

## Project boosts respite options

Holiday haven for people with disabilities



Friendship House, Rotary's highly-regarded respite facility for people with disabilities, is now friendlier than ever.

A contemporary two-bedroom unit has been added at the rear of the Emu Point property, offering new respite options for people with disabilities and their carers.

Community Services Minister Robyn McSweeney opened the Van Eyk Unit, named after the late Albert Van Eyk, on Friday 23 March.

Albert Van Eyk was a Rotary member who contracted polio and spent most of his adult life in a wheelchair.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$85,000 through the GSDC supported the \$300,000 project, along with funding from Lotterywest and the Jack Family Charitable Trust.

The Van Eyk Unit is purpose-built for people with moderate to severe disabilities.

It includes a hoist on a ceiling-mounted track to assist with procedures that involve leaving a wheelchair, such as bedtime, bathing and toileting.

All areas of the unit are accessible by wheelchair.

Kitchen benches are set at an accessible height and include recesses to allow wheelchair users to sit close to the work areas.

*Community Services Minister Robyn McSweeney cuts the ribbon to open the Van Eyk Unit, watched by Rotary Club of Albany East President Gary Ironmonger.*

Mrs McSweeney said it was easy to see why Friendship House was in high demand.

"It is heartening to think that the Rotary Club of Albany East is now able to extend its hospitality to people who have a major mobility disability," Mrs McSweeney said.

The Van Eyk Unit has been built for energy efficiency, with solar panels to generate electricity to the unit, and recycling of rainwater to the laundry and toilet.

Friendship House opened in 1976 and has provided more than 1500 weeks of low-cost holiday accommodation for disadvantaged and disabled people and their carers.

Accommodation at Friendship House is by referral through the Disabilities Services Commission or its agents, through a community housing organisation or through a relevant service club.

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## Tenth festival in fine voice

Great Southern Festival draws crowds

From its sunset launch on the Albany foreshore to the closing credit of the final film, the Great Southern Festival celebrated its tenth outing with flair.

Initiated by the GSDC in partnership with the Perth International Arts Festival in 2003, the Great Southern Festival has built a dedicated following in a decade.

Crucial in reaching the 10-year milestone was the festival's \$225,000 of Royalties for Regions funding over three years in Round 2 of the GSDC's Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme.

Premier Colin Barnett opened the 2012 program at sunset on Friday 10 March in a ceremony that included a Noongar welcome, a 75-voice choir and fireworks. Festival performances started the next day and continued to the March long weekend.

Thousands of patrons attended shows including classical virtuosos the Escher String Quartet, a capella trio The Magnets, bluesman Eric Bibb and paraplegic Congolese musicians Staff Benda Bilili.

Musical workshops in 2012 focused on voice, there was a three-day program for writers and readers, and the 14-film cinema program concluded on 22 March. Many performances and cinema screenings sold out and extra shows were scheduled to cater for the demand.

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Above: Premier Colin Barnett opens the 2012 Great Southern Festival at the Albany Entertainment Centre. Below right: Noongar dancer Gillian Wood performs at the opening. Below left: Blues singer Eric Bibb at Wignalls Winery.



## New hospice to double capacity

Funding ensures link to hospital

Three Great Southern projects will share \$5.8 million in recently-announced Royalties for Regions grants through the Regional Development Council's Action Agenda Fund (AAF).

The biggest grant for the region will enable the development of a new \$5 million hospice in Albany to cater for the Lower Great Southern, a project that gained a \$4.26 million AAF grant.

The eight-bed hospice to be built near the new Albany Health Campus will double the capacity of the current facility.

The existing hospice has a corridor link to the hospital, which will be lost when the Albany Health Campus opens. Funding for a new hospice means the link can be maintained by a corridor to the campus.

A proposed new Hawthorn House, providing

support for people with dementia and their families, gained \$992,334 in AAF funding, and a project to provide independent living accommodation for seniors in Tambellup drew \$585,000.

The projects are among 14 throughout Western Australia, sharing more than \$24 million in Royalties for Regions funding.

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## SuperTown releases draft plan

### Katanning's vision for the future

Katanning has completed drafting a new plan for its future.

Following a series of well attended community, agency and individual consultations, the Great Southern SuperTown has put out a draft of its Growth and Implementation Plan, a framework for future development.

It is a non-statutory, affirmative action plan which integrates economic, community and environmental initiatives.

The production of a community owned and endorsed plan is a key part of the strategic planning phase of the SuperTowns program.

In its first round, this Royalties for Regions

initiative has been embraced by nine towns in the southern half of the state.

Katanning's community consultations were consistently well attended and the participants made considered and positive contributions to the structure and content of the final document.

After a public comment period ending on Friday 30 March, a final version of the Growth Plan will be prepared to guide the Shire of Katanning's development priorities for years to come.

The Shire of Katanning and the GSDC Board have endorsed the draft plan, which can now be used to support investment in transformational projects.

The process for the funding of priority projects will involve a thorough assessment of the relevant business cases by the Department of Regional Development and Lands and eventual recommendations to Minister Grylls.

For Katanning, the recommendations included in its Growth Plan reflect its economic, urban expansion and infrastructure, community development, environmental and governance objectives.

The other eight SuperTowns – Boddington, Collie, Esperance, Jurien Bay, Manjimup, Margaret River, Morawa and Northam – are following the same process in the development of priority projects.

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## Tempting regional flavours

### Taste program highlights food, wine excellence

Flavours of the Great Southern are the centre of attention in Taste Great Southern, the annual celebration of the region's finest food and wine.

Restaurants, wineries and food outlets across the region have put on special menus, tasting events and celebrations as part of the Taste Great Southern program, coordinated by Denmark Tourism and supported with Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC.

On Friday 17 March, Tourism Minister Kim Hames launched the 2012 Taste program in Perth's Kings Park, generating strong coverage in Perth media.

A formal opening of the festival at West Cape Howe winery in Mount Barker followed on Thursday 1 March, heralding a feast of events on the March long weekend.

Special guests include Must Winebar proprietor Russell Blaikie, celebrity butcher Vince Garreffa and Iron Chef Australia winner Herb Faust.



*Pepper and Salt Restaurant chef Silas Masih prepares barbecued marron at the opening of Taste Great Southern.*

Local chefs highlighted in the Taste program include Silas Masih of Pepper and Salt Restaurant, Xavier Poupel of Terroir and Table, and Dan Sharp of Sharp Infusion.

Taste continues into April and programs are available at [greatsoutherntastewa.com](http://greatsoutherntastewa.com) or from participating outlets.

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## Golfers on target

### Refurbishment takes shape

Golfers in Denmark will soon have a new haven in which to celebrate or commiserate after a few hours spent chasing the white ball.

The Denmark Country Club's renovation of its clubhouse has reached lock-up stage, and contractors and volunteers are pushing ahead with the interior fit-out.

Vice President Graham Wilson said the refurbished clubhouse would be suitable for seminars and functions, and would be used as a community centre as well as a sporting centre.

Refurbishing the clubhouse is part of a wider program that included installing reticulation throughout the course.

Next year the club will tackle the final stage of the project and replace the current sand greens with grass greens.

"It's going to be a pretty top-class facility when it is finished and it will attract visitors," Mr Wilson said.

"We hope to set up a tournament as a major event for Denmark, which will probably take two or three years to get up and running.



Graham Wilson (front) and volunteers Bob Smith, Les Wolfe and Ron Munro install the bar in the refurbished Denmark Country Club.

"We want to double the visitor numbers through the course, which would enable us to employ a greenkeeper," Mr Wilson said.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$143,000 through the GSDC supports the \$1.5 million project, along with \$580,000 from the Community Sport and Recreation

Facilities Fund and \$470,000 from the Shire of Denmark.

The Denmark Country Club has contributed \$300,000 and club members have volunteered thousands of hours of labour on the project.

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## Better facilities for jockeys, stewards

### Race patrons gain closer view

Albany Racing Club boasts new facilities for jockeys and stewards, formally opened by Racing and Gaming Minister Terry Waldron late last year.

Mr Waldron said the new facility was long overdue and would serve the racing community well for many years.

The building includes a general administration and reception area, a stewards' room, change rooms and a common room for jockeys, a disabled toilet

and an audio-visual control room. Changes to the racing club's grounds in association with the development enabled it to provide spectators with a better view of the track near the finish line.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$220,000 through the GSDC's Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme supported the \$700,000 project, along with funding from Racing and Wagering Western Australia.

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Racing and Gaming Minister Terry Waldron and Albany Racing Club Vice President Lesley Solly open the new building.

# Buyers take close look at winemaking

Travel writer covers wine trail

Wine buyers participating in the fourth Great Southern Wine Trail enjoyed the bonus of being able to take in Taste Great Southern events as they toured the region sourcing fine wines.

Buyers from Hong Kong, Korea and the Philippines visited 14 wineries over five days and also took in the sights at some tourism destinations.

Philippines buyer Corinne Joseph was accompanied by her husband Dondi, a travel editor with Travelife magazine.

Mr Joseph will feature the Great Southern in a forthcoming issue of the publication.

Visiting the region during the grape harvest meant the buyers were able to follow the winemaking process from grape to bottle.

They tasted grapes from the vine at the point of harvest and then visited a winery to watch newly-delivered grapes pressed for juice to begin fermentation. Tastings followed, to demonstrate the results of the processes undertaken by the winemakers.

GSDC Export Development Officer



Philippines travel editor Dondi Joseph (left) photographs Single File Estate's Patrick Corbett taking buyers Kevin Tang (Hong Kong), James Lee (Korea) and Claudia Capelvenere (Hong Kong) through the vineyard.

Elizabeth Reed said the buyers all identified their preferred wines.

"Follow-up contact with the buyers will take place in May at Vinexpo in Hong Kong," Ms Reed said.

"Vinexpo is the biggest wine trade show in Asia and all Great Southern wineries were offered the opportunity to attend.

"Forest Hill, West Cape Howe, Bunn's Vineyard, Ferngrove and Xabregas will take part.

"Following Vinexpo, there will be a Great Southern trade tasting in Seoul and all wineries have the opportunity to attend," Ms Reed said.

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# Photographers focus on region's essence

Competition offers \$1600 in prizes

Great Southern photographers are vying for \$1600 worth of prizes in the current GSDC digital photography competition on the theme 'Essence of the Great Southern'.

Initiated by the GSDC and run in partnership with Albany GateWAY and Albany Camera House, the photo competition drew almost 400 entries last year and provided the Commission with a useful bank of images to promote the region.

The 2012 competition opened on Friday 16 March, drawing a steady stream of entries, and closes on Friday 13 April.

First prize is \$400 from the GSDC plus a \$200 print voucher.



Ed Nelson's winning photo from the 2011 GSDC digital photography competition, showing his sons Ricky and Bill flying high at Bremer Bay.

Polling for the Albany GateWAY popular vote award will continue until Friday 20 April and the prizes will be presented on Thursday 26 April.

Entries in the competition can be viewed in the gallery at [www.albanygateway.com.au](http://www.albanygateway.com.au).

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## Workshops seek iconic experiences

### Consultation on National Landscape profile

Workshops in Walpole, Denmark and Albany have contributed to shaping a Tourism Experience Development Strategy (EDS) for the Great Southern as part of the Great South West Edge National Landscape.

Consultants EC3 Global held workshops in March, covering the southern coastal parts of the South West, Great Southern and Goldfields-Esperance regions.

More than 60 people took part to help identify iconic experiences in the area that would appeal to the 'global experience seeker' tourism market.

The Albany meeting had a strong focus on

conservation outcomes, Denmark focused on visitor experiences and Walpole focused on itinerary development.

A draft of the EDS will be made available for public comment in May and the final report will be presented for approval by the Steering Committee in July.

The Great South West Edge is one of Australia's 12 designated National Landscapes, a select listing of the nation's most significant natural environments.

The Great South West Edge stretches from Busselton's tuart forests to Cape Arid east of Esperance.

It takes in the entire Great Southern coastline and is poised to be promoted for its bio-diversity and natural grandeur.

Nomination of the Great South West Edge as a National Landscape was supported by the GSDC, neighbouring Development Commissions, Tourism WA, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the tourism industry.

The Great South West Edge nomination was ratified in 2011 by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia.

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## Consultation on workforce needs

### Planning for future development

Consultation is under way with Great Southern businesses and agencies on the future workforce needs of the region.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development (DTWD) and the Great Southern Workforce Development Alliance have appointed Consultants Carpe Diem

Strategic Solutions to develop a Great Southern Workforce Development Plan to identify current and future workforce needs and to devise strategies to address these needs.

The Alliance comprises representatives from local government, industry, regional

business associations and training organisations, and is chaired by the GSDC.

Carpe Diem is conducting a series of workshops with business and agency representatives across the region.

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## Improved track for speedway

### Better facilities for drivers and fans

Speedway drivers and fans gained the benefit of a better track and pit area when the Albany Speedway Club opened its current racing season.

Royalties for Regions funding of \$49,000 through the GSDC's Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme supported an upgrade of the track and pit area at the Attwell Park Speedway.

The entire track was dug out and replaced to provide a better racing surface, and the material removed was used to extend and reshape the pit area.

The \$100,000 project was completed in time for the club to host a round of the World Series Sprintcars in February.

Club president Kevin Theyer said the

changes provided a better racing surface and gave spectators a safe vantage point overlooking the pits.

Mr Theyer said it was essential for the future of speedway in Albany that the club kept up to the standards necessary for state and national title events.

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## Carbon economy under scrutiny

Conference assesses emerging opportunities

A major conference on the emerging carbon economy drew a keen audience to the Albany Entertainment Centre on Tuesday 13 March.

Greenstream 2 Mainstream focused on emerging opportunities in clean energy, carbon farming, sustainable agriculture, landscape and biodiversity restoration, and regional development.

An initiative of South Coast NRM, Greenstream 2 Mainstream was supported by the GSDC along with Verve Energy, Regional Development Australia and the Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Speakers included Bank of America Merrill Lynch chief economist Saul Eslake, GE Australia New Zealand's Ben Waters and Virgin Airlines' David White.

Local speakers also took to the podium and spoke on developments in wind power, solar energy and agricultural innovations.

The Greenstream 2 Mainstream committee hopes to build the event into a three-day conference and expo.

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Left: Economist Saul Eslake addresses the Greenstream2Mainstream conference.

Below: Greenstream2Mainstream attendees Duane Schouten (GSDC), Paul Turnbull (Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre) and Ken Clements (Plantagenet Shire President).



## Katanning assesses childhood hub

'One-stop shop' proposed

Community groups in Katanning are assessing the potential of a 'one-stop shop' for early childhood services.

A proposal for a Katanning Early Childhood Hub was put forward at a community meeting in April last year, at which a committee was formed.

The GSDC and Lotterywest have supported the committee to undertake a feasibility study and business plan for the proposal.

Consultants Keston Technologies have

been appointed to conduct the study and develop the business plan.

The Early Childhood Hub would be a purpose-built multi-use facility that would host a full range of services catering for children up to eight years old in Katanning and surrounding areas.

Key organisations interested in the proposal include the Katanning Community Kindergarten, Katanning Playgroup, A Smart Start - Great Southern, Katanning Community Childcare Centre,

Katanning Toy Library and the Child Health Nurse. Some of the organisations face difficulties with their current premises and need to renew their facilities to maintain contemporary standards.

Development of an Early Childhood Hub would help to resolve these issues and address Katanning's expected growth in population.

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# Cycle trail rolls on

## Albany to Denmark target in sight

Construction work on the Munda Biddi Trail extension is steadily closing the gap between Albany and Denmark.

By the middle of the year, off-road touring cyclists will be able to pedal between the two South Coast towns on a combination of dedicated trails and minor roads.

The Albany-Denmark link is part of the \$6 million extension of the Munda Biddi Trail from Nannup to Albany, completing a 1000km trail all the way from Kalamunda to Albany.

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) project is supported by \$1.5 million of Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme.

Further Royalties for Regions funding through the South West Development Commission covers the trail construction from Nannup to Walpole.

DEC project coordinator Kerstin Stender



*Munda Biddi Trail coordinator Kerstin Stender with construction supervisor Brett Trouchet and assistant supervisor Peter Horsington on a section of trail near the Sleeman River.*

said the trail sections under construction were not yet ready for cyclists.

Much of the Albany-Denmark trail uses old railway formations, and some of the

original rail bridge pylons are still sound and have been used for the cycle trail bridges.

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