

## Royalties for Regions

Development funds flow to regional areas

The much discussed Royalties for Regions Scheme is now a reality and the State Government program designed to promote long-term development in Western Australia's regions is being rolled out.

The latest addition to Royalties for Regions is the Regional Grants Scheme, which includes an allocation of \$3.5million to support the establishment of strategic regional services, infrastructure and headworks in the Great Southern.

The Regional Grants Scheme was announced by the Minister for Regional Development, Hon Brendon Grylls MLA, in Geraldton on 12 February.

The \$3.5million Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme (RGS) will be administered by the Great Southern Development Commission.

The RGS will provide finance assistance to regionally based entities such as business groups, educational institutions, philanthropic foundations and community organisations.

Royalties for Regions is a program designed to help local communities grow and prosper through the promotion of local decision-making and is specifically aimed at helping regional Western Australia attract the resources needed to support development.

Mr Grylls said, "Royalties for Regions represents an historic agreement to return the equivalent of 25 per cent of our mining and resources royalties revenue annually as an investment in regional communities across Western Australia."

Royalties for Regions addresses three key funding goals:

- To support strategic projects in regional areas;
- To ensure decisions are made locally about projects and programs; and
- To ensure State Government administration and processes provide for and support the principle of decision making locally in regional areas

To address these priorities, the Scheme operates three funds:

- The Country Local Government Fund;
- The Regional Community Services Fund; and
- The Regional Grants Scheme

The Country Local Government Fund was launched on 16 December 2008 and aims to improve the quality of existing local community infrastructure. The government announced \$400 million of funding to local governments through this fund, with \$100 million to be spent by the end of the current financial year.

Albany City Council was the major beneficiary in the Great Southern, receiving \$1,568,047. Other regional local governments to benefit included the Shires of Katanning (\$1,085,325), Denmark (\$1,076,771), Plantagenet (\$1,071,541) and Cranbrook (\$605,275).

The Regional Community Services Fund will establish accessible services and programs which improve the quality of life for regional residents. This includes increasing the Boarding Away from Home Allowance, extending the reach of Royal Flying Doctor Service and extending the benefits of Patient Assisted Travel Scheme.

All three funds aim to provide a series of investment outcomes:

- Increased capacity for local strategic planning and decision making
- Retaining the existing benefits in regional communities and expanding on these into the future
- Relevant and accessible local services
- Communities that know how to plan for a sustainable economic and social future
- Communities that can expand social and economic opportunities
- Regional communities that are prospering through increased employment opportunities, business and industry development, opportunities and improved local services

The response to the 2009 RGS was excellent, with over 80 high quality applications received from around the region. Decisions will be announced in June.

Contact: Christine Grogan, ph: 9842 4888.



Hon Brendon Grylls MLA,  
Minister for Regional Development

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## Non- allergenic cloth seeks global market

### Niche market for Great Southern wool

A young girl's dermatological problems have resulted in the development of an anti-allergenic merino wool with a potentially huge international market.

The driving force behind the new textile development is Dr Sarah Rankin of Paragon Merino in Kojonup.

"My daughter's allergy to some fabrics was the catalyst which started the research," said Dr Rankin, "It started us on the path to develop sustainable, chemical free, natural merino wool for use in garment manufacture."

Paragon Merino specialises in precision-engineered merino fibre for high quality, low volume markets. The new product, Paragon Biological, is sourced from Merinotech lambs grown on a small number of farms in the Great Southern.

Paragon Biological is now being developed to satisfy demand for a fully certified and environmentally sustainable natural fibre.



*A selection of Paragon Biological products in early development*

The textile has been tested by the CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology Environmental Analysis Group and complies with the European Union's Eco-label chemical residue standards for greasy wool.

Testing of the material is also taking place at the University of Modena, a world leader in textile allergy research. Currently, the university is running skin allergy trials on a group of children.

Italian company Tintoria Emiliana is preparing organic dyes from foods such as pomegranate

and eggplant for use with the textile.

The children are wearing sample tops manufactured from Paragon Biological, day and night, for one month. Results are expected in February 2009.

These trials have been part-funded by the Great Southern Development Commission through the Regional Development Scheme.

Contact: Alison Naylor ph: 9842 4888

## Maritime Heritage Research to Boost Tourism

### Coastline awash with tourism potential



*The crew of the Norwegian barque Mandalay at Bow Bridge in 1911. Image courtesy of Mike Murphy*

The South Coast's long established maritime connection may soon play a major role in the region's tourism industry.

Maritime-related sites and stories offer many tourism opportunities and the potential of the region's maritime heritage is now being explored through a partnership between the Great Southern

Development Commission (GSDC) and Sustainable Development Facilitation (SDF).

Over the next four months a team from SDF will help determine which of our maritime sites and stories have the most potential to draw more visitors to the Great Southern.

The region's maritime heritage begins with Noongar fishing and travel activities and encompasses European exploration, exploitation of maritime resources, settlement, trade and development of a built environment. Our maritime heritage connects us with many countries including Britain, France, Holland, Norway and Latvia.

GSDC CEO Bruce Manning said, "This is an exciting opportunity to further develop our region's tourism industry and I encourage anyone with an interest in maritime history to get involved."

SDF is currently compiling a register of existing maritime heritage assets. They would like to contact organisations or community members about any maritime heritage sites or stories that already attract tourists, or may have the potential to attract tourists, to the area.

Contacts: Dorothy Lucks or Maria Price at SDF, ph: 9582 9228 or email: sustain@southwest.com.au

## PIAF presents local and global treats for the Great Southern



*Just a fragment of the dramatic action during PIAF 2009*

### Hot acts for a cool summer

The Perth International Arts Festival offered an exciting range of international and local events for residents and visitors alike during their seventh Great Southern Program.

The program featured drama, visual art, music of varying genres, comedy, the chance to meet renowned writers, and the well-loved international film series.

The highlight of the program was a production of Samuel Becket's *Fragments* as part of its Australian premiere season. From the pen of the extremely well known writer of *Waiting for Godot*, these four plays and a poem were strange, haunting, unflinching and painfully funny.

Produced by La Centre International de Creation Theatre (CICT) and Theatre des Bouffes du Nord, the dramas were directed by legendary theatre figure Peter Brook. Mr Brook brought the nine hour epic *Mahabharata* to the then Festival of Perth twenty years ago.

Premiere was the key word for much of this year's Perth program, with a range of these premiere events also visiting the Great Southern. Seckou Keita SKQ

performed as part of their Australian debut season and three other events – Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking*, Camille O' Sullivan's concert of decadent, nightlife-inspired songs and Andrew McClelland's comic history of piracy – were Western Australian premiere performances.

Seckou Keita SKQ is a blend of styles driven by the sounds of the kora – a 21-string harp. Their performance was one which used the Festival Marquee in York Street, a new performance space commissioned for this year's program.

A free screening of *My Neighbour Totoro*, one of the greatest animated family films ever made, also graced the Festival Marquee.

*Playmakers: You Can Ukulele* followed on the success of last year's series centring on the mandolin. *Playmakers* is an essentially hands-on, home grown product and Great Southern exclusive.

This year's series of workshops and performances celebrated the re-emergence of the 'jumping flea' in a jamboree of craft and music-making.

Another Great Southern exclusive, *Paparartzi 09*, concentrated on the visual arts and was themed around two and three dimensional works in paper. The exhibition included works from established Australian-based artists Dadang Christanto and Julie Rrap.

*Sonic Seeding*, under the direction of Brisbane sound artist Tom Hall, returned with Tom's new work *Peripheral Up* and field recordings from local creators.

The involvement of Great Southern residents as cultural producers and empresarios continued through the involvement of Southern Edge Arts and the Great Southern Regional Marketing Association. The program concluded with a swinging closing party of jazz and boogie woogie presented by Albany's Jazz Masala and featuring Adam Hall and the Velvet Playboys.

With more jazz, a classical quartet, comedy for kids, and something for booklovers thrown in for good measure, the PIAF Great Southern Program again put a bit of heat into our cool southern summer.

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## Tourism awards pile up at Kojonup



Jack Cox in the Kodj Gallery

### Years of community input reaps rewards

The past year saw a bumper crop of awards for Kojonup's tourism-related activities and is, according to Kojonup Visitors Centre manager and relentless Kojonup promoter Glenys Russell, both a reward for years of community effort and a harbinger of things to come.

A strong performance at the 2008 GWN Top Tourism Town Awards resulted in Kojonup being named as half a point runner up to Kununurra in the major award.

But they didn't come home empty-handed; instead they collected the following prizes:

- Winner Top Tourism Town with Population Under 2500;
- Winner Top Tourism Town Cultural Interpretation Category; and
- Joint Winner Top Tourism Community Relations Category.

During 2008, Kojonup also picked up the following awards:

- Winner of Inaugural 2008 ABC Radio National Marvellous Regional Museum Award;
- Winner of Inaugural 2008 ABC Radio National Marvellous Regional Best Small Museum category; and
- Winner 2008 Alcan Landcare Indigenous Award at the State Landcare The Kodja Place Bush Tucker Trail.

But that's not all! Kojonup tourism stalwart John Benn received the Visitor Centre Association of WA 2008 Pioneer Award for

his outstanding contribution to pioneering the development of tourism in Regional Western Australia.

"The genesis of all these successes is a meeting of the Kojonup Tourist Association about 25 years ago when the discussion centred on dissolving the Association," said Mrs Russell.

"Fortunately the 38 people at that meeting decided to push ahead, and tourism is now very much a part of Kojonup's social and economic life," she said.

Starting with the development of a wildflower festival as an event designed to draw tourists to the town, the constantly evolving vision now encompasses a range of heritage and indigenous attractions.

A major development has been the Kodja Place. The Kojonup Visitor Centre opened at the location in March 2001, the Kodj Gallery followed in November 2001, and the Storyplace in 2002.

The Kodja Place is build around the theme of 'One Story, Many Voices', and is the result of the district's cultures working in harmony towards a single goal.

This theme is addressed at the Kodja Place through the Kodj Gallery, Yoondi's Mia Mia and the Storyplace, where visitors can learn about the experiences and relationships of Noongar and Wadjela culture in the Kojonup region.

The Australian Rose Maze continues the theme. The maze weaves together the stories of three women from Noongar, English and Italian heritage. Extracts from the women's letters, journals and personal dialogues are used to tell a powerful story about the hardships and isolation of life in early twentieth century Kojonup.

The latest addition to the Kodja Place, The Black Cockatoo Cafe, opened for business in January 2009.

The Kojonup tourist railway is another major activity which has had a long gestation; it was first discussed at the Wildflower Weekend in 1991. The project will allow the development of a tourist railway travelling the 15 kilometres from Kojonup to Farrar Reserve, site of the dam previously used for watering the steam engines.

The development of Farrar Reserve involves fencing the reserve, releasing wildlife indigenous to the area and regenerating the site.

The Noongar community have a special connection with Farrar country and aim to use the reserve to provide visitors with tours and displays which will include examples of living conditions and sampling traditional meals.

Continuing the locomotive theme the Heritage Council of Western Australia has, at the request of the Kojonup Tourist Railway Inc., listed the railway station building and goods shed. This listing includes some trees along the railway which were planted in the early 1900s.

The AW Potts Kokoda Track Memorial is another recent addition to tourism and cultural life in Kojonup. Brigadier Potts, or Potts as he was affectionately known, lived and farmed in Kojonup.

During World War II, against the orders of his superiors, he and his troops fought the successful retreat battle on the Kokoda Track that resulted in an Allied victory and saved the strategic port of Port Moresby and possibly Australia.

Governor General Major General Michael Jeffery formally unveiled a life size bronze statue of Brigadier Arnold Potts before an enthusiastic crowd on the 6 May 2007 and classed the sculpture as "An enduring testament to a truly remarkable Australian."

Contact: Glenys Russell ph: 9831 0500.

## Two new doctorates at CENRM

UWA extends natural resource engagement centred in the Great Southern

Centre for Excellence in Natural Resource Management (CENRM) researchers Peter Speldewinde and Paul Close can now add the title Doctor of Philosophy to their names after completing major theses during 2008.

CENRM is a major element of the University of Western Australia's presence in Albany. The Great Southern Development Commission chairs the CENRM Board of Management.

CENRM focuses on the better management of natural resources in Australia. It employs the equivalent of twenty full-time teaching and research staff.

Dr Speldewinde's research examined the relationships between dryland salinity and human health. The results indicated that dryland salinity, as with other examples of ecosystem degradation, is associated with an increase in human disease prevalence.

"One of the health outcomes of dryland salinity appears to be elevated risks of depression and diseases which are associated with depression," said Dr Speldewinde, who is currently seeking funding to continue the research.

Dr Close investigated crucial knowledge gaps in our understanding of estuarine ecology. Whilst there has been considerable effort made to determine the ecological water requirements for streams and rivers worldwide, the freshwater requirements of estuaries have been largely ignored.

"My research at the moment follows on from my thesis and is aimed towards developing and applying suitable methodologies to assess freshwater requirements for these ecosystems," said Dr Close.

"Having local students carry out the research for their doctorate in Albany is great for the students, the community and for other students at UWA in Albany," said Professor Peter Davies, Director of CENRM.

"These two researchers both continue to work in the Great Southern, so that is a bonus for the region," he said.

Contact: Professor Peter Davies ph: 9842 0838



Dr Paul Close



Dr Peter Speldewinde

## Houses that grow with the family

Innovative housing project in the Great Southern

The desire to build a new home in the Great Southern has always been attended by issues relating to shortages of available land and increasing costs of labour and materials.

In an attempt to address some of these problems the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) convened the Building Innovation and Sustainability Working Group (BISWG) in 2007. The BISWG aims to facilitate and demonstrate building innovation and affordability in the Great Southern.

The design brief included a requirement that the houses be "inter-generational" in that they have the capacity to be built in

stages to adapt to the needs of a growing and aging family.

The group's initial target is to design and construct a demonstration house using innovative design and materials. The overall aim is to increase the capacity of the local building industry and enhance awareness of best practice approaches to affordable housing design and construction.

The GSDC chairs the BISWG, whose other members are drawn from the building industry; the University of Western Australia Faculty of Architecture (UWA) Landscape and Visual Arts; LandCorp; and the Department of Housing and Works.

UWA ran a course for fifth year architecture students during 2008 to help them develop a range of house designs for the project.

A number of the student-generated designs were presented to BISWG members at the UWA Albany Centre on 21 November 2008.

The Department of Housing and Works has provided a block in the Albany suburb of McKail for the demonstration house and a tender for the construction of the dwelling have been advertised. A start on the house is expected in mid 2009.

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# Government invests widely in Great Southern

Variety and dynamism of the Great Southern community acknowledged

Providing accommodation for the aged and for the agricultural workforce has been identified as a high priority activity in Round 8 of the Great Southern Regional Development Scheme (RDS).

The Minister for Regional Development, Hon Brendon Grylls MLA, recently named 22 successful applicants who are sharing \$500,000 funding made available through round eight of the RDS.

The RDS is supporting a diverse range of industries including aged care, tourism, natural resource management, and agribusiness.

"The wide ranging interests of the successful applicants characterises the

engagement and dynamism of communities in the Great Southern," said Mr Grylls.

"We have supported projects that ensure these communities are enhanced, including support for aged persons accommodation in the Shires of Broomehill-Tambellup, Gnowangerup and Plantagenet.

"Projects aiming to provide accommodation for rural workers and tourists in Frankland River, Mt Barker and Pingrup have also received funding," he said.

The Activ Foundation is the major recipient. The Foundation will receive \$60,000 to support the redevelopment of its Albany Business Service. The redevelopment will enable the Foundation to increase the

number of people with disabilities that it supports by increasing its manufacturing capacity and expanding its services through its role as a Registered Training Provider.

The RDS was administered by the Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) on behalf of the Government of Western Australia and has now been replaced by the Great Southern Regional Grants Scheme, a part of the Government's Royalties For Regions initiative.

The complete list of grant recipients is available from the GSDC website at [www.gsdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gsdc.wa.gov.au)

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## They're Great ... Southern wines!

The best of regional wine flows in York Street



Education and indulgence in York St

The Great Southern Wine Producers Association (GSWPA) presented their Main Event – Festival on York Street to a wide and appreciative audience in the heart of Albany's central business district on Sunday 7 December 2008.

The event closed down two blocks of York Street to allow 25 Great Southern wineries and a number of supporting beverage and food producers to share their produce with Great Southern residents and visitors. The festival was also supported by local restaurants which provided solid sustenance to flagging festival-goers.

The festival atmosphere was enhanced by a warm day and entertainment provided by the Royal Australian Navy Band, Simone Keene, Blue Manna and Jamie the Clown.

Each of the Great Southern's five sub regions: Albany, Denmark, Frankland, Mt Barker and Porongurups were represented and the Great Southern's signature varieties of Riesling and Shiraz

were not let down by the wide range of other popular varieties grown and vintaged in the region.

Ian Mayo, President of the GSWPA, said that the festival gave people the opportunity to taste wines from a widespread area in a single location. "The Great Southern is huge and many people haven't had the time or opportunity to visit all the wineries in the region.

"Great Southern wines are still a bit of a secret, but festivals such as this are helping to spread the word about our diversity and quality," he said.

Major marketing activities on the GSWPA calendar during 2009 include Taste Great Southern in association with the Perth International Arts Festival, the Festival of the Sea at the Albany Boatshed in partnership with the Albany Maritime Foundation on Easter Saturday, and a metropolitan tasting to be held at the Perth Concert Hall in early May.

Contact: Ian Mayo ph: 9851 3150

# Changes at the Commission

New faces, organisation and responsibilities



*Christine Grogan and Russell Pritchard*

The Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) initiated a number of changes at the end of 2008 to ensure that it is delivering quality services to the region.

Some of these changes are necessary to manage the GSDC's new responsibilities administering the Regional Grants Scheme component of the Royalties for Regions initiatives outlined in our cover story.

The previous position of Deputy Chief Executive Officer has been replaced by two Regional Manager positions, one responsible for Community and Corporate and the other managing Industry and Infrastructure.

The Regional Manager Community and Corporate is Christine Grogan. Christine is new to the GSDC and comes from the City of Albany where she was Manager Executive Services.

Christine holds a Master of Business Administration and has extensive experience in corporate planning and governance, human resource management, and public relations. Prior to coming to the Albany, Christine

was involved in urban renewal projects in the United Kingdom. "This new position combines my two areas of interest and expertise, regional community engagement and corporate management, so I'm looking forward to the challenges," she said.

Russell Pritchard has been appointed Regional Manager Industry and Infrastructure. Russell has been with the GSDC since 1994 and was the GSDC's major face in Katanning and the hinterland before becoming the GSDC's acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer in 2007.



*Jennifer Dalby*

Another new face in the office is Alison Naylor. Alison has replaced Kate McKenzie as Tradestart Export Advisor. Alison comes to the GSDC with extensive experience in exporting, and has worked in Austrade's Perth office and for the Craig Mostyn Group; a family-owned agribusiness company based in Fremantle.

The smiling face and cheery voice of Jennifer Dalby will probably be your first point of contact with the GSDC. Jennifer has replaced Toni Wheatcroft as our receptionist.

The GSDC's public face is also enhanced by the launch of their new website.

The website design is more accessible, informative and simple to use without some of the complex and memory-hungry 'bells and whistles' which often accompany contemporary website design.

The website provides information about the GSDC and the region, allows easy access to forms and documents, and will feature regular news via email to subscribers.

The website address is [www.gsdc.wa.gov.au](http://www.gsdc.wa.gov.au)

Contact: Christine Grogan  
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*Alison Naylor*

# Timbercrete project moves into marketing mode



Brian Mason with Timbercrete blocks

## Building blocks for paid employment in place

The Western Australian Agribusiness Development Centre's (WAADC) Timbercrete Project continues to move ahead and is now finding local markets for its product.

Timbercrete – a patented mixture of cellulose, cement, sand and binders – is being used to manufacture bricks and pavers

at the WAADC's Tambellup incubator.

The pavers and building blocks are being produced by a Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) team working under the management of Brian Mason.

The team received intensive training in

building block production and construction techniques during early 2008. One outcome of this work was the construction of a display area at the Tambellup agribusiness incubator which included a walled paved area and a pizza oven.

With support from the Great Southern Development Commission and the Southern Aboriginal Corporation, the WAADC Manager and the CDEP team also completed the business planning that will define the WAADC's operational model for 2009.

This planning included a marketing component which will see products out in the marketplace and being used for construction this year.

The project, which has attracted core funding from State and Commonwealth programs, aims to provide a steady transition to paid employment for the CDEP team and an independent contracting model for the WAADC.

Contact: Russell Pritchard, ph: 9842 4888.

