

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES AND TRENDS

The Peel Region is the fastest growing region in Western Australia. The estimated resident population as at 30 June 2010 was 108,560, a 3.5% increase over the previous year. All of the local government areas in the Peel Region have experienced an increase in population over the year to June 2010. The Shire of Boddington had the largest increase of 6.6% (111 people), followed by the Shire of Murray (642) and the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale (725), both 4.2%. Mandurah City had an increase of 3.1% (2,163) people.

The labour force in the Peel Region decreased to 46,889 in December 2010 from 48,503 in December 2009. Most of the Region's labour force is located in the City of Mandurah (62.1%), followed by Serpentine-Jarrahdale (18%), Shire of Murray (13.8%), Shire of Waroona (4.3%) and Boddington (1.8%). Our unemployment rate decreased from 5.9% in December 2009 to 5.7% in December 2010. This is still the third highest unemployment rate in the state behind the Kimberley (7.9%) and Gascoyne (6.4%).

Mining, construction and manufacturing are the main industry sectors of the Peel Region. Together they make up 55.9% of the Gross Regional Product. Peel remains the third largest mineral producing region in Western Australia, with its value of production accounting for 6% of the state's output. The two main alumina producers are Alcoa World Alumina and Worsley Alumina Pty Ltd. Together they accounted for 12.6 million tonnes of alumina sold in 2009-10, with a value of \$3.8 billion. This accounted for 23% of the world's alumina production. In 2009 over 8,000 people were employed by the Alumina industry in the Peel Region.

Although visitor numbers have been declining over recent years, tourism remains an important contributor to the regional economy. The annual average visitor numbers

over the three years to 2009 was 397,000, spending an estimated average of \$145.2 million per annum.

Intrastate visitors accounted for 87% of the total visitor number while interstate visitors accounted for 7%. The remaining 6% of visitors were international. Total visitor numbers declined by an average of 4.3% in the three years to 2009, however international visitor numbers increased by an average of 11.7% in the same period.

Affordable housing continues to be an issue in the Peel Region with two caravan parks closing to permanent residents and one caravan park closing entirely. The median weekly rent for Mandurah/Murray in the March 2011 quarter was \$310, up 3.3% from the December 2010 quarter. The rental vacancy rate for Mandurah/Murray was 3.5% in the March quarter. There are over 700 applicants on the Public Housing waiting list in the Peel Region, with applications in some categories going back as far as October 2003.

Population and economic growth in the Peel Region is placing mounting pressure on the available water resources. This has led to the development of a water reuse scheme to ensure a secure, consistent and sustainable supply of water for existing and proposed industrial and agricultural development. The scheme will capture, treat and store waste water for industrial, agricultural and other uses, reducing pressure on potable water sources. Availability of an alternative water source will lead to development of much needed industrial land as well as facilitating expanded agricultural opportunities in the region. Benefits from this project include job creation and economic development. The development of the Nambelup Industrial Estate alone is expected to yield 6,900 to 7,150 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) workers by 2031.