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IN YOUR REGION

Edition 12 - 2014



Royalties for Regions Budget promotes regional WA's economic future

The announcement of the 2014-15 State Budget in May revealed a further \$1 billion Royalties for Regions funding would be injected each year over the next four years into agriculture, regional revitalisation, health, community services, education, sport, transport and tourism.

The commitment will provide continued support for essential services in regional communities and boost major infrastructure and development projects in regional Western Australia.

Department of Regional Development Executive Director for Regional Investment Andrew Mann said the budget commitment would complement the more than 3,500 Royalties for Regions funded projects and initiatives delivered in regional Western Australia in the last six years.

"Expanding on regional growth means much more than delivering social and community services infrastructure. The \$1 billion funding each year will also capitalise on opportunities for long-term growth by fostering economic development, which in turn will retain and attract people to live, work and invest in regional Western Australia." Mr Mann said.

Royalties for Regions continues to support existing initiatives such as Pilbara Cities, the Mid West Investment Plan and revitalisation projects for the Gascoyne, West Kimberley and Goldfields-Esperance.

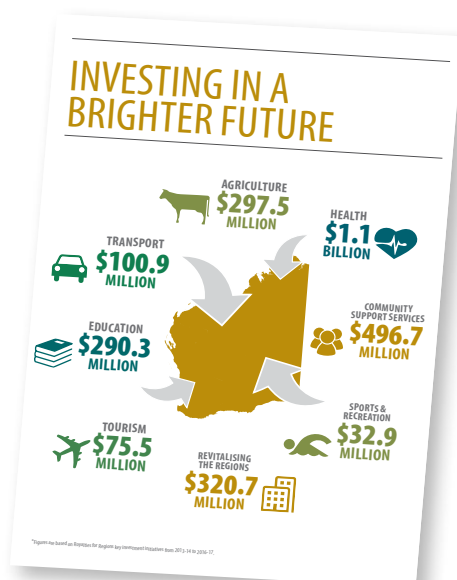
Key initiatives of the Royalties for Regions 2014-15 Budget are:

Growing our South

- \$600 million over five years
- A new program to fund major infrastructure projects and initiatives across the Peel, Wheatbelt, South-West and Great Southern.

Regional Blueprint initiatives

- \$292 million over five years
- The nine Regional Development Commissions are each preparing a Regional Investment Blueprint that will outline the region's growth and development priorities.



DG Message

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome our new acting Director General, Paul Whyte.

Paul started with us on Monday, 18 August and he brings with him extensive experience in land development and business operations. Thanks to his most recent role as General Manager Commercial and Business Operations at the Department of Housing, Paul has an intimate understanding of regional Western Australia's needs.

While he was with the Department of Housing, Paul led a series of significant projects that included delivering the National Partnership Agreement on housing for remote Aboriginal communities, and overseeing the delivery of the \$355 million Housing for Workers strategy in regional Western Australia.

Prior to his role with the Department of Housing, Paul was Landgate's acting Chief Executive Officer and he has held

various senior positions with the Valuer General's Office and the Department of Land Information.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding contribution Paul Rosair made during his six years with the department and its predecessors. As Director General, Paul oversaw the establishment and administration of Royalties for Regions and the department while managing a diverse range of projects in the regional development and lands portfolio. In particular, Paul's leadership - including on major initiatives like the Ord-East Kimberley Expansion Project, Pilbara Cities, SuperTowns and the Regional Mobile Communications Project - will leave a lasting and significant legacy for regional Western Australia.

I have been acting Director General of the Department of Regional Development since Paul Rosair's



departure on 1 July and I am now returning to my role as Executive Director Policy and Planning. I'm sure you will all join me in welcoming our new acting Director General Paul Whyte and in wishing Paul Rosair all the best for the future.

Michael Rowe,
A/Director General

Carnarvon levees offer flood relief

Carnarvon's growers and farmers and the local community are now better protected from major flood damage thanks to the completion of four major levees constructed to the east of the town and adjacent to the Lower Gascoyne River.

The \$60 million Carnarvon Flood Mitigation Works project received \$45 million from the State Government's Royalties for Regions program and \$15 million from the Commonwealth Government.

The construction of the levees is in response to the December 2010 flood in which Carnarvon experienced its worst flood in recorded history. The flood completely destroyed the horticulture

district and caused damage estimated at \$90 million.

Local mango, grape grower and Chair of the Gascoyne Water Cooperative Domenico Condo said the Gascoyne River flood had a devastating impact on the community, industry and local economy.

"Carnarvon is a significant food bowl for Western Australia and it is important that we secure our fresh produce for market."

"While the levees are still to be tested, it is anticipated that they will reduce the risk of loss for Carnarvon's farmers and fruit growers," Mr Condo said.

The four levees - Nickol Bay, Lawson Street, South River Road and McGlades Road - have been designed to withstand one in 100 annual recurrence intervals and total 16kms in length ranging in height from one to six metres.

New waterfront attraction for Geraldton's foreshore



Geraldton Esplanade. Photo: Richard Rossiter, courtesy of Mid West Development Commission

Geraldton's award winning Esplanade redevelopment has given the city's foreshore a significant facelift. The formerly isolated semi-industrial space now features barbeque facilities, shelters, landscaped walkways and a viewing tower with 360 degree views of Geraldton, the port, Champion Bay, Seal Rocks and the Moresby Ranges.

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Ian Carpenter said The Esplanade typified Geraldton's positioning statement to 'Take a Fresh Look'.

"The Esplanade offers a family friendly environment for locals and tourists and we anticipate it will become a main attraction for holiday makers and cruise ship visitors to Geraldton," Mr Carpenter said.

"It's an ideal place for people to enjoy Geraldton's natural beauty."

Designed by Blackwell and Associates and managed by the City of Greater Geraldton, The Esplanade received a

2014 Western Australia Landscape and Architecture Design Award.

The awards jury said The Esplanade was a beautiful and well contextualised project with functional and technical aspects and innovative methods that responded to the prevailing ocean winds.

"The work's scale, use of colour, line, form, symmetry and repetition combine to create an exceptional place marker with iconic and memorable qualities with an aesthetic that will contribute to the 'Gero Vibe' for years to come," the jury said.

Formerly known as the Eastern Breakwater, it was renamed The Esplanade as an historic reference to the Esplanade Jetty, which was constructed in 1857 to service sailing ships visiting the port and became a popular meeting place for the Geraldton community.

The Esplanade project was funded \$2.25 million from the State Government's Royalties for Regions program with supporting funding from Geraldton Port Authority, Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (Regional Development Australia Fund) and City of Greater Geraldton.

Albany's Mt Clarence prepares for Anzac centenary

Albany's Mt Clarence war memorial has received a major upgrade in preparation for the launch of Anzac Albany, the curtain raiser for the nation-wide Anzac centenary commemorations.

The memorial's upgrade has resulted in much improved aesthetics, space and safety and the number of people that can attend Anzac Day dawn services has now doubled to approximately 4,000.

Running from 30 October to 2 November 2014, Anzac Albany will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first convoy of ships carrying Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force troops to fight in World War I. The convoy left Albany on 1 November 1914.

The State Government provided \$5.84 million, including \$2.84 million from Royalties for Regions, to refurbish and upgrade the memorial precinct. The City of Albany and the Great Southern Development Commission provided funding towards the new Padre White Lookout, named in honour of the man credited with conducting Australia's first Anzac service in Albany.

City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington said Albany is privileged to hold one of Australia's oldest war memorials and it is important that we have been able to preserve it for generations to come.

"The City is very grateful for the State Government's support and we're



War memorial. Photo: City of Albany

very proud of the upgrades to the Mt Clarence precinct," Mr Wellington said.

"The upgrades have received unanimous praise from the community."

For more information on Anzac Albany, visit www.anzacalbany.com.au.

Royalties for Regions Budget promotes regional WA's economic future

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The Blueprints are expected to be completed later this year and will provide a comprehensive approach to spending and effort across the government and non-government sectors, and a compelling rationale for future investment.

Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture

- \$300 million over five years
- Funding will ensure the agricultural sector can undergo transformation, creating growth and prosperity in regional communities. The program is made up of new and continuing projects such as WA's Biosecurity Defence, Water for Food

Initiative, Agricultural Research and Development Fund, Food Centres and WA Open for Business.

Health

- \$252 million in 2014-15
- Priority projects include Goldfields Emergency Telehealth, Southern Inland Health Initiative, Regional Hospital and Health Campus upgrades, St John Ambulance Services and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Plus the \$161 million North West Health Initiative starts in 2014-15 with an allocation of \$1 million.

Community support services

- \$157 million in 2014-15
- Continued funding for the Country Aged Pensioner Fuel Card, Emergency Volunteer Fuel Card, Regional Police Incentives,

Community Resource Centres and the Community Safety Network.

Aboriginal initiatives

- \$43 million in 2014-15
- Upgrades to Remote Indigenous Health Clinics and development of Indigenous Visitor Hostels. Continued funding for the Aboriginal Justice program, Clontarf Colleges and the Northwest Drug and Alcohol Support Program.

Training

- \$22.8 million in 2014-15
- Funds for the Regional Skills and Training Initiative to improve access to trade training in regional areas of the State
- A further \$14.9 million for the relocation of year 7 students to secondary settings and \$11.4 million for residential college upgrades.

Gascoyne Junction revitalised and open for business

In December 2010 widespread flooding of the Gascoyne River destroyed the Gascoyne Junction town centre and completely washed away some surrounding homesteads.

Just over three years later, Gascoyne Junction's town centre has been completely rebuilt thanks to more than \$8 million from the State Government's Royalties for Regions program.

The town centre has been relocated to a nearby site above one in 100 annual recurrence intervals. New infrastructure includes essential retail and tourism services such as a 24-hour petrol station, general store, tavern and restaurant, caravan park with pool and playground and a new main street.

Although the flood devastated the town, community member Jim Caunt is looking on the bright side.

"It has been an amazing transformation for the town and we have ended up with a first-rate community centre that we can all be really proud of," Mr Caunt said.

Shire of Upper Gascoyne Chief Executive Officer Dirk Sellenger said that while it was heartbreaking to see the old town virtually washed away, the flood had provided an opportunity to give the town a makeover.

"We were given a unique opportunity to produce a modern version of the essential social infrastructure, building brand new facilities to last long into the future," Mr Sellenger said.

Gascoyne Junction is the northern gateway to natural tourist sites such as Mount Augustus National Park, the Kennedy Range and inland Gascoyne.

The town now has the tourism facilities needed to give weary travellers a place to refuel and recharge.

Mr Sellenger said that, while the impact of rebuilding the town is yet to be fully realised, continued monitoring would measure its impact on the local economy.

"Tourism is vital for the town and the Gascoyne Junction community should be congratulated for working together to ensure tourism remained active for the three and a half years following the flood. It is great to have new facilities up and running to cater for locals and for those visiting the region," Mr Sellenger said.

Business leaders focus on economic diversification in the regions

Some of Western Australia's most influential business leaders and decision makers met in Bunbury in August to talk about economic diversification in the South West.

The **'WA State of the Regions'** series, held by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), presents a forum for industries to work in partnership to generate economic development opportunities, bridge the gap between the city and the regions and showcase plans for regional Western Australia.

Department of Regional Development
Acting Director General Mike Rowe

welcomed the delegates to the first of the then part series, the *Future of the South West* forum and said Royalties for Regions is driving economic investment in the regions.

"Royalties for Regions is unlocking regional Western Australia's potential by supporting local jobs and creating long-term growth in regional communities," Mr Rowe said.

"The series provides a platform to enable regions to collaborate and learn from one another, increase industry and community knowledge of our strategic programs and support local decision making."

Other influential speakers at the forum included Minister for Regional Development Hon Terry Redman, South West Development Commission Chief Executive Officer Don Punch and other leaders in State Government and essential services.

The next forum, *Future of the Mid West*, will be held in Geraldton next month. For more information on the series, visit CEDA regional series website at www.ceda.com.au/events.

Kalbarri gets a boost for tourism

Kalbarri National Park is set to receive its peak season flurry of visitors following the upgrade of infrastructure and provision of new visitor facilities at sites along the Murchison River Gorge.

The \$7.7 million redevelopment aims to boost tourism in the area by sealing 12km of the rough Murchison Gorge access road and providing new shade shelters, lookouts, walking trails, carparks and toilets at the Loop and Inyaka Wookai Watju (West Loop lookout) sites.

Department of Parks and Wildlife Project Manager Rory Chapple said Kalbarri National Park received about 330,000 visitors per year undertaking activities such as abseiling, diving, canoeing and bushwalking.

"The new section of road improves the safety and access for its visitors



New shelter at Loop. Photo: Department of Parks and Wildlife

as the previous unsealed road was seasonally rained out and closed several times a year during peak periods," Mr Chapple said.

"It also means that visitors can stay and play longer making use of the new walking trails and shaded rest and visitor information areas."

The park received \$7.5 million from the State Government's Royalties for Regions program as part of the \$20 million Conservation Parks Visitor Infrastructure and Roads Initiative.

The works also included improvements to several coastal sites in the park such

as construction of the coastal Bigurda boardwalk between Natural Bridge and Island Rock, which has provided a much improved experience for hikers exploring the park's coastal cliffs. The boardwalk, made from recycled plastic, is part of the Coastal Cliffs Restoration Project which recently earned Department of Parks and Wildlife the Western Australian Coastal Award for Excellence 2013 for Coastal Development / Design.

For more information on Kalbarri National Park, visit www.parks.dpaw.wa.gov.au.

Geraldton leads the way with its regional education programs

Geraldton now offers a broad range of full degree programs thanks to the expansion of the independent, incorporated, not-for-profit, Geraldton Universities Centre (GUC).

The GUC supports local delivery of programs from different universities throughout Australia by complementing online learning with the best technology available and always with face to face tutorials from local professionals.

This year the centre received a record number of 80 new university

enrolments following the introduction of new study programs. Throughout the year close to 200 students will study at the GUC in its existing and newly completed classrooms.

This expansion was made possible through two stages of Royalties for Regions funding. The first stage received \$1.05 million to market the centre to universities, develop and implement new courses, attract and engage high quality tutors, develop enrolment projections and strategic plans.

The second stage received \$3 million from the State Government's Royalties for Regions Mid West Investment Plan to construct new facilities that include classrooms, IT facilities, office, toilets and a kitchen following recommendations and assistance provided by the Mid West Development Commission.

GUC Director Meredith Wills said that without Royalties for Regions funding, the GUC would not have been able to explore and expand on its programs.

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Geraldton leads the way with its regional education program

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"Our existence relies on student enrolments so it is imperative that we offer attractive programs that meet the aspirations of our community. Enrolment numbers continue to soar because of the new programs available such as engineering, business, psychology, bridging courses and the

re-introduction of nursing along with new teaching rooms to deliver them," Ms Wills said.

Mid West Development Commission Chair Hon Murray Criddle said the majority of GUC graduates are choosing to remain in the region often taking up hard to fill positions.

"The graduates contribute to the community's professional services and economy and this builds our region and

its towns into desirable places to work and live. It also provides a successful regional educational model on a state and national level."

GUC is partnered with Central Queensland University, Charles Sturt University and the University of Southern Queensland and aims to continue its growth by expanding program options for regional and remote students in the future.

South West creative industries opportunities for growth

The Department of Regional Development facilitates partnerships between stakeholders to identify, design and deliver transformational projects that will diversify regional economies.

One example is a collaboration with ScreenWest and the South West Development Commission to assess future infrastructure needed to develop creative industries in Bunbury and the South West. The assessment will focus on how improved infrastructure can support animation and visual effects industry growth in the South West.

Department of Regional Development Economic Development and Diversification Executive Director Peter Stubbs said there had been growth in the South West's creative industries due to investment in a range of successful projects.

"The movie *Drift* starring Sam Worthington and Simon Pegg's *Kill Me Three Times* were both shot in and around Margaret River, and the popular and world-class CinefestOZ film festival are all good examples," Mr Stubbs said.



From left to right; Madam Yang Wen Yan - President of Toonmax Media, Alan Lindsay - Managing Director of Vue Group, Kerr Xu - CEO of Shanghai Hippo Animation Design, Madam Ying Lei - Director of Hunan Aniworld Cartoon, Michael Kuan - Kuan Capital. Photo: Vue Group

"The South West Development Commission has also identified a growing band of South West talent in creative industries."

Bunbury creative studio Vue Group, recently announced it would co-produce animated films valued at \$87 million with Perth-based Zac Films in partnership with Chinese studios: Shanghai Hippo Animation Company, Toonmax Media, Hunan Aniworld Cartoon and Kuan Capital.

"The partnership came about through ScreenWest's promotion in China of Western Australian film investment opportunities," Mr Stubbs said.

ScreenWest Production Investment Director Annabelle Sheehan said the partnership between Vue Group

and Shanghai's Hippo Animation Design Company could increase employment of animators and other creative industry professionals in the South West.

"The boost to the South West economy is estimated to reach \$5 million when the full effect of their co-production agreement is played out," Ms Sheehan said.

"The China screen economy is the fastest growing in the world with 2013 box office reaching \$3.6 billion - up one third on 2012. Partnerships with Chinese companies are great opportunities to share in that growth as well as providing significant creative partnerships."

Hedland's service workers given a place to call home

Hedland's community and business operators are feeling some housing relief thanks to the roll-out of a region-wide package that has provided 125 dwellings and housed more than 160 people.

In June 2012 the State Government announced a much needed 125 house intervention package for Hedland service workers to address high rents and the accommodation shortage while the new Osprey key worker village was being developed.

The package, funded by \$93.37 million from the Royalties for Regions program and administered by the Department of Housing, has housed service workers in

areas of childcare, education, emergency services, healthcare, hospitality, retail, trades, manufacturing and government.

South Hedland hardware business owner Gloria Jacob said the program was already making a big difference to her business and employees.

"It has me retain people that otherwise would have had to leave town due to the lack of affordable housing," Ms Jacob said.

"Some have said they couldn't stay because they were living in buses or caravans, or paying \$500 a week for one bedroom in a shared house.



Relieved South Hedland business owner Gloria Jacob. Photo: Department of Housing

"This program is really helping businesses in our community to keep on operating."

Applications are now being accepted for Osprey key worker village in South Hedland. For more information visit www.housing.wa.gov.au/investorsandpartners/swa/Osprey

Surfers Point redevelopment showcased to the world

The Surfers Point redevelopment at Prevelly near Margaret River was showcased globally in April during the Drug Aware Margaret River Pro international surfing competition, a designated stage of the Association of Surfing Professionals World Championship tour.

The redevelopment included car parks, paths, fencing, landscaping, lookout picnic areas, BBQs, toilet blocks and playground equipment.

Surfing Western Australia Chief Executive Officer Mark Lane said the new and improved facilities at Surfers Point were sure to bring even larger crowds to Western Australia's South West region in years to come.

"The surf break was already considered world class and now we have the onshore facilities to match, possibly making it the best venue in the world

to watch a surfing competition," Mr Lane said.

Shire of Augusta-Margaret River Chief Executive Officer Gary Evershed praised the project's positive environmental outcomes.

"From a conservation perspective the infrastructure is helping the coastline cope with the number of visitors that go there, protecting areas of fragile coastline and keeping people off the environmentally sensitive areas," Mr Evershed said.

Furthermore, the redevelopment is expected to attract additional tourism to the region.

The Surfers Point redevelopment is part of the Margaret River Capes Regional Tourism Foreshore Precincts Project, which is a major revitalisation of waterfront tourism infrastructure in the region.

The project was funded by \$4.7 million from the State Government's Royalties for Regions program and \$1.3 million from the Australian Government's Regional Development Australia Fund.