Regional sustainability strategies: 
A regional focus for opportunities to improve sustainability in Western Australia

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Research Masters with Training
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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work, which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Rachel Julia Armstrong
Abstract

The spatial implications of Global and Australian national trends in economy, society and environment are diverse. At a sub-national level these combine with local trends and issues to create unique regional milieu through which an integrated approach to sustainability may be negotiated. A change in government process may be required for sustainability to be implemented, and sub-national governance mechanisms are increasingly seen as important in enacting sustainability on the ground. Yet in Western Australia, large land mass and low population density means that neither State nor Local Governments are well equipped for this task. Western Australian regional policy and governance structures, as well as Commonwealth economic and regional policy trends, are important influences on regional sustainability. Both the Draft Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy and the Draft Statement of Regional Policy for Western Australia support a regional approach to sustainability planning. Yet models of regional governance organisation for the implementation of regional sustainability in Western Australia, such as regional associations of Local Governments, and Regional Development Commissions need to be further developed. It is at this regional level where partnerships between community, government and business may emerge to enact regionally appropriate initiatives for sustainability. For this to occur, community participation and government process that enables community participation to influence decision making is necessary. Regional approaches to natural resource management provide insight into the way that a regional approach to sustainability planning and organisation may evolve. Trends that influence regional issues and Commonwealth and Western Australian regional policy and structures provide a broad context for the development of regional sustainability strategies. Analysis of these issues and of the insights that may be gained from ideals for enabling governance mechanisms and
regional natural resource management projects to facilitate regional sustainability are presented.
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