

New funding round opens

Minister announces Regional Grants Scheme Round 2



Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls announces the second round of the Regional Grants Scheme.

A new round of the Regional Grants Scheme (RGS) will make available \$3.5 million in Royalties for Regions grant funding for Great Southern projects. Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls announced the second round of the grants program in Bunbury on 20 October.

Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said the new funding round was an exciting opportunity for Great Southern people to advance initiatives to enhance the region's investment and job opportunities and improve residents' quality of life.

"I invite applicants to put forward their best case for funding. The RGS has already helped some high profile projects, such as the Munda Biddi Trail and the UWA Albany Science Building," Mr Manning said.

Mr Grylls said the Regional Grants Scheme was a key Royalties for Regions initiative that put particular emphasis on local decision-making. "The Regional Development Commissions have an important and expanding role in the regions and are in a good position to determine which projects should be funded," Mr Grylls said.

"The scheme gives regional communities

and all organisations with regional interests the chance to apply for funding directly through the development commissions, knowing that their applications will be assessed in the region. It is putting money back in to communities and giving them the chance to determine for themselves how that money is best spent."

Guidelines and application forms for the grants are available direct from the GSDC at Pyrmont House, 110 Serpentine Road, Albany, by phoning 9842 4888 or by visiting www.gsdc.wa.gov.au or www.RoyaltiesforRegions.wa.gov.au.

Groups or individuals whose Round 1 applications were unsuccessful and who wish to apply again must provide new applications for Round 2. All applications must follow the guidelines, be completed in full on the application form and be submitted by mail or personal delivery.

Mr Manning said the \$3.5 million RGS grant funding comprised \$3.4 million in contestable grants and a new small grants program of \$100,000.

Applications for contestable grants should be for projects over \$10,000 related to services, infrastructure or headworks and

must reach the Commission's Albany office by 4.30pm on Wednesday 10 February 2010.

The small grants program will provide funding of up to \$10,000 for projects related to services, infrastructure, events and headworks. Applications for small grants will be accepted at any time until the \$100,000 set aside for the program is fully allocated. A series of submission dates applies to the small grants program: 24 November 2009, 19 January 2010, 30 March 2010 and 25 May 2010. Applicants should note there is no guarantee that the available funds will last until the later submission dates.

A review of projects approved in the first round of Regional Grants Scheme funding is on pages 4 and 5 of this *Bulletin*.

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Spreading the word on Great Southern wines

GSDC brings interested buyers to local wine regions



Great Southern wines on show in Shanghai, China.

International interest continues to grow in wine from the South-West and Great Southern regions of Western Australia (WA), despite the challenging economic times.

In an effort to expand export potential and to introduce new importers to these local wines, the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) is working with TradeStart to bring interested buyers to the wine growing districts.

GSDC TradeStart Export Advisor Alison Naylor helped to co-ordinate the first wave of interested international buyers who visited the region in May. "It's a great opportunity for local wineries to not only showcase their premium wines, but also the beautiful vineyards," she said.

Major wine and spirit importers from Japan, Nepal, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand toured WA and attended mini trade shows in Perth, Margaret River, Pemberton, Denmark, Albany and Mount Barker.

"The Nepalese, Japanese, Sri Lankan and Thai buyers do not currently buy wines from WA. The Korean and Taiwanese buyers were looking to add more lines to their existing premium portfolios," Ms Naylor said.

"The Nepalese wine buyer already imports wine from the Hunter Valley but had never

and extensive coverage from both rural and urban newspapers," Ms Naylor said.

As a further way to increase sales, WA representatives from several agencies also travelled to Shanghai, China in May to participate in wine promotion and to explore available markets there.

Ms Naylor was part of the group that went to represent Great Southern wine companies. "I met with representatives from the WA Trade Office to discuss the current retail market situation and opportunities for WA exporters in China. It was pleasing to see that the Chinese participants appeared very interested in the Great Southern wines that were on show, which included wines from Galafrey, Trevelen Farm, Harwood Estate, Ferngrove and Xabregas."



The buyers take time out to sample local produce in Mt Barker.

been to WA. He commented that Nepal's thriving tourism industry generated demand for fine wine, and, given their love of spicy food, visitors particularly enjoyed Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc. Taiwanese wine drinkers have more of a preference for reds, particularly Shiraz, with interest in new world wines growing over recent years."

Ms Naylor said 68 wineries presented their range during the trade shows. "It was really exciting to see what tempts the buyers from these diverse cultures, given the regional diversity of varietal flavour in WA."

"While they were here the buyers were treated like mini-media stars with a spot on WIN television, two interviews on ABC regional radio

During her stay in China Ms Naylor also visited numerous supermarkets in order to research how food and wine is displayed and sold in the market place.

"I left Shanghai, a city of 22 million, optimistic about opportunities in this challenging market. Although success will not happen overnight, the opportunities are immense."

Alison Naylor has since left the GSDC and Liz Reed has taken on the role of Tradestart Export Advisor.

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GSDC NRM Medal winner

Susanne Dennings wins in 2009

Malleefowl protector Susanne Dennings outshone a talented field to win the 2009 Great Southern Development Commission Medal for Excellence in Natural Resource Management.

Ms Dennings, of the Malleefowl Preservation Group, was presented with the sterling silver medal and \$10,000 to support her future in NRM practices during an award ceremony at Carlyles Reception Centre in Albany in June. In its eighth year, the award recognises achievements beyond daily work commitments for those working in NRM in the Great Southern.

Agriculture and Food Minister Terry Redman MLA presented Mrs Dennings with the award and praised the work she has done within the region. "I am delighted to see your outstanding work and dedication in using the malleefowl as an icon species to engage the community and promote broader issues in NRM, which has been recognised with this award," Mr Redman said.

Judging panellist Wendy Bradshaw pointed out Mrs Dennings' work was already well known within the community.

"Susanne's name is synonymous with the MPG where her passion for communities and the environment has been the perfect combination to inspire and mobilise a community conservation group," Ms Bradshaw said. "She is a fiercely determined and proactive individual who sees the big picture and has pitched her passion for the malleefowl as a flagship for the greater ecological benefit."

Since the group's inception in 1992, Ms



GSDC CEO Bruce Manning, former GSDC Deputy Chairman Denis Sawers, Hon Terry Redman MLA, Susanne and Alan Dennings.

Dennings has led the MPG to international recognition as a conservation organisation. Her key achievements include maintaining the group's local community base, continuing malleefowl mound surveys, establishing the school education program Malleefowl Magic and producing the 'Gnow or Never' documentary.

Other finalists for the award were Quechinup Forestry proprietors Liz and Bill Hollingsworth, Kojonup farmers Robert and Jennifer Warburton and Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management Fellow Dr Geoff Woodall.

Each finalist was awarded \$1000 in prize money to support NRM activities. Previous winners and finalists have used these funds for study tours, to attend conferences, for on-farm trials and for research.

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning

said all finalists were outstanding contenders for the award. "With the high calibre of nominees, and a diversity of backgrounds in NRM it was hardly surprising the judging panel insisted on four finalists this year instead of the usual three."

"Our aim is to take a partnership approach with the winner to support and promote best practices, while fostering further innovation investment in this field," Mr Manning said.

Chair of the judging panel Alex Campbell said the award grew in calibre every year and acknowledged outstanding contributions to NRM. "The medal provides recognition to our outstanding NRM practitioners who continually drive the protection, conservation and enhancement of our natural resources in the Great Southern."

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Investment boost on offer

Grants encourage long-term sustainability

Community groups in the Great Southern can gain up to \$10,000 in investment power through the latest round of the Challenge Grant program.

The program provides matching grants of up to \$10,000 for groups to invest through the Western Australian Community Foundation

to provide sustainable investment income. Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said the Commission was calling for expressions of interest in Challenge Grants.

"Interested groups must lodge initial

paperwork by November 27 and a full application later if their expression of interest is approved," Mr Manning said. "The program encourages groups to work on their sustainability and promotes philanthropy in the community."

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Regional development projects



State Government Royalties for Regions investment in the Great Southern

October's announcement of a new round of the Regional Grants Scheme (RGS) set the scene for further improvements in infrastructure and services in the Great Southern.

The RGS is administered in the region by the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) on behalf of the Government of Western Australia.

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said the Royalties for Regions program was already providing direct benefits for communities in the region.

"In the first round of funding announced in June, a wide variety of infrastructure, services and community projects were supported across the Great Southern, including recreation, tourism, education and rural health," Mr Manning said.

More than \$1 million is being invested in recreation and sporting projects, including the construction of the Albany leg of the Munda Biddi off-road cycle touring trail. The three-year project will receive \$1.5 million in total from the Great Southern RGS fund and will result in the off-road cycle trail running continuously from the Perth Hills all the way to Albany.

It will provide a challenging and scenic trail for both local and visiting cycling enthusiasts, in much the same way as the Bibbulmun Track has opened up the region's natural beauty to dedicated walkers from across the world.

Sporting facilities in Woodanilling, Katanning, Jerramungup and the Princess Royal Sailing Club in Albany are being upgraded through the RGS.

Part of the Bibbulmun Track in the Nullaki Peninsula is being realigned and the program is providing funds for an innovative community park next to the new Denmark Hospital.

Tourism initiatives across the region also benefit from almost \$600,000 of grants. Drive trails are being funded around the Frankland River Wine area and Bremer

Bay's Point Henry. The "Floracopia" component at Whaleworld's Albany Biodiversity Park is being developed as a result of the program funding.

The Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation has \$100,000 to complete and implement the Oyster Harbour Fish Traps management plan. The Oyster Harbour Fish Traps is one of the earliest Aboriginal sites in WA to be recorded by European explorers and is widely recognised as one of the most important cultural landmarks in the region. This grant funding will greatly contribute to the management and preservation of this unique site. It will also ensure the traditional owners can continue to maintain the site for future generations.

A number of inland towns across the Great Southern experience problems due to a limited supply of appropriate residential accommodation, particularly for retired citizens. In recognition of this, grants were awarded to the Shire of Cranbrook to support a unit development, and to the Walpole and Districts Seniors Accommodation Inc to assist in the creation of a Jarrah Glen Lifestyle Village.

The provision of medical services will improve at Gnowangerup through

an extensive refurbishment of the Medical Centre. A similar Shire-driven project at Jerramungup will provide new accommodation for the district's medical practitioner.

Community safety is being enhanced through funding for a CCTV installation at Katanning, and improvements are approved for the Bornholm Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade facilities. The communities of Mt Barker and Walpole benefit from funding for extensions to their Community and Telecentres.

"All of the projects funded by Round 1 of the RGS will be of real value to communities across the Great Southern region, and I look forward to seeing a new selection of good quality projects in Round 2 of the scheme," Mr Manning said.

Regional Grants Scheme successful applications so far (Round 1) are:

- Albany and Regional Volunteer Service: \$7900 towards the Visiting Volunteers program
- Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation: \$100,000 towards the development and implementation of the Oyster Harbour Fish Traps project



Cyclists enjoying existing sections of the Munda Biddi Trail.

Image courtesy of the Munda Biddi Trail Foundation.

- Bibbulmun Track Foundation: \$16,100 towards the Bibbulmun Track realignment on the Nullaki Peninsula
- Bornholm Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade: \$6400 towards fire station improvements
- Braeside Primary School P & C Association: \$46,900 towards the creation of outdoor shaded areas
- Creative Albany Inc: \$10,000 towards the Albany Music Documentary project
- Denmark Rivermouth Caravan Park: \$107,100 towards improvements to the power supply and headworks
- Denmark Shire Council: \$145,000 towards the creation of the Denmark Community Park
- Fitzgerald Biosphere Group: \$63,600, towards the development of the Point Henry Drive Trail at Bremer Bay
- Frankland River Wine Makers & Grape Growers Assoc: \$20,000 towards development of the Frankland River Wine Trail
- Jerramungup Sports Club Inc: \$145,000 towards improving facilities in the Jerramungup Combined Sporting Clubs Precinct
- Katanning Regional Business Association: \$60,000 towards the installation of CCTV
- King River Recreational Club: \$38,000 towards the creation of a King River Sensory Playground
- Munda Biddi Trail Foundation: a total of \$1.5 million over three years (\$500,000 per year) towards the construction and promotion of the extension of the Munda Biddi Trail from Nannup to Albany
- Princess Royal Sailing Club: \$80,000 towards the improvement of Club facilities for the 2011 Mirror World Championships
- Shire of Cranbrook: \$250,000 towards the creation of Currie St mixed use accommodation complex
- Shire of Gnowangerup: \$120,000 towards the upgrade of the Gnowangerup Medical Centre
- Shire of Gnowangerup: \$11,500 towards the preparation of updated marketing materials for Hidden Treasures 2020
- Shire of Jerramungup: \$200,000 towards the construction of medical practitioner's accommodation
- Shire of Katanning: \$50,000 towards the construction and fit-out of Katanning Sports Shelter
- Shire of Katanning: \$50,000 towards the Katanning Aged Housing Feasibility Study & Design project
- T.A.S.T.E. Pty Ltd: \$25,000 towards the creation of new down-stream products using French black truffles
- The Baptist Union of WA Inc: \$140,000 towards the extension of the Mt Barker Community Centre
- The Jaycees Community Foundation: \$380,000 towards the Floracopia component of the Albany Biodiversity Park
- The School Volunteer Program Incorporated: \$50,000 towards the Mentors Making a Difference in Schools project
- University of Western Australia: a total of \$1.5 million over three years (\$500,000 per year) towards the construction and fit-out of the UWA Albany Sciences Building
- Walpole and Districts Seniors Accommodation: \$160,000 towards the creation of the Jarrah Glen Lifestyle Village
- Walpole Community Resource Telecentre Inc: \$72,500 towards the TeleCENTRAL building extension
- Woodanilling Sport & Recreation Association: \$145,000 towards the Woodanilling Recreation Precinct upgrade

A full list of the projects funded across the State is available on the Royalties for Regions website:
www.RoyaltiesforRegions.wa.gov.au

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Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls

Changes to the GSDC Board

The Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) says goodbye to two long standing members and welcomes four new Board members.

The GSDC would like to recognise the enormous contributions and dedication of Chairman Russell Harrison and Deputy Chairman Denis Sawers, who finished their board terms at the end of June.

The Minister for Regional Development Brendon Grylls also extended his thanks and appreciation to Russell Harrison and Denis Sawers, commending them both on the leadership they had provided over the past six years.

The Board now has four new members with the recent appointment of new Chairman Peter Rundle, Deputy Chairman Kim Barrows, Len Smith and Kevin Forbes.

"With Mr Rundle's first-hand knowledge of private, public and community sectors he will bring an exceptional blend of experience and expertise to the Board of the Commission in the coming years," Mr Grylls said.

Board membership is for a fixed period and positions are advertised as they become available.



*Russell Harrison
Former Chairman*

Mr Russell Harrison

Mr Harrison steered the GSDC through its most successful period to date as Board Chairman from 2003 to 2009. He is a partner at Lincoln's Accountants, one of the largest accounting firms in regional WA. Mr Harrison has a strong background in community service, serving as the Deputy Chair on the Board of the Albany Port Authority, and as financial adviser to the Albany Hospice. He lives in Albany with his family.



*Denis Sawers
Former Deputy Chairman*

Mr Denis Sawers

Mr Sawers is the former General Manager of the Albany Plantation Export Company (APEC) and was a GSDC Board Member from 2003 to 2009. Mr Sawers currently offers consultancy services as a Forestry Production Advisor.



*Peter Rundle
New Board Chairman*

Mr Peter Rundle

Mr Rundle is a long-term resident of the Shire of Katanning and has managed a successful farming enterprise there for 20 years.

He has been a proactive leader of the Katanning Country Club, managed a major community water recycling project and sat on the Water Corporation's Customer Advisory Council.



*Kim Barrow
New Deputy Chairman*

Mr Kim Barrow

Mr Barrow is a Denmark Shire Councillor and former President of the Shire, and has business and farming interests in Denmark.

He is actively involved with the Denmark Chamber of Commerce and a wide range of community and volunteer organisations.



*Len Smith
New Board Member*

Mr Len Smith

Mr Smith has lived and worked in the Great Southern region for more than 40 years. His long-term business interests in the tourism sector have been complemented by decades of voluntary work in the broader tourism industry and in the community.



*Kevin Forbes
New Board Member*

Mr Kevin Forbes AM

Mr Forbes is a beef farmer and long-time resident of the Mount Barker district. He has had a long involvement in local government, having been first elected as a Councillor in 1991 and having served as the President of the Shire of Plantagenet from 1997 to 2009.

Skilled migration program fills gaps

Program helps regional employers find people to fill positions where skilled workers cannot be found

Certain job categories are hard to fill, especially in regional areas. To help address the situation in the Great Southern's agriculture, agricultural processing, hospitality and health sectors the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) provides migration assistance direct to regional employers.

As a Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) Regional Certifying Body, the GSDC coordinates sponsorship and nominations for the Regional Sponsored Migration Scheme, and the Regional 457 temporary business entrants.

The regional program has helped bring international workers into regional positions that can't be filled by Australian workers. DIAC recently increased visa requirements on all temporary regional visas, removing some employment categories from eligibility, but the advancement of existing visa holders to permanent visas is being encouraged.

"Even in the current economic climate we are still receiving phone calls from employers about permanent and temporary skilled worker visa nominations," GSDC Development Officer Linsey McFarlane said.

The GSDC will continue to provide migration program information and visa certification for all regional employers who are choosing to sponsor skilled workers from overseas.

"The GSDC will continue to work closely with the DIAC and regional employers to make them aware of the recent changes, and of their options regarding permanent sponsorship for current and future employees," Ms McFarlane said.

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New staff at the Commission



Linsey McFarlane

Linsey McFarlane joined the GSDC in April as a Development Officer and will fill the role while Nicola Shaw is on parental leave. Linsey moved from Perth and a challenging role within the policy branch of the Office of Native Title. Before that, Linsey worked in environmental management in China. She has a geography degree through the University of Western Australia with honours on place marketing in the wine industry.

Veronica Dayman came aboard



Veronica Dayman

in May as the Executive Assistant to the CEO from the City of Albany. After working for the City for five years as both a Mayoral Liaison Officer and an Executive Assistant to the City's CEO, Veronica felt it was time for new challenges. Veronica said she was attracted to the role at the GSDC because of the opportunity to be involved in work across the region.

The GSDC's newest Regional Development Officer is Jessica van der Waag. She comes to the Commission from the Fitzgerald



Jessica van der Waag

Biosphere Group where she was the Bremer River Catchment Project Officer. Jessica has a Curtin University degree in Environmental Biology. She is continuing her education through the UWA Albany Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management with PhD studies into malleefowl chick survival and dispersal in small habitat remnants. Jessica is based in the GSDC's Katanning office.

Rosita Vilches-Lody is the GSDC's new administration assistant, joining Jennifer Dalby behind the front counter. Rosita was formerly with GRD Minproc in Perth, where she was a project administrator in Oracle. Rosita trained as a computer programmer in her



Rosita Vilches-Lody

native Chile and has been in Australia for 23 years, 14 of them working for Medicare.

Communications and Development Officer Steve Pontin comes to the GSDC from the City of Albany, where he was the public



Steve Pontin

relations officer. Steve holds a degree in Communication Studies from Murdoch University and was formerly a journalist and deputy editor at the *Albany Advertiser*. Steve is a founding member of the organising group for Albany's Sprung festival for readers and writers.

Liz Reed is the GSDC's new Tradestart export adviser. Liz studied winemaking at Curtin University and spent ten years



Liz Reed

making wines in Australia and overseas. She has pursued her trade in Spain, France, New Zealand and the United States, along with stints in most Australian states. About a year ago Liz made the move from Margaret River to Porongurup and now she has decided it is time for a career move that builds on her international experience.

Plantation Energy boasts green fuel

Biomass fuel production in Albany



Image courtesy of the Albany and Great Southern Weekender

WA Forestry Minister Terry Redman MLA with some of the fuel pellets to be exported.

Densified biomass fuel (DBF) pellets look likely to play a growing part in Australia's renewable energy future and the company leading the charge is Perth-based Plantation Energy at its Great Southern production facility.

After a long planning process, production of this clean and green burning source started this year at Australia's first industrial timber fuel pellet plant within Albany's Mirambeena Industrial Park. With production under way, Plantation Energy recently completed a tent-like storage facility at Albany Port in preparation for its full shipping program.

DBF pellets are made from plantation trees that are stripped of bark and branches during harvest and produced during a densification process which involves drying, size reduction and formation under high pressure.

Support for the operation has been assured through the Forest Products Commission signing a major contract to supply low-grade plantation pine logs as feed stock for the fuel pellet plant.

Plantation Energy Business Development Manager Jarrod Waring said opening the production plant was a good thing for the region. "We have created 15 full-time positions within the area and four times that in the construction phase."

Mr Waring said Plantation Energy planned eventually to ship up to 250,000 tonnes of

pellets a year. "Plantation Energy has secured two contracts worth about \$130 million to supply Europe with the pellets, which are already widely used in Belgium and the Netherlands. In the longer term we plan to expand into Asia, beginning with Japan, and in the medium term we will further explore the domestic market," Mr Waring said.

Power generation using DBF pellets is a more efficient option than using the combustion of raw biomass. The low cost of conversion for coal generators makes pellets highly cost effective, easily transportable and a secure energy source.

"When you replace the burning of a fossil fuel with a renewable source it is always a good thing," Mr Waring said.

The Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) helped in the planning and approval stages to gain an infrastructure package of \$8.6 million for the Mirambeena Precinct.

"This is the first additional timber bi-product to woodchips in the region," GSDC Senior Development Officer Duane Schouten said.

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