



Strategic Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25

Great Southern
Development Commission



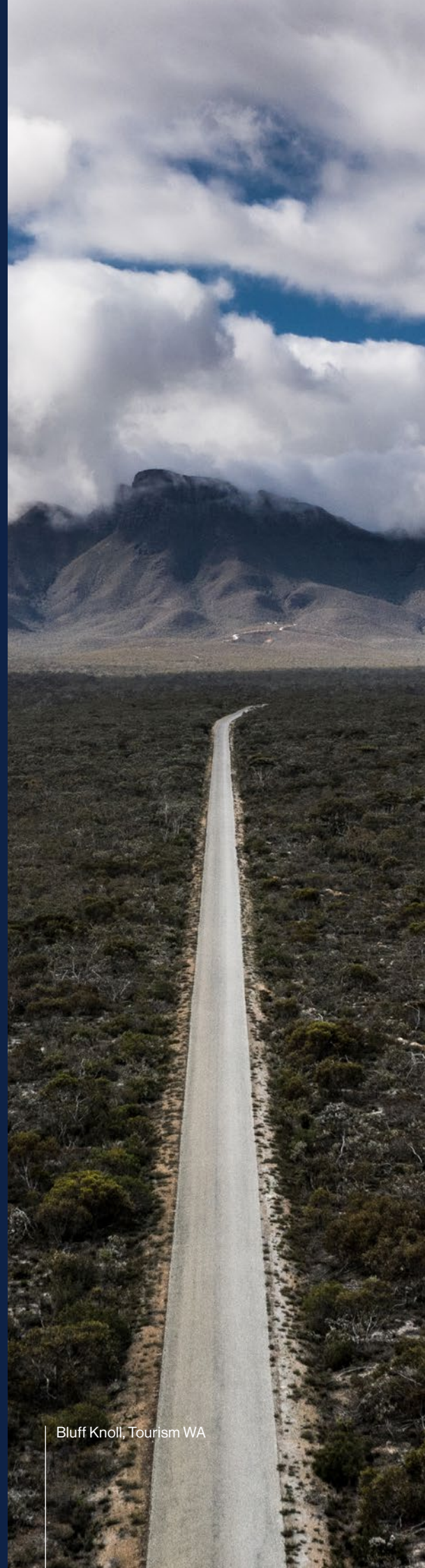
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Acknowledgement of Country	3	8. Strategic Initiatives	24
2. Message from the Chair and CEO	4	8.1 Leverage the region's comparative advantages	25
3. Our Vision	5	8.2 Facilitate sustainable, supported economic development	26
4. Our Role and Our Values	6	8.3 Focus on diversification	27
4.1 Our role	6	8.4 Facilitate investment in critical social and economic infrastructure	28
4.2 Values	7	8.5 Facilitate skills and knowledge development	29
4.3 Our approach	8		
5. Regional Development Portfolio	10	9. What will success look like?	30
6. Our Region	12	10. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation	31
6.1 Economy	14	10.1 Implementation	31
6.2 Social Context	15	10.2 Monitoring and Evaluation	31
6.3 Our Challenges and Opportunities	16		
6.4 Comparative Advantages	18		
7. Our Strategic Priorities	20		
7.1 Strong and Diverse Economy	21		
7.2 Regional Liveability	21		
7.3 Strong Communities	22		
7.4 Organisational Excellence	22		

Front cover image credit: Jake Wilton

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Noongar people, the traditional custodians in the Great Southern, and their continuing connection to the region's land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of Noongar communities, and to elders past, present and emerging.



Bluff Knoll, Tourism WA

2. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

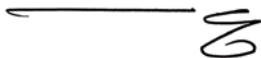
The Great Southern Development Commission's role is to help our community grow, develop and take advantage of the significant benefits our region has to offer including its enviable lifestyle, natural landscape and thriving economy.

By working in partnership with local governments, businesses and communities, the Commission aims to coordinate and support endeavours that build an integrated regional economy, foster regional growth, and transform our communities into vibrant places to live, work and grow.

This Strategic Plan is aligned with the State Government's priorities which include recovery and renewal from the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering regional prosperity, building a strong economy, and Aboriginal wellbeing. The plan is also aligned with the work of the Regional Development Portfolio which guides the State's regional development agenda.

The Commission's strategic plan has been developed in consultation and partnership with community, industry, and government. This document has been prepared using a range of evidence to provide stakeholders with a clear understanding of the Commission's approach to delivering a progressive, prosperous, and dynamic region with a culture of care.

This Plan sets out our strategic direction for the period 2022-23 to 2024-25, including our values, vision, and strategic initiatives.



Bruce Manning
Chair



Natasha Monks
CEO

3. OUR VISION

Sustainable economic development with lasting prosperity for the Great Southern region and its communities.

The Commission is driving this change by strategically and sustainably building on the region's comparative advantages and knowhow.



4. OUR ROLE AND OUR VALUES

4.1 Our role

The Commission is a statutory authority under the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993* (the Act), which established Regional Development Commissions “to coordinate and promote the economic development of the regions.” This *Great Southern Development Commission Strategic Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25* is underpinned by the original objects and functions stipulated in the Act.

We will be the catalyst for sustainable development and growth in the Great Southern region. To do this we will:

- Leverage comparative advantages to focus activity that creates impact.
- Maximise gains in regional job creation and business activity.
- Drive economic development in the region to broaden our economic base.
- Identify and advocate for critical infrastructure that fixes constraints and services communities.
- Support business development and ambition.
- Seek to normalise regional living standards.
- Build strong and inclusive communities, supporting a sense of belonging.
- Support the economic aspirations of Aboriginal communities.
- Respect and enhance the region's environmental, arts, culture and heritage assets.
- Champion education, knowledge, innovation, and creativity that benefits the region.

4.2 Values

Underpinning all our decisions and actions are our core values:

Leadership

We are “thought leaders”, understanding the Great Southern’s potential and striving to achieve it.

Knowledge

We hold deep knowledge of our region and distil insights that we share with the community, industry, and government.

Empowerment

We advocate for our region, and work alongside our stakeholders to achieve the aligned purpose of regional prosperity.

Relationships

We actively build meaningful relationships with our stakeholders.

Agility

We are flexible, responsive, focussed and resilient.

Integrity

We are honest, transparent, and accountable for our actions.

4.3 Our approach

Regional Development Commissions are critical on-the-ground connectors, advocates, and influencers for regional development. While Regional Development Commissions often have limited implementation roles, we play an important role in identifying and supporting development opportunities and coordinating across government agencies.

The “levers” that Regional Development Commissions influence to drive change include:

- Policy.
- Planning, and regulation.
- Enabling infrastructure.
- Building capability.
- Capacity and service delivery.

The following actions reflect the above levers available to the Commission to influence change:

Connect

our region, people and communities to opportunities, services, and funding.

Champion

our region, its brand, assets and identity, and its successes, opportunities, and solutions to its challenges.

Cultivate

the development, investment and growth in our region's jobs and economic activity.

Collaborate

to develop effective relationships and partnerships that enable us to proactively monitor, inform and respond to opportunities and challenges influencing our region's prosperity.



5. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

Successful regional development is a collaborative endeavour. The Commission is one of nine independent Regional Development Commissions and is part of the Regional Development Portfolio that aims to measurably improve regional development in Western Australia.

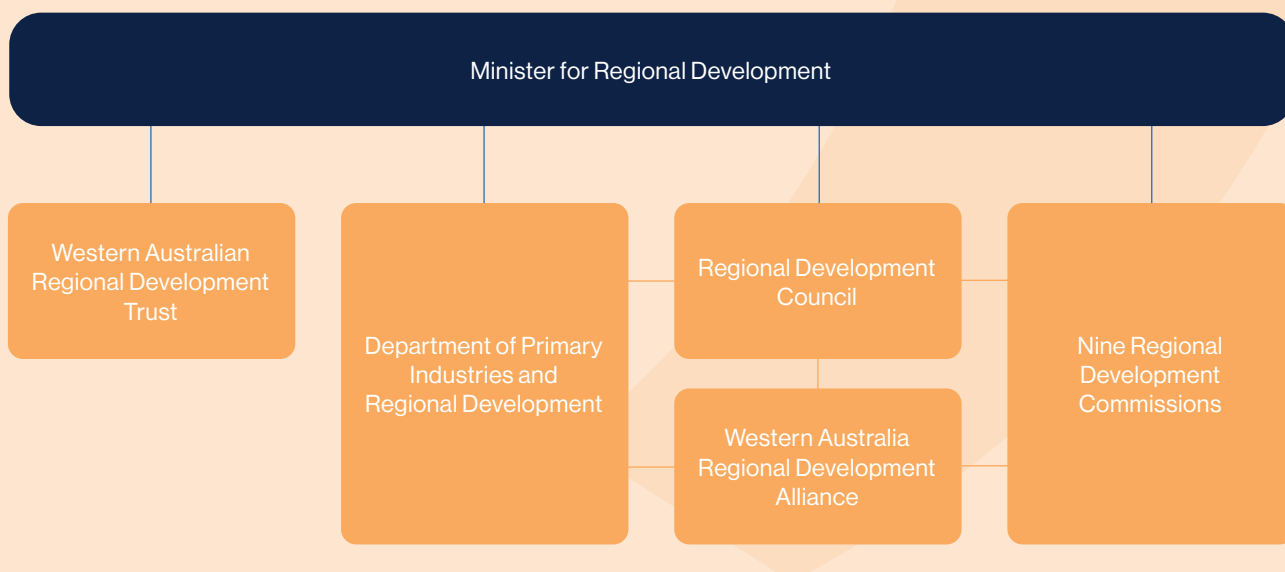
In addition to the nine Commissions, other key bodies in the Portfolio are:

- The Regional Development Trust, an independent statutory advisory body established under the *Royalties for Regions Act 2009* that provides advice to the Minister for Regional Development on the operation of the Royalties for Regions Fund.
- The Regional Development Council, a key advisory body to State Government on regional development issues, comprising of the Chairs of the nine Regional Development Commissions.
- The WA Regional Development Alliance (WARDA), comprising of the CEOs of the nine Regional Development Commissions, working collaboratively to further regional development across the State; and
- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), the State Government department with portfolio responsibility for regional development.

Regional development is most effective when it focuses on important opportunities and barriers to development both at a regional level and at a state-wide level. Therefore, the Commission, as part of the Regional Development Portfolio, works closely with the other Regional Development Commissions and DPIRD to progress strategic initiatives for regional Western Australia.

The Commission provides critical input into the Regional Development Portfolio priorities and ensures strong on-the-ground connection and alignment to the work of the Portfolio.

Figure 1. Regional Development Portfolio



The Regional Development Portfolio focusses efforts across five Strategic Themes:

1. Growing non-renewable resources and related industries.
2. Growing new, alternative industries.
3. Regional living standards.
4. Aboriginal economic development.
5. Organisational excellence.

These themes are applied consistently across the nine Regional Development Commissions' Strategic Plans, with each Commission formulating region-specific priorities and initiatives that align with the Strategic Themes.

In responding to the Regional Development Portfolio Strategic Themes, the Commission has also taken into consideration key State Government Legislation and Policy:

- *Regional Development Act 1993.*
- *Royalties for Regions Act 2009.*
- *WA Recovery Plan July 2020.*
- *Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy – Western Australia 2021-2029.*
- *Infrastructure WA State Infrastructure Strategy 2021.*
- *Diversify WA Economic Development Framework.*



Misery Beach

6. OUR REGION

A strong economic foundation and high liveability factors make the Great Southern a great place to live and work.

Western Australia's Great Southern takes in 250 kilometres of the State's southern coastline, stretching from Nornalup in the west to the Fitzgerald River National Park in the east, and it extends north to the Shires of Woodanilling and Kent. Its ancient geography includes the highest ranges in southern Western Australia, deep forests, productive farmland and spectacular coastal scenery.

The Noongar people are acknowledged as the traditional custodians of the lands of the Great Southern. The region supported a significant population of Aboriginal people for tens of thousands of years. The Great Southern falls within the Wagyl Kaip and Southern Noongar portion of the South West Native Title settlements and covers the ancestral boundaries of the Menang, Kaneang and Goreng Noongar peoples, but also includes parts of Wudjari and Wilman land.

The Great Southern region includes 11 local government areas including: Albany, Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet, and Woodanilling.



More information and data on our region can be found at [REMPAN](#).

Figure 2. Great Southern Region Map





6.1 Economy

GREAT SOUTHERN REGION

GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT
\$5.2 BILLION



UNEMPLOYMENT

3.7%

(March 2022)



JOBS

25,042

(Census 2016)



BUSINESSES

6,868

(June 2021)



ANNUAL VISITORS

679,000

(20/21 average)

MAJOR COMMODITY VALUE



WHEAT

**\$263.0
MILLION**



FORREST PRODUCTS

**\$207.2
MILLION**



WOOL

**\$197.5
MILLION**



BARLEY

**\$190.0
MILLION**

TOP 3 EMPLOYERS



AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING

16.4%



HEALTHCARE & SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

12.3%



RETAIL TRADE

11.0%

Source: 2021 ABS Census data

6.2 Social Context

POPULATION



Great Southern's population;

82% of the population residing within Albany, Denmark and Plantagenet.



Average annual population growth rate over the past decade.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Great Southern's median age;

High proportion of older residents **>55 years**

Low proportion of young adults **15-40 years**

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE



of the region's population are Indigenous;

the highest proportions are in: Broomehill-Tambellup **13%**
Gnowangerup **7.7%**
Katanning **8.8%**

MULTICULTURALISM



of the population were born overseas;
Katanning's overseas born population is significantly more culturally diverse than other regional towns.

SOCIOECONOMICS



The region's family weekly income;

Perth weekly income: **\$2,259**

WA weekly income: **\$2,214**

6.3 Our Challenges and Opportunities

The Great Southern region faces a variety of challenges that the Commission factors into its work.



Geographic Challenges and Opportunities

Geographic challenges are associated with the distance from the metropolitan area, and relatively inconvenient transport links and forecast climate change exposure. These factors particularly impact the region's tourism and primary production potential and transportation of goods in and out of the region.

Opportunities to address this need to:

- Enhance community assets and social infrastructure to attract and retain residents.
- Develop strong and informed economic development initiatives which stimulate key growth sectors.
- Enhance transport, business and trade infrastructure to encourage private investment into regional industry.
- Enhance the region's significant heritage and cultural assets as important drawcards for visitation by promoting the region as a heritage and cultural hub of activity.
- Adapt to climate change by promoting primary industry innovation and developing a knowledge economy.
- Leverage the region's growth in population and visitation to seek investment in tourism and transport infrastructure.



Demographic Challenges and Opportunities

Demographic challenges are associated with an ageing population, the outmigration of youth, low or negative growth rates in smaller towns and lower personal incomes but comparable costs of living compared to state averages.

Opportunities to address this need to:

- Stimulate the region's high value sectors, to create more skilled, permanent employment opportunities and increase the diversity of skilled employment offerings in the region.
- Use our multicultural diversity to help tap potential export markets, including markets for products such as bushfoods, aquaculture products and agricultural products.
- Capitalise on our ageing population by developing supporting sectors which also provide new opportunities for employment and enterprise development.
- Diversify recreational, arts, cultural and educational assets to reduce youth outmigration and cater for the region's multicultural community.
- Build upon the existing tertiary education offerings to retain and grow skills and knowledge within the region.



Economic Challenges and Opportunities

Economic challenges are associated with relatively low per capita Gross Regional Product, underdeveloped aboriginal business sector, overreliance on a few key industries, amalgamation and corporatisation in the primary production sector, competition from other regions for tourism visitation, an ageing population, and current infrastructure limiting industry and business growth.

Opportunities to address this need to:

- Further develop new industries and more complex products to diversify the economy.
- Compete effectively for tourists, with a current focus on the domestic market and the potential for high spending international markets that were previously growing globally before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Capitalise on the Great Southern's wealth of untapped potential in local produce and niche primary production, with food and beverage manufacturing opportunities for international export markets.
- Support the development of the Aboriginal business sector, including supporting the capture of economic opportunities from the South West Native Title Settlement and increasing awareness of State Government procurement opportunities for Aboriginal businesses.
- Capitalise on geopolitical trends such as global food security, provenance and ethically sustainable production.
- Further develop the region as welcoming and attractive for international students.
- Capitalise on growing interest in natural experiences through sustainable and sensitively managed ecotourism.



Infrastructure and Services Challenges and Opportunities

Infrastructure and services challenges include a lack of tertiary education availability, limited secondary education outside Albany, changing weather patterns and other climate-related factors, a lack of serviced industrial land and appropriate transport linkages, and customers serviced by ageing or insufficient power, water and digital service networks with associated high costs of connection and upgrades.

Opportunities to address this need to:

- Grow the market for digital nomads and remote workers by improving digital connectivity and promoting the region's competitive lifestyle advantages.
- Enhance energy, water, transport and telecommunications infrastructure and systems to improve reliability and reduce costs to lower barriers to existing industry and attract new business.
- Sustain and enlarge educational offerings, including secondary education offerings in the upper Great Southern.
- Impactfully engage Government agencies to plan, prioritise and deliver infrastructure improvements that unlock the region's economic capacity and improve service standards.
- Address market constraints, identify and prioritise the source of market failures and advocate to implement corrective action to remove economic growth inhibitors.

6.4 Comparative Advantages

A region's comparative advantages reflect what that region excels at. Leveraging comparative advantages is key to creating economic growth.

The Great Southern's comparative advantages have been identified as:



PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Diverse, high quality produce with significant value-add and export opportunities.



TOURISM

Natural and built attractions, Aboriginal heritage assets, unique historical character.



VOCATIONAL & TERTIARY EDUCATION & RESEARCH SECTOR

The significant and growing presence of TAFE, University of Western Australia, research institutions and the Great Southern Universities Centre that can be leveraged to attract innovation.



LIFESTYLE & NATURAL AMENITY

Highly attractive temperate climate, environment, arts, culture, and heritage assets.



7. OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Figure 3. Strategy at a Glance – Hierarchy and Approach

GSDC Strategic Priority	GSDC Strategic Initiative	Regional Development's Five Strategic Themes				
		Growing mining and related industries	Growing new industries	Regional living standards	Aboriginal economic development	Organisational excellence
Strong and Diverse Economy	Leverage the region's comparative advantages	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Facilitate sustainable, supported economic development	✓	✓		✓	✓
	Focus on diversification	✓	✓		✓	✓
Regional Liveability	Facilitate investment in critical social and economic infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strong Communities	Facilitate skills and knowledge development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organisational Excellence	Ongoing priority	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Commission has four Strategic Priorities, which respond to and align with the Regional Development Portfolio's Strategic Themes.

The Commission's Strategic Priorities are:

- **Strong and Diverse Economy**
- **Regional Liveability**
- **Strong Communities**
- **Organisational Excellence**

As shown in the above diagram, 'Organisational Excellence' is an overarching Organisational commitment to efficiency and effectiveness, spanning across all strategic themes and priorities, with performance indicators to be established as part of an annual business planning process.

The "lens" of the above Strategic Priorities has been applied to five high level Strategic Initiatives to enable the identification of specific actions and projects for delivery under this plan.

This approach reflects the interconnectedness and multidimensional nature of regional development, with projects often delivering outcomes across more than one area of strategic focus.

The five Strategic Initiatives are:

- Leverage the region's comparative advantages (Primary Production; Lifestyle and Natural Amenity; Tourism and Tertiary Education).
- Facilitate sustainable, supported economic development.
- Focus on diversification.
- Facilitate investment in critical social and economic infrastructure.
- Facilitate skills and knowledge development.

Further detail on each of the above Strategic Priorities in the context of the Regional Development Portfolio, and further context around each Strategic Initiative and key action, is provided below.



7.1 Strong and Diverse Economy

Research undertaken by the Regional Development Portfolio identifies the importance of economic diversification to ensure economies can better absorb shocks. This aligns with the State's primary economic policy, Diversify WA.

The focus for the Portfolio is on growth of new industries and up-stream diversification of the resource sector to increase the economic complexity of the Western Australian economy. The Commission will seek to achieve this in the Great Southern by driving the expansion of existing industries into new areas with high economic complexity, and growing new industries to help add diversity and resilience to the local economy.

To grow and diversify the economy, the Commission will leverage the region's unique comparative advantages and legacy industries which are highly competitive, scalable and sustainable.

Key potential sectors for growth include manufacturing, regenerative agriculture, renewable energy, tourism, international education, and higher education.

The State's extractive industry sector also represents a significant opportunity for the Great Southern to diversify its economy by building a local METS service sector that services the industry virtually/remotely, attracting and retaining FIFO workers and families to the region, and using the knowhow this brings to the region to kickstart new local industries.



7.2 Regional Liveability

Normalising regional living standards is critical to growing regional populations and underpins regional economic development. The focus for the Regional Development Portfolio is on improving access to services and experiences that attract populations to regional areas and encourages them to stay.

The Commission recognises the critical role that social, community and cultural infrastructure and services play in building regional capacity for economic development.

Significant regional development opportunities will be constrained or missed without continued improvement in whole-of-life living standards in the Great Southern. The Commission addresses this by highlighting the unique needs and challenges of local communities, and advocating for place based and effective solutions. This includes:

- Championing education (including tertiary-level), knowledge, creativity and innovation.
- Respecting and enhancing the environment, heritage and cultural assets.
- Developing community assets and capacities that make the region a preferred place to live, work, visit, study and invest.
- Improving health and wellbeing outcomes in the region.
- Strengthening regional resilience against disruptive events.



7.3 Strong Communities

The Commission recognises the intrinsic social and economic value of inclusive communities.

This strategic priority encompasses a focus on hard to reach segments of the community, including (for example) – Aboriginal people, young people, seniors, people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – who in some cases face barriers to accessing education, employment and other economic opportunities.

In many regional locations Aboriginal people account for a significant proportion of the potential workforce. Activating and empowering Aboriginal peoples' human and social capital is critical to delivering regional development and to social outcomes for the region.

The new National Agreement on Closing the Gap sets the tone for Aboriginal economic development. The National Agreement has been developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and commits all parties to working in full and genuine partnership.

The focus for the Portfolio is ensuring Aboriginal people have equal opportunity for economic participation, particularly through supporting Aboriginal business growth, creating more inclusive workplaces, and providing training programs. An integrated procurement and support strategy for Aboriginal people and Aboriginal businesses is a key mechanism to achieve this outcome.

The Commission recognises that supporting Traditional Custodians to participate in the regional economy via culturally appropriate employment, investment and enterprise will deliver strong benefits to Traditional Custodians and the region.

The Commission addresses this by building strong and inclusive communities, enhancing Aboriginal wellbeing and economic development, and empowering Aboriginal communities to determine their own path to health and prosperity. The continuous connection of Aboriginal Traditional Custodians to lands within the Great Southern is also an enormous regional asset.



7.4 Organisational Excellence

The Portfolio is a key enabler for regional economic development. To be successful, the way the Portfolio works together is critical. This includes delivering transparent and effective governance, and effective systems and processes to support ongoing collaboration.

To influence and lead thinking on regional economic development, the Portfolio requires diverse skill sets and a motivated and empowered team working towards a common goal. Using clear evidence to inform regional development decisions will strengthen the Portfolio's reputation as trusted partners, particularly with regard to investment recommendations. Identifying, attracting, and retaining the talent, skills and experience necessary to drive regional economic development is also critical.

The impacts of the Commission are directly related to the way we work.

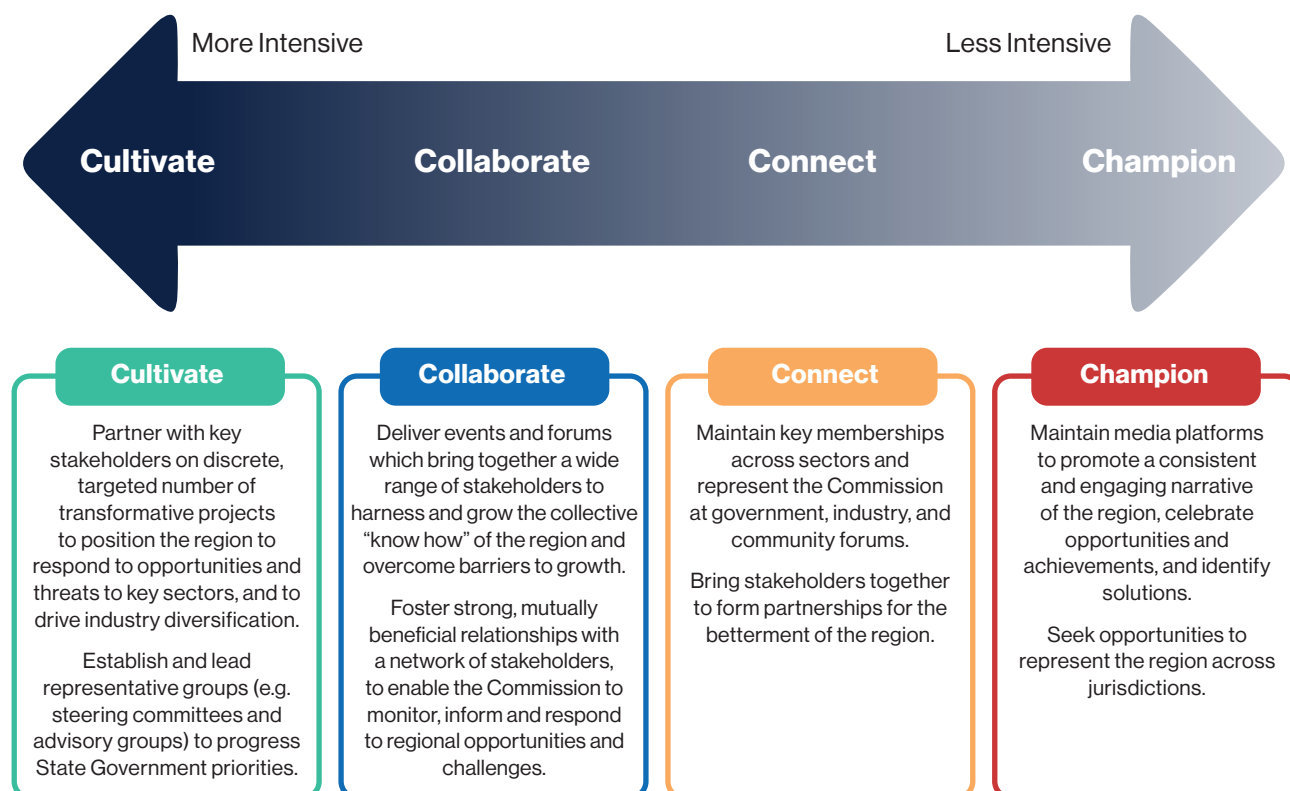
Our organisation is committed to a principles-based, evidence-led approach to operations and governance that produces best-practice behaviours. These behaviours drive outcomes in line with the Commission's strategic vision and values.

The Commission's organisational excellence is achieved by leading with integrity and professionalism, maintaining a region-wide focus, being strategic and effective, and using well-developed evidence to advocate strongly for the Great Southern. Building and sustaining partnerships based on mutual trust, sharing knowledge, and informed decision making is also crucial to achieving this outcome.



8. STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Figure 4: Four-tiered approach to implementation – Cultivate, Collaborate, Connect, Champion



The Commission has adopted a four-tiered approach to implementation of the strategic initiatives. This approach is similar to the implementation approach set out in the whole of Regional Development Portfolio Plan (align, collaborate, coordinate), and reflects the dynamic nature of the Commission's role, which differs across project lifecycles, and industry sectors at different stages of maturity.

This approach also reflects that some projects or actions may require more resource intensive implementation from the Commission for a period of time to (for example) 'cultivate' a transformative project or opportunity to fruition. At other times, a less intensive implementation role may be appropriate, to 'connect' stakeholders with the right data or funding opportunity.

The four-tiers are not necessarily a linear progression, and the nature of the response by the Commission within a specific project or sector may change over time.

8.1 Leverage the region's comparative advantages

The Commission will focus its efforts on actions which leverage, grow, and support the region's comparative advantages - Primary Production; Lifestyle and Natural Amenity; Tourism; and Tertiary Education. This approach will optimise the Commission's impact. Key advantages that can be leveraged include:

- Well established industries in primary production, manufacturing, tourism, and international education.
- Geographical assets (National Parks, wilderness, beaches, viticulture and agricultural land).
- Environmental assets (soils, temperate climate, natural energy sources, pristine oceans).
- Social assets (historical significance as the first European Settlement in Western Australia, rich Aboriginal cultural heritage, emerging health care hub in the City of Albany, burgeoning tertiary education sector with links to environmental biodiversity and natural energy sources).

Alignment	Implementation Approach
Regional Development theme Growing new, alternative industries Strategic priority Strong and diverse economy	Cultivate opportunities to attract investment to the region's new industries using evidence-based advocacy
	Collaborate with partners to promote the Great Southern brand
	Connect with industries that can leverage the region's competitive advantages to spark industry collaboration that can seed early cluster development
	Cultivate value-add opportunities in the region's propulsive industries
	Cultivate initiatives that capitalise on the region's natural assets and history
	Cultivate initiatives that attract and welcome international students to study, work and live in the most suitable Great Southern locations
Regional Development theme Aboriginal economic development Strategic priority Strong communities	Champion the region's liveability and lifestyle via media platforms
	Collaborate with Aboriginal people to promote genuine co-design of initiatives, including delivering projects that empower Aboriginal enterprises, business owners and community groups
	Connect local Aboriginal enterprises and businesses to State Government procurement opportunities
	Collaborate with Wagyl Kaip representative groups to help capture economic opportunities from the South-West Native Title Settlement

8.2 Facilitate sustainable, supported economic development

The Commission will focus on promoting sustainable growth and mitigating environmental threats that may impact its brand and related industries. The intrinsic link between our environment and what makes the region a destination of choice to live, study and invest - pristine oceans, temperate climate, and fertile soils – is one of our region's greatest strengths.

Alignment	Implementation Approach
Regional Development theme Growing new, alternative industries Strategic priority Strong and diverse economy	Cultivate opportunities from the emerging 'carbon economy' Collaborate with partners to initiate power and water solutions that reduce costs and carbon footprints and waste Champion Great Southern's brand by linking into University of WA Albany's research in natural resource management and marine research, and identifying new sustainable industry opportunities Collaborate with relevant partners to ensure that the region is resilient to the changing climate, including addressing coastal erosion, bushfires, and floods.
Regional Development theme Regional living standards Strategic priority Regional liveability	Collaborate with State agencies to ensure effective regional disaster management capability
Regional Development theme Aboriginal economic development Strategic priority Strong communities	Collaborate with Traditional Custodians to sustainably support the activation of the capital held in land, culture and skills into the mainstream economy

8.3 Focus on diversification

The Commission will drive economic diversification by leveraging existing propulsive industries and supporting them to expand in new directions. These industries include Primary Production, Construction, Manufacturing, and Education, including International Education, and Training.

Alignment	Implementation Approach
Regional Development theme Growing new, alternative industries Strategic priority Strong and diverse economy	Cultivate the Great Southern as one of Australia's premier destinations for international VET and tertiary students Cultivate growth of the tertiary and research presence in the region by partnering with industry to develop research that solves local industry problems, creates new global opportunity for enterprise development, and attracts talent from across the world Cultivate opportunities that support the diversification of markets for Great Southern products, goods, services, and tourism opportunities Connect the region's established manufacturing industry with the new \$1 billion Advanced Manufacturing Fund, a major forthcoming Commonwealth initiative Connect with established industries and business networks to ensure early identification of opportunities and threats to economic growth Connect industries with funding and investment opportunities that can diversify their offerings
Regional Development theme Regional living standards Strategic priority Regional liveability	Collaborate with industry and across all levels of government to ensure that digital infrastructure can support industry growth, and to plan and prioritise improvements that sustain remote skilled workforces
Regional Development theme Aboriginal economic development Strategic priority Strong communities	Collaborate with Aboriginal Corporations and business owners to support the growth and viability of Aboriginal enterprises and businesses into our propulsive industries

8.4 Facilitate investment in critical social and economic infrastructure

The Commission will use evidence-based advocacy to seek the social and economic infrastructure required to enable the Great Southern to grow and thrive. Access to social infrastructure (housing, health services, retail precincts, cultural assets) is a key enabler of regional economic development as it helps attract and retain skilled workers. Economic infrastructure (telecommunications, water, power, serviced industrial land) is also vital to allow industry to grow and service the region.

Alignment	Implementation Approach
Regional Development theme Growing new, alternative industries Strategic priority Strong and diverse economy	Collaborate with industry and State agencies to develop a pipeline of serviced industrial land across the region Collaborate with industry and all levels of government to develop precincts and clusters based on regional competitive advantages, seek investment, and value realisation strategies Collaborate with partners, including industry and local government, to develop a strategic approach to workforce development including housing availability for new workers
Regional Development theme Regional living standards Strategic priority Regional liveability	Connect with key senior State officials to raise awareness, and advocate for, important regional infrastructure issues Collaborate with lead agencies to attract private and public investment in health, aged care, and early childhood, and child care infrastructure
Regional Development theme Aboriginal economic development Strategic priority Strong communities	Collaborate with Traditional Custodians and State Government agencies, to support the implementation of <i>State Government's Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy</i> , to support opportunities for truth-telling, healing and reconciliation

8.5 Facilitate skills and knowledge development

The Commission will work with the education sector to identify opportunities to retain more local students, and to attract new students from outside the Great Southern to experience our region.

Supporting our education sector has two important benefits. Firstly, having the right skills and knowledge within the Great Southern is vital to ensuring industries have the capacity to thrive and expand. Secondly, the region's outmigration of young people can be partly explained by the lack of high-quality tertiary education opportunities in the region. Creating viable, tailored regional tertiary educational offerings to meet industry needs will help create economic growth, and attract and retain youth and talent.

Alignment	Implementation Approach
Regional Development theme Growing renewable industries Strategic priority Strong and diverse economy	Collaborate with industry to gain a sound understanding of the skills and knowhow required by local industry, including in potential areas of growth
Regional Development theme Regional living standards Strategic priority Regional liveability	Collaborate with organisations with the skills and expertise to drive entrepreneurship and business in the region to leverage new business development opportunities
Regional Development theme Regional living standards Strategic priority Strong communities	Collaborate with secondary, tertiary and VET sectors to explore ways to improve education opportunities to attract families to remain in the region, and to attract students from outside the region Cultivate and support initiatives that engage with difficult-to-reach segments of the community to help them access their education needs

9. WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

By 2025

The Great Southern is emerging as the place of choice for investment in renewable energy and environmentally sustainable research and practices. The growth of this sector is being supported by the inward migration of people with new technical expertise. Key sectors – including agriculture, forestry, viticulture, and manufacturing – are beginning to reap the benefits of the influx of this new skilled workforce, tapping into the rapidly maturing innovation ecosystem, professional networks, and industry “clusters”. This is beginning to facilitate the transfer of expertise across sectors, growing the “knowhow” of the region.

The region has capitalised on a growing appetite for regional living – led by remote work practices and a renewed focus on work/life balance which emerged during the COVID pandemic. Digital connectivity, health care and access to education is not a barrier to people seeking to base themselves and their families in the region and enjoy the pristine environment, natural assets and lifestyle the region offers. The availability of quality education – from early childhood through to tertiary – means that more families and young people are moving and staying in the region. This has invigorated the small business sector and has bolstered the local workforce across a range of service sectors, including for example – hospitality, childcare, care and support and retail.

These workers provide services that underpin regional liveability and, by living and working in the region, contribute to a vibrant, inclusive, and diverse sense of community.

Shared narratives that showcase the region's rich culture, history and heritage form the cornerstone of the Great Southern's identity. In particular, the lead up to the 2026 Albany Bicentenary has been the catalyst for a region-wide reconciliation journey, with the stories and experiences of Traditional Custodians providing opportunities for truth telling and healing. The economic benefits of the South-West Native Title Settlement are becoming evident in the community, and Aboriginal businesses are flourishing.

The Great Southern has a steadily increasing international reputation as a tourist destination with unique, curated experiences – including Aboriginal cultural offerings, self-drive itineraries and adventure and “trails” tourism. A series of annual events showcase the region's provenance, including arts, culture, food and beverages. The region's products continue to gain an international reputation as they diversify and reach new export markets.



10. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

10.1 Implementation

The Board of the Commission is accountable for the delivery of the activities within this strategy and delegates responsibility for them to the CEO and Commission staff. The outputs and desired outcomes from this plan are a shared responsibility with key stakeholders across the region. The Board's commitment is to work closely with those stakeholders to ensure the outputs and outcomes are delivered to drive economic and social development for the Great Southern region.

Designing and implementation of the programs and projects constituting the Strategic Initiatives will be guided by the following principles:

- Alignment - with our vision and values, and the priorities of the State Government and community.
- Deliverability - programs and projects will be practical and achievable.
- Momentum – programs and projects will mutually support each other to help realise the vision.
- Objectives – goals will be clearly defined.
- Accountability – roles and responsibilities will be clearly allocated to individuals.
- Timelines – clear milestones and deadlines will be identified and agreed on.

Key stakeholders to engage while implementing the Strategic Initiatives will vary, but are likely to include:

- Local governments
- Business and industry
- State Government agencies – DPIRD; Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science, Innovation; Department of the Premier and Cabinet; Department of Treasury
- Government Trading Enterprises
- Peak bodies
- Community groups.

10.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important for the Commission to measure and evaluate the progress in relation to goals, strategies and actions. The Commission's performance is reported each year in its Annual Report, including key performance indicators (KPIs). Two indicators are reported:

- A effectiveness indicator drawn from a client survey rating the Commission's coordination and promotion of development in the Great Southern.
- An efficiency indicator showing the average cost per project.

In addition, the Commission's performance is monitored and evaluated by:

- Internal and external audits delivering no major risk findings.
- Timely responses to governance requirements.
- Accuracy and utility of advice to government.
- Timely delivery and acquittal of funded projects.
- Quantifying local content in Great Southern State Government projects.

Evaluation of the Commission's programs and projects is vital to ensuring successful implementation and to capture lessons-learned.

Key principles for conducting an evaluation include:

- Were goals clearly identified before implementation commenced?
- Were the goals met, including for deliverables and timelines?
- Was the program/project on budget?
- Was the program/project on scope?
- What feedback was received from stakeholders during and after completion?
- Was a de-brief held at the end of the program/project to capture lessons-learned?
- Has a plan been developed to ensure the lessons-learned are being incorporated into the work of the Commission's and the Regional Development Portfolio?

Great Southern Development Commission Strategic Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25

Great Southern Development Commission

Pyrmont House
110 Serpentine Road
ALBANY WA 6330

Telephone: (08) 9842 4888
Email: gfdc@gfdc.wa.gov.au

Great Southern Development Commission

10 Dore Street
KATANNING WA 6317

Telephone: (08) 9821 3211
Email: katanning@gfdc.wa.gov.au
Website: www.gfdc.wa.gov.au