



THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2008

FOREWORD

The **Regional Development Council** is the peak advisory body to the West Australian Government on all regional development issues and is an advocate for regional Western Australia.

The Council tackles a diverse range of issues and aims to influence Government decision making to achieve improved outcomes for regional Western Australians.

The Western Australian Regional Development Council – Strategic Priorities 2008 is a continuance of the renewed approach to the Council's role and key outcomes for the regional Western Australia.

The areas of the strategic priorities remain focused on improved service delivery in the regions and continue to reflect a more structured approach by the Council to influence decision making on service delivery. The Council has an opportunity in 2008 to put forward sound policies that could attract broad support in the run up to the 2009 State Election.

There has been an erosion of core funding to Commissions over time and the Commissions need an increase in funding in order to meet their expanded responsibilities. Commissions need to adapt their charters to take on the challenges they face and the possibility of further enhancement of their roles in light of the dialogue which has ensued over the concept of Regional Governance.

Through its network of Regional Development Commissions and the Department of Local Government and Regional Development, the Council will work to provide practical and effective policy advice to the Government to address these priorities for Regional Western Australia.

The sustainability and growth of the Western Australian economy is to a large extent underpinned by economic activity in the regions that feeds the State's export performance. My Council colleagues and I are committed to ensuring that regional Western Australians share in the benefits of a strong Western Australian economy, continue to contribute to sustainable development of the State and participate fully in development decision making.

Hon John Cowdell
Chair
Regional Development Council

THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The **Regional Development Council**, established under the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993* is the State Government's peak advisory body on regional development issues.

The *Act* establishes the functional responsibilities of the Council as the advisory body to the Minister on all regional development issues

- to promote development in all regions;
- to develop policy proposals on development issues affecting one or more of the regions;
- to facilitate liaison between commissions and relevant government agencies and the coordination of their respective functions;
- to promote liaison between local, State and Commonwealth government bodies with respect to regional issues, and the coordination of their respective policies on those issues; and
- to report to the Minister on matters referred to it by the Minister.

MEMBERSHIP

Council membership comprises the chairs of the nine Regional Development Commissions, two representatives from Local Government and the Director General from the Department of Local Government and Regional Development.

Members 2008

John Cowdell	Chair RDC, Chair, Peel Development Commission
Kevin Leahy	Chair, Gascoyne Development Commission
Graham Thomson	Chair, Goldfields Esperance Development Commission
Russell Harrison	Chair, Great Southern Development Commission
Patrick Dodson	Chair, Kimberley Development Commission
Robyn Parsons	A/Chair, Mid West Development Commission
Stan Martin	Chair, Pilbara Development Commission
Stan Liaros	Chair, South West Development Commission
Darren West	Chair, Wheatbelt Development Commission
Mal Osborne	Local Government (CEO, Shire of Esperance)
Vacant	Local Government

RELATIONSHIPS

The Council's sphere of influence within the public sector is focused on:-

- Cabinet Standing Committee on Regional Policy
- Minister for Regional Development
 - Responsible for regional development and Kimberley, Pilbara and Gascoyne Regions
- Regional Ministers
 - Responsible for SW, Wheatbelt, MidWest, Peel, Goldfields-Esperance and Great Southern Development Commissions
- Regional Development Commissions
 - Comprising appointed Boards and Commission officers
- Department of Local Government and Regional Development
 - Outcome – An increased capacity of our multicultural communities to develop good government, economic growth and environmental sustainability.
 - Services
 - Implementation of Government policy
 - Improved access to services and capacity for development in regional communities
 - Better local government
- Other State Government Agencies
 - Contribution to the State's Goals as they relate to the regions
- Local Government
 - Inter-Governmental Agreement
 - Municipal services
- Commonwealth Government
 - Inter-Governmental Agreement
 - COAG
 - COALG

The Council also has a keen interest in business and industry particularly in regard to attraction and retention in regional Western Australia, and with the delivery of services and access to infrastructure for the general community.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Western Australian Government's vision for the regions and its regional development policy provide an extensive framework for the Council to establish its priorities. In addition, the Cabinet Standing Committee on Regional Policy provides a high level mechanism for consideration of Council advice and guidance of Council strategy.

The regional vision and development policies are formulated within the broader context of the Western Australian Government's goals relating to People and Communities; the Economy; the Environment; the Regions; and Governance.

VISION FOR THE REGIONS

- ***Western Australian regional communities will have strong and effective local leadership and decision-making processes.***
- ***They will be healthy, safe and enjoyable places to live and work, offering expanded and improved educational and employment opportunities for their residents and a high standard of services.***
- ***Regions will have robust, vibrant economies based on the sustainable use of economic, social and environmental resources and a strong partnership approach within and between regional communities, industry and Government.***

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY OUTCOMES

The strategic outcomes for regional development are:

- ***Government decision-making is based on a thorough understanding of regional issues***
- ***Planning in partnership for a sustainable future***
- ***Effective Government service delivery to regions***
- ***Skilled communities***
- ***Improved regional infrastructure***
- ***Diversified regional economies***
- ***Enhanced regional investment***
- ***Fair pricing for regional residents and businesses***
- ***Life long learning in the regions***
- ***Effective health service delivery***
- ***Safe regional communities***
- ***Enhanced quality of regional lifestyles***
- ***Cohesive communities***
- ***Improved environmental management***
- ***Sustainable natural resource management***
- ***Conservation and restoration of our State's natural and built heritage***

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- **Attraction and Retention of Population**
 - Education & Training
- **Planning and Infrastructure**
 - Housing & Housing Affordability
- **Indigenous Development**

The Council has determined these 3 areas and their sub categories as priorities for its strategic focus on policy impact and change. The priorities include an emphasis on alignment of Government activity with regional development vision and policy.

ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF POPULATION

Skilled Employment in the Regions that Promotes Sustainable Communities

The Skilled Communities Outcome is focused on availability and take-up of leadership training; improved access to quality education including tertiary options; enhanced planning and management of communities; increased apprenticeships and traineeships; improved access to business guidance and training and to information technology skills training and development; and training aligned to present and future needs of industry and business. It stresses the need to ensure that suitably qualified and skilled people are employed in both public and private sectors in regional areas and that the community conditions and employment rewards encourage people to work and stay in the regions.

Council policy impact targets:-

- *Regional attraction and retention.*
- *Fly In Fly Out employment.*
- *Regional education and training.*

Council actions to influence:-

- *Provision of incentives for regional placements including
 - *Federal Government decisions on tax incentives.*
 - *Targeting based on generational profiles.**
- *Review of regional education and training policies.*
- *Promotion of career path development and the benefits of regional experience for key professions, including teaching.*
- *Support for professional and personal development in the regions*
- *Better information on and assessment of Fly In Fly Out employment.*
- *Provision of information on work location choice factors for professionals and their families and tertiary students.*
- *Assessment of critical skill sets required for each region.*

Council project development:

- *Attraction and Retention of Public Sector Employees.*
- *A Regional Development Impact Assessment Framework for Fly-In Fly-Out Projects.*

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Decentralised Regional Planning For Land Use, Infrastructure and Development and Maintenance of Government Service Provision

The Planning Outcome is focused on addressing issues under a sustainability assessment framework and through improved State and local government relationships and partnerships. It also aims at increased expenditure for research and development on regional issues and opportunities; substantial community and development benefits for Indigenous people arising from partnerships; resolution of native title claims by negotiation rather than litigation and formal recognition of regional and remote communities through statutory planning processes. The principal focus of the priority is in the context of decentralised planning in its broadest sense and includes land use, infrastructure, environment, social and economic planning.

Council policy impact targets:-

- ***High level regional planning committees that integrate planning in the regional context.***
- ***Decentralised planning through delegated powers.***
- ***Planning for small towns.***
- ***Affordable housing in regional WA***

Council action to influence:-

- ***Development of a business case for a decentralized planning model for consideration by Government.***
- ***Engagement of regional communities in planning and project development.***
- ***Encouragement of an affordable housing plan, including consideration of the impact of caravan park closure on long-stay tenants.***

Council project development:-

- ***Townsite Development Senior Officers Group***
- ***Extractive Industries Contribution to Communities Project***
- ***Development of formal advice to Government on the future role of Development Commissions in the context of Regional Governance***

INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT

Improved Economic Participation of Indigenous Communities Through Increased Employment.

The Regional Development Policy addresses indigenous issues across its mainstream Outcomes. Indigenous components of the outcomes focus on substantial improvement in the availability of essential services and facilities; enhanced capacity

to plan and manage their futures; enhanced economic development; improvement in education health and police service delivery in remote communities and in access to culturally sensitive services.

It also highlights specific interest in indigenous participation in a sustainable employment industry and acknowledgment of the role of Indigenous people in natural resource management.

Council policy impact

- ***Co-ordination of private sector employment opportunities.***
- ***CDEP evolution***

Council action to influence:-

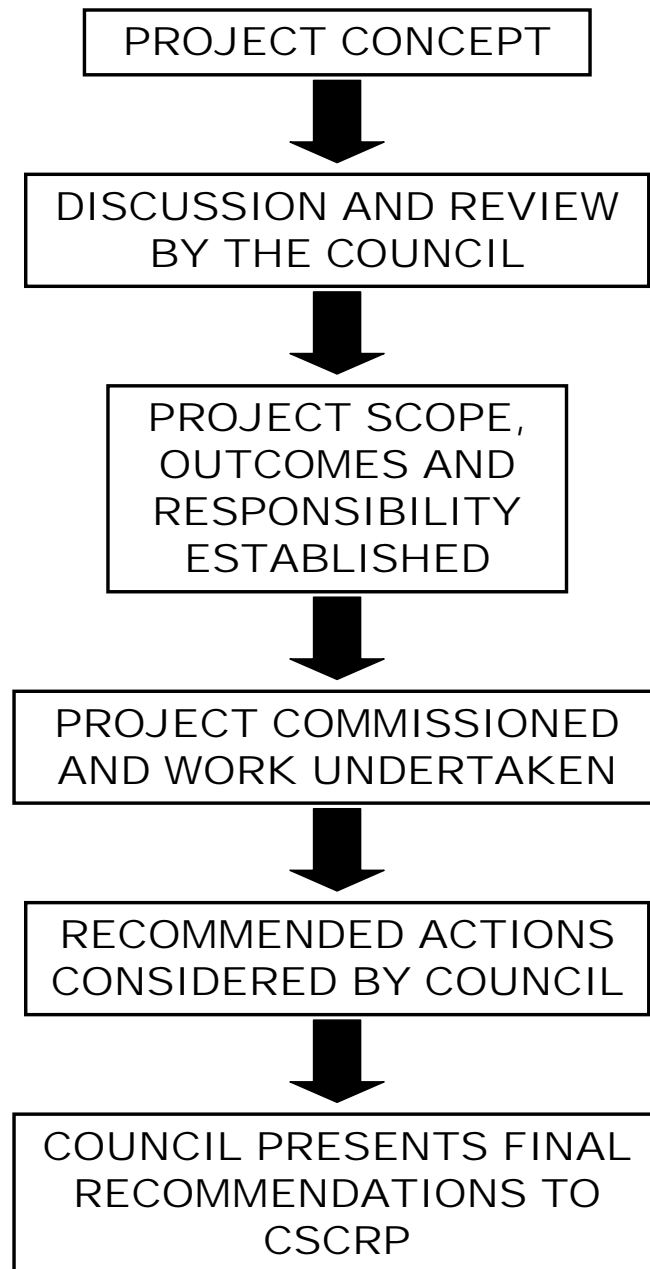
- ***Adoption of regional and local solutions rather than State wide measures.***
- ***Adjustment to the evolution of Commonwealth policies and programs.***
- ***Knowledge, skills, leadership and governance capacity building.***
- ***Identification of critical blockages in services to indigenous communities***
- ***Decision making empowerment of indigenous communities in mainstream areas.***
- ***Implementation of early childhood solutions for indigenous development issues focused on health, education and nutrition***

Council project development:-

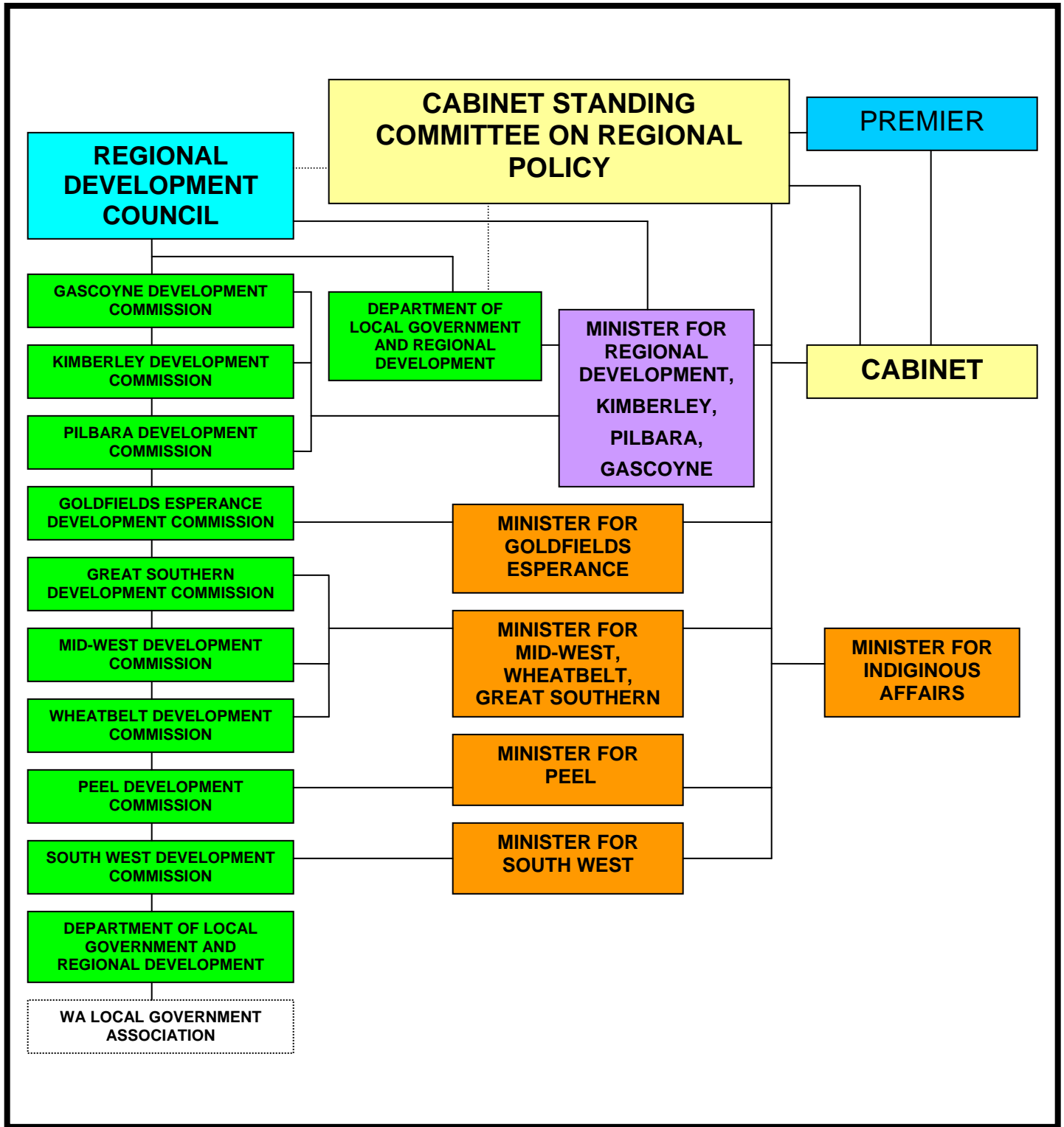
- ***Aboriginal Economic Development Officers***

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL PROJECTS

The Council's approach to key issues is through the development of project briefs that are undertaken on behalf of the RDC by selected parties and provide the RDC with recommended actions for consideration by the Cabinet Standing Committee on Regional Policy. This approach is summarised in the following diagram:-








REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL STRUCTURAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT



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Western Australian Regions

