

Strengths

Bunbury Geographe's key strength is in **connectivity and location**, which makes it ideally suited to take advantage of global and regional trends. Bunbury Geographe has the advantage of a port with capacity for growth, capable of exporting both agricultural goods and mineral resources from nearby that is located in a highly desirable and liveable city. The road network between industrial and agricultural locations within Bunbury –Geographe to the major population centre of Bunbury means that mining-manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and timber production are well connected to commercial and professional services. The area is also located two hours from Perth if there are additional services required that aren't available in the area. This connectivity with Perth also means that 1 million visitors per year come through Bunbury Geographe via Forrest Highway.

The Bunbury Geographe location is also ideally suited to take advantage of global trends. In terms of facilitating trade and in addition to being readily accessible by air and sea, Bunbury Geographe is located in the same timezone as China and Singapore and only one hour different from other Southeast Asian countries. The combination of a favourable climate, waterfront and rural amenity with the natural biodiversity makes Bunbury Geographe a highly desirable location.

Weaknesses

The key weaknesses that Bunbury Geographe will need to address relate to the preparedness for change. The area has already seen a reduction in the amount of rainfall as a result of climate change which is predicted to result in there significant shortfall of water for agriculture and industry. Bunbury Geographe is also developing a potential overreliance on the bauxite/alumina industry. The previous \$3.5B expansion of the Worsley Alumina expansion was a once off event rather than a part of a broader construction trend. Thus, although the region has a range of highly skilled construction personnel, this sector is patchy and associated with major projects, such as the major Worsley Refinery expansion. The extent of the alumina export market also potentially exposes the area to future changes in the Bauxite export market, such as gas prices or the increase in the domestic capacity in Asia to process minerals domestically.

There are also broader constraints facing the area including rail capacity, health infrastructure and education. As Bunbury grows it will be essential to maintain safe access to the port to prevent potential future conflict between freight movement (both rail and road) and residential values. In terms of health services the Bunbury Geographe area has 2.7 beds per 1000 people, compared to a national average of 3.9 beds per 1000 people and there is a high rate of semi- and non-urgent attendances at hospital emergency departments, indicating a lack of primary health services such as GPs. In addition, population growth and aging is likely to exacerbate these issues. In terms of education there is a lower percentage of university graduates than in other parts of WA. Edith Cowan University (ECU) is present but offers a limited range of courses, resulting in young people leaving Bunbury Geographe to access better opportunities in Perth

Opportunities

The global megatrends present opportunities. The rise in Asia is creating demand for goods, services and experiences. The demand includes high quality food, mining equipment and services and tourism. The NBN rollout enables more people and individuals to work out of regional areas like Bunbury Geographe.

Bunbury Geographe also acts as a relative competitive advantage over Fremantle Port as not only does it have capacity to expand and is located closer to resource, it also has capacity to readily improve transport infrastructure into the port.

With the emerging retirement wave of the 'Baby boomer' generation and growth in Perth/Peel there is a demand for retirees looking for a quieter lifestyle in a smaller town. In addition, the rise of house prices and decreasing affordability in Perth/Peel Perth/Peel will attract people to move to Bunbury Geographe.

Threats

Three key threats have been identified in relation to the ongoing economic viability of the Bunbury Geographe area. Gas prices and the potential increased capacity of countries in Asia to process minerals domestically could lead to a decline in the demand for Alumina, resulting in a shift to lower value bauxite export.

Climate change and decreased water availability has the potential to result in decreased agricultural and timber output and could potentially constrain mineral processing.

The future of Fremantle Port / Outer harbour may represent a threat to the operation of Bunbury Port if the development is not considered as part of a holistic strategic freight solution.