

Simon Baker film to boost Denmark

TV star's feature film of Tim Winton novel

Funding secured through the GSDC helped to clinch a decision to produce a feature film of Tim Winton's award-winning novel *Breath in the Great Southern*.

Australian actor and star of *The Mentalist* Simon Baker visited Denmark on Friday 10 July for the announcement of the project.

The production of *Breath* is supported by \$1.5 million in State Government Royalties for Regions funding administered through the GSDC and \$800,000 through ScreenWest.

Mr Baker will star in and direct the film, and said he was familiar with the book.

A location-scouting tour of the South West included a visit to Denmark, and Mr Baker said he and Australian producer Jamie Hilton immediately felt it was the right place to make the film.

"It was just the feel of the place and the sense of community environment that rung out and felt special," Mr Baker said.

"We knew right there. We just looked at each other and we knew that we had to somehow try to make it work in this particular area."

Mr Baker said he felt honoured that the 'powers that be' had supported the intention to come to the Great Southern to make the film.

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman and Culture and the Arts Minister John Day joined Mr Baker for the announcement.

Mr Redman said the production would generate significant economic activity for the Great Southern.

"Breath will create local jobs, directly benefit the local economy and showcase the Great Southern to the world," Mr Redman said.

Mr Day said the production would employ West Australian film professionals and crew, along with about 150 Great Southern locals as actors, extras and surfing doubles.



*Culture and Arts Minister John Day (left), actor and director Simon Baker (centre) and Regional Development Minister Terry Redman celebrate the announcement of the Great Southern production of the feature film *Breath*.*

"ScreenWest and the Great Southern Development Commission have worked closely with the film's producers to sell the State's attributes as a premier filming destination," Mr Day said.

Breath is set in and around the fictional town of Sawyer, which is based on Denmark. The neighbouring town is called Angelus, which is based on Albany and is a fictional location in many works by Tim Winton.

Breath tells the story of two teenagers who are befriended by an older surfer and introduced to risks and challenges that significantly change their lives.

The production team includes Oscar- and Emmy-winning US producer Mark Johnson (*Breaking Bad*, *The Notebook*, *Rainman*) and Australian producer Jamie Hilton of See Pictures (*The Little Death*, *The Waiting City*, *Backtrack*).

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Minister gives Budget overview

Regional issues canvassed

Business and community leaders from throughout the region attended a GSDC and Albany Chamber of Commerce luncheon on Friday 15 May to hear details of the 2015-2016 State Budget from Regional Development Minister Terry Redman.

Mr Redman gave an overview of the budget and explained specific issues that would affect the Great Southern.

“We’ve seen in this term one of the most unprecedented impacts on the State budget that we’ve ever seen in Western Australia,” Mr Redman said.

“Iron ore royalties have dropped off significantly and at the same time there’s a significant drop in the GST, so that makes it a huge challenge.”

Mr Redman said the key elements of the budget included reform and efficiencies in the public sector and aiming for a minimal impact on households and businesses.

He said the Government also aimed to reduce debt through asset sales and to create jobs through an asset investment program.



Regional Development Minister Terry Redman (centre) with Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Rod Hedderwick (left) and GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle.

The audience was told that exports were growing strongly and business investment was peaking.

The Government had accepted that there would be a budget deficit over the medium term but it forecast a return to surplus by 2017-2018.

Mr Redman said the Great Southern would benefit from the Government’s State-wide programs, and there would be further gains through regional programs

such as the Growing Our South Fund, the Regional Telecommunications Project and the Seizing the Opportunity in Agriculture program.

Initiatives for 2015-16 in the region include a regional tourism marketing campaign, new visitor infrastructure at Torndirrup National Park and development planning for the long-vacant Middleton Beach hotel site.

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Plan for Katanning workforce

Priority actions identified

Katanning has a new plan that identifies its current and projected needs for workforce development and skills.

The Katanning Workforce Development Plan was launched by Department of Training and Workforce Development Director General Dr Ruth Shean on Thursday 11 June in Katanning.

The document sets out ten practical and achievable priority actions to address issues such as low labour force participation and high unemployment rates among Aboriginal people, access to education, training and migrant settlement services, availability of childcare, and

provision of employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Actions include establishing a steering committee for the Agrifood Precinct project and initiating an employment pact aimed at achieving the same workforce participation rate for Katanning’s Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population.

Dr Shean acknowledged the contribution to the project by the Great Southern Workforce Development Alliance, chaired by the GSDC. She said producing a workforce development plan for Katanning was set as a priority action under the Great Southern Workforce Development

Plan (launched in 2013) in recognition of Katanning’s status as a SuperTown and regional centre in the central Great Southern.

GSDC Regional Manager Industry and Infrastructure Russell Pritchard said the Katanning plan fitted into the Commission’s overarching strategic approach to the development of the Great Southern, guided by the *Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint*. Mr Pritchard said that achieving significant strategic aims always came down to the engagement of local people.

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Nine projects gain RGS funds

Program supports initiatives across the region

Nine projects worth a total of \$12 million will receive funds through the GSDC's Regional Grants Scheme (RGS), bringing more than a million dollars of State Government Royalties for Regions support into the Great Southern.

Regional Development Minister Terry Redman announced the successful grants on Thursday 4 June. Mr Redman said the RGS provided opportunities for local communities to improve and develop infrastructure and community services.

The \$1.066 million Great Southern grants were part of a \$9.024 million program supporting 86 projects across Western Australia's nine regions.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the grants for the Great Southern would continue the Commission's work of promoting economic and social development in the region.

"This is the fourth round of the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme, which has supported more than a hundred projects since 2009 with about \$12

million of Royalties for Regions funding," Mr Rundle said.

"In this round of the RGS, there is support for continued development in the agriculture sector, enhancement of community and sporting facilities, and growth of tourism and major events.

"As the projects are undertaken and completed, they will enhance the lives of regional residents and build the Great Southern economy," Mr Rundle said.

The Shire of Gnowangerup's \$3.16 million redevelopment of its swimming pool gained a \$200,000 RGS grant that will support the landscaping, car parking and access road components of the project.

A \$3 million upgrade of the Tambellup Sports Pavilion attracted an RGS grant of \$200,000 and the Denmark Riverside Club secured a \$200,000 grant to support its \$2.57 million project to replace the existing bowling club building. The Shire of Kent is building a \$1.8 million community hub at Nyabing, which was allocated \$150,000 in RGS funding.

Mount Barker's saleyards will be improved by roofing a section of the stock holding pens, for which \$200,000 in RGS funds was allocated in a \$700,500 project.

Perth International Arts Festival was allocated \$43,480 to support the 2016 Great Southern Festival, and the City of Albany was allocated \$20,001 to support its hosting of the 2015 Clipper Round the World yacht race.

With the support of a \$27,630 RGS grant, Princess Royal Sailing Club will build accessible boat storage and training facilities to improve its sailing programs for juniors, school groups and people with disabilities.

Australia's South West will undertake a \$175,000 capacity building program throughout the Great Southern, supported by \$25,000 in RGS funds, to enhance growth in tourism.

Details of the RGS grants are on the GSDC website at www.gsdc.wa.gov.au.

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Medallist's work on show

Dieback fight in focus

A demonstration of the Phytoguarder 3000 dieback boot cleaning station will feature at the biennial GSDC Medal field day on Monday 14 September.

Tour guide and WOW Wilderness proprietor Gary Muir will present details of the work he has undertaken since being awarded the 2014 GSDC Medal, including the innovative cleaning station aimed at reducing the spread of dieback.

The medal award included a \$12,000 grant, which Mr Muir applied across four key projects: Project Dieback, UR Walpole school education program, Walpole Wilderness Biodiversity Project and the WOW Wilderness Communication Strategy.

The Phytoguarder is part of the dieback work, and comprises a convenient boot-cleaning



Regional Development Minister Terry Redman (left) presented Gary Muir with the GSDC Medal in June 2014.

stand which incorporates a disinfectant spray that kills dieback spores.

The field day will be held at the WA Museum Co-op Building and costs \$10. Morning tea and lunch will be provided.

Places are limited and people wanting to attend are invited to register by email to administration@gsdc.wa.gov.au or contact the GSDC Albany office on 9842 4888.

The 2014 GSDC Medal finalists Basil Schur and Stephen Frost each received a \$2,000 grant towards their work in natural resource management.

Mr Schur allocated his grant towards travel to Asia to attend shorebird conferences and visit key feeding sites on migratory bird routes. Mr Frost undertook a high tannin fodder trial aimed at naturally controlling intestinal worms in sheep, as part of a whole of farm approach to reducing chemicals in production.

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Young artists honour Anzacs

Mural part of youth art program

Young artists have created an ambitious mural with an Anzac theme in St Werburgh's Lane on the side of the Dog Rock Boulevard shopping centre in Albany as part of a youth arts project supported by the GSDC.

War veterans Murray Maxton and Harold Martin officially opened the mural 'A Salutation to Anzacs' at a sunset ceremony on Anzac Day.

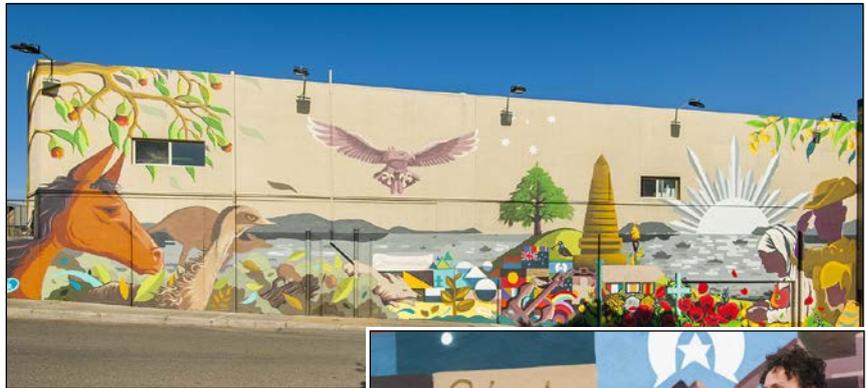
The GSDC supported a \$95,773 Albany Youth Support Association (AYSA) project, of which the mural is one component, with \$19,985 of Royalties for Regions funding through the Community Chest Fund.

A group of aspiring young artists from Albany and Denmark helped to create the artwork, guided by experienced mural artists Chad Marwick and Darren Hutchens.

AYSA youth services coordinator Aaron Bailey said the mural project was an exciting opportunity for the association.

"These large-scale community art projects are a great way to grow young people's skills," Mr Bailey said.

"It gives them a chance to develop pride of place and ownership, and it's a great way for them to get a deeper understanding of the Anzac tradition."



Above: The mural 'A Salutation to Anzacs' is on the side of the Dog Rock Boulevard shopping centre.

Right: At the official opening of the mural, artists Chad Marwick (left) and Darren Hutchens (right) joined war veterans Murray Maxton (centre left) and Harold Martin.



Initial concept designs for the mural were developed in consultation with the RSL and Cockles Pty Ltd, the owners of the Dog Rock Boulevard shopping centre.

Artist and former Albany resident Darren Hutchens said coming back to Albany to work on a project of such a magnitude was significant to him, as was the fact that his great-grandfather fought at Gallipoli.

"I only recently found this out, so it's been

a kind of personal journey," Mr Hutchens said. "If this mural can help other people come to understand the history of our nation, then I think we've achieved our objective," he said.

Further elements of the AYSA project included youth workshops in Term 2 covering visual arts, hip-hop and beat-making, song-writing and recording.

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Chinese investors explore potential

Delegations seek opportunities

In March and April, the GSDC met two business delegations from China to enhance their understanding of investment possibilities in the Great Southern.

On 26 March, a delegation from Shanghai visited the Great Southern to explore its business potential.

A GSDC presentation to the delegation showcased existing and potential international investment opportunities

in aquaculture, timber, viticulture, horticulture, food processing, agriculture, tourism, energy and tertiary education.

On 24 April, the GSDC hosted a delegation from the Jiangsu Province and Chinese Academy of Sciences, which is exploring options to import kikuyu from the Great Southern.

The delegation comprised four professors and a research associate from the

International Cooperation Program. GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning escorted the delegation to view kikuyu production and research sites.

The group also met with Professor Steve Hopper, from the Centre of Excellence in Natural Resource Management, to discuss the potential for collaboration, student exchange and study opportunities.

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Focus on ancient fish traps

Project enhances heritage site

Ancient fish traps on the north shore of Albany's Oyster Harbour now boast a cultural shelter, boardwalk and interpretive signs provided with the support of the GSDC.

The Oyster Harbour Fish Traps project was officially opened on Thursday 28 May by members of the Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation (AHRGAC).

Enhancing the fish traps site was a \$185,000 project of the AHRGAC, which gained \$100,000 in State Government Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme.

AHRGAC Chairperson Vernice Gillies acknowledged the project's supporters.

"This project has been a long-time dream of the local Menang Noongar people, to be able to take care of and protect our fish traps," Ms Gillies said.

Speaking at the event, GSDC Board member Margaret Gorman said the Commission's support was aimed at preserving a precious part of the region's heritage and making it more accessible to locals and visitors.

"This shelter and boardwalk will attract tourists and it is also an asset for education and recreation," Mrs Gorman said.



Members of the Albany Heritage Reference Group Aboriginal Corporation cut the ribbon to open the Oyster Harbour Fish Traps project: (from left) Eliza Woods, Stan Loo, Averil Dean, Aden Eades, Cheryle Colbung and Vernice Gillies.

"In the tourism field, it will build on the higher profile that the region is gaining through other heritage projects like the National Anzac Centre.

"It links into other projects and proposals that will eventually lead to tourism trails with cultural connections."

Students from the nearby Great Southern Grammar School contributed to the project by creating art that was included in the interpretive panels.

The panels also include illustrations of celebrated 19th century paintings by artist Robert Neill.

The Oyster Harbour Fish Traps was one of the first sites declared a protected area under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972.



GSDC Board member Margaret Gorman (left) with Vernice Gillies and Harley Coyne at the opening of the fish traps project.

It comprises low stone structures on the harbour floor that were used to trap fish that swam in on the high tide and were unable to escape when the tide fell.

Augmenting the GSDC's funding, the Oyster Harbour Fish Traps project was supported by Lotterywest, Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA), WA Museum, South Coast NRM and the City of Albany.

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Video record of Noongar stories

Recollections of Aboriginal elders

Stories of Noongar life in and around Gnowangerup will be recorded on video as part of an Indigenous Community Stories Program delivered through the Film and Television Institute (FTI) and ScreenWest.

Supported by the GSDC, the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation and the Gnowangerup Community Resource Centre successfully made a joint submission to the FTI to record the stories of Noongar people from the area.

Participating Noongar elders will tell the stories of their lives at the mission near Gnowangerup and the transition to the town reserve in the 1960s, including their relationships with townspeople, farmers and other Noongar people.

Elders from Albany, Gnowangerup and Katanning have been approached and expressed interest in taking part. The resulting video will be the property of the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation.

A copy will be used in an audio-visual display at the Gnowangerup Heritage Centre.

Filming will take place over four to five days in October at sites in and around Gnowangerup including the Gnowangerup Mission, the two reserves, Twisted Tree and Kebaringup worker hut.

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Classic cars take to the streets

Drivers race against the clock

Classic cars took over the streets of central Albany on Sunday 31 May to thunder and purr through their laps in the 2015 Albany Classic Motor Event.

The Albany Classic was supported by \$20,000 of State Government Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Community Chest Fund to help cover timekeeping, insurance and marketing costs.

A big crowd took advantage of bright autumn weather to watch the race and enjoy the associated activities and attractions in Alison Hartman Gardens, the Town Square and along York Street.

Motoring fans wandered the pits area in the library car park and lined the streets to watch the drivers try to hit their nominated circuit times.

Drivers in the Albany Classic nominate a time to complete their laps of the course, and lose points for times over or under the mark.

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Action in the Albany Classic Motor Event: Drivers pass the chequered flag (above) in York Street, while the competitors in the next race (left) queue in Collie Street behind the pits area.

Great Southern pitch for rally visitors

Invitation to campervan and motorhome owners

Attractions and advantages of the Great Southern were on show for hundreds of campervan and motorhome owners in South Australia in April, in a partnership promotion by the GSDC, the City of Albany, Shire of Cranbrook and Hidden Treasures of the Great Southern.

The promotion was aimed at enticing visitors to the Great Southern for the next Campervan and Motorhome Club of Australia (CMCA) rally, to be held in Albany from 26 October to 1 November 2015.

Under the Community Chest Fund program, the City of Albany secured a Royalties for Regions grant of \$10,000 to implement a regional marketing plan for the CMCA rally.

Hundreds of campervan and motorhome owners are expected to converge on

Albany for the rally, which will generate spin-off benefits for other centres in the Great Southern.

The South Australian rally, in Murray Bridge, was an opportunity for GSDC Senior Development Officer Linsey McFarlane and representatives of the partner organisations to maximise the number of visitors to the Great Southern event.

For six days, Ms McFarlane and representatives of partner organisations staffed a stand promoting activities and attractions of the Great Southern.

Two seminars were presented on the Hidden Treasures shires, which will host the annual Bloom Festival in the weeks before the CMCA rally.

The seminars gave an overview of tourism in the region, with a summary of activities and experiences, and presented useful traveller information about caravan parks, camping areas, CMCA staging points and distances between destinations.

A daily prize was offered to the Murray Bridge rally participants, creating the opportunity to promote the Great Southern each day from the event's main stage to a 1,000-strong audience.

Prize draw participants were entered into a database which will assist with communications in advance of the Great Southern event, including distribution of a regional touring map produced as part of the City of Albany's marketing plan.

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Key conference for Great Southern

Major forum for regional issues

Australia's premier national conference on regional issues is headed for the Great Southern in 2016.

A successful partnership bid led by the GSDC will bring the 2016 Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA) conference to the region.

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 representatives from industry, community organisations and all levels of government.

The 2016 conference is SEGRA's 20th and its first branded as a region-wide event, called 'Albany and the Great Southern'.

GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle said the conference, to be held late in 2016, will be based in Albany and extend into the region.

"The SEGRA conference will be a highlight event in the Great Southern in 2016," Mr Rundle said. "It will showcase the advantages and opportunities of the Great Southern, and enable keen national focus on regional issues."

Mr Rundle said a key pillar of the bid

was the GSDC's strong partnership with, and funding support from, the City of Albany, RDA Great Southern, Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Katanning and Plantagenet, UWA Albany, Denmark Chamber of Commerce, Great Southern Institute of Technology, Southern Ports Authority - Albany Port, South Coast NRM and Department of Parks and Wildlife.

SEGRA will officially launch the Albany and Great Southern conference at this year's event in Bathurst.

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Downhill riders thrill crowds

Cyclists show courage

Albany turned on a perfect autumn day to host the 2015 Urban Downhill mountain bike event on Sunday 24 May.

The thrilling event, supported by \$10,000 of State Government Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Community Chest Fund, sets courageous mountain bike riders racing against the clock to hurtle downhill from the summit of Mount Clarence to a finish line in Stirling Terrace.

At first the course ran across granite faces and along rough bush tracks, but then the riders hit the streets of Albany where they

had to negotiate a series of challenging obstacles including a shipping container and a bone-shaking log track.

Race winner Jimmy Pritchard completed the course in 3min 7.65sec, and received congratulations from City of Albany Mayor Dennis Wellington at the prize ceremony.

Estimates put the spectator crowd at 5,000. Many local residents took advantage of the kind conditions to view the race in comfort from their front yards.

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A downhill rider hits the boards to round the Spencer Street corner into Stirling Terrace outside the UWA Albany Centre.

Regional businesses continue to shine

Great Southern businesses have recently gathered national and international accolades.

West Cape Howe Wines was named Best Value Winery of the Year in the 2015 Qantas epiQure Halliday Wine Companion Awards.

Limeburners Single Malt Whisky, produced

by the Great Southern Distilling Company, won a gold medal at the 2015 London International Wine and Spirit Competition in July. The medal complements the company's win in the Western Australian Regional Business category in the 2015 Telstra Business Awards.

Albany accommodation provider HideAway Haven was a finalist in the Western

Australian Micro Business and Regional Business categories of the Telstra awards, and The Lake House Denmark winery was a finalist in the Western Australian Regional Business category.

Albany's Beach House at Bayside entered the Hall of Fame of online travel website TripAdvisor after achieving a certificate of excellence for five consecutive years.

Happy times for pre-primary students

Fun with new playground features

Break times at Yakamia Primary School are alive with the happy sounds of pre-primary students enjoying their new playground equipment.

The Yakamia Parents and Citizens Association recently completed a project that provided a cycle path, shop fronts and watercourse feature with the help of \$14,600 in State Government Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Community Chest Fund.

The project brought new possibilities for creative play into a formerly empty area of the playground.

Pre-primary teacher Jenny Carter said the children enjoyed using the new equipment.

"It's not just a cycleway, it's a bit more challenging than that," Ms Carter said.

"It's got different surfaces and a small bridge so the children use their muscles more as they ride around.

"When they play in the shops, they work



Yakamia pre-primary students (from left) Jeremy, Saxon, Ruby and Weylan enjoy the new shopfronts and cycle path.

together and solve problems, and their play is generally more cooperative."

Ms Carter said the children had learned to observe a one-way rule that promotes safety on the cycle path.

The new features are part of a larger concept for the pre-primary playground that includes an increased emphasis on nature play.

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