



Great Southern Development Commission

Strategic Plan 2026-2029





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

*Ngala kattidj nidja Noongar moort boodja
wer gorah-gorah wer yy-i wer mila.*

*Ngala koort-kwab nidja boodja-k wer kattidj
netingar wer bee-dee-eer wer gorah-gorah
wer yy-i wer mila.*

We acknowledge this is Noongar peoples' country
from long, long ago to now to the future.

We are happy to be on this country and
acknowledge ancestors and elders from long,
long ago to now to the future.

The Board and employees of the Great Southern Development Commission
acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we operate: the
Menang, Kaneang, Goreng, Wudjari, and Wilman Noongar peoples.

We acknowledge their continuing connection to the lands, waters, and sky, and
celebrate their over 65,000 years of life on this land.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

NOONGAR PEOPLE OF THE GREAT SOUTHERN

In the Great Southern region of Western Australia, the Aboriginal population is predominantly made up of Noongar people, who are part of one of the largest and oldest continuous cultural groups in Australia. Within the Noongar Nation, there are 14 distinct language groups, and five of these are located in the Great Southern region.

MENANG (MINANG)

The Menang people are the traditional custodians of the coastal lands surrounding Kinjarling, stretching from King George Sound north to the Stirling Range. Their deep connection to land, sea, and sky is reflected in their stories and language.

KANEANG (KANEANG/KANEANY)

The Kaneang people are the traditional custodians of lands encompassing Katanning, Tambellup, Cranbrook, Donnybrook, and Bridgetown. Their revitalised language and cultural practices ensure that Kaneang kaartdijin (knowledge) continues to be passed down to future generations.

WILMAN (WILMAN)

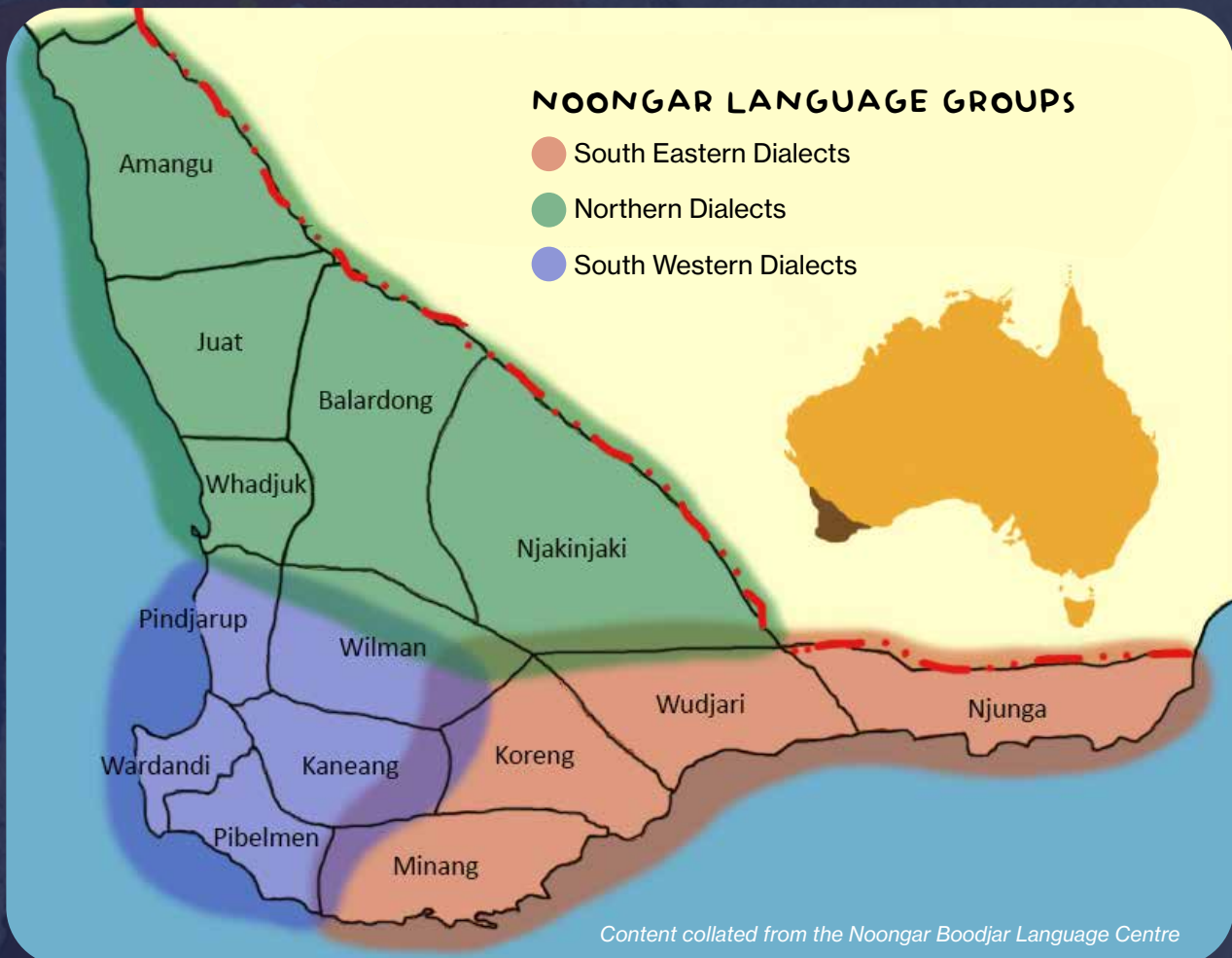
The Wilman people are the traditional owners of a large area spanning Narrogin, Wagin, Williams, Collie and reaching into the northern part of Katanning in the Great Southern region.

GORENG (KORENG)

The Goreng people, also known as Koreng, are the traditional owners of a vast inland area stretching from the Gairdner River to Bremer Bay and inland to Jerramungup, Pingrup, and Gnowangerup. Their cultural practices are deeply tied to the land and its seasonal rhythms.

WUDJARI

The Wudjari people are the traditional custodians of the southern coastal lands from the Gairdner River to Point Malcolm, including Ravensthorpe, Esperance, and Cape Arid. Their country is rich in biodiversity and cultural significance, with ancient songlines and sacred sites.





Cranbrook
Ben and Ebony

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A Message from the Chair and Chief Executive Officer



The Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC) is committed to shaping a strong future for our region. We bring people, ideas and investment together to create opportunities that grow our economy, support our communities and care for our environment.

The Great Southern is a remarkable place. Its lifestyle, landscapes, industries and rich Noongar culture set it apart. Our task is to turn these strengths into long-lasting prosperity, resilience and liveability for everyone who calls this region home.

We know this can only be achieved in partnership. Working with government, business, Aboriginal organisations and our communities, the GSDC helps coordinate regional priorities, unlock investment and support delivery where it matters most.

This Strategic Plan sets our course for 2026 to 2029. It aligns with State Government priorities and the WA Regional Development Framework and outlines the vision and actions that will guide our work. Together, we aim to shape a thriving Great Southern where people choose to live, work, invest and grow.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Ricky Burges'.

Ricky Burges PSM
Chair, GSDC Board of Management

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Natasha Monks'.

Natasha Monks
Chief Executive Officer, GSDC

Our vision

A thriving, resilient Great Southern region where sustainable growth, natural and cultural richness, and safe and inclusive communities drive a shared prosperity and diversified future for its people.

Our values

COMMUNITY

CURIOSITY

EQUITY

INTEGRITY

Strategic focus



Our role

Enabling legislation

The GSDC, established under the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993* (Act), is listed as a statutory authority on Schedule 1 of the *Financial Management Act 2006* and is subject to the provisions of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

Objectives of the Act

The GSDC is one of nine Regional Development Commissions (RDCs), each established to serve their unique regions of Western Australia, and to achieve specific objectives defined in the Act:

- Maximising job creation and improve career opportunities in the region;
- Develop and broadening the economic base of the region;
- Identify infrastructure services to promote economic and social development within the region;
- Provide information and advice to promote business development within the region;
- Seek to ensure that the general standard of government services and access to those services in the region is comparable to that which applies in the metropolitan area; and
- Generally take steps to encourage, promote, facilitate, and monitor economic development in the region.

Functions of the Act

To deliver these objectives, the GSDC may undertake functions listed in the Act:

- Promote the Great Southern region;
- Facilitate coordination with relevant statutory bodies and State Government agencies;
- Cooperate with representatives of industry and commerce, employer and employee organisations, education and training institutions and other sections of the community within the region;
- Identify the opportunities for investment in the region and encourage that investment;
- Identify the infrastructure needs of the region, and encourage the provision of that infrastructure in the region; and
- Cooperate with departments of the Public Service of the State and Commonwealth, and other agencies, instrumentalities and statutory bodies of the State and the Commonwealth; and Local Governments, in order to promote equitable delivery of services within the region.

Responsible Minister

The GSDC is responsible to the Minister for Regional Development. The Minister has the power to direct the GSDC either generally or with respect to a particular matter, on the exercise and performance of its powers, functions, and duties under the Act.

The GSDC supports the Minister for Great Southern, a portfolio responsibility which enables stronger advocacy for local priorities within government.

Governance

The GSDC is governed by a Board of seven people, including six regional representatives from Local Government, community and Ministerial nomination, and the CEO, who is a member of the Board by virtue of office.

Through a Service Level Agreement (SLA), the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) provides the GSDC with resources to fulfil its functions under the Act and is the employing agency for the staff assigned to the GSDC under Section 29 of the Act.

All members of the Board and staff are regionally based and contribute specialised skills, experience and local knowledge that benefits the GSDC and the region.

Regional Development Portfolio

Successful regional development is a collaborative endeavour. The GSDC is one of nine independent RDCs and DPIRD who form the Regional Development Portfolio that aims to measurably improve regional development in Western Australia.



In addition to the nine RDCs, 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 the Chairs of the nine RDCs and DPIRD
- **The WA Regional Development Alliance** - Comprising the CEOs of the nine RDCs and Director General, DPIRD, working collaboratively to further regional development across the State
- **DPIRD** - The State Government department with portfolio responsibility for regional development

How the Regional Development Portfolio works

Through trusted local leadership and strong cross-government partnerships, the Regional Development Portfolio connects State Government priorities with regional delivery.

What the Portfolio does	Values
Work across Government Collaborate across agencies to turn State priorities into regional outcomes.	Strong partnerships across Government, industry, Aboriginal partners and community.
Drive economic growth Strengthen WA's economy by investing in local jobs, business capability and infrastructure.	Tangible investment that grows the economy and jobs.
Inform policy and investment Provide evidence-based insights that guide government decisions and investment.	Trusted delivery through people who live and work in the regions.
Deliver with agility and impact Tailor local solutions that align with State Government priorities, drawing on deep regional knowledge and strong partnerships to act quickly and confidently.	Test and scale solutions for WA's future.

Regional Development Framework

About the Regional Development Framework

The WA Regional Development Framework (the Framework) provides a unified, state-wide approach for strengthening regional WA. It sets out the priority areas that most strongly influence quality of life in the regions – jobs, health, housing, community, environment, and infrastructure and services – and emphasises the importance of coordinated delivery across government, industry, community and Aboriginal partners.

The Framework recognises that the strength of regional WA underpins the prosperity, sustainability and identity of the entire state. It highlights the essential role of RDCs as trusted local leaders, connecting state priorities with place-based action that delivers tangible outcomes for regional communities.

How the GSDC Strategic Plan aligns

The GSDC Strategic Plan 2026–2029 directly aligns with the Framework by organising our work around its six strategic themes and adding a seventh – Organisational excellence – to reflect our commitment to strong governance, high performance and trusted delivery.

Our priorities mirror the Framework's focus on:

- Creating quality jobs and diversifying the regional economy.
- Improving access to health care and wellbeing services.
- Enabling housing supply and land availability for workforce and community needs.
- Strengthening safe, inclusive and vibrant communities.
- Protecting the environment and supporting the low-carbon transition.
- Delivering essential infrastructure and services that connect people and opportunity.
- Building organisational capability to deliver with impact.

Our contribution to the Framework

Through strong local leadership, deep regional partnerships and evidence-based insights, GSDC turns the Framework's priorities into practical, place-based outcomes.

We:

- coordinate cross-government actions
- partner with Aboriginal organisations and community leaders
- support regional industries to innovate, grow and adapt
- enable infrastructure and service investment
- mobilise local capability to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Why this alignment matters

Aligning the GSDC Strategic Plan with the Framework ensures:

- a direct line of sight between regional priorities and State Government priorities
- stronger coordination across agencies, Ministers and partners
- consistent focus on outcomes that matter most to regional communities
- clarity on the role the GSDC plays in shaping the region's economic and social future
- a shared framework for measuring long-term regional impact.



Our strategic foundation

Vision

A thriving, resilient Great Southern region where sustainable growth, natural and cultural richness, and safe and inclusive communities drive a shared prosperity and diversified future for its people.

Purpose

To lead, coordinate and support regional development that strengthens the Great Southern's economy, liveability and sustainability. We connect State priorities with local delivery, working in partnership with community, industry, Aboriginal organisations and government to create tangible, long-term regional outcomes.

Values

Community

We are part of the Great Southern. We work alongside our communities and provide foresight, guidance, and stewardship to support their vibrancy, diversity, and long-term prosperity.

Curiosity

We stay open-minded and forward-looking, using evidence, insights, and new ideas to drive innovation, shape opportunities and create meaningful outcomes.

Equity

We are committed to fairness and opportunity for all, ensuring people and places across the region benefit from growth and change.

Integrity

We act with honesty, professionalism, and accountability, building trust through openness and collaboration.

Strategic priorities 2026–2029

This plan aligns with the seven priority areas of the WA Regional Development Framework.

Each priority reflects the interconnected social, economic and environmental factors influencing quality of life across the Great Southern.



Jobs

Driving economic development, diversification and innovation

Goal:

Build a diverse, competitive and resilient regional economy by strengthening local industries, expanding market access and creating quality jobs across the Great Southern.

Key initiatives:

- Strengthen local industry capability and entrepreneurship.
- Attract and facilitate private and public investment that advances industry diversification across key and emerging sectors.
- Expand domestic and global market access for Great Southern products, services, and cultural exports.
- Support regional workforce development and education pathways that build long-term industry competitiveness.



Health

Enhancing access to essential services and regional wellbeing

Goal:

Ensure all people in the Great Southern have equitable access to health, aged care, mental health and wellbeing services that support liveability and long-term community resilience.

Key initiatives:

- Champion fair and reliable access to essential health services, ensuring delivery is regionally appropriate and consistent with metropolitan standards.
- Partner with health agencies and industry to strengthen care economy and services across the region.



Housing

Enabling secure, affordable and appropriate housing for communities and workforce

Goal:

Support the delivery of housing options that meet community needs, attract and retain workers, and underpin population stability and economic growth.

Key initiatives:

- Work with local governments, community housing providers and industry to enable secure, affordable and appropriate housing.
- Support, identify and progress opportunities for land release, enabling infrastructure and development-readiness for priority housing projects.
- Facilitate partnerships that address housing shortages through investment, planning pathways and coordinated delivery.



Community

Strengthening inclusive, vibrant and resilient communities

Goal:

Champion safe, connected and culturally rich communities that attract and retain people and celebrate the diversity and identity of the Great Southern.

Key initiatives:

- Promote the Great Southern as a place of choice to live, invest and visit, including positioning Albany as a leading WA regional city.
- Support community participation, inclusion and cultural vibrancy through events, creative industries, public spaces and place-based initiatives.
- Strengthen community capability through partnerships with government, business, youth, volunteer and cultural groups.
- Advance reconciliation and cultural empowerment by supporting truth-telling, cultural recognition and Aboriginal participation in regional leadership.



Environment

Accelerating climate resilience and the low-carbon transition

Goal:

Prepare the Great Southern for a sustainable future by advancing climate resilience, clean industries and regenerative environmental practices.

Key initiatives:

- Champion renewable energy, clean industries and circular economy innovation to support the region's low-carbon transition.
- Strengthen climate preparedness, adaptation and resilience across communities, industries and ecosystems.
- Ensure regional communities equitably benefit from economic and environmental transitions.



Infrastructure and services

Delivering the infrastructure and services that enable growth and liveability

Goal:

Enable infrastructure and services that improve liveability, connect people to opportunity and support a growing and diversified regional economy.

Key initiatives:

- Identify and support delivery of infrastructure, facilities and services essential for population, industry and workforce growth.
- Facilitate enabling infrastructure for industry precincts, tourism, community facilities, digital connectivity and essential services.
- Support transport, utilities and social infrastructure that enhances regional access, competitiveness, and connectivity.



Organisational excellence

A high-performing commission delivering with integrity, insight and impact

Goal:

Lead with integrity, evidence and partnership to deliver impactful outcomes for the Great Southern.

Key initiatives:

- Lead with regional intelligence, data, and evidence to guide investment and decision-making.
- Build trusted partnerships across government, business, Aboriginal organisations and communities to drive collective impact.
- Maintain excellence in governance, performance and transparency to ensure accountable, reliable and efficient operations.
- Cultivate an agile, values-driven workforce and strengthen a delivery culture focused on impact, clarity and urgency.

How we work

To deliver sustainable economic development across the Great Southern, we operate through four interconnected approaches to ensure agility, responsiveness, and impact. These principles align with our commitment to:



CONNECT

We bridge opportunities with access, linking people, businesses, and communities to essential services, funding, and markets. This positions us as a key conduit between State Government priorities and regional implementation.



CULTIVATE

We foster an environment where development and job creation flourish. By identifying opportunities and removing barriers, we enable investment that accelerates industry expansion and innovation.



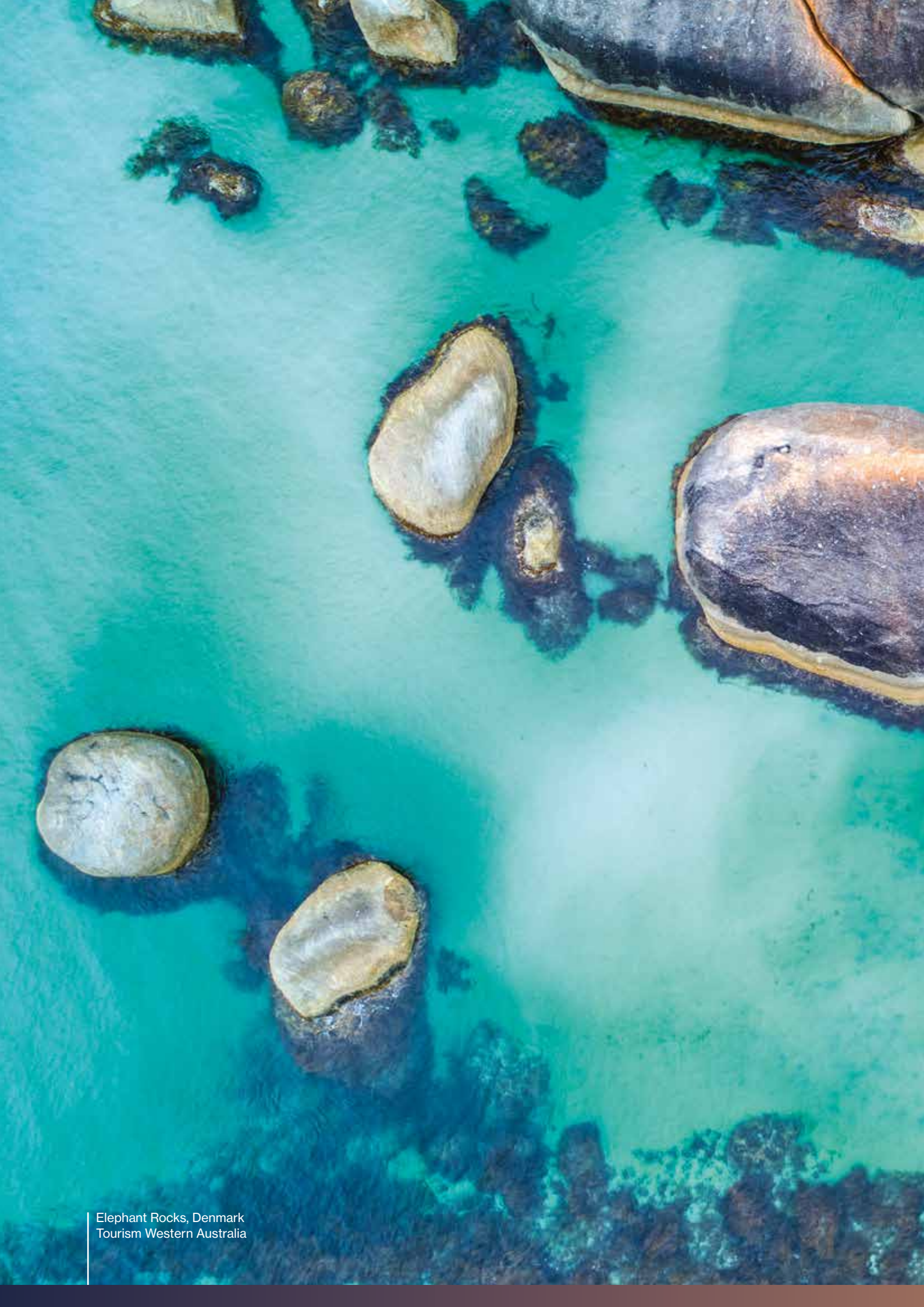
COLLABORATE

We build strategic partnerships that amplify impact and create shared knowledge. This collaboration ensures policy and investment decisions are grounded in robust evidence and local insights.

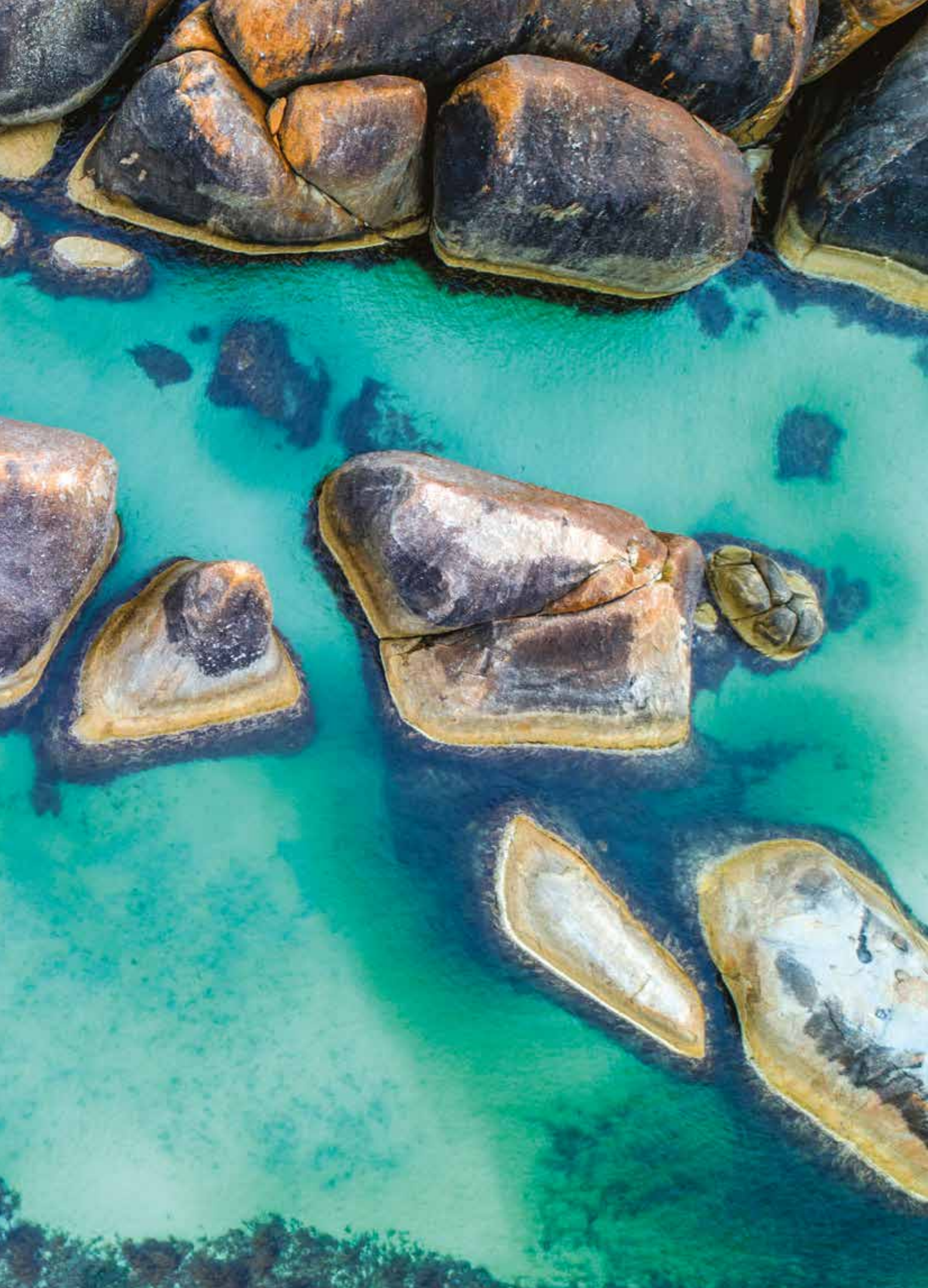


CHAMPION

We advocate for the region's strengths, celebrate achievements, and promote potential to broader audiences. This advocacy, combined with local leadership, drives timely, impactful outcomes.



Elephant Rocks, Denmark
Tourism Western Australia



Strategic Plan 2026-2029

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