



# **Strategic Directions**

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## **(2021 – 2024)**

*April 2021*

# Executive Summary

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The Strategic Directions (2021 – 2024) of the Southern Link Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC) is the framework for the excellent working relationship that has developed between six Local Government Authorities in the Great Southern region of Western Australia.

In the first Strategic Directions (2015 – 2020), the Councils spent time working out the basis of the VROC approach and focused on priorities such as the provision of aged housing and independent living facilities, the development of regional records archiving, water recycling and regional road initiatives.

The current plan is now based on the value and benefits to be achieved from an expanded sub-regional group as a result of agreement in principle on the additional participation of the Shire of Gnowangerup and the Shire of Katanning. The focus is on building advocacy strength as a significant sub-regional bloc.

We commend these Strategic Directions to you to guide regional collaboration.



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Shire President

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Shire President



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Shire President

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Shire President



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Shire President

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Shire President

# Profiles



## PROFILE

6 SHIRES

Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils

- Kojonup
- Broomehill-Tambellup
- Katanning
- Gnowangerup
- Cranbrook
- Plantagenet

Supported by an Executive Officer

### KOJONUP

- 1,985 people
- 2,932 sq km
- 0.7 people / sq km

### KATANNING

- 4,151 people
- 1,518 sq km
- 2.7 people / sq km

### CRANBROOK

- 1,089 people
- 3,277 sq km
- 0.3 people / sq km



### BROOMEHILL-TAMBELLUP

- 1,144 people
- 2,609 sq km
- 0.4 people / sq km

### GNOWANGERUP

- 1,215 people
- 4,268 sq km
- 0.3 people / sq km

### PLANTAGENET

- 5,079 people
- 4,792 sq km
- 1.1 people / sq km



## GREAT SOUTHERN

67% of its visitors come from the UK, Germany, other European countries and New Zealand

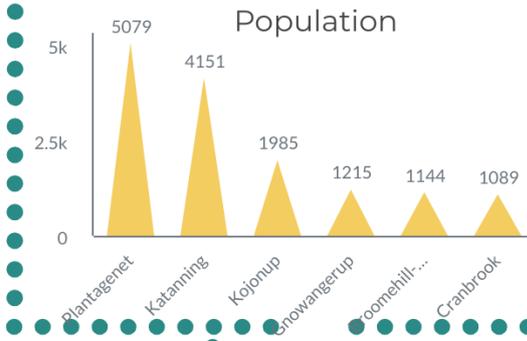


2.3% of the population



16 Great Southern wines feature among the 28 "best of the best" of Australia's Rieslings





Plantagenet and Katanning make up the two highest populations



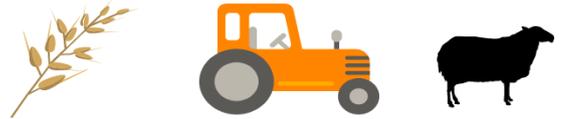
### Broomehill-Tambellup Indigenous Population



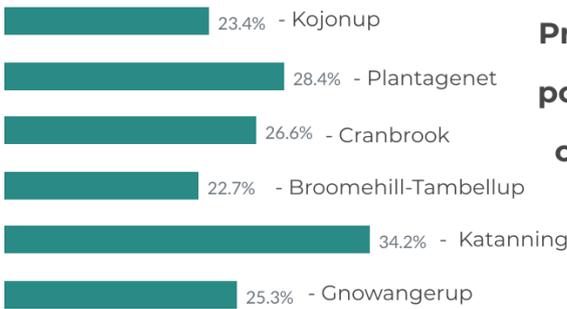
Broomehill-Tambellup has the highest Indigenous population at **11.5%**

Gnowangerup = 8.4%  
 Katanning = 7.6%  
 Kojonup = 4.4%  
 Plantagenet = 3.1%  
 Cranbrook = 2.2%

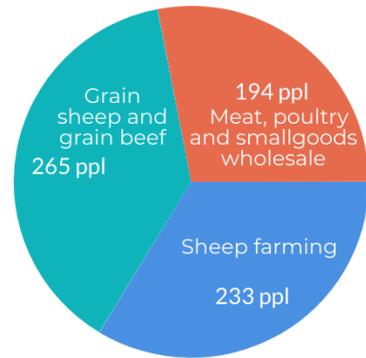
### Employment by Industry



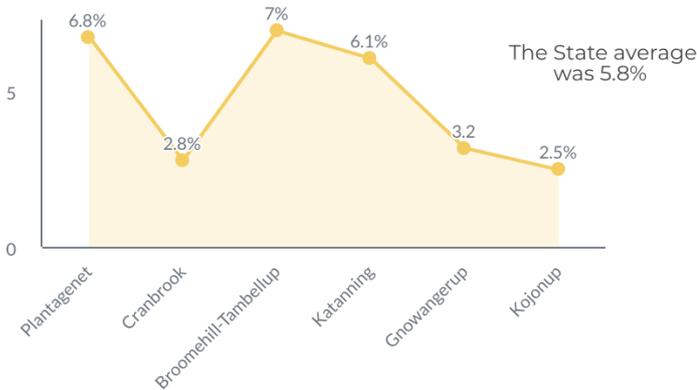
Employment is dominated by agriculture in all 6 Shires



### Top Employers



### Unemployment Rate



Figures for each Shire are taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Regional Data Summaries<sup>1</sup> and the 2016 Census<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ABS, *Regional Data Summaries for Statistical Local Areas of Broomehill-Tambellup, Cranbrook, Kojonup, Plantagenet, Katanning, Gnowangerup, 2020*

<sup>2</sup> Quick Stats (Census 2016), ABS

# Strategic Plan at a Glance

This Strategic Plan at a Glance provides an overview of the goals, strategies and targets that the Southern Link VROC will seek to achieve over the next four years.

Our strategic directions and our action planning are presented in more detail in the following pages.

Regional Economic Development	Environment	Regional Community Development	Governance and Human Resources
<b>Goal:</b> Stimulate economic growth and business opportunity.	<b>Goal:</b> Value and protect the environment.	<b>Goal:</b> Build community capacity to achieve outcomes.	<b>Goal:</b> Increase SL VROC capacity through collaboration.
<p><b>R1:</b> Support the implementation of wider regional initiatives.</p> <p><b>R2:</b> Collaborate on safe and efficient road networks.</p> <p><b>R3:</b> Improve the provision and maintenance of infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>E1:</b> Encourage natural resource management.</p> <p><b>E2:</b> Improve energy and waste management.</p>	<p><b>C1:</b> Support skills development across the communities.</p> <p><b>C2:</b> Collaborate on common community development projects.</p>	<p><b>G1:</b> Articulate clear direction for the VROC.</p> <p><b>G2:</b> Build a culture of collaboration and trust.</p> <p><b>G3:</b> Share systems, processes and professional development between member LGAs.</p>

## Implementation

Each Local Government Authority is committed to supporting these goals and strategic directions. Officers from the LGAs will take responsibility to implement actions within their own organisations and to drive working collaborations across the organisations.

Review and continual improvement will be undertaken as a shared exercise.

# Our Strategic Direction

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## Vision for the Southern Link VROC

**Our Vision is** to sustain a collaborative partnership that serves the member Local Governments.

**Our Purpose is** to work collaboratively as Local Governments to share knowledge and resources for mutually beneficial outcomes.

### Our Values are

Leadership	provide leadership in the region through effective regional representation and influential strategic advice to our stakeholders.
Integrity	demonstrate integrity in our actions, decision-making processes and corporate governance.
Inclusiveness	understand and value the diverse perspectives on key opportunities, issues and challenges within the region
Collaboration	engage respectfully with all stakeholders within and external to the region.
Responsible	perform our functions in an efficient, transparent, economical and professional manner.

Our vision for the Southern Link VROC is aligned with the current directions of the Western Australian Regional Development Trust and the Great Southern Development Commission.

## Vision for Regional Development in Western Australia

Regional development is the sustainable economic development of regional Western Australia cooperatively with that of the metropolitan area.

The Western Australian Regional Development Trust vision is for ‘a diversified State economy that is independent of non-renewable resource extraction’.

The Strategic Themes of the Trust include:

1. Grow existing, and find and develop new, non-renewable resource and related industries;
2. Grow existing, and find and develop new, other alternative industries;
3. Normalise regional living standards;
4. Normalise Aboriginal economic development.

## Vision for the Great Southern

The vision or preferred future for the Great Southern is that:

*The Great Southern is recognised internationally as a natural choice for opportunity and lifestyle.*

The strategic goals of the Great Southern Development Commission include:

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Strong and Diverse Economy | Grow existing, and find and develop new regional industries;                       |
| 1. Regional Liveability       | Enhance and normalise regional living standards;                                   |
| 2. Strong Communities         | Build strong, inclusive communities and normalise Aboriginal economic development. |

<https://www.gsd.c.wa.gov.au/information/current-publications>

# Strategic Analysis

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The **critical trends** that will impact the Southern Link VROC members over the next four years are:

- Ongoing resourcing and preparedness for further impacts of the COVID pandemic;
- Increase in direct Federal funding to Local Government;
- Increase in State Government scrutiny;
- Increased focus on water security;
- Increase in the diversity of the regional population;
- Lack of available 'trades' within the region;
- Market failure in building sector especially headwork charges in regional areas.

The **key challenges** for our sub region are:

- Economic growth including value adding of the agricultural base, attraction of new industry and encouragement for new business;
- Maintaining ageing civil infrastructure for power, water, sewerage and especially, communications;
- Water security on a regional basis;
- Road infrastructure to handle heavier loads, access and road safety;
- Housing affordability and supply not meeting demand.

We also **need to progress**:

- Access to health services and facilities;
- Waste management and recycling;
- Population attraction and retention in the region;
- Phase Two Housing Project covering VROC area.

## Priority Projects

The priority projects for 2021- 2024 are:

### ➤ Develop a Regional Water Security Strategy:

- Focus on longer term solutions for water management, catchment and storage;
- Include a regional strategy for stock water;
- Include community dams and tanks:
  - utilisation of disused Water Corporation assets,
  - water harvesting;
- Establish permanent water sources rather than continual carting;
- Develop scoping paper following audit of existing baseline infrastructure and assessment of required infrastructure;
- Lobby the State Government to identify long term water solutions.

### ➤ Establish VROC reporting processes to enhance the effectiveness of VROC advocacy:

- status reporting on:
  - advocacy undertaken;
  - upcoming priorities;
- VROC Strategic Implications referenced by member Councils as part of agenda items;

### ➤ Continue to push for better electronic connectivity and the elimination of black spots:

- Join up and tender as one sub-regional bloc to achieve more customised systems;
- Collaborate with other regions and sub-regions to lobby Government.

### ➤ Share learnings and upskill staff:

- Capture the corporate knowledge;
- Promote local government pathways as an industry.

### ➤ Joint household hazardous waste and e-waste collection and disposal.

- Audit the quantities generated;
- Assess options for collection and disposal.

### ➤ VROC Housing Project.

- Update GSHI Business Case and prepare submissions for State/Federal Funding with member shires contributing \$2k each in 21/22 Annual Budget;
- Project management/ Work Group established, freehold land availability identified and plans prepared to reduce delays in meeting milestones.

The **critical success factors** to enable us to implement our plan are:

- Effective and committed collaboration between officers and staff of the six LGAs;
- Consistent support from the Elected Members of the six LGAs;
- Strategic focus from the Chief Executive Officers of the Southern Link VROC Shires; and
- Strengthened advocacy and voice from a significant sub-regional bloc of Local Government Shires.

# Goals, Strategies and Actions

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To achieve our vision, the goals, strategies and actions are:

## Regional Economic Development

### Goal One:

Stimulate economic growth and business opportunity:

#### Strategy R1:

Support the implementation of wider initiatives.

#### Target:

One initiative implemented within 2 years.

#### Actions

Action 1:

Ensure representation on priority regional working groups.

#### Deliverables

- 6 Shires represented in working groups such as Information Technology.

Action 2:

Support for Great Southern Treasures (GST)

- 6 Shires enter into initial 3-year MOU arrangement to provide surety to strategic and operational objectives of organisation.

Action 3:

Support further planning for Regional Trails.

- Pilot programs developed through the Great Southern Centre for Outdoor Recreational Excellence (GSCORE).

#### Strategy R2:

Collaborate on safe and efficient road networks:

#### Target:

One significant road initiative per year.

#### Actions

Action 1:

Prioritise problematic locations on a regional basis to strengthen the funding case.

#### Deliverables

- Progress on the agreed list of priorities, with funding authorities.

Action 2:

Use the Revitalising Agricultural Region Freight Strategy to increase funding for Great Southern roads.

- Lobby Group formed with the Development Commission
- Business Case developed for the region

Action 3  
Work collaboratively through the Regional Road Group to upgrade significant local roads that join Shires.

- Regional Road Group support of priorities.

**Strategy R3:**

Improve the provision and maintenance of infrastructure:

**Target:**

One improvement in infrastructure within 3 years.

**Actions**

**Deliverables**

Action 1:  
Develop a Regional Water Security Strategy.

- Institutional support (e.g., Water Corp, DFES, DPIRD) for the Regional Water Security Strategy.

Action 2:  
Build support for additional communication infrastructure and innovation in technology for the sub region.

- Expanded cover for emergency responses across the sub-region.

Action 3:  
Progress Phase Two Housing Project.

- Update GSHI Business Case and
- Prepare submissions for State/Federal Funding
- Member shires contributing \$2k each in 21/22 Annual Budget:

## Environment

### Goal Two:

Value and protect the environment.

### Strategy E1:

Encourage natural resource management:

### Target:

One NRM initiative implemented each year.

#### Actions

Action 1:

Share and coordinate approaches to bushfire mapping, coordination and procedures.

#### Deliverables

- Collaborative bushfire management approach.

Action 2:

Encourage water harvesting and recycling of waste water.

- One initiative of the Drought Proofing Program (Future Drought Fund) or the Rural Water Security Strategy piloted within 2 years.

Action 3:

Collaborate on pest and weed management across Shire boundaries.

- Establish at least one Contiguous Local Authority Group.

### Strategy E2:

Improve energy and waste management:

### Target:

One initiative piloted within in 2 years.

#### Actions

Action 1:

Promote options for incorporating renewable energy (closing the loop).

#### Deliverables

- Establish best practice baseline utilising Katanning Energy experiences.

Action 2:

Progress the recycling of heavy metal waste, electronic and IT waste.

- Investigate opportunities through audit.

Action 3:

Develop opportunities for combined waste management for collection services, transfer station management and landfill operations

- Report on existing facilities, effective life, existing contract terms with waste contractors and options for shared facilities delivered within 1 year.

## Regional Community Development

### Goal Three:

Build community capacity to achieve outcomes.

#### Strategy C1:

Support skills development across the communities.

#### Target:

At least 1 collaborative initiative within 2 years.

#### Actions

Action 2:  
Extend learnings from early intervention initiatives in Cranbrook and Plantagenet to all partners.

#### Deliverables

- Recommendations paper to all LGAs.

#### Strategy C2:

Collaborate on common community development projects.

#### Target:

At least 2 collaborative initiatives within 2 years.

#### Actions

Action 1:  
Continue to work collaboratively on the provision of aged care, staff housing and independent living facilities.

Action 2:  
Encourage the development of Community Health Plans

#### Deliverables

- Share knowledge and learnings at VROC meetings.
- Review commonalities within each LGA profile.

## Governance and Human Resources

### Goal Four:

Increase SL VROC capacity through collaboration.

### Strategy G1:

Articulate clear direction for the VROC:

### Target:

Documented VROC directions and achievements every 2 years.

### Actions

Action 1:

Review the Southern Link VROC Strategic Directions.

### Deliverables

- Two-year Desktop Review.
- Four-year Major Review.

Action 2:

Align the strategic directions and priority projects with Shire activities.

- Establish links with Great Southern Treasures, GSCORE, GSRRG, GSDC, RDA, and others.

Action 3:

Establish a VROC Advocacy Approach to better position Southern Link.

- Regular Status Reports at VROC meetings on:
  - advocacy undertaken;
  - upcoming priorities;

### Strategy G2:

Build a culture of collaboration and trust:

### Target:

Strong, single voice for the VROC.

### Actions

Action 1:

Increase SL VROC membership to strengthen the regional voice

### Deliverables

- Two additional VROC members in 2021 (Katanning and Gnowangerup)

Action 2:

Maintain regular meetings of both Elected Members and CEOs to build understanding and action.

- 3 Elected Member meetings and 4 CEO meetings per year

Action 3:

Continue to celebrate achievements of each partner as one group

- At least one joint meeting of staff per year for example Works Managers or Community Development Officers.

**Strategy G3:**

Share systems, processes and professional development between member LGAs:

**Target:**

Every LGA actively involved in collaborative exercises within 2 years.

**Actions**

Action 1:

Identify and share readily apparent documents, policies, procedures and workforce data.

Action 2:

Continue resource sharing for at least two identified services.

Action 3:

Provide local staff with opportunities for career pathways between the six LGAs.

**Deliverables**

- Assess Records Repository capacity at Broomehill given two new member shires and future requirements for Records Management.
- Activate IT Work Group meetings.
- Collaborating to provide LGA's with opportunities to undertake joint work groups on projects, planning for the future, or continuous improvement for team members such as EHO, Planning, Building Surveyor, CESM services.
- Each LGA to incorporate opportunities within their Workforce Plan and Position Descriptions regarding Resource Sharing.