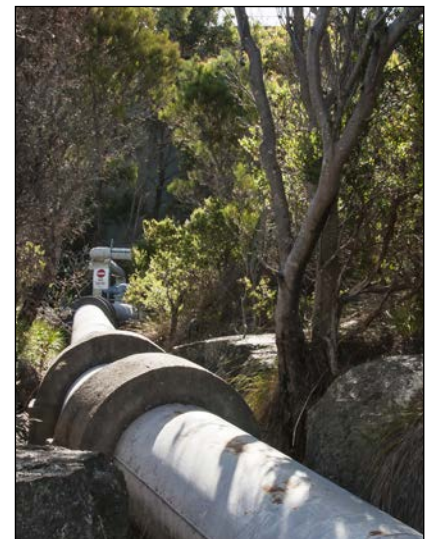
The region needs a sustainable, reliable water supply and improved water management in order to meet the challenge of a changing climate.

To achieve this aim, relevant agencies are moving to explore groundwater sources and develop the next major drinking water supply for lower Great Southern towns.

It must also extend and upgrade water supplies in integrated schemes and in independent town schemes, recycle wastewater and develop options for water harvesting and reuse.

By doing this, the region will deliver secure and sustainable water supplies for more industrial activities and for a population of up to 100,000. This will help the region to be more productive and to grow its manufacturing sector.

*Good management of water resources is essential for the Great Southern's future.*



## SPECIAL REPORT: BLUEPRINT AT A GLANCE

### Transformational Project Four

## Avenues to Opportunity

Avenues to Opportunity focuses on transport and industry hubs and seeks to ensure that the region's transport network has the capacity to safely and efficiently provide connections to domestic and export markets.

It also aims to provide industry hubs for regional enterprises.

Growing the Great Southern economy will depend on having the transport it needs, particularly road infrastructure, for industries and regional tourism.

Achieving this will mean enhancing the Port of Albany and its transport links, upgrading arterial roads and completing the final stages of the Albany Ring Road.

It will also entail assessing options for freight transfer hubs, upgrading the Albany

Regional Airport, linking industry hubs and providing land for specialised industrial development.

As this is achieved, the region will be served by safe and efficient transport, enabling more industry and tourism activity.

Albany Regional Airport passenger numbers will rise steadily, and there will be greater capacity in shipping, road and rail linking serviced industry hubs.

*Safe and efficient road transport is essential for the growth of the regional economy.*



### Transformational Project Five

## Connected Great Southern

Connected Great Southern is about thriving in the digital age.

The aim is to integrate and expand the Great Southern's engagement with the global digital environment. This will be associated with learning and research initiatives that have national and international connections and will maximise the region's capacity to harness business and investment opportunities.

Digital links will play an expanded role in the region's productivity, enhance small to medium businesses and the not-for-profit sector, and provide for better education, training, research and innovative activities.

The Great Southern will seek the best in broadband and mobile networks, provide for innovation, promote digital enterprise and

set up a web portal for regional marketing and investment.

The region will boost regional buying and enhance the capacity of research, training, secondary schooling and tertiary education.

By doing this, Great Southern residents will be able to connect to digital networks that facilitate high levels of innovation, better outcomes in education, more tertiary education options and high quality research. All of this will enhance productivity gains in the region's economy.

*Tertiary education and research will benefit from the region's engagement with digital technologies.*





## SPECIAL REPORT: BLUEPRINT AT A GLANCE

### Transformational Project Six

## Destination of Natural Choice

Destination of Natural Choice is about further developing the Great Southern's iconic tourism product and its marketing to prospective visitors.

The project will also support the growth of a dynamic arts and creative sector with links to the tourism industry.

The Great Southern has a wide range of high value tourism assets. Developing tourism products, events, activities and attractions will grow the economy. Doing so will create social benefits as residents and visitors take part in culture and the arts.

Achieving this project will mean enhancing facilities in iconic national parks, attracting investment in the Albany Waterfront,

improving the Middleton Beach precinct and developing cultural and heritage assets.

The region will set up a regional wine trail and associated hubs, and expand festivals and events programs. It will link cultural and biodiversity trails, set up a south coast subregional tourism body and improve tourism amenity and safety management.

By doing this, the region will create more jobs and a greater economic return from tourism.

There will be more events in the region, enhanced management of heritage assets and natural resources, and recognition for the Great Southern as Western Australia's premier region for the arts and culture.



Ageing infrastructure at Torndirrup is being replaced and improved with the support of \$5.1 million in Royalties for Regions funding, of which \$1.2 million is through the Growing Our South initiative. The redevelopment aligns with a project component in the Destination of Natural Choice. See page 8.

### Transformational Project Seven

## Strong Communities

Strong Communities is focused on community development and amenity.

The aim is to maintain and enhance the region's communities to ensure the Great Southern is recognised as a preferred region in which to live, work and invest.

The Great Southern's population will continue to grow and regional communities need to be able to offer a range of job opportunities, good social environments and attractive local amenity.

To achieve this, the region will plan more strategically for human services, refresh town centres, improve waste management, develop community leadership, provide

access to affordable housing and enhance early childhood development.

It will also foster opportunities that flow from the South West Native Title Settlement, support arts and culture, extend services and facilities for seniors, and boost health, sport and recreation services.

Doing this will mean that a bigger population in the region, up to 100,000 people, will have the right facilities and services at all stages of life. They will have health outcomes that compare to the metropolitan area. Community strength will show in volunteering, taking part in sport, arts and culture, and in measures of the sense of community safety.



Seniors' accommodation projects, such as Collet Barker Court in Mount Barker, are consistent with the aims of the Strong Communities project. Stage 3 of Collet Barker Court received \$1.2 million of Royalties for Regions funding through the Growing Our South initiative.

### Find out more about the Blueprint

More information about the Great Southern's future out to 2040 can be found in the downloadable full version of the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*. A concise summary of the Blueprint is also available for download or from the GSDC offices in Albany and Katanning. Download the documents from [www.gsdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gsdc.wa.gov.au) or contact the GSDC on 9842 4888.

# Natural Bridge section opens

Redevelopment improves visitor facilities

A big section of the new visitor facilities at The Gap and Natural Bridge is now open to the public.

Environment Minister Albert Jacob announced a 'sneak preview' of the redevelopment on Friday 4 December.

Mr Jacob said technical challenges had delayed the installation of the new viewing platform at The Gap. Access to The Gap is restricted but other sections of the attraction, including a picnic area and a new lookout at the Natural Bridge, are open until mid-January.

From mid-January, the area will be closed again for a short period for the installation of the viewing platform at The Gap.

The improvements are part of a \$6.775 million redevelopment at the popular tourist attraction, that will provide better parking, a picnic area, new concrete paths, interpretive information, and viewing platforms at The Gap and Natural Bridge.

The Department of Parks and Wildlife project was supported by \$5.1 million



*New paths and viewing areas at the Natural Bridge are open for a 'sneak preview'.*

of Royalties for Regions funding, \$1.2 million of it through the Growing Our South initiative, which is helping to implement major infrastructure and community projects in southern WA.

The GSDC helped to develop business cases for the Torndirrup redevelopment and for a range of other projects funded

through Growing Our South. These include seniors' accommodation in Kojonup and Mount Barker, Katanning's Early Childhood Hub and Mainstreet projects, affordable student accommodation in Albany, and waste management by a partnership group of five local governments.

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