Gascoyne Development Commission

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026 2030

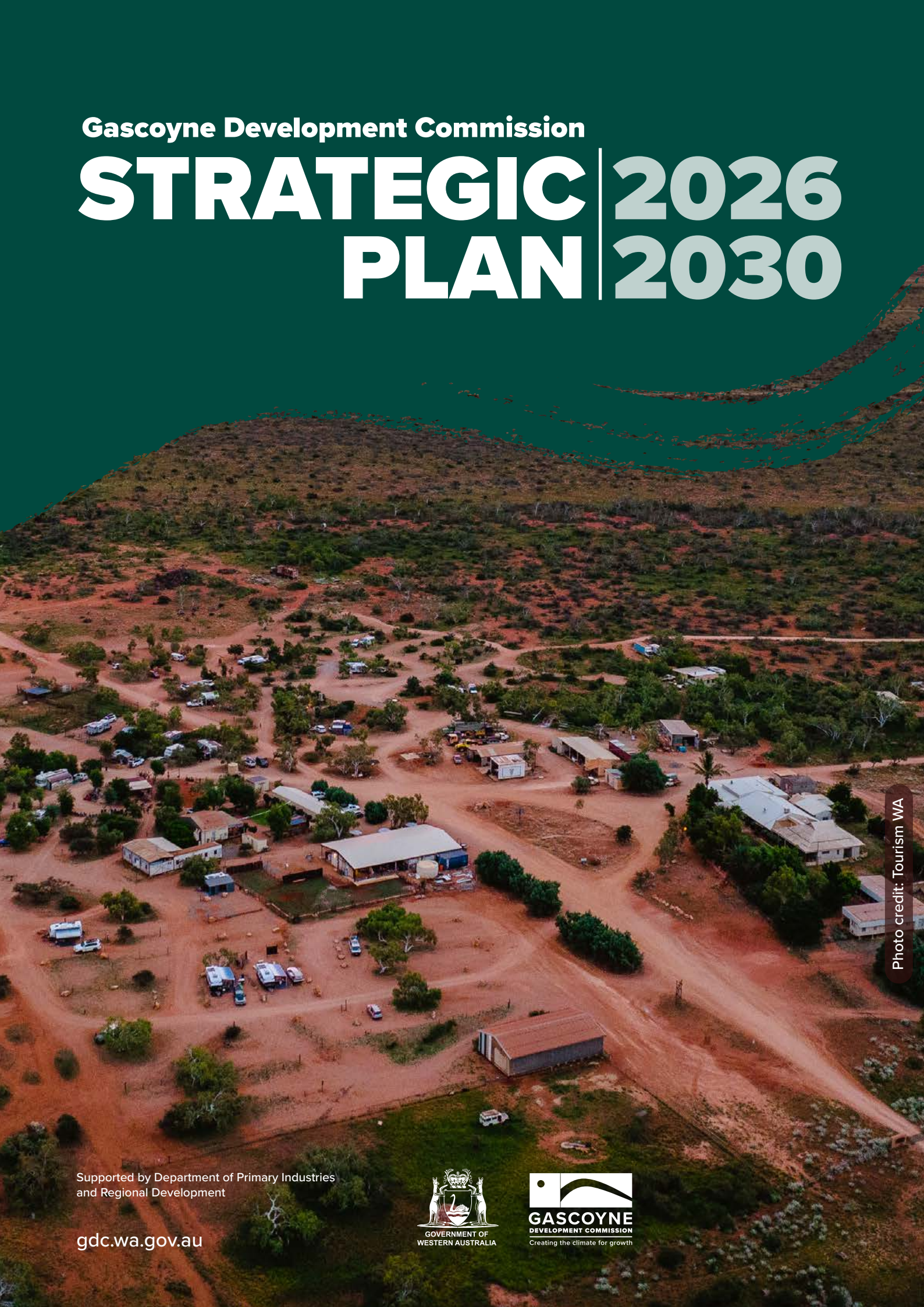

Photo credit: Tourism WA

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GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GASCOYNE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Creating the climate for growth

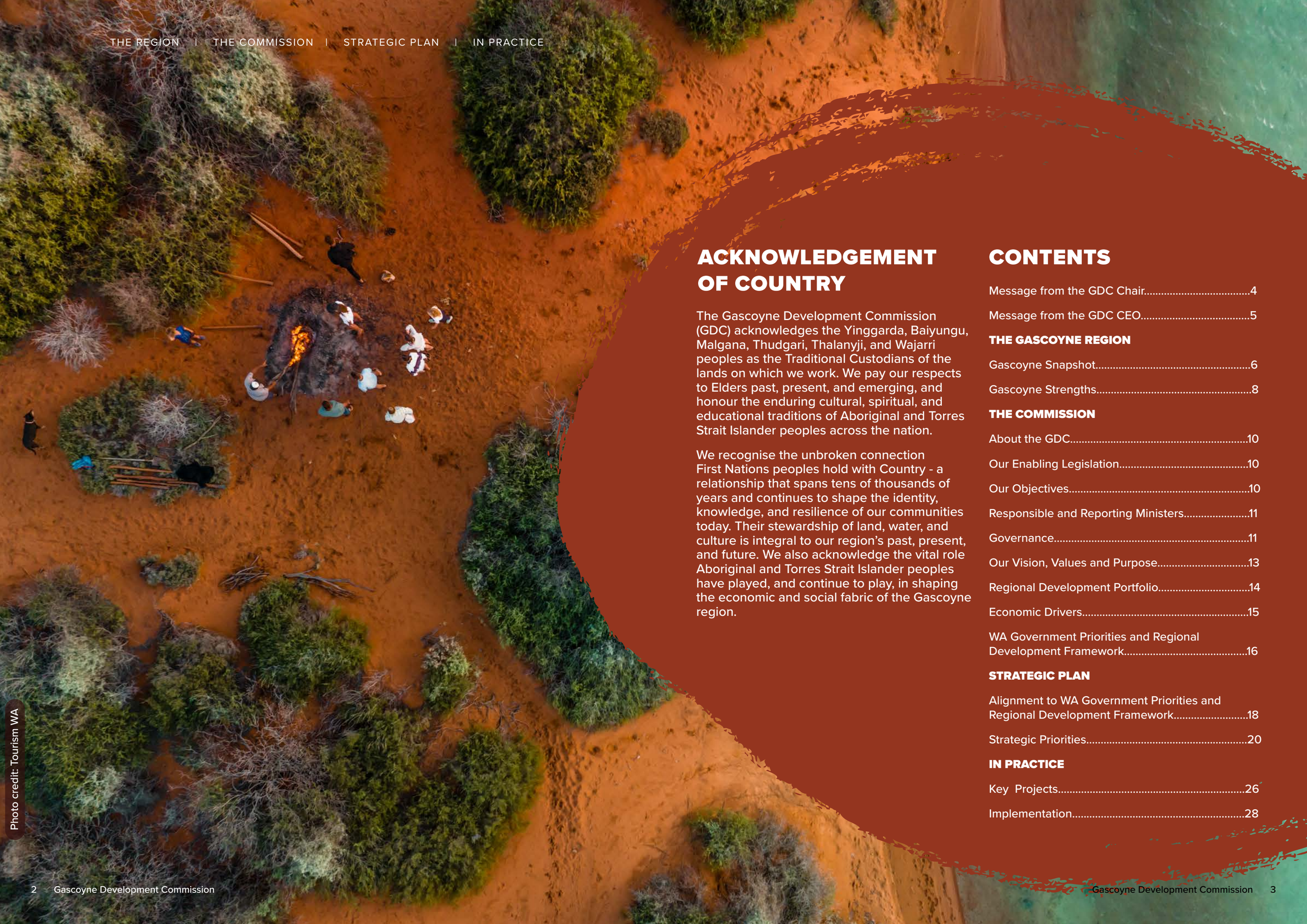

Photo credit: Tourism WA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Gascoyne Development Commission (GDC) acknowledges the Yinggarda, Baiyungu, Malgana, Thudgari, Thalanyji, and Wajarri peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging, and honour the enduring cultural, spiritual, and educational traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation.

We recognise the unbroken connection First Nations peoples hold with Country - a relationship that spans tens of thousands of years and continues to shape the identity, knowledge, and resilience of our communities today. Their stewardship of land, water, and culture is integral to our region's past, present, and future. We also acknowledge the vital role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have played, and continue to play, in shaping the economic and social fabric of the Gascoyne region.

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GASCOYNE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CHAIR BURKE MASLEN

This plan outlines the strategic direction for the Gascoyne Development Commission for 2026 to 2030.

It sets out our approach to creating jobs and diversifying the economy, in line with the WA Government's priorities for Western Australia, and the needs of communities across the Gascoyne.

We take our purpose very seriously: to connect communities and industry, and to facilitate economic development in the Gascoyne. These connections are essential for driving growth, tackling barriers, and making change.

We do that by delivering projects, advocating to government, attracting investment and by building our case on the latest research and evidence.

The Gascoyne has vast natural resources – rare earths, sun and wind, salt and sand, and globally recognised landscapes and natural assets that attract visitors from around the world.

The distinct strengths of Exmouth, Carnarvon, Shark Bay and Upper Gascoyne contribute to a diverse and resilient regional economy, supported by internationally significant tourism, primary industries, resources, renewable energy, strategic national defence and communications assets.

The future of the Gascoyne is sustainable development that leverages our natural assets to create a resilient economy and that supports the wellbeing of the Gascoyne's diverse and vibrant communities.

By working in partnership, we are driving sustainable development for the future.

GASCOYNE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TIM BRAY

The Gascoyne Development Commission is uniquely positioned to outline a strategic direction for the Gascoyne, and it is an opportunity in which the Board and staff of the Commission are deeply invested.

Looking ahead to the economic and social development opportunities for the Gascoyne is not only our statutory responsibility as part of the State Government, but also our professional specialisation as regional development practitioners, communicators, project managers, analysts, relationship managers and subject matter experts. Just as importantly, it is also the need and expectation of the residents and stakeholders of the Gascoyne, among whom we live and work.

The opportunities outlined in this plan for the next four years are shaped by forces as diverse as the natural environment; international, national and state economic forces; public and private sources of investment; and the skills, talents and ambitions of the people of the Gascoyne.

In the Gascoyne, under the leadership of our Ministers for Regional Development and the Gascoyne, the WA government has established a carefully thought-out hierarchy of strategic guidance, from the *WA Government Priorities* to the *WA Regional Development Framework* and here in the Gascoyne, this Strategic Plan. Together with other strategic and statutory plans, this integrated set of priorities will help create the economic and social development opportunities outlined in this plan and guide our work over the next four years.

Whether it is ensuring that every regional resident has a home to live in, a promising and fulfilling job, access to health care and appropriate infrastructure, or creating opportunities to manufacture more products locally and develop emerging industries in renewable energy and critical minerals, this plan seeks to advance those objectives and support a prosperous future for the Gascoyne.

THE GASCOYNE SNAPSHOT

Gascoyne Output **$2.46 BILLION** [3.]

Gross Regional Product **$1.36 BILLION** [3.]

UNEMPLOYMENT	BUSINESSES	TOTAL JOBS
4.1% [4.]	1,013 [5.]	4,767 [3.]

1,004 [4.] LIVES ELSEWHERE, WORKS IN THE GASCOYNE

3,763 [3.] WORKS AND LIVES IN THE GASCOYNE

10,530 [1.] POPULATION

12% [6.] ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

LARGEST ARTIFICIAL REEF IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

932 [7.] HOME OWNERSHIP (OWNED OUTRIGHT)

AVERAGE AGE **39** [7.]

1525 [9.] SCHOOL ENROLMENT

2 OF 3 WA WORLD HERITAGE SITES

THE RED GRANTS PROGRAM

$5.194M	141 JOBS	47 GRANTS
AWARDED TO GASCOYNE PROJECTS	CREATED FROM 28 COMPLETED PROJECTS	AWARDED (ROUND 1-7)

1. Remplan 2024 ERP, 2. Remplan (2024 R2) - Economy Profile, 3. REMPLAN (2024 R2) - Economic Overview Gascoyne Region, 4. REMPLAN (2024) - Community Profile Gascoyne Region, 5. ABS Business Counts – Gascoyne (SA3 2024), 6. (2021) Census - ABS Quickstat Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Statistical Area Profile - Gascoyne (SA3), 7. (2021) Census - ABS Quickstat Statistical Area Profile - Gascoyne (SA3), 8. Pastoral Lands Board 2022, 9. Australian Curriculum Assessment & Reporting Authority (2024), 10. Small Area Labour Market (March Quarter 2025)

EXMOUTH

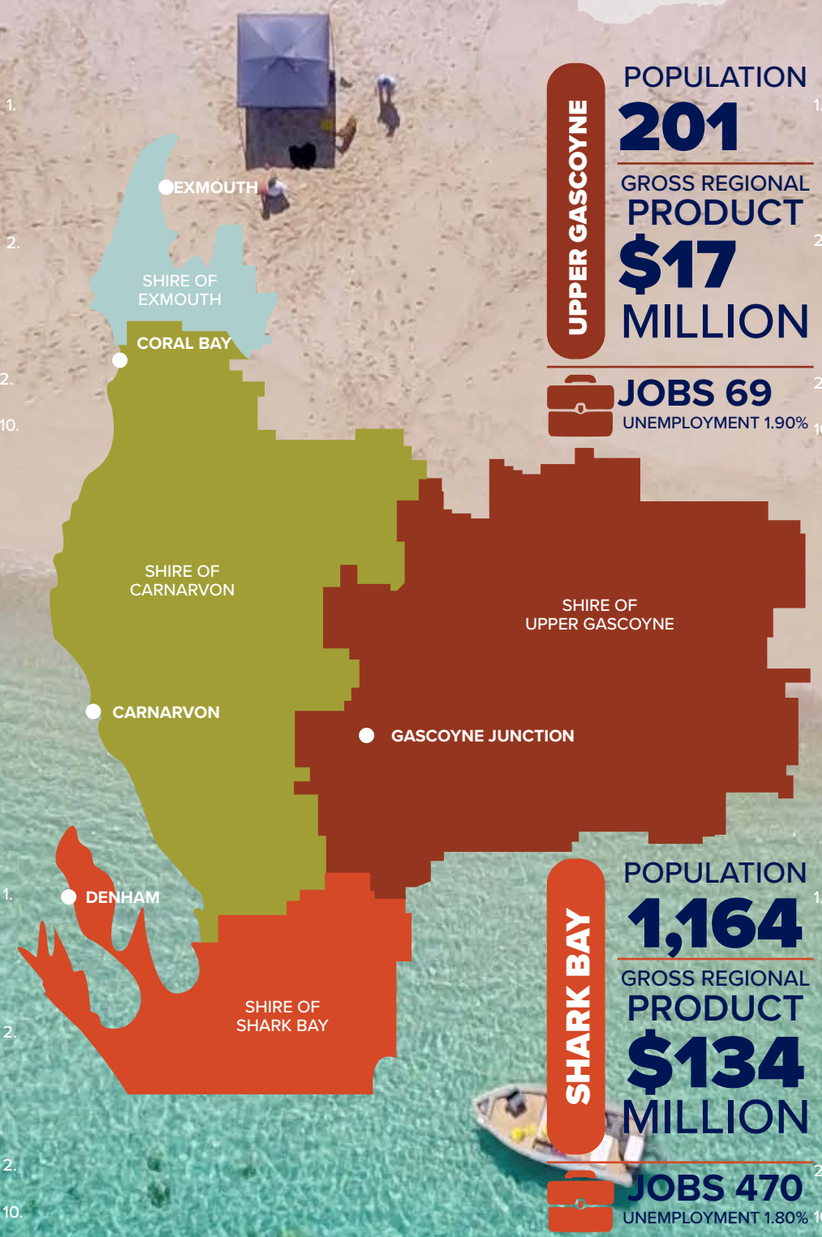
CARNARVON

SHARK BAY

UPPER GASCOYNE

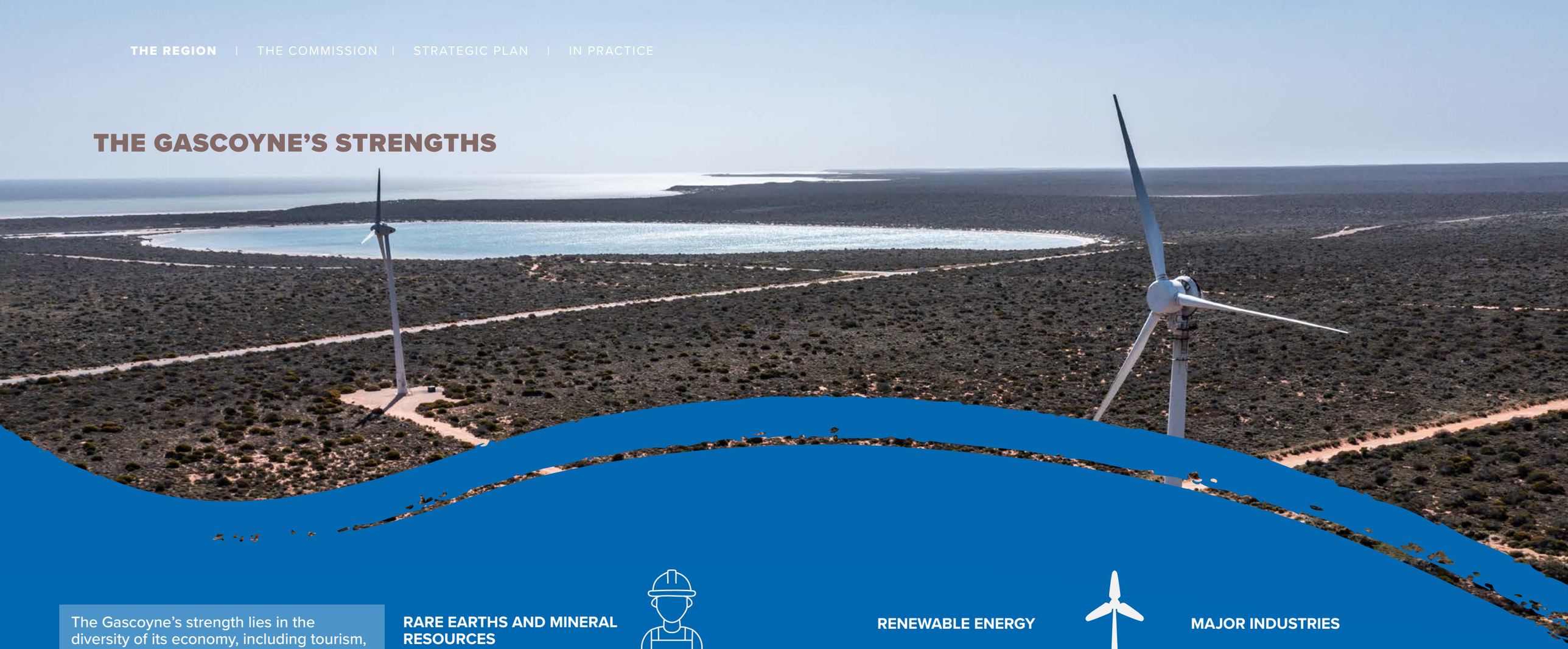
EXMOUTH
POPULATION **3,566** [1.]
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT **$444 MILLION** [2.]
JOBS 1,731 [2.]
UNEMPLOYMENT 1.80% [10.]

UPPER GASCOYNE
POPULATION **201** [1.]
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT **$17 MILLION** [2.]
JOBS 69 [2.]
UNEMPLOYMENT 1.90% [10.]



CARNARVON
POPULATION **5,599** [1.]
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT **$770 MILLION** [2.]
JOBS 2,497 [2.]
UNEMPLOYMENT 6.20% [10.]

SHARK BAY
POPULATION **1,164** [1.]
GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT **$134 MILLION** [2.]
JOBS 470 [2.]
UNEMPLOYMENT 1.80% [10.]



THE GASCOYNE'S STRENGTHS

The Gascoyne's strength lies in the diversity of its economy, including tourism, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, resources, renewable energy, national defence and space industries.

NATURAL ASSETS

Home to iconic natural attractions like Ningaloo Reef and Shark Bay World Heritage Site, the region draws eco-tourists and adventure seekers.

The Gascoyne's 600 km coastline, sunny climate, and marine biodiversity make it a prime destination for nature-based tourism including diving, whale shark tours, and coastal recreation.

Tourism remains one of the Gascoyne's major industries, supported by globally recognised destinations and natural environments.

RARE EARTHS AND MINERAL RESOURCES

The Gascoyne region is rapidly emerging as a significant hub for mineral resources development, particularly in rare earth elements (REEs) and critical minerals.

Salt and gypsum are mined at Lake MacLeod, contributing to the region's resource sector.

The resources sector supports local jobs and contributes significantly to local economic activity.

The future of the Gascoyne is sustainable development that leverages our natural assets to create a resilient economy and that supports the wellbeing of the Gascoyne's diverse and vibrant communities.

By working in partnership, we are driving sustainable development for the future.

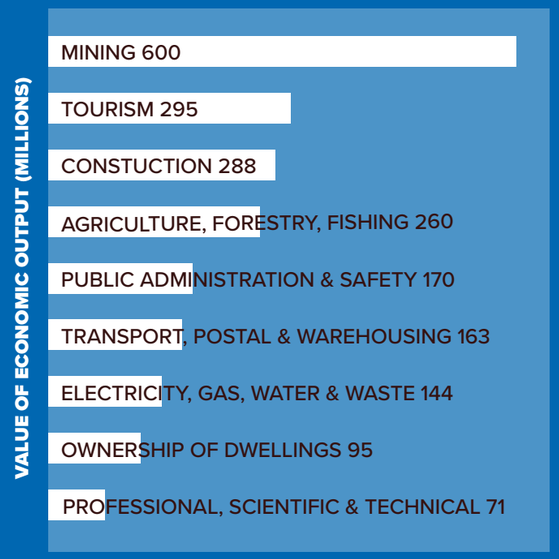
RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Gascoyne region is characterised by exceptional renewable energy potential, driven by its world-class solar and wind resources, vast land availability, and strategic proximity to export markets.

High solar irradiance and clear skies make the Gascoyne ideal for large-scale solar installations.

The Gascoyne region is also highly regarded for mean wind speed and capacity factor and is among the highest in Australia. Wind patterns are consistent and strong, especially at night, complementing solar for a balanced 24-hour energy profile.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES



1. REMPLAN (2024 R2) - Economic Overview Gascoyne Region

ABOUT THE GASCOYNE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Gascoyne Development Commission's purpose is to promote economic and social development across the Gascoyne region of WA. We work for the benefit of communities and industry across our region.

OUR ENABLING LEGISLATION

The Gascoyne Development Commission is a statutory authority of the Western Australian Government established in 1994 under the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*. The GDC is subject to the provision of the *Financial Management Act 2006* and the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

OUR OBJECTIVES

The GDC is one of nine Regional Development Commissions in WA each established to serve their unique regions and to achieve specific objectives defined in the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*.

Our objectives are:

- Maximising job creation and improving career opportunities in the Gascoyne
- Developing and broadening the economic base of the Gascoyne
- Identifying infrastructure services to promote economic and social development within the region
- Providing information and advice to promote business development within the region
- Seeking 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
- Taking steps to encourage, promote, facilitate, and monitor economic development in the region.

WE DO THAT BY:

- Promoting the region
- Facilitating coordination between relevant statutory bodies and state government agencies
- Cooperating with industry and commerce, employer and employee organizations, education and training institutions and other sections of the community within the Gascoyne
- Identifying the opportunities for investment in the region and encouraging that investment
- Identifying the infrastructure needs of the region, and encourage the provision of that infrastructure in the region
- Cooperating with other parts of government: including local, state and federal governments, to promote equitable delivery of services within the Gascoyne.

RESPONSIBLE AND REPORTING MINISTERS:

The Gascoyne Development Commission is responsible to the Minister for Regional Development. The Minister has the power to direct the GDC either generally or with respect to a particular matter, on the exercise and performance of our powers, functions and duties under the Act.

The Gascoyne Development Commission also reports to the Minister for Gascoyne following the creation of that portfolio in March 2025.

GOVERNANCE:

The GDC is governed by a Board of seven people, including six members variously representing local government, community and Ministerial nomination, and the CEO, who is a member of the Board by virtue of office.

All members of the Board and staff are regionally based and contribute specialised skills, experience and local knowledge that benefits the Commission and the communities of the Gascoyne region.

Photo credit: Shire of Upper Gascoyne

WHAT WE STAND FOR

OUR VISION

The Gascoyne's communities and economy are rich, vibrant and diverse with great opportunity for people, businesses and industry to pursue their goals.

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to facilitate economic and social development in the Gascoyne.

OUR VALUES

Integrity: We always remember the needs of the government and community we serve. We are committed and focussed on delivering. We follow through.

Leadership: We provide leadership in our community. We listen to others, build relationships, and use our skills to create solutions.

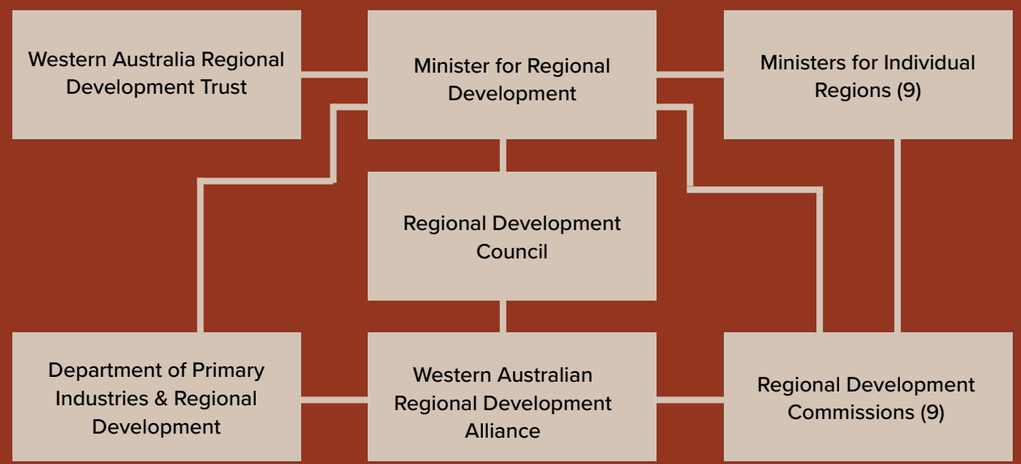
Partnerships: We use our expertise to connect stakeholders in partnerships to achieve shared goals.

Innovation: We build and foster expertise. We work with our partners to find creative solutions. We work together to 'find a way'.

Photo credit: WA Government House

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

The GDC forms part of the regional development portfolio of the WA Government.



The GDC Board

ECONOMIC DRIVERS

The WA Government's vision is for Western Australia to remain the strongest economy in the nation. WA's regions – including the Gascoyne – play an important role.

The drivers of our local and regional economies reflect the WA Government's vision in several ways.

Job creation – contributing to WA being the best place in the world to get a quality job.

By remaining a global leader in the **resources industry,** leveraging the Gascoyne's strengths in rare earth minerals, salt and basic raw materials.

Diversifying our economy for the future – at the local and regional scale.

Becoming a **renewable energy** powerhouse – recognising the important renewable energy resources available in the Gascoyne, to support the low carbon transition.

Making and buying local including our celebrated superb quality beef, horticultural produce and fisheries.

Helping every Gascoyne resident to have **a home**.

Ensuring that the Gascoyne's regional and remote communities have access to the **infrastructure and services** we need. Including access to **healthcare.**

Photo credit: Tourism WA

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Western Australian Regional Development Framework sets the strategic direction for regional development across Western Australia and applies to the entire Regional Development portfolio. It supports the WA State Government's priorities to strengthen the economy, create jobs and build strong, inclusive and resilient communities across the State.

The Gascoyne Development Commission Strategic Plan 2026–30 gives effect to these priorities in the Gascoyne, responding to the region's unique strengths, challenges and opportunities. Together, the Framework and Strategic Plan ensure a coordinated, aligned and outcomes-focused approach to delivering lasting benefits for the Gascoyne and Western Australia.

ALIGNMENT TO WA GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

JOBS

WA GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

DIVERSIFY THE WA ECONOMY SO THAT IT REMAINS THE STRONGEST IN THE NATION

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

HELPING LOCAL INDUSTRIES GROW, ATTRACT INVESTMENT AND ADAPT TO CHANGE

GDC'S PRIORITIES

DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

HEALTH

WA GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

WESTERN AUSTRALIANS CAN ACCESS THE HEALTHCARE THEY NEED

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

WORK TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE AND WELLBEING, STRENGTHENING REGIONAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

GDC'S PRIORITIES

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND HEALTHCARE

HOUSING

WA GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

EVERY WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HAS A HOME

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

WORK TO UNLOCK LAND, ENABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND HELP MAXIMISE HOUSING AVAILABILITY

GDC'S PRIORITIES

PROVIDING MORE HOMES

COMMUNITY

WA GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

BUILDING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

SUPPORT PROJECTS THAT BUILD VIBRANT, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES ACROSS REGIONAL WA

GDC'S PRIORITIES

BUILDING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

ENVIRONMENT

WA GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

PROTECTING AND RESTORING OUR ENVIRONMENT

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

SUPPORT LOCAL ACTION ON CLIMATE, RESTORATION AND RENEWABLE INDUSTRIES THAT PROTECT NATURAL ASSETS AND STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE

GDC'S PRIORITIES

PROTECTING AND RESTORING THE ENVIRONMENT

INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

WA GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

DELIVERING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

WORK TO DELIVER ESSENTIAL TRANSPORT, WATER, DIGITAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

GDC'S PRIORITIES

DELIVERING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1
Diversify the economy

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

D1. Attracting new investment and new industries

D2. Supporting renewable energy development

D3. Securing the Gascoyne's water future in the drying climate

D4. Workforce development through skills and training

D5. Making more things in the Gascoyne – especially primary production

D6. Fostering vibrant and creative economies – through supporting new products and businesses

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2
Supporting access to government services and healthcare

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

S1. Supporting local health service delivery, including health service infrastructure

S2. Supporting attraction and retention of critical workers (including healthcare workers) in the Gascoyne

Photo credit: RM Williams Outback Mag

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3
Providing more homes

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

H1. Creating new opportunities to increase residential land supply

H2. Facilitating investor engagement with government

H3. Addressing barriers to residential land development

H4. Supporting attraction and retention of critical workers (including construction sector workers) in the Gascoyne

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4
Building safe and inclusive communities

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

C1. Working with partners to strengthen communities to address anti-social behaviour and reducing youth crime

C2. Supporting initiatives that build inclusive communities

C3. Supporting regional delivery of police and emergency services, where there are barriers

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FIVE
Protecting and restoring the environment

5

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

E1. Supporting investment and leveraging new opportunities in the low carbon economy (to decarbonise the WA economy and support our trading partners to reduce emissions)

STRATEGIC PRIORITY SIX
Delivering quality infrastructure

6

WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

I1. Supporting new home construction

I2. Improving infrastructure and services in regional and remote communities

Photo credit: Gascoyne Media

KEY PROJECTS

DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

Gascoyne Food Festival

For decades, the Gascoyne Food Festival has celebrated the region's fresh, delicious produce on the backdrop of breathtaking, remote landscapes. It's now growing into a quality, high-class event that celebrates the entire Gascoyne region. The GDC continues to support the Gascoyne Food Council to guide the festival in a stronger, more sustainable direction.

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND HEALTHCARE

Coral Bay Multi-User Facility

Coral Bay is one of the Gascoyne's most treasured coastal destinations and is described as the jewel in WA's coastal destination crown. As Coral Bay continues to grow in popularity, the need for reliable and accessible services also increases. The GDC is working with the Shire of Carnarvon and the Baiyungu Aboriginal Corporation to progress planning for a new Coral Bay Multi-User Facility.

PROVIDING MORE HOMES

Accommodation Redevelopment

Expanding housing and workforce accommodation is critical to unlocking economic growth in the Gascoyne. We are focused on creating opportunities to increase the supply of residential housing across the region, helping communities grow and businesses access the workers they need. Through the RED Grants program, the Gascoyne Development Commission is supporting the Shire of Carnarvon's Essential Worker Accommodation Project, delivering accommodation that will help attract and retain workers, support local businesses, and strengthen the regional economy.

BUILDING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Carnarvon Common Ground Project

Carnarvon's community and service providers are working together on this project with the aim of delivering services that are tailored to the unique social needs of the town. GDC is proud to be supporting this project and is helping the community group develop into an operational Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation to address social issues in Carnarvon.

PROTECTING AND RESTORING THE ENVIRONMENT

Gascoyne Renewable Generation Potential

Marine infrastructure presents a critical opportunity for economic development in the Gascoyne, addressing the barriers to accessing international and domestic markets for green energy, basic raw materials, mineral resources including rare earths, horticultural and other products. The GDC is supporting investigation of marine infrastructure solutions.

DELIVERING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Tantabiddi Boat Ramp

Well-planned infrastructure is key to supporting the Gascoyne's diverse industries and growing visitor economy. The primary boat launching facility for access to the northern Ningaloo Reef is at the Tantabiddi Boat Ramp, approximately 35 km from Exmouth. The Tantabiddi Taskforce, including the Gascoyne Development Commission, has progressed options to better meet the current and future needs of recreational and commercial vessel operators.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This Plan sets out the Gascoyne Development Commission's approach to delivering economic development in the Gascoyne over the next four years.

Collaboration with partners is an important part of this plan. The strategies we've outlined here are high-level and broad, due to the nature of regional development and economic development practice. They allow us to focus our resources and effort in ways that deliver impact, whilst responding to the priorities of the government of the day, and the direction from the Minister for Regional Development, our Board, and local stakeholders.

Where new, unforeseen regional development issues and opportunities arise, the Gascoyne Development Commission may pivot, and redirect resources, to address an emerging challenge or opportunity, and to leverage economic benefits.

The Gascoyne Development Commission Board is accountable for the priorities within this Strategic Plan and delegates operational responsibility to the CEO and staff to implement it. Our work is guided by an annual implementation plan, approved by the Commission's Board.

We monitor and report on our performance, including the implementation of this strategic plan and our obligations under the Act, using an outcome-based management structure approved by the Minister for Regional Development, Department of Treasury and audited by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). The GDC reports on two key performance indicators through that framework: one measuring effectiveness of the agency based on client satisfaction and the other measuring efficiency based on average cost per hour of our operations.

Internal monitoring mechanisms will be facilitated through our implementation plan, regular reporting against the priorities of the Strategic Plan to the Board at Board meetings, through internal auditing processes and through the State Government's Annual Reporting process. The Commission's Annual Report is publicly tabled in Parliament each year by the Minister for Regional Development and is available on the GDC website.

The Commission will measure and evaluate the progress of its goals, strategies, and actions each year.

GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

GASCOYNE
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Creating the climate for growth