



# Regional Centres Development Plan (SuperTowns)

## Background Information

### WHAT IS THE REGIONAL CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SUPERTOWNS) INITIATIVE?

The Regional Centres Development Plan (SuperTowns) is a Royalties for Regions initiative to encourage regional communities in the southern half of the state to plan and prepare for the future so they can take advantage of opportunities created by WA's population growth to 2050. WA's population is predicted to more than double over the next 40 years to 4.9 million people.

### WHAT MAKES A SUPERTOWN?

A town that has growth potential. The SuperTowns vision is to have balanced communities, with lifestyle options and access to services. They will have affordable, quality housing and a diverse range of job opportunities. The towns will offer more choices for people to live in regional areas and an attractive alternative to living in the metropolitan area.

### WHAT IS THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE SUPERTOWNS INITIATIVE?

This initiative supports regional towns to prepare for the future so they can take advantage of opportunities created by WA's population growth to 2050.

The Western Australian population is predicted to more than double to 4.9 million by 2050. Metropolitan Perth is expected to grow to 3.8 million and regional WA to 1.1 million by that time. This will create opportunities for regional towns to grow their communities and help them realise their full potential.

SuperTowns will build on their natural population growth and the unique geographical and economic advantages of each town. The initiative also seeks to create the new business opportunities required to attract investment and generate the jobs required to attract more people to live in those towns.

### WHICH TOWNS HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR THE REGIONAL CENTRES DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SUPERTOWNS)?

For 2011-12, the nine towns selected to participate in SuperTowns are:

- Esperance
- Northam
- Collie
- Katanning
- Morawa
- Jurien Bay
- Boddington
- Manjimup
- Margaret River

### HOW WERE THESE TOWNS SELECTED?

These initial towns were chosen using the following criteria:

- Potential for population expansion
- Potential for economic expansion and diversification
- Strong local governance capabilities
- Generation of net benefits to Western Australia

The six Regional Development Commissions in the southern part of the state were asked by the Minister to nominate towns within each of their regions and provide supporting information.

An assessment was then undertaken by a steering group comprising representatives of the Department of Regional Development and Lands, WA Planning Commission, Department of Planning, Department of Local Government, Department of Agriculture and Food, and the six Regional Development Commissions. It then provided advice to the Regional Development Council, which then provided advice to the Minister for Regional Development; Lands for submission and consideration by Cabinet.

The assessment process was mindful of major state and commonwealth initiatives such as the State's Regional Freight Strategy, the Workforce Development and Training Plan and the National Broadband Network roll out.

### **HOW MUCH WILL BE INVESTED IN EACH TOWN?**

Through Royalties for Regions, \$80 million is available to SuperTowns for transformational projects in the chosen communities.

In addition, \$5.5 million has been allocated to assist local governments in undertaking the necessary planning and revisiting their strategic plans, if needed. Funding will also be provided to relevant state government agencies to support local governments through this process.

### **WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM FUNDING A TOWN CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE?**

No investment decisions will be made until the detailed planning is complete.

Towns will be encouraged to prepare their own distinctive vision and undertake significant community consultation through the strategic planning process. Planning will be undertaken with consideration of other major state and commonwealth initiatives such as the State's Regional Freight Strategy, the Workforce Development and Training Plan, and the National Broadband Network roll out.

When the plans are finalised, it is expected that towns will leverage funding from other relevant parts of state government and industry, in addition to the Royalties for Regions investment.

### **WHY ARE THERE NO FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THIS INITIATIVE IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS?**

This is not a short term program. The Western Australian Government is committed to this initiative over the long term, as growth will occur over a number of years. Research and planning at a regional and local level must be undertaken before funding can be set aside for ongoing years.

It is expected that some of the Round One SuperTowns may need funding in future years for some projects.

Subject to availability of funding, it is also intended to extend the SuperTowns initiative to other towns that can demonstrate they meet the selection criteria in the future.

### **WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

The next steps are:

- The Minister to brief the Shire Presidents and CEOs of the selected SuperTowns. Local government representatives will get an opportunity to meet the SuperTowns Steering Committee.
- A joint-agency SuperTowns implementation unit will be formed to work with each town and deliver the initiative. This unit will be lead by the Department of Regional Development and Lands, and include representatives from the Department of Planning and LandCorp.

- Project teams will also be established for each SuperTown. These teams will be led by the Local Government and relevant Regional Development Commission, with the support of the SuperTowns implementation unit and other key agencies. Once established, SuperTowns Project Teams will begin consulting with the selected communities.
- Planning consultants and other specialists may also be appointed through the SuperTowns Project Teams to work with the communities where needed.

### **SOME TOWNS ALREADY HAVE PLANS. WILL THEY STILL NEED TO GO THROUGH THE PLANNING PROCESS?**

This is the opportunity for the towns with existing plans to reassess those plans and redefine what the development priorities are, given the objectives of SuperTowns and the additional funding opportunities presented by SuperTowns.

By going through this process the final plan will be better informed and will be aligned with SuperTowns objectives.

### **WILL THERE BE REDUCED INVESTMENTS IN THE TOWNS NOT SELECTED?**

The State Government Royalties for Regions program will continue to make new investments throughout each of the regions – not just in SuperTowns.

In addition, the investment in SuperTowns is likely to also benefit surrounding towns. The focus will not just be on town centres.

Subject to availability of funding, it is also intended to extend the SuperTowns initiative to other towns that can demonstrate that they meet the selection criteria in the future.

### **WHY IS THE FOCUS ON THE SOUTH OF THE STATE?**

Significant Royalties for Regions investment is already either planned or underway in the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne and MidWest Regions to address immediate pressures due to major resources sector activity, and prepare towns in those regions for the future. Significant investment will now be directed to towns in the southern part of the state to facilitate growth in response to WA's expanding population.

### **WHAT ABOUT REGIONAL CITIES?**

The SuperTowns initiative is focused on the next tier of regional centres, addressing their impediments to growth.

### **WILL THERE BE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FUTURE TO BE SELECTED AS A SUPERTOWN?**

This is the first phase of the SuperTowns initiative and, dependant on the availability of funds, it is intended to extend the SuperTowns initiative to other towns that can demonstrate they meet the SuperTowns selection criteria in the future.