

Projects continue to grow the south

Accommodation for Great Southern seniors

Two Great Southern projects providing accommodation for seniors will benefit from \$1.88 million in grants through the \$600 million Growing Our South initiative, which is funded by the State Government's Royalties for Regions program.

Acting Regional Development Minister Mia Davies recently announced that a grant of \$1.24 million would support the Collet Barker Court Stage 3 project in Mount Barker, and \$646,000 was allocated to the Kojonup Independent Living Units project.

Growing Our South is a five-year program to implement major infrastructure and community projects in the Peel, Wheatbelt, South West and Great Southern regions.

The two new projects add to five initiatives that were previously granted a total of \$11.5 million through the program: Visitor infrastructure at The Gap, Katanning's Mainstreet upgrade, the Early Childhood Hub in Katanning, waste management in a group of hinterland shires and student accommodation at Norman House in Albany.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle welcomed the new funding announcement and said providing appropriate housing for seniors in regional towns strengthened local communities.

"These projects were supported by business cases through the GSDC because aging in place is important for the wellbeing of our seniors, as emphasised in the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*," Mr Rundle said.

"Ensuring that seniors who need modified housing options can continue to live in their own communities helps to maintain a strong social fabric in these Great Southern towns.

"It enables seniors to keep on contributing to their communities and also helps to retain younger family members who might otherwise have to move away to be near elderly relatives," Mr Rundle said.



Wagin MLA Terry Waldron (right) visited Kojonup in July to view plans for seniors' accommodation, joined by (from left) Shire of Kojonup CEO Rick Mitchell-Collins, Shire President Ronnie Fleay and GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle.

Seven independent living units will be constructed in the third stage of the \$8 million Plantagenet Village Homes Collet Barker Court project, which will ultimately provide 21 independent living units for seniors in a five-stage development.

The first stage, completed in 2014, comprised five units, and the second stage is the construction of a clubhouse and communal facilities.

Three independent living units will be constructed in the \$1.25 million second stage of the Shire of Kojonup's Independent Living Units project at Loton Close, adding to the three units completed in the first stage.

Great Southern seniors will also benefit from Growing Our South funding provided to the 4WDL (Shires of Dumbleyung, Wagin, West Arthur, Williams, Woodanilling, Lake Grace and Kent) Regional Organisation of Councils' Well Aged Housing Project, which was facilitated by the Wheatbelt Development Commission.

The 4WDL project will support two new independent living units for seniors in Woodanilling, along with other accommodation for seniors in the Wheatbelt.

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Blueprint is common ground

Agencies sign revised memorandum

A Memorandum of Understanding between the GSDC and Regional Development Australia—Great Southern (RDA-GS) has confirmed common ground in the two agencies' approaches to regional development.

The Chairs and executive officers of both agencies signed the memorandum on Thursday 13 August.

The memorandum, a revision of a document first signed in June 2010, includes agreement on co-branding the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint* as a key strategic guide to investment and decision-making in the Great Southern out to 2040.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said strategic directions set in the *Great*



RDA-GS Board Chair Greg Stocks (left) and GSDC Chair Peter Rundle signed a memorandum taking in the Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint.

Southern Regional Investment Blueprint are already being applied in the region.

"Significant funding has been directed

into the Great Southern recently through initiatives such as Growing Our South," Mr Rundle said. "Projects supported in this way are being assessed in the light of the opportunities identified in the Blueprint's seven transformational project areas.

"The GSDC welcomes the common understanding with RDA Great Southern on the strategic approach to development in the Great Southern," Mr Rundle said.

The memorandum prepares the way for the official launch of the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*.

Following the official launch, the final version of the document will be posted on the GSDC website.

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Taste gains three-year support

Funding to strengthen festival

A three-year funding agreement is set to strengthen the Great Southern's annual celebration of regional produce.

Taste Great Southern secured State Government funding for the next three years through Tourism WA's Regional Events Scheme, which is funded by Royalties for Regions.

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman co-announced the funding in Denmark on Friday 9 October, in conjunction with a statement by Tourism Minister Kim Hames.

Mr Redman said the investment through Royalties for Regions would continue to encourage visitors to discover the rich experiences offered in regional Western Australia.

"Regional tourism creates great social and economic prospects for people who live and work in the regions," Mr Redman said.



Regional Development Minister Terry Redman announced three-year funding for Taste Great Southern recently.

"Tourism has a strong influence on regional development and well established events like Taste Great Southern are a strategic asset for our State."

Dr Hames said the State Government was proud to support the event.

"Over the past 11 years Taste Great

Southern has grown into one of the State's top food and wine festivals, and our sponsorship until 2018 will see the event flourish further," Dr Hames said.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle welcomed the funding and said the three-year arrangement showed confidence in the future of the event.

"The GSDC has supported Taste Great Southern since its inception and we expect that the new funding will help it to grow stronger," Mr Rundle said.

"Successive Taste festivals have highlighted the superb quality of Great Southern produce and brought increasing numbers of visitors into the region."

The next Taste Great Southern will be held in February and March 2016.

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Coverage gain for Nyabing

Phone towers to improve Great Southern services

New opportunities for connection to digital communications have opened up in Nyabing through the \$45 million Regional Telecommunications Project (RTP), which is funded through the State Government's Royalties for Regions program.

A new mobile phone site in the town centre was completed in August and officially launched on Friday 2 October, giving Nyabing residents and businesses improved access to 3G and 4G services.

Nyabing previously had limited mobile phone coverage because the nearest tower was located several kilometres from the town centre.

The new service is one of 27 mobile phone sites that will be installed in the Great Southern over the next four years through the RTP, as augmented by funding through the Commonwealth Government's Mobile Black Spot Program.

Four more sites are due to be completed within the next six months in the first tranche of the RTP roll-out.

The balance of the sites will be delivered



Connected in Nyabing: (From left) Telstra's Boyd Brown, Penny Griffin from the Department of Commerce, Shire of Kent CEO Peter Bentley and GSDC Board member Cameron Taylor celebrated the launch of Nyabing's new mobile phone tower.

over the life of the program, which is due for completion in 2018.

The GSDC worked with the Department of Commerce to identify priority sites for the RTP.

Details of the program are available through the Industry and Innovation page of the Department of Commerce website at www.commerce.wa.gov.au.

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Community works for hub project

Crop program a vital support

Strong community involvement has helped to establish a project that will provide new options for visitors to Nyabing.

In August, the Nyabing Progress Association signed a grant agreement with the GSDC for a \$150,000 grant from the Royalties for Regions-funded Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme to support the \$527,413 first stage of the Nyabing Community Hub project.

Stage one of the project is also supported by major fundraising through a community cropping program.

The first stage entails the construction of six accommodation units beside the newly

acquired Nyabing Inn, for use by short-term visitors and seasonal workers.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the Nyabing Community Hub project was a solid example of the dedication and tenacity that can be found in regional communities.

"Such an impressive community facility will create a desirable meeting place for locals, as well as providing economic benefit for the community through increased visitor traffic," Mr Rundle said.

"The GSDC commends the Nyabing Progress Association on the development of such a significant project, notably

raising almost \$350,000 towards the accommodation project from its own community cropping program."

Future stages of the project will include the complete redevelopment of the site.

When finished, it will include community meeting and conference facilities, offices, a commercial kitchen, dining and licensed areas, and a playground.

Construction of the six accommodation units is expected to be completed by the end of 2016.

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Wine industry celebrates 50 years

First Great Southern vines planted five decades ago

Fifty years ago, a few forward-thinking farmers started planting wine grapes in the Great Southern, on the advice of the Department of Agriculture.

What was then a risky step outside the bounds of conventional agriculture has now become an important strand of the regional economy, producing highly regarded wines.

On Saturday 10 October, the GSDC and the Shire of Plantagenet presented a celebratory dinner at the Henderson and Hwang function centre near Kendenup to mark 50 years of Great Southern wines.

Pre-eminent Australian wine writer and critic James Halliday was the keynote speaker at the dinner, which included four of the region's wine pioneers: Betty Quick, Tony Smith, Merv Lange and Mike Goundrey.

Dinner guests also included wine industry members and people involved in tourism and hospitality.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle addressed the dinner and outlined ways in which the Commission had supported the growth of the industry.

He said the GSDC had supported marketing and export initiatives, buyer visits, wine writer visits, the Riesling and Oysters promotion, the Virtual Tasting



Wine industry pioneers and honoured guests at the 50 years of wine dinner, from left, Merv Lange, Judy Lange, Mike Zekulich, Betty Quick, Tony Smith, James Halliday, Tony Devitt and Michael Goundrey.

project and the Great Southern Wines publication.

Mr Rundle said further development of the wine industry had a place in the key projects listed in the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*.

"The Blueprint envisages the development of a Great Southern regional wine and produce trail connecting the five wine subregions," Mr Rundle said.

"The wine trail will integrate with other tourist trail initiatives in the region.

"Even as we celebrate the past of this wonderful industry, and as we enjoy the fruits of its present achievements in the company of honoured pioneers, we also look to the future and we savour the prospect of further greatness," he said.

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Katanning business awards night

Achievements celebrated

Katanning celebrated the success of local businesses at the inaugural Katanning Regional Business Association Business Awards on Saturday 19 September.

The awards were presented at a gala dinner, with 65 attendees including business owners and employees from the area, and representatives from the GSDC, Great Southern Institute of Technology, the

Small Business Centre Great Southern and the Small Business Development Corporation.

The GSDC supported the awards with a \$1,500 contribution for an award category.

GSDC Board member Cameron Taylor presented the Award for the Best Business with 5-10 employees to Elders Katanning.

Sharna Garlick won the Structured Workplace Learning category, and Carlo Schiano Di Cola from H-Hardware won the Customer Service award. Bellrick Tech and Design took the Home-Based Business category and Tyrepower Katanning was named Best Business with 0-4 employees.

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SEGRA sets sights on Great Southern

Region promoted to conference delegates

Delegates at the 2015 Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA) conference at Bathurst, New South Wales, were invited to come to Albany and the Great Southern for their next conference when a number of SEGRA bid partners, including GSDC and local government representatives, attended to promote the 2016 event.

SEGRA is Australia's premier national conference on regional issues and the organisation's 2016 event will be held in Albany and the Great Southern.

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning and Senior Development Officer Linsey McFarlane were part of the Albany and Great Southern team that attended the conference.

Ms McFarlane told the conference delegates that the Albany and Great

Southern event would be the 20th anniversary of the conference, and was the first time that SEGRA had been hosted by a region rather than a single city.

"The Great Southern region is proud of this collaboration and we are sure that it will help us in delivering an exciting program for you next year," Ms McFarlane said.

"The level of engagement and input from our regional partners to date has been fantastic."

Ms McFarlane announced that the 2016 conference theme would be 'Naturally Strong Regions: Realising the Potential', and she unveiled the event branding.

City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington showed delegates the beauty and attractions of the region, including the acclaimed National Anzac Centre.

Before the announcement, delegates had been invited to guess the location of the 2016 event by viewing nine photos of Great Southern attractions.

Six winners of the competition each received a bottle of Five Virtues wine.

SEGRA was set up in 1997 as a forum to explore issues affecting regional, rural and remote Australia, and to promote positive sustainable outcomes to ensure future prosperity.

Its annual conference attracts key decision-makers from industry, community organisations and all levels of government.

Dates for the Albany and Great Southern conference are not finalised but it will be held late in 2016.

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Runners brave wintry race

City to Surf helps Activ Foundation

Chilly conditions and the occasional shower of rain couldn't dampen the spirits of more than 500 competitors who converged on Middleton Beach for the 2015 Albany City to Surf Race on Sunday 9 August.

Competitors in the race take on a challenging 12km run or walk, or a 4km run or walk.

The Albany event is part of the state-wide City to Surf series, along with Karratha, Busselton, Geraldton and Perth. The series helps to raise funds for the Activ Foundation.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$10,000 through the GSDC's Community Chest Fund supported the event.

GSDC Deputy Chairman Ross Thornton was on hand to start the race and presented medallions to the race winners in each category.



GSDC Deputy Chairman Ross Thornton presented medallions to the City to Surf category winners.

The City to Surf race attracts competitors and supporters to visit the Great Southern and promotes healthy lifestyles. About a third of the 500 competitors travelled from

outside of Albany for the event, resulting in demand for about 225 room nights.

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Science takes centre stage

Regional research achievements on show

Achievements in regional science took centre stage at the Albany Entertainment Centre's Kalyenup Room on Friday 14 August for the 2015 Great Southern Great Science symposium.

Presentations at the event, which was supported by the GSDC, ranged from measuring the behaviours and attitudes of fishers at Albany's notorious Salmon Holes to killing snails with microwaves.

Other topics included fox control, protecting the western ground parrot, peat rehabilitation and advance care planning for people with serious respiratory disease.

Keynote speaker Alec Coles, the Chief Executive Officer of the WA Museum, prodded and poked the 180-strong audience into a reconsideration of what he claimed was a false dichotomy between scientists and creatives.

Mr Coles invoked rock stars, Star Trek's Mr Spock, Shakespeare, Pythagoras and Einstein to argue that some of the most creative thinking happens in science.



WA Museum CEO Alec Coles helped to inspire creative scientific thinking at the Great Southern Great Science symposium.

In a recorded message presented to the audience, WA Chief Scientist Professor Peter Klinken threw out the challenge to maintain scientific endeavour in the key areas of mining and energy, agriculture and food, health and medical research, biodiversity and marine sciences, and radio astronomy.

Professor Klinken identified challenges and opportunities in each key area.

In the field of agriculture, he identified decreasing rainfall, increasing salinity, and biosecurity as serious challenges.

"We can only address these challenges through scientific means," Professor Klinken said. "If Western Australia is to stay at the forefront of being a fantastic producer of agricultural products, we have to maintain our standards and our capabilities in science. It is the science that will take us forward."

Great Southern Great Science is organised by the Great Southern Science Council (GSSC) in collaboration with the Western Australian Museum - Albany, the University of Western Australia's Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management and South Coast Natural Resource Management.

The symposium promotes science to the Great Southern community, to other scientists, and to professionals with an interest in research or teaching in science.

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Festival highlights spring beauty

Program takes in botanical riches

Visitors and residents across the northern shires of the Great Southern have been out and about enjoying the beauty of spring with the help of the annual Hidden Treasures Great Southern Bloom Festival.

September and October are the best months of the year for viewing the region's botanical riches, and the Bloom Festival made it easy in 2015.

The 2015 festival, supported by \$20,000 of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Community Chest Fund, was launched at Kodja Place in Kojonup on 11 September by Hon Martin Aldridge MLC.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle also spoke at the launch, and said the festival, now in its fifth year, showed a commitment to growing tourism in the region, reflecting

priorities set in the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*.

He said the Blueprint included a key project area aimed at further developing and marketing the region's iconic and creative tourism sector.

"The 2015 Bloom Festival is already doing this by bringing together 37 individual events under one brand to further develop the region's tourism product and to strengthen marketing efforts," Mr Rundle said. "The event is not just for visitors as all of us in the region can discover our own hidden treasures by joining the Hidden Treasures Bloom Festival this year."

The festival, which finished on 11 October, included 37 events across seven of the Hidden Treasures shires. The 2015



ABC presenter Andrew Collins (left) took the Bloom festival launch on-air with GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle.

event was the first time that Healthways partnered with Hidden Treasures to promote the Act, Belong, Commit message.

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Maps aid cycling and touring

Easy navigation in the Great Southern

Navigating the Great Southern on two wheels or four is easier than ever, thanks to projects supported by the GSDC.

A cycle touring map was released in August to highlight ten great bike rides in Albany, and a regional touring map was released in September to provide campervan and motorhome owners with a handy guide to routes and attractions in the Great Southern.

Each project was supported by State Government Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Community Chest Fund (CCF).

The regional touring map, available through visitor centres, is one of several activities undertaken in a partnership between the GSDC and the City of Albany, and is aimed at promoting Albany and the Great Southern as a destination for the 2015 Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) National Rally, to be held in Albany from 26 October to 1 November.

The project, supported by a \$10,000 CCF grant, also included development of a communication plan for the event,



Transport Minister Dean Nalder launched the 10 Great Rides map in Albany in August.

targeted marketing to CMCA members and promotion of the Great Southern through a regional trade stall at the CMCA Anniversary Rally in Murray Bridge in April this year.

For those on two wheels, the Amazing Albany: 10 Great Rides map, available at the Albany Visitor Centre, sets out distances, times and tips for ten cycling routes centred on Albany.

The map includes easy family rides such as Middleton Beach to Emu Point and an Anzac discovery ride around Albany Heritage Park. Riders can also embark on

longer rides, for example all the way to Two Peoples Bay and Little Beach and through the Nullaki Wilderness.

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman said Amazing Albany: 10 Great Rides would be an essential resource for tourists and residents on the south coast.

"This high quality map was developed by the Albany Cycling Club and contains a wealth of easy-to-use information about the best 10 on-road rides in Albany in a compact pocket format," Mr Redman said.

The GSDC supported the 10 Great Rides project with \$19,958 through the Government's Community Chest Fund, made possible by Royalties for Regions.

Transport Minister Dean Nalder launched the map in Albany Friday 28 August. Mr Nalder said the State Government had provided significant support for the Cycle City Albany strategy, including \$900,000 over the past three financial years for bike network projects in the region.

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Denmark impresses the judges

Great Southern has WA's Top Tourism Town

Persistence paid off for Denmark when it won the 2015 WA Visitor Centre Association's Top Tourism Town award on Tuesday 22 September.

After being a finalist for two previous years, Denmark impressed the judges in 2015 to win the award ahead of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Geraldton, in the category for towns with populations greater than 5,000.

A media package worth \$25,000 comes with the award and will help Denmark to promote itself to the Perth market during the off-peak season.

Then Denmark Shire President and Chair of Denmark Tourism Ross Thornton

attended the WA Tourism Conference dinner to receive the award. Mr Thornton said the town was full during peak periods but there was capacity to increase visitor numbers at other times of the year.

He said that on the day of the judging for the award, the town had taken a highly organised approach because the judges visited for only six hours.

Bid organisers ensured that the judges were exposed to fresh produce and local wines during their visit. Their tour included Greens Pool and Valley of the Giants, and they enjoyed specially-prepared marron.

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Denmark Markets are a big drawcard for the town. Photograph by Meryl Oversby.

Medal helps dieback fight

New cleaning station launched at field day

GSDC Medal winner Gary Muir launched the Phytofighter 3000 dieback cleaning station at a field day in September.

Mr Muir was awarded the 2014 GSDC Medal and used the associated \$12,000 grant to continue the development of the cleaning station, along with other environmental work.

At the GSDC Medal Field Day at the WA Museum Co-Op Building in Albany, Mr Muir said the Phytofighter

3000 overcame several limitations of earlier versions of the cleaning station, whose walk-through designs were considered trip hazards.

The 3000 model features a wide platform of open mesh over a debris collection sump, with two side bays. One bay is for brushing debris off boots and the other is



GSDC Medal winner Gary Muir demonstrates the Phytofighter 3000, which is accessible for wheelchair users, cyclists and horseriders.

a boot sprayer that applies a disinfectant solution.

“The brush section is separate from the spray section to minimise recontamination,” Mr Muir said. “There’s no trip hazard, so you can walk straight through, and you can get through in a wheelchair.”

The wide platform also allows the station to be used on bicycle and horse trails. Cyclists can use the retractable hose to disinfect bicycle tyres, and the hose can extend beyond the station platform to disinfect horses’ hooves.

Solar panels power a 12-volt battery pump that automatically mixes the disinfectant with water, and there is an integrated back-up hand pump.

The GSDC Medal is awarded every two years. A field day every other year presents details of the work undertaken by medal winners. Nominations for the 2016 award open on 2 November 2015; details will be available at www.gsdc.wa.gov.au or Twitter:@NRM_Medal.

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