GERALDTON — FROM A LOCAL TO GLOBAL REGIONAL CITY
Over the next 50 years Geraldton will undergo a transformation...
GERALDTON—
FROM A LOCAL TO GLOBAL REGIONAL CITY
From being a small regional city dedicated to harvesting the land and the ocean... into a truly diverse, exciting and interesting city
Geraldton is a great city and region with a marvellous history and a very bright future.

I encourage you to read Geraldton – from a local to global regional city that maps out how the people of the Geraldton region can embrace economic opportunities to become a global centre, while retaining their local, regional character.

This paper demonstrates this potential and looks to the future.

I share this vision.

Overlooking the Indian Ocean, the Western Australian Museum — Geraldton celebrates the rich heritage of the land, sea and people of the Midwest region. It is also a focal point for the Yamatji people who are the custodians of this ancient landscape.

Having visited Geraldton late last year and spoken with local people, I know community leaders have a great vision for the region which includes the ambition to be the second Pilbara for iron ore mining.

A major expansion of mining in the Geraldton or Midwest region will require access to vast power resources and an understanding that underpinning this will be harnessing the potential of renewable energy. The region has huge potential to expand solar, geo-thermal, bio-mass, wave power and wind power generation.

I am aware there are plans to triple the extent of wind farming in the region taking generation up to 450mw.

There are so many opportunities in the Geraldton region. These opportunities will not only benefit the region, they will strengthen the national economy and also draw the Geraldton region into the global economy.

I am a great believer in the importance of local decision making to develop strong regional economies and communities and Geraldton is a good model.

As the Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government and Minister for the Arts I am making sure that Australian Government policy effectively targets investment in regions, particularly in the areas of health, education, skills, communications, infrastructure, water, climate change as well as the arts.

Our Government is making sure that all regions of Australia are empowered to identify local need and to guide their own futures, through a strong Regional Development Australia network and other mechanisms.

The Australian Government has a genuine commitment to regional Australia and to entrenching the concept of ‘regionalism’ in our national decision making.

I look forward to working with regions like Geraldton to secure this future and to make sure that the voice of local and regional communities is strong and heard loud and clear.

Foreword by

The Hon Minister

Simon Crean MP

Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government; Minister for the Arts
Regional WA remains the backbone of the WA and national economy. The continued growth in the resources industry, plus development of diverse industry sectors and strong population and workforce growth presents enormous challenges and opportunities for regional areas. It’s pleasing to see regional communities working proactively to capture these opportunities and seek to leverage sustainable long-term outcomes for current and future generations. The Midwest regional centre of Geraldton is an excellent example.

The Midwest Development Commission’s (MWDC) Midwest Major Projects Summary (December 2011) identified more than $27 billion worth of projects planned or proposed for the Midwest over the next five-seven years. If all such projects come to fruition, one study predicts that the region’s population may grow from around 55,000 to 80,000 by 2021. Such growth and social change presents the CGG and other Midwest communities with significant challenges and opportunities that can’t be ignored.

In concert with the Western Australian Planning Commission’s Midwest Regional Planning and Infrastructure Framework, the MWDC has prepared a Midwest Investment Plan (MWIP) to clearly outline the region’s strategic priorities. Concurrently the City of Greater Geraldton has undertaken extensive consultation and various strategic visioning exercises to help guide its transition from a stable regional centre to thriving, sustainable global city.

The “Geraldton – from a local to global regional city” discussion paper aligns closely with the Liberal-National governments focus on developing major regional cities in WA. The paper is the second in the series, following the groundbreaking Pilbara Cities document that has already driven unprecedented public investment in Karratha and Port Holland. Such research and strategic technical planning helps decision makers ensure that public and private investment is targeted to deliver the best and most sustainable outcomes for regional communities.

As the Midwest enters this period of intense change, this discussion paper can be used to support coordinated development and leverage funding through various Federal and State programs. The Royalties for Regions funding program is one important tool for reshaping regional WA that has already made substantial investment in the Midwest, including $220 million towards implementation of the Midwest Investment Plan. Significant region changing projects borne out of this discussion paper may also target other Royalties for Regions funding opportunities.

I congratulate the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSPI), Arup and other stakeholders for their involvement in preparation of this publication and encourage decision makers to use it to help the community of Geraldton achieve its vision of becoming a liveable, growing, carbon-neutral and economically adaptive city.

Hon Brendon Grylls MLA
Minister for Regional Development; Land; and Minister Assisting State Development
THE VISION

Geraldton is at the start of a substantial economic growth process driven by mining, trade and science that will draw the region into the global economy. The people of the region want to embrace this economic opportunity and become a truly global city, but to do so in a way that retains the local and regional appearance, culture and character. Over the next 50 years, Geraldton will undergo a transformation — from being a small regional city dedicated to harvesting the land and the ocean, into a truly diverse, exciting and interesting city supported by many different economic and community activities.

Based on a series of public engagement processes and interviews with key people, this Discussion Paper describes what will be needed to match the global economic development drivers with a broadening of the economic base, a deepening of the social and cultural commitment to being a livable city, and a strengthening of the environmental features that the region looks to secure.

The vision is that in 50 years the city will have a diverse range of economic activities, with local people being employed in a diverse range of work opportunities. Ultimately, this broader economic approach will not only local and regional and natural assets to ensure a sustainable and high-quality living environment, but also the broader region and the national and international economy.

This paper sets out a roadmap for a journey that looks 50 years into the future. It uses what we know about the potential projects that are emerging to support the claim that Geraldton is transforming from a local to a global regional city. While the immediate directions and projects are easily described, the further we look into the future the more we have to rely on setting broad directions, finding the right values to guide the process and allowing the details to be worked out over time. The forward-looking planning and consultation processes that are occurring today in Geraldton give confidence that these values are in place.

During 2009–10 the City of Greater Geraldton undertook the Sustainable Future City Project to set a broad vision for what it wanted to become. The four big issues facing the city region were how to become:

- a liveable city — where people want to live and spend time
- a growing city — increasing its population, but still retaining its essence
- a carbon-neutral city — powered by renewables and repairable to the world
- an economically adaptive city — changing and diversifying its economic base to take advantage of global trends.

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Each of these issues is discussed, and headline projects outlined, and a potential way forward is summarised. But first, the idea of a new name for the city region is explored as a part of this major growth.
A NEW NAME FOR A GLOBAL CITY-REGION

Geraldton will rapidly become a lot more than a city of just over 40,000 people on the Midwest coast of Western Australia. The region around Geraldton will grow to more than 100,000 or even 250,000 people as it becomes a significant city-region known internationally for its livability; science, mining and trade industries; food production; and renewable energy. In this new, larger city-region, City of Greater Geraldton as it is known now will become the regional capital.

But what will the region be called?

Currently the region is known by the lack-lustre title of ‘the Midwest’. As the region receives more international attention, this name will become increasingly inappropriate because of its associations with the United States of America. Other parts of Western Australia have more context-evoking and engaging local names, such as Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne and Goldfields.

As the region grows and develops, it will be easier to find a more suitable name for its long-term future. Some suggestions include:

Abrolhos
Taken from the Abrolhos Islands off the Geraldton coast, the word is an Anglicisation of the Portuguese abri vossos olhos, which means ‘open your eyes’, a good metaphor for a region that is growing and looking to the future.

Wajarri or Wajarri Yamatji
This is the name of the Aboriginal language group area that covers a significant part of the inland portion of the Midwest region. Using this word would acknowledge that the roots of today’s activities touch a culture and landscape that is thousands of years old.
In his 1950 novel ‘A Town Like Alice’, Neville Shute wrote about the characteristics of a ‘lousy’ outback town like Willstown and compared it to the ‘bonzer’ town of Alice Springs. The difference was that Alice Springs had something more than just work and pubs for men; it had attractions for women and was a place of cultural and social activity. It had a cinema, an ice-cream parlour, a swimming pool, women’s clothing and jewellery stores, a beauty parlour... and most of all, it was a place that offered employment for women. Neville Shute describes what happens when a town begins to invest in the elements of a more liveable city. Rather than being just a stop-over on the way to somewhere else, for the predominantly male population of the Northern Territory, Alice Springs began to attract women. Along with women came households and families. And with households and families came diverse and growing communities with a new prosperity and positive approach to the future.

Geraldton needs to be a town like Alice, built around the whole fabric of life, attractive to all people, rather than solely an economic powerhouse where quick money is made from the region’s finite natural resources. It needs to ensure that, in the midst of its growth and change, it focuses on becoming a liveable, engaging, intelligent and vibrant city. Historically, many cities (such as Melbourne and Fremantle) have experienced the benefits of a mineral boom or gold rush. These cities managed to link economic boom times with cultural, civic and architectural excellence. The Geraldton city-region has now taken up this challenge.

The elements of a liveable city currently being explored by the city include:

- building community connectivity through transport opportunities and the soft infrastructure that helps people gather together in places where they want to meet
- providing services for the economically and socially disadvantaged, thus helping to ensure that the people who helped make the place aren’t disadvantaged when the new money starts to flow
- including Aboriginal people in decision making and the new employment opportunities through training for the jobs that will be created directly by the new industries, as well as for the jobs that come indirectly, such as small businesses related to their cultural economy
- clustering non-government organisations (NGOs) and community service centres, and embedding these into the business and commercial areas to create a real mix of activities in the city centre and other district hubs
- ensuring that each of the commercial centres contain a diverse range of activities which will help prevent the formation of run-down areas when economic factors change
- developing and articulating a Geraldton style for the city’s architecture, housing and cultural activities
- providing housing stock that reflects the demography of the region, especially the ageing portion of the population, and focusing on medium density housing in high amenity nodes along the coast
- supporting affordable and culturally appropriate housing in high amenity and other areas
- supporting and strengthening social networks that enable the city’s social capital to promote civic pride and a sense of place
- introducing a level of fine detail to urban design, especially to streets, so that the streetscape, architecture, materials, facilities and services make the city an attractive and walkable place that draws people in.
Developing and articulating a Geraldton style
A SUSTAINABLE GROWING CITY-REGION

Every day we are reminded in the media that we live in a world where nothing is stable — global financial crises, cyclones, floods, bushfires, climate change, and vulnerability to diminishing resources like oil. The anxiety caused by this can, unfortunately, discourage people from taking positive action to change and overcome these issues. However, some cities, such as Geraldton, are favoured with economic growth opportunities and have a real chance to make a difference and aim for a more sustainable future. For Geraldton to create its vision it will need to become a global destination for people who see the city as a long-term lifestyle and investment opportunity, and who want to be associated with a city that is not only growing but showing the world how to be more sustainable.

The community wants this growth to be supported through major contributions from the new regional economic drivers. These contributions are needed to create social and economic opportunities as well as to significantly reduce its environmental footprint. Its civic and business leaders believe this growth needs to happen in an intelligent and sustainable way — more than just piecemeal economic contributions to specific projects.

Geraldton can take the opportunity to grasp emerging technologies, such as decentralised green infrastructure, SmartGrids and renewable energy; and it can create much better housing opportunities. It can do this through new procurement and funding mechanisms such as public–private community partnerships, and it can demonstrate leadership in managing its future with a planned agenda built around sustainable development.

Demographics and planning

As indicated in Figure 1, current projections place the population as high as 79,800 people by 2021 and up to 99,700 people by 2031. Growth of Geraldton from the current population of 40,000 to nearly 100,000 in 20 years is very significant. These people all need to live somewhere and to enjoy where they live, whether that be in the regional capital of Geraldton or in regional towns such as Northampton, Cue or Mullewa.

Over the next 30 years Geraldton will need to plan so that it can:
- adequately prepare for the influx of new people of mixed ethnic backgrounds
- provide better housing and services than are presently available
- grow within geographic and environmental constraints
- provide high quality food and water from local sources
- build a city with a diverse and flexible structure that can adapt to change
- reduce its fossil fuel consumption significantly compared to present day levels.

This will need to be reflected in housing policy, spatial planning policy and co-ordinated infrastructure policy and development.
In addition the population will be aging. Not against these trends will be the inflow of people attracted by the increase in economic activity in the region. This is likely to skew the demographics towards singles and couples, and a mobile population with short-term accommodation requirements. In addition to changing demographics the wealth produced from the mining industry is unlikely to be distributed evenly across the community. This may result in a segmented income structure, with significant numbers of people being able to pay high rents and property prices, while at the same time a similarly significant number of people will be excluded because they are not working in high-paid jobs.

Over 95% of the housing stock in Geraldton is located in suburban neighborhoods, which suits the needs of many people during the family raising phases of their lives. With changes in population structure, however, there will be a demand for medium-density urban development linked to good transport systems and placed in prime locations. Mixing medium-density centers with corridors of traditional low-density suburbia is known to create the best, most equitable, vibrant and sustainable cities. Geraldton is well placed to change the form and structure of its coastal urban areas to reflect this type of urban form, and it is small enough to make these changes with relatively low capital investment.
Research into radio astronomy, natural resource management, renewable energy, marine sciences, regional health.

A real chance to make a difference and aim for a more sustainable future.
Spatial planning policy
The City of Greater Geraldton is constrained geographically to the north by the Oakajee Industrial Estate; to the east by the Moresby Ranges, the airport and Narngulu Industrial Estate; and to the south by the productive lands of the Greenough Plains. This is not a bad situation because many of the world’s best and most vibrant cities are geographically constrained, forcing innovative housing, transport and infrastructure solutions that provide for rich, diverse and vibrant built-form and related functional outcomes. Importantly, there are also real productivity gains in cities that do not rely on extensive travel distances and times as well as substantial savings in public expenditure associated with reduced costs for transport infrastructure.

Economy
The economy of the Greater Geraldton and Midwest region has been experiencing a rapid level of growth over the past decade. The population growth evidenced over this period and that projected in the future is inexorably linked to the economic drivers, in mining, renewable energy, the SKA and city services. A factor in this initial driver of growth was government sector investment in infrastructure and services. During the period 2001 – 2005, the State Government invested heavily in the deepening of the Geraldton Port Harbour (enabling an increase of ships to 70,000 tonne panamax vessels), a new public hospital, new police complex and the development of the Geraldton Universities Centre.

In terms of future growth it is expected that Geraldton can leverage off the regional projects, which according to the Midwest Development Commission amount to $27 billion between now and 2020. The City of Greater Geraldton has adopted a “Positive Lasting Legacy Principles” policy and is seeking to have this policy apply to all new major industry and government projects. The intention is to seek the maximisation of local economic benefits and multipliers to ensure the local and regional economy is both supported and enhanced.
Land use and transport

Despite the geographic constraints, there is no shortage of land for housing. The projected population growth can be easily accommodated overall if the development is a continuation of the current suburban sprawl. Over 100,000 people can be accommodated on land currently planned and approved for development following suburban density models similar to Perth and Sydney. The major dilemma with following the urban sprawl housing model is that all the issues of car dependence, congestion, transport inefficiencies and high infrastructure costs will be created in Geraldton when there is no need to do so.

Moderate increases of density around selected urban nodes would easily allow the city to grow to 250,000 people. Consequently, it is proposed that a series of medium-density urban nodes, placed close to the beach and linked by a cheap, efficient and safe mass transit system, be designed and built over the next 50 years. These nodes and transit system would look like a ‘chain of pearls’ (see Figure 5). Each of these nodes will be surrounded by more typical suburban development, but the increased population of the medium-density nodes will support local businesses and recreational areas, reducing the need to travel long distances to shops and facilities.

While everyday living can be supported through these nodes, people want to have an active and alive city centre. Typically this will require redevelopment of the central business district to increase building heights up to four or five stories, with the upper storeys containing apartments. The heights of these buildings should be staggered back from the waterfront so that the upper storeys of all buildings have good views of the ocean. The emphasis should be on making the centre of the city highly liveable and based around pedestrian traffic with lots of green spaces, rather than being dominated by cars as currently occurs.

Geraldton has committed to becoming a walkable city, and has already begun a review of traffic and movement around the city. This needs to be extended to include and link into the long-term vision for the ‘chain of pearls’ along the corridors of growth.

The Port

The long-term plan would be to move the mineral export activities of the Geraldton port to Oakajee. This will free Geraldton port for uses that are more integrated with the city and its residents — freight handling, tourism, fishing, recreational boating, housing and education. Freeing up the port land and the adjacent area along Point Moore will create huge opportunities for highly desirable urban development.

An active and alive city centre
Connecting the clean power

Geraldton
Weld Range
Mullewa
Pindar
Mingenew
Morawa
Perenjori
Dongara
Three Springs
Eneabba
Miling
Muchea
Mandurah
Perth

Bonnie Rock
Dalwallinu
Mukinbudin
Merredin
Quairading
Northam
Moora
Koolyanobbing
Kalgoorlie
Kalgoorlie

Future connections to National Rail Grid
Future connections to Pilbara

Northampton
Karratha
Dampier
Hesperia
Native
Hanger
Mt. Magnet
Harrismith
Mudgee
Broken Hill
Kalgoorlie

Logistics for the Future

Midwest existing and proposed energy infrastructure (Fig. 4)

Highway existing and proposed rail infrastructure (Fig. 5)
Food and water

Increasingly regional cities have to insulate themselves from the risks associated with interruptions to long-distance supply chains for the human essentials of energy, food and water. As a city-region, Geraldton is well endowed with good supplies of arable land in the Greenough Flats and east of the Moresby Ranges, as well as with reasonable quantities of good quality groundwater. Local market gardens are adequate to feed the city with fresh food.

As the region grows, however, it is important that local food and water supplies are protected and enhanced, and supply chains shortened. In all the planning for the future it will be essential to retain the horticultural districts and reserve the groundwater supplies for the future resilience of the city-region, rather than using them for short-term economic advantage.

Infrastructure policy

A sustainable city demands that we be more intelligent about the supply of water, energy and waste disposal systems. Currently, Geraldton’s water and waste water infrastructure, telecommunications and electricity cabling are inadequate to accommodate the increased density of development. Expanding this infrastructure following business-as-usual (BAU) design approaches will be an enduring drain on the city’s rate base, particularly for ongoing operations. This is something that will need carefully considered, innovative and strategic planning. In particular the City needs to provide leadership to State infrastructure agencies which currently use a supply-on-demand model of infrastructure development.

In addition, BAU design is generally about using environmental resources, polluting them, then dumping the waste into the environment. The City of Greater Geraldton has decided to plan that future infrastructure will be green infrastructure that works with natural systems, rather than against them. The public forums strongly endorsed this policy. This represents a significant commitment to a sustainable, low-carbon, low-water, high-recycling approach. CUSP research has shown this can be cost effective.

In addition to infrastructure, the city needs sustainable buildings for civic, commercial and domestic use. To implement this will require some changes to building bylaws, and the city’s support for pilot and demonstration urban development and housing projects. This needs to be supported by good economic evidence that such innovation won’t negatively impact upon peoples’ livelihoods.

The long-term sustainability of green infrastructure from smart, efficient energy, better transport options, clever waste and wastewater management, as well as world-class information technologies needs to be coupled with a commitment to reducing carbon emissions. This is discussed further below.
A CARBON-NEUTRAL CITY-REGION

While climate change presents major challenges, reducing emissions from the generation of power is one of the challenges most readily addressed through technological advances; transport and the production of food are more difficult. However, the redesign of the urban form discussed in the previous section will make a very significant contribution to reducing emissions from these sources.

Described as ‘the Middle East of renewable energy’ due to its wind and solar resources, the city-region of Greater Geraldton has a vision to become a leading user and provider of clean energy, exporting renewable energy out of its region to Perth, regional energy-hungry magnetite mining operations, and other urban centres.

The City of Greater Geraldton considers that with relatively modest levels of investment, and considerable application of policy and administrative initiative, the energy-intensive mining operations will help create a carbon-neutral region by accessing renewable energy through well-planned, fit-for-purpose transmission assets that align to and run off pre-existing state-owned transmission infrastructure.

The City of Greater Geraldton

The city has begun initiatives to boost the energy efficiency of both public and private buildings across the region. By combining this with green infrastructure and SmartGrid technology, the demand for energy can be significantly reduced across the region and enable small-scale renewables to be built into all new urban development.

Carbon credits

While it is technically feasible to completely switch to renewable energy over the next 50 years, there is still a real imperative to sequester carbon and avoid future emissions. Geraldton is the major coastal city in the Southern Rangelands of Western Australia, an area that has some of the most degraded landscapes in the country. Developments in land management technologies mean that these degraded areas are now able to be managed and turned into very significant long-term carbon stores featuring new plantations, soil biochar and new rangeland management techniques. The city is well placed to provide large-scale brokerage of carbon credits linked to regional sequestration and avoidance projects over the next 30 years as the world economy is decarbonised.

The city's ambition is to become the capital of a carbon-neutral region.
As seen in Figure 6, traditionally the city has been supported economically by Harvesting, with a focus on agriculture and fishing. The reliance on agriculture as the dominant economic activity will soon shift, both due to the arrival of the mining and export industry and as climate change affects the productivity of agricultural output. The City of Greater Geraldton recognises the benefits that will be gained from this Digging phase, but also acknowledges that it will have to move beyond this into a diversified and sustainable economy based on developing regional logistics industries and Creative, clever industries. These will Link to the world, creating new and innovative businesses and culture.

Figure 6 indicates these opportunities.

Central to the vision of being a city with an adaptive economy is the creation of economic precincts to help provide a focus for the city’s economic development. The precincts envisaged as critical to long-term growth include:

- Heavy Industry – Oakajee Port and Industrial Estate, Oakajee Narngulu Infrastructure Corridor and Narngulu Industrial Estate to facilitate processing and export of mined commodities
- Logistics – Oakajee Port, state rail network upgrade, and links into the national rail network, Geraldton Port, Geraldton Airport
- Research and Technology – full deployment of the National Broadband Network (NBN), Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP/SKA), iVEC, research into radio astronomy, natural resource management, renewable energy, marine sciences, regional health
- Administration – IT services hub for regional agencies and local government, backup/mirror for state government IT systems
- Health, Education and Training – training, education, tele-health, virtual service delivery, on the clustering of two major hospitals, Durack Institute of Technology, Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health, Geraldton Universities Centre, high schools
- Arts – providing artistic workspaces and buildings for the local physical and Digital Arts community’s initiatives
- Sport – building on Geraldton’s fascination with sport, cars and all things that move fast

All of these components must be combined in a broad regional plan to help lead the city-region through the anticipated transitions outlined above. The sooner this is done and the first steps taken to encourage their facilitation the sooner Greater Geraldton will begin the journey to becoming a global regional city that is more liveable and sustainable.
CREATE A DELIBERATIVE & ENGAGED COMMUNITY

2029 and Beyond is a long-term initiative to improve sustainability in the Greater Geraldton City region of Western Australia by implementing deliberative democracy as a way of life. Deliberative democracy is a participatory governance process where all levels of government, industry and the non-government sector, learn and undertake new ways of cooperative problem solving and collaborative decision-making, thus engaging a new city-region within 50 years that will be considered one of the world’s success stories as an international city-region with a strong local identity.

Deliberative democracy is a participative governance process where the community — ordinary citizens, all levels of government, industry and the non-government sector, learn and undertake new ways of cooperative problem solving and collaborative decision-making. 2029 and Beyond includes a 3-year research project with Curtin University (CUSP) to develop and evaluate innovative use of deliberative democracy and social media to build regional sustainability. After the first year, the City has agreed on future directions for the community, and teams of people — made up of community members and City staff, tackling some of the tough sustainability issues that Geraldton is facing.

Other initiatives include the creation of the ‘Alliance Governance Group’ — consisting of representatives of the community, industry and government, formed to oversee and help implement outcomes of 2029 and Beyond. ‘Community champions’ — people who initiate and engage the community in conversations about things that affect the future of the City, have been trained and are working with the community. A strong alliance has been built with the media, in particular the widely read local newspaper, to foster informed dialogue and promote engagement with the future of the City. New connections have been created with Indigenous and multicultural groups. An interactive website, ‘Civic Evolution’, has been built to encourage the community to develop ideas into specific proposals the City can implement, and many small and large scale face-to-face deliberations have been run to facilitate your problem solving and collaborative actions have been run.
Undertaking new ways of cooperative problem solving and collaborative decision-making
Throughout history, economies have been reshaped by revolutionary inventions. Breakthroughs in information and communication technology (ICT) have been reshaping our world for the past one hundred years. From the creation of the first telegraph in the late nineteenth century, the expansion of telephone communication networks in the early twentieth century to the worldwide adoption of mobile computing technology in the twenty first century created, and will continue to create, enormous growth of economic and social opportunities.

The “Digital Economy” a mix of ICT innovations such as the high speed broadband network, mobile computing and digital equipment are now allowing knowledge creation industries, scientific breakthroughs and efficient utilization of capital and resources independent of geographic location. Most future predictions now look at how this smart technology can also help create the “Green Economy” where significant reductions in resource footprint are feasible because of the precision of digital systems.

The Digital Economy is creating a highly dynamic economy and is changing many, if not all facets of society. It shrinks the physical boundaries that previously limited free flows of information, investment to move easily around the world and redefines social interaction. Businesses that are part of the Digital Economy find it easier to innovate, improve market access and become globally competitive. It also empowers social engagement and governance structures that can become more transparent, democratic and effective.
In charting the milestones towards realising this vision, the City has taken bold steps to plan, initiate and spearhead several major ICT development projects within the City as well as the Midwest region. These projects include but are not limited to the following:

**Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder**

The Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) is a next-generation radio telescope based at the Murchison Radio-Astronomy Observatory, approximately 315km north-east of Geraldton. In addition to undertaking ground-breaking radio astronomy it provided an opportunity for Australia’s capacity as a world class exemplar of efficient resource usage, including how to best integrate renewable energy technologies into households and businesses, to enhance both practice demand side management education programs and how to best integrate renewable energy technologies into households and businesses, to enhance both practice demand side management education programs and how to best integrate renewable energy technologies into households and businesses.

**IBM Smart City Status**

Geraldton was selected as one of 32 cities worldwide to receive an IBM Smart City Challenge in 2012. This grant provides the City with access to IBM’s experts to analyse and recommend ways Geraldton can become an even better place in which to live and work. This award will support Geraldton’s push to become a world class exemplar of efficient resource usage, including how to best integrate renewable energy technologies into households and businesses, to enhance both practice demand side management education programs and how to best integrate renewable energy technologies into households and businesses.

**Data Repository**

The NBN enables Geraldton to become the home for all the SKA, Government’s data disaster recovery, data backup and storage in order to meet it sovereign risk and international data management requirements. This would use a transformative change in the local and regional economy to become more focused on technology and innovation. Such a centre has also the potential to create a critical mass to sustain further data support for the resources sector and all remote and rural communities in the north of Western Australia.

**Digital Government Programs**

In line with the Australian Federal Government’s vision to become a leading global digital economy by 2020, Geraldton has been chosen as the first regional Western Australian city to establish the Digital Hub, Digital Enterprise and Digital Local Government programs. These programs aim to equip the community with the skills needed to seize and capitalize on opportunities in the Digital Economy.

**New Opportunities in the Green Economy**

To showcase Australia’s capacity as a world class exemplar of efficient resource usage, including how to best integrate renewable energy technologies into households and businesses, to enhance both practice demand side management education programs and how to best integrate renewable energy technologies into households and businesses.

**Digital Enterprise and Digital Local Government**

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The NBN enables Geraldton to become the home for all the SKA, Government’s data disaster recovery, data backup and storage in order to meet it sovereign risk and international data management requirements. This would use a transformative change in the local and regional economy to become more focused on technology and innovation. Such a centre has also the potential to create a critical mass to sustain further data support for the resources sector and all remote and rural communities in the north of Western Australia.

**Huge Bandwidth Connection**

Geraldton is uniquely poised to become the technology hub for Western Australia. This is through a mix of its location and also the development of key infrastructure elements such as the SKA. In 2010 the Commonwealth Government funded the construction of a 36 core of optic fibre link between Perth and Geraldton consisting of all core for NBN, 34 core for the SKA project, a core for AARnet for research purpose and linking Geraldton Universities Centre (GUC) to the Pawsey Centre (VEC supercomputer), and a core for State Government usage. The AARnet connection will provide GUC significant access to supercomputing and telepresence capacity through facilities currently being developed by CSIRO on-site at the Geraldton campus. For the first time researchers can be based in Geraldton and have access to world class super computing capacity and modelling.
Turning this vision into a reality over the next 50 years will take intelligence, commitment, effort and leadership. It also requires recognition that the world is constantly evolving and we will have to modify this vision over time. It will require the community and the City of Greater Geraldton to continue to recognize and strengthen the values of a visionary, civilised and civic-minded community, including:

- welcoming the opportunities for change as a means of creating a better future
- continuing to work together for the common good
- enhancing the local environment and heritage
- creating new forums where people can talk through their ideas and access assistance with developing them, including development of the entrepreneurial spirit
- using the talents and resources that are present in the region
- forming partnerships with the best and finest people and organisations from outside the region
- having a commitment to excellence and believing that the Geraldton region truly represents a world-class opportunity
- working for tolerance, equity and inclusion
- recognising and celebrating difference.

We have developed this document to give an overview of Geraldton’s potential as it enters an intense period of growth. In our view, creating this vision will depend on how strongly the people of the region hold to these values and work towards the vision. We’re optimistic that Geraldton will create a new city-region within 50 years that will be considered one of the world’s success stories as an international city-region with a strong local identity.
The city will become an economic, cultural and social hub in its own right — a global city — but will still be the place people recognise as Geraldton.