Regional Development Australia

GOLDFIELDS ESPERANCE

Regional Plan

Regional Development Australia Goldfields-Esperance

2013-2016

The Goldfields-Esperance Region, Western Australia

Source: Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport.

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Message from the Chair

It is with pleasure that I present the RDA Goldfields Esperance Regional Plan for 2013-2016. The Plan provides a practical and collaborative approach to achieving our vision of a sustainable region of flourishing and resilient communities enjoying an improving quality of life.

The key role of RDA Goldfields-Esperance is to build effective partnerships between the three tiers of government and key regional stakeholders to address the economic, social and environmental issues affecting the region.

We strive to:

- Engage and consult with the community
- Support comprehensive regional planning
- Contribute to a whole-of-government approach to issues across the region
- Promote Australian Government programs
- Improve community and economic development.

Western Australia is coming off a lengthy resources investment boom. This employment-intensive period has fuelled unprecedented growth over the past decade and has made the State an economic powerhouse in the national economy. The Goldfields-Esperance region with its strong mining sector, has been in the heart of this period of growth.

Since late 2012, a drop in commodity prices, especially gold, has resulted in a significant contraction in mining and exploration activity in the region. Over the medium and longer term, production in the mining sector will carry the region through. In the meantime, the current challenge facing the region makes this three year Regional Plan all the more important.

The purpose of our Regional Plan is to provide a wide range of stakeholders, potential investors and policy-makers with a better understanding of our region, including strengths, challenges, needs and strategic priorities. It will enable the region to explore opportunities for economic diversification, managing regional growth pressures, ensuring environmental sustainability and improving liveability.

The Plan builds upon existing and extensive research, planning and consultation that has been undertaken in the region by Local, State and Federal bodies. Our audience includes communities, community organisations, private sector organisations, potential investors and Australian, State / Territory and Local Governments and government agencies.

With changes taking place in the global and Australian economies, I believe the role of RDA Goldfields Esperance is vital in providing support, advocacy and strategic thinking for investment in infrastructure, services and facilities for Goldfields-Esperance communities. I am confident, that with community support and Government commitment, we can continue to develop and strengthen this vast and diverse region.

Julia Shadlow-Bath

Chairperson

Regional Development Australia Goldfields-Esperance

Executive Summary

The Goldfields-Esperance region of Western Australia is a vast area covering just under one third of Western Australia, yet containing only 2.5% of the State population and 0.26% of the Australian population.

The region covers nine Local Government Areas and is represented by the Federal electorates of Durack and O'Connor, and the State electorates of Kalgoorlie and Eyre.

The regional population growth is well on the way to the 2026 predicted growth of 62,200 residents under a median growth projection or 75,110 under a high growth projection.

The Aboriginal population is 9.9% of the regional population, compared to 3.4% State-wide. Within the region, the Aboriginal population ranges from 4.3% in the Shire of Esperance to 84.2% in the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku.

Mining and related services are the key drivers of the regional economy, contributing $9.145 billion or 80.4% of the Gross Regional Product in 2012.

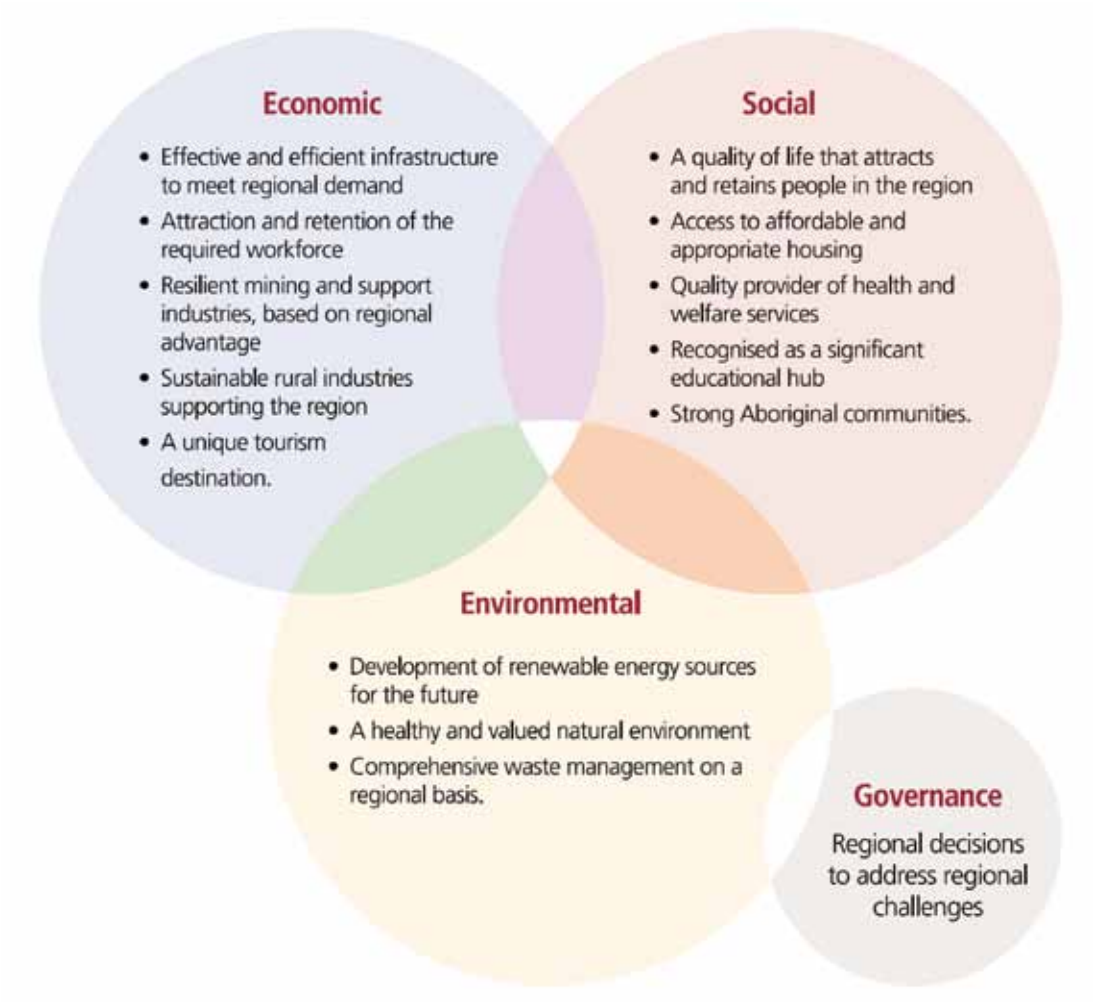
Compared to the other 55 Regional Development Australia regions, (where a lower ranking indicates higher performance) the Goldfields-Esperance region is:

19th for natural resources
22nd for labour market efficiency
33rd for economic fundamentals
38th for technological readiness
41st for human capital
48th for market size
50th for business sophistication
55th for infrastructure and essential services.

More detailed rankings show the strength of the economy and employment in the region:

2nd for average wage and salary income
2nd for local workforce employed in mining
3rd for low youth unemployment
6th for low overall unemployment.

The economic, social, environmental and governance aspirations for the region are:



The 2013 – 2016 regional priorities for RDA Goldfields-Esperance are:

- Attracting and retaining population
- Increasing access to affordable, adaptable and secure housing
- Enhancing industry resilience and innovation
- Ensuring a healthy and valued environment.

This document sets out the strategic framework for RDA Goldfields-Esperance to contribute to the regional vision.

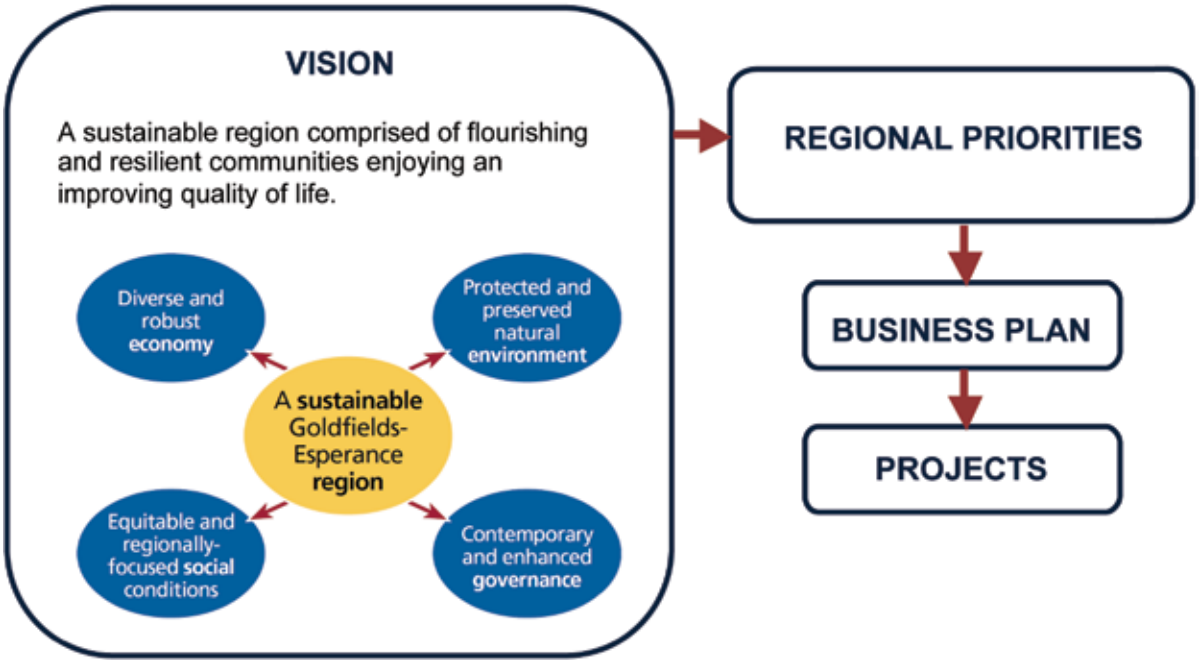
Vision for the Region

Recognising the importance of relevant and effective stakeholder engagement in working towards a sustainable future for the Goldfields-Esperance region, RDA Goldfields-Esperance, the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission and the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils have previously embarked on a comprehensive consultation process. During the initial process and a subsequent review, key stakeholders identified their aspirations for the Goldfields-Esperance region.

The Regional Vision for Goldfields -Esperance is for:

A sustainable region of flourishing and resilient communities enjoying an improving quality of life founded on:

- A diverse and robust **economy** that fosters enduring business development and personal prosperity
- Equitable, regionally focused **social** conditions, services and amenities
- A natural **environment** protected and preserved for its intrinsic value and for its foundation role in economic and social advancement
- Contemporary **governance** conditions that promote regional development opportunities and accommodate regional circumstances.



In such a vast region, this vision expresses itself with different emphasis in the three sub regional areas.

THE LANDS

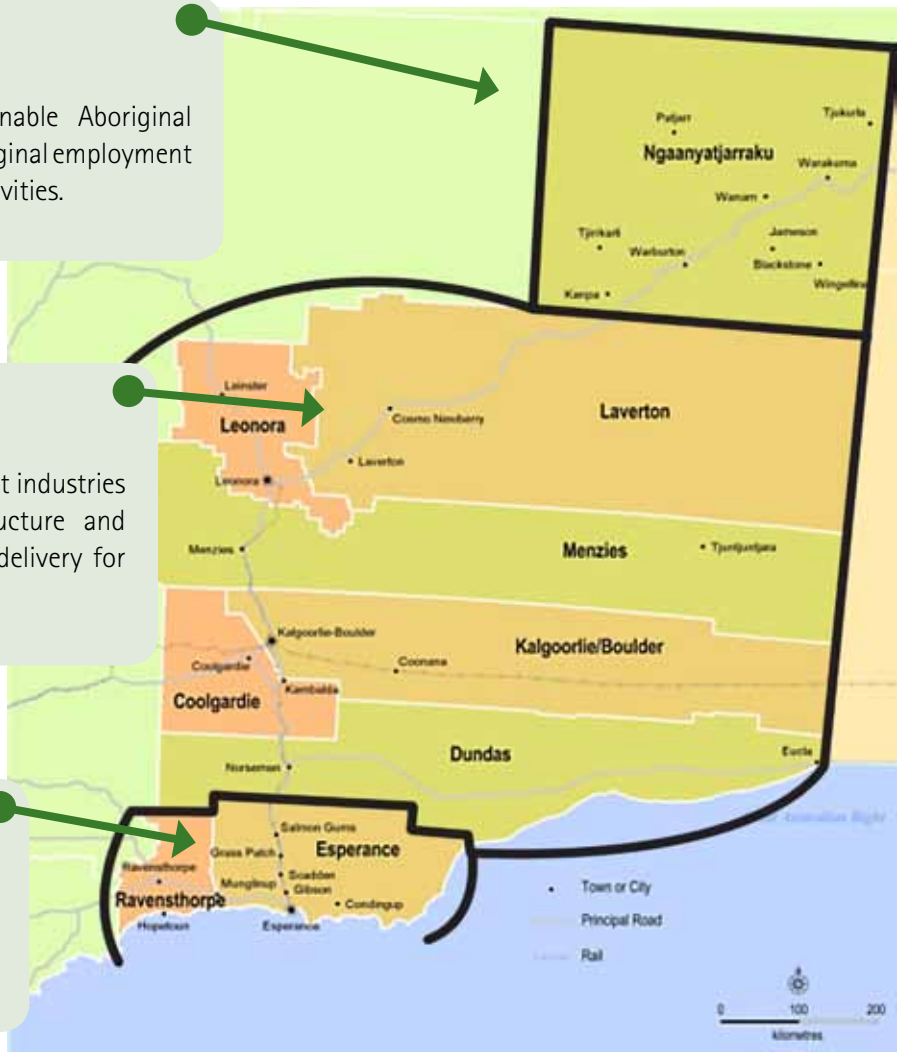
A vision of strong and sustainable Aboriginal communities, with increased Aboriginal employment and participation in economic activities.

THE GOLDFIELDS

A vision of resilient mining and support industries that attract investment in infrastructure and development, and innovative service delivery for the population.

THE COAST

A vision of a stable and mixed economy of agriculture, fisheries, mining and tourism based on natural beauty.



Role of RDA Goldfields-Esperance

RDA Goldfields-Esperance is responsible for delivering the outcomes of:

- Enhanced community engagement and consultation:
  - Consulting with regional stakeholders on needs and priorities
  - Providing a two-way conduit for information and advice between communities and government
  - Engaging with all levels of government, regional stakeholders and communities in developing solutions to regional needs and priorities.
- Improved regional planning:
  - Developing a strategic Regional Plan in collaboration with State and Local Governments
  - Reporting annually against milestones/performance indicators
  - Contributing to analysis against areas of Australian Government policy.
- Enhanced whole of government approach:
  - Being the first point of contact for Australian Government agency consultations and information about Australian Government services and programs
  - Contributing to other national agendas from a regional perspective
  - Administering third party contracts for other agencies as appropriate.
- Enhanced community awareness of Government programs:
  - Providing information to regional stakeholders about Australian Government programs
  - Identifying potential Government programs to support regional projects and initiatives
  - Providing advice and assistance with accessing funding from existing programs towards regional projects.
- Improved community development:
  - Acting as an advocate for the region
  - Building networks and developing leadership within the region
  - Brokering solutions that address regional issues and barriers to development
  - Helping to broker partnerships that address the needs and aspirations of regional communities.

Determinants of Long-Term Regional Growth

The Council of Australian Governments Regional Australia Standing Council (COAG RASC) framework has been used by RDA Goldfields-Esperance to determine regional priorities. COAG RASC has committed to the following framework for regional economic development to provide a common structure for regions to consider their development:

- Human capital:
  - The stock of knowledge, expertise and abilities of a population that can contribute to economic activity, particularly education and skills.
- Sustainable (economic, environmental and social) communities and population growth:
  - The long-term economic, environmental and social sustainability of a region, including changes in the size or composition of the population.
- Access to international, national and regional markets:
  - The ability of the regions to trade goods and services is facilitated by transportation networks, infrastructure and business relationships.

- Comparative advantage and business competitiveness:
  - A region has a comparative advantage when it can produce products, goods or services at a lower opportunity cost than other regions and in a way that cannot easily be duplicated.
- Effective cross sectoral and intergovernmental partnerships through place based approaches and integrated regional planning:
  - Areas of formal and informal cooperation between economic stakeholders that are reflected in integrated regional planning across multiple levels of government, business and the community.

Policy Frameworks

RDA Goldfields-Esperance recognises nationally significant policy issues that include:

- Population growth and demographic change
- Productivity and global competitiveness
- Climate change mitigation and adaption
- Efficient development and use of existing and new infrastructure assets
- Connectivity of people to jobs and businesses to markets
- Development of strategic regional corridors
- Social inclusion
- Health, liveability and community wellbeing
- Housing affordability
- Matters of national environmental significance.

RDA Goldfields-Esperance collaborates with the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission and the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils to progress regional development and recognises the policy and funding frameworks that guide those bodies including the Development Commissions Act, the Regional Centres Development Program (SuperTowns), Royalties for Regions and statutory plans.

Operational Constraints

The Goldfields-Esperance region is just under one third of the total landmass of Western Australia. Ensuring effective consultation with regional stakeholders is challenging as the distance between Warburton in the north-east and Ravensthorpe in the south-west is over 1,500 kilometres.

The region is also covered by the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission which has a strong presence in the region, with eleven staff in three offices in Kalgoorlie, Esperance and Leonora. RDA Goldfields-Esperance works closely with the Development Commission and with the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils which represents the nine Local Government Authorities in the region, to assist with the delivery of the RDA Goldfields-Esperance work program. The RDA Executive Officer role provides a facilitation process for programs the Australian Government is offering and engages with partners and key stakeholders to ensure the completion of specific projects.

The ability of RDA Goldfields-Esperance staff to undertake significant actions across the wide scope of issues in the region is limited, as is the number of specific actions able to be taken forward by the Committee.

Analysis of the Region

This section is a summary drawn from the Regional Profile attached in Appendix II

Overview

The Goldfields-Esperance region is the largest RDA region in Western Australia, covering an area of 771,276 square kilometres, which is three times the size of the State of Victoria. This vast region consists of three distinct sub regions: the remote Aboriginal communities in the north-east; the dispersed mining area in the centre; and, the farming communities on the southern coast. The climate is Mediterranean with an environment that ranges from extensive arid rangelands in the north and east, to mulga shrub and woodlands in the Goldfields, and sandplain soils on the coastal fringe.

The region comprises nine Local Government Areas:

- Shire of Coolgardie
- Shire of Dundas
- Shire of Esperance
- Shire of Laverton
- Shire of Leonora
- Shire of Menzies
- Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku;
- Shire of Ravensthorpe
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

The region is part of the Durack electorate and part of the O'Connor electorate at the Federal level. It is represented through the Kalgoorlie electorate and through the Eyre electorate at the State Legislative Assembly and the Agricultural, and the Mining and Pastoral electoral districts at the State Legislative Council.

The Gross Regional Product of $12.3 billion in 2010/11 was largely generated by the mineral resources and related services sector (80.4%), supplemented by a strong agricultural industry and tourism.

Population

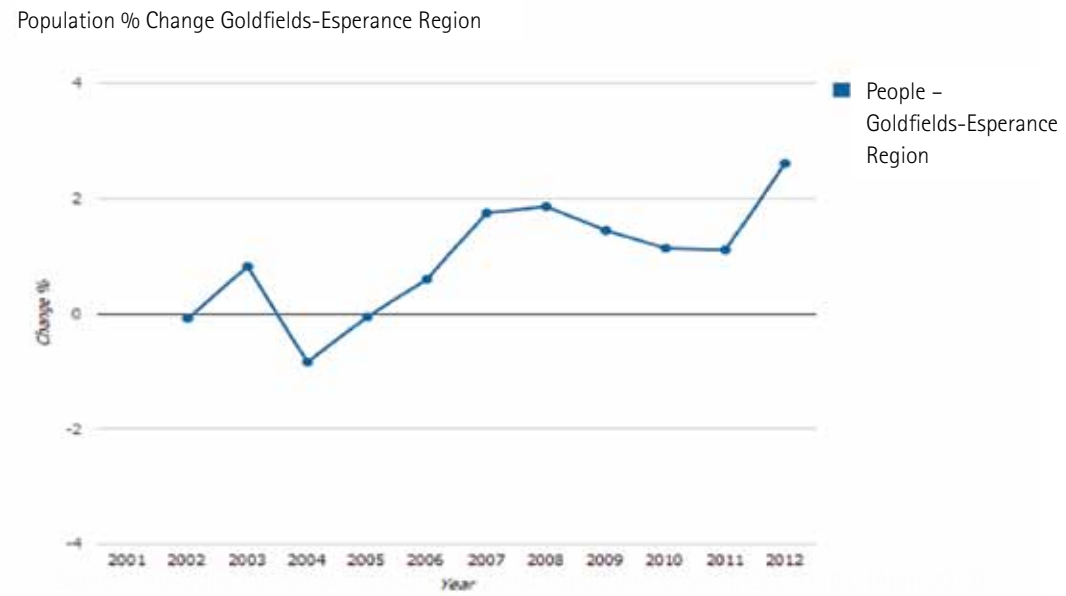
The region is home to 61,042 people, with half the population living in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, a quarter in Esperance and Ravensthorpe, and the rest living in some of the most remote areas of Australia.

In demographic terms, the Goldfields-Esperance Region:

- Is just under one third of Western Australia's total land mass (30.5%)
- Contains 2.5% of the State population
- Has a long-term population growth rate (1.7%) that is lower than the State average (2.7%)
- Has a population density (0.08 per km2) that is one tenth of the State population density (0.98 per km2)
- Has a median age of 32.2 years and a sex ratio of males : females of 114.8
- Has an Indigenous population of 5,931, which is 9.9% of the regional population.

Population growth in the region is currently above the 2006 – 2012 average.

Table 1: Population Growth, Goldfields-Esperance Region



The population profile is over-represented in:

- 0 – 14 years age cohort
- 20 – 54 years age cohort (reflecting employment provided in the mining sector).

It is under-represented in older age cohorts (70 years and older) and significant outmigration of the 15 – 19 years age cohort occurs in Shires other than Esperance and Ngaanyatjarraku.

The regional population growth is well on the way to the 2026 predicted growth of 62,200 residents under a median growth projection or 75,110 under a high growth projection[1].

1. Department of Planning and WAPC (2012).

Regional Analysis

This and subsequent sections are addressed through the COAG determinants of long-term regional growth:

- Human capital
- Sustainable communities
- Access to markets
- Comparative advantage and business competitiveness.

Comparative Rankings

In each section, data is presented from the Insight tool, developed by the Regional Australia Institute in collaboration with Deloitte Access Economics. Insight is an online index and interactive mapping tool that tracks the competitiveness of Australia's 560 Local Government Areas and 55 Regional Development Australia regions. Data is collated from sources including the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Social Health Atlas of Australia to provide comparative rankings across ten themes and 59 indicators for sustainable growth in Australia.

Human Capital

Comparative Ranking

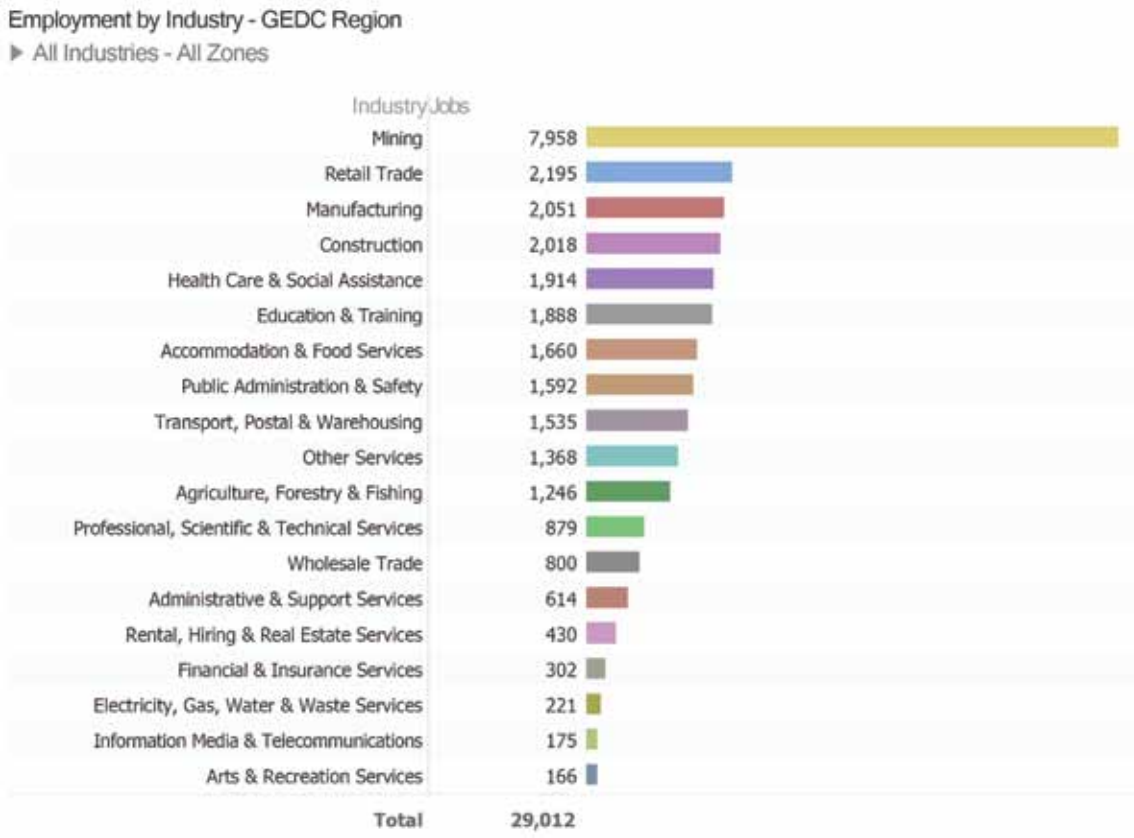
Of the 55 Regional Development Australia regions, Goldfields-Esperance is ranked (where 1st is the highest ranking):
22nd for labour market efficiency
6th for low unemployment rate
3rd for low youth unemployment rate (15 – 24 year olds)
34th for participation rate (working age people in the labour force)
49th for skilled labour (employed as managers and professionals)
22nd for welfare dependency (Government support as main income)
41st for human capital
48th for working age population with University qualifications
45th for working age population with technical certificates or diplomas
22nd for working age population engaged in life long learning

In terms of human capital, the Goldfields-Esperance region has:

- A workforce of 29,012 (2012)
- A participation rate of 73.5% (2011)
- An unemployment rate of 2.25% (2012)
- A youth unemployment rate of 8.5% (2011)
- A skilled labour rate of 23.3% (2011)
- Welfare dependency rate of 18.7% (2011).

Addressing workforce requirements

Goldfields-Esperance has the second largest workforce in regional Western Australia. Workforce participation rates in the region are high, ranging from 69% to 82%, compared to the Western Australian average of 68%. High participation rates highlight the relative tightness of the labour market and hence the critical issue of attracting and retaining the required workforce for the region.



Source: REMPLAN data incorporating Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) June 2012 Gross State Product, 2008 / 2009 National Input Output Tables and 2011 Census Place of Work Employment Data

Of the total 29,012 jobs in the GEDC Region in 2012, there were:

- 7,325 jobs in the Esperance sub region (25.3%)
- 21,206 jobs in the Goldfields sub region (73.1%).

Between 2006 and 2011, mining jobs in the region increased 28.5%. For the resources sector, the workforce in the region had been estimated to peak in 2013[2]. However, in late 2012 and the first quarter of 2013, a significant drop in commodity prices (9%) and gold prices in particular (25%) has resulted in a significant contraction in mining and exploration activity in the region. With the gold price at four-year lows, this contraction is likely to manifest in workforce participation rates in the short to medium term, given a recent survey[3] showing that at least 600 mining jobs and 680 mining contractor jobs had disappeared from the Goldfields in the past 12 months.

2 Chamber of Minerals and Energy of WA (2011).
3 WestBusiness (2013).

For the region as a whole, labour force modelling undertaken for the Workforce Futures Report[4] indicates that total demand is expected to increase by 10,200 jobs between 2008 and 2018, although this figure may prove to be an over estimation in light of current economic conditions.

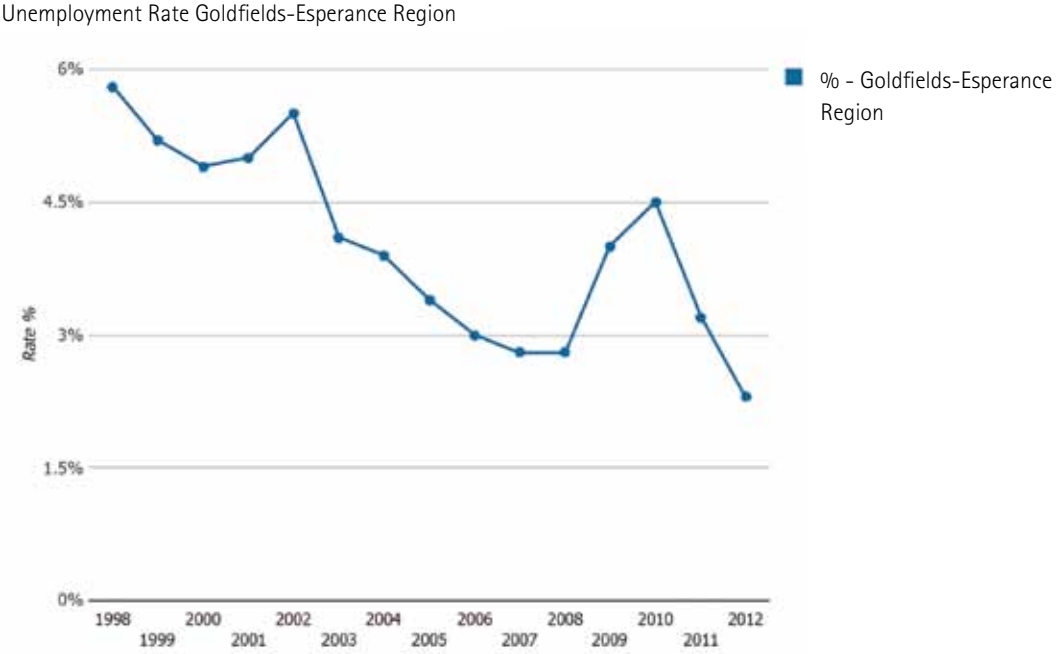
To fill these positions, new workers in the Goldfields-Esperance region are likely to be sourced from local residents (an estimated 56% of the new workforce). The local resident proportion of the workforce is much greater in this region, partly due to the greater proportion of operations compared to construction workers, but secondly because the region is more established, with better developed social infrastructure than other high growth areas.

Unemployment and participation

Overall, the Goldfields-Esperance employment service area has a recent history of relatively low unemployment, at about 2.8% compared to the National rate of 5.2% (December 2011). However, within the region, unemployment rates range from 1.1% in the Shire of Ravensthorpe to 16.8% in the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku.

The most current research shows an unemployment rate of approximately 2.25% as of December 2012, rising to 2.7% in March 2013[5].

Unemployment Rate Goldfields-Esperance Region



Source: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Small Area Labour Markets (SALM), (December Quarter 2012).

According to DEEWR labour market information, there are currently over 2,600 registered job seekers in the Goldfields-Esperance employment service area. The average job seeker age is 34 years and the average unemployment duration is 30 months.

4 Tonts, Matthew & Davies (2008).
5 WestBusiness (July 2013).

Participation in tertiary education and training

According to the 2011 ABS Census, the participation rate in tertiary education and training for Local Government Areas in the Goldfields-Esperance region are 2.1% for University or higher education which is significantly lower than the rate for Western Australia (approximately 7-8%).

Lower rates of higher education participation in many Western Australian regions including the Goldfields-Esperance region, can be partly explained by their labour markets feeding the resource sector's high demand for tradespeople and people such as mobile plant operators who do not seek higher education qualifications.

According to the 2012 REMPLAN, 10.4% of the population in the Goldfields-Esperance region have a tertiary qualification level at Advanced Diploma or higher (ie: Advanced Diploma, Diploma, Bachelor, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate or Post Graduate). At State level, this percentage is about 17.5% and at National level, about 18.1% of all Australians have at least an Advanced Diploma qualification.

Participation in vocational education and training

Access to technical or further education is low at 2.3%, with 30.3% of the population holding technical certificates or diplomas. The highest proportion of qualifications is at the Certificate III and IV levels, which is due to the strong demand for trades and technical personnel.

Sustainable Communities and Population Growth

Economic

Comparative Ranking

Of the 55 Regional Development Australia regions, Goldfields-Esperance is ranked (where 1st is the highest ranking):
33rd for economic fundamentals
2nd for average wage and salary income
51st for value of building approvals per capita
48th for market size
49th for size of economy (turnover)
49th for working age residential population
19th for natural resources
2nd for local workforce employed in mining
25th for local workforce employed in commercial fishing and aquaculture

Economic indicators from 2011 show:

- Strong annual growth in Gross Regional Product
- Extraction and processing of minerals as the dominant industry
- Gold as the major mineral industry.

Table 2: Economic Indicators for the Region

Indicator	
Gross Regional Product (2010/11)	$12.3 b
GRP as % of Gross State Product	5.7%
GRP Annual Growth (2001 11)	12%
Labour Force (2012)	29,012
Unemployment Rate (2012)	2.25%
Extraction and Processing of Minerals (2012)	$9.145 b
Minerals as % of GRP	80.4%
Regional Agricultural Production (2012)	$230 m
Regional Tourism Value (2009)	$222 m
Average wage and salary income	$55,506

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, various Catalogues.

Mineral resources in the Goldfields- Esperance region include gold, nickel, cobalt, zinc, copper and silver. Gold mining constituted 66% of the value of regional mineral production in 2011-2012, equating to over $6.1 billion. As of 2012, the Goldfields-Esperance region accounted for 65% of the State gold production and 75% of the State nickel production[6]. Other valuable minerals produced in the region include platinum, palladium and lithium.

Commodity	$ Value	%	Commodity	$ Value	%
Gold	6,048,668,468	66%	Silver	31,703,640	<0.5%
Nickel, Platinum	2,798,337,354	31%	Gypsum	14,304,822	<0.5%
Cobalt	131,324,019	1%	Construction Material	6,124,216	<0.5%
Copper & Zinc	-	1%	Other	19,482,784	<0.5%
Total	**$9,145,287,932**				

Source: Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission Economic Profile (Department of Minerals & Petroleum, Western Australian Mineral and Petroleum Statistics Digest 2011-2012).

The quantity and value of the region's mineral production is inherently linked to global demand and commodity prices.

However, these indicators mask the diverse nature of the region, with the bulk of the minerals extraction and processing occurring in the Goldfields sub region, agriculture focused in the Esperance sub region and high unemployment amongst the predominantly Aboriginal population in the Lands sub region.

Tourism brings 424,000 domestic visitors and 43,000 international tourists to the region, attracted by vast areas of pristine environment including rangelands, western woodlands and extensive coastlines.

6 Department of Minerals & Petroleum, Western Australian Mineral and Petroleum Statistics Digest 2011-2012.

Environmental

Comparative Ranking

Of the 55 Regional Development Australia regions, Goldfields-Esperance is ranked (where 1st is the highest ranking):
19th for natural resources
14th for National Parks
53rd for net primary productivity (plants producing useful chemical energy)

The region contains numerous areas of significant biodiversity that are recognised at State, National and International levels. The Great Western Woodlands is the largest remaining area of intact Mediterranean-climate woodland on Earth, covering almost 16 million hectares.

The Fitzgerald River Biosphere is internationally recognised as a biodiversity hotspot, Lake Warden is recognised under the Ramsar Convention and along with Lake Gore, these important wetland systems are home to significant proportions of the global population of migratory birds.

In the pastoral areas, Lake Ballard, and the Adelong Dunes are recognised for biodiversity and in the remote areas, the Great Victorian Desert Bioregion stretches out towards the South Australian border.

All of these areas are subject to threat from weeds and feral animals including wild horses, camels, rabbits, feral cats, feral pigs, goats and red foxes. To address these risks, natural resource management is coordinated through South Coast NRM for the southern sub region and Rangelands NRM for the central and northern sub regions.

The region must address the development of alternative and renewable energy sources, to meet its commitment to sustainability. There is a willingness to trial alternative energy generation, including wind power on the South Coast, biomass in Ravensthorpe and solar power in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The challenges include high capital costs, complex technology, lack of supporting expertise and lack of storage capacity.

Effective waste management is growing in importance as a regional issue, given the commitment to sustainably manage both domestic and industrial waste. There is opportunity to increase the uptake of comprehensive waste management systems in the mining and processing sectors.

Social

Comparative Ranking

Of the 55 Regional Development Australia regions, Goldfields-Esperance is ranked (where 1st is the highest ranking):
55th for infrastructure and essential services
55th for access to Primary education
53rd for access to Secondary education
53rd for access to Technical or further education (working age ppn)
44th for access to University or higher education (working age ppn)
51st for access to GP services per capita
47th for access to hospital services (hospital employees / resident)
54th for access to allied health services (health services employees)
41st for human capital
21st for adult population that did not complete Year 12
28th for health (risk factors of smoking, alcohol, inactivity or obesity)
49th for English as a first language, in the population
48th for Primary school performance in top 2 bands for reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy
40th for Secondary school performance in top 2 bands for reading, writing, spelling, grammar, punctuation and numeracy

In social terms, the Goldfields-Esperance region has:

- 54.3% of the population not completing Year 12
- 59.4% with 1 in 4 health risk factors of smoking, alcohol, inactivity or obesity
- 88.8% with English as a first language
- 22% of Primary school performance in the top 2 bands
- 17.7% of Secondary school performance in the top 2 bands.

With the higher proportion of workers in the Goldfields-Esperance region likely to be drawn from local residents, the challenge is to develop social infrastructure that improves the amenity and liveability of regional towns. Educational opportunities, arts and cultural facilities, sport and recreation and quality support services all add to the ability of the region to retain its population and attract the increased workforce required.

Planning and management strategies are required to address key regional social issues such as:

- Changing demographics
- Housing affordability
- Improved community access to public service support
- Social isolation
- Cultural and ethnic harmony
- Regional higher education opportunities
- Comprehensive health services
- Indigenous health, education, recreation and employment circumstances.

The State Government Affordable Housing Strategy 2010 – 2020 identifies a key challenge as recognising the different needs of regional Western Australia. For the Goldfields, this means difficulty in accessing affordable and appropriate accommodation, across all socio-economic levels.

Indigenous people represent one of the largest single client groups in the public housing system in Western Australia (20% of public housing tenants; 25% of applicants on a wait list). Furthermore, homelessness amongst Indigenous people is 35% higher in Western Australia than the national average[7].

Early childhood education and care

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a measure of young children's development (as they enter school and at community level) across five domains: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills (school-based); and, communication skills and general knowledge. Children's ability in these categories provides a good indication of how they are likely to fare in the future against health, education and social outcomes. The results are presented as proportions of students who are considered to be 'on track', 'developmentally at risk' and 'developmentally vulnerable'. A child assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' means the child falls below the tenth percentile in that community.

Table 3: Percentage of Young People Developmentally Vulnerable by Communities within Goldfields-Esperance

Community	Developmentally vulnerable one or more domains (%)	Developmentally vulnerable two or more domains (%)
Ngaanyatjarraku	78.3	65.2
Laverton	33.3	20
Leonora	29.8	17.5
Menzies	No results	No results
Coolgardie	33.3	18.2
Kalgoorlie/Boulder	30.9	14.7
Dundas	43.6	31.6
Esperance	23.6	7.1
Ravensthorpe	16.7	11.9
Australia	**23.6**	**11.8**

Source: 2009 AEDI results.

The AEDI is a relative measure and shows how local children are doing compared to other children surveyed across Australia. Of particular note is that the AEDI results show that generally all young people in the Goldfields-Esperance region (other than in Ravensthorpe and Esperance) have been deemed developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains compared to the national average of 23.6%.

Anecdotal evidence indicates there is a scarcity of child care places with unmet demand for care, and that this is having a negative impact on labour market participation, in particular on paid employment for women.

School attendance

Looking at the attendance rates for all schools (government and non-government) across the Goldfields-Esperance region provided on the My School website, it appears that schools have an attendance rate ranging from 55% – 97%. By way of comparison, the average attendance rate for all government schools in Western Australia was 87.5% in 2011.

Current attainment results provided for schools across the region on the My School website indicate a good level of Year 12 attainment.

7 Department of Housing (December 2010).

Access to International, National and Regional Markets

Comparative Ranking

Of the 55 Regional Development Australia regions, Goldfields-Esperance is ranked (where 1st is the highest ranking):
55th for infrastructure and essential services
54th for port infrastructure
52nd for rail infrastructure
54th for road infrastructure
52nd for aviation infrastructure
38th for technological readiness
41st for households with internet connection
23rd for households or businesses with Broadband internet
45th for workforce employed by technology rated businesses
40th for workers employed in ICT and electronics

Meeting infrastructure needs

Roads

Some roads in the north east Goldfields are inadequate for future intra and inter-regional traffic, especially in terms of increased heavy haulage from mining and construction activity. Traffic bypasses and upgrades are required to meet increasing congestion at key nodes. Roads to remote communities continue to provide a significant impediment to residents, in terms of access to services and workforce mobility.

Rail

Track upgrades are required for safety, reliability and significantly increased tonnages of mineral ores, especially moving north to south to access the Esperance port. A major issue arises with Kalgoorlie-Boulder rail infrastructure where north to south rail traffic clashes with east to west freight traffic.

Shipping

Based on the current rail system, the port lacks the capacity to handle predicted iron ore tonnages, requiring improved access and upgraded loading facilities.

Energy

Energy infrastructure in a region that has low population density and a large land mass, is characterised by limited network integration, island grids, stand-alone infrastructure for specific purposes (such as mining) and the need to provide services for remote Indigenous communities[8].

Energy is essential for regional development and industries such as mining, agriculture, forestry, fishing and transport are heavily reliant on diesel fuel for transport and energy generation. The challenges are to find cost effective ways to integrate renewable energy sources such as wind power or concentrated solar thermal energy production into the energy requirements for the mining industry, regional towns and remote communities. The need for a coordinated approach to the provision of new sources of energy and the maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure is critical.

Communications

Information and communication technology is an area of growing importance for regional infrastructure. Currently, 56% of households have an internet connection, which is relatively low compared to Australian benchmarks. The advent of the National Broadband Network, remote control technology and increased automation in the resource industries all offer opportunities to address issues of isolation and remoteness in a vast region. In this regard, currently 66.3% of households or businesses are connected with Broadband internet.

8 RDA Goldfields-Esperance Submission to the Federal Government Draft Energy White Paper, April 2012.

Comparative Advantage and Business Competitiveness

Comparative Ranking

Of the 55 Regional Development Australia regions, Goldfields-Esperance is ranked (where 1st is the highest ranking):
50th for business sophistication
52nd for economic diversification
49th for employment in export, import or wholesale
39th for income source from own business
43rd for access to local finance
23rd in innovation
38th for human resources in science and technology

Regional Costs

The 2011 Regional Price Index for Western Australia identifies the differences in the price of 500 selected goods and services (the basket of goods and services) between regional town centres and Perth[9]. To estimate the regional cost differences, an index is used, with Perth as the base (100) and other localities rating above or below the base.

In 2011, the regions' index numbers were as follows:

- Pilbara (+37.1%)
- Kimberley (+20.0%)
- Gascoyne (+9.3%)
- Goldfields (+5.1%)
- Mid West (+2.2%)
- Wheatbelt (+1.0%)
- Great Southern (+0.2%)
- South West (+0.2%)
- Peel (-0.1%)

The Goldfields-Esperance region at 105.1 was the fourth highest index. The surveyed locations were Kalgoorlie in the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Esperance in the Shire of Esperance, Leinster in the Shire of Leonora and Norseman in the Shire of Dundas, representing 86 per cent of the region's population.

- Town indices were:
  - Kalgoorlie (106.2)
  - Esperance (102.0)
  - Leinster (110.3)
  - Norseman (108.6)
- Food and clothing indices were significantly higher than other categories for the region:
  - Kalgoorlie (111.2)
  - Esperance (106.0)
  - Leinster (120.6)
  - Norseman (113.1)
- Housing and transport indices were approximately 3% higher for the region compared to Perth, however Esperance (94.4) recorded a cheaper index for housing compared to Perth.

9 Department of Regional Development and Lands, 2011.

Demand for labour and skills

With a strong regional economy in Western Australia, there is strong intra-regional competition for skilled labour between the Kimberley, Mid West, Pilbara and Goldfields-Esperance regions. The Goldfields-Esperance region is competing with these other regions to attract and retain skilled labour, particularly in the resources and construction sectors.

As reported in the Goldfields-Esperance RESJ Plan, DEEWR undertook a survey in November 2010 in the region of employers' recruitment experiences. This activity involved telephone surveys with 250 employers in the Goldfields-Esperance employment service area.

The survey showed that labour market conditions in the region were strong, with two-thirds of employers experiencing recruitment difficulty and about 10% of vacancies unfilled. In particular, higher levels of recruitment difficulty were associated with technicians and trades workers (over 25% vacancies were unfilled), mainly because many applicants lacked the prerequisite technical skills.

In meeting the demand for labour and skills, there is an increasing presence of Fly-In Fly-Out (FIFO) workers in the Goldfields-Esperance region. Survey responses show that employers are using FIFO workers to fill vacancies for cleaners and mining labourers as well as for qualified tradespeople.

Over 16% of vacancies for community and personal services workers remained unfilled, mostly due to the location of the jobs on offer.

Diversifying the economic base

Although the long term outlook for minerals in the region is strong, there has been a significant economic slowdown in the minerals sector in 2012/13. This has flowed from the terms of trade for the region peaking in the last quarter of 2011. As a consequence, there has been a severe curtailment of exploration expenditure and activity which has had a compounding effect on service industries to the mining sector.

Exacerbating this situation is the decline in the price of gold (25%) in the first quarter of 2013 which has seen further cutbacks and in some cases, mine closures. At the same time as falling metal prices, miners face rising costs. The cost of mining an ounce of gold has risen from US $280 in 2005 to US $775 in 2012[10].

Adding to this pressure, the most recent data on consumer confidence[11] shows that consumer outlook in Western Australia has fallen to a record low in the June quarter of 2013.

Consumers are increasingly concerned about the political and economic environment, with just 10% of respondents believing that conditions in the Western Australian economy would improve in the next three months, and only 4% of regional respondents expecting an improvement. The sharp decline in sentiment is largely driven by rising cost of living pressures, especially increases in housing and rental costs.

The Goldfields-Esperance, like much of Western Australia is a cyclical economy with a reliance on big projects and large exports (46% of national exports, especially in mining, petroleum and farming).

Despite the current cutbacks in investment, $100 billion of mining and petroleum exports are taking place, $177 billion of resource projects are either in construction or committed and 30% of Australia's business investment is taking place in Western Australia[12].

The economic growth rate has dropped back from 6.7% in 2012 to a predicted rate of 4 to 6% in the years to come. Production in the mining sector will continue despite the current contraction in investment and exploration. The challenge on the production side is that mining costs in Australia exceed international benchmarks by one third.

10 BMO Capital Markets (2013).
11 Curtin Business School (2013).
12 Premier's Speech, the Australian & Deutsche Bank Business Leaders Forum, Perth, June 2013.

The opportunity is to leverage the mineral growth to build a more diversified economic and social base in the region. Growth in diversified mining services and other support industries offers a significant opportunity in the well established centres of the region.

Economic diversification in this region is also reliant on investment in innovation, research and development. Fostering new ideas will assist in the diversification of the economy and potentially, its sustainability through the development of new industries.

The critical need is to build more resilience into the overall regional economy. Key industries in the region that require this support and investment include: manufacturing, retail, agriculture, tourism, construction, transport/storage and fishing.

Regional Priorities

A comprehensive consultation process was undertaken throughout the region to develop the Goldfields-Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011–2021. Details of the stakeholders consulted are included in Appendix II.

The regional aspirations identified in this plan are regarded as the overall priorities for the region for the ten year period. These aspirations are reflective of the regional profile and seek to balance the desire for economic development with the commitment to build social capacity and quality of life for the region's residents. The aspirations cover the full agenda of the region's priorities and have been adopted by a range of organisations and agencies to guide their strategic focus.

The RDA Goldfields-Esperance Committee has maintained communication with key stakeholders, and from this feedback Committee members confirm that the aspirations accurately reflect the long term vision of the community for the region.

The **economic** regional aspirations are:

- Effective and efficient infrastructure to meet regional demand.

  This means:
  - Expanding Esperance port capacity as the sole outlet for significant bulk exports of minerals, grain and woodchips
  - Increasing supply chain capacity by boosting rail and road infrastructure
  - Expanding aviation services and capacity to position regional airports as key hubs for industry and defence services
  - Accelerating digital inclusion and literacy to maximise the usage of Broadband Network infrastructure
  - Developing resilient utilities that meet regional needs for water, energy and communications.

- Attraction and retention of the required workforce.

  This means:
  - Increasing the commencement and completion rate of apprenticeships and traineeships
  - Developing specific responses to emerging skill and labour shortages
  - Actively promoting the region as a diverse and vibrant work environment by addressing priority areas of housing availability, health, education and child care
  - Increasing Indigenous employment and participation in economic activities by working with relevant agencies and the minerals and resources sectors.

- Resilient mining and support industries, based on regional advantage.

  This means:
  - Planning for the future of mining and other primary industries
  - Broadening the economic base of secondary industries through research and development initiatives.

- Sustainable rural industries supporting the region.

  This means:
  - Increasing the diversity of production in agriculture, pastoral, forestry, aquaculture and fishing sectors
  - Supporting value added processing as a way of developing new enterprises.

- A unique tourism destination.

  This means:
  - Developing a consistent approach to tourism
  - Supporting sustainable tourism by improving the marketing and development of tourism products and regional facilities.

The **social** regional aspirations are:

- A quality of life that attracts and retains people in the region.

  This means:
  - Promoting and developing the positive lifestyle of the region
  - Enhancing existing services and establishing new regional facilities
  - Ensuring all satellite towns in the region have attained an acceptable level of amenity, aesthetics, service delivery and support infrastructure
  - Increasing safety and security for all communities through planning, infrastructure and safe community initiatives.

- Access to affordable and appropriate housing.

  This means:
  - Increasing the supply of land and housing
  - Improving the standards of accommodation through diversity and innovation in housing.

- Quality provider of health and welfare services.

  This means:
  - Developing regional partnerships for health and welfare
  - Addressing regional alcohol and drug issues
  - Addressing developmental needs through early childhood and youth services.

- Recognised as a significant educational hub.

  This means:
  - Developing an educational precinct of high quality facilities to deliver education, training and research
  - Providing pathways for education and training that meet the requirements of the workforce and civic engagement
  - Promoting education and research to value add to industry strengths for regional benefit.

- Strong Aboriginal communities.

  This means:
  - Supporting sustainable Aboriginal communities through economic development, better coordination of services and effective transport networks that link remote communities.

The **environmental** regional aspirations are:

- Development of renewable energy sources for the future.

  This means:
  - Promoting the development of alternative energy sources to increase the use of renewable energy in the region
  - Reducing the current energy footprint through energy efficiency initiatives.
- A healthy and valued natural environment.

  This means:
  - Working with existing resource management plans and agencies to manage impacts on natural resource systems
  - Promoting the unique and diverse natural resources of the region.
- Comprehensive waste management on a regional basis.

  This means:
  - Increasing the use of existing programs of management for industrial and domestic waste
  - Supporting the establishment of new regional waste facilities.

The **governance** regional aspiration is:

- Regional decisions to address regional challenges.

  This means:
  - Strengthening the regional governance framework through collaborative relationships between the major regional bodies
  - Improving and targeting the delivery of services through clearly defined roles for all agencies and services
  - Implementing robust risk management
  - Developing a regional funding framework as a source of capital for regional priority projects.

RDA Activities

Regional Priorities (2013 – 2016)

From the regional aspirations, the regional priorities for the period 2013 – 2016 have been identified by the RDA Goldfields-Esperance Committee.

These priorities are the areas that RDA Goldfields-Esperance considers as most important and most likely to result in outcomes from the resources that RDA Goldfields-Esperance can apply.

These regional priorities are:
(Priorities are numbered for clarity only, the numbering does not reflect importance.)

Key Priority 1: Attracting and retaining population

The Focus:

The Goldfields-Esperance region contains 2.5% of the State's population and the long term population growth rate of 1.7% is lower than the State average of 2.7%.

As well as growing at a slower rate, the regional population faces additional issues:

- Goldfields-Esperance is ranked 55th of the 55 RDA regions for infrastructure and essential services, including access to education, skilling, doctors, hospital services and allied health services
- The region has a cost of living index that is 5.1% higher than Perth, with food and clothing costs up to 20.6% higher in some sub regional centres.

Although the region has maintained low rates of unemployment, the current contraction in mining and exploration activity will impose further pressure on the region's capacity to both attract and retain its population.

Approaches and Initiatives:

RDA Goldfields-Esperance will work with the Goldfields Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils and the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission on the following broad approaches:

Liveability:

- Supporting learning outcomes from students who are disengaged from schooling
- Planning for digital opportunities and inclusion arising from the NBN / Digital Futures Plan
- Encouraging greater recognition of arts in the region and further abroad
- Promoting and marketing the liveability of the region (housing, childcare, education, health, sports, recreation, arts, culture and entertainment).

Workforce / population:

- Working with regional partners to attract population to the region
- Increasing options for the delivery of remote health services in the region
- Supporting incentives and mechanisms for a regional workforce
- Strengthening community organisations to increase community resilience.

Key Priority 2: Increasing access to affordable, adaptable and secure housing

The Focus:

Access to affordable housing is consistently raised as a critical issue by the people of the region. Lack of housing increases the pressure on the rental market, which in turn affects the availability of public housing and the cost of private rentals.

Indigenous people represent one of the largest single client groups in the public housing system in Western Australia and the Goldfields-Esperance region is home to some of the poorest and most isolated people in Australia.

The pressure on housing is accentuated by a population that is:

Transient:	less than half of the residents in the region have lived in the same Local Government Area for five or more years.
Young:	the median age of the Goldfields sub region is 31 years and the median age of Aboriginal residents is 23 years.
Vulnerable to the risk of being homeless:	the vulnerability rate is 18.81 per 1,000 residents.
Lower in ownership:	with 60% of residents living in dwellings that are either owned outright or being purchased, home ownership is below the State average.
Vulnerable to overcrowding in remote areas:	in Aboriginal communities, around 19% of households require additional bedrooms.

Approaches and Initiatives:

RDA Goldfields-Esperance is committed to working with the State Government to progress the Affordable Housing Strategy 2010 – 2020 in order to advance the following:

- Increasing affordable housing in the region
- Increasing land availability and options for housing in the region
- Providing support to residents to maximise the capacity of existing housing.

Key Priority 3: Enhancing industry resilience and innovation

The Focus:

The region has a dominant concentration on the extraction and processing of minerals, accounting for 80.4% of the Gross Regional Product. Substantial changes in commodity prices therefore result in significant effects on investment and activity in the mining sector, which flow through to unemployment and small business contraction in supporting industries.

There is an opportunity to continue to diversify the economic base of the region through agriculture and tourism, since these industries operate independently of the mining sector.

The growth of China, India and other Asian powers, and the consequent expansion of a massive new middle class with a changing diet and demand for more protein, should see a growing appetite for the region's land and sea food, as well as regional tourism.

At the same time, opportunities exist for both industry and the community to benefit from initiatives in energy efficiency and management. The region is well placed to demonstrate best practice around the development of renewable energy hubs for mining sites and remote communities within the region.

Approaches and Initiatives:

RDA Goldfields-Esperance will focus on:

- Promoting the Goldfields-Esperance region as a viable and sustainable food production area
- Facilitating the understanding of Government policy on energy and application mechanisms for the development of energy infrastructure
- Facilitating opportunities to broaden innovation and industry development in the region.

Key Priority 4: Ensuring a healthy and valued environment

The Focus:

The region covers a vast area of Western Australia and consequently, a significant amount of natural resource assets including land, water, coastline and biodiversity. The increasing impacts of climate change will introduce a further range of issues across this environment.

For such a diverse region, it is essential to work with partners who have natural resource management as their focus. Through the development of Memorandums of Understanding and other agreements, RDA Goldfields-Esperance will be able to promote Federal Government programs that support on-ground resource management.

Approaches and Initiatives:

RDA Goldfields-Esperance will concentrate on:

- Increasing awareness of environmental issues and promoting the value of a healthy and valued environment to the region
- Building relationships with existing NRM organisations in the region
- Building stakeholder engagement for planning and implementation.

Monitoring and Review

The performance of this Regional Plan needs to be assessed against its effectiveness in achieving high priority goals and performance targets. Performance measures are operational in nature, and thus will be detailed in the annual Business Plan. The performance of the organisation in terms of its strategic goals will be reviewed annually and the goals will be refined if necessary.

In the context of RDA Goldfields-Esperance, the annual review processes will involve:

- Direct consultation with key stakeholders and Government regarding the plan and its effectiveness
- Annual strategic planning workshops with the Committee to review progress against KPIs
- Inclusion of new regional developments or improvements to the way the plan is implemented.

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Appendix I

Regional Profile

Overview

The Goldfields-Esperance region is the largest RDA region in Western Australia, covering an area of 771,276 square kilometres, which is three times the size of the State of Victoria.

It is bordered by the Mid West, Great Southern and Wheatbelt regions to the west, the Pilbara region to the north, the South Australian and Northern Territory borders to the east and the Great Southern Ocean to the south.

This vast region consists of three distinct sub regions that have very different characteristics and needs, ranging from the very remote Aboriginal communities in the north-east, the vast mining area in the centre, to the farming communities on the southern coast. The region is characterised by a transient population, with half the population living in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, a quarter in Esperance and Ravensthorpe, and the rest living in some of the most remote areas of Australia.

The region comprises nine Local Government Areas:

- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- Shire of Coolgardie
- Shire of Dundas
- Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
- Shire of Ravensthorpe
- Shire of Laverton
- Shire of Leonora
- Shire of Menzies
- Shire of Esperance.

Population

The summary demographics are:

Table 6: Demographics for the Goldfields-Esperance Region

Indicator	Lands	Esperance	Goldfields	Region	State
Area (km2)	160,378	54,868	556,030	771,276	2,526,574 (30.5%)
Population (2012)	1,570	17,516	41,956	61,042	2,472,700 (2.5%)
Growth Rate (per year) (2006-2012)	0.97%	1.61%	1.07%	1.72%	2.7%
Population density (per km2) (2011)	0.009	0.32	0.07	0.08	0.98

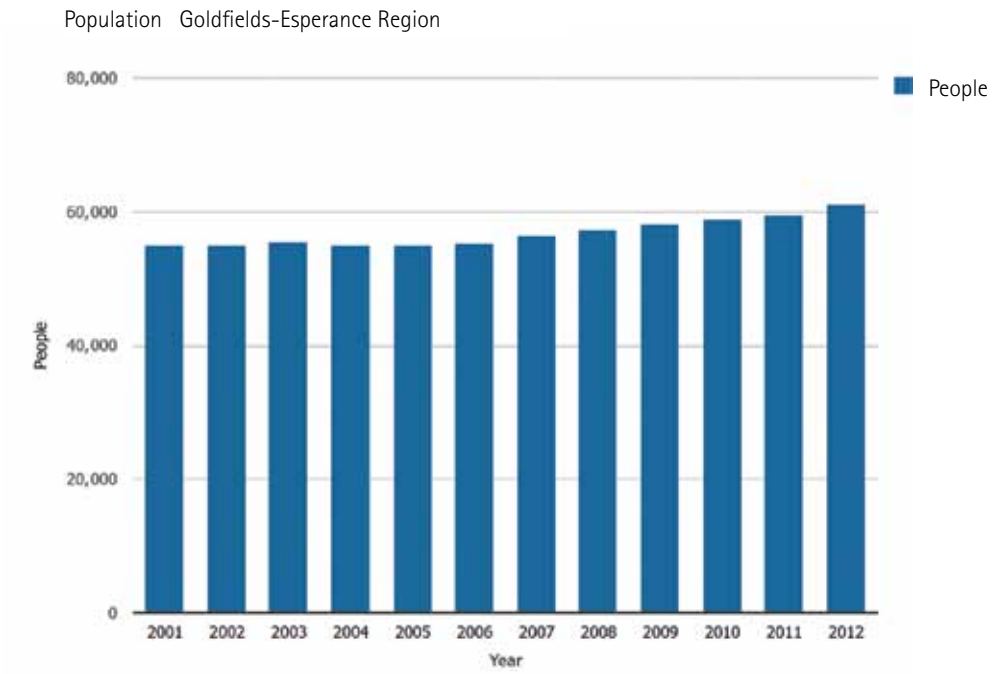
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue 3218.0.

In demographic terms, the Goldfields-Esperance Region:

- Is just under one third of Western Australia's total land mass (30.5%)
- Contains 2.5% of the State population
- Has a lower population growth rate than the State average
- Has a population density that is one tenth of the State population density.

The population size and age structure of the region and its implications in terms of regional labour dynamics is an important area of planning for the future of the Goldfields-Esperance region. The region is home to 61,042 people (2012), with the estimated resident population posting an average growth rate of 1.72% between 2006 and 2012.

Figure 1: Estimated Resident Population, Goldfields-Esperance Region, 2001–2012



Source: Australia Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Cat. 3218.0 (April 2013).

The region is characterised by two large population centres (Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Esperance) and vast areas of low population density.

The bulk of the region's population resides in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Local Government Area (31,107), accounting for 52% of the total regional population. Of this population, 30,841 reside within the City limits and 266 people reside in a vast swathe of land that stretches east to the South Australian border.

The comparison of the major centre with other centres in the region is stark, in terms of the proportion of Indigenous population, children 0 - 14 years, median weekly income and rental statistics.

Table 7: Population for the Goldfields-Esperance Region

Measure	City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder	Shire of Esperance	Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku (the "Lands")	Western Australia
Population	31,107	13,477	1,437	2,239,170
Indigenous population	2,145	575	1,211	69,664
Indigenous population %	6.9	4.3	84.2	3.1
Median age	31	38	28	36
Children 0 - 14 years %	23.4	22.2	28.3	19.7
Median weekly income $	897	578	272	662
Rental accommodation %	38.5	33.2	91.4	29.2
Median weekly rent $	260	180	21	300

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census, Code LGA 54280; Code LGA 53290.

From the 2011 Census[13], the population profile is over-represented in young age cohorts (0 - 14 years) and in 20 - 54 years (reflecting employment provided in the mining sector). There is under-representation in the older age cohorts (70 years and over) and a significant outmigration of the 15 - 19 years age group in Shires other than Esperance and Ngaanyatjarraku.

The median age is 31 years in the Goldfields and 38 years in the Esperance area. This compares to the State median age of 36 and National median age of 38 years.

Estimates of population growth to 2026 for the region[14] indicate that the regional population growth is well on the way to the 2026 predicted growth of 62,200 residents under a median growth projection or 75,110 under a high growth projection[15].

13 ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2011.
14 Department of Planning and the Western Australian Planning Commission (February 2012).
15 Department of Planning and WAPC (2012).

Table 8: Estimates of Population Growth to 2026 for the Region

Local Government Area	Current population	Median growth 2026	High forecast 2026
Kalgoorlie-Boulder	31,107	33,200	38,500
Esperance	13,477	16,000	18,300
Coolgardie	3,999	3,900	5,500
Ravensthorpe	2,126	3,600	5,200
Ngaanyatjarraku	1,437	2,000	2,600
Leonora	2,513	1,500	2,200
Laverton	1,227	1,000	1,400
Dundas	1,141	820	1,100
Menzies	384	180	310
Totals	**57,4111**	**62,200**	**75,110**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census, Code LGA 54280; Code LGA 53290.

Declines in population projections for the Northern and Southern Goldfields are most likely due to the increased fly-in fly-out workforce reducing the permanent resident population of these areas and the continuing economic decline of pastoralism across the sub region.

Indigenous population

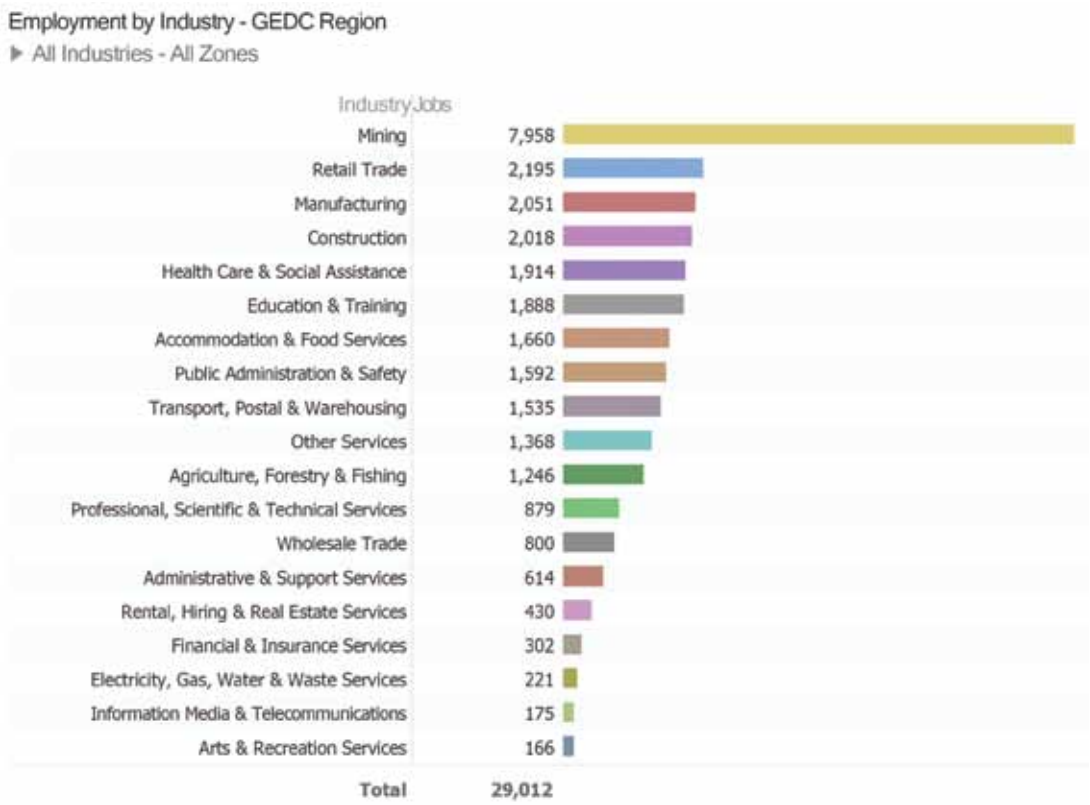
Of the resident population of the Goldfields-Esperance region, 9.9% are identified as being Indigenous people. The Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku has the highest proportion of Indigenous residents (84.2% of all residents) compared to all other Local Government Areas in the State. Major, discrete Indigenous communities in the region include Warburton, Blackstone, Warakurna as well as others in the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku.

Human Capital

(Material for this section has been sourced from the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan, Goldfields-Esperance 2012–2014 and the Goldfields-Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011–2021.)

Addressing workforce requirements

Goldfields-Esperance has the second largest workforce in regional Western Australia, with 29,012 in employment in 2012. Workforce participation rates in the region are high, ranging from 69% to 82%, compared to the Western Australian average of 68%. High participation rates highlight the relative tightness of the labour market and hence the critical issue of attracting and retaining the required workforce for the region.



Source: Latest REMPLAN data incorporating Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) June 2012 Gross State Product, 2008 / 2009 National Input Output Tables and 2011 Census Place of Work Employment Data.

Of the total 29,012 jobs in the GEDC Region there are:

- 7,325 jobs in the Esperance sub region (25.25 %)
- 21,206 jobs in the Goldfields sub region (73.09 %).

The impact of a fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workforce is an unquantified issue. It is estimated that these additional workers may equate to an additional 6,000 residents in the Shire of Leonora and an estimated 4,000 residents in the Shire of Laverton[16], however the pressure on local facilities and services remains anecdotal.

In late 2012 and the first quarter of 2013, a significant drop in commodity prices (9%) and gold prices in particular (25%) has resulted in a significant contraction in mining and exploration activity in the region. This contraction is likely to manifest in workforce participation rates in the short term.

16 RDA Goldfields-Esperance Submission to the Federal Government Draft Energy White Paper, April 2012.

For the region as a whole, labour force modelling undertaken for the Workforce Futures Report indicates that total demand is expected to increase by 10,200 jobs between 2008 and 2018.

To fill these positions, new workers in the Goldfields-Esperance region are likely to be sourced from local residents (an estimated 56% of the new workforce). The local resident proportion of the workforce is much greater in this region, partly due to the greater proportion of operations compared to construction workers, but secondly because the region is more established, with better developed social infrastructure than other high growth areas.

Unemployment and participation

Overall, the Goldfields-Esperance employment service area has relatively low unemployment, at about 2.8% compared to the National rate of 5% (December 2011) and traditionally, the unemployment rate in the Goldfields-Esperance region is lower than that of the National average. However, within the region, unemployment rates range from 1.1% in the Shire of Ravensthorpe to 16.8% in the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku.

The most current research shows an unemployment rate of approximately 2.25% as of December 2012.

Table 4 shows that unemployment rates had been decreasing in all statistical local areas in the region over the 12 months prior to December 2011.

Table 4: Unemployment Rates for Statistical Local Areas in the Goldfields-Esperance RDA Region

Statistical Local Area C = City; S = Shire	Unemployment rate (%)	% change in past 12 months	Labour Force size
Kalgoorlie-Boulder (C)	2.2	–1.3	19,435
Coolgardie (S)	3.0	–1.0	2406
Menzies (S)	7.8	–3.1	129
Esperance (S)	2.2	–1.0	8,449
Ngaanyatjarraku (S)	16.8	–4.8	780
Laverton (S)	4.1	–1.3	590
Leonora (S)	2.7	–0.4	1,137
Dundas (S)	4.1	–2.4	713
Ravensthorpe (S)	1.1	–0.3	1,603

Source: DEEWR Small Area Labour Markets data, December 2011.

The Shires of Ngaanyatjarraku and Menzies had high unemployment rates of 16.8% and 7.8% respectively. The size of the labour force in these areas should be noted, with only 129 people in Menzies compared to 780 in Ngaanyatjarraku. The figures highlight the need for targeted Indigenous training and employment activities in the Ngaanyatjarraku Shire.

Employment

The composition of the labour force of the region has remained steady over the last decade, with mining providing the largest employment, followed by retail, and health care and social assistance.

Table 5: Employment by Industry Breakdown

Industry	% of total workforce 2006 Census	% of total workforce 2001 Census
Mining	18.1%	18.2%
Retail Trade	9.3%	12.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	7.9%	6.5%
Construction	7.6%	7.4%
Education and Training	6.8%	6.0%
Manufacturing	6.2%	6.0%
Public Administration and Safety	6.0%	4.8%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	6.0%	7.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	5.5%	4.8%
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	5.4%	4.9%
Other Services	4.4%	3.4%
Wholesale Trade	3.1%	4.4%
Inadequately described / Not stated	3.0%	2.9%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	2.9%	n/a
Administrative and Support Services	2.4%	n/a
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1.8%	7.7%
Financial and Insurance Services	1.3%	1.3%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	0.8%	0.6%
Information Media and Telecommunications	0.7%	0.8%
Arts and Recreation Services	0.7%	1.3%

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 2001 & 2006.
An update of these figures from the 2011 Census data has not been released at this time.

The Australian Government has recognised that there are complex barriers to gaining employment in remote areas and has announced new arrangements for remote participation and employment, the Remote Jobs and Communities Program (RJCP). The new arrangements, due to be in place by July 2013, will be simpler, better integrated and more flexible, thereby becoming a 'one stop shop' for people in remote Australia currently being assisted by Job Services Australia, Disability Employment Services, Indigenous Employment Program and the Community Development Employment Projects programs. Some of the communities within the Goldfields-Esperance region that will have the new service are:

- Kambalda
- Leonora
- Warburton.

Registered job seekers

Job seekers (including those who may have recently lost their jobs or remote and disadvantaged job seekers) can register to receive help from JSA providers by either registering with Centrelink or directly with a JSA provider. There are two JSA providers operating within the Goldfields-Esperance region: Skill Hire and MAX Employment. Skill Hire has offices in Kalgoorlie and Esperance; MAX Employment has 13 sites across the region in regional centres and remote towns.

Job seekers are assessed to determine the level of support that will be offered by the employment service providers. Some may be assessed as job ready whilst others may require more intensive pre-employment training, support and mentoring in order to be work ready and effectively transition into the workforce.

According to DEEWR labour market information, there are currently over 2,600 registered job seekers in the Goldfields-Esperance employment service area. The average job seeker age is 34 years and the average unemployment duration is 30 months.

Many job seekers in the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku face a combination of barriers to employment. For example, a large proportion of job seekers have less than a Year 10 level of education, with low levels of language and literacy skills. There is therefore the need for pre-employment support and training in order to be work ready and to participate in the workforce.

Participation in tertiary education and training

According to the 2006 ABS Census, the participation rates in tertiary education and training for the Local Government Areas in the Goldfields-Esperance (most range between 1-4%, with the REMPLAN showing 2.1%) are significantly lower than those for Western Australia (7-8%). Notably, the highest rate of participation (4-6%) occurs in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. This ABS measure includes people attending higher education through Universities as well as vocational education and training with registered training organisations (including State Training Providers) and other higher educational institutions.

Lower rates of higher education participation in many Western Australian regions, including the Goldfields-Esperance region, can be partly explained by their labour markets feeding the resource sector's high demand for tradespeople and people such as mobile plant operators who do not seek higher education qualifications.

From the 2006 ABS Census, about 10% of the population (10.4% according to the REMPLAN) in the Goldfields-Esperance region have a tertiary qualification level at Advanced Diploma or higher (ie: Advanced Diploma, Diploma, Bachelor, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate or Post Graduate). At the State level, this percentage is about 17.5% and at the National level about 18.1% of all Australians have at least an Advanced Diploma qualification.

The GEDC undertook a Goldfields Tertiary Education Survey in 2009. They found that nearly 50% of secondary students (Years 9–12) were interested in higher education, and 27% of students were interested in studying locally. Of this 27%, 9% originally indicated "no" to university and 32% initially selected "don't know". Importantly, this indicates that access to local higher education study options was identified as a determining factor for many students who were uncertain about going to University.

Higher education options in the region

Curtin University operates the Western Australian School of Mines (WASM) in Kalgoorlie. The School of Mines is recognised by the Minerals Council of Australia as delivering excellence in minerals education and is actively involved in the Minerals Tertiary Education Council's initiatives.

The University of Western Australia and Notre Dame University jointly operate the Rural Clinical School for advanced level medical students. Its head office is in Kalgoorlie and it operates on several sites across Western Australia, including Esperance. The centre specialises in rural and Aboriginal health, and each site comprises an administration and teaching facility and student accommodation.

Participation in vocational education and training

According to the Workforce Futures for the Goldfields-Esperance Region report, Kalgoorlie-Boulder had a higher proportion of people over 15 with Certificate III and IV qualifications than the Western Australian average in 2006 (ABS, 2007). However in all other qualifications higher than Certificate III and IV (eg: Diploma, Bachelor Degree, etc.), the proportion was lower than the Western Australian average (ABS, 2007). A similar situation occurs in the Eastern and Northern Goldfields areas where it shows the proportion of people over 15 years with a post school qualification is less than that of the State average. Esperance-Ravensthorpe has had a greater percentage of people over 15 attaining Certificates I-IV than the State average but like Kalgoorlie-Boulder, qualification levels higher than Certificate IV fall below the WA average. In all four regions, the highest proportion of qualifications is at the Certificate III and IV levels which can be attributed to the strong demand for trades and technical personnel.

Delivery of vocational education and training in the region

The major provider of local vocational education and training in the Goldfields-Esperance region is the Goldfields Institute of Technology (GIT) offering a range of courses through its campuses in Kalgoorlie and Esperance. According to a recent report[17], GIT delivered 92% of all vocational education and training in the Goldfields-Esperance region. A recognised strength of GIT's approach is its delivery of training for traditional trade apprenticeships and for business, aged care, hairdressing and agriculture traineeships. Smaller, private training providers also operate in the region.

The 2007 Goldfields-Esperance Workforce Development Plan found that there was a reasonable range of courses available in the region but that there were some shortfalls in the light manufacturing, hospitality and community services areas.

Participation in apprenticeships and traineeships

According to the Workforce Futures for the Goldfields-Esperance Region Report commissioned in 2008, the majority of apprenticeships are in the automotive, electrical, mechanical and fabrication trades. Traineeships on the other hand, are spread over a wider range of industries including business and management; sales and personal services; and community services.

In conjunction with the Goldfields-Esperance Workforce Development Alliance, the Western Australian Government (through ApprentiCentre), group training organisations and industry groups, GIT has led a range of activities to improve local awareness of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities as part of promoting a training culture within the region.

Through its dialogue with local businesses, the Alliance has found that many employers are concerned about the literacy and numeracy skills of prospective apprentices and trainees.

About 7% of all apprenticeships or traineeships in the Goldfields-Esperance region are commenced by Indigenous people. Indigenous apprentices and trainees account for about 5% of all completions in the region.

17 KPMG (2007).

Sustainable Communities and Population Growth

(Material for this section has been sourced from the Goldfields-Esperance 2011-2021 Strategic Development Plan.)

Economic

Economic indicators show:

- Strong annual growth in Gross Regional Product (12%)
- Extraction and processing of minerals as the dominant industry (80.4%)
- An unemployment rate that is lower than the State average of 4.9%
- A younger, predominantly male workforce
- A sizeable Indigenous population, with the Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku having the highest Indigenous population of any Local Government Authority in Western Australia (84.2%).

The Gross Regional Product (GRP) for the region in 2009/10 was $8.1 billion, representing 4.4% of the Gross State Product. The extraction and processing of minerals accounted for $7.7 billion of the GRP, with manufacturing, retail, agriculture and tourism contributing the balance.

In 2009/10, gold mining contributed 54% of the value of regional mineral production, or approximately $4.1 billion. Nickel, platinum and palladium accounted for 42% of production or approximately $3.2 billion. The remaining mineral production (approximately $0.4 billion) included cobalt, copper, zinc, silver, construction materials, gypsum and lime sand[18].

By 2010/11, GRP increased to $12.3 billion or 5.7% of the Gross State Product[19]. Over the past ten years, GRP has grown at an average annual rate of 12% per annum.

Gold mining constituted 66% of the value of regional mineral production in 2011/12, equating to over $6.1 billion. The region accounted for 65% of the State gold production and 75% of the State nickel production[20]. Other valuable minerals produced in the region include platinum, palladium and lithium.

While gold contributes most to current production value, nickel and iron ore mining are the growth drivers of the region. By 2020, the Chamber of Minerals & Energy[21] estimates that the Goldfields-Esperance region is likely to be the world's major nickel producing region with up to three large scale laterite nickel mining and processing operations, plus ongoing sulphide nickel production.

Recent commitments to expenditure on major mineral projects include Mount Cattlin Lithium Project, Ravensthorpe ($75m); Yilgarn-Koolyanobbing Iron Ore Upgrade ($320m); First Quantum Ravensthorpe Nickel Operation ($190m); Mt Weld Rare Earths Mine ($135m) and Tropicana Gold Joint Venture ($700m).

The Yilgarn Iron Ore Province is still poised to become a new long term iron ore export industry, with magnetite mining operations that are characterised by scalability, reliability and longevity offering a period of sustained long term growth and economic wellbeing to the region. The Yilgarn Iron Producers Association[22] estimate an exploration target of over 15 billion tonnes of Potentially Beneficial Magnetite and over one billion tonnes of Direct Shipped Ore (DSO) and claim that this new iron ore industry could generate 3,500 jobs per magnetite operation and 400 jobs per Direct Shipped Ore operation in the construction phase alone.

18 Department of Mines and Petroleum in Department of Regional Development & Lands: A Region in Profile, February 2011.
19 Department of Regional Development and Lands (estimated from ABS catalogue 5220.0).
20 Department of Minerals & Petroleum, Western Australian Mineral and Petroleum Statistics Digest 2011-2012.
21 Infrastructure to support Western Australia's Growth, February 2010.
22 Implications of Expanded Iron Ore Mining in the Yilgarn Iron Province, December 2011.

Whilst mining is the predominant sector in the central and northern parts of the region, there is a substantial agriculture sector in the south, based on cereal crops, wool and livestock production. The region contributed 8.2% to the total value of agricultural production of WA in 2008/09, valued at $587 million. Most importantly, Esperance is the port for the region, importing petroleum and fertiliser and exporting mining and agricultural products.

Manufacturing is largely based in the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder with the regional industrial centre producing explosives, drilling equipment, machinery and fabricated metal products. A smaller manufacturing sector is based in Esperance, servicing local fishing, agricultural and mining industries.

Tourism brings 424,000 domestic visitors and 43,000 international tourists to the region, attracted by vast areas of pristine environment including rangelands, western woodlands and extensive coastlines. The tourism output is worth $268.5 million and provides 1,365 jobs directly connected to tourism in the region.

Environmental

Biodiversity

The Great Western Woodlands (GWW) is the largest remaining area of intact Mediterranean-climate woodland on Earth. Covering almost 16 million hectares, this continuous band of native vegetation stretches from the edge of the Western Australian wheatbelt to Kalgoorlie-Boulder in the north, the inland deserts to the northeast, the Nullarbor Plain to the east and the coastal vegetation of the south. The GWW has been recognised as an internationally significant area of great biological richness.

Land tenure within the GWW is predominantly Unallocated Crown Land (UCL) (58.9%), but also includes large areas of pastoral lease (17.5%) and conservation reserve (16.1%). The Department of Parks and Wildlife manages conservation reserves (2,569,728 ha), but also has a responsibility to manage weeds, feral animals and fire on UCL (9,415,721 ha). The GWW incorporates 12 Local Government Authorities and seven townships and more than 60% of the area is covered with active or pending mining tenements.

Management of this important area is carried out under a Biodiversity and Cultural Conservation Strategy for the Greater Western Woodlands[23]. The plan consists of two parts; the Strategic Weed Management Plan and the Strategic Feral Animal Management Plan. The plan will be effective from 2013 for a period of five years, after which it will be revised for its next period of implementation.

Weeds are a potential threat to biodiversity and cultural values of the GWW. Weeds can impact biodiversity through the exclusion of native flora species, modification of the structure and composition of native vegetation communities, loss of native fauna habitat and by contributing to changes in fire regime (frequency and intensity) and hydrology.

Feral animals are introduced species that are creating major economic, environmental and social impacts. For the Goldfields-Esperance region, the major feral animal threats are wild dogs, camels, rabbits, feral cats, feral pigs, goats and red foxes.

23 Department of Environment and Conservation (2010).

The region contains a number of other biodiversity hotspots:

- The Fitzgerald River Reserve, recognised and protected as an International Biosphere
- Lake Warden recognised and protected under the Ramsar Convention as a site that regularly supports up to 30,000 waterbirds in a hydrologically complex wetlands system of seven main lakes and over 90 smaller lakes, behind beach-front dunes
- Lake Gore recognised as an Important Bird Area because it supports significant proportions of the global population of Hooded Plovers, Australian Shelducks and Banded Stilts
- Lake Ballard in the pastoral region near Menzies, recognised as a Wetland of National Significance and nominated for listing as a Ramsar wetland of International Significance
- The Adelong Dunes whose sandy landforms and vegetation are an expression of the desert bioregion that lies within the Shire of Menzies
- The Great Victoria Desert Bioregion which stretches out towards the South Australian border.

The region must address the development of alternative and renewable energy sources, to meet its commitment to sustainability. There is a willingness to trial alternative energy generation, including wind power on the South Coast, biomass in Ravensthorpe and solar power in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The challenges include high capital costs, complex technology, lack of supporting expertise and lack of storage capacity.

Effective waste management is growing in importance as a regional issue, given the commitment to sustainably manage both domestic and industrial waste. There is opportunity to increase the uptake of comprehensive waste management in the mining and processing sectors.

Social

With the higher proportion of workers in the Goldfields-Esperance region likely to be drawn from local residents, the challenge is to develop social infrastructure that improves the amenity and liveability of regional towns. Educational opportunities, arts and cultural facilities, sport and recreation and quality support services all add to the ability of the region to retain its population and attract the increased workforce required.

Planning and management strategies are required to address key regional social issues such as:

- Changing demographics
- Housing affordability
- Improved community access to public service support
- Social isolation
- Cultural and ethnic harmony
- Regional higher education opportunities
- Comprehensive health services
- Indigenous health, education, recreation and employment circumstances.

The State Government *Affordable Housing Strategy 2010 – 2020* identifies a key challenge as recognising the different needs of regional Western Australia. For the Goldfields, this means difficulty in accessing affordable and appropriate accommodation, across all socio economic levels.

Lack of housing increases the pressure on the rental market as people cannot afford to buy the houses available. As a consequence, public housing becomes less available and private rentals become more expensive.

Indigenous people represent one of the largest single client groups in the public housing system in Western Australia (20% of public housing tenants; 25% of applicants on a wait list). Furthermore, homelessness amongst Indigenous people is 35% higher in Western Australia than the National average[24].

24 Affordable Housing Strategy 2010 – 2020 / Opening Doors to Affordable Housing. Government of Western Australia, Department of Housing, December 2010

The Goldfields Indigenous Housing Organisation manages 184 properties (120 houses in remote communities and 64 properties in Kalgoorlie, Leonora and Coolgardie) and provides ongoing tenancy management and support services for 1,080 tenants, who are amongst the poorest and most isolated people in Australia[25].

Stakeholders have identified that, in the Goldfields region, it is of paramount importance that government agency input is integrated, with a collaborative approach between public, private and community sectors.

Early childhood education and care

Australian Early Development Index

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a measure of young children's development (as they enter school and at community level) across five domains: physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills (school-based); and, communication skills and general knowledge. Children's ability in these categories provides a good indication of how they are likely to fare in the future against health, education and social outcomes. The results are presented as proportions of students who are considered to be 'on track', 'developmentally at risk' and 'developmentally vulnerable'. A child assessed as 'developmentally vulnerable' means the child falls below the tenth percentile in the community.

In 2009, the AEDI survey was completed nationwide. The Goldfields-Esperance region is identified by nine communities within the AEDI. Table 3 shows the percentage of young people developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDI and developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains.

Table 3: Percentage of Young People Developmentally Vulnerable by Communities within Goldfields-Esperance

Community	Developmentally vulnerable one or more domains (%)	Developmentally vulnerable two or more domains (%)
Ngaanyatjarraku	78.3	65.2
Laverton	33.3	20
Leonora	29.8	17.5
Menzies	No results	No results
Coolgardie	33.3	18.2
Kalgoorlie/Boulder	30.9	14.7
Dundas	43.6	31.6
Esperance	23.6	7.1
Ravensthorpe	16.7	11.9
Australia	**23.6**	**11.8**

Source: 2009 AEDI results.

The AEDI is a relative measure and shows how local children are doing compared to other children surveyed across Australia. The AEDI results show that generally all young people in the Goldfields-Esperance region (other than in Ravensthorpe or Esperance) have been deemed developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains compared to the national average of 23.6%.

Whilst the AEDI data can be used to raise awareness of the importance of children's early years within the Goldfields-Esperance region and to begin identifying possible actions to enhance development in the five domain areas, the data must be interpreted with caution. A higher proportion does not necessarily mean a large number of students as, conversely, a low proportion may in fact equate to a large number of students.

25 CHCPen, Community Housing Coalition WA, Newsletter, April 2012.

Child care services

Currently, there are 718 licensed long day care places in the Goldfields-Esperance region, provided through services in the townships of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Esperance, Kambalda, Leinster, Leonora, Ravensthorpe and Somerville. Nearly 44% of these places are in Kalgoorlie Boulder, with Esperance having nearly 20%.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that there is a scarcity of child care places with unmet demand for care, and that this is having a negative impact on labour market participation, in particular on paid employment for women.

School education

School attendance

Looking at the attendance rates for all schools (government and non-government) across the Goldfields-Esperance region provided on the My School website, it appears that schools have an attendance rate ranging from 55% – 97%. By way of comparison, the average attendance rate for all government schools in Western Australia was 87.5% in 2011; as provided by the Western Australia Department of Education on its WA Schools Online website.

Attendance is lowest in the more remote areas. The Western Australian Government education sector has identified attendance as an issue, particularly in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, and has strategies in place to address this. DEEWR's Parental and Community Engagement (PaCE) Program can also contribute to improving attendance rates, by helping families to engage with schools.

Year 12 attainment and youth

According to the RESJ Plan, the Council of Australian Governments' National Education Agreement (2009), aims to lift the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate for 20-24 year olds to 90% by 2015. Research has shown that young people who have completed Year 12 and attained either the senior secondary certificate (in Western Australia this is the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) or training related certification have a greater likelihood of continuing with further study, particularly in higher education, as well as entering into the workforce. The report Australian Social Trends March 2011 Year 12 Attainment identified that 'Year 12 attainment contributes to the development of a skilled workforce and, in turn, to ongoing economic development and improved living conditions' (ABS, 2011).

The RESJ Plan also notes that attainment results provided for schools across the region on the My School website also indicate a good level of Year 12 attainment. Consultations with education sector stakeholders indicate that whilst they are generally pleased with the Year 12 attainment results, they will continue to develop and implement strategies to further increase the attainment rates. There is a strong appetite to work collaboratively with the RESJ coordinator to implement targeted strategies that will further improve attainment rates.

Western Australian Government education sector

According to the Western Australian Department of Education, there are about 8,000 students enrolled in 38 Western Australian Government schools in the Goldfields-Esperance region (this includes kindergarten, primary schools and secondary schools). The schools are located in regional centres such as Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Coolgardie, Esperance and Norseman; in mining towns such as Ravensthorpe, Kambalda and Laverton; and in remote communities such as Warakurna and Tjuntjuntjara.

Non-government education sector

In the Goldfields-Esperance region, there are three Catholic primary schools (St Joseph's Primary School and St Mary's Primary School in Kalgoorlie-Boulder, and Our Lady Star of the Sea Primary School in Esperance) and one Catholic high school (John Paul College in Kalgoorlie).

There are five independent schools in the region: Christian Aboriginal Parent-directed School (CAPS) Kurrawang, CAPS Coolgardie and Goldfields Baptist College in the North; and Wongutha CAPS and Emmanuel Community Christian College in the South.

Access to International, National and Regional Markets

(Material in this section has been sourced from the Goldfields-Esperance 2011-2021 Strategic Development Plan.)

Meeting infrastructure needs

Roads

The region's road network comprises 1,000 kilometres of Auslink highways, 950 kilometres of State highways and over 17,000 kilometres of local roads, with users including the mining industry, pastoral/agricultural industries, tourism and general freight.

Some roads in the north east Goldfields are inadequate for future intra and inter-regional traffic, especially in terms of increased heavy haulage from mining and construction activity. Traffic bypasses and upgrades are required to meet increasing congestion at key nodes. Roads to remote communities continue to provide a significant impediment to residents, in terms of access to services and workforce mobility.

Rail

The rail network carries general freight and passenger services through the region, providing a major link with Eastern Australia.

Track upgrades are required for safety, reliability and significantly increased tonnages of mineral ores, especially moving north to south to access the Esperance port. A major issue arises with Kalgoorlie-Boulder rail infrastructure where north to south rail traffic clashes with east to west freight traffic. There are currently very limited local storage lines available to hold delayed trains. As a consequence, conflicts arise between movements, given the operational requirement for rail to be accessible 365 days per year, 24 hours per day. In addition, the existing track is situated in a built up residential area, resulting in noise, dust and road traffic impacts.

Shipping

Esperance port currently handles vessels up to 200,000 tonnes and in 2010, docked 205 vessels moving 11 million tonnes of cargo. Based on the current rail system, the port lacks the capacity to handle predicted iron ore tonnages, requiring improved access and upgraded loading facilities.

Energy

Energy infrastructure in a region that has low population density and a large land mass, is characterised by limited network integration, island grids, stand-alone infrastructure for specific purposes (such as mining) and the need to provide services for remote Indigenous communities[26]. Supply arrangements for electricity are complex, with a mixture of grid power generation and distribution networks supported by a number of different players. The Goldfields sub region is supplied with a grid network, the Esperance sub region is supplied from a combination of gas-fired and wind-powered generators, northern regional towns are serviced by stand-alone power stations fuelled by either diesel or natural gas and remote communities rely on diesel generators.

Energy is essential for regional development and industries such as mining, agriculture, forestry, fishing and transport are heavily reliant on diesel fuel for transport and energy generation. The challenges are to find cost effective ways to integrate renewable energy sources such as wind power or concentrated solar thermal energy production into the energy requirements for the mining industry, regional towns and remote communities. The need for a coordinated approach to the provision of new sources of energy and the maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure is critical.

Water

Water supply is reliant on pipeline provision for some major towns, such as Kalgoorlie-Boulder. For more remote towns, water is sourced from surface catchment dams and bore fields, requiring constant and prudent management.

26 RDA Goldfields-Esperance Submission to the Federal Government Draft Energy White Paper, April 2012.

Communications

Information and communication technology is an area of growing importance for regional infrastructure. The advent of the National Broadband Network, remote control technology and increased automation in the resource industries all offer opportunities to address issues of isolation and remoteness in a vast region.

Comparative Advantage and Business Competitiveness

(Material in this section has been sourced from the Goldfields-Esperance 2011-2021 Strategic Development Plan; and the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan, Goldfields-Esperance, 2012-2014.)

Demand for labour and skills

The Goldfields-Esperance region is competing with other resource rich regions to attract and retain skilled labour, particularly in the resources and construction sectors. ABS data collected in 2006 showed that a high proportion of locally employed people from the Goldfields-Esperance region are tradespersons and intermediate production and transport workers (more detail is in Table 9).

The demand for tradespersons is likely to continue, as evidenced by local businesses and mining companies recruiting workers from overseas to fill local positions. For example, recently CPC Engineering relocated 21 workers and their families from the United Kingdom and Ireland to Kalgoorlie-Boulder to fill boilermaker and pump fitter vacancies.

Table 9: Types of Jobs in which Local People are Employed

Occupation	No. of persons employed
Tradespersons and related workers	4,442
Intermediate production and transport workers	4,068
Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	3,264
Professionals	3,117
Associate professionals	2,929
Labourers and related workers	2,549
Managers and administrators	2,280
Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	1,894
Advanced clerical and service workers	550

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census data.

In meeting the demand for labour and skills there is an increasing presence of Fly-In Fly-Out (FIFO) workers in the Goldfields-Esperance region. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia investigated the impacts of FIFO. Findings from this inquiry will be taken into consideration in workforce development planning, as will labour market demand.

Employers in the Goldfields–Esperance region and their recruitment experiences

The major employers operating in the region are in the mining and retail sectors, but many people are employed in construction and manufacturing. The services sector (including health, education, business services, community services and government) also employs a significant proportion of the local labour force.

The RESJ Plan outlines a DEEWR survey in the Goldfields of employers' recruitment experiences. This activity involved telephone surveys with 250 employers in the Goldfields-Esperance employment service area.

The survey showed that labour market conditions in the region were strong, with two-thirds of employers experiencing recruitment difficulty and about 10% of vacancies unfilled. In particular, higher levels of recruitment difficulty were associated with technicians and trades workers (over 25% vacancies were unfilled), mainly because many applicants lacked the prerequisite technical skills.

Over 16% of vacancies for community and personal services workers remained unfilled, mostly due to the location of the jobs on offer.

The survey showed that employers were using FIFO workers to fill vacancies for cleaners and mining labourers as well as for qualified tradespeople. Employers found that many job seekers lacked sufficient qualifications and work experience to perform the duties of the positions on offer. Nearly 20% of employers cited poorly written job applications as a factor in finding a job applicant to be unsuitable.

Over 50% of employers surveyed expected to recruit in the 12 months following the survey. This was mostly driven by the mining industry. However, the extent of job opportunities in the mining sector was also expected to flow through to the local economy, creating new job opportunities in other sectors. Difficulties in recruiting tradespeople were expected to strengthen future demand for apprentices and trainees.

Appendix II

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

Goldfields-Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011–2021

In the development of the Plan, 13 consultation sessions and several individual sessions were held that involved 170 residents throughout the region from June 2010 to August 2010. The Plan was launched in April 2011.

Stakeholder consultation list from throughout the region 2010

- Allied Health Services (South East)
- Arts & Culture Goldfields Association
- Australian Prospectors & Miners Hall of Fame
- BHP Billiton
- BOICO
- Boulder Promotion & Development Association Inc
- Centrecare
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- Community members
- Community Resource Centre
- CRS Australia
- Curtin VTEC
- Department of Child Protection
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Education
- Department of Education – NDHS
- Department of Environment & Conservation, Goldfields
- Department of Indigenous Affairs
- Department of Mines & Petroleum
- Department of Sport & Recreation
- Department of Transport
- Disability Services Commission
- Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison
- Eastern Goldfields Sexual Assault Centre
- Eastern Region Building Management and Works
- Esperance Accounting Services
- Esperance Army Cadets
- Esperance Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Esperance District Education Office
- Esperance Regional Forum
- Esperance Volunteer Resource Centre
- Esperance YECH Rest Group
- FaHCSIA
- Fire & Emergency Services Authority
- Firefly Art
- GMAEG & KREG
- Golden Quest Trails Association Inc
- Goldfields Art Centre
- Goldfields District Education Office Goldfields Indigenous Housing Organisation
- Goldfields Land and Sea Council
- Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre
- Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission
- Graham Gath Surveys
- Granny Smith Mine
- Hopetoun Motel
- Hopetoun Progress Association
- Jim's Seeds
- Kalgoorlie-Boulder Volunteer Centre
- Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines Pty Ltd
- Kalgoorlie District Education Office
- Kalgoorlie Goldfields Visitor Centre
- Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Kalgoorlie-Boulder Liberal Party
- Laverton Hospital
- Little Boulder Sweet Shop
- Main Roads WA
- Mallee Girl Design
- Morapoi Station
- Ngadju Dancers
- Norseman Visitors Centre
- Office of Barry Haase, Federal Member
- Office of Helen Bullock MLC
- Office of John Bowler MLA
- Pastoral Industry
- Professionals Real Estate, Esperance
- Ravensthorpe & Hopetoun Area Promotions
- Ravensthorpe Community SES
- Ravensthorpe Progress Association
- Recreation Hotel Boulder
- Regional Development Australia Goldfields-Esperance
- Rifle Point Contractors
- School Business Community Group
- Shire of Coolgardie
- Shire of Dundas
- Shire of Esperance
- Shire of Laverton
- Shire of Leonora
- Shire of Menzies
- Shire of Ngaanyatjarraku
- Shire of Ravensthorpe
- Small Business Centre-Goldfields
- Small Business Centre-South East Coastal
- South Coast Natural Resource Management
- St John Ambulance, Hopetoun
- Telstra Country Wide
- Tjulyuru Cultural Centre
- Tjuntjunjara Community
- Toll Group
- Tourism Western Australia
- WA Country Health Services
- WA Police
- WA School of Mines
- Warburton Arts Project
- Water Corporation – community participation
- Water Corporation – Goldfields and Agricultural Region
- Westnet Rail
- Widgiemooltha Tavern, Roadhouse Motel & Caravan Park
- WOWKAL

A Key Stakeholders Forum was held in Kalgoorlie in November 2011, to review the Goldfields-Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011-2021.

Organisations attending the first review of the Plan

- Anglogold Ashanti Australia Ltd
- Artgold Inc.
- Australian Prospectors & Miners Hall of Fame
- Brookefield Rail
- Centrecare Goldfields
- Chamber of Minerals and Energy of WA
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- Cooperative Bulk Handling (CBH)
- CRC Tjuntjuntjara
- Curtin University – WA School of Mines
- Department of Child Protection
- Department of Corrective Services
- Department of Environment & Conservation
- Department of Indigenous Affairs
- Department of Planning
- Department of Sport & Recreation
- Department of Transport
- Desert Knowledge Australia
- Disability Services Commission
- Eastern Goldfields YMCA
- Esperance Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Esperance Port Sea & Land
- Fyson & Associates
- Goldfields Education Regional Office
- Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission
- Goldfields-Esperance GP Network
- Goldfields Land & Sea Council
- Goldfields Tourism Network Association Inc
- Kalgoorlie-Boulder Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- Kalgoorlie-Boulder Pure Gold
- Kalgoorlie-Boulder Urban Landcare Group
- Nullabor Links
- Office of Tony Crook, MHR
- Paupiyala Tjarutja Aboriginal Corporation
- PFD Foods
- Regional Development Australia Goldfields-Esperance
- Shire of Esperance
- Shire of Laverton
- Shire of Leonora
- Shire of Menzies
- Shire of Ravensthorpe
- South Coast Natural Resource Management
- South East Premium Wheat Growers Association
- Shire of Coolgardie
- Spinifex Health Service
- Telstra
- Vocational Training and Education Centre
- WA Country Health Services
- Wongatha Birni

Further iterative review sessions were held with the Board of RDA Goldfields Esperance plus stakeholders in Esperance, the Board of GEDC plus stakeholders in Kalgoorlie, and the GVROC members in Kalgoorlie.

RDA Goldfields–Esperance Regional Plan

The current document has been built on the foundation of the Goldfields Esperance Strategic Development Plan 2011–2021 and the consultation process involved with that Plan.

The RDA Goldfields-Esperance Committee has reviewed the achievements of the Strategic Development Plan as the starting point for the current Regional Plan.

An external facilitator has assisted the RDA Goldfields-Esperance Committee to review, analyse and identify regional priorities for the next three years. The draft Regional Plan has been circulated to key stakeholders for comment.