

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Attention: News Editor

### **Great Southern's great outdoors**

Outdoor activities in the Great Southern will get a big leg up from a new initiative to build programs and enterprises focused on outdoor recreation excellence.

A partnership between the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC), the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Albany Chamber of Commerce and Industry will establish a Great Southern Centre of Outdoor Recreation Excellence (GSCORE).

The \$600,000 region-wide GSCORE project will include the development of one or more themed adventure centres and lodges, marketing initiatives, an online presence and research activities.

GSDC Chair Ross Thornton said the three-year project, supported by \$300,000 in Royalties for Regions funding through the Regional Grants Scheme, aimed to increase nature-based and adventure tourism, boost outdoor recreation and better connect people with the environment.

"Great Southern people live in a setting that is unmatched in Western Australia for the scale, diversity and accessibility of its natural attractions," Mr Thornton said.

"In line with the aims of the Great Southern Regional Investment Blueprint, this project will build economic and social benefits based on the outdoor recreation opportunities afforded by our wonderful natural assets and will include a push to international markets."

ACCI president Cameron Bergsma said GSCORE is a great initiative that will provide new jobs, and both directly and indirectly support existing and new start-up businesses in the Great Southern.

"GSCORE will strengthen the existing eco-tourism industry," Mr Bergsma said.

"It will provide opportunities for tourists and locals to not only enjoy the natural wonders via outdoor recreational activities, but also to be educated on the history, sustainability and care of our environment.

"The substantial social and economic benefits will be felt throughout the region," Mr Bergsma said.



*Building partnerships for regional prosperity*

The Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) has allocated \$150,000 in funding to the project that will go towards a project director and also provide transport, office and administrative support.

DSR Director General Ron Alexander said the centre will encourage greater physical activity in the outdoors which goes hand-in-hand with the numerous positive mental benefits.

“WA’s outdoor sector is unique, exciting and fast-growing so it’s important to develop the participation opportunities that will naturally flow from this valuable collaboration,” Mr Alexander said.

“We believe it’s vital that the growth of outdoor recreation and adventure activities is matched by the provision of quality products, services and facilities and I believe GSCORE will provide that for the region.”

Guided by a project management group including the GSDC, DSR and ACCI, the GSCORE initiative will begin with the appointment of a project manager.

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