



Strategic Directions

(2015 – 2020)

Final Draft, December 2014

Executive Summary

The Strategic Directions (2015 – 2020) of the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC) is the framework for the excellent working relationship that has developed between the four Local Government Authorities.

The Councils have achieved good collaboration on priorities such as the provision of aged housing and independent living facilities, the development of regional records archiving, water recycling and regional road initiatives.

The VROC represents independent communities working together to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

This plan sets out the strategic directions for the VROC and identifies the priority initiatives to be progressed over the next five years.

We commend these Strategic Directions to you to guide regional collaboration.

Shire President



Shire President



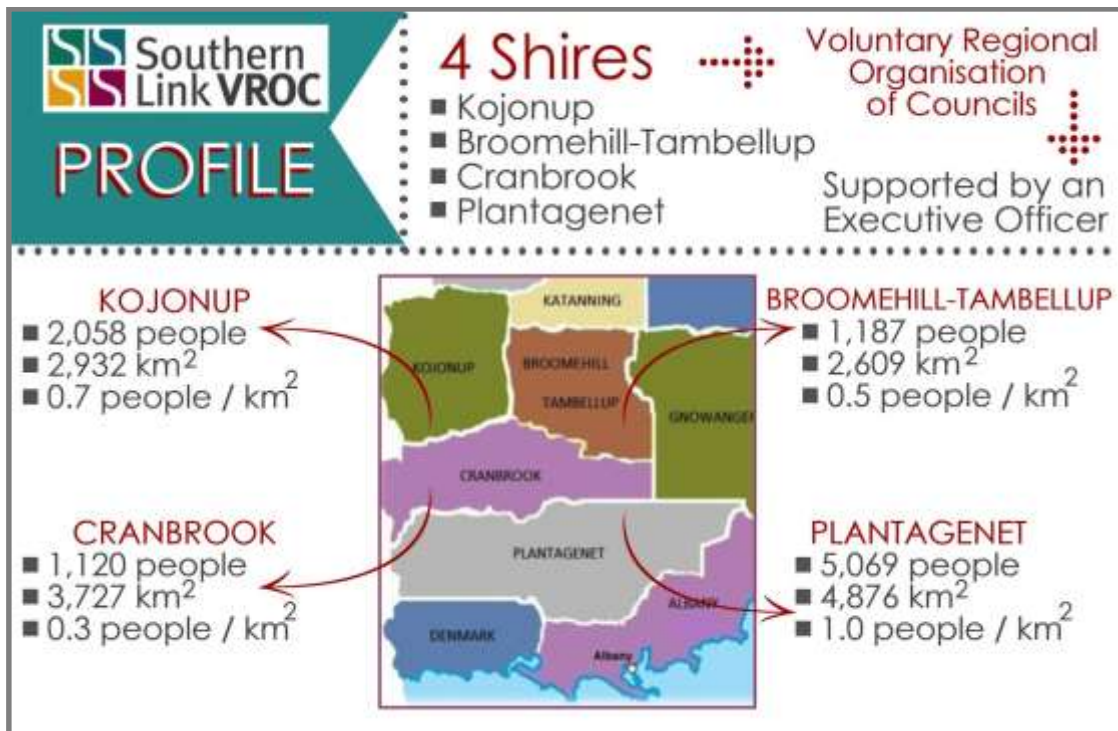
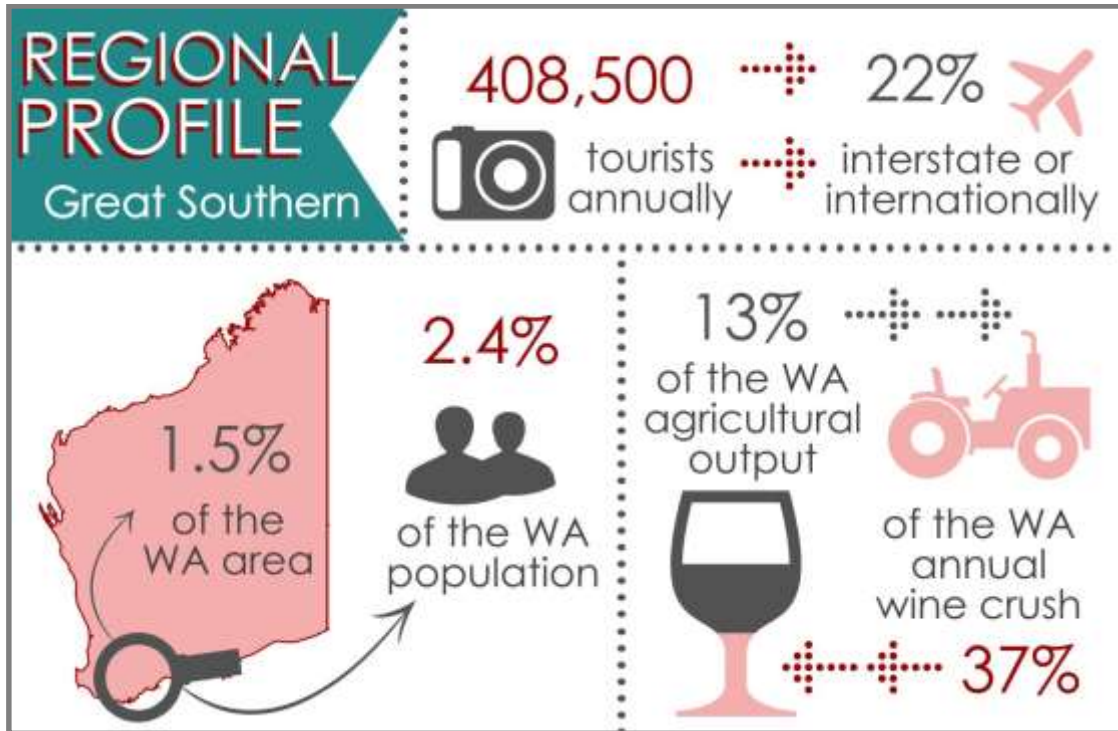
Shire President

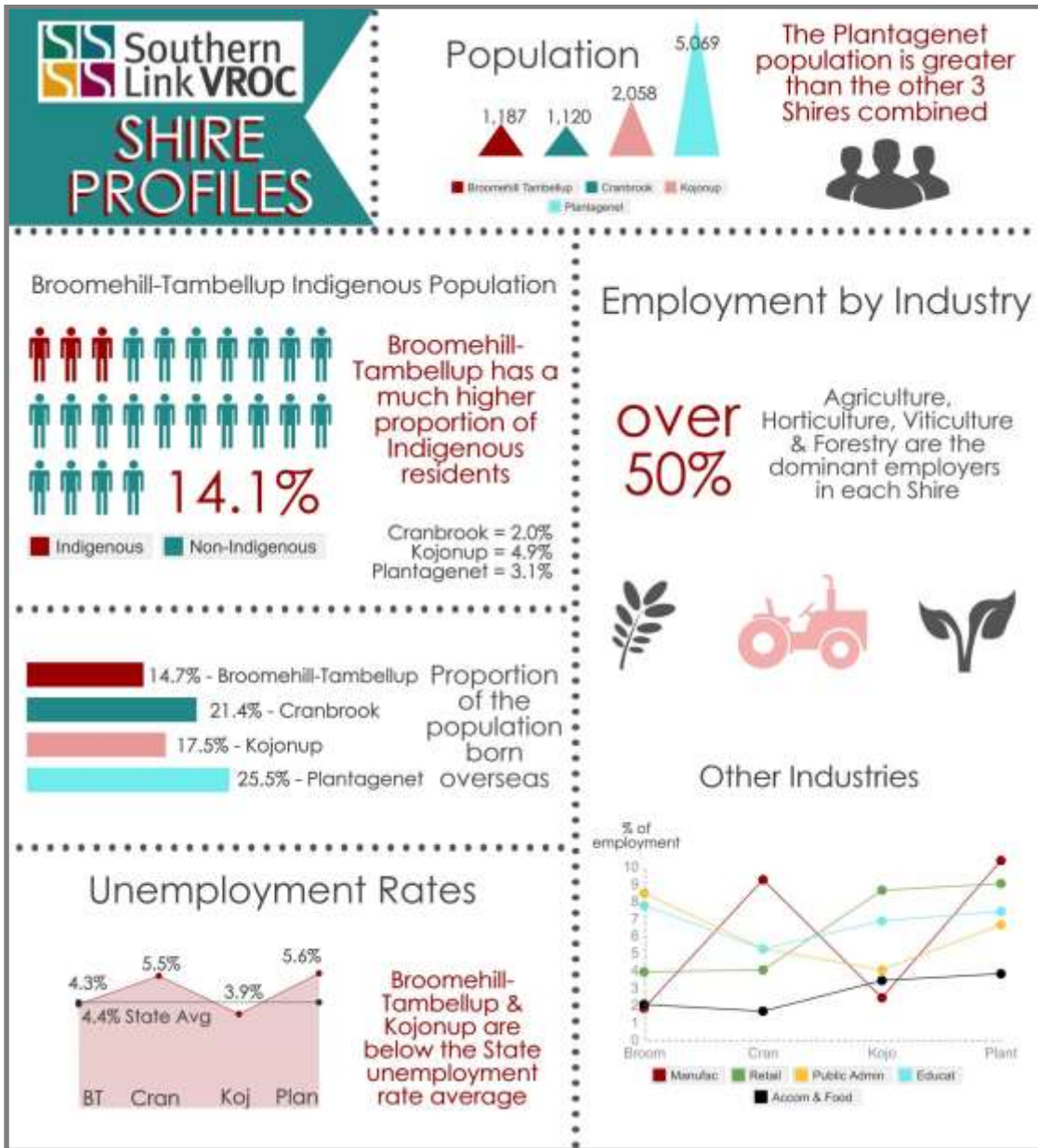


Shire President



Profiles





Figures for each Shire are taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Regional Data Summaries¹ and the 2011 Census².

¹ ABS, *Regional Data Summaries for Statistical Local Areas of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup, Plantagenet*, 2013

² Quick Stats (Census 2011), ABS

Strategic Plan at a Glance

This Strategic Plan at a Glance provides an overview of the goals, strategies and targets that the Southern Link VROC will seek to achieve over the next five years.

Our strategic directions and our action planning is presented in more detail in the following pages.

Vision: To sustain a collaborative partnership that serves as an exemplar to other Local Government groupings.				
Regional Economic Development	Governance	Environment	Human Resources	Regional Community Development
Goal: Stimulate economic growth and business opportunity.	Goal: Provide sub regional leadership through the VROC.	Goal: Value and protect the environment.	Goal: Increase capacity through collaboration.	Goal: Build capacity to enable communities to achieve.
S1: Support the implementation of wider regional initiatives. S2: Collaborate on safe and efficient road networks. S3: Improve the provision and maintenance of infrastructure. S4: Develop uniformity across planning schemes.	S1: Articulate a clear direction for the VROC. S2: Build wider support for the VROC from Elected Members and the community. S3: Build a culture of collaboration and trust.	S1: Plan for the potential impact of climate variability. S2: Encourage natural resource management. S3: Improve waste management.	S1: Share systems and processes between member LGAs. S2: Develop professional specialities for each LGA. S3: Share training and professional development at the officer level.	S1: Support skills development across the communities. S2: Collaborate on common community development projects.

Implementation

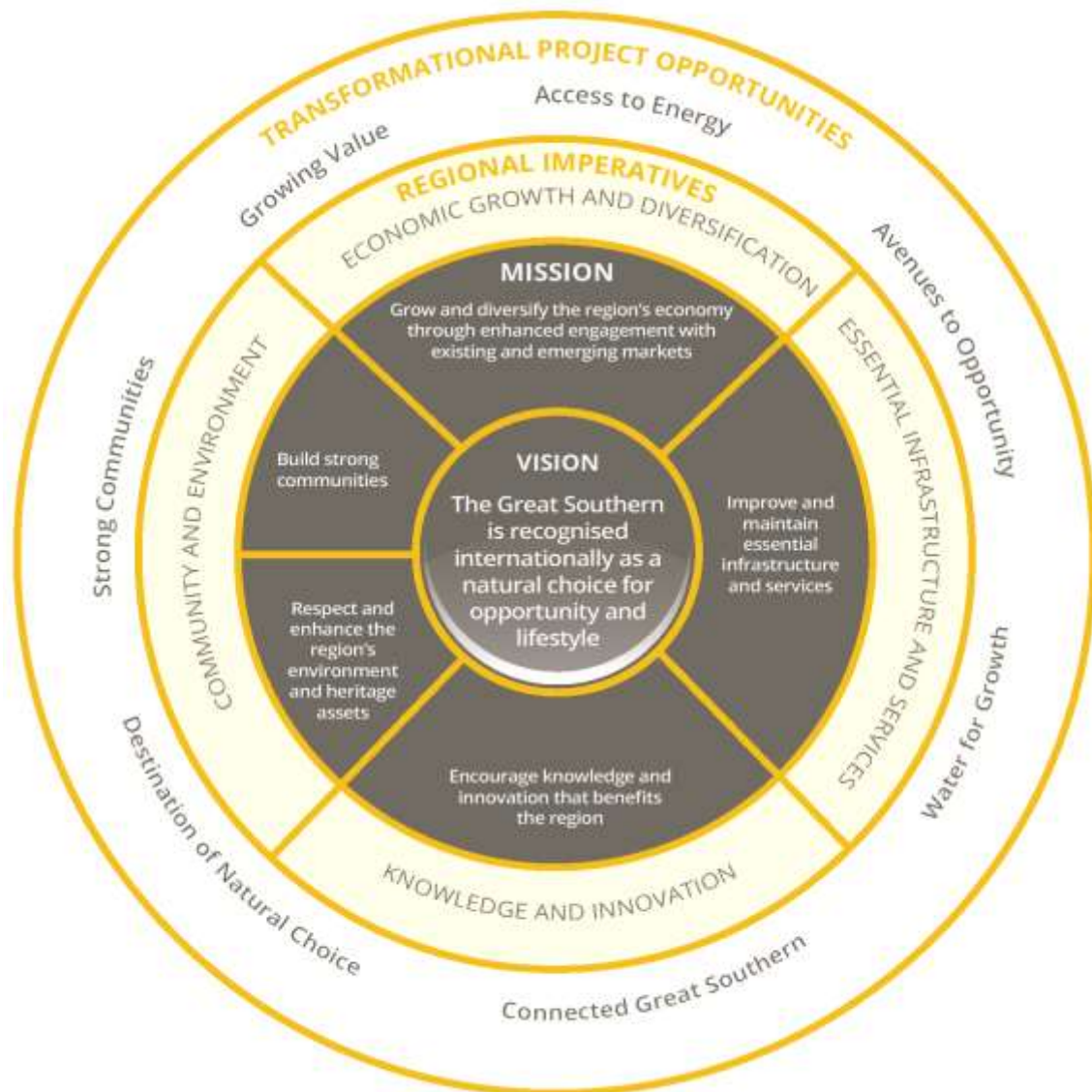
Each Local Government Authority is committed to supporting these goals and strategic directions. Officers from the LGAs will take responsibility to implement actions within their own organisations and to drive working collaborations across the organisations. Review and continual improvement will be undertaken as a shared exercise.

Our Strategic Direction

Vision for the Great Southern

The vision or preferred future for the Great Southern is that:

The Great Southern is recognised internationally as a natural choice for opportunity and lifestyle.



The transformational project areas are:³

➤ **Growing Value**

Further expand production, value adding and international marketing of the region's food products.

➤ **Access to Energy**

Ensure the Great Southern has access to a range of energy sources that are affordable and secure and able to meet the requirements of industry and the community.

➤ **Water for Growth**

Ensure the long-term security of the Great Southern's water supply to meet industry and community requirements.

➤ **Avenues to Opportunity**

Ensure the region's transport network has the capacity to safely and efficiently provide connections to domestic and export markets; provide industry hubs for regional enterprises.

➤ **Connected Great Southern**

Integrate and expand the Great Southern's engagement with the global digital environment in order to develop learning and research initiatives with national and international connections and maximise the region's capacity to harness business and investment opportunities.

➤ **Destination of Natural Choice**

Further develop the Great Southern's iconic tourism product and its marketing to prospective visitors; support the growth of a dynamic arts and creative sector with links to the tourism industry.

➤ **Strong Communities**

Maintain and enhance the region's communities to ensure the Great Southern is recognised as a preferred region in which to live, work and invest.

³ Great Southern Development Commission, *Draft Great Southern Regional Blueprint*. 2014

Vision for the Southern Link VROC

Our Vision is to sustain a collaborative partnership that serves as an exemplar to other Local Government groupings.

Our Purpose is to work collaboratively as Local Governments to share knowledge and resources for mutually beneficial outcomes that support the vision for the Great Southern region.

Our Shared Values are:



Strategic Analysis

The **critical trends** that will impact the Southern Link VROC members are:

- Reductions in funding levels;
- Uncertainty of Local Government Reform;
- An ageing population profile;
- Necessity to do more with less resources, arising from cost shifting for service provision and increasing expectations from ratepayers;
- Increased requirements for compliance and accountability.

The **key challenges** for our sub region are:

- Economic growth including value adding of the agricultural base, attraction of new industry and encouragement for new business;
- Inadequate provision of civil infrastructure for power, water, sewerage and especially, communications;
- Population attraction and retention in the region;
- Road infrastructure, access and road safety.

We also **need to progress:**

- Access to health services and facilities;
- Waste management and recycling;
- Education quality and retention of High School students.

The **critical success factors** to enable us to implement our plan are:

- Effective and committed collaboration between officers and staff of the four LGAs;
- Consistent support from the Elected Members of the four LGAs;
- Strategic focus from the Executive Officer of the Southern Link VROC.

Priority Strategies

The **priority strategies** that will meet these critical success factors are:

- Critical Success Factor: *Effective and committed collaboration between officers and staff of the four LGAs:*

Strategy 1:

Share systems and processes between member LGAs:

Target:

Every LGA actively involved in collaborative exercises within 2 years.

Strategy 2:

Develop professional specialities for each LGA:

Target:

4 speciality hubs operating within 2 years.

Strategy 3:

Share training and professional development at the officer level.

Target:

At least 25% of training and development shared within 2 years.

- Critical Success Factor: *Consistent support from the Elected Members of the four LGAs:*

Strategy 1:

Articulate a clear direction for the VROC:

Target:

Documented VROC directions and achievements each year.

Strategy 2:

Build wider support for the VROC from Elected Members and the community:

Target:

Satisfaction rating of 60% or greater from Elected Members within 2 years.

Strategy 3:

Build a culture of collaboration and trust:

Target:

Identifiable VROC culture within 2 years.

- Critical Success Factor: *Strategic focus from the Executive Officer of the Southern Link VROC:*

Strategy 4:

Develop uniformity across planning schemes:

Target:

Uniform planning schemes implemented within 2 years.

Plus collaborative actions as directed by the VROC.

Goals, Strategies and Actions

Regional Economic Development

Goal One: Stimulate economic growth and business opportunity:	
Strategy 1: Support the implementation of wider regional initiatives.	Target: One regional initiative implemented within 2 years.
Actions	Deliverables
Action 1: Ensure representation on priority regional working groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation on four working groups.
Action 2: Advance the case for a Southern Link Transport Hub in Cranbrook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included in Regional Blueprint priorities.
Action 3: Support planning for a Regional Wine and Food Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SL VROC concept paper prepared.
Strategy 2: Collaborate on safe and efficient road networks:	Target: One significant road initiative per year.
Actions	Deliverables
Action 1: Prioritise problematic locations on a regional basis to strengthen the funding case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed list of priorities.
Action 2: Investigate support for a regional fatigue management facility on Albany Highway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options paper presented.
Action 3: Work collaboratively through the Regional Road Group to upgrade significant local roads that join Shires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Road Group support of priorities.

<p>Strategy 3: Improve the provision and maintenance of infrastructure:</p>	<p>Target: One improvement in infrastructure within 3 years.</p>
<p>Actions</p> <p>Action 1: Collaborate to resource the assessment of infrastructure gaps across the sub region.</p> <p>Action 2: Generate support to extend water infrastructure to all VROC Shires.</p> <p>Action 3: Build support for additional communication infrastructure and towers in the sub region.</p>	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure assessment presented. • Agreement in principle obtained. • Included in Regional Blueprint.
<p>Strategy 4: Develop uniformity across planning schemes:</p>	<p>Target: Uniform planning schemes implemented within 2 years.</p>
<p>Actions</p> <p>Action 1: Develop uniform definitions within Local Planning Schemes.</p> <p>Action 2: Develop uniform industry development standards for buffers, buildings and conditions.</p> <p>Action 3: Liaise on regional planning initiatives.</p>	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed list within 1 year. • Agreed standards within 18 months. • Mechanism for liaison established within 1 year.

Governance

<p>Goal Two: Provide sub regional leadership through the VROC.</p>	
<p>Strategy 1: Articulate a clear direction for the VROC:</p>	<p>Target: Documented VROC directions and achievements each year.</p>
<p>Actions</p> <p>Action 1: Review the Southern Link VROC Strategic Directions on an annual basis.</p> <p>Action 2: Integrate the strategic directions and priority projects into regional marketing and promotion activities.</p> <p>Action 3: Continue to develop and discuss options for reform and best practice in local government.</p>	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated document each year. • Incorporation into at least 6 activities per annum. • Discussion paper presented to member LGAs each year.
<p>Strategy 2: Build wider support for the VROC from Elected Members and the community:</p>	<p>Target: Satisfaction rating of 60% or greater from Elected Members within 2 years.</p>
<p>Actions</p> <p>Action 1: Ensure Southern Link VROC is included into the induction for all new Elected Members.</p> <p>Action 2: Develop materials to enhance the profile of the VROC.</p> <p>Action 3: Conduct Elected Member Forums to promote the progress of the VROC.</p>	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction package updated for all LGAs. • Two promotional products per year. • One forum held within 2 years.
<p>Strategy 3: Build a culture of collaboration and trust:</p>	<p>Target: Identifiable VROC culture within 2 years.</p>
<p>Actions</p> <p>Action 1: Maintain regular meetings of both Elected Members and CEOs to build understanding and action.</p> <p>Action 2: Formalise working agreements on areas of collaboration and advocacy.</p> <p>Action 3: Continue to celebrate achievements of each partner as one group.</p>	<p>Deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Elected Member meetings and 8 CEO meetings per year. • Memorandums of Understanding on at least 4 areas. • At least one joint meeting of staff per year.

Environment

Goal Three: Value and protect the environment.	
Strategy 1: Plan for the potential impact of climate variability:	Target: Package on climate variability available within 1 year.
Actions Action 1: Promote access to information on climate variability. Action 2: Share and coordinate approaches to bushfire mapping. Action 3: Ensure climate variability considerations are built into planning approaches.	Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information access available through each LGA. • Agreed bushfire mapping approach. • Inclusion in planning checklists.
Strategy 2: Encourage natural resource management:	Target: 3 NRM initiatives implemented within 5 years.
Actions Action 1: Apply sub regional influence on behalf of landcare and biodiversity volunteers and professionals. Action 2: Encourage water harvesting and recycling of waste water. Action 3: Promote options for incorporating renewable energy into public buildings. Action 4: Collaborate on pest management across Shire boundaries.	Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 1 landcare or biodiversity initiative recognised and acknowledged at the regional level. • One initiative piloted within 2 years. • Information access provided by each Shire. • One event per year.
Strategy 3: Improve waste management:	Target: One initiative for combined management within 2 years.
Actions Action 1: Investigate the creation of a Waste Regional Council to service the area. Action 2: Develop opportunities for combined waste management for collection services, transfer station management and landfill operations.	Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options Paper to LGAs. • Pilot activity trialled in 1 year.

Human Resources

Goal Four: Increase capacity through collaboration.	
Strategy 1: Share systems and processes between member LGAs:	Target: Every LGA actively involved in collaborative exercises within 2 years.
Actions Action 1: Identify and share readily apparent documents, policies, procedures and workforce data. Action 2: Implement resource sharing for at least two identified services. Action 3: Develop a shared project to target more advanced areas for collaboration, such as road construction and maintenance.	Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Schedule prepared within 6 months. First 2 collaborative exercises within 1 year. Major collaboration implemented within 18 months.
Strategy 2: Develop professional specialities for each LGA:	Target: 4 speciality hubs operating within 2 years.
Actions Action 1: Commission an audit and recommendations for areas of specialisation and best practice. Action 2: Trial, develop and document working procedures for a specified period. Action 3: Review, refine and promote achievements.	Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper presented to LGAs within 1 year. Recommendations on procedures within 18 months. Evaluation report to LGAs within 2 years.
Strategy 3: Share training and professional development at the officer level.	Target: At least 25% of training and development shared within 2 years.
Actions Action 1: Share training needs to identify common opportunities. Action 2: Identify firms or organisations that can provide shared training. Action 3: Provide local staff with opportunities for career pathways between the four LGAs.	Deliverables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common training needs paper endorsed. Preferred suppliers list established. At least two pathways within 2 years.

Regional Community Development

Goal Five: Build capacity to enable communities to achieve.	
Strategy 1: Support skills development across the communities.	Target: Identified increase in capacity in each LGA.
Actions	Deliverables
<p>Action 1: Develop and promote a Skills Register for the sub region.</p> <p>Action 2: Expand the Club Development Program to all community groups.</p> <p>Action 3: Encourage education and training providers to support upskilling of communities.</p> <p>Action 4: Extend learnings from early intervention initiatives in Cranbrook and Plantagenet to all partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Register available within 1 year. • Program run at least once in each LGA. • External provider activity in each LGA, each year. • Recommendations paper to all LGAs.
Strategy 2: Collaborate on common community development projects.	Target: At least 2 collaborative initiatives within 2 years.
Actions	Deliverables
<p>Action 1: Share knowledge and learnings on provision of aged care and independent living facilities.</p> <p>Action 2: Explore options for integrated and co-located health facilities.</p> <p>Action 3: Foster support for Traineeship Schemes as an option for youth unemployment.</p> <p>Action 4: Support initiatives for a Southern Link VROC Youth Council and the expansion of VROC Scholarships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations paper to each LGA. • Prioritised options presented to LGAs. • Relationship established with Department of Training and Workforce Development. • Options paper presented to LGAs.

Appendix I: Great Southern Regional Blueprint

What is a Regional Blueprint?

The Great Southern Regional Blueprint is a strategic guide for the region's future out to 2040. It sets out a broad aspirational plan with short, medium and long-term ambitions and a method to measure progress towards these outcomes.

Does it affect me?

It will if you live in the City of Albany or the Shire of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Denmark, Gnowangerup, Jerramungup, Katanning, Kent, Kojonup, Plantagenet or Woodanilling.

Why do we need one?

Change is inevitable. Opportunities will arise and challenges must be faced. The Blueprint looks at the Great Southern as it is now and surveys the national and international trends likely to affect the region in the years ahead so as to work towards the best outcomes for the people of the Great Southern.

What's in it?

The Blueprint identifies four main themes or 'regional imperatives' that will drive the region towards its vision. Putting these drivers against the big trends of the coming decades, the Blueprint sets out seven project areas that stand out as the keys to a strong and bright future for the region.



GROWING VALUE

Premium Food Production and Value Adding: Further expand production, value adding and international marketing of the region's food products.

Why? Global demand for food, including premium products, is anticipated to rise strongly in the near to medium future. The Great Southern is a consistent and productive food region. It can expand production, add value and further promote the region's food products.

What can we do? Boost land use planning, develop a central Great Southern food processing precinct, expand aquaculture, expand horticulture opportunities and build better links to emerging markets.

What will it mean? A more productive region, more jobs and better infrastructure.



ACCESS TO ENERGY

Energy Security: Ensure the Great Southern has access to a range of energy sources that are affordable and secure and able to meet the requirements of industry and the community.

Why? Current power infrastructure could limit residential and industry growth in the region. Providing safe and efficient power, with sufficient capacity for the region's growth, is essential for the Great Southern to achieve its goal. The region could gain more industry and commerce, and generate more exports.

What can we do? Build the Bunbury to Albany gas pipeline, enhance the electricity grid (particularly at the edge of the grid) and develop renewable energy.

What will it mean? More reliable power in the region, access to natural gas in key places, and more renewable energy. This will make the region more productive, with more industry activity and more manufacturing.



WATER FOR GROWTH

Water Security: Ensure the long-term security of the Great Southern's water supply to meet industry and community requirements.

Why? Secure water supplies will ensure the Great Southern can support a growing population and an expansion of industry and agriculture. The region needs a sustainable, reliable water supply and improved water management in order to meet the challenge of a changing climate.

What can we do? Explore groundwater sources, develop the next major drinking water supply for lower Great Southern towns, extend and upgrade water supplies in integrated schemes and in independent town schemes, recycle wastewater and develop options for water harvesting and reuse.

What will it mean? Secure and sustainable water supplies for more industrial activities and a population up to 100,000. This will help the region to be more productive and to grow its manufacturing sector.



AVENUES TO OPPORTUNITY

Transport and Industry Hubs: Ensure the region's transport network has the capacity to safely and efficiently provide connections to domestic and export markets; provide industry hubs for regional enterprises.

Why? Growing the Great Southern economy will depend on having the transport it needs, particularly road infrastructure, for industries and regional tourism.

What can we do? Enhance the Port of Albany and its transport links, upgrade arterial roads, complete the Albany Ring Road, assess options for transfer hubs, upgrade the Albany Regional Airport, link industry hubs and provide land for specialised industrial development.

What will it mean? Safe and efficient transport in the region, with more capacity in shipping, road and rail, linking serviced industry hubs and enabling more industry and tourism activity.



CONNECTED GREAT SOUTHERN

Thriving in the Digital Age: Integrate and expand the Great Southern's engagement with the global digital environment in order to develop learning and research initiatives with national and international connections and maximise the region's capacity to harness business and investment opportunities.

Why? Digital links will play an expanding role in the region's productivity, enhance small to medium businesses and the not-for-profit sector, and provide for better education, training, research and innovation.

What can we do? Seek the best in broadband and mobile networks, provide for innovation, promote digital enterprise, set up a web portal for regional marketing and investment, boost regional buying and enhance the capacity of research, training, secondary schooling and tertiary education.

What will it mean? Great Southern people will connect to digital networks that facilitate high levels of innovation, better outcomes in education, more tertiary education options and high quality research that is engaged with the region's economy.



DESTINATION OF NATURAL CHOICE

Iconic and Creative Tourism: Further develop the Great Southern's icon tourism product and its marketing to prospective visitors; support the growth of a dynamic arts and creative sector with links to the tourism industry.

Why? The Great Southern has a wide range of high value tourism assets. Developing tourism products, events, activities and attractions will grow the economy. There will be social benefits as people take part in culture and arts.

What can we do? Enhance facilities in iconic national parks, attract investment in the Albany Waterfront, improve the Middleton Beach precinct, develop cultural and heritage assets, set up a regional wine trail and hubs, expand festivals and events programs, link cultural and biodiversity trails, set up a south coast subregional tourism body and improve tourism amenity and safety management.

What will it mean? More jobs and more economic return from tourism, more national and/or international sporting events in the region, enhanced management of heritage assets and natural resources and recognition for the Great Southern as Western Australia's premier region for the arts and culture.



STRONG COMMUNITIES

Community Development and Amenity: Maintain and enhance the region's communities to ensure the Great Southern is recognised as a preferred region in which to live, work and invest.

Why? The Great Southern's population will continue to grow and regional communities need to be able to offer a range of job opportunities, good social environments and attractive local amenity.

What can we do? Plan better for human services in the region, refresh town centres, improve waste management, develop community leadership, provide access to affordable housing, enhance early childhood development, foster opportunities that flow from the South West Native Title Settlement, support arts and culture, and extend services and facilities for seniors and in health, sport and recreation.

What will it mean? A bigger population in the region, up to 100,000 people, will have the right facilities and services from early childhood through education, family years and on to senior years. They will have health outcomes that compare to the metro area. Community strength will show in volunteering, taking part in sport, arts and culture, and in measures of the sense of community safety.