

# NEWS RELEASE



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## Critical thinking about South West communities

The countdown is on to an event that will bring into focus the forces shaping South West communities.

The Critical Horizons – Communities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century conference will take place in Bunbury on Thursday May 15 and people are encouraged to put on their thinking caps and attend.

South West Development Commission chief executive officer Don Punch said it was important locals have the opportunity to hear first-hand from experts about the way communities are transforming.

“If we understand the changes around us then we can make better decisions to shape and manage our future rather than simply be managed by what comes,” he said.

“It is about being proactive rather than simply reacting.”

The conference will feature a number of high-profile guests who will speak on a range of topics.

Among those set to present at the event will be US-based futurist Jim Lee who will talk about ageing populations, housing and urban research professor Gavin Wood who will discuss trends in home ownership, and Dr Justin Harrison who will explore the future of families and relationships.

Mr Punch said the Commission’s work involved planning to meet the needs of both current and future communities.

“We are working to improve and revitalise our town centres and public open spaces, make sure we have access to health and education services, ensure housing is affordable and that our communities can meet the needs of older people as well as young families,” he said.

“We are also working to identify the jobs that will shape the future.”

Critical Horizons is an initiative of the South West Development Commission. The Communities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century event is being sponsored by Alcoa, Bunbury Mail, LandCorp and Regional Development Australia – South West.

For more information about the event or to book tickets, visit [www.criticalhorizons.com.au](http://www.criticalhorizons.com.au).



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