PEEL AWAY THE MASK
A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE PEEL REGION
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November 2001

Prepared By

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Funded By

Alcoa World Alumina Australia
Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal
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Preface

The Peel region has experienced a phenomenal rate of growth in its population in recent years and enjoys a seemingly enviable lifestyle. However the growth has occurred without a parallel increase in resourcing for service and infrastructure provision. This has resulted in a severe strain on the social fabric of the region.

As the magnitude of the impact of the social sector issues on regional development became more clearly understood, the Peel Development Commission set about securing partners to provide resources for a study that would investigate the needs and gaps in service provision in that sector. This milestone report would not have been possible without the generosity of those contributors and the many local people who contributed their time, information and advice during the primary study and those who have commented on the report's first draft.

The circulation of the first draft report generated very positive impact in terms of:

- increased awareness of the critical issues facing the Peel community;
- the availability of firm data to provide justification for funds leverage into the region; and,
- creating stronger impetus amongst local organisations to start working together on local solutions.

This study provides an analysis of statistics that reflect the fragile and stressful existence of many of the residents, volunteers and social and human service providers in the Peel region. But the report does not end on a negative note. It describes the excellent work of many in the Peel region to better their communities and it provides a springboard of strategies to help the Peel achieve its potential.

The major issues described are solvable by local people with local solutions with support from government and non-government partners. It is hoped that this report can serve as a guide to future initiatives that will improve the lifestyle in the Peel region for all community members.

I commend this report to you and believe you will find it both informative and compelling.

JOHN COLLETT
Chairman
Peel Development Commission
November 2001
Thank You

The Peel Development Commission gratefully acknowledges the contribution of and would like to thank:

- Alcoa World Alumina Australia and the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal for their financial contribution to this milestone report.
- Ms Dorothy Lucks and Ms Stephany Durack, the authors, for their tenacity and professionalism.
- Dr Jim Ife and Dr Ranjit Kumar of Curtin University for their assistance in developing the methodology and reviewing the document.
- The numerous local people in government and non-government organisations who invested their time in responding to the questionnaire and who acted as ‘reality checks’ for the analysis.
- Peel artist Ms Lesley King-Dowding, who has worked with local young people on a range of art projects, and who created the striking artwork on the front cover.
- The Peel Community Campus who assisted with the mask ‘thumbprint’ through the document.
INDEX

INTRODUCTION 1
BACKGROUND 1
SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS 1
SOCIAL INDICATORS 2
REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 3
STUDY SCOPE AND METHODS 6
HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES 10
HOUSING 19
SAFETY AND SECURITY 24
EDUCATION 28
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT 35
SUMMARY AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS 42
BIBLIOGRAPHY 45

APPENDICES

Appendix A  Survey Questionnaires - Individual 49
Appendix B  Survey Questionnaires - Organisation 52
Appendix C  Summary of Written Comments on the Draft Report 55
INTRODUCTION

The widening gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’, even in the world’s most developed countries, is becoming a globally recognised phenomenon that is of concern to all responsible organisations. With the advent of concepts such as Local Agenda 21, based on the Kyoto Convention, and ‘triple bottom line’ accounting, the world is also recognising that government, industry and communities have to create partnerships to protect environmental and social integrity, as well as generate economic impact, cash profits and political power. The increasing poverty gaps and traps are more commonly considered to occur in third world countries but this report shows that such a situation is occurring in the ‘backyard’ of one of Australia’s most progressive regions. The physical beauty and apparent affluence of the area masks a community that is increasingly under stress.

BACKGROUND

The Peel region in Western Australia, one hour south of Perth, has a reputation as a great place to live. It is a region of contrasting natural beauty with a network of waterways, 75 kilometres of ocean beaches, a rural backdrop and a large native forested scarp. The relaxed quality of life is the drawcard that entices many people to live in the region, part-time residents to holiday in their luxury homes and millions of tourists to visit the area.

However, the Peel is now the most densely populated region in Western Australia, with a current population of over 75,000 people and a projected population of over 150,000 people by 2025. The population growth rate is one of the highest in Australia, with Mandurah, the region’s main population centre, being placed as the fastest growing city in Australia. The Peel has contrasts in its social situation that are not widely recognised and which threaten the livelihood security of a surprisingly high proportion of its community.

The following report is the output of a social study conducted in the Peel region. The rising level of negative indicators in the social sector throughout the region and the increasing concerns of the local community alerted the Peel Development Commission, a Western Australian government regional development agency, to the need to provide a clearer picture of the pressures affecting the region. It proposed a feasibility study into the causes, effects and possible solutions to reverse the emerging negative trends. The Commission secured funding from its own budget, from Alcoa World Alumina Australia, a major employer in the region, and the national Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal which is interested in the priority needs of the community and the feasibility of establishing a Regional Trust.

SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS

The findings of the study as described in this document show that the community issues have been rapidly building during the last few years but it is only now that the warning signs are becoming increasingly apparent to the wider community. There is strong potential for the area with many natural and human assets but with the rapid increase in population, the gaps in services are becoming wider as the service providers are struggling to cope with the demands of increasingly vulnerable community members. This does not just affect those individuals who are in dire need of assistance; the effects are beginning to spill over into the lives of other community members.
SOCIAL INDICATORS

The following data was compiled from the Australian Bureau of Statistics’s most recent projections, from internal statistics of government departments, from the monitoring information of non-government organisations and from the responses to a questionnaire used in this study.

* Peel has one of the highest unemployment rates in the state (9.2%) compared to the state average of 6.7% (September 2001). The inferred youth unemployment rate is calculated to be the highest in Australia at 39% (August 2001 figures).

* The region’s accelerated growth rate in 2000 (5.2%) was the highest in Western Australia and one of the highest in Australia. The growth has outstripped and continues to outstrip the availability of government and private organisations to resource the needs of the community.

* In the Peel region 56.88% of the population receives an average weekly income under $300 (Western Australia as a whole 46.29%). 16.38% of the Peel population earns $600 or more in a week compared to 21.42% in Western Australia as a whole. This means that the average weekly income is not only below that of most of the rest of Australia but it is placing some families in an extremely vulnerable situation.

* There is a high level of the Peel population with inadequate social and employment capabilities. Peel has the lowest ‘lifelong learning’ indicators in Western Australia. Peel has an extremely low rating of 13, compared to the City of Bunbury at 51 and the town of Kwinana, the lowest in the Perth Metropolitan region at 29. The Shire of Waroona has a rating of only 4. Refer to more detail in the Regional Performance Indicators section on page 3.

* Less than 3% of survey respondents agreed that students leaving Year 10 have good employment prospects (increases to only 14% in Year 12). 88% cite lack of transport as a major barrier to further education.

* Even for those people with adequate capabilities, there is a lack of appropriate pathways to achieve self-sufficiency, leading to a fragility and vulnerability that is affecting many families and resulting in increasing levels of drug use and family violence. 91% of organisations report that appropriate referral services are not readily available in the region.

* There is only a 0.5 full time community health worker designated for the Aboriginal community, despite an estimated indigenous population of close to 2,000 people.

* There are only 9 lawyers in the Peel for a population of 76,929 people compared to over 30 in the City of Bunbury which has a population of 28,500 people.

* In 2000/01 there were 7,983 criminal offences recorded across the Peel region. Drug related offences have steadily increased in the last three years from 360 recorded offences in 1996/97 to 480 offences in 2000/01. A six week intensive campaign in 2001 yielded 56 offences relating to the seeling, supply and manufacture of illicit drugs. This is one of the highest rates in Western Australia, including the Perth Metropolitan region.

* The lack of dedicated community infrastructure contributes to the lack of access to services. Peel performs badly on the leverage of resources - both core funding from government agencies and grant funding from state and federal programs. There is little local industry support due to the low level of income in most of the business community.

* The only women’s refuge in the region has only four rooms. In 1999/2000 it was able to accommodate 90 women and 123 children who had been in danger from violence and other forms of abuse, but had to refuse sanctuary to 245 women and 371 children. An additional 533 women with 769 children sought advice and information.

* The Job Placement, Employment and Training Program, which targets unemployed young people, has catered to over 80 clients in the last year. Of those, 21 were registered as
homeless, 59 were classified as being at risk of becoming homeless and 8 were either in the care of the State or had been in care. This service, offering skills training and mentoring to gain employment, has now been withdrawn from the region and current clients are receiving a reduced service from adjacent Rockingham. No new clients will be added unless new funding is found.

Statistics received from the Kids Helpline outlined a high level of calls from Peel compared to other areas of Western Australia. Only 15% of all callers choose to reveal their postcode so estimations are of approximately 2,950 calls from Peel with a further 5,900 unsuccessful attempts to access the service. The highest number of calls (44.5%) were concerning relationship problems (state average is 39.7%). The number of calls pertaining to child abuse was 8.5% (1.9% above the state average) and leaving home/homeless issues 4.6% (0.1% higher than the state average). 8.1% of young people contacted the service in regards to sex related issues which again is higher than the recorded state average (7.5%).

There are over 200 registered homeless young people in the region. Unofficial estimates are double that amount.

The community is experiencing widening gaps in service delivery, across all major social support areas (eg health services have been centralised in Mandurah where there is no public transport access for residents in Mandurah, much less for those in outlying areas). 97% of survey respondents state lack of internal transport as severely inhibiting employment and access to basic services such as health and higher education.

There is a lack of resources within and between government and private organisations to integrate, co-ordinate and deliver solutions to remove those gaps. 41% of survey respondents reported that clients lack information about basic services. Over 80% of organisations surveyed indicated that they are seriously under resourced.

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (1998)
(Source: South West Urban System Economy Study 2000)

The following rankings were generated through analysis of key social and economic indicators across a range of parameters¹ and placed into a database called ‘YourPlace’. The database compares localities Australia-wide and the rankings provide an indication of how Peel fares on a national level. For comparison to specific WA localities, Peel’s performance is given below in comparison to Perth and Bunbury. Peel consistently scores a considerably lower performance level, indicating that the region is reaching a disadvantaged social state.

- **Job Readiness**
  [Ranking out of 100 localities throughout Australia - Perth 62; Bunbury 70; **Peel 16**]
  
  Average ranking for Australia is 50. A low ranking shows a higher level long term unemployed, migrant unemployed and recipients of social security benefits associated with structural unemployment.

- **High Skills**
  [Ranking out of 100 throughout Australia - Perth 48; Bunbury 29; **Peel 18**]
  
  Average ranking for Australia is 50. A low ranking indicates a low level of professional occupations such as lawyers and doctors, with higher education or analytical skills within the population.

¹ The YourPlace database went through a complex analysis of ABS statistics such as level of key infrastructure, employment characteristics, educational and qualification levels, health statistics, crime statistics etc to generate the key overall indicators as described above. A total of 632 localities Australia-wide were reviewed for general indicators and more detailed work was undertaken for 100 of those 632. Further information can be gathered through the Ministry for Planning ‘South West Urban System Economy Study 2000’ documentation.
Global Knowledge
[Ranking out of 100 throughout Australia - Perth 81; Bunbury 58; Peel 45]

Average ranking for Australia is 50. A lower ranking indicates a lower ratio of occupational skills related to IT, innovation, finance, marketing and communication flow.

Lifelong Learning
[Ranking out of 100 throughout Australia - Perth 76; Bunbury 51; Peel 13]

Average ranking for Australia is 50. A lower ranking indicates a lower rate of adult education and supply of skills needed for economic growth.

Wealth
[Ranking out of 100 throughout Australia - Perth 57; Bunbury 47; Peel 36]

Average ranking for Australia is 50. A lower ranking indicates a lower level of income and assets per household illustrating a low capability to withstand income shocks and to exploit further wealth generating opportunities.

Industry Performance
[Ranking out of 632 throughout Australia - Perth 590; Bunbury 547; Peel 190]

Average ranking for Australia is 316. A lower ranking indicates a lower level of local employment provision, output per capita as well as potential for future growth, based on economic growth indices.

Community Well-being*
[Ranking out of 632 throughout Australia - Perth 492; Bunbury 354; Peel 309; Mandurah 375, Murray 68, Waroona 164]

Average ranking for Australia is 316. A lower ranking indicates a lower level of community development, lifestyle choice outcomes and community welfare provision, based on the range of community infrastructure available per population base and lifelong learning indices.

Total Performance
[Ranking out of 632 throughout Australia - Perth 348; Bunbury 394; Peel 164; Mandurah 186, Murray 107, Waroona 48]

Average ranking for Australia is 316. A lower ranking indicates a lower level of overall performance on all key composite indicators of economic and social performance.

* Paraphrased from 'YourPlace' database term of Regional Foundations.

The composite picture generated through the study is of a regional community that is facing levels of stress and negative indicators that are far higher than average for Australia.

The Peel region has untapped potential in both natural, physical and human resource terms and all potential prosperity indicators should predict a bright future for the region. The pressures exerted by the rising population, however, are not given sufficient credence to achieve adequate resourcing to combat the rising problems and harness the potentials.

The findings show that if urgent support is not channeled to the Peel region the current gaps will become wider and more critical.

\(^2\) The numbers provided in the Ministry for Planning South West Urban System Economy Report were based on a high value indicating a low performance. This was reported as confusing in the comments on the draft so these have been reversed to aid in clarity of understanding.
The support needs to be:

➢ in proportion to current needs;
➢ to cover the backlog where resourcing has been inadequate; and
➢ designed to meet the demands of a growing population not just reactive to current needs.

This document can only be a snapshot of the social condition of the region due to the brevity of the study but the findings are sufficiently clear to justify urgent action and more specific research into the major gap areas. There is already a wide range of local initiatives and these must be supported to protect against the very real danger of ‘burn-out’ amongst service providers due to the huge demands on services. New initiatives need to be encouraged and additional services and resources attracted.

This report focuses on describing the problem. The Peel Development Commission and many local partners, including the local governments, community groups, local offices of State agencies and individual leaders with wide expertise and knowledge, are working together to address the issues in the ways most appropriate to the needs of the local community using the resources that are available.

For more information contact the Peel Development Commission on telephone 9535 0000 or visit its website on www.peel.wa.gov.au.
STUDY SCOPE AND METHODS

The study was undertaken from April to June 2001 by one Researcher/Analyst (40 days) and one Team Leader/Senior Analyst (20 days). The scope of the study was not designed nor resourced to be an empirical research project but a study to identify the current condition of a community, assess priorities for action and to provide a basis for the analysis of potential solutions. The subject matter covers an extremely complex mix of issues and factors where many different individuals, organisations and actions interface.

Secondary data in the social sector is extremely difficult to access in a format that can be easily cross-referenced and analysed. Information may be available in one form in one local government area and in a different form in another and not available for a third. Much social data is protected and is considered too sensitive to be released by the organisation holding the information (e.g., definitive information on attempted suicide rates). Some data obtained was conflicting and is only used with caveats as to its veracity and sources noted. Despite these constraints the findings on all major issues were remarkably consistent.

The study was critiqued by two leading social scientists - Dr Jim Ife and Dr Ranjit Kumar. Dr Ife, who holds the Chair of Social Policy and Social Work at Curtin University, Western Australia, is internationally recognised for his work in social policy and community development and is a published author on these topics. Dr Kumar is known internationally for his work in qualitative and quantitative research methodology and is a respected and published author on research methods. Both advised on research tools and methods to gain as comprehensive and verifiable information as possible during the short time frame.

The study involved working with a wide range of organisations, with varying area of focus, level of operation and income sources. To unravel the important issues, the main methods used were the sourcing and compilation of available secondary data, participatory appraisal and triangulation. The study was developed around the five 'quality of life' indicators used by the United Nations:

- health & community services
- housing
- safety and security
- education
- income and employment

The chart opposite shows the mix of organisations surveyed and the following chapters reflect each of the five 'Quality of Life' indicators as experienced in the Peel region.

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3 The team consisted of Mrs Dorothy Lucks, Team Leader/Senior Analyst and Ms Stephany Durack, Researcher/Analyst.

4 Participatory appraisal is a technique that recognises the value in the knowledge and experience of key respondents across the scope of work. It provides a semi-structured interview/focus group to record both known data and relevant analyses. The validity of the information is then confirmed by cross-referencing to formal data and to other respondents. This can be undertaken on a detailed correlation basis for in-depth research basis but within the study period the basic principles were applied for broad agreement of key concerns, priorities, and possible solutions.
The study involved working with a wide range of organisations, with varying income sources. In addition, the researchers spoke with individuals in local shopping centres and at other public locations.

A summary of primary respondents is included in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Participants/ Groups</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Interest Groups</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal People</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisations</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Agencies</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the pilot testing of the questionnaire, it became clear that there were four major concerns that were unanimously expressed. These were lack of transport, low educational achievement, unemployment and lifeskills development. These have been assessed in more detail due to the high prominence given by respondents through an amended survey instrument. In addition to the primary research, additional interviews were held to verify and develop key areas of emerging focus. The recommendations proposed as a result of the analysis were also presented back to key respondents for a 'reality check' to assess for practicality and potential impact. Detailed recommendations will be documented in a separate document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Funding - Organisations Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Government Service Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Government Funding Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government Service Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government Funding Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Service Provider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Funding Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lotteries Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthways</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey results were analysed through a database and results have been incorporated in the following sections. In addition to the data accessed, the respondents were asked to relate what they thought would 'make a significant difference' to the issues that they had identified. These are summarised at the end of each section.
DETAILED STUDY FINDINGS
HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The United Nations’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the following:

ARTICLE 25
(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family including medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

CURRENT CONDITION

For the purpose of this study, the UN definition of health as described above is adopted, taking the broader view of community well-being and availability of appropriate services. The resounding conclusion from this section of the survey was that there is "not enough" in just about every area of service provision.

SECONDARY DATA

Population Demographics  The Peel region is located immediately south of the Perth Metropolitan region and extends west from the flat coastal plain bordered by the Indian Ocean to the jarrah forests and rolling farm lands of the Darling Range to the east (refer map following). The region is geographically diverse with coastal areas, river systems, an expansive estuary, multiple dams, agricultural and horticultural land, an escarpment and plateau. The five local government areas are the City of Mandurah and the rural Shires of Boddington, Murray, Serpentine-Jarrahdale and Waroona. The Peel covers an area of approximately 5,500 square kilometres.

Map of the Peel Region
In June 2001 the estimated population of the Peel region was 76,929 people which ranked it second in population size of the nine Western Australian regions. Refer Table 4.

Table 4 - WA Regions – Population Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population Estimates 2001 Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peel</td>
<td>76,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatbelt</td>
<td>74,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfields</td>
<td>62,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great</td>
<td>52,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid West</td>
<td>52,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilbara</td>
<td>42,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberley</td>
<td>31,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gascoyne</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Estimated Resident Population. Population by Age and Sex

The Ministry for Planning forecasts population gains across the Peel region at 5.2% per year from 2001 to 2016 to reach a population of 131,163 people, almost doubling its current population. This makes the Peel the fastest growing region in Western Australia. The increase equates to around 3,500 persons per year - equivalent to gaining an additional population the size of the Shire of Waroona every year. Mandurah is now the largest urban centre in regional Western Australia. The rapid growth is partly explained by the Peel region’s adjacency to Perth, affordability and lifestyle attractions.

There were conflicting growth rates from different sources. As noted above, the Ministry for Planning has used the figure of 5.2%. The Department of Commerce and Trade sources quote the following figures (refer Table 5). National figures as stated in ‘The Big Shift’ records population growth over the 12 months to June 2000 for Mandurah of 3.7%. It also notes Mandurah as the fastest growing city in Australia with an overall growth rate of 412% over 20 years. The local government figures support the Ministry for Planning’s figures, also citing the knowledge of increased demand for services, estimating that there has been no significant fall-off in the growth rate. Therefore, for the purposes of this document, the figure of 5.2% and associated statistics are used but there may be a need for further investigation.

Table 5 - Average Annual Population Growth Rate. Peel = fastest growth rate in WA since 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Gas</th>
<th>2 G/E</th>
<th>3 GS</th>
<th>4 Kmb</th>
<th>5 Mid W</th>
<th>PEEL</th>
<th>7 Pilbara</th>
<th>8 SW</th>
<th>9 Wheatbelt</th>
<th>10 Reg’l</th>
<th>11 Perth</th>
<th>12 WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986-1991</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1996</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>-2.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2000</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

1 = Gascoyne, 2 = Goldfields Esperance, 3 = Great Southern, 4 = Kimberley, 5 = Mid West, 6 = Peel, 7 = Pilbara, 8 = South West, 9 Wheatbelt, 10 = Regional WA, 11 = Perth, 12 = WA

In 1998 children under 15 years of age represented 23.3% of the Peel region’s population (Western Australian average – 21.6%) while the portion of persons 65 years of age and over was 14.4% (Western Australian average – 10.5%).

- Significantly the 15 to 29 years of age group represents 17.1% of the region’s population while the Western Australia average is 22.8% – this indicates a large movement of young people out of the region due to a lack of employment opportunities.
- The high percentage of people aged 55 to 64 years of age reflects Mandurah’s position as a preferred location for people entering retirement years. The Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale is also becoming popular with the 65 years of age and over group.

Table 6 – Population by Age and Sex – Peel and Western Australia 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>0-4</th>
<th>5-14</th>
<th>15-29</th>
<th>30-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65-74</th>
<th>75-84</th>
<th>85+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WA Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>WA Males</td>
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<td>Peel Females</td>
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</table>

Age Structure, 1998 ERP. Selected Region Compared to Western Australia (Percentage of age group as a proportion of total persons.)

Health Services  The detailed current figures for the whole of Peel compared to the rest of Western Australia for health provision were difficult to access because the boundaries for the Department for Health do not correspond to the Peel region boundary and the data formally available during the study period was very dated. To provide a composite picture of the health sector is not possible in this document and would require significant time investment.

Despite the large seniors population and the needs of a growing population, Peel had by far the lowest number of hospital beds and a very low level of respite care for seniors in 1994. The level of health services provision in the region has improved with the launch of the Peel Health Campus in 1999. However, information gathered from the Department for Health’s more recent reports showed that Peel still had a very low level of hospital beds with 130 at the
Peel Health Campus and 30 at the Murray District Hospital. That is in 2001, Peel has an estimated additional 26 beds, serving an increased population of almost 60,0006 in total, giving an estimated beds per 1,000 rating in 2001 of 2.6, which is still below average for the state. Health services for the region are available in the Perth Metropolitan area but as there is currently no patient assisted travel scheme for the region, access to those services for low income families can be problematic.

Table 7 – Number of Beds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gasc’n</th>
<th>Gold/Esper’ne</th>
<th>Great South’n</th>
<th>Kimb’y</th>
<th>Mid West</th>
<th>PEEL</th>
<th>Pilbara</th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>Wheat’ne</th>
<th>Sum of Regions</th>
<th>Perth Metro</th>
<th>WA State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Hospital Beds (1991)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>2,505</td>
<td>6,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds per 1,000 Persons</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Nursing Home &amp; Hostel Beds</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1,118</td>
<td>6,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds per 1,000 Persons 65 yrs &amp; Older</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.82</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>26.35</td>
<td>47.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Health 1994

Community Services As is shown by the primary study results below, there was huge concern over the level of resourcing for basic community services. It was not possible to access the level of core funding available through various departments but the budget available for additional projects, above the core rates was available. The results show that certain areas have been well-catered for, particularly education, in the last government budget, but that the main health and well-being areas of health, family and children’s services and justice are well under resourced.

The following budget analysis in Table 8 is based only on specific budgeted items per region. These are not core costs as these are not possible to access on a regional basis, but are additional program allocations. There are other state-wide initiatives that are expected to be allocated across all regions on either a pro-rata or a ‘first-come-first served’ basis. No information is available on the regional distribution of such funds.

Table 8 - Government of Western Australia – Regional Budget 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>Wheatbelt</th>
<th>PEEL</th>
<th>Goldfields Esperance</th>
<th>Great Southern</th>
<th>Mid West</th>
<th>Pilb’ra</th>
<th>Kimb’y</th>
<th>Gasc’e</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>123,619</td>
<td>72,431</td>
<td><strong>70,338</strong></td>
<td>58,778</td>
<td>51,840</td>
<td>50,490</td>
<td>41,153</td>
<td>29,527</td>
<td>9,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth Rate %7</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td><strong>5.1</strong></td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>-1.47</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Regional Initiatives</th>
<th>$ million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development Commission</td>
<td>8,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Department</td>
<td>5,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Training &amp; Employment</td>
<td>0.975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Department</td>
<td><strong>6,800</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
<td><strong>2,200</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire &amp; Rescue Service</td>
<td>0.170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Sport &amp; Rec.</td>
<td>0.583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Children’s Services</td>
<td>0.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA Drug Abuse Strategy</td>
<td><strong>0.193</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dept of Transport</td>
<td>2,422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Commerce and Trade Budget 2001

---

6 Serpentine-Jarragahdale and Boddington are not included in the Peel Health district and information for Peel is difficult to isolate.

7 At 1996 levels
**Young People** Information from the Youth Media Survey 2000 on key services in the community, which included 240 young people aged 12-25 years in the Peel region, provided the following information as shown in Table 9. This provides an indication of the adequacy of services available to young people in the region.

**Table 9 – Youth Media Survey 2000 – Peel**

![Table 9. Youth Media Survey 2000 - Peel](image)

Source: Office of Youth Affairs

**Aboriginal Population** The ABS data for Aboriginal population in the region is recorded as 860 people but a recent informal survey by the local Indigenous population recorded around 2,000 people. The study found it very difficult to access any firm data on the demographics of the Aboriginal population in the region. The degree of variation between the formal statistics and the informal estimates of the population and the level of concern as reported in the primary findings suggests that a detailed specific study of the Aboriginal community would be very valuable for improved planning.

**PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS**

On the surface, the Peel region looks well endowed with health and community services. Recent initiatives such as the Peel Health Campus, Lotteries House, the Mandurah Senior College and the new facilities at Halls Head – the recreation centre and community college, are examples of valuable community infrastructure. Proposed facilities such as the new recreation facilities in Byford and the proposed community centre in Waroona are initiatives that will bring significant new community assets to the region.

Local human services are frequently reported as being efficient and effective. Professional field staff have been doing a great job at providing core services to local people. The maturity in the relationships between agencies has resulted in resource sharing initiatives, infrastructure partnerships, effective referral procedures, inter-agency networks and creative solutions to local problems.
Some positive examples found in the study include:

- Resource sharing (eg physiotherapy services provided to the Disability Services Commission by Peel Health Campus).
- Effective referral procedures to avoid as much duplication as possible.
- Infrastructure partnerships (eg Halls Head Recreation Centre is a joint project between the City of Mandurah, Peel Education and the Department of Sport and Recreation).
- Inter-agency networks (eg the Safer WA Committee has developed successful prevention and early intervention strategies for young people – ie Streetnet and the Student-at-Risk program at Fairbridge).
- Creative solutions to local problems (eg when Pinjarra High School won the opportunity to enter a car in Rally Australia, the local community recognised the social and educational benefits of the project and has maintained this project).
- The FAIR program (Fellowship, Awareness, Inclusion, Relaxation) program undertaken jointly by the Disability Services Commission and Fairbridge is breaking new ground in community cohesion in the care and participation of young people and their families and carers.
- Waroona operates a cooperative local transport system that assists local people in accessing services.

The recent trend for government agencies to return to 'core business' has led to resources for extending the reach of successful programs being cut or not extended in proportion to the needs of the growing population.

Examples include:

- Difficulty in accessing on-going funding for programs which have proved successful in achieving positive community health outcomes, eg funding for the STAR program, Streetnet and the Job Placement, Employment and Training program has been withdrawn, as well as funding for other programs.
- Difficulty in accessing funding for increased demand on services eg:
  
  • Peel Community Health has the services of a dietician on a 0.6 full time employee basis;
  • Allambee Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Counselling Service has experienced an increase in demand for core services from 76 clients to an estimated 120 clients in the last year.
- The only women's refuge in the region (Pat Thomas Memorial Community House) has just four rooms - in 1999/2000 it was able to accommodate 90 women and 123 children who had been in danger from violence and other forms of abuse, but had to refuse sanctuary to 245 women and 371 children with an additional 533 women with 769 children seeking advice and information.
- The respondents of the study highlighted Aboriginal health services (17% of total respondents and 100% of Aboriginal respondents) and mental health support (35% of total respondents) and access to health services due to lack of transport (88% of total respondents) as key areas of concern.

Community and voluntary services (and those involved in infrastructure development) are operating at levels that are not sustainable – in fact, many staff and organisations showed signs of being in jeopardy. High levels of 'burn-out' were reported by participants in the study across all organisations (refer Table 10).
Table 10 – Adequacy of Staffing Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequacy of Staffing Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No 80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study Data Sample number = 75 local agency, government and non-government organisations from all local government areas

In almost all categories there were very severe cases of ‘Peel Red Eye’ – a level of exhaustion and over-burden human services workers experience due to constant demands beyond their capacity over time.

For obvious reasons the organisations approached during this study were not able to officially release data to confirm the level of stress but indicators provided the following picture:

- 100% of organisations reported substantial increases in client bases. Those who gave specific indications reported increases in demand for services of between 60% to 200% over a five-year period.
- Only 20% agreed that resourcing had increased proportionately to the level of demand.
- 80% of the organisations surveyed cited lack of staff as a major barrier to effective servicing.
- 91% of respondents said that the types of services many of their clients required were not available locally and people had to travel outside of the Peel region to have their problems addressed. Where a local service was available, the waiting periods were problematic due to high demand.
- It was reported in several interviews that several local general practitioners have now closed their doors to new patients so it is becoming difficult for some sectors of the community to access basic medical services.
- Six organisations provided firm, if unofficial, examples of high levels of stress leave.
- The random survey of individuals captured three people who were on, or had recently been on stress leave. All three indicated that they had no prior history of depression or stress problems and that the stress was work-related. All three mentioned unrealistic expectations of workload with insufficient resources.
- Agency managers reported that a shortage of appropriate resources contributed to staff turnover.
- Many Peel organisations reported lack of funding parity – the services exist, but are not funded or staffed at the same levels as agencies elsewhere dealing with the same number of clients (for example, the Disability Services Commission recently appointed a new Local Area Coordinator – this has reduced the caseload to 1:60 cases per LAC - the recommended quota is 1:40-60).
- Community organisations stated member ‘burn-out’ was a constant problem, leading to loss of membership, reluctance of members to enter into new projects and in some cases it has lead to closure, or risk of basic medical services.
- Community associations and agencies that distribute State or Federal funds for programs are managed by volunteer board members who, in a private capacity, are obliged to provide a professional service and carry all the financial and legal responsibilities associated with the management of that association or agency. It can be an onerous task for these volunteers who in many cases also work full time and manage homes and families.
With the rapid increase in demands on their core services the capacity of Peel’s human services organisations to share resources has diminished. In the past there has been at least some time or cost benefit to cooperate, to absorb demands by improved working methods or to attempt to address the gaps in services and additional demands being placed on people living in the Peel region.

Yet, it has been difficult or impossible to get the needs of the residents of the Peel placed high enough up the departmental budget agenda to result in enough staff being able to offer minimum services. So at the same time that demand is increasing, requests for assistance have not been responded to. In some instances, Perth, Fremantle, Rockingham or Bunbury based services have been assigned programs that are designed to cover the Peel region, eg Legal Aid, Job Placement, Employment and Training and justice programs. But these cannot provide sufficient levels of services due to either a lack of support organisations in the Peel region to implement them, the inability of clients to travel to those services (no public transport in the Peel) or the lack of prominence given to developing the service in the region compared to other areas of coverage.

Agencies report that attracting resources to the region has been complicated by:

- Central planning boundaries not being aligned with the Peel regional boundaries. Consumer surveys consistently show that the Peel community views itself as non-metropolitan and that the rural amenity of the area is given high priority. Service boundaries for community service agencies vary considerably and this leads to gaps in servicing, difficulty in obtaining effective monitoring and planning data and confusion amongst both consumers and service providers.

- Public and planning perceptions that Mandurah is a retirement destination rather than a community with high numbers of young families and seniors. Consequently, service organisations find it difficult to gain support for articulation of need.

- Public perceptions that Peel is a high income area and an unwillingness to believe that there are increasing numbers of low income families in the area. Today there is an estimated 11,500 people (individuals and families) out of a population base of just under 77,000 (over 15% of the population) dependent on Centrelink as their main source of family income.

- Thwarted efforts to attract additional resources within State and Federal agencies and attracting funding to non-government organisations is a significant problem.

- Lack of time or skill to write competitive submissions for funding due to the high level of direct servicing required to keep up with client demand.

On the surface there appears to be a stable level of social services being delivered. It is managed at the expense of non-urgent activities (e.g. worker self-care; future planning; accountability requirements; submissions for additional funding; successful internal lobbying to attract appropriate levels of support). This means that the provision of the social services safety net to people in greatest need is close to being in jeopardy, with many agencies able only to provide core services and with increasing gaps being identified.

Struggling with the additional demands placed by the increasing population and the need to continually increase services in short timeframes without adequate resourcing was a constant theme in the interviews. All organisations were attempting to cope with increased demand on services by finding new ways of working or by playing ‘catch-up’. This is where they lobby for additional resources for service delivery and by the time it hits the ground they have to start lobbying again for additional funds because of the rapid rate of population growth and the changing needs of the community. Arguing for continued growth in budgets to accommodate new demands is a challenge for government and community organisations.

This is particularly so when the agencies were seen to be successful in the last budget round and would therefore be unlikely to succeed again due to their funding organisation’s (understandable) aim to have a spread of successful submissions across different areas.
GAP ANALYSIS

Key problems in the region are related to the adequacy and availability of relevant services. The range of services mentioned as being inadequate was expansive with each respondent mentioning several. Services for older persons were generally considered to be adequate to meet current demand with an excellent service range in place, although there are still major concerns about the level of respite care and transport to essential services. This will require close monitoring as the population ages.

The top ten problem areas identified were:

- Lack of leadership and skills for community advocacy amongst most consumers of human services in the region.
- Generalist human services workers responding to people with acute problems.
- Inadequate local crisis services, especially 24 hour services.
- Inadequate drying out houses (ie safe places for alcohol or drug affected people to sober up safely).
- Inadequate primary health care and support services, especially for mental health and well being.
- Chronic ill health for Aboriginal people.
- Insufficient early childhood/family support, especially for child victims of family violence.
- Lack of appropriate early intervention and prevention programs (eg early childhood/family; juvenile offender programs; school-leaver support programs; parenting programs; relationship support and counselling services; financial advice and advocacy services; community legal education; self-help and self development programs and community and allied health programs).
- Programs specifically for isolated people in neighbourhoods across the community to connect them to existing services.
- Inadequate children’s services from school holiday activities (0-12 years, 12-15 years) to child care services for workers in smaller towns, to specialist family violence witness programs.

WHAT WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Again, the range of answers to potential solutions was comprehensive. The most commonly identified were:

- Resources for existing community based services offering welfare services for them to reach parity (ie equivalent funding levels as elsewhere; arms and legs to help coordination; cross-sectoral strategic directions information flow and writing successful submissions).
- Youth services linking people to work, education or training opportunities.
- 24 hour shelter (for homeless, drug or alcohol affected people).
- Drug and alcohol treatment programs.
- Early intervention and prevention programs.
- Improved health services and awareness of health issues within the Aboriginal community.
- Young offenders programs.
- Early childhood/family matters, especially child victims of family violence.
- School leavers strategies.
- Affordable family counselling and support services and other communications programs.
The United Nations's Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the following:

**ARTICLE 25**
(1) *Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing....*

**CURRENT CONDITION**

The physical image of the Peel region is of relative affluence due to the luxury housing around the waterways and large land holdings in the rural areas, which are either new housing developments or agricultural properties. The actual profile of housing shows a different picture.

The place a person lives in is not only seen as 'bricks and mortar' or a 'financial investment', it is profoundly connected to individual and family perceptions of safety, security and wealth. Owning one's own home is seen as a fundamental part of Australian life and therefore seen as a moral duty and an act of personal responsibility. Even people on very low incomes (e.g. sole income families) will strive to save and pay off their own homes. Most families buying their own homes today seem to tie more than one third (sometimes more) of their earnings to mortgages and home improvements. Financial counsellors begin to get concerned when 25% of household income is invested in rent or mortgage payments.

Indications in the Peel region are that the influx of population is drawn partly by the amenity and natural attractions of the area, but also by the relatively low priced housing compared to metropolitan prices. Low cost rental accommodation is hard to find in Peel particularly for the more vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, seniors and single young people.

Moving to the region with an expectation of finding employment locally or to start a small business is a common story amongst those eventually accessing crisis support. Jobs are not easy to find and the local economy makes entrepreneurial activity less feasible than in areas with a higher level of disposable income. Lower than expected family income levels leave some families with financial difficulties in covering mortgage or rental costs. This is coupled with higher than expected transport costs due to the lack of public transport, particularly for those who are lying in outlying areas. Therefore the cost of living in the two basic needs of housing and transport absorbs a large percentage of available income.

**SECONDARY DATA**

The profile of housing in the Peel region shows that there has been a very rapid growth of building (see Table 11 to right) which is both a response to the demand of the growing population and a factor in the influx of new arrivals to the region.

In a study undertaken by Fremantle TAFE students on the visitors market to the Peel region, a strong image of the Peel as either a retirement centre or of expansive housing estates was common. This was brought about by the level of television advertising for new housing complexes in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value (m$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics*
This inhibited the Peel’s potential image as a centre for tourism and also promoted the concept that the region is an increasing urban sprawl rather than a regional area with main population centres.

In 1999/00 there were 1,430 residential dwelling approvals in the region. The total building approvals was worth $217.1 million, which is approximately a 100% increase within four years.

The Peel has the highest percentage of unoccupied dwellings in regional Western Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Gascowyne</th>
<th>Goldfields Esperance</th>
<th>Great Southern</th>
<th>Kimberley</th>
<th>Mid West</th>
<th>Peel</th>
<th>Pilbara</th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>Wheatbelt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>375</td>
<td>2,092</td>
<td>3,069</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>3,116</td>
<td>6,512</td>
<td>2,201</td>
<td>6,862</td>
<td>6,110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

There are 720 Ministry of Housing tenancies in the Peel region (620 in Mandurah and 100 in Pinjarra) with a turnover of just 6 units per month. The local Ministry of Housing office estimates that since 1996 demand for both rental houses and units has increased more than 100%. According to the Ministry’s Mandurah office some 60 units of Bond Assistance are provided each month to low income individuals and families (ie $150 x 4 weeks x 60 units x 12 months = $432,000 for 700 bonds each year), showing the high level of movement of low income households into the area and the level of investment that this requires.

The current waiting list for housing in the Peel is between two and four years for a Ministry of Housing property. The Ministry advises that the duration of the wait is similar to that of the Perth Metropolitan region and other popular coastal towns.

More than 50% of people on the Mandurah waiting list already live in the Peel region. In February 2001 there were 493 outstanding applications for Ministry of Housing tenancies:

- 156 applications for seniors over 55 years of age;
- 129 applications from singles under 55 years of age; and
- 208 family applications.

In 2000 Centrelink contributed approximately $17 million to the local property market through rent assistance; approximately $4 million in direct rental and $11.3 million in family tax breaks for rental properties.

In the private market, rents vary from $75-$150 plus per week for a house Mandurah and the regional towns, to $200-$1,200 per week on the canals in Mandurah or for rural holiday rental. Private rentals are scarce and low income families struggle to find accommodation. Caravan rental in permanent caravan parks also can cost over $100 per week. Rent for a three bedroom home in the coastal areas will cost approximately $150-$200 per week.

The cost of buying a home also varies, ranging from around $80,000 to $350,000 plus. An established, three bedroom older style home will cost approximately $100,000. A luxury home on the canals may cost up to $1 million or more depending on the degree of facility and the scope of view. This shows that there is a very wide range of housing within the region, not just the luxury style housing for which the region has been recognised.

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8 In Western Australia there are 38,000 Ministry of Housing units and properties and 1.8% are managed through the Mandurah Office.
PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Housing is closely linked to the social, economic and environmental challenges facing the Peel region because:

- Much of the new money coming into the region is tied up in the family home. It does not generate investment capital nor enhance family wealth. In many cases, this financial commitment to the home represents most of the household’s savings and investments.

- The sale of standard, older homes appears to be slowing down but more people are building new homes and are becoming over-extended financially. Crisis care agencies report that they are receiving applications for emergency assistance from families in the more affluent neighborhoods because their income level has dropped, they are unable to find alternative employment and the housing costs lead them very quickly into debt. Financial counseling and making hard decisions on reducing their level of housing can solve their immediate livelihood problems but often leads to a huge loss of capital to the family.

- The State and Commonwealth Governments are providing a large and indirect subsidy to the housing industry through the provision of low cost units and properties, first home buyers schemes, bond assistance payments and subsidies for the local rental property market with rent assistance.

- The social and economic vulnerability of local families and individuals (see Income and Employment chapter) is leading to increasing levels of local homelessness and the mix of community service housing sector services is inadequate to meet the demand.

- Conservative estimates suggest that 875 new families move into the area every year, usually into new houses. In 1999/00 alone there were 1,430 residential dwelling approvals in the region. The difference could well be shifts within the region and applications for holiday homes. The region has a large number of people whose primary savings and earnings are being invested in bricks and mortar and mortgage interest leaving little for investing locally in income generating/wealth creating activities.

Financial counsellors have indicated that paying or saving for mortgages is a very high priority for people living in the Peel and budget items (such as parent’s health care or further education) are given a lower spending priority. Investing in property is seen as a strategy for wealth creation⁹. For a number of families in the middle income bracket, this has been an effective strategy and if they are able to sell when the market is buoyant, their investment plus increment can be realised. For low income families or those in a vulnerable position, the opposite is true. Homeowners’ incomes are tied to spending (eg mortgages, rates and taxes and home improvements) and this restricts their capacity to generate wealth through other types of investment. It also restricts their ability to adapt to economic shocks (such as loss of income, disability etc). If an urgent need for capital is required and they are compelled to sell their house when the market is sluggish, large losses can occur, resulting in reduction of wealth and further reducing family resilience.

Local human services professionals estimate that:

- Over 200 young people are officially homeless in the Peel region. To be classified as homeless involves a rigorous procedure, including written confirmation from a parent or guardian stating that the young person cannot return home.

- Unofficial estimates by the Police Service and Centrelink put the actual number of people who could be classified as having no fixed abode at around double the official number. Most are living rough, sleeping on floors in different squats or friends’ houses for several

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⁹ Wealth is the number of days you can survive, without physically working (or anyone else in your household physically working) and maintain your standard of living”. – Robert T. Kiyosaki in ‘The Cash Flow Quadrant’, (1998).
days at a time. There is a core of about 50 young people who cannot return home and are persistently seen on the streets during the night.

- The region has only 8 crisis beds available for youth through the Calvary Youth Services in Mandurah.

- Youth homelessness, and the risk of becoming homeless, has been identified as a major issue facing young people in the region\(^\text{10}\) and a group has been established to investigate the issue in more depth.

- 245 women and 371 children were refused access to Pat Thomas House (the local women’s refuge) last year mostly because of lack of space – it only has 4 rooms. 90 women and 123 children were accepted in 1999/2000. For the women and children who could not be accommodated, they have either to return to what they consider is an unsafe environment, find alternative accommodation with friends or relatives (technically becoming temporarily homeless) or find accommodation outside of the region.

- There is not enough access to public housing for families escaping domestic violence. In the last two and a half years there were only 2 people placed in Homeswest housing (out of approximately 200 women and 400 children who requested assistance through the women’s refuge).

- There is no available short-term accommodation for homeless men over 25 years or age and a number of alcohol and drug dependent people have no access to long term safe, secure shelter.

- Rental accommodation is competitive and scarce. Respondents to the study cited several examples of where newcomers to the area had arrived expecting to readily find affordable rental but were forced to either take accommodation above their means or below requirements.

- Overcrowding is particularly an issue for the Aboriginal community where, unable to find accommodation, it is common for several families to live in the one household. This is thought to be a contributory factor to the recent unrest in the community.

- Common examples are cited of young families who could not afford property within walking distance of a school who when they have either sold their vehicle to have sufficient funds for the rental bond or the family car is taken by the worker, their children do not get to school.

- Several Aboriginal families have been registered as homeless due to the difficulty in accessing rental or even Homeswest accommodation. Several families have ended up living in their cars. This included one family newly arrived in the area where the parent had confirmed employment.

The housing concerns in the region have an additional spin off related to safety and security. The level of financial and emotional investment in home ownership is so strong that any threat to a person’s home is amplified. For example, in some Perth Metropolitan urban estates local residents hire private security guards to protect local property. There has been discussion of this in the Peel region, where most property crime rates by metropolitan standards are around 30% less than in metropolitan areas.\(^\text{11}\) This illustrates the emotional investment in housing and the impact of the threats to losing the home.

**GAP ANALYSIS**

In an effort to ameliorate the impacts of poverty, the ‘International Year of Eradication of Poverty’ (1996) report to the government of Western Australia recommended that public

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\(^{10}\) Youth Strategy, City of Mandurah, 1998

housing should be maintained at 5% of all housing. This level is internationally recognised as a minimum safety net for Western economies and may usefully be monitored in the Peel region to ensure an adequate safety net.

The Peel Economic Development Unit has put in place a regional group of Local Government Planners to assist in managing regional town planning schemes. The Peel Region Scheme indicates future and current property developments. It is used to demonstrate the population projections for the region. The need for a social or community planner has been raised and the City of Mandurah has recently committed funding for a part-time position to increase the level of community planning in infrastructure development but this is unlikely to be sufficient to address the full need for improved planning in the future.

There is a need for additional housing stock to ensure that the cultural needs of Aboriginal families are addressed (eg size for extended families, location issues in relation to "feuding").

Recognition and further financial support is needed for the critical role played in the provision of services to homeless people by volunteers across the Peel region. This includes people associated with the Foodbank, social workers who have linked families to bill paying services, provision of emergency relief, linking people to appropriate accommodation services and other services.

There are many people, frequently strongly aligned to religious organisations, steadily providing support to the homeless and destitute in the Peel region. Many are older people and some are even frail aged who receive little or no financial benefit to provide this service to the community. With the level of demand on services as described in the previous section, there is grave concern as to the capability of the non-government sector to continue the current level of support, much less increase the services to keep pace with demand.

**WHAT WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

The following were the most commonly mentioned key solutions to housing issues in the region.

- A 24 hour ‘safe, drying out’ shelter (like Calvary House in Rockingham) for drug and alcohol affected people who are ineligible for access to refuges.
- Improved family reconciliation and counselling services (including services for child witnesses of domestic violence, teenage and adult victims of sexual abuse, services for perpetrators of family violence and a range of prevention and early intervention strategies that will assist in stemming the flow of people seeking alternate accommodation).
- Youth refuges and long term supported accommodation services.
- Family respite accommodation services.
- Improved local family law information and free legal advice for economically disadvantaged families.
- Residential detoxification unit (drugs and alcohol) unit locally.
SAFETY AND SECURITY

The United Nations's Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the following:

ARTICLE 3
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

ARTICLE 7
All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law....

ARTICLE 22
Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for this dignity and the development of his personality.

CURRENT CONDITION

Safety and security does not only relate to the actual level of crime but also the perceptions that the community has about their own vulnerability. The study found that while the majority of people have a positive view of safety and security in the region, there are certain sectors of the community that are more at-risk in both physical and mental aspects of safety and security.

There are currently over 5,000 cases per year of people accessing emergency assistance such as food parcels and emergency payments. The range of problems reported as leading to a crisis situation is very varied. Anecdotal evidence from the study indicates a possible correlation between the increasing level of crisis in the region and the increasing incidence of petty crime, particularly burglary.

Young people in particular feel unsafe in the region. There is some concern amongst older people due to the media coverage of crime against seniors and the difficulty in mobility demonstrated by the previous chapter on housing, there are large numbers of people living in the Peel at present who do not enjoy safe and secure housing.

SECONDARY DATA

The Department of Commerce and Trade has produced a document called 'Living in the Regions'. The information was produced from a random telephone survey of 150 respondents and a focus discussion group.

"While the vast majority of respondents thought the Peel was a great place for children to grow up in, the result was nonetheless a little below the all-regions average. There was also a sharp contrast in the level of agreement in the Peel in terms of the 'livability' of Peel compared to other regions. This disparity may be a function of concerns about crime in the region, as reported by the focus groups, combined with concern about employment opportunities for young people.

It was noticeable that the focus group from Mandurah made several references to increased crime relating it to factors such as unemployment among young people and the paradox of relatively asset-rich retirees being attracted to the region along with low income families utilising its proximity to Kwinana and other industrial centres, combined with the availability of cheap housing and the attractive coastal life style".

Because generally there is more than one reason behind any decision to move, the survey then asked respondents to nominate all of their main reasons for moving. This brought
lifestyle into even greater prominence, mentioned by 75% of respondents as at least one of their main reasons for moving to the Peel. The attraction of the ocean/seaside was also evident with 37% mentioning this as one of their main motivations. Employment fell back into third place, followed by family/marriage and then retirement. The percentage mentioning retirement (17%) was noticeably higher than the 10% all-regions average.

Perceived safety was the most universally held attitude throughout all regions where many people have a particular perception that their children are less at risk from the 'stranger danger' than they associate with Perth. This was also true in the Peel but to a lesser extent than other regions.

The crime statistics for the region show that Peel is still a reasonably safe place to live in comparison to other areas but that there is a rapid increase in crime. In 1998/99 there were 6,910 criminal offences recorded across the Peel region. During 2000/01, this had increased to 7,983. A more detailed breakdown is included in Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>Rate/1000</th>
<th>Peel</th>
<th>Rate/1000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime against the Person</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,087</td>
<td>8.51</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime against Property</td>
<td>7,870</td>
<td>9,893</td>
<td>77.47</td>
<td>5,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>1,998</td>
<td>2,710</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>1,623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>3,482</td>
<td>4,817</td>
<td>36.15</td>
<td>2,408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>1,283</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Offences Reported</td>
<td>9,905</td>
<td>12,263</td>
<td>96.02</td>
<td>6,910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WA Police Service Strategic Services Statistics

Drug related offences have steadily increased in the last three years from 360 recorded offences in 1996/97 to 480 offences in 2000/01. A six week intensive campaign in 2001 yielded 56 arrests for offences relating to the selling, supply and manufacture of illicit drugs. The increases for sexual assault and burglary are of particular concern.

The Peel region has a relatively low level of crime in comparison to the Perth Metropolitan region but is higher per 1,000 people than most other non-metropolitan regions in Western Australia.

Access to accurate legal information, advice or assistance is lower than in metropolitan and other regional areas where information is available. For example, there are 9 local lawyers in Peel (population 76,929), plus duty lawyers when the Courts sit. In Bunbury (population 28,500 plus surrounding areas) to 36 lawyers plus a Community Legal Service with a mediation service, a Legal Aid office and an Aboriginal Legal Service, plus duty lawyers accessible prior to Court if necessary. In addition, the Family Court provides Conciliation Conference services and Directions Conferences.

There is a very limited access to Legal Aid and other legal services in Peel. Children's Court, Legal Aid is provided by SCALES in Rockingham, requiring individuals already in a vulnerable situation to make a trip outside their own area at a cost that they can often ill afford. There are 2 hours a week of free legal advice available through the local Citizen's Advice Bureau. A Peel Community Legal Service was established in August 2001 and it is proposed that additional services will be available through this organisation.

Another indication of a feeling of insecurity in the population is the increasing level of demand on the social services. The health of a population is linked to the level of safety and security and as indicated in the chapter on Health and Community Services, the community is under considerable strain. Increasing rates of access to crisis services such as the Good
Samaritans, the Kid’s Helpline and other mental health programs are an indicator that the natural well-being of the community is being disturbed.

Statistics received from the Kid’s Helpline outlined a high level of calls from Peel compared to other areas of Western Australia. The number of calls as a percentage of young people in the region was 44.5% (39.7% in Western Australia). Only 15% of all callers choose to reveal their postcode so estimations are of approximately 2,950 calls from Peel with a further 5,900 unsuccessful attempts to access the service. The number of calls pertaining to child abuse was 8.5% (1.9% above the state average) and leaving home/homeless issues 4.6% (0.1% higher than the state average). 8.1% of young people contacted the service in regards to sex related issues which again is higher than the recorded state average (7.5%).

PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study findings confirmed the secondary data findings that in general Peel is still seen predominantly as a safe place to live. 70% of respondents agreed that there is a positive measure of safety and security in the region. Interestingly, even those respondents who were interviewed while requesting emergency assistance still appreciated the positive values in the region but admitted that it was the economic situation that was causing their main distress.

An interesting anomaly that appeared in the primary data was that of the 22% who expressed strong concern about the level of safety in the region, over 50% of those (26) respondents were in the younger age bracket. The study did not request demographic information from those surveyed so this information is not verifiable but it is sufficiently consistent to be worthy of further study. Anecdotal information from respondents indicated a feeling of being unsafe when being out in the evenings, a recognition of a growing level of petty crime, drug use, bullying and instability amongst their peers.

To support this observation, the Police Service is also concerned about the increasing level of petty crime, burglaries and cautions issues, particularly to young people. The figures given in Table 13 show that the burglary rates have been increasing rapidly. Local Police report a high incidence of young people as perpetrators.

Of the study respondents, reasons reported for people accessing crisis support were many, varied and often inter-related, but all of which add up to a lack of security, whether physical or financial. Main examples included:

- Family breakdown (eg tension between adults in relationships (either between partners or adult children living at home and parents).
- Family violence (physical or psychological violence including sexual assault and/or domestic violence).
- Financial hardship (eg change in economic circumstance, unexpectedly high outgoings for medical bills or other circumstances).
- Ministry of Housing rent arrears that preclude further assistance.
- ‘Breached’ conditions of obtaining unemployment assistance leading to no cash income.
GAP ANALYSIS

The above identified reasons for insecurity amongst the population have complex causes and cannot be fully addressed only by consideration of safety and security solutions. It was emphasised by respondents that an integrated approach to dealing with gaps in community support was necessary to achieve long term results. With this caveat, the key gaps reported to the study as facing the Peel community were:

- Inadequate prevention and early intervention strategies.
- Perceived shortage of staff to strengthen traditional community approaches to policing.
- Lack of community information about the success of local community safety and crime prevention strategies, especially those implemented by the Safer WA Committee.
- Lack of accurate knowledge of how the legal system works and rights and responsibilities under the law.
- Consideration of community safety and crime prevention in planning and development decisions.
- Absence of appropriate 24 hour emergency services and referral pathways, especially a 24 hour shelter, for drug and alcohol affected people.

WHAT WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

- The need for appropriate 24 hour emergency services, especially a 24 hour shelter, for drug and alcohol affected people was raised as the highest priority by a number of different respondents in several different contexts, both considering the safety of families, wives and children, of those directly ‘under the influence’ for their own protection, and to keep the streets safer for the general population.
- More investment in prevention and early intervention strategies in the region was seen as a key, given the success of the few programs that are operating successfully and the constant difficulties in finding core funding.
- More focus on mitigating the effects of crime on both direct and indirect victims through increased counselling and appropriate community involvement programs.
- Increased police resources, particularly for community policing.
- Increased lighting of public places.
EDUCATION

The United Nations’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the following:

**ARTICLE 26**

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

CURRENT CONDITION

The study found that there are world class teachers and facilities in the Peel region, many innovative programs and extraordinary efforts to maximise and attract resources to keep up with the demands of systems. As has been noted in previous chapters, however, the resources take time to deliver and by the time the new facilities are in place a new demand has either arrived or emerged.

While the condition in formal primary and secondary education has improved in recent years, non-formal education, skills development and lifelong learning is seen as in very poor condition.

The perception is that education is not highly valued. Extra curricula skills development and post-compulsory education is not easy to afford for lower income households in the region and this has to change quickly if the Peel area is to achieve its economic and social ambitions.

SECONDARY INFORMATION

Compulsory Schooling

In June 2000 the region had a total of 33 schools – 26 State schools and 7 private schools, with a total of 14,380 students:

- 7,962 children in primary schools;
- 4,562 children in secondary schools; and
- 1,856 children attending pre-primary schools.

Approximately 600 Aboriginal students are registered with the Peel District Education Office\(^{12}\) with most living in the Mandurah/Murray districts.

2000/2001 were very positive for the formal education sector in the region with new secondary schools opening in Boddington and Mandurah (Halls Head). In 2001 the new Mandurah Senior College opened. This is a campus just for Years 11 and 12 students and is collocated with the Challenger TAFE. A new primary school opened in Falcon, a suburb of Mandurah. Another is planned to open in the near future in Dawesville, further to the south. The level of investment in the sector is reflected in the government budgets for the region as noted in the Health and Community Services chapter.

Despite the rapid growth in infrastructure facilities, the population pressure has already been apparent in the higher than expected enrolments in the new schools, resulting in, particularly

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\(^{12}\) Peel District Education Office includes Rockingham/Kwinana, but not Serpentine-Jarrahdale or Boddington.)
at the senior college, the need to bring forward planning for the next stage of infrastructure development.
The social indicators for education, learning and skills levels for the region were consistent in highlighting the justifiable concern amongst the study respondents.

The comparative figures of educational infrastructure for the state do not give a clear picture of the adequacy of schooling in the Peel as the number of sites can depend upon how education in the area is structured. They do however show that on most indicators Peel figures are at the lower end of the indicators, not within the top three, and well below the level that would be expected for the population size in comparison to other areas, particularly comparing the level of infrastructure available per 1,000 persons. Refer Table 15.

Table 15 – Number of Educational Institutions in the Regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Educational Institutions</th>
<th>Gascoyne</th>
<th>Goldfields Esperance</th>
<th>Great Southern</th>
<th>Kimberley</th>
<th>Mid West</th>
<th>PEEL</th>
<th>Pilbara</th>
<th>South West</th>
<th>Wheatbelt</th>
<th>Regional Western Australia</th>
<th>Perth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 0 to 5</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Schools</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 6 to 12</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Schools</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 13 to 17</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Primary and Secondary Schools</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 5 to 17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Schools</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 6 to 17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 15 &amp; over</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and Further Education Institutions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 15 &amp; over</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Education Institutions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number per 1,000 pax aged 15 &amp; over</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Regional Statistics. Regional Development Council based on ABS 1996 Census
Retention Rates

In 1999 there were 945 students enrolled at Year 10 level in the following schools in the Peel region: Boddington District High School; Coodanup; Frederick Irwin Anglican School; Mandurah Catholic College; Mandurah High School; Pinjarra Senior High School and Waroona District High School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>MANDURAH</th>
<th>PEEL REGION</th>
<th>WA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Peel District Education Office, 2001

Two years later (in 2001) there are 597 students enrolled at Year 12 level within the same region. This equates to a Year 10 to Year 12 retention rate of 63%.

The Year 10 cohort of 1998 shows a similar picture:

- 911 enrolled in Year 10 in 1999;
- 546 enrolled in Year 12 two years later; and
- Retention rate: 60%.

These figures were consolidated for the region. Initial indications are that there is a variable rate across the region's schools and that some retention rates are below the average. This is being explored further in the Youth Commitment program that has recently commenced within the region.

Post-compulsory Schooling

Linked to the number of further educational facilities, the level of tertiary and professional skills in the Peel shows differences to the state average. Challenger TAFE (South West Metropolitan College of TAFE's Peel Campus) delivered programs to more than 2,800 students during 2000. It is linked with Murdoch University and the Mandurah Senior College to allow inter-sectoral collaboration and increase training opportunities for local students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALES</th>
<th>FEMALES</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Degree</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>804</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Diploma</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Diploma</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Vocational; Basic Vocational</td>
<td>5603</td>
<td>764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequately Described</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Stated</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10,383</td>
<td>6,911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Basic Community Profile

The Peel region has extremely high numbers of people with trade qualifications – more than 36.8% compared with a state average of 27.2%. Conversely, the Peel has extremely low
numbers of people with post-compulsory schooling (or tertiary) qualifications – see Table 17 above. Just 24% of the population aged 15 years and over have any formal qualifications. Of these, more than 4,463 people hold engineering qualifications reflecting the focus on mining in the region. There are also extremely high numbers of people without qualifications of any kind.

**Vocational Training**

Vocational Education and Training programs for the region have increased considerably in the last five years (56% from 528,771 student curriculum hours in 1995 to 825,988 in 2000). This is reflected in the proportional achievement of Peel with regard to trade qualification levels. The VET programs are delivered by a range of methods including correspondence and via the Internet.

**Lifelong Learning**

Lifelong learning is a key factor in determining economic outcomes over time. It is an indication of the education achievements, professional or trade qualifications and informal skills development opportunities. A population of well-trained and flexible workers means that a region can change with the shifting demands of a global economy. According to the ABS ‘YourPlace’ database which has rated 632 localities Australia-wide and which was designed to assess indicators of future prosperity, Peel has a lower lifelong learning rating (13) than Kwinana (29) – which has the lowest indicator rating in the Perth Metropolitan region – or the Bunbury region (51). Waroona has a rating of just 4 points. Of further concern than the absolute rating is the decline over the last 10 years. The figures show that Western Australia as a whole has cause for concern, with Peel, Rockingham and Bunbury declining while the rating for the Perth Metropolitan region has remained static. However, each locality in the Peel and the overall rating for the region has reduced significantly.

Table 18 – Lifelong Learning Indicator Ratings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERTH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Perth Metropolitan</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest And Lowest LGA In Perth Metro</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth (C)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwinana (T)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE PEEL REGION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandurah (C)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray (S)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waroona (S)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE BUNBURY REGION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunbury (C)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capel (S)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey (S)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dardanup (S)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spiller Gibbins Swan Pty Ltd for Ministry of Planning, South West Metropolitan Urban Development Study (T = Town, S – Shire, C = City)

13 Separate ratings were not available for Boddington or Serpentine-Jarrahdale.
PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Discussions with participants in the study reveal that all of the respondents were very concerned with education and skills development. There are four local environmental factors that have a big impact on the Peel’s low level of skill achievement. These were also strongly linked to employment outcomes, which are explored further in the next chapter.

1. Valuing education.
2. Transport.
3. Infrastructure.
4. Resources.

Valuing Education

There was a perception that people living in the Peel region should value education highly but almost 90% either clearly disagreed or had some reservation about how high education is actually valued in the region. Parents, students and the education system, expressed concern about the level of understanding of the needs in the region and the level of support available to increase skill levels.

Only 21% of people agreed that parents had enough information about the link between education levels and livelihood and only a slightly higher number (28%) thought that students had enough information about this link. 96% agreed that the education to work programs were not sufficiently strong.

Almost all respondents (98%) interviewed saw a need for local people to learn skills that allow them to be creative, recognise opportunities and act with confidence to meet these challenges (be they personal, community, work or business development challenges).

Transport

Access to effective and affordable transport so people can move freely to and from education campuses at all levels was seen as a major concern and was mentioned as a regional priority in 100% of interviews from all parts of the region. Transport was not only seen as a means of access to formal education but also for all other means of life skills development and social well-being.

Table 19 – Impact of Transport
Infrastructure

As indicated above, the level of infrastructure has been of strong concern to the region. There was awareness of the new facilities and an appreciation of the advances in the last two years but there is still a concern that the facilities will be insufficient to cope with the level of growth.

In emergent growth areas (such as south of the Dawesville Channel, Murray and Serpentine-Jarrahdale) access to adequate education facilities are an important aspect of local services for new property developments. Local schools have been successful in building partnerships to overcome resource challenges in the face of rapid growth. These include capital works partnerships (eg Halls Head Recreation Centre has school and community access and is a partnership with local government, the education sector and other funders).

Resources

An increasing number of local families are struggling – emotionally and economically, placing new types of demands on the education system at a time when the resourcing profile of the region means it is difficult to respond (eg assistance for low achievers in class rooms). Innovative regional early intervention and prevention programs (such as the STAR program at Fairbridge and the Student Volunteer Program where older people visit selected children and spend one hour each week providing coaching on reading and writing skills) are at risk because they do not have on-going funding.

Expansion of the Kwinana Industry Compact (education and industry partnerships in work placements) into the southern end of the region was welcomed. Alcoa’s contribution to apprenticeship and traineeships (87 for the Rockingham/Peel area) and the new scholarship for women in industry are appreciated but there is a strong desire to see these programs replicated throughout the region to create a turn-around on the negative indicators.

GAP ANALYSIS

The following analysis was generated from study data based on qualitative information of study respondents.

Table 20 - Summary of Study Gaps in Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generating Pathways (counseling/training/life skills/career options that lead to tangible employment opportunities)</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Resources in Education/TAFE</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce Local University</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase Funding/Facilities for Local Schools</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve School Grounds/Maintenance (care for children)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Study Data n = 106

Additional anecdotal reports raised several key concerns.

➢ A number of 4 year olds did not go to pre-school in the region this year¹⁴ (2001) in part, it is reported, because it is too difficult for parents to deliver and collect children as they do not have transport and live too far for young children to walk. Concern has been expressed about the additional requirements that will be needed for these children when they do enter the school system.

¹⁴ School transport is provided for primary school age in most circumstances but not for pre-primary.
Overall cuts in education spending have come at the expense of specialist programs in larger schools to support people who require additional assistance. These have been cut at a time when there is a greater need for these programs.

Schools have indicated that in the Peel, with its limited industrial base, securing sponsorship or assistance for key projects on campus is very difficult. This is more problematic in Mandurah than in some other communities. It is more acute again in areas where many families are economically disadvantaged and are struggling to pay mortgages, let alone school related fees.

Schools surveyed reported the need to exclude students from low income families from school excursions because of non-payment of fees from previous excursions. It is managed carefully and as discretely as possible but the bottom line is that not all students in the same class receive the same education experiences. Individual parents surveyed also indicated that they could not afford extra-curricular activities for their children.

There are reports that people are attending/enrolling in post-compulsory schooling in order to have access to Centrelink payments (and bring in additional income into their families). This requires careful further examination.

**WHAT WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

There is a need to shift community attitudes to education and to engage students in building a personal vision for themselves and their community:

The following were seen as areas where further focus is required:

- Adopting whole-of-school strategies to build enterprise skills/social capital.
- Developing strategies to assist local young people to think globally and act locally.
- Maximising local resources and finding ways that economically disadvantaged families are engaged in this process.
- Encouraging modelling by developing a campaign to increase lifelong learning opportunities in the region.
- Whole-of-community commitment to valuing children and young people.
- Regional Youth Commitment by PEAC (Peel Employment Advisory Committee) in partnership with others to mobilise school leavers as a matter of urgency.
INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

The United Nations's Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the following:

ARTICLE 22
Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for this dignity and the free development of his personality.

ARTICLE 23
(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

CURRENT CONDITION

The economy of the region is not reaching its full potential. Mining is the biggest sector by far, yet it has a comparatively low level of employment opportunities compared to the tourism industry for example. The fragile environment of the region is both an economic asset in terms of tourism, 'clean' industry, intensive agriculture and proximity to the Perth Metropolitan region but it inhibits employment growth due to the high level of legislation governing business development. The lack of efficient transport infrastructure is an inhibitor to economic development and participation in the workforce. Similarly, there is a cyclical cause and effect in the low purchasing power in the local economy. Income levels are low partly due to high unemployment rates, greatly increasing the price sensitivity of retail purchases, which in turn affects the viability, net earnings and re-investment power of the business sector in the region.

It is reported that employers have limited employment resources for people once they have completed high school. Traineeships and apprenticeships are very few. One bank advised that on average it gets at least 40 applications for a junior/apprentice position but can only employ one person.

The high level of the population receiving unemployment benefit further masks those who are technically employed through very small scale businesses or in part-time work. The low average income figures illustrate the challenges facing families in having sufficient income to cover daily needs. A high level of access to emergency financial and Foodbank services further illustrates the severe financial stress of an estimated 17% of the population.

SECONDARY DATA

The Peel region has a diverse economy, predominantly based on mining and mineral processing, although agriculture, the equine industry, timber production, fishing and tourism also make a contribution to Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP). Mining and mineral processing is dominated by large reserves of bauxite, which are processed into alumina. Alcoa is the region's largest employer. The region supplies feedstock for the production of 21% of the world's alumina. Gold yields from the mines in Boddington have contributed

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15 Gold mining is Boddington has ceased whilst the mine changes over from surface to hard rock mining. The mine operator will assess in 18 months time whether or not to proceed with the hard rock mining. Its workforce (bar 10 skeleton crew) of approximately 130 people has been laid off.)
significantly towards Western Australia’s gold production. Mineral sands production also makes a contribution to GRDP (gross regional domestic product). Output from total mining activities was valued at $1.7 billion in 1999/00 of which alumina production accounted for $1.6 billion.

Table 21 – Peel Region Economy

Note: the above categories are based on average value of production/turnover over a three year period. This allows for annual variations in production quantities and commodity prices. In addition, due to variations in the release dates of various production and turnover statistics, some of the categories shown in the graph are not available for the full three year period from 1997/98 to 1999/00.

Source: Department of Commerce and Trade

➢ There were 2,816 business locations within the Peel region in 1998, predominantly in the agriculture, retail, business services and construction industries.

➢ Total agricultural output in 1998/99 was valued at $98.2 million and this accounted for 2.3% of the state’s total agricultural production.

➢ The equine industry has a unique presence in the region, contributing some $75 million to the economy in 1997/98.

➢ The region’s forestry industry is based primarily on the logging of hardwoods. In 1999/00 152,000 tonnes were harvested at an estimated value of $7.8 million. This accounted for 10.5% of the state total.

➢ Fishing operations are centred around Mandurah and are dominated by the rock lobster catch. For the 1999/00 season the total catch was valued at approximately $20.3 million, of which rock lobster accounted for $18.3 million.

➢ Although tourism contributes only 2.7% of GRDP, there was an estimated 1.9 million day visitors to the region in 1999.

➢ The main manufacturing sectors include metal products, wood products, food processing, transport equipment and metal fabrication. In 1998/99 there was an estimated 3,975 people employed in manufacturing.

➢ Building activity has continued to grow strongly. In 1999/00, there were 1,430 residential dwelling approvals in the region. Total building approvals for 1999/00 were worth $217.1 million.

➢ Commercial activity turnover in 1999/00 was estimated to be $475.4 million.
In comparison, the social payments through government welfare budgets per year for the region were estimated in 2000 to be around $210 million\textsuperscript{16} - the equivalent of the building approvals for the year and a half of the total commercial activity.

The South West Urban System Economic Study 2000 estimates the contribution of regional government current expenditure to economic activity in Peel to be 1.1%. This is compared to a contribution of 10.1% in Bunbury and 1.6% in Perth.

**Workforce**

From 1990 to 2000 the labour force in the Peel region increased in number by 7,821 people, representing an average growth rate of 3.3% per year. In June 2000, the total of the region’s labour force was estimated to be 31,519 people. The majority of the labour force (59%) resides in the City of Mandurah. Since 1990 the region’s labour force has been characterised by two main features:

- An unemployment rate that is consistently higher than that of the Western Australian state average - in September 2001 the unemployment rate of the Peel region was 9.2%, which was 2.5% higher than the state unemployment rate of 6.7% for the same period.
- An estimated 42% of the working population are employed outside of the region.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics’s 1996 Census, in the Peel region 56.88% of the population receives a weekly income under $300 ($300-$399 is the median weekly individual income for Western Australia - Rockingham Kwinana 51.82% and Fremantle 46.86%). At the other end of the scale, in the Peel region 16.38% of the population earn $600 or more in a week, Rockingham-Kwinana 17.78% and Fremantle 22.57%. For Western Australia as a whole, 46.29% of the population earn under $300 a week and 21.42% earn over $600 per week. Table 21 provides an indication of income level and median age. This implies that there is some impact of Peel having a higher median age range but that this is not the only variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA AND TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>PERSONAL MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME</th>
<th>MEDIAN AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mandurah 38,925</td>
<td>$230</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canning 68,374</td>
<td>$309</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockburn 57,335</td>
<td>$297</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armadale 49,703</td>
<td>$286</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockingham 58,167</td>
<td>$263</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwinana 19,186</td>
<td>$245</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census 1996

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has developed a database called ‘YourPlace’ used to indicate the social and economic status of an area. Its assesses an area on quantifiable measures and develops a package of data that, when compiled, constitutes a social or economic indicator. It then ranks the region or local government area from highest functioning to lowest functioning.

\textsuperscript{16}Conservative annual estimate based on actual expenditure figures provided by Centrelink for the six months ending 31 December 2000.
Some of the key ingredients in this package are:

- Age structure of the population.
- Household socio-demographic stability (marriage formation, house ownership status).
- Livability or quality of life of an area as reflected in lifestyle choice (available cultural, recreational and entertainment choices) infrastructure.
- Whether or not households have the skill set and learning characteristics required to effectively compete (in an economy).

Table 23 below shows just how poor the Peel economy is performing according to this set of data. Although its ranking has increased over time, of the 632 local government areas across Australia, the Peel ranks at 468 (in 1998). In contrast, the Perth Metropolitan region ranked 284 – with Subiaco in the top 10 Australia wide. The Bunbury region fluctuated but it is higher ranked than the Perth Metropolitan region.

Table 23 – Peel Economy Performance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(RANKING, AUSTRALIA-WIDE OUT OF 632)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE PERTH METROPOLITAN Subiaco (C)</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE PEEL REGION</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandurah (C)</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray (S)</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waroona (S)</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE BUNBURY REGION</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunbury (C)</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capel (S)</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvey (S)</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dardanup (S)</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ‘YourPlace’ Database

The following more detailed information from ‘YourPlace’ (Table 24) gives credence to the community concerns, as shown below in the primary research, that there is a low level of job readiness in the population and future opportunities are in doubt, despite the relatively high rating given to the possible economic prospects of Peel.

Table 24 - Future Perth Comparisons from ‘YourPlace’ Database

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Bunbury</td>
<td>PEEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Readiness</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating out of 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A low rating indicates highest level of long term unemployed, migrant unemployed and recipients of Social Security benefits associated with structural unemployment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Performance</th>
<th>304</th>
<th>397</th>
<th>466</th>
<th>276</th>
<th>335</th>
<th>433</th>
<th>246</th>
<th>285</th>
<th>442</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranking out of 632</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia-wide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A low rating indicates a higher level of local employment provision, output per capita as well as potential for future growth.
PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS

Findings from the study showed that there are very high levels of concern about employment prospects in the Peel region, particularly for young people. Table 25 below demonstrates:

- **A high level of concern about job prospects for young people** - employment prospects for young people are seen to be the highest concern for most people interviewed – 94% expressed reservations about job prospects for teenagers. Less than 10% of the people interviewed thought those job prospects in the region are good. Grave concern was expressed for people who left school at Year 10 (98%) and high levels of concern were expressed for Year 12 graduates looking for work in the region (65%).

- **Students need better preparation for the workforce** - few people thought that young people were well prepared for the workforce:
  
  - 20% really did not know and would not comment;
  - 72% disagreed and felt that they were not well prepared; and
  - only 6% felt that they were well enough prepared for the workforce.

- **High expectations of employers to prepare school leavers for work** – there are mixed views about this matter but views are strongly held. Some believe that families should be responsible for preparing children by developing a strong work ethic; others say schools have this job. Employers expressed the view that due to a lack of job readiness and work experience a higher level of training is expected of them when employing local people than in other areas where there are more, and more diverse, job opportunities.

- **Not a lot of confidence about how well young people are prepared for the workforce** - over 60% of respondents either disagreed, or did not know how well young people were prepared for the workforce in Peel.

Anecdotal comments throughout the interviews suggest that there is a severe shortage of confidence about the future for people living in the Peel. Families moving to the area for lifestyle reasons may find themselves living on unemployment benefit, despite being job ready.

The lack of jobs for young people is confirmed by the decreased ratio of young people in the region. The ratio is counterbalanced by families who cannot afford to support the transition of a young person to higher education, increasing employment and income prospects, or for transport opportunities for the young person to access employment outside of the region.

Table 25 – Employment Opportunities
GAP ANALYSIS

The following Table 26 shows the frequency with which certain issues arose in the respondent replies relating to income and employment. The table shows that ‘access’ was a major gap in the minds of most respondents. The relative isolation of the workforce, both employed and self-employed, was considered to be a major factor in the capacity of individuals to exercise their right to employment. Examples were cited of people managing to find transport to get to interviews but then being unable to retain the job because available transport was inadequate to maintain regular attendance. Others cited having had jobs outside of the region but being unable to earn sufficient to cover the transport costs, or to make it worthwhile to do so.

Table 26 - Summary of Local Issues Affecting Income and Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address Public Transport Issues (local, regional and external)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase full-time employment (especially for ‘blue collar’ workers)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Planning-Improve Roads/Footpaths</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Local Produce/Support Local Farming/Dairy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrelink More Available In Remote Areas</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop/Promote Local Industry &amp; Small Business</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Childcare Facilities</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase In Highly Skilled Employees/Local Residents</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination Of Employment Opportunities For Aboriginal People (that includes family support, education and training)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Shopping Facilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Open Range Zoo</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand Gold Mine In Boddington</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce STD Telephone Rates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Local Solutions Study, Peel Development Commission May 2001

WHAT WOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

There was unanimous agreement that more employment is required for the region, therefore, the most frequently recorded specific recommendations have been recorded by local government area to show the similarities and differences in the suggestions received.

Boddington

- Decision on extension to mines.
- Develop Tourist Railway.
- Attract an open range zoo
- Promote local features more effectively.
- Support local businesses to be tourist friendly.

Mandurah

- Improve self-sufficiency of economy from a factor of 29 to 50+.
- Mobilise local businesses to find ways to employ and skill young people.
- Mobilise community to value life-long learning.
- Develop a range of relevant post-compulsory local education options.
- Expand early intervention and prevention programs in primary and high schools.
- Attract additional professional services into the town.
- Improve employment options for Aboriginal people.
Murray
- Improve local employment options.
- Assist local people to cope with change.
- Implement local economic development plan.
- Improve local education and employment options for Aboriginal people.
- Improve support for non-academic students in schools.
- General pathways into further study and work for young people.
- Develop historic precinct.
- Improve water quality in rivers.

Serpentine-Jarrahdale
- Build on sustainable practices in the region.
- Extend tourism options in each locality.
- Improve Byford infrastructure to support people (education, employment etc).
- Improve local employment options.
- Promote food produced in the region.
- Enhance pathways to employment for young people.

Waroona
- Improve local employment options.
- Assist local people to cope with change.
- Implement local economic development plan.
- Improve support for non-academic students in schools.
- General pathways into further study and work for young people and 'blue collar' workers.
- Investigate further the potential of the irrigation area.
- Enhance local tourist attractions as a priority.
What becomes clear from the study is that while there are gaps and unmet needs in each sector, there needs to be recognition of the inter-relatedness of causes that together progressively lead to social dysfunction. Gaps and unmet needs must be addressed in a strategic and co-ordinated way, both to create an increasingly strong mesh of safety net initiatives that can support the vulnerable and provide a springboard to future prosperity. What is required is a range of solutions that reverse the trend as illustrated in Figure 1.

The study has shown that the current condition in the Peel region raises serious concerns about the overall social well-being of the region. There are strong positive factors in the region's development but signs of social stress are becoming increasingly apparent. At present the impact of the negative indicators are not obvious externally. There is however a
growing realisation amongst all sectors of the community that the key issues of employment generation, education and skills development, housing for the most vulnerable, and community resourcing must be seriously considered both to halt further decline and to redress the existing low social indicators.

The different localities in the region expressed different levels of concern on certain issues:

**Boddington:** generally respondents indicated the highest level of overall satisfaction with the social condition in their area. The community is more cohesive and social service levels are appropriate to the level of population. Although employment is currently at reasonable levels, the main employment sectors (agriculture and farming) are facing uncertainties, which explained the respondents' main concern being generation of additional employment opportunities.

**City of Mandurah:** being the largest population centre and ranked as the fastest growing city in Australia, Mandurah showed the highest rates of negative social indicators. There was huge concern about all the aspects mentioned in the report. Youth issues are currently a priority and these are also linked to transport, employment generation and skills development issues.

**Shire of Murray:** respondents were particularly concerned with dairy deregulation and the impact (eg amenity, health) of the mining companies in the area. Local business particularly were concerned about the economic future of the area and how that would effect the social situation. Housing, youth, employment and education issues came through very strongly and levels of community infrastructure, particularly transport were raised as key concerns.

**Shire of Waroona:** as confirmed by the information gathered through the study, Waroona has particular concerns that require urgent consideration and support. The unemployment rate in Waroona is high, again particularly amongst the young people. In addition to dairy deregulation, Waroona has also been affected by local company closures and the cutbacks in the forestry sector. Transport also was raised as a major concern, as was the number of people living on low incomes and the effect that this has on the disposable income available in the local economy.

**Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale:** has also experienced job losses and is concerned about long term employment prospects, particularly in balancing the natural attributes of the Shire with the need for economic development. The growth rate of the Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale is now climbing to equal that of Mandurah and this is bringing considerable stress to resources and infrastructure development plans. Government boundaries are a particular issue for the Shire. The study often found it difficult to access information for the Shire as some services are amalgamated into the Perth Metropolitan region statistics. As with the other local government areas, transport and youth issues arose in all interviews.

**REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Although the composite picture of the social sector shows that there are major concerns, the study respondents also highlighted the opportunities in the region. There are many innovative and valuable programs in the region which are working to strengthen the community social sector. There are local professionals, staff and a strong volunteer network that received high commendation from most respondents. There is a strong recognition that the region cannot only rely on government input to turn around the negative social indicators but that the industry and small business sector and the whole community needs to be mobilised to generate local solutions to the issues.

There is gradually an increasing recognition of the community needs, as illustrated by the increased education budget, the Federal Department of Family and Community Services new program identifying Mandurah as a priority needs area, and a range of new initiatives that are operating in the region.
However, the energy, skills and resources of these positive initiatives are stretched beyond acceptable limits. The resourcing information available during the short study period does not give definitive information on the level of resourcing in comparison to other areas. The indicators show however that there is strong grounds for concern and a need for further in-depth investigation on the comparable level of government support for the population of the Peel region.

There is an urgent need to support the priority needs of the region and the integrated implementation of solutions that are appropriate to the needs of the regional population.

With appropriate resourcing and integrated planning, most respondents were very positive about the future of the Peel region. The most frequently identified recommendations were as follows:

✓ Higher community cohesion.
✓ Generation of social capital.
✓ Job creation.
✓ Stronger economic, social and environmental base.
✓ Reduction of disadvantage/increase in opportunities.
✓ Development of infrastructure and service delivery.
✓ Increased availability of information and advice to promote development.
✓ Increased level of services that meet the community's needs.
✓ Sustained program impacts through a stable, representative, dynamic structure.

There was however an overwhelming concern that if further support and resources are not forthcoming, the local population and local governments cannot adequately service the local community. This will result in an ever increasing proportion of the population towards the downwards social spiral (refer Figure 1).

It is recommended that both within the region and beyond, a higher prominence is given to the consideration of the region's needs, particularly in relation to resourcing both for current needs and for future growth. Regional partnerships are required to increase integrated planning and sharing of resources. Collaborative action has been shown to be very effective in the region and wherever possible positive examples and successful programs should be expanded and replicated throughout the region.

Further research is required into some of the gap areas identified as the scope and duration of the study precludes detailed investigation into specific areas. There was a large amount of more in-depth information on many of the issues raised through the work of other local organisations and this information would be available for further study and design of practical solutions. More specific recommendations and suggestions for priority programs were gathered during the study and these will be collated and provided through the regional networks and appropriate agencies.
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<td>A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Community-</td>
<td>Extracts from a report commissioned by Department of Family &amp;</td>
<td>Erin Gauntlett, Richard Hugman, Pauline Logan, Prof Peter Kenyon, Institute for</td>
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<td>Based Prevention and Early Intervention Action</td>
<td>Community Services, Community Branch</td>
<td>Research into International Competitiveness, Curtin Business School, Curtin University of</td>
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<td>A Regional Profile The Peel Region of Western Australia</td>
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<td>A Review of the Early Childhood Literature</td>
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<td>A report to the Government of Western Australia through the Minister for</td>
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<td>Eradication of Poverty (1996) Taskforce</td>
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<td>Community Opportunity and Vulnerability in Australia’s</td>
<td>Characteristics, patterns and implications</td>
<td>Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute: Scott Baum, Robert Stimson, Kevin O’Connor</td>
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<td>Cities and Towns</td>
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<td>Gap between the number of people using mental health services in the</td>
<td>Health Department of Western Australia</td>
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<td>Corridor and the number of people expected to use services.</td>
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<td>Health Information Centre, Health Department of Western Australia</td>
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<td>Health Measures For the Population of Western Australia: Trends and Comparisons</td>
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<td>Health Department of Western Australia</td>
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<td>Healthview - Sobering-up Shelter in Wiluna Turns Outback Town Around</td>
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<td>Hearing the Voices, volumes 1 and 2</td>
<td>Life on a low income in Tasmania. Prepared on behalf of the Just Tasmania Coalition</td>
<td>Jo Flanagan, Social Action &amp; Research Centre, Anglicare Tasmania</td>
<td>Jan 2000</td>
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<td>Literature Review - Evidence Based Practice</td>
<td>Determining models of quality service delivery requires definition of standards.</td>
<td>Health Department of Western Australia</td>
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<td>Mandurah Inner Area Strategic Land Use &amp; Transport Integration Study</td>
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<td>Metropolitan Allied Health Survey Report</td>
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<td>Peel Economic Perspective</td>
<td>An update of the economy of Western Australia's Peel region</td>
<td>Department of Commerce and Trade, WA Peel Development Commission, WA</td>
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<td>A portrait of the population of Western Australia's Peel region</td>
<td>Department of Commerce and Trade, WA Peel Development Commission, WA</td>
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<td>Angela Piscitelli, Rockingham Kwinana Psychiatric Service, Peel Mental Health Service</td>
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<td>Population Report No 4 Western Australia Tomorrow</td>
<td>Population projections for the statistical divisions, planning regions and local government areas of Western Australia</td>
<td>Western Australian Planning Commission</td>
<td>Oct 2000</td>
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<td>Department of Commerce and Trade</td>
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<td>Response of the Government of Western Australia to the report by the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996) Taskforce</td>
<td>Co-ordinated by the Department of Family and Children's Services</td>
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<td>Mark Devenish-Meares, Behavioural Science Investigative Consultancy Colin Penter, Matrix Consulting Group</td>
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<td>Rural Crime and Safety in Western Australia</td>
<td>Prepared for the Department of Commerce and Trade - Regional Development Council</td>
<td>Crime Research Centre</td>
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<td>Shire of Murray – a Profile of the Local Government Area</td>
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<td>South Burnett Local Government Association Web Site</td>
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<td>Stronger Families and Communities – Targeted Community Project – Mandurah Background Paper</td>
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<td>The Western Australian Aboriginal Justice Plan 2000</td>
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<td>The Western Australian Youth Report</td>
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<td>The Justice Co-ordinating Council</td>
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<td>Tourism Indications Australia</td>
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<td>Labour Economics Office of Western Australia</td>
<td>Mar 2001</td>
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<td>Work and Family Current Thinking, Research and Practice</td>
<td>Prepared for the Department of Family ad Community Services as a background paper for the National Families Strategy</td>
<td>Dr Graeme Russell Lyndy Bowman Macquarie Research Limited, Macquarie University</td>
<td>Feb 2000</td>
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<td>Young People, Culture and the Law</td>
<td>Prepared for the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia</td>
<td>Hon David K Malcolm, AC – Chief Justice of Western Australia</td>
<td>Sep 1999</td>
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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE (Individual Interviews)

Individuals

Hi! Do you live in the Peel Region? My name is ____________ Do you have a few minutes to discuss issues that concern people living here?

1. As I mentioned, to be eligible to participate you need to live in the Peel Area? Which local government area do you live in?

( ) Boddington  
( ) Mandurah  
( ) Murray  
( ) Serpentine-Jarrahdale  
( ) Waroona  
( ) Other (if a person says ‘other’ they are ineligible to participate).

Please complete the following questions - we will just circle your answer. The first impression you have – go with that! If you don’t like the question you can pass on it!! You don’t have to answer each one. If everything goes smoothly it should take just a few minutes.

TRANSPORT AS A FACTOR IN LIFESTYLE

This question is designed to let us know if you think access to affordable transport affects the lifestyle choices of people living in the Peel region. What sort of impact do you think transport has in the following areas – Please let me know if you think it has a high impact, some impact, low impact or no impact.

(Code for person completing the document: 
1 = High impact  2 = Impact=  3 = Don’t Know  4 = Low Impact  5 = No impact)

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<td>Employment</td>
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<td>Contact with family and friends</td>
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<td>Sport, Recreation &amp; Leisure</td>
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<td>Health services</td>
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Comment
EDUCATION

Next, we need for you to listen to these statements and quickly let me know if you agree or disagree. If you strongly agree or disagree you can tell me that too. . . .

Code:  1 = Strongly agree  2 = Agree  3 = Disagree  4 = Strongly disagree  5 = Don’t know

People living in the Peel Region value education highly

Parents have adequate information about the relationship between education and livelihood

Students have adequate information about the relationship between education and livelihood

There is a wide range of educational options and pathways available to people living the Peel Region

There is a need to encourage local enterprise skills in the Peel Region

What else have you got to say about education?

EMPLOYMENT

There are many job opportunities for young people living in the Peel Region

People leaving school at Year 10 have good job prospects and a career path

People leaving school at Year 12 have good job prospects and a career path

People leaving school (at any age) are well prepared for the workforce

Employers have a responsibility to train staff on the job in basic lifeskills (eg presentation; communication; employer relations)

Your comments:
### LIFESKILLS

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<td>People I know have highly developed social support networks</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>People I know feel that they belong to the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>People I know understand how the legal system works</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>People I know cope with major life changes well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>People I know manage on a low income until an unexpected change occurs (eg accident, family emergency, change in income)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>People I know don't know about useful local services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asking for assistance when they need it is easy for most people I know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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**Comment**

If you had to pick one thing that could be done to make a lasting difference to the quality of life of people living here, what would that be? (Can be anything).
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE (Organisation Interviews)

ORGANISATION IDENTIFICATION
Organisation Name:
Street address:
Postal address:
Contact Name:                                             Position:
Direct Phone Number:                                           Direct email:
Organisation email:                                            Website:

SERVICE TYPE
☐ Individual and Family Support Services
☐ Employment
☐ Education & training
Life Skills
☐ Arts,
☐ Leisure & Recreation
☐ Information & Awareness
☐ Coordination
☐ Health
☐ Housing
☐ Legal
☐ Other Service Providers

Please specify your service types – see attachment 1 for reference.

SERVICE CATCHMENT
Suburb/Town (s)                                    Postcode (s)

WHERE DOES THE FUNDING FOR YOUR SERVICE COME FROM?
Commonwealth Government Service provider
Commonwealth Government funding program
State Government service provider
State Government funding program
Local Government service provider
Local Government funding program
Lotteries Commission
Healthways
Philanthropic Trust
Charity Collections
Other

WHAT MODE OF SERVICE DELIVERY IS USED?

1  Centre based
2  Outreach service
1:1 interview
Group workshop
Coordination
Information based (media, internet, video conferencing, telephone service
Education/training
Other. Please specify

SERVICE USE:

WHAT METHOD DO YOU USE TO RECORD CLIENT CASELOAD?

☐ Computer Database
☐ Annual census period
☐ Manual record
☐ Other (please specify)

Do you collect information by:
☐ Number of contacts
☐ Number of cases
☐ Unmet need
☐ Other (please specify)

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU SEE IN A YEAR (Approx)?

HAS THIS CHANGED SINCE 1981? YES/NO
If so, what is your estimated increase or decrease in demand for service.
%INCREASE/DECREASE

HAS THIS CHANGED SINCE 1996? YES/NO
If so, what is your estimated increase or decrease in demand for service.
%INCREASE/DECREASE

WHY DO YOU THINK IT HAS ALTERED?
☐ Increase in population
☐ Changes in government policy
☐ Reduction in services in region
☐ Increase in services in region
☐ Other (please specify)

PERSONNEL

CURRENT NUMBER OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY STAFF ____________

CURRENT NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF ________________

CURRENT NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER STAFF ______________________

REFERRALS

What proportion of clients do you refer on to other services.

WHAT OTHER SERVICES DOES A CLIENT OF YOUR SERVICE TYPICALLY NEED?
Use service categories attached as an aid.

ARE THESE SERVICES AVAILABLE LOCALLY?
What is required but not available?
IF YOU COULD CHANGE THREE THINGS THAT WOULD MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE TO THE PEOPLE WHO USE YOUR SERVICE, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

1.
2.
3.

WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD MAKE IT HAPPEN?
- Cash
- Service delivery staff
- Community Development staff
- Administrative staff
- Attracting skilled staff
- Training existing staff
- Community mobilisation
- Community awareness
- Policy change
- Attraction of non-local programs
- Design of completely new programs
- Better links between existing service providers
- Information sharing between key stakeholders
- Other (please specify)

What, if any relationship do you have with the local business community?

DO YOU THINK A PEEL REGIONAL TRUST where local business and community members could contribute to a consolidated fund that would provide local funds for local solutions and also leverage other State and Federal funds, could be successful?

YES/ NO
Why:
APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS ON DRAFT REPORT

The following comments were provided from a range of organisations during the period of open consultation on the draft. The draft was circulated around all organisations that contributed to the survey, other local non-government and government organisations and all key State Government departments. The existence of the report was advertised widely in the local press and many copies were requested through the advertising and word of mouth. In total around 350 copies were distributed.

All comments received have been incorporated into the report as far as possible although further research could not be entered into as the budget for the project had long been exhausted. Amendments are marked in italics. Requests for further research have been noted in the comments in the hope that additional research funds may be accessed at a later date to deepen the level of analysis possible. Where further information was provided, this has been referenced in the report where possible. However not all additional data could be included in the interests of keeping the report succinct. The supplementary information received is available for reference on request.

1. Comments By: Mandurah Joblink
   Key Points: Improve clarity of information quoted from "YourPlace" database. More comparison with other areas of similar profile if possible. Information presentation improved. Comparison point well noted. Unable to undertake further research at this stage.

2. Comments By: Office of Youth Affairs
   Key Points: Supportive of "informative and interesting report, particularly with regard to the needs of young people in the Peel region." Additional information provided on the Youth Advisory Councils, Youth Coordinating Networks, OYA Community Grants Funding, Cadets WA Units, Youth Grants WA and Youth Media Survey 2000. Information on youth survey included in Table 9.

3. Comments By: Calgary Youth Services
   Key Points: "Found it to be excellent in its presentation of the 'facts' of our area, and a great resource book for information regarding the plight of our area".

4. Comments By: WA Police Service Strategic Services & Peel Region Headquarters
   Key Points: Additional updated information provided which indicates that the levels of crime are increasing, particularly burglary. Both reported an increase in non-reported crime ie informal cautions.

5. Comments By: Agriculture WA
   Key Points: Error in agricultural production figures. Should be $98 2m not $81 1m. Data amended.

6. Comments By: Department of Education Western Australia and Peel Education Office
   Key Points: "Excellent resource to inform planning. It confirms some of the suspicions that we have and has thrown up others that weren't so obvious...." The study provides valuable insights and should form the basis for further discussion. Urges further investigation particularly into the reality of the 'perceptions' alluded to in the report. Expressed recognition of the rapid growth and continued commitment to partnerships and interagency programs. Concern at comment re students from low income families being excluded from excursions due to non-payment of fees. "Returned to original primary data to verify and assessed that the exclusion is not just for non-payment of fees but also a factor of parents not allowing children to attend due to cost. Some additional information introduced into revised text.

7. Comments By: Department of Culture and the Arts
   Key Points: Request for copy of the questionnaire. Query on the four major concerns in the testing of the survey. Text was expanded accordingly.

8. Comments By: Peel Mental Health
   Key Points: " would like to give full support to the findings. A recent audit of existing services and resources in the Peel region as part of Commonwealth-funded 1 year research project into suicide prevention has seen a similar picture emerge." Extensive additional information provided. Some information has been woven into the text where possible.
9. **Comments By:** City of Mandurah - Director & Manager of Community Services

**Key Points:** "... a much needed resource." Acknowledgement of the funding provided by FRRR and Alcoa World Alumina. *Update provided on the recruitment of a part-time community planner. Text has been amended accordingly.*

10. **Submission By:** Department of Training and Employment & Peel Office

**Key Points:** Vocational education and training provisions under-represented and information provided on increases in VET programs in the region. Conflicting data on lifestyle and housing values vs disadvantage. Include more emphasis on future infrastructure developments. Specific additional information provided, Peel Regional Training and Employment Report copy provided. Suggestion for more comparative data for other regions on primary data. *Suggestion noted but not possible within current resourcing of study. Some additional information has been woven into the text where possible.*

11. **Comments By:** Aboriginal Affairs Department

**Key Points:** "...notes the significant work... and the attention placed on the impact of social indicators and subsequent challenges for both government and community. Recommendations are supported in principal and of those most relevant to the Indigenous client group. Strongly supports the emphasis of regional partnerships and collaborative planning. *Increased emphasis on the most relevant identified issues for Indigenous people in text.*"

12. **Comments By:** Peel TAFE

**Key Points:** "... this will be an important study. The final study will be a useful tool in seeking a more equitable share of the resources that the region so clearly needs." Better definition is required of the definition of lifelong learning. Recommend comparison with state averages for each qualification that gives numbers and percentage per 1,000 pax. Suggest use of term 'post compulsory education' rather than 'schooling' and 'sites' instead of institutions. *Suggested amendments included in revised text as far as possible.*

13. **Comments By:** Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale

**Key Points:** Report reviewed and noted. No further comments or additional information.

14. **Comments By:** Ministry of Justice

**Key Points:** "... draft report provides a useful snapshot on a complex mix of issues and factors. The ideas expressed under the gap analysis sections are further sources of stakeholder information to be incorporated into the department's environmental scanning process." Recommended Mapping Crime, Offenders and Socio-demographic Factors Report.


15. **Comments By:** Wisdom in Your Life/QRA Network

**Key Points:** Extensive additional information provided. Particularly on the impact of the low General Practitioner:patient ratio, the lack of bulk billing, the complexity of mental health problems being treated by GPs that do not fit the criteria of specialist services, the dearth of appropriate health services for Aboriginal people and the lack of specialist health services. *Additional information included in revised text where possible.*

16. **Comments By:** Department of Health

**Key Points:** Information on health services in the Peel is out-of-date and does not provide an accurate picture. The report would be enhanced by information on utilisation of health services outside of the region, annual budget allocations. No data on inadequacy of primary health care and support services, especially for mental health and well-being or chronic health for Aboriginal people. Assistance offered in generating more accurate information. *Agreed. The secondary information provided during the study was out-of-date or not region specific. Emphasis in text increased. A detailed specific study of the health services in the region would be welcomed.*
Disclaimer

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