



Christmas Hours

Season's greetings from the Great Southern Development Commission.

The Board and CEO of the Commission, and the staff of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development wish you a happy and healthy festive season.

The GSDC offices in Albany and Katanning will close at 5pm on Wednesday 20 December and reopen at 8:30am on Tuesday 2 January.



Major Projects

The Great Southern Development Commission provides update on major industry, infrastructure and construction-related projects to better inform the community of the status of major projects and to maximise local and regional business and employment involvement. [Click here to view the latest Major Projects Register.](#)

Additional information can be obtained through the contact person noted for each project.

Local content business boost



The GSDC's Local Content Officer (LCO) promotes and maximises regional business opportunities for local suppliers, contractors and employers.

The LCO works to ensure that Great Southern businesses are given the best shot at tendering for government projects, and encourages larger businesses to think local when awarding contracts. The aim is to include as much local content as possible in regional projects to create local jobs.

This work is part of a State Government intention to ensure that, as far as possible, its investments in regional areas support local businesses and grow the regional economy.

Regional Development Minister Alannah MacTiernan said LCOs will ensure that smaller companies in the regions are not disadvantaged in the tender process just because they don't have dedicated procurement staff.

"We want to encourage regional businesses to compete for government tenders so they can employ more local workers, helping to spur job and career development opportunities in communities," Minister MacTiernan said.

The State Government's focus was highlighted to business representatives at the Denmark Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours on Thursday 7 December and was very well received. Other business organisations in the region will have similar opportunities to hear about the initiative in coming months.

As part of the initiative, the GSDC has established a Local Content Reference Group to help identify opportunities to improve local procurement outcomes.

The group will seek to improve agency practices at a local or regional level, and could recommend more wide-reaching policy or practice initiatives to Government to generate change.

If you run a regional business that could work on State Government projects, check the [tenders](#) and [jobs](#) links. For enquiries, [speak to the Local Content Officer](#).

Project links regional WA to local jobs and tenders



JobsWA and TendersWA links on the GSDC website gives visitors easy access to State Government jobs and tenders in the region.

Regional businesses and job seekers now have easier access to information about State Government jobs and project tenders in the region thanks to a portal link on the Great Southern Development Commission website.

The initiative was launched in Albany by Regional Development Minister Alannah MacTiernan. The Commission's website now links directly to [Tenders WA](#) and [Jobs WA](#) opportunities in each region, supporting the State Government's commitment to increasing economic development and employment across regional WA.

The *Tenders WA* portal links to State Government projects and programs in each region, allowing businesses to view public sector tenders and awarded contracts in their area. The Commission can also provide support with the tendering process.

The *Jobs WA* portal provides regional job seekers with a direct link to public sector job opportunities in their communities across a range of sectors including education, health, corrective services and conservation.

Regional Development Minister Alannah MacTiernan described the initiative as timely as it provides a one-stop shop connecting people and industry to local jobs and business opportunities.

"We urgently need to drive more business to regional WA, and these projects are part of this Government's commitment to promoting economic diversity and jobs growth in our regions," Minister MacTiernan said.

New facilities on show



Cutie the Cow occupying the new cattle pens with Albany Agricultural Society President Rob Wright and Youth AAS members Georgina Ravenhill and Ella Smith.

Just days before opening the gates for the 2017 Albany Agricultural Show, the Albany Agricultural Society (AAS) celebrated the completion of its new facilities on the Cockburn Road side of the Centennial Park Sporting Precinct.

New structures, including marquees funded by the GSDC, were established to replace the society's former buildings that were demolished in earlier stages of the Centennial Park Sporting Precinct upgrade.

GSDC funding of \$340,000 through the Regional Grants Scheme helped to provide two new marquees, one for cattle and one for alpacas. The funding also supported the purchase of modular cattle yards, a cattle wash-down bay and the fit-out of the AAS's new premises.

AAS president Rob Wright said a lot of work had been undertaken to the betterment of the entire community.

"The purchase of the \$96,000 marquees saves \$40,000 in hire costs," Mr Wright said. "This is a direct saving to the society, and hiring the marquees out during the year provides potential income opportunities."

Three new pavilions were built with funding from the Federal Government through the National Stronger Regions Fund. Member for O'Connor Rick Wilson officiated by cutting the ribbon to open the pavilions.

The pavilions provide 4800sqm of hard floor, under-cover space in three separate buildings. Great Southern contractors Auspan designed and built the sheds, which feature curved roofs that minimise the visual impact of the three large buildings.

Auspan Director and General Manager Ben Richardson said it was great to see the funding coming to the regions and being spent locally to grow local businesses.

"To put some perspective on it, the contract created five jobs in Auspan for the year," said Mr Richardson.

GSDC Chair Ross Thornton said the overall project aligned with the Commission's focus on local content and jobs, and delivered important community infrastructure.

"The Albany Agricultural Society connects the community with primary production, which is the region's biggest economic driver," Mr Thornton said. "Providing facilities that strengthens this connection helps to maintain and grow economic activity in primary production and related enterprises."

Friends camp out to celebrate Twertup



Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park - Ric Pepper, Gill Craig and Andy Chapman

The Twertup community has recently celebrated the completion of the Twertup Field Studies Centre after it was substantially damaged by a bushfire in 2008.

The centre, located in the Fitzgerald River National Park, was officially reopened by GSDC Chief Executive Officer Bruce Manning on Saturday 4 November.

The weekend event incorporated an overnight campout with nature walks, presentations and an evening campfire.

It was an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge many years of hard work by the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park volunteers and community members who rebuilt the environmental research and education facility, with support from funding organisations including the GSDC.

Following the bushfire, funding support from the State Government in 2009-10 helped to establish a Master Development Plan and building plans.

Additional funding support was provided in 2015 and 2016 through the State Government's Community Chest Fund, which contributed to the construction costs of restoring and completing the centre.

GSDC CEO Bruce Manning said the GSDC was proud to have provided \$55,000 support for the project over the years.

"Support over several years shows the GSDC's strong commitment to developing this community and environmental asset," Mr Manning said.

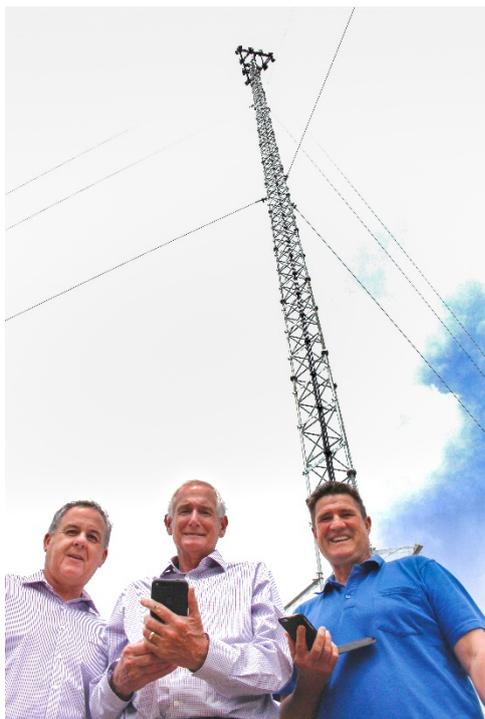
"Twertup is a valuable centre for researchers conducting field work in the park, attracting local, national and international visitors to the UNESCO-listed Biosphere Reserve.

"The rebuild is a great result and a wonderful example of collaboration for the benefit of biodiversity protection, research and community engagement."

A quarry worker built Twertup Cottage in 1965 out of spongolite blocks from the adjacent quarry. After his death, the cottage remained empty and fell into disrepair until 1980 when the Fitzgerald National Park Association took on responsibility for the building, which opened as the Twertup Field Studies Centre in December 1981.

It was the base from which the community conducted the first ever professional biological survey of the Park, extending over two years, and it was the venue for the first Biosphere Reserve gathering in Western Australia.

New site boosts Manypeaks coverage



Telstra CountryWide's Area General Manager Boyd Brown, Peter Watson MLA and Manypeaks farmer Richard Metcalfe check out the improved mobile coverage at the recently activated Manypeaks phone tower.

Mobile coverage around Albany's eastern region has been boosted with a new site being activated near Manypeaks with support from the Regional Telecommunications Project (RTP) and the Mobile Black Spot Program.

The Great Southern Development Commission worked with the other State Government agencies to identify the 22 priority sites that were funded under the RTP for the period 2016 to 2018.

GSDC Chair Ross Thornton said the continued expansion of mobile phone coverage in the Great Southern had far-reaching benefits for regional residents.

"Wider coverage has business benefits but also improves safety and emergency service capabilities, improves social connections and affects education and tourism," Mr Thornton said.

Telstra Area General Manager Boyd Brown said the site at Manypeaks was now delivering state-of-the-art mobile coverage.

"These are exciting times and a significant achievement for residents and businesses based around Manypeaks who have had their call for better mobile coverage answered," Mr Brown said.

"The growing use of mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets is changing the way we live and we're acutely aware of the challenges facing communities living with limited access to a mobile network.

"Expanding coverage across this region ensures locals can keep in contact with family and friends and run their businesses more effectively, whether it's chatting on the phone or using a range of online services over our fast mobile network."

Restoration milestone in student housing project



Historic buildings on the former Albany Primary School site in Serpentine Road have been restored in the first stage of a student accommodation project for the precinct.

Advance Housing (formerly Great Southern Community Housing Association) is undertaking a \$16 million project to provide a 40-bed accommodation facility on the site, supported by \$10.9 million in State Government funding.

The first stage of the project was the refurbishment of the existing buildings, beginning with the headmaster's house on the Collie Street frontage. Contractors Wauters Enterprises restored the building's original footprint by removing a lean-to that had been added at the rear of the house.

Wauters project manager Ben Polette said old fireplaces and pressed tin ceilings were revealed and refurbished, and local trades people crafted a replacement window and new doors in period style.

The headmaster's house will accommodate staff from the Albany Education Office.

Similar restoration is under way at the former school building to provide facilities for the eventual student residents, along with office accommodation for Advance Housing.

The headmaster's house and the former school building were provided to the project by the Department of Education.

In the second stage of the project, new accommodation will be built on the site to house tertiary education students.

The Serpentine Road project complements Advance Housing's \$3 million, 20-bed project in the Norman House precinct on Stirling Terrace, also supported by the State Government with funding of \$1.17 million.

Advance Housing Chief Executive Officer Kaz Sternberg said the organisation was honoured to have received funding to restore some of the Albany central precinct's oldest and most significant heritage buildings.

"Additionally, the provision of affordable student housing will open up opportunities to retain and attract young people to Albany and the beautiful Great Southern region," Ms Sternberg said.