



Department of  
Transport

# South West Region

## Recreational Boating Facilities Study July 2021



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*Front cover photo: Casuarina Boat Harbour, Bunbury  
Inside cover photo: Augusta Boat Harbour*

# Introduction

The South-West Region Recreational Boating Facilities Study (this Study) is being undertaken by Department of Transport Maritime to identify the need for new and improved recreational boating facilities. For the purposes of this Study the Region is defined by the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Augusta-Margaret River, Bunbury, Busselton, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Capel, Collie, Dardanup, Donnybrook-Balingup, Harvey, Manjimup, Nannup and West Arthur; and navigable waterways located adjacent to or within their boundaries.

## Study Parameters

The term “recreational boating” refers to registered recreational vessels that navigate the waterways of the Region and require formal boating facilities. The definition excludes all commercial vessels including some sail-only vessels.

Registered recreational vessels in the Region range in size from small dinghies to large luxury craft. For planning purposes these vessels are categorised by length - vessels up to 7.5 metres are typically stored on trailers and vessels greater than 7.5 metres are typically stored in mooring installations.

For the purpose of this Study the term “boating facilities” refers to facilities which are available for recreational vessels. These include, public boat ramps and mooring installations such as boat pens, swing moorings, private jetties and boat stackers/storage.

The Study examines the growth in the local fleet of registered vessels to the end of 2020 and forecasts future growth based on average boat ownership growth rates and population projections for each of the LGAs

The planning horizon for this Study is 2036 and has been selected as it approaches the reliable forecasting limit of the referenced data sets. The timeframe also recognises the lead times associated with planning and providing maritime infrastructure.

For determining boat ramp requirements, boating facilities with a classification rating of less than Level 3 have not been used in this calculation. However, it is recognised that these smaller/informal facilities still provide access for some vessels in suitable conditions and will assist with satisfying future demand for boat ramp lanes. For determining mooring installations an additional five per cent has been allowed for transient/visitor requirements.

## Boating Facility Classification

The standard to which the facilities are developed varies considerably from location to location, ranging from informal open coast launching sites to formal serviced boat harbours. To assist with comparison, DoT has established levels of boating facility development - the higher the level, the higher the standard of the facility. The table below summarises the classification levels and type of boat launching facility.

Level	Classification
<b>Level 1 (Informal)</b>	Open/beach launching with sea search and rescue organisation.
<b>Level 2 (Minimal)</b>	A restricted length of waterside (usually a beach) over which launching can take place as determined by environmental conditions; four-wheel drive vehicle access and limited unsealed car-trailer parking.
<b>Level 3 (Local)</b>	A single or two-lane ramp with a holding jetty for launching and retrieval of shallow draft craft by a two-wheel drive vehicle. Limited sealed car-trailer parking with unsealed overflow area.
<b>Level 4 (District)</b>	A two-lane ramp with a holding jetty for launching and retrieval of shallow draft craft by a two wheel-drive vehicle. Limited sealed car-trailer parking with unsealed overflow area. Navigation aids and public toilets.
<b>Level 5 (Regional)</b>	A multiple number of lanes for launching and retrieval by a two-wheel drive vehicle. Boat holding jetties to assist launching and retrieval for each lane. Navigation aids and public toilets. Formal sealed car-trailer parking with an unsealed overflow area.
<b>Level 6 (Major Boat Harbour)</b>	Boat pens and yacht/sailing club facilities. Multiple ramp lanes for launching and retrieval by two-wheel drive vehicle. Boat holding jetties to assist in launching and retrieval and boat wash down facilities. Formal sealed car-trailer parking and car parking. Service jetty and boat refuelling and sullage pump out facilities. Boat repair facilities including one boat lifter (or similar) and associated commercial development. Navigation aids, lighting and public toilets and showers.

# Current Situation

To determine the current situation existing facilities have been considered satisfactory in condition and suitable for operational requirements. The South West Region is currently served by 45 boating facilities however only 18 are considered class Level 3 and above. The majority are located on the coast, the notable exceptions are facilities located at inland lakes or dams at Logue Brook Dam, Lake Towerrinning, Lake Stockton, Lake Kepwari and Glen Mervyn Dam. See map 1.

The number of recreational vessels registered in a particular area may also be expressed as the number of vessels per thousand residents, also referred to as the 'boating density' or 'rate of boat ownership'.

For the purposes of this Study, several Catchment areas have been established. Some coastal areas have been grouped together because the resident boat owners are likely to use the same boating facilities or have similar population and boating registration growth predictions. The inland areas, that do not have coastal frontage, have been grouped together because their resident boaters are likely to access any one of the facilities available within the Region.

The table below provides a '2020 snapshot' of the Catchment areas and the corresponding number of residents and registered recreational boats that are housed there.

Catchment Area	Local Government Area	Population 2020 (Estimated)	Recreational Boating Registrations 2020		Vessels / 1,000
			0 – 7.5m	> 7.5m	
Greater Bunbury	Harvey, Bunbury, Dardanup, Capel	95,358	6,100	248	67
Busselton	Busselton	42,352	3,446	187	86
Augusta – Margaret River	Augusta – Margaret River	16,140	1,396	43	89
South Coast	Nannup, Manjimup	10,424	920	16	90
Inland	Collie Donnybrook – Balingup Bridgetown – Greenbushes Boyup Brook, West Arthur	21,906	1,310	35	61
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>186,180</b>	<b>13,172</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>74</b>

The estimate for peak boat ramp usage on a good boating day is determined by the number of local boat users plus the number of visitor boat users.

Local boat users have been calculated as a percentage of the boats that are registered within the Region. It has been noted on a good boating day in a region where the visitor percentages are high, the percentage of local boat users are low. This percentage reduction of the local boat user is in accordance with the table below.

Percentage visitor numbers have been calculated using Department of Fisheries data collected over two peak boating seasons. For the South West Region this equates to 52 per cent

Visitors	Local registered vessels
0 - 20%	5%
21 - 40%	4%
41 - 60%	3%
61 - 100%	2%

## Boat Ramp

- 3% of local boat registrations  $\leq$  7.5 metres = 395
- Visitors = 429
- Total boat users = 824

To determine boat ramp requirements, 20 boat users per ramp lane has been used in accordance with AS3962-2020 Marina design.

## Mooring Installations

- Local boat registrations > 7.5 metres = 529
- Transient visitors (5% of 529) = 27
- Total = 556

To allow for a mooring installation assessment, the current moorings include an estimate of recreational swing moorings. This estimate has been determined from limited information available at the time of this report.

An assessment of boating facilities indicates the number of boat ramp lanes meets the current demand and there is a surplus of 150 mooring installations.



Photo: Boat pens, Augusta Boat Harbour

# Forecast Demand - 2036

DoT's Recreational Boat Licencing Register was used to extract data required for calculating demand for each LGA in the Study area. The number of registered vessels, their location and length were used for modelling the forecast demand. A time series analysis of historical data dating back to 1990 was used to predict future patterns of ownership out to 2036. Population estimates for the study area is based on population figures derived from the *WA Tomorrow Population Report* series released by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH)

A linear trendline growth rate was applied to the vessel and population forecast. This methodology was suited to the available data on population and boat ownership for the regional area. The methodology is statistically sound and suitable for estimating growth in the number of recreational vessels and future needs.

The table below provides a 2036 forecast number of registered recreational vessels for each LGA and their corresponding forecast number of vessels per thousand head of population.

Catchment Area	Local Government Area	Recreational Boating Registrations (forecast) 2036				Vessels / 1,000
		0 – 7.5m	Growth	> 7.5m	Growth	
Greater Bunbury	Harvey	8,656	2,556	430	182	76
	Bunbury Dardanup Capel					
Busselton	Busselton	4,939	1,493	279	92	77
Augusta – Margaret River	Augusta – Margaret River	1,924	528	58	15	83
South Coast	Nannup Manjimup	1,244	324	24	8	133
Inland	Collie	1,779	469	54	19	82
	Donnybrook – Balingup Bridgetown – Greenbushes Boyup Brook West Arthur					
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18,542</b>	<b>5,370</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>77</b>

The number of registered recreational boats in the Region is predicted to increase to 19,387 (18,542 + 845) by the end of 2036. This represents an increase of 42 per cent over the period 2020 to 2036.

As expected, the largest increase is in the Catchment areas with the highest populations: Greater Bunbury and Busselton.

Forecast boating facilities requirements in 2036:

## Boat Ramp

- 5% of local boat registrations ≤ 7.5 metres = 556
- Visitors = 604
- Total boat users = 1,160

## Mooring Installations

- Local boat registrations > 7.5 metres = 845
- Transient visitors (5% of 845) = 42
- Total mooring installations required = 887

A comparison of the forecast demand for boating requirements against the current capacity of the existing facilities indicate there is a requirement for an additional 17 boat ramp lanes and 181 mooring installations to meet future demand.



*Photo: Blackwood River, Augusta*



Photo: Port Geographe



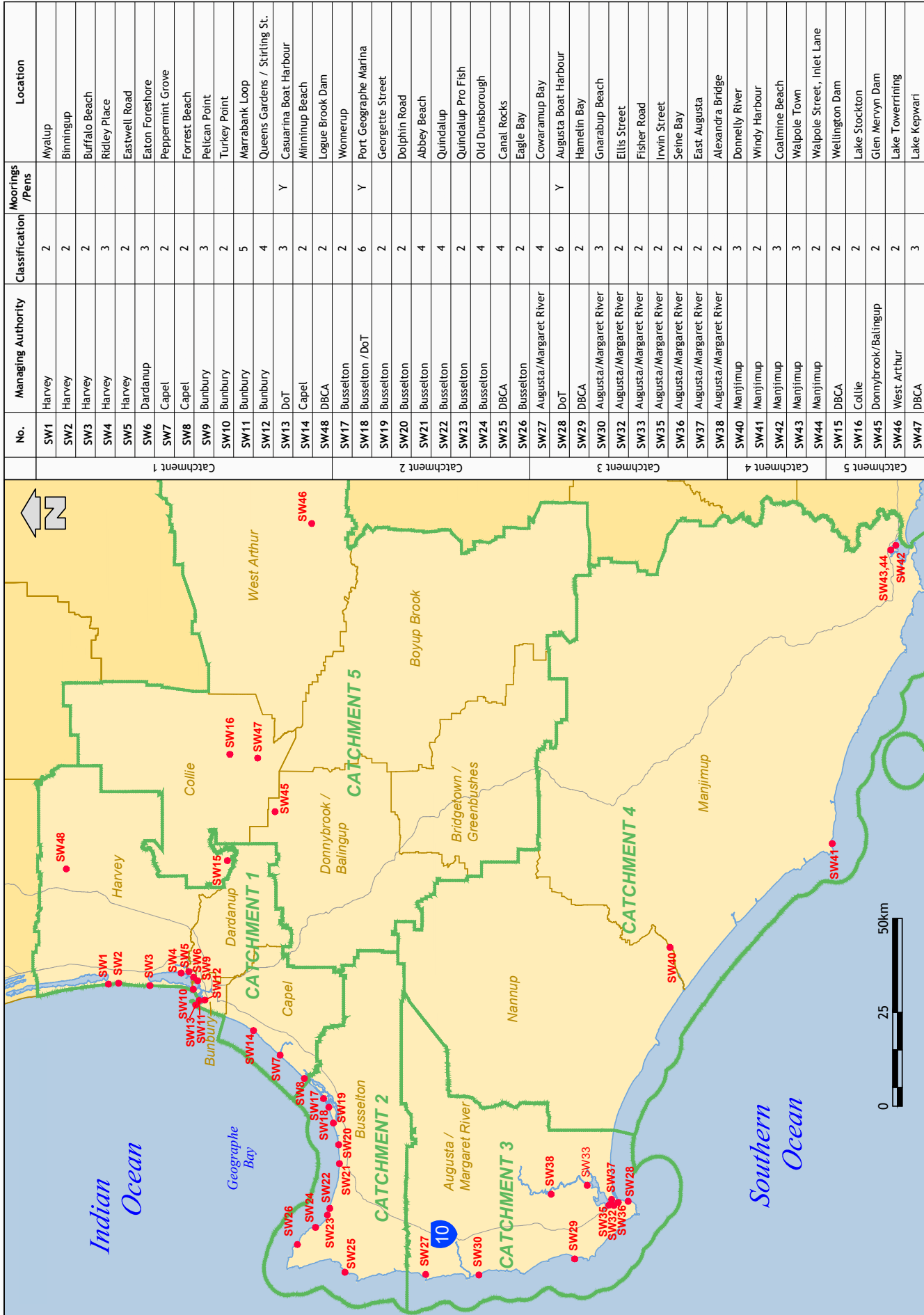
# Recommendations

This Study has predicted growth in the boating fleet and subsequent demand for recreational boating facilities across the Region. Where considered achievable, development/expansion options have been proposed at existing boating facilities to meet the demand. However, it is recognised that in some locations there is also a need to plan and provide for facilities at new sites.

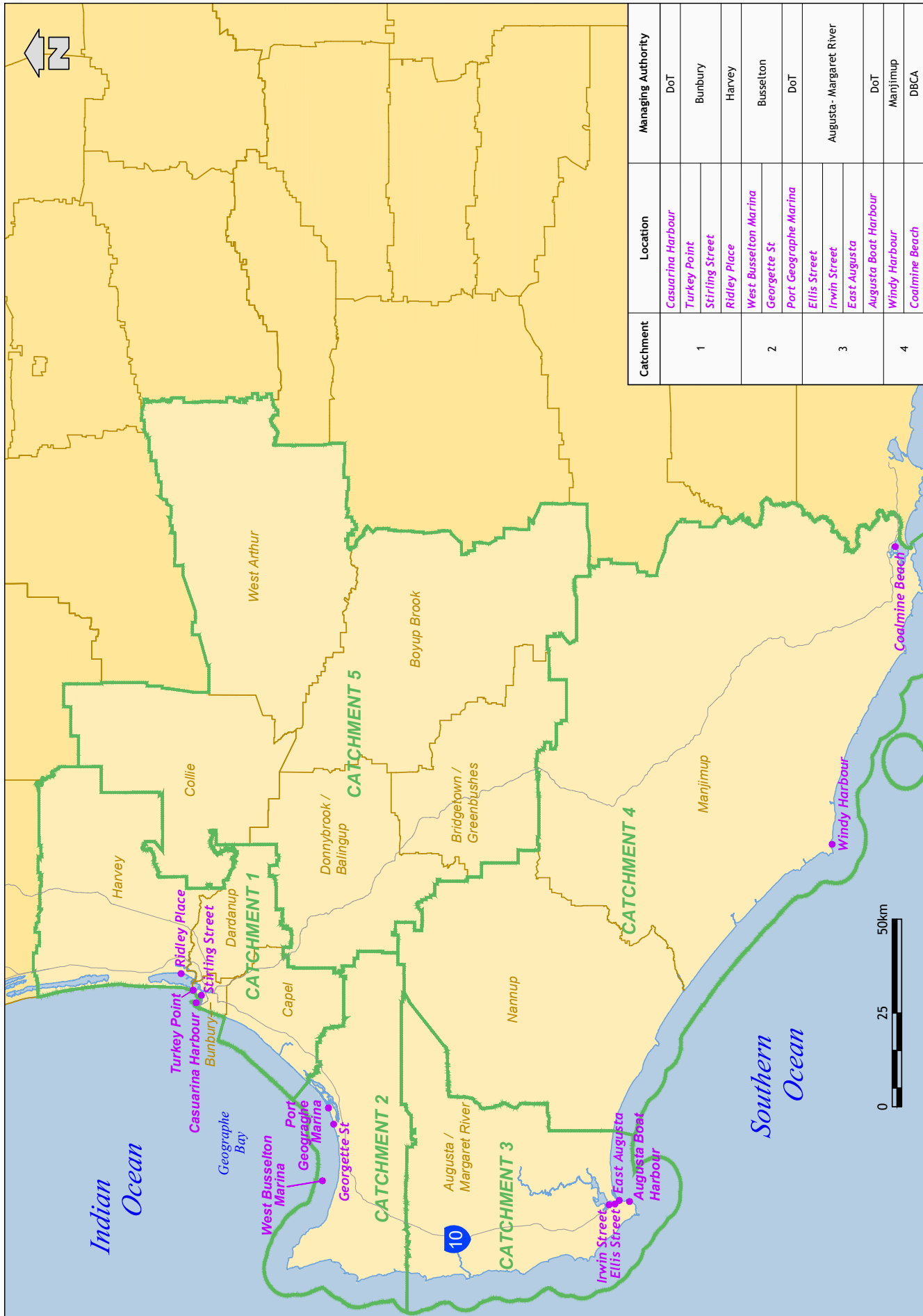
The following table provides a summary of options for recreational boating facility development to meet the demand to 2036. See *map 2*

Catchment area	Managing Authority	Location	Development Options
<b>Greater Bunbury</b>	DoT	Casuarina Harbour	2 additional lanes 350 additional pens 100 boat stacker
	Bunbury	Turkey Point	Upgrade boat ramp to level 3 - 2 lanes
	Bunbury	Stirling street	2 additional lanes
	Harvey	Ridley Place	2 additional lanes
<b>Busselton</b>	Busselton	Georgette street	Upgrade boat ramp to level 3 - 2 lanes
		West Busselton area	New boat launching facility 4 lanes 100 pens
	DoT	Port Geographe Marina	60 additional pens
<b>Augusta-Margaret River</b>	Augusta-Margaret River	East Augusta	New boat ramp level 3 - 1 lane
		Ellis Street	30 additional pens
		Irwin Street	Upgrade boat ramp to level 3 - 1 lane
	DoT	Augusta Boat Harbour	10 additional pens
<b>Inland</b>	Manjimup	Windy Harbour	Upgrade boat ramp to level 3 - 2 lanes
	DBCA	Coalmine Beach	1 additional lane

# Map 1. Existing Facilities



# Map 2. Recommendations Map



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