

Denmark golfers celebrate

Volunteers back clubhouse, course improvements

Denmark golfers celebrated a mighty effort at the opening of the refurbished Denmark Country Club.

Warren-Blackwood MLA Terry Redman officially opened the club's \$1.5 million upgrade project, supported by \$142,700 in Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC, and praised the volunteers who contributed a major portion of the work.

Club President Graham Wilson said the club appreciated the GSDC's role, the support of the Department of Sport and Recreation, and further Royalties for Regions funding through the Shire of Denmark.

He said club members had put in a great effort, volunteering thousands of hours of unpaid work to bring the three-year project to fruition.

Mr Wilson himself was particularly acknowledged for his volunteer work in coordinating the project and supervising the volunteer roster.

The upgrade project involved extending and refurbishing the clubhouse, laying extensive reticulation around the fairways and greens, and replacing the oiled sand greens with turf.

Mr Wilson said the improvements to the course and its facilities would enable the club to attract more visiting golfers and to host a wider range of golf events.



Denmark's refurbished golf club in its lush green setting.

"We are planning to host an inaugural three-day event in late February 2014," Mr Wilson said.

"This will be an annual event and will probably take some years to develop to full capacity and potential. It will certainly be good for business in Denmark and will extend the tourism season," he said.

The club is considering ways to develop partnerships with other golf clubs in the Great Southern by developing regional golf tours.

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Warren-Blackwood MLA Terry Redman (left) officially declared the Denmark Country Club refurbishment open. He is pictured with Denmark Shire President Ross Thornton.



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Early childhood help for families

Handbooks set out parenting essentials

Regional families with young children have new sources of information to help them give their children the best start to life.

A Smart Start is a program conceived 13 years ago in the Great Southern and running in ten local government areas in the region, enhancing early childhood learning by helping families nurture their children through developmental stages.

Central Wheatbelt MLA Mia Davies and Agricultural Region MLC Paul Brown visited the Katanning Library recently to launch a series of six handbooks setting out the essential information of A Smart Start.

Ms Davies said the handbooks, covering stages from newborn through babyhood and toddler years to age four, were a special gift to the region's children and families.

"Getting a smart start to life means growing up in a caring family environment and having good community support around the family," Ms Davies said.

"It sets children up for better learning



Great Southern Development Commission Chairman Peter Rundle (left), Wheatbelt MLA Mia Davies, YMCA Manager Family Support Projects Marilyn Lottering and Tambellup Primary School teacher Sue Sheridan (initiator of the Smart Start program), holding a folder of the Smart Start parent handbooks.

outcomes when they get to their school years and over a lifetime.

"When Great Southern families need a helping hand in the early years, A Smart Start is there to provide support and to connect families with community services and assistance," Ms Davies said.

Tambellup primary teacher Sue Sheridan initiated the program in 1999, and developed it for a decade with the assistance of Jan Batchelor.

In 2009, the program entered a partnership with the YMCA and A Smart Start gained \$660,000 over three years

in Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC, part of which supported the development of the parent handbooks. The handbooks focus on all domains of development including physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language and literacy development and aim to make the ideas easy to read and understand.

YMCA Manager Family Support Projects Marilyn Lottering said the program resonated deeply with her personal experience: she displayed a new parent's manual compiled for her by her father during her first pregnancy.

"We are not just providing information, we are really encouraging families to get involved, to create networks to get the support they need in the early years," Ms Lottering said.

Ms Davies and Ms Lottering presented flowers and certificates to volunteers and key figures associated with the program, including Ms Sheridan. With GSDC Board Chairman Peter Rundle, they cut a cake to celebrate the program's 13 years in the Great Southern.

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SuperTown works plan approved

Katanning Shire Council sets priorities

Katanning's SuperTown activity is about to move up a gear following the Katanning Shire Council's approval of a works plan for the Town Centre and Streetscape Revitalisation Project.

At its March meeting, the Council endorsed a two-stage approach to the Royalties for Regions-funded project, with priorities being drainage and landscape works in Clive Street (Richardson to Daping Streets) and associated laneways, development of

the town square, the entry roundabout on Great Southern Highway, and parking on Richardson and Daping Streets.

Estimated costs for Stage 1 were \$7.11 million but the Shire identified \$1 million of cost savings by using resources already in place for the saleyards project, along with cost savings on a few aspects of the revitalisation work.

The project must be completed and the

Royalties for Regions funds expended by 30 June 2014.

Second stage priorities determined by the Council include upgrades to Clive Street from the railway crossing to Richardson Street, the Clive Street-Austral Terrace intersection, Austral Terrace open space, and Clive Street from the Great Southern Highway to Austral Terrace.

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Cyclists inaugurate world-class trail

Munda Biddi connects Mundaring and Albany

A new tourism icon has taken its place in the Great Southern with the completion of the 1000km Munda Biddi Trail for off-road touring cyclists.

Now running from Mundaring to Albany, the Munda Biddi is considered the world's longest, most continuous trail of its type.

Its completion was the culmination of a \$6 million project to extend the existing trail from Nannup to Albany, supported by \$1.5 million of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC and a similar amount through the South West Development Commission.

A team of 26 riders, including Great Southern cyclist Charmaine Brown, inaugurated the trail in April in the Welldrill Munda Biddi Epic, leaving Albany on 7 April and finishing at a cycling festival in Mundaring on 28 April.

Munda Biddi Trail Foundation Chairman and Epic ride leader Ron Colman said the cyclists had enjoyed the challenge of the three-week ride, during which they were feted by the communities along the trail. Environment Minister Albert Jacob welcomed the riders to the Mundaring finish line and officially declared the trail open.

The Munda Biddi Trail Foundation is arranging a similar event to be held from 13 April to 4 May 2014, a supported ride



Above: Department of Environment and Conservation Acting Director General Jim Sharp (left) and Munda Biddi Trail Foundation Chairman Ron Colman (right) watch Environment Minister Albert Jacob cut the ribbon to open the Munda Biddi Trail.

Right: Charmaine Brown of Nornalup during the three week Welldrill Munda Biddi Trail Epic ride to Mundaring.

in the other direction, from Mundaring to Albany. More than 20,000 riders, including locals, interstate cyclists and overseas visitors, are expected to use the Munda Biddi Trail each year, providing significant business boosts for towns along the route.

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Science on show

Researchers to report on projects

Scientific research and projects of national and regional significance will be on show at this year's Great Southern Great Science on Thursday 8 August.

The annual celebration of science is part of National Science Week, from 10 to 18 August, and features presentations on scientific endeavour within or relevant to the Great Southern.

Great Southern Great Science 2013 topics include: improving the quality of end-of-life

care in the Great Southern; translocations and their impact on genetic diversity in the endangered noisy scrub-bird; Geological Survey of WA imaging the Great Southern; and macro fungi of the Great Southern. Winthrop Professor Stephen Hopper will be a key speaker. More topics will be announced closer to the event.

Great Southern Great Science, supported by the GSDC, is presented by the Great Southern Science Council with the Western Australia Chief Scientist, the WA Museum

(Albany), and the University of Western Australia's Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management (CENRM).

Great Southern Great Science will be held from 9am to 3.30pm at the Albany Entertainment Centre. Tickets cost \$45, including morning tea and lunch. Book through the CENRM website at www.cenrm.uwa.edu.au/community/conference.

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Regional workforce examined

Plan outlines worker supply and demand

Great Southern employers have a clearer picture of the future of the region's workforce thanks to a plan launched in April.

The Great Southern Workforce Development Plan 2013-2016, launched by Training and Workforce Development Minister Terry Redman, is a detailed view of the supply of and demand for skilled workers in the region.

"Workforce Development Plans focus and direct resources to the areas that they're needed," Mr Redman said.

"They ensure that those that are affected by those resources and those that have issues with the challenges there can have input to the plan.

"The Great Southern Workforce Development Plan finished up with about 28 actions with a whole range of different relevant groups playing a role in delivering on those actions including government agencies, industry and the like," Mr Redman said.

Department of Training and Workforce Development Director General Dr Ruth Shean said community involvement was crucial in the development of the plan.

"The local community has been very involved, they have really embraced this process," Dr Shean said.



GSDC Board Chairman Peter Rundle, Training and Workforce Development Minister Terry Redman, Department of Training and Workforce Development Director General Dr Ruth Shean and GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning mark the launch of the Great Southern Workforce Development Plan.

Local industry, community and government representatives formed the Great Southern Workforce Development Alliance, chaired by the GSDC, to coordinate the planning process.

Actions recommended in the plan address issues such as skills development, migration, workforce participation, and attraction and retention of employees.

Relevant factors explored in the plan include the competitiveness of the region's salaries and wages, availability of post-secondary education options,

affordable housing, accessible health care, employment and training of Aboriginal people and the seasonal nature of work in agricultural and related industries.

The GSDC will continue to chair the Great Southern Workforce Development Alliance during the plan's implementation.

The Great Southern Workforce Development Plan is available through the Publications page of the GSDC website at www.gsdc.wa.gov.au.

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GSDC Medal event lauds achievements

Winners' work on display

Natural resource management practitioners will gather in Albany on 13 August for the first GSDC Medal for Excellence in NRM Field Day.

The field day is the first event of the revised GSDC Medal schedule, under which the prestigious award will be made every second year.

In alternate years, the recipients of previous awards will feature at an informal

lunch event where their work in natural resource management will be highlighted.

This year's field day and lunch will feature 2011 GSDC Medal for Excellence recipient John Moore and 2010 recipient Dr Geoff Woodall.

Mr Moore will demonstrate the Herbicopter remote controlled spraying unit, developed to help control weeds in inaccessible locations.

Dr Woodall will present the CommVeg Series II seeder for native food crops.

The field day costs \$10 including lunch and will be held from 10.30am to 1.30pm at the Department of Agriculture and Food, 444 Albany Highway, Albany. Book by email to roslyn.loxton@gsdc.wa.gov.au or phone 9842 4888.

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Lookout for Anzac observance

Improvements on Mount Clarence

Albany's Anzac Day dawn service draws hundreds of people to the summit of Mount Clarence to observe the solemn ceremony in a place intimately connected with the Anzac story.

This year's participants appreciated improved facilities at the summit following the completion of the new Padre White Lookout.

The lookout is a stainless steel structure with integrated lighting, an access ramp and a mesh floor.

Previously the summit was only accessible by steps leading to an uneven viewing area of natural granite.

Now visitors can stay on the flat surfaces of the new lookout or step onto the granite that has been a vantage point since the inception of the dawn service.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$200,000 through the GSDC supported the construction of the new \$962,000 lookout, which is part of a \$15 million upgrade of the Mount Clarence precinct ahead of the Anzac Centenary events from 2014.

Padre White Lookout was built by Robinson Buildtech, which gained recognition for its construction of the challenging Castle Rock lookout at the Porongurups.



Above: The Anzac Day dawn service under way on Mount Clarence with the Padre White Lookout access ramp in the foreground.

The Mount Clarence lookout is named after Padre Arthur Ernest White, who is considered to have conducted the first Anzac Day dawn service in Australia.

Padre White was the rector of St John's Anglican Church in the years following World War I, and led members of his congregation to observe a dawn ceremony from the summit of Mount Clarence, overlooking King George Sound, from

which the Anzac convoy sailed on 1 November 1914.

On 1 November 2014, Albany will observe the centenary of the departure of the Anzac convoy, and the Anzac Day commemorations on 25 April 2015 will mark the centenary of the landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

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Ten years of treasures

Tourism push marks a decade

A tourism initiative that showcases the lesser known historic and cultural gems in the northern and eastern shires of the Great Southern celebrates a decade of operation this year.

The Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern marketing concept was set up in 2004 to increase visitor numbers to the eight shires by telling the stories of their past and present in a series of themed drive trails.

The GSDC has been a partner of the group

through its decade of operation, providing strategic advice and assisting with funding for many Hidden Treasures projects.

The group has achieved great success, being recognised on a state and national level as a best practice partnership model between local governments and the community.

Other notable achievements include the production of a sought after touring guide, associated trail signage and website, representation at trade shows and

development of an iconic tourism event, the Bloom Festival.

The Bloom Festival takes place again this year, presenting 30 events from 14 September to 19 October.

Planning is under way for the next five years, aimed at building on the success of the Bloom Festival and reviewing the operational model to ensure the long-term sustainability of the group.

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Health campus benefits region

Country WA's biggest hospital project

Health practitioners and patients in the Great Southern are enjoying the benefits of the new Albany Health Campus, the biggest hospital project carried out in country Western Australia.

Premier Colin Barnett and Health Minister Kim Hames officially opened the \$170.4 million project on Friday 3 May 2013.

Funding for the Albany Health Campus included \$60 million from Royalties for Regions and \$4.4 million from the Commonwealth.

Demolition of the old hospital will be completed as part of the second stage of the project, clearing the way for work to start on the new eight-bed Albany Community Hospice. The hospice is supported by \$4.26 million in Regional Development Council Action Agenda funding facilitated through the GSDC.

Mr Barnett said the Albany Health Campus was a state-of-the-art, integrated health facility which would transform the way health services are delivered to the people of the Great Southern.

Dr Hames said the Albany Health Campus included a bigger emergency department, more mental health beds, expanded renal dialysis capability, expanded cancer services, a new surgical centre and



Nursing and midwifery coordinator Barbara Marquand shows visitors around the emergency department during the open day at the new Albany Health Campus in May.

upgraded obstetric and birthing suites.

"The Albany Health Campus is a modern and innovative facility that brings together inpatient and specialist hospital-based services with a range of outpatient services for the seamless care of patients in a 'one-stop-shop' service," Dr Hames said.

An open day on Friday 3 May allowed members of the public to look over the facility before patients were admitted.

The Albany Health Campus uses telehealth technology to support smaller hospitals in the Great Southern and to enable patients to consult metropolitan specialists by video conference instead of by travelling to Perth.

Information about the second stage is available through the building projects page of www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au.

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Lake improvements gain support

Ewlyamartup funding pool grows

A Great Southern recreation icon will be revitalised with three years of research, consultation and planning for the restoration of Lake Ewlyamartup set to come to fruition.

The lake, located 20km from Katanning, has been a popular water skiing, paddling, bird watching and picnicking facility for generations and is etched in the memories of many locals.

In recent years the health of the lake has deteriorated and user numbers have declined, spurring the Katanning Land

Conservation District Committee and a passionate group of community volunteers to act to ensure its long-term survival as a recreation facility and valuable habitat for flora and fauna.

A grant of \$45,000 was provided by the GSDC and Tourism WA, with the group leveraging further funding of almost \$200,000 across two rounds of the Department of Transport's Recreational Boating Scheme.

The group has finalised a Recreation Area Plan and is now progressing to the

installation of new facilities including a boat ramp, trailer parking area and toilet block. Proposed future works include shelters, picnic tables, barbecues, signage, a dual access track and a bird hide.

Conservation and water quality works will take place through the Department of Regional Development's Living Lakes program with a view to revitalising the lake and surrounding catchment area and ensuring its sustainability for the enjoyment of future generations.

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Park upgrade draws visitors

Cranbrook celebrates project success

Travellers have rediscovered Cranbrook following an upgrade to the Great Southern town's caravan park.

The Shire of Cranbrook received \$97,000 of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Regional Grants Scheme, matched by its own funds, for a \$199,000 project to seal the caravan park road, renovate the caretakers' house, enclose the camp kitchen and provide new caravan hard stands.

The Royalties for Regions funds provided a new park home available for short-term guests.

Since the upgrade was completed, occupancy rates at the park have risen and it has been booked out at times.

Park caretakers Susan Soanes and Steve Palin have been integral to the success of the upgrade, offering bright hospitality and plenty of tourist information.

Shire President Jan Pope honoured Ms Soanes and Mr Palin for their contribution at the caravan park, presenting them with certificates of appreciation at a recent ceremony at the Shire of Cranbrook.

"We have received numerous letters, email and phone calls complimenting them both on their friendliness and the state of the park," Ms Pope said.

"They regularly hold sundowners and



Cranbrook Shire President Jan Pope (left), along with Cranbrook Shire CEO Peter Northover (right), recently presented caravan park caretakers Susan Soanes and Steve Palin with a certificate of appreciation for their promotion of the Shire and the Great Southern.

spend time with guests espousing the virtues of the whole of the Great Southern," she said.

Cranbrook Shire Manager of Economic and Community Development Cassandra Stipanicev said the upgrade was part of the Shire's Strategic Plan.

"A focus of our Strategic Plan was the redevelopment of the caravan park to upgrade accommodation options for visitors," Ms Stipanicev said.

"This has resulted in increased bookings and visitors now using Cranbrook as their base to explore the natural attractions which our Shire and the Great Southern has to offer.

"Visitors extending their stay helps our local businesses and we are also pleased that the caravan park is now in a positive financial position," Ms Stipanicev said.

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Study assesses outdoor recreation

Potential for training, services

The potential for the Great Southern to become an internationally recognised hub for outdoor recreation activities, training and services is being explored as part of the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreation Excellence Feasibility Study, a partnership between the GSDC and the Department of Sport and Recreation.

Project consultants PX2 and a working group of key stakeholders are investigating

the potential for the region to achieve global recognition in the field of outdoor recreation by capitalising on the region's rugged environment, iconic trails and the steady growth in outdoor recreation.

International business models for outdoor recreation and adventure activity have been examined and a series of community and industry forums conducted across the region as part of the study, which

aims to identify opportunities for further development, business model concepts and potential demand for such a centre.

Findings from the study are due to be released in late July with further business planning expected to start in the second half of 2013 should the study findings support more detailed investigation.

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Finishing touches for surf club

Project to enhance volunteers' work

Albany Surf Life Saving Club is about to unveil the second stage of its club refurbishment.

An ambitious \$1.38 million project supported by \$987,266 of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC has given the club new second storey facilities that will be officially opened at a function at the end of July.

An earlier project supported by Lotterywest, the Department of Sport and Recreation, the City of Albany and the Jack Family Trust provided extensions to the ground floor.

The Middleton Beach premises has been a barricaded construction site since late 2012, but now the fence is down and the finishing touches are being applied to the building.

Despite the disruption of the building program, the club maintained surf patrols over the 2012-2013 summer and the enthusiasm of its many volunteers remained high.

Club President Rob Lucas said members



Extensions to the Albany Surf Life Saving Club at Middleton Beach are almost finished.

were looking forward to running patrols out of the new premises from December and would appreciate the new ablutions.

"We are also looking forward to reopening the kiosk and bringing back all the club's equipment that has been moved to storage in members' homes," Mr Lucas said.

The second storey additions provide more training space, better change rooms and ablutions, improved storage and an observation deck. Expansion of the club's facilities will enhance its capacity to host surf-related events in Albany.

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