

# **Response to the WAPC's draft Regional Planning and Infrastructure Frameworks**

Submission from the RAC

**June 2014**



**For the better**

# Draft Regional Planning and Infrastructure Frameworks

Unprecedented population and employment growth is forecast for key regional centres in Western Australia (WA). Effective planning, guided by a comprehensive strategic framework, will be essential to encourage desirable patterns of urban growth and ensure the potential for the growth is not constrained. Transport plays a vital role in creating liveable and sustainable centres, and this needs to be reflected in planning for future growth.

## Introduction

The RAC welcomes the development of Regional Planning and Infrastructure Frameworks by the State Government to help guide the development of regional WA and thanks the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) for the opportunity to respond to the public consultation on the draft Regional Planning and Infrastructure Frameworks for the:

- » Great Southern Region;
- » Goldfield-Esperance Region;
- » Kimberley Region;
- » South West Region; and
- » Wheatbelt Region.

## About the RAC

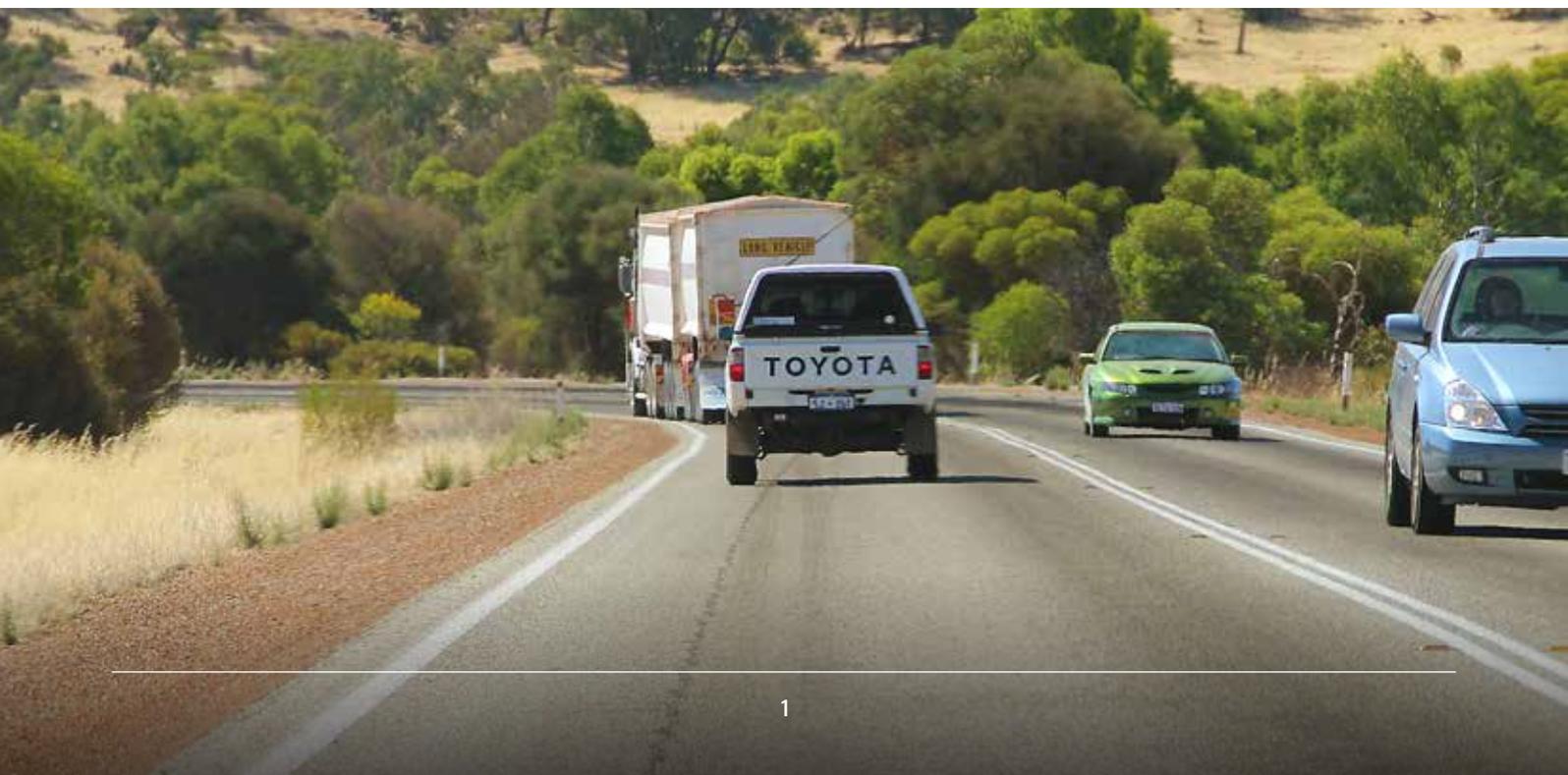
RAC WA represents the interests of more than 800,000 Western Australians, approximately 160,000 of whom live in regional WA, and is the leading advocate on the mobility issues and challenges facing our State. Drawing on our heritage, a key role

for the RAC is to act as a voice for our members and as a strong public advocate on the mobility issues which affect Western Australia (WA).

The RAC collaborates with Government and other organisations to ensure safe, accessible and sustainable mobility options are available for our members and the community.

The RAC aligns its activities with the following three themes:

- » **Safety** – A safe mobility system can be defined as a system that outperforms national and international safety benchmarks. It encompasses safer drivers in safer cars on safer roads.
- » **Accessibility** – To have a cost efficient, convenient and reliable commuter network is an essential part of personal mobility.
- » **Sustainability** – Sustainable mobility is broader than the environmental aspects of mobility; it encompasses the mobility needs of current and future generations.



## Context

WA is the most capital city-centric state in Australia. In 2012, the population of regional WA only accounted for 22 per cent of the total population of the State<sup>1</sup>. In comparison, 52 per cent of the population of Queensland resides outside of the capital, Brisbane, in the State's 11 regional centres<sup>2</sup>.

Whilst this will continue to be the case, significant population and employment growth is forecast for key regional centres. Between 2012 and 2026, the regional local government areas of the City of Albany, City of Bunbury and City of Greater Geraldton for example are expected to experience increases in population of up to 15 to 29 per cent (22%, 15% and 29% respectively)<sup>3</sup>.

With effective planning, guided by a comprehensive strategic framework similar to that which has been developed for metropolitan Perth and Peel, more desirable patterns of urban growth can be encouraged to support the forecast growth for regional centres.

It is understood that the draft Regional Planning and Infrastructure Frameworks, which are the subject of this submission, are intended to set out an agreed Government position on the future planning and infrastructure requirements for five planning regions, considering the growth projections and unique characteristics and challenges for each region. These Frameworks will therefore be of vital importance to guide the development of regional WA and, to ensure sustainable growth, it is essential that the transport challenges and needs of each region are given adequate consideration.

Transport is an enabler for growth but it can also be a catalyst for urban sprawl. It has implications not only for mobility and quality of life but also for the economic prosperity of Perth and our regional centres. A good transport system will be the foundation to facilitate and support sustainable growth of our regional centres and planning for the full range of mobility options will be essential.

The RAC recently launched the 'RAC Regional Transport Planning Initiative' (RAC-RTPI). The purpose of the RAC-RTPI is to better understand the transport and mobility challenges and priorities for our regional members, the broader community and key stakeholders, to help inform planning, infrastructure and service requirements over the short and longer-term.

As part of the RAC-RTPI we recently completed a survey of over 300 RAC members residing in the regional cities of Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton (referred to as the Regional Transport Survey). The survey highlighted that the car will remain an important mobility option for our regional members, but over the next 10 years there will be a growing desire and need for access to a greater range of options, in particular public transport and cycling.

## Our submission

Our submission focuses on those elements of the draft Regional Planning and Infrastructure Frameworks that directly, or indirectly, relate to transport and mobility within the respective regions.

It has been structured to provide general comments on the draft Frameworks collectively, followed by specific comments on each Framework.



<sup>1</sup>Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012). 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012).

<sup>3</sup>WAPC (2012). Western Australia Tomorrow Population Report No. 7. 2006 to 2026. January 2012.

## General comments on the draft frameworks

**Provision of public transport services:** In regional WA there are fewer public transport options and a greater range of services is required. Our 2013 Regional Transport Survey revealed that 26 per cent of respondents are to some degree dissatisfied with the public transport services in their city and a further 44 per cent were unable to comment on their level of satisfaction because they do not, or have never, used them. Poor network coverage, frequency, hours of operation and reliability were commonly given reasons for dissatisfaction with existing public transport services. Associated with the high level of dissatisfaction, there was strong support for improved regional (50 per cent) and local (49 per cent) public transport connections.



**Of respondents to the RAC's 2013 Regional Transport Survey would like to see the greatest priority being placed on public transport over the next 10 years.**

Whilst it is recognised that there are clear challenges in providing viable passenger transport services in regional areas, public transport allows people to interact, to work, to study and to play, all of which directly impact on health and wellbeing, the economy and the environment. Investment in public transport has been demonstrated to create jobs, and training and business opportunities for companies of all sizes, in all types of sectors.

It is essential for action to be taken to support the provision of a range of transport options in regional WA.

In our State Budget Submission for 2014-15, we called for State Government to investigate and implement new funding models that will support the introduction of services in regional centres.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 1** - appropriate planning initiatives be incorporated to demonstrate commitment to investigating and implementing new funding and operational models to improve the viability of regional services.

**Regional transport plans:** The draft Frameworks do not currently consider the adequacy of existing passenger transport networks, and enhancements required, to support the scale and distribution of growth for each region. However, a number of the Frameworks include a planning initiative to develop a passenger transport plan for the region. The development of transport plans which clearly identify the priority infrastructure and service

requirements (for all modes of transport) to facilitate growth, reflecting the differing functions / role of centres in each region based on the settlement hierarchy set out in the Frameworks and the needs of the community, is important. Effective integration of transport and land use will be vital to deliver the visions and objectives for these planning regions, as set out in the draft Frameworks.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 2** - in recognising the role of other modes of transport in supporting the vision and objectives set out in the draft Frameworks, the scope of the passenger transport plans should be expanded to consider all modes and the integration of transport and land use; and

**Recommendation 3** - all the Frameworks should include a planning initiative to develop a Transport Plan for the region (or sub-region plans as appropriate). The objectives and intended outcomes for these plans should also be made clear in the Frameworks.

**Role of walking and cycling:** For the most part, there needs to be greater recognition of the role of walking and cycling in contributing towards achievement of the visions and objectives set out in these draft Frameworks. Walking and cycling are important transport options now, and for the future. This is supported by the RAC's 2013 Regional Transport Survey where over one third of respondents indicated that they would like to see greater priority being placed on cycling over the next 10 years.

Encouraging and facilitating active modes of travel will help create more liveable, accessible and sustainable centres, and also help foster healthier and physically active communities. Decision-making around supporting growth in and around established centres in these regions should consider the role of active transport and this should be reflected in the planning initiatives and future directions set out in the draft Framework to ensure it is not overlooked.



It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 4** – more emphasis should be placed on the role of active modes of travel, through the incorporation of appropriate planning initiatives to provide guidance for the development of activity centres, and strategic infrastructure projects should be identified for inclusion when possible.

**Road safety:** As an issue affecting all modes of transport and road users, road safety is a key consideration when looking at the movement of people and goods around WA.

In 2013 WA's road fatality rate was still higher than the national rate. On average WA recorded one road death nearly every two days. Historically WA has been one of the worst performing States. Based on 2013 figures, 33 additional lives would need to be saved each year for WA to come into line with the 2013 national rate.



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AusRAP is a program of the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) and State and Territory motoring clubs, dedicated to saving lives through advocating safer road infrastructure. In WA, AusRAP, co-funded by the RAC, has examined 1,540 kilometres of State highway, awarding star ratings to the roads based on their level of safety. Sections of road are rated on a scale of 1 to 5-stars, with 1-star being the most dangerous rating and 5-star being the safest rating. The ratings assess the level of safety provided by the road's design, focusing on highway features which have an impact on the likelihood of a crash and its severity.

A Safer Roads Investment Plan (SRIP) is being developed which will quantify the level of investment required to potentially result in a reduction in deaths and serious injuries over the next 20 years.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 5** – appropriate planning initiatives and projects should be integrated within the Framework to address road safety issues at a strategic level and ensure it is embedded in processes, procedures and practices at all levels of Government in an effort to tackle road safety in the regions.

**Maintenance of existing assets:** As with providing new infrastructure, maintenance of the existing road network and other transport assets will be critical to continued growth of the regions and greater recognition of this is required in the Frameworks.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 6** – additional detail should be provided on how the existing road infrastructure will be maintained, including the incorporation of planning initiatives and projects as appropriate to guide funding decisions.

**Infrastructure projects, planning initiatives and future**

**direction tables:** In some cases these tables demonstrate the linkages between the projects / initiatives and State Planning Strategy (SPS) strategic directions; however, it would be helpful to understand how these are expected to contribute towards the vision and objectives / goals of the Framework.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 7** – the tables setting out the infrastructure projects, planning initiatives and future directions demonstrate the linkages with objectives / goals / positions / directions (as appropriate) of the Frameworks so it is more apparent how they will contribute to delivery of the Framework.

**Implementation:** Whilst the Frameworks identify planning and infrastructure initiatives, and committed projects, to support growth in the regions, the RAC is concerned that the information provided is not sufficient to guide Government funding decisions and give confidence to the private sector to encourage investment. Without indicative timeframes or priorities being assigned it is unclear when actions and projects will be required in order to support sustainable growth, and what priorities can reasonably be expected to be achieved in the region over the next 20 years.

The Frameworks highlight the issue of competing funding needs across the State and that the identification of projects should not be taken as a commitment for Government funding. Whilst it is understood that these are intended as strategic frameworks to provide the direction for future planning and infrastructure provision in these regions, and that funding may not have yet been secured for all, clarity is required on how projects will be appraised and prioritised for funding. Assigning priorities and indicative timeframes would aid informed decision-making by the Government and prioritisation of funding investment. As the Frameworks currently stand they provide a "wish-list" of initiatives and potential projects, with no pathway to implementation.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 8** – an appropriate level of priority and indicative timeframe be assigned to each of the planning and infrastructure initiatives / projects to guide funding and investment decisions, and ultimately implementation of planning and infrastructure requirements necessary to support the growth projected for these regions.

**Monitoring and review:** While a number of the draft Frameworks make reference to the fact that they are intended to be live documents and may be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant, particularly in relation to the projects identified, only the Frameworks for the South West and Wheatbelt regions specify a review period (the review periods for each differ). In order to understand the effectiveness of these Frameworks in meeting the objectives set, and guiding development of regional WA, it is essential that a commitment be made to monitoring and reporting on progress at defined intervals, and to undertake a review and refresh of the Frameworks themselves over time.

The draft Framework for the Kimberley Region, whilst not specifying a review period, does however include a commitment to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to allow the effectiveness of the initiatives to be assessed; this is supported but it would be preferable for indicators to be included in the Frameworks.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 9** – a consistent approach, and regime, for the monitoring and review of the suite of Frameworks be defined and that this is reflected in the final documents (this should ideally include the identification of KPIs, appropriate for the different regions).



## Comments on the draft Framework for the Great Southern Region

**Population and sustainable settlement:** The strategic direction and priorities for the region should reflect the role of transport in supporting this theme, particularly in helping to promote more vibrant and liveable communities and supporting a more compact urban form for key regional and sub-regional centres such as Albany.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 10** – an appropriate regional initiative be incorporated to recognise the contribution of transport to supporting the objective under 'population and sustainable settlement'.

**Transport network:** The objective for this theme, as set out in the draft Framework, is supported, as is the need to improve access to services and facilities in Albany, Katanning and Perth through provision of regular and affordable passenger transport. As discussed under general comments, consideration needs to be given to funding and operational models to improve the viability of such services (refer to *Recommendation 1*).

**Table A – Planning Initiatives:** Planning initiative A30 relates to implementation of the recommendations of the WA Freight Transport Network Plan which are of relevance to this region but it would be helpful if these recommendations were clearly identified.

Planning initiative A31, which relates to the preparation of a regional passenger transport plan that determines the adequacy of transport links based on the settlement hierarchy established, is supported. There would however be merit in placing greater emphasis on the role of walking and cycling in supporting a consolidated urban form.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 11** – the committed projects and anticipated directions from the WA Freight Transport Network Plan be cross-referenced in this table;

**Recommendation 12** – a planning initiative be incorporated, reflecting the role of active travel in supporting a consolidated urban form (this may involve expanding the scope of the regional passenger transport plan to consider transport more broadly).

## Comments on the draft Framework for the Goldfield-Esperance Region

This draft Framework is in two parts, Part A being Regional Strategic Planning and Part B being Regional Infrastructure Planning.

### Part A

**Transport and Infrastructure - 2.2.1 Road:** It is stated that 'regional road network planning, including freight and tourist network reviews, will help facilitate and identify future funding requirements for the enhancement of regional roads to support growth and development'; however, no further information is provided to provide strategic direction.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 13** - additional information be included about the 'freight and tourist network reviews' and appropriate implementation actions incorporated in the Framework.

**Transport and Infrastructure - 2.2.5 Public transport:** The challenge in providing viable passenger transport services in a car dependent region is mentioned but there are no clear planning initiatives to support the provision of a range of transport options associated with the development of activity centres identified in the hierarchy set out in the document. The strategic direction for Activity Centres includes a strategy to 'develop the region's settlements to be sustainable and liveable' yet the role of transport in supporting this is not apparent in the Framework. Consideration should also be given to the development of a transport plan, and in helping to

support the viability of public transport services alternative funding and operating modes should be investigated (refer to *Recommendation 1*).

**Transport and Infrastructure - 2.2.12 Opportunities:** The RAC is supportive of the opportunities that have been identified in relation to transport but these could benefit from further clarification and also clearer linkage to the implementation actions in Table 7. There is also no clear linkage between the strategies identified under strategic directions and the opportunities and implementation actions.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 14** - further clarification be provided around the opportunities for transport and the linkage between these and the implementation actions identified.

**Strategic directions:** There appears to be no strategic direction relating to transport, to enable comprehensive planning and to guide the local planning processes. The only reference to transport in the Strategic Directions section relates to the transport network plans being developed by the Department of Transport under the "Moving Freight" and "Moving People" themes. Whilst the WA Regional Freight Network Plan provides a strategic framework for the State, the Moving People Network Plan will be concerned with metropolitan Perth and as such will provide little direction for regional WA.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 15** - consideration be given to the transport-related planning and infrastructure requirements for this region specifically to help provide the strategic direction for transport.



## Part B

**Potential infrastructure projects:** Only 13 potential infrastructure projects have been identified as being required to support growth of this region over the next 20 years, nine of which are transport projects (seven of these have been previously identified in the WA Regional Freight Network Plan).

Whilst the document makes reference to the fact that this is not intended as 'a definitive list of all Goldfields-Esperance regional infrastructure requirements, rather it identifies those potential projects that may be the most important from the region's perspective to facilitate economic and population growth', further consideration should be given to the strategic infrastructure projects necessary to support the development of the activity centres. With the exception of freight, it is unclear from the draft Framework what the strategic priorities and directions are for transport more broadly to help guide more detailed planning to be undertaken at a local level.

The document also makes reference to the fact that other agencies and organisations are responsible for delivering the projects identified however, no agencies have been identified. This information is necessary to support implementation of the Framework.

In its current form it is also unclear whether funding is currently committed for any of these projects, when they are required by, their relative priorities or the relevance to the opportunities for transport identified in Part A.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 16** – appropriate strategic infrastructure projects be identified to facilitate the growth of the region over the next 20 years;

**Recommendation 17** – responsible agencies be identified within the Framework to aid implementation; and

**Recommendation 18** – committed projects be differentiated from potential projects.

## Comments on the draft Framework for the Kimberley Region

**Infrastructure projects:** The draft Framework states that the infrastructure projects identified are intended to provide direction to the private sector and ensure the sector has confidence to invest in the region<sup>4</sup>. However, without identified indicative timeframes and levels of priority being identified for projects it is uncertain when these projects would be required or delivered by (refer to *Recommendation 8*).

**Transport infrastructure:** The draft Framework recognises the importance of transport in facilitating economic growth and the need for an integrated, efficient and safe transport network serving the needs of the community and industry<sup>5</sup>, this is supported. The increasing pressures being placed on the road network due to the absence of a rail network is acknowledged in the Framework.

Whilst one public transport initiative has been included, which is to 'identify opportunities for public transport in line with settlement growth' this does not provide much strategic direction to guide public transport in the region over the next 25 years. As discussed under general comments, a commitment should be made to develop a transport plan for the region and the priorities and direction for this plan should be defined in the draft Framework (refer to *Recommendation 2 and 3*).

**Demand and capacity:** The draft Framework makes various references to the need to ensure transport capacity is sufficient to facilitate growth but there does not appear to be any data or analysis presented to demonstrate whether this will be the case. Sub-section 8.1.5 for instance highlights the need for access to demand data to assist service agencies with the ongoing requirements to undertake strategic infrastructure planning, and whilst this is supported, it is unclear whether the infrastructure projects already included in the draft Framework have been informed by analysis of demand and capacity data or through consultation only.

<sup>4</sup>Page vi  
<sup>5</sup>Page ix.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 19** – further detail be provided on how assessment of existing and future transport demand and capacity has influenced the planning initiatives and projects identified to support growth in these regions.

**Rail:** Whilst it is accepted that there may not be sufficient demand, or sufficient funding, in the short-term to justify the construction of a freight rail network the draft Framework states that there 'may come a time in the future when it may be required (most likely to occur in the mid to long term)<sup>6</sup>. Going forward it will be important to undertake a detailed assessment to determine if, or when, such a network would be required and the key locations to be served.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 20** – further detail be provided around the potential requirements for the freight rail network.

**Public transport:** It is considered that the draft Framework lacks detail on the key challenges and future needs in relation to passenger transport in the region. More detail would be helpful to guide each level of Government as to the priorities for passenger transport over the next 25 years. Under 'Future capacity requirements' it is acknowledged that the private sector is unlikely to meet demand for the expansion of capacity in regional and sub-regional centres, at least in the short term, without incentives. For this reason, the preparation of a transport plan and investigation of alternative funding and operational models will be key (refer to *Recommendation 1, 2 and 3*).

**Infrastructure Projects and Planning Initiative Tables:** It is considered that 'Table 8.6 Planning initiatives – transport infrastructure' could benefit from the inclusion of additional information to aid implementation of the Framework.

For example:

- » initiative 8a, which relates to sharing of data to allow accurate demand assessments to enable forward planning, should also be the responsibility of the PTA;
- » the recommendations of the Regional Freight Network Review and State Aviation Strategy which are of relevance to this region should be identified under initiative 8c;
- » initiative 8h, which is to investigate the viability of regular intra-regional, inter-state and international passenger services, should be expanded upon to ensure that a commitment is made to undertaking a study to investigate these issues and identify appropriate initiatives and projects to provide the necessary strategic direction.

Also, Table 8.6 demonstrates the linkages between the projects / initiatives and State Planning Strategy (SPS) strategic directions, it would be helpful to understand how these contribute towards the vision and goals of the Framework and the same should be provided for the infrastructure projects tables (refer to *Recommendation 7*). The text states that the infrastructure projects tables set out the short, medium and long term projects that have been identified for the region, but the projects have not been allocated such indicative timeframes so it is unclear which is which (refer to *Recommendation 8*).

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 21** – additional detail be included to provide strategic direction around the planning initiatives in Table 8.6; and

**Recommendation 22** – relevant or lead agencies be identified in the infrastructure project and planning initiative tables to make it clear which agencies are responsible for progressing each project / initiative.



## Comments on the draft Framework for the South West Region

This document provides a Regional Framework, along with frameworks for the three sub-regions.

**Vision and themes:** The vision for this region recognises that, whilst economic growth is essential, there is a need to balance this with continued wellbeing of the community. Transport is vital to achieving this and it is promising to see that 'Transport and Infrastructure' is clearly identified as one of the eight key themes to deliver the vision. Transport is also integral to the themes of 'Building Sustainable Communities', 'Building Inclusive Communities' and 'Economy and Employment', although it does not currently feature in the latter. Transport also features in the sub-regional frameworks.

**Building sustainable / inclusive communities:** The role of public transport, walking and cycling in helping to build sustainable and inclusive communities is recognised in the WAPC's positions on these two key themes.

In 'building sustainable communities', the WAPC will support strategies and plans that seek to concentrate retail, employment, recreational and other services in activity centres that can be made accessible by public transport to reduce car dependency and encourage travel by more sustainable modes. Likewise, for 'building inclusive communities' the WAPC will support strategies and plans that provide sustainable, well-designed and liveable neighbourhoods that ensure safe and convenient access to a range of facilities and services for all residents.

However, with the exception of a Planning Initiative around urban consolidation there appears to be no committed projects, anticipated directions or planning initiatives identified to support these positions.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 23** - further consideration be given to appropriate planning initiatives and anticipated directions that will help to improve public transport access to activity centres and encourage well-designed and liveable neighbourhoods.

**Transport and infrastructure:** The RAC is supportive of the WAPC's position, particularly around:

- » improved connectivity between Bunbury and Perth and between settlements in the region (by road and rail);
- » locating facilities that serve the region / sub-region in regional and activity centres which are accessible by a range of transport options;
- » promoting sustainable integration of land use and transport planning; and
- » monitoring the feasibility of new or alternative modes of transport such as light rail.

However, in the absence of appropriate planning initiatives it is unclear how some of these will be encouraged. We would also like to see a commitment to investigating new funding and operational modes for public transport to improve viability of services and also the incorporation of Planning Initiatives to support these WAPC positions.

The need for timely provision of new infrastructure and maintenance of existing assets is recognised as being critical to the region's continued growth but, as discussed under general comments, without identifying the relative priority of projects and providing detail around maintenance it is unclear how this will be supported (refer to Recommendation 6 and 8).

**Bunbury and Warren-Blackwood sub-regional frameworks:**

Whilst the need for an efficient public transport network to cater for increasing demands associated with the forecast population growth is acknowledged, there is no mention of the need for strategic walking and cycling networks to support growth of these centres (refer to Recommendation 4).

**Infrastructure projects and planning initiative tables:**

Despite the priority given to providing effective public transport in the Bunbury and Warren-Blackwood sub-regions, this has not been reflected in Table 2 (planning initiatives) or 4 (infrastructure initiatives) because 'this issue requires further investigation before considering it for inclusion'. There should be a commitment to investigating options to improve multi-modal transport accessibility for key centres to ensure this is progressed by the responsible authorities (this should ideally include the development of a transport plan - refer to Recommendation 3).

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 24** - appropriate Planning Initiatives be incorporated in Table 2 around public transport and walking and cycling to adequately recognise the importance of providing for a range of transport options, particularly in supporting the development of highly accessible activity centres.



## Comments on the draft Framework for the Wheatbelt Region

**Liveable communities:** The contribution of transport to supporting the objectives identified under liveable communities is alluded to in the planning approach through the recognition that providing access to transport options (including road, rail, bus and aviation) is necessary to provide a high level of amenity and employment opportunities in and around established centres. Whilst this is supported, the role of walking and cycling in helping to create more liveable and better connected centres should be recognised.

'Initiatives for liveable communities' includes the development of a range of sub-regional planning strategies and also a passenger transport strategy for the Wheatbelt to provide improved inter and intra-regional access. These two initiatives are supported however, whilst some additional detail is provided in Appendix 1 on the former there is no additional detail in relation to the objectives and intended outcomes for the latter. In recognising the role of other modes of transport, it is suggested that the scope of the strategy be expanded (refer to *Recommendation 2 and 3*).

**Vibrant economy - Transport network:** In general, there appears to be a strong focus on freight, and whilst efficient and sustainable freight movements will be essential to supporting a vibrant economy, movement of people (which is a strategic direction in the State Planning Strategy) will also be key to improving access to jobs, encouraging private investment through creating business opportunities for companies of all sizes, in all types of sectors.

With regards to passenger transport, this sub-section is very brief and provides no context on the key issues and future direction in relation to passenger transport in the region. Whilst included under 'vibrant economy', no clear linkages appear to have been made with the objectives and the summary presented would appear to be more relevant to supporting the objectives of 'liveable communities'. There is also no cross-reference to the Passenger Transport Strategy initiative included under liveable communities.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 25** - stronger emphasis be placed on the movement of people, as well as freight, in the general commentary, planning approach and initiatives (for vibrant economy and liveable communities as appropriate) - this should include clear directions for transport in the region to guide the 'passenger transport strategy' (or regional transport strategy if the scope is expanded);

**Recommendation 26** - the 'passenger transport strategy' (or integrated transport plan - refer to *Recommendation 2 and 3*) should be cross-referenced under vibrant economy and this strategy should consider options to maximise the contribution of transport to both the objectives under vibrant economy and liveable communities.

**Road Safety:** In 2013, the fatality rate in the Wheatbelt region was more than four times the State average and more than double the fatality rate of nearby regions.

A review commissioned by the RAC found there is no single issue that clearly differentiates the Wheatbelt from nearby neighbours or any other WA regions. This is why a collaborative and integrated approach must be taken at all levels to make a significant contribution to improving the road safety record in the Wheatbelt. The RAC believes that significant investment is required to support a collaborative and integrated approach and it must focus on a range of initiatives. From an infrastructure perspective this would include accelerating road maintenance and treatment programs. In line with the Safe System approach, road safety should be an integral part of the planning, design, implementation and operational of our transport networks.

As part of the AusRAP program a SRIP will be developed to quantify the level of investment required to potentially result in a reduction in deaths and serious injuries over the next 20 years for the Wheatbelt region specifically.

Road safety should be considered in the Framework (refer to *Recommendation 5*).

**Implementation:** The draft Framework proposes bi-annual monitoring and potentially reprioritisation of implementation items. However, implementation items have not been prioritised in the draft Framework (refer to *Recommendation 8*).

**Appendix 5 - SWOT analysis for the Wheatbelt:** Transport-related issues do not feature in the SWOT analysis. The key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (e.g. the limitations of existing public transport services, poor road safety record, the role of transport as an enabler to economic growth and creation of liveable communities, etc.) should be identified and fed through into the objectives, initiatives and projects as appropriate.

It is recommended that:

**Recommendation 27** - consideration be given to transport within the SWOT analysis and that the issues are reflected in the Framework.

**A submission by the RAC.**

Advocacy and Member Benefits  
Royal Automobile Club of WA (Inc.)  
832 Wellington Street,  
West Perth, WA 6005

RAC/04

For further information please  
contact [advocacy@rac.com.au](mailto:advocacy@rac.com.au)



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