

# 1 Introduction



**The South West has been steered by a regional plan, in different guises, for more than a decade. Its achievement is demonstrated in successfully prioritising investment opportunities.**

The power of a strategy that engages across its region and has its region's buy-in cannot be overstated. While driven by Regional Development Australia, South West Regional Futures is the region's plan not RDA's plan.

It considers broad input and is influenced by other pieces of work such as that produced by the South West Development Commission and there is substantial input from the region's 12 local governments.

South West Regional Futures challenges readers to meet the years ahead with courage and confront both what will be exciting and what is likely to pose a threat.

Some of the ideas might seem provocative but they are based on genuine opportunity, comparative advantage and they have an eye on our rapidly changing world.

The first part of this work will note overall regional data and then we will move to future themes. This will provide a framework for discussion which will be enlivened by commentary on global megatrends, futurism and arguably a little speculation.

Regional Futures will explore several areas of opportunity and will dare to dream what might be.

## Economic Infrastructure

- Roads
- Rail connectivity
- Port
- Airport
- Water
- Intermodal Hub
- Renewable Energy
- Fibre
- Telecommunications

- Advanced manufacturing
- Mining and METs
- Timber
- Agribusiness
- Tourism

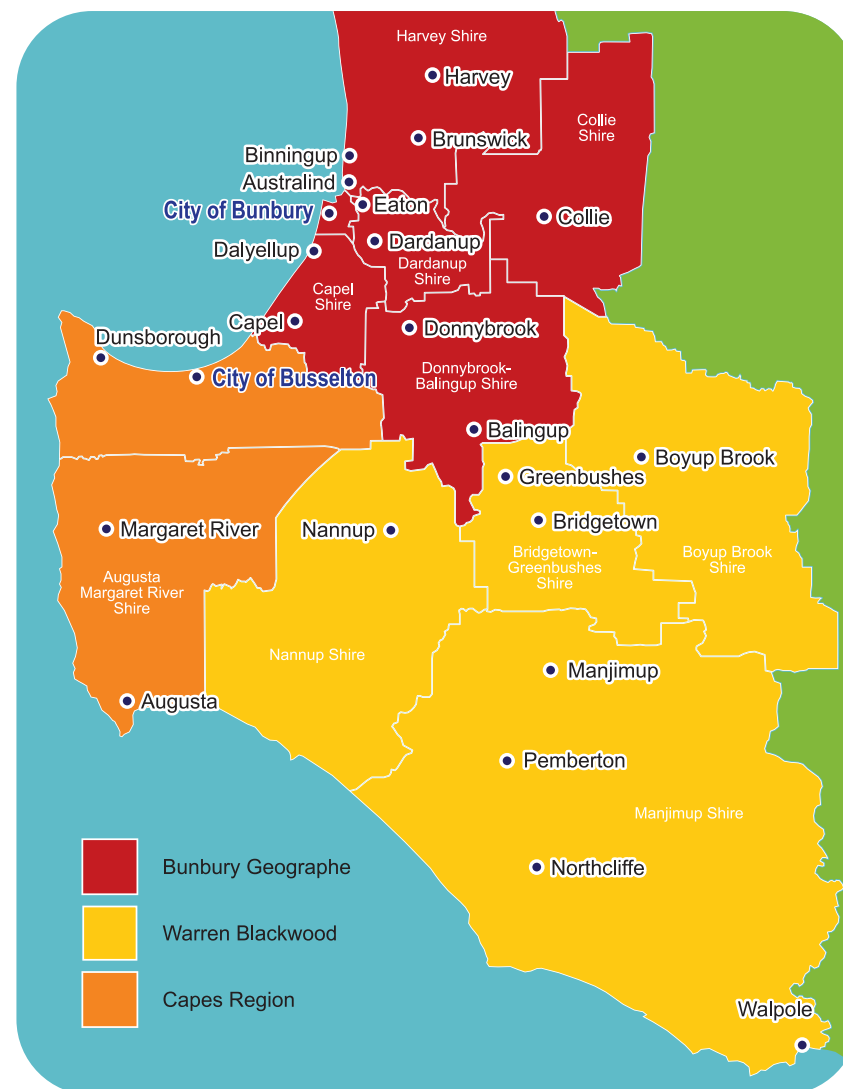
- Education and training
- Health and ageing population
- Housing and social equity
- Arts, sport and recreation
- Sustainable living and landcare

## 1.1 South West locator

The South West is one of Western Australia's nine recognised regions located outside the Perth metropolitan area. Fronting the Indian and Southern Oceans, covering 24,000km<sup>2</sup> and including 12 local government areas, the South West is the most populous and economically diverse of WA's regions.



Image by Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils, Beulah Wines



## 1.2 Purpose

**This document provides an analysis of the factors shaping our world and consequent opportunities for the economic and social development of the region. It sets out key principles for guiding future investment and decisions. It incorporates the ideas and thinking of the public sector, local government, industry and community bodies. It is based on solid evidence and on consulting regional stakeholders, leading to a suite of investment proposals.**

Regional Development Australia – South West (RDASW) has worked substantially with the region's local government bodies to provide the best possible advice to both Commonwealth and Western Australian Government on the region's strategic imperatives.

The framework for Regional Futures is based on investments that support a prosperous society where business creates jobs and the whole community is supported in the context of a healthy natural environment.

The framework is based on three pillars:

- Economic infrastructure
- Industry, business and investment
- Community and environment

It is intended to link the pillars, demonstrating that prosperity and sustainability should and must go hand-in-hand.

While the document may dare to dream, a key intent of Regional Futures is to present a robust rationale underpinning actions that are achievable over differing time horizons. The evidence-base is derived from a variety of statistical, academic and planning sources as well as:

- An understanding and recognition of the region, its economic history and values;
- Analysis of national and global megatrends that will shape the future in a significant and material way;
- Analysis of more than 50 Commonwealth, state and local level planning strategic documents; and
- Analysis of the region's key determinants of long-term regional growth within recognised regional development principles of human capital, sustainable communities, access to markets and comparative advantage all brought together through working in partnership.

These considerations lead to actions underscored by identified priority areas that are geared to generating jobs and prosperity in the region. It is important to note these actions do not represent funding commitments by Government but rather set out a broad direction for exploring action agendas.