

4 Transformative Opportunities

4.1 An explanation

The overall regional vision will benefit from strategic investment in proposals that will fundamentally change the region, flowing beyond the original investment to support jobs, industry, community and regional liveability.

It is important that transformational projects are grounded in reality and what's achievable, but do allow some space so the South West can dare to dream. The highlighted areas will:

- Attract private as well as public investment
- Echo the pillars of regional development analysis
- Have regional reach
- Benefit the State and national economies
- Provide sustainable jobs
- Work with the environment
- Change the way the South West is perceived
- Enhance existing regional advantages
- Look to the future
- Offer an enviable quality of life

4.2 Selecting priority proposals

Priority proposals are highlighted where they align with Commonwealth regional priority areas, determinants of regional development and have propulsive linkages. Propulsive sectors are those that drive and support other sectors within an economy.

The Regional Australia Institute also identified particular prospects for Western Australia. Consistent foci for the South West refer to advanced manufacturing, food processing, tourism and the creative sector. The South West's headline gamechangers include: economic infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, decarbonisation (renewable energy and transformational technologies), timber, tourism and investment in communities.



Propulsive linkages

Economic development has a number of support theories generally covered by propulsive linkages which are forwards and backwards.

Some industries create more economic eco-systems than others and may also be labelled as clusters or growth poles in economic development theory.

For example:

Advanced manufacturing requires workforce supported by the education and training sector, but plants also require material inputs and energy while completed products require storage and distribution.

Linkages are augmented by options that produce cheap energy for competitiveness and lever off a regional brand / reputation if that energy is renewably produced.

4.3 Regional development matrix

Determinants of regional development	Western Australian Government Priorities 2025-29	Regional Investment Framework (Australian Government)	OECD Regional Development Framework
Access to international, national and regional markets – transport, digital and institutional	Jobs – diversifying the WA economy to create business and employment opportunities	Investing in Places – delivering infrastructure for accessible regions	Endogenous growth – building on existing local assets and strengths
Comparative advantage and business competitiveness, building on existing strengths	Health – access to healthcare to support wellbeing	Investing in Industries and Local Economies – ensuring economies are positioned for growth	Boosting innovation ecosystems – supporting finance, regulatory environments, training, research and entrepreneurship
Human capital, particularly education and skills capability to drive productivity and resilience	Housing – ensuring all Western Australians have a home	Investing in People – targeting skills, education, training and leadership capacity	Functional economic regions based on investment, asset-based development/infrastructure
Sustainable (populations, environment and economically including liveability and housing)	Community – building safe and inclusive communities	Investing in Services – health, communications, water and transport	Governance – local, institutional, collaborative and underpinned by leadership
Partnerships / collaboration – relationships across industry, government, community and research	Protecting and restoring our environment for future generations		Rural resilience – adaptive, educated communities including resilient environments
	Infrastructure and services – supporting quality assets statewide		Supporting wellbeing through jobs, housing, health, education, safety and access to services

4.4 Seven Cities – a regional vision

The State Government's Seven Cities vision is a long-term plan to boost regional development via quality infrastructure and services.

Bunbury heads the Seven Cities list of regional centres that are critical to the goal of capitalising on existing strengths and elevating the state to become a renewable energy powerhouse while producing more goods. This will be done by creating enabling infrastructure and supporting skilled local workforces. It follows that investment in housing, health, and other public services will be prioritised.

The South West can expect to benefit from:

- Additional free and low-fee TAFE courses
- Planning and common user infrastructure in the Kemerton Strategic Industrial Area
- Expansion of Bunbury Regional Hospital – the largest regional hospital construction project in WA's history
- Key upgrades at Bunbury's Casuarina Boat Harbour
- A commitment to establish an Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Hub (AMTECH) in the Picton area
- Support for increased Bunbury-Perth rail services
- Bunbury Port Optimisation Planning to boost capacity over the coming three decades

Housing availability has been identified as the next area for priority investment.



CRITICAL ISSUE: Housing

Housing is one of the South West's greatest growth constraints, limiting workforce attraction, business expansion and community resilience. While this is the case, Western Australia is falling 8,200 new homes of short of its national housing target.

ABS data shows that 5,052 homes were built in WA in the March quarter 2026. This represents a 10.8% increase on the previous quarter, but for WA to achieve national housing accord targets it would need to build about 6,500 homes each quarter through to 2029.

Future opportunities lie in innovative solutions. Increasing density in appropriate locations, supporting key worker and build-to-rent housing, activating underutilised land, expanding modular construction and aligning housing with transport and employment will all help unlock supply.

Accelerating housing supply

Streamline planning approvals: Standardise processes and regulation across Local

Governments. Introduce digital approvals via code-based assessments for compliant proposals.

Increase housing density: Reform zoning around transport corridors, employment centres and existing infrastructure, reducing reliance on greenfield sites and making efficient use of serviced land.

Boost construction productivity: Simplify regulations, reduce unnecessary design variation, encourage standardisation, and support modern construction methods.

Address skilled labour issues: Expand apprenticeships, accelerate recognition of overseas qualifications, improve skilled migration pathways for critical construction occupations.

Infrastructure support: Provide headworks, services and infill sewerage to bring more available lots on stream and to boost density.

Fast-tracking: Prioritise projects that can commence quickly. Focus on removing barriers to developments where there is buyer/worker demand.

Image by City of Bunbury



4.4.1 Transformative economic infrastructure

Bunbury Port

Adopted in 2023, Bunbury Port Masterplan provides an overview in a 30-year time horizon, being responsive to emerging markets and delivers on the port's key role to facilitate trade. A renewed Bunbury Port Optimisation Plan provides an overview of the requirements needed to meet growth in the region and the necessary infrastructure requirements. This plan is currently under review by State Government.

Bunbury Port is a critical component of the transport supply chain and it is well placed for a future that looks towards more Indian Ocean markets. New demands will necessitate adaptation for supply chain efficiencies and evolving needs. That puts an onus on operations to safeguard port landholdings for port-related trade in the decades ahead.

Currently operating across two sites – an Inner and Outer Harbour – realisation of the existing outer harbour for an extended period may be required. Capacity exists to create additional berths within the port footprint, move to more land-backed facilities, widen the channel to accommodate larger vessels and create an operations centre with autonomous control capability to maximise efficiency and minimise demurrage costs.

Economic gains to be enjoyed by investment in the port cannot be under-estimated and reach beyond the region to Perth. It is well recognised the expanse of land over 400ha is well placed to assist with the West Coast trade demands.

Intermodal Terminal

The construction of an Intermodal Terminal (IMT) will be critical economic infrastructure serving Bunbury Port, advanced manufacturing and the efficient transfer of freight into the future.

The location of the IMT has been identified as Waterloo (DoT 2019, DPLH 2020), a strategic optimal location linking Bunbury Port, Picton, Preston and Kemerton Strategic Industrial Area. The 1,350ha Waterloo site intersects the Wilman-Wadandi Highway and existing rail infrastructure. It also enjoys proximity with Picton and AMTECH proposals.

Rail

Additional rail corridor capacity will facilitate efficiency, reduced road usage and will improve both industry and social outcomes.

The 18km Brunswick section requires duplication and grade separation as the line reaches operational capacity, while a Kemerton spur would provide rail as a transport choice for tenants of the Strategic Industrial Area.

The investigation into a proposed Greenbushes 78km rail line reinstatement found the project is not economically viable at this time.

All upgrades would need to be considered in relation to efficiently linking in with the future creation of a South West intermodal terminal.

Transforming Bunbury's Waterfront

The Transforming Bunbury's Waterfront (TBW) project is reimagining how people experience Geographe Bay.

Since the vision was introduced, the three-stage project has continued to take shape, improving access, creating new spaces and strengthening connections among key locations from Koombana Bay to Casuarina Boat Harbour.

Initial stages have delivered a major upgrade of the Dolphin Discovery Centre, along with revitalisation of foreshore areas at Koombana Beach and Jetty Baths.

Earlier investment at Casuarina Boat Harbour saw the completion of a new northern breakwater creating a more sheltered facility for users. The Koombana groyne has been upgraded, toilets and improved parking at the boat ramp. The works followed the earlier Jetty Road upgrade and provision of a new multipurpose building as part of TBW Stage 2.

Casuarina Boat Harbour will continue its transformation during TBW Stage 3, as a regional marine and community hub with a recreation precinct to support an accessible fishing platform and to nearly double the number of boat pens.

There will also be upgrades to the harbour's outer seawall and internal rock revetments, allowing work to raise some areas to create lots ready for commercial leasehold and activation.

Works are expected to continue through to 2029. Funding for harbour upgrades has reached \$218m since 2018.

4.4.2 Transforming manufacturing

BMRA Commercial

Air freight and general aviation servicing opportunities at Busselton Margaret River Airport (BMRA) are available across a flat 15ha industry-zoned development area.

Growth in passenger flights with underbelly freight capability will generate opportunities, particularly in future years as key international routes open to markets demanding premium perishable products.

However, the uniquely spacious greenfield development site and Code 4C and 4E aircraft accessibility offer opportunities that are unavailable in other airports. BMRA has the space for passenger and commercial aircraft hangars with associated servicing.

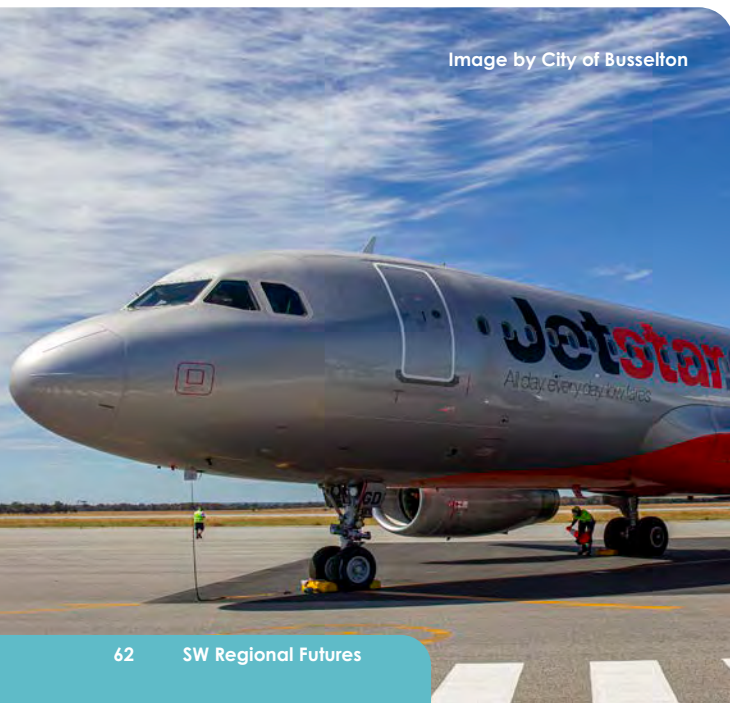


Image by City of Busselton

South West Agribusiness Precinct

The need for a relocated new, fit-for-purpose saleyards to replace the Boyanup yards is well established.

Demand persists, with stakeholders indicating the efficiency of selling stock from the South West catchment through Capel rather than through facilities in the Wheatbelt or Great Southern. Maintaining sale yards close to their current location is crucial for aggregating cattle herds, supporting feedlots, aiding small producers in competitive sales, and serving as a transit point for a variety of destinations.

Establishing a new location also opens up other opportunities as appropriate buffers, biosecurity, animal welfare, access to the RAV 4 network, water availability and other systems can be put in place.

Stakeholders have indicated a variety of large businesses across several different agricultural industries that could potentially act as an anchor, including an abattoir, horticulture processing facility, and grains processing. Indeed, a modern fit-for-purpose agribusiness precinct would offer opportunities in value adding, would be technologically advanced and would promote the circular economy.

It is notable that the existing saleyards within Boyanup townsite creates land use conflicts with neighbours including odour, noise, dust and effluent disposal, as well as constraining development of fully serviced land. Relocating the yards opens the door to future residential development at the Boyanup site.

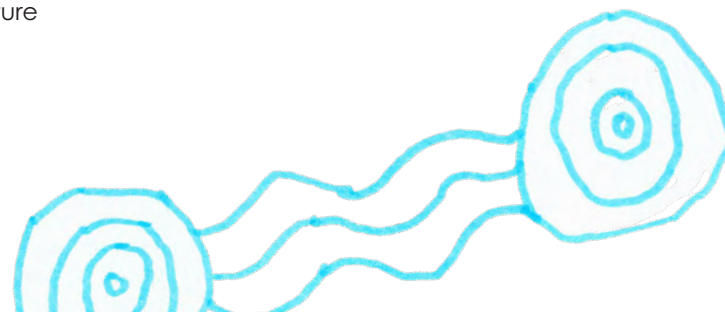
Water security

Harvey Water's market-led proposal phase of the 'Collie to Coast' project offers to deliver a water infrastructure initiative designed to improve water availability and quality for the benefit of agriculture and industrial water users in the South West. The project aims to support agricultural expansion in a proposed 500ha horticulture zone – Myalup Primary Industries Reserve.

Originally funded in partnership with the Australian and WA Government, a business case was developed to deliver a reduction in water salinity sourced from the 185GL capacity Wellington Dam, and to reduce water loss in the distribution network. The potential of Wellington Dam asset is constrained by salinity levels that are more than double potable water limits.

The Collie to Coast work considers long-term forecasting and includes stakeholder engagement to maximise inputs and benefits. The preliminary business case was completed in 2024 but details are not yet public. Options considered include: project scale; the existing Binningup desalination plant; construction of a new 20GL capacity Wellington Dam desalination plant; upgrade and extension of water networks; establishment of managed aquifer recharge; and, better utilisation of existing storages in a drying climate.

Reducing salinity remains a South West priority issue and boosts regional water security into the future.



Manufacturing opportunities

Manufacturing is undergoing a dynamic transformation globally and plays a vital role in Australia's economy.

Manufacturers are diversifying their focus across different stages of the manufacturing process, ranging from research and development, and ethical resource acquisition to responsible processing of waste materials.

Government policy supports the benefits of expanding regional production opportunities by decoupling the over-reliance on imports, alleviating dependency on global supply chains in materials, medical technologies and other goods. Advanced manufacturing is linked with competitive advantage and requires affordable energy, with an emphasis on promoting renewable energy as having leading credentials.

AMTECH

An Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Hub (AMTECH) in the region will enable the adoption of new technologies, processes and practices to attract increased private sector investment and encourage high-skilled, high-value job creation for the long-term growth and prosperity of the regional economy.

New technologies produce specialised and valuable inputs linked to downstream processing, improved efficiencies in the innovation process to target and supply growing Australian export markets and support the nation's energy transition.

Skilled and knowledgeable workforces will be a prerequisite, building strength and underpinning investment attraction.

AMTECH development begins

In early 2025 the WA State Government announced plans to develop AMTECH in Picton and establish facilities to support the local manufacture of major energy infrastructure. The State's Made in WA plan details its commitment to installing a Western Power Manufacturing Facility as an anchor tenant for AMTECH and has called for EOIs to enable local industry to leverage opportunities.

This is an important first step in the development of WA's first dedicated advanced manufacturing, technology and renewables zone which will unlock local supply chain opportunities and create jobs as the energy transition takes pace.

It also signals WA Government commitment to the energy transition pipeline. This encouraging development will underpin future investment in partnerships and facilities designed to increase industry collaboration, skills development and R&D innovation.

AMTECH will elevate the region's manufacturing potential by clustering private enterprise, education and skills training, and research to drive high-value industry transformation and workforce development.

At both a State and Commonwealth level there is increased investment in manufacturing innovation to support new and emerging markets. The South West is poised to benefit and play a major role in a 'Future Made in Australia' building on the region's existing strengths and comparative advantages.



Image by Uncommon Creative, Dwyer Engineering

Location

The South West has long been hailed as an industry hub and export gateway, boosted by Bunbury Port which features one of the largest landholdings of any port in Australia.

Together with a sophisticated port, rail and road network within reach of key mining operations, current and emerging manufacturers, innovators and educators, the South West has a real opportunity for advancement. Major growth opportunities exist at the region's Strategic Industrial Areas at Kemerton and Collie, as it transitions from a traditional coal-based economy to embracing an innovative, opportunity-rich business environment supported by the State Government.

The convenience of available industrial land within close proximity to the port and access to key road links to Perth suggests the cost of growth in the Bunbury Geopraphe will be more inviting than competing areas.

Furthermore, the development of the Bunbury Geopraphe Sub-regional Planning Strategy, South West Supply Chain Strategy and finalised alignment of the Bunbury Outer Ring Road has aided the identification of quality sites all within 10km of Bunbury Port.

Consequently, AMTECH has the potential to link and complement other future development in the South West, such as an intermodal terminal and port expansion.

Critical minerals

Critical minerals are essential components in modern technologies, particularly in generating clean energy. The Department of Industry, Science and Resources lists 33 critical minerals: Nine are produced in the South West. They are alumina, graphite, lithium, silicon, tantalum, titanium (ilmenite and rutile) and zircon.

The Australian Government's critical minerals strategy emphasises sovereign capability, supply chains and renewable energy development as key issues with Geoscience funding to map critical mineral and rare earth deposits across the continent.

These actions and investing in a "Future Made in Australia" highlight the importance of the South West in advanced manufacturing, port expansion and a renewable energy future. The South West is

approaching a watershed period in which it value adds its potential or exports materials for another region to benefit.

Collie industries

Backed by the WA Government, Collie is transitioning away from coal-fired generation to new industries and jobs. Work is progressing to refresh the commitment through to 2030.

Australia's first low emissions steel mill and WA's first steel recycling mill is one step closer with Generation Steel closing on its final investment decision. The project has undertaken front-end engineering design and has been backed with a further \$9.8m State Government investment.

Magnium Australia's state-of-the-art pilot plant is now operational in Collie's Light Industrial Area, marking a major milestone in the development of sustainable magnesium production. Magnium's facility represents a significant step forward in establishing a domestic supply of this critical defence and automotive metal.

International Graphite has now commissioned and is operating its pilot project as it continues to move towards commercial scale processing. The company has commenced a Battery Anode Material Facility Feasibility Study, demonstrating industry interest in developing projects at Coolangatta Industrial Estate. The facility will produce graphite products for battery materials and a variety of industrial uses.

In support of attracting new job-creating industries, the State Government has allocated \$134m to activate Collie's Coolangatta Industrial Estate.

Tesla is establishing a battery re-manufacturing facility in Collie to service, repair, and renew Tesla's

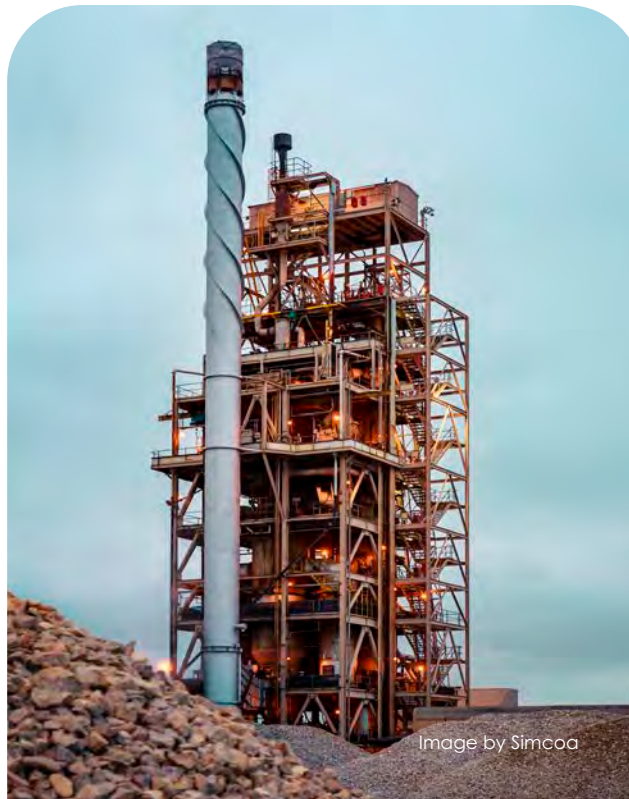


Image by Simcoa

battery products, including utility-scale Megapacks, with the capability to expand to Powerwall systems and EV batteries.

It is expected that Synergy and Neoen projects will bring battery energy storage capacity to more than 1GW (4+GWh) by the end of 2025, with proposals to double that in the future.

Other projects include Renergi's waste-to-fuel pyrolysis plant at the commissioning stage, Cannaponics' medicinal cannabis project moving towards certification and Quantum Filtration Medium's water treatment systems.

Timber and forestry

The timber and forestry industry is under-rated as an economic contributor to the region and points towards a more sustainable future; growing, harvesting and then growing more trees to store carbon.

Innovations range from replacing plastic packaging to building more energy efficient and affordable housing. Planet Ark is promoting a Wood Encouragement Policy, a call to lock up carbon and think of timber first as a building material.

A timber future also raises new opportunities in education and training, developing expertise in construction, architecture, design, technology and manufacturing.

An integrated processing facility would add value to the sector by utilising whole logs to maximum value and reducing costs through efficiency in processing by exploiting synergies

within the industry cluster. A full merchandising yard would also support an Advanced Timber Manufacturing Hub.

Plantations and investment

The timber industry is a leading prospect for private sector investment. Creating the preconditions for investment in plantations at one end of the industry and high-end manufacturing at the other would set the sector on a solid course given the UN's prediction that demand for timber products will treble by 2050.

Blue sky thinking establishes a path that leads to the development of a CLT or LVL plant and is underpinned by expansion of the Dardanup Timber Precinct to include an industry-leading processing yard serving a variety of related customers.

Building Wanju

A shortage of fill materials and challenging soil types on land at the future suburb of Wanju will require lightweight construction techniques. Since the customary approach of brick and concrete on raised pads will not be an option, the opportunity for quick-build alternatives is very timely and comes to the fore.

Timber construction on raised frames is the future in a suburb already being promoted as one where environmental values will dominate. That opportunity points to affordable and energy efficient homes erected in half the typical build time therefore contributing to provide housing supply.



The Djarlma Plan for the Western Australian forestry industry is inspired by the Noongar concept of Djarlma, which reflects the interconnected relationship of people with forests and woodlands.

The Djarlma Plan is underpinned by four, interdependent strategic priorities that aim to integrate traditional with scientific knowledge:

- 1) Healthy forests and woodlands
- 2) Wood product and ecosystem values
- 3) Community benefits
- 4) Industry for the future



4.4.3 Transformational technologies

Renewable energy

The Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) has identified WA as undergoing one of the nation's fastest electricity transitions. At times, renewable energy now accounts for more than half of electricity generated in the Wholesale Electricity Market, driven by rapid growth in rooftop solar, utility-scale wind generation and battery storage. As coal-fired generation is progressively retired, maintaining a secure and reliable electricity supply will depend upon coordinated investment in renewable generation and the electricity network.

The South West sits at the heart of the South West Interconnected System (SWIS), the world's largest isolated electricity network. For more than a century, Collie's coal-fired power stations have underpinned WA's baseload electricity supply.

The SWIS comprises approximately 7,800km of transmission lines and more than 93,000km of distribution lines. As electricity demand continues to grow, there is an obvious need for more generation and improvements to the transmission network.

The Australian Government has declared an offshore wind feasibility area in the Bunbury and Geographe Bay region. While the commercial viability and ultimate scale of offshore wind is to be determined, proposals reflect growing recognition of the South West's renewable energy potential. Onshore wind continues to attract investment, supported by favourable wind resources and proximity to existing transmission infrastructure.

Household rooftop solar has become a defining feature of the SWIS, with WA recording one of the highest rates of residential solar uptake in the world (36-40%, contributing 3GW of cumulative distributed capacity). Continued growth in distributed energy resources, together with improvements in network management and transmission infrastructure, will be fundamental to delivering a secure, affordable and low-emissions electricity system for the State.

Green hydrogen

WA continues to recognise green hydrogen as a potential long-term opportunity to support industrial decarbonisation and future export markets. However, commercial development has progressed more slowly than anticipated, with a number of proposed projects deferred as technology, economics and market demand continue to evolve.

Gas reliance

WA's domestic gas market continues to face medium and long-term supply challenges as existing gas fields mature and demand from industry and electricity generation evolves. While the immediate gas supply challenge has softened, the AEMO forecasts additional domestic supply will be required from 2030 onwards to meet growing demand. Ultimately, it may become necessary for all Perth basin gas supplies to be committed for domestic use in the years ahead.

Battery storage

Battery energy storage systems have become a defining feature of WA's energy transition. They store surplus renewable energy, release electricity during periods of peak demand and provide essential services that improve the stability, reliability and resilience of the SWIS.

Collie has emerged as the State's principal battery storage hub. Neoen's Collie Battery Energy Storage System (219MW/877MWh) became operational in 2024 and an expanded system (341MW/1,363MWh) in 2025. Synergy's 500MW/2,400MWh Collie Battery Energy Storage System was commissioned in February 2026.

Together these projects represent one of the largest concentrations of grid-scale battery storage in Australia and underline the South West as the operational centre of WA's energy transition.

Investment in battery storage continues across the South West. Alinta Energy is progressing a 100MW / 200MWh battery at Wagerup and has approval for a second 300MW / 1,200MWh battery at the same site.

In Collie, Hesperia is progressing approvals for a project combining a 66MW solar farm with a 200MW battery energy storage system. These investments reinforce the South West's central role in supporting reliability and SWIS resilience.

Collectively, the operational and in-progress battery storage infrastructure will contribute a total power output of 1,460MW representing 6,040 MWh (excluding Hesperia which has not yet specified its output).

WA Creative Technology Innovation Hub – WA Creative Tech Village

Founded in 2023, WACTIH operates across the state as a distributed connector network, building local, national and international industry partnerships to deliver stakeholder-driven programs.

CTV's first international initiative is the Creative Tech Exchange, an agreement with Indonesia's Singhasari SEZ, alongside a partnership with a Singapore-based music, arts and entertainment hub. Closer to home, the Bunbury-based {B}LAB sees CTV work with major events including Emergence Creative and GoSH – WA's largest regional youth tech-innovation event.

CTV has also developed Bandwidth (a business support program for creative and tech enterprises), and Biddiwah, a pathways program for emerging creatives and techs.

In partnership with the City of Bunbury, CTV has delivered Shine Together: 50 Years of Deadly, a major projection event onto the facade of the Bunbury Regional Art Gallery for the first night of NAIDOC Week 2026. This marked the first installation of the overarching Waveforms project to light up Bunbury and showcase the region as a creative community.

As the creative industries grow, CTV is looking to strengthen its ties across WA's network of State-administered innovation hubs. These include the WA Data Science Innovation Hub and the WA GreenTech Hub, to support responsible both AI adoption and renewable-powered digital infrastructure across the sector.

Proven talent, raw talent in the mix

To further progress the creative sector, there are opportunities in the Busselton Business Fibre Zone to create a creative industries centre at scale and on a fully commercial footing based on a model comprising shared resources, tenants with established businesses and the inclusion of an incubator component to transition start up innovators into commercial operations.

Common-user facilities – particularly where tech and equipment is capital intensive – makes a great deal of sense in raising the commercial bar, industry capability and the facilitation of growth in the industry.

The space itself should be built with large areas for usage as a photographic or video studio, sound stage or green screen/ motion capture and recording/ editing facilities for tenants and visiting productions. Co-working spaces add to the commercial arm of the project and generate other prospects.

It is expected that some existing studios and offices would be attracted to a dedicated space. This would underpin greater industry collaboration while tenant rents provide an income stream to maintain the facility and its equipment. Established creatives could additionally be integrated into the incubator program, mentoring and providing advice.

With a targeted Busselton location, the proposed facility could generate genuine critical mass by integrating with nearby convention centre activities, gallery, CinéfestOZ program and events.



4.4.4 Transforming tourism

BMRA Terminal

Noted as a leading priority by all South West councils, Busselton Margaret River Airport requires a fit-for-purpose terminal building that reflects the region's quality tourism brand and serves as an appropriate, high level introduction/farewell as expected from visitors to the Capes region.

With airside infrastructure in place, BMRA now accommodates direct RPT (Regular Passenger Transport) Jetstar flights to Melbourne and Sydney, connections to Perth and 36 closed charter flights for the resources sector. The airport serviced in excess of 200,000 passengers in 2025-26.

There is an identified and urgent need to upgrade the terminal to a scale that allows all passengers to disembark smoothly and departing passengers to be processed through baggage and security for outbound flights. Facilities will be required to provide capacity for a fast turnaround and create opportunities for private sector engagement in operations, such as car rentals, food/drinks and retail.

The City of Busselton is leading the charge to increase revenues and attract private investment to support future growth. Studies have explored multiple options for a terminal proposal that would address current capacity issues.

Looking ahead to 2030 and beyond, BMRA's future will include international capability and the prospect of delivering underbelly freight into Asian markets.

As well as being just 7km from Busselton CBD, the airport is also blessed with greenfield site opportunities.



Cape to Cape Track

The Cape to Cape Track is one of Australia's premier and most iconic hikes, running along the Leeuwin-Naturaliste Ridge between the lighthouses of Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin.

It is estimated that the Track attracts around 20,000 walkers each year, who engage in guided and independent short, day, and multi-day walks. However, a significant portion of the track and its associated day-use sites are in poor condition. Although recent upgrades have been made to a limited number of sections, there is a substantial opportunity to increase the number of interstate and international visitors by upgrading the entire track to meet international standards.

Trails

The South West is Western Australia's premier trails destination, delivering options from leading mountain bike projects to a bridle trail, kayaking and world class walks that include the renowned 1,000km Bibbulmun Track, 1,072km Munda Biddi Trail and breathtaking 125km Cape to Cape Track.

Investment is supporting the extension of the walking/cycling Wadandi Track to 109km. The Wadandi Track traverses bushland, farms, vineyards and the magnificent Leeuwin-Naturaliste area, opening the door to other speciality routes from the arts to food and wine.

In contrast, Manjimup is developing Australia's first trailbike hub which will provide unique access to State Forests. The hub is expected to attract more than 33,600 visitors yearly and builds on Manjimup's reputation as a dirt bike racing destination.

Rounding out Cape Leeuwin

Plans for a Cape Leeuwin boardwalk will elevate its significance as one of the world's three great maritime capes, alongside Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope. The proposal will offer accessibility to the Cape's tip, featuring multiple viewing platforms and will bring to life stories spanning Wadandi Pibbulmun culture, ancient climate and continental shifts, the meeting of the Indian and Southern Oceans, historic shipwrecks, Dutch, French and British maritime exploration, whale migration, and the Ngari Capes Marine Park.

The project positions Augusta and the broader South West to capture growing visitor demand for quality, sustainable, nature and heritage-based experiences.

4.4.5 Transforming the community

Economic development activities must go beyond wealth generation and ultimately improve the wellbeing of communities.

Regional centres and hierarchies

Settlement hierarchies underpin economic development, with the trend towards urban living on the coast, especially relevant to regional centres.

Weak regional centres lead to weak regions. Economic activity and liveability flow in waves from regional centres so it is important that the Bunbury-Busselton population axis stays strong and Manjimup anchors the Warren-Blackwood sub-region.

A drive to have Bunbury recognised as Western Australia's second city is important in administration, education, healthcare, business and accompanying investment. Seven Cities status will underpin that.

Transforming Bunbury's Waterfront will change perceptions while the development of Hands Oval is already doing that in hosting AFL games. Advanced manufacturing, port investment and digital progress will lay the foundations of a path to the future. Combine this with R+D, skills training and industries requiring an educated workforce, and your key centres secure the region.

Bicentennial Square

Development of Bunbury's Waterfront highlights the impact of revitalisation on first impressions and serves to provide opportunities in jobs and community leisure. Bicentennial Square has all the hallmarks of potential to better connect Bunbury to Leschenault Inlet and deliver transformative outcomes.

The currently underutilised public space can position itself as a connector to the water and become a vibrant precinct and community asset with strategic options to rejuvenate the CBD.

Human capital, education and skills

Unprecedented change and a housing shortage serve to elevate the importance of endogenous skills development and training in the region.

While collaborative activities already take place among SW Health and Education Campus bodies (Bunbury Regional Hospital and St John of God Hospital, ECU South West, South Regional TAFE, Manea Senior College and the Rural Clinical School), they operate separately which triggers an opportunity to create a fully co-operative working space and closer ties for all the precinct partners.

A proposed Precinct Hub would be co-designed to physically connect the partners, support collaboration and ease current infrastructure constraints as well as delivering a multi-disciplinary and interprofessional approach to regional health and education.



Image by City of Bunbury, Koolambidi Woola - Youth Precinct

Closing the gap

The South West Native Title Settlement has begun to fundamentally change Aboriginal engagement and create unprecedented opportunities for South West Noongar people. Notwithstanding formalised approaches, it is important that the potential for Aboriginal advancement is fulfilled through acknowledgement of history and an understanding that, for Traditional Owners, booja is a complete ecosystem that includes family, society and relationships with the land, plants and animals.

Opportunities for recognition abound in signage, art, procurement and tourism. Shared learning and mutual respect will be a key to a shared future in which no one is left behind.

In Bunbury, the Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporation has a vision for a centre at Mangrove Cove where new premises can blend the 21st century with traditional culture and share arts with the community and visitors alike.

Liveability

Growing our regional cities is a popular theme, and sustainable populations are a key pillar, but there are risks that need to be carefully addressed. The '20-minute city' with easy commute times, accessibility and parking will be challenged by unmanaged population growth. However, those issues will present their own opportunities for surrounding smaller towns and for infrastructure and services that retain high levels of liveability.

There will need to be open and mature discussion on sprawl versus multi-storey buildings, density, infill, and the necessary development of support infrastructure to cater for more people. For example, there will be requirements for expanded sports facilities, and thoughts will need to turn to the built environment in respect of catering for an ageing population.

Amid all change, the value of the natural environment and wild places must always be taken into account.

Waste

Waste precincts have the potential to meet State and Federal policy expectations by rapidly heading towards zero waste to landfill while using 'waste' as a resource and boosting innovation, jobs and the economy. Developing local composting facilities will cut landfill significantly and create other opportunities, while other activities can move towards a circular economy in which landfill is an atypical approach to available waste materials.

Investment in materials recovery will produce a stream of sorted materials for recycling uses and product for an innovation hub, which is strong potential development for the site.

There have been great strides in utilising mine tailings as roadbase and that is just the start as the region takes its first steps on the journey towards a circular economy and delivering on the brand.

Image by Tourism WA, Shelter Brewing Busselton

