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Location Report

CITY OF BUNBURY South-west coast, Western Australia

Noongars Country

December 2023

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CITY OF BUNBURY HIGHLIGHTS



Strong population growth



Attractive seaside lifestyle



Large industrial areas with job nodes



Affordable housing



\$278 million Bunbury Hospital



\$1.25 billion Bunbury Outer Ring Rd



\$2.25 billion lithium hydroxide processing trains

CITY OF BUNBURY South-west coast, Western Australia

Noongars Country

Bunbury is the commercial heart of Western Australia's booming south-west region and the fastest-selling regional property market in the nation.

Dubbed the second capital of the state, Bunbury features one of the country's biggest regional ports.

When combined with its major industrial estates and strong transport links to mining and agricultural regions, the city is a formidable employment node.

Government planning instruments indicate this area will be the focus of further extensive transport and infrastructure spending in the near future.

Bunbury also offers an attractive seaside lifestyle and affordable housing which no doubt accounts for it having a population growth rate well above the national average.

WA's regional property markets rebounded in 2022 after the worst of the pandemic lockdowns and border closures.

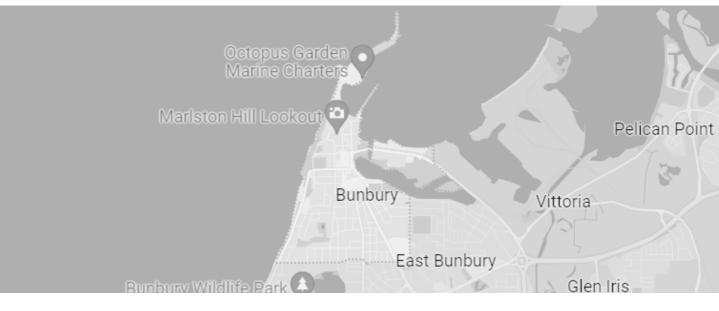
Consequently, lifestyle locations south of Perth have produced some of the state's most impressive results right through 2023.

Across the Bunbury LGA, median house prices continued to rise significantly in the 12 months to June 2023 - with Gelorup achieving a massive 17% rise and Australind, Dalyellup, Leschenault and Usher all recording double-digit growth.

With demand for real estate continuing to build and firsthome buyers heavily targeting the suburb of Australind, where 339 houses sold for the year, price growth is becoming more evident.

Very low vacancy rates and high yields are a feature of the region.

City of Bunbury Location, Employment, Population, Home Ownership

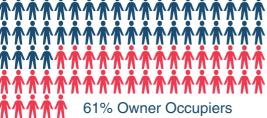


LOCATION

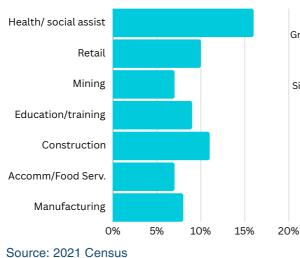
Distance from:

Perth

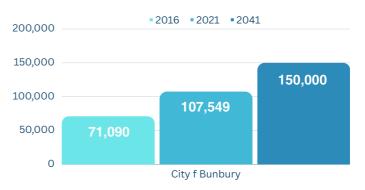
175km



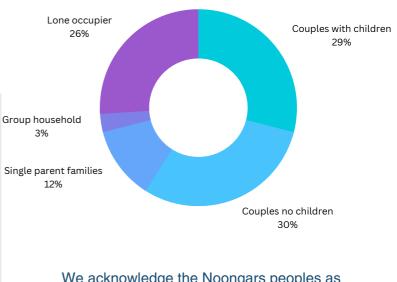
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



POPULATION



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



We acknowledge the Noongars peoples as the traditional owners of lands within the City of Bunbury

Economy and Amenities

Greater Bunbury, 175km south of the Perth CBD, includes four local government areas (the City of Bunbury and the shires of Capel, Dardanup and Harvey), and extends from Yarloop in the north to Boyanup in the south and Capel to the southwest.

Built on a natural harbour, Bunbury is an important seaport on the Western Australian coast with its major exports being alumina, wood chips, mineral sands, spodumene - a source of lithium - and silica sand.

The port's excellent rail and road links also make it an ideal distribution point for the many mining, manufacturing and agricultural industries in the State's south-west regions.

A growing population is enhancing Bunbury and the south-west regions further. Although ABS data released in July 2022 shows the Bunbury LGA's population increased by just 3.3% between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses, the south-west region as a whole is proving to be a magnet for incoming residents with the Greater Bunbury region's population expected to reach 100,000 by 2031.

Between 2016 and 2021, the shires of Augusta-Margaret River and Nannup - both about an hour south of Bunbury - experienced 17.5% and 15.8% increases respectively in population numbers.

Mining is continuing to fuel population growth. One of the region's key employers is BHP Billiton's Worsley Alumina Refinery, which employs 1,200 workers.

Another is the Kemerton Strategic Industrial Area (KSIA), which is home to several chemical processing plants as well as a power station, wastewater treatment plant and abattoirs.

A State priority project, the 7,605 ha KSIA site supports over 1,000 direct jobs and contributed \$490 million to the Gross State Product (GSP) in 2018-19 with a further \$300 million expected from 2022.

A lithium hydroxide plant at KSIA - believed to be one of the world's largest lithium production facilities - was completed in 2020. US developer Albermarle is now planning a billion-dollar expansion of the facility plus worker's accommodation villages in Australind and Binningup.

Bunbury's overall economy is diverse, with the construction industry sector making the greatest contribution to economic output in the region. The gross regional product of Bunbury is \$7.1 billion.

The City of Bunbury endorsed its largest-ever annual budget of \$102.6 million for the 2023-24 financial year. Its \$36 million capital works program has allocated \$15 million for the multi-year redevelopment of Hands Oval and \$3.6 million for the replacement of Forest Park Pavilion.

The healthcare and social assistance sector is the region's largest employer, representing 16% of total jobs.

But Bunbury isn't all about industry. Reportedly one of the few places in the world where you can swim with dolphins, this opportunity results in an influx of tourists each summer. Tourism attracts around 420,000 visitors each year, employs 1,200 people and is responsible for \$150 million in visitor expenditure.

A two-hour drive from Perth, Bunbury is also easily accessible by road, while there are also regular train services from the capital. Bunbury is the terminus of the Australind passenger train service which links to Perth, with the heritage-listed old Bunbury Railway Station a focal point for tourists and history buffs.

Economy and Amenities

Although Bunbury has an airport that caters for general aviation, its main function is training pilots and accommodating emergency services. The Busselton-Margaret River Regional Airport, 55km south of the city, is the main passenger terminal for the region.

Bunbury is serviced by several public and private schools as well as South Regional TAFE and Edith Cowan University campuses.

The South West Health Campus is the major hospital and includes Bunbury Regional Hospital - one of the busiest hospitals in regional WA and where early works construction on a \$278 million redevelopment were completed in 2022.

In December 2022, it was announced a \$78 million redevelopment would be the largest in regional WA, with additional maternity, birthing and neonatal services. The hospital will also feature WA's first regional teaching, training and research centre.

Bunbury has an abundance of recreational areas, including several retail hubs, a buzzing waterfront strip, and a regional art gallery and entertainment centre. Nature reserves, parks and gardens are a feature of the town centre, while the renowned Margaret River wine region is only an hour's drive away.

Property Profile

Perth and regional WA were among the markets that defied the 2022 downturn, in which some of the key markets across Australia declined after the pandemic boom.

A PropTrack Market Insight report in November 2022 showed Bunbury was the only market in WA to remain at peak levels throughout the year, recording annual price growth of 9.14%. Bunbury also continued to deliver rising sales activity and solid price growth through the first half of 2023.

CoreLogic's Regional Market Update for February 2023 found the Bunbury LGA was the fastestselling regional property market in the nation. At that time, houses in Bunbury sold in a median time frame of 24 days as city buyers moved to more affordable areas outside of the suburbs.

It was more of the same in CoreLogic's May 2023 Regional Market Update, which showed Bunbury bucking the nationwide trend of declining property prices. Bunbury dwellings, it found, increased 4.8% in three months to make it the third highest in the nation.

The price growth was still strong in June 2023, with CoreLogic figures showing the major sales regions of Australind (339 sales) and Dalyellup (246 sales) had both recorded 12% growth in median house price in the previous 12 months.

The Spring 2023 edition of the *Price Predictor Index*, published by Hotspotting, listed Bunbury itself as one of its Top 100 Supercharged Suburbs. Suburbs on that list are the places showing the strongest growth patterns and most likely to deliver future price growth. Bunbury sales over the past four quarters went from 33 to 49, 39 and 60.

South Bunbury made the report's list of Top 50 Locations for Consistency for the second time in 2023 after being named in the Autumn edition of the PPI. Its quarterly sales figures consistently hover between the high eighties and high nineties.

As it did in January 2023, CoreLogic's Home Value Index report in June 2023 also highlighted Bunbury as ranking second in regional WA's Top 10 SA3 areas for the highest 12-month value growth.

Property Profile

Post-Pandemic Trends

WA overall and its regional areas, in particular, have experienced dramatic changes since COVID. During the worst of the pandemic restrictions in 2020 and 2021, the Perth market underwent a resurgence. The city saw heightened sales activity and a return to double-digit growth in median prices during this time.

WA's affordability, strong state economy and growing resources sector are key drivers of these trends. New jobs are being created, while there is a shortage of dwellings in the state. These factors have resulted in the state remaining largely unaffected by the ongoing cash rate rises between May 2022 and November 2023.

Perth's affordability index - the share of an average wage paid on a new mortgage - would have a major bearing on the fact that it was not as heavily impacted by the rate rises.

The ANZ Housing Affordability Report released in May 2023 found buyers in Sydney needed 51.6% of their wage to service a new mortgage compared to 32.2% in Perth. The requirement was even lower in regional WA including Bunbury, where only 28.5% of a wage was needed. Regional WA was significantly lower than the national figure was 42.7%.

Local Sales Activity & Prices

Strong population growth in Greater Bunbury is expected to continue, driving more property demand. The suburb of Australind emerged as a hotspot for first-home buyers (FHBs) in 2022, replacing Bunbury on the list of Top 20 suburbs. Australind continues to be the busiest suburb in the LGA, according to CoreLogic figures.

While Australind and Dalyellup were runaway leaders in the sales race with well above 200 sales each, Carey Park was also a busy suburb with 156 sales for the 12 months. All enjoyed strong rises in their median house prices.

The highest-price suburbs in the LGA, Leschenault and Gelorup, both recorded double-digit price growth to \$765,000 and \$753,000 respectively. The only other location above the \$500,000 mark was Bunbury on \$648,000.

The unit market in the LGA is much smaller, with Bunbury and South Bunbury the only significant markets. Bunbury median unit prices rose 21% to \$430,000, while South Bunbury remained very affordable for investors at \$335,000 despite a 12% increase.

Vacancy Rates

Bunbury's strong connection to the mining sector is highlighted in its vacancy rate which from 2015-2018 - when the resources industry was waning - rose to around 6%. However, as both the WA and Bunbury economy began to rebound, vacancies dropped and fell to 3% between 2018-19.

Such relaxed figures are no longer on the rental landscape. The postcode of 6230 (which covers most of the Bunbury LGA) has been below 1% since September 2020 and was at 0.4% in September 2023, according to SQM Research data. Australind (postcode 6233) is also very tight at 0.6%.

Rents and Yields

The rental shortage in Bunbury means rents are expected to continue increasing. SQM Research data showed rents in the 6230 postcode of Greater Bunbury increased by more than 14% to \$551 per week in the 12 months to November 2023. The rent increases weren't quite as high in Australind (6233) but they still rose 7.9% to \$572 per week. Rents on units in Australind rose sharply, however, by 13.8% to \$477.

Market Summary

The Bunbury house market can be summarised as follows:-

Suburb	Sales Houses	Median Houses	1-year Growth	10 Year Growth Average	Median Yield
Australind	339	\$475,000	12%	6%	6.2%
Bunbury	74	\$648,000	3%	7%	5.5%
Carey Park	156	\$314,000	8%	8%	7.6%
College Grove	31	\$425,000	6%	4%	7.1%
Dalyellup	246	\$475,000	12%	6%	6.2%
East Bunbury	98	\$398,000	5%	3%	6.3%
Gelorup	27	\$753,000	17%	8%	N/A
Glen Iris	70	\$405,000	9%	4%	6.3%
Leschenault	43	\$765,000	12%	8%	4.3%
South Bunbury	225	\$435,000	7%	4%	5.7%
Usher	58	\$372,000	13%	6%	7.6%
Withers	88	\$295,000	7%	9%	7.8%

Source: CoreLogic

The Bunbury unit market can be summarised as follows:-

Suburb	Sales Units	Median Units	1-year Growth	10 Year Growth Average	Median Yield
Bunbury	84	\$430,000	21%	3%	6.6%
South Bunbury	65	\$335,000	13%	3%	7.2%
Withers	22	\$143,000	5%	-7%	12.1%

Source: CoreLogic

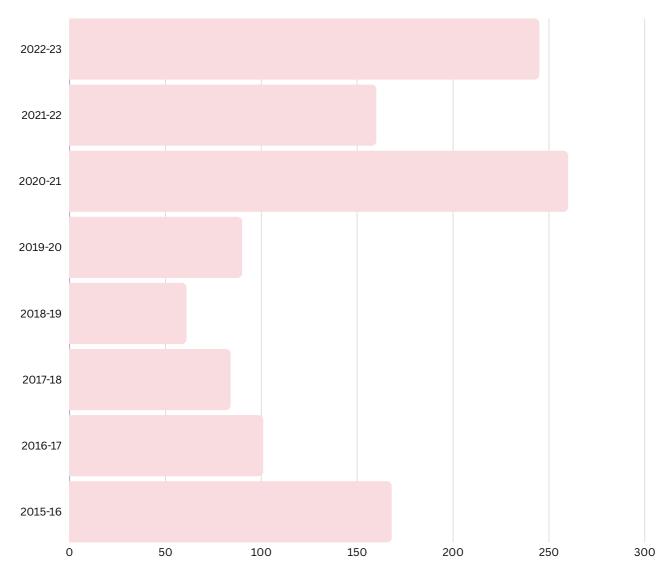
Rents and Vacancy Rate

Rental Statistics

P/code	Suburbs	Vacancy	Median Asking Rent
6230	Bunbury houses	0.4%	\$551pw
6230	Bunbury units	0.4%	\$411pw
6233	Australind houses	0.6%	\$572pw
6233	Australind units	0.6%	\$477pw

Source: SQM Research

Building Approvals - City of Bunbury



Source: .id profile

Future Prospects

In February 2022, the WA State Government recognised the South-West region as the fastestgrowing and most populous area in the State, outside of metropolitan Perth and Perth's adjacent Peel region.

The population of the South-West is projected to reach around 230,000 by 2026, and as a result, significant investments are being made in infrastructure and development, with industrial and mining sites being a priority focus.

Bunbury is certainly the commercial and residential heart of this booming area, with the local economy generating \$10 billion annually. Its gross regional product (GRP) has continued to increase strongly in recent years, jumping from \$5 billion to \$7 billion between FY2022 and FY2023.

The Gross Regional Product of WA's South-West grew almost 6% in FY2021 to \$31.26 billion. Industrial expansions and major transport projects are now a focus for planning experts amid the rapidly growing population.

Amid such construction, however, there are concerns that WA's low level of stock and its skills shortage may push up wages, rents and property prices. Construction and labour costs are far higher than pre-pandemic prices with Perth experiencing the nation's highest rise in the price of building materials in 2022 (over 30%).

Residential Projects

In what will be a considerable residential and retail project for Bunbury, a 260ha coastal community is being planned for Binningup.

WA billionaire Andrew Forrest announced his plans for the site in August 2022, which will include constructing residential, retail and leisure amenities on the 2.2km stretch of coastline over 30 years.

Forrest's Fiveight property firm plans to upgrade and expand the greenfield site's golf course - which closed in 2020 - into a high-quality nine-hole course.

Transport

Along with the BORR project, a fast train service running between Perth and Bunbury could also enhance connectivity in the South-West region.

A feasibility study way back in 2010 costed the project at around \$1.2 billion.

It was announced in 2022 that the State and Federal governments had agreed to pool \$8 million in funding for a business case on the service, which could cut the current 150-minute journey to 90 minutes or less.

Meanwhile, an 82km stretch of disused railway tracks known as the South-West line between Greenbushes and Kwinana may also be reopened in the future.

The State Government has also allocated \$4 million to evaluate major new infrastructure to support the region's lithium industry.

Future Prospects

Major Projects

The largest project in the City of Bunbury - and the biggest infrastructure project ever undertaken in the South-West - is the Bunbury Outer Ring Road (BORR) project.

Worth \$1.25 billion, the joint State and Federal government project will feature a 27km four-lane, high-standard road linking the Forrest and Bussell highways, thereby easing congestion. Construction on the northern section began in 2021 while that of the southern section started in August 2022. Full completion is expected in late 2024.

Meanwhile, one of the key developments in the City of Bunbury is the Kemerton Strategic Industrial Area (KSIA). Businesses already operating out of the park include:

- Albermarle lithium hydroxide processing plant
- · Kemerton Silica Sand silica sand production
- Simcoa Operations silicon production
- · Cristal titanium dioxide production
- Nufarm Coogee Pty Ltd chlor-alkali production
- BOC Limited oxygen and nitrogen production
- Transfield gas-fired power plant
- Tesla power plant

Under the Picton Industrial Park Southern Precinct District Structure Plan (2018), a major advanced manufacturing hub is also proposed for the KSIA precinct, with the 500ha site already zoned industrial.

The location benefits from easy road, rail and port access. This has in turn led the WA Government to commit \$485,000 towards a feasibility study for the industrial park.

In other new projects for the area, Stirling Shopping Centre in the Bunbury CBD was demolished in early 2021 and replaced by a four-storey office complex, housing around 400 staff from Services Australia (formerly the Department of Human Services). The \$17 million project, which created 150 construction jobs, was completed in mid-2023.

Meanwhile, Bunbury's waterfront strip has been undergoing a series of upgrades and beautification programs since 2015, making the precinct more appealing to both tourists and locals.

Future Prospects

Collie-Bunbury Region

The State Government recognises that the future of Collie is firmly entwined with that of Bunbury - 65km west - due to shared interests in coal mining, energy generation and agriculture.

This has resulted in the Economic Development Action Plan for the Collie and Bunbury Regions, 2020–2026. Under this planning instrument, the Collie-Bunbury region can expect to be the recipient of serious public and private expenditure.

With the key purpose of attaining a more diversified economy, the document also includes plans to facilitate the expansion of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, tourism and healthcare.

Some targeted projects include:

- Port of Bunbury upgrade \$10 million
- General road upgrades \$15 million
- Perth-Australind rail upgrade \$32 million
- Bunbury & Collie Hospitals upgrade -
- \$293 million
- Six schools & TAFE upgrade \$24 million

Following a \$7.8 million upgrade in 2017, Collie Health Service and its general hospital area are now undergoing a \$14.7 million redevelopment.

The new operating theatre opened in May 2023 with the redevelopment also including a new consulting room, critical infrastructure work and a roof replacement.

Meanwhile, work is underway on a \$277.9 million upgrade of Bunbury Regional Hospital - one of the busiest hospitals in regional WA.

Early critical works, including a new car park, were completed in 2022 with the State Government announcing in December 2022 that the work will include an additional \$78 million worth of new maternity, birthing and neonatal services.

In February 2023, the State Government called for contract tenders to design and construct the project. The hospital upgrade will see the facility feature WA's first regional teaching, training and research centre plus an expanded emergency department, additional beds, and new clinical equipment and mental health areas.

Meanwhile, one of WA's two remaining coal mines - Griffin Coal Mine, near Collie - went into receivership in September 2022, with 270 employees at risk of losing their jobs.

The mine supplies coal to Collie's Bluewaters Power Station, which is one of Australia's newest stations and one of WA's largest generators in the main electricity grid, generating 15% of WA's power.

In February 2023, the State Government offered \$19.5 million to Griffin Coal in a bid for it to continue operations at the mine and protect the State's electricity supply. In October 2023, a further \$3.2 million of taxpayers' money went to the embattled mining company, taking the total support package to \$30 million.

Future Prospects

Offshore Wind Farms

Bunbury's coastal location is highly beneficial for renewable energy with several offshore wind projects in the pipeline.

These have become even more significant following a Federal Government announcement in August 2022 to develop as many as six offshore wind farms around the nation, including in WA.

In April 2023, the Federal Government concluded the submission period for the Gippsland coast off Victoria. Following this, it was announced that the Indian Ocean region off Perth and Bunbury would go through the consultation process for an offshore wind zone.

Plans for Australia's largest such project - to be installed in Geographe Bay, 55km south of Bunbury - were lodged with the Federal Government in March 2022 by Danish company, Copenhagen Energy.

The 3GW Leeuwin Offshore Wind Farm comprising up to 200 turbines could have an annual capacity of up to 11 Terawatt-hours. This equates to around half of the energy generated by the state's main grid. Construction on the wind farm could begin in 2026 and take three years to complete.

Other offshore wind projects in the planning pipeline include a 300MW facility between Bunbury and Mandurah, and a 2GW facility at Dunsborough, 80km south of the city.



Future Prospects

Lithium Plants

The lithium mine at Greenbushes - in which Albemarle, the world's biggest listed lithium producer, owns a half-share with Talison Lithium - is the largest of its kind in the world. The mine produces a third of the global lithium supply, supplying the product to China, North America and Europe. With Albermarle announcing in September 2022 that it expects lithium prices to remain high for the next decade, the Greenbushes mine is a significant driver for the local economy.

Talison Lithium also has plans for further expansion to double its output and increase its workforce of over 400 people. The world-leading lithium minerals producer is also now building a \$700 million lithium processing plant at Kwinana - 35km south of Perth - which is reported to be the largest in the world. The first stage began production in 2019.

As previously noted, Albermarle also has big plans for its KSIA lithium hydroxide plant - which it now owns in partnership with Mineral Resources.

Firstly, Albermarle is planning to double its lithium hydroxide output in Australia via a \$2.25 billion project which will see two new processing trains at its KSIA facility.

The trains would lift the facility's production by 50,000 tonnes every year and bring annual production capacity across the plant's total of four trains to 100,000 tonnes. This is reportedly enough capacity to produce batteries for more than two million electric vehicles each year.

Construction on the new trains was expected to begin in late 2023, with the first of these due for completion in 2026.

A \$125 million proposal from Albermarle for an 850-person workforce accommodation village in Australind - dubbed Paris Grove - was approved in April 2023. Planned to accommodate employees of its KSIA lithium hydroxide processing plant, the village may be turned into a permanent housing estate in the future.

The project will add to Albermarle's plans for a \$73 million similar site at Binningup, which was conditionally approved by the State Government in August 2022, despite being knocked back by the Shire of Harvey Council.

The project has been stalled at the State Administrative Tribunal due to relevant conditions surrounding the site, particularly the need for an on-site sewerage system.



Recent sales











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City of Bunbury Major projects currently impacting the region are:-

INFRASTRUCTURE – TRANSPORT

Project	Value	Status	Impact
Bunbury Outer Ring Road project (BORR) Federal & State Governments	\$1.25 million (Includes additional State & Federal Gvt commitments of \$400m in total in 2022-2023 Budget)	Under construction Scheduled for completion in 2024	Jobs: 4,500 27km, 4-lane highway connecting Bussell & Forest Highways

INFRASTRUCTURE – HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

Project	Value	Status	Impact
Bunbury Regional Hospital - redevelopment	\$278 million	Under construction Early critical works completed 2022	Expanded emergency and operating theatre capacity, new mental
State Government			health unit & extra maternity, birthing & neonatal services

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT - GENERAL

Project	Value	Status	Impact
Services Australia - office building Primewest	\$17 million	Completed 2023	Jobs: 150 construction New 4-storey office building on site of former Stirling Centre Shopping Centre to house 400 Services Australia government employees
Worker's village, Australind Albemarle with Mineral Resources	\$125 million	Approved April 2023	17ha accommodation precinct for KSIA lithium hydroxide plant workers to comprise dwellings for 850 people
Worker's village, Binningup Albemarle with Mineral Resources	\$73 million	Conditional State Government approval in 2022 after Harvey Shire Council refusal Project stalled at State Administrative Tribunal after sewerage system issues	Accommodation precinct for 500 workers KSIA lithium hydroxide plant workers

City of Bunbury Major projects currently impacting the region are:-

RESOURCES AND ENERGY

Project	Value	Status	Impact
Lithium hydroxide plant, KSIA	\$2.25 billion	Work to start late 2023 First train expected for completion in 2026	2 new processing trains to increase production by 50,000 tonnes/year
Albemarle with Mineral Resources			
Greenbushes Lithium Mine - expansion Talison Lithium with Albemarle	\$1.4 billion	Work began late 2022 First new circuit expected to be commissioned by 2025 Second likely to enter the market by 2027	Upgrade of current plant plus 2 new processing circuits will lift lithium concentrate output by over 1 million tonnes every year
Leeuwin Offshore Wind Farm, Geographe Bay Copenhagen Energy	TBA	Plans lodged with Federal Govt early 2022 Work may start in 2026	3GW offshore wind farm with 200 turbines to be biggest of its kind in Australia
Myalup Offshore Wind Farm project, between Bunbury & Mandurah WA Offshore Windfarm	ТВА	Announced April 2021 Construction expected to start in 2025 Completion in 2027	Facility will comprise up to 37 wind turbines with total energy capacity of 300MW, which will power 200,000 homes

RESIDENTIAL

Project	Value	Staus	Impact
Binningup long-term development	ТВА	Early planning stage	260 hectares along 2.2km of coast to be turned into housing.
Andrew Forrest			



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