

Gala celebration for AEC

Crowds welcome Albany Entertainment Centre

A spectacular performance by local musicians and singers marked the long-awaited opening of the Albany Entertainment Centre on Saturday 11 December.

Before the gala concert, Culture and Arts Minister John Day unveiled a plaque and officially declared the centre open at a civic ceremony in the foyer of the grand new building.

Guests then took a seat for the first full demonstration of the qualities of the main auditorium, the Princess Royal Theatre, enjoying a massed orchestra and choir and a sparkling parade of local talent.

Gala celebrations over, the entertainment centre opened its doors to paying patrons from Sunday 12 December, with a three-day season of the opening concert drawing enthusiastic audiences.



Culture and Arts Minister John Day (centre), who officially opened the Albany Entertainment Centre on Saturday 11 December, with City of Albany Mayor Milton Evans and GSDC Chairman Peter Rundle.

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New grant round open

Minister announces \$1 million Royalties for Regions opportunity

New grant funding totalling \$1 million is now available for Great Southern projects.



Brendon Grylls

Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls recently announced the third round of Royalties for Regions funding for the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme (RGS) for projects that improve economic and community infrastructure and services in the region.

"The grants scheme is providing money for projects to help attract investment and increase jobs or improve the quality of life in regional WA," Mr Grylls said.

Applications in the Great Southern would be assessed and approved by the GSDC for endorsement by the Minister and State Government.

Round 3 funding is for projects starting from 1 July 2011.

Applicants have until 4.30pm on Thursday 10 March to complete their applications and ensure that hard copies are delivered to the GSDC's Albany office at 110 Serpentine Road.

The GSDC does not accept late, faxed or emailed applications.

Guidelines and application forms are available on the Regional Grants Scheme page of the GSDC website at www.gsdc.wa.gov.au.

Previous rounds of the Great Southern RGS have brought more than \$9 million in funding into the region, supporting 79 projects so far.

Contact: Alison Carpenter ph. 9842 4888



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Region welcomes Governor

Vice-regal tour takes in Great Southern towns

Great Southern schools, community groups and local governments recently basked in the warm approval of His Excellency Dr Ken Michael, Governor of Western Australia.

Dr Michael visited towns from Mount Barker to Ongerup to Katanning and Kojonup in September to renew his acquaintance with communities that had missed out on previous vice-regal tours.

Mt Barker Community College welcomed the Governor for the first time in its new incarnation, Kendenup Primary School children shared their excitement about a proposed skate park, and students turned out at Cranbrook, Tambellup and Broomehill.

At Ongerup, Dr Michael toured the Yongergnow Malleefowl Centre, a long-term project partner with the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC).

Dr Michael praised the centre's work in raising awareness and establishing a highly-regarded malleefowl preservation program.



Mungart Boodja artist Gabrielle Hansen displays works for Dr Michael.

In Gnowangerup, the Governor visited the hospital and high school, and met community and local government representatives.

Dr Michael then travelled to Katanning to meet community leaders including

representatives from neighbouring shires, and visited the GSDC-supported Mungart Boodja Art Centre, focal point of Noongar art in the region and custodian of the Carrolup art school story.

Carrolup art was produced by Aboriginal children in the mid-20th century and gained an international reputation but the key collection of the art was lost in the 1950s, only resurfacing in the archives of Colgate University in New York state in 2005.

A Carrolup artwork by Lance Chadd hangs in Government House, and Dr Michael keenly examined related works on display at Mungart Boodja.

"I have been wanting to see this since the Carrolup paintings were found and I have always had on my mind to come down here," Dr Michael said.

The Governor's tour of the region concluded with a look at Kodja Place in Kojonup and a visit to Kojonup District High School.

Contact Bruce Manning ph. 9842 4888



Ongerup Primary School students Hayley Curtin (left) and Montana Hooper show Dr Michael around Yongergnow.

GSDC festive season closure

GSDC offices in Albany and Katanning will close at 5pm on Christmas Eve, Friday 24 December, and reopen on Tuesday 4 January.

Board and staff members wish all project partners and supporters compliments of the season and look forward to working together constructively in 2011.

Cycle trail under way

Munda Biddi Trail to connect Elleker, Torbay

Work has started on one of the icon projects of the Royalties for Regions-funded Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme.

The Munda Biddi Trail extension gained \$3 million of Royalties for Regions funding over three years, \$1.5 million of it through the GSDC.

Agriculture and Food Minister Terry Redman visited Elleker in November to witness the start of construction of a section of the trail extension now being built between Elleker and Torbay townsites.

The section under construction, already identified as a community trail by the Torbay Catchment Group, follows a rail formation dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It offers an easy grade and includes some surviving infrastructure such as bridge pylons and culverts that may still be usable for the Munda Biddi Trail.

Department of Environment and



Agriculture and Food Minister Terry Redman (right), accompanied by GSDC Deputy Chairman Kim Barrow, enthuses about the Munda Biddi Trail as work starts at Elleker.

Conservation (DEC) personnel assisted by a Department of Corrective Services work crew will clear regrowth along the rail formation and install bridges, culverts and signs. The trail section should be available to users halfway through 2011.

Construction has also started at the Nannup end of the extension. The works from Nannup and from Albany are expected to meet in Walpole in 2012, completing the

trail and creating a 1000km off-road touring cycle trail from Mundaring to Albany.

Further community consultation about the trail will take place early in 2011 including the sections east of Walpole and in the Youngs Siding area. Anyone who wants to contribute is invited to contact the DEC Munda Biddi team on 9842 4550.

Contact: Duane Schouten ph. 9842 4888

PIAF delights ahead for Great Southern

Program takes culture to the region

Denmark, Borden, Katanning and Albany will host events in the 2011 UWA Perth International Arts Festival Great Southern Program.

The Royalties for Regions-supported 2011 Great Southern Program was launched in November at the Albany Entertainment Centre, and includes an inspiring range of performances and cultural events.

Borden will host the high-energy Public Opinion Afro Orchestra, Katanning is the setting for Carrolup and Mungart Boodja art events, and rockabilly burlesque performer Imelda May will take to the stage at Howard Park winery in Denmark.

Program highlights for Albany include the exquisite folk interpretations of the



PIAF artistic director Shelagh Magadza outlines the Great Southern Program at the launch in November.

Unthanks, a dance exploration of deception in Fraudulent Behaviour, creative jazz from the Gwilym Simcock Trio with Tinalley String

Quartet and a classical program from the Academy of Ancient Music.

The Playmakers series continues with a focus on the harmonica led by Joe Filisko and Brendan Power, literary events will take place at the Albany Public Library, and Australian and international films will screen at Orana Cinema.

The GSDC has supported the PIAF Great Southern Program since its inception in 2003. Under an agreement signed this year, the GSDC has committed Royalties for Regions funding through the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme to continue its support in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Contact: Linsey McFarlane ph. 9842 4888

Concert displays AEC qualities

Audience applauds centre's debut

A spectacular gathering of 260 performers took part in the opening concert at the Albany Entertainment Centre on Saturday 11 December.

In keeping with tradition, the first performance in the newly-opened theatre was prefaced by a literary statement, delivered by writers Kim Scott, Dianne Wolfer and Maree Dawes.

The gala concert that followed showcased local talents, with a 100-piece orchestra and 130-voice choir backing a series of musical and dance performances under the baton of musical director Sue Findlay.

Master of ceremonies Toby Leach linked the musical pieces together with a narrative that

took in the story of European exploration and settlement in the Great Southern and proceeded eventually to the building of the Albany Entertainment Centre. Along the way, pointed mention was made of the controversy about the construction of the Albany Town Hall.

To the rousing 1812 Overture, the performance ended in a burst of colour and celebration, as glitter and streamers rained down on the performers and audience.

GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning said feedback after the concert indicated that the entertainment centre was a hit.

"The sheer size of the stage and the scale

of the production surprised many in the audience," Mr Manning said.

"People appreciated the acoustics and the comfort of the theatre, which feels intimate even though it seats twice as many patrons as the Town Hall.

"Seeing the singers and grand piano rise into view on the orchestra pit lift was a highlight, and is a taste of the production potential the venue offers performers," Mr Manning said.

The GSDC secured and administered the State Government's \$68.8 million of funding for the AEC.

Contact: Bruce Manning ph. 9842 4888



Gilbert and Sullivan numbers were performed by singers including Megan Bailey (above), with Poor Wandering One, and Greg Barber (below) with I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major General.



Randy Hammina sang Stephen Sondheim's Send In the Clowns.



Clockwise from above: Dean Kinnear and Mike Hyder performed Tonci Huljic's Explosive; vocalists sang O Fortuna from Carmina Burana; Master of Ceremonies Toby Leach revisited the Albany Town Hall controversy; solo flautist Natalie Edwards performed Lord of the Dance by Ronan Hardiman.



Berlin Philharmonic set the stage

Regional audience shared AEC pre-opener

Audiences across the Great Southern enjoyed the performance that set the stage for the opening of the Albany Entertainment Centre (AEC).

On Sunday 14 November, a capacity audience gathered in the AEC to watch a simulcast of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's performance in the Perth Concert Hall.

Sharing the experience, smaller gatherings took place in Community Resource Centres

(CRCs) in Ongerup, Frankland River, Tambellup and Wellstead.

The Royalties for Regions-funded simulcast was initiated in April by the GSDC and the Perth Theatre Trust, who made a joint submission to the Regional Development Council (RDC).

The RDC supported the idea in July and the simulcast was made available to regional theatres and CRCs throughout Western Australia.

At the AEC, the audience was the first to fill the Princess Royal Theatre, giving the centre management a chance to fine-tune the use of the auditorium ahead of the AEC gala opening on Saturday 11 December.

A week after the simulcast, the AEC hosted a public open day, providing an opportunity to look over the new facility, including the backstage and technical areas. An estimated 7000 people passed through the doors, showing extraordinary interest and support for the spectacular new building.

Games athletes win students over

Tour takes in region's small schools

Thousands of Great Southern students and community members enjoyed close encounters with sporting heroes in December, thanks to Royalties for Regions funding.

The Australian Commonwealth Games Association WA Division brought a group of eight athletes along with support staff to visit the region, aided by funding through the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme and Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) funding.

The group travelled more than 900km to visit every local government area in the region and most Great Southern towns.

Tour coordinator Stephanie Clements said the Share the Spirit 2010 Australian Commonwealth Games Team Regional Tour drew an estimated 5500 children and community members over four days.

The visiting athletes started their tour in Albany, taking in a DSR function for sporting club volunteers.

The athletes were Amanda Bisk (pole vault), Kim Mickle (javelin), Nicholas Kidd (badminton), Liz Parnov (pole vault), Michael Freiberg (cycling), Rachael Lynch (hockey), Liam De Young (hockey) and



Athletes Amanda Bisk (left) and Pamela McKenzie joined students at Mt Barker Primary School to promote positive approaches to achieving personal goals.

Pamela McKenzie (shooting), accompanied by chaperones Kobie McGurk (hockey) and Paul Rogers (basketball).

They addressed a business breakfast in Albany and then split into pairs to visit a total of 32 schools.

The school tour started in Albany and moved on to Denmark, Mt Barker, Jerramungup and the rest of the Great Southern, delivering a positive message about commitment and achieving personal goals.

Ms Clements said the athletes were

fortunate to be able to include small schools in their itinerary, including seven schools with fewer than 30 children, in communities such as South Stirling and Nyabing.

Schools reported that their children took to the visit with enthusiasm, and the athletes said they were surprised at the level of engagement of the students. Some children had researched the achievements of the visitors and asked pertinent questions about their experiences at the games and in training.

Contact: Linsey McFarlane ph. 9842 4888

Focus on Katanning's diversity

National spotlight on cultural inclusion

Katanning's cultural diversity was in the spotlight at a national conference in Queensland in October.

GSDC Regional Development Officer Jessica van der Waag and Regional Development Australia Great Southern Executive Officer Simon Lyas gave a joint presentation at the Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia (SEGRA) conference in Townsville.

Their workshop highlighted Katanning as a case study of social engagement and inclusion. They told participants how the town's industrial base had sustained a culturally diverse community through the

creation of employment and associated opportunities.

In particular, the need for labour of the town's major processing industry has been addressed since the early 1970s through the migration of people to Australia, and to Katanning, seeking work.

The first influx of workers came from Christmas and Cocos Islands, and now three generations of these families live in the town. In recent years, the community has been joined by skilled migrants from China and, among others, refugees from Afghanistan and Myanmar (Burma).

Today more than 25 nationalities are represented in the town.

Mr Lyas and Ms van der Waag outlined the responses by government, industry and the community to address the opportunities and challenges associated with social engagement and inclusion of residents from such diverse cultural backgrounds.

Ms van der Waag said the attendees appreciated the presentation's localised focus on a regional development issue.

Contact: Jessica van der Waag
Ph. 9821 3211

Bus brings youth support

Fun, services and information on wheels

A converted bus with a distinctive paint job is helping to build stronger communities in the Great Southern.

The YMCA's mobile youth bus service is funded by Royalties for Regions funding through the GSDC's Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme.

This summer the bus is headed for Cranbrook, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup and Kojonup to bring activities, support and information for young people from 12 to 17 years old.

Bus coordinator Leanne Williams said the service aimed to provide an opportunity for young people to have fun in a context where they could connect to services that could help them to achieve their goals.

Ms Williams has ten years' experience in community services and has been engaged in youth work for the past four years.

"The bus is a really good way to take the services out to those areas where young people can find themselves quite isolated," Ms Williams said.

"We can get to know them, find out what they would like to see happen in their area, find out what services are needed and help to make those services available."

YMCA Great Southern Regional Manager Fiona Garland said the local governments involved had been a great help.

"A lot of agencies go out from Albany to take services to regional towns and we would like to work together and support each other to bring those services to young people," Ms Garland said.



Leanne Williams on the youth bus, which will be hard to miss when it rolls into Great Southern towns this summer.

During the summer holidays, the youth bus will visit Gnowangerup at Varey Park on Mondays from January 10 to 24; Cranbrook at Frederick Square on Tuesdays from January 4 to 25; Kojonup at Benn Parade on Wednesdays from January 5 to 19; and Bremer Bay at Pelican Park on Thursdays from January 6 to 27.

The bus will park at the stated location where Ms Williams and her helpers will unpack recreational equipment such as sports gear, sumo suits and computer games.

Young people will be welcome to enjoy the activities and will be free to interact with the youth workers.

Next year during the school terms, the bus will begin a program arranged in consultation with the regional schools.

Contact: Leanne Williams ph. 9842 1457

Mirrors to fill Albany harbour

Best sailors to compete for world title

Albany's Princess Royal Harbour will fill with colour and movement after Christmas when the 2011 Mirror World Championships hit the water.

Princess Royal Sailing Club (PRSC) is hosting the event that promises to be one of the biggest displays of sails ever seen on the harbour. Providing for more than 200 competitors and up to 400 volunteers and spectators was a big challenge for

the sailing club, which was helped out by funding through the GSDC, most recently in Royalties for Regions funding from the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme.

The Royalties for Regions support helped to provide shaded areas and upgraded ablutions, including connection to deep sewerage.

Weather station and communication

facilities were upgraded and the racing will be overseen from an improved race office.

Activities at PRSC start on 28 December with three days of racing for the Australian Championship. From 2 January 2011, the world's best Mirror sailors take to the water for five days of racing for the world championship.

Contact: PRSC ph. 9844 4033

Wine marketing boosted

Great Southern wineries reach into Asian markets

Wine buyers from four Asian countries took part in a six-day Great Southern Wine Trail in mid-October.

Supported by GSDC trade officer Elizabeth

Reed, buyers from Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Taiwan met owners and producers from more than 20 Great Southern wineries during their visit and committed to buying wines from the region.

Due to the success of the buyer visit, a second Great Southern Wine Trail will take place from March 3 to 8, 2011, to coincide with the Great Southern Taste Festival.

The buyer visit followed an intense scrutiny of the State's wines at the 33rd Qantas Wine Show of Western Australian in Mount Barker in early October.

The GSDC supported the exhibitors' luncheon at the conclusion of the wine show, at which Hong Kong Master of Wine Debra Meiburg delivered an insightful talk on selling wines in Asian markets.

Ms Meiburg urged the winemakers to investigate the cultural differences between Asian countries and to adjust their marketing and expectations for each nation.

Contact: Elizabeth Reed ph. 9842 4888



Hong Kong Master of Wine Debra Meiburg judged wines at the Mount Barker wine show and coached winemakers in dealing with Asian markets.