



# peel

PROGRESSIVE | PROSPEROUS | DYNAMIC

## Capable People

Highlighting local leaders and initiatives building a skilled and adaptable workforce

## Tourism Excellence

Celebrating diverse tourism offerings and events in Peel

## RED Grants

Supporting regional job creation



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COVER: The Exchange Hotel, Pinjarra.



## Peel Development Commission

45 Mandurah Terrace (PO Box 543)  
Mandurah Western Australia 6210

Phone: (08) 9535 4140  
Email: [peel@peel.wa.gov.au](mailto:peel@peel.wa.gov.au)

[www.peel.wa.gov.au](http://www.peel.wa.gov.au)

[www.facebook.com/  
peeldevelopmentcommission](https://www.facebook.com/peeldevelopmentcommission)  
[www.linkedin.com/company/peel-  
development-commission](https://www.linkedin.com/company/peel-development-commission)

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Department of  
**Primary Industries and  
Regional Development**

## Peel Development Commission Board

**Ms Myrianthe Riddy** Chair  
**Cr Mike Walmsley** Deputy Chair  
**Cr Bob Pond**  
**Ms Sharon James**  
**Mr Kallan Nannup**  
**Ms Natasha Upcott**

## Peel Development Commission Staff

<b>Andrew Ward</b> Chief Executive Officer E <a href="mailto:andrew.ward@peel.wa.gov.au">andrew.ward@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	<b>Natalie Lees</b> Principal Regional Development Officer E <a href="mailto:natalie.lees@peel.wa.gov.au">natalie.lees@peel.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Marnie Bennett</b> Agreements Officer E <a href="mailto:marnie.bennett@peel.wa.gov.au">marnie.bennett@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	<b>Wendy Muir</b> Principal Regional Development Officer E <a href="mailto:wendy.muir@peel.wa.gov.au">wendy.muir@peel.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Laura Booth</b> Regional Data Management Officer E <a href="mailto:laura.booth@peel.wa.gov.au">laura.booth@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	<b>Adrian Parker</b> Director Regional Development E <a href="mailto:adrian.parker@peel.wa.gov.au">adrian.parker@peel.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Stefan Chappell</b> Principal Regional Development Officer E <a href="mailto:stefan.chappell@peel.wa.gov.au">stefan.chappell@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	<b>Ben Robins</b> Regional Data Manager E <a href="mailto:ben.robins@peel.wa.gov.au">ben.robins@peel.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Shauna Cohen</b> Trainee E <a href="mailto:temp@peel.wa.gov.au">temp@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	<b>Larissa Stacy</b> A/Local Content Adviser E <a href="mailto:localcontent@peel.wa.gov.au">localcontent@peel.wa.gov.au</a> E <a href="mailto:larissa.stacy@peel.wa.gov.au">larissa.stacy@peel.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Simone Hutton</b> Regional Development Officer E <a href="mailto:simone.hutton@peel.wa.gov.au">simone.hutton@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	<b>Anne Walsh</b> Regional Development Officer E <a href="mailto:nwmpracticecoordinator@peel.wa.gov.au">nwmpracticecoordinator@peel.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Zoe Ibbotson</b> Customer Service Officer E <a href="mailto:cso@peel.wa.gov.au">cso@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	<b>Kylie Wilson</b> A/Communications Adviser & Executive Officer to CEO & Chair E <a href="mailto:eo@peel.wa.gov.au">eo@peel.wa.gov.au</a> E <a href="mailto:communications@peel.wa.gov.au">communications@peel.wa.gov.au</a>
<b>Vicki Lawrence</b> Senior Administration Officer E <a href="mailto:sao@peel.wa.gov.au">sao@peel.wa.gov.au</a>	

## Publisher

**Peel Development Commission**

## Editor

**Kylie Wilson**  
A/Communications Adviser

## Graphic Designer

**Josephine Eynaud**  
Redtail Graphic Design

## Acknowledgment of Country

The Peel Development Commission would like to acknowledge the Bindjareb, Wilman, and Whadjuk people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we operate. We pay respect to all Elders, past and present, and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to this region.

Peel Development Commission is a statutory authority established in 1993 by the Western Australian State Government under the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*. The Commission is one of nine regional development commissions across the state, each established and operating under the same legislation.



# New Board members welcomed

## New chair to drive opportunities in the Peel region

**In late December 2024, Regional Development Minister Don Punch announced the appointment of Myrianthe Riddy as the new chair of the Peel Development Commission (PDC) for a 3 year term expiring 31 December 2027.**

Ms Riddy was on the board of the Rottnest Island Chamber of Commerce until mid-2024, as well as previously serving on the board of the Tourism Council of Western Australia and Destination Perth.

She brings with her senior leadership experience in the private sector, working for 17 years in various management positions for Shell, before moving to Mandurah and establishing her tourism charter business Sea West in 2017.

Ms Riddy's appointment follows the departure of outgoing chair David Doepel, who finished up in the role in June 2024 after more than four years of service to the Development Commission.


The Minister also thanked Michelle Sidebottom for her contributions to the Board over her six year term as Community Representative and Deputy Chair.

Other new Cabinet appointments made included:

- **Cr Mike Walmsley** as Deputy Chair expiring 31 December 2026.
- **Kallan Nannup** as Ministerial Representative for a 2 year term expiring 31 December 2026.
- **Natasha Upcott** as Community Representative for a 2 year term expiring 31 December 2026.



**We congratulate all new appointees and look forward to working with them in 2025.**

You can read the farewell acknowledgement for former board members, Michelle Sidebottom and Sue Daley on page 50. 



Myrianthe Riddy



Cr Mike Walmsley



Kallan Nannup



Natasha Upcott

## Building a better Peel

The Peel Development Commission partners with government, communities, business, and industry to make Peel a better place to live, work, and invest. We identify and support projects that benefit the region.

Our goals are organised under the six sub-themes of the Peel Regional Investment Framework: **Thriving Industries, Agriculture and Food Innovation, Tourism Excellence, Capable People, Strong and Resilient Communities, and Organisational Excellence.**

In every issue of *Peel Magazine*, we focus on two specific sub-themes, exploring the individuals, projects, and local businesses driving progress in these areas. In this issue, we feature:




**Tourism Excellence:** Our goal is that Peel's tourism industry and related businesses will be diverse, competitive and sustainable, creating economic growth and jobs through high value products and services.



**Capable People:** Our goal is to ensure Peel's workforce will be highly skilled and adaptable to structural and technological change to support an economy that is strong, diverse and high performing.



Our regional work is underpinned by our commitment to driving the **wise use of our environment**, ensuring that social and economic development is balanced with conservation. 

### MORE INFORMATION

For a comprehensive understanding of our strategies and initiatives, we invite you to read the **Peel Regional Investment Blueprint and Strategic Plan 2023-25** on our website.



# CEO's Management Report



Welcome to the latest edition of the *Peel Magazine*. This issue focuses on Tourism Excellence and Capable People, highlighting significant achievements and initiatives in the Peel region.

Our role in the Commission involves connecting communities and industry to help make our region prosper and grow our regional economy. A strong tourism industry enables regional prosperity that can deliver economic and social development in the Peel region and this is supported by a capable workforce who is skilled and adaptable to change.

Over the past 12 months the Commission and key stakeholders have been busy focussing on programs and projects that help foster tourism excellence and help build both individual and business capability, many of these are highlighted in this edition of the *Peel Magazine*.

The re-opening of the 100+ year old Exchange Hotel following a substantial refurbishment, was a real highlight for the region and the Shire of Murray, showcasing the vibrancy and heritage of the Pinjarra township.

There were many tourism events the region hosted throughout 2024 including the 2024 Perth Airport WA Tourism Conference held in Mandurah; the 100th edition of the WA Open golf event hosted at Mandurah Country Club; Plein Air Down Under Painting Festival and the very popular Waroona Troutfest.

The Commission was also proud to sponsor local Aboriginal business leader Kerry Stack in attending the

2024 World Indigenous Tourism conference in Melbourne.

The Peel region continues to be an excellent place to do business, with a dynamic local business community driving our economy forward. In this edition, we spotlight the winners from the 2024 Alcoa Peel Business Excellence Awards, a must-attend annual event recognising the vast array of successful local businesses operating here in the Peel.

The announcement of Round 7 of the Regional Economic Development (RED) Grants in Mandurah on 10 October 2024 highlighted our focus on manufacturing, agribusiness, hospitality, tourism, environment and health sectors. These grants provide invaluable financial support for projects that drive economic growth, stimulate job creation, increase business productivity, and attract new investment to the region.

We are pleased to report on the success of Waalitj Hub's Business Builder event hosted in Mandjoogordap, providing specialist support to Indigenous businesses in Peel, enabling Indigenous business owners and entrepreneurs to join with industry leaders, to discuss collaborative opportunities.


As with the success of any event, there are the driving forces of skilled and capable people behind them like Michelle Wong who is profiled in this edition as our local leader

story. Michelle is just one of a large team of people behind the highly successful and engaging GoSH event held in 2024 in Mandurah and also in the South-West.

Our region is witnessing exciting and innovative projects, along with significant growth and infrastructure updates from all our Peel region Shires and the City of Mandurah. These developments are critical in supporting our strategic goals and enhancing the quality of life for our communities.



**The Peel region continues to be an excellent place to do business, with a dynamic local business community driving our economy forward.**

The collective efforts of our stakeholders and community partners are crucial as we continue to embrace opportunities for sustainable development and economic growth in the Peel region. We thank you for your ongoing support as we work together towards a thriving future for the Peel region. 

**Andrew Ward**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Peel Development Commission

# Waroona Agricultural Society 93rd Waroona Show 2024



**WORDS** | Waroona Agricultural Society  
**IMAGES** | Trish Davies

## The Waroona Agricultural Society and the community of Waroona, celebrated its 93rd Waroona Show in October 2024.

This iconic annual event held on the last Saturday of the October school holidays each year is one of the largest and most successful one day Agricultural Shows in Australia.

Originally known as the Drakesbrook Agricultural Society Show, the first ever Show was held in 1925 as a way to advertise the district and its products. Since then it has grown into an event that attracts thousands of showgoers and has a reputation that is the envy of many other Agricultural Societies. The Waroona Show is a fantastic showcase of everything country with a little bit of City thrown in for good measure.


For 10 months of the year, the hardworking committee of more than 50 volunteers work together to create an amazing event to showcase life in the country and various competitions. They then weave this together with music, entertainment, free activities and the must have showbags and side show alley. Trade stalls and food trucks scattered throughout the grounds create a colourful market place atmosphere. The full day event runs from 8am to 8pm and the Fireworks Finale sponsored by Alcoa of Australia completes the experience of a genuine country show.

Free features and entertainment are always a popular part of the Waroona Show. There are always a variety of animals, birds of many shapes and sizes in the poultry pavilion, horses on the oval, Redz Zoo, Old Macs farm, wood chopping, photography, cooking, sewing, fruit, vegetables, flowers, art and craft, shearing, sheep dog and cow milking demonstrations and a live cattle auction. The oval is a hive of activity with a climbing wall, children's activities, sand play, balloons, bubbles, mini diggers, fairies, magicians, circus and magical kites flying overhead. Performers on 'The Rec' Main Stage keep people entertained all day and food van alley keeps them fed.

Some of the highlights in 2024 were the RAC Rescue Experience helicopter, road safety experience truck INSTRUCKTA and a large scraper kindly supplied by Charles Hull Contracting. The John Marchetti Farm Shed was a

wonderland that catered to all ages and kept people entranced for hours and there were an incredible 890 entries in the children's hall.

The show is a celebration for the whole community and the strength and success can be attributed directly to our volunteers and volunteer groups. The event would not run without them. Also critical to the event are the local and regional businesses who support us both financially and in-kind each year.

**“**  
**We hope to see you in 2025 on the 11th of October to celebrate the 94th Waroona Show.** 

### MORE INFORMATION

More information on the show can be found at [www.waroonashow.com.au](http://www.waroonashow.com.au) or by contacting the secretary email: [secretary@waroonashow.com.au](mailto:secretary@waroonashow.com.au). You can also find us on Facebook and Instagram.





# Troutfest 2024 & Drakesbrook Weir Upgrades


**WORDS & IMAGES** | Shire of Waroona

The ever popular annual Troutfest was back on Saturday 7 September 2024! The event saw hundreds of participants helping Recfishwest to hand-release more than 300 rainbow and brown trout into the Drakesbrook Weir.

The day also celebrated the official opening of upgrades to Drakesbrook Weir which were made possible with funding and support from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Peel Development Commission.

The rains held off for a beautiful spring day with dozens of families enjoying the live music and children's entertainment, trying their hand at flicking lures or fly-fishing, browsing the array of stalls packed with freshwater fishing merchandise, and enjoying some of the fantastic food stalls.

The new nature playground was thoroughly enjoyed with one of the biggest hits of the day being the new giant marron 'Clawed'!

The Waroona Troutfest was proudly presented by the Shire of Waroona and Recfishwest, supported by Alcoa, and delivered in partnership with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Healthway, Fishability, and Act Belong Commit. 



Top: 'Clawed' the giant marron. Above: DPIRD Fisheries staff with local member Robyn Clarke MLA and one of the many children releasing trout into the Drakesbrook Weir.



# Mandurah Country Club hosts epic WA Open

**WORDS & IMAGES** | GolfWA

October 2024's WA Open Golf Championship was hailed a 'complete success', with large galleries supporting the PGA Tour of Australasia event through to its thrilling conclusion.

Boosted by the presence of high-profile WA professional golfers Jason Scrivener, Curtis Luck and Jarrod Moseley, the 100th staging of the historic WA Open put golf in Mandurah in the spotlight like never before.

Mandurah Country Club hosted the championship for the first time, which returned to the Peel region for the first time since 1995 when it was held at Meadow Springs Golf Club.

Those lucky enough to be present were treated to golf of the highest standard, with 10 players breaking the previous course record of 67 on the first day alone.

One of these was Mandurah local and DP World Tour pro Jason Scrivener, who started the week as the hot favourite and opened his account with an eight-under-par 63 to sit one stroke adrift of first-round leader Jak Carter.

After three bright and breezy days, the WA Open's final round was played out in some of the toughest conditions imaginable, with winds exceeding 40km/h and sheeting

rain flooding greens, causing numerous suspensions of play.

While spectators could retire to Mandurah Country Club's welcoming clubhouse, the players themselves were forced to battle it out in an epic finale.

Carter, however, played one of the greatest golf shots the WA Open has ever seen, firing an approach to the 18th green – in wind bending the flagstick like a young sapling – to five feet to make a birdie and tie the lead at 19-under-par.

He and Smylie returned to the 18th tee for a sudden-death playoff, but while Carter found trouble off the tee and with his approach, Smylie hit a wedge to two feet to set up a title-winning birdie for his first tour victory.

It was a suitable climax to a magnificent week of golf, with GolfWA Chief Executive Gary Thomas full of praise for the host venue.

"Mandurah Country Club did a superb job," he said. "The course was in superb condition, we had excellent levels of support and a very worthy winner in Elvis Smylie. Even with the rain, the event was a complete success."

As well as large crowds, the weekend TV audience was up an estimated 90% on the 2023 championship, with extensive national media coverage reaching a potential audience of 19.5 million. 🦋



**Mandurah Country Club did a superb job hosting.**

*GolfWA Chief Executive, Gary Thomas.*





# EXCHANGE HOTEL PINJARRA

*opens*



**WORDS** | Shire of Murray & Peel Development Commission  
**IMAGES** | Damo Photography

The highly anticipated Exchange Hotel Pinjarra redevelopment is complete and the venue is open for business.

L-R: Hon Don Punch MLA, Robyn Clarke MLA, Janine Bullers, Karl Bullers and Senator Louise Pratt celebrating the official opening of the Exchange Hotel.

The 130+-year-old venue has three bars, exclusive bookable spaces, large-scale function area, and a gin distillery with private tasting room. This stunning hospitality venue combines the best of modern architecture with Pinjarra's local heritage, and offers a unique and exciting place for locals and visitors to meet, relax and celebrate.

The project has been a priority for both the Shire of Murray and community for over a decade.

From 1871, the tavern hotel operated under private ownership, but was permanently closed in 2008. In 2012, the Shire of Murray purchased the site and has been working to redevelop it into a food and beverage facility ever since.

The project was co-funded by the Shire of Murray and the operators, as well as a \$2.34m investment from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund.





Numerous Peel region businesses were engaged to supply materials and professional services for various aspects of the hotel's redevelopment and a big focus for the new venue will be sourcing local products to use both on the menu and on tap.

Throughout the project the preservation of the heritage and integrity of the building was a priority and facilitated the development of an exceptional new chapter for the Exchange.

Operator Karl Bullers said he is thrilled to see the Exchange Hotel open its doors once again.

"We are excited to be a part of the next chapter of the Exchange Hotel. It was very important to us to make sure we created a new venue that allows the community to reminisce on their old memories and make new ones at the Exchange," said Mr Bullers.

"Our focus was to create a modern hospitality environment for people to come together and enjoy, all while preserving the heritage and history of this 130+-year-old building. We look forward to welcoming the community and visitors to the Exchange," added Mr Bullers. 🌿



President David Bolt cutting the ribbon with venue operators Karl & Janine Bullers.



**We are very proud to see Exchange Hotel Pinjarra restored as an iconic destination venue for our community and visitors.**

*Shire President David Bolt.*

The Cook Government also invested \$100,000 in the project through a Regional Economic Development Grant (Round 5) which was announced back in December 2022. The funding was for a high-quality fitout of the hotel's central kitchen and bar area.

Minister for Regional Development, Hon Don Punch MLA attended a VIP event on 13 September 2024 to help officially open the venue along with other funding partners.

## Revitalising Pinjarra

**The completion of The Exchange marks the completion of a trio of projects aimed at revitalising the heart of Pinjarra.**

The Exchange Hotel, alongside the redevelopment of the town square and the restoration of the Murray River foreshore and parkland, have been designed to secure the areas so they remain accessible and available for public use and enjoyment by future generations.

### MORE INFORMATION

To book your next event or function at the newly re-opened Exchange Hotel, visit <https://exchangehotel.com.au/>



Geoparks WA Board Members and Wendy Muir at the geotrail launch.

# Peel Geotrails project signposts regional attractions

**WORDS** | Peel Development Commission  
**IMAGE** | Overland Media

The Peel Development Commission have celebrated the launch of the Peel Geodrive Trail which showcases the region's natural attractions and local cultural heritage.

The geotrail is the first of its kind in the region and provides interpretive signage along the existing trail, spanning from Mandurah to the internationally significant Lake Clifton Thrombolites and out to Pinjarra and Waroona.

The signage allows visitors to scan a QR code and learn more about the geological, natural and cultural highlights along the length of the

trail which can be driven by vehicle in one day, or explored in parts by bike or on foot over several days.

The project was officially launched in August 2024 following two years of work by staff in partnership with Geoparks WA, Visit Mandurah, surrounding local governments, Salt and Bush Eco Tours and the Geological Survey of Western Australia.

With \$26,500 funding from PDC, Geoparks WA led development of the geotrail map, interpretive information, logo, brochures and coordination of signage installation along the trail.

The geotrail is one of the region's key steps towards the goal of advancing to a UNESCO Global Geopark.


Peel Development Commission CEO Andrew Ward thanked the team for their hard work over the life of the project.



**We expect the geotrail will contribute to the local economy by attracting visitors to the region and make use of local accommodation providers and food and beverage businesses.**

*Andrew Ward, CEO Peel Development Commission*

"Principal Regional Development Officer Wendy Muir and Regional Development Officer Simone Hutton were instrumental in liaising with the stakeholders and Executive Officer Kylie Wilson helped organise the launch event," Andrew said.

"It was great to have Regional Development Minister Don Punch launch the geotrail and meet all the stakeholders, including Bindjareb Elder Uncle George Walley." 

## Global recognition for a rock star

Professor Ross Dowling is WA's own global rock star, having been recognised for his contribution towards UNESCO Global Geoparks.

The award was announced at the Global Geopark Network Regional Conference in Brazil, which marked the network's 20th anniversary. The Certificate of Recognition was awarded for significantly supporting the network's development.

Prof Dowling is a global advocate for geoparks, which unifies areas of geological significance. They recognise not just the geology, but flora and fauna of their area and tend to be developed by local communities.

There are geopark projects (not Global Geoparks) happening in WA.

They include:

- Nannup WA Geopark, which was launched on November 8, 2024 by Jane Kelsbie, member for Warren-Blackwood.
- Murchison GeoRegion and Aspiring Geopark. The GeoRegion was launched in 2020 and now they are working to create a geopark.
- Bindjareb-Peel Geotrail, which was launched by Minister for Regional Development Hon. Don Punch MLA on August 21, 2024. It will form the heart of a geopark.
- Mt Barker's Mountain Tourism Organisation, which is working towards creating a geopark by 2026.
- Joondalup-Wanneroo, which is working towards creating a geopark.

Prof Ross Dowling (centre) and Wendy Dowling at the Bindjareb-Peel Geodrive Trail launch.



# Peel Regional Trails project

**WORDS** | Peel Development Commission

**IMAGE** | Visit Dwellingup

## The Peel Regional Trails project is picking up speed with some designs being finalised and construction beginning.

With an investment of \$8 million through the Australian Government's Priority Community Infrastructure Program, Peel Development Commission (PDC) is currently coordinating delivery of the six trails projects.

The projects will support community and sporting infrastructure and open space improvements across all five local government areas in the Peel region. PDC has partnered with the Shire of Boddington, Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, Shire of Waroona, and the State Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions who will each be responsible for project delivery.

Funded projects include a diverse network of mountain bike trails in Boddington, suitable for riders of all skill levels.

There will be a suite of upgrades and improvements to Dwellingup's trail network, including a new canoe launch site, Captain Fawcett 4WD Track upgrade, as well

as walking trail upgrades and mountain bike trail expansion.

Gooralong Trail Precinct will benefit from a new sealed carpark and footpath, and in Jarrahdale, construction of two horse trails has commenced, involving an easy classification trail of at least 3km and a moderate classification trail of at least 15km.

Visitor experience at the Lake Clifton Thrombolites will be improved through boardwalk upgrades and the addition of signage and sculptural elements.

Constructing a shared use trail in Waroona will involve designing a dual-use pathway from Waroona to Drakesbrook and installing boardwalks over exposed tree roots.

The projects, expected to finish construction by end of 2026, will enhance community infrastructure, improve equity outcomes and social inclusion, and encourage communities to thrive economically and socially.



**The projects will enhance community infrastructure, improve equity outcomes and social inclusion.**



# Mandurah, the Perfect Host for the 2024 Perth Airport WA Tourism Conference

**WORDS** | Visit Mandurah

**IMAGE** | Well Strategic

Mandurah was proud to host the 2024 Perth Airport WA Tourism Conference in June, a milestone event held at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre. This was the first time in the conference’s history that Mandurah was selected as the host destination, and the three-day gathering exceeded all expectations, attracting over 300 tourism professionals from across Western Australia.

The conference was delivered by Tourism Council WA and supported by Visit Mandurah and the City of Mandurah, showcasing the region’s rising profile as a hub of tourism innovation, excellence, and community spirit.

Mayor Rhys Williams opened the event with an inspiring address, sharing both the history and the ambitious future vision of Mandurah. He highlighted the region’s commitment to sustainable tourism growth, supported by a skilled and capable local workforce, strong regional partnerships, and its unique position as one of Western Australia’s most desirable tourism destinations.

Keynote speaker Justin Langer, former Australian Cricketer, captivated the audience with a passionate address about leadership, perseverance and gratitude, and worthy of the standing ovation received. A brilliant end to what had been a great two days of interesting topics and excellent speakers.

## Economic Outcomes

The conference had an immediate and measurable impact on Mandurah’s local economy. Attendees contributed an estimated 686 visitor nights and \$324,100 in total expenditure.

This influx of spending provided a significant boost to local businesses, particularly within the tourism and hospitality sectors. Additionally, the timing of the conference, held during the low season and mid-week, helped support businesses during the quieter winter season.

## Survey results

**The conference survey highlighted the value of holding such an event in Mandurah:**

**83%**  
of attendees stayed overnight in the region

**2.5 nights**  
average length of stay

**~\$324,100**  
total visitor expenditure for Mandurah during the event


**20**  
local businesses supported

With an overall satisfaction rating of 86% for the entire event and overwhelming positive delegate feedback, the event was a resounding success.

## Showcasing Mandurah’s Tourism Experiences

The conference kicked off with a superb Welcome Event at the award-winning Boundary Island Brewery, where delegates enjoyed stunning views and locally crafted brews and an impressive display of food was on offer! The venue was the perfect setting, and the BIB team delivered a 5-star event that showcased the very best of Mandurah.

On the final day of the event, over 150 delegates participated in the Familiarisation Trip program, experiencing first-hand the range of



Mayor Rhys Williams delivering the host town address at the 2024 Perth Airport WA Tourism Conference held in Mandurah.

Mandurah’s tourism transformation  
MAYOR RHYNS WILLIAMS



**The Tourism Conference in Mandurah has been a highlight of the 2024 tourism calendar. A combination of excellent speakers, diverse entertainment, and exceptional events (including the opening function and Gala dinner) made it an unforgettable experience. The event also gave me a new appreciation for Mandurah and its tourism objectives.**

*Delegate*

experiences and activities from the Wild Seafood Cruise, to Giant Bike Tours, Dolphin Spotting and more! Over 15 local operators participated and provided delegates with a true taste of what makes Mandurah an exceptional tourism destination.

Looking forward, Mandurah's ability to host such a high-impact event demonstrates its readiness to embrace future opportunities. As a destination, Mandurah offers the ideal combination of tourism excellence and capable people, providing a strong foundation for the continued growth and success of the region's tourism industry. 🌊



**Wharf Cove Jetties in South Yunderup.**

# Wharf Cove Jetties

**WORDS & IMAGE** | Shire of Murray

## Eight new self-floating finger jetties have been installed at Wharf Cove in South Yunderup.

This completes the final stage of upgrades to the Wharf Cove boating facilities and with the remaining four new self-floating finger jetties now installed and upgrades to the footpath along the jetty complete, this project has improved functionality, safety and access to waterways for locals and tourists to enjoy the Murray river.

"It falls within the Shire's priority focus area of 'Place' and supports the community's aspiration where Murray's rural charm is preserved while we grow by embracing innovative urban design ideas," President David Bolt said.

Carried out in two stages, these upgrades help to accommodate a range of large, mid-size and smaller power boats with improved accessibility for all kinds of boaters. The previous jetties were replaced due to wear and age, with the locally made self-floating jetties more adaptable to tides and weather events.

The project is a major initiative of the Shire of Murray Council Plan and is supported by the Department of Transport (Marine) Recreational Boating Facilities Scheme. 🌊



# 2024 Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference

## wrap-up



**WORDS** | Gabby Simoni, Operations Manager, WAITOC

**IMAGES** | WAITOC

Melbourne/Naarm played host to the 11th Australian Indigenous Tourism Conference (AITC), a leading First Nations conference for the Australian tourism industry at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), gathering thought leaders, tourism operators, and government representatives to spotlight the rapidly growing Aboriginal tourism sector.

Overseen by the WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC), 345 delegates from around Australia and the globe descended on Wurundjeri Country to share their own inspirational stories of success and learn from each other and key industry leaders during three days of intensive workshops, sessions, panel discussions, masterclasses and networking functions.

The 2024 theme 'Songlines — Cultural Threads', focused on key areas of Aboriginal tourism: youth, environment, culture, and the business of tourism, with a diverse line-up of keynote speakers, including First Nations youth leaders, cultural tourism experts, industry, and government agencies.

With hundreds of Aboriginal tourism businesses in attendance, delegates were able to form business connections and celebrate the unique offerings of Aboriginal tourism.

While in Naarm, delegates also participated in cultural walking tours with one of the city's leading Aboriginal tourism operators to gain a deeper understanding of

the heritage and practices of First Nations peoples.

Attendees also engaged in insightful sessions with Aboriginal-led businesses from across the nation and New Zealand and the role tourism plays in cultural preservation and economic empowerment.

Aboriginal tourism serves as a bridge to understanding, preserving, and celebrating the diverse cultures of Australia's First Nations. Offering visitors authentic and immersive cultural experiences enables a far deeper connection to the traditions, stories, and vast landscapes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by promoting reconciliation and driving economic empowerment and sustainability within Aboriginal communities.

Research conducted by Tourism Research Australia in 2022 found that domestic visitors spent more than \$3 billion on First Nations tourism activities, compared to \$1.3 billion by international visitors, and there is growing demand for authentic cultural experiences and visitors wanting an On-Country experience.

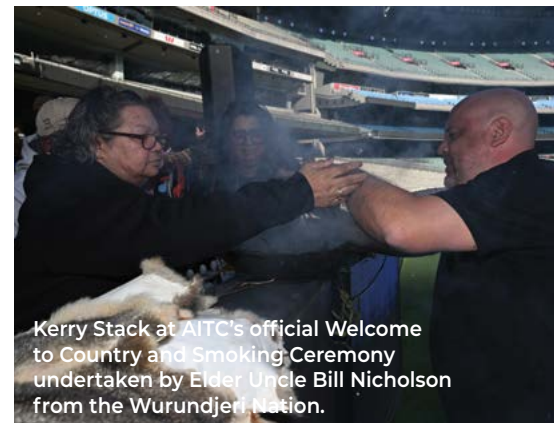


**Aboriginal tourism serves as a bridge to understanding, preserving, and celebrating the diverse cultures of Australia's First Nations.**

Peel Development Commission supported one of the region's Aboriginal tourism operators, Kerry Stack from Goolamwiin, in attending AITC 2024. 

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.aitc.org.au](http://www.aitc.org.au)



Kerry Stack at AITC's official Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony undertaken by Elder Uncle Bill Nicholson from the Wurundjeri Nation.

# A night sky Wonderland

WORDS & IMAGES | Starbright Wonderland Photography

**When the sun sets and darkness falls over the Peel region, Suzy Jones sees a world of light — celestial patterns, cosmic stories, and a universe waiting to be captured.**

Suzy's lifelong curiosity about our planet and solar system drove her to explore the local landscape as a child and later, to study geology and geophysics, eventually forging a career in hydrocarbon exploration.

However, feeling that the corporate environment drifted from her interests, Suzy sought to create a career aligned with her passions and values. Embracing a holistic work-life balance allowed her to share her love of science and make the wonders of the universe accessible to all, ultimately leading her to create Starbright Wonderland Photography.

Years of exploration throughout Western Australia have seen Suzy dedicate countless evenings perfecting her astrophotography skills. She has captured stunning images of the Milky Way, constellations, and the aurora at iconic landmarks around WA. However, it was the dark skies at home in the Peel region where she spent her evenings shooting and experimenting, that solidified her reputation as one of the most respected astrophotographers in WA.

Her commitment culminated in winning Best New Talent at the AstroFest Astrophotography Competition in 2021.

Suzy's standout offering is her **AstroPortraits** — bespoke photoshoots that uniquely blend portraiture with astrophotography, capturing clients in the most natural environment: the night sky.

Balancing her career as an astrophotographer with life as a mother, Suzy has cultivated a unique lifestyle that allows her to share her love of the cosmos with her daughters. Weekends and school holidays are spent out camping at spots that provide both fun adventures for her girls and the dark, open skies essential for her work. Through these experiences, she demonstrates that science, passion and family can coexist, all while creating beautiful family memories.

Recognising the potential of the Peel region in Dark Sky Tourism, Suzy decided to channel her passion into offering **astrophotography workshops and night sky tours** locally. She shares her expertise with others, guiding them to discover and photograph the wonders of the night sky. Her workshops have gained popularity, providing participants with the opportunity to experience the beauty of the universe while enjoying the natural landscapes that make the Peel region so special. ✨

#### MORE INFORMATION

Contact Suzy Jones, 0449 035 787 or [suzy@starbrightwonderland.com](mailto:suzy@starbrightwonderland.com)  
[starbrightwonderland.com.au](http://starbrightwonderland.com.au)



Where does your Astro journey begin?

## Dark sky tourism

**Tourism WA data from 2021 showed that dark sky tourism has an appeal amongst domestic audiences, especially alongside nature/wildlife and other outdoor experiences.**

Source: Destination Perth, *Tourism & Destination Management Plan*



Suzy Jones, Starbright Wonderland Photography.



# Plein Air Down Under 2024

## Fostering creativity and community spirit

**WORDS** | Mandurah Plein Air Artists

**IMAGES** | Overland Media

Plein Air Down Under continues to exceed expectations and is now Australia's largest outdoor painting festival.

Originating from the French tradition of *en plein air* (painting outdoors), this niche event brings the world of outdoor painting to the Peel region, offering locals and tourists a chance to experience this European-inspired art form.

Artists travel the world for inspiration and over 200 artists register for the week-long event, held annually at the end of September. It offers a wide range of activities that attract local, national and international artists. To extend 2024's footprint beyond Mandurah and Pinjarra, Caraholly Orchard and Fairbridge Village were added to the mid-week painting locations. This encouraged exploration of the wider Peel region

and included the Experience Peel Award, presented by the Peel Development Commission.

The week-long festival offers art education in the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre, free have-a-go activities for the public, free Feature Artist demonstrations and outdoor painting for all ages, skill levels and mediums. Other event highlights are the two-hour Quick Draw painting competition, \$13,000 in awards and the opening of a two-week exhibition of over 200 fresh Plein Air paintings. The exhibition runs alongside the four-week Spirit of the Landscape Exhibition in the Alcoa Mandurah Art Gallery.

Setting this festival apart is the high calibre of international Feature Artists, exclusive to Plein Air Down Under. 2024 welcomed Lori Putnam (USA), one of the world's most awarded plein air artists. Lori's Masterclasses sold out quickly and her free painting demonstration attracted many members of the public, acutely aware they were watching a master in action. Says

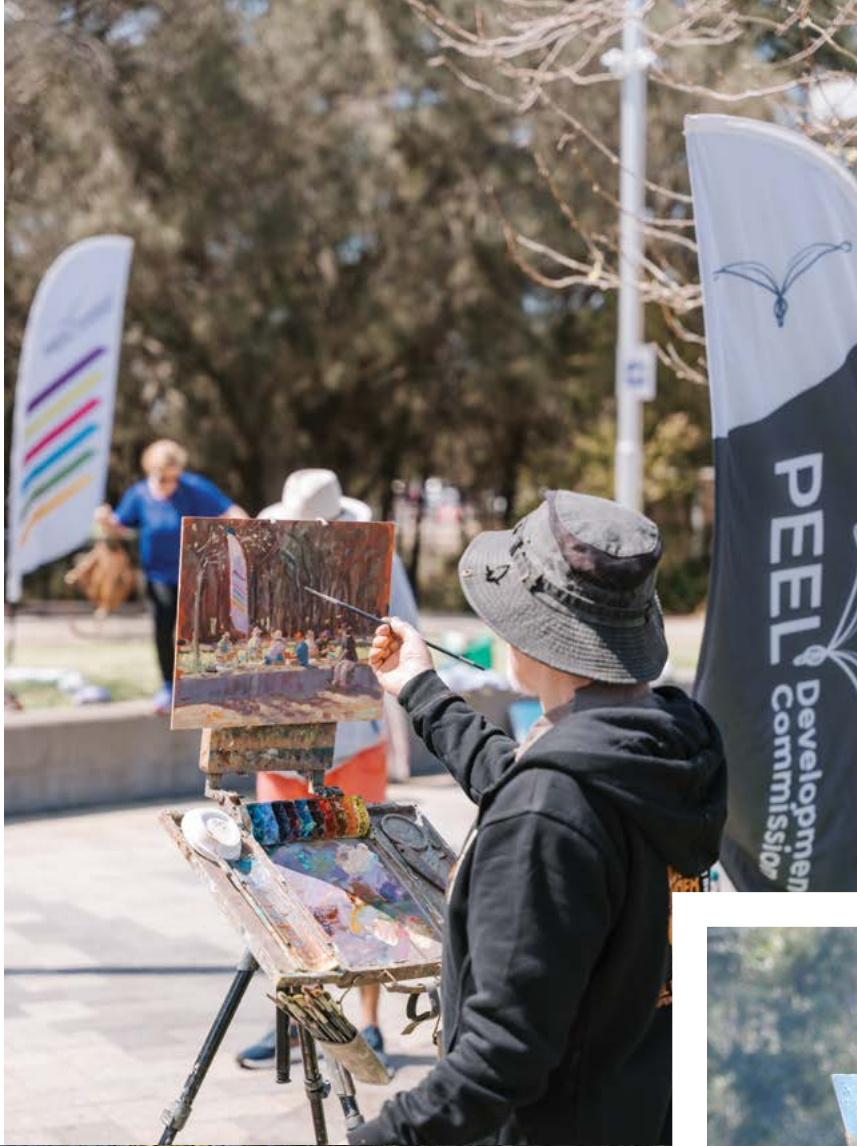
Lori "Plein Air Down Under in Mandurah, Australia, offers stunning coastal views, exciting wildlife, and incredible rolling vistas. Anyone wanting a creative and inspirational art adventure met with warmth and camaraderie will love this trip-of-a-lifetime event".

Another coup was the inclusion of Ireland's Tony Robinson, founder of Art in the Open, now the largest outdoor painting festival in Europe. He has attended many international outdoor painting events, commenting "Plein air festivals are a growth area culturally and from a tourism perspective, with many events attracting international visitors, positive media coverage and sponsors who see this as something to be associated with. Having taken part in plein air painting events around Europe, the UK and in the USA, I can say PADU is definitely up there with the best. My warm thanks and congratulations to all concerned."

Award winning artist Leon Holmes continues to teach, demonstrate, paint and inspire.







As a headline event for the Mandurah Arts Festival, not only does Plein Air Down Under foster creativity and community spirit; it drives significant tourism revenue and media attention to the area, transforming the Peel region into an art destination with international appeal. Its low environmental impact aligns with sustainable tourism practices while spotlighting the area's natural and urban landscapes.

Plein Air Down Under was co-founded in 2019 by Leon Holmes and Barb Thoms, and with support from a passionate Steering Committee, they continue to provide creative direction and leadership.



An army of enthusiastic volunteers include the Mandurah Plein Air Artists, Ray White Mandurah's Team, Curtin Uni Volunteers and community members, all committed to delivering a festival experience to cherish. 🌿

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The success of Plein Air Down Under is made possible, in large part, thanks to its valued sponsors. This generous support plays a pivotal role in bringing each year's festival to fruition. Platinum Sponsors include **Ray White Mandurah, Mandurah Arts Festival, Community Bank Halls Head** and the **Mandurah Plein Air Artists**.

#### MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit [www.pleinairdownunder.com](http://www.pleinairdownunder.com)



**Top:** Ireland's Tony Robinson, founder of Art in the Open. **Above:** Award winning artist Leon Holmes. **Left:** The Experience Peel Award, presented by Peel Development Commission was won by Linda MacAulay (Vic), for her painting titled Caraholly Orchard Vines.



# Mandurah Action Sports Games

14–16 March 2025

**WORDS & IMAGE** | Action Sports Promotions

**Since 2012, the Mandurah Action Sports Games has been a must-attend event for adrenaline-seeking sports enthusiasts, and the City of Mandurah is undoubtedly the premier location in Australia to host this multi-action sports event.**

The event showcases a Pro Wakeboard Tournament, freestyle motocross demonstrations, nationally rated BMX Freestyle and skateboarding competitions, along with scooter, roller skating, and Electric Racing League competitions.

In an Australian first, the Mandurah Action Sports Games will host an International Freestyle Trampolining Tournament, boasting a massive social media following and positioning Mandurah on the global map as a must-visit destination.

Thanks to Mandurah's unique waterfront location and the growing popularity of skateboarding and BMX Freestyle as Olympic sports, coupled with the Pro Wakeboard Tournament, the Action Sports Games has the potential to rival the iconic Melbourne Moomba Festival held annually in March.

The Action Sports Games not only promote Mandurah as a key tourism destination, but also provide a platform for future WA Olympic athletes to compete, offering significant prize money to attract top talent.

New for 2025 is an Action Sports Expo Zone, featuring board sports expo, skate exhibitions, BMX and cycling displays, plus an exciting food court area.

Held over two days on the western foreshore, the event runs alongside the iconic Mandurah Crab Fest, which attracts over 100,000 visitors annually.

Mandurah will come alive with the vibrancy of this family-friendly festival, showcasing its unique charm and picturesque beauty.

Packed with non-stop action, engaging activities, and thrilling competitions, the Mandurah Action



**Packed with non-stop action, engaging activities, and thrilling competitions, the Mandurah Action Sports Games will enhance the Crab Fest experience, making it a weekend to remember.**

*Tim Thirsk, Director, Action Sports Promotions*

Sports Games will enhance the Crab Fest experience, making it a weekend to remember.

If you or your business would like to partner in this exciting event, please connect with Tim at [tim@aspromo.com.au](mailto:tim@aspromo.com.au).

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information visit, <https://actionsportsgames.com.au>

## Local Business *Spotlight*

# Mostyn & Frankie

## Gift giving made easy

**WORDS** | Peel Development Commission  
**IMAGES** | Mostyn & Frankie

Mostyn & Frankie was created by Lorette and Frankie in November 2023 with a dream to showcase the very best of what Australian artisans and artists have to offer.

You could not meet a more down to earth, generous and kind couple with a heart of gold than the dynamic duo behind Mostyn & Frankie.

Having met while working together, Lorette and Frankie relocated to the Peel region with a dream of creating a bespoke giftbox business that prides itself on 'good old' core values and personal service.

The Mostyn & Frankie name is dedicated to Lorette's father Colin Mostyn.

Having started off the business in their one bedroom home studio, the business quickly grew and evolved, requiring larger premises. The popularity and awareness of the Mostyn & Frankie brand really took off when they held a pop-up store at Mandurah Forum for Mother's Day which was a huge hit. And there are plans for more pop-ups in the future.

Their dream was to curate giftboxes that are sustainable and visually beautiful and which showcase the very best of what Australian artisans and artists have to offer. There is a focus on gifts that are useful and have a purpose and are re-usable. The gifts are rustic and handmade, with each individual piece being different from the next.

One of the most exciting parts of what they do is finding home-grown artisans and small businesses both local to Peel


and across WA, which has allowed the business to grow quite organically.

There is a wide range of products from perfectly imperfect pottery gifts to gifts for pets or the special someone in your life. Lorette thrives on the creative process when people give her a simple brief of the occasion or the person and she can then curate a very individualised giftbox that is chosen just for them.

Everything with Mostyn & Frankie has been designed by themselves with a passion and attention to detail that is second to none. It has been encouraging to see that a growing part of their business has been in the corporate gift area, with a number of local high profile real estate and building company clients utilising the personalised service to provide custom gifts for their clients.

The whole experience of receiving a Mostyn & Frankie giftbox is something that is very important to Lorette & Frankie. They consider every aspect from the packaging, to the textures, to the design. There is a focus on using natural and sustainable products and packaging. Even the giftboxes can be regifted!

Looking ahead, Mostyn & Frankie hope to continue developing their local connections and brand awareness as the premier curated giftbox business in Peel. Their commitment to developing authentic relationships with both clients and artisans is genuine and their service is personalised and makes for a fun experience overall.

If you have a special occasion coming up or someone you want to spoil (even yourself!), please make sure you support this fantastic local business and reach out to Mostyn & Frankie for all your giftbox needs. 



**Everything with Mostyn & Frankie has been designed with a passion and attention to detail that is second to none and they believe everyday you should find one exquisite moment.**



### MORE INFORMATION

Shop online at [mostynfrankie.com.au](https://www.mostynfrankie.com.au) or check out their Instagram page at [www.instagram.com/mostynfrankie](https://www.instagram.com/mostynfrankie). If you would like to discuss your particular requirements, you can also contact Lorette and Frankie on 0499 992 510.

## 2024 Alcoa Peel Business Excellence Awards

# Celebrating Excellence *in Peel*

**WORDS** | Peel Chamber of Commerce & Industry

**IMAGES** | Overland Media

On Saturday 16 November, the Lane Group Stadium came alive with celebration as the Peel region's business community gathered for the 2024 Alcoa Peel Business Excellence Awards.

Hosted by the Peel Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the event recognised and celebrated the incredible entrepreneurship, resilience, and commitment of regional businesses and their supporters.

This prestigious awards night highlighted the remarkable achievements of local businesses, bringing together stakeholders, sponsors, and community leaders to honour their contributions. It

was a collective "thank you" to Peel businesses for the vital role they play in driving economic growth and fostering community connections.

### Recognising Excellence

The awards night showcased the best of the region through a rigorous judging process independently conducted by Edith Cowan University. Each submission was thoroughly assessed to ensure a fair and transparent outcome,



## Winners Across the Categories

The awards celebrated businesses of all sizes and industries, with winners including:

- **Sole Trader:** Kelly King, Iconic Wealth Mandurah
- **Micro Business (1-5 employees):** Mandurah Speech Pathology
- **Small Business (6-10 employees):** Melaleuka Farm Merchants
- **Medium Business (11-20 employees):** Hayes Tree Care
- **Large Business (21+ employees):** Boundary Island Brewing Co.
- **Start-Up Business:** West Coast Ability
- **Community Engagement:** Bluebird Technology & Consulting
- **Tourism Excellence:** Jacaranda Hill Farm
- **Charity Organisation:** Bridge Builders Incorporated
- **Food & Beverage Industry Innovation:** Boundary Island Brewing Co.
- **Tully Collins Excellence in Service Award:** Natalie Goddard, Sea West





**It was a privilege to celebrate the hard work, passion, and innovation of our Peel businesses. Congratulations to Hayes Tree Care, Bridge Builders Incorporated, and all our finalists and winners for their inspiring contributions to the region.**

*Ian Cadwallander, Strategic Development Manager at Peel CCI*

celebrating businesses that embody innovation, dedication, and success.

Ian Cadwallander, Strategic Development Manager at Peel CCI, reflected on the event: "It was a privilege to celebrate the hard work, passion, and innovation of our Peel businesses. Congratulations to Hayes Tree Care, Bridge Builders Incorporated, and all our finalists and winners for their inspiring contributions to the region."

### The Night's Big Winners

The prestigious Business of the Year award was presented to Hayes Tree Care, a business admired for its strong community values,

commitment to sustainability, and professionalism. Their year-on-year growth and excellent service delivery have earned them a stellar reputation in the region. Judges commended their focus on staff well-being, workplace culture, and a community-focused philosophy that continues to drive their success. Hayes Tree Care also took home the Medium Business category award.


The Business of the Year Runner-Up, Bridge Builders Incorporated, was recognised for their incredible work addressing food poverty and supporting vulnerable families in the region. Through partnerships with organisations such as OzHarvest and SecondBite, they

have transformed surplus food into tailored hampers, easing financial stress for families. Their Backpack Buddies program, which supports children's health and education, and events like the Gift of Christmas demonstrate their deep commitment to the community.

### An Unforgettable Evening

The Alcoa Peel Business Excellence Awards are a testament to the strength, innovation, and passion of Peel's business community. Attendees enjoyed live entertainment, a fabulous door prize of two nights' accommodation at Seashells Mandurah Resort, and the chance to network and connect with industry leaders.

As the Peel Chamber of Commerce and Industry continues to champion local businesses, the awards remain a highlight of the region's calendar, inspiring excellence and fostering collaboration. Congratulations to all the winners, finalists, and supporters who made the event such a resounding success.

The 2024 Alcoa Peel Business Excellence Awards were not just a celebration of past achievements but a call to action for the future. Each winner and finalist reminded us of the importance of community-focused innovation, sustainable practices, and creating opportunities for growth. 





# RED Grants

## Round 7 Announcement Event

**WORDS** | WA Government Media Statement

**IMAGE** | Overland Media

The seventh round of successful Regional Economic Development (RED) Grants were announced on 10 October 2024 for the Peel region by the Minister for Regional Development, the Hon Don Punch MLA.

Seven projects will share in \$1.17 million in Round 7 to support regional job creation in manufacturing, agribusiness, hospitality, tourism, environment, allied health, and recreation sectors.

The RED Grants program is investing \$55.85 million over nine years toward locally driven projects to stimulate economic growth in the regions.

The announcement was made by Regional Development Minister Don Punch at the Mandurah Indoor Rock Climbing Centre, which was one of the successful Peel recipients.

The proponent received a \$60,000 grant to expand their current facilities to meet the growing community demand for a safe, inclusive space for fitness and social connection. The funding will see the centre double its floor space by introducing a state-of-the-art bouldering facility and accommodating diverse activities such as children's parties, men's mental health, women's fitness, senior wellbeing groups and State-level climbing competitions.

Also among the group of Round 7 recipients is ARYZTA, which

has been awarded \$250,000 to purchase equipment to assess new evolving technologies to measure and improve bun quality at its first Western Australian commercial bakery at the Peel Business Park. The facility in the Shire of Murray, 10 kilometres north-east of Mandurah, will bring world-class industrial bakery technology to the facility, which adopts advanced AI-driven quality assurance, robotics, storage and monitoring systems for ingredient quality and biosecurity.

The bakery will create additional jobs in the region and valuable on-site, hands-on training for both new and experienced bakers upon completion in 2025.

Waroona-based SDR Engineering has also been awarded \$210,000 to expand its operations and diversify into manufacturing replacement spare parts for heavy equipment. The RED Grant will be used to expand into larger premises adjacent to their current workshop, and purchase and install a new lathe and gantry crane. This project will expand the engineering and manufacturing industry in the Peel region and increase revenue

by 40 per cent by manufacturing locally business that has been going interstate and overseas.

Miami Physiotherapy will use its \$100,000 grant towards building a purpose-built physiotherapy and allied health centre in Lakelands, providing treatment rooms, a rehabilitation gym, open class exercise area and consultant rooms.



**Peel offers a vibrant range of investment and growth prospects, as it continues to expand in export-oriented sectors such as manufacturing.**

*Regional Development Minister Hon Don Punch MLA.*

"Congratulations to all the successful REDS recipients this year. The diverse range of Peel projects reflects the thriving, social and innovative work happening across the region.

"Since the inception of this program, the WA Labor Government has invested more than \$4 million across 40 locally driven projects in Peel, helping to build a better region for the local community."

# RED Grants Round 7

## Aryzta Australia Pty Ltd

\$250,000

Aryzta Australia Pty Ltd will use their \$250,000 grant to purchase equipment to assess new evolving technologies to measure and improve bun quality at its first Western Australian commercial bakery at the Peel Business Park.



1

2



## C4C Packaging Pty Ltd

\$250,000

C4C Packaging Pty Ltd will use their \$250,000 grant to build a new cutting-edge facility at the Food Innovation Precinct WA utilising advanced technology to revolutionise the processing, production and sustainable packaging of beverages.

## Bar Therapy Pty Ltd

\$150,000

Bar Therapy Pty Ltd will use their \$150,000 grant to refit of the first floor of Little Stiller Distillery to expand operations and create Mandurah's most exclusive function and event centre which will also be available for business training workshops, conferences and meetings.



3

4



## SDR Engineering

\$210,000

SDR Engineering has been awarded \$210,000 to expand its operations and diversify into manufacturing replacement spare parts for heavy equipment. The RED Grant will be used to expand into larger premises adjacent to their current workshop, and purchase and install a new lathe and gantry crane.

## Waroona Wood Supplies and Waroona Earthworks

\$150,000

Waroona Wood Supplies and Waroona Earthworks' \$150,000 grant will support diversification into niche mine site rehabilitation services in the region. The grant will fund the purchase of an 'articulated truck' with specialised design to work on steep terrain and help prevent land erosion and plant damage, delivering environmental and economic benefits to the Darling Range scarp east of Waroona.



5



RED Grants Round 7 continued

**Miami Physiotherapy**

\$100,000

Miami Physiotherapy will use its \$100,000 grant towards building a purpose-built physiotherapy and allied health centre in Lakelands, providing treatment rooms, a rehabilitation gym, open class exercise area and consultant rooms. The facility will fill critical market gaps in Lakelands, providing services such as neurological physiotherapy rehabilitation, podiatry and psychology for chronic pain management.



6

**Mandurah Indoor Rock Climbing Centre**

\$60,000

Mandurah Indoor Rock Climbing Centre will use its \$60,000 grant to expand their current facilities to meet the growing community demand for a safe, inclusive space for fitness and social connection. The funding will see the centre double its floor space by introducing a state-of-the-art bouldering facility and accommodating diverse activities such as children's parties, men's mental health, women's fitness, senior wellbeing groups and State-level climbing competitions.



7



Plans to bring  
**Mandurah's  
Western  
Foreshore**  
*To Life*

WORDS & IMAGE | City of Mandurah

**Mandurah's transformation in recent years, set into motion by Council's clear strategic vision, has paved the way for even more possibilities for the future of the city.**

Mandurah Council's bold 20-year vision, which was created alongside the community, is the driving force behind what Mandurah will look like over the coming decades and aims to create opportunities for everyone.

Off the back of several major capital programs that have changed the face of the city centre, the City of Mandurah is embracing the next wave of game-changing projects that will help to create an even better Mandurah for all.

As part of this strategic vision, the final phase of the iconic Western Foreshore's transformation is underway, marking an exciting new chapter for the city. Bringing the foreshore to life will unlock the potential of some of the community's most-loved places and spaces that are currently underutilised.





“  
**Bringing the foreshore to life will unlock the potential of some of the community’s most-loved places and spaces.**”

With several transformative benefits that aim to create jobs and save ratepayers money, enrich community offerings and enhance the city’s unique coastal appeal, overall plans for the Western Foreshore are set to amplify Mandurah’s potential as a key destination for tourism, business, and lifestyle, and complement the award-winning works already done to revive the southern end of the Western Foreshore.

The City embarked on big conversations with the community back in 2018 about the overall vision for the foreshore areas, which led to the transformation of public spaces including a competition-level skate park, a world-class adventure playground and the circular pool on the estuary.

The big program of public works that has already been completed on the waterfront has refreshed some of the city’s most popular spots, leading to great benefits for the community and visitors and providing welcoming spaces for all to enjoy.

These works also send a clear message that Mandurah wants private investment, to improve economic opportunities and to create jobs for the city.

Council has now approved an overarching precinct plan for the Western Foreshore which will see major upgrades to

the public areas adjacent to the skate park and children’s playground, including new public jetties, an all-abilities paddle launch site, a market square, and enhancements to the Mandurah War Memorial.

As part of unlocking the value of these great spaces for the community, the City is progressing plans to approve a new family-focused hospitality precinct at the Western Foreshore.

Plans for an estimated \$23m development by Left Coast Leisure Group, which represents the largest private investment in Mandurah’s city centre in decades, will feature an 18-hole mini-golf course, a licensed restaurant/microbrewery, a cafe and a chocolate factory, all while improving public access to the water and maximising tree retention.

This project is part of Council’s strategic vision for revitalising the city centre, which is essential for reshaping the local economy and enhancing attractions for residents and visitors. Importantly, this project is expected to create over 300 jobs including in construction and hospitality and provide training pathways in partnership with TAFE.

This final phase of the Western Foreshore’s transformation will make a vibrant space where locals and visitors can play, meet, work and enjoy.



mandurah  
MATTERS

get involved today at  
[mandurahmatters.com.au](http://mandurahmatters.com.au)

A fond *farewell* to  
**Mayor Rhys  
Williams**

WORDS & IMAGES | City of Mandurah

**As Mandurah Mayor Rhys Williams finishes his seven-year tenure on Mandurah Council, the City of Mandurah recognises a legacy marked by visionary leadership and milestone transformations for the city.**





Government, to bring it to fruition. The Giants are an incredible story of meaningful partnerships, and an example of how art can transform tourism, boost local economies and help shape a new story for Mandurah.

Mayor Williams also drove city centre activation efforts, embedding a dedicated team to support local businesses through city-led programs and initiatives. His leadership extended to major infrastructure projects like the Mandurah Waterfront revitalisation, which changed the face of the city centre while retaining Mandurah's identity.

Advocacy efforts secured key developments such as the Common Ground Facility, addressing community housing needs. Simultaneously, place-based neighbourhood initiatives preserved Mandurah's roots and celebrated its distinctive charm.



**One of Mayor Williams' hallmark achievements was instigating the Mandurah Matters campaign in 2018.**

Throughout his tenure, Mayor Williams' focus on economic resilience and diversification remained steadfast. His collaborative approach to leadership fostered strong partnerships with government and private stakeholders, positioning Mandurah as a vibrant city ready to seize future opportunities.

As Mayor Williams steps down, the City celebrates his contributions and service to the community, recognising leadership that has shaped Mandurah's identity and fostered community spirit that will endure for years to come. Mandurah's Deputy Mayor Caroline Knight will now take up the Mayor position until the planned Council Mayor Election in October. 🦋

At the age of 21, Mr Williams was the youngest person to be elected to Mandurah Council, coming to local government with years of experience working in social enterprise and leadership programs.

He became one of Australia's youngest mayors in 2017, prioritising economic diversification, community wellbeing, and pride in Mandurah.

One of Mayor Williams' hallmark achievements was instigating the Mandurah Matters campaign in 2018, a citizen-driven vision for the city's next 20 years. Under his leadership, over 2000 community members contributed through workshops, discussions, and surveys, shaping a shared vision of Mandurah.

Mandurah Matters paved a new way forward in formulating a bold new vision hand in hand with the community and ensured the vision was reflected in the City's planning, purpose and decision making. The momentum created resonates just as strongly today, with the City's

growth and development propelled by the vision 'woven by waterways, a city that is thriving and connected to its people and culture'.

Under Mayor Williams' leadership, the City adopted a renewed focus on local economic challenges, addressing entrenched disadvantage, job creation, and evolving community needs. Partnering with the Peel Development Commission and others, Mandurah worked to capitalise on its strengths while tackling persistent issues. A notable early focus was revitalising Mandurah's tourism sector, which had been in decline. Council set about restructuring the tourism model, revamping public spaces, and launching Visit Mandurah, a dedicated tourism organisation.

A big part of the tourism success was *Thomas Dambo's Giants of Mandurah* project, with Mayor Williams working alongside key partners, including FORM Building a State of Creativity and the State

# Shire of SJ wins Local Government Authority of the Year (WA)

WORDS & IMAGE | Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

## The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale won the inaugural Local Government Authority of the Year Award at the 2024 Urban Development Institute of Australia (WA) Awards.

Winners were announced at a ceremony hosted in Perth on Saturday, 14 September 2024, which recognised the best projects in the urban development industry from across Western Australia.



**This recognition of the Local Government Authority of the Year Award is a tremendous honour for our Shire,” said Shire President Rob Coales.**

“It reflects the hard work of Shire officers, the engagement of our community and industry stakeholders, and our shared vision to create a place where everyone feels at home.”

### About the awards

The UDIA awards are widely regarded as the pinnacle of urban development, celebrating top achievements and best practice in community creation, innovation, and sustainability.

The Local Government Authority of the Year Award highlights the Shire’s exceptional work in shaping sustainable, community-centred urban environments, which foster a thriving, liveable and connected community.

### Shire celebrated for proactive approach

The judges were impressed by the Shire’s collaborative approach to securing funding, providing planning certainty, and speeding up approvals, thanks largely to their

up-to-date planning scheme and customer-focused culture.

The Shire was also praised for building partnerships across all levels of government industry, in order to deliver more housing, faster rather than simply expecting developers to fix issues.

### Young families and first homeowners move in

Located in the southeast corridor, the Shire is fast becoming Perth’s go-to destination for young families and first homebuyers.

It’s also one of Australia’s fastest-growing local government areas, with a 5.6% population increase in 2022–23, bringing the total to 36,739 residents — a 225% surge since 2001.

The Shire is a popular choice for those seeking an enriching lifestyle filled with natural beauty and vibrant community spirit.

Mr Coales said the Shire showed tremendous resilience in the face of rapid growth and was committed to fostering a nurturing environment where families can thrive.

“The Shire is fortunate to have the beauty of forests and the Darling Scarp while still offering proximity to the city, along with great amenity, so this award, and the figures, basically just cement what we already know – it’s a great place to live!” he said.



Shire President, Rob Coales and Andrew Trosic from the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale accepting the UDIA Award.



Briggs Park pump track signing with Shire President Rob Coales, Hon David Templeman MLA and Hugh Jones MLA.

“Rapid growth means we need to plan for the future and have the infrastructure in place to give Shire residents every opportunity to be active and healthy.”

# Community Cabinet comes to SJ

WORDS | Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

## The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale hosted the WA State Government on 14 October 2024, as part of a Community Cabinet visit.

Shire President Rob Coales welcomed Premier Roger Cook and his team to Mundijong for key discussions with State ministers.

Community Cabinet offers regional communities the chance to directly engage with the Premier and ministers, bringing local issues to the forefront.

With the State election on the horizon, it was a prime opportunity for the Shire to advocate for its top projects and priorities.

### New funding to boost sports in the Shire

A highlight of the State Government’s visit was the signing of an \$18.5 million funding

agreement for the Keirnan Park Recreation Precinct by Minister for Sport and Recreation David Templeman.

Together with local member Hugh Jones MLA, Minister for Sport and Recreation David Templeman announced plans for a new bike pump track at Briggs Park in Byford. The project is set to be completed later in 2025.

Funding for the Keirnan Park Recreation Precinct will advance the development of a multi-use sports pavilion, car park, entry road, and ovals at the expansive 63-hectare site. The funding is in addition to the \$3.5 million already secured for planning and design.

Mr Coales said that the State Government funding announcements were a significant step towards future proofing the Shire as a liveable, thriving, and connected hub.

“Our Shire has one of the fastest growing populations of any local

government area in the country, and it’s expected to soar from just more than 38,000 today, to more than 95,000 by 2046,” he said.

“It’s an exciting time, but a rapidly growing population always brings challenges for community infrastructure. Our current recreation facilities are badly degraded and have needed replacing for years.”

The Shire continues to push for additional funding to enhance the Keirnan Park Recreation Precinct further, with plans for 15 new netball courts and change rooms, as well as a new BMX track.

The Keirnan Park project is just one of six of the Shire’s election priorities.

### MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about these initiatives, visit the Advocacy 2025 page on the Shire’s website: [www.sjshire.wa.gov.au/our-shire/advocacy-2025](http://www.sjshire.wa.gov.au/our-shire/advocacy-2025)

Serpentine Jarrahdale  
Ag Show

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# Bindjareb District Leadership Group

**WORDS** | Peel Development Commission

**IMAGE** | Tuna Blue

Real change happens when community leaders come together with a common purpose. In 2024, the Bindjareb District Leadership Group (DLG) translated shared goals into action.

Through an action planning workshop; government, community, and Aboriginal leaders prioritised key issues and identified opportunities to improve the lives of everyone in the Bindjareb region. Supporting the development of locally led Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver community services was identified as a top priority. This has led to direct support for vital organisations like Winjan Aboriginal Corporation and Nidjalla Waangan Mia Aboriginal Health Services, as demonstrated below.

Other priorities on the Bindjareb 2024–25 DLG Action Plan include advocating for;

- adequately resourced Family and Domestic Violence services
- a well resourced Family Support Network
- increased housing and homelessness service options across the region.

The Bindjareb District Leadership Group (DLG) brings together leaders from government, community and Aboriginal organisations to address regional issues and

leverage opportunities to improve social outcomes for the community.

The Bindjareb DLG is committed to working with the local community and respecting the culture and aspirations of Aboriginal people of the Bindjareb region.

## Local Aboriginal Health Service Transitions to Community Control, Boosting Employment Opportunities

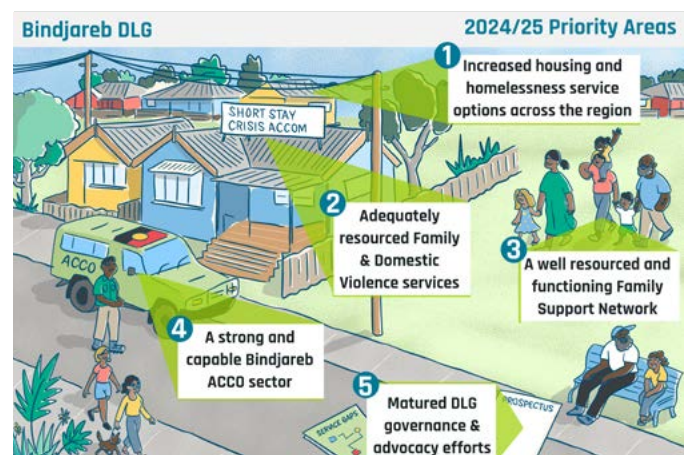
Nidjalla Waangan Mia (NWM) Aboriginal Health Service, a well-established health and wellbeing centre serving the Bindjareb region since 2010, is transitioning to become an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. This exciting change aligns with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which prioritises Aboriginal control over services. 'A community-controlled organisation implicitly recognises the strength, the expertise and the right to self-determination by Indigenous communities': Closing the Gap Priority reform.

NWM has been providing culturally appropriate

health services for nearly 2,000 Aboriginal clients under the administration of not for profit organisation GP down south (now Oseca). Recognising the benefits of community control, local elders, Oseca, Lavan Legal, Peel Development Commission and the City of Mandurah are working together to ensure a smooth transition to a newly formed, local Aboriginal Corporation. Bindjareb District Leadership Group support for the Nidjalla Waangan Mia Aboriginal Corporation has resourced the hiring of a transition coordinator and attracted further funding to help set up the Aboriginal Corporation to ensure a smooth handover of services.

This shift to community control opens significant employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Bindjareb region. NWM will develop an Aboriginal employment strategy with pathways to training and careers in the health field. This will not only lead to better health outcomes for the community but also contribute to economic development and self-determination.

By providing culturally appropriate healthcare and empowering the Aboriginal community, NWM is taking a significant step towards Closing the Gap and ensuring a brighter future for the Bindjareb region.



# Peel Community Foundation

Creating sustainable  
positive change



**WORDS & IMAGE** | Veronica Smith, Peel Community Foundation

The Peel Community Foundation (PCF) is an inspiring example of philanthropic leadership in Western Australia's Peel region. With a vision of creating sustainable positive change, PCF focuses on connecting donors with meaningful causes to build a more vibrant and resilient community.

During 2024, PCF organised two standout public events that emphasised the power and importance of local philanthropy.

The first event, Philanthropy in Peel, took place on May 30, 2024 at Mataya eatery in the heart of Mandurah. This gathering, attended by community members, was structured to engage locals in discussions about philanthropy's role in the Peel region. Attendees had the opportunity to hear from distinguished speakers, including Dylan Smith of Philanthropy Australia, who provided insights into national trends in charitable giving. Greg Watts from C-Wise shared his perspective on the significance of supporting local causes, inspiring attendees with the impact of grassroots philanthropy. Ashlie Marshall from Murdoch University discussed the Peel Community Foundation Scholarship, a program helping local students pursue higher education in nursing and science, and highlighted its role in expanding educational access in the community. The event also featured interactive networking sessions, which encouraged participants to brainstorm

collaborative ways to foster a culture of giving within the Peel. Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, underscoring the value of community-oriented discussions on giving.

Later in the year, on November 15, 2024, PCF hosted its second Philanthropy in the Peel event. This evening was a celebration of the collective impact of the Foundation's philanthropic initiatives over the past year and aimed to educate attendees on ways to engage in and support the region's charitable projects. Held at the recently refurbished, and iconic Exchange Hotel in Pinjarra, the event included a showcase of the Foundation's key achievements, such as the growing Peel Community Fund, which had received over \$35,000 in donations throughout the year. The event featured an inspiring keynote from Ian Bird, CEO of Community Foundations Australia who spoke about the potential transformative effects of PCF's support in the region and the bigger picture of the national campaign.

The dual focus of these events — education and engagement

— mirrors PCF's commitment to fostering a robust philanthropic ecosystem. By organising opportunities for local individuals and businesses to learn about giving, PCF is strategically strengthening community bonds and setting the foundation for long-term support for critical regional needs. Through a blend of informative discussions, personal stories, and networking opportunities, PCF's events in May and November demonstrated that anyone can become a philanthropist.

Looking ahead, the Peel Community Foundation plans to continue its annual events to sustain and expand its mission. By building partnerships, like those with Fremantle Foundation and Murdoch University, PCF aims to increase its scholarship offerings and extend its community grants, thereby reinforcing its commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all in the Peel region. 🌿

## **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information, please visit our website: <https://peelcf.com.au/>



# Boddington's Residential Aged Care Focus

WORDS & IMAGE | Shire of Boddington

The Shire of Boddington is taking bold steps to address a critical need in its community: **residential aged care accommodation.**

With many residents travelling long distances for care, the Aged Care Accommodation project aims to provide a much-needed local solution for the Shire and surrounding areas.

The nearest aged care facilities for seniors are in Narrogin, Brookton, and Pinjarra, each around an hour's drive. The shortage of aged care beds often results in residents needing to travel as far as Albany and Rockingham. The impact on local families is immense. To address this gap, the Shire established an Aged Accommodation Committee

in 2020, tasked with assessing demand and exploring the feasibility of a local facility.

Partnering with Verso Consulting, the Shire conducted an in-depth analysis of current and future aged care needs. The findings revealed a growing elderly population, particularly among those aged 70 and above. Projections show a need for 37 residential care places by 2026, growing to 47 by 2031.

In August 2022, the Boddington Council endorsed the hospital precinct as the preferred location for

the new facility. Since that time, the Shire has acquired two blocks of land to support the development of the site. With plans to attract a suitable operator, the Shire has invited formal expressions of interest from service providers for the design, construction, and operation of a facility, to ensure that the needs of Boddington's elderly population are met.

This initiative reflects the Shire's commitment to enhancing the quality of life for its residents and providing vital services close to home.

## Boddington Mountain Bike Park

To add to the already strong offerings of mountain bike trails in the region, Boddington is poised to turn Williams Reserve, only 2 km from the town centre, into a premier destination for mountain biking enthusiasts.

A grant of \$959,947 from the Australian Government's Priority Community Infrastructure Program, will fund the creation of a diverse network of mountain bike trails for riders of all skill levels.

This initiative stems from recommendations outlined in the Peel Trails Strategy, which emphasised enhancing recreational trail facilities to meet the growing demand for outdoor activities. The project aims to provide valuable recreational options for Boddington residents while attracting tourists, boosting local businesses, and promoting a healthier lifestyle.

Common Ground has been appointed to lead the planning and construction of the project. Spanning approximately 20 kilometres, the new trails will primarily cater to mountain biking enthusiasts while providing a scenic option for walkers. With the Shire currently navigating the required approvals, construction is anticipated to commence in early 2025.

The development of these trails positions Boddington as a premier destination for outdoor adventure enthusiasts. 🌿

# Empowering Women, Building Connections:

## The 2024 Success Story of the Business Women's Collective

**WORDS** | Business Women's Collective

**IMAGES** | Starbright Wonderland Photography

The Business Women's Collective (BWC) had a banner year in 2024, marked by growth, achievements, and an ever-deepening commitment to empowering businesswomen in the Peel region. From increasing attendance at events to successful fundraising and strategic planning, BWC continues to build a vibrant, supportive community.

### Growing Together

Kicking off the 2024 year, the Monthly Meetups saw attendance soar from 20–25 to over 50 participants. This growth reflects not only the appeal of the Collective's mission but also the value its members find in the connections and resources it provides. A heartfelt thanks to Cynthia and her team at Boundary Island Brewery in Erskine for creating a welcoming atmosphere and crafting a special brunch menu that has become a highlight of the meetups.

### Achieving Milestones

June 2024 marked a significant milestone as BWC officially became incorporated as the *Regional Business Women's Collective Incorporated*. One of

the first fruits of this incorporation was the formation of a Grants Sub-Committee. In a triumph for the Collective, their first grant application resulted in a \$980 award from the City of Mandurah, enabling the purchase of audio equipment for their events.

### Giving Back

2024's standout fundraiser was the Long Table Lunch at Redgum Wine Estate, where over \$6,600 was raised for Ovis Community Services. Attendees were inspired by keynote speaker Amber Kearns, whose heartfelt story underscored the importance of compassion and connection. Against the backdrop of a perfect spring day, attendees enjoyed a delicious meal and lively camaraderie, all for a worthy cause.



Councillor Amber Kearns speaking at the Business Women's Collective Long Table Lunch at Redgum Wine Estate.



### Forging Connections and Building Influence

BWC's influence extended beyond the region, with members attending a private reception at Parliament House in October 2024. Addressed by Premier Roger Cook and hosted by Robyn Clarke MLA, Lisa Munday MLA, and David Templeman MLA, the event highlighted the importance of businesswomen's voices in shaping the community. Later that month, BWC representatives engaged directly with Minister Ellery during her visit to Mandurah, showcasing the group's growing role as a voice for women in business.




**The BWC stands as a testament to the power of community and collaboration.**

*Veronica Smith, Co-founder*

#### Planning for the Future

October 2024 also saw BWC hold its first Strategic Planning Meeting, led by the esteemed Maree Gooch. With her guidance, the group revisited their Vision, Mission, and Values, laying the groundwork for an exciting 2025, including a new website, generously provided by local digital marketing agency, Saturday House Studios.

The Regional Business Women's Collective stands as a testament to the power of community and collaboration. With a strong foundation, successful initiatives, and an ambitious vision, BWC is poised for even greater achievements in the year ahead. 

#### MORE INFORMATION

For more information about our organisation and events, please email one of our founding committee members, Veronica Smith, Sue Daley, Kelly Winrow, Kelly King or Chloe Esakoff at [hello@businesswomenscollective.org.au](mailto:hello@businesswomenscollective.org.au) or visit [businesswomenscollective.org.au](https://businesswomenscollective.org.au)

Mandurah rock climber competes at

# World Championships in China!


WORDS & IMAGE | Mandurah Indoor Rock Climbing

**James Mouton, a promising young climber from Mandurah, secured a stunning victory at the national climbing championships in 2024, earning him a coveted spot at the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) World Championships in China.**

Known for his tenacity and skill, James has been a standout at Mandurah Rock Climbing, a facility renowned for its comprehensive training programs catering for children aged 5 to adults. This achievement is not only a testament to James' hard work and dedication but also highlights the supportive environment fostered by Mandurah Rock Climbing.

The facility itself is undergoing a significant transformation, expanding its walls and incorporating state-of-the-art features to better serve both elite climbers like James and beginners. The expansion aims to create a more inclusive and challenging

environment, reflecting the growing interest in rock climbing within the community.

James' journey from his local Mandurah Climb Club to the World Championships serves as an inspiration to other young athletes aspiring to reach new heights. The local community is buzzing with excitement and pride, eagerly following James' training and progress. This monumental achievement is a story of perseverance and passion, highlighting transformation from hesitant beginner to an inspiring role model. All eyes will be on James' future climbs as he aspires to make his mark on the world stage. 

# Unleashing regional innovation:

## GoSH24 empowers the next generation of problem solvers

WORDS | Peel Development Commission

IMAGES | GoSH

**The 2024 GoSHowcase was held on 9 August, and GoSHackathon on 17 August to unite students, tech enthusiasts, and entrepreneurs to empower regional young people through innovation and disruption.**

GoSHowcase is WA's largest youth tech-innovation event. The free event for regional young people in Years 5-12 saw over 800 students from 15 schools in the Peel region transform Mandurah Baptist College into a bustling hub of innovation and creativity. With keynote presentations, industry demonstrations, live panel interactions, challenges, and plenty of disruption, the showcase got our regional youth excited about their futures and technology. GoSH has continued to expand

its impact across the region to reach more students, with 5 additional government schools attending the GoSHowcase in its second year.

Attendees were treated to presentations by Lucas Lane from Glossy Boys (youngest entrepreneur in Australia to go on Shark Tank and to get funded), Jeremy Chetty from Student Edge (Australia's largest student membership platform), Maria and Sam from Drip Invest (an app to teach adolescents about investing), Sarah James from Capgemini (Global Tech leaders in AI), and Antonio Morias, global head of robotics for Alcoa. It was great to see our speakers from Perth and Peel inspiring regional youth.



**The 2024 GoSHowcase and GoSHackathon were a celebration of young people's creativity, collaboration, and the potential for technology to drive positive change in the Peel region.**



**846**

students attending compared to **700** in 2023

**16**

schools compared to **12** in 2023

**9**

Government schools compared to **6** in 2023

**31%**

increase in female participants to reach gender parity in 2024



**GoSH2024 is all about that inspiration. Where does the spark start? Where does the lightbulb moment start? Well it starts here.**

*Jeremy Chetty – Executive Director, Student Edge*



**We thought that coming to the GoSH hackathon would be an amazing experience for us.**

*GoSHackathon participant*



**My favourite part was about having fun with my friends and being creative.**

*GoSHackathon participant*



The free GoSHackathon event is for mixed age teams up to 18 years of age. The 2024 Peel event saw 20 primary and 15 secondary teams competing to solve challenges specific to the Peel region. Teams designed solutions to address rising sea levels, break the fast fashion cycle, or make school more cool. Underpinned by the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, projects leveraged technology to create solutions with a meaningful impact on Peel. The GoSH 24 goal to encourage girls to explore STEM pathways was achieved with a 31% increase in female participants to reach gender parity. GoSHackathon is committed to removing barriers to access by providing all materials and mentors to support teams.

The top four primary school teams won funded scholarships to attend the Game Changer Awards in October, where they refined their idea, developed their GoSH projects, designed prototypes, and presented to a range of judges.

The top four secondary teams won a funded scholarship to attend the West Tech Fest Youth Entrepreneur Showcase in December where they pitched and promoted their solution to the business community, investors and public. 🦋

**MORE INFORMATION**

For further information visit: [www.goshackathon.au](http://www.goshackathon.au) or go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCJbPo8f0IM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCJbPo8f0IM) GoSH24 Recap

# Stories of everyday leaders

WORDS & IMAGE | Michelle Wong

## Tell us about your act of leadership?

Michelle is the volunteer coordinator of the Mandurah Autism Academy Coder Dojo. The free coding club for neurodivergent adolescents (ninjas) is part of the Curtin Autism Academy and runs at Mandurah Catholic College who share their facilities each Saturday. Michelle doesn't have a tech background but has a team of volunteer mentors who are all tech-specialists and many who are neurodivergent themselves.

*"The program is very special and often the only activity the ninjas are excited to leave the house for."*

## What motivated you to perform this act of leadership?

Michelle quickly saw the positive impact on families and the talent of the ninjas.

*"There is always a moment of joy, seeing the kids happy and finding their people. The ninjas think about problems differently and their solutions are amazing. I have no doubt they hold the talent and tech skills we need for the future, and I will do everything I can to support their pathway."*

As the ninjas reach upper secondary, Michelle assists with alternative pathways to further education or employment, targeting the technical strengths of each ninja.

## What impact has this act of leadership had?

In 2023, Michelle founded the GoSHackathon in Mandurah, a tech-innovation event spotlighting regional talent and highlighting future career pathways for regional youth. With over 700 participants the event became the biggest of its kind in WA, with the ninjas featuring on the winning teams.




**Our club is a window into what the world looks like when we can all be our true, sparkly selves.**

*"I don't get upset if mentors don't come or are late. I have grown in my understanding that everyone has different circumstances, views and concepts of time. As long as I have set up sorted, I take the rest of the morning as it comes."*

In 2025, South Metro TAFE will be piloting a 'first of its kind' Neurodivergent Tech Cert III, a program that Michelle has been developing in collaboration with the agile and progressive team at the TAFE. She is delighted that the Certification is fully subscribed, as Michelle strives to build a pipeline of neurodivergent talent in support of a thriving tech industry in the Peel region.

## What was the hardest part of being a leader and how did you respond?

Managing the volunteer mentors was a learning curve as Michelle learnt to understand and accommodate their needs. Taking time to make space has been incredibly worthwhile, the neuro-friendly culture is extraordinary.

Working with the ninjas has been humbling. As an adult with ADHD, Michelle can be quick to jump in and take over. The ninjas have shown her to step back, let them run with a problem and see where it leads, which is often somewhere mind-blowing! 

# Corporate Team Collaboration Workshop 2024

WORDS & IMAGE | Peel Development Commission

**Executive and administrative officers from the nine Regional Development Commissions met in Perth on 18-19 July 2024 for the inaugural Corporate Team Collaboration Workshop.**

Participants received facilitated training sessions focusing on effective communication for business and time management. An informative session was provided by Bloom AI where officers learnt about emerging digital trends and artificial intelligence, and explored AI tools available and their potential impact on business administration. Officers also met with key corporate services staff from agencies in Perth and held a meet and greet with staff from the Office of the Minister for Regional Development.



The Corporate Collaboration Workshop provided an opportunity for professional and personal development for Commission corporate team members and a rare chance to meet colleagues from across Western Australia, to form new working relationships.

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# Cultivating a career in care at SM TAFE

Building strong pillars for care  
and connection in Peel

The SM TAFE Mandurah campus has exterior artwork titled 'Djena Bida Kooro Kooro Mila – Pathways from Past to Future' by local Noongar artists Maitland Hill and Kerry Stack. INSET: Lecturers Geri Dickson (left) and Paula McLellan (right) at the SM TAFE Mandurah campus.



**Demand for aged care professionals is particularly strong in regional areas.**

## WORDS & IMAGES | SM TAFE

Care and connection are an intrinsic part of the human experience. From sourcing childcare at the early stage of life to finding an aged care facility for a close relative at the later stage of life, it is imperative to feel your loved one is in the best care possible.

The people at the core of care light up this industry, helping individuals reach their full potential and providing fundamental opportunities for community, belonging, social interaction and independence.

Here in Peel, the South Metropolitan TAFE (SM TAFE) Mandurah campus has real-world simulated training facilities and a local lecturer team with a wealth of experience in the care industry. Their capability in care from early childhood to aged care is coupled with an unwavering passion for teaching the next generation the skills to foster an incredibly rewarding career.

SM TAFE lecturer Lisa Muir is a passionate force in shaping the next generation of childcare workers, teaching the *CHC30121 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care*, which is a fee free\* course through the State Government's partnership with the Commonwealth Government.

"To succeed, students need a lot of nurturing, and we help them build a great understanding for the importance of early childhood

education; you need to have a lot of passion for our sector as well," Lisa said.

"The first five years of life is when most of the brain development happens, so we have to give children opportunities to learn from a young age," she explains.

For those that wish to begin a career in early childhood education and care, SM TAFE Mandurah campus is home to a virtual creche for training students to become an educator in a childcare setting.

Both childcare and aged care are part of Australia's largest employing category; healthcare and social assistance. Demand for aged care professionals is particularly strong in regional areas such as Mandurah, with more retirees opting to move out of the city for a relaxed coastal lifestyle, resulting in a growing senior population.



Geri Dickson has been a lecturer in aged care at SM TAFE Mandurah for the past 12 years, teaching the *CHC33021 Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing)*, which is currently fee free.\* The course provides the skills to become an aged care or support worker in a facility or residential setting.

Geri began her career as a registered nurse in the UK and worked at a country hospital that had six long-stay aged care residents. It was here that she found her passion for aged care and made the transition into the industry. As a lecturer, Geri says the most rewarding part of the job is seeing a student's journey from beginning to the end of the course.

"We go out and do workplace visits and see past students that have become support workers and love their job. The majority of students do actually get offered jobs where they are doing their work placement training," Geri said.

SM TAFE has strong connections with local industry, working closely in Peel with organisations such as McNamara Lodge (RAAFA), Opal HealthCare, Coolibah Care, and Aegis Greenfields, on work placements for students as part of their course.

Paula McLellan also works as a lecturer at SM TAFE in aged care and disability support, and she says the purpose-built training facility at Mandurah campus elevates the learning experience for students.

"It's a simulation of the actual industry and we keep everything as up to date as possible. Everyone is aging and we're living a lot longer and we need well trained staff out there to be able to carry on the industry," Paula said.

Geri and Paula both agree it is of paramount importance for students to have the attributes needed to provide person-centred care, including respect, compassion, empathy, patience, and stamina,

along with a solid foundation of computer skills.

With training facilities that emulate workplace settings and lecturers who are industry specialists at SM TAFE, there are strong pillars in place for the future of care in the Peel region.

**MORE INFORMATION**

The Mandurah campus of South Metropolitan TAFE is part of the Peel education and training facility, sharing the campuses of Murdoch University and John Tonkin College. The Peel Jobs and Skills Centre (JSC) is also located on campus – visit the centre to access free, professional advice on training and employment opportunities. The Peel JSC services are supported by Aboriginal and career services from SMYL Community Services.

**Applications are still open for Semester 1, 2025.**

There has never been a better time to *Be more* at TAFE. To see all the courses on offer at our Mandurah campus, visit [www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au](http://www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au)



**Whether you're a school leaver or looking for a career change, South Metropolitan TAFE has the right course for you.**

# Thinking about study plans for the new year ahead?



**Study locally in Peel and learn in real-world facilities!**

Our Mandurah campus has a brand-new Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre for cookery, tourism and event management courses, including a fully operational restaurant.

The campus also has industry-standard hairdressing and beauty therapy training spaces, as well as a hair salon open to the public.

You could train for a rewarding career in aged care, childcare, or as an education assistant. Gain skills for carpentry, engineering, accounting, and much more.

For more information about our courses at Mandurah campus, visit our website.

**t: 1800 001 001 e: info@smtafe.wa.edu.au W: southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au**



SM TAFE RT0: 52787

\* The *CHC30121 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care* and the *CHC33021 Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing)* are fee free in 2025. The tuition fees are 100 per cent subsidised by the WA Government for WA residents. Some eligibility conditions apply for the free training, and other fees may apply for some courses. Please visit [www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au/courses/skills-ready](http://www.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au/courses/skills-ready) for further information. Tuition fees are free, but resource fees may be payable for some courses.

# Aged Care Training and Workforce Centre of Innovation: Strengthening WA's Aged Care Workforce

**WORDS** | Peel Development Commission

**IMAGES** | Overland Media

**The Peel Development Commission and City of Mandurah recently hosted a dynamic event in Mandurah to unveil a bold vision to transform Western Australia's aged care workforce.**

More than 60 industry professionals were presented with the business case requesting \$20.8 million from the State Government to establish an Aged Care Training and Workforce Centre of Innovation. The Centre aims to develop evidence-based solutions for training and workforce issues, attract skilled workers through innovative approaches, and ultimately improve the quality of life for older Western Australians.

The business case was developed in response to a needs analysis commissioned by the Peel Development Commission and City of Mandurah, to quantify the current and projected demand for aged care workers in the Peel region and WA. The needs analysis exposed a significant undersupply of aged care places in both residential and community care settings, which coincides with significant workforce shortages across the sector.

The ageing population is driving unprecedented demand for aged care and health services, and by 2031 more than 1700 new aged care workers will be required in the Peel region and almost 25,000 will be needed across WA. Workforce shortages have caused limited growth in aged care services, while limited worker skills reduce the level of care and support that can be provided. The needs analysis study has shown dramatic cost savings to the government if older people were supported within aged care facilities as opposed to long-stay patients in hospitals.



A panel discussion was facilitated with industry experts which underscored key challenges and opportunities in aged care. Insights included the importance of culturally appropriate training for Aboriginal students, the need to prioritise human-centered care, and the value of on-the-job training within aged care settings. Collaboration emerged as a recurring theme, with calls for more flexible training and the need to break down barriers to innovation and pool resources.

Stakeholders continue to work with industry partners on WA's first Aged Care Centre of Innovation.

The proposed Centre of Innovation will be implemented by Aged Care Research and Industry Innovation Australia (ARIIA) and will focus on four pillars: innovation, workforce, training, and meaningful ageing.

The focus of the Centre will be to ensure WA has a workforce of sufficient size and skills that will support longer stays in the community, with Peel's ambition to be at the cutting edge of aged care innovation. An independent cost benefit analysis stated the investment request of \$20.8 million will return \$6.7 billion in economic and social benefits over 15 years.

The event reaffirmed a shared commitment to building a stronger, more innovative aged care sector in WA, plus outlined a unique opportunity to take a leading role in building the nation's aged care workforce for the future.





# Business Builder event series

**WORDS & IMAGE** | Waalitj Foundation

The Waalitj Foundation's Business Builder event series is providing specialist support to Indigenous businesses in Kwinana, Peel and the Upper South West.

Their event, hosted in Mandjoogoordap in September 2024, enabled Indigenous business owners and entrepreneurs to join with industry leaders, to discuss collaborative opportunities.

Through the Waalitj Hub, a program of the Waalitj Foundation, Indigenous business owners have access to a range of free services, including state-of-the-art facilities, mentoring from business coaches, industry connections, and independent professional services. Since its inception in 2020, the Waalitj Hub has serviced over 520 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. Clients can access specialised, one-on-one support across a range of business areas, such as tendering, industrial relations, marketing, and HR.

The Business Builder was a great success, attracting over 30 attendees representing diverse skills and capabilities, including mechanical maintenance, electrical services, art, and merchandise.

Attendees benefited from insights shared by Waalitj Hub Business Coaches Verity Sebire and Michael Jack, who detailed the comprehensive support available to both established and emerging Indigenous businesses through the Waalitj Foundation.


Further presentations were made from representatives from Alcoa Australia, City of Mandurah and City of Cockburn, who discussed each organisation and their commitment to working with Indigenous businesses, upcoming opportunities and how to navigate their tendering process.

Waalitj Hub Business Coach Michael Jack said the Business Builder events are essential in empowering and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to build business capability.



**These events offer Indigenous business owners exceptional opportunities to network and explore meaningful business prospects within their region.**

The chance to engage in substantive dialogue with industry leaders is invaluable for fostering a strong, sustainable, and competitive Indigenous industry sector that benefits the entire community.

The event was made possible with the support of Alcoa's global charity, the Alcoa Foundation, which provides support to the Waalitj Hub to deliver six Business Builder events annually in areas where the resources company operates. 

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

Contact [admin@wf.org.au](mailto:admin@wf.org.au) or phone (08) 9242 6700.

## About Waalitj Foundation

**The Waalitj Foundation aims to lead the provision of education, employment, and business opportunities for First Nations Australians by working together to empower and build capacity amongst individuals, their families and their communities.**

Through the establishment of a number of successful programs in Perth, regional Western Australia, Victoria and Queensland, the Waalitj Foundation has reached over 60,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people nationally. We influence and inspire the empowerment of our people through our diverse workforce, which is led by our First Australian role models.

<https://www.wf.org.au/>

# Biz Blitz 2024

## The Ultimate Sales Pitch Competition!

**WORDS** | IPS Management Consultants

**IMAGES** | BroomstickChick Photography

**On 14 November 2024 the bi-annual Biz Blitz took place at All Malt Brewing in Mandurah. Organised by IPS Business Advisory, this event brought together entrepreneurs and the public for a unique competition.**

Eleven small businesses worked for weeks to perfect their sales programs. During the Biz Blitz event, they presented their ideas to an audience of 50 other business owners, family members and interested parties, while four judges determined who had the best pitch. The event turned into an unforgettable evening filled with creativity, connection, and motivation.



The atmosphere was electric as each entrepreneur showcased creativity, clarity of message, and the effectiveness of their product or service. The judges, tasked with the difficult decision of scoring each pitch, evaluated them on these criteria, while the audience played a crucial role in selecting their favourite.

The stakes were high, with a prize pool designed to propel these small businesses to the next level. The first prize winner would receive \$3,000 in seed money, a significant boost for any emerging enterprise. The second prize offered a one-year membership to the Peel Chamber of Commerce, providing invaluable networking opportunities and resources. The third prize was a comprehensive marketing package, crucial for expanding reach and visibility. Additionally, the audience was invited to vote for their favourite pitch, contributing to the selection of the Audience Favourite Award. The winner of the Audience Favourite received a professional photoshoot package.



All Biz Blitz participants and judges.



Biz Blitz 2024 judges

**The Winners were:**


- **1st Prize:** Jayne Warren, owner of Lakza Crochet — \$3,000 seed funding, offered by the City of Mandurah
- **2nd Prize:** Frankie Holden, co-owner of Mostyn & Frankie — A free one-year membership with the Peel Chamber of Commerce
- **3rd Prize:** Hugo Pracas, owner of Air Deluxo — A \$500 marketing package, provided by the Peel Development Commission
- **Audience Favourite Award:** Aisha Tan from Mugs & Kisses — A photoshoot, donated by Starbright Wonderland

**Outcomes and Impact**

The evening was a success for both participants and the broader community. Each of the eleven businesses left with enhanced sales strategies, which they can now apply to future presentations and client interactions. The judges provided detailed feedback on every aspect of each pitch, giving participants valuable insights for refining their presentations.

Furthermore, the event allowed participants to gain valuable public speaking experience and connect with other entrepreneurs and stakeholders. The audience had the opportunity to learn how to assess a sales pitch, identify key elements, and put these skills into practice by selecting the Audience Favourite.

**Conclusion**

Biz Blitz 2024 once again proved that collaboration and creativity can have a significant impact on small businesses. The event not only strengthened the entrepreneurial skills of the participants but also brought the community together in an inspiring celebration of entrepreneurship. Biz Blitz remains an essential platform for growth and innovation in the region. 



**Biz Blitz is a great example of how collaboration and creativity can have a significant impact on small businesses.**

**Biz Blitz 2024**

**Organisers**

IPS Management Consultants

**Judges**

The competition was attended by around 50 people, including entrepreneurs, family members, and other interested parties. The judging panel consisted of experts:

- **Natasja Perovic** (Project Manager of the City of Mandurah)
- **Ian Cadwallander** (Strategic Development Manager of the Peel Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
- **Larissa Stacy** (A/Local Content Adviser of the Peel Development Commission)
- **Suzy Jones** (Owner of Starbright Wonderland, winner of the last BizBlitz)

**Sponsors**

- Principal Sponsor: City of Mandurah
- Prize sponsors: City of Mandurah, Peel CCI, PDC, Starbright Wonderland
- Venue: All Malt Brewing
- Photography: BroomstickChick Photography

**Venue & Photography**

The event was hosted at All Malt Brewing, owned by Jen and Andy Scothern, who generously provided the venue free of charge. Guests enjoyed a relaxed atmosphere, complete with delicious drinks and catering.

Danny Musica, from Designed by Magic captured the event by photographing and videotaping each individual sales pitch.



# Caring for Bindjareb Boodja

**WORDS & IMAGES** | Winjan Aboriginal Corporation

The Winjan Aboriginal Corporation and its growing Ranger Program has been achieving wonderful outcomes in caring for Bindjareb Boodja and building strong and mutually beneficial relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations to achieve common goals of caring for country.

As part of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions funded Aboriginal Ranger Program (DBCA ARP) Round 5, a team of Rangers walked with Elders, visiting ten local places of cultural significance with the aim of learning more about country to protect cultural values and assets. A term they now like to call — a cultural induction. This means, before stepping onto these sites, it is important to think from a cultural perspective to process and decipher the cultural significance of these special places before site management planning begins. To guide culturally appropriate land management activities, rangers have developed a series of Action plans to be implemented at significant sites for the duration of the ranger program.

The DBCA ARP Round 6 — *Winjan Bindjareb Boodja Baldja Rangers Innovation Project*, a partnership with the Harvey Aboriginal Corporation and Waroona Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Corporation, aims to make ranger groups strong and connected across Bindjareb country with a focus on Junior Ranger Program development, drone cultural and landscape mapping/country monitoring, cultural tourism capacity building and native seed collection processing and testing.

The work of the Winjan Rangers is extensive. Working in partnership with DBCA, PHCC, DFES, PDC, DWER, Formosa Flora, Nuts about Natives, Curtin Restoration Ecology Group and numerous other stakeholders to undertake activities on country — including threatened ecological community (TEC) flora and fauna surveys; track and landscape maintenance; bushfire management (cultural mosaic burning); feral animal/weed management and seed collection, processing and viability testing for landscape revegetation.

Winjan rangers/staff are being mentored and trained by an assembly of specialist partners to support their endeavours in the native seed arena.

The rangers are undertaking a broad range of training activities with several seed experts:

- An on-country mentoring partnership has been established with Formosa Flora, a long-established seed collection business operating out of Albany/micropropagation in a laboratory environment for species whose seed dormancy mechanisms have yet to be discovered.
- Curtin University Restoration Ecology Group and on country seed collecting from local reserves, private land and Lot 8,000 East Keralup with processing and viability testing both in the field and laboratory with support from Formosa Flora, PHCC and Nuts About Natives.

To further develop the Winjan Ranger's Capacity, funding was secured from DPIRD's Native Seed and Nursery development grants. With this grant Winjan was able to engage a consultant for a feasibility study on native seed collection & nursery development.

The grant has helped inform what equipment/skill requirements are needed to be filled. The project, being led by Winjan Aboriginal Corporation, guided by a specialist stakeholder team, aims to identify commercial seed collection, processing and testing opportunities and build capacity for Winjan to participate in the sector.

**“**  
**The work of the Winjan Rangers is extensive.**



## Native seeds

The long-term aim of the native seed training is for Winjan to form commercial relationships for the collection, processing, viability testing and on-sale of native seeds and services to support with revegetation activities.

The Winjan Bindjareb Boodja Baldja Rangers program shows that Aboriginal-led natural resource management provides long-term economic and environmental benefits and strengthens Bindjareb people's cultural connection to Country.



Rangers out on Country collecting seeds.



A recent highlight for the Ranger group was a visit to Nowanup Noongar Boodja — 284 Normans Rd Gairdner — a property still undergoing healing (revegetation) that has recently been handed back to the local Noongar Community by Gondwana link and Greening Australia. On this property, located in the Great Southern (Wagyl Kaip Boodja), rangers met with local Goreng elders to explore the 750-hectare site and other recently revegetated properties to learn valuable lessons on how to successfully revegetate previously cleared land with an impressive biodiversity of plant species.

## Community power

# How locals lead the fight against invasive species

**WORDS & IMAGES** | Peel Harvey  
Biosecurity Group

## Peel-Harvey locals are stepping up to protect their environment from invasive species.

Landholders, volunteers and local biosecurity groups play crucial roles in identifying and managing pests, supporting local agriculture and protecting native bushland.

Through shared knowledge and action, our local community is safeguarding the region for future generations.

### The strength in collective action

Monitoring through local Recognised Biosecurity Groups (RBGs), like the Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group, is vital in the fight against invasive species. By reporting declared weeds and feral animals to RBGs, landholders are ensuring that authorities can stay ahead of potential infestations. Whether it's identifying hotspots or

sharing pest control strategies, the community's involvement results in a more coordinated approach to managing threats to pets, plants and agriculture. Paired with tools like the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's (DPIRD) MyPestGuide app, these efforts become even more effective.

### Cotton bush: a local success story

The management of narrow-leaf cotton bush in Peel-Harvey highlights the critical role of community involvement in pest control. Under the *Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (BAM) Act 2007*, landholders are legally required to manage declared plants. Advocacy from local landholders, coordinated through PHBG, has ensured that cotton bush — a toxic and invasive weed — remains on the declared list, keeping it a priority for control efforts. These efforts are further bolstered by initiatives such as free equipment rental through local biosecurity groups PHBG and Leschenault Biosecurity Group.

While success varies among landholders, many have made significant strides toward eradicating this weed over the past decade.

### Polyphagous shot-hole borer: a growing threat

Community involvement in biosecurity also strengthens the response to new incursions, such as the polyphagous shot-hole borer (PSHB). In September 2024, DPIRD expanded the beetle's quarantine zone in metro Perth to include sections of the Peel region. Residents have a key role to play in managing this threat by adhering to quarantine rules and reporting possible sightings via the MyPestGuide app. Early detection is key, and the community's vigilance can prevent this pest from causing further harm to local trees and ecosystems.

### Citizen science and a sustainable future

Citizen science initiatives like MyPestGuide and grassroots organisations like the RBGs are empowering locals to take an active role in biosecurity. Community members are helping biosecurity experts and local authorities respond swiftly to emerging threats by reporting their sightings and sharing their knowledge. Grassroots efforts are not just about protecting the environment—they also help secure a healthy and sustainable future for Peel-Harvey. 

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#### MORE INFORMATION

Visit [PHBG.org](https://www.phbg.org)

Download MyPestGuide Reporter app from [agric.wa.gov.au](https://agric.wa.gov.au)

**A PHBG officer in the field investigating community reports of declared weeds.**





# Mandurah Tech Fest 2024

Where cutting-edge technology meets investment and collaboration

“  
What a day!  
MTF gets bigger and better each year.

*PropTech Hub WA Chair Cullum Ashton*

Perth Giants L-R: Davyd Hooper, Gavin Hegney & Carl Holmes.

**WORDS** | PropTech Hub WA

**IMAGES** | Suzanne Jones, Starbright Wonderland Photography

**Mandurah Tech Fest 2024 finished off the year on December 7th at Mandurah Offshore Fishing & Sailing Club. The festival was an exciting celebration of innovation and entrepreneurship, where cutting-edge technology meets investment and collaboration.**

As a result of the event, two standout innovators from the region received scale-up and early-stage investment from the renowned Perth Giants, a prestigious group of investors committed to driving the growth of groundbreaking startups. The event provided a dynamic platform for emerging tech companies to showcase their ideas, with a focus on the most promising and disruptive technologies in the market today.

Throughout the festival, attendees were treated to a variety of mini-events that engaged and inspired. The Tech Demo sessions featured live, hands-on demonstrations of the latest advancements in fields like artificial intelligence,

blockchain, tourism technology and sustainable tech, allowing participants to interact with innovations that are shaping the future. These interactive showcases gave a glimpse into the potential of emerging technologies and provided a space for direct feedback from industry professionals and enthusiasts alike.

Another highlight was the Tech Panel Discussion, where thought leaders and experts gathered to discuss the most pressing challenges and opportunities in the tech world. This thought-provoking conversation covered topics ranging from property technology, resource and energy technology, food and beverage innovation and tourism



**Top: Mighty Booch Founder Damian Ots. Above: Casalyf Founder Jessica Scott.**

innovation. The insights shared sparked new ideas and connections, ensuring that the Mandurah Tech Fest was not just a celebration of technology, but also a platform for future collaborations and the growth of a vibrant tech ecosystem in the Peel region. 🌿

**MORE INFORMATION**

Mandurah Tech Fest 2024 was hosted by PropTech Hub WA, with Major Partners City of Mandurah, Peel Development Commission and Invest & Trade Western Australia.

# District Leadership Group Statewide Forum 2024

## Spotlight on District Leadership Groups

**WORDS & IMAGE** | Department of Communities

**The inaugural District Leadership Group Statewide Forum was held at the Perth Town Hall on 27 November 2024, with representation from each the State's 16 District Leadership Groups (DLGs).**

The focus of DLGs is to impact change by getting the right people around the table and last year's event did just that.

Among the 150-plus in-person and online attendees from metropolitan and regional areas were representatives from Commonwealth, State and local governments, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, not-for-profits and the community services sector.

Since their inception a decade ago, DLGs have used their collaborative efforts to find place-based solutions to issues in key priority areas, particularly family and domestic violence, children and young people, housing and homelessness and mental health.

Communities' Director-General Mike Rowe officially opened the DLG Statewide Forum, which involved a series of presentations and



**Paul Bridge (Kimberley DLG), Rob Cossart (Wheatbelt DLG) and Brett Hill (Bindjareb DLG) opened the Forum with a session about how they have impacted change in their respective communities.**

discussions exploring the work of DLGs around WA.


Presenters shared their experiences about how they have effected change, faced challenges and the importance of sharing knowledge through networking opportunities.

They also cited the value of good data collection to help target programs and projects, as well as the need to have strong community leaders to champion their causes and developing strategies so they can lead with confidence.

DLG Project Sponsor and Communities' Executive Director Service Delivery Glenn Mace closed the event with some sage advice about collaboration and finding



**The focus of DLG's is to impact change by getting the right people around the table.**

focus in the delivery of human services projects: "Just choose something and do it and get some wins out of it — we all know that success breeds success." 

#### **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about the role of District Leadership Groups, visit [www.wa.gov.au/dlg](http://www.wa.gov.au/dlg). If you would like to discuss how your work can connect with DLGs, please contact the DLG team at [dlg@communities.wa.gov.au](mailto:dlg@communities.wa.gov.au).

# Q&A: Staff profiles

## INTRODUCING

**SOPHIE SMITH**

**WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT**

The Commission welcomed Sophie Smith in September 2024, who joined us on a part-time work experience placement. Sophie has recently completed her degree at Murdoch University in Cyber Security and joined us to gain some valuable experience working in an office. Sophie helped review the Commission's cyber security policies/reports and provided some general project support.

### Q: Tell us about what you have studied at University and why?

I studied Cyber Security and Digital forensics at Murdoch University and to explain that in a singular word, it is 'hacking!'. What got me interested in this was I would play an online game called 'watch dogs' where you play a vigilante in a city and you hack security cameras and use your hacking powers to take down criminals. It was my Human Biology teacher that mentioned the University course so I decided to

follow my interest and see where it would lead me.

### Q: What interested you about doing a work placement with the PDC?

As part of my course, we have to do a core unit called 'Learning for Tomorrow' and it requires you to take an internship somewhere and get actual work experience. PDC is close to where I live and my father previously worked there at the Commission, so there was that existing connection and the Commission was willing to offer me some work in what I was interested in and was relevant.

### Q: Why does cyber security interest you?

Cyber security interests me because its just cool! There is so much that you can do with technology that you don't even think about, like watching security footage and tracking people down. There are hackathon games where hackers will crack cold cases and find missing people over the internet for the fun of it, kind of like a digital egg hunt.

### Q: What are your future career goals/plans?


The thing about cyber security is it is such a massive area and there is

so much that you can do. I'm not exactly sure just yet what I want to specifically do after, because there is so much you can do for example, analysis jobs where you are reviewing data logs and you have to determine whether or not hackers are trying to hack into your system, so you are the person who provides that early warning and prevents the cyber incidents. You also need to learn programming in order to do cyber security, along with learning the anatomy of the computer, so you can go into the tech industry and you can build computers. My favourite though might be penetration testing. This is where people pay you to hack into their system and then explain how you got in, so they can further protect themselves.

### Q: What is your favourite activity or thing to do in the Peel region?

I have visited the Serpentine Falls before and it is beautiful. It would be nice to swim in the dam. My favourite activity though that I have done in this region is when I went to Jarrahdale to do some horse riding. In fact, I am due to do a twilight trail ride this year which I got a voucher for as a birthday present.

### Q: How do you spend your spare time?

I enjoy writing fan fiction and am currently working on an original story. I also do digital modelling and animation as a hobby and enjoy video editing, and have taken a media elective on this. When I am not playing video games, game creation is something I have dabbled in. 

Sophie delivering a Cyber Hygiene report presentation to the PDC team as part of her work placement.





**INTRODUCING**

**LAURA BOOTH**

**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
OFFICER**

The Commission welcomed new team member Laura Booth in August 2024 who joins us on contract as a Regional Development Officer assisting our Regional Data Manager with a number of data driven projects.

**Q: Tell us about what you are studying at University and why?**

I have completed my Degree in Environmental Geography and Planning at UWA and currently completing a Master of Urban and Regional Planning at Curtin University. I hoped that this area of study would provide me with the knowledge to create spaces that improve human wellbeing alongside ecosystem protection.

**Q: What motivated you to become a part of the PDC?**

I was interested in becoming a part of the PDC to gain professional experience in the regional planning field whilst I am completing my studies.

**Q: Tell us about your role at the Commission.**

As a regional development officer, my role centres around research and analysis. This involves displaying and interpreting data to assess regional needs, opportunities, and challenges.

**Q: How do you engage with the local community through your role, and what impact do you hope to have on the Peel region through your work?**

As a part of my role, I hope to engage with local stakeholders and support the growth and development of the Peel region.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about working in the Peel region?**

It is exciting to work within the area that I grew up in, and to make a positive impact on its future.

**Q: In your opinion, what makes the Peel region so unique?**

The diversity of its subregions, in both its landscape and demographics.

**Q: How do you like to spend your spare time?**

I spend most of my time at the beach, swimming or stand-up paddleboarding. As well, my partner and I are currently renovating a camper van for future road trips around Australia. 🦋



# Farewell ...

The Peel Development Commission extends a warm farewell to two accomplished and powerhouse Board members, Michelle Sidebottom and Sue Daley.

Michelle Sidebottom served as Community Representative for a total of six years on the PDC Board from September 2018 to early December 2024, having been appointed as Deputy Chair in March 2024. Michelle's professional experience and valuable strategic advice to the Board on a range of matters, but primarily with a focus on tourism, has been instrumental in a number of projects and initiatives being funded and progressed through the Commission.

A graduate of Harvard University's 'Harvard Kennedy School — Leading Economic Growth Executive Program', Michelle consistently made significant contributions to the Board in the areas of hospitality and tourism, workforce development, Aboriginal tourism development and project management. Having run her own successful tourism businesses Breakaway Tourism Pty Ltd and Avocet Island Pty Ltd, she understood the needs of industry, how to work with various government bodies and was always professional and generous with her time.

Sue Daley served as Community Representative from December 2021 through to December 2024. She brought an energy and curiosity matched with extensive experience in project management within varied business environments. As a successful business owner herself specialising in residential and commercial property transformations and more recently, her new venture called Pocket Condos – Tiny Homes in WA, Sue was a passionate advocate for solution focused outcomes to WA's housing challenges. Sue's contributions to the Board focused on being an advocate for supporting local and also championing women in business.

We deeply appreciate both Michelle and Sue's commitment and hard work, and wish them all the best in their future endeavours. 🦋

# Q&A: Board profiles

## INTRODUCING

### BOB POND

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

**The Peel Development Commission is pleased to have Cr Bob Pond on the PDC Board as a Local Government Representative. Cr Pond's term commenced on 24 April 2024 and will run until 31 December 2026.**

Cr Pond has worked in water and land use planning in urban and rural setting for 31 years, 25 of those in the Peel region. He has contributed to the community with over 20 years with the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council and was elected to the City of Mandurah Council in October 2021. A Falcon resident since 1999, Cr Pond raised his family in Mandurah, and operates a successful bed and breakfast in Falcon with his partner through which he has gained significant insight into the effort required to operate a small business. Cr Pond has a Bachelor of Applied Science in Conservation and Park Management and a Post Grad Diploma of Science in Environmental Management.

#### **Q: How long has your family been in the Peel region and why did they come to the area?**

We moved here from South Australia in 1999 when a job opportunity in waterway management came up. I fell in love with the area immediately when I saw the Peel Harvey Estuary as it reminded me of a large shallow

bay I grew up next to in Canada, including going scooping for crabs! Coming here felt like coming home.

#### **Q: What was your most memorable board or corporate moment? Why?**

I can't really say about a single memorable moment. I see a series of small wins that lead to bigger things.

In 2001, after a couple of years of consideration we formed the PHCC to step into issues that fell between government activities. That led to preparing a management plan for the Peel Yalgorup Wetlands, raising the awareness and appreciation of their importance. That led to the PHCC being a nationally recognised community Natural Resource Management body. That led to increasing investment into protecting the region more than tenfold. I guess I see the journey more than a particular moment.

#### **Q: Can you share a favourite quote or motto that guides your leadership?**

There are two that come to mind that for me go hand in hand and have had a very strong influence on me professionally.

The first is from Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

The second is attributed to the Chinese philosopher Lao Tsu: "A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves".



#### **Q: What do you see for the overall future of the Peel region?**

I see a bright future for the region. We have a diverse natural resource base with good proximity to the larger market of Perth, and in terms of exports the much larger markets of Asia. We have a lifestyle to envy, and a strong, supportive community spirit. We need further diversification of the economy, but we have some very clever and innovative people to make that happen.

#### **Q: In your opinion, what makes the Peel region so unique?**

I think it is the available mix of urban, rural and natural environments in such close proximity to each other. Throw in the waterways and coastal offerings and we have a special place to live that is pretty rare.

#### **Q: What do you enjoy most about living in the Peel region?**

I love the relaxed lifestyle and the offerings that a popular tourist town provides. I love the fact that you can do a full day at work, and still spend some time recharging in a natural environment. And I really love that I live in a place where I know my neighbours and we look out for each other. It all makes for a rich and blessed life.


**INTRODUCING**
**MIKE WALMSLEY**
**LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
REPRESENTATIVE**

**The Peel Development Commission is pleased to have Cr Mike Walmsley on the PDC Board as a Local Government Representative. Cr Walmsley's term commenced on 24 April 2024 and will run until 31 December 2026.**

**Q: How long has your family been in the Peel region and why did they come to the area?**

On my father's side, James and Isabella Herron arrived as free immigrants from Ireland to Western Australia aboard the sailing ship Clara in 1853. Like many others, they dreamt of making a better life on the other side of the world as Ireland was still reeling from the 1840 Potato Famine. They took up land in the Murray District and worked particularly hard to lay foundations for the generations that followed. They leased land from the Sutton family 15 miles south of Mandurah and were industrious in running tree clearing operations off the Mandurah to Bunbury Road and jetty approach repairs. At this time, he also ran cattle and sold agricultural produce.

**Q: What was your most memorable board or corporate moment? Why?**

I have been involved on the board of Quambie Park in Waroona since 2003. We have had many memorable and interesting moments, but my most memorable is perhaps finding out we were successful in two separate grant applications to build nine new independent living units and a social inclusion hub. This was the culmination of many meetings with people of influence and telling our story. During my board tenure we have had the opportunity to expand our footprint in residential care and independent living arrangements

and the organisation now employs 108 people in different roles. It is a vital part of our community and we all share a sense of pride in what Quambie Park delivers to our region.

**Q: Can you share a favourite quote or motto that guides your leadership?**

Life is not about what you get, its about what you give.

**Q: What do you see for the overall future of the Peel region?**

The first part to this is that population growth will play a large part in what the Peel will become. It certainly has a huge attraction in the lifestyle it offers through its diverse geographical assets and moderate climate. Balancing the pressure of growth and economic development will be challenging and protecting our environment together with food production are vitally important considerations. This region has so many natural resources and assets that we can adapt to almost any pursuit imaginable. From primary industries to mining and tourism, this region is incredibly rich in opportunities that are on our state capital's doorstep. Guiding those advantages will require investment and vision. I believe the Peel region has a very important and positive future.


**Q: In your opinion, what makes the Peel region so unique?**

The uniqueness of the Peel is the diversity of its natural assets and its people. From fertile cropping land in Boddington through to the Jarrah forests of the Darling Scarp and the Swan Coastal plain. Water underpins a lot of what the Peel offers and protecting its quality and availability are issues for us all to contemplate. We take for granted the supply of water but increasing use and lowering supply will certainly be a challenge into the future. The



region has significant holdings of water for our state's population use and also many natural habitats on our rivers, lakes and estuary. All of these features hold different uses for industry, recreation, tourism and agriculture and some are showing signs of fatigue. Stewardship of all these water bodies including the impacts the Indian Ocean will begin to have over the coming years are part of the unique region we live in and will require significant attention moving forward.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about living in the Peel region?**

I enjoy the ability to be in different environments within a very short amount of time. As a farmer, I enjoy the land and livestock. Our primary producers deliver some of the best produce that you will find anywhere globally. I enjoy the connections through the region in our sporting culture and the opportunity in the many diverse offerings of entertainment and community pursuits. I very much appreciate the volunteers throughout the region who go above and beyond to help others and that many good people that I encounter have chosen to call this region home. I enjoy the open opportunity to anyone who wishes to roll their sleeves up and be determined to succeed. These foundations are fundamental in any community, but I believe the Peel offers more of these possibilities than any other region in WA. 

# Annual staff engagement workshop

**WORDS** | Peel Development Commission

**IMAGE** | Social Arts WA

**In October 2024, PDC staff convened for its annual staff engagement workshop with this year's workshop centering on Mandurah.**

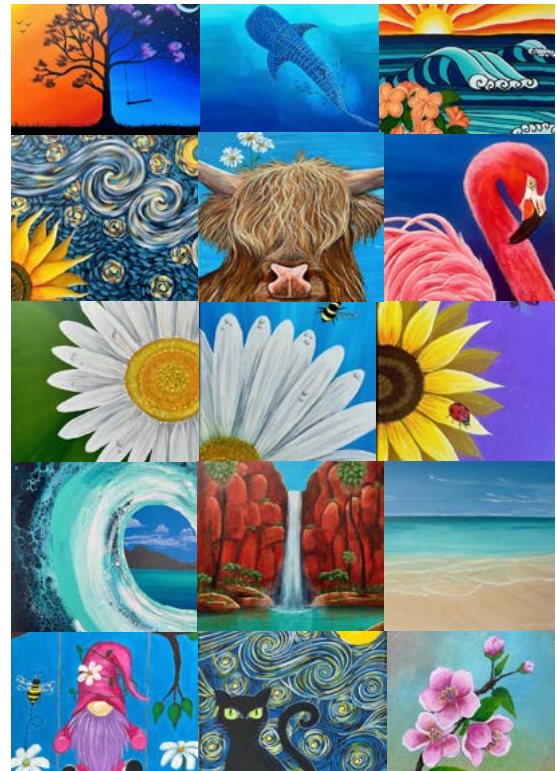
The workshop entailed detailed presentations from the City of Mandurah on their current projects, priorities and challenges along with an insightful assessment provided by the PHCC on the state of the Peel-Harvey estuaries and waterways.

Each year staff also participate in an annual staff engagement survey which looks at what the Commission is doing well; what areas can be improved and what processes or systems may need to change.

The team then had a site visit to see where the new Dawesville Community Centre is being built and finished the day off with a fun team building activity of painting whale sharks with the very inspiring and passionate art teacher from Social Arts WA.



The PDC team showcasing their finished paintings.



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