Aims
The CUSP regional research strategy is based on action research. CUSP research activities outlined in the present proposal will research and build awareness of sustainability solutions. The strategic aims of the CUSP regional research strategy are to:

1. Create an MOU with Shire of Augusta Margaret River which will support the intent to build relations and research capacity between CUSP and the Shire
2. Work with other relevant bodies such as SWDC and the Capes Catchments Group
3. Deploy the capacities of Curtin researchers in collaboration with local expertise
4. Further the implementation of sustainability practices
5. Build research capacity at the education campus at Margaret River.

The substantive aims are:

1. Help the Capes Region to build, enhance and demonstrate a sustainability reputation (clean, green and cultural) which can provide a platform for tourism as well as improving local wellbeing
2. Research aspects of coastal and Indigenous sustainability
3. Research governance solutions in a fire prone landscape
4. Research a sustainability accounting methodology to enhance decision-making and help demonstrate the sustainability reputation for the region.

Three broad areas of activity include a seminar series, a research program and supervision of research masters and PhDs, as set out below.

Seminar series
We propose presenting a seminar series at the MR campus around the topics of sustainability and climate change. Each seminar would involve a paired presentation with one talk from a Shire officer or local focusing local perspectives and actions followed by one talk from Curtin University on national or global experiences, followed by discussion. We hope to add value in this way to what is already happening in this space in the Shire and at the Campus. We need to ensure this series complements and supports the existing workshops being run by Transition MR, and other seminars, and is clearly differentiated. Topics could include: coastal tourism, energy and renewables, transition management, zero waste, public transport, walkability, coastal sustainability, climate adaptation, sustainability accounting or others to be discussed.
Research program: Enhancing Margaret River’s Sustainability Reputation

1. Coastal wellbeing
This project looks at how a healthy coastal environment supports wellbeing and sustainability. Using interviews and personal narratives, it documents how coastal visitors (locals and tourists) use natural healthy coastal areas for recreational purposes and the effects on physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing that they experience as a result. It also looks at how locals have achieved cultural, social, environmental and economic sustainability in their own coastal lifestyles and businesses.

Output: The key output planned is an iPad app which will incorporate an e-book, video clips, photos, quotes, local sustainability stories, and cultural and social histories. It will also incorporate a participatory Google Earth map which will show the spatial location of the stories and visual images. A fibre-format booklet will also be produced.

Outcome: The app and booklet can be used to:
- document the wellbeing experiences and sustainability achievements of the Margaret River community and visitors in their healthy coastal environment
- demonstrate and enhance the existing sustainability reputation of the Shire for the purposes of natural-cultural tourism (a smaller version could be translated into Chinese), linking into the coastal tourism projects below
- support governance by providing information relevant to decision-making, and linking into the sustainability accounting project detailed below.

It is proposed that funding will be sought by the Shire and CUSP from Lotterywest in the forthcoming round. The project is already partially funded from the Centre for Sport and Recreation. A/Professor Laura Stocker, Dr Gary Burke, Ms Ainslie Beattie and Professor Marian Tye have research experience in coastal recreation studies, multimedia, participatory mapping, community engagement, interviews and story collection in relation to coastal sustainability and wellbeing.

2. Coastal tourism – ecotourism and China tourists
The Shire is interested both in a healthy environmental base for ecotourism and also in attracting Chinese tourists. However the interface between the two is an unexplored challenge at this stage. This project looks at the requirements of both sectors and how they might detract from or benefit each other. Professor David Wood has experience both with coastal tourism, including his work on tourism destination modeling. In his role as Curtin’s DVC International, Professor Wood also has extensive links in China. Funding will need to be sought.
3. Coastal tourism - carrying capacity of the Rivermouth with regards to competing uses of limited resources

There are a number of uses competing for limited resources at the Margaret Rivermouth and on the Margaret River, which is a place of significance to the Wardandi people. A study is needed to identify the cultural carrying capacity of use in relation to this place and these sites. In this case, the focus would be on the location of the sites and associated threats and opportunities. The project would aim to: provide tools and plans to manage the sites; provide plans to protect heritage and environmental values; and, engage the community actively and build further shared skills, knowledge and capacity. Professor David Wood has long standing experience with Indigenous coastal tourism, including developing the Yamatji Tourism Strategy in the Exmouth/Ningaloo/Carnarvon region. A possible source of funding is Coastwest who recently funded us to produce www.derbalnara.org.au

4. Governance solutions in a fire prone landscape

This project has its genesis with the SWDC. The aim is to develop a vulnerability analysis for the area with a view to improving public policy in the medium term. The research would map the fire history profile of the region and then use this as the basis for a participatory mapping workshop in which stakeholders' concerns and suggested adaptive pathways would be developed. There are several key partners: AMR Shire and surrounding shires, Cape to Cape Catchments Group, the new DFES Office of Bushfire Risk Management, DPAW, DoP, and DRD among others. We are currently in discussion with SWDC, DFES and the Cape to Cape Catchments Group about dovetailing the proposed project with their existing work. Professor David Wood, A/Professor Grant Wardell Johnson, A/Professor Laura Stocker, Dr Gary Burke and Mr David Kelly have research experience in climate adaptation and bushfire ecology.

5. Governance and sustainability accounting

This three year project looks at how sustainability accounting can support governance. Sustainability accounting includes both qualitative and quantitative sources: corporate story telling (a World Bank methodology\(^1\)); stories/results from the above projects; data from Environment Management Systems, SQF, Green Globe, star-rated buildings; and many other sources across business and government agencies. These ‘mixed sources’ can be pulled together into a single ‘data warehouse’ and used to

(a) provide substance a 'sustainability reputation'
(b) build capacity in sustainability accounting
(c) enhance decision-making and management
(d) monitor continual progress towards sustainability.

This project builds on the recent PhD work of Dr Gary Burke and the long-standing research of Dr Heinz Dreher (Adjunct Professor in Informatics, Curtin University).

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\(^1\) Steve Denning, former Director of Knowledge Management at the World Bank, explains, "Slides leave listeners dazed. Prose remains unread. Reasons don’t change behavior. When it comes to inspiring people to embrace some strange new change in behavior, storytelling isn’t just better than the other tools. It’s the only thing that works..." [http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2012/03/09/the-science-of-storytelling/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2012/03/09/the-science-of-storytelling/)
Funding will be sought.

**Output:** A pilot model of a sustainability-informed accounting system.

**Outcome:** The project will provide the basis for enhanced monitoring, management and decision-making around sustainability issues.

**Research Masters and PhD Students**

We would like to recruit a cohort of research Masters and PhD candidates in the region that we could supervise from the Margaret River Campus as a community of scholars. They could be involved in a) any of the above projects, b) related projects of interest to their workplace, or c) related projects of their own. They would add strength and depth to the existing research team. Curtin could likely provide fee-waiver scholarships to these students.

**Curtin University Researchers**

Professor David Wood, A/DVC Academic, DVC International (former WAPC commissioner, coastal tourism, Indigenous tourism, statutory and strategic planning)

Associate Professor Laura Stocker (coastal sustainability, climate adaptation and Indigenous projects)

Associate Professor Grant Wardell-Johnson (fire ecology)

Dr Gary Burke (sustainability accounting, governance of sustainability)

Mr David Kelly (bushfire impacts, MR Education Campus)

Ms Ainslie Beattie (CUSP Outreach Officer, oral history collection, corporate storytelling)

Dr Heinz Dreher (Adjunct Research Professor in Informatics, Curtin University).

Professor Marian Tye (sport and recreation)