



REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL

# Regional Development Policy Framework

*An Action Agenda for  
Regional Development*



## From the Minister

I am pleased to endorse the Regional Development Council's Action Agenda.

The Action Agenda clearly sets out the policy and project priorities that the Council has identified as vital to ensuring Western Australia's regions remain places people want to live, work and invest.

This concise and user-friendly tool will assist the Council to provide advice on Royalties for Regions spending priorities under the Regional Strategic Projects and Regional Capital Works Initiatives. It supports the ongoing regional development of Western Australia by seeking to turn project ideas into reality quickly and effectively with the support of Royalties for Regions funding.

The Action Agenda also provides a framework for efficient, effective and coherent ways to prioritise, plan and deliver regional projects. This will be of use to all government agencies, local government and other partners and stakeholders who utilise Royalties for Regions funding.

The Council will use the Action Agenda to identify indicators and targets for each of the priority areas to ensure that we can track and review progress of each priority's delivery and make changes over time.

I encourage all those with responsibility, commitment and passion for regional Western Australia to read and embrace the Regional Development Council's Action Agenda for Regional Development and to work towards realising its vision.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brendon Grylls'.

**Brendon Grylls**

Minister for Regional Development; Lands

# Vision for Regional Development in Western Australia

Regional Western Australia will continue to be a key contributor to the nation's well being. The future success of rural and regional areas will depend on attracting investors and visitors, encouraging new residents to settle, and enabling existing residents to remain. The facilities and services in rural and regional areas of the State will provide good opportunities for accommodation and employment, high standards of health and education, and offer a lifestyle that is safe and enjoyable. People living in regional Western Australia will have opportunities to be involved in local decision-making to set the direction of their communities.



## Action Agenda Aims

This Action Agenda for Regional Development will prioritise investment decisions to achieve more effective regional development outcomes, which result in a productive and beneficial legacy for regional communities.

The Action Agenda clearly sets out the Regional Development Council's priorities and outcomes for regional development in Western Australia. It directs the Council's policy development focus, coordinates the strategic planning of the nine Regional Development Commissions, and assists the Council to advise the Minister for Regional Development on Royalties for Regions spending priorities for Regional Strategic Projects and Regional Capital Works Initiatives.

The Action Agenda adopts a triple bottom line approach and focuses on outcomes that improve the provision of quality affordable and accessible services in regional areas. This approach also aims to improve the social, cultural and environmental amenity for regional residents to complement and support regional economic development.



The Action Agenda includes indicators and targets for each of the priority areas to ensure that Council, and all interested parties, can track and review progress against its delivery and make changes over time.

An effective and balanced approach to regional development will include a variety of programs and projects that reflect regional differences and develop over time.

## **Priorities and Outcomes**

The Action Agenda is structured around six key priority areas. The outcomes in these areas will be achieved by enhanced coordination and collaboration across the three levels of government, community and industry, with a wide range of targeted investments and regional partnership arrangements.



# **PRIORITY 1:**

## ***HOUSING AND SERVICES***

Affordable access to a range of essential economic and human services, such as housing, telecommunications, power and water, is the cornerstone of vibrant and robust regional communities.

Affordable and suitable housing is fundamental for individuals and their families who choose to live and work in the regions. Regional housing options are required to cater to all income and age groups and must accommodate a variety of lifestyles.

### ***Outcomes***

- More affordable housing options in regional centres, especially in areas of rapid investment and growth.
- Public housing and home ownership options that better reflect the outcomes sought by regional communities.
- Improved housing options for Indigenous people.
- Housing options for Indigenous people that will facilitate transition into employment and home ownership.
- Timely land release for residential and commercial development in regional areas, reflecting an improvement in planning approval processes.
- Accessible, affordable and reliable delivery of essential services in regional areas for residents and businesses.
- Sufficient investment in essential services to meet the current and future social and economic needs of regional communities.

## **PRIORITY 2:**

### **EMPLOYMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SKILLS**

Diverse and emerging industries require a local workforce with depth in a wide range of semi-skilled, skilled and professional occupations, offering broader employment opportunities and encouragement for people to work, settle and remain in the regions. The development of a stable and skilled workforce creates its own impetus and opportunities, such as greater local consumption and the retention of more income and wealth generated within the regional economy.

#### **Outcomes**

- A skilled regional workforce that meets the diverse needs and demands of all industry sectors of regional economies.
- Mainstream employment opportunities, driven by economic growth, available and accessible to Indigenous people to improve workforce participation.
- Appropriate training options available to regional residents to enhance workplace skills and employment options and qualifications for further career development.
- Major projects developed around initiatives that maximise local employment and business development, creating a long-lasting legacy for regional and local communities.
- Greater economic diversity across all sectors of regional economies, providing a wide range of employment opportunities and options.
- Public and private investment in logistics and transport infrastructure in regional areas that is sufficient to support the productive and employment capacity of local industry.

## **PRIORITY 3:** **HEALTH**

Ready and affordable access to treatment and preventative health services is a fundamental requirement for resilient communities.

The differing health needs of each region are to be reflected in planning and investment in health infrastructure that best meet the particular health needs of each region, as well as through innovative resourcing and service delivery.

### **Outcomes**

- Health infrastructure and service delivery that reflects the needs of each region.
- Regional delivery of health services coordinated across all levels of government to provide universal access to healthcare for all regional residents.
- Regional patients to receive timely, high quality and continuous health care that meets their needs throughout their lives.
- Older regional residents to have access to health and community support services that promote independent and healthy living.
- Health professionals and allied health workers who are attracted to live, work and remain in regional areas.



## **PRIORITY 4:** **EDUCATION**

Education, training and life-long learning opportunities for all ages and groups are key factors for people choosing to work and live in the regions. It is particularly important that people can access high-quality schooling, as well as tertiary and technical education training options.

Improvement in the participation in early schooling programs, particularly for Indigenous children, must be the cornerstone of many of the social and economic outcomes sought in regional and remote areas.

### **Outcomes**

- The closure of the gap in education achievement and participation between regional and metropolitan students.
- Improved attendance and retention rates for primary and secondary schooling in regional and remote areas.
- Standards of achievement in literacy and numeracy for regional students that match national and state averages.
- Teachers to be attracted to take up and remain in teaching posts in regional areas.
- A broad range of educational options to be available and accessible to students in regional areas.

## **PRIORITY 5:**

### ***SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AMENITY***

Sustaining vibrant and robust regional communities requires a safe, secure and stimulating environment for people of all ages. Community and cultural events supplement the quality and way of life enjoyed by regional families and residents, and attract participants and visitors from outside the region.

Balanced regional development must require careful planning and consideration of competing values in the management of the complex interplay between the physical environment, the built environment, and the social or community environment.

#### ***Outcomes***

- Regional communities to be safe and secure places for families and people of all ages to live, where residents can confidently pursue a wide range of lawful lifestyle choices.
- Government services to be accessible, affordable and reliable and meet the current and future social needs of regional communities.
- Judicial processes to provide fair and equitable treatment to all members of regional communities.
- Recognition of the unique natural assets in each region and valuing of these by the regional and wider communities. Where appropriate, these natural assets to be promoted in order to attract private and public investment into regional areas.
- The physical environment to be managed so that it provides a lasting and positive legacy for regional residents.
- Cultural events that attract artists and visitors to the regions and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

## **PRIORITY 6:**

### ***LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING***

The regions and their communities need strong and capable leaders with regional knowledge and expertise, who can advance practical solutions to challenges and take advantage of emerging opportunities. Regional leaders are to come from all sectors of the regional population, with Indigenous people being well-represented.

Strong and early regional participation in decisions relating to aspects of planning and service delivery is required for the development and sustainability of vibrant and diverse communities with a dynamic business sector.

#### ***Outcomes***

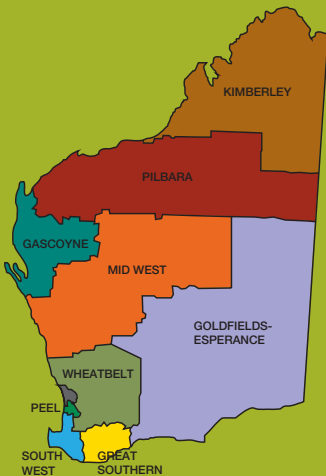
- Emerging community leaders to be identified and developed and encouraged to participate in local and regional development initiatives.
- Regional groups to be well represented in decision-making and planning forums on matters that impact upon the wellbeing and development of regional communities and businesses.
- Strategic planning for regional land use, service delivery and infrastructure provision to be well integrated across and within State, Commonwealth and Local Governments. This integration includes the participation of private and not-for-profit sectors.
- Indigenous leaders to be encouraged to develop local solutions to regional and Indigenous challenges and to enhance Indigenous representation at all levels of government policy development, program roll-out and service delivery.
- More government jobs, government service delivery and management functions to be located in the regions.

# About the Council

The Regional Development Council is established under section 33 of the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993* and is the peak advisory body to the Western Australian Government on regional development issues. The Council consists of the chairpersons of the nine Regional Development Commissions, two local government representatives and the Director General of the Department of Regional Development and Lands.

## The functions of the Council are to:

- promote development in the regions;
- develop policy proposals on regional issues;
- assist commissions and relevant government agencies to work closely on regional issues; and
- report back to the Government on matters referred to it.



## Regional Development Council contact information

Chair: Mr Graham Thomson

Email: [graham.thomson@rdl.wa.gov.au](mailto:graham.thomson@rdl.wa.gov.au)

Fax: (08) 9226 4050

Executive Officer: (08) 9217 1400

Fax: (08) 9226 4050

Free call: 1800 620 511 (Country Only)

**Further information:** [www.rdl.wa.gov.au](http://www.rdl.wa.gov.au)

## Disclaimer

The Action Agenda for Regional Development has been prepared by the Department of Regional Development and Lands with the guidance and support from the Regional Development Council and the Regional Development Commissions.

The aim of the Action Agenda is to assist the Council and the stakeholders to track and review progress against the priorities. These priorities and other circumstances may change after publication of this document which may lead to different outcomes.

While every effort has been made to vet the contents of this report, it may contain references to, or images of, people who are now deceased. The Department of Regional Development and Lands regrets any offence this may cause.