



Department of
**Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

Mid West Outdoor Recreation Strategy

2018 – 2021

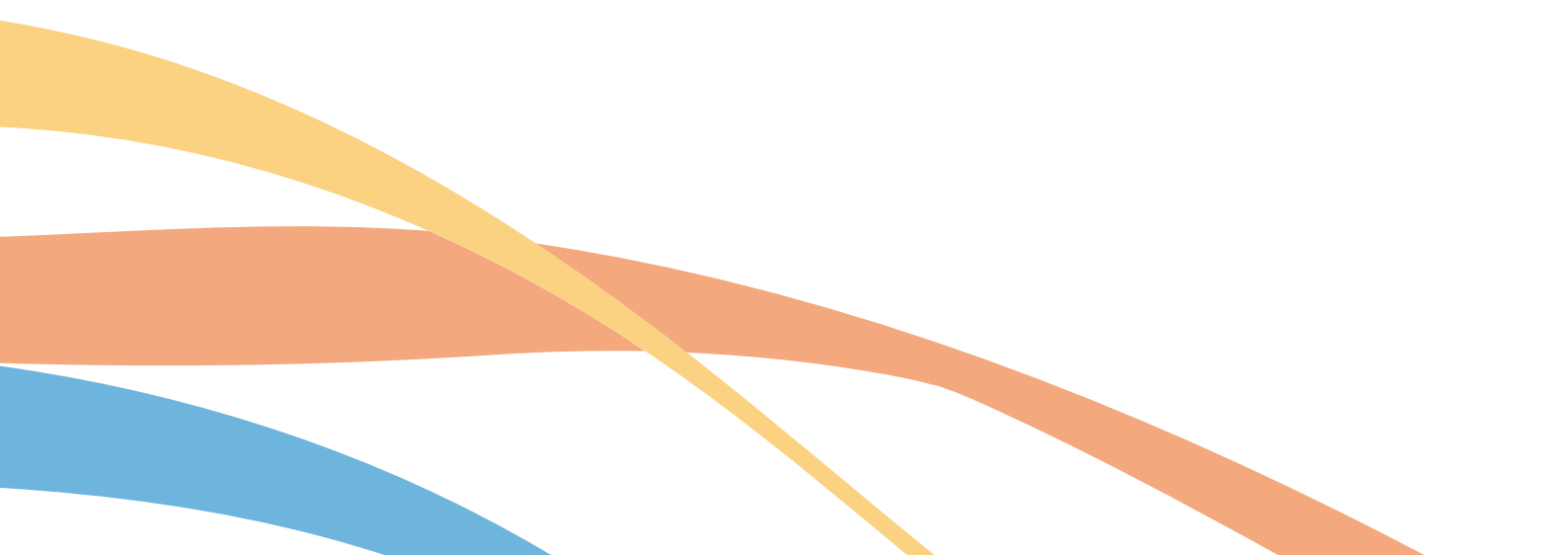
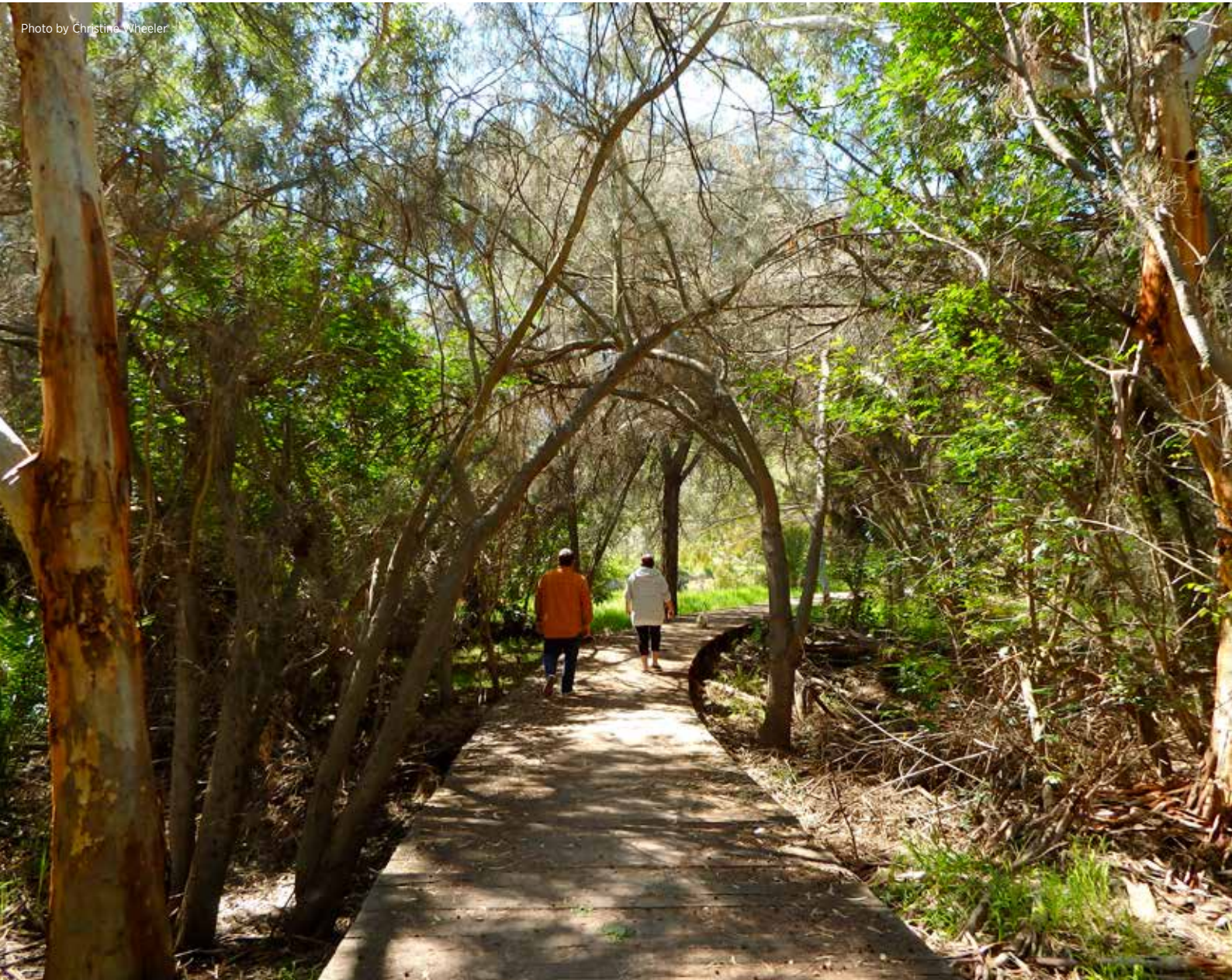




Photo by Christine Wheeler



Photo by Rebecca Roffman



Mid West Outdoor Recreation Strategy

2018 – 2021

**Department of Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries**

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Introduction

The Mid West region of Western Australia has a diverse range of natural environments which lends itself to a range of outdoor recreation activities using the ocean, rivers, bushland, cliffs and gorges. The diverse coastal section of the Mid West provides opportunities for water-based recreation pursuits such as surfing, paddle boarding, kayaking, water skiing, diving, snorkelling and fishing. The strong winds make the Mid West one of the best places in the world for windsurfing and kite surfing. For those who prefer land-based activities there are a variety of trails for walkers, runners, mountain bikers and horse riders. Camping is very popular and during the wildflower season people visit a range of locations throughout the region in large numbers.

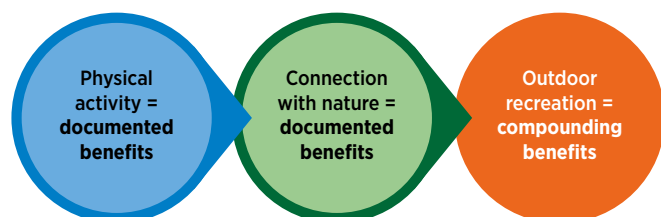


Figure 1: Compounding benefits of outdoor recreation

Urban-based lifestyles have revitalised interest in being active outdoors and returning to the natural environment.

The flexibility of involvement in unstructured outdoor activities such as bush walking and mountain biking is appealing to an increasingly time-poor community. At the same time, there's a desire for greater adventure and alternate sports and recreational pursuits with a thrill-seeking component, particularly among younger people (Strategic Direction for the Sport and Recreation Industry 2016 – 2020).

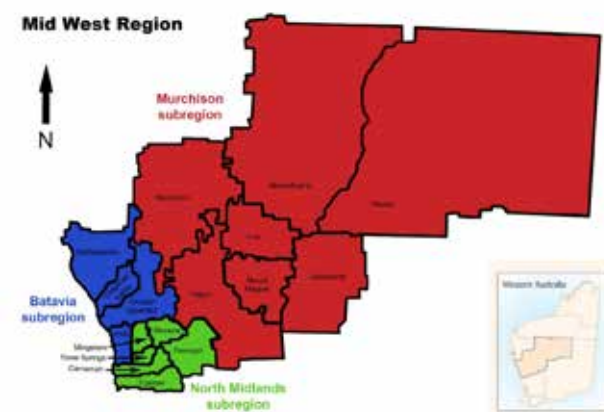
The strong sporting culture in the Mid West means there are many clubs and associations with skilled volunteers and in some cases paid staff. On the other hand, the unstructured nature of outdoor recreation means that the development of this industry is driven by a small

number of organisations or in some cases local government. This strategy will help bring those groups together and determine a direction for the development of outdoor recreation.

Outdoor recreation contributes to the health and wellbeing of the community by compounding the benefits of physical activity and the connection to nature. Benefits include better mental health, social interaction and stronger communities, improved education outcomes, environmental stewardship and economic development through stimulation of regional tourism.

The Mid West Region

The Mid West region is one of nine regions in Western Australia, spanning around 478,000km² or almost one fifth of the State's landmass. It extends around 340km along the coast from Green Head (south) to Kalbarri (north) and around 1000km east to Wiluna in the Gibson Desert. It houses around 58,000 people shared across 17 local government areas, loosely grouped into three distinct subregions as below.



Purpose of this strategy – More people, More active, Outdoors

The purpose of Mid West Outdoor Recreation Strategy is to lead the development of outdoor recreation opportunities in the Mid West region, harness local resources and collaborate with multiple sectors to develop outdoor recreation to achieve local social, economic, educational, environmental and health benefits.

How was this strategy developed?

The strategy was developed through consultation with stakeholders from State and local government, industry bodies, recreation club and individuals. These stakeholders had the opportunity to contribute through several means.

Initially, surveys were sent to all stakeholders to gather initial data on what outdoor recreation activities currently exist, who is responsible for providing outdoor recreation opportunities and what are some opportunities to develop outdoor recreation in the Mid West region.

A facilitated workshop was held with all stakeholders. This workshop built on the findings of the survey and helped build the strategy framework. Attendees at the workshop were invited to participate in the Mid West Outdoor Recreation Strategy Working Group which was given the task of:

- Drafting and reviewing the strategy.
- Identifying priority projects and collaborative partnerships.
- Developing action plans to achieve agreed outcomes.

Related strategies, policies and initiatives

This strategy has been written with the intent to align outdoor recreation with a number of planning documents that have been developed at a Mid West regional level and contribute to the successful implementation and achievement of outcomes in these plans.

Several statewide strategies and frameworks have also been considered so that any actions agreed to are in line with the overall objective for the State.

Mid West Regional Planning Documents

- Mid West Regional Blueprint
- Mid West Tourism Development Strategy
- Mid West Investment Plan 2011 – 2021
- Growing Greater Geraldton: A Growth Plan
- Geraldton 2050 Cycling Strategy

Statewide Strategies

- Strategic Directions for Western Australia Sport and Recreation Industry 2016 – 2020 (SD6)
- Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint 2017 – 2021
- Western Australian Bicycling Network Plan 2014 – 2031 (Department of Transport)
- WestCycle Strategic Framework for Cycling in Western Australia – Our Bike Path 2014 – 2020

What is outdoor recreation?

Outdoor recreation involves physical activities that are done outdoors, usually in a natural or nature-based environment. Outdoor recreation often involves a personal challenge which leads to satisfaction, enjoyment and improved wellbeing. This could be as simple as going on a bush walk, or as challenging as completing a multi-day trek or mountain bike ride. There's also a trend towards adventure sports with a thrill-seeking component such as kiteboarding or rock climbing.

While there are many outdoor recreation providers and organisations offering structured recreation opportunities, outdoor recreation can generally be done at any time that suits the participant. Unlike sport there's not a primary focus on competitive outcomes, however it's recognised that some activities, particularly those like trail running, mountain biking and paddling are often included in adventure events, and cross over from recreation to competitive sport.

Activities such as road cycling and skateboarding are not usually considered within outdoor recreation plans as they are not always conducted in environments that could be described as natural or nature-based. However, activities like these are considered within this strategy when they are done outdoors, include elements of risk, people can participate at a time that suits them and they are primarily conducted in a non-competitive environment.

Four-wheel driving and camping are also considered in this strategy as it's recognised that these activities often lead to people being active in the outdoors. For example, people may drive off-road to a specific place to bush walk or camp overnight as part of an expedition or spend time at a location that provides outdoor recreation opportunities.



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Benefits of outdoor recreation

An extensive review of published research underpins this strategy. A summary of the five key benefits and outcomes associated with participation in outdoor recreation is presented below (Table 1).

Key Benefits	Focus Areas	Outcomes
Personal development, challenge and enjoyment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building resilience • Fostering spirit and identity • Changing lives of young people at risk • Encouraging challenge and risk taking 	<p>Outdoor adventure experiences help develop resilience, leadership, risk management, problem solving skills and self-reliance, leading to people being better equipped to cope with the daily stresses of modern life.</p>
Improved health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and mental health benefits • Avoided healthcare costs • Social cohesion and inclusion 	<p>Physical inactivity is a recognised leading cause of ill health and a large associated health, social and economic burden.</p> <p>Research shows that chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and depression respond well to time spent being physically active in the outdoors.</p> <p>Active, self-reliant people are less susceptible to depression, anxiety and anti-social behaviour.</p>
Outdoor learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor literacy • Outdoor education 	<p>In the same way that participation in physical activity can assist with developing physical confidence and fundamental movement skills (physical literacy), participation in outdoor activities can assist to develop confidence and competence (outdoor literacy).</p> <p>Outdoor education activities can develop outdoor knowledge and activity skills and help foster positive character traits such as self-confidence and leadership skills.</p>
Connection to nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting back to nature • Volunteering • Environmental stewardship 	<p>Contact with nature has restorative properties, fostering an individual's feelings of vitality, alertness, focus and resurgence of energy.</p> <p>Participation in nature-based outdoor activities contributes towards developing greater environmental awareness and stewardship.</p>
Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Investment in recreational facilities • Pathways to employment 	<p>Viewing participation in outdoor recreation as simply an individual leisure or lifestyle choice can obscure its economic importance.</p> <p>Outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism can make a significant contribution to local economies through construction of recreational infrastructure, visitor expenditure and ongoing employment.</p>

Table 1: Benefits of participation in outdoor recreation.

Promoting participation in outdoor recreation in Western Australia

Consultation with the outdoor recreation community identified four fundamental objectives for promoting participation in Western Australia (Figure 2).

These objectives – valuing, encouraging, enabling and developing – provide the structure for identification of priority projects and opportunities for potential partnerships in the Mid West.



Figure 2: Fundamental objectives for promoting participation in outdoor recreation.

Priority projects

To achieve More People, More Active, Outdoors we need to build on the strengths of outdoor recreation in the Mid West region, identify gaps that exist and ensure outdoor recreation is well planned for at a regional level.

Five priority projects have been identified to help achieve the objectives of this strategy. In no particular order, these projects are:

1. Pathways to Participation
2. Trails Development
3. Wind and Water
4. Cycle-Friendly Communities
5. Outdoor Recreation Events

The following sections describe each priority project and sets out the:

1. Objective
2. Current situation (Where are we now?)
3. Agreed direction (Where do we want to be?)
4. Strategic actions (How do we plan to get there?)
5. Implementation schedule



Pathways to participation

Objective

Raise the profile of outdoor recreation and increase the number of quality opportunities for people at all life stages and abilities to be physically active in the outdoors.

Current Situation

There's a vast array of opportunities to participate in outdoor recreation in the Mid West, however, to maximise the benefits of outdoor recreation, strategies are required to introduce people to the outdoors and encourage continued participation to achieve More People, More Active, Outdoors.

One of the great attractions to outdoor recreation is that it's generally unstructured and people can participate at a time and place that suits them. Clubs, community groups and commercial operators however, can play a role in introducing people to outdoor recreation and while in the Mid West there are some of these groups doing an excellent job, there's scope for more to be delivered.

Figure 1 outlines the broad participation spectrum and diverse types of outdoor recreation experiences on offer. These can be entry points to outdoor recreation or looked at as different ability levels. This spectrum should be considered when planning to provide participation opportunities.

Participation spectrum			Setting
Outdoor aware	Virtual or visual	On-screen viewing and/or spectating	Urban parks and local green spaces: easily accessible and highly developed
	Incidental	Spending time in green spaces at home and en route	
	Outdoor play	Play and outdoor recreation in urban and neighbourhood parks	
Outdoor active	Managed outdoor recreation	Participation in low-risk outdoor activities in managed environments	National and regional parks, accessible nature reserves, parks and campsites with limited development
	Adventure recreation	Participation in more challenging activities and extended visits to natural environments	
	Outdoor immersion	Multi-day activity and/or overnight camping in natural environments	
Outdoor adventure	Wilderness experience	Self-sufficient multi-day experience in remote locations	Wilderness locations: remote with little development
	Extreme adventure	Life affirming, life changing challenge in extreme conditions	

Research shows that being active outdoors at an early age increases the chances of continuing participation throughout a person's life stages¹. In the early childhood years children are reliant on their parents and/or childcare centres to introduce them to activities. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) have developed National Quality Standards which ensure healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in to the program for children and that outdoor spaces in natural environments and designed to engage children in quality experiences.

In the school setting, education providers introduce children to outdoor education and outdoor learning which can help develop an interest in outdoor recreation. Some schools in the Mid West have nature playgrounds to encourage students to play in a more natural environment. Schools can utilise Nature Play WA who provide resources for schools to encourage and build the capacity of teachers to use the outdoors in the school curriculum.

Outdoor recreation is commonly being used as a tool in intervention programs for young people at risk. PCYC and the City of Greater Geraldton have conducted successful programs to engage at risk youth and provide them with a range of benefits. Research has shown that individuals participating in an outdoor recreation activity can benefit through increased health, wellbeing, learning and interpersonal and life skills.²

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- 1 Sport England (2015). Getting Active Outdoors: A study of demography, motivation, participation and provision in outdoor sport and recreation in England. Available from <https://www.sportengland.org/media/3275/outdoors-participation-report-v2-lr-spreads.pdf>
- 2 School of Population and Global Health, The University of Western Australia. Breaking the Cycle: Mountain biking as a way of engaging at-risk and disengaged youth.



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Agreed Direction

Simply, we want More People, More Active, Outdoors. By encouraging more people to participate in outdoor recreation the whole community will become healthier, more educated, more resilient, more cohesive, more inclusive and more environmentally aware.

This means that we will have:

- People at all stages of their life, from early childhood to seniors, being physically active in the outdoors.
- Families recreating together in the outdoors.
- Schools and early childhood centres introducing young children to outdoor recreation.
- Access to places and spaces across the participation spectrum.
- Outdoor recreation being used to engage youth at risk in physical activity.

To achieve this, organisations such as clubs and commercial entities will need to have the capacity to deliver outdoor recreation programs across the participation spectrum to encourage participation.

Strategic Actions

1. Advocate the value of outdoor recreation and the benefits of participation.
2. Encourage schools and early childhood centres to offer school-based outdoor recreation programs.
3. Encourage and promote organisations that develop outdoor recreation programs which have physical and mental health benefits.
4. Work with land managers at local and State level to develop infrastructure and provide access to places and spaces to enable outdoor recreation activities that meet the demands of diverse user groups.
5. Develop the capacity of local community groups and enable them to provide outdoor recreation pathways for diverse groups across the participation spectrum.
6. Encourage the outdoor recreation industry to value environmental sustainability practices and embed environmental stewardship into people and programs.



Implementations Schedule: Pathways to Participation

Description / Method	Roles and Responsibilities	Timing and Sequence	Performance Indicators
Advocate the value of outdoor recreation and the benefits from participation.			
<p>Work with all sectors to ensure they are promoting outdoor recreation in their industry as well as its benefits</p> <p>Sectors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Education • Environmental Protection • Commerce and industry • Tourism 	<p>Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) to lead.</p> <p>All sectors to advocate within their industry</p> <p>Mid West Chamber Commerce and Industry (MWCCI)</p> <p>Mid West Regional Education Office</p> <p>Population Health (WACHS)</p> <p>Parks and Wildlife Service</p>	<p>Start with Outdoors October in 2018</p>	<p>Each of the sectors are engaged in promoting outdoor recreation</p>
<p>Use national and state awareness days to promote and encourage participation.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoors October • Ride to Work Day • Ride to school • Walk to school • Bike Week 			<p>Number of initiatives developed around awareness days</p>
Encourage schools and early childhood centres to develop school-based outdoor recreation programs.			
<p>Provide information, resources and training to schools which increases the capacity of schools to deliver outdoor recreation programs.</p>	<p>DLGSC to partner with Mid West Regional Education Office</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Number of training opportunities delivered to schools across the Mid West</p>
<p>Investigate what schools are currently doing regarding outdoor recreation and identify good examples to promote and gauge interest in developing new opportunities.</p>	<p>Mid West Regional Education Office to conduct audit</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Increased number of schools delivering Outdoor Recreation related programs</p>
Encourage and promote organisations that develop outdoor recreation programs which have physical and mental health benefits.			
<p>Develop new and existing health promotion programs which involve outdoor recreation.</p>	<p>DLGSC to partner with Population Health (WACHS) to identify and coordinate potential programs</p>	<p>2018 – 19</p>	<p>Participation programs are developed and evaluated</p>

Description / Method	Roles and Responsibilities	Timing and Sequence	Performance Indicators
Support new and existing community outdoor recreation programs to ensure health messages are delivered.	DLGSC and Population Health (WACHS) to partner with community groups	Identify groups in 2018 Ongoing	Number of groups who deliver health messages Number of partnerships developed with community groups and health
Work with land managers at local and state level to develop infrastructure and provide access to places and spaces to enable outdoor recreation activities that meet the demands of diverse user groups.			
Provide consultation with local and State Government in relation to planning of parks and recreation areas, eg CGG Parks plan.	DLGSC to provide expertise Parks and Wildlife Service	Ongoing	Number of plans developed and implemented
New opportunities for outdoor recreation places and spaces are explored. For example, Moresby Ranges, Parks and Wildlife Service Rangeland Parks.	DLGSC to consult with local government and Parks and Wildlife Service	Ongoing	New opportunity explored / created
Advocate for additional funding for infrastructure including federal, state, and other funding sources	DLGSC to communicate with funding partners	As required	Number of projects receiving funding
Develop the capacity of local community groups and enable them to provide outdoor recreation pathways for diverse groups across the participation spectrum.			
Work with groups to identify and deliver training needs through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops from expert presenters Providing funding for accredited courses 	DLGSC to lead	Ongoing	Number of training opportunities made available across the Mid West
Encourage the outdoor recreation industry to value environmental sustainability practices and embed environmental stewardship in to programs and within participants.			
Develop ways that programs, user groups, and individual participants can protect the natural environment.	NACC to provide advice to clubs and programs to implement environmental protection initiatives.	Ongoing	Number of groups / programs who implement environmental protection initiatives

Trails development

Objective

To develop an active network of trails in the Mid West region that meets the demand of local users and promotes the region as a tourist destination.

Current Situation

The Western Australian Strategic Trails Blueprint provides evidence that the provision of trails leads to multiple health, lifestyle, social, environmental and economic benefits for communities through:

- Encouraging more frequent outdoor physical activity leading to improved physical and mental wellbeing and a reduction in lifestyle diseases and associated medical costs.
- Improved lifestyle due to opportunities for outdoor recreation by individuals, groups, education and community organisations.
- Providing low-cost facilities for recreation accessible to many different groups in the community.
- Improved awareness and appreciation of the natural environment and support for its conservation and protection.
- Economic benefits from employment and business opportunities in trail development, management, maintenance, events and supporting products and services.
- Tourism growth to trail destinations with resulting economic stimulus of local economies.
- Trails adding to the value of nearby properties.
- Protection and showcasing of natural, cultural and historic areas by providing for sustainable access routes.
- Improved sustainability of local communities by making them more attractive places to live.
- Opportunities for social interaction and development of community identity through participation in trail activities, maintenance and conservation.

The Mid West has many trails however there is scope to increase the network and improve the standard and promotion of the existing trails. The Green Head 3 Bays Trail and the Chapman River Mountain Bike Trail have recently received funding for further development and improvement.

There has been much discussion over many years about developing the rails trails in Geraldton as well as from Geraldton to Nabawa and Northampton. Utilising rail corridors for trails has proven to be successful all over the world.

The Murchison region has some significant geological features and the interest in geotourism could provide opportunities to develop walk trails. Similarly, in the North Midlands there are some prominent features such as lakes, rivers and wildflowers.

The Kalbarri National Park has some of the most spectacular trails in the State. These trails include iconic walks such as Nature's Window and other gorge walks and the coastal gorge walks. On the drive between Northampton and Kalbarri the Pink Lakes also provide opportunities and these are becoming very popular, especially with Asian tourists.



Photo: © Tourism Western Australia



Photo by Dragonfly Media

Agreed Direction

Ultimately, we want to develop a trails network in the Mid West region that meets the demands of local users but that will also promote the region and attract visitors. These trails networks will allow access to the region's attractions as well as access to local amenities such as shops, schools, beaches and parks.

To achieve this, all stakeholders will need to understand and value trails for their social, environmental and economic benefits so we can work together to develop trails infrastructure that caters for residents and tourists who want to explore the region while walking, cycling, riding, paddling, diving and snorkelling.

Strategic Actions

1. Develop a Mid West Trails Masterplan.
2. Develop capacity and capability of trails stakeholders to provide safe and enjoyable trails that meet the demands of diverse user groups and promote environmental protection messages.
3. Encourage the use of trails through promotion and providing unique attractions.

Implementation Schedule: Trails Development

Description / Method	Roles and Responsibilities	Timing and Sequence	Performance Indicators																					
Develop a Mid West Trails Masterplan																								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Mid West Trails Masterplan will develop an inventory of current trails, identify future trails opportunities and prioritise investment into trails. 	DLGSC to lead and partner with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local governments Parks and Wildlife Service Mid West Development Commission (MWDC) Progress Midwest NACC MWSF 	Project scope to be developed by end of 2018 Masterplan developed in 2019	Masterplan developed Funding sourced																					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an advisory group to drive the development of the Trails Master Plan 				Develop capacity and capability of trails stakeholders to provide safe and enjoyable trails that meet the demands of diverse user groups and promote environmental protection messages				Trails management plans to be developed to ensure continued investment into the maintenance of trails.	DLGSC to work with local governments	Major trails to have management plans by 2021	All significant trails have management plans	Deliver workshops to ensure trail managers and user groups are educated in trails planning, construction and maintenance.	DLGSC to lead	Workshops to begin in 2019 in line with trails masterplan	Regular trails workshops are conducted	Encourage the use of trails through promotion and providing unique attractions				Ensure trails are well promoted on websites such as Trails WA, visitors' centres and local government pages.	DLGSC Trails WA LGs and respective visitors' centres Parks and Wildlife Service	Completed by 2020	Details of significant trails can be found easily online	Develop innovative products that encourage trail use.
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Develop innovative products that encourage trail use.	DLGSC to lead with trails managers	Included in masterplan	New innovations are utilised in trails																					

What are we talking about?

- Kiteboarding
- Windsurfing
- Stand up paddle boarding
- Surfing
- Kayaking
- Sailing

Wind and water

Objective

Develop and promote the Mid West region as one of the premier Wind and Water locations in the world.

Current Situation

The Mid West coast is well known for its consistent summer winds which makes it one of the best places in the world for windsurfing and kiteboarding. During the summer months, windsurfers and kiteboarders come from far and wide to sail in the Mid West conditions. When the wind dies down there are some great spots to surf, SUP, sail and kayak.

There are several events showcasing the strengths of the region and its conditions, however, these are closer to the competitive end of the scale and are not purely recreation based. Organised programs and events for recreational participation are limited.

Few clubs directly deliver programs for wind and water-related activities and these clubs are generally limited in their capacity. Some commercial businesses provide hire equipment and lessons for those who want to try these activities.

The locations where these activities take place are well known by locals however there is limited investment into the development of infrastructure and promotion. This includes signage, required facilities such as rigging areas, online location guides etc.

Agreed Direction

There is an opportunity to make the Mid West one of the premier wind and water locations in the world. In doing so the Mid West can capitalise on increased tourism to the region, stimulating economic growth.

Through the Geraldton Growth Plan, three pilot clusters were developed to grow Greater Geraldton's niche specialisations.

These clusters are collaborative networks that link businesses, research/education and government agencies and form a global competitive specialisation. Our wind and water attractions have the potential to be the next cluster in the Geraldton Growth Plan.

Working with businesses, government and the community, the development of the Mid West as a premier wind and water location in the world is achievable.

To realise this vision, we will need to have:

- A strong commercial industry that meets the demands of the visitors coming to the region. This will include equipment hire, basic instruction and lessons, tours etc.
- Well signed, promoted, safe and accessible places where people of all abilities can confidently participate.
- Iconic events that promote the activities and the region which attract international visitors.
- Strong and effective marketing campaigns that can be used to promote the region worldwide.
- A tourism industry that can meet the demands of wind and water-specific visitors.

Strategic Actions

1. Form cluster group to drive the development of wind and water project.
2. Develop infrastructure which enables easy access to places and spaces for wind and water activities.
3. Promote and encourage people to visit the region for wind and water activities.
4. Develop the industry capacity to provide programs that encourage participation in wind and water activities.



CASE STUDY

Adventure tourism leading a revival in the Tasmanian town of Derby

(Source: ABC News Online)

The small town of Derby in Tasmania's north-east is abuzz with activity, as it tries to keep up with a visitor boom. An extra 25,000 people a year have visited the town since the Blue Derby mountain bike trails were opened in 2015.

Once-empty cottages and deserted shopfronts have been snapped up by developers and converted into tourist accommodation, shops, cafes and other businesses to cater for the boom.

"People who come to a destination because they want to walk a particular track or they want to cycle a particular mountain biking circuit, they're generally people who are passionate about what they do and will absolutely invest accordingly, so they're high yielding," says Tourism Industry Council Tasmania chief executive Luke Martin.



Implementations Schedule: Wind and Water

Description / Method	Roles and Responsibilities	Timing and Sequence	Performance Indicators
Form cluster group to drive the development of Wind and Water project			
Form a cluster group which can develop and drive the Wind and Water strategy.	Industry to lead with support from DLGSC	Cluster group formed 2018	Group has been formed and identified needs and priorities
Develop infrastructure which enables easy access to places and spaces for wind and water activities			
Identify locations where wind and water activities take place and determine the infrastructure needs of these areas.	Wind and Water cluster group	2019	Infrastructure needs are identified and prioritised
Advocate funding to develop infrastructure needs.	Wind and Water cluster group and DLGSC	As required	Number of projects receiving funding
Promote and encourage people to visit the region for wind and water activities			
Detailed marketing information to be available in various mediums outlining the region, its activities, locations, conditions and other useful information.	Wind and Water cluster group to work with visitor centres and tourism providers	2018/19	Easily accessible information is available
Existing and new events are used to promote the region.	DLGSC to work with event hosts	2018 onwards	Increase number of people travelling to region for events
Develop the capacity of the industry to provide programs that encourage participation in wind and water activities			
Facilitate the delivery of workshops and courses for local clubs, instructors, coaches, administrators to deliver programs, lessons and events that encourage participation.	Wind and Water cluster group to identify workshops and courses and assist clubs to secure funding to host	Begin 2018	Number of training opportunities provided

Cycle friendly communities

Objective

Create a culture of cycling in the Mid West that provides a safe and inclusive environment.

Current Situation

Cycling-friendly communities can deliver health, environmental, social and economic benefits.

Key statistics:

- 18.5% of WA residents ride a bicycle in a typical week and more than one third (41.1%) of regional WA residents had done so in the past year.¹
- Around 5% of people in Geraldton ride to work or education.²

Two key documents have been developed relating to cycling in Western Australia. The Department of Transport produced the Western Australian Bicycle Network Plan 2014-2031 and WestCycle produced A Strategic Framework for Cycling in Western Australia – Our Bike Path 2014-2020³. These documents are currently guiding the way cycling is being developed in the State.

The City of Greater Geraldton and the Department of Transport have developed a Geraldton 2050 Cycling Strategy. This strategy has described Geraldton's current cycling network as "lacking in terms of its coverage, consistency and separation from motorised traffic. The City's cycling infrastructure generally consists of shared paths of varying quality and a small number of sporadic, unprotected bike lanes. In many cases these remain poorly connected to the wider network."

In the consultation process for the Geraldton 2050 Cycling Strategy some barriers to riding a bike were identified. The top three were a lack of dedicated cycling and/or shared path infrastructure, safety concerns and the lack of adequate end-of-trip facilities.

Most other towns in the Mid West would be in a similar position to Geraldton however on a smaller scale because of their size.

Agreed Direction

Creating a safe cycling environment and a culture of cycling in the Mid West will realise multiple benefits for individuals and the community. A cycling culture will make it normal to ride to school, work, sport or to the shops. It also means that people feel comfortable riding for recreational purposes and if they choose, they can follow the sporting pathway and compete at whatever level they aspire to.

Work produced by WestCycle provides a great framework to develop cycling in all its forms and work that has already begun by the Department of Transport and the City of Greater Geraldton is a great start to realising the cycling potential in Geraldton.

The WestCycle Strategic Framework outlines five strategic actions that can be adopted to guide the development of cycling in the Mid West. These actions are:

1. Grow a cycling culture
2. Creating bike friendly communities
3. Building the capability of our community
4. Strengthening our sporting pathway
5. Develop a cycling economy

Strategic Actions

1. Partner with stakeholders to enable the implementation of the Geraldton 2050 Cycling Strategy.
2. Encourage local governments to develop cycling plans in line with WestCycle Strategic Framework.
3. Develop cycling programs and initiatives which grow a cycling culture and encourage participation for transport, recreation and sport.

1 2017 National Cycling Participation Survey

2 RAC Regional Transport Planning Initiative (RAC-RTPI) - Regional Transport Survey 2012

3 Strategic Framework for Cycling in Western Australia – Our Bike Path 2014-2020



Implementations Schedule: Cycle friendly communities

Description / Method	Roles and Responsibilities	Timing and Sequence	Performance Indicators
Partner with stakeholders to enable the implementation of the Geraldton 2050 Cycling Strategy.			
Work with stakeholders to review the Geraldton 2050 Cycling Strategy and ensure that the five year action plan is implemented.	DLGSC to partner with the Mid West Sports Federation and the City of Greater Geraldton	From June 2018	Actions from five year action plan are implemented
Encourage local governments to develop cycling plans			
Work with local governments (Geraldton excluded) to develop cycling plans which address recreation cycling and transport.	DLGSC to work with Local Governments to develop cycling plans	Ongoing	Two cycling plans developed by 2021
Develop cycling programs and initiatives which grow a cycling culture and encourage participation for transport, recreation and sport			
Work with local clubs, schools and local governments to audit existing programs and identify any gaps and opportunities to develop programs such as come-and-try, participation and youth engagement.	DLGSC to lead and partner with local clubs and local government Midwest Regional Education Office to provide communication with schools	Ongoing	Number of new programs developed Number of existing programs supported
Work with groups to develop the capacity to deliver programs through training of paid and volunteer workforce.	DLGSC to lead and partner with local clubs and local government	Ongoing	Number of training opportunities provided Number of people trained





Outdoor recreation events

Objective

Mid West to be a preferred destination for Outdoor Recreation events.

Current Situation

The climate, beaches, wind, natural landscapes and the activities associated with these natural assets draw people to the Mid West. Tourist are often not only after a destination to visit they are after activities to do while they are here. Outdoor recreation events play a significant role in providing incentives to visit a region.

While the Mid West region has several outdoor recreation events, there are none that stand out as an iconic event that would draw large numbers of people from around the State or even the country. For example, the Lancelin Ocean Classic draws more than 200 windsurfers, kitesurfers and kayakers. In the South West region, the Cape to Cape Mountain Biking four-day event draws 1500 competitors. In the Kimberley, the Lake Argyle Swim draws around 260 swimmers.

In recent times attempts at developing new events have been made with a SUPfest and Midwest Windfest being held for the first time. There are also some existing events such as the Sunshine Surf Masters and the Kalbarri Canoe and Cray Festival which has a river paddling event and now incorporates the Adventurthon.

Many Mid West towns have their own festivals and/or shows which have some outdoor recreation elements.

These provide a fantastic opportunity to get people physically active in the outdoors and usually draw upon regional strengths such as the wildflowers or the coastline.

Agreed Direction

For the Mid West to be known as an outdoor recreation tourism destination we need to build on the strength of the region and develop an iconic event that would maximise the economic, social, health and potential educational benefits of outdoor recreation.

The Mid West Sports Federation are currently leading a Sports Tourism Project which will calculate the economic benefit of sports tourism in the Mid West. Some recreation events will be included in this research. Capitalising on this project to develop an event that is known throughout the State, across Australia and worldwide could have immense economic benefits.

Large events will also have significant benefit for local Mid West communities, providing opportunities for community participation, developing experience in event management, advocating for investment and increasing club membership.

Strategic Actions

1. Develop an understanding of the economic value of outdoor recreation events in the region and advocate the benefits to encourage investment.
2. Encourage and develop both new and existing outdoor recreation events in the region for people of all ages, backgrounds and ability.
3. Develop the capacity and capability of organisations to enable them to host enjoyable outdoor recreation events that meet the growing demand.
4. Maximise the value of outdoor recreation events including economic, educational, social, health and environmental.



Implementations Schedule: Outdoor Recreation Events

Description / Method	Roles and Responsibilities	Timing and Sequence	Performance Indicators
Develop an understanding of the economic value of outdoor recreation events in the region and advocate the benefits to encourage investment			
Work with the Mid West Sports Federation and the Mid West Sports Tourism Project to determine the economic value of recreation events.	Mid West Sports Federation lead the Mid West Sports Tourism Project	2018	Economic value is determined and promoted
Encourage and develop both new and existing outdoor recreation events in the region for people of all ages, backgrounds and ability			
Through the Sports Tourism Project, identify what outdoor recreation events exist and support the development of existing and new events.	MWSF Community Groups	2019 onwards	
Develop the capacity and capability of organisations to enable them to host enjoyable outdoor recreation events that meet the growing demand			
Provide workshops and training opportunities for event organisers.	DLGSC in partnership with Mid West Sports Federation	Ongoing	Number of training opportunities available
Maximise the value of outdoor recreation events including economic, educational, social, health and environmental			
Provide support and advice to event organisers and facilitate relationships between event organisers and other industries to ensure events are maximising the value that they can contribute to the whole community.	DLGSC to work with Event organisers and other industries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWCCI • NACC • Population Health • Education • LGAs • Media • MWSF 	Ongoing	Number of events where support has been provided

Appendix 1 – Working Group Representatives

The Mid West Outdoor Recreation Strategy Working Group included representatives from the following organisations:

- Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
- Western Australian Country Health Service – Population Health
- Midwest Education Regional Office
- City of Greater Geraldton
- Shire of Three Springs
- Shire of Irwin
- Shires of Perenjori, Three Springs, Morawa (via Club Development Officer)
- Kid Hub Training and Consultancy







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Our whole
community **wins**