

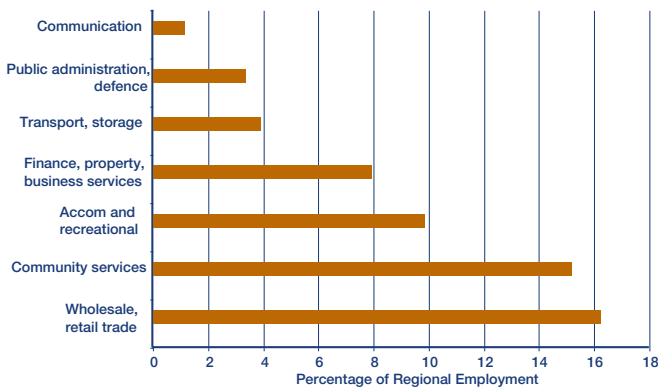
Opportunities in Communication and Services

Overview

The services sector, including Tourism, employs over 60 per cent of the workforce in the regions.

To maintain a competitive edge on world markets the export oriented, regional agricultural and mining sectors demand a large range of sophisticated services. The diversity of the service sector in regional Australia reflects this. The range of services delivered within the regions includes communications, specialised education and training, business and legal services and scientific and technical services.

Fig.1 Service Sector-Percentage Share of Regional Employment



Source: ABS Population Census

Aviation Services

Western Australia has substantial competitive advantages with regard to aviation training.

Western Australia is well endowed with basic aviation infrastructure. A large number of aerodromes in regional Western Australia can offer opportunities for international pilot training.

The market for aviation training in general and pilot training in particular is expected to expand significantly in the future.

The Asian market for pilot training is expected to be substantial and has been estimated to be as high as an additional 21,000 pilots being required in the Asia-Pacific region by 2006.

China Southern Airways trains its pilots at Merredin in the **Wheatbelt** region. The region has excellent flying conditions, good infrastructure and access to controlled and uncontrolled airspace.

Regional locations suitable for Aviation Training

Region	Characteristics	Location
Kimberley	Tropical climate similar to Asia. Close to potential clients and Darwin. International Access.	Broome Derby
Pilbara	Middle East climate. Control tower available. International access.	Port Hedland Karratha
Gascoyne	Sub-tropical climate. Growing tourist industry. Under utilised support infrastructure.	Learmonth Carnarvon
Mid West	Substantial support infrastructure. Suitable climate.	Geraldton Kalbarri*
Wheatbelt	Close proximity to Perth. Access to nav aids.	Cunderdin Narrogin
Goldfields-Esperance	Substantial airport infrastructure. Excellent flying conditions. Tourism spinoffs.	Kalgoorlie Esperance
Peel	Close proximity to Perth. Light aircraft suitability.	Murray Field

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Department of Local Government and Regional Development

Region	Characteristics	Location
South West	Excellent flying conditions. Substantial tourist base variety of aerodromes.	Bunbury Busselton
Great Southern	European climate. Substantial tourist base. Variety of flying conditions. Capable of handling Boeing 737s.	Albany

*Source: BSD report prepared for Department of Transport * proposed*

Communications

Reliable, flexible and easy round the clock access has become a cornerstone of successfully doing business on today's world markets. Nowhere is this more evident than in regional Western Australia.

The increasing sophistication of users and the increased integration of electronic commerce and communications into household and business activities will see the demand for communication infrastructure and services grow strongly in regional Western Australia.

There are investment opportunities for the carriers to partner with communities and government to develop telecommunications infrastructure.

The State Government has allocated \$A10 million to address the need for improved telecommunications, in conjunction with key Government agencies, with a focus on a substantial upgrade in infrastructure.

This will include regional capital works, such as satellite or optic fibre hubs, where the private sector currently finds it difficult to justify investment. It also includes further development of broadband telecommunications facilities in the regions to ensure that people have access to facilities to use the Internet, online government services, video conferencing and the growing electronic economy.

The State Government has also provided \$A1 million to encourage the smart use of communications, including the Internet and electronic commerce by businesses and communities throughout Western Australia. As the regions become heavier users of the communications network there will be more opportunities for carriers to invest in developing the infrastructure and services to meet demand.

There are opportunities for Internet Service Providers to establish and invest in regions so people can gain access to the Internet. Local call Internet access is available throughout Western Australia.

Telstra, Optus, Vodafone and other carriers continue to invest in both fixed and mobile telecommunications infrastructure improvements throughout regional Western Australia and this will continue as demand on their networks grows.

There are opportunities for software companies to invest in the development of software packages which facilitate easier use of the Internet, accessing Online services and for use of electronic commerce in regional areas.

Improved telecommunications infrastructure is encouraging for businesses which are technology dependent to consider the benefits of moving to regional areas.

Call Centres

The advances in telecommunications provide a number of regional opportunities for the establishment of customer service centres for banking, insurance, telemarketing, ticketing and booking and financial and billing services.

All Western Australian regions are in the same time zone as most of Asia and are up to three hours behind the Eastern States which can result in staffing and servicing advantages for clients and customers within Australia and Asia.

A call centre, employing up to 150 people, has already been established at Bunbury in the **South West** region and another call centre employing 35 people has also been established at Katanning in the **Great Southern** region.

The **Wheatbelt** has identified an opportunity for the establishment of a call centre at Northam. This area is close to Perth and has excellent transport linkages. It has extensive communication links, including ISDN, available. The presence of tertiary, higher education and further education institutions with established telecommunications facilities also adds to the attractiveness of the region as a call centre location. The region has a stable and well

qualified workforce based in the Avon valley. Office accommodation, both large and small, can be provided in the region at low cost.

The **Peel and Great Southern** regions offer an attractive lifestyle, a large and growing population base, good communications and transport infrastructure and ready access to education and training facilities to those companies seeking to establish a call centre to service clients in Australia and Asia.

Services to Mining

Western Australian companies are world leaders in a number of mining services, such as applied geoscience, contract mining, environmental management and rehabilitation, minerals exploration, mining software and gold processing technology.

Australia exports over \$A1 billion of mining related equipment and services each year of which approximately 25 per cent is estimated to be sourced from Western Australia. The export market for mining services in Asia is expected to remain strong despite the recent downturn in some South East Asian economies.

With the continued strong growth and a very positive outlook for the domestic minerals and minerals processing industries, more mining service providers are seeing greater benefits in relocating to the regions for better access to their client base.

The **Goldfields, Pilbara and South West** are areas where there is a high concentration of mining and processing operations. Geraldton is a major supplier of services to industry in the **Mid West** region. Other locations, such as Mount Magnet, Meekatharra and Wiluna, provide immediate access to the goldmines of the **Mid West** region while still affording good access to the East Murchison, Northern Goldfields region and the **Pilbara** iron ore industry to the north.

The **Goldfield-Esperance** region is a natural centre for companies servicing the gold and nickel industries and has a complementary and well developed mining equipment supply and maintenance industry.

The burgeoning world class oil and gas, salt, gold and the iron ore provinces provide many opportunities for exploration and mining services in the **Pilbara and Mid West** regions. Industrial and community infrastructure in the Pilbara continues to develop. The expansion of the workforce required to service the Pilbara's mining, petroleum and mineral processing industries presents substantial opportunities for housing construction in the Shire of Roebourne.

The benefits for mining service companies to locate in regional Western Australia are augmented by regional investment schemes such as the Relocation Feasibility scheme and the Industry Relocation scheme.

Environmental Services

Western Australia has built a world class reputation for the delivery of a wide range of environmental services. The State's particular strengths are in mine site rehabilitation, salinity control and redressing land degradation.

Opportunities to deliver environmental services from within regional Western Australia are provided by expansions to minerals processing activity in the **South West, Peel and Mid West** regions, the oil and gas and iron ore sectors in the **Pilbara** and the expansion of gold and nickel mining in the **Goldfields-Esperance** region.

There are also opportunities for private sector participation in environmental science centres such as the International Centre for Arid Land Science, which is situated at Kalgoorlie in the **Goldfields-Esperance** region. Arid land management and the development of arid agro-forestry technology have world wide applications, which have already excited overseas interest in this project.

Health Services

The provision of general and specialised medical services has not kept pace with demand in regional Western Australia.

The Federal and State Governments have announced a number of budget initiatives designed to encourage the establishment of more medical practices and multi-purpose medical centres in regional Australia.

Advances in telecommunications technology and the installation of telecommunications infrastructure also affords opportunities for the delivery of telemedicine services throughout all regions. Private sector delivery of telemedicine services is currently occurring in the **South West, Mid West and Kimberley** regions.

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