South West

The South West region’s diverse economy is largely driven by mining and tourism, the wine industry, agriculture, and more recently, a burgeoning creative arts and culture sector. There are 12 local government areas in the region.

**Size:** 24,000 km² (approximate)
**Population:** 163,000 (approximate)
**Regional centre:** Bunbury

**SuperTowns:** Collie and Manjimup
**Key industries:** Mining, tourism, food and agribusiness

Arts and culture across the region

- The South West Development Commission is supporting the growth of the creative sector in the region through the Creative Corner, which links creatives with business opportunities.

- The Emergence Festival is held annually in Margaret River and attracts participation from people involved in the creative industries and those who are interested in creative collaboration.

- The Art Gallery of Western Australia provides funding and support to the Bunbury Regional Art Galleries (BRAG). BRAG is managed by the City of Bunbury and runs a program of local and touring exhibitions complemented by an extensive range of public programs.

- The Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre (BREC) has recently undertaken an extensive expansion and refurbishment, creating a second smaller theatre and function areas suitable for conferences and conventions.

- The BREC and the Margaret River Cultural Centre are members of the CircuitWest network.

- Northcliffe’s Understory – Art in Nature trail is a unique arts and cultural tourism experience featuring artworks located along a 1.2 km walk trail through pristine native forest.

The trail is managed by Southern Forest Arts, a not-for-profit community cultural organisation based in Northcliffe.

- The Boyup Brook Country Music Festival was established in 1986 and is now the flagship country music event in Western Australia. The festival includes the Western Australian Country Music Awards, which are staged as a gala event during the festival each year. The Boyup Brook Country Music Club is seeking support to establish a major country music centre complex and a permanent home for the festival in Boyup Brook.

- Yallingup’s Wardan Aboriginal Centre is a cultural experience centre and art gallery.

- The ArtGeo Cultural Complex in Busselton incorporates the Courthouse Gallery and the ArtGeo Gallery.

- Art Partners is a mentorship program that matches people with disability with mentors to participate in mainstream art classes and activities in Bunbury.

- The region is host to numerous annual festivals and events including the Nannup Music Festival, Southbound, Blues at Bridgetown and the Manjimup Cherry Harmony Festival.
The Golden Tree by Thomas Heidt. Understory – Art in Nature. Photo by Peter Hill
Department of Culture and the Arts funding in the region

- Arts Margaret River is a peak regional arts and cultural organisation with a diverse annual program, which includes the Margaret River Readers and Writers Festival. Arts Margaret River is funded by the Department of Culture and the Arts (DCA) via devolved funding to Country Arts WA’s Core Arts Fund.

- DCA, through the Looking Forward Fund, funded Ausdance WA’s ‘Future Landings’, a contemporary dance music program which engaged communities in the South West and the Great Southern. This initial investment leveraged further funding from the Australia Council for the Arts to extend Future Landings to Broome, Karratha and Ravensthorpe in 2013.

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 issues and priorities as raised by participants of the South West focus group include:

- Increasing professional development opportunities for both emerging and established writers and visual artists.

- Establishment of a regional arts and cultural network that meets regularly to provide a forum for groups to communicate, share information, resources and ideas.

- Securing resources to promote and market South West artists and local creative industry businesses more effectively to residents and tourists.

- Standardisation and simplification of the grant application process, which would enable increased access to funds by regional artists.

- Improving equitability of access to funding, resources and the State’s collections across the region.

- Access to programs offering larger grants, which are more effective and provide greater value in terms of cost-benefit than small-to-medium size grants.

Region-specific actions

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<th>Priorities</th>
<th>Key Partners</th>
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<td>Objective 4: Creative Economies</td>
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<td>DCA will partner with key stakeholders to research and identify opportunities for the creative industries</td>
<td>2015–16</td>
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<td>4.4 Support the development of opportunities</td>
<td>South West Development Commission</td>
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<td>for the creative industries in the regions</td>
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Arts and Cultural Infrastructure

**Bunbury**
1. Art Partners
2. Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre
3. Bunbury Regional Art Galleries
4. Stirling Street Art Centre

**Bridgetown**
1. Blues at Bridgetown

**Busselton**
1. ArtGeo Cultural Complex

**Margaret River**
1. Margaret River Readers and Writers Festival
2. Margaret River Cultural Centre
3. Arts Margaret River
4. Creative Corner
5. Emergence Festival

**Yallingup**
1. Wardan Aboriginal Centre

**Boyup Brook**
1. Boyup Brook Country Music Festival

**Manjimup**
1. Manjimup Cherry Harmony Festival

**Nannup**
1. Nannup Music Festival
2. Nannup Arts Council

**Northcliffe**
1. Understory – Art in Nature trail
2. The Painted Tree Gallery
3. Southern Forest Arts