**Population**

Eyre and Western region covers over 230,000 square kilometres from Whyalla to the border with Western Australia. The region is home to 58,072 (estimated resident population (ERP) 2008) people with Whyalla (22,801 people) and Port Lincoln (14,452 people) the largest population centres. The region encompasses the Aboriginal lands of Yalata and Maralinga Tjarutja (MT) as well as homelands around Ceduna.

The region is home to almost 10 per cent of the state's Aboriginal population.

**Economy**

The region's economy centres on primary production and processing, including a significant seafood industry. Agriculture and fishing provide employment for a quarter of the region's population. Tourism is a significant industry with over 1.6 million visitor nights spent in the region. A further 20 per cent of the population is employed in either the retail or health and community services sectors. Steel manufacturing and associated mining activities in the Middleback Ranges are a key source of employment in Whyalla. The regional city also has an expanding hub of industries supporting mining activities across the far north and west of the state. Principal industries include fishing and aquaculture, grains and livestock, mining and mineral processing and tourism.

**Infrastructure**

**Transport**

Principal road routes for the movement of freight and passengers from South Australia and the eastern states to Western Australia traverse Eyre Peninsula. State strategic and primary and secondary freight routes provide connections to the National Land Transport Network. Rail lines provide vital transport links for the export of grain and minerals through ports at Port Lincoln and Thevenard. Opportunities for these lines to play a strategic role in supporting emerging mining activities in the region are being explored.

The region has a number of significant airports, all of which are owned and operated by local government. Being a vast and relatively remote area, commuter air services are a critical element of the regional passenger transport mix. Future passenger and freight requirements at Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Ceduna, are currently being evaluated.

The main commercial ports at Whyalla, Port Bonython, Port Lincoln and Thevenard play a significant role in the transfer of primary produce, seafood and minerals to other parts of Australia and overseas. Port Lincoln has capacity to accommodate Panamax size vessels.

Expanding mining activity across the region and neighbouring Far North region is increasing demand for expanded port capacity in the region. Investigations are currently being conducted on the feasibility of upgrading Port Bonython and other Eyre Peninsula locations to accommodate Cape size vessels. There is also growing demand across the region for suitable wharf facilities to support the fishing and aquaculture industries.

The State Government provides funding for public transport services in Whyalla and Port Lincoln and also supports the Eyre Region Community Passenger Network (CPN) which provides access for people with no alternative transport.

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7 MT holds inalienable freehold title of the land under the *Maralinga Tjarutja Land Rights Act 1984*. Yalata is managed by the Yalata Community Inc. under a lease in accordance with the *Aboriginal Lands Trust Act 1966*. 
Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Telstra’s NextG network extends across most of the region providing mobile phone coverage to rural communities with a population in excess of 500 people and along major highways. While optical fibre connects most of the region’s populated areas, only Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Ceduna have access to ADSL broadband capable of carrying large volumes of data. Video conferencing facilities are available through councils, schools, remote indigenous centres, TAFE campuses and hospitals.

Education and Training / Science, Technology and Innovation

Education facilities include 43 government and non-government schools, 20 pre-schools/child care centres, TAFE campuses at Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Ceduna, TAFE learning centres at Wudinna, Kimba, Cleve and Yalata and a University of South Australia campus at Whyalla. The Australian Fisheries Academy (provider of training to the fisheries and seafood industries) and the Lincoln Marine Science Centre (centre for marine science, education and industry development) are both located in Port Lincoln, South Australia’s centre of fisheries and marine training and research.

Justice and Emergency Services

Justice and emergency services in the region include police and courts facilities in Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Ceduna and MFS services in Port Lincoln and Whyalla. Port Lincoln is also the location of a prison facility with community correction facilities in both Whyalla and Port Lincoln.

The region is also well supported by a strong volunteer emergency service with over 70 CFS and SES units and a Volunteer Marine Rescue service. Following the Wangary Fires, and subsequent reviews and inquests, the region has benefited from a considerable increase in operational preparedness and protection. Increased air support during summer, new fire appliances and the donation of numerous water tanks across the region has improved operational capacity.

An emergency services precinct (comprising a CFS/SES Regional Headquarters and a new MFS station) is currently being developed at Port Lincoln and due for completion in mid 2010.
Regional Overview – Eyre and Western

Arts, Culture and Heritage

The region’s heritage and cultural calendar is strongly based on its rich coastal, maritime and agricultural history and reflects its role as a centre for mining and heavy industry. The region’s role in the development of overland access to Western Australia generates continuing tourist interest.

Indigenous arts, culture and heritage is a feature of the region.

The Middleback Theatre in Whyalla provides a venue for performing arts for both professional companies and community groups. The theatre complex was recently redeveloped and now doubles as a two screen cinema complex as well as a performing arts venue.

Health

There are a number of public hospitals in the region that are complemented by an extensive network of health providers delivering a range of specialist, community and allied health services. The Strategy for Planning Country Health Services in South Australia envisions that designated country general hospitals at Port Lincoln and Whyalla will be developed to have an increased capacity, a higher complexity of services, and a range of enhanced and new health services.

The Australian and South Australian Governments will invest in a new regional cancer centre at Whyalla. The centre will include a day chemotherapy centre, in-patient and palliative care facilities, a Wellness Centre, educational and research facilities and more accommodation for patients and staff.

The Yalata Aboriginal community is served by the Talluwon health service.

Community Services and Housing

One third of occupied housing in the region is rental accommodation of which almost half is social housing concentrated in Whyalla, Ceduna and Port Lincoln.

The region includes a significant Aboriginal population in Ceduna, Port Lincoln and the Far West. Many Aboriginal people rely on social housing. Work is underway to improve the supply of social housing including in Aboriginal communities.

Aged care accommodation, hostel living and nursing homes are currently provided in many towns across the region. Further facilities are likely to be required to meet future needs and provide opportunities for people to stay in their local area as they age.

Energy

An extensive electricity distribution system services the majority of the communities and farming enterprises throughout the region. Significant investment has occurred in the development of wind farms at Cathedral Rocks and Mount Millar. Constraints within the existing high voltage transmission lines limit the potential development of this resource. The Green Grid report, referred to in the Energy chapter, has identified that significant investment in augmentation of the electricity transmission network will be required to unlock the wind energy potential of the Eyre Peninsula.

The Great Australian Bight has been identified as one of the top ten worldwide locations for renewable energy for both wind and wave technology. There is also a constraint to natural gas supplies to Whyalla.

National energy market reforms are being developed to enable investment in scale efficient network extensions.

Water

SA Water operates and maintains the water reticulation system. Primary water sources are the River Murray and local groundwater. Supplies are via two essentially separate water supply systems. Whyalla and Iron Knob are supplied with River Murray water via the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline. The southern and western parts of the region are supplied mainly via the Tod-Ceduna pipeline from groundwater basins in the south of the peninsula. The Iron Knob to Kimba pipeline completed in 2007 provides limited transfer.
Regional Overview – Eyre and Western

capacity of River Murray water into the Tod-Ceduna system. Following the development of a long term water supply plan for Eyre Peninsula, the government is progressing detailed investigation of augmentation options including seawater desalination.

The region has limited surface water, in terms of both quality and quantity. SA Water extracts groundwater that is controlled by water allocation plans. New subdivisions are increasingly incorporating the capture and treatment of stormwater for use on public gardens, reserves or sporting fields. A large scale seawater desalination plant has been proposed near Port Bonython to supply water for BHP Billiton’s proposed expansion of Olympic Dam Mine. Councils are increasing the reuse of treated effluent to irrigate major open space and sporting complexes.

Natural Assets

Eyre and Western region has a diverse and unique arid and semi-arid geography. The region is characterised by low rainfall, limited fresh surface water resources, and unique fresh groundwater resources. The region has significant areas of native vegetation cover containing important mallee habitat and several woodland communities.

The region also features fresh and saline wetlands, mangroves and estuaries. The diverse marine and coastal biota in these coastal and marine waters has been protected through the development of ten marine parks. Management plans with zoning are currently being developed for these marine parks for release mid-2012.

Current Major Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Expected Completion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Lincoln Prison - additional accommodation</td>
<td>Mid 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceduna GP Plus centre and hospital redevelopment</td>
<td>Mid 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct Port Lincoln Fire Stations</td>
<td>Mid 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building the Education Revolution - new and upgraded school facilities across region</td>
<td>Progressive up to 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan additional social housing</td>
<td>Progressive up to 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote indigenous new and upgraded housing</td>
<td>Progressive up to 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalata police station</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cowell Area School upgrade</td>
<td>Late 2010/2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whyalla - Ocean Eyre Estate</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whyalla - Aboriginal Children and Family Centre</td>
<td>2011-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceduna - Aboriginal Children and Family Centre</td>
<td>2011-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Park infrastructure and visitor facilities at Lincoln National Park and Head of Bight</td>
<td>2011</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Achievements and Outlook

Since the plan was released in 2005 the region has benefitted from significant infrastructure developments. In transport and telecommunications these include:

- completion of the Eyre Peninsula grain transport road and rail upgrade
- commencement of upgrading of the Port Lincoln Airport
- upgrading of port facilities for OneSteel in Whyalla, and upgrading of No 1 berth at Port Lincoln for tourism and recreational fishing
- intersection improvement on the Lincoln Highway, Flinders Highway and Bratten Way
- roadside rest area improvement on the Flinders Highway and Lincoln Highway.

ICT infrastructure has been boosted with a high speed broadband link from Port Augusta to Port Lincoln.

Education and training in the region has benefited from school upgrades through the Building the Education Revolution program together with completed scheduled capital works at Ceduna Area School, Port Lincoln Children’s Centre, Cleve Area School and Whyalla Stuart R-7 with works in progress at Cowell Area School and Yalata Anangu School. The Whyalla TAFE campus is being upgraded as a centre for excellence in engineering and mining.

Justice and emergency services have been enhanced through commissioning of a new dedicated rescue vessel for Port Lincoln and will be further improved through the completion of an emergency services precinct, currently being constructed in Port Lincoln and a new 36 bed low security accommodation unit at Port Lincoln Prison.

Health infrastructure will be substantially improved through a redevelopment of the Country General Hospital at Whyalla including the establishment of a new regional cancer centre announced in May 2010, and the redevelopment of the Ceduna hospital including the establishment of a GP Plus Health Care Centre to be completed in 2012. These projects will improve inpatient facilities and support enhanced primary health services and day surgery services and will also provide culturally appropriate physical facilities from which to deliver services to the Aboriginal population.

In 2006 the Whyalla water reclamation plant (WRP) was commissioned. Implemented as part of an environmental improvement program, the WRP was designed to facilitate reducing the total volumetric and contaminant load discharge to Spencer Gulf. The WRP treats low salinity wastewater to a quality suitable for reuse.
Regional Overview – Eyre and Western

The treated wastewater from the WRP is recycled by the local council and golf course for irrigation purposes. The pre-existing Whyalla wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) was also upgraded as part of the environmental improvement program to operate in conjunction with the WRP. The WWTP treats higher salinity wastewater and was modified to enable a period of zero discharge during summer (the period of highest potential for environmental impact).

Implementation of the WRP and improvements to the WWTP have provided for diversification of water supply, improved environmental performance and enhanced water security within Whyalla.

SA Water is currently undertaking a long term planning investigation for the Upper Spencer Gulf region (including Whyalla), to ensure infrastructure and resources to meet customer requirements into the future. This investigation will consider both water and wastewater within the region, with particular focus on further opportunities for water supply diversification through treated wastewater reuse.

A rainwater harvesting system has recently been completed at Scotdesco, 110 kilometres west of Ceduna.

The region's renewable energy generation potential is being realised through the development of wind farms. The Green Grid Report, commissioned by the State Government, has assessed the wind energy potential of the Eyre Peninsula. The report shows that South Australia has the potential to deliver 30 per cent of the Australian Government’s renewable energy target. To utilise the wind energy potential of Eyre Peninsula will require a new $613 million transmission line from Elliston to Port Augusta and a new $840 million backbone for the existing electricity network connection from Port Augusta to Heywood in Victoria.

Zero Waste SA has provided grants toward the upgrade of recycling infrastructure at Port Lincoln, Lock, Elliston, Tumby Bay, Cleve, Coffin Bay, Cummins and Whyalla through recent rounds of its Regional Implementation Program.

Housing and employment lands have been enhanced through completion of the Myall Place urban renewal in Whyalla and RDIF contributions to the development of industrial land in Whyalla.

Other significant boosts to the region’s economic potential have been the completion of the Port Lincoln Hotel and the State Government RDIF supported Clean Seas Tuna - Arno Bay Hatchery and Whyalla Zinc Project.

Work is currently underway on the development of regional park infrastructure and visitor facilities at Lincoln National Park and the Head of the Bight.

The auditorium and foyer areas of Whyalla’s Middleback Theatre have recently been upgraded.

The outlook for the near term includes upgrading of the Whyalla regional theatre and an increase to new social housing supply over the next two years at Port Lincoln and Whyalla through the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

The proposed development of Port Bonython as a deep water port to service the expansion of the mining industry will be a major new facility of state significance.

Further potential to develop Whyalla for heavy industry to support the region’s expanding minerals and energy production is being investigated through the Upper Spencer Gulf Heavy Industry Hub feasibility study.

Strategic Priorities

- Extend the capacity of the electricity transmission network to accommodate investment in renewable energy generation.
- Develop energy and transport infrastructure, including ports, to support economic growth, particularly in the agricultural, minerals and tourism sectors.
- Augment the region’s water supply for residential and industrial use.
- Ensure that the National Broadband Network delivers an affordable and effective broadband service for the region.