

LIVING IN THE REGIONS
THE VIEWS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIANS
The Goldfields-Esperance Report

A Study Undertaken for

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND TRADE

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

•

MINISTRY FOR PLANNING

•

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS

[Gascoyne Development Commission](#)

[Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission](#)

[Great Southern Development Commission](#)

[Kimberley Development Commission](#)

[Mid West Development Commission](#)

[Peel Development Commission](#)

[Pilbara Development Commission](#)

[South West Development Commission](#)

[Wheatbelt Development Commission](#)

By

Patterson Market Research

in conjunction with Focused Management and Hames Sharley

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LIVING IN THE REGIONS: THE VIEWS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIANS
THE GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE REPORT

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FOREWORD

The Living in the Regions project was commissioned by the Regional Development Council to provide much needed information about why people decide to live in or move away from the regional areas of the State.

The Regional Development Council is the peak advisory body to Regional Development Minister, Hendy Cowan. The Council is made up of the Chairs of the nine Regional Development Commissions, a representative of the Department of Commerce and Trade and representation from Local Government.

The Living in the Regions reports provide statistical data which will be useful for all spheres of government, the private sector and community groups. There will no longer be the need to rely on anecdotal data in areas such as policy, planning or preparing submissions in matters relating to the retention or attraction of people to live in regional Western Australia.

The suite of ten reports contain the results of a statewide study which involved over 20 focus groups and 1500 telephone interviews. The State Report provides the survey findings for all of the nine regions in the one document. There is also one report for each of the nine Regional Development Commission regions of Western Australia, which highlight significant regional results.

I would like to thank all the people who took part in the surveys. Through the contribution of their time we now have a much greater understanding of why Western Australians choose to live where they do, what makes them stay and what makes them decide to move on.

This project will point the way to further research into issues such as higher education and professional development. The Regional Development Council would welcome any feedback you may have on the Living in the Regions project or suggestions for further research, both within the regions and the Perth metropolitan area.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Morgan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey background.

STUART MORGAN, AM
CHAIRPERSON
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The *Living in the Regions* project was conceived by the Regional Development Council in conjunction with the State's nine Regional Development Commissions, the Department of Commerce and Trade and the Ministry for Planning. The project management committee commissioned Patterson Market Research in an open tender process to undertake the comprehensive survey which forms the basis of this regional report.

The State Report which gives an overview of the survey results in all Western Australian regions is also available from the Department of Commerce and Trade or Regional Development Commissions in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Mid West, Wheatbelt, Goldfields-Esperance, Peel, South West and Great Southern regions. Highlights of the State Report are included at the end of this report.

BACKGROUND

In June, 1996 the Ministry for Planning released its population report *Migration Trends in Western Australia 1986-1991* which used census data to show the numbers of people migrating to, from and within Western Australia. This provided valuable data on population movement but did not set out to give reasons why migration occurs.

With 72 per cent of the State's population living in Perth (and this figure is showing a gradual increase) there is a need to determine if more should be done to encourage people to move to the regions and persuade those already there to remain.

The purpose of the Living in the Regions project is to determine the key factors which influence individuals and families on where they will or will not live in Western Australia. It also looks at likely movement in the future.

The information will assist Western Australia's nine Regional Development Commissions to form policies and strategies which address misconceptions and also promote the benefits of regional living.

SURVEY METHOD

The survey was conducted in two stages. First, an extensive series of focus discussion groups were established to gather profile information on attitudes to living in the regions and the propensity for movement. This information was used to help develop the survey questionnaires.

The focus groups, comprising people who had moved or were considering moving to or from the regions, included two groups in each of the nine regions and two in Perth, augmented, at the request of individual Development Commissions, by an extra group in the Pilbara and two extra groups in the Wheatbelt.

The second stage of the survey involved extensive telephone interviews with 1500 people aged 18 and over across the whole of Western Australia in October and November 1997.

This included 150 telephone interviews in Perth using a Perth-specific questionnaire and 1350 throughout regional Western Australia (150 in each of the nine regions) using a regions-specific questionnaire.

Because of the disparity in population sizes, it was inevitable that some regions were over-sampled relative to their more populated neighbours. This was adjusted using correction weights to align the regional survey numbers with populations from the 1996 census.

The effect of the weighting procedure is that each region has survey estimates based on 150 interviews, producing a sample error of plus or minus 5.5 per cent, but the all-regions averages reflect the average of all people in Western Australia.

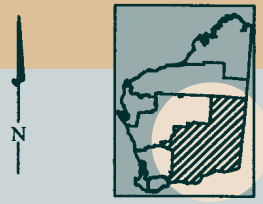
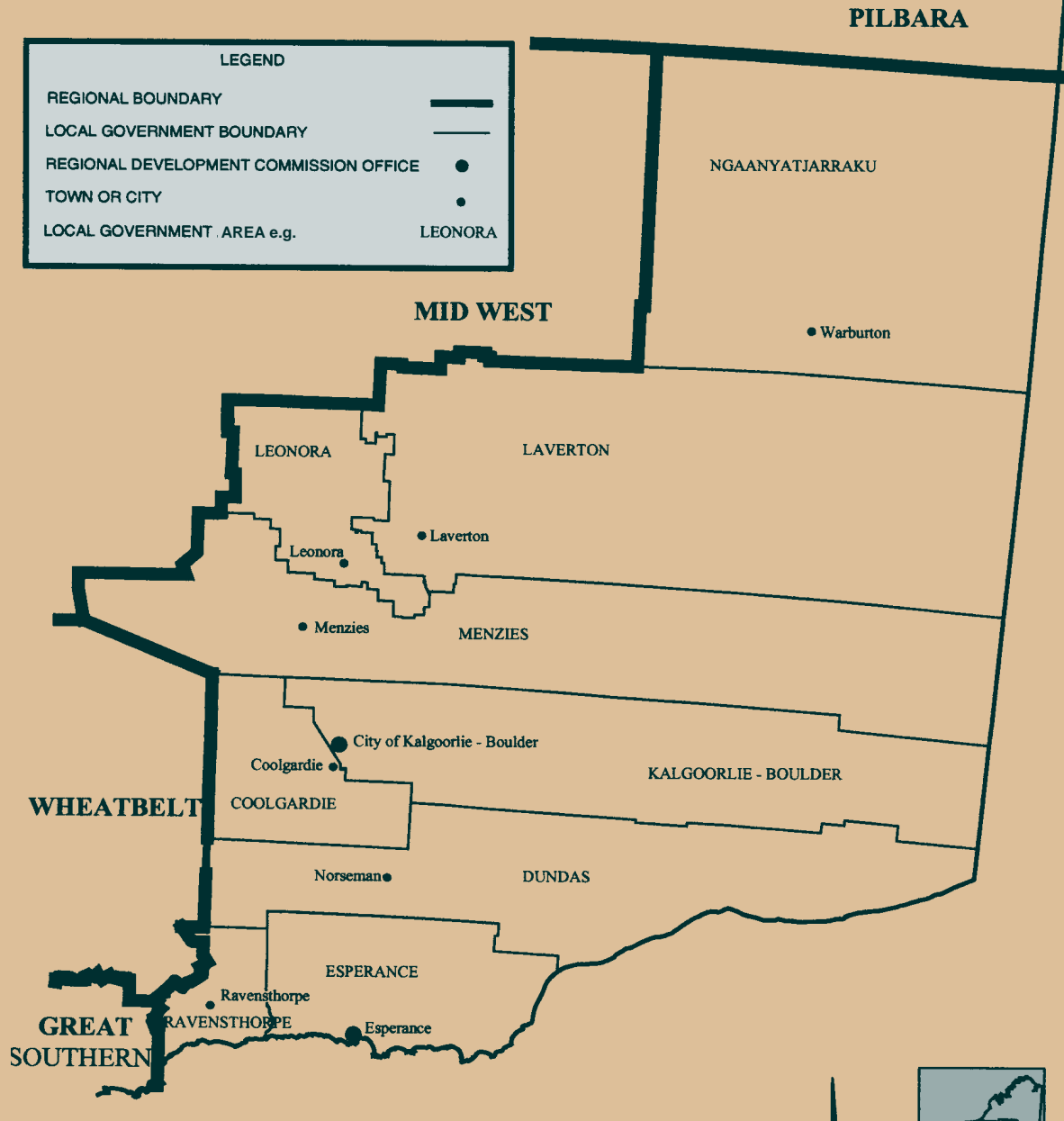
Contents	Page
Profile	7
The Goldfields-Esperance Report	8
Where People Live	8
Why People Move	9
Feeling Safe	9
Affinity with the Region	10
Community Facilities	10
Perceived Community Spirit	11
Environmental Values	12
Perceived Economic Benefits	13
Employment Perceptions and Attitudes	15
Diversity in Recreation/Entertainment	16
Standard of Health Services	16
Perceived Isolation	17
Schooling	17
Future Movement	18
Where People Would Go	18
Why People Move	20
The View from Perth	20
Highlights of the State Report	23

GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE REGION

SCALE
30km 0 30 60 90 120 150Km

LEGEND

REGIONAL BOUNDARY	—
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY	—
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION OFFICE	●
TOWN OR CITY	•
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA e.g.	LEONORA



PROFILE

The Goldfields-Esperance Region is located in the south eastern corner of Western Australia. It covers 778,558 square kilometres, about a quarter of the State's total area. The region is bounded by the Great Victorian Desert to the north, the Wheatbelt to the west, the Great Australian Bight to the south and the South Australian border to the east.

In 1997, the Goldfields-Esperance Region had a total population of 57,565 people living in nine local government areas. The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is the region's economic centre with a population of 30,488 or 53 per cent of the total population. Esperance is the region's major coastal town with a population of 12,523 in 1997, or 22 per cent of the total population. The remainder of the population is distributed across the Shires of Coolgardie, Dundas, Esperance, Laverton, Leonora, Menzies, Ngaanyatjaraku and Ravensthorpe.

The region has a relatively young population and in 1997 the median age was 28.9 years compared to 33.3 years for the State as a whole.

In 1997 there were 21 per cent more males than females living in the region.

The main industries are mining and agriculture. Mining activity is primarily centred around Kalgoorlie-Boulder and northwards into the area known as the Northern Goldfields Mineral Province which extends into the Mid-West Region. In 1996/97 the region's mining industry employed 6,445 people. Total production was valued at \$2.7 billion, most of which came from gold.

Agricultural activity in the region is centred around Esperance and is mainly comprised of cereals, wool and the slaughter of livestock. There is a strong manufacturing base in the region driven by the requirements of the minerals processing sector in the Goldfields area and the fishing and agricultural sectors in the Esperance area.

THE GOLDFIELDS-ESPERANCE REPORT

The survey results were compiled using responses to 1500 random telephone interviews conducted throughout Western Australia, but also include feedback from discussion groups held in various localities. This included both Kalgoorlie and Esperance. Information from these discussion groups is referred to throughout this report.

While the telephone survey involved 150 people in each of the nine regions and 150 in Perth, the results need to be viewed with care. A feature of this type of survey is that households without a phone and those in communities serviced by a 'communal phone' are not represented.

Where People Live

Most people in regional Western Australia live in towns or cities - but the Goldfields-Esperance Region has one of the highest proportions of people living in that situation. The survey suggests that 93 per cent of residents live in a town or city, four per cent live on a commercial rural property and three per cent in some other out of town situation. Only the Pilbara has a higher proportion of the population living in town (96 per cent).

While such a high proportion are concentrated in town, it was noticeable that many people originally came from a very different background. Nineteen per cent of Goldfields-Esperance respondents said they grew up on the land (rather than in town) compared to just seven per cent now living in that situation.

There was considerable movement by people in all regions, and in the Goldfields-Esperance Region this was illustrated by the fact that just 17 per cent of respondents still live in the area they grew up in. While some of those who moved had simply come from somewhere else in the region, a large proportion were from overseas or interstate. In all, 48 per cent of the 'movers' were from overseas/interstate, 22 per cent were from Perth, 17 per cent from elsewhere in the region and 13 per cent from another Western Australian region.

The 48 per cent from overseas or interstate is a substantially higher proportion than for any other region. The Pilbara came closest yet had just 33 per cent reporting this background.

More than half the Goldfields-Esperance respondents (58 per cent) said they had moved within the last 10 years, although a proportion of that movement would be from other places in the region. This compares with just 41 per cent who had moved in the Mid West, which was the most stable region in the State.

Period in region	Goldfields-Esperance residents
Under 6 years	36%
6 – 10 years	20%
11 – 20 years	21%
21 + years	23%
Total	100%

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 9 to 11 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Why People Move

Employment is the main reason for moving to any region, and in the Goldfields-Esperance Region it was nominated by 69 per cent of 'movers' as their major motivation for going there, well above the all-regions average (47 per cent).

Family/marriage was the next most common 'single main reason' for moving although it was nominated by a substantially smaller proportion of respondents (19 per cent). This was followed by lifestyle (two per cent). The lifestyle result was well under the all-regions average (nine per cent).

Single main reason for moving to the Goldfields-Esperance region	Respondents %
Employment	69
Family/marriage	19
Lifestyle	2
Other	10

Because there is often more than one reason behind a person's decision to move, the survey then asked people to nominate all of their major reasons for moving to the Goldfields-Esperance Region. This gave family/marriage much greater prominence with 54 per cent mentioning it as at least one of their major motivations. But it was still well behind employment, which rose to 91 per cent on this measure. The proportion mentioning employment as one of their main reasons was higher than in any other region, although the Pilbara had a higher incidence of people who named employment as their principal reason for moving.

While lifestyle was rarely the primary reason for moving to the Goldfields-Esperance Region, nominated by just two per cent of respondents, it was nevertheless an important consideration for over a third of respondents in their final decision to move. Thirty-seven per cent said lifestyle was at least one of their main reasons for moving to the region. It seems likely that the Esperance component of the region would have boosted this result. However, the lifestyle result was still well under the all-regions average (67 per cent).

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 12 to 13 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Feeling Safe

Perceived safety was the most universally held attitude throughout the regions where many people have a particular perception that their children are less at risk from the 'stranger danger' they associate with Perth. This was also the case in the Goldfields-Esperance where 80 per cent of respondents said they felt safer than they would in Perth. While this is an overwhelming majority and shows a clear perception that the Goldfields-Esperance Region is safer than Perth, the level of agreement was lower than in many regions, which ranged as high as 96 per cent agreement.

(Further information and comparative regional data page 15 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Affinity with the Region

People in the Goldfields-Esperance Region differed markedly from other regions in the level of affinity they feel for the area. Just 49 per cent of respondents agreed they would be sad to leave to live in Perth, compared with around three-quarters in all other regions.

There was some suggestion that attitudes vary depending on where people live. Feedback from the Kalgoorlie discussion group suggested people there had comparatively little long term affinity with the region, while views from the Esperance group suggested the opposite. While Kalgoorlie offers a high earning potential, it is at the cost of long working hours. In contrast, the feedback from Esperance was that the economic potential of the region was seen to be less than in some places but the lifestyle benefits were great.

The survey found that the bulk of people living in regional Western Australia prefer the regional lifestyle to any other option. Certainly, it will be shown later in this report that few regional people, if offered the choice to live anywhere they wanted, would choose a destination outside regional Western Australia. While the Goldfields-Esperance 'affinity' rating is clearly at odds with other regions in the Table below, the contrast is much less dramatic when you ask respondents where they would most like to live.

This issue is discussed in more detail later in this report, but it is worth noting here that almost a quarter said they would choose to remain somewhere within the Goldfields-Esperance Region. This was a higher proportion wanting to stay in their region than occurred in either the Gascoyne or Pilbara.

Agreement that "I would be sad to leave this place to live in Perth"	Agree %
Peel	82
Great Southern	80
Kimberley	79
Wheatbelt	76
South West	76
Pilbara	70
Gascoyne	70
Mid West	70
Goldfields-Esperance	49

(Further information and comparative regional data page 15 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Community Facilities

The majority of Goldfields-Esperance respondents felt local sporting and recreation facilities were good, although satisfaction was less widespread than in most regions.

The 76 per cent who said sporting facilities were good compares with 83 per cent across the regions, while the 68 per cent who felt general recreation facilities were good compares with a 77 per cent all-regions average.

Despite this comparison, it was still a positive result indicating most people in the Goldfields-Esperance Region feel they are reasonably well served for sport and recreation facilities. The lack of strong agreement suggests there may be some underlying concerns,

possibly reflecting issues raised in the local discussion groups. Feedback from Kalgoorlie in particular was that the region is reasonably well catered for with sporting facilities but as the area begins to take on a more family-oriented profile, the pressure on these facilities (particularly junior sports) is increasing. There was also some suggestion that recreational facilities were lacking for children without a strong sporting interest and that more passive recreation facilities were needed for activities such as family barbecues and picnics.

The survey also asked respondents if the availability of modern communications was a problem in their area. The 17 per cent who agreed that it was included just six per cent who strongly agreed, suggesting most people do not think this issue is a major concern. However, this could reflect a limited awareness of the commercial and recreational possibilities that modern communications facilities can bring. As well, it is possible that a more specific question about services such as mobile phones, Internet and data transmissions would have evoked a much stronger response.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 16 to 17 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Perceived Community Spirit

Issues including friendliness, community division, stress on families, privacy and environment for children were considered when trying to determine people's broad perception of community spirit.

There was overwhelming agreement that the Goldfields-Esperance Region was "a really friendly place to live" and "a great place for kids to grow up". There was also little inclination to see the size of the community causing a lack of privacy. But some issues were evident in relation to community division and family stress.

Almost three out of five respondents agreed there were great stresses on family life in the Goldfields-Esperance Region. This was second only to the Pilbara. While this issue has currency worldwide, not just in the regions of Western Australia, the result was nonetheless disturbing because the level of concern in the Goldfields-Esperance was quite dramatically higher than that in all regions except the Pilbara. There was some indication that the problem may be localised to some extent with feedback from the Kalgoorlie focus group of particular interest. This indicated families suffered particular strain from miners working long shifts for up to 14 days straight, sometimes longer. Women in the discussion group were particularly keen to break from that lifestyle.

Agree that there are "great stresses on family life in this area"	Generally Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Total %
Pilbara	41	21	62
Goldfields-Esperance	41	18	59
Kimberley	29	15	44
Gascoyne	30	7	37
Peel	31	6	37
Great Southern	29	6	35
Mid West	25	7	32
Wheatbelt	26	6	32
South West	24	3	27

The issues raised in relation to stress on families may also have impacted on the perception of the region as a great place for kids to grow up in. While a solid 75 per cent thought it was, this was well under the all-regions average and lower than in all other regions, which ranged as high as 97 per cent agreement.

The proportion who felt there was a lot of community division in the Goldfields-Esperance was also above the all-regions average, although less so than several other regions including the Gascoyne, Mid West and Kimberley. The result was also softened by a relatively low level of strong agreement.

The Goldfields-Esperance region	Generally agree %	Strongly agree %	Total %	All regions average %
Really friendly place to live	56	29	85	85
Lots of community division	33	11	44	36
Great stresses on family life	41	18	59	39
Lack of privacy	14	7	21	27
Great place for kids	51	24	75	89

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 17 to 19 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Environmental Values

While recognising the problems inherent in trying to assess people's attitudes to the environment from just a few questions, the survey sought to get a broad indication using three specific measures. These included the importance of clean air, the benefits of the climate and likely acceptance of environmental cost in exchange for jobs.

Attitudes in the Goldfields-Esperance Region again differed markedly from other regions.

Just 60 per cent of respondents agreed that clean air was one of the best things about the area, compared with almost total agreement in many regions. While this suggests that clean air is not a major attraction, the results need to be viewed with care because of the very different components of the Goldfields-Esperance Region. In particular, feedback from the Esperance discussion group indicated the environmental qualities of that area were highly prized.

Respondents were also least inclined of all regions to view climate as a major benefit. Just 61 per cent said it was, including only 15 per cent who strongly agreed. This compares with a region like the Gascoyne, for example, where 93 per cent felt climate was a major benefit, including 58 per cent strong agreement.

The third statement asked respondents to agree or disagree that they would "accept some environmental cost in exchange for more job opportunities". This provided an interesting result because the Goldfields-Esperance had one of the lowest proportions of respondents agreeing to this trade-off.

"I would accept some environmental cost in exchange for more job opportunities in this region"	Generally Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Total %
Mid West	46	13	59
Great Southern	45	10	55
South West	47	5	52
Gascoyne	42	8	50
Pilbara	43	6	49
Wheatbelt	36	12	48
Goldfields-Esperance	38	7	45
Peel	35	7	42
Kimberley	32	9	41

The 45 per cent of Goldfields-Esperance respondents inclined to accept some environmental cost in exchange for jobs included just seven per cent who strongly agreed. While a similar result in another region would probably suggest a very cautious approach to environmental trade-off, the low rating for 'clean air' and 'climate' mentioned earlier suggests it may be more realistically linked to the perceived supply of employment - at least in some parts of the region - rather than environmental issues.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 19 to 20 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Perceived Economic Benefits

The survey examined cost of living, earning potential, retirement barriers and economic future to give an indication of how residents perceive the economic well-being of their region.

A notable feature was the overwhelming confidence people in the Goldfields-Esperance Region have in the economic future of the area. Eighty-two per cent agreed the region has a strong economic future. This was second only to the Pilbara. While the level of strong agreement was not overly high (22 per cent), it is possible that the severe fall in the price of gold in the course of the survey period (late 1997) had some bearing on this. Overall, the response was a compelling endorsement of the region's economic future.

"This area has a strong economic future"	Agree %
Pilbara	88
Goldfields-Esperance	82
South West	82
Mid West	78
Kimberley	71
Great Southern	65
Wheatbelt	63
Gascoyne	62
Peel	55

The vast majority of respondents (77 per cent) also agreed you could earn a lot of money in the region if you worked hard. This was well above the all-regions average (62 per cent).

Attitudes to cost of living were less enthusiastic. Only 45 per cent of respondents agreed the cost of living was "not too bad" compared with other places, but even while this was well below the all-regions average it was still noticeably better than regions such as the Pilbara and Kimberley.

Agree that "the cost of living is not too bad here compared to other places"	Agree %
Peel	84
Mid West	79
South West	77
Great Southern	75
Wheatbelt	65
Gascoyne	64
Goldfields-Esperance	45
Kimberley	30
Pilbara	23

Just over half the respondents (54 per cent) felt cost of living made it hard to retire in the region. Again, there is likely to be some difference in responses from Esperance and the Goldfields. Certainly, anecdotal evidence suggests a strong tendency for people in the Goldfields to move to Esperance on retirement for the perceived lower living costs. Feedback from the Goldfields indicated cost of living was very high, particularly in relation to housing costs, whereas concerns expressed in Esperance were more limited. It is likely that cost of living would be a contributing factor to the disproportionately low number of people of retirement age living in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. The age profile for Esperance shows a much higher proportion of the population in the older age groups.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 21 to 22 Living in the Regions - 17 to 19)

Employment Perceptions and Attitudes

The survey asked people to agree or disagree with four statements relating to job security, the range of jobs available and the need for new development to provide more jobs. The Goldfields-Esperance Region had the best result on every measure, indicating widespread satisfaction with local employment opportunities.

While most regions were vocal about the need for a wider range of jobs and also more opportunities for people with higher education, respondents in the Goldfields-Esperance Region and also the Pilbara were relatively muted on these issues. Given the strong employment position of these regions, this is not overly surprising. It will to some extent be influenced by the local industry base which provides specific and diverse opportunities for people such as mining engineers and others with high technical qualifications. However, another factor would be the proportion of people who have moved to the region specifically for its earning potential but without necessarily having high qualifications. A specific example in the Kalgoorlie focus group was a relatively poorly-educated man who said: "To be frank, I couldn't earn this money anywhere else. I mean, I'm really just a labourer." He pointed out, however, that his own children were receiving a good standard of education, and the implication is that as they progress through the education system their employment expectations may well be beyond that currently available in the region. There was some indication from the Perth discussion groups (of people who had left the regions) that young people with quite good education have left the Goldfields-Esperance Region in search of higher employment opportunities.

The Goldfields-Esperance Region also had the lowest proportion of people agreeing they were often concerned about the security of jobs in the region and the lowest proportion agreeing that the area needs new development to provide more jobs. While this reflects the already mentioned strong confidence in the economic future of the region, it was noticeable, nonetheless, that 60 per cent of respondents still at least generally agreed that new development was needed.

Goldfields-Esperance respondents	Generally agree %	Strongly agree %	Total %	All regions average %
Often concerned about job security here	33	10	43	54
Wider range of job opportunities needed	32	17	49	71
Few career opportunities for people with higher education	33	13	46	65
Area needs new development to provide more jobs	41	19	60	73

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 23 to 24 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Diversity in Recreation/Entertainment

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with five statements to determine attitudes to recreation/entertainment in the regions. These related to sport, entertainment and the availability of restaurants and nightlife. The results in the Goldfields-Esperance were generally very positive.

There was little real support for the suggestion that there was not much to do in the region if you were not into sport. Less than four out of 10 respondents agreed with the statement, including less than one in 10 who strongly agreed. Most people also disagreed that sport was the 'glue' which keeps people together socially in the Goldfields-Esperance. Both results suggest the region has a diversity of recreational activities available.

While only four out of 10 respondents said they missed the entertainment that comes with a large city, this was slightly above the average. Given that only 30 per cent of respondents said they had grown up in a large city, it suggests some latent demand for more extensive entertainment options. However, the extent to which this demand is evident in the Goldfields versus the Esperance component of the region is unclear.

Most people generally agreed there was a good range of eating establishments in the region and also enough nightlife. The level of satisfaction with nightlife was one of the highest recorded, second only to that in the Mid West.

Views of Goldfields-Esperance respondents	Agree %	All regions average %
This area relies on sport to keep it together socially	44	51
If you're not into sport, there's not much to do	38	36
I miss the entertainment of a large city	40	37
There is a good range of eating establishments here	71	66
Area has enough night life	70	64

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 25 to 27 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Standard of Health Services

Almost three-quarters of respondents in the Goldfields-Esperance Region agreed the standard of general medical practice was good, but many were less convinced about the availability of specialist medical services.

The 73 per cent who felt GP services were good was in sharp contrast to the 60 per cent who had "real concerns" about the availability of specialist medical services. While this represents a substantial level of concern it was still slightly below the all-regions average. There is clearly significant disquiet in many parts of regional Western Australia about the availability of specialist services.

The majority of Goldfields-Esperance respondents (77 per cent) agreed it was important that the area had good aged health and care facilities, a consistent finding in all regions. While not asking people to judge the standard of existing facilities, the survey sought to determine the importance people placed on them. Certainly, in some regions, it appears that a lack of

adequate facilities for the aged will contribute to families leaving an area. The strong views expressed by people of all ages in all regions, combined with the rapid ageing of society generally, reinforces the need to ensure these facilities are given an appropriate priority in future planning strategies.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 27 to 28 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Perceived Isolation

Some sense of isolation was apparent in the Goldfields-Esperance Region, particularly in the degree to which residents feel isolated from extended family. This would have a lot to do with the extent to which residents have come to the area from distant shores, primarily overseas or interstate.

The 46 per cent of respondents who said they would like to live closer to their extended family was well above the all-regions average (37 per cent) and second only to the Pilbara response.

A similar number of respondents (45 per cent) agreed the area could be “lonely for homemakers”, although this was only a little above the average. In regional terms, this suggests ‘loneliness’ in itself is not as big an issue as dislocation from family. But the result was still quite high considering the extent to which the population is concentrated in major regional centres such as Kalgoorlie-Boulder and Esperance. For example, an identical response was received in the Wheatbelt which has a much greater proportion of people living on (remote) rural properties and a tendency for most of the others to live in small towns.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 29 to 30 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Schooling

Only respondents with school age children took part in this section of the survey. Across the regions, this amounted to 470 respondents. The results should be viewed with care as the sample for each region was inevitably quite small.

The survey asked all respondents with school age children to indicate what education option they were either currently using or planned to use to educate their high school children. They were then asked to indicate if they were satisfied with this solution.

The findings suggest that the majority of Goldfields-Esperance parents opt for local high schools. As with most regions, the ability to have children at home tended to result in higher levels of satisfaction.

A quite high proportion of respondents said they would move the family to an area served by a high school when their children reached that age, suggesting schooling will cause significant disruption to those families at some stage. The 13 per cent choosing this option was second only to the Pilbara and Gascoyne.

Nevertheless, 68 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied with their schooling solution. Of the remainder, 20 per cent were dissatisfied, five per cent ambivalent and seven per cent didn't know. The proportion saying they were satisfied (68 per cent) was slightly under the all-regions average of 70 per cent.

High school solutions adopted by Goldfields-Esperance parents	%	All regions average %
Commute to a local school	65	78
Move family to area served by high school	13	7
Send to Perth	14	12
Send away to regional school	2	5
Private tutors	3	1

Table includes some multiple responses due to parents opting for different education solutions for their children. For example, they could use a local school for one child and send another to Perth. A small proportion also chose not to give a response. As a result, the Table does not equal 100%

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 30 to 33 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Future Movement

Just 43 per cent of Goldfields-Esperance respondents said they either planned to stay in the region or at least had no plans to move. This compares with around three-quarters in regions such as the Peel, South West and Great Southern.

In all, 32 per cent said they would stay and 11 per cent had no particular plans to move. Those tending to leave include 25 per cent with definite plans to move and 29 per cent who said they would probably move. The remainder were not sure.

The results suggest that more than half the Goldfields-Esperance respondents will at least probably move from the region at some stage. This is well above the all-regions average and second only to the Pilbara. The tendency in both the Pilbara and the Goldfields to move there primarily for the high earning potential (rather than lifestyle) would no doubt be a major contributing factor. These people would probably not have a long term plan to stay from the outset. However, given the anecdotal evidence of a tendency for residents from Kalgoorlie to retire to Esperance, the proportion reporting they will leave the region altogether takes on greater meaning. The implication is that apart from Esperance, there is little holding people indefinitely, particularly when the cost of living is perceived to be so high.

Of those planning to go, over two-thirds (equivalent to about 36 per cent of the population) said they would do so within five years. Only the Pilbara, with 39 per cent of its population likely to leave within five years, will see a greater impact from population turnover.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 34 to 36 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Where People Would Go

While there will always be barriers which stop people living exactly where they choose, respondents were asked to ignore those obstacles and nominate where they would most prefer to live if they had the choice.

The most common preference for Goldfields-Esperance residents was Perth, nominated by 26 per cent of respondents. Other popular destinations were overseas/interstate and the South West.

Just 13 per cent of respondents said they would not leave their present locality in the Goldfields-Esperance for any inducement, one of the lowest proportions to say this. However, a further 10 per cent said they would move elsewhere in the region, making a total of 23 per cent who would choose to stay somewhere in the region. This was a higher result than both the Pilbara and Gascoyne.

Desired Location	Average %	CURRENT LOCATION								
		Kimberley %	Pilbara %	Gascoyne %	Mid West %	Wheatbelt %	Goldfields-Esperance %	Peel %	South West %	Great Southern %
Will not move	21	17	9	8	21	20	13	30	25	26
Perth	19	21	28	20	17	22	26	15	15	17
Kimberley	7	16	9	13	14	7	1	5	4	6
Pilbara	3	2	3	5	3	3	1	4	2	1
Gascoyne	1	2	1	4	2	1	-	4	1	-
Mid West	5	6	8	13	9	4	3	1	3	2
Wheatbelt	2	1	3	2	1	6	2	-	-	3
Goldfields-Esperance	3	1	5	2	-	2	10	1	1	3
Peel	3	1	3	2	5	5	4	2	3	4
South West	14	7	11	13	6	14	10	18	23	13
Great Southern	6	3	2	2	3	6	6	7	9	9
Interstate/overseas	6	14	12	7	4	1	11	5	5	6
Other	2	2	1	5	6	3	2	7	1	4
Don't Know	8	7	5	4	9	6	11	1	8	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The shaded cells indicate the proportion of people moving from one part of a region to another. For example, at the top left shaded cell, you find 16% of people in the Kimberley would move elsewhere within the Kimberley given their choice of living anywhere in Western Australia. Places which could not be identified through the Department of Land Administration database are categorised as 'other'.

Note that in calculating State averages, results from each region are weighted to take account of the impact of population size. Without this weighting, responses from a smaller population region would have a much greater impact on the whole of regional Western Australia than it should. The weighting reinstates the relativities of the nine regions in population terms.

The most common reason people gave for choosing to leave the Goldfields-Esperance Region was family reunion, particularly for people who would choose to return to Perth.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 36 to 40 Living in the Regions - State Report)

Why People Move

Having determined which locations are most popular as 'ideal' destinations, the obvious question is why.

It has to be said that the Goldfields-Esperance Region received one of the lowest votes as a preferred destination, drawing most interest from Pilbara and Great Southern residents, although it was nominated by just five per cent and three per cent respectively from each of these regions.

However, respondents in all regions were asked to nominate things which would attract them to a region, and on this measure people nominated the climate, attractive environment and retirement as the major attractions of the Goldfields-Esperance Region. The influence of Esperance is clearly apparent in these results and implies most of the vote for the region as an ideal destination would, in fact, relate to the attractions of Esperance.

(Further information and comparative regional data page 41 Living in the Regions - State Report)

The View from Perth

The survey included 150 interviews conducted with people in Perth to ascertain their views on a range of issues affecting the regions.

A significant finding was that while 57 per cent of Perth respondents said they would not want to leave Perth, a solid 43 per cent indicated they would prefer to live somewhere else in Western Australia. Most commonly, they would head south to either the South West or Great Southern, reflecting a tendency among Perth respondents to value the regions for perceived lifestyle benefits rather than their economic opportunities. Just one per cent of Perth respondents chose the Goldfields-Esperance as their preferred destination.

Where Perth people want to live	%
Perth	57
Kimberley	4
Pilbara	2
Gascoyne	1
Mid West	3
Wheatbelt	4
Goldfields-Esperance	1
Peel	3
South West	16
Great Southern	9
Don't Know	3

Note: This was a multiple response question and therefore does not equal 100%.

When asked why they would choose to leave or remain in Perth, a number of common themes emerged. Those who chose Perth did so on the basis of family connections, facilities and lifestyle. Those wanting to live in the regions cited physical environment and a quieter, more relaxed lifestyle as their major motivations. It appears that people in Perth tend to think of the regions in terms of lifestyle advantages rather than economic opportunities.

A striking feature was the relative lack of knowledge people in Perth have about the regions. More than half could not name any towns in some regions, but the Goldfields-Esperance fared extremely well with 90 per cent able to name at least one town. Most commonly this was Kalgoorlie (known by 79 per cent), followed by Coolgardie (26 per cent), Esperance (17 per cent) and Boulder (13 per cent) but there was also some awareness of quite a wide range of Goldfields-Esperance towns. The relatively low number naming Esperance was intriguing considering it is actually part of the region's title.

A quite high number of Perth respondents (61 per cent) saw the Goldfields-Esperance as a region with a strong economic future. This was one of the highest ratings, second only to the South West and Pilbara. Just nine per cent thought the region had a weak economic future. The remainder didn't know or were ambivalent.

Perceived Economic Future:

Perth respondents	Kimberley %	Pilbara %	Gascoyne %	Mid West %	Wheatbelt %	Goldfields-Esperance %	Peel %	South West %	Great Southern %
Net Weak	3	3	9	13	21	9	9	8	17
Net Strong	61	62	35	31	39	61	47	63	34
Neither	10	6	11	17	17	14	16	12	11
Don't Know	28	29	45	39	23	16	28	17	38

The Goldfields-Esperance Region also rated quite highly, compared to other regions, on its quality of life, social life, attractions of the natural environment and quality of essential services. This suggests the region is generally perceived quite positively by people living in Perth. Nevertheless, despite this rating, only 22 per cent of Perth respondents said it was a place they would like to live, which placed it behind four other regions - the South West, Peel, Great Southern and Kimberley. The region was, however, perceived by Perth people to be more attractive than the Pilbara, Gascoyne, Mid West and Wheatbelt.

A Place I Would Like to Live:

Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown	Dark Brown
Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Dark Brown	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan
Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Dark Brown	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan
Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Dark Brown	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan
Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan	Dark Brown	Light Tan	Light Tan	Light Tan

Sixty per cent of Perth respondents said they had been to the Goldfields-Esperance Region (assessed by their understanding of the region's perimeters, not necessarily the true perimeters) - 39 per cent on holidays, 11 per cent on business and another 10 per cent combining holiday and business. This was quite a high visitation rate compared to many other regions.

(Further information and comparative regional data pages 42 to 51 Living in the Regions - State Report)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STATE REPORT

Mobility:

The survey shows that regional Western Australia is highly mobile. Only 16 per cent of respondents had grown up in the area where they now live. More than half had been in their current region for 10 years or less and a third for five years or less.

The survey suggests that about a third of people who move to the regions come from Perth and a quarter from overseas or interstate. The remainder move from within their current region or from another Western Australian region.

One in five reported moving three or more times in the last 10 years.

The Mid West had the highest proportion of people who had not moved from their current town or district in the last 10 years, while the Peel and the Pilbara were the most mobile.

Motivation:

Employment is the key factor prompting movement, followed by family/marriage influences and then lifestyle.

People living in the regions indicated they felt safe, had a strong affinity with their location and were generally happy with community facilities (particularly sports). Perceived safety was the most universally held attitude throughout the regions.

While in some regions there is a strong trend towards moving when children reach high school age, the survey suggests that overall 78 per cent of regional people with high school children send them to local high schools.

Attitudes to health care varied across regions, with particular concern evident in the northern regions. Overall, the standard of medical general practice was considered good, but the availability of specialist medical services was a significant concern.

The Future:

Only half the people in regional Western Australia plan to stay where they are indefinitely, although another 11 per cent say they have no firm plans to move.

This leaves a solid 33 per cent of the population who say they will either definitely or probably move on. The residual 6 per cent are not sure.

The survey suggests that a fifth of the regional population will move from their current region within five years.

Asked where they would most prefer to live, two-thirds of the total sample chose a regional area in Western Australia. In other words, the majority of people living in regional Western Australia prefer that lifestyle to any other.

In total, 21 per cent said they would prefer to stay in their current location, 44 per cent said they would either transfer to another region or to another place in their current region, 19 per cent chose Perth, five per cent interstate and one per cent overseas. (A further eight per cent said they did not know and two per cent named places that could not be identified through the DOLA database.)

The Perth Perspective:

Forty-two per cent of Perth respondents said they had lived at some stage in regional Western Australia, although most did not grow up there.

More than half said they would not move away from Perth, but a massive 43 per cent indicated they were open to the possibility. The South West was the most preferred destination (nominated by 16 per cent) followed by the Great Southern (nine per cent).

Major motivations for remaining in Perth include family and the availability of good services/facilities/shopping.

Major motivations for moving to the regions are a quieter lifestyle and country atmosphere.

Perth residents who wanted to move to the regions, but had not, said career structure was the overwhelming reason (28 per cent), followed by financial constraints (18 per cent) and children's education (14 per cent). There was a strong perception that they would not find suitable employment in the regions.

The view from Perth showed relatively little understanding of the economic opportunities available in regional Western Australia. Lifestyle values rather than economic opportunities were overwhelmingly the key attractions.

There was also limited awareness of specific regions, particularly those in the north. A significant number of respondents could not name any towns in some regions. Questions about perceived quality of life and essential services also drew a significant 'don't know' response.

There were clearly people in Perth who would like to live in the regions for perceived lifestyle benefits that appear to be borne out by the experiences of those living there. But most do not pursue a move unless they happen upon employment related opportunities.

Notes