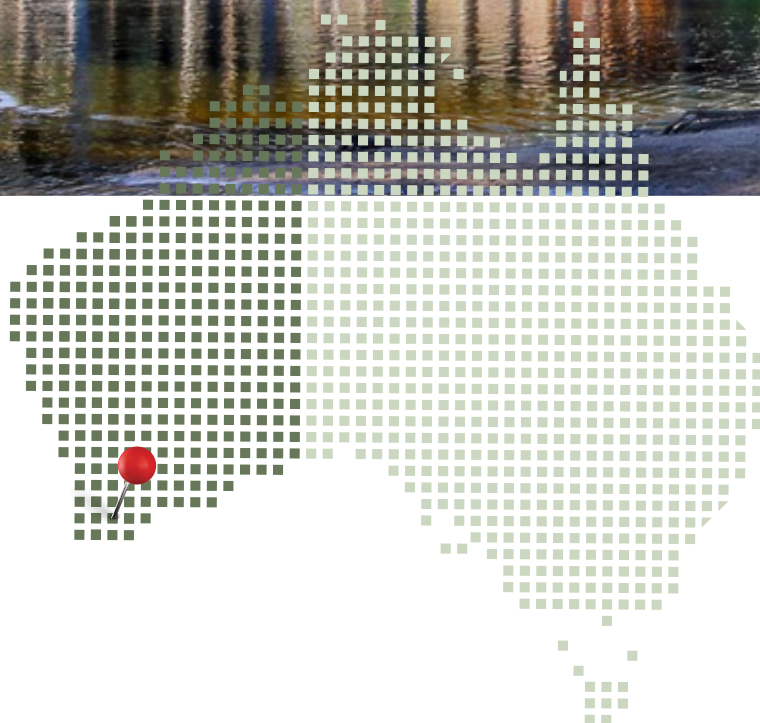


# Bridgetown

## Community Development Action Plan



**June 2025**



# Foreword



The origins of this plan stem from a conversation between the Managers of the Bridgetown Hub and the Bridgetown Community Resource Centre in late 2023 about collaborating on a potential Community Conference in Bridgetown, with funding from the Stronger Communities Program.

Eager to make the most of an opportunity to bring the community together, a broader group was gathered, forming the Activate Team. This team worked to develop a program that included training courses, community and business collaboration events, and small focus groups – all contributing to the creation of this plan.

Initially, the plan aimed to include both Bridgetown and Greenbushes. However, Greenbushes is developing its own plan, which means the focus of this document is solely on Bridgetown.

We acknowledge and are grateful for the support of all our funders who made Activate Bridgetown possible: Department of Social Services for the Stronger

Communities Program, Rural Aid for their Community Development Program, and Talison Lithium for supporting our Activate ambitions.

This 'Community Development Action Plan' serves as a roadmap for our collective aspirations, outlining clear goals and actions to support the ongoing growth and vitality of our town. Whether by strengthening infrastructure, fostering social inclusion, promoting economic opportunities, or preserving our unique environment, the plan is designed to ensure that Bridgetown remains a place where everyone can live, work, and thrive.

As we move forward, it is important to remember that our strength lies in our unity. This Action Plan is not only a guide for local government and organisations but also a call to all residents to contribute to shaping the future of our town. Together, we will honour our past while building a sustainable and vibrant future for generations to come.

# Our Story

Bridgetown, located in the South-West region of Western Australia, is a charming and historic town nestled along the banks of the Blackwood River. Known for its picturesque scenery and rich heritage, Bridgetown offers a unique blend of natural beauty, cultural history, and a thriving community spirit that makes it an attractive destination for visitors and a welcoming home for residents.

Established in the 1860s, Bridgetown has a deep historical significance, initially serving as a key settlement for timber and agriculture industries. The town retains much of its old-world charm, with heritage buildings and landmarks that provide a glimpse into its past. The Old Gaol, the Bridgetown Railway Station, and the beautifully preserved Bridgetown Hotel are just a few examples of the historical architecture that lines the streets. This rich heritage is celebrated annually through local festivals and community events that highlight its cultural legacy.

Bridgetown is located within stunning natural landscapes including forest, rolling hills, fertile valleys, and the scenic Blackwood River. The town's temperate climate, rich biodiversity and lush forests make it a haven for nature lovers. Surrounding national parks and jarrah and karri forests offer opportunities for bushwalking, birdwatching, and enjoying the local flora and fauna. The area is also known for its vibrant autumn foliage, drawing tourists to its "Festival of Country

Gardens. The tranquil riverside setting is ideal for kayaking, fishing, and picnicking, while the rolling hills are popular among cyclists and hikers.

Bridgetown's economy is supported by a diverse range of industries, including agriculture, tourism, and small-scale manufacturing. The town has a reputation for producing high-quality local goods, such as fruits, vegetables, and timber products. The surrounding countryside is renowned for its orchards, vineyards, and olive groves, which contribute to a growing food and wine tourism sector. Bridgetown's artisan culture is also thriving, with local markets and shops showcasing handmade crafts, art, and produce. Additionally, the town is increasingly becoming a hub for the arts, eco-tourism and sustainable farming practices.

The sense of community in Bridgetown is strong, with a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. The town is home to wide range of community groups, clubs, and events that promote active participation and social engagement. Events such as "Blues at Bridgetown," "Rotary Blackwood Marathon," "Fridgetown Fest" and the "Bridgetown Agricultural Show" attract large numbers of visitors, fostering a lively social scene that complements its serene rural environment. The town also boasts excellent schools, healthcare facilities and recreational amenities, making it an ideal home for families and those wanting to age well.





# Our Vision

A Vision Statement is a vivid description of what our community aspires to become, without its current barriers, but tied to what we value as a community.

The statement below is our intended outcome:

‘Retaining our small-town charm and community spirit through continual activation of strong community engagement, inclusiveness, collaboration, sustainable practices, preservation of our unique assets and a can-do nature.’



# Our Guiding Values

**Guiding values are the fundamental, moral, and ethical beliefs that we share as a community. They represent core principles and capture what our community considers important. They help foster trust, respect, collaboration, and unity.**

The following seven guiding values and attitudes provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives, namely:

- **Active Participation:** Valuing the involvement and contribution of all our community residents and groups; and appreciating, welcoming and respecting the diversity of all cultures, opinions, gifts and ideas.
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Committing to cooperate, collaborate, network and share resources to ensure maximum positive outcomes for our community.
- **Respect for Our Environment:** Valuing and protecting our beautiful natural environment, waterways, landscapes and diverse wildlife.
- **Respect for Our Heritage:** Appreciating our unique heritage, stories and traditions, and their importance in community and economic development.
- **Resilience and Positive Mindset:** Ensuring positive and can-do community attitudes and behaviours to deal with adversity, embrace change and activate proactive 'can-do' behaviours, optimism and hopefulness.
- **Embracing New Opportunities:** Building upon our local assets, capacities and creativity; and facilitating opportunities that enable all our residents to see and experience their community as a place of opportunity.
- **Pride:** Encouraging pride and times of celebration related to our heritage, environment, uniqueness and achievements.

# Our Goals

**Community goals are broad statements of intent that direct our efforts towards accomplishing our vision in line with our guiding principles.**

Below are the eight community goals which guide our community aspirations, namely:

- To strengthen collaboration, networking and sharing of resources in all spheres of Bridgetown's organisational life.
- To create an environment where our young people feel involved, supported and empowered, and will consider staying in or returning to our community for work, business, family and lifestyle opportunities.
- To actively pursue new economic and entrepreneurial opportunities that strengthen and diversify our local economy and business life.
- To actively promote and showcase Bridgetown as a great place to stop, stay, experience and reside, especially through a vibrant and welcoming town centre.
- To enhance Bridgetown as a major regional arts centre.
- To ensure Bridgetown becomes a sustainable, low-waste, circular economy.
- To retain our strong sporting and cultural clubs, events, facilities and traditions.
- To preserve our unique heritage assets.

# Our Challenges

**Like many small inland rural communities, our community needs to respond creatively to a series of demographic, social, economic and environmental challenges. These issues include:**

- Volunteer fatigue and declining numbers
- Levels of organisational collaboration and networking
- Climate change
- Impact of drought
- Poor engagement of young people
- Ageing population
- Talison mine expansion
- Population growth management
- Blackwood River management
- Mental health & high suicide rate
- Limited youth spaces and options
- Lack of Community Arts Centre
- No umbrella body for the Arts community
- Attracting and keeping tradespeople working in town due to competition from the mines
- Limited public transport options and accessibility in town
- Poor publicity and awareness of what is happening in town
- Poor state of waterways
- Need for improved cultural inclusion
- Levels of waste
- Lack of local upper-years high school – Years 11 & 12
- Tourism challenges, especially seasonal nature
- Poor town entrance statements
- Poor connectivity of health services
- Lack of rental accommodation and limited living options
- Cost of living challenges
- Limited pool hours
- COVID-19 hibernation
- High summer temperatures
- Lack of local produce in local shops
- Pedestrian safety in main street
- No backpacker facility
- Limited social gathering spaces at Recreation Centre
- Trucks in the main street
- Lack of banking facilities
- High postage and freight costs
- Limited access to fresh fruit and vegetables
- Poor road networks
- Poor footpath condition
- Animal management



# Our Assets

## People

- Professionals and specialists: GPs, Health Workers, Childcare Workers, Teachers, Nurses, Social Workers, Engineers, IT Professionals, Farmers
- Artists, Creatives, Musicians, Florists, Writers, Brewers
- Traditional Custodians: The Kaneang, Pibelman and Wadandi people
- Unique artisan businesses
- Pioneering families, New residents with new ideas, Passionate residents, Volunteers, Community builders
- Seniors, Young people, Home-schoolers, Parents
- The Mailbag
- Operation Christmas Child, Mobile Foodbank, Blackwood Hero Project, Youth Advisory Group of BYA

## Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

- Traditional Custodians: The Kaneang, Pibelman and Wadandi people
- Historical and Heritage: Rail heritage, Agricultural heritage, Indigenous heritage, Historical buildings, Main street, Heritage town status, Historic homes, Police Museum, War memorials, Railway bridges
- Arts and Culture: Jigsaw Gallery, Theatre/Performing Arts, Art galleries, Repertory, Goorbilyup Gallery, Station Masters Gallery, Blackwood River Arts Trail, Rabbit Hole, Writers Groups
- Festivals and Events: Heritage Festival, Blues Festival, Festival of Country Gardens, Ag Show, Easter Tennis Tournament, Tour of Margaret River Cycle Race, Blackwood Marathon, Bridgetown Fest, Banquet on the Bridge/Sunset at Sids

## Institutions

- Educational Institutions: St Brigid's Primary School, Bridgetown Primary School, Bridgetown High School, Camp School
- Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes: Council Office, Staff, Library, Recreation Centre, Visitor Information Centre
- Community and Social Services: Community Resource Centre, BYA, Bridgetown Hub, Youth Emergency Services Cadets, Belong at Home, Blackwood Biosecurity, SES, St John Ambulance, VBFB, VFRS, Red Cross, Silver Chain, Anglicare, Carer's WA, Advocacy WA, YEOp Shop
- Health Services: Silver Chain, Geegeelup Aged Care Village, Hospital, Medical Centres, Rural GPs, Oseca (formerly GP Down South)
- Government Agencies/Utilities: Post Office, Water Corporation, Police, Western Power



# Our Assets

## Economic

- Produce swap, River Markets, Facebook Buy & Swap
- Agricultural: Farms, Landcare, Agricultural support businesses, Ashbil Community Garden produce stall
- Industry: Talison Lithium, Talison Community Support Program, Industrial area
- Community and Social Enterprises: Ashbil Community Garden, Op Shop, CWA, BES Nursery, River Park Markets
- Retail and Small Businesses
- Tourism and Hospitality: Accommodation, Airbnb's, Cidery, Tourists, Pottery Restaurant, Hotels, Micro-breweries, Visitor Information Centre
- Cultural and Heritage: Museums
  - BGTA, BCCI, SFV, WBAC

## Physical

- Nature: River, Rural landscapes, Bush/forest, Farming lands, Gardens, Reserves, Flora and fauna
- Recreational Facilities: Youth Precinct & Skatepark, Stock Route, Parks, Leisure centre, Pool, Sculpture walk, Trails (Walking, Mountain Biking, Horse, Munda Bindi), Community gardens x2, Jarrah Park, Memorial Park
- Historical and Cultural Sites: Historical precinct, Heritage buildings, Main street, Museums, Railway stations, Murals, Bridges
- Public and Community Buildings: Town Hall, Library, Visitor Information Centre, Geegeelup, Bridgetown Hospital, Bridgetown Gardens

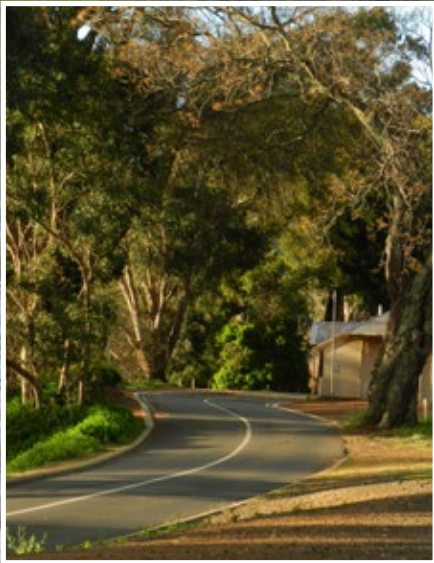
## Social Networks

- Sports and Recreation Clubs: Volleyball, Football, Junior Football, Cricket, Pony, Basketball, Tennis, Netball, Swimming, Golf x2, Horse groups
- Community and Social Groups: Bridgetown Grumpy Old Men (Men's Shed), CWA, Rotary, Lions, Probus, RSL, Masons, BGTA, coffee clubs, Friendship Group, Agricultural Showground's Committee, Walking Group, youth groups, Copernicus Club of BHS, Bridgetown Club, Bridge Club, Leisure Centre groups, Hub groups, Bridgetown Choir, WA Bushfire Museum & Heritage Group
- Religious Groups: Anglican, Catholic, Uniting, Church of Christ, Buddhist Collective
- Arts & Cultural Groups: Crochet Group, Book Club, Photography Club, Craft groups, Social Dancing Group, Ukulele Group, Theatre & Kaos, Historical Society, The Rabbit Hole, Blues of Bridgetown, Bridgetown Repertory Theatre
- Environmental Groups: Blackwood Environment Society, Blackwood Permaculture, Bridgetown Gardens, Transition Bridgetown, Small Landholder's Association, BGFF, Ashbil Community Garden, Blackwood Basin Group (Landcare group), garden clubs











# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme One

### Building a More Engaged & Connected Community

#### ACTIONS

1

1. Continue **Activate Bridgetown** as a community collective mechanism to achieve better collaboration, networking and resource sharing between Bridgetown community organisations.

**Timeframe: Ongoing**

2. Instigate a **calendar of regular conversations and workshops** that enable residents and organisations in the communities of Bridgetown to continually share and learn from each other, including an 'Activate 2025' workshop series.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

3. Promote **volunteering and community engagement** through:
  - a) Continually inviting community members to voice ideas, suggestions and actively volunteer.
  - b) Holding an annual 'Community Expo' event where all community groups have a stall/display/stand and actively promote community engagement opportunities.
  - c) Recognising and celebrating community volunteers, through media exposure and an annual 'Volunteer Appreciation Event'.
  - d) Seeking support from Volunteering WA and utilising their resources.

**Timeframe: Short-Term – Immediate and Ongoing**

4. Design, implement and maintain a community **asset mapping initiative** that identifies the gifts and learning needs of the Bridgetown community.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

5. Form a 'Welcome to Bridgetown' Task Team who develop and distribute a **'Welcome Kit'** and coordinate **'Welcome to Bridgetown'** events.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

6. Improve **intra-community communications** including:
  - a) Investigate establishing a Progress Association to support all town committees
  - b) Bridgetown Website, Facebook site and Instagram.
  - c) Weekly podcast series that introduces local residents and groups.
  - d) Community noticeboards.
  - e) Town entrance events promotion sign.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

7. Advocate to the SBG for **physical and staffing improvements to the Leisure Centre** to enhance its social gathering appeal.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

8. Form a **Transport Task Team** to research and develop action plans to improve local transport options including the possibility of instigating community bus, rideshare, shared vehicles and local taxi.

**Timeframe: Immediate**



# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme One

## Building a More Engaged & Connected Community

### ACTIONS

1

9. Instigate a **Parkrun weekly event** in Bridgetown.

**Timeframe: Immediate**

10. Form a **Bridgetown Sports Coordinating Committee/Task Team** that can liaise with SBG and other levels of government regarding issues affecting the Bridgetown sporting community, and explore ideas and make recommendations on ways to improve and extend sporting facility options. In particular, focus on better utilisation of the facilities of the Leisure Centre, Swimming Pool, Youth Precinct, School Camp and Showgrounds.

**Timeframe: Immediate**

### LEAD GROUPS

**Activate Team**

**SBG**

**'Welcome to Bridgetown' Task Team**

**Transport Task Team**

**Bridgetown Sports Coordinating Committee/Task Team**

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**BCRC**  
**Bridgetown Hub**  
**BB**  
**BYA**  
**DPIRD**  
**BCCI**  
**BES**

**BGFF**  
**BGVC**  
**TCSP**  
**Volunteering WA**  
**Bridgetown**  
**community groups**

**Bridgetown service**  
**groups**  
**Lotterywest**  
**CBHIF**  
**RA**  
**BOI**





# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Two Enhancing Town Appeal

### ACTIONS

2

1. Undertake **main-street improvement** through the formation of a **Main-Street Improvement Task Team** that focuses on:
  - a) Undertaking an audit of existing street presentation.
  - b) Seeking ideas and suggestions from Bridgetown residents and businesses to improve the vibe and appeal of the CBD.
  - c) Providing responses to issues related to traffic management, pedestrian safety and parking.
  - d) Identifying ways to enhance local heritage.
  - e) Creating prioritised beautification options.
  - f) Seeking support to implement opportunities.
  - g) Participating in the KAB 2025 ‘Tidy Towns Awards’.
  - h) Forming a Bridgetown Town Team.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

2. Organise a community project to improve the facilities and playground in Memorial Park, including investigating putting the **boat back in the park**.

**Timeframe: Short Term**

### LEAD GROUPS

**SBG**  
**Main-Street Improvement Task Team**

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**BCCI**  
**Bridgetown businesses**  
**BCRC**  
**Bridgetown Hub**  
**BYA**  
**BGVC**

**TCSP**  
**Bridgetown service groups**  
**SWDC**  
**RDASW**  
**KAB**  
**TTM**

**RED Grants**  
**SAP**  
**SFVTA**  
**Lotterywest**  
**RA**  
**BOI**





# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Three

## Creating Opportunities for Young People

### ACTIONS

1. Support SBG to implement the **'Bridgetown-Greenbushes Youth Action Plan'**  
**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**
2. Maintain **regular contact with young people after they leave the community** via social media, regular newsletter and organisation of a calendar of school and sporting reunions.  
**Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing**
3. Link and support local young people to **shire, regional, state and national leadership development experiences and scholarship opportunities.**  
**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

### LEAD GROUPS

BYA  
SBG  
Bridgetown Sports Coordinating Committee/Task Team

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

YACWA	Bridgetown businesses	SWDC
BHS	Bridgetown service clubs	RDASW
BCRC	DoC youth funding	Lotterywest
Bridgetown Hub		RA
TCSP		BOI
Bridgetown community and sporting groups		





# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Four

### Instigating a Sustainable & Low-Waste Community & Circular Economy

#### ACTIONS

1. Support community consultation and a **'Bridgetown Sustainability Strategy'** that provides practical actions related to the management of landscapes and waterways, waste reduction, renewable energy and bushfire prevention.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

2. Support the formation of a **Blackwood River Management Task Team** to provide practical recommendations for improved management of the Blackwood River in relation to improved control of weeds and debris, improved waterflow and better recreational access.

**Timeframe: Immediate to Short Term**

#### LEAD GROUP

**SBG**  
**Blackwood Biosecurity**  
**Transition Bridgetown**  
**BES**

**Blackwood Basin Group**  
**BGFF**  
**Community gardens**

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**SWDC**  
**RDASW**

## Theme Five

### Developing Bridgetown as a Regional Arts Centre

#### ACTIONS

1. Form a Bridgetown Arts Centre Task Team that undertakes:
  - a) Activating local interest and commitment for the design and construction of **Bridgetown Arts Centre** that provides work and gallery space for local creatives, as well as creating a significant tourist attraction facility.
  - b) Formulating a 'Business Plan'.
  - c) Identifying the necessary technical support and possible funding.
  - d) Overseeing implementation.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

2. Advocate for the development of an **enclosed Youth Arts Space**.

**Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing**

3. Continually grow the **arts initiatives in the region**.

**Timeframe: Ongoing**

#### LEAD GROUP

**Local artists**

**SBG**

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**BGTA**  
**BCCI**  
**TCSP**  
**SWDC**  
**RDASW**

**CBHIF**  
**RED Grants**  
**SFVTA**  
**DLGSC**  
**Lotterywest**

**Healthways**  
**WBAC**  
**Rabbit Hole**



# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Six

## Growing Accommodation Options

### ACTIONS

6

1. Form a **Local Housing Action Task Team** to design and implement a **Local Housing Action Plan**, with a focus on increasing the availability of family, worker, crisis and visitor dwellings and properties:
  - a) Undertaking research into housing, land, property investment and subdivision development initiatives happening in other small rural communities.
  - b) Identifying and repurposing underutilised local properties for accommodation.
  - c) Exploring resourcing housing options, especially state government funding.
  - d) Expanding social housing.
  - e) Providing support to service provider employers for the construction of employee housing.
  - f) Fast-tracking government employee housing initiative.
  - g) Lobbying the Housing Authority (DoC) for improvement of derelict housing.
  - h) Investigating crisis housing options.
  - i) Seeking Talison Lithium and State Government support in managing the significant social and economic impacts of the Greenbushes mining expansion.
  - j) Investigating partnership approaches with the not-for-profit housing providers.
  - k) Advocating for assistance to help local youth take on trades in the local building industry.
  - l) Seeking modification to zoning restrictions.
  - m) Exploring the use of non-traditional housing construction and group ownership options.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

### LEAD GROUP

**Local Housing Action Task Team**

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**Housing Authority of DoC  
SWDC  
RDASW  
NASCGP**

**RED Grants  
TCSP  
Service providers  
WBAC**





# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Seven

## Repositioning Bridgetown as a Major Tourism Destination

### ACTIONS

1. Support BGTA and SFV to develop a **Bridgetown-Greenbushes Tourism Strategy** that engages in the following actions:
  - a) Auditing current tourism attractions, facilities, events, trails and initiatives.
  - b) Reviewing regional tourism links, activities and trails.
  - c) Identifying opportunities to enhance existing products and offerings.
  - d) Prioritising opportunities to create new tourism products, especially related to heritage and cultural tourism and builds upon the strong regional arts assets.
  - e) Recommending initiatives to enhance marketing, branding, customer service, community storytelling and operator networking.

**Timeframe: Immediate to Medium Term**

### LEAD GROUP

**SBG  
BGTA  
SFVTA**

**BCCI  
BGVC**

### OTHER PARTNERS

**SWDC  
TWA  
RDASW**

**ASW  
RED Grants  
TCSP**

**WBAC**





# Abbreviations

<b>ASW</b>	Australia's South West Tourism Association
<b>BB</b>	Blackwood Biosecurity
<b>BCRC</b>	Bridgetown Community Resource Centre
<b>BCCI</b>	Blackwood Chamber of Commerce and Industry
<b>BES</b>	Bridgetown Environment Society
<b>BGFF</b>	Bridgetown Greenbushes Friends of the Forest
<b>BGTA</b>	Bridgetown-Greenbushes Tourism Association
<b>BGVC</b>	Bridgetown-Greenbushes Visitor Centre
<b>BHS</b>	Bridgetown High School
<b>BOI</b>	Bank of I.D.E.A.S.
<b>BYA</b>	Blackwood Youth Action
<b>CRC</b>	Community Resource Centre
<b>CWA</b>	Country Women's Association
<b>DLGSC</b>	WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
<b>DPIRD</b>	WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
<b>DoC</b>	Department of Communities
<b>KAB</b>	Keep Australia Beautiful WA
<b>RA</b>	Rural Aid
<b>RAC</b>	Royal Automobile Club
<b>RED Grants</b>	Regional Economic Development Grants of SWDC
<b>RDASW</b>	Regional Development Australia South West
<b>RSL</b>	Returned Services League
<b>SAP</b>	Streets Alive Program of TTM
<b>SES</b>	State Emergency Service
<b>SBG</b>	Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes
<b>SFVTA</b>	Southern Forests & Valleys Tourism Association
<b>SWDC</b>	South West Development Commission
<b>TCSP-</b>	Talison Community Support Program
<b>TTM</b>	Town Teams Movement
<b>TWA</b>	Tourism Western Australia
<b>YACWA</b>	Youth Affairs Council of WA
<b>VBFB</b>	Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade
<b>VFRS</b>	Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service
<b>WBAC</b>	Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils
<b>YEOp Shop</b>	Youth Enterprise Opportunity Shop (BYA)







# Acknowledgements

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This Plan acknowledges the cultural custodians of the land, the Kaneang, Pibelmen and Wadandi people. We acknowledge and support their continuing connection to the land, waterways and community. We pay our respects to members of the Aboriginal communities and their culture; and to Elders past and present, their descendants still with us today, and those who will follow in their footsteps.

All photos included in this document were entries in the Bridgetown Community Resource Centre's Annual Calendar Photo Competition, first published in 2013.





# Bridgetown

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

*The Winter Capital of WA*

