

WHEATBELT BLUEPRINT

OVERVIEW



Document Status

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Cliffs Resources

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.

**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.

Planning for our future





Say *Hello* to the Wheatbelt

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.

#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

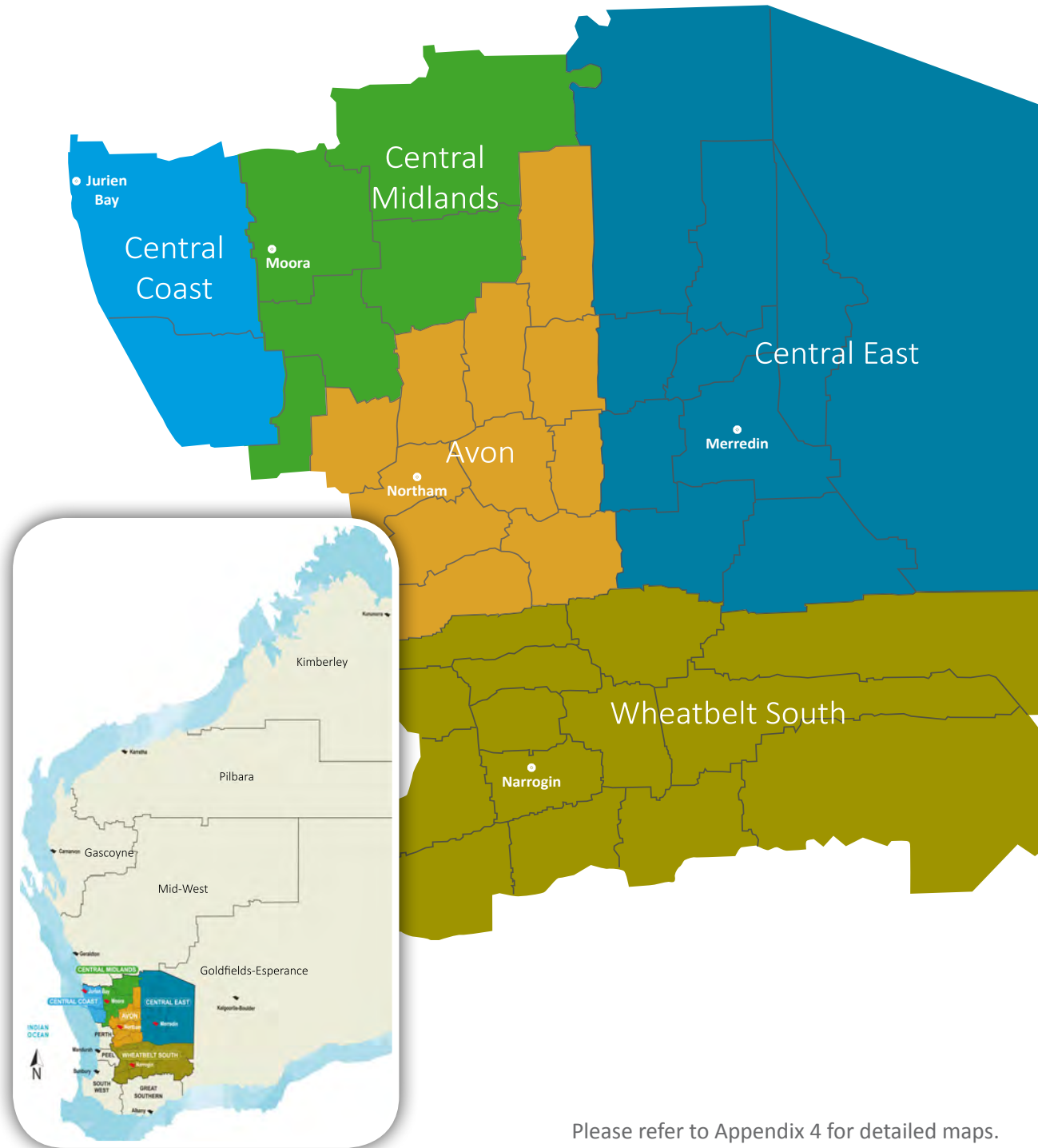
February 2015

Overview

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.



Please refer to Appendix 4 for detailed maps.



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; capacity for growth. The Wheatbelt Strategic Framework is used to provide a robust analysis of economic social and environmental characteristics 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 leads to Section 5, the identification of 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.

Blueprint Aspirations and Targets



Global Drivers

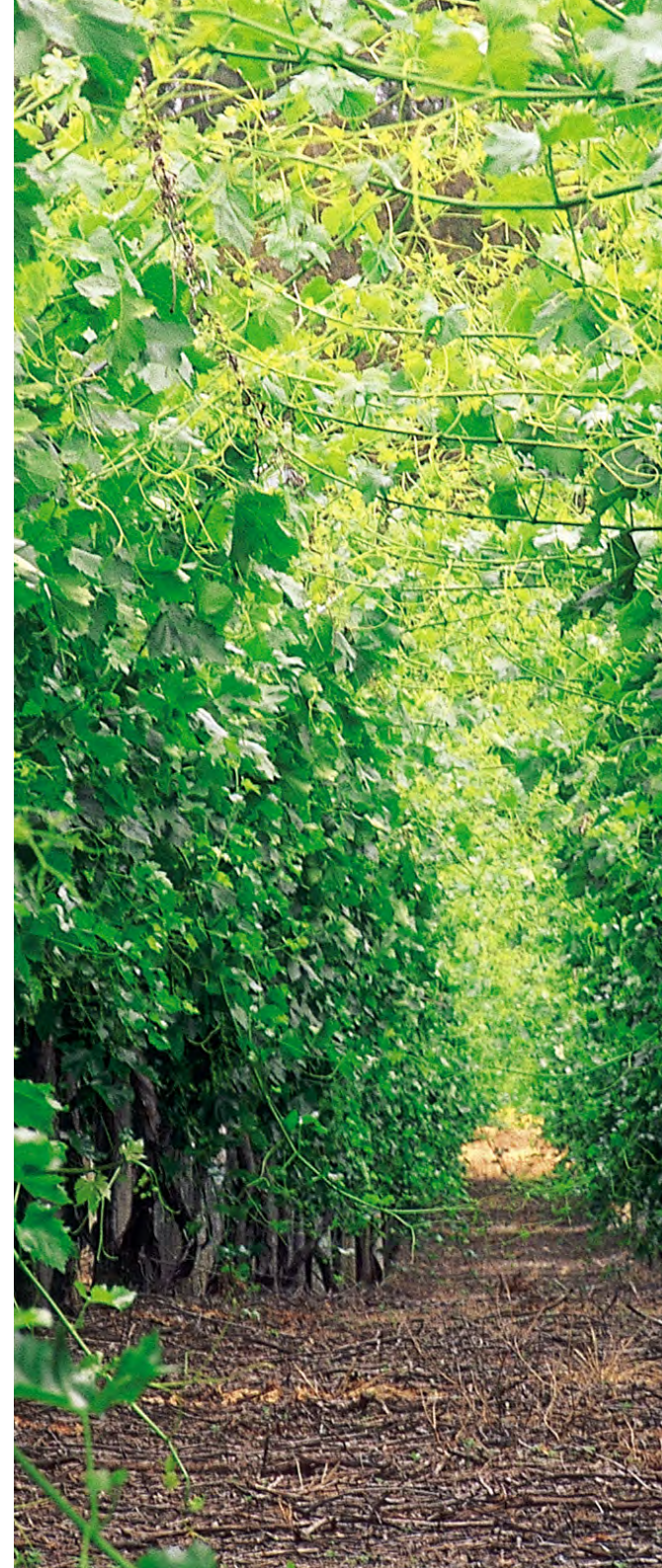
Increased globalisation of world economies, growing affluence in Asian markets and associated demand for food and population services present opportunities for economic development in the Wheatbelt, given the Region's comparative advantages.

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 global population is growing, ageing and becoming urbanised. The Wheatbelt has the necessary assets to double its current population, providing a solution to the State population growth challenges. This includes the increasing proportion of the ageing cohort.

Climate change, water availability and the environmental impacts of economic development are putting pressure on global food production. Renewable energy is increasingly being relied upon to supply growing demands. Land stewardship is mitigating climate impact and the Wheatbelt's natural environment offers a variety of renewable energy opportunities. Tourism growth will also occur as a result of increasingly affluent populations wishing to engage with the natural environment.

A full analysis of global drivers impacting the Wheatbelt can be found at Section 3 of the Blueprint.



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, six key pillars for growth.

Vibrant Economy

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 ensure 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 10,000 small businesses so that they can grow and prosper in the global market place.
- Skilled 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.
- 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. 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.

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

Clever People

To achieve population growth, there is a need to address the out-migration of 15-29 year olds.

The higher than State proportion of the 0-4 and 65+ cohorts and this out migration result in a ‘reversed’ population bell.

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 employment opportunities are maximised for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Wheatbelt residents.

Liveable Communities

The Wheatbelt offers multiple liveability options across 200 communities. Residents highly value where they live, appreciating the 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.



Service delivery reform will result in innovative service models across the highly disbursed area and better match services to the population profiles of the Region.

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

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 benefiting from high visitor numbers to natural attractions, the Wheatbelt is well placed to continue deriving benefit from this landscape provided possible conflicts between productivity, biodiversity and land use are effectively managed.

Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities

Key to optimising the opportunities for the Wheatbelt are 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.

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.

Wheatbelt Road Map for Growth

Shared commitment to the implementation of transformational strategies is required to deliver on the Region’s vision and achieve the stated aspirations and targets.

The Blueprint analysis has identified the following key areas for action, and outlines them within the


themes of the Wheatbelt Strategic Framework (2012) which was developed collaboratively by regional stakeholders.

A focused effort is required in the short to mid term, so key actions that will drive significant growth in the short term are can be found in Section 5.

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

Aspirations & Targets	Outcomes	Focus Areas	Priority Actions
 <i>A diversified and adaptive economic base building on the Regions assets and aligned with State, National and International opportunity</i> Target 2050: <i>Average Annual Compound GRP Growth Rate of 7%</i>	1.1: Diverse and innovative business and industry grow the Wheatbelt's global market share	Industry Development	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'
		Business Development	Develop sub-regional business alliances for collaborative market development Implement 'Growing the Digital Wheatbelt' Strategy Support Heartlands WA to market job, investment and visitation opportunity
	1.2: Skilled workers are attracted and retained to meet the needs of the Region and the State	Workforce Attraction	Support Heartlands WA to market job, investment and visitation opportunity Support CY O'Connor and Muresk Institutes 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	Key Infrastructure Enhance access to markets and services: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• strategic transport network• digital capacity• housing	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

Aspirations & Targets	Outcomes	Focus Areas	Priority Actions
 <i>Lifelong learning - innovation and leadership drive economic growth and community vibrancy.</i> Target 2050 <i>Workforce of 109,800</i>	2.1 Education and life-long learning drives productivity and thus economic growth	Enhance Participation and Achievement Improve Pathways to Employment Support Aboriginal Enterprise	Design and invest in new service delivery models to ensure early intervention and enhanced participation and achievement Implement the Wheatbelt Children's Services Plan Support the Wheatbelt Workforce Alliance to establish business, education and training partnerships that increase training and employment participation Support Aboriginal Elders Groups develop and implement initiatives relevant to local need
	2.2: Innovation drives economic, social and environmental outcomes	Develop Innovation Networks Build R& D Capacity	Support Heartlands WA to profile Wheatbelt innovation Maintain strong links to the University sector
	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	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

Connected Communities

Aspirations & Targets	Outcomes	Focus Areas	Priority Actions
 <i>Diverse, safe, healthy and resilient communities where services and infrastructure reflect the needs and aspirations of current and future residents</i> Target 2050: <i>Population of 180,000</i>	3.1: Connected settlements support economic growth and offer multiple liveability options	Connect Communities	Implement Growth Plans for 5 sub-regional centres Develop Growth Plans for high growth areas
	3.2: Service delivery reform ensures health, education, aged, youth and children's services reflect the needs of current and future Wheatbelt residents in an efficient and cost effective way	Service Reform	Design and deliver integrated sub-regional services in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aged Care• Health• Education (k-tertiary)• Family, youth and children's services• Public transport
	3.3: Community amenity contributes to community well-being and liveability and creates economic opportunity	Culture and the Arts Heritage Sport and Recreation	Support effective governance and delivery structure across communities for each sector Support innovative design and management of multipurpose, multi user community facilities in small towns

Valued Natural Amenity

Aspirations & Targets	Outcomes	Focus Areas	Priority Actions
 <i>The Wheatbelt's unique natural amenity is valued as an asset for social, cultural and economic development for current and future generations</i> Target 2050: <i>30 Wheatbelt communities have off grid power and water solutions.</i>	4.1: Climate change risks are minimised	Climate Mitigation	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
	4.2: Landscape Management protects biodiversity and ensures compatible and profitable land use	Landscape Management	Invest in R&D and technology application to improve soil health Support Wheatbelt NRM foster 'best practice' land management
	4.3: Water management is improved for the benefit of community amenity and industry development	Water Security	Undertake integrated water planning Invest in water harvesting and re-use Implement pilot project: desalination of water using renewable energy
	4.4: Nature based industry utilises the Wheatbelt's natural assets	Tourism Alternative Energy	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

Marketing Wheatbelt Opportunities

Aspirations & Targets



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

Outcomes

5.1: Workers, businesses, visitors, and investors are attracted to the Region

Focus Areas

Targeted Marketing
Influencing Key Decision Makers

Priority Actions

Implement targeted marketing for workforce and visitor attraction

Attract private investment through the development of industry prospectuses for emerging industry identified in Sub-regional Economic Strategies

Effective Partnerships

Aspirations & Targets



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

Outcomes

6.1: High impact, cost effective Investment drives growth

Focus Areas

Infrastructure Co-ordination
Agency Co-ordination
Local Government Collaboration
Proponent Support

Priority Actions

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

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:

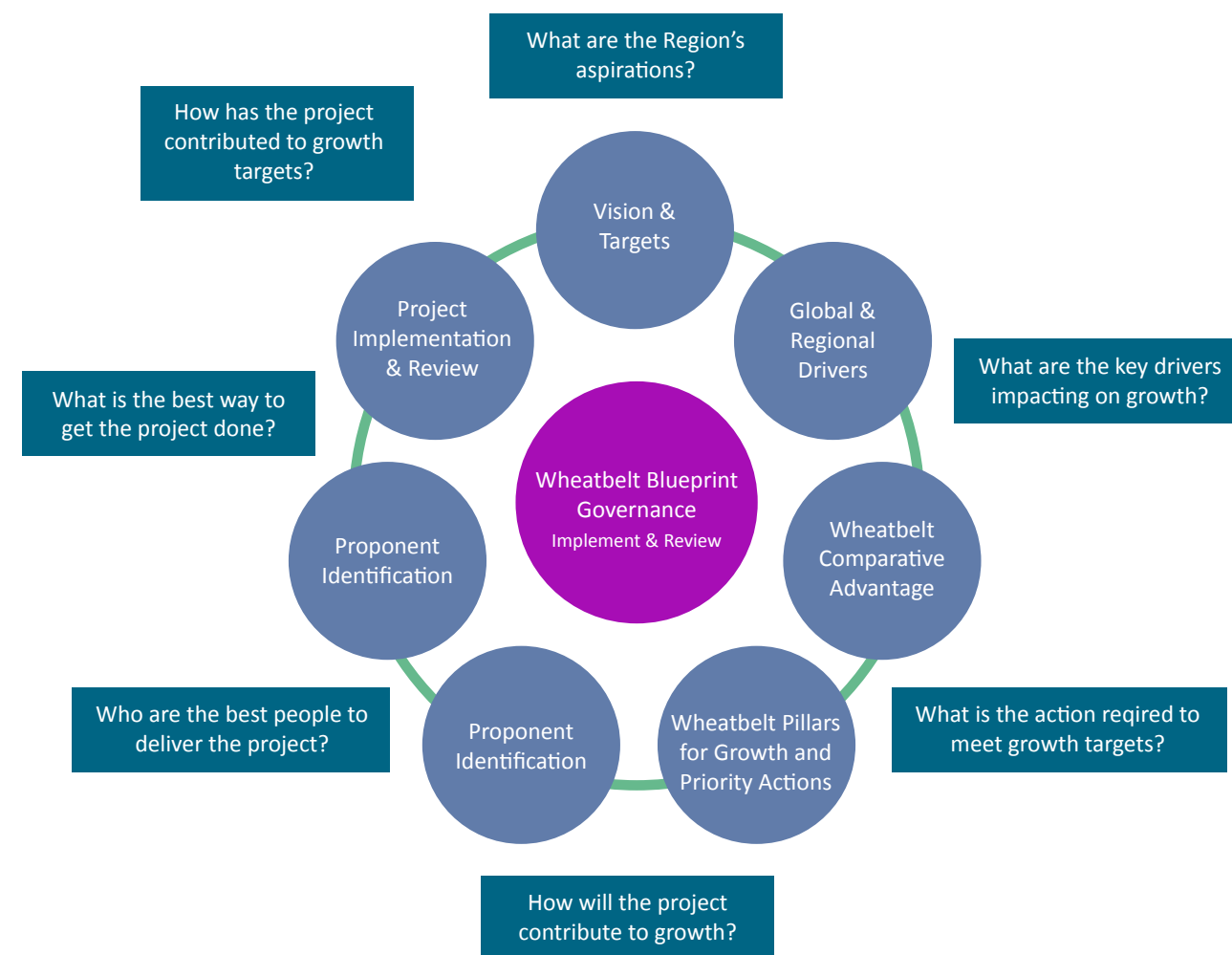
1. The perception of the Blueprint and the Commission. This will be measured through the WDC annual stakeholder survey; and
2. The knowledge, acceptance and use of the Blueprint and its contributing plans, measured through:

- 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.

Blueprint Development & Review



Building on ***strong*** foundations

A long-exposure photograph of a night sky showing numerous concentric star trails in shades of purple, blue, and white. The trails are centered around a point in the sky, creating a circular pattern. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of several trees are visible against the lower part of the sky.

Say ***Hello*** to the Wheatbelt

www.wheatbelt.wa.gov.au | [#wheatbeltblueprint](https://twitter.com/wheatbeltblueprint)