

# Three Springs

## Community Development Action Plan



July 2024

# Foreword



Referred to as the 'Heart of the North Midlands', Three Springs is a town dear to those of us lucky enough to live or to have lived here. We are central to six surrounding towns with many similarities in terms of lifestyle and population. So, is our challenge to stand out or to appreciate what we have? Why not both?

Three Springs' economy is predominantly based around agriculture. We appreciate and value the businesses and services here (a great grocery store, a famous and fabulous butcher shop, and a hospital, among some) but also acknowledge that there are gaps in our community and its services. These are opportunities waiting to be taken up!

We are striving to help our community to thrive and evolve and understand that any change in our community needs to be driven by us. There is no one on a white horse riding in to provide us with services! There are exciting times ahead and we cannot wait to see who comes along on the journey with us.

## Acknowledgements



The formulation of this Community Development Action Plan was initiated and coordinated by the Three Springs Community Builders Team - Jenny Mutter, Chris Lane, Nadine Eva and Lexi Burgemeestre and funded by Rural Aid as part of their commitment to supporting Australia's small rural towns. The formulation of the Plan was undertaken by Peter Kenyon from the Bank of I.D.E.A.S. with assistance from Jude Sutherland, Jen Curnow-Trotter, Paul Gravett, Roger Hitchcock and Maria D'Souza. Special thanks to so many passionate community members who gave so generously of their time, wisdom and experiences.

This Plan also acknowledges the traditional owners of this land - the Yamatji People, and their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to elders both past, present and emerging.

# Our Story

Our thriving and picturesque community of Three Springs is in the heart of the North Midlands region of Western Australia, approximately 313km north of Perth. Our community is known for its rich agricultural industries, fascinating heritage, unique mineral resources, and spectacular wildflowers.

The traditional owners of the Three Springs district are the Yamatji people who have a historical connection stretching back over 40,000 years. The first European farmers began arriving from the mid 1840's. The name of the area is attributed to the government surveyor Charles Cooke Hunt, who whilst undertaking a road survey in 1867, recorded the words 'Three Springs' for the three freshwater springs located one mile north of the current town site. After this time, the name began to appear on official maps.

In 1894, the Midland Railway completed the railway line from Midland Junction to Walkaway, which included a siding at Three Springs, and this led to a growth in population and new farming activity. In 1906, the area west of the railway line was opened by the government for farm holdings under the name 'Kadathinni Agricultural Area' and thus began significant grain and sheep farming. In 1907, the government declared a townsite adjacent to the railway siding with the gazetted name as 'Kadathinni'. However, the name 'Three Springs', was favoured by locals and in 1946, the town's name was officially changed to 'Three Springs.'

Through the dedication of those early settlers, the town site and its amenities flourished during the early 1900's. The first public body was the Kadathinni Farmers and Progress Association, formed

in 1908 and it oversaw the construction of the town dam and the appointment of a resident police office and the a local Justice of the Peace. The railway siding was upgraded to a station in 1910. The first local clubs - the Football Club and Race Club- were established in 1910 and the Rifle Club in 1915. During the first two decades of the 20th Century, a range of community and business amenities were established, including a variety of retail stores, blacksmith, coffee palace, bakery, photographic studio, Agricultural Hall, Catholic Church, public school, Dominican convent and school, Anglican Church, Three Springs Agricultural Society and several banks. In 1929, electricity arrived in Three Springs.

By the early 1930's, Three Springs was achieving recognition as a world class wheat growing region. In 1931-32, the Three Springs district obtained the highest average yield for the State and in 1933, Three Springs farmers won prizes at a World Grain Exhibition held in Canada.

Minerals have also played a significant role in our economy. Three Springs is home to the largest talc mine in the Southern Hemisphere and second largest talc mine in the world. We currently have significant interest in the area from renewable energy and rare earth mineral exploration companies.

Today, our community has a population of 575 and continues to be a vibrant service centre to our principal agricultural, mining industries and essential services/utilities. Our tourism sector, based upon our amazing collection of physical, natural and heritage assets continually evolves in importance for local business, employment and visitor attraction.

# 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:

Our vision is to produce generations of proactive community members who cultivate, embrace and execute ideas which support our future.

# 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 seven community goals which guide our community aspirations, namely -

- To actively pursue new economic and entrepreneurial opportunities that strengthen and diversify our local economy and business life.
- To support, promote and celebrate active community participation, volunteerism and leadership.
- To facilitate opportunities and experiences that builds upon local assets and the capacities and creativity of all community members.
- To create an environment where our young people feel involved, supported and empowered, and will consider staying in / returning to our community for work, business, family and lifestyle opportunities.
- To provide a safe and attractive living and working environment that will attract skilled people and families and help grow our population base.
- To preserve, maintain and strengthen our significant historical and cultural assets.
- To promote and support active citizenship and community leadership.



# 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 five guiding values and attitudes provide the context for our community's identified actions and initiatives, namely –

- **Collaboration** - appreciating community involvement, partnerships, collective action, volunteerism, and active citizenship.
- **Sense of community** – ensuring all our community members experience a deep sense of connection, inclusion, and contribution.
- **Positive mindset** - fostering community attitudes that embrace change, proactive 'can-do' behaviours, forward thinking, optimism and innovation.
- **Intergenerational connections** - creating opportunities for all ages to share, support and learn from each other.
- **Embracing new opportunities** - building upon local assets, capacities and creativity; and facilitating opportunities that enable all residents to see and experience their community as a place of opportunity.

# 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:**

- A change in climate.
- Declining and ageing population.
- Volunteer fatigue
- Multiple main entrances to town lack informative signage.
- Business loss and service gaps.
- Limited local employment opportunities.
- Limited services and allied health support.
- Cost of services and timeliness of delivery.
- Attraction and retention of suitably qualified staff / trades people
- Lack of rental and short-term accommodation.
- Limited youth recreation facilities.
- Decline in number of community gatherings and special events.
- Widespread mobile black spots
- State and local government regulations and practices.
- Limited eating and dining choices.



# Our Assets

## People

Population of 575 people

Tradespeople - electrician, mechanic, shearers, engineer, fabricator, boiler maker

Health professionals - nurse, physiotherapist, doctor, child health personnel, allied health personnel, school psychologist, mental health councillor, pharmacist

Service Professionals - vet, agronomist, Ag businesspeople

Creative People - author, singer, cinematographer, artists

Shire Councillors, Changemakers Town Team

Volunteers

## Culture, Stories & Sources of Pride

RSL War Memorial, Armoured Personnel Carrier), Heritage Trail, Mutters heritage knowledge

Mural & Junk Art

Visitors Centre

Astro Tourism & CBH Silo Movie Nights,

Duffy's Store and Cooke's Cottage at Arrino

Yarra Yarra Lakes, Arrowsmith River, the 3 springs

Sporting groups, Churches

Agriculture and Midlands Railway Heritage

Events - Wildflower Show and Art Exhibition, Off Road Car Race, Police Charity Golf Day

## Physical

Geographical location and proximity to major population centres.

Sports pavilion, town oval, gymnasium, swimming pool, tennis courts, bowling green, hockey oval, golf course, badminton courts, indoor bowls area, squash courts, skatepark, town hall

Dominican Park, Main St Park, Eco Park

Love Lock's Soak, Yarra Yarra Lakes & Trail, Talc Mine Lookout, Dookanooka Reserve, Jack Thorpe Gardens, Byrne Dog Park

Three Springs & Arrino cemeteries, public toilets

Wheat silo's, mural

Renewable Energy - solar & wind, Quality housing

Localities of Arrino, Dudawa & Kadathinni

Night sky, sunsets, sunrise, farmlands, bushland, wildflowers

# Our Assets

## Social Networks

Sporting Groups – football, bowling, netball, hockey, golf, indoor bowls, badminton, swimming

Friends NMHS

Volunteer Groups - Bush Fire Brigade, Lions Club, RSL,

Three Springs P & C, Playgroup, Daycare

3Fin – Grower Group

Thrift Shop

Churches- Anglican/Uniting, Catholic

Gym, senior fitness, yoga, craft group

Yakabout

## Institutions

Three Springs Shire

Hospital and community health services

Three Springs Primary School

Government services - Water Corporation depot, Western Power substation, Police station

MEEDAC, Town Team Movement

Early Childhood Learning Centre

Doctor

St John Ambulance & Bush Fire Brigade

## Economic

Farms

Personal Services – pharmacy, Early childhood learning centre, personal trainer, vet

Agricultural Businesses –Machinery dealership, Ag supplies, CBH, trucking and earth moving, fencing contractor, shearing team, concreter

Accommodation – Barracks, Three Springs Hotel

Retail – butcher, supermarket, post office, pharmacy

Community Enterprises - Thrift Shop, Visitors Centre

Trade Businesses – Engineering, electrician, auto electrician, refrigeration mechanic, mechanic







# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme One

### Enhancing Community Connection & Engagement through shared spaces

#### ACTIONS

# 1

- 1. Grow and develop the Changemakers Town Team** as a local improvement and action group including-
  - a. Expansion of membership and community involvement.
  - b. Creation of special interest task teams.
  - c. Exploration of the Eldership Incorporation model.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

- 2. Create or enhance existing spaces, events and interests** that brings residents together to share, learn and enjoy, including the following possibilities -
  - a. Creation of more family friendly social events, get-togethers and celebrations. Main annual event (See Theme #4 below).
  - b. Introduction of regular Pay Nothing markets, Dominican Park events.
  - c. Development of more music, culture, games and movie options.
  - d. Improvement of playground equipment and shade covering - audit current playground equipment and identify options for improvement to increase and improve use.
  - e. Establishment of a community garden
  - f. Attraction of more restaurant / café options.
  - g. Investigation of the attraction/creation of a brewery / distillery / bakery.
  - h. Improvement to the frequency and diversity of use of the swimming pool through additional features, structured activities and events or develop the space to improve diversity of use.

**Timeframe: Short - Immediate and Ongoing**

- 3. Promote volunteering and community engagement.**
  - a. Continual invitation to community members to voice ideas, suggestions and actively volunteer.
  - b. Recognition and celebration of community volunteers, through media exposure and an annual 'Volunteer Appreciation Event'.

**Timeframe: short - immediate to ongoing**

- 4. Continue to support and develop local internal communication tools and events that promote social connection and enhance a range of voices in our community -**
  - a. Social media pages- Facebook and Instagram.
  - b. Local shire webpage, noticeboards and newsletter.
  - c. Opportunities to hear our youth voices.

**Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing**

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme One

### Enhancing Community Connection & Engagement through shared spaces

#### ACTIONS

# 1

**5. Instigate a community share 'skills event'** to identify, connect and utilize skills of local residents.

**Timeframe: Short term**

**6. Design and develop tools for continual feedback and ideas** e.g. an ideas box at the Shire, local clubs and main street shops, regular surveys, travelling ideas board at main events and an annual 'Community Opportunity Workshop (C.O.W.)' event.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

**7. Explore, promote and access financial and grant options** to assist community project delivery including the following-

- Better utilisation of Shire small community grants program.
- Identification of an immediate project for Rural Aid funding.
- Greater awareness of the Renewables Community Funding opportunities.
- Identification and recruitment of a casual grant writer to assist with finding and submitting relevant funding applications to assist community development initiatives.

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

#### LEAD GROUP

**Changemakers Town Team  
Shire of Three Springs**

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**Volunteer community groups  
DLGSC  
NMP  
Lotterywest  
Healthways  
RA  
CBHIF  
FRRR  
BOI**

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Two

### Developing Housing & Short-term accommodation

#### ACTIONS



1. Undertake an **audit of existing vacant blocks and housing availability including on farms.**

**Timeframe: Short Term**

2. Undertake **research into housing initiatives** happening in other small rural communities.

**Timeframe: Short Term**

3. Together with the Shire, work with local mining and renewable energy companies to **determine future requirements in town.**

**Timeframe: Short-Medium Term**

4. Create a **rental register for housing.** Use a map to determine owner/occupier and rental properties.

**Timeframe: Short Term**

5. Together with the Shire, determine where the empty **GROH housing is in town.** Determine if there is an opportunity for businesses to access these properties.

**Timeframe: Short Term**

6. In partnership with the Shire, access and review its **Economic Development Plan**, and its investigation into the **supply of residential housing.**

**Timeframe: Short - Medium Term**

#### LEAD GROUP

**Changemakers Town Team  
Shire of Three Springs**

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**MWDC- Red Grants  
RDAMWG  
TSVC  
DPHL  
Lotterywest  
FRRR  
CBHIF  
MWCCI  
Landcorp  
NMP**

# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Three

### Enhancing the Appearance of Three Springs

#### ACTIONS



1. Under the Changemakers Town Team, form a **Tourism Group** to formulate a comprehensive **'Tourism Action Plan'** which incorporates key elements including –
  - a. An audit of current tourism attractions, facilities, events, trails and initiatives.
  - b. A review of regional tourism links and trails.
  - c. Opportunities to enhance existing products and offerings.
  - d. Opportunities to create new tourism products especially related to heritage, natural environment, culture, arts and Indigenous connections. In particular, building upon assets such as salt lakes, talc mine and silos
  - e. Opportunities to align efforts on a regional scale.
  - f. The enhancement of marketing, community storytelling and operator networking.
  - g. The identification of a signature annual event (see Theme #4 below).

**Timeframe: Medium Term**

2. Establish a Signage Task Group to undertake shire-wide **signage audit** of town advertising, town entry statements and directional signage. Seek support from the Shire to embed these proposed improvements into their Asset Management Plan.

**Timeframe: Immediate to Short Term**

3. Form a **Three Springs Beautification Task Group** to identify and implement main street beautification and placemaking opportunities including-
  - a. The identification and prioritisation of beautification and place making options.
  - b. Identification of funding and technical support to implement opportunities.

**Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing**

4. Continue to enter the KAB annual **'Tidy Towns Program'**.

**Timeframe: Ongoing**

#### LEAD GROUP

Changemakers Town Team  
Shire of Three Springs  
TSVC

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

MWDC  
RA  
KAB  
RAC Community Grants  
Talc Mine  
Town Team Movement  
Lotterywest  
NMP  
TWA  
AGORTO  
RDAMWG



# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Four

### Creating an Annual Signature Community Event

#### ACTIONS

1. Under the Changemakers Town Team form a **Signature Community Event Task Group**.
  - a. Investigate community planning event to contribute ideas and opinions and buy in, e.g. B&S Ball at the Golf Course / White Rock Stakes (Talc Mine to Town), Music Event
  - b. Determine event, budget, program content, timing, potential stakeholders and regulatory requirements.
  - c. Identify and secure funding / sponsorship.
  - d. Implement.
  - e. Review.

**Timeframe: Medium to Ongoing**

#### LEAD GROUP

**Changemakers Town Team  
Shire of Three Springs**

#### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**TSVC  
MWDC  
RA  
Talc Mine  
Town Team Movement  
Lotterywest  
Healthways  
NMP  
TWA  
RDAMWG  
AGORTO  
CBH**



# Our Strategies & Actions

## Theme Five

## Supporting independence & keeping our elderly residents at home

### ACTIONS



1. **Continue and expand 'Meal 4 U'** including meal choices, frozen leftovers distribution and dine-in option

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

2. Advocate for the introduction of **in-house aged care services through adopting the Pingelly 'Staying in Place'** model.

- a. Explore partnering neighbouring shires for administrative support.
- b. Research options available.
- c. Hold information sessions on regional models.
- d. Seek funding support.
- e. Launch.

**Timeframe: Medium Term and Ongoing**

3. **Establish regular 'Cuppa Catch-Up' connections** within community

**Timeframe - Medium Term and Ongoing**

### LEAD GROUP

**Three Springs Changemakers  
Shire of Three Springs**

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

**Neighbouring Shires  
Pingelly 'Staying Local' Project  
Town Team Movement  
DoC grants  
Lotterywest  
Healthways**

**DPIRD  
DLGSC  
VWA  
DoC Grants  
Community Gardens Australia**

### ABBREVIATIONS

AGORTO	Australia's Golden Outback Regionalm Tourism Organisation
BOI	Bank of I.D.E.A.S.
CBHIF	Co-operative Bulk Handling Investment Fund
CGA	Community Gardens Australia
CRC	Community Resource Centre
DFES	Department of Fire and Emergency Services
DLGSC	WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries
DPHL	WA Department of Planning, Heritage and Lands
DPIRD	WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
DoC	Department of Communities
FRRR	Foundation for Regional and Renewal Renewal
KAB	Keep Australia Beautiful WA
MWCCI	Mid West Chamber of Commerce
MWDC	Mid West Development Commission
NMP	North Midlands Project
RA	Rural Aid
RAC	Royal Automobile Club
RED Grants	Regional Economic Development Grants of MWDC
RDAMWG	Regional Development Australia - Mid West and Gascoyne
TSVC	Three Springs Visitor Centre
TWA	Tourism Western Australia
VWA	Volunteering WA





THREE

SPRINGS

WESTERN AUSTRALIA