

LANDMARK POSTCODE

6255



The Old Gaol, Bridgetown.
Image courtesy of Tourism Western Australia.

Story: Sheryl Allen

LOCATION: Bridgetown
2.5 hours southwest of Perth

POPULATION: 3,000

INDUSTRIES: Tourism, agriculture, mining

CLIMATE: Temperate
Summer: 12.7°C – 29.6°C
Winter: 4.3°C – 15.7°C
Rainfall: 743mm

As you near Bridgetown, you understand why so many Perth people take the 2.5 hour drive to this corner of the world.

Your trek into tall timber country opens up to rolling hills and bucolic vistas; you are transported to a pleasingly countrified place that many compare to rural England.

Nestled in the valley of the Blackwood River, Bridgetown was settled on strong pastoral origins and grew under the influence of mining, orcharding and the railway.

Today, Bridgetown is all about lifestyle.

The legacy of a once flourishing apple and fruit growing area is a bonus for tree-changers.

Tim Clynych, CEO of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes explains. "The original orchards were located right in town. Many of them have been bought out and are now 5-10 acre lifestyle properties, still within the town environs and lending a unique rural character to the heart of Bridgetown."

"While there is still an agricultural sector here

(and even some fruit growers) the real attraction is the lifestyle. Bridgetown has evolved to meet the demands that come with that market – cottage industries, B&Bs, chalets, cafes, a spirited art and crafts culture and an emerging wine industry."

Services include a supermarket, a hospital, a handful of doctors, specialty shops, banks, golf courses, tennis club, bowling club and more.

Potters, musicians, artists, food artisans are some of the personalities that build the Bridgetown community. You can get up close and personal with them in the working studios and galleries, cafes, wineries and the cidery.

From 12-14 November 2010, the Bridgetown Blues Festival will present an impressive line-up of home grown and international talent. "It's a very popular annual event renowned for its community feel," said Tim. "It will bring 10,000-15,000 people to Bridgetown over the three day program."

Then there are theatre lovers, environmentalists and heritage enthusiasts. You'll find them at Bridgetown's large repertory theatre, the Environmental Society or exploring the historic Bridgedale homestead, the two local heritage trails or the town centre's famed 19th century streetscape.

Tin and gold were the early targets of prospectors. Today it's the rich deposits of lithium and tantalum that keep miners busy.

"Talisson Minerals is the single biggest employer in the area," said Tim. "There are many opportunities here for skilled employment. We

also have a fair share of fly-in-fly-out mine staff who opt to commute further afield while enjoying Bridgetown as their family base."

"The majority of people are moving to Bridgetown for the lifestyle not for a job."

There are always "urban refugees" in various stages of change. Tim explained that there is a typical journey and that often it occurs over several years. "Often people come for a day or a weekend or two. Then they might invest in a 'weekender' and still work and live in the city during the week."

"As the years move on they might look at commuting a few days or reducing their work to part-time so they can spend more time here. Eventually they move into the retirement phase (often early) and make the full transition."

Sounds like a good plan!

CONTACT:

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PROPERTY GUIDE:

Residential: median house price \$375,000

Lifestyle: 2.5 to 8 acres in or near town
\$200,000-\$300,000

Small acreage with large home \$680,000-\$800,000