



A Profile of the Region

The region for which the RFA is being developed is the South West Forest Region, covering about four and a quarter million hectares of public and private land. The region stretches from just north of Gingin to the South Coast, from near Denmark around to Cape Naturaliste. The region's western boundary broadly follows the Darling Scarp, swinging in to the coast at Cape Naturaliste. Its eastern boundary broadly follows the Albany highway.

Forests and the environment

The jarrah and karri forests of WA's South West are unique among Australia's eucalypt forests. They have a diverse range of flora and fauna species - the jarrah forest is home to about 240 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, frogs and fish, while about 230 fauna species live in the karri forest. Animals now extinct or under threat in other parts of the country still thrive in these forests, including the woylie, tammar wallaby, quenda, chuditch, western ring-tail possum and numbat.

About 900,000 hectares of forest is in accredited reserves, with another 100,000 hectares in other informal reserves. The CRA documented over 3,200 plant species and about 400 vertebrate fauna species. Twenty six forest ecosystems and 312 native vegetation complexes were mapped within the region.

The forest catchments are an important source of water, supplying the Perth-Bunbury area with about 200,000 million litres each year for domestic and industrial use.

Forest industries

The forests make a major contribution to the State's economy and employment in forest-based industries ranging from timber production, mining and tourism to smaller industries like bee keeping, seed collecting and arts and crafts.

The timber for the State's wood, wood products and furniture industry comes mostly from the South West region. The combined hardwood and softwood sectors employ more than 20,000 people either directly or indirectly and has a turnover in excess of about \$850 million a year.

Mining is another important industry in the forests. The region has rich mineral deposits of bauxite, gold, coal and mineral sands which earn the State more than \$2.68 billion a year.

With natural attractions like the Gloucester Tree near Pemberton and Walpole's Valley of the Giants, the forests are also major tourist attractions with about three million visits a year.

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People and communities

At the 1996 census, the South West Statistical Division had a population of about 160,000 people.

Major towns in the region include Bunbury, Mandurah, Collie, Busselton and Manjimup.

Agriculture is a major industry on private land in the region, with dairying, sheep and cattle, horticulture and viticulture the major land uses. Establishment of tree plantations in the region has steadily increased over the past two decades.

Many popular pastimes for local residents are water-based, including fishing, swimming and boating. Bushwalking, picnicking and scenic driving in the forests and coastal areas