



SMALL TOWN REINVENTION - WHY SO IMPORTANT?"

TREVOR WHITTINGTON – CEO WAFARMERS





**THESE THREE
TOWNS ARE ?**



187 GAZETTED TOWNSITES

10 Miles Apart



Gazetted Wheatbelt Rail Sidings



WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT

- There are 189 gazetted townsites across the inland Wheatbelt and Great Southern

1. **Northam** - Population: ~6153
2. **Merredin** - Population: ~2807
3. **Narrogin** - Population: ~4,435
4. **Katanning** - Population: ~3685
5. **York** - Population: ~2022
6. **Moora** - Population: ~1730
7. **Mount Barker** - Population: ~1725



NOT ALL SMALL TOWNS ARE THE SAME

- Big Coastal Farming Service Centre's - Esperance, Albany, Geraldton : 10,000 – 35,000
- Inland Coastal Service Centre's - Narrogin, Northam, Katanning, Merredin. 3000 – 6000
- Further Inland Communities - Narembeen, Newdegate, Wyalkatchem, Hyden. 200 - 1000
- Towns left behind - Yealering, Dudinin, Bullaring sub-50



**THE YEAR THE
POPULATION
PEAKED ACROSS
THE WHEATBELT
IS ?**





THE YEAR RURAL POPULATION IN WESTERN EUROPE STARTED TO DECLINE?

- **There are now 9 million
abandoned farm houses and
millions of empty village
houses across Eastern and
Southern Europe.**



BIGGER FARM + BIGGER MACHINES

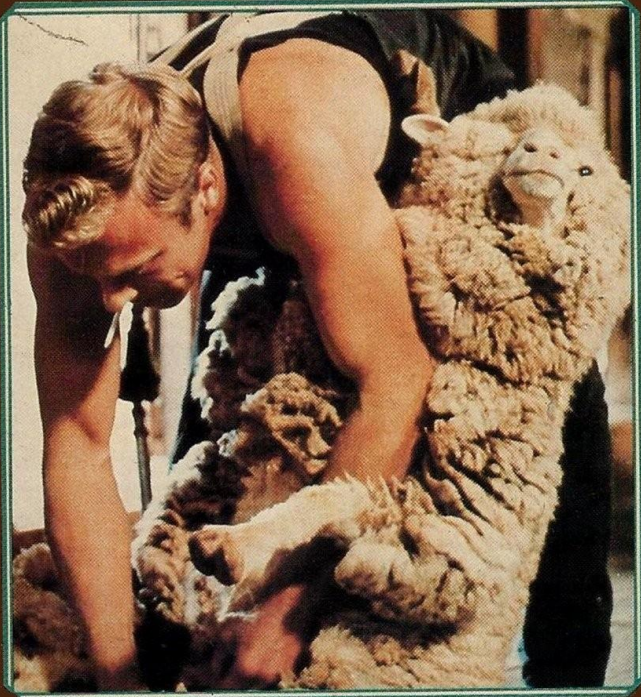
= DYING TOWNS

- Average farm size back in 1969 in WA was 2500 acres with 16,000 family farms
- Today there is just 4000 family farms farming on average 7500 acres
- Expected this to halve in number and farm sizes to double by 2050
- Today 800 produce 80% of the grain, this will fall to 500 massive farms by 2050 with up to 100 of them being corporate farms.

THE FUTURE
IS ALREADY
HERE



Sunday Too Far Away



BAN LIVE EXPORT



WHAT ABOUT SHEEP ?



WHAT ELSE HAS CHANGED ?

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM HAS CHANGED





THE MINING BOOM: A RELENTLESS COMPETITOR TO AGRICULTURE



ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF MINING VS FARMING

- The average salary for a farm worker is \$66,307 per year in Australia.
- The average salary for a mine worker \$120,417 per year in Australia



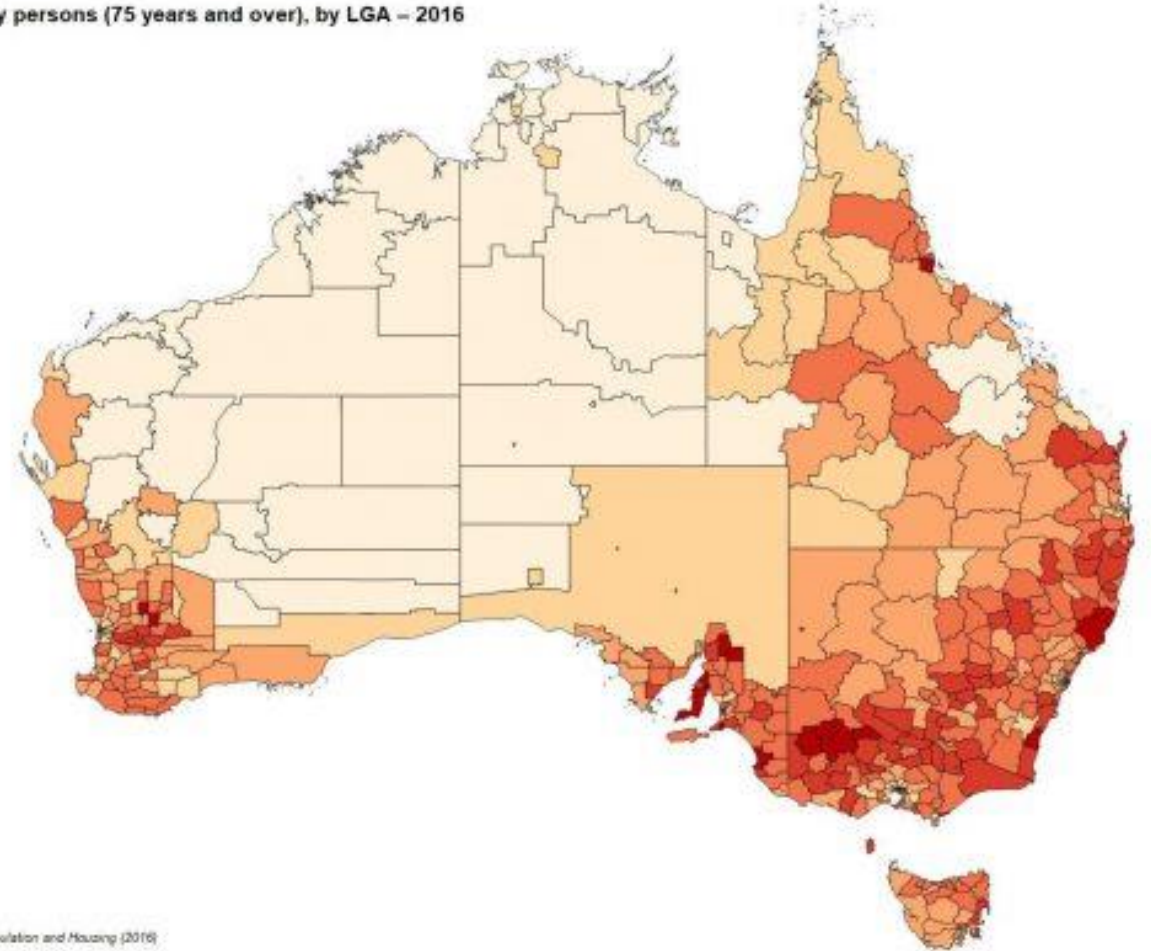
CORPORATE FARMING HAS ARRIVED

CORPORATE MINING AND CARBON FARMING IS AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT

THE AGING POPULATIONS AND DECLINING SCHOOL ENROLMENTS ARE KILLING SMALL TOWNS

Proportion of elderly persons (75 years and over), by LGA – 2016

Legend



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing (2016)

SMART SPECIAL MUSICAL SPORTING

THE LACK OF
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
OUR KIDS

IS A MAJOR
PROBLEM



THE HOUSING
STOCK IS OLD
AND TIRED





THE NEIGHBOURS CAN BE A PROBLEM



Corrigin \$169,000



Housing Minister John Carey unveils seven social housing dwellings in Hamilton Hill at a cost of \$690,000 Each

WHAT WOULD YOU PICK

"At some point, everything's gonna go south on you and you're going to say, this is it. This is how I end. Now you can either accept that, or you can get to work."

"That's all it is. You just begin. You do the math. You solve one problem and you solve the next one, and then the next. And if you solve enough problems, you get to come home."

- Mark Watney



Farm Succession is Speeding up Aggregation

It becomes increasingly difficult to split up the average farm now worth \$20m, opening the door to the corporates





DRIVE IN DRIVE OUT HAS ARRIVED IN AGRICULTURE

WITHOUT VIABLE SMALL TOWNS THE CORPORATES MOVE IN





ARE SHORT TERM WORKING HOLIDAY VISAS WORKING AGAINST US



\$250 million
over five years
to grow
Regional Cities



THE POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE FAILED US



ROYALTIES FOR REGIONS: \$7 BILLION

BUT WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE ?

BUT DO THEY WANT TO COME

Coastal Communities

- yes

Escarpment Communities

- some

Super Towns

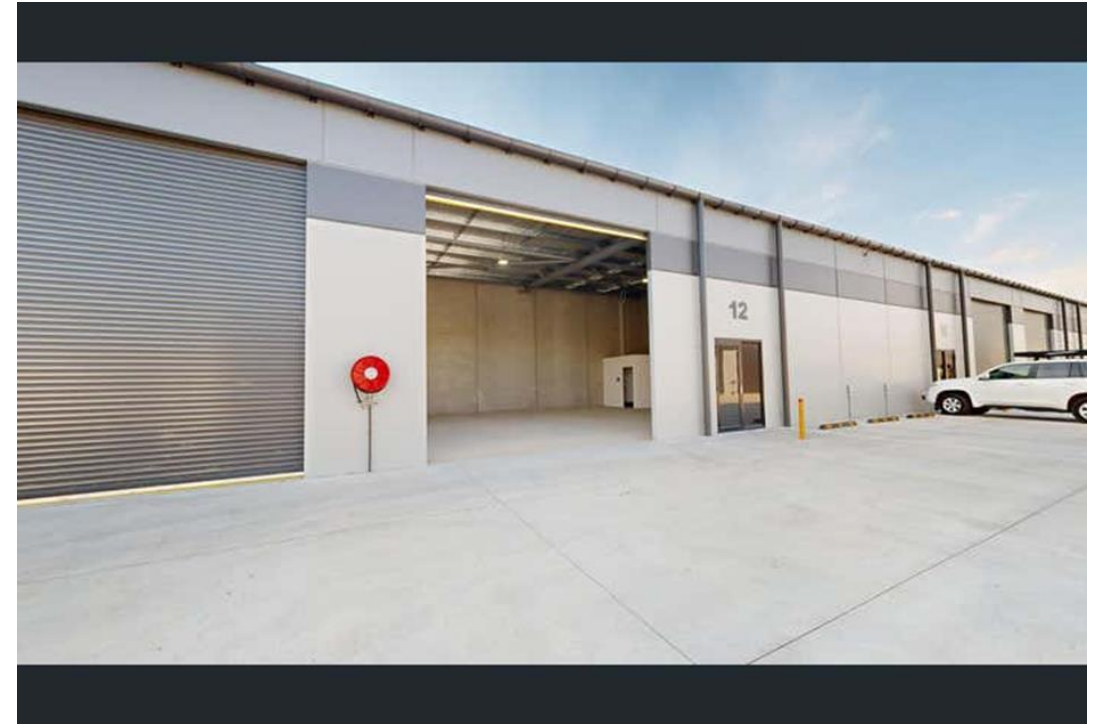
- few

Small Siding Towns

- almost none



\$595,000 Margaret River



THEY WILL COME IF THERE IS CHEAP INDUSTRIAL UNITS TO RENT



THEY WILL COME IF WE REVITALISE THE MAIN STREETS

THEY WILL COME IS
WE GIVE THEM A
GO

All they need is
a shed and a
house





ONLINE SHOPPING HAS MADE IT EASIER TO LIVE IN SMALL TOWNS





THE BIG SMART
TV - HASMADE IT
EASIER TO NOT
FEEL YOU ARE
MISSING OUT

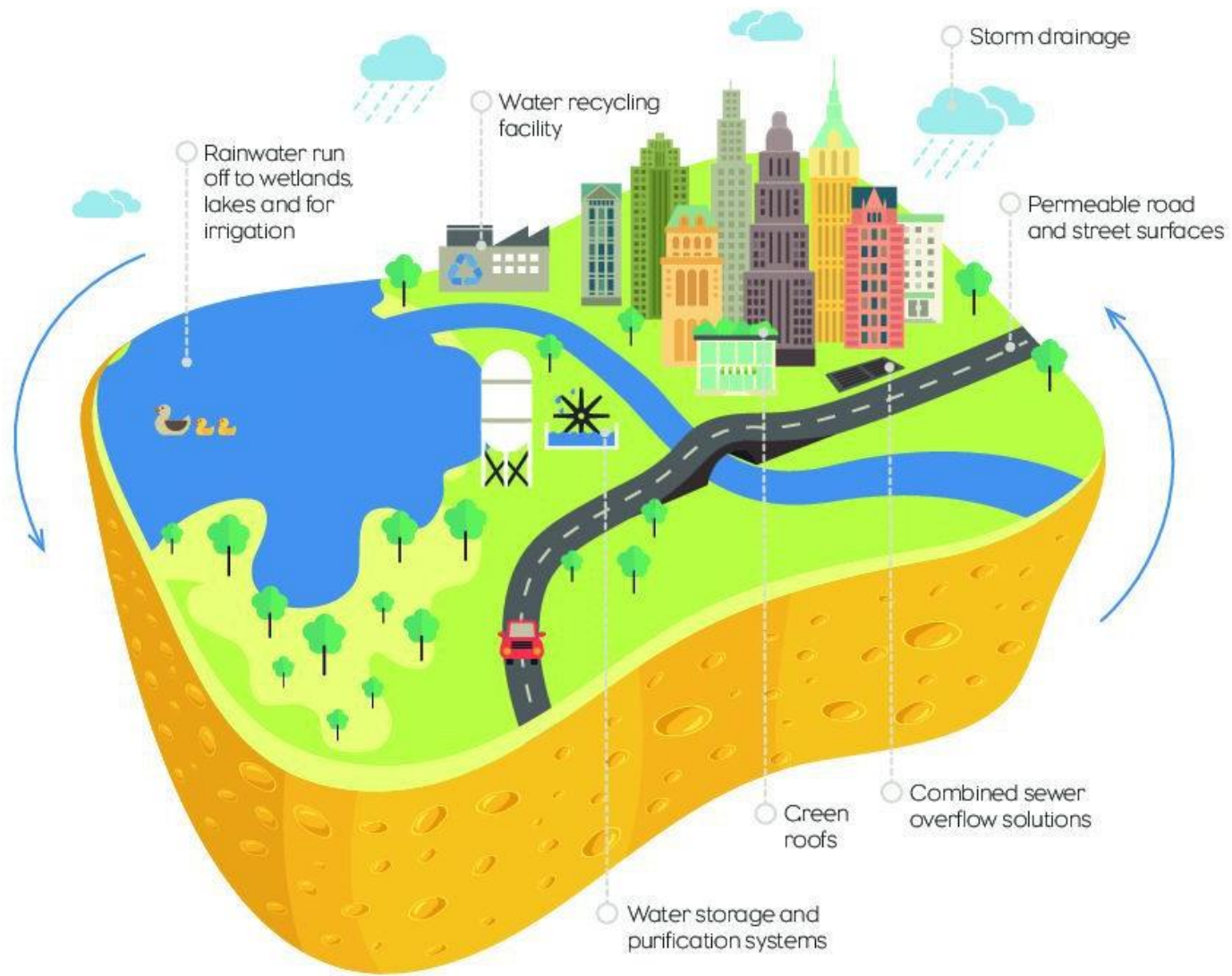


BUT WE HAVE TO FACE THE FACT THAT

85% OF AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION LIVE WITHIN 50KM OF THE COAST

BREAK NO 2 - WE CAN'T AFFORD TO GIVE UP





SPONGE CITIES

WE ARE FAILING TO SPREAD THE MESSAGE

IF THE UBER DRIVERS DON'T KNOW



PICKING WINNERS

We need to pick our
Sponge Cities

Super Towns and Coastal
Towns should be the
governments focus

While battling small towns
can compete by offering
free industrial land

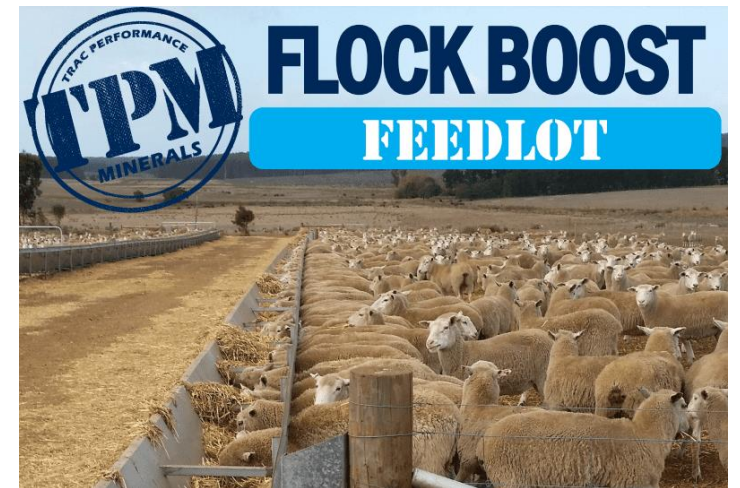




AGED CARE AND CHILDCARE IS NOT ENOUGH



FODDER AND FEEDLOTS



LABOUR SHORTAGE

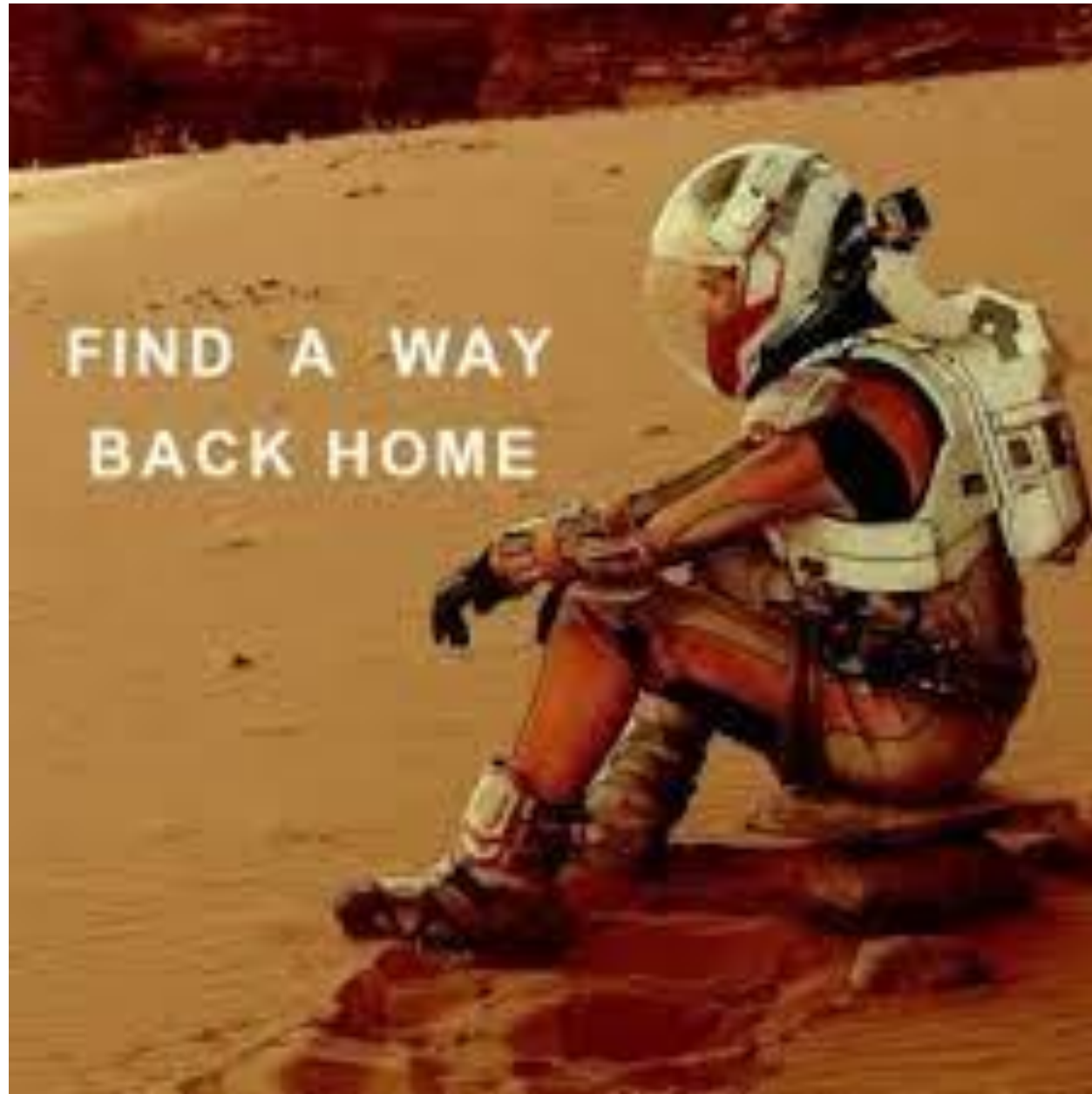
WHAT LABOUR SHORTAGE





BUT THE COSTS
OF PROCESSING

FIND A WAY
BACK HOME





SO MUCH
OPPORTUNITY

SO CHEAP

THE GOVT
COULD SUPPORT
RENNOS TO
SAVE OUR
HERITAGE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AS THE KEY TO REGIONAL GROWTH

- Perth has a shortfall of 30,000 houses
- UDIA says the average plot of land in Perth now costs \$279,974 most country lots sell for under \$50,000



**THEY NEED OUR
IDEAS**





REGIONAL VISAS

- Targeted immigration, particularly regional-specific visas, to attract skilled and semi-skilled workers to small towns, such as mechanics, nurses, truck drivers, and aged care supporters.

THE HOUSING SHORTAGE IS A HUGE OPPORTUNITY

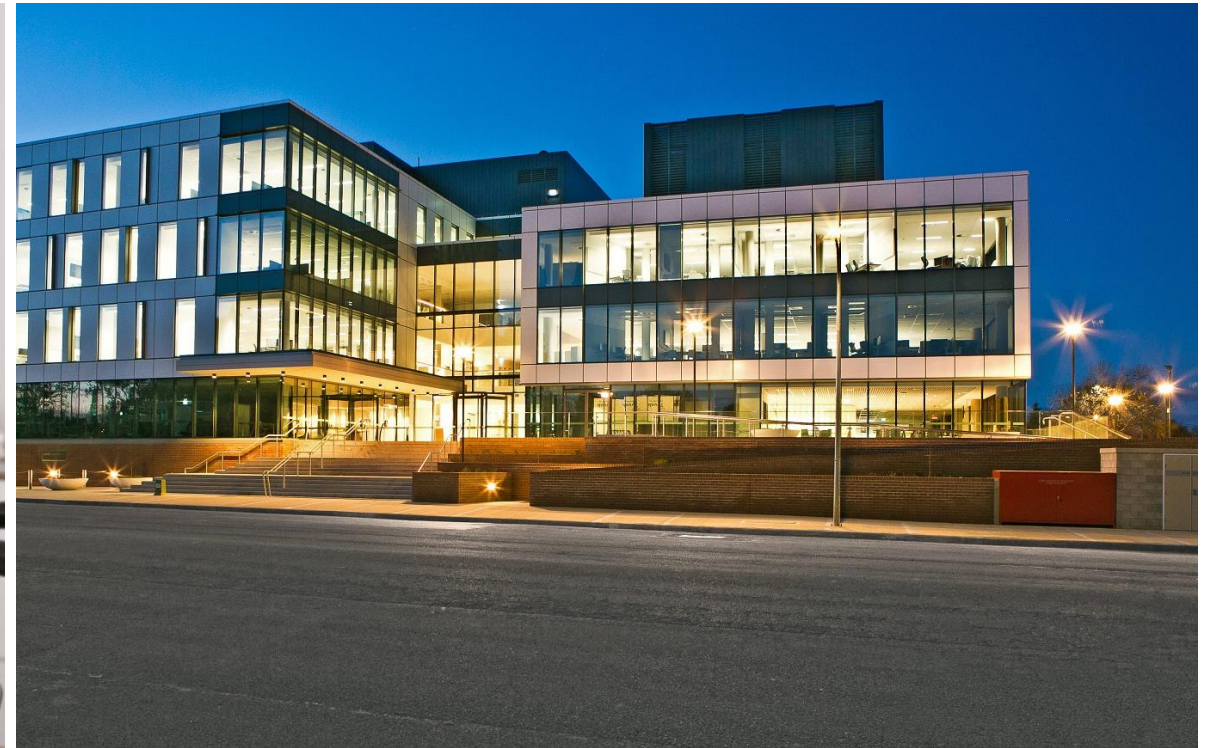
- Dump the planning rules
- Shires should allow homer builders to turn the shed into a house



PERTH PRICES HIT \$800,000 - LETS GIVE HER OPTIONS

=





MOVE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS OUT TO THE
REGIONS. ALLOW MORE CONTRACT WORKERS

100,000 1 – 10 HA HOBBY FARMS



**BUT NOT ALL
TOWNS NEED
HELP BUT
MOST DO...**



**DENMARK WA
TOP 10**

denmarkwesternaustralia.com



FUNDING BUCKET:

**TAPPING
DEVELOPERS FOR
REGIONAL
INVESTMENT
SHOULD BE ON
THE TABLE**



CONNECTIVITY:
KEEPING UP WITH
TECHNOLOGY IN
RURAL TOWNS IS
CRITICAL

ARE WE TARGETING THE RIGHT PEOPLE





POPULATION
GROWTH WILL
EVENTUALLY
END



WHY SO IMPORTANT

