Great Southern

The Great Southern region is known for its strong focus on arts and culture, its premium wines and increasingly, environmental tourism. The region has a network of walking and driving trails throughout, including the southern stretch of the world-famous Bibbulmun Track. There are 11 local government areas in the region.

Size: 39,007 km²
Population: estimated at over 59,000
Regional centre: Albany

SuperTowns: Katanning
Key industries: Farming, timber, fishing, tourism and viticulture

Arts and culture across the region

- The Great Southern region hosts the only Perth International Arts Festival program outside of the Perth metropolitan area.

- artsouthwa hosts an extensive database and website promoting artists and craft practitioners, galleries, collectives, cultural groups and art supply retailers across the region. artsouthwa’s Southern Art and Craft Trail features works from more than 300 local artists and craft practitioners and attracts around 9,000 visitors annually.

- The region is home to many individual artists, active contemporary arts groups such as MIX and craft practitioners associated with Viewpoint Inc.

- The region is home to a large number of writing groups, book clubs, professional writers, authors and artists from a broad cross-section of art forms.

- Creative Albany encourages and supports alliances between artists, designers, the community and other organisations. It is actively involved in research partnership projects about the creative industries; the development of networks such as the Committee for Albany and the Creative Exchange in partnership with the City of Albany; and events including the Bookmark Albany writer’s events and the Bendigo Bank Film Festival.

- Cultural infrastructure in the Great Southern includes the Mungart Boodja Art Centre, The Kodja Place and the Gnowangerup Heritage Centre.

- Australia’s commemoration of the ANZAC Centenary in 2014 will officially start in Albany. The Western Australian Museum has coordinated the development of the exhibitions for the National ANZAC Centre which will open on the day of the centenary of the departure of the first convoy.

- Music is also a big part of the cultural life of the region and includes Playmakers as part of the Great Southern Festival Program, community choirs, fine music societies and local musical theatre groups.

- There is an active Historical Society network with groups based in Albany, Denmark, Kojonup, Katanning and Mt Barker.

- The Shire of Denmark has completed a concept plan to develop the Denmark Civic Centre into a modern civic building. Proposed facilities include a Shire library, increased theatrette seating for 240–290 people, two new meeting-breakout rooms, and an accompanying civic square outdoor cinema wall and space.

- The Shire of Katanning has upgraded and adapted the Katanning Town Hall to create a
regional entertainment centre for the Upper Great Southern.

• The Katanning Gallery is the only ‘B’ class gallery in the Great Southern Region. It hosts a number of touring exhibitions interspersed with local exhibitions and the Shire’s own art collection.

• The annual Katanning Harmony Festival celebrates diversity, community participation, inclusiveness and respect for different cultures.

• The Plantagenet Arts Centre, Mitchell House in Mount Barker features an exhibition of work by artists of the Shire of Plantagenet.

Department of Culture and the Arts funding in the region

• The Vancouver Arts Centre (VAC) is funded by DCA via devolved funding to Country Arts WA’s Core Arts Fund. VAC runs an annual program of activities, which includes the Great Southern Art Award.

• DCA is partnering with the City of Albany to deliver the KidsCulture Pilot Program in 2014. KidsCulture is designed to remove the financial barrier to children and young people participating in local visual and performing arts workshops.

• Southern Edge Arts is the State’s premiere regional youth performance organisation. It has operated in the region for 29 years and receives multi-year funding from DCA.

• Denmark Arts is funded by DCA via devolved funding to Country Arts WA’s Core Arts Fund. Its annual program includes the Brave New Works Community Arts Festival, the Festival of the Voice and five open air markets per year.

• The Western Australian Museum – Albany is part of the Western Australian Museum. It is funded through State Government.

• The $70 million Albany Entertainment Centre opened in 2010 and is managed by the Perth Theatre Trust.

Arts and cultural priorities in the region

Outcomes from focus group consultations provide valuable insight into regional priorities that will guide the collaborative development of future initiatives by government, arts organisations and the local community. Regional priorities as identified by participants of the Great Southern focus group include:

• Providing regular skills and professional development workshops and forums for emerging and established regional artists.
• Providing assistance for artists to make professional connections and networks both within and outside the region in order to expand their practice and markets.

• Addressing under-use of new technologies by artists and arts organisations.

• Increasing access to tertiary art education and creative industry courses in the region, without which creative people are leaving to find training and career development elsewhere.

• Increasing access to information on funding opportunities and assistance to improve grant writing skills of artists in the region.

• Creation of a dedicated position to link like-activities and encourage the development of projects across the region.

• Increasing opportunities to showcase the City of Albany’s significant Art Collection of 300 artworks, which is currently exhibited infrequently.

• Providing incentives to increase the retention of young people in the region after they have completed secondary school.

• The need for preparation, planning and governance structures in order to secure additional funding to complete the work outlined in the Kinjarling Cultural Heritage Project.

• Establishment of forums to bring potential partners and philanthropists from the arts and non-arts sectors together to build region wide relationships and networks.

• Increasing marketing and connection to tourism for creative enterprises to thrive.

• Conducting research to examine the economic and social impact of the arts in the region.

• Providing access to information technology services and improved mobile phone reception.

• Addressing the high cost of insurance for community events, which is prohibitive for not-for-profit organisations.

• There is community support for the development of a regional art gallery in Albany.

Region-specific actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Key Partners</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective 1: Creative People</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop an intra–regional networking forum for artists and community organisations.</td>
<td>2015–16 2016–17 2017–18</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 Intra–regional networking and skills sharing forums</td>
<td>Great Southern Development Commission (GSDC); Regional Development Australia (RDA) Great Southern; Key regional stakeholders.</td>
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| **Objective 3: Creative Environments** | | DCA will partner with the community to evaluate the long term economic impact of major arts and cultural infrastructure such as festivals and art trails. | 2014–15 2015–16 |
| 3.5 Research and evaluation | City of Albany; Shire of Denmark; Denmark Arts; artsouthwa; Creative Albany; GSDC; RDA Great Southern | DCA will assist key community stakeholders as required to plan an Albany Cultural and Heritage and Tourism Precinct. | 2015–16 2016–17 |
Arts and Cultural Infrastructure

**Albany**
1. artsouthwa
2. Vancouver Arts Centre
3. Mungart Boodja Art Centre
4. Albany Town Hall
5. Western Australian Museum – Albany
6. Albany Entertainment Centre
7. Southern Edge Arts
8. Creative Albany
9. Albany Port Theatre

**Katanning**
1. Katanning Harmony Festival
2. Katanning Regional Entertainment Centre
3. Katanning Gallery

**Kojonup**
1. The Kodja Place

**Mt Barker**
1. Plantagenet Arts Centre, Mitchell House

**Borden**
1. Borden Pavilion Committee

**Denmark**
1. Denmark Arts
2. Denmark Civic Centre