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Wheatbelt Development Commission

# Strategic Plan

2024-2026



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Wheatbelt Development Commission respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands that we live and work on: the family and clan groups of the Ballardong, Goreng, Gubrun, Kalamaia, Njaki-Njaki, Whadjuk, Willman, Wudjari, Yued and Yamatji People of the Noongar Nation, their Elders past present and emerging. We acknowledge their living culture and important role in the sustainable economic development and prosperity of the Wheatbelt region.

Led by Noongar wisdom and philosophy, we are committed to embracing opportunities for Aboriginal economic development, entrepreneurship and wealth creation; being a voice of change and reconciliation; supporting sustainable and healthy communities; and empowering future leaders.

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# 1 Messages from the Chair and CEO

The Wheatbelt Development Commission's Strategic Plan 2024 – 2026 communicates our commitment to fostering sustainable growth and prosperity across the Wheatbelt region.



Robyn Sermon  
Chair



Susan Hall  
A/Chief Executive Officer

This region plays an important role in Western Australia's economy, and in national and global food security. It is home to a network of diverse communities, rich cultural heritage, unique landscapes and biodiversity. Across generations, the Wheatbelt has demonstrated resilience and abundant potential. This plan is formed as we see the Wheatbelt in a period of economic growth and development.

As we move forward, recognising the importance of the Wheatbelt and investing in its growth and prosperity is not just essential for the people living within its boundaries but for the State. Supporting the region's economic diversification, developing enabling infrastructure, and adopting sustainable practices will ensure that the Wheatbelt continues to contribute to Western Australia's continued growth and success.

This plan has sought to harness the region's strengths while recognising and responding to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Our vision is for a resilient, diversified and growing Wheatbelt economy, with prosperous and sustainable communities, contributing to our region and Western Australia.

We have identified four strategic themes to guide the WDC's efforts over the life of this plan and deliver on our vision:

**to grow** existing and find and develop new industries;  
**to enhance** regional living standards;  
**to increase** Aboriginal participation in the regional economy;  
and **organisational excellence**.

These themes, and the associated strategies, are interrelated and connected – each supporting the outcomes of the others.

Stronger together, the Board and staff of the Wheatbelt Development Commission recognise the importance of working with government, industry and the community to the benefit of the region. We are committed to building and harnessing relationships with the region's diverse stakeholders, and welcome opportunities to collaborate and partner on a wide range of initiatives. Throughout the life of this plan, we will continuously review our progress, adapting to the evolving needs and challenges of the Wheatbelt community.



Robyn Sermon  
Chair



Susan Hall  
A/Chief Executive Officer

## 3 Our Vision

A resilient, diversified and growing Wheatbelt economy, with prosperous and sustainable communities, contributing to our region and Western Australia.

## 4 Our Role and Values

### 4.1 Our Purpose

To maximise long-term positive outcomes for the Wheatbelt region.

As a proactive and forward-thinking regional development agency we connect, collaborate and support stakeholders, harness the region's competitive advantages and address barriers to growth.

### 4.2 Our Values

Our values define how we operate. They shape our culture, and guide our behaviours and decisions.

#### Leadership

Lead through engagement, advocacy and action. Be curious and courageous.

#### Innovation

Innovate in our approach to economic development and investment.

#### Collaboration

Collaborate by connecting businesses, government and community.

#### Integrity

Uphold organisational excellence.

## 4.3 Regional Development Commissions

The Wheatbelt Development Commission (**WDC**) is one of nine independent statutory Regional Development Commissions formed under the Regional Development Commissions Act 1993 (the Act) comprising a six-member Board, a CEO and staff with offices in Northam, Merredin, Moora and Narrogin. The Board includes two community, two local government and two Ministerial appointments. The Board and CEO report directly to the Minister for Regional Development.

Pursuant to the Act, each Regional Development Commission brings localised and region-specific context to measurably improve regional development across the State. The objectives of Regional Development Commissions are to:

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

Regional Development Commission functions are to:

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

## 4.4 The Regional Development Portfolio

The WDC works within the WA Government's Regional Development Portfolio. This includes a number of other organisations or bodies seeking to further regional development outcomes across Western Australia.

### Minister for Regional Development

#### WA Regional Development Trust

Independent statutory advisory body to the Minister for Regional Development, formed under the *Royalties for Regions Act 2009*.

#### Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

State agency with portfolio responsibilities for regional development.

#### Regional Development Council

Advisory body to State agencies on regional development. Comprises the Chairs of the Regional Development Commissions.

#### Regional Development Commissions (9)

Independent statutory bodies formed under the *Regional Development Commission Act 1993*.

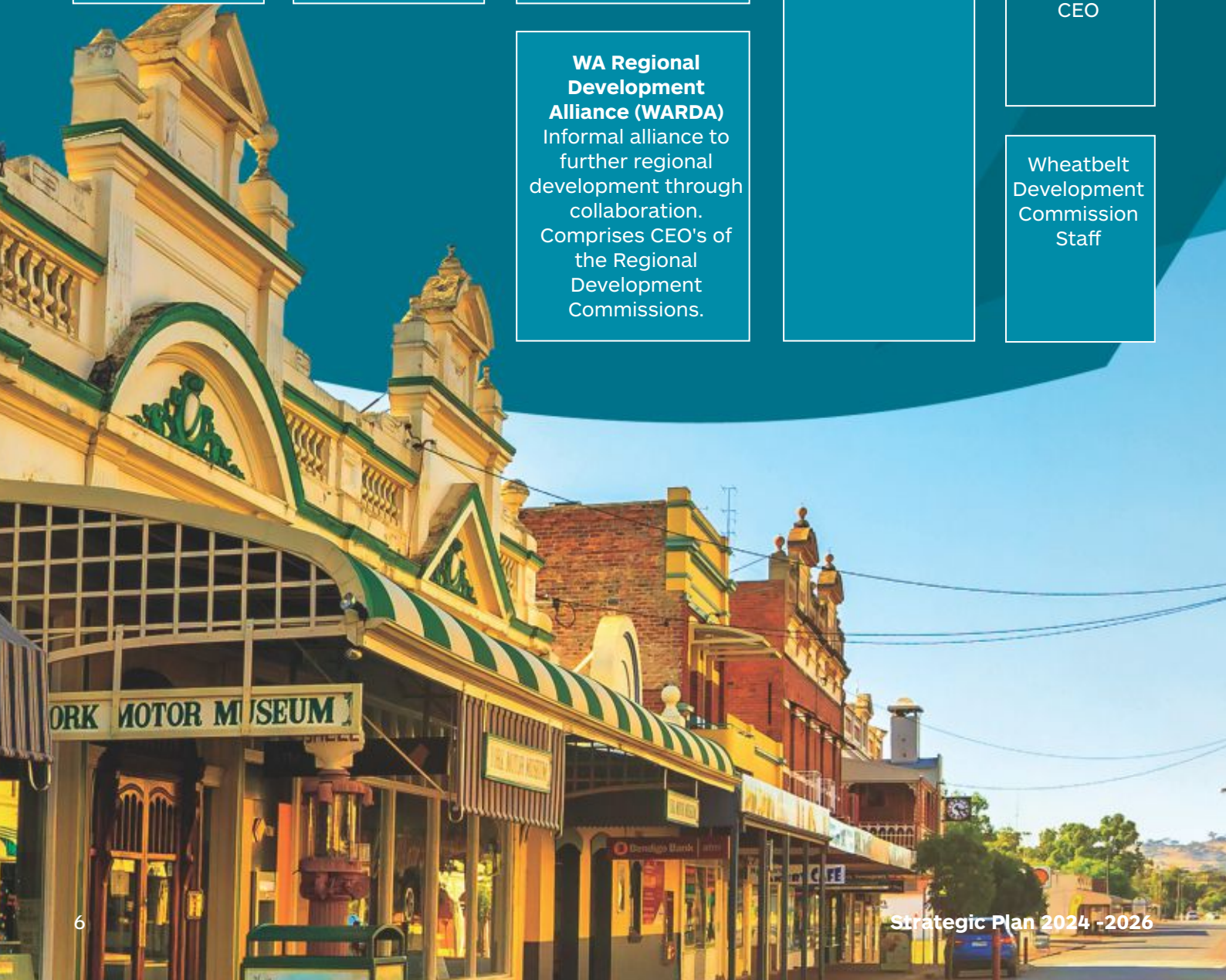
Wheatbelt Development Commission Board

Wheatbelt Development Commission CEO

Wheatbelt Development Commission Staff

#### WA Regional Development Alliance (WARDA)

Informal alliance to further regional development through collaboration. Comprises CEO's of the Regional Development Commissions.





## 4.5 Regional Development Levers

Working within the Regional Development Portfolio, the WDC seeks to utilise its unique Wheatbelt focused position to effect positive outcomes for the region, using the following tools and mechanisms:

- **Regional intelligence** - building, maintaining and disseminating regional information and knowledge across and amongst government, industry, business and communities internal and external to the region.
- **Relationships and connections** – facilitating positive and ongoing communication between key stakeholders, identifying and creating connections for regional people and businesses.
- **Policy, planning and regulation** – contributing to, monitoring, and advocating for policy, governance and approval environments that support the region and recognise its contributions to broader State outcomes.
- **Research, analysis and scenario building** – supporting and enhancing understanding of regional challenges, opportunities and solutions through clear, well researched evidence and analysis.
- **Enabling infrastructure and service delivery** – advocating for infrastructure and services that enable and catalyse economic and social outcomes for the region.
- **Regional profile and events** - participating in and supporting Wheatbelt based events and initiatives that bring people together, and raise the profile of the region.
- **Regional Economic Development Grants** – administration of State grants that deliver on-ground regional development outcomes within the region.
- **Local capability and capacity** - development of local capability, including Local Content advisory and policy.

## 5. The Wheatbelt Region

### 5.1 About the Wheatbelt



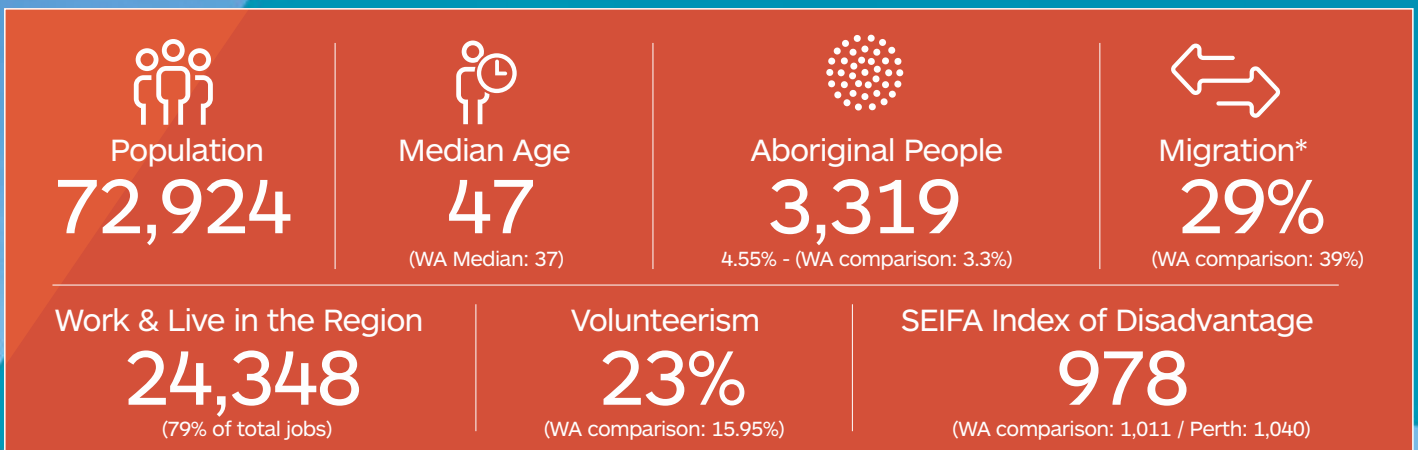
### Unemployment and Business Activity



### Key Industry Sectors



### People



\*% of residents reported living elsewhere in Australia or overseas 5 years ago.

Sub-Region	Population	Largest Settlement	GRP	Jobs	Businesses	Industries & Attributes
Avon	25,901	Northam	\$1.84B	9,123	2,580	Broadacre agriculture Transport and logistics Manufacturing Peri-urban lifestyle Health and aged care Tourism
Central Coast	14,861	Jurien Bay	\$1.48B	5,376	1,770	Aquaculture Horticulture Renewable energy Peri-urban lifestyle Mining Construction and light industry Tourism
Central East	9,396	Merredin	\$2.30B	5,022	1,297	Broadacre agriculture Mining Support Services Renewable energy
Central Midlands	5,770	Moora	\$593M	2,865	986	Broadacre agriculture Horticulture Livestock Health and aged care Mining Manufacturing
Wheatbelt South	16,996	Narrogin	\$1.60B	8,006	2,718	Broadacre agriculture Livestock Education Health and aged care Retirement and lifestyle Tourism



## 5.2 Competitive Advantages



### Lifestyle & Location

The Wheatbelt includes a network of historic and picturesque towns, communities and landscapes offering a variety of coastal, peri-urban and rural lifestyles, with low relatively cost of living. Proximity of the region to Perth provides a range of benefits including access to services, facilities, markets and labour.



### Available, Affordable Land

Industrial, commercial and residential land is available across the Wheatbelt at competitive prices relative to the adjacent Perth region.



## Transport Connectivity

The region directly adjoins Perth and five other regions. It is intersected by major road transport routes as well as narrow gauge and transcontinental standard gauge railways accommodating passenger and freight services, and has access to five ports at Albany, Bunbury, Esperance, Fremantle and Geraldton.



## Economic Stability

Underpinned by a steady resource sector and an established agriculture industry, growing agri-food and intensive livestock industry, a strong small to medium enterprise sector and consistently low unemployment, the Wheatbelt has proven historically resilient to external economic headwinds.



## Innovative & Adaptive People

The region is home to entrepreneurs and a high proportion of established small to medium size enterprises, including knowledge and skills in land management and agriculture.



## Natural Resources

An abundance of renewable energy and critical mineral resources suggests the Wheatbelt is well placed to capitalise on, and substantially respond to decarbonisation of the economy.

## 5.3 Strategic Drivers

The future growth and success of the Wheatbelt region will be influenced by a number of economic, environmental and societal trends and conditions. If we are to anticipate challenges, identify opportunities and develop resilience, it is critical that the impact of these trends and conditions on the region are understood, and reflected in strategic decisions and actions.



### Responding to climate change

Changing global climates means Wheatbelt communities and industries need to be prepared to anticipate and mitigate impacts and foster resilience. There are also immense opportunities for the region to participate in a range of green energy and de-carbonisation initiatives.

Priorities for the Wheatbelt include an increased understanding of temperature and rainfall changes on agriculture, water resources, biodiversity, built environments and economic profiles and productivity; sustainable resource management; pathways to a carbon-neutral economy; adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices; adaption of infrastructure; collaboration and knowledge sharing; and advocating for further research and development.



### Harnessing Aboriginal cultural capital

Increasing the opportunities for involvement of Aboriginal people in all aspects of the Wheatbelt's governance, society and economy – which is strongly aligned to global societal expectations – is a priority with benefits to the region, and to families and individuals.

This includes ensuring a wide range of opportunities to harness Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives as advisors and decision makers, entrepreneurs, land and business owners, skilled employees and community members.



### Accessing and retaining skilled workforces

Global and national labour shortages, especially in skilled industries means the continued growth and diversification of the Wheatbelt economy will require an attractive value proposition to retain and grow local workforces in the face of immense competition for skills.

Priorities include building capability and skills in existing communities via training and education opportunities, as well as addressing to gaps in access to quality housing, education, health and childcare, social and cultural opportunities.



### Keeping pace with technology advancements

Rapid changes in technology are altering every aspect of society, creating both opportunities and challenges for regional Western Australia. Far greater efficiencies will be possible for industry.

These changes must be backstopped by continued improvement in the availability and quality of energy, infrastructure and digital connectivity to ensure the communities and industries of the Wheatbelt are able to keep pace with global changes.



### Ensuring economic stability and growth

The Wheatbelt continues to diversify beyond its traditional base of broadacre agriculture with a wider array of industry sectors including manufacturing, mining, energy and services. Growth in the mining sector, particularly green minerals is important for continued economic diversification, and will benefit the ongoing development and sustainability of the region's small and medium enterprise (SME) sector.

Economic change will necessitate community preparedness, to ensure new industries are both compatible and complementary to the existing economic landscape.



### Innovation in infrastructure and services

Industry diversification across the Wheatbelt is creating new infrastructure demands, including for industrial land, water, energy and digital communications which may challenge traditional supply and distribution models.

With more than \$10 billion worth of projects currently slated for the Wheatbelt, continued investment in freight, logistics and industrial land precincts is a priority to accommodate significant developments in agriculture, hydrogen, renewable energy, biofuel, mining and manufacturing. Freight network investments is key to maintaining the international competitiveness.

Partnerships and collaboration between government, private and university sectors will support the identification of power, water and digital connectivity solutions.



### Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) expectations

Adoption of ESG principles and practices aligns businesses with the expectations of investors, consumers, employees, regulators and the broader community that they will operate sustainably and responsibly. This includes minimising the environmental impacts of their activities; adopting socially responsible practices including diversity, inclusion and stronger engagement with local communities; and demonstrating good governance practices.

The increasing expectation that businesses engaging in the Wheatbelt adopt ESG measurements and reporting offers wide ranging benefits to the environments and communities where these businesses operate, as well as value creation benefits for the business themselves.

# 6 Strategic Themes and Initiatives

## 6.1 Grow existing, and find and develop new industries

Research undertaken by the Regional Development Portfolio identifies the importance of economic diversity to ensure labour market flexibility and economies able to withstand shocks. Further, that the path to diversification should leverage current strengths and develop value-adding and complimentary industries to drive greater economic complexity.

While the Wheatbelt's five sub-regions are diverse in characteristics, capacity, business and economic activity, both agriculture and resources are the strongest contributors to the Wheatbelt economy with potential for further growth and diversification in both sectors.

Agricultural production at a range of scales will be further enhanced through greater climate resilience including drought tolerance, enhanced natural resource and land management outcomes, and further diversification of crop types, scales of operation and value-adding industries.

There is also significant growth potential for mining across a variety of commodity groups. The Wheatbelt is abundant in construction materials, industrial minerals, precious metals, mineral sands and speciality metals. Recent Nickel-Copper-Platinum Elements (Ni-Cu-PGE) discoveries have driven an increase in exploration, with the potential to transform the economy towards a low carbon future.

Opportunities for the Wheatbelt's residents and businesses to service the resourcing industry within and beyond the region, can occur by strengthening workforce participation rates and supporting associated ancillary businesses. This includes leveraging the existing skill base that has developed through servicing a world class, export focused agricultural industry.

Leveraging the region's competitive advantages, there are also opportunities for further generation of alternative sustainable energy production including wind, solar, biomass and other local responses to the decarbonisation economy. The availability of water and land in proximity to Perth markets and international trade links presents substantial opportunity across a range of sectors.

Harnessing the region's full economic potential will require intervention and effort to overcome key barriers including housing availability, workforce capability gaps, and transport and other enabling infrastructure networks including power, water and digital connectivity across the region.





## Grow existing, and find and develop new industries

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes
Attract and facilitate regional investment that supports economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for government policies and programs that incentivise or directly deliver further regional investment that supports local industry.</li> <li>• Develop and promote a clear evidence-base for industry investment and growth.</li> <li>• Build, maintain and harness relationships amongst key stakeholders to facilitate meaningful partnerships and economic opportunities.</li> </ul>	Industry and business can establish and grow in the Wheatbelt, with timely access to key inputs, enablers and requirements.
Unlock barriers for new and growing industry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support timely planning, development and coordination of the infrastructure required for new and growing industry.</li> <li>• Advocate for streamlined land use planning and industrial land assembly to reduce start-up or expansion time and cost and build regional attractiveness.</li> <li>• Improve access and reliability of digital infrastructure to develop and sustain highly skilled businesses and workforces and improve business efficiency.</li> <li>• Support a clear and workable policy, planning and approval environment for key worker housing.</li> </ul>	
Support community preparedness and realisation of local benefits arising from economic growth and diversification across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support innovative approaches to managing economic booms and short -term industry projects that create competition for available infrastructure, e.g. for housing.</li> <li>• Advocate for strategic planning and policy that considers new or alternative land uses, including renewable energy projects such as wind and biomass, and community facilities and education services that align with expected growth.</li> <li>• Advocate for policies that establish clear environmental, social and governance (ESG) obligations for new and growing industry and ensure practical fulfillment.</li> <li>• Support projects and activities that create opportunities for small and medium enterprise to successfully service growing industries.</li> </ul>	<p>Growth of new and existing industry is sustainable and well planned, evidenced through growth of local wages, employment opportunities and access to infrastructure.</p> <p>The environmental, social and governance practices of industry deliver benefit to the environments and communities where they operate, and meet market expectations.</p>
Support and grow sustainable resource management and energy generation practices and projects across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support renewable energy projects at a range of scales, including those with the potential to transform regional communities.</li> <li>• Identify and support power and water solutions that reduce the costs and carbon footprint of these key inputs.</li> </ul>	Sustainable resource management and energy generation in the Wheatbelt contributes to State readiness for net-zero carbon by 2050.

## 6.2 Enhance regional living standards

The Wheatbelt is a region of relative affordability, with a rich network of communities offering a variety of coastal, peri-urban and rural lifestyles. There are opportunities to raise the profile of the Wheatbelt as a location of choice with diverse opportunity. A region where living standards are not just on par with the metropolitan area, but in some cases, exceed it.

However, the Wheatbelt is a region that also experiences considerable social disadvantage. While human services-oriented agencies focus on generating interventions and solutions to addressing many issues and inequities, the WDC is committed to engaging in, and furthering the objectives of the District Leadership Group, including ensuring economic development programs support local social outcomes. Regional living standards can also be improved by setting robust ESG expectations, including encouraging local employment and improved accessibility to infrastructure arising from new industry.

Access to quality housing, education, health and childcare, social and cultural opportunities enhance quality of life and contribute to economic growth and social cohesion. Supporting the development of innovative service models to enhance service quality across the region, particularly in health, vocational education, child care and aged care will substantially contribute to attraction and retention of local populations. Local governments are critical to the delivery of services, facilities and experiences that attract and retain populations, and need to be supported to do so.

Improving regional living standards across the Wheatbelt will continue to be a priority to attract and retain skilled individuals and enable local communities to thrive.



## Enhance regional living standards

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes
Build, hold and share regional intelligence regarding liveability and living standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise regional knowledge and stakeholder relationships to drive improvements in regional living standards and service design and delivery.</li> </ul>	Service delivery and design solutions informed by regional understanding and circumstance.
Support innovative delivery and governance models associated with community services and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for boosted childcare services in the immediate term to enable greater workforce participation.</li> <li>Support and encourage local innovation and champions in community services delivery.</li> </ul>	The accessibility and quality of community services and facilities help to attract and retain populations at pace with growth of industry.
Improve digital connectivity across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and advocate for delivery of digital connectivity solutions across the region at business, State and Federal level.</li> </ul>	Digital connectivity is substantially improved across the region and no longer a constraint for residents or business.
Plan for, and support initiatives and programs that deliver housing outcomes across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare regional housing and land activation plans to profile the housing needs of the region through assembly of quality data and evidence to articulate housing need, and capacity.</li> <li>Work with local stakeholders including Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) and community housing providers (CHPs) to develop innovative housing projects for investment.</li> <li>Incentivise and remove barriers to alternative housing and accommodation models including adaptive reuse of buildings, lock and leave and Build to Rent products.</li> </ul>	Suitable, affordable housing is available across the region.
Promote the liveability and economic contribution of the Wheatbelt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead and contribute to initiatives that disseminate information about the liveability and economic contribution of the Wheatbelt, including to central State service delivery agencies.</li> </ul>	The Wheatbelt is considered a region of choice, and recognised for its State contribution.

## 6.3 Increase Aboriginal participation in the regional economy

Increasing the opportunities for Aboriginal people to contribute knowledge and perspective in all aspects of the Wheatbelt's governance, society and economy as advisors, decision makers, entrepreneurs, land and business owners, skilled employees and community members offers immense benefits to the region, as well as to Aboriginal people.

The National Agreement on Closing the Gap is a key policy driver for Aboriginal economic and social development. Developed in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it commits all parties to working in full and genuine partnership. In WA, the Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy sets out how Government will direct its efforts towards positive outcomes for all Aboriginal people, families and communities.

The WDC is committed to building trusted partnerships with Aboriginal people, and recognise the importance of clear strategy and focus on Aboriginal economic participation activities.

Native Title agreements, including the South West (SW) Native Title Settlement, are a significant opportunity for sustainable economic development, providing an asset base and a framework for cooperation between Native Title holders, State Government and the private sector. The SW Native Title Settlement enables meaningful and lasting economic development for Aboriginal people across the Wheatbelt region. The Yued, Ballardong and Gnaala Karla Boodja Regional Corporations are important entities to raise the voice of Aboriginal people in decision making, and to further Aboriginal-led economic and social initiatives. The WDC is committed to engaging with these Corporations, and relevant partner agencies, to support programs that meet needs identified by Aboriginal people.

Supporting all Aboriginal people across the Wheatbelt to establish and grow businesses and employment potential through access to programs, funding and training, and through improving government procurement and Aboriginal engagement practices and behaviours is a priority.



## Increase Aboriginal participation in the regional economy

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes
Support Aboriginal economic opportunities arising from the SW Native Title Settlement as a significant economic development package.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build and maintain relationships and awareness of the issues, challenges, opportunities and successes facing the Yued, Ballardong and Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporations in relation to advancing their objectives from the SW Native Title Settlement.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, respond to requests for business strategy, development and governance support by the Yued, Ballardong and Gnaala Karla Booja Aboriginal Corporations.</li> <li>• Continue to clarify and communicate the role and functions of the WDC to advance Aboriginal economic participation through the SW Native Title Settlement.</li> </ul>	Strong, strategic Aboriginal organisations able to facilitate meaningful economic and social outcomes across the Wheatbelt.
Support Aboriginal economic participation and unlock barriers for opportunities to grow participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with and support Aboriginal people and businesses in the development of preferred industries, including but not limited to, land restoration, cultural tourism and bush food production.</li> <li>• Identify and act on opportunities that connect industry and government with local Aboriginal people and businesses to achieve mutual benefits.</li> <li>• Improve Aboriginal procurement outcomes through two-way education about Aboriginal procurement policy, and support programs that build local capacity and capability.</li> <li>• Support and contribute to clear State-wide Aboriginal economic development strategy, including objectives and targets contributing to the growth of Aboriginal economic participation.</li> <li>• Engage regularly with Aboriginal leaders and organisations across the Wheatbelt, building relationship, understanding and awareness of challenges and opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>Aboriginal people and businesses can access timely services and supports to fully participate in the economy of the Wheatbelt.</p> <p>The outcomes of industry and government are enhanced as a result of greater inclusion of Aboriginal people and partnerships with Aboriginal organisations.</p>

## 6.4 Organisational Excellence

Identifying, attracting and retaining talent, skills and experience to the region is a critical element of the Wheatbelt's future success. The WDC is committed to leading by example, ensuring transparent and effective governance, systems and processes, and healthy Board and staff behaviours, and supporting other regional organisations to do the same.

The WDC is also committed to being trusted partners in regional development, understanding and working collaboratively across the Regional Development Portfolio to meet statutory obligations and deliver government objectives for regional development and economic growth. Capability development and succession planning are key to the long-term success of the WDC.

Goals	Strategies	Outcomes
Develop and retain collaborative and trusted partnerships in regional development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, facilitate and act upon opportunities to build partnerships across government, community, not for profit, private and Aboriginal sectors that further economic and social development of the region.</li> <li>Build and maintain a network of strategic high functioning stakeholder networks relevant to the Wheatbelt.</li> </ul>	Initiatives and projects across the region leverage capital and resources from across government, community, not for profit, private and Aboriginal sectors.
As an organisation, lead by example demonstrating effective organisational governance, systems, processes and behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the Minister, Board and broader Regional Development Portfolio timely, high-quality information that supports regional development outcomes for the Wheatbelt.</li> <li>Communicate the importance of adapting and evolving workforce policies to attract and retain high quality staff in the regions.</li> <li>Foster a supportive, high performing organisational culture that is aligned with a physically dispersed, highly mobile workforce.</li> <li>Actively provide appropriate staff training and resources to effectively perform roles and apply good governance practices.</li> <li>Support initiatives that facilitate workplace diversity, inclusion and career progression.</li> <li>Comply with the Regional Development Commission Act and other applicable legislation.</li> <li>Manage government business and programs with integrity and in a timely and effective manner.</li> </ul>	<p>The WDC has a strong organisational reputation with appropriately skilled and experienced staff and Board members to deliver regional development outcomes.</p> <p>The WDC is an employer of choice.</p>





# 7 Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

## 7.1 Implementation

This plan sets out a strategic framework and priority areas of focus for the WDC over the three-year operating period to 2026. It will be used by the Board, CEO and staff to direct the organisations operations over that period, as well as to communicate with government, industry and community stakeholders about what can be expected of our organisation over this period.

The initiatives, programs, projects and resource allocations to deliver on this plan will be influenced by:

- **Alignment** with our purpose, values and vision for the region.
- **Deliverability** of programs and projects, ensuring they are practical, achievable and able to be resourced.
- **Momentum**, prioritising programs and projects that mutually support each other and the goals, strategies and outcomes established by this plan.
- **Accountability**, with roles and responsibilities that can be clearly allocated and understood across stakeholders; and
- **Timelines** that are clear, with agreed milestones and deadlines.

The Board and staff are committed to working with key stakeholders across the region, government and industry. This includes:

- The Wheatbelt's 42 local governments
- Aboriginal organisations and knowledge holders
- Business and industry
- State Government agencies, particularly those involved in advancing key industry sectors, natural environments, human services and infrastructure provision.
- Government Trading Enterprises, including DevelopmentWA, Western Power and Water Corporation
- Peak industry bodies, and
- Community organisations and service providers across the region.





## 7.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The WDC is committed to monitoring and evaluating its performance, impact and effectiveness utilising the following mechanisms:

Key performance indicators reported via the Annual Report:

- Effectiveness, via the outcomes of a client survey rating the WDC's coordination and promotion of economic and social development; and
- Efficiency, through the report of average cost per project.
- Internal and external risk audits.
- Response times to governance requirements.
- Accuracy and utility of advice to government.
- Timely delivery and acquittal of funded projects.
- Quantifying local content in State Government projects in the region.
- Monitoring of the macroeconomic environment and key regional statistics (for example, Census data) to reflect regional performance and trends.

The WDC also recognises the importance of program and project evaluation ensuring accountability, successful implementation, and the capture and application of lessons-learned. The following enquiries in relation to program and project evaluation are generally adopted as part of closing out projects or programs:

- Were goals clearly identified before implementation commenced?
- Were the goals met, including for deliverables and timelines?
- Was the program/project on budget?
- Was the program/project on scope?
- What feedback was received from stakeholders during and after completion?
- Was a de-brief held at the end of the program/project to capture lessons-learned?
- Has a plan been developed to ensure the lessons-learned are being incorporated into the work of the WDC and the Regional Development Portfolio?

**The WDC looks forward to working with our regional , State and Federal stakeholders to realise the objectives of the 2024-26 Strategic Plan and associated benefits to our regions social and economic resilience and prosperity.**



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