

HIGHLY DESIRABLE COMMUNITIES

BUILD COMMUNITIES WITH STRONG SOCIAL CAPITAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CREATES A REGIONAL POPULATION OF 80,000 BY 2025 and 190,000 by 2050.



The Mid West is extremely diverse, with populations, economies, attractions and challenges ranging significantly across the region’s 17 local governments.

To facilitate growth, communities must be vibrant and inclusive with appropriate infrastructure and services that support social fabric and wellbeing. Urbanisation and the ageing of regional populations, also present both challenges and opportunities to developing the Mid West as a region of choice to live in.

Desirable communities with appropriate human capital help create thriving economies and exciting, vibrant local communities with a strong sense of belonging, are proactive, connected and welcoming. This supports communities to attract and retain workers and families and encourage young people to ‘come home’ after their studies.

This chapter identifies the Blueprint's key Highly Desirable Communities focus and priorities.



Community Development, Leadership, Collaboration and Identity

Spaces and Places

Regional Housing

Health and Wellbeing

Remote Communities

Environment

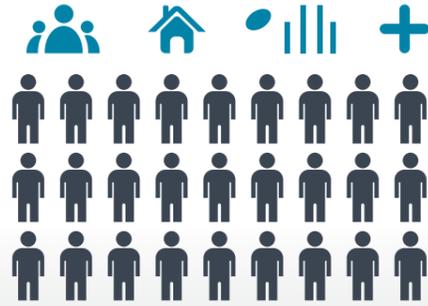
Port Denison foreshore



092 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND IDENTITY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

2050
POPULATION
190,000
TRANSFORMATIONAL
GROWTH SCENARIO



COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Most Mid West communities have a strong social fabric with a high degree of community collaboration to achieve local outcomes. Community groups deliver an enormous range of social services across a diverse range of fields eg sport, arts, tourism and events.

The 'rise and fall' of large resource projects and the impact of FIFO / DIDO workforces complicates the determination and provision of appropriate infrastructure and services. To a lesser extent the impact of fluctuating tourist populations can also challenge the provision of spaces and places in communities. There is often a need for investment in building community capacity and assisting communities to manage and adapt to these fluctuating circumstances.

In combination, development of diverse spaces and places with appropriate human capital contributes to the regional goal of creating exciting, thriving and vibrant local communities with a strong sense of belonging, are proactive, connected and welcoming. In turn this helps communities attract and retain workers and families, encourage young people to 'come home' after their studies and attract new residents, which supports their ability to absorb some of the impacts of economic dips.

A large proportion of community services are undertaken or supported by volunteers and the growing pressures on unpaid workers are a significant barrier to future delivery.

Ageing populations are a factor with few young people taking on voluntary roles in community. Added pressure is being placed on volunteers in some communities that also need to support neighbouring communities due to their lack of basic services eg ambulance drivers, health and community care and meals on wheels.

In all communities it is recognised that providers can't simply invest in social infrastructure - they also need to invest in people.

CHALLENGE: A strong focus is needed to develop human capital throughout the region to help manage community facilities and provide valued local services.

LEADERSHIP

CHALLENGE: Delivering the transformational change for the Mid West requires the commitment, leadership and collaborative efforts of regional businesses, industry, community organisations and all levels of government working in partnership with a shared vision for the future.

Regional leaders need to play a key role in building the perception and understanding about the region's competitive advantages. By showcasing the strengths and competitiveness of the region and working together proactively, impediments to delivering the 2050 vision can be addressed. This role includes ensuring the region's planning frameworks and regulatory regimes support the Blueprint's goals and priorities.

Collaboration and partnerships between MWDC and its network of other RDCs is critical to the cross regional initiatives that will benefit the development and growth of WA.

Partnerships and synergies will be pursued between the region and all levels of government – local, state, federal and other local stakeholders.

Priority actions in the Blueprint will be led by partnership groups working with clear responsibilities and timelines for action.

NON GOVERNMENT SECTOR

MWDC had an external review of the non-government human services sector undertaken in September 2013, which revealed that:

- excluding sport and recreation, arts and culture and general service clubs, there are around 80 non government organisations (NGO) in the Mid West that provide human services to people managing social issues or experiencing some form of disadvantage or hardship;
- two thirds are locally governed, with the balance managed by State or Federal government (but have a Mid West presence);
- almost all NGOs in the region are small to medium in terms of local staff / presence;
- NGOs could benefit by working more collaboratively in attempt to enhance their viability and better meet sectoral challenges; and
- there is a growing trend towards larger (often multinational) NGOs being contracted to undertake government contracts.

CHALLENGE: Regionally, gaps exist across the NGO sector with little coordination across the respective networks resulting in isolation of service providers and duplication of effort.

CHALLENGE: There are recurrent sectoral challenges in terms of continuity of funding, capacity building, use of technology and remote community service provision.

CHALLENGE: The prevalence of larger NGOs being contracted to deliver regional services is resulting in reduced local employment and potentially reduced local knowledge / understanding and human capital.



Future leaders, Kalbarri

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

There is evidence in most communities of collaboration between local governments and community groups towards sharing facilities and running activities. This is particularly so in smaller communities where collaboration and resource sharing has become the norm by necessity over time. Larger Mid West populations have developed more tailored infrastructure and services for specific uses and users, with collaboration often less prevalent and facing greater opposition.

Murchison communities have a scarcity of structured community groups, which is a major challenge for delivery of sport and community activities and limits community ownership. The need for such activity in these communities is significant, generally placing the onus for delivery on local governments.

CHALLENGE: Hinterland communities have particular human capital constraints creating added pressures for local governments to deliver community infrastructure and services.



GOAL:

Enhance the capacity of communities and empower people to better manage change at a local level, supporting communities to be resilient, adaptable and self-reliant

2050 OUTCOMES
Regional Aspirations

CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIES

TERM

COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Community capacity is enhanced and people are empowered to better manage change at a local level, be more resilient, adaptable and self-reliant.



A strong focus is needed to develop human capital throughout the region to help manage community facilities and provide valued local services.

Enhance local community capacity by working with local governments to develop programs that encourage volunteerism, leadership and capacity building across a range of sectors to create empowered and locally driven Mid West communities.



LEADERSHIP

The Mid West region is built on the foundation of a shared vision and culture of strong leadership, and collaboration by government, business, industry and the Mid West community.



Delivering the transformational change for the Mid West requires the commitment, leadership and collaborative efforts of regional businesses, industry, community organisations and all levels of government working in partnership with a shared vision for the future.

Engage all levels of government, business, industry and the broader Mid West community to develop strong leadership and collaboration to deliver the agreed regional priorities.

Encourage collaboration with leaders outside the region who influence decision making within the Mid West.



NON GOVERNMENT SECTOR

All Mid West residents have equitable access to social services.



Regionally, gaps exist across the NGO sector with little coordination across the respective networks resulting in isolation of service providers and duplication of effort.

There are recurrent sectoral challenges in terms of continuity of funding, capacity building, use of technology and remote community service provision.

The prevalence of larger NGOs being contracted to deliver regional services is resulting in reduced local employment and potentially reduced local knowledge / understanding and human capital.

Lead a coordinated, innovative approach to analyse and develop options for sustainable organisation models for the region.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Regional and subregional local governments are integral to delivery and decision making in the region.



Hinterland communities have particular human capital constraints creating added pressures for local governments to deliver community infrastructure and services.

Work with key regional and subregional local government groups to implement the Mid West Regional Blueprint.

Support hinterland communities and local governments with development of human capital, resource sharing and continued investment in priority social infrastructure and services to attract and retain populations.





COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Mid West is extremely diverse, with populations, economies, attractions and challenges ranging significantly across the region's 17 local governments. This creates challenges for provision of appropriate infrastructure and services, which are essential to the social fabric of communities and the wellbeing of residents.

A hierarchy of provision typically exists across the region's communities, with different scales of infrastructure servicing the varying sized catchments. For example local community halls and childcare facilities generally service local catchments; youth centres and libraries generally service district catchments; and regional art galleries and major sporting and cultural facilities will generally service a subregional or regional catchment.

Not discounting the importance of local and district infrastructure, the growth and development focus of the Mid West Regional Blueprint is primarily on spaces and places of a subregional or regional scale. Projects of a local nature would be applicable if they offered higher level (subregional or regional) benefits.

Housing the region's main population centres, most 'major' social infrastructure and associated services are located in Batavia Coast communities, and principally Geraldton. There are extreme needs for social infrastructure in hinterland communities but provision is often constrained by smaller population demands, cost pressures and the availability of human capital for development and sustainable delivery.

CHALLENGE: Smaller communities and local governments sometimes lack human resources for project planning and development of social infrastructure, as well as raising the required funding for implementation.

Mid West consultations confirmed significant community and regional pride and a desire to celebrate the uniqueness of communities. There was also consistent support for growth and development, provided this doesn't result in a loss of their unique signatures and the creation of homogenised communities. There was also recognition that provision of services must match any population growth so that liveability is at least maintained.

The region also aspires for minority groups to be well represented and visible in communities ie seen by agencies and local businesses, rather than being 'out of sight out of mind'.

Planning for social infrastructure in communities with specific population cohorts (for example Aboriginal people, seniors and youth) requires a strong understanding of how these people use and access these services and facilities.

The development, maintenance and replacement of social infrastructure in most hinterland communities in the region is largely the responsibility of local government. Some of these are legacy assets from 'different times' eg larger populations, greater tyranny of distance, fewer entertainment options etc. This is a significant challenge in some communities resulting in infrastructure decline.

CHALLENGE: The 'whole of life' cost implications of social infrastructure is an important consideration, particularly in smaller communities that often incur higher development costs and may face financial pressures sustaining, maintaining and replacing facilities.

During Blueprint consultation, stakeholders expressed collective aspiration for Mid West communities that are:

- liveable;
- clean and green;
- retain their current feel;
- safe (physical and financial);
- collaborative and well connected;
- welcoming and have a sense of belonging;
- exciting, thriving and vibrant;
- innovative and dynamic;
- proud of their cultural difference;
- attractive to people from all cultures;
- universally accessible;
- age friendly;
- flexible, resilient and adaptive;
- proactive, aspirational and empowered to enable and drive growth; and
- supportive internally – 'buy local' focus.

SPORT AND RECREATION

The Mid West has a strong sporting culture and a significant range of sporting infrastructure. Communities outside Geraldton generally have facilities that support multiple activities and groups, with most having multi purpose recreation centres or the like.

Geraldton infrastructure has developed in a more 'sport by sport' single use basis and as facilities near the end of their usable life there are extreme cost pressures impeding their replacement. Compounding this is an expectation that Geraldton provides the region's larger scale facilities for regional competition and major events. The City's most recent master plan for sporting infrastructure was costed at more than \$100 million.

CHALLENGE: Rationalising facilities and trending towards more collocation of sports is one strategy of local government to reduce construction and recurrent cost, although the preference or stance of many sports to retain single use infrastructure remains strong.

The same challenges constrain many of the region's sporting programs, although sports with a larger membership are generally more self reliant. Sports in remote communities or that cater for smaller target markets often experience further financial and human capacity constraints.

CHALLENGE: Recurrent funding is a major constraint for the provision of regional sport and recreation. This is particularly so in remote communities or with programs that have limited capacity to generate income (small membership), specific user groups (such as people with disabilities) or activities that support people experiencing disadvantage.

CHALLENGE: Sport is essential to the social fabric of small regional communities. Human and financial capacity constraints present extreme challenges in these communities, often resulting in local governments needing to take responsibility for delivery.

The region has a recently established Mid West Academy of Sport (MWAS) to enhance the development of talented athletes from within their home environment and provide access to services comparable to athletes living in Perth. This serves to reduce travel to access services and delay the need to leave the region to pursue excellence.

CHALLENGE: Talented regional athlete development is human resource intensive and expensive, placing pressures on recurrent funding for the MWAS, which is itself difficult to secure.

Nature based recreation is emerging as a prominent physical activity pursuit, with participants generally able to participate in their own time in an unstructured manner. A strong and growing cohort of boating / fishing and coastal recreation enthusiasts (including tourists) also enjoys the region's enviable climate and coastline, requiring provision of appropriate waterfront recreation infrastructure.

CHALLENGE: Provision of quality infrastructure to support the growth in nature based recreation.

CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE

The Mid West is one of two WA regions identified by Department of Culture and Arts (DCA) as a 'creative industry hub'.

With its strong and diverse cultural links many of the region's communities have, or are developing, an increasing focus on infrastructure for arts, culture and heritage purposes. Linking arts, culture and heritage across communities creates the basis for regional or subregional strategies.

Geraldton offers regional level facilities including the Queens Park Theatre, Western Australian Museum Geraldton, a regional library, a multi-screen cinema, an "A Class" regional art gallery and the Yamatji Art Gallery. The City also houses the Geraldton Foreshore and Batavia Coast Marina (Stage 1), with the imminent development of the Beresford Foreshore, The Esplanade, Batavia Coast Marina (stage 2) and the revitalisation of the West End Recreation and Entertainment Precinct expected to deliver additional cultural, arts and entertainment opportunities for the region and its visitors.

The availability and quality of culture, arts and entertainment facilities vary greatly across Mid West communities from town halls, museums, art centres, picture theatres, libraries and the like. Prominent assets outside of Geraldton include but are not limited to the Wirnda Barna Art Centre in Mount Magnet, Tjukurba Art Gallery in Wiluna, Mullewa Women's Indigenous Art Centre, Billeranga Cultural Arts Centre in Morawa and the Mount Magnet Mining and Pastoral Heritage Museum.

OPPORTUNITY: Infrastructure and services for arts, culture and heritage serve to create community vibrancy, help celebrate their uniqueness and bring opportunities for local story telling and potential tourism and events.



INDIGENOUS CULTURE

Communities with large Aboriginal populations have unique requirements and it is often difficult and inappropriate to generalise the needs of these communities. Planning for social infrastructure in these communities requires a strong understanding of how Aboriginal people use and access these services.

There is a scarcity of dedicated spaces and places for acknowledging the region's strong Aboriginal heritage and unique culture. Where many of the region's diverse cultural groups have their own "club" type facility for events, functions and weddings, there is no such facility for its Aboriginal people.

CHALLENGE: Places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people and issues related to this (eg access, protection etc) are not widely understood.

CHALLENGE: There is a scarcity of dedicated spaces and places to acknowledge the region's strong Aboriginal heritage and unique culture.



Ilgarjijiri eggs on the Geraldton Foreshore
~ Yamaji artist interpretation of the night sky

ACCESS, INCLUSION AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

The region has a number of programs that support people with disabilities and other populations with specific needs and appears well placed to pursue a future of best practice in universal design and inclusion, where enhanced standard become the norm / benchmark. However, universal access to facilities in the region varies significantly within and between communities.

CHALLENGE: The region's infrastructure is not universally accessible to all people.

YOUNG PEOPLE

It is a well established trend in the region that young people leave regional areas for secondary and tertiary education, experiences or employment. Making communities appealing to young people may encourage them to return to the region, engage in community life and pursue a career and establish a family in the Mid West.

OPPORTUNITY: The Mid West aspires to be a region of choice for young people.

People aged between 25 and 50 are the demographic with the greatest economic impact and spend, so attracting younger populations provides added economic benefit for the region. The demographic will also include a large proportion of first and second home buyers, small business entrepreneurs and parents of kids in school. Attracting and retaining young people in their child rearing years also has a compounding effect on population growth.

As our population ages, there will be greater pressure on the workforce to support people in retirement.



Dongara sand dunes



SpinOut wheelchair basketball

GOAL: Infrastructure and services that help create exciting, healthy and vibrant local communities with a strong sense of belonging



2050 OUTCOMES
Regional Aspirations

CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIES

TERM

COMMUNITIES

Highly liveable communities that are attractive to families and better placed to retain populations during economic decline.



Smaller communities and local governments sometimes lack human resources for project planning and development of social infrastructure, as well as raising the required funding for implementation.

The 'whole of life' cost implications of social infrastructure is an important consideration, particularly in smaller communities that often incur higher development costs and may face financial pressures sustaining, maintaining and replacing facilities.

Support the implementation of local government Corporate Business Plan strategic priorities that support the provision of infrastructure and services in their communities.



Develop a transparent process for prioritising and decision making for local and regional projects.



Work with local governments and relevant agencies to prioritise and in some cases rationalise social infrastructure and services.



Support the implementation of the State's Regional Centres Development Plan in Phase 1 (Morawa SuperTown's Growth and Development Plan) and Phase 2 (Geraldton Regional Centres Growth Plan). Promote the development of a subregional centre for the Murchison.



SPORT AND RECREATION

An active region with sport and recreation facilities and services comparable to those offered in Perth (relevant to the needs of the region).



Rationalising facilities and trending towards more collocation of sports is one strategy of local government to reduce construction and recurrent cost, although the stance of many sports to retain single use infrastructure remains strong.

Pursue the development of regional scale, multi purpose sporting facilities for the region.



Prioritise the development of multi purpose infrastructure as the norm throughout the region to reduce recurrent costs pressures and realise other benefits from having multiple users / contributors.



Recurrent funding is a major constraint for the provision of regional sport and recreation. This is particularly so in remote communities or with programs that have limited capacity to generate income (eg small membership, specific user groups such as people with disabilities or activities that support people experiencing disadvantage).

Work with the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR), local governments and proponents to develop funding solutions for priority Mid West sport and recreation initiatives.



Sport is essential to the social fabric of small regional communities. Human and financial capacity constraints present extreme challenges in these communities, often resulting in local governments needing to take responsibility for delivery.

Work with the DSR, local governments and existing groups to develop tailored sport and recreation models in Mid West communities.



Talented regional athlete development is human resource intensive and expensive, placing pressures on recurrent funding for the MWAS, which is itself difficult to secure.

Work to ensure sustainability of the Mid West Academy of Sport (MWAS) as a mechanism to enhance development of talented regional athletes.



Support efforts of the MWAS to expand operations. Initiatives may include exporting services to other regions or collaborating (eg with educational institutions) to attract inter / intra national athletes to experience sport in the region.



Provision of quality infrastructure to support the growth in nature based recreation.

Ensure a range of appropriate scale nature based and coastal recreation areas exist throughout the region with appropriate infrastructure and services.





<p>2050 OUTCOMES Regional Aspirations</p>	<p>CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>STRATEGIES</p>	<p>TERM</p>
<p>CULTURE, ARTS AND HERITAGE A healthy, visible, lively culture that embraces all people and enables them to get to know their culture and that of others.</p> 	<p>Infrastructure and services for arts, culture and heritage serve to create community vibrancy, help celebrate their uniqueness and bring opportunities for local story telling and potential tourism and events.</p>	<p>Investigate the development of a multi user convention facility for the region as part of a regional network of arts and entertainment infrastructure (supported by appropriate human resources).</p> <p>Work with WA Museum (Geraldton) and DCA to investigate and support the development of arts and culture infrastructure and exhibitions in Geraldton and the broader Mid West.</p> <p>Support DCA to develop opportunities for creative industries in Mid West communities, including Aboriginal art.</p>	  
<p>ABORIGINAL CULTURE The region's traditional ownership is acknowledged in communities with appropriate cultural facilities to celebrate Aboriginal heritage and develop new Aboriginal enterprise.</p> 	<p>Places of cultural significance to Aboriginal people and issues related to this (eg access, protection etc) are not widely understood.</p> <p>There is a scarcity of dedicated spaces and places for acknowledging the region's strong Aboriginal heritage and unique culture.</p>	<p>Acknowledge the region's traditional owner groups through appropriate signage and visual recognition.</p> <p>Investigate the development of an Aboriginal operated cultural centre in Geraldton to celebrate local Aboriginal heritage and provide opportunities for cultural exchange, tourism, storytelling, Aboriginal enterprise development and community events.</p> <p>Preserve local Aboriginal culture by protecting sites of cultural significance and developing programs that preserve Aboriginal language, music and art.</p>	  
<p>ACCESS, INCLUSION AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN The region celebrates and values its diversity and aspires for greater inclusivity.</p> 	<p>The region's infrastructure is not universally accessible to all people.</p>	<p>Advocate for the adoption of enhanced design standards by all Mid West stakeholders to create a region of world best practice in universal design.</p>	
<p>YOUNG PEOPLE Create highly attractive communities for young people.</p> 	<p>The Mid West aspires to be a region of choice for young people.</p>	<p>Make the region a place of choice for young people by creating highly liveable communities with an attractive blend of lifestyle, technology, education and affordable living eg CBD revitalisation.</p>	



REGIONAL HOUSING DEMAND



Development and construction costs have created affordability issues across several local governments, resulting in shortages in lower priced housing and large public housing waitlists (around eight years in Geraldton). Given the tendency for developers to build larger homes due to market demand and profitability there is generally a shortage in 1-2 bedroom residences across the region, which represents up to 50% of Department of Housing (DoH) demand. Rental accommodation is also limited in several Mid West communities.

Affordable housing is a priority for most Mid West local governments, although the specific focus often varies between communities. Some communities need additional aged care accommodation with others facing shortages in housing for Aboriginal people, youth or key workers¹ and temporary (FIFO / DIDO) workforces. There is also an identified scarcity of short term accommodation for students, teachers, doctors, nurses and visiting specialists in Geraldton.

DoH works with the public, private and NGO sectors to deliver a range of affordable housing opportunities for low to moderate income earners. DoH also plays a pivotal role in providing government and key workers housing.

The present affordable housing shortages have followed a period of modest population growth and any escalated regional growth will result in commensurate pressures on affordable housing. There are risks increasing housing supply (and other infrastructure and services) for boom populations, which can result in oversupply when the economy cools. Maintaining affordability during boom periods is important to avoid further housing gaps for local populations and also helps to retain working populations during decline.

The 2008 Mid West Infrastructure Analysis (2008) reported that only one third of the region's available residential land had been developed. The majority of undeveloped land is in Greater Geraldton. Several housing developments are underway in the region, with the Karloo-Wandina development to create up to 1,500 new lots on a staged basis.

Mining tenements close to townsites are understood to constrain development / expansion in some Murchison communities, although current population pressures to do so are not strong.

DoH has increased its focus on generating income from land developments, often in partnerships with developers / local government, based on commercial demand.

STRATEGIC REGIONAL HOUSING DELIVERY

A Mid West Housing Needs Analysis² was recently completed to quantify existing housing gaps and priorities. The analysis identified the top 20 gaps in the region being low cost general housing in:

- Meekatharra, Green Head, Northampton, Leeman, Eneabba and Geraldton (1-2 bedroom);
- Northampton, Leeman, Wiluna, Green Head, South Murchison, Geraldton, Yalgoo and Kalbarri (3 bedroom); and
- Wiluna, Mount Magnet, Northampton, Leeman, Green Head and Kalbarri (4+ bedroom).

Through its consultation process the Analysis revealed that:

- many Mid West towns could cater for the housing needs of residents in the medium to high price brackets;
- the high cost of construction in several parts of the Mid West makes it unviable for low-cost dwellings to be provided; and
- there is a shortage of affordable dwellings in most Mid West towns.

Each of the Blueprint's growth scenarios would require provision of significant additional dwellings across the Mid West, particularly along the coast. To ensure housing supply into the market at a steady rate with no unnecessary shortfalls or oversupply, a number of factors must be addressed through collaborative effort.

CHALLENGE: A coordinated and strategic approach to delivering housing to meet the region's growth needs on a timely basis is required.

REGIONAL HOUSING DYSFUNCTION

Regional housing markets, including that of the Mid West, often don't function in a way that provides optimal dwelling allocation in communities. The lack of market scale and long distances between towns prevent the development of a competitive construction market. This raises the costs of construction and puts a 'floor' on the price of all new developments that may be out of reach for many residents.

High construction costs in the Mid West are a significant constraint to the efficient operation of the region's housing market and represent a barrier to both private investment and home ownership.

DoH, LandCorp, local governments and developers face extreme cost pressures providing housing in remote parts of the region. Subdivision costs (kerbing, roads, water, sewerage, power) all significantly impede new housing developments.

Other constraints include regulatory requirements, native title (heritage and rights) and presence of cultural sites or valuable flora and fauna. As a result, land suppliers such as LandCorp increasingly look to urban in fill, development of 'lazy land' (zoned for other uses but surplus to demand) and alternative supply of utilities to keep their development costs down.

Building 1-2 bedroom premises (largest gap) is also generally less viable for developers, with development costs and sales value often disproportionate. Further, the sale value of houses in many remote towns can be substantially less than the costs of construction, which can also make it difficult for people to gain bank finance to purchase a home (bank risk issue).

Additional 1-2 bedroom premises would enable many large home occupiers to scale down, releasing the larger homes for new workers and families.

Housing in hinterland communities is further constrained by a scarcity of local tradespeople to construct as well as perform maintenance and basic repairs. Some communities must wait significant periods and incur inflated costs to have relatively minor works performed by visiting tradespeople. Initiatives to develop or attract the required trade skills to communities are needed to make them more sustainable. Such strategies might include a commitment of government housing contracts up to a certain scale and partnerships with resources companies and training and employment providers. Significant benefits may exist for Aboriginal communities (education, training, employment, local engagement, sustainability).

Collectively, these issues create a dysfunctional market and means that government has a significant role to play in ensuring housing development can occur in these towns.

CHALLENGE: Market failures and housing shortages exist in many Mid West communities.

CHALLENGE: There is a scarcity of housing and trade services in most Mid West hinterland communities.

CHALLENGE: Regulatory requirements and development costs are impeding development in many Mid West communities.

CHALLENGE: Disproportionate housing development costs and sales values are impeding the ability of some Mid West residents to access bank finance to enter the housing market.

CHALLENGE: Around 50% of DoH demand for housing is for 1-2 bedrooms premises but there is a scarcity in supply due to market constraints and commercial realities.

¹ Key workers defined by the Department of Housing as "modestly paid workers in the non-resource economy who provide many of the basic and essential services in local communities." This also includes local government staff. Department of Housing. Affordable Housing Strategy (2014)

² Mid West Housing Needs Analysis (2013). Pracsys Economics.



HOUSING THE REGION'S WORKFORCE

Mid West communities generally seek to attract a share of FIFO / DIDO workforces as a means of retaining and growing populations, enhancing social capital and attracting investment. Housing in most hinterland communities in the Mid West is affordable by comparison to Perth and regional centres, but employment for partners and availability of some essential services (for example health, education and communications) can counter this affordability advantage.

Housing for key workers in hinterland communities is a priority for Mid West local governments and a 'Flagship' priority of the MWDC's Mid West Investment Plan.

CHALLENGE: Housing temporary workforces creates both challenges and opportunities for regional communities.

CHALLENGE: There is a shortage of key worker housing in several Mid West communities which constrains their ability to attract and retain essential local workforces.



Perenjori flat pack housing pilot project

HOMELESSNESS, SHORT STAY AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Homelessness and crisis accommodation has emerged as a major social challenge in the Mid West and is a priority for a number of human service and non profit providers. Anecdotally, the prevalence of 'couch surfing' and 'kids on the street' is also significant, with many young people in this situation understood to be escaping social issues in their homes.

CHALLENGE: There is a growing demand for low cost accommodation for people facing homelessness.

CHALLENGE: There is a significant need for short term and crisis accommodation for disengaged people, linked to support services.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

As the regional centre, Geraldton houses significant numbers of students engaged in secondary school, or pursuing specific tertiary / vocational education or training. Limited student accommodation is available at the Geraldton Residential College and Durack Institute of Technology. Boarding facilities at Nagle Catholic College are being closed down in 2015.

The Geraldton Health, Education and Training Accommodation Project (GHETAP) aims to provide affordable and appropriate quality accommodation for students studying in institutions within the Geraldton Health, Education and Training Precinct including nurses on short term work practice. GHETAP is expected to help Geraldton and the broader Mid West attract and retain higher education students and health professionals.

CHALLENGE: There is a shortage of diverse student accommodation to meet current and anticipated future needs of the region.

ACCESSIBLE ACCOMMODATION / INDEPENDENT LIVING

In part, the relative scarcity of 1-2 bedroom homes has contributed to a lack of affordable and appropriate housing for seniors and people with disabilities. This explains why up to 14% of the public housing shortage is for seniors.

Strategic directions in housing need to recognise changing housing characteristics, dwelling preferences and impacts of strategic demand drivers. The unmet demand for Independent Living Units (1-2 bedroom) was recognised in the Mid West Housing Needs analysis and is a focus of several proposed projects led by not for profit organisations.

Mid West communities such as Kalbarri and Irwin have particularly large retiree cohorts. Nevertheless, recent efforts by the private sector to develop housing in these communities have failed due to a lack of market scale, which defers the onus for provision back the public sector.

Affordable and accessible housing for people with disabilities has also been revealed as a priority for the Disability Services Commission.

CHALLENGE: Provision of accessible accommodation options is important to most Mid West communities and will continue to grow as an issue as the population ages.

ABORIGINAL HOUSING

Aboriginal housing is a priority in a number of Mid West communities, particularly short term accommodation in Geraldton for people visiting to access services. Short term accommodation facilities for Aboriginal people, linked to local services, are in planning.

A lack of appropriate housing diversity in the region means that some Aboriginal households, that would otherwise live independently, are forced to share with another household. By providing greater housing diversity in the Mid West, stock can be better aligned with current and emerging needs, reduce overcrowding and better satisfy the ethnic and demographic characteristics of Aboriginal households.

Whilst the rate of Aboriginal home ownership in the Mid West is low by comparison to non-Aboriginal residents, it is consistent with the State level for all Aboriginal people.

CHALLENGE: Provision of appropriate housing for Aboriginal people and families is an ongoing priority for the region.

Yugunga-Nya People's trust

The Yugunga-Nya People's Trust gathers and invests native title funds to a range of projects and initiatives that benefit the Yugunga-Nya people of the Mid West. It principally seeks to advance educational, cultural and religious outcomes of the Yugunga-Nya people by helping to relieve poverty, sickness, homelessness and misfortune. Its recent focus has been on establishing business, employment and training interests that promote economic self sustainability of the Yugunga-Nya people. Projects being examined include a motel / restaurant complex in Geraldton, a commercial laundry complex incorporating a child minding centre and plant nursery in Meekatharra and a modular house building company in the Mid West.



100 REGIONAL HOUSING *CONT'D*

GOAL: Sufficient regional housing stock of suitable configuration to meet growth and development needs of each local community

2050 OUTCOMES Regional Aspirations

CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIES

TERM

STRATEGIC REGIONAL HOUSING DELIVERY

Housing is addressed as a strategic regional issue with a diversity of successful community, private and public delivery models.



A coordinated and strategic approach to delivering housing to meet the region's growth needs on a timely basis is required.

Work with DoH, LandCorp, local governments and other housing stakeholders to develop and implement tailored housing models of delivery in line with emerging trends.



Work with local and State government to continually build new housing stock in communities and recycle old housing to keep stock fresh and ensure affordability for new buyers.



REGIONAL HOUSING DYSFUNCTION

Competitive housing markets exist in all communities that encourage private investment.



Market failures and housing shortages exist in most Mid West communities.

Work with local governments, community groups and housing providers to develop viable, locally driven housing solutions in communities with market failure.



There is a scarcity of housing and trade services in most Mid West hinterland communities.

Work with stakeholders to develop skills and workforces in hinterland communities capable of providing local housing and trade services.



Regulatory requirements and development costs are impeding development in many Mid West communities.

Work with authorities, developers and local governments to develop strategies that reduce housing development cost pressures created by regulatory constraints.



Disproportionate housing development costs and sales values are impeding the ability of some Mid West residents to access bank finance to enter the housing market.

Address existing housing and financing legislation and policies that constrain development and home ownership.



Work with industry to reduce construction costs where possible and raise industry capacity across the region.



Around 50% of Department of Housing demand for housing is for 1-2 bedroom premises but there is a scarcity in supply due to market constraints and commercial realities.

Encourage the prioritised development of 1-2 bedroom residential accommodation in Mid West communities to meet latent demand.





<p>2050 OUTCOMES Regional Aspirations </p>	<p>CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES</p>	<p>STRATEGIES</p>	<p>TERM</p>
<p>HOUSING THE REGION'S WORKFORCE There is an adequate stock of key worker housing throughout the region. </p>	<p>Housing temporary workforces creates both challenges and opportunities for regional communities. There is a shortage of key worker housing in several Mid West communities which constrains their ability to attract and retain essential local workforces.</p>	<p>Work with local governments and major project proponents to maximise local housing provision for workers and their families. Work with all local governments to ensure adequate key worker housing availability in each community.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>HOMELESSNESS, SHORT STAY AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING There is adequate crisis or short stay accommodation in the region. </p>	<p>There is a growing demand for low cost accommodation for people facing homelessness. There is a significant need for short term and crisis accommodation for disengaged people, linked to support services.</p>	<p>Work with the not for profit sector, local and State government agencies to develop a strategy and advocate for appropriate resources to support people experiencing homelessness in the region. Support projects that deliver appropriate short stay and transitional accommodation facilities for Aboriginal people, disengaged people (specifically youth) and people receiving health services, all linked to appropriate support services.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>STUDENT ACCOMMODATION Student accommodation is provided to keep young people in the region for educational offerings. </p>	<p>There is a scarcity of diverse student accommodation to meet current and anticipated future needs of the region.</p>	<p>Complete a comprehensive plan for the provision of affordable student accommodation for all schools as well as training and higher education institutions. Implement the Geraldton Health, Education and Training Accommodation Project (GHETAP).</p>	<p> </p>
<p>ACCESSIBLE ACCOMMODATION Sufficient stock of accessible accommodation is available in all Mid West communities to meet the needs of people with disabilities and enable residents to age in place. </p>	<p>Provision of accessible accommodation options is important to most Mid West communities and will continue to grow as an issue as the population ages.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with relevant government agencies and local government to define aged care needs and develop and implement a collaborative subregional housing model for investment eg the Ageing in the Bush strategy. Advocate for the adoption of enhanced design standards to provide for the current and future housing needs of people with disabilities.</p>	<p> </p>
<p>ABORIGINAL HOUSING Aboriginal home ownership in the region matches that of the broader community. </p>	<p>Provision of appropriate housing for Aboriginal people and families is an ongoing priority for the region.</p>	<p>Investigate the opportunity to partner with DoH and Aboriginal peak bodies to develop a pilot housing project to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities. Work with DoH and other key agencies to develop strategies to facilitate increased Aboriginal home ownership in the region.</p>	<p> </p>



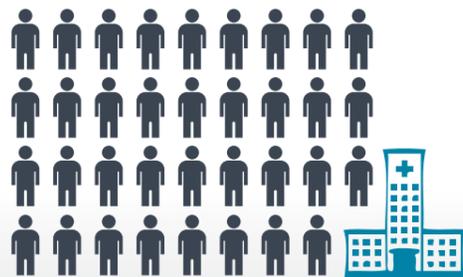
102 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

HEALTH WORKFORCE

2,309
Employees

9% REGIONAL
WORK FORCE

WORK IN THE HEALTH CARE SECTOR



Further information on the region's health profile is included in the Blueprint's social profile from page 24. Some of the more pertinent points are reiterated here.

HEALTH SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE

Geraldton is one of two non-metropolitan centres in WA with both public and private hospitals, which provide a range of general and specialist health services. The St John of God and Geraldton hospitals are serviced by both resident and visiting medical specialists, however complex cases are normally referred to tertiary hospitals in Perth.

The Geraldton Hospital faces significant capacity constraints and federal funding has been sought for several years for an extension (estimated value \$100 million+).

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) is the largest health service provider in the region. The Geraldton Hospital, regional executive and corporate services, regional health service teams and other clinical and non-clinical support services based at the Geraldton Health Campus.

WACHS operates smaller hospitals, nursing posts and health centres at a number of locations including Cue, Dongara, Kalbarri, Meekatharra, Morawa, Mount Magnet, Mullewa, North Midlands (Three Springs), Northampton, Sandstone and Yalgoo.

Major primary health care organisations within the region include Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service, Goldfields-Midwest Medicare Local (GMML), Nganganawili Aboriginal Health Service (Wiluna), Silver Chain and the Royal Flying Doctors Service. Collectively these organisations provide a wide range of health services, including Aboriginal and community health services, health centres, aged care, after hours General Practice (GP) services and coordination, allied health and mental health services, chronic disease management, emergency services, general practice support, nursing posts and workforce development and support.

There were more than 50 GPs based in Geraldton (as at July 2014), with a number of small practice, solo and visiting GPs providing services across the region. Public and privately funded allied health professionals deliver community based and outreach services across a wide range of communities within the Mid West.

There is understood to be reasonable spare capacity in most smaller hospitals, health centres and nursing posts outside of Geraldton, although several are ageing / deteriorating and require significant upgrades. There is a recognised need to redevelop the Meekatharra Hospital.

A dentist operates out of Three Springs with a mobile health service recently established in the North Midlands as a partnership between the RFDS and Karara Mining Ltd.

CHALLENGE: Deteriorating health buildings and infrastructure are impeding capacity to deliver quality essential health services in the region.

HEALTH WORKFORCE

Health care and social assistance is the region's third largest individual employment sector with 2,309 workers (2011). This represents 9% of the regional workforce; a two percentage point increase from 2001 to 2011.

Sustainability of the health workforce is a challenge for the sector. The average age of nurses in the Mid West is 48.

In 2011, there were 107.3 GPs per 100,000 persons and 78.2 medical specialists (resident and / or visiting) per 100,000 persons in the Department of Health's Mid West Health Region. These rates are 30% and 40% lower respectively compared with the WA per capita rates for GPs and medical specialists.^[1]

These findings accord with consumer feedback obtained by GMML (2012), which indicated that GPs and specialists were the two most common service providers that residents are unable to access.

Provision of health workers is generally market driven, with communities or service providers typically able to attract personnel if the right conditions are met. In some cases, while professionals may be present in communities, they may not be available full time, after hours or equipped to meet all community needs.

In some smaller Mid West communities, local governments have taken on a role of attracting and retaining medical professionals, often at considerable local expense to subsidise provision.

Despite having strong higher education and training providers, the region can also face challenges providing more advanced professional development opportunities for its health professionals. Those seeking particular qualifications or experiences may need to leave the Mid West to pursue their aspirations, which impacts continuity of provision.

A Mid West Health Education and Training Alliance operates to strategically address health education and training needs of the region from the perspectives of:

1. encouraging rural uptake and support of local pathways into health careers;
2. providing coordination, support and access for medical, nursing and allied health clinical placements across the Mid West that add value to the student learning;

3. effective (and cost effective) delivery of localised education for clinicians' upskilling and skill maintenance; and
4. looking to the future and providing opportunities for undergraduate, post graduate health career opportunities within the Mid West, including the support of localised research capacity and outcomes.

CHALLENGE: The region faces some ongoing challenges attracting, retaining and educating / upskilling health sector workers (including allied health workers and specialists), particularly in remote areas.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES / PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE

Many residents within the Mid West area are socioeconomically disadvantaged compared with WA residents overall. In 2011, the shires of Meekatharra, Mount Magnet, Murchison and Wiluna were ranked in the top 10% of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas within WA and Geraldton was ranked within the top 20%.^[2] The region's Australian Early Childhood Development Census (AEDC) results also indicate similar disadvantage and needs of children in these areas.

There is value in creating community partnerships to support the delivery of basic health and community support services, especially in hinterland communities with limited resources. Community engagement and participation in decision making can enhance local buy in and commitment to addressing health and wellbeing challenges.

Positive community attributes include those that stimulate social cohesion and facilitate economic security by enabling access to social, sporting and recreational amenities, ensuring access to health and other essential services, increasing employment opportunities and supporting the provision of safe neighbourhoods.^[3]

Locally driven initiatives may include more training for health providers, creating temporary housing near health facilities, providing transportation for patients, developing inclusive community projects to promote healthy living and creating a system of social bonds to encourage community investment in health and wellbeing outcomes.

The use of native title funds in Aboriginal communities to support local health and wellbeing priorities (as well as education and community capacity) should be examined, especially for initiatives unlikely to attract significant public investments. Examples of this approach are occurring with some Mid West claimant groups.

CHALLENGE: A constraint in many communities, particularly in the Murchison, is the local capacity to deliver community services (eg fitness, social, inclusive community projects, health campaigns etc) that can positively impact health and wellbeing.

¹ ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing

² ABS, Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (20033.0.55.011)

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2012. Australia's health series no.13. Cat. no. AUS 156. Canberra: AIHW.



HEALTH INNOVATION AND DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

Innovation and technology provides significant opportunity for health service provision throughout the region (telemedicine), with most communities currently having ADSL grade infrastructure.

The Geraldton Health, Education and Training Accommodation Project (GHETAP) aims to provide affordable and appropriate quality accommodation for students (including nurses on short term work practice) studying in institutions within the Geraldton Health, Education and Training Precinct as well as some visiting health professionals. GHETAP is expected to help Geraldton and the broader Mid West attract and retain higher education students and health professionals.

Sophisticated digital health solutions are emerging throughout regional WA, including the new Emergency Telehealth Service that connects patients at regional and remote hospitals with specialist emergency physicians. WACRH's new Education and Simulation Learning (EdSiM) Centre also provides innovative education and training space with three human like simulation mannequins and patients, two clinical demonstration areas and five customisable consultation rooms. This centre is the first in rural WA.

OPPORTUNITY: With further investment in ICT to leverage off existing regional infrastructure capabilities, innovative and high quality health service delivery would be possible in all Mid West communities, coupled with various other applications and benefits.

MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL ISSUES

Government and non-government organisations, as well as private practitioners deliver mental health services across the Mid West area. GPs play a critical role for supporting residents and arranging referrals to appropriate community and hospital based services.

The Mental Health Services Rural and Remote Areas Program is an important initiative which targets people with mild to moderate mental illness living in rural and remote areas by increasing access to mental health services.

The Access to Allied Psychological Services program is another initiative, which facilitates access to 6-12 free or low cost individual or group counselling programs per calendar year.

Partners In Recovery is a new initiative which aims to increase support for people with severe and persistent mental illness with complex needs, and their carers and families, by getting services and supports from multiple sectors that they may come into contact with (and could benefit from) to work in a more collaborative, coordinated, and integrated way.

WACHS provides community drug services across the Mid West and the Nganganawili Aboriginal Health Service is working collaboratively with a number of community partners to address substance misuse issues in the Wiluna area.

Outreach mental health services are provided to the vast majority of towns across the Mid West area. WACHS has identified a strong need for an acute psychiatric facility in Geraldton.

CHALLENGE: Provision of mental health, clinical and community support services and facilities for people battling mental health problems and associated issues, such as drug and alcohol addiction, depression, social and emotional wellbeing and homelessness.

ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Aboriginal people experience poorer outcomes across a broad range of health issues, and have a lower life expectancy compared with non-Aboriginal people.^[1]

Aboriginal people aged 50+ are included in the Department of Health and Ageing's planning benchmarks that apply to people 70+.

With the proportion of Aboriginal people residing in the Mid West (12%) being four times higher than for the WA population (3%) this is an important consideration for health planning in the region.

There are two Aboriginal Medical Services in the Mid West, namely the Geraldton Regional Aboriginal Medical Service (GRAMS), which has medical centres in Geraldton and Mount Magnet, and the Nganganawili Aboriginal Health Service in Wiluna. A number of other organisations provide services that specifically target Aboriginal people, such as WACHS's Aboriginal Health Team and GMML's Care Coordination and Supplementary Services program for Indigenous Australians.

CHALLENGE: Provision of chronic illness, maternal, child and mental health services for Aboriginal people throughout the Mid West.

Although a significant proportion of Aboriginal people in the Mid West reside in Geraldton there are significant challenges providing services for Aboriginal people with complex health issues residing in outlying communities.



Goo Fest, Yalgoo

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011. The health and welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, an overview 2011. Cat. no. IHW 42. Canberra: AIHW.

AGED CARE

Older members of our community have a significantly higher likelihood of chronic illness, disability and risk of hospitalisation compared with younger persons. In Australia, hospitalisation rates have been shown to increase nine fold across the lifespan, with rates increasing greatly after 65 years of age. For the Aboriginal population, chronic illness and related disease burden occur up to two decades earlier compared with non-Aboriginal people.

The preliminary Statewide Ageing in the Bush findings^[2] highlighted that:

- a total of 2,455 people aged 55+ in the Mid West indicated a need for assistance in daily living in the 2011 Census, with 1,928 carers in the region providing unpaid work for people over 55;
- there were 782 Aboriginal people in the Mid West aged 50-59, which are included in the same Department of Health and Ageing benchmarks as general population aged over 70; and
- the Commonwealth reported 354 operational residential care places and 237 Home Care places in the Mid West.

The Australian Government recognises that many older Australians want to stay in their own homes as long as they can. By 2050, more than 3.5 million Australians will access aged care each year, with around 80% of the services being delivered in the community.^[3]

There are a number of specialist aged care facilities and services across the Mid West including social and domiciliary services. Some services are limited for those residing in smaller and remote communities.

An important task for health and community services is to increase awareness of the availability and limitations of community and residential health care services for older persons.

CHALLENGE: Enabling all Mid West residents to age in place will be a significant challenge for the future.

² Statewide Ageing in the Bush Mid West preliminary findings. Verso Consulting (2014)
³ Goldfields Midwest Medicare Local. Information supplied for the Blueprint.



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GOAL: Sophisticated health services and infrastructure provision to support improved health and quality of life within communities

2050 OUTCOMES Regional Aspirations	CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES	STRATEGIES	TERM
HEALTH SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE Mid West health infrastructure enables the highest possible standard of health service provision in all communities. 	Deteriorating health buildings and infrastructure are impeding capacity to deliver quality essential health services in the region.	Establish world class regional health infrastructure by redeveloping the Geraldton Hospital to meet current and anticipated future demands. Grow the region's 'hub and spoke' health delivery model with the Geraldton Hospital supporting Multi Purpose Centres and regional health providers in smaller communities. Establish and maintain modern regional health service provision through timely investment in regional and subregional health facilities.	  
HEALTH WORKFORCE The region attracts and retains high quality health care workers throughout.  	The region faces some ongoing challenges attracting, retaining and educating / upskilling health sector workers (including allied health workers and specialists), particularly in remote areas.	Incentivise placement of health sector workers (particularly in remote locations in the Mid West), with strategies to optimise experiences in the region and maximise retention. Work with regional training providers to facilitate further professional development support for health workers, including those wishing to specialise. Advocate for the establishment of a Mid West Health Initiative.	  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES / PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE Healthy communities and preventative healthcare models are prioritised and invested in throughout the region. 	A constraint in many communities, particularly in the Murchison, is the local capacity to deliver community services (eg fitness, social, education, health campaigns etc) that can positively impact health and wellbeing.	Prioritise primary and preventative health care to build healthy communities by engaging the public in the "healthier communities" approach. This includes the provision of diverse social infrastructure and services throughout the region.	
HEALTH INNOVATION AND DIGITAL SOLUTIONS Innovative approaches to health service delivery are in effect throughout the Mid West by working with and through community. 	With further investment in ICT to leverage off existing regional infrastructure capabilities, innovative and high quality health service delivery would be possible in all Mid West communities, coupled with various other applications and benefits.	Advocate for the expedient rollout of ICT infrastructure to facilitate improved health outcomes at all levels, particularly in hinterland communities. Optimise primary and allied health services delivery in the hinterland by supporting greater subregional cooperative health servicing options through partnership development at a local government / community level.	 



2050 OUTCOMES
Regional Aspirations

CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIES

TERM

MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL ISSUES

Best practice mental health services and supports are available throughout the region.



Provision of mental health, clinical and community support services and facilities for people battling mental health problems and associated issues, such as drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness, depression and social and emotional wellbeing.

Improve mental health services throughout the Mid West by working with on ground community groups and government agencies to develop innovative and engaging delivery modes.



Investigate demand for an acute psychiatric facility in the Mid West.



ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Health indicators for Aboriginal people in the Mid West parallel the region's non Aboriginal population.



Provision of chronic illness, maternal , child and mental health services for Aboriginal people throughout the Mid West.

Address Aboriginal health outcomes by working with Mid West Aboriginal Organisations Alliance (MAOA) and peak health agencies to provide culturally and geographically appropriate health services.



Enhance health services in high Aboriginal population settlement areas through further expansion of the GRAMS model.



AGED CARE

All Mid West residents have opportunity to age in place.



Enabling all Mid West residents to age in place will be a significant challenge for the future.

Pursue the timely delivery of aged care packages to enable 'well living' and ageing in homes in Mid West communities.



Encourage 'well living' fitness and health programs to aged persons at a local level to ensure key health determinants.



Tarcoola Beach, Geraldton



106 REMOTE SETTLEMENTS

REMOTE MID WEST COMMUNITIES

The WA State Planning Strategy 2050 identified remote settlements as informal towns, remote road houses, Aboriginal communities, workers' camps, tourist camps and remote aerodromes.

There are also a number of small and informal towns in the remote regions that are recognised as towns, but have characteristics that tend more towards being remote settlements. These include tourist camps, pastoral centres, declined mining towns and small isolated towns.

These small and informal towns are unique places which have grown in response to economic and social need. The Murchison settlement is characteristic of the Western Australian experience, and has developed in spite of the lack of formal structures such as appropriate land tenure and regulated essential services. Supporting the survival of some of these places also provides a cultural and social dividend to the State.

There are up to 150 Aboriginal settlements in WA with up to a dozen in the Mid West. Aboriginal settlements have generally developed without regulated essential, municipal or social services. Supporting Aboriginal settlements also provides a cultural and social dividend to the State.

The region's remote settlements are continuously challenged through tyranny of distance, cost pressures to access goods and services, accessing workers, access to infrastructure and services and social isolation.

SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In November 2014 the WA Premier flagged the possible closure of some remote settlements due to the State's inability to service them.

Essential services and infrastructure provision to remote settlements is usually discrete and unregulated.

CHALLENGE: Cost to deliver services and infrastructure is often at a premium due to remoteness and is difficult to justify on economic grounds for limited population benefits.

OPPORTUNITY: Some native title claimant groups in the region may be in a position to leverage economic and social opportunities for local outcomes.

LAND TENURE AND NATIVE TITLE

Remote settlements present opportunities for economic and / or cultural outcomes. Land tenure arrangements and native title in some Mid West remote settlements remain unresolved. This uncertainty may present challenges to regional development efforts and the sustainability of remote settlements.

CHALLENGE: Most remote settlements are on Crown land and are subject to native title claim or determination, which may create uncertainty for stakeholders.



Murchison Settlement

GOAL:

Remote communities have equal opportunity to create desirable, productive and healthy places, spaces and economic opportunities

2050 OUTCOMES

Regional Aspirations

CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIES

TERM

SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mid West remote settlements have appropriate access to essential services and infrastructure.



Cost to deliver services and infrastructure is often at a premium due to remoteness and is difficult to justify on economic grounds for limited population benefits.

Some native title claimant groups in the region may be in a position to leverage economic and social opportunities for local outcomes.

Deliver a united approach together with local, State and Federal agencies to plan for appropriate and timely investment of infrastructure and services for remote communities in the Mid West.

Work with and support groups that wish to explore investment of native title funding to achieve social and economic outcomes.



LAND TENURE AND NATIVE TITLE

The remote settlements across the Mid West are on appropriate land tenure.



Most remote settlements are on Crown land and are subject to native title claim or determination, which may create uncertainty for stakeholders.

Work with affected stakeholders to attempt to remove land tenure uncertainties.





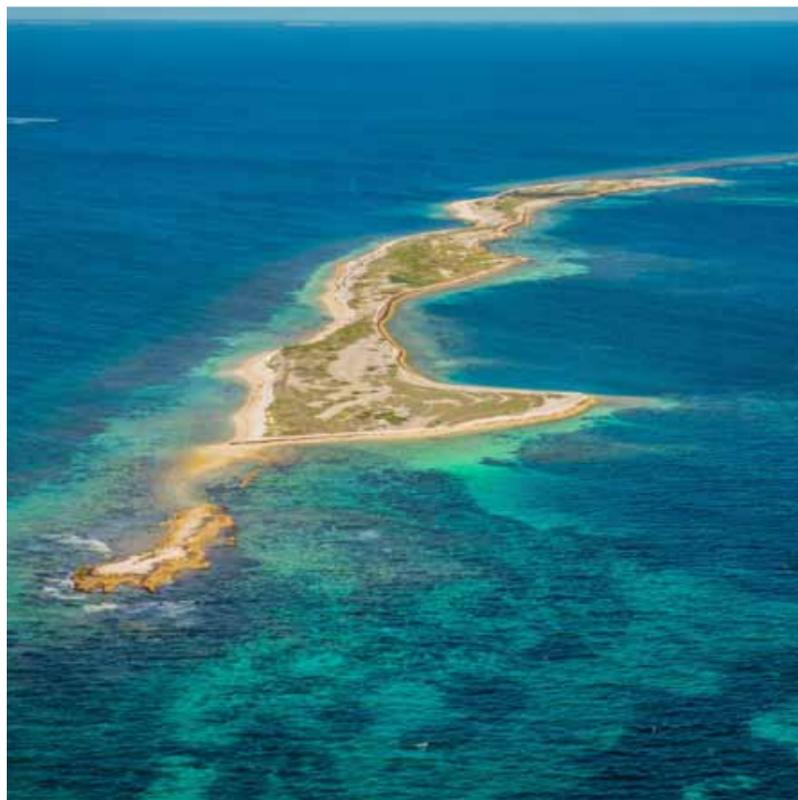
BIODIVERSITY

The Mid West has sensitive natural ecosystems and is one of only five places in the world with globally recognised biodiversity hotspots in marine and terrestrial environments. These 'hotspots' not only contain large numbers of species, but their biodiversity is also under significant threat. Given the region's growth potential and range of development opportunities, there is a clear need to balance growth and prosperity with environmental and lifestyle values and long-term sustainability.

A rich store of natural assets in the region provides opportunities for nature-based and eco-tourism activities, which are likely to expand with the region's focus on tourism. A significant green corridor is planned through the middle of the region from Perenjori to the Murchison Shire boundaries to increase habitat and to allow flora and fauna species to migrate as climate conditions gradually change. To the north the green corridor would connect with another corridor to the World Heritage listed Shark Bay, and in the south with Gondwana Link through to the South Coast of WA. Large areas within this planned corridor are already managed by agencies such as the Department of Parks and Wildlife.

Local communities such as Perenjori are keen to develop environmental education as part of the network of land being managed for conservation purposes in their and adjacent shires (450,000ha of land managed by four different environmental entities). The region can use key opportunities such as these to research and educate the community about environmental challenges and their impacts.

CHALLENGE: The region's unique natural biodiversity assets need to be maintained.



Houtman Abrolhos Islands

CLIMATE CHANGE

Recent work by the CSIRO and the Climate Commission (Steffen, 2011) suggests that temperature, rainfall and storm event patterns have significantly changed in WA in recent decades, and this has had substantial impacts on biodiversity, water resources, agriculture and marine and coastal environments. More specifically, that average temperatures have increased, rainfall patterns have become more variable with a drying climate trend, and storm events have become more frequent and intense. This has serious implications for increasing risks associated with sea level rise, coastal erosion and inundation hazard, soil and wind erosion, land degradation and declining agricultural productivity, and declining biodiversity.

The projections indicate that the following changes might occur, which are relevant to the Mid West:

- the annual temperature in the region is projected to be 4.2°C higher than 1995 levels by 2090;
- there could be a decline in winter rainfall of between 5-40%;
- there could be an increase in natural rainfall variability;
- rainfall extremes are expected to increase in frequency and intensity;
- an increase in intense heat waves, bushfires, droughts, flooding and storm surges; and
- sea level rise of up to 55cm by 2070.

CHALLENGE: Given the complex nature and extent of climate change impacts across the region, it is clear there needs to be integrated and strategic adaptation planning across multiple sectors.

The Northern Agricultural Catchment Council has developed several online tools to help the region manage climate change and other impacts. These tools / system include:

- "LiDAR", which shows climate change impact on coastlines; and
- "NARVIS", a data system that can show potential impacts of climate change overlays and scenarios.

Applying a climate adaptation lens to planning in the region highlights four key challenges:

- making decisions for multiple possible futures;
- employing flexible and adaptive planning processes;
- explicitly identifying and preparing for likely future decisions; and,
- strengthening the adaptive capacity of key stakeholders, organisations and community groups.

A coordinated approach is required to research and assess the impacts of the region's environmental challenges and their potential social and economic impacts. A set of priority actions need to be established around the region's challenges of:

- climate change;
- biodiversity;
- coastal management;
- waterways;
- eco efficiency (energy, waste);
- natural resource conservation (water, agricultural land, basic raw materials); and
- land management.

Given the complex nature and extent of the predicted climate change impacts across a very large, diverse region, it is clear that there needs to be integrated and strategic adaptation planning across multiple sectors and geographic areas.

PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Further decline in rainfall could make marginal lands unviable and presents the need for further innovation in production practices and accessing alternative water supplies for agriculture. This is particularly true for intensive agriculture and any strategies to significantly increase the region's food production would require substantial water for food solutions.

The region's primary producers are adaptable and resilient and they will need to continue to innovate in response to environmental changes. The Mid West agriculture sector is strong in land management practices for environmental benefit and has become extremely efficient in maximising yields in an environment with less reliable winter rainfall and potentially higher summer rainfall. The fishing sector has also restructured itself in response to declining fish stocks and has maintained its profitability in a challenging environment.

Sustainable agriculture will continue to be a key investment area for the NRM sector, agricultural sector and grower groups of the region. The Mid West has been a focus of research to create a planning framework that enables carbon and intensive (horticulture) farming to be titled separately to normal broad acre production systems.

With agricultural and pastoral production accounting for a significant proportion of the region's land use and economic stability, integrated multidisciplinary planning is required to protect areas of existing production as well as areas for future development.

CHALLENGE: Climate impacts will continue to challenge the region's primary production economies.

Up to date, system wide technical information into local planning strategies and schemes is required to protect areas of existing production as well as areas for future development.



GOAL: The region's diverse natural assets are protected and managed for current and future use

2050 OUTCOMES
Regional Aspirations

CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIES

TERM

BIODIVERSITY

The region's unique biodiversity is recognised and protected as a regional economic, social and cultural asset.



The region's unique natural biodiversity assets need to be maintained.

Protect the region's unique biodiversity by investing in a range of initiatives to increase habitat and allow flora and fauna species to migrate and expand.

Develop initiatives to make environments more resilient by reducing threats and conserving values on existing reserves.

Investigate economic and other opportunities that help to educate and raise awareness of the region's unique biodiversity.



CLIMATE CHANGE

The region is recognised as a leader in climate change adaption practices, behaviours and technologies.



Given the complex nature and extent of the predicted climate change impacts across the region, it is clear that there needs to be integrated and strategic adaptation planning across multiple sectors.

Drive a collaborative approach to the identification of climate change adaptation priorities and develop agreed regional interventions.



PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Sustainable primary production practices within the region are the norm.



Climate impacts will continue to challenge the region's primary production economies.

Support Mid West primary producers to adapt to climate change through investment in sustainable practices, natural resource management, research and innovation, and projects that support adaptation.



Ellendale Pool, Walkaway