WHEATBELT BLUEPRINT

a vision for a vibrant future
Acknowledgements

The Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) acknowledges the
considerable input into the Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint by the
Region’s 43 local governments, government agencies and trading enterprises
at a regional and central level.

We acknowledge and thank the Department of Planning of Western
Australia and Regional Development Australia (RDA) Wheatbelt Inc for their
ongoing partnerships in developing a range of documents underpinning
this Blueprint, including the Wheatbelt Strategic Framework, the Wheatbelt
Regional Infrastructure Framework, The Wheatbelt Regional Plan 2013-2018
and The Wheatbelt Digital Action Plan. Similarly, WA Country Health Service,
RDA Wheatbelt and local governments have invested significantly with the
Commission to deliver the Wheatbelt Aged Care Solutions Report.

Key evidence supporting this Blueprint has been provided by RPS Consulting,
through their work in developing the five Wheatbelt Sub-regional Economic
Strategies. LandCorp has been a key partner in delivering the Growth
Plans for regional centres. These have been collaborative processes with
the Commission, and again, input from local government and community
business leaders has been critical in their development.

The staff of the WDC have travelled thousands of kilometres across the
Region to develop this Blueprint. Their efforts illustrate their passion for the
Wheatbelt.

The development of this Blueprint is funded by Royalties for Regions.

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared using a range of evidence to provide
key stakeholders with a clear indication of the Wheatbelt Development
Commission’s thinking on priority actions to ensure a strong and vibrant
future for the Region. All information is provided to the best of our ability
and within the limits of our knowledge and resources.

It is anticipated that elements of this inaugural Wheatbelt Regional
Investment Blueprint may be at odds with stated government priorities
at a Local, State and Federal level. Over time, with ongoing engagement,
data collection and analysis, it is hoped that greater alignment is achieved
between stakeholders.

All proposals resulting from this document will be further detailed and
agreed to by relevant parties.

References

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APPENDIX TWO: Wheatbelt Economy
APPENDIX THREE: Comprehensive Action Plan
APPENDIX FOUR: Wheatbelt and State Maps

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Executive Summary

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In 2050, Wheatbelt residents enjoy time for family, friends and community. Their work is creative, rewarding and empowering. Life is affordable. Services are there when you need them and technology is a powerful enabler of innovation.

Say Hello to the Wheatbelt

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#wheatbeltblueprint

Foreword

"I have lived a very good life, it has been very rich and full. I have been very fortunate and I am thrilled by it when I look back."

-- A. B. (Albert) FACEY, A Fortunate Life

In the era in which this Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint (the Blueprint) has been developed, we are in a fortunate place. In the year 2050, we hope that the foundations laid in this plan will enable future generations to claim, like Albert Facey, "I am thrilled when I look back."

2015 sees the Wheatbelt of Western Australia well positioned to seize the opportunities offered by the new century. Our proximity to the Perth Region and Asia, our landscape, our people and our infrastructure represent significant capacity and opportunity, to both grow the Region, and contribute significantly to the State’s economic and population growth. There are also challenges shared across regional Western Australia, and unique to this Region, which, if not managed, will inhibit this growth.

This Blueprint takes us on a journey of identifying:

• The desired future state of the Wheatbelt;
• The Wheatbelt’s potential to grow and prosper in the global village in which we function;
• The Region’s human, economic, social and environmental capacity, and gaps in that capacity; and
• The priority actions needed to maximise the existing capacity, minimise the gaps and thus transform the Region from a ‘business as usual’ scenario to achieve aspirational population and economic growth goals.

By working extensively with stakeholders within and external to the Region, the process of developing this Blueprint has strengthened existing partnerships and forged new ones. The result is a shared vision and agreed goals and priorities for action. Key stakeholders will work individually and collectively in order to achieve them.

As this Blueprint is developed, we already see the benefit of this partnership approach:

• Groups of local government working together on agreed priority projects and developing innovative governance structures to ensure viability into the future;
• Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt and the Wheatbelt Development Commission working together on agreed priorities, advocating for policy, program and funding settings to meet regional need;
• Agencies within and external to the Region keen to work in an integrated way to achieve better outcomes;
• Regional organisations, industry and business all committed to collaborative ways of working; and
• Better decisions made through improved access to information.

We look forward to continuing to work with you all to bring our shared vision to fruition.

Tim Shackleton
Chair, Wheatbelt Development Commission
February 2015
Executive Summary

The Wheatbelt is a region of enormous opportunity. Its proximity to markets, diverse productive landscapes, strong economic base, its people and their strong sense of community are all foundations for growth which contribute to the State’s prosperity.

The drivers of this regional growth are diverse. As the State’s largest agriculture producer and with a mining sector experiencing growth, the Wheatbelt has an export oriented economy. The Region has five distinct sub-regions, consisting of multiple small communities accommodating a population of 75,000 people. Current perceptions of the Region underestimate its diverse economic, human, social and environmental assets and potential.

The Wheatbelt’s diversity requires customised solutions to achieve sustained growth. The service models and infrastructure created in the past need transforming to enable the Wheatbelt to achieve its potential and build on its significant contribution to the State’s prosperity. The Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint (the Blueprint) identifies these priorities.

What is the Blueprint?
The Blueprint is the road map that will assist the Region deliver on its potential. Section 1 outlines what the Blueprint sets out to achieve and how it was developed.

Section 2 articulates a vision for the Region and Section 3 identifies the global context in which it operates and the opportunities these global drivers present for investment and growth.

Section 4 of the Blueprint provides analysis of the Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth. The Wheatbelt Strategic Framework is used to provide a robust analysis of the Region. The analysis occurs under the themes of Vibrant Economy, Clever People, Connected Communities, Valued Natural Amenity, Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities and Effective Partnerships.

The Blueprint Structure

This analysis has been undertaken within the context of Federal and State planning. It is underpinned by comprehensive economic planning within each of the five sub-regions and a ‘stock take’ of existing infrastructure and services in terms of their capacity to accommodate future growth targets.

Following this analysis, Section 5 identifies the key growth targets and actions required to optimise global drivers and build on the Region’s comparative advantages.

Vision for the Future

The Wheatbelt is a key contributor to Western Australia’s prosperity. The Region’s prime location, diverse economy, clever people, vibrant communities and unique natural environment offer a high quality of life and will attract global innovators and investors.
Executive Summary

BluePrint Aspirations and Targets

Vision for the Future

The Wheatbelt is key contributor to Western Australia’s prosperity. The Region’s prime location, diverse economy, clever people, vibrant communities and unique natural environment offer a variety of solutions in 30 Wheatbelt communities.

Global Drivers

Increased globalisation of world economies, growing affluence in Asian markets and associated demand for food and population services present opportunities for economic development in the Wheatbelt, given the Region’s comparative advantages.

The globally connected knowledge economy, underpinned by private and public investment in technology and innovation, will drive long term sustained growth. The Region’s world class food production is just one opportunity to grow the Wheatbelt’s knowledge economy.

The local population is growing, ageing and becoming more diverse. The Wheatbelt is in a strong position to contribute to the State’s continued economic prosperity. Such growth will also occur as a result of increasingly renewable energy opportunities. Tourism and natural recreation and the Wheatbelt’s natural environment offers a variety of tourism opportunities which will ensure more jobs for a growing population.

Harnessing the Wheatbelt’s Capacity for Growth

‘Business as usual’ is not an option if the aspirations identified in the Blueprint are to be achieved. For sustainable growth across the Region transformation solutions are required.

Given the global opportunities, the Wheatbelt’s comparative advantages and barriers to growth outlined in Section 4, there exists considerable opportunity to grow the Region’s economy and population by developing key pillars for growth.

Vision for the Future

With a diversified economic base growing at an annual average rate of 8.2% over the last 10 years, the Wheatbelt is in a strong position to contribute to the State’s continued economic prosperity. Such growth will require:

- Emerging Industry Development - Supporting growth of emerging industry sectors to consolidate the Region’s diversified economy. Pursuit of more intensive industry matched to comparative advantages and global opportunities will enable more jobs for a growing population.
- Transforming Agriculture - Increasing productivity of existing industry through pursuit of opportunity along the supply chain and increased application of innovation and technology and developing intensive agriculture opportunities.
- Business Development - Supporting the Region’s 12,000 small businesses so that they can grow and prosper in the global market place.

Ski ed Workers – The Wheatbelt has one of the lowest regional unemployment rates after the Pilbara and Goldfields-Esperance. However there is a significant out-migration of the 15-29 year old cohort. Attraction of workforce aged population is critical to support economic growth.

- Key Infrastructure - Investing in strategic infrastructure assets including transport and digital infrastructure, land development and housing will underpin growth opportunities.

Maximum growth can be achieved by looking at job intensive industry development and building on the following areas of comparative advantage:

- Producing and processing:
  - commodity and niche foods through dry land agriculture opportunities.
  - Processing of natural resources such as minerals and renewable energy.

- Population services that have the dual purpose of providing amenity for existing and future residents and offering employment.

- Areas of comparative advantage for the Wheatbelt include: aged care, aviation, renewable energy, tourism, culture and the arts, education and training services, health, retail and well-being and leisure.

- Strengthening the Region’s knowledge economy by undertaking research and development in these sectors and sharing that knowledge with the world.

ValueProposition:

The Wheatbelt’s unique natural amenity is valued as an asset for social, cultural and economic development for current and future generations.

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executive summary

Wheatbelt Road Map for Growth

The following pages provide an overview of the Region’s aspirations and targets. Outcomes, focus areas and priority actions required to deliver the stated targets are indentified.
**Vibrant Economy**

1.1: Diverse and innovative business and industry grow the Wheatbelt's global market share

- Develop emerging industry strategies for intensive agriculture, transport and logistics, renewable energy, aviation and population services (aged care, health, education and tourism)
- Agricultural investment through ‘Seizing the Opportunity’

1.2: Skilled workers are attracted and retained to meet the needs of the Region and the State

- Support Heartlands WA to market job, investment and visitation opportunity
- Support Regional Development to deliver cross industry training
- Support the Wheatbelt Workforce Alliance to promote pathways to employment

1.3: Key strategic infrastructure is identified and invested in

- Implement the Wheatbelt Digital Action Plan, including ongoing investment in new mobile towers and building broadband capacity
- Develop an Integrated Transport Plan for the Wheatbelt and invest in identified priorities
- Conduct residential and industrial land audits and invest in identified priorities
- Invest in innovative end of grid power and water solutions
- Action findings of the Wheatbelt Housing Audit and support innovative investment vehicles and universally designed housing
- Conduct a Waste Site Identification feasibility

**Clever People**

2.1: Education and life-long learning drives productivity and thus economic growth

- Support Aboriginal Enterprise

2.2: Innovation drives economic, social and environmental outcomes

- Develop Innovation Networks
- Build R&D Capacity

2.3: Leadership harnesses diverse capacity that delivers benefit at a local, sub-regional and regional level

- Foster Innovative Governance
- Foster Leadership and Civic Engagement
- Support Volunteers

**Aspirations & Targets**

**Outcomes**

**Focus Areas**

**Priority Actions**
**Connected Communities**

**Aspirations & Targets**
- **Outcomes**
- **Focus Areas**
- **Priority Actions**

1. **Connected Communities**
   - **Diverse, safe, healthy and resilient communities where services and infrastructure reflect the needs and aspirations of current and future residents**
   - **Target 2050:** Population of 180,000

2. **Service delivery reform**
   - **Design and deliver integrated sub-regional services in the areas of:**
     - Aged Care
     - Health
     - Education (K-tertiary)
     - Family, youth and children’s services
     - Public transport

3. **Community amenity contributes to community well-being and livability and creates economic opportunity**

**Valued Natural Amenity**

**Aspirations & Targets**
- **Outcomes**
- **Focus Areas**
- **Priority Actions**

1. **Climate change risks are minimised**
   - **Invest in R&D and technology application to mitigate climate impact including dry climate and frost tolerant plant breeds**
   - **Assist coastal communities to plan for impact of shore line shift**

2. **Landscape Management**
   - **Invest in R&D and technology application to improve soil health**
   - **Support Wheatbelt NRM foster ‘best practice’ land management**

3. **Water management is improved for the benefit of community amenity and industry development**
   - **Undertake integrated water planning**
   - **Invest in water harvesting and re-use**
   - **Implement pilot project: desalination of water using renewable energy**

4. **Nature based industry utilises the Wheatbelt’s natural assets**
   - **Develop an tourism strategy that includes nature based tourism and identifies infrastructure priorities**
   - **Partner with Western Power and Universities to develop innovative alternative energy solution for end of grid situations**
The Wheatbelt value proposition is clear to investors in government and private enterprise and families wishing to live and visit.

**Target 2050:**
- 105,000 new residents and new investment creates 64,000 jobs

### Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirations &amp; Targets</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Focus Areas</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement targeted marketing for workforce and visitor attraction</td>
<td>Attract private investment through the development of industry prospectuses for emerging industry identified in Sub-regional Economic Strategies</td>
<td>Targeted Marketing Influencing Key Decision Makers</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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### Effective Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspirations &amp; Targets</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiate the Wheatbelt Infrastructure Co-ordinating Group</td>
<td>Support cross community investment trusts to drive sustainable investment</td>
<td>Infrastructure Co-ordination Agency Co-ordination Local Government Collaboration Proponent Support</td>
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</table>

**Cost effective investment occurs as a result of proponent partnerships, good information, quality project management and leveraged investment.**

**Target 2050:** Sub-regional governance and investment structures drive growth and effective service delivery.
Blueprint Governance and Implementation

While the Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) is the lead agency in the development of this Blueprint, its effective implementation requires ownership and commitment from a range of stakeholders.

In addition to the high-level priority actions identified, a pipeline of strategies and projects is required for effective implementation. Aligned to set targets, these projects will achieve population growth and economic diversity and growth. A prioritisation tool will be used to determine which strategies and projects will best deliver growth aspirations.

The Blueprint will have high-level and ongoing oversight from the Boards of the Wheatbelt Development Commission and Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt. In addition to this high-level oversight, collaboration and co-ordination of initiatives will be delivered through the following mechanisms:

- Wheatbelt Infrastructure Co-ordinating Group;
- ongoing federal and state agency engagement and collaboration at both a central and regional level; and
- ongoing support for project proponents, including groups of local governments, private investors and not-for-profit groups.

A full description of the implementation process can be found in Section 6 of the Blueprint.

The success of the Blueprint will be determined by its acceptance and use by stakeholders. Success of implementation will be measured by:

1. The perception of the Blueprint and the Commission. This will be measured through the WDC annual stakeholder survey; and
2. The knowledge, acceptance and use of the Blueprint and its contributing plans, measured through:
   - number of times the Blueprint is referred to in stakeholder publications;
   - number of specific priority actions that are implemented in any one year; and
   - evidence of positive progress in achieving stated targets.

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Blueprint Development & Review

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Planning for our future

Wheatbelt Blueprint Governance

Governance

Implement & Review

Vision & Targets

Global & Regional Drivers

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Global & Regional Drivers

What are the Region’s aspirations?

What are the key drivers impacting on growth?

What is the action required to meet growth targets?

Who are the best people to deliver the project?

What is the best way to get the project done?

How will the project contribute to growth?

How has the project contributed to growth targets?

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Who are the best people to deliver the project?

What is the best way to get the project done?

How will the project contribute to growth?

How has the project contributed to growth targets?
1.0 Introduction
The Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint (the Blueprint) articulates a vision and growth targets for the Region, and provides a framework to guide future growth.

1.1 Purpose of the Blueprint
The specific purpose of the Blueprint is to:
• gain alignment with a range of stakeholders on the Wheatbelt vision, aspirations, targets and priority actions;
• provide robust analysis of the global drivers impacting the Wheatbelt, and how the Region can continue to contribute to the State’s prosperity by using its comparative advantages to seize the opportunities these drivers present;
• identify the actions required to transform the Wheatbelt from its current status and position to achieve the vision and meet sustainable growth targets;
• inform both public and private investors of the opportunities the Region offers; and
• establish a monitoring and review framework to ensure targets are met.

‘Business as usual’ is not an option if the aspirations identified in the Blueprint are to be achieved. For sustainable economic growth across this diverse region, transformational solutions are required.

1.2 Blueprint Development Process
The Wheatbelt Development Commission (WDC) has been working with stakeholders in the Region for some time to arrive at a shared vision and aspirations for the Region. The development of the Wheatbelt Strategic Framework (2012) with Regional Development Australia (RDA) Wheatbelt and Wheatbelt local governments was the starting point. In addition, an infrastructure planning process was undertaken with local governments as part of the Country Local Government Regional Planning initiative. This process identified agreed infrastructure development priorities across the Region.

The Commission has also undertaken extensive research and data analysis including:
• Sub-regional economic planning;
• Regional Centres Development Planning (SuperTowns) and sub-regional centre growth planning.

Complementing this work, ‘Wheatbelt Snapshots’ have been taken of key infrastructure, services and industry sectors. These were used to consult stakeholders to confirm priority developmental issues.

Figure 1.1 summarises the process and the range of information used to develop the Blueprint.

Determine the Facts
• Wheatbelt Snapshot Series - the current state of play in each portfolio, identifying the key development issues in each
• Sub-regional Economic and Growth Plans x 5 - Sub-regional economic assessment to deliver evidence based guidance to assist in investment and decision making
• Desktop Research to utilise existing information

Collate and Align Planning Activity
Local, Regional, State and Federal Plans
Refer to Figure 1.4

Stakeholder Engagement
Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders within the Region (LGA’s, businesses, NGO’s) and external to the Region (Agencies)

Blueprint Implementation
• Endorsed by the WDC Board and Minister for Regional Development
• Partner with proponents to bring Blueprint to fruition
• Ongoing engagement, implementation and review

1.3 Stakeholder Engagement
While the WOC is the lead agency developing this Blueprint, its effective implementation requires ownership and commitment from key stakeholders within and external to the Region.

Stakeholder engagement has been a critical underpinning of a range of initiatives of the WOC in a region of over 200 communities, 45 local governments and low agency presence, creative consultative methodologies are required. Figure 1.2 outlines the key engagement that has occurred and will continue to occur, to gain this commitment.
1.4 The Blueprint Structure

The Blueprint begins by stating a vision for the Wheatbelt, describing what the Region looks like in the year 2050. It then identifies the global drivers and regional capacity that impact on achieving this vision. The Blueprint culminates in articulating the actions that will deliver the transformation required to meet identified targets.

Documentation developed as part of the Blueprint process, such as the Sub-regional Economic Strategies provide the source data for both specific project development and prospectuses for industry and investment attraction.

1.5 Gaining Alignment

The Blueprint seeks to identify new possibilities for the future growth of the Wheatbelt through analysis of global trends, statistical evidence and local knowledge. In this formative stage, it is inevitable that some aspects of the Blueprint may not be aligned with contemporary government policies and priorities at a local, state and federal level.

With ongoing engagement and further analysis, the WDC is confident that there will be strong alignment between all stakeholders that will result in greater economic and social returns on private and public investment.

The Blueprint has strong alignment to the Wheatbelt Infrastructure Framework (2014). While the Infrastructure Framework focuses on infrastructure needs of the Region, the Blueprint is more aspirational, forecasting enablers of growth. The Blueprint is also strongly aligned to the State Planning Strategy 2050. It delivers directly on its principle of Regional Development and Strategic Goals of Global Competitiveness, Strong and Resilient Region’s, Sustainable Communities, Infrastructure Planning and Coordination and Conservation.

The Blueprint is also consistent with the Royalties for Regions Act (2009) which was established to:

(a) provide infrastructure and services in regional Western Australia;
(b) develop and broaden the economic base of regional Western Australia; and
(c) maximise job creation and improve career opportunities in Western Australia.
2.0 Vision 2050

What will the Wheatbelt look like in 2050? What are the possibilities given:

- global trends;
- the many assets of the Region; and
- the aspirations of its residents and leaders?

This section of the Blueprint articulates that vision for the future and describes what the Region looks like in 2050.

Wheatbelt Vision and Aspirations

The Wheatbelt is a key contributor to Western Australia's prosperity. The Region's prime location, diverse economy, clever people, vibrant communities and unique natural environment offer a high quality of life and will attract global innovators and investors.

The aspirations underpinning this vision are:

Vibrant Economy: A diversified and adaptive economic base building on the Region's assets and aligned to state, national and international opportunity.

Clever people: Lifelong learning, highly skilled labour, innovation and leadership drive economic growth and community vibrancy.

Liveable Communities: Diverse, safe, healthy and resilient communities where services and infrastructure reflect the needs and aspirations of residents.

Valued Natural Amenities: The Wheatbelt's unique natural amenity is valued as an asset for social, cultural and economic development for current and future generations.

Specifically, the Wheatbelt has set the following targets:

- Population growth from 75,000 in 2013 to 180,000 by 2050.
- Economic growth at 7% per annum, resulting in the Wheatbelt's Gross Regional Product increasing from $6.4B in 2013, to $183.7B by 2050.

The assumptions behind these targets and the interventions that will achieve them are outlined in Section 5 of this Blueprint.

What Success Looks Like

In the year 2050, we hope to look back and see how targeted intervention delivered well-managed population and economic growth in regional WA and the Wheatbelt. The following pages describe what the Wheatbelt looks like in 2050 if these interventions succeed.

Building on strong foundations
Vibrant Economy 2050

Economic growth has resulted from harnessing the assets of the diverse sub-regions of the Wheatbelt. The Avon sub-region is home to 75,000 people (33% of the Wheatbelt’s population) spread across multiple interconnected communities. Agricultural production and processing form a strong economic base, while transport and logistics, niche manufacturing and population services are the dominant industries. Adventure, heritage and events tourism continue to attract visitors to the Sub-region. The Central Coast sub-region continues to be a lifestyle and tourism destination with a pristine coastal environment and a population of 23,500, representing 13% of the Wheatbelt’s population. Major economic activity includes population services, agriculture and adventure tourism. Well-managed horticulture, aquaculture and fisheries sectors support strong export industries and inland industrial sites provide strong economic base, while transport and logistics, niche manufacturing and population services are the dominant industries. The Wheatbelt South sub-region’s agricultural industry has seen significant growth of high value horticulture and livestock production. The Sub-region’s natural amenity and mild climate make it a desired residential location supporting 17% of the Region’s population, a total of 32,000 people. A long history of excellence in education has seen this area attract strong education ethos nurturing diverse niche businesses. The Wheatbelt is a region that offers a range of lifestyle, business and employment options. Interconnected urban hubs and rural and coastal living are all within three hours of the Perth Region and half-miles from the rest of the world. People of all ages are attracted, seeking a return to strong community values, safe communities and engagement with the environment. The Wheatbelt is a sub-region that offers people of all ages are attracted, seeking re-engagement with the environment.

In 2050, the Wheatbelt has built on its comparative advantages of:

> diverse and growing food and resources production, processing and services sectors;
> transport logistics and digital capacity within the Wheatbelt linking the States products to the global market place;
> renewable energy generation and local distribution; and
> specialised communities with common interests.

In 2050, the Wheatbelt becomes a region that offers a range of lifestyle, business and employment options. Interconnected urban hubs and rural and coastal living are all within three hours of the Perth Region and half-miles from the rest of the world. People of all ages are attracted, seeking a return to strong community values, safe communities and engagement with the environment. The Wheatbelt is a sub-region that offers people of all ages are attracted, seeking re-engagement with the environment.

New industries and sectors are emerging in the Wheatbelt, particularly in renewable energy and mining. These networks have been overcome. Business leaders and workers are attracted to the Region because of diverse lifestyle options, innovative housing solutions and world class population servicing. These workers are highly flexible, working across industries. Education networks within and across communities and regions provide lifelong learning opportunities. The Wheatbelt continues to build world class knowledge networks in dry-land agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture, mining, transport, logistics, niche manufacturing, renewable energy and population services. These networks have become key drivers of productivity and selling knowledge to the world. Muresk Institute is a pre-eminent campus for regional development, education, research and knowledge sharing. The South West Native Title Settlement (known as the Single Nooner Claim) has seen the growth of diverse Aboriginal enterprise and the strengthening of culture and community and in the words of Andrew Forrest the “racism of low expectation” has been eliminated.
Liveable Communities 2050

Service delivery reform in education, health, aged care, Aboriginal development, family and childcare services, public transport and police and justice has resulted in service models that are widely regarded as international best practice. These highly integrated services, with strong hubs in regional centres with strong connection to outlying communities, meet the unique needs of a dispersed population.

Networks of technology and transport connect communities within and external to the Region. Because they are community driven, these reforms continue to have strong local investment resulting in considerable ‘value-add’ to standard services.

Local government, communities and businesses continue to collaborate and invest across administrative boundaries to seize global opportunities.

International culture and arts enterprises have grown to achieve world acclaim. Many engaging, inspiring and innovative new age enterprises exist across the Region.

Aboriginal residents continue to celebrate and share their culture, and use that capacity to care for their people and their land. Economic independence is achieved by local development of realistic and relevant pathways to employment and enterprise.

Valued Natural Amenity 2050

The use of technology and innovation has halted land degradation, utilized saline water and developed local energy solutions. Research and development has resulted in continued improvements in sustainable use and management of agricultural land and enhanced management of national parks, waterways and other natural resources.

In 2050, Wheatbelt residents enjoy time for family, friends and community. A vibrant economy attracts individuals and businesses. Work is creative, rewarding and empowering. Life is affordable. Services are there when you need them and technology is a powerful enabler of innovation.

Leading balanced lifestyles
3.0 Local and Global Impacts on Growth

This section of the Blueprint provides a brief overview of the Wheatbelt and then identifies a range of global drivers that will impact on the Region’s growth.

3.1 The Wheatbelt’s role in the State’s Development

The State’s population is forecast to increase to 5.4 million in 2056, with a proportion of this increase expected to occur in regional WA. The Wheatbelt is ideally placed to accommodate some of this increase.

The Wheatbelt:
- surrounds two sides of the metropolitan area (north, east) and has proximity to growing demand for food, resources and population services in Asia;
- is a world leading producer of export commodities (grain, livestock and, increasingly resources) with considerable potential to ‘value add’ this production and knowledge base;
- has significant affordable freehold land;
- possesses significant fundamental infrastructure (power, water, telecommunications, community);
- has a developed transport network (road, rail, air) that includes key State and National infrastructure;
- has a natural amenity which is ideal for renewable energy generation and is attractive to visitors for nature based, adventure and aviation tourism; and
- has a strong sense of place which promotes community values and considerable investment of social capital.

The Wheatbelt consists of five sub-regions: Avon, Central Coast, Central East, Central Midlands and Wheatbelt South. Each sub-region is serviced by a sub-regional centre (Northam, Jurien Bay, Merredin, Moora and Narrogin) and has unique economic and population drivers. (See Appendix 2).

With a population of 75,000, the Wheatbelt is the third most populous region in the State. This population is highly dispersed with over 200 towns and settlements spread across 155,256 square kilometres. The Region is governed by 43 local governments, with no single dominant regional centre (See Figure 3.1).

With an average annual compound economic growth rate of 8.2% and a diverse economic base, the Wheatbelt is well positioned to make significant contribution to the State and Nation’s growth.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for detailed maps.
3.2 Global Trends Impacting the Wheatbelt’s Growth

Overview

The Region’s attributes see it well placed to seize opportunities from global drivers, including:

• globalisation and economic growth in Asia;
• feeding the world’s increasing demand for food (particularly protein);
• the application of new knowledge and technology across global networks; and
• increased population and prosperity.

The Wheatbelt will play a key role as Western Australia continues to service and capitalise on growth in Asia and takes advantage of its common time zone with some of the world’s fastest growing economies.

Global challenges are also impacting on the Wheatbelt and these include:

• urbanisation;
• an ageing population;
• climate change and demand for water; and
• the impact of development.

3.2.1. Vibrant Economy

Globalisation and the economic growth of Asia

Along with global economic growth, there is a shift in the centre of economic gravity from west to east and north to south. China and India increasingly drive the new world economy. The annual economic growth rate for the developing Asia region is projected to be 6% compared to growth in developed countries of 2-3%. By 2030 the bulk of global Gross Domestic Product will be generated by non Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

Technology will continue to fundamentally change the way we live, work, buy and access services. Its use will drive productivity gains domestically and accelerate globalisation.

Greater consensus across governments favouring free trade and democratisation of free markets contribute to the increasingly global marketplace.

Despite anti-globalisation sentiment in parts of the developed world and the establishment of regional trade blocs, this trend will increasingly favour globally networked individuals and businesses working together, regardless of location.

New opportunities will emerge in the global marketplace based on increased demand as living standards rise in the developing world.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• servicing the Asian markets as their population grows and becomes more affluent;
• proximity and similar time zone to Asian markets – transport infrastructure provides good access to these markets;
• as supply chain partnerships occur, there will be increased opportunity for direct foreign investment; and
• increased global exposure for its export oriented economy.

Knowledge-based economic growth

In a modern economy, capital investment alone will not promote growth. Knowledge is also required. Well-educated, self-motivated, innovative and globally networked individuals increasingly drive the knowledge economy. The more knowledge that is embedded in goods and services, the more valuable (and profitable) they become. Thus investment in education and lifelong learning become more important than ever.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• exporting knowledge products in areas of existing competitive advantage such as dry land agriculture, horticulture, specialised engineering and environmental management.

Knowledge-based economic growth

In a modern economy, capital investment alone will not promote growth. Knowledge is also required. Well-educated, self-motivated, innovative and globally networked individuals increasingly drive the knowledge economy. The more knowledge that is embedded in goods and services, the more valuable (and profitable) they become. Thus investment in education and lifelong learning become more important than ever.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• ability to harness technology to drive productivity;
• integration with global supply chains to increase product value;
• increasing foreign investment in supply chain management;
• capacity to increase production scale and profits; and
• utilisation of less arable land for bio-fuel production and carbon farming.

Key Economic Opportunities:

• Given proximity to growth markets, the Wheatbelt’s comparative advantage is aligned to addressing global trends in food production, specialised manufacturing and population services.

• The knowledge economy, underpinned by technology and innovation will drive long term sustained growth.
Local and global impacts on growth

3.2.2 Clever People

The proportion of the world’s population aged over 65 is growing and forecast to grow from 11.2% in 2011 to 22% by 2050. Asia will become home to 53% of this older population.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• workforce attraction through targeted migration; and
• exporting knowledge of servicing small communities (especially in governance, energy, water, health, education and housing).

Ageing population

The overall cost burden to the retirement and lifestyle villages, space-hungry goods and service markets; • increased numbers of economic refugees and create a need for flexible and creative solutions to population servicing. The ageing population.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• greater demand for population services including health, wellness, recreation, tourism and aged care services; • changing lifestyles, resulting in new food, goods and service markets; • innovative and cost effective aged care, health and residential solutions can be packaged and exported in the knowledge economy; and • training and immigration to assist in servicing the ageing population.

3.2.3 Liveable Communities

Baby Boomers retiring in increasing numbers create new issues and opportunities including significant expenditure on lifestyle pursuits. Pressures of urbanisation and rising property prices limit opportunities for retirees in metropolitan centres.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• highly desirable locations to tele-work or tele-commute. People will be attracted by lack of crime, and an abundance of space and community life; • the large number of communities with special amenity attract people with a special interest (e.g. equestrian, trains, music, sustainable living, organic food production); • urban Australia is a ready market for the Wheatbelt’s goods and services, including both high value and high volume products; • activities pushed out of the metropolitan area by spreading urbanisation will find space in the Wheatbelt; and • affordable retirement and lifestyle villages within easy distance of the metropolitan area.

Key Social Opportunities:

• Population restructuring policies will be required to reduce global trends of urbanisation.
• Underutilised social infrastructure and the regional social capital are Wheatbelt assets that provide government with a cost effective way to manage population growth.
• People from diverse backgrounds engaged in civic activity and leadership roles will improve the Wheatbelt’s ability to operate in a global economy.
• The Region’s proximity to the Perth Region creates distinct opportunity for access to markets and services and offers multiple livability options within three hours of the metropolitan area.

The R

Sparsely populated by world standards, the Wheatbelt has significant infrastructure across many livability options and can readily absorb activities that require space (markets, medium to large manufacturing industry, retirement and lifestyle villages, space-hungry or noisy recreational pursuits). Although peri-urban pressures will impact on those parts of the Wheatbelt bordering the Perth Region, proactive planning will maximise the opportunities created.
3.2.4 Valued Natural Amenity

Climate change and water

Regardless of the cause, climate change will affect the environment. Dry seasons and extreme weather events are becoming more prevalent, altering conditions for plant and animal production. The Wheatbelt will require adaptability and the embracing of new technologies to minimise the negative impacts of these changes.

Emission trading schemes have been developed, but are not yet globally effective. As these schemes become more widely enacted, the opportunities for carbon farming and offset schemes will evolve. Demand for water will increase in response to both population pressures and climate change. Total water consumption in Australia is forecast to rise by 42% by the year 2026, and 76% by 2056, compared to 2009 levels11.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• local underground water reserves and treated salt affected water could meet local, domestic and industrial demand, reducing distribution costs.

Environmental impact of economic development

It is estimated that the world loses 12 million hectares of productive agricultural land each year to land degradation12. In this context, the value of large-scale agricultural land, such as that of the Wheatbelt, will increase in the future as a response to growing scarcity.

Government policy increasingly reflects community expectation to balance economic development with social and environmental responsibility, particularly where environments are considered valuable.

Land stewardship is becoming increasingly important as the Wheatbelt’s landscape has been considerably altered and requires innovative solutions.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• unique landscapes that offer economic opportunities for tourism, agriculture (broadacre and intensive) and aquaculture; and
• world class research on conservation and rehabilitation of land and waterways, both agricultural and natural, which can be marketed to the world.

Renewable energy

Global energy consumption is projected to grow by 56% between 2010 and 204013. The share of renewable energy is projected to increase from 5% of total primary energy consumption in 2008–09 to 9% in 2034–35. This implies an average annual growth rate of 3.4%, with the most significant growth occurring in wind energy14.

Along with the Northern Territory and Queensland, Western Australia is expected to exhibit the highest growth in primary energy consumption15. At the same time, international agreements and community pressure will require governments to develop alternative sources of energy.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt include:

• utilising its considerable renewable energy resources: sunshine, wind, wave and biomass to grow renewable energy options; and
• export world-class research and technologies in efficient, sustainable energy practices.

Key Environmental Opportunities:

➢ While being significantly impacted by climate change, the Region’s adaptation (land stewardship and use of technology) can underpin the Region’s knowledge economy.

➢ The Region’s natural environment offers considerable economic opportunity.

Local and global impacts on growth

Growth from opportunity
4.0 The Wheatbelt’s Capacity for Growth

The growth of the Wheatbelt will be determined by its ability to adapt to constantly changing domestic and international economics and sociology.

The mobility of capital, people and technology, global shifts in food demand and Asia’s economic future will be as much an influence on the Wheatbelt’s growth as changes in local population demographics, urbanisation and climate. Growth will arise from the Wheatbelt’s capacity to seize the opportunities arising from these simultaneous, complex changes.

This section of the Blueprint analyses the opportunities for growth in the Wheatbelt and identifies what barriers may inhibit this growth. These enablers and inhibitors of growth are discussed under the key pillars for growth identified in the Wheatbelt Strategic Framework (2012):
- Vibrant Economy
- Clever People
- Livable Communities
- Valued Natural Amenity
- Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities
- Effective Partnerships

4.1 Vibrant Economy

Fast Facts:
- 8.2% average annual compound GRP growth rate over the last ten years\(^a\)
- Diversified economic value across agriculture (18%), mining (27%), construction (11%), transport and logistics (10%), other (34%)\(^b\).
- Largest agricultural producing region in the State - $3.5b or 46% of the State’s production in 2011/12\(^c\).
- Mining growth of 221% in the last 5 years\(^d\).
- Wheatbelt produces 60% of the State’s renewable energy\(^e\).
- Second most visited region after South West (average of 605,700 visitors annually resulting in a turnover of estimated $246 million)\(^f\).
- Low unemployment (2.5%) and high participation rates (62%)\(^g\).
- Over 10,000 small businesses\(^h\).
- 40,000 additional homes needed by 2050 to house 180,000 people.

The Wheatbelt has displayed strong economic growth over the past 10 years of 8.2% Average Annual Compound Growth Rate (Figure 4.1). This demonstrates its competitiveness and opportunity for continued growth. This growth (Figure 4.2) has occurred across an increasingly diverse economic base with expansion in the mining, transport and logistics, manufacturing and construction sectors (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.2 Wheatbelt Gross Regional Product

Figure 4.1 Economic Growth Rates

![Figure 4.1 Economic Growth Rates](source: DRD and ABS Australian National Accounts State Accounts 5220.00, 2012-13)

Source: BREE 2011, Australian energy projections to 2020-21, BREE report prepared for the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, Canberra

Source: RPS (2012), RPS Economics Gross Regional Product Model, RPS, Gold Coast

*Industry Value Add represents the component of GRP associated with production and value added by businesses and industries within the economy excluding inputs from other regions.
Figure 4.4 provides a summary of each sub-region’s opportunities for economic growth as identified in sub-regional economic planning strategies. See Appendix 2 for detail of sub-regional economic opportunity.

Figure 4.4: Sub-regional Summary of Economic Opportunities

4.1.1 Industry

4.1.1.1 Agriculture and Fisheries

The Wheatbelt is a world-leading producer of agricultural exports, and is by far the largest producing region in the State. The Region produced a gross value of almost $3.5 billion, or 46% of Western Australia’s total value of agricultural production in 2011/12, and the sector contributed 18% of the Region’s industry value add.

While the Wheatbelt’s agriculture and horticulture sectors are already of a high standard internationally, opportunities exist for further investment, diversification and value adding. It is estimated that global food production levels, including meat and cereals need to increase 70% by the year 2050 to meet demand. As a key producer of grains and livestock, this increasing demand presents opportunities for Wheatbelt producers.

Agricultural activity differs across the Region. Broadacre cropping is dominant across much of the Region, with more mixed farming (grain/livestock/fodder) occurring in the Wheatbelt South and increasing fodder and horticultural activity in the Central Midlands and Central Coast.

As global demand for food grows, Wheatbelt agricultural land will become increasingly valuable. Land and water resources which support existing and potential intensive agricultural enterprises within the Wheatbelt are of State significance and policies to protect these resources for agricultural use remain important.

Mitigation of the impact of climate change will also be critical and is discussed in more detail in Section 4.4.

In August 2013, the State Government announced the $295m “Seizing the Opportunity” initiative. Funded through Royalties for Regions, this package will position the agricultural sector to capitalise on the growing global demand for food and agricultural products. It will help to promote local products and attract new investment in agriculture, as well as build business skills, research and development and create efficient supply chains. It is critical that this investment is used to capitalise on opportunities to grow agriculture in the Wheatbelt.

The Department of Agriculture and Food WA has produced two key documents outlining priorities for development of the Industry: AgFood2025+ The Future Why and its 2014-17 Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan identifies priority investments required in: Business and Supply Chain Development, Transformational Development, Boosting Resilience and Sustaining Natural Resources.
The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

In 2011/12 the Wheatbelt produced $2.7 billion worth of grains, over 50% of the State’s grain production. Wheat makes up the bulk of this production however barley, canola, triticale and oats are also grown in the Region. Broadacre farms in the east of the Region are experiencing increased variability of seasons which, coupled with declining terms of trade and increasing market variability, has affected the viability of some farming operations. Despite this, the sector overall has delivered increased production levels with the State wide harvest in 2013/14 totalling a record 15.9 million tonnes.

Livestock

The Wheatbelt has 50% of the State’s sheep stock generating a value of $563 million in wool and meat in 2011/12. Western Australian sheep numbers have declined significantly over the last decade but have begun to grow since 2010. While the Wheatbelt South sub-region holds the majority of the Region’s flock, all sub-regions have significant stock numbers. The Region also has a significant poultry industry, contributing 51% of the State’s egg production in 2010/11. The majority of this production is in the Central Coast sub-region with opportunities to expand production in other peri-urban locations.

Horticulture

The Wheatbelt also contributes significantly to the State’s horticultural production, producing more than 88% of the State’s olives, 64% oranges, 57% limes and 58% lettuce. Increasing intensive horticultural activity in the Central Midlands and Central Coast contributes significantly to Western Australia’s production of a number of niche products.

Fishing and Aquaculture

Seafood is a major component of global food consumption and is particularly favoured in many emerging Asian economies. There is significant potential for the development of both mariculture (on the Central Coast) and an inland aquaculture industry in the Wheatbelt. Aquaculture in Western Australia has not yet progressed beyond the boutique industry stage.

In 2011/12, fishing in the Wheatbelt generated over $58 million. The industry has been decreasing in value since 2006/07, reflecting the reduction in the State’s fisheries. This is largely related to the rise in the Australian dollar and the restructuring of the Western Rock Lobster fishery, the State’s most valuable fisheries’ product. The Rock Lobster industry remains the highest value fishing industry in the Wheatbelt, generating $57 million, 34% of the State’s total catch.

In 2011/12, aquaculture generated $818,000 in the Wheatbelt from the production of finfish and yabbies. The last ten years has seen a reduction in production of yabbies and an increase in finfish, resulting in growth of the sector since 2006/07, as shown in Figure 4.7. Previous attempts to establish aquaculture product on the Central Coast have failed for a number of commercial and operational reasons, namely inadequate availability of working capital and higher exposure to stock health risks.

Growing consumer demand for certainty of supply and source will encourage a move from wild capture-based industry to farmed aquaculture/mariculture. Significant infrastructure exists in the Wheatbelt (pontoons, marinas, processing facilities) to support this industry growth.
The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

- Growing markets
- Development of dedicated multipurpose food processing precincts.
- Profiling the industry to grow markets and attract investment.

Growing capacity

- Enhancing farm management practices to manage the altered landscape and climate change.
- Development of drought, heat and frost tolerant grains and pastures.
- Undertaking R&D to identify emerging market needs, diversify crop mix, develop livestock opportunities and improve soil health.
- Building collaborative relationships to enhance productivity and profitability; and
- Using technology to drive productivity.

Adding value along the supply chain

- Strengthening links along the supply chain to key markets;
- Increasing fodder production for feedlots;
- Increasing horticultural operations in the Central Coast and Central Midlands sub-regions and investing in value added processing facilities such as centralised packaging and distribution facilities; and
- Development of dedicated multipurpose food processing precincts.

Addressing policy inhibitors

- Managing land use conflict to safeguard prime agricultural land.
- Continuous improvement in State infrastructure, including the Oakajee, Esperance Port Multi User Iron Ore Facility and Portlink projects, will play an important part in realising the value of mining opportunities in the northern and eastern parts of the Wheatbelt.

Figure 4.8: Value of Minerals and Petroleum by Commodity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wheatbelt Region</th>
<th>2013 Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inter Ore</td>
<td>$1,756,294,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsum and Heapy Minerals Sands</td>
<td>$96,891,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickel. Capper and Salt</td>
<td>$325,893,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold, Silver, Condorine and Natural Sdi</td>
<td>$13,527,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>$2,459,339,580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011-12, CRC Analysis of Department of Minerals and Petroleum Data (Unsuppressed), Department of Regional Development, Perth.

4.1.1.3 Emerging Industries

- Transport, logistics and manufacturing

The Wheatbelt’s centrality to major mineral resources, agricultural and population regions and access to significant national and state transport infrastructure, is resulting in growth of the transport, logistics and manufacturing sectors. This sector contributed 15% of the Wheatbelt’s Industry Value Add in 2012/13.

- Construction

Projected population and economic growth in the Wheatbelt will underpin demand for construction related activity. The Wheatbelt’s construction industry has experienced upwards trends in activity in recent years, reflecting increasing investment in industrial and residential developments. This is reflected in the building approvals data shown in Figure 4.9. The sector contributed 15% in the Industry Sector Value Add in 2011-12.

Image: Cliffs Resources

Increased availability of serviced industrial land and marketing this opportunity through an industry development strategy would assist to grow this sector.

4.1.2.1 Construction

- Industry development strategy is required for this industry.
4.1.1.3 Tourism

As the second most visited region in the State after the South West\(^\text{41}\), the Wheatbelt’s tourism is significant. There was an average of 605,700 visitors annually to the Wheatbelt between 2010 and 2012 producing an annual turnover of $456 million per annum.

Domestic travellers dominate the Region’s tourism market making up 94% of the visitors. While domestic visitor numbers fluctuate, international visitor numbers appear more stable and international tourism are expected to grow in the future.\(^\text{42}\) Opportunities exist to expand the range of visitor attractions beyond the coastal areas of the Wheatbelt, especially in relation to cultural, heritage and ‘experience’ tourism. While tourism is a small contributor to the Wheatbelt economy, it provides secondary economic benefits to local communities by: increasing demand for tourist-related services, such as food and accommodation; supporting increased use of existing infrastructure and amenity; and improving the profitability and competitiveness of industry sectors. The Wheatbelt’s tourism expenditure shows an increase of $95 million per annum,\(^\text{43}\) the Wheatbelt’s tourism market making up 94% of the visitors. While tourism is a small contributor to the Wheatbelt economy, it provides secondary economic benefits to local communities by:

The Wheatbelt is a region with significant tourism assets including:• Pinnacles and the coast; • Avon Valley; • Chittering Valley; • Wave Rock; • food and agricultural tourism; • Great Western Woodlands; and • other significant natural attractions including astronomy, wildflowers, native animals, rock formations, national parks and nature reserves.

The highly fragmented nature of this industry is a constraint. With three Tourism regions, at least six tourism groups and a multitude of micro business operators across the Region, developing a comprehensive industry development strategy has been a challenge. The Central East has proven that building product and capacity and joint marketing across communities leads to success. Effort is required to develop a whole of region approach to developing this industry.

A whole of region tourism strategy is required to focus investment, build capability and product and market this.

4.1.1.3.4 Health and Aged Care

The Wheatbelt currently has an older population, with 16% of the population aged 65+ (well above State levels of 12.3%)\(^\text{44}\). This sector of the population is predicted to increase due to both improved health outcomes and the in-migration of retirees into the Region. This sector of the population presents economic opportunities for the growth of this sector. With significant renewable energy generation resources by way of wind, solar, geothermal and biomass opportunities, the Wheatbelt could become self-sufficient or indeed a net exporter of energy.

The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

The Wheatbelt supplies 60% of the State’s renewable energy, generating more than 280MW from wind power\(^\text{45}\) and there are opportunities for the growth of this sector. With significant renewable energy generation resources by way of wind, solar, geothermal and biomass opportunities, the Wheatbelt could become self-sufficient or indeed a net exporter of energy.
A large number of additional generation facilities utilising a variety of energy sources are in planning stages. Some Wheatbelt businesses are investigating the use of renewable energy for on-site generation to reduce costs and improve profitability. These trials could deliver substantial alternatives for energy generation and supply that negate the requirement for businesses to connect to the South West Interconnected System. Business collaboration on these initiatives would potentially achieve economies of scale and deliver self-sufficient industrial and residential development.

There is also a natural fit in this agricultural region to pursue bio-fuel energy options. Global experience dictates that this needs to be managed so that food production is not compromised. Improving business linkages and networks, both within and external to the Region, will improve businesses’ ability to compete in an increasingly globalised economy. While the Wheatbelt has an export-oriented economy, as a whole it lacks any opportunities along the supply chain within the industry.

Growth in the small business sector will occur with the following interventions:

- enhanced digital capacity to achieve success in local, national and global markets;
- assistance to strengthen business alliances within and external to the Region to seize opportunities along the supply chain within these markets;
- Heartlands WA (which exists to promote the Region as a place to live, work and invest) remains supported to develop the regional brand and use it to promote the Region;
- development of international relationships through trade missions, ‘sister city or heartland' programs, and enhance international relationships through targeted marketing of employment opportunities along the supply chain within the Wheatbelt region.

4.1.2 Business

The Wheatbelt has a high representation of small businesses (employing 0-19 persons) relative to its share of the State’s population, 5.2% or close to 10,000 of the State’s small businesses are located in the Wheatbelt economy. The Wheatbelt’s consistently low unemployment rate (62%) mean that the attraction and retention of labour force is critical for economic development. The Region’s unemployment rate is the third lowest rate of regional unemployment, only slightly above the two major mining regions. There are variations across the Region, with 14 local government areas of 43 having an unemployment rate higher than the State average, indicating pockets of labour force availability. The Wheatbelt’s working population (ages 15-64) makes up 63% of the total population and has increased by 10.7% in the last 10 years since 2001.

The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

Unemployment rates for Aboriginal people in the Region are also significantly higher (26.2%) and labour force participation rates lower (45.2%). Improving employment opportunities for Aboriginal residents will benefit both the individuals and the Wheatbelt economy.

4.1.3 Skilled Workers

4.1.3.1 Labour Force

As shown in Figure 4.12 employment self-sufficiency rates in the Region demonstrate the need to attract workers to fill current employment opportunities. This is particularly apparent in the Central East where the ratio of local jobs to local workforce is 107%. This is most likely attributable to the fly in, fly out workforce in the Yilgarn mining operations.

Anecdotally, the Region is experiencing increasing numbers of drive-in, drive-out workers. Further analysis is required to determine the scope and develop mitigation strategies.
4.1.3.2 Industry Skill Needs

Within a tight labour market, the industry skills needs of the Region are broad and varied. Agriculture, fishing and forestry remain the Region’s largest employer. Increasing farm size and automation has seen employment in the sector decrease with the exception of the Shire of Gingin, reflecting its growing horticultural activity. The seasonality of broadacre agriculture results in a heavy reliance on casual workers, especially during peak periods. Synergies between required skill sets present opportunities for cross industry workforce development for the agricultural and forestry sector decrease with the exception of the Shire of Gingin, reflecting its growing horticultural activity. The seasonality of broadacre agriculture results in a heavy reliance on casual workers, especially during peak periods. Synergies between required skill sets present opportunities for cross industry workforce development for the agricultural and forestry industries.

The Shires of Chittering, Northam, Toodyay, Merredin, and the Town of Narrogin have an employment distribution less reliant on the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector (less than 20% of total labour force). In these locations, the retail sector plays a significant role, reflecting the fact that the seasonality of broadacre agriculture results in a heavy reliance on casual workers, especially during peak periods. Synergies between required skill sets present opportunities for cross industry workforce development for the agricultural and forestry industries.

4.1.4 Key Infrastructure

The Wheatbelt has extensive land transport links with the metropolitan area and other parts of the State, delivering good access to international, national and regional markets. Some 90% of the Region’s grain harvest is moved around 60% of grain to port. This share has declined in recent years, with greater road haulage consolidating tonnage from smaller sites into larger facilities and direct to port. The grain rail network consists of 2,300 kilometres of narrow gauge lines managed by Regional Rail, under a lease agreement with the State Government. The 2009 Strategic Grain Freight Network Report recommended the closure of a number of lines in the Region, known as the Tier 3 lines, and this has since occurred. This has led to increased road usage, particularly on local roads that are not for public use. Upgrades and maintenance will require significant investment.

4.1.4.1 Land Transport

The Wheatbelt has extensive land transport linkages with the metropolitan area and other parts of the State, delivering good access to international, national and regional markets. The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

Figure 4.13 Wheatbelt Employment by Sector

The growth of the Wheatbelt economy and its changing employment trends will require:

- lifelong learning and training opportunities at secondary, TAFE and university level to encourage skills development and pathways to employment within the Region, especially for Aboriginal residents;
- workforce training that enables workers to develop skills that are transferable across industry and meet seasonal fluctuations in labour demand; and
- development of the Muresk Institute as a cross industry education and training facility in areas of identified regional need.

The Wheatbelt has a comprehensive infrastructure base to provide access to markets and services – roads, rail, aviation, telecommunications and social infrastructure. To ensure ongoing productivity gains and enhanced livability to attract the required workforce, prioritised investment will be paramount. Key enabling infrastructure exists outside the Region, including ports and airports.

The globalisation of the world economy, continued population growth and increased prosperity in the developing world is expected to significantly increase the international flow of goods and people. The proximity of Australia, in particular Western Australia and the Wheatbelt, to the developing economies of East Asia means that comparative transport costs, relative to other major trading partners (Europe, USA, South America), provides Australia with a comparative advantage. This is further enhanced by the fact that Western Australia shares a time zone with much of that region. While current infrastructure provides a sound base for development, ongoing investment is required to consolidate transport and telecommunications networks to seize emerging global opportunities.

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The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

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The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

Increasing grain production levels, coupled with the deregulation of the grains market, is resulting in significant changes in the role of players in both the marketing and logistics sectors of the industry. This will increase pressure on road and rail transport from the regional WA. While a significant percentage of Wheatbelt accidents are single vehicle accidents (34% in 2012)1 and therefore not attributable to increased truck movements, the impact on road surfaces as a result of increased volumes and loads should not be ignored. Increased transport and logistics activity is providing economic opportunity in the Region and within the transport network. With the Wheatbelt already recording growth of traffic volumes, heavy vehicles and high wide loads on the National roads through the Region (Great Northern and Great Eastern Highways). Traffic volumes of the Great Northern Highway have grown by 10% per annum (compound) over the past five years, with the proportion of heavy vehicles growing from 25% to 40% over the same time16. Increased heavy haulage on roads that are not constructed or maintained to manage the freight loads should not be ignored.

4.1.4.2 Aviation

Wheatbelt air space, at airports and airstrips, present a solid infrastructure base on which to develop the aviation industry in the Region, with the majority of facilities currently underutilised. There are more than 54 airports and airstrips in the Wheatbelt. The quality of these facilities varies greatly; however, the majority of strips meet a minimum standard suitable for Royal Flying Doctor Service access. Airstrips are mostly owned, operated and maintained by local government. These airstrips support a large number of aviation pursuits including:

• flight training;
• recreational and adventure aviation, including aero clubs, gliding, skydiving, ballooning;
• emergency services;
• agricultural spraying; and
• aircraft servicing.

China Southern Flying College WA has been operating at the Merredin airstrip since the late 1990s. The College specialises in training pilots operating at the Merredin airstrip since the late 1990s. The College specialises in training pilots with no flying experience to the standard of multi-engine instrument-rated jet pilots for China Southern Airlines.

There has been significant investment in recent years at Cunderdin, Narrogin, Northam, Wagin, Worang Hills and Wyalkatchem airstrips improving airport quality and safety standards alongside airstrips. Further opportunity for investment exists in key locations identified in the sub-regional economic planning process.

In line with the recommendations of the Draft WA State Aviation Strategy to “encourage private sector investment in new facilities at key regional airports to improve their effectiveness and efficiency”77, ongoing investment to develop facilities should be encouraged.

To grow the Wheatbelt aviation industry, opportunities include:

• marketing the Region’s aviation assets to increase the role of the Wheatbelt in the State’s general aviation space and to attract private investment in commercial developments;
• continuing programs to support the maintenance of small airstrips for emergency services.

4.1.4.3 Communications and the Digital Capacity

Improved digital connectivity throughout the Wheatbelt will deliver economic growth, enhanced service delivery and social engagement. Continued upgrades to telecommunications infrastructure and maximising the reach of the National Broadband Network (NBN) are critical to ensuring Wheatbelt digital connectivity is world class. The agricultural sector has a high take up of telecommunications to drive productivity. However, the dispersed settlement patterns of the Wheatbelt and its geography, in some parts, present challenges for digital connectivity. Distances and low population densities make provision of digital services and personal communications can make radio signals ineffective. Satellite solutions make some level of service available to most people, but these solutions are generally slower and unreliable.

Digital technology in the Wheatbelt suffers the paradox that high uptake is required to create demand, however, this requires a level of reliability in service limits demand. Mobile telephone coverage in the Region is highly variable in terms of both reliability and signal. The State Government’s Regional Mobile Communications Project (RMCP) has resulted in improved coverage for the Region through 17 new towers, however there are still significant gaps in coverage. The rate of the Wheatbelt small businesses to access internet services is increasing the importance of improved coverage for the Region. The 2012 WA State Aviation Strategy estimates 26% of Wheatbelt households had no internet connection78, well above State figures that show 18% of households without a phone. Wheatbelt small businesses have low corporate website presence (46%, compared to 71% in the Perth Region19) and only 25% of Wheatbelt small businesses utilise social media. Continued investment in increased use of digital technologies to engage with markets can provide the Region’s 10,000 small businesses with new market opportunities.

While lack of access to reliable services is in part responsible for the Region’s slow uptake of digital technology, the high number of people living in parts of the Wheatbelt with no internet connection, limits demand.

In 2011, 26% of Wheatbelt households had no internet connection. In 2011, 26% of Wheatbelt households had no internet connection.  Wheatbelt small businesses have low corporate website presence (46%, compared to 71% in the Perth Region19) and only 25% of Wheatbelt small businesses utilise social media. Continued investment in increased use of digital technology to engage with markets can provide the Region’s 10,000 small businesses with new market opportunities.

The Wheatbelt Digital Action Plan (RDA Wheatbelt, 2013) highlights the actions required to increase the usage of digital technology for both business and personal purposes delivering economic and social benefits for the Wheatbelt.
To grow the Wheatbelt’s digital capacity, the following actions are required:

- **improved connectivity and access (ongoing improvement to the mobile tower network throughout the Region and continued improved access to quality broadband services to enhance internet speeds and reliability);**
- **building online communities and services;** and
- **building digital innovation, which includes enhancing the digital skills of small business, internet marketing, delivery of education and health services through digital means.**

### 4.1.4.4 Land Assembly: Land, power, water and sewerage

**(a) Industrial Land**

The Wheatbelt is a large land mass (154,862 square kilometres), which is sparsely populated and has the ability to provide large parcels of industrial land for businesses that require a larger footprint. The majority of land in the Region is held in freehold title.

The development of industrial land in the Wheatbelt is constrained by the cost of connection to utilities. These costs are partly attributable to the need to upgrade infrastructure points of weakness back through the network and are most problematic for electricity connections. Innovative local off grid power and water solutions would reduce the reliance on ageing and expensive network services.

Serviced industrial land for medium to large sized businesses is available at the Avon Industrial Park, just east of Northam on the Great Eastern Highway. Planning for the proposed Muchea Employment Node is well advanced. This development is of State significance and is strategically located at the intersection of Brand and Great Northern Highways.

Zoned light industrial lots are available in a number of communities throughout the Region, but there remains a shortage of serviced industrial land in some areas.

Availability of serviced industrial lots would attract new industries to the Region, assisting with economic growth and generation of new employment opportunities. The relocation of large scale manufacturers from the metropolitan area would deliver benefits of freed up land for other development and a reduction of heavy freight traffic in the metropolitan area.

The development of ‘self-contained’ industrial land packages aligned with locational comparative advantages would assist to reduce development costs.

Aligning power upgrades and water supply with sub-regional need and moving from single proponent development to grouped development will allow development costs to be shared across industry. Targeted sub-regional marketing strategies to attract business to existing lots can increase local economic output.

**(b) Residential Land**

There is significant unmet demand for housing throughout the Wheatbelt75 compounded by the lack of available, construction-ready (serviced) residential land. The majority of approved development-ready lots are located in the peri-urban and coastal areas of the Region. However, the demand for housing is more widespread throughout the Wheatbelt.

Availability of water and lack of reticulated sewerage is limiting development in some communities, including peri-urban areas experiencing growth pressures. In other areas, the cost of housing development exceeds the market value of completed or established properties, resulting in an inability to finance development through traditional structures.

Improved access to water and reticulated sewerage could deliver availability and diversity of residential land across the Region and therefore assist in the attraction of population and thus labour force.

Planned development of rural residential land to meet growth demands will ensure appropriate population servicing keeps pace with development growth. The challenge will be to ensure land use conflicts are well managed.

- as with industrial land, greater alignment of infrastructure investment with sub-regional needs will allow more cost effective investment for service providers and developers;
- collaborative investment models will attract public and private investment and generate economies of scale; and
- the establishment of a Wheatbelt Infrastructure Co-ordinating Group will create opportunities for collaboration with the aim of reducing cost of land assembly for both residential and industrial developments.
The Wheatbelt has the assets to address energy issues within and external to the Region including:

- renewable energy options;
- ‘edge of grid’ solutions; and
- multi-proponent investment.

(d) Water

Growth pressures in peri-urban areas and the increasing demand for water in the Wheatbelt have caused some reliability issues within the Region. The Wheatbelt has the assets to address energy and water problems in the Wheatbelt communities and industry; and network upgrade costs to individual businesses.

Improved network planning at a sub-regional level that considers economic development opportunities could reduce network upgrade costs to individual businesses.

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Improved network planning at a sub-regional level that considers economic development opportunities could reduce network upgrade costs to individual businesses.
The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

The Wheatbelt’s land development and housing construction market is generally characterised for families and social disruption for some in some locations, resulting in poor outcomes between family needs and the services available suggests that there are cases of misalignment. Bureau of Statistics, Canberra


Figure 4.16 Household Composition

Number of persons per

Household

Wheatbelt

Residents

Western

Australia

Wheatbelt

% Wheatbelt

Western

Australia

Wheatbelt %

One

26.62

23.77

3.60

Two

39.58

34.49

5.08

Three

12.09

15.94

-3.25

Four

12.08

16.07

-3.99

Five

6.10

6.64

-0.54

Six or

more

5.13

5.00

0.03

Housing affordability varies markedly across the Region. There is a minimal shortfall of social housing in the Wheatbelt as a whole, and a surplus in a couple of Wheatbelt local government areas. The Department of Housing considers the demand for social housing to be modest in areas. The Department of Housing considers the capacity of the housing industry across the Region to support this growth, strategies that increase the level of land and housing development required approximately 40,000 additional dwellings by 2036. In order to accommodate and sustain the Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

by financial institution lending models that residential construction sector is constrained by small-scale developers. Anecdotally, the construction market is generally characterised

for the elderly.

4.2.1.1 Early Education and Child Care

The Region’s high percentage of population in the early years presents strong demand for child care services. New innovative service delivery methods are required to deliver services to a dispersed population and overcome the challenges that the sector is currently facing, including the cost of capital upgrades and access to skilled staff.

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) measures five key domains and is a population measure of childhood development. In 2011, a number of Wheatbelt areas had children who were developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains of the AEDI. High vulnerability is seen in

Toodyay (52.5%), Moora (46.4%) and Northern (40.3%) with nearly half of the children ranked in the bottom 10%. Areas such as Gingin (10%) and Merredin (11.4%) have a lower proportion of children who are developmentally vulnerable.

Improved access to parental support services and early childhood development programs will assist to redress a loss of potential workforce and broader regional capacity.

The key to future economic development and productivity gains lies in matching education and skills development to support this growth, strategies that increase the capacity of the housing industry across the Region are required:

- Innovative solutions to deliver diverse housing stock are required, including:
  - strategies to address market failure;
  - collaborative investment vehicles; and
  - universally designed housing that is flexible to meet the needs of workers, tourists and the elderly.

Improved access to parental support services and early childhood development programs will assist to redress a loss of potential workforce and broader regional capacity. To do better outcomes for Wheatbelt children, the following interventions are required:

- Parenting Centres that are co-located with primary schools in these areas showing higher levels of vulnerability; and
- Implementation of the Wheatbelt Regional Children’s Services Plan, aimed at developing a strategic long-term approach to supporting sustainable models of education and care services in the Wheatbelt.
The Wheatbelt is well serviced for primary schooling with 73 schools delivering primary curriculum. Ageing infrastructure is a concern in some schools, as is the attraction and retention of teaching staff. Changing policy around primary schooling, such as moving Year 7 students into secondary school, will affect services in the Region. This is of most concern in areas of population decline where decreasing school numbers are threatening reduced staffing numbers, school closures or reclassification of school levels.

4.2.1.3 Secondary Schools
Achievement levels of enrolled secondary students are comparable to State levels with 95% of enrolled students completing secondary schooling, 73 schools delivering secondary curriculum. Ageing infrastructure is a concern in some schools, as is the attraction and retention of teaching staff. Changing policy around primary schooling, such as moving Year 7 students into secondary school, will affect services in the Region. This is of most concern in areas of population decline where decreasing school numbers are threatening reduced staffing numbers, school closures or reclassification of school levels.

4.2.1.4 Vocational Education and Training, and Higher Education
There is limited access to tertiary training and education options within the Wheatbelt. The Region’s post compulsory education participation rates at between 2-4% compare poorly with State levels of 7-8%. Northam (5-6%), and Toodyay and Moora (4-5%) have the highest rates of participation in the Region. C.Y. O’Connor Institute is the primary provider of post compulsory education. The ten campuses (Merredin, Moora, Narrogin, Northam) offer a range of courses, including apprenticeships, awards, certificates, diplomas, pre-apprenticeships, short courses and traineeships. Having commenced delivery of an Agribusiness Degree course (supported through Charles Sturt University) at Muresk Institute campus, C.Y. O’Connor Institute is investigating the possibility of delivering other courses through similar arrangements with universities. Increasingly, C.Y. O’Connor Institute is focused on flexible, mobile and digital delivery that is capable of supporting learning communities across dispersed and remote student locations. The fact that C.Y. O’Connor delivers programs beyond the Wheatbelt, is evidence of this.

The increasing global trend towards the provision of online tertiary education will require increased support for students undertaking this form of study. The Muresk Institute campus has existing hard and soft infrastructure that could be utilised to meet this need and would result in a more efficient and effective service delivery to a dispersed population context.

Interventions that increase participation and attainment in education and life long learning are a priority for the Wheatbelt. Such interventions require networked infrastructure and services within and across communities, specifically:

• the ability to share bricks and mortar (within communities), and telecommunications and knowledge resources across sectors will result in a more efficient and effective service delivery to a dispersed population context;
• addressing service shortfalls in growth areas;
• enhanced training and higher education offerings to retain the 15–29 age cohort; and
• marketing the Region’s attractiveness, jobs and business opportunities to attract this age group to the Region.
Leadership across the Region occurs through formal and informal structures. The dominant formal leadership structure occurs in local government and is fragmented, with 43 local governments across the Region, operating in three WA Local Government Associations (WALGA) Zones with 10 Voluntary Regional Organisations of Councils (VROCs). There is a lack of gender, cultural and age diversity within formal leadership structures in the Region.

At a local level, structures outside local government include progress associations, business associations, tourism associations, sporting bodies and community foundations. Some of these groups also work at a sub-regional level. The Avon Community Development Foundation is one such group and achieves positive stakeholder partnership, leadership and builds community economic and social infrastructure across the Avon.

Formal structures, with representation at a whole of region level, include the Wheatbelt Development Commission, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Wheatbelt, C.Y. O’Connor Institute, Directions Workforce Solutions Inc., Wheatbelt NRM, The Wheatbelt GP Network, the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group and Heartlands WA Inc.

For Aboriginal residents, the South West Native Title Settlement has the potential to drive leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship. Strong engagement with Wheatbelt Aboriginal residents is required to achieve this.

Measures to improve leadership and governance in the Region should include:

- decentralisation of State public service structures as outlined in “Putting the Public First”;
- strategies to increase diversity in leadership roles;
- better support and resource to community not for profit groups;
- support for cross community initiatives;
- the development of knowledge networks that connect research development, innovation and leadership; and
- growing the Region’s links to the University sector.

Volunteering rates in the Wheatbelt are the highest in the State, particularly in the south-eastern Wheatbelt83. Volunteer contributions are integral to the operation of a range of organisations, including Fire and Emergency Services, St John’s Ambulance, environmental management groups, Country Women’s Association’s Shed groups, culture and arts groups and sporting clubs and associations. The Wheatbelt’s increasingly aged population is likely to influence the levels of volunteering in the Region.

Changing generational values mean that different methodologies are required to attract and retain tomorrow’s volunteers and leaders. Improved support structures and reduction of red tape associated with some volunteer roles will encourage increased participation and allow people to continue to give to their communities.

Continued high levels of volunteering in the Wheatbelt should be encouraged through:

- increased co-ordination, support and investment in capacity building for key volunteer services;
- ensuring that emergency services are only called upon in the case of true emergency, and are not utilised to support routine service delivery; and
- measuring and reporting the economic benefits of volunteerism (including income to government) which could provide a basis for targeted incentives through the tax system for community members who volunteer (commensurate with the economic benefits to society and government).
4.3 Liveable Communities

Fast Facts:
- 200 communities offering diverse lifestyles
- 70% of communities within two hours of Perth
- Underutilised social infrastructure
- Mismatch between family and housing profiles
- Low crime rates
- 2013 Living in the Regions Report: Wheatbelt respondents rated highly safety, lifestyle, general well-being and happiness

4.3.1 Connected Settlements

The Wheatbelt’s strength is its multiple liveability options. Having vibrant communities with high liveability achieved through access to quality services and availability of affordable, quality housing is key to attracting and retaining population. For government, considerable existing and at times underutilised infrastructure across many communities, presents a cost effective opportunity to grow population. Planning has shown that communities across the Wheatbelt are strongly interconnected by economic and social activity. Serviced by five distinct sub-regional centres, future growth in the Wheatbelt needs to account for both the interconnectivity between these centres and their hinterlands and the unique differences and comparative advantages from one sub-region to another.

As well as SuperTowns Jurien Bay and Northam; Merredin, Narrogin and Moora are also key service centres. A growth plan has been prepared for each. In the case of Moora, because of patterns of economic and social connectedness, Wongan Hills and Dalwallinu have been included. The Greater Narrogin Growth Plan accounts for interconnected activity across the Town and Shire of Narrogin and the Shire of Cuballing. Growth planning is also required for high population growth areas such as the Shires of Gingin and Chittering. An alliance between the high growth local governments of Chittering, Dandaragan and Gingin will be an important mechanism for addressing pressures and opportunities arising from Perth’s northern growth.

For the Avon Sub-region, a concept being developed is the notion of ‘Avon City’. This planning process identifies projects required to deliver growth across the Avon Sub-region and recognises how the comparative advantage of each community contributes to overall growth of the Sub-region. Similar to the notion of a CBD and its connectedness with its surrounding suburbs, planning for interlinked communities and growing a sub-region as a single entity has merit in the Wheatbelt context. This delivers effective planning and investment and while it leads to cross community outcomes, local government amalgamations are not required to achieve the desired outcomes.

4.3.1.1 Population Projections

ABS population projections suggest that Western Australia’s population will increase to at least 4.8 million people by 205084. If the Wheatbelt maintains its current percentage of the State’s population, there will be 154,000 people living in the Region by 2050. With State Government policies aimed at increasing the percentage of the State’s population living in regional WA, the Wheatbelt’s proximity to the Perth region and the potential for further spread of the urban footprint, it is anticipated that the Region will increase its share of population growth, resulting in a growth scenario of 180,000 people by 2050 (Figure 4.17). The 180,000 population target means that the Wheatbelt as a percentage of the State’s population will grow from 3.15% to 3.75%, and from 11.85% to 13.39% of the regional WA population. Given the assumptions stated above and recent economic planning, this is not an overly ambitious target. A detailed rationale behind these population projections can be found at Appendix I.

The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

Figure 4.17 Wheatbelt age profile showing under-representation of 14-44 cohort

Source: 2011 Census of Population and Housing

4.3.1.2 Population Profile

Figure 4.18 Wheatbelt age profile showing under-representation of 14-44 age cohort to the State population, is characterised by over representation of the 0-14 and 45+ age cohorts and under-representation of 14-44 age cohort (Figure 4.18). This illustrates the out-migration to seek secondary and tertiary education and employment opportunities.
The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

The Region experiences relatively low levels of immigration and lesser cultural diversity than State levels. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people have a higher representation in the Wheatbelt than State levels. The 0-14 cohort make up 39% of the Region’s Aboriginal population. The Region has a high percentage of low-income earners (income below $25,000) in comparison to the State.

Improved access to secondary and tertiary education options in the Region is a significant factor in addressing the out-migration of the 15-29 cohort. The affordability of living in the metropolitan area while studying is a key concern for this cohort. The benefits of having this group remain in the Region to study will add considerable value to regional economic output.

Implications of the high representation of the 45+ group remain in the Region to study will add considerable value to regional economic output.

Section 4.2.2 as an economic opportunity for the Region is a significant factor in addressing the out-migration of the 15-29 cohort. The affordability of living in the metropolitan area while studying is a key concern for this cohort. The benefits of having this group remain in the Region to study will add considerable value to regional economic output.

The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

To meet the needs of the Region’s changing demographics, infrastructure and services are required for:

- 0-4 year olds, particularly those who are developmentally vulnerable;
- education and employment pathways for 15-44 year olds; and
- aged care services for the 70+ cohort.

4.3.2 Service Delivery

4.3.2.1 Aged Care

There is a growing demand for services and infrastructure to accommodate the Wheatbelt’s ageing population. The Wheatbelt’s aged population is predicted to continue to grow at faster rates than 9%. It is predicated that “the 70+ population of 7,146 will have increased to 13,400 by 2027, moving from 10.4% of the total population to around 17%.”

The availability of suitable housing and access to services will support the retention of the ageing population in the Region. The growth of an aged care servicing and support industry in the Region will deliver on the contemporary ageing policies of both the Federal and State governments which support ‘Aging in Place’. The Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Services Report (2014) investigates an integrated approach to aged care service delivery that fits the Wheatbelt context.

The solutions proposed in the Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Services Report (2014) recommends:

- Support for planning and investing in Age Friendly Communities;
- Development of universally designed housing to facilitate home based care; and
- Flexible models of home care; and
- Enhanced residential care to meet demand.

4.3.2.2 Social Services

Delivery of social services in the Wheatbelt is a challenge due to the Region’s dispersed population and lack of a principal regional centre. Many of the Department of Human Services (DHS) (Centrelink and Medicare) services are delivered through agencies which have shortened hours and minimal-staffing due to funding constraints. While most sub-regional centres have a DHS agency, smaller communities are serviced by access points in Community Resource Centres. This can affect the quality of and accessibility to these essential government services.

The Region has a higher percentage of low-income earners (30%) than State levels (26%) in comparison to the State. This is demonstrated in the growing demand from the Region for assistance through the Hardship Utility Grants Scheme that provides assistance to maintain connection to essential services. Demand for Hardship Utility Grants in the Wheatbelt Region since 2008 has grown from 48 applications to 450 applications in 2012.

ABS estimates that there are 411 homeless persons in the Wheatbelt and an additional 5,247 persons living in inadequate or crowded conditions. This represents 1.2% of the Region’s population.

An estimated 3.5% of the Wheatbelt population has a disability, slightly higher than the State rate at 3.19%. The Disability Services Commission (DSC) reports a higher rate of disabled people accessing DSC Local Area Co-ordinators.

There is limited respite care for disability services available in the Region. The recent development of a respite centre operated by the Wheatbelt Individual and Family Support Association in York will assist some Wheatbelt residents to access this service.

Improved resourcing of and collaboration between agencies would assist to improve service delivery and overcome the challenges posed by the geographic spread of population.

Limited the number of services delivered from metropolitan area or a single point in the Region while consolidating and co-locating services in key centres across the Region would help to achieve economies of scale, reduce duplication and develop strong service hubs.

Improved service delivery will result from:

- better collaboration across agencies and at all levels of government;
- limiting the number of services delivered from metropolitan area or a single point in the Region while consolidating and co-locating services in key centres across the Region; and
- better supporting the not-for-profit sector to deliver relevant and co-ordinated services at point of need.
These include the and services improvements to deliver has funded a number of which are operated by the Health Service and a Primary Healthcare Unit. There are also 20 small hospitals and two mental Health infrastructure varies across the Region, but the majority of facilities are over 50 years of age and are designed for modern health service delivery. Infrastructure and services are provided by the Department of Health (SA Health Region) and a number of not-for-profit organisations, including Wheatbelt GP Network, Silver Chain, Royal Flying Doctor Service and St John’s Ambulance. The Wheatbelt Health Region is made up of four districts. Each district has an Integrated District Health Service and a Primary Healthcare Unit. There are also 25 small hospitals and 10 mental health services servicing the Region. The Region has formed a Primary Care nursing posts, six of which are operated by the Silver Chain. Health profiles for Regions has a number of projects that have and will continue to deliver improvements in health and aged care, infrastructure and services in the Region. These include the Southern health care system. Health Initiative (SHI) ($655m over five years), Regional Men’s Health ($2.7m over four years), Royal Flying Doctor Service medical jet service ($30m over three years) and Housing for Workers.

Two public mental health services are provided in the Region, operating out of Narrogin (Great Southern Mental Health) and Northam (Wheatbelt Mental Health). Services are also offered by the not-for-profit Wheatbelt GP Network. Care and support programs such as Regional Men’s Health and Oasis provide mental health awareness and educational programs to the Region. In addition, the 100 health services for Wheatbelt residents, the majority are located outside the Region via online or phone services. These resources are likely spread, and unco-ordinated, resulting in a confusing offering to Wheatbelt residents. With the rate of teenage pregnancies, male youth suicide, prostate cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity and arthritis in men, lower rates of breast cancer and sexually transmitted diseases.

The Wheatbelt’s health profile is characterised by a • lower hospitalisation rate for Wheatbelt residents than that of the State, yet similar trends in causes of hospitalisation; • significantly higher rate of potential preventable hospitalisations (PPH) accounting for 12% of hospitalisations, a rate of three times more than the State average reflecting a lack of access to primary health care; • high percentage (7%) of emergency department presentation classified as semi-urgent or non-urgent, demonstrating the shortage of General Practitioners; • low ‘self-sufficiency rating’ (28%), reflecting the need to access higher order treatments outside the Wheatbelt (i.e. Perth Region); • declining trend in hospital separations and bed days despite an increasing population, indicating a change in the delivery of health services; • much lower rate of GP attendance (2,975 per 1,000 people) compared to the State (3,818 per 1,000 people)

When compared to the State averages, the trends for Wheatbelt residents include higher rates of teenage pregnancies, male youth suicide, prostate cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity and arthritis in men, lower rates of breast cancer and sexually transmitted diseases. Improved health and well-being can be achieved for the Wheatbelt through:

• continued health planning and investment that ensures better alignment between infrastructure and services and community need; • investment in infrastructure and services to grow areas; • enhanced health education and co-ordination of information and services to include people about which level of health service to access; and • ongoing partnerships, such as the Wheatbelt Health Net (the Wheatbelt Health Net) to work more closely together, funders and providers.

4.3.2.4 Public Transport The Wheatbelt has limited access to public transport, both intra-urban and inter-regional. The Avon Link and Prospector passenger rail services operate on the East West line, providing a daily service. TransWA also provides bus services to some areas of the Region. These services are infrequent with some sites only receiving one service a week with limited stopovers. There are also two small regional airports in the Wheatbelt with limited facilities. Two public mental health services are provided in the Region, operating out of Narrogin (Great Southern Mental Health) and Northam dealing with less serious civil and criminal matters. Major sporting clubs are managed in a reactive manner, often utilising resources from outside the Region which is costly and inefficient. Regional boards and government resources and governance should be utilised to deliver proactive services to communities to prevent such situations reaching crisis levels. Additional resourcing to allow cross-agency engagement with families and groups to address causal factors prior to crisis would present better outcomes for individuals and communities.

A proactive approach is required, including:

• regionally based resources and governance • relevant proactive service to communities; • integrated resourcing to allow cross-agency engagement with families and groups; • increased police resources in areas of population growth; and • state of the art facilities to deliver an efficient, effective police and justice service to the Region. These facilities should enable integrated cross-agency initiatives to deal with vulnerable families effectively.
4.3.3 Community Amenity

4.3.3.1 Culture and the Arts

The Region’s culture and the arts sectors offer opportunities for growth, both as an industry and as a creative outlet for residents. There is significant art and cultural activity in the Region, including fine art groups, theatre groups, museum collections, contemporary music groups, craft groups, photography clubs, book clubs and more.

While the majority of activity is undertaken as a hobby or for personal reasons, there are a growing number of people deriving an income through the creative industries, represented by 0.5% of the Region’s population in arts or recreation employment. There are a number of growing hubs of artistic activity in the Region.

The Region has over 25 museums and galleries presenting a range of historical and cultural topics, including visual arts and sculpture, wildflowers, toy soldiers, war and pioneering heritage. Most of these are privately or local government owned and many are staffed by volunteers.

The Cummins Theatre (Merredin) and the Moora Performing Arts Centre are a part of a network of professionally managed regional WA venues known as Circuitwest. There are also a large number of smaller venues throughout the Region including town halls, school performing arts centres, sound shells, and amphitheatres.

In recent years there has been considerable engagement with the WA Music (WAM) to support the growth of contemporary musical talent in the Region. Touring circuits combining WA talent with local artists have successfully provided development opportunities for locals and increased recognition of State artists.

Development of the culture and the arts sector will enhance the Region's vibrancy and deliver employment opportunities.

Initiatives to foster arts and culture in the Region should include measures such as:

- Increased market development opportunities for professional and developing artists in the Region;
- Support for collaborative networks to assist artists to share resources and ideas;
- Support for localised activities for community engagement and entertainment;
- Continued development of contemporary music in the Region through support for touring circuits and networks for local musicians;
- Support for artistic programming and key staffing of cultural venues to ensure maximum usage and development; and
- Development of an integrated annual arts and cultural events calendar with activities spread across the Wheatbelt, promoting both the Wheatbelt and the individual locations of each event.

4.3.3.2 Heritage

Heritage in the Wheatbelt captures pioneering, aboriginal, motoring, rail and convict aspects of Western Australian history. Planning for the sustainability of the Wheatbelt’s key built heritage is essential in providing an insight into the past, creating community amenity and providing tourism opportunities.

Key heritage sites in the Wheatbelt such as The Monastic Town of New Norcia, Newcastle Goal and Police Station complex (Toodyay), Cummins Theatre, Narrogin Town Hall, Northam, York and Toodyay townsites all present excellent tourism opportunities. New Norcia, in particular, is a nationally recognised destination for domestic and international tourists. Heritage in its built form is increasingly being recognised and utilised as important community gathering places and venues for inside and outside events.

To maintain the Wheatbelt’s heritage and maximise opportunity, the following actions are required:

- Construction of bypass in New Norcia and York to remove heavy traffic from close proximity to heritage buildings;
- Engagement between Wheatbelt Local Governments and historical groups with the State Heritage Council on the sustainability of the identified state heritage sites; and
- Creation of linkages between places of heritage value and existing and future tourism activities.
The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

Sport and Recreation

Sport and recreation plays a significant role in Wheatbelt communities. It provides opportunities to network, socialise and helps create a sense of belonging. Sports clubs and community organisations are important conduits for developing social capital and are good barometers of community strength. Relative to State averages, the Wheatbelt has a significantly lower percentage of population that participate in a sufficient level of physical activity and significantly higher levels of obesity (Figure 4.20).

The majority of Wheatbelt communities have excellent sporting and recreational facilities managed by the local government authorities. The sustainability of these facilities is challenging, with changing community expectations around quality of facilities and cost of access. While infrastructure upgrades are funded, in part by the Department of Sport and Recreation, the ongoing cost of operation and maintenance is the responsibility of local governments.

More sustainable models are required to maximise the benefit of the Region’s considerable local and regional assets. Such models need to account for:
- ongoing operation and maintenance of facilities;
- capacity building within local sporting clubs to improve administration, coaching and development in the Region;
- an increased focus on inclusion; and
- building and amenity design that delivers multi-user, multi-purpose functions, achieves sound water management and encourages more active lifestyles.

Fast Facts:

- Proportion of adults who participate in a sufficient level of physical activity: 46.7%
- Proportion of adults normal weight (BMI categories): 25.6%
- Proportion of adults overweight (BMI categories): 38.3%
- Proportion of adults obese (BMI categories): 35.8%

Figure 4.20 WA Health and Well-being Surveillance System, 2006-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Wheatbelt</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults who participate in a sufficient level of physical activity</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>-6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of adults normal weight (BMI categories)</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>-7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of adults overweight (BMI categories)</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of adults obese (BMI categories)</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>+9.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.4 Valued Natural Amenity

4.4.1.1 Dry Land Salinity

Dry land salinity threatens agricultural production and built infrastructure, particularly in areas located in or adjacent to valley floors. More than one million hectares of agricultural land in the south-west of WA is severely salt-affected and the opportunity cost of lost agricultural production is estimated to be at least $344 million per year.

The Wheatbelt is a complex issue, needing integrated responses at farm, townsite and catchment level to manage both ground and surface water.

Salinity solutions include, but are not limited to:
- salt tolerant species development;
- engineering; and
- landscape management through re-vegetation.

4.4.1.2 Soil Health

It is estimated that more than 14.25 million hectares of Wheatbelt soils are acidic, or are at risk of becoming acidic. Acidity impacts significantly on crop production (estimated annual cost of $418 million), and limits crop choice. Reduced crop growth can lead to erosion and nutrient leaching. If not managed, acidic drainage has the potential to seriously impact wetlands and river systems. The National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and Natural Heritage Trust Program 2003-2009 Final Report cites soil acidity as a major threat to the degradation of soils.

In addition to acidity, soil erosion, compaction, water repellence and nutrient export are all to be managed. Agricultural soil management practices are increasingly focused on soil health and improving productivity to deliver economic and environmental benefits.

Further development of skills and knowledge in soil health and production benefits, including demonstration of best practice soil monitoring, management and nutrient planning will assist in combating productivity and improvement of crop production.

4.4.1 Water, Landscape and Climate Change Management

The majority of the Wheatbelt’s landscapes have been altered through clearing of native vegetation. This practice has led to significant land and water management issues, including rising groundwater levels, salinity, eutrophication of waterways and loss of biodiversity. Only 13.2% of the landscape retains its original vegetation cover.

Improving land management practices will continue to deliver productivity gains for the agricultural industry. There are a significant number of national and conservation parks across the Region. It also forms part of the area across the south west of Western Australia identified as one of 25 internationally significant biodiversity ‘hotspots’, due to its high level of species diversity under threat from human disturbance. This natural environment presents opportunities for the development of nature based tourism ventures, and native fauna and flora conservation programs.

In addition to acidification, compaction, water repellence and nutrient export, soil acidity and potential erosion are to be managed. Agricultural soil management practices are increasingly focused on soil health and improving productivity to deliver economic and environmental benefits.
4.4.1 Water
Availability and provision of water is a key enabler for economic, social and environmental development. With reduced rainfall and water storage capacity, strategies are required to develop and secure water resources. Climate change has negatively impacted on run-off and groundwater discharge and since European settlement, water quality within Wheatbelt catchments has altered, resulting in near fresh waterways becoming saline, affecting wildlife habitat, farming productivity and community amenity.

Water in the Wheatbelt lies predominantly within the Avon River Basin, which extends 500 kms to the east of the Perth Region. The remainder is in the Moore Hill Basin to the north, and the Blackwood, Murray and Collie River Basin to the south. The Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia lists nine wetlands in the Wheatbelt. The zone of ancient drainage located east of the Meckering Line, has extensive regional aquifers. Water quality across aquifers is variable, from salty to fresh. Groundwater is believed to be available in a narrow strip between the Meckering Line and the Darling Scarp, and again, its quality is variable. Gingin and Jurien groundwater areas provide water for public use, mining, agriculture and horticulture. The Jurien groundwater area has approximately 64 gigalitres (GL) available for new users. The Gingin groundwater area is either full or approaching full allocation in some sub areas, with allocation to some agricultural and horticultural users already reduced. Water entitlement transactions and increasing water use efficiency or development of new supplies are required to meet increased demand.

Water planning is required in the following areas:
• local and metropolitan use, to address both demand issues and protect wetlands; and
• the exploration of new water sources, including water treatment, to create sources for domestic and industrial use.

4.4.1.4 Climate
Changing climatic conditions in the Wheatbelt will affect agriculture and aquaculture production, town and coastal planning, asset management and impact on human health. This issue will be State-wide and not limited to the Wheatbelt. The Wheatbelt’s climate features mild wet winters and hot dry summers. Most rain falls between May and September and until recently, has had low variability. Long-term records show the climate becoming hotter (Figure 4.21), drier (Figure 4.22) and more variable. CSIRO predictions indicate that the Region can expect higher temperatures by 1-2 degrees, changes to seasonality and amount of annual rainfall, increased evaporation rates, more frequent extreme weather, storm surges and shoreline movements affecting coastlines.

In this context, water security is a critical issue. Research and development into alternative crops, and drought resistant grain varieties are delivering options for the agricultural industry to deal with climate variation.

Climate mitigation strategies are required to underpin industry, business and community planning. Specifically:
• town planning in coastal communities needs to account for sea level rise and the inevitable salinity shift;
• infrastructure and emergency service plans need to account for increased numbers of extreme weather events; and
• R&D into production efficiency and water management that is adaptive to climate change.

4.4.2 Nature Based Industry
4.4.2.1 Renewable Energy
Section 4.1.1.3 outlines the renewable energy opportunities that can be derived from the Region’s landscape. Wind, solar, geo-thermal and biomass production could lead to energy self-sufficiency in the Region.

4.4.2.2 Nature Based Tourism
As identified in Section 4.2.2, tourism presents opportunity for the Region. A number of national and conservation parks, nature reserves, granite outcrops and iconic locations, such as the Pinnacles and Wave Rock, offer a multitude of nature based tourism opportunities.

![Figure 4.21 Trend in Mean Temperature (Annual 1970-2013 (OC/10yr)](image)

![Figure 4.22 Trend in Annual Total Rainfall 1970-2012 (mm/10yr)](image)
The Wheatbelt is a region of growth, diversity and opportunity. Land and house values, safety and a strong sense of community are drivers for in-migration.

The name “Wheatbelt” and the ongoing representation of it as a drought and salt affected agricultural producing region in decline does little to accurately portray this.

To attract investment, workers and visitors, a targeted strategy linked to specific opportunity, is required. Heartlands WA Inc. exists to promote the Region and ongoing support is required for it to establish a strong regional brand, connect community, business, investment and job opportunities and market them effectively.

The five Sub-regional Economic Strategies provide a strong foundation for marketing economic opportunity. Strategies and prospectuses for emerging industries identified in this planning is an important starting point. These Economic Strategies also form a strong foundation for influencing public and private investment decisions.

4.5 Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities
Fast Facts:
- Wheatbelt residents highly value safety and a strong sense of community

The Wheatbelt is a region of growth, diversity and opportunity. Land and house values, safety and a strong sense of community are drivers for in-migration.

Fast Facts:
- Wheatbelt residents highly value safety and a strong sense of community

4.6 Effective Partnerships
Fast Facts:
- 43 local governments
- Five distinct sub-regions and five sub-regional centres (no one regional centre)

In a region consisting of 43 local governments, 200 communities, five distinct sub-regions with five sub-regional centres and nearly 10,000 small businesses, mechanisms that link activity, resources and investment within the Wheatbelt are critical to achieving effective development outcomes.

Similarly, mechanisms that facilitate attracting activity, resources and investment from outside the regional are required. In both cases, co-ordination and collaboration will result in better outcomes.

Across the Region, there are examples of such thinking and action at a regional and sub-regional level. These include:
- partnerships between the peak economic development agencies of the Region - the Wheatbelt Development Commission and RDA Wheatbelt;
- Senior Managers’ Group – Wheatbelt senior managers of key regional agencies;
- alliances such as the Wheatbelt Health MOU Group, which brings together local, regional, state and federal representation to advocate for health services across the Region;
- not-for-profit groups such as Heartlands WA Inc. (marketing the Region), Wheatbelt NRM (land management), Wheatbelt Business Network Inc (business development) and Directions Workforce Solutions Inc (workforce development); and
- sporting associations.

Sub-regional mechanisms include:
- Voluntary Regional Organisations of Councils (VROCs) and Local Government Zones;
- community based organisations such as Avon Community Development Foundation;
- local health advisory groups;
- tourism groups; and
- Small Business Development Centres.

Innovative mechanisms being developed to foster collaborative action, include business alliances and investment trusts.

Across industry, community and government sectors, strategies are required that bring together individuals and groups to facilitate collaboration and co-ordination that results in effective investment and outcomes.
The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

Given the global opportunities, the Wheatbelt’s comparative advantages and barriers to growth outlined in this section, there exists considerable opportunity to grow the Region’s economy and population by developing six key pillars for growth.

4.7.1 Vibrant Economy

With a diversified economic base growing at an annual average rate of 8.2%47 over the last 10 years, the Wheatbelt is in a strong position to contribute to the State’s continued economic prosperity. Such growth will require:

• Emerging Industry Development - Supporting the development of emerging industry sectors to consolidate the Region’s diversified economic potential. Pursuit of more intensive industry matched with the development and application of innovation and technology and developing intensive agriculture and aquaculture. The Wheatbelt will use targeted programs to develop and grow emerging industry sectors. Maximum growth can be achieved by looking at job intensive industry development and building on the following areas of comparative advantage:
  - commodity and niche foods through dry land broadacre agriculture; intensive agriculture (horticulture) and aquaculture.
  - commodity and niche natural resources, such as minerals and renewable energy.
  - population services that have the dual purpose of providing amenity for existing and future residents and offering employment.
  - areas of comparative advantage for the Wheatbelt include: aged care, aviation, renewable energy, tourism, culture and the arts, education and training services, health, retail and well-being and leisure.

• Skilled Workers – The Wheatbelt has one of the lowest unemployment rates after the Pilbara and Goldfields-Esperance and there is a significant out-migration of the 15-29 year old cohort. Workforce attraction is critical to support economic growth.

• Key Infrastructure - Investing in strategic infrastructure assets including enhancing transport and digital infrastructure, land development and housing will underpin growth opportunities.

• Marketing Wheatbelt - The Wheatbelt offers multiple liveability options to key decision makers who better understand the Wheatbelt, a region of growth and opportunity. This Blueprint provides evidence of a different Wheatbelt, a region of growth and opportunity.

• Skilled Workers – The Wheatbelt has one of the lowest unemployment rates after the Pilbara and Goldfields-Esperance and there is a significant out-migration of the 15-29 year old cohort. Workforce attraction is critical to support economic growth.

• Key Infrastructure - Investing in strategic infrastructure assets including enhancing transport and digital infrastructure, land development and housing will underpin growth opportunities.

Maximum growth can be achieved by looking at job intensive industry development and building on the following areas of comparative advantage:

• Producing and processing:
  - commodity and niche foods through dry land broadacre agriculture; intensive agriculture (horticulture) and aquaculture.
  - commodity and niche natural resources, such as minerals and renewable energy.

• Population services that have the dual purpose of providing amenity for existing and future residents and offering employment.

• Transformation of Agriculture - Increasing productivity of existing industry through pursuit of opportunity along the supply chain and application of innovation and technology and developing intensive agriculture and aquaculture. The Wheatbelt will use targeted programs to develop and grow emerging industry sectors.

• Business Development - Supporting the Region’s 10,000 of small businesses so that they can grow and prosper in the global marketplace.

The Wheatbelt’s capacity for growth

Given the global opportunities, the Wheatbelt’s comparative advantages and barriers to growth outlined in this section, there exists considerable opportunity to grow the Region’s economy and population by developing six key pillars for growth.

4.7.2 Clever People

To achieve population growth, there is a need to address the out-migration of 15-29 year olds, the higher than state average proportion of the Region’s population in the 0-4 cohort and high growth rate of the 65+ cohort. Population attraction strategies need to aim at normalising this population profile. High workforce participation and low unemployment mean that workforce attraction must be a key element of any population growth strategy.

Innovation, leadership and volunteerism will drive productivity and community vibrancy. Life long learning will ensure skills meet the Region’s need and job intensive employment opportunities are maximised for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Wheatbelt residents.

4.7.3 Liveable Communities

The Wheatbelt offers multiple liveability options across 230 communities. Residents highly value the potential of creating a Region’s safety and strong sense of community. Considerable social infrastructure exists across these communities, with a need to plan for enhanced amenity in high growth areas. Connecting settlements through the development of strong ‘hubs’ will result in more effective economic development and efficient service delivery.

Sustainable living reform will result in innovative service models across the highly dispersed area and better match services to the population profiles of the Region.

Investment in community amenity will ensure the attraction and retention of population.

4.7.4 Valued Natural Amenity

The Wheatbelt has a permanently altered landscape that will continue to benefit from strong land stewardship. The natural landscape offers considerable social and economic benefit and is being impacted by climate variation. This landscape, the water within it and climate change need to be effectively managed to mitigate risk.

Already producing 60% of the State’s renewable energy and benefitting from high visitor numbers to natural attractions, the Wheatbelt is well placed to continue to derive benefit from this landscape, as long as possible conflicts between productivity, biodiversity and land use are effectively managed.

4.7.5 Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities

Key to optimising the opportunities for the Wheatbelt will be changing perceptions of the Region. The Region is often portrayed in terms of population, economic and environmental decline. This Blueprint provides evidence of a different Wheatbelt, a region of growth and opportunity.

Family, business, industry and government decision makers who better understand the diversity and opportunities are more likely to invest. Strategies that market Wheatbelt opportunities to key decision makers will be critical to the Region achieving its growth potential.

4.7.6 Effective Partnerships

In a region with high numbers of organisations (local government, business, community) more effective planning, project implementation and investment will result from communities, organisations and groups working together. Collaborative approaches already found in the Region have resulted in more cost effective and efficient project and service delivery across communities. Support for such innovation is required on an ongoing basis.

Section 5 of the Blueprint provides details of the desired outcomes and targets to be achieved and the priority actions required within these six pillars to deliver continued economic and population growth to the Wheatbelt and the State.
5.0 Transforming the Wheatbelt

Having identified the vision for the Wheatbelt (Section 2), analysed the global drivers (Section 3) and regional capacity that will enable or inhibit growth (Section 4), this section of the Blueprint outlines the specific outcomes and targets to be achieved, the assumptions behind the economic, population and workforce growth projections and the priority actions required to deliver these.

5.1 Vision, Aspirations and Targets

**Vibrant Economy**
A diversified and adaptive economic base building on the Wheatbelt’s assets and aligned to State, National and International opportunity.

- **2050 Target:** 7% Average Annual Growth Rate

**Clever People**
Lifelong learning, highly skilled labour, innovation and leadership drive economic growth and community vibrancy.

- **2050 Target:** Workforce of 109,800

**Liveable Communities**
Diverse, safe, healthy and resilient communities where services and infrastructure reflect the needs and aspirations of residents.

- **2010 Target:** 180,000 people

**Valued Natural Amenity**
The Wheatbelt’s unique natural amenity is valued as an asset for social, cultural and economic development for current and future generations.

- **2050 Target:** Off grid power and water solutions in 30 Wheatbelt communities

**Vision for the Future**
The Wheatbelt is a key contributor to Western Australia’s prosperity. The region’s prime location, diverse economy, clever people, vibrant communities and unique natural environment offer a high quality of life and will attract global innovators and investors.

9,760 new jobs by 2026, and 14,000 jobs by 2050;
- tourism;
- renewable energy; and
- aviation.

• diversifying primary industries along the supply chain, increasing both product value and employment requirements;
• growth of business and industry. 10,000 businesses currently employ 21,140 people. 20,000 new businesses by 2050 will employ a further 42,000 people.

5.2 Wheatbelt Growth Assumptions

The Wheatbelt will play an important role in accommodating some of the State’s predicted population growth because of its proximity to the Perth region. Growth to the north and east of Perth will continue to impact on growth in the Wheatbelt in terms of both population and the economy. Population growth needs to be supported by economic activity which results in job growth. Figure 5.1 outlines the current and aspirational targets for the economy, population and workforce.

The target of 7% average annual growth rate (AAGR) for the economy is conservative given the 8.2% AAGR for the last 10 years. This approach has been taken on the assumption that the significant growth of the mining sector (221% over the last 5 years) will not be sustained at this level. Growth in all industry sectors is expected to continue, given historical trends.

Low unemployment and high participation mean that workforce attraction is required now to meet job demand. Economic growth and new jobs will be created through:
• the development of emerging industries with relatively high job needs and in line with the Region’s comparative advantage. Such industries include:
  - intensive agriculture and food processing;
  - construction;
  - transport and logistics;
  - niche manufacturing;
  - aged care and other population services.
  (1.5 aged care workers for every 70+ person =

• attracting private investment which in turn brings new business and industry to the Region;
• minimising out-migration of 15-29 year olds by developing strong pathways from education to employment; and
• attracting workforce age population to fill current and future jobs by marketing these jobs and the liveability of Wheatbelt communities.

These actions will result in a shift from business as usual to transformational change that delivers on the Wheatbelt’s potential and achieves stated targets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economy GDP S6.4b</td>
<td>GDP S183.7b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Year AAGR 8.2%</td>
<td>7% AAGR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population 75,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3.15% of the State’s population)</td>
<td>(13.75% of the State’s population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11.85% of regional WA’s population)</td>
<td>(13.39% of regional WA’s population)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce 47,250 (63.7% of population)</td>
<td>109,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth of 10% over last 10 years</td>
<td>16,000 new jobs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.1 Key Wheatbelt Targets
These population and economic growth targets can only be achieved if the Region has:
• a clear economic strategy to ensure a Vibrant Economy;
• clever people to enhance productivity and community vibrancy;
• liveable communities that attract and retain workers; and
• a valued natural amenity that is effectively managed to mitigate risk and maximise economic and social benefit.

In addition to these four pillars, the unique circumstance of the Wheatbelt requires enhanced perceptions of the Region to promote opportunities for investment, employment, lifestyle and visitation. Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities in a targeted way will achieve this.

In addition, the multiple stakeholders within and external to the Region need to be brought together to create Effective Partnerships that maximise investment identification and delivery.

The Wheatbelt Road Map for Growth provides the framework for these six pillars for growth.

**Figure 5.2  Wheatbelt Road Map for Growth**

**Vibrant Economy**
- Industry Development
  - Emerging Industries
  - Transforming Agriculture
- Business Development
  - Digitally and Accessible
- Skilled Workers
  - Workforce Attraction
  - Cross Industry Employment
- Key Infrastructure
  - Access to Workers: road, rail, air and ports, digital capacity
  - Land Assembly: land, power, water and sewerage
  - Housing

**Clever People**
- Lifelong Learning
  - Participation and Achievement
  - Pathways to Employment
  - Aboriginal Enterprise
- Innovation
  - Innovation Networks
  - Building R&D Capacity
- Leadership
  - Innovative Governance
  - Leadership and Civic Engagement
  - Volunteers

**Liveable Communities**
- Connected Settlements
  - Strong and Connected Sub-Regional Centres and Hinterlands
  - Public Transport
- Service Delivery Reform
  - Aging
  - Children's Services
  - Family Services
  - Health and Well-being
  - Safety
  - Services to Growth Areas
- Community Amenity
  - Culture and the Arts
  - Heritage
  - Housing
  - Recreation

**Valued Natural Amenities**
- Water, Landscape and Climate Change Management
- Nature Based Industry
  - Renewable Energy
  - Nature Based Tourism

**Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities**
- Targeted Marketing
- Influencing Key Decision Makers

**Effective Partnerships**
- Infrastructure Co-ordination
- Agency Co-ordination
- Local Government Collaboration
- Supporting Proponents

Embracing exciting new opportunities
5.3 Delivering the Wheatbelt’s Growth Potential

To achieve the stated population and economic growth targets, long term and comprehensive action is required. The full range of actions to achieve growth targets are outlined in detail in Appendix 3. With over 130 actions identified, this is an ambitious agenda. To deliver high impact results, some actions take precedence in the short to mid-term.

Outlined below is a summary of the aspiration for each priority area, a description of what the outcome looks like if the aspiration is to be achieved, the current issues inhibiting and enabling their achievement, the solutions and priority actions required to achieve stated targets.

5.3.1 Vibrant Economy

**Aspiration:** A diversified and adaptive economic base building on the Regions assets and aligned with state, national and international opportunity

**Focus:**
- Diverse and adaptive economic base building on the Regions assets and aligned with state, national and international opportunity
- Businesses are networked, digital and Asia ready
- Businesses are networked, digital and Asia ready
- Agribusiness, manufacturing and processing become growth industries
- Government divest assets and retained to meet the needs of the Wheatbelt area
- Wheatbelt businesses are globally competitive
- Diversified and adaptive economic base building on the Regions assets and aligned with state, national and international opportunity
- Businesses are networked, digital and Asia ready

**Outcome Summary of Issues Solutions Priority Actions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Increasing global demand for food and population services</td>
<td>- Develop emerging industry strategies for intensive agriculture, transport and logistics, renewable energy, aviation and population services</td>
<td>- Develop emerging industry strategies for intensive agriculture, transport and logistics, renewable energy, aviation and population services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strong export economy</td>
<td>- Focus on intensive agriculture and transform broad acre supply chain management</td>
<td>- Focus on intensive agriculture and transform broad acre supply chain management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Diverse economic base with the opportunities for this to grow</td>
<td>- Agricultural investment through 'Tasmania the Opportunity'</td>
<td>- Agricultural investment through 'Tasmania the Opportunity'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Broadacre agriculture = population decline</td>
<td>- Develop sub-regional business alliances for collaborative market development</td>
<td>- Develop sub-regional business alliances for collaborative market development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Primary industry (agriculture and mining) highly volatile and cyclical</td>
<td>- Implement Wheatbelt Digital Action Plan</td>
<td>- Implement Wheatbelt Digital Action Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 10,000 small businesses need enhanced digital capacity and links to global markets</td>
<td>- Enhance links to growing Asian markets</td>
<td>- Enhance links to growing Asian markets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Target 2050:**
- Average Annual Compound GRP Growth Rate of 7%
- Average Annual Compound GRP Growth Rate of 8.2%
5.3.2 Clever People

**Aspiration:** Lifelong learning - innovation and leadership drive economic growth and community vibrancy

**Current:** Workforce of 47,250

**Target 2050:** Workforce of 109,800

### Outcome Summary of Issues Solutions Priority Actions

#### 2.1: Education and lifelong learning drives productivity and thus economic growth

**Focus:**
- Participation and achievement enhances productivity
- Pathways to employment drive economic growth
- Aboriginal Enterprise creates financial independence

**Focus:**
- Participation and achievement enhances productivity
- Pathways to employment drive economic growth
- Aboriginal Enterprise creates financial independence

**Summary of Issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sound primary and secondary school results</td>
<td>• Involvement and promote reformed education and training services that meet the needs of a highly dispersed population</td>
<td>Design and invest in new service delivery models to ensure early intervention and enhanced participation and achievement. Implement the Wheatbelt Children’s Services Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extensive infrastructure across communities</td>
<td>• Establish and support partnerships between education, training and business to increase training participation.</td>
<td>Support innovative cross community entities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poor Aboriginal participation and achievement in education and employment</td>
<td>• Maximize opportunities emerging from the South West Land and Sea Council title</td>
<td>Foster collaborative systems in which to develop leadership capacity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inhibitors**

| • Significant out-migration of 15-29 year olds due to perceived lack of education and job opportunities | • Lack of innovation ‘brand’ for the Region | Support Heartlands WA to profile Wheatbelt innovation |
| • Low SEIFA and early childhood index scores | • Lack of formal innovation networks and strategies | Maintain strong links to the university sector |
| • Outdated delivery models | • Poor post compulsory education participation (traineeships, apprenticeships, higher education) | |
| • Unclear career pathways | • Poor Aboriginal participation and achievement in education and employment | |
| • Poor Aboriginal participation and achievement in education and employment | • Poor Aboriginal participation and achievement in education and employment | |

**Enablers**

| • Strong primary and secondary school results | • Strong volunteer base | Support Innovation Networks |
| • Extensive infrastructure across communities | • Multiple formal leadership structures in which to develop leadership capacity | • Develop globally linked networks and profile innovation activity in the Region. |
| • Poor Aboriginal participation and achievement in education and employment | • Leadership and civic engagement underpins vibrant communities | Build R & D Capacity |
| • Poor Aboriginal participation and achievement in education and employment | • Multiple organisations, thinly stretched | • Strengthen and promote university links. |
| • Poor Aboriginal participation and achievement in education and employment | • Volunteers deliver critical social capital | |

### 2.2: Innovation drives economic, social and environmental outcomes

**Focus:**
- Innovation networks and R&D drive productivity and community vibrancy

**Summary of Issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Well connected to the higher education sector</td>
<td>• Innovation networks and R&amp;D drive productivity and community vibrancy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong industry investment in R&amp;D</td>
<td>• Lack of innovation ‘brand’ for the Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of formal innovation networks and strategies</td>
<td>• Lack of formal innovation networks and strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inhibitors**

| • Lack of innovation ‘brand’ for the Region | | |
| • Lack of formal innovation networks and strategies | | |

**Enablers**

| • Well connected to the higher education sector | • Support innovation cross community entities |
| • Strong industry investment in R&D | • Foster Leadership and Civic Engagement |
| • Lack of innovation ‘brand’ for the Region | • Support collaboration across communities |
| • Lack of formal innovation networks and strategies | • Establish and support leadership networks |

**Inhibitors**

| • Lack of innovation ‘brand’ for the Region | | |
| • Lack of formal innovation networks and strategies | | |

**Enablers**

| • Support innovative cross community entities | • Support Innovation Networks |
| • Foster Leadership and Civic Engagement | | |
| • Support collaboration across communities | | |
| • Establish and support leadership networks | | |
| • Support Volunteers | | |

**Inhibitors**

| • Foster innovation networks and profile innovation activity in the Region. | | |
| • Develop globally linked networks and profile innovation activity in the Region. | | |
| • Build R & D Capacity | | |
| • Strengthen and promote university links. | | |
| • Support Heartlands WA to profile Wheatbelt innovation | | |
| | | |

**Summary of Issues**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Strong volunteer base</td>
<td>• Foster Innovation Governance</td>
<td>Support Innovation Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multiple formal leadership structures in which to develop leadership capacity</td>
<td>• Support innovative cross community entities</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Leadership and civic engagement underpins vibrant communities</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Volunteers deliver critical social capital</td>
<td>• Establish and support leadership networks</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Inhibitors**

| • Strong volunteer base | • Support Innovation Networks |
| • Multiple formal leadership structures in which to develop leadership capacity | • Foster Leadership and Civic Engagement |
| • Leadership and civic engagement underpins vibrant communities | • Support collaboration across communities |
| • Multiple organisations, thinly stretched | • Establish and support leadership networks |

**Enablers**

| • Strong volunteer base | • Support Innovation Networks |
| • Multiple formal leadership structures in which to develop leadership capacity | • Foster Leadership and Civic Engagement |
| • Leadership and civic engagement underpins vibrant communities | • Support collaboration across communities |
| • Multiple organisations, thinly stretched | • Establish and support leadership networks |

**Inhibitors**

| • Strong volunteer base | • Support Innovation Networks |
| • Multiple formal leadership structures in which to develop leadership capacity | • Foster Leadership and Civic Engagement |
| • Leadership and civic engagement underpins vibrant communities | • Support collaboration across communities |
| • Multiple organisations, thinly stretched | • Establish and support leadership networks |

**Support Volunteers**

| • Support strategies that foster volunteer engagement and delivery of services across community activity (emergency services, health and well being) | | |

**Support Groups of Local Government**

| • Promote Infrastructure Trusts as a mechanism for cross community investment | | |
| • Support groups of local government to invest in regional priorities | | |
| • Encourage Community Resource Centres to take a lead role on volunteer support and co-ordination | | |
### 5.3.3 Liveable Communities

**Aspiration:** Diverse, safe, healthy and resilient communities where services and infrastructure reflect the needs and aspirations of current residents and future residents.

**Current:** Population of 75,000

**Target 2050:** Population of 180,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Summary of Issues</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.1: Connected settlements support economic growth and offer multiple liveability options</strong></td>
<td>Focus: • Regional Centres with strong connections with their hinterlands result in strong connected communities • Public Transport enhances access to services</td>
<td>Connect Communities: Implement Growth Plans for five sub-regional centres Develop Growth Plans for high growth areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enablers: • Multiple liveability across many small communities • Patterns of economic and social activity across communities • Critical role of regional centres</td>
<td>Solutions: • Support cross community models of investment and services • Support community comparative advantage. (Not every community can have ‘it’ but across neighbouring communities you will find it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inhibitors: • Fragmented governance and service delivery leads to inefficiencies • High growth pressures north of Perth and across the Avon Arc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcome Summary of Issues Solutions Priority Actions

**3.2: Service Delivery Reform ensures services reflect the needs of current and future Wheatbelt residents**

**Focus:** • Ageing in Place • Education • Children’s and family services • Health and well-being • Safety • Public transport • Services to growth areas

**Enablers:** • Community appetite for better services • Several examples of innovation

**Inhibitors:** • Centralised services • Infrastructure and models not current • Many uncoordinated and unsustainable services • Lack of proactive planning to address demographic changes

**Solutions:** • Deliver solutions across communities • Sub-regional governance and delivery required to achieve sustainability (Deliver regional solutions with local impact, fund on a sub-regional basis, not a service provider basis)

**Priority Actions:** Design and deliver integrated sub-regional services in the areas of: • Aged Care • Health • Education (K-tertiary) • Family, youth and children’s services • Public transport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Summary of Issues</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.3: Community Amenity contributes to community well-being and liveability and creates economic opportunity</strong></td>
<td>Focus: • Culture and the Arts and Heritage grow enterprise and enhances liveability • Sport and Recreation enhances well being</td>
<td>Promote Wheatbelt amenity assets and invest in gaps in the areas of: • Culture and the Arts • Heritage • Sport and Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enablers: • Liveability of Wheatbelt communities rated highly by residents (safe, strong identity) • Strong cross community planning exists to guide investment (economic, aged care, growth planning) • Good examples of cross community planning, co-operation and service sharing</td>
<td>Solutions: Support effective governance and delivery structure across communities for each sector Support innovative design and management of multi-purpose, multi-user community facilities in small towns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inhibitors: • Multiple communities duplicate facilities and services • Challenge for small local governments to provide facilities and services expected by community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Summary of Issues</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4: Liveable Communities</strong></td>
<td>Focus:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enablers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inhibitors:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Solutions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Priority Actions:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Transforming the Wheatbelt**

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### 5.3.4 Valued Natural Amenity

**Aspiration:** The Wheatbelt’s unique natural amenity is valued as an asset for social, cultural and economic development for current and future generations

**Current:** Off grid power community-wide, 16 communities with off grid water

**Target 2050:** 30 Wheatbelt communities have off grid power and water solutions

#### 4.1: Climate change risks are minimised

**Focus:** Climate change mitigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant R&amp;D exists into mitigation</td>
<td>Seizing the Opportunity investment delivers strategies to mitigate seasonal variation</td>
<td>Invest in R&amp;D and technology application to mitigate climate impact, including dry climate and frost tolerant plant breeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant investment in technology to enhance decision making</td>
<td>Planning accounts for possible shore-line shift</td>
<td>Assist Coastal Communities plan for impacts of shore-line shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change impacting on agricultural productivity and coastal communities (shoreline shift)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.2: Landscape management protects biodiversity and ensures compatible and profitable land use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape icons: Pinnacles, Wave Rock, Great Western Woodlands</td>
<td>Seizing the Opportunity investment delivers strategies to ensure soil health maintenance production levels</td>
<td>Invest in R&amp;D and technology application to improve soil health Support Wheatbelt NRM to foster ‘best practice’ land management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong land stewardship</td>
<td>Community groups, facilitating improved land management practices, are supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanently altered landscape affecting agricultural productivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3: Water management results in water security to enable community amenity and industry development

**Focus:** Water security through water and wastewater planning and management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aged water distribution infrastructure</td>
<td>Invest in R&amp;D and technology application to improve soil health Support Wheatbelt NRM to foster ‘best practice’ land management</td>
<td>Undertake integrated water planning Invest in water harvesting and re-use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited total water management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to utilise alternative sources through treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of small communities to invest in water harvesting and re-use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.4: Nature based industry utilises the Wheatbelt’s natural assets

**Focus:** Renewable energy, Nature based tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enormous potential of the natural landscape to deliver increased tourism numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enormous potential of the natural landscape to drive renewable energy production to support local transmission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D to deliver localised renewable energy solutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Develop a tourism strategy that includes nature based tourism and identifies infrastructure priorities**

**Partner with Western Power and universities to develop innovative renewable energy solutions for end of grid situations**
5.3.5 Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities

Aspiration: The Wheatbelt value proposition is clear to investors in government and private enterprise and families wishing to live and visit.

Current: 75,000 residents

Target 2050: 105,000 new residents have been attracted to the Region, new investment creates 64,000 jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Summary of Issues</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5.3: Workers, businesses, visitors, and investors are attracted to the Region | Focus:  
- Targeted marketing  
- Influence key decision makers | Enablers  
  - Heartlands W.A has a sound track record in branding and promotion  
  - Sub-regional economic planning highlights investment opportunities  
- Support Heartlands W.A to promote the Wheatbelt brand and be the portal for promoting workforce, investor and visitor opportunity  
- Support tourism groups to undertake collaborative marketing | Implement targeted marketing for workforce and visitor attraction  
- Attract private investment through the development of industry development plans and prospectuses for emerging industry (identified in sub-regional economic strategies.) |}

5.3.6 Effective Partnerships

Aspiration: Cost effective investment occurs as a result of good information, quality project management and leveraged investment.

Current: Unco-ordinated investment

Target 2050: Infrastructure Co-ordinating Group oversees all government investment in the region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Summary of Issues</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>Priority Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6.1: High impact, cost effective investment drives growth | Focus:  
- Infrastructure co-ordination  
- Agency co-ordination  
- Local government collaboration  
- Proponent support | Enablers  
  - Good examples of cross community planning and investment  
  - Examples of innovative investment vehicles exist  
  - Significant private investment occurring in mining and agriculture | Continue to support groups of local governments’ planning and investing in agreed regional priorities  
- Attract and support private investors and project partners | Initiate the Wheatbelt Infrastructure Co-ordinating Group  
Support cross community investment trusts to drive sustainable investment  
Support groups of local governments to deliver regionally significant projects locally |
Effective Blueprint implementation will work at many levels. The first is at the ‘macro level’ which requires imbedding the Blueprint into decision processes to ensure alignment of effort and resources achieves maximum results. The second is in terms of implementing the priority actions outlined within the Road Map for Growth.

The list of priority actions identified in Section 5 are focussed on achieving results in the short to mid term. The Comprehensive Action Plan (Appendix 3) will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and actions determined and prioritised accordingly. The priority actions are aspirational in nature and a pipeline of strategies and projects will be developed as proponents, resources and investment opportunities become available. These proponents include private enterprise, industry peak bodies, not for profit organisations and local, state and federal governments.

Maximising investment opportunity will be underpinned by seeking leveraging opportunities and ensuring the right structures are in place to maximise investment and impact through collaboration and partnerships.

Figure 6.1 Elements of Implementation
6.2 Who Implements the Blueprint?

There are numerous stakeholders who will be involved in Blueprint implementation. Effective implementation will require genuine engagement of and partnerships between relevant stakeholders. We will need to look beyond our regional boundaries when seeking solutions and opportunities. Creating opportunities to work collaboratively across regions on initiatives that address State and regional priorities and maximise regional development outcomes will be a priority.

6.3 Co-ordinating Implementation

The Wheatbelt Development Commission’s primary role in implementing this Blueprint will be to:

- advocate for the Blueprint and the Region to the public, private and community sectors;
- co-ordinate and facilitate collaboration on priorities for action across relevant stakeholder groups;
- develop and drive solutions and appropriate governance structures to get results;
- assist proponents to shape projects that align with the priorities and objectives outlined in this Blueprint;
- raise awareness of programs, initiatives and legislation that will impact on regional priorities;
- and engage in a continuous process of monitoring and improvement of the Blueprint and its priority areas for action.

6.4 Blueprint Monitoring and Review

The Blueprint will have high level and ongoing oversight from the Board of the Wheatbelt Development Commission supported by RDA Wheatbelt. Joint board meetings held twice a year will:

- monitor implementation of the Blueprint and agreed priority elements within it; and
- review and update the Blueprint to reflect progress made, changing needs and resources.

In addition to this high level oversight, collaboration and co-ordination of priority actions will be achieved through the following mechanisms:

- initiating the Wheatbelt Infrastructure Co-ordinating Group and aligning this group with other public and private-planning processes;
- ongoing Agency engagement at both central and regional level;
- developing a pipeline of project proposals and business case development to source project funding; and
- ongoing support for project proponents, including government agencies, groups of local governments, private investors and not for profit groups.

6.5 How will Success be Measured?

The success of the Blueprint will be determined by its acceptance and use by stakeholders. Success of implementation will be measured by:

1. The perception of the Blueprint and the Commission. This will be measured through the WDC annual stakeholder survey; and
2. The knowledge, acceptance and use of the Blueprint and its contributing plans, measured through:
   - number of times the Blueprint is referred to in stakeholder publications;

Figure 6.2 Blueprint Review Process

- number of specific priority actions that are implemented in any one year; and
- evidence of positive progress in achieving stated targets.

6.6 Determining Where to Start

The Blueprint outlines an ambitious agenda for growth. With over 40 priority actions within the six pillars for growth, rigorous process is required to determine which priority actions (or projects) would deliver growth in population, economic diversification and private investment. The following criteria are used in this prioritisation process. (Figure 6.3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Aligned to Blueprint Priority Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aligned to acts, plans, policies or priorities (State and Federal Government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has a strong business case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attract private investment</td>
<td>Regional impact of private investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates commitment of non-government investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meets identified market demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developability</td>
<td>Increases number of workers in the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improves perception of the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Aligned to Blueprint Priority Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aligned to acts, plans, policies or priorities (State and Federal Government)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has a strong business case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stated targets.</td>
<td>Aligned to acts, plans, policies or priorities (State and Federal Government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has a strong business case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth</td>
<td>Impacts on economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attracts new industry to the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spreads economic diversity across the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic impact</td>
<td>Increase capacity to drive productivity and innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are the key drivers impacting on growth?</td>
<td>Programmes, initiatives and legislation that will impact on regional priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are the key drivers impacting on growth?</td>
<td>Programmes, initiatives and legislation that will impact on regional priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the key driver shaping the project?</td>
<td>Programmes, initiatives and legislation that will impact on regional priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Programmes, initiatives and legislation that will impact on regional priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Align to acts, plans, policies or priorities (State and Federal Government)</td>
<td>Has a strong business case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popolation growth</td>
<td>Results in population growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Normalises the population bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect private investment</td>
<td>Regional impact of private investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates commitment of non-government investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance employability</td>
<td>Increase number of workers in the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improves perception of the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic impact</td>
<td>Impact on economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attracts new industry to the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic growth</td>
<td>Spreads economic diversity across the Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve stated targets</td>
<td>Number of specific priority actions that are implemented in any one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of positive progress in achieving stated targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.7 Actionable First Steps

Imbedding the Blueprint with key decision makers began in earnest with extensive stakeholder consultation throughout its development. This process will continue so that alignment can be maintained and priority actions can be agreed to, developed and implemented.

In the short term (2-3 years), there are specific actions and projects arising from the extensive planning underpinning this Blueprint (economic, regional centre growth and aged care planning). These include:

Vibrant Economy
• sub-regional economic prospectuses to profile sub-regional investment opportunities;
• emerging industry development plans to ensure the fundamentals are in place to grow these industry sectors and to promote opportunities to investors; and
• industrial and residential land development to facilitate industry and workforce attraction.

Connected Communities
In each of the five sub-regional centres, including the SuperTowns of Jurien Bay and Northam, specific projects have been identified to facilitate economic and population growth, including:
• precinct development;
• land assembly;
• industry development; and
• community amenity.

Similar planning is required in high growth areas of Chittering and Gingin.

Service Delivery Reform: Aged Care

Cross regional planning has identified the need to invest in the four key planks of aged care service provision:
• age friendly communities;
• age appropriate housing;
• more effective home care service delivery; and
• residential care including dementia and respite care.

These are by no means all of the actions which must occur for the Wheatbelt to provide a solution to the State’s growing population and to achieve its potential as a key driver of the State’s prosperity. As more detailed planning and feasibilities are conducted in each of the priority areas for action, a pipeline of projects will continue to emerge.

Some of the priority areas for action will also be addressed through cross regional action emerging from the analysis of all nine Regional Investment Blueprints.

Driving diverse investment
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Growing healthy communities
APPENDIX ONE: Wheatbelt Population and Demographics

The Region’s population at the 2011 Census was 73,814 people making it the third most populous region in Western Australia after Peel and the South West.

As Figure 1 illustrates, there has been steady population growth rate in the Wheatbelt since 2007. This growth has not been consistent across the Region with some sub-regions experiencing strong growth and others experiencing stagnating or declining population. This variation is in line with global urbanisation trends with peri-urban and coastal areas experiencing growth and the more traditional inland agricultural based regions experiencing stagnation or decline.

The Avon Sub-region is the most populated of the Wheatbelt’s five sub-regions with a population over 26,000 people in 2012.

Greatest sub-regional population increase from 2002-2012 in the Wheatbelt: Central Coast (13%)
Greatest local population increase from 2002-2012 in the Wheatbelt: Shire of Chittering (53%)
Greatest local population decrease from 2002-2012 in the Wheatbelt: Shires of Mount Marshall and Mukinbudin (-28%)

High representation of people aged 45 years and over (46%) compared to State figures (37%). This is concurrent with the national trends of an older farming population and the in-migration of retirees and semi-retirees in areas of high amenity (sea/tree-change in-migration) and is strongest in the Central Coast with this cohort making up almost 50% of the population. In line with global trends this age group is predicted to continue to increase in numbers.

23% of the Region’s population was born overseas. This is significantly lower than WA rate of 37%, but is increasing, up from 18.6% in 2001. The most common countries of origin in descending order are United Kingdom, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, Netherlands, Germany and Ireland. The Region experiences relatively low levels of immigration with 167 permanent settlers in 2012.

In the 2011 Census 4.7% of the Wheatbelt population identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. This is higher than the State proportion of 3.1%. The Region’s Aboriginal population shows a higher percentage of young people with the 0-14 cohort making up 39% of the Aboriginal population. The Local Government areas with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation of over 10% include Quairading (14.8%), Moora (12.2%), and Pingelly (11.2%).
The Region has a high percentage (30%) of low-income earners (income below $21,000) in comparison to the State (26%)\(^{121}\). The local areas with the highest percentage of low-income earners are Beverley (38%), Kellerberrin (37%) and Nungarin (36%).

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Areas with indicators equal to the national average will receive a score of 1000\(^{122}\). In 2011, Wheatbelt communities generally ranked poorly on the SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage with 62% of the Region’s local government areas below 1000. The local areas of Pingelly, Kellerberrin and Quairading were the most poorly ranked in the Region.

**Wheatbelt Population Projections**

By 2050, the Wheatbelt will have a population of 180,000, based on the growth pressures Western Australia is experiencing, the Wheatbelt's proximity to the Perth Region and the availability of affordable housing in safe welcoming communities. As a part of the Royalties for Region’s SuperTowns initiative, the towns of Northam and Jurien Bay will experience significant growth. This growth will also flow to other parts of the Region receiving population decline trends as high order services become more accessible in regional centres.

The Wheatbelt currently has 75,000 of the State’s 2.35 million people. This is 3.2% of the State population and 15% of WA’s regional population. Recent ABS population projections suggest Western Australia’s population will increase to at least 4.8 million people by 2050. If the Wheatbelt maintains its current percentage of the State's population this equates to 154,000 people in the Region by 2050. Current State Government policies aimed at increasing the percentage of the State’s population living in regional WA, increasing density of living in the metropolitan area and the Wheatbelt’s proximity to the Perth Region and the urban spread contribute to our belief that the Region’s population will grow to 180,000 people by 2050.

Recent economic planning for the Wheatbelt indicates that the Avon, Central Coast and Central Midlands populations will double by 2031, amounting to 42,500 more people. The rest of the Region (Central East and Wheatbelt South) currently accounts for 40% of the Wheatbelt population. Suggesting that these areas grow more conservatively, by only 10%, the Region’s population by 2031 will be 120,000, equating to 62% growth over 18 years or conservatively 2-3% per annum. Taking the lower of these, 2% per year for another 25 years to 2056, we could expect another 50% increase in population or a Wheatbelt population of approximately 180,000.

This would mean that the Wheatbelt would maintain its 15% share of the State’s regional population, provided the other regions grow adequately to achieve 35% of the growth to the regions. Given the Wheatbelt’s proximity to the Perth Region, peri-urban growth trends and the growing pressures on population growth in the metropolitan area the WDC sees this as easily achievable if the State’s population growth continues as predicted.
Ageing Population

The Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Solution’s report, completed by Verso Consulting in 2013 found that, “by 2027 the population of the Wheatbelt aged 70 and over will have increased by 75.3% from 2011. The 70+ population of 7,646 will have increased to 13,400 by 2027, moving from 10.4% of the total population to around 17%.” This projected growth is much greater than WA as a whole.

The Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Solution’s report investigates an integrated approach to aged care service delivery that fits the Wheatbelt context. The solutions proposed in the report are intended to:

- Support ageing in place (services assisting the aged to remain in their communities);
- Identify existing and required infrastructure and service development needs; and
- Provide a range of actions and responsibilities to effectively implement proposed solutions.

Figure 6 Aged Care Need Predictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>High Care</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>High Care</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Shortfall/Excess</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>7,646</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>792</td>
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<td>2021</td>
<td>13,400</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>1444</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>-238</td>
<td>-445</td>
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</table>

Population Planning Places Actual Places Total Shortfall/Excess

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>High Care</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>High Care</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>-445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The Wheatbelt has displayed strong economic growth over the past 10 years (8.2% AAGR). This growth has occurred across an increasingly diverse economic base with growth in the mining, transport and logistics, manufacturing and construction sectors.

The Wheatbelt possesses a range of competitive advantages and opportunities for future economic growth. However, these opportunities present differently across the sub-regions and communities. Economic strategies for each of the Wheatbelt’s five sub-regions provide full analysis of global trends, profiling of current and future economic opportunities and an opportunity network analysis highlighting each community’s comparative advantages.

Figure 7 provides a brief summary of each sub-region’s economy and the associated opportunities for economic growth.

Appendix Two: Wheatbelt Economy

The Wheatbelt has a diverse range of economic opportunities, drawing upon local comparative advantages to leverage global drivers.

Figure 1 The Wheatbelt has a diverse range of economic opportunities, drawing upon local comparative advantages to leverage global drivers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Central Coast</th>
<th>Central East</th>
<th>Central Midlands</th>
<th>Wheatbelt South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>Broadacre</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
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<td>Mining &amp; Support Services</td>
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<td>Retail &amp; Lifestyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peri-Urban &amp; Rural Living</td>
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<td>Tourism Services</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The major drivers of the Avon economic activity are transport, logistics and manufacturing, agriculture and construction. These industries collectively account for 45% of sub-regional industry value add. Health, social welfare and education are also important sectors contributing an additional 15%. This is illustrated in Figure 8 below.

In 2011, the Avon had an annual average unemployment rate of 3.6%, below the comparative state average of 4.1%.

Health, social welfare and education is the largest employment sector in the sub-region employing 19% of the workforce. Agriculture, transport, logistics and mining support industries; health and aged care; retail and lifestyle; and tourism (Figure 3). A more comprehensive assessment of the Sub-region’s economy and more information on these opportunities is available in the Avon Sub-regional Economic Strategy.

In 2011, Northam, as the Avon’s regional centre, was announced as one of WA’s nine SuperTowns. The Northam Regional Centre Growth Plan, released in 2012, outlines how the town can grow to be home to 20,000, servicing a sub-regional population of 50,000.

Figure 3: Avon Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Drivers</th>
<th>Food Demand</th>
<th>Transport &amp; Logistics</th>
<th>Ageing Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manufacturing &amp; Logistics Hub</td>
<td>Strong Population Growth</td>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Proximity to Perth &amp; Mining Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Profile</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Solid Agricultural Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid</td>
<td>Affordable</td>
<td>Proximity to Perth &amp; Mining</td>
<td>Retail &amp; Lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Opportunities</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadscale Agriculture</td>
<td>Broadacre agriculture and animal husbandry will continue to underpin local economic development, with strong relationships with transport and logistics. Opportunity to leverage global demand for food to underpin local economic prosperity.</td>
<td>Transport and Industry</td>
<td>The critical location of the Avon as a mining and urban centre is already recognised by the transport and logistics sector and will incentivise further investment and employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Central Coast

The major drivers of the Central Coast economic activity are mining agriculture and fishing activities and associated transport, logistics and manufacturing. These sectors account for 58% of the local industry value add. Construction is also strong in the Region and accounts for a further 17%. This is illustrated in Figure 10 below.

Agriculture is the dominant employment sector in the Central Coast, employing 27% of the sub-region’s workforce. Transport, logistics and food processing; renewable energy; mining, construction and light industry; retail, construction and health, social welfare and education are also significant employment sectors in the Central Coast. Unemployment rates in the Central Coast, at 2.0% are significantly lower than the State average of 4.6%.

The impacts of northern urban expansion from the Perth Region, and amenity migration will assist in labour force attraction to allow economic growth in the Sub-region.

The Central Coast Sub-regional Economic Strategy identifies a number of key themes for future economic development. These include aquaculture (mariculture), horticulture and food processing; renewable energy; mining, construction and light industry; and tourism (Figure 5). A more comprehensive assessment of the Sub-region’s economy and more information on growth opportunities are available in the Central Coast Sub-regional Economic Strategy.

Jurien Bay, as the Central Coast’s regional centre, was announced in 2011 as one of WA’s nine SuperTowns. The Jurien Bay Regional Centre Growth Plan released in 2012 outlines how the town can transform from a small coastal settlement to a regional city of 20,000.

Global Drivers present considerable economic opportunities for the Central Coast, to leverage existing competitive advantages and establish new industries.

- **Food**: Accelerating global food consumption is not only increasing demand for broadacre crops but also protein (aquaculture and livestock) and intensive horticulture.
- **Tourism**: Domestic day trip and international overnight tourism activity is a core driver of the Central Coast activity and the Sub-region has strong potential to support further development.
- **Energy**: Global and Australian energy demands continue to grow as does the need for greater diversity of energy mix. This includes increased renewable energy production from wind, solar and biomass.

Economic Opportunities

- **Mining, Construction & Light Industry**: Providing housing, business, accommodation and infrastructure for the growing economy and population. Leveraging niche mining activities and broader supply chains.
- **Tourism**: Continue to develop Sub-region’s established domestic day trips, family leisure and international overnight markets, levering the coastal environment and food based opportunities.

Economic Profile

- **Food Production**: Broader agriculture, animal husbandry and intensive horticulture represent primary drivers of the local economy, with coastal locations also supported by fishing.
- **Aquaculture, Horticulture & Food Processing**: Leveraging robust water supplies, natural competitive advantages and favourable domestic and global market conditions to make the Central Coast the premier ‘Food Bowl’ of WA
- **Renewable Energy**: Continue to promote the Sub-region’s natural assets to attract State significant renewable energy products. Leverage branding and marketing opportunities from sector profile.
- **Retirement & Lifestyle**: Provide services to ageing population while leveraging coastal and peri-urban lifestyle to attract new residents.

Population Growth

Conservative population projections from WA’s support a further 2,500 residents by 2021.

Peri-Urban and Coastal Living

The sub-region includes both peri-urban towns such as Bindoon and Gingin and coastal nodes such as Cervantes, Lancelin, Leeman and Jurien Bay.

Economic Profile

- **Food Production**: Broader agriculture, animal husbandry and intensive horticulture represent primary drivers of the local economy, with coastal locations also supported by fishing.
- **Aquaculture, Horticulture & Food Processing**: Leveraging robust water supplies, natural competitive advantages and favourable domestic and global market conditions to make the Central Coast the premier ‘Food Bowl’ of WA
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- **Retirement & Lifestyle**: Provide services to ageing population while leveraging coastal and peri-urban lifestyle to attract new residents.

Source: RPS (2012), RPS Economics Gross Regional Product Model, RPS, Gold Coast
Central East

At 59%, mining is the most significant contributor to sub-regional industry value add (IVA) in the Central East. Construction has also been a strong contributor over the past three years reflecting the large industrial investments. As shown in Figure 12 below, transport, logistics and manufacturing and agriculture also make significant contributions to the Sub-region’s IVA.

Figure 7: Central East Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

The high value of the mining industry in the Sub-region masks the significant contributions of the other sectors. Industry value add (IVA) from agriculture in the Central East is, in real terms, greater than agricultural IVA in the Central Coast, but makes a lesser contribution to the sub-regional total IVA.

While mining is the dominant industry in terms of industry value add, only 7% of the Central East workforce is employed in the industry. Agriculture, employing 28% of the workforce is easily the most dominant industry in employment terms. Health, social welfare and education, transport, logistics and manufacturing and retail are also significant employers in the Sub-region.

With historically low unemployment rates (3.7% in 2012), and high participation rates (66.2%), the attraction and retention of workforce is integral to economic and population growth in the Central East. The Central East Sub-regional Economic Strategy indications are that opportunities for future economic development will be in broadacre agriculture; mining and support services; and populations services (including health, aged care, tourism and education and training).

The Central East Sub-regional Economic Strategy (Figure 7) outlines how Merredin can grow to support a Regional Centre Growth Plan. This plan will involve Merredin the WDC is developing the Merredin Regional Centre Growth Plan. The plan will outline how Merredin can grow to support a sub-regional population of 12,500.

Broadacre Agriculture

Agricultural Production

Broadacre grain production is the foundation of the Central East economy. Coarse grain production averages 1.6 million tonnes for a third of the Sub-region’s population. This reflects low rainfall and hot, dry summers. Bruce Rock is the primary concentration of agriculture activity. Below average per hectare yields are offset by large land holdings. Livestock is the next largest agricultural sector.

Strategic Location

The Central East is at the heart of regional Western Australia and is the Wheatbelt’s gateway to the Goldfields. The Sub-region has historically had an export based agricultural economy, characterised by extensive coarse grain production. However, the emergence of mining activity, particularly in Yilgarn and Westonia, is changing local economical dynamics. This has the potential to help stabilise the Central East population and support future growth.

Economic Opportunities

Broadacre Agriculture will remain a core industry of the Central East economy. However a hot, dry climate and below average rainfall will continue to impact production. Supporting R&D in dryland grain farming and promoting niche products will be key to the Sub-region’s agricultural future.

Mining Support Services

Mining activity continues to provide growth and high value employment in transport, logistics, training and equipment maintenance. Global Drivers

The Central East is at the heart of regional Western Australia and the Wheatbelt’s gateway to the Goldfields. The Sub-region has historically had an export based agricultural economy, characterised by extensive coarse grain production. However, the emergence of mining activity, particularly in Yilgarn and Westonia, is changing local economical dynamics. This has the potential to help stabilise the Central East population and support future growth.

Economic Profile

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Strategic Location

The Central East is located adjacent to the Goldfields-Esperance Region. This provides the Sub-region strong connections to the Goldfields economy. Similarly the Sub-region is located on a major ‘grey nomad’ travel route through to Kalgoorlie, with many Central East communities benefiting from passing tourists.

Mineral Activity

Figure 5: the centre of mining activity in the Central East, although Western Australia is also home to gold mining. Gold and iron ore are the most common commodities. Despite the relatively new nature of mining in the Sub-region, strong growth in production since 2007/08 has seen the value of product exceed $1.6b in 2011/12. The development of mining activity provides a diverse range of supply chain opportunities in transport, logistics, training and equipment maintenance as well as employment opportunities.

Economic Opportunities

Broadacre Agriculture will remain a core industry of the Central East economy. However a hot, dry climate and below average rainfall will continue to impact production. Supporting R&D in dryland grain farming and promoting niche products will be key to the Sub-region’s agricultural future.

Mining Support Services

The medium and long term potential of the Pilbara Iron Ore Province and sub-regional gold mining presents an opportunity to underpin economic activity. However, maximising the benefit will require the growth and integration of local businesses into key supply chains.

Population Services

The effective delivery of services to residents including education, training, health and other community services is critical to retaining and growing the population. Higher quality service offering can also attract and support tourist and visitors.

Global Drivers

The Central East has experienced modest population growth over the past decade. Simply projections for further population losses in the sub-region has the economic capacity to stabilise and grow over the next 20 years.

Population Growth

The Central East has experienced modest population growth over the past decade. Simply projections for further population losses in the sub-region has the economic capacity to stabilise and grow over the next 20 years.

Population Services

The effective delivery of services to residents including education, training, health and other community services is critical to retaining and growing the population. Higher quality service offering can also attract and support tourist and visitors.

Average Per Hectare Yields

The Central East Sub-regional Economic Strategy (Figure 7) more comprehensive assessment of the Sub-region’s economic, an Opportunity Network Matrix and more information on these opportunities will be available in the Central East Sub-regional Economic Strategy. In partnership with LandCorp and the Shire of Merredin, the WDC is developing the Merredin Regional Centre Growth Plan. This plan will outline how Merredin can grow to support a sub-regional population of 12,500.

Economic Opportunities

Broadacre Agriculture will remain a core industry of the Central East economy. However, a hot, dry climate and below average rainfall will continue to impact production. Supporting R&D in dryland grain farming and promoting niche products will be key to the Sub-region’s agricultural future.

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Population Services

The effective delivery of services to residents including education, training, health and other community services is critical to retaining and growing the population. Higher quality service offering can also attract and support tourists and visitors.
The Central Midlands is a dynamic Sub-region with a diverse economic, population and industry drivers. This diversity of activity means that the future economic development will be influenced by a wide range of global socio-economic trends.

Agriculture is the dominant employment sector in the Central Midlands, employing 26% of the workforce. Transport, logistics and manufacturing; health, social welfare and education; and retail are also significant employment sectors in the Sub-region.

In 2011, the annual average unemployment rates in the Central Midlands was 3.3%, well below State averages (4.6%). Participation rates tend to remain high, highlighting the importance of attraction and retention of labour to the Sub-region's economic and population growth.

The Central Midlands Sub-regional Economic Strategy identifies a number of key themes for future economic development. These include agriculture, horticulture and livestock; peri-urban living; mining, manufacturing and support services; health and aged care; and tourism (Figure 15). A more comprehensive assessment of the Sub-region's economy and more information on these opportunities is available in the Central Midlands Sub-regional Economic Strategy.

WDC, LandCorp and the Shires of Moora, Wongan Ballidu and Dalwallinu are working in partnership to develop the Central Midlands Regional Centre Growth Plan. WDC is also consulting with a “Thought Leaders” group made up of business and community members. This plan outlines how these centres can grow to support a sub-regional population of 20,000.

Global Drivers

The Central Midlands is a dynamic Sub-region with a diverse economic, population and industry drivers. This diversity of activity means that the future economic development will be influenced by a wide range of global socio-economic trends.

Agriculture, Horticulture & Livestock
Leveraging strong water supplies, natural competitive advantages and favourable domestic and global market conditions to make the Central Midlands a dynamic, diversified value adding food producer.

Peri-Urban & Rural Land
Embracing the Sub-region’s role as a peri-urban and rural living destination of choice, by providing a diversity of affordable accommodation and services for new residents.

Mining, Manufacturing & Support
Leveraging local and regional mining activity and proximity to major markets to develop and grow the manufacturing and industrial base of the Sub-region, with supporting services and supply chains.

Tourism
Increase overall tourist visitation to the Sub-region by continuing to support daytrip visitors while growing domestic and international overnight visitor numbers, through activities, attractions and accommodation.
Wheatbelt South

Contributing 31% and 17% respectively to the Wheatbelt South's industry value add (IVA), mining and agriculture are the Sub-region’s major economic drivers. As shown in Figure 10, transport, logistics and manufacturing; health, social welfare and education; and retail are also significant contributors.

Figure 10 Industry Value Add: Wheatbelt South Sub-region (2012/13)

In 2011, the annual average unemployment rate in the Wheatbelt South was 4.2%, below the State average of 4.9%.\(^{10}\) Workforce participation rates in the sub-region at 64.5% are similar to the State average (64%), indicating that any major employment growth will need to be accommodated by in migration. Themes for future economic development that include agriculture, livestock and food supply chains; health and education; lifestyle, amenity and retirement; and tourism (Figure 11) are emerging strengths in mining and tourism. These economic strengths have the potential to underpin positive population growth of the labour force and new sectors of the economy.

Figure 11: Wheatbelt South Sub-Regional Economic Strategy

Global Drivers

Population Growth

The Wheatbelt South has the most dynamic small business sector across the Region. The Wheatbelt South accounted for almost 25% of all small businesses in the Wheatbelt South and has had a higher rate of new small businesses per 1000 residents than leading Regions such as the South West and Great Southern. Small business activity is clustered in Narrogin but is distributed across the Sub-region. Agriculture, mining and construction figure strongly while population and ageing is expected to drive growth in sectors like health and retail in the future.

Economic Profile

Agriculture, Livestock & Food Supply Chains

Comparative climate resilience, established local supply chains and export markets are expected to support continued growth in the Sub-region to compete favourably to meet the growing demand for food in Asia and around the world.

Health & Education

Population growth and ageing is expected to drive need for health and education services. Increased demand will require primary health care to age in place services, while education services need to be closely linked to local industry.

Economic Opportunities

Lifestyle, Amenities & Retirement

The Wheatbelt South is the agricultural heart of the Region. Home to extensive wheat and livestock production, the sub-regional economy is an export-oriented economy with emerging strengths in mining and tourism. These economic strengths have the potential to underpin positive population growth of the labour force and new sectors of the economy.
References


126 Ibid


Creating jobs
## Appendix 3
### Comprehensive Action Plan

Section 5 of the Blueprint has identified 40 priority short to mid-term actions to maximise growth opportunities for the Wheatbelt. Growth of the Region will rely on a range of actions. This appendix is the full range of strategies that will drive comprehensive and lasting growth, who will be the key stakeholders and describes outcomes which will be achieved by 2050 is stated actions are implemented. It identifies transformational actions – those things that will move the Region beyond a ‘business as usual’ growth pattern. The Foundational actions identified are more ‘business as usual’ actions, but important to address if growth targets are to be achieved.

### 1. Vibrant Economy

**Aspiration:** A diversified and adaptive economic base building on the Region’s assets and aligned with state, national and international opportunity.

**Outcome 1.1:** Diverse and innovative business and industry grow the Wheatbelt’s global market share.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Transformational Actions</th>
<th>Foundation Actions</th>
<th>Outcome 2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Emerging industries diversify the economy and create new jobs | State Gov WDC Industry | **Plan for and promote emerging industries identified in the Wheatbelt Sub-regional Economic Strategies:**  
- Intensive agriculture  
- Transport and logistics  
- Renewable energy (generation and distribution)  
- Population services including tourism, aged care, health and education  
- Knowledge products in areas of comparative advantage: Land stewardship, agriculture, specialised engineering | Gross Regional Domestic Product grows from $2b in 2013 to $22.8b in 2050  
- The Wheatbelt remains the States leader of agricultural production across the broadacre, horticulture and fishing sectors  
- UWA Future Farm at Pingelly is a world recognised knowledge hub for climate change mitigation  
- Muresk Institute is a world recognised knowledge hub for agriculture and manufacturing |  |

**Seizing the Opportunity investment, results in enhanced productivity and profitability for Wheatbelt agriculture.** Such initiatives include:  
- Building business capacity to meet the challenges of globalisation and climate change;  
- Seizing whole of supply chain opportunities in growing global markets;  
- Establishing innovation networks to share and sell knowledge;  
- Improving the industry profile to attract workers, investors and markets; and  
- Investing in infrastructure to:  
  - improve water use; and  
  - enhance access to markets  
Identify and develop sites for agricultural processing precincts  
Support Muresk Institute and Pingelly Future Farm to play a pivotal role in global knowledge transfer in areas such as climate change adaptation, land stewardship and regional development.

Agriculture Regional Product grows from $2b in 2013 to $22.8b in 2050. The Wheatbelt remains the States leader of agricultural production across the broadacre, horticulture and fishing sectors.

UWA Future Farm at Pingelly is a world recognised knowledge hub for climate change mitigation.

Muresk Institute is a world recognised knowledge hub for agriculture and manufacturing.
### Outcome 1.1: Diverse and innovative business and industry grow the Wheatbelt’s global market share.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Businesses are networked, digital and Asia-ready</td>
<td>Private Enterprise, Private Enterprise, State Gov, Peak Bodies</td>
<td>Connect and build business capacity and grow markets through Heartlands WA on-line business portal</td>
<td>Develop telecommunications infrastructure that links Wheatbelt businesses regardless of their location</td>
<td>Wheatbelt businesses have a strong presence in key Asian markets</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Support business to grow their markets through co-ordinated and strengthened links to Asia</td>
<td>Implement Wheatbelt Digital Action Plan</td>
<td>By 2020 one entity represents and promotes Wheatbelt business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private Enterprise, Private Enterprise, State Gov, Peak Bodies</td>
<td>Develop sub-regional business alliances based on the successful Wheatbelt Business Network and Avon Business Alliance project. Create the Wheatbelt Business Alliance as the umbrella body of these Alliances.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Undertake innovative and extensive workforce attraction strategies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Review and implement the Wheatbelt Workforce Development Strategy, addressing attraction, retention and workforce development to match current and future requirements of industry and community</td>
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<td>Continue to advocate for Tourist and 457 Visas as critical sources for labour</td>
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<td>Develop cross industry training and employment opportunities across the primary industry sector (farming, mining, manufacturing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strategy, addressing attraction, retention and workforce development to match current and future requirements of industry and community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue to advocate for Tourist and 457 Visas as critical sources for labour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop cross industry training and employment opportunities across the primary industry sector (farming, mining, manufacturing)</td>
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### Outcome 1.2: Skilled workers are attracted and retained to meet the needs of the Region and the State.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workforce attraction meets industry need</td>
<td>Private Enterprise, State Gov, Job Networks, Training Providers</td>
<td>Undertake innovative and extensive workforce attraction strategies</td>
<td>Review and implement the Wheatbelt Workforce Development Strategy, addressing attraction, retention and workforce development to match current and future requirements of industry and community</td>
<td>The Region has a localized, highly skilled tech. savvy and global workforce</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop strategies that mitigate the out-migration of 15-29 year olds.</td>
<td>Continue to advocate for Tourist and 457 Visas as critical sources for labour</td>
<td>Policy settings support the relocation of whole families to the Wheatbelt</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review and implement the Wheatbelt Workforce Development Strategy, addressing attraction, retention and workforce development to match current and future requirements of industry and community</td>
<td></td>
<td>Workers operate seamlessly across industry sectors</td>
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<td>Continue to advocate for Tourist and 457 Visas as critical sources for labour</td>
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<td>Develop cross industry training and employment opportunities across the primary industry sector (farming, mining, manufacturing)</td>
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<td>Strategy, addressing attraction, retention and workforce development to match current and future requirements of industry and community</td>
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<td>Develop cross industry training and employment opportunities across the primary industry sector (farming, mining, manufacturing)</td>
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### Outcome 1.3: Key strategic infrastructure is identified and invested in.

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<th>Outcome 2050</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated transport improves access to markets</td>
<td>Private Enterprise, Local Gov</td>
<td>Develop a Wheatbelt Integrated Freight Plan that delivers: • a grain freight solution, including links to Bunbury Port from Wheatbelt South • a lime route solution • transport needs for increased mining activity in the region • a heavy haulage link from the Avon to Great Northern Highway</td>
<td>Develop a Wheatbelt Integrated Freight Plan that delivers: • a grain freight solution, including links to Bunbury Port from Wheatbelt South • a lime route solution • transport needs for increased mining activity in the region • a heavy haulage link from the Avon to Great Northern Highway</td>
<td>Delivers an outer metropolitan ring road: Muchea, Avon, Brookton and associated inter-modal facilities at these locations</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deliver an outer metropolitan ring road: Muchea, Avon, Brookton and associated inter-modal facilities at these locations</td>
<td>Locate the State’s second general aviation and regular passenger airport in the Wheatbelt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Locate the State’s second general aviation and regular passenger airport in the Wheatbelt</td>
<td>Investment addresses increased heavy vehicles on roads. Current priorities are: • GNH Upgrades • GEH Upgrades • Strategic bypasses and bridges</td>
<td>Road, rail and air systems are interconnected, safe and efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Investment addresses increased heavy vehicles on roads. Current priorities are: • GNH Upgrades • GEH Upgrades • Strategic bypasses and bridges</td>
<td>Key national highways are maintained to a standard that results in minimal conflict between freight and passenger movement</td>
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<td>Key national highways are maintained to a standard that results in minimal conflict between freight and passenger movement</td>
<td>Road planning and construction meets the predicted growth requirements</td>
<td>Road planning and construction meets the predicted growth requirements</td>
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<td>Road planning and construction meets the predicted growth requirements</td>
<td>Airport development in the Wheatbelt addresses pressures at Perth International and Domestic Airports, and Jandakot Airport</td>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Digital capacity increases access to markets and services</td>
<td>Fed Gov</td>
<td>Build 88 additional mobile towers</td>
<td>Invest in fixed broadband bandwidth that enables real time video conferencing for e-health, e-education and e-business across the Region</td>
<td>Digital infrastructure enables Wheatbelt businesses and residents to participate in a global digital economy and have access to world class services and social amenities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Build 10 additional Mobile Towers to address identified short term priority need</td>
<td>Support the development of knowledge hubs where lifestyle opportunity, comparative advantage and broadband capacity intersect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local Gov</td>
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<td>State Gov Local Gov NGO’s</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private Enterprise</td>
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<td>20 communities develop quality medium density universally designed housing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wheatbelt Cluster Housing model addresses aged care needs across 20 communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Invest in priorities emerging from the 2014 Wheatbelt Housing Audit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land supply meets economic and population growth requirements</td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Implement “Energising the Wheatbelt” renewable energy creation, distribution and transmission models, and where possible using this energy to provide and process ground water</td>
<td>Undertake targeted utilities investment, including maintenance and upgrades of existing infrastructure and innovative end of grid solutions</td>
<td>Land development normalised and cost of utilities connection is commensurate with metropolitan costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Gov</td>
<td>Invest in priority industrial and residential land assembly as identified in sub-regional economic plans and land assembly audits</td>
<td>Complete Avon Industrial Park Stage 3</td>
<td>Supply meets demand of population of 180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private Enterprise</td>
<td>Develop ‘self-contained’ industrial and residential developments (own power and water sources, creative sewerage solutions)</td>
<td>Cluster complimentary businesses aligned to sub-regional advantage in precincts</td>
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<td>Replicate the Septic Tank Effluent disposal (STED) sewerage system</td>
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<td>Continue and expand Infill Sewerage Program</td>
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### Outcome 1.3: Key strategic infrastructure is identified and invested in.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing is diverse and of quality, matching household compositions</td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>20 communities develop quality medium density universally designed housing</td>
<td>Wheatbelt Cluster Housing model addresses aged care needs across 20 communities</td>
<td>A normalised housing market delivers diversity in dwelling structure, renewal and growth in housing stock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Gov</td>
<td>Invest in priorities emerging from the 2014 Wheatbelt Housing Audit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>NGO’s</td>
<td>Develop a strategy to address market failure in housing development, including the development of cross community investment vehicles to attract leveraged funding</td>
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2. Clever People

Aspiration: Lifelong learning - innovation and leadership drive economic growth and community vibrancy.

**Outcome 2.1: Education and lifelong learning drives productivity.**

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<tr>
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<th>Transformational Actions</th>
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<th>Outcome 2050</th>
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</table>
| Participation and achievement enhances productivity | State Gov | Reform service delivery to meet disbursed population setting, particularly in relation to:  
- Early intervention  
- Integration of services  
- Use of transport and technology to improve access
Develop regionally based and resourced interagency intervention programs, including Parenting Centres in each regional centre, providing support to frontier communities
Enhance the footprint of higher education delivery through C Y O’Connor and Muresk Institute providing multi-disciplinary post compulsory training and education, particularly in areas aligned to the Region’s comparative advantage (primary production, transport, logistic and manufacturing, population services, health, aged care, education)
Policy settings enable the measurement of outcome cost/ benefits rather than just input costs
Invest in fit for purpose infrastructure:
  - K-12 Moora,  
  - Senior and Middle School Northam, Narrogin
New primary schools Northam and Narrogin
Renewal of 7 District High Schools
New TAFE Campus Narrogin
Investment in e-learning - hard and soft infrastructure
Develop and implemented programs to address needs of marginalized/risk students (migrants, Aboriginal, disengaged youth)
Invest in a WA Regional Higher Education Strategy
The education attainment of Wheatbelt residents compares favourably with their metropolitan counterparts
Child Development Indices improve from 63% of Local Governments having a SEIFA of less than 1000 in 2013, to 50% in 2025 and 40% in 2050
The Wheatbelt population profile in age cohort 15-29 increases from 15% of population in 2013 to 20% in 2030
No matter where people live in the Wheatbelt, they have access to higher education, and are supported in their studies by knowledge networks

**Appendix Three**
Outcome 2.2: Innovation drives economic, social and environmental outcomes.

Focus | Delivery | Transformational Actions | Foundation Actions | Outcome 2050
---|---|---|---|---
Innovation networks drive economic and community vibrancy | Fed Gov | Create "knowledge hubs" where lifestyle opportunity, competitive advantage and broadband capacity intersect. | Support programs that connect and support innovators (e.g. The Grow Zone). | Wheatbelt knowledge hubs attract world class innovators, lead to increased productivity, generate export income for the region and foster engagement and innovation.

BR & D capacity drive economic and community vibrancy | State Gov | Muresk Institute is supported to foster a global/regional knowledge network. | Improve R&D in the region through strong links to University sector. | The Wheatbelt continues to be a focus of research activity in the university sector.

Innovative governance creates efficiency and effectiveness across communities. | Fed Gov | Support the development of regional entities (such as regional infrastructure trusts and regional service providers) to own and manage assets across communities. | Establish leadership networks to share innovative ideas, support leadership initiatives and foster emerging leaders. | Wheatbelt leadership is diverse and based on collaborative models of engagement.

Leadership and civic engagement underpins vibrant communities. | State Gov | Establish leadership networks to share innovative ideas, support leadership initiatives and foster emerging leaders. | Support Aboriginal Elders in each sub-region to develop economic and community programs appropriate to need. | Wheatbelt Foundation Fund continues to support implementation of Sub-regional Economic Strategies.

Volunteers contribute to social capital | Local Gov | Support strategies that foster co-ordinated volunteer engagement and service delivery across community service (emergency services, health and well-being, culture and arts, sport and recreation). | Support Aboriginal Elders in each sub-region to develop economic and community programs appropriate to need. | Wheatbelt residents continue with high rates of volunteerism (26-50%).

Outcome 2.3: Leadership harnesses diverse capacity that delivers benefit at a local, sub-regional and regional level.

Focus | Delivery | Transformational Actions | Foundation Actions | Outcome 2050
---|---|---|---|---
Innovative governance creates efficiency and effectiveness across communities. | Fed Gov | Support the development of regional entities (such as regional infrastructure trusts and regional service providers) to own and manage assets across communities. | Establish leadership networks to share innovative ideas, support leadership initiatives and foster emerging leaders. | Wheatbelt leadership is diverse and based on collaborative models of engagement.

Leadership and civic engagement underpins vibrant communities. | State Gov | Establish leadership networks to share innovative ideas, support leadership initiatives and foster emerging leaders. | Support Aboriginal Elders in each sub-region to develop economic and community programs appropriate to need. | Wheatbelt Foundation Fund continues to support implementation of Sub-regional Economic Strategies.

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3. Liveable Communities

Aspiration: Diverse, safe, healthy and resilient communities where services and infrastructure reflect the needs and aspirations of current residents and attracts new residents.

Outcome 3.1: Connected settlements support economic growth and offer multiple liveability options.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong and connected sub-regions – regional centres and hinterlands</td>
<td>WDC, Local Gov, State Gov, Fed Gov, LandCorp, Private Enterprise</td>
<td>Implement priorities identified in Sub-regional Economic Strategies and Regional Centre Growth Plans</td>
<td>Plan for high growth areas to the North of Perth and the Avon Arc.</td>
<td>Annual population growth rate of 2.3% achieves a population target of 180,000 by 2050</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attract investment that includes: • Precinct development • Land assembly • Industry development • Community amenity</td>
<td>Market the liveability of Wheatbelt communities through Heartlands WA promotions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support the Avon Link revitalisation initiative</td>
<td>Transport networks connect residents regardless of where they live to: work, services and recreation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public transport enhances access to services</td>
<td>State Gov, Local Gov, Community groups</td>
<td>Develop and implement a Wheatbelt Public Transport Plan that delivers Inter and intra region transport co-ordination</td>
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Outcome 3.2: Service Delivery Reform ensures health, education, aged, youth and children’s services reflect the needs of current and future Wheatbelt residents.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ageing in place</td>
<td>Federal Gov, State Gov, Local Gov, Not for Profits</td>
<td>Transform aged care and support service delivery through the implementation of the Wheatbelt Aged Care Support and Solutions Report</td>
<td>Implement the cluster housing model by seeking investment for 20 clusters across the Wheatbelt</td>
<td>Aged care infrastructure and services enable residents to age in place. They no longer have to leave the Region to live to enable access services</td>
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<td>Advocate for new aged care delivery structures that deliver an integrated service across communities</td>
<td>Aged Care reform results in another 14 residential beds in the Region by 2015 and 200 by 2027</td>
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<td>Develop and aged care industry strategy</td>
<td>20 communities across the Wheatbelt provide aged care services through a cluster housing model by 2020</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Support local governments plan for and deliver age friendly communities</td>
<td>The Wheatbelt Aged Care industry has achieved considerable growth and is renowned for its quality of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s services</td>
<td>Federal Gov, State Gov, Local Gov, Not for Profits</td>
<td>Deliver improved health, well-being and education results by early intervention and integration of services.</td>
<td>Priorities identified in the Wheatbelt Children’s Services Plan are invested</td>
<td>Child Development Indices improve from 63% of Local Governments having a SEIFA of less than 2000 in 2013, to 50% in 2025 and 40% in 2050</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support local governments plan for and deliver age friendly communities</td>
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### Outcome 3.2: Service Delivery Reform ensures health, education, aged, youth and children’s services reflect the needs of current and future Wheatbelt residents.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family services</strong></td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Reform service delivery by developing sub-regional, cross agency governance structures that result in quality and cost effective services. One region, one provider</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and well-being</td>
<td>Federal Gov</td>
<td>Develop a strategy that delivers a comprehensive and co-ordinated mental health service. One region, one provider</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Research Sub-Regional Health Service Plans to reflect changing community health profiles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local Gov</td>
<td>Investment from the Southern Inland Health Initiative improves primary care and accident and emergency services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not for Profits</td>
<td>Morbidity indicators: Obesity, Arthritis, Cardio vascular disease, Diabetes, Male youth suicide, Mental health indicators, have been significantly improved for Wheatbelt residents</td>
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**Outcome 2050**

- Wheatbelt residents access a full range of services close to home.

**Focus**

- Safety
- Services to growth areas
- Culture and the Arts

**Delivery**

- State Gov
- Federal Gov
- Local Gov
- NGO’s
- Private enterprise

**Transformational Actions**

- Review Sub-Regional Health Service Plans to reflect changing community health profiles
- Investment from the Southern Inland Health Initiative improves primary care and accident and emergency services
- Support improved cohesion of multiple small groups across the region

**Foundation Actions**

- Plan for and deliver services required in high growth areas of Gingin, Chittering and Dandaragan
- Support and promote the Wheatbelt Arts Trail
- Complete the World’s biggest art gallery, linking arts across the Central East

**Outcome 2050**

- Wheatbelt residents access a full range of services close to home.
- Morbidity indicators: Obesity, Arthritis, Cardio vascular disease, Diabetes, Male youth suicide, Mental health indicators, have been significantly improved for Wheatbelt residents.
- Plan for and deliver services required in high growth areas of Gingin, Chittering and Dandaragan.
- Support and promote the Wheatbelt Arts Trail, resulting in industry growth and enhanced liveability options.

**Focus**

- Safety
- Services to growth areas
- Culture and the Arts

**Delivery**

- State Gov
- Federal Gov
- Local Gov
- NGO’s
- Private enterprise

**Transformational Actions**

- Review Sub-Regional Health Service Plans to reflect changing community health profiles
- Investment from the Southern Inland Health Initiative improves primary care and accident and emergency services
- Support improved cohesion of multiple small groups across the region

**Foundation Actions**

- Plan for and deliver services required in high growth areas of Gingin, Chittering and Dandaragan.
- Support and promote the Wheatbelt Arts Trail
- Complete the World’s biggest art gallery, linking arts across the Central East

**Outcome 2050**

- Wheatbelt residents access a full range of services close to home.
- Morbidity indicators: Obesity, Arthritis, Cardio vascular disease, Diabetes, Male youth suicide, Mental health indicators, have been significantly improved for Wheatbelt residents.
- Plan for and deliver services required in high growth areas of Gingin, Chittering and Dandaragan.
- Support and promote the Wheatbelt Arts Trail, resulting in industry growth and enhanced liveability options.
Appendix Three

Outcome 3.3: Community Amenity contributes to community well being and liveability and create economic opportunity.

- **Heritage**
  - **Focus**: Developed heritage assets as places for Aboriginal enterprise and healing, e.g., Mogumber and Wandering Missions.
  - **Transformational Actions**: Implement heritage projects emerging from the Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy.
  - **Foundation Actions**: Wheatbelt Heritage Asset Register complete.
  - **Outcome 2050**: Wheatbelt’s built heritage is a valued community asset that is used for both community amenity and economic opportunity.

- **Sport and recreation**
  - **Focus**: Implement the Wheatbelt Active Communities Plan, with a focus on:
    - Developing soft infrastructure to better utilise hard infrastructure and increase resident activity;
    - Innovative infrastructure design and co-location; and
    - Enhanced water management.

  - **Foundation Actions**: Recreation facilities in Wheatbelt communities are highly utilised.

  - **Outcome 2050**: Activity levels of Wheatbelt residents contribute to reduced morbidity rates.

4. Valued Natural Amenity

Aspiration: The Wheatbelt’s unique natural amenity is valued as an asset for social, cultural and economic development for current and future generations.

- **Climate change opportunities are pursued and risk minimised.**
  - **Focus**: Export knowledge in climate change adaptation.
  - **Foundation Actions**: Seizing the Opportunity.

  - **Outcome 2050**: Wheatbelt’s agricultural productivity continues to grow.

- **Landscape Management protects biodiversity and ensures compatible and profitable land use.**
  - **Focus**: Evaluate current land management initiatives and develop best practice holistic management methods.

  - **Foundation Actions**: Ensure NRM groups have the capacity to support on the ground ‘best practice’ land stewardship.

  - **Outcome 2050**: Productivity gains result from sound land stewardship.
Outcome 4.3: Water management results in water security to enable community amenity and industry development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Transformational Actions</th>
<th>Foundation Actions</th>
<th>Outcome 2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water security through water and wastewater planning and management</td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Integrated water planning for the State that assures security of supply for Wheatbelt communities and industry</td>
<td>Implement an innovative water management program with focus on new urban growth areas, to enable development</td>
<td>Secure water sources meet community and economic need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Gov</td>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated water planning for each Wheatbelt community, to increase water harvesting, recycling and reuse</td>
<td>Develop alternative sewerage options for smaller communities</td>
<td>100% water re-use achieved by 2030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private enterprise</td>
<td></td>
<td>Invest in priority infrastructure identified in these plans so that industrial and community needs are met</td>
<td>Develop local desalination and re-use plants meet residential and industrial water needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcome 4.4: Nature based industry utilises the Wheatbelt’s natural assets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Transformational Actions</th>
<th>Foundation Actions</th>
<th>Outcome 2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature based tourism</td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Develop a comprehensive nature based tourism plan within a Wheatbelt wide tourism strategy</td>
<td>Visitor information and investment in the Wheatbelt National Parks and nature reserves</td>
<td>Nature based tourism contributes to increased number of visitors, enhanced community amenity and improved understanding and respect for the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Gov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewable energy</td>
<td>Fed Gov</td>
<td>Support development of a demonstration solar farm to meet community-wide need</td>
<td>Colgar Wind Farm Stage 2 Mid West Energy Project complete</td>
<td>The Wheatbelt generates 80% of the State’s renewable energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop local distributed energy options</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Gov</td>
<td></td>
<td>State waste facility located in the region creates opportunity for energy generation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 5. Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities

**Aspiration:** The Wheatbelt value proposition is clear to investors in government and private enterprise and families wishing to live and visit

**Outcome 5.1: Workers, businesses, visitors, and investors are attracted to the region.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Transformational Actions</th>
<th>Foundation Actions</th>
<th>Outcome 2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted marketing</td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Develop investor prospectuses emerging from sub-regional economic strategies</td>
<td>Profile Wheatbelt opportunities and match global queries with these opportunities through the Heartlands WA online marketing and “business -connect” portal</td>
<td>Workforce shortages in key industries and geographic locations are met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Gov</td>
<td>Implement worker attraction campaign to meet industry need</td>
<td>Targeted marketing results in increased investment and business relocation to the Region</td>
<td>Visitor numbers grow to 1.2m per annum by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NFP’s</td>
<td>Heartlands WA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private Enterprise</td>
<td>Private Enterprise</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing key decision makers</td>
<td>Federal Gov</td>
<td>Continue targeted messaging in relation to Wheatbelt investment and reform opportunities</td>
<td>Ongoing liaison with agencies, investors and elected members around Blueprint priorities</td>
<td>Wheatbelt issues are well understood and planning and investment meets developmental need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Gov</td>
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<td>Local Gov</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private enterprise</td>
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<td>Families</td>
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</table>

## 6. Effective Partnerships

**Aspiration:** Cost effective investment occurs as a result of good information, quality project management and leveraged investment

**Outcome 6.1: High impact and cost effective investment.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Transformational Actions</th>
<th>Foundation Actions</th>
<th>Outcome 2050</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure coordination</td>
<td>Fed Gov</td>
<td>The Wheatbelt Infrastructure Co-ordinating Group maximises co-ordination of major infrastructure development</td>
<td>Proactive planning on a sub-regional level (rather than reactive planning on a proponent-by-proponent/ local level)</td>
<td>Utilities infrastructure development is coordinated and aligned to developmental priorities of the Region</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State Gov</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Private Enterprise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency co-ordination</td>
<td>Federal Gov</td>
<td>Ongoing liaison to ensure alignment with agency planning and Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint</td>
<td>Targeted and effective investment contributes to meeting economic and population growth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Gov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local government collaboration</td>
<td>State Gov</td>
<td>Supporting groups of local governments to deliver collaborative projects</td>
<td>Cross community investment achieves economy of scale</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Local Gov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proponent support</td>
<td>Federal Gov</td>
<td>Supporting proponents to deliver priority actions identified in the Wheatbelt Regional Investment Blueprint</td>
<td>Targeted and effective investment contributes to meeting economic and population growth</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State Gov</td>
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<td>Local Gov</td>
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<td>Private Enterprise</td>
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<td>Not for Profits</td>
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Working together for the future

APPENDIX FOUR: Wheatbelt Region Map
APPENDIX FOUR: State Map

Acronyms

AAGR – average annual growth rate
ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics
AEDI – Australian Early Development Index
BMI – Body Mass Index
BRM – basic raw materials
COAG – Council of Australian Governments
CSIRO - Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DHS – Department of Human Services
DRD – Department of Regional Development
DSC – Disability Services Commission
FAO - Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP – gross domestic product
GEH – Great Eastern Highway
GNH – Great Northern Highway
GP – general practitioner
IWA – Integrated Water Supply Scheme
IVG – industry value add
K-12 – Kindergarten to Year 12
LGA – local government authority
NBN – National Broadband Network
NFP – not - for - profit organisation
NGO – non government organisation
NRM – Natural Resource Management
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
R&D – research and development
RDAW – Regional Development Australia – Wheatbelt
RDL – Department of Regional Development and Lands
RMCP – Regional Mobile Communications Project
SIHA – Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
STED – Septic Tank Effluent Disposal
SWALSC - South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council
SWIS – South West Interconnected System
WAM – WA Music
WAPC – Western Australian Planning Commission
WASCS – Wheatbelt Aged Support and Care Solution/s
WDC – Wheatbelt Development Commission
VET – Vocational Education and Training

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Join the Conversation: @WheatbeltDevCom #wheatbeltblueprint
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