shire of Ashburton
opportunity to community

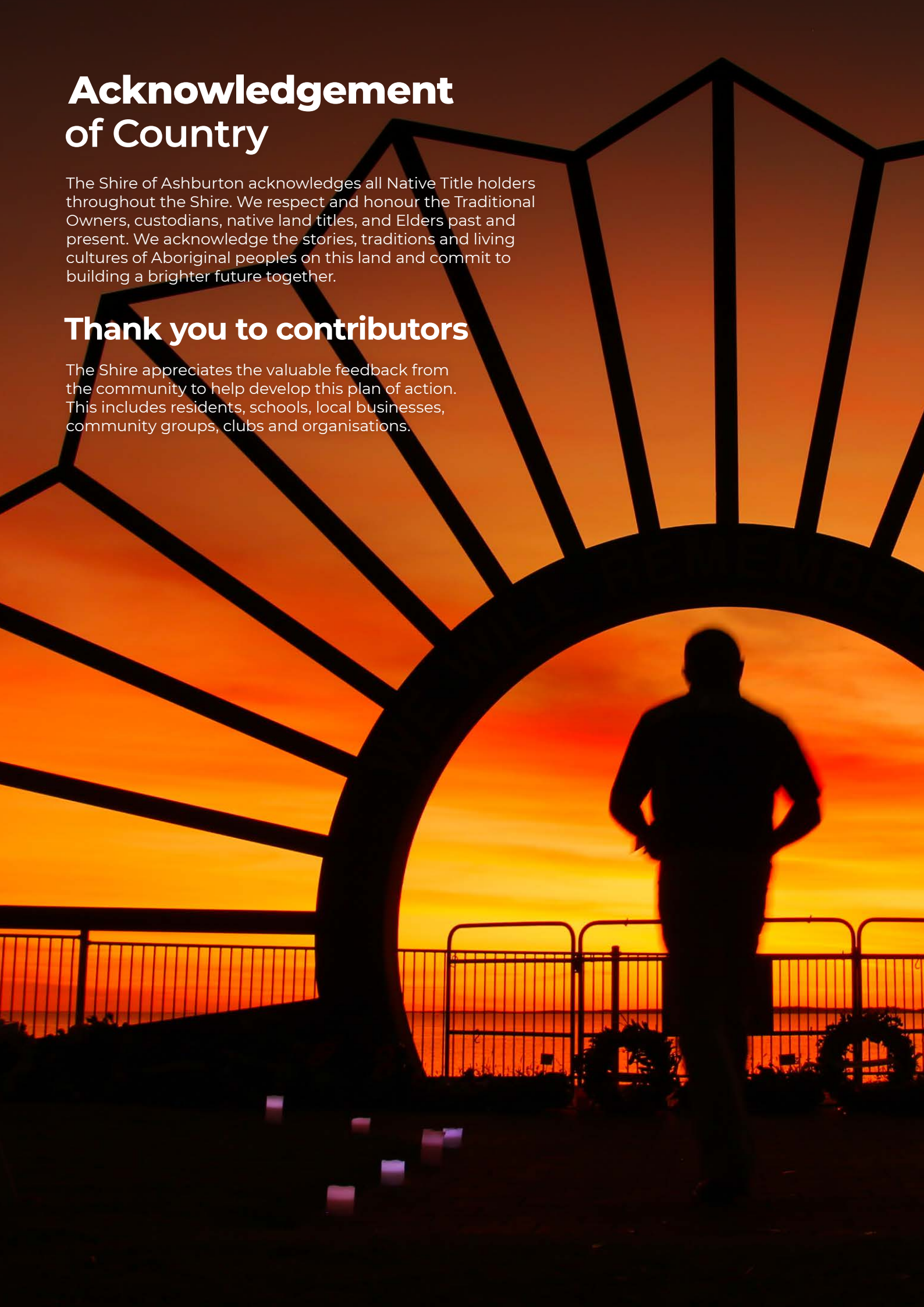# Community Programs and Events Strategy

2024 – 2027

Acknowledgement
of Country

The Shire of Ashburton acknowledges all Native Title holders throughout the Shire. We respect and honour the Traditional Owners, custodians, native land titles, and Elders past and present. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.

Thank you to contributors

The Shire appreciates the valuable feedback from the community to help develop this plan of action. This includes residents, schools, local businesses, community groups, clubs and organisations.

Contents

A home with strong foundations.

'Community and opportunity' are the foundation of 'My Pilbara Home'. They enable the Shire and the many residents, volunteers, organisers, leaders, corporate sponsors, and participants to develop activities, initiatives and events in a way that makes the most of our remote location and dynamic population.

The 'My Pilbara Home' Community Development Strategy 2024 – 2027 ('My Pilbara Home') includes six informing strategies:

RAP
Connecting culture to community to advance reconciliation.

CAIP
Connecting all community members with the same opportunities and experiences.

Youth
Connecting young people with opportunities to feel engaged, empowered and supported.

my Pilbara home

Programs & Events Connecting community members through the delivery of inclusive programs and events.

Club Development Plan Connecting clubs and groups with opportunities to build capacity.

Arts
Connecting community with Arts.

1. Why *Community Programs and Events* in the Shire?

1.1 Community Programs and Events make "My Pilbara Home"

Community Programs and Events are a key part of life within the Shire. They bring communities together with a sense of celebration, joy and fun and contribute to community belonging, connection and inclusiveness.

The Shire of Ashburton is comprised of diverse towns and communities that stretch across pristine coastal and inland Pilbara environments. Our communities consist of people from a range of backgrounds who enjoy the economic and employment opportunities on offer, while also relishing the unique lifestyle in this part of the world.

What we call community programs and events help engage both different groups within community and the community as a whole. Their purpose, scale and feel can vary as much as the people, groups and experience of life in the Shire. They involve new arrivals, children and families, young adults, long-time residents, people living with disability, single people, seasonal visitors, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, Aboriginal and non-Indigenous people, FIFO workers and volunteers.

The Shire defines 'Community Programs' as activities that support the community and take place across the year. Examples are school holiday programs, Onslow Keepers, NAIDOC Week, Volunteer Week, Youth Week and smaller scale initiatives within the community. The Shire defines 'Events' as large scale activities that attract a wide audience, including visitors to the Shire, and take place once a year. Examples are Passion of the Pilbara (POP), the Jundunmunnah Nameless Festival and the Karijini Experience.

This Community Programs and Events Strategy is an action plan to build our 'social currency' – what we call belonging, connection and inclusiveness. It is part of the 'My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy 2024-2027' ('My Pilbara Home'). The Shire's commitment is to build on the strengths and successes of our communities and learnings from across the State about the importance of community-led programs and events in regional towns.

All help stage community programs and events that make 'My Pilbara Home'.

The following quotes from community members in the Shire illustrate the importance of Community Programs and Events in community belonging, connection and inclusion:

" I feel connected to my community by joining in with work and community events and social activities.

" There are lots of community events that always bring everyone together.

" "In my town I love the local community events and the people."

1.2 Our commitment to Community Programs and events

At the Shire of Ashburton, we provide core Council services and work with mining and other resources companies to create liveable townships. Our vision is to embrace our unique Pilbara environment and lifestyle, by developing vibrant, active and connected communities. As community members ourselves, we believe that social values are worth fighting for, and that everyone deserves to share in the richness created from where we choose to invest, live and visit. We are dedicated to driving and delivering 'opportunity to community.'

The Shire is committed to vibrant Community Programs and Events. We recognise and value the role of local clubs and community groups in building a vibrant programs and events calendar. The Shire has a Community Development Team based in each of the four towns dedicated to supporting the community and building their capacity to facilitate Community Programs and Events.

The Shire will be involved in different ways to deliver the actions in this Community Programs and Events Strategy. Implementation will be led by the Community Development Team based in each town. The Shire has five critical roles to play in the delivery of this Strategy. These roles are clearly outlined in the Action Plan of this strategy, alongside who should be involved in each action.

Table 1.1 Role of the Shire

Provider	Delivers the initiative, activity, service, or facility	For example, Welcome to Town events, Town ovals, Community halls, Town swimming pools
Facilitator	Connects the right people together	For example, 'What's On' meetings and information promotion, Shire Youth Development officer
Partner	Collaborates or is part of making something happen	For example, ANZAC Day services, Friday nights at the pool, NAIDOC Week events
Advocate	Talks about or promotes an issue to people who need to listen	For example, recognising volunteers, raising awareness of cost of living pressures, policies on diversity and inclusion
Funder	Provides money or resources to support	For example, Community support grants and our sponsorship of events.

This strategy cannot succeed with the Shire acting alone: it requires support and involvement from across the local community service providers, clubs, organisations, tourism operators, and state government agencies such as Tourism WA and the Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC).

Our approach is based on the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) in recognition that the community has many strengths. An ABCD approach focuses on doing things with the community and valuing the capacity, skills, knowledge and potential in the community that contribute to Community Programs and Events.

You can read more about ABCD in the 'My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy'.

Asking what community wants or needs is an early but important step in setting the direction of developing community programs and events – and how we make progress together in a collaborative way. Understanding what part community can play alongside the Shire is another important step. Playing our parts together takes us closer to our big goal for 'My Pilbara Home': *"to foster a sense of belonging, connection and inclusiveness in our approach to the delivery of our programs, events and initiatives".*

Table 1.2 Role of community

Advocate	Talks about or promotes an issue to people who need to listen	For example, Chamber(s) of Commerce
Facilitator	Connects the right people together	For example, the local tourism office coordinating regional promotion of events.
Funder	Provides money or resources to support	For example, providing corporate sponsorship for major [signature] events
Participant	Attends, visits or participates	For example, holding a stall at a Welcome to Town event
Partner	Collaborates or is part of making something happen	For example, the local schools cooperating with Tom Price Cadets for skills development among young people
Provider	Delivers the initiative, activity, service, or facility	For example, managing and staging the Karijini Experience with support from sponsors
Volunteer	Contributes personal time and skills without financial compensation	For example, drafting and publishing social media posts

1.3 Our current activities with Community Programs and Events

If you are community-minded, you can probably name the many events staged across the towns of Ashburton. Perhaps you take part in Welcome to Town events, Friday nights at the Pool, and Reconciliation Week activities that are inspired by the parts of community that together make us 'whole'. Or maybe you think of the high-profile Passion of the Pilbara (PoP) in Onslow, Robe River Rodeo near Pannawonica and the Jundunmunnah Nameless Festival and Karijini Experience near Tom Price that draw residents and visitors together to celebrate life, community and Country.

For decades the Shire has played an active role in supporting and delivering community programs and events across all towns. The COVID-19 pandemic and staffing challenges has influenced the ability to state some programs and events, particularly those usually attracting visitors to the Shire. Organisations in community play a vital part through their specialist skills and team members, including volunteers. Funding partnerships remain a key channel to reviving a vibrant programs and events calendar and our corporate partners share our goal of delivering more opportunity to community.

In addition to the Implementation Plan outlined in this document, the Community Development function within the Shire runs the following daily functions relevant to community programs and events:

- Collaborate with key stakeholders in the delivery of community programs
- Support clubs and community groups to run community programs and events, by offering venues, materials and funding.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders in the delivery of programs and events, including as part of regional roadshows
- Support community organisations in their efforts to secure and manage grants or seek sponsorships.
- Proactively work with corporate partners to identify allocation of funds for community programs and events and integrate requirements into the design of infrastructure projects
- Apply the Shire's local procurement policy to prioritise people and businesses based in the Shire for commercial opportunities
- Actively work to connect residents with community programs and events to boost participation and inclusion across age groups and community groups

2. *Community Programs, Events* and you

2.1 How we talked with the community

Community consultation to develop this Community Programs and Events Strategy was delivered as part of the engagement for the 'My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy' and informing plans between March and April 2024 and included:

- a print and online survey that received 214 responses (103 complete, 111 incomplete)
- talking with community members at one of the four Welcome to Town events (Tom Price, Onslow, Pannawonica, Paraburdoo)
- 38 one-on-one interviews (online and in-person) with people living or working in the Shire
- two stakeholder workshops (Onslow and Tom Price) involving 21 people.

Information about the development of the My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy and informing plans, including the opportunity to participate, was delivered to the community through the Shire's website, Facebook page and via direct engagement with select stakeholders.

A comprehensive summary of consultation can be viewed in the "My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy".

2.2 What we learned

Community Programs and Events may not be the main reason you come to live in the Shire, but they influence why you stay. You love the remoteness, the close-knit community, and community engagement of living in the Shire. This is what counts towards our 'liveability'. The Regional Australia Institute explains that 'liveability' depends on costs, availability of health and education services, and also:

- *Attractive features ('amenity')*
- *Connections to community, friends and place*
- *Lifestyle and opportunity.*

Your feedback shows that community services and programs are in high demand, reflecting population growth in some towns and the barriers to accessing quality, reliable services in remote areas. Some employees who come to the Shire for its relaxed vibe and natural beauty, face high rental costs. Others receive company housing and work rotating rosters that limit their ability to volunteer. The Shire balances these different factors in delivering and supporting community programs and events.

You can see actions to support volunteer participation in the 'My Pilbara Home Community Development Strategy'.

1. Program capacity: Sharing information to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of community programs and events

You feel there is a limited understanding in community about how – and why – community programs and events are run.

You see a chance to understand the shared goals of the Shire their corporate partners and other community stakeholders to make the most of opportunities and pool knowledge and resources. The Shire is viewed as an important Partner and Advocate to help activities and programs meet the needs of the community. You see a role for the Shire in supporting community members, organisations and stakeholders to work together to build vibrant and engaging communities.

"We want to move away from branding and events to something more toward community development. We are keen to shift funds to programs that help meet economic and development priorities."

"We want to be clear on the contribution of programs and events to social and community infrastructure and have policies that engage resources companies in more of a strategic way to align with Shire and community priorities."

"So while the new facility is incredible, there is not a lot of sustainability built into how to keep the centre running. So that means funds previously spent for volunteer appreciation are now going to running the building."

"Everyone recognises the merit of coordination but what is needed is the committed funding to keep it current. The transient nature of the population limits this."

"In the interim, we understand the challenges of the context – transient population – so we are happy to fill the void and keep it happening if an initiative loses a key representative."

"For the multi-purpose centre, we can hire out the space required but that can take 90 days plus information and data. Needs input from Shire to discuss if it's a permanent structure."

"Consistency is the key to success. For anyone if you're going to do anything up here in such a small town you've got to be able to have the funding for up to 4 years to successfully get somewhere. Plus retention of staff is aided with certainty of representatives."

2. Community capacity building: Supporting community members to deliver sustainable community programs and events.

You see a role for the Shire in supporting community members, organisations and stakeholders to work together to build vibrant and engaging communities.

"It's certainly not money, grant programs are plentiful, it's more related to skills. For example, the basics of running accounts."

"We need lunch cover – it's difficult to get casual staff. RTO. Looking for trainees, school-based trainees. We are seeking people to look for the service as a career pathway."

"It's very hard to get the right worker because of the nature of the work. We prefer to have Aboriginal people because of the sensitive issues involved."

3. Participation: Supporting the levels of community participation in community programs and events

You support Shire efforts to involve different sections of the community in programs and events, such as young adults, families and the over-55 age group. You feel that some people who are attracted to the region for work are not engaging with community.

The Shire is clear on the opportunity to create community programs and events that build togetherness, belonging and inclusiveness.

"I attend all the events held during the year, Onslow keepers and bingo."

"I am new to town so still finding my way in the community."

"We need to build critical liveability. People come for the money, there's no two ways about it. The majority come to make money and save it."

"The Shire's '50 year anniversary' event celebration in Paraburdoo was amazing."

"Sometimes parents don't come and watch. There's not ownership of the community. We would like more ownership of things by the community."

"I do feel that when people move to town from the city and they've been in an environment where it's all dealt with, so there's a lack of understanding about the role community plays in keeping these services going."

"We don't want to be seen in town as the babysitting service."

"Staff mainly come from Perth and leave behind many facilities and networks for their families, so Chevron needs to encourage those elements to attract and retain workforce. Even making sure those basic requirements are met – such as daycare, is such a challenge."

"I have great circle of friends and we all help each other out and get together regularly."

"I have lived here for almost 14 years; I also see many members of the community through my work – sometimes when they are quite vulnerable. I have been on pretty much every committee at one stage and my passion is to improve services and community life."

4. Volunteer recruitment and recognition: Identifying more volunteers and celebrating their contribution.

Some community groups provide volunteers for Community Programs and Events to be able to be run. But demand for volunteers and skilled employees, cost of housing, and a tendency for residents to stay for only two or three years is taking a toll on planning and delivery.

"We need to focus more on collaboration – we should call up all the non-profit organisations to stage a big event to release the tension."

"I am heavily involved in community groups and feel this helps with my connection to the town and the people here."

"Now working full time I do not have a lot of time to be involved in other volunteer groups, I understand that changes will be made when there are more people volunteering and getting behind these groups to create events and things to do for the town."

5. Coordination and collaboration: Fostering a connected and active network of Community programs and Events

Funders, such as corporate partners, and providers of community services see the Shire as an important Facilitator and Advocate. Many community programs and services are working with the Shire and resource companies to manage costs, gain customers and keep services running. Grants and sponsorship are available and valued. You want to see some consistency and coordination in community programs and events to help plan your time and participation.

"We need a coordination role to avoid clashing – Friday Night Lights events in winter run by Swans, summer Fridays at the pool by the Shire with Swans participating."

"Someone needs to take ownership of the promotion of what's coming up – a discussion board, PO box drop, I feel like it's really lacking."

"Would like to see sponsorship of prizes, better notification of grants, guest speakers, motivational, leadership development."

"We don't have a process – a standard sharing of comms and promotions. Currently comms are not coming out earlier than two weeks before events."

3. Developing *Community Programs and Events* together

3.1 What we will do

We need to talk about the benefits of community involvement – together! The answer is not to stage more programs and design new events, but rather to combine our strengths to manage the challenges of life in a remote region.

Community input shows that events are a valued chance to get more of the community and visitors together in one place and brings social and economic value. Our events should feature the special connection we feel with the region – across our towns and on Country. Community Programs should maintain their focus on the different needs and experiences of groups within each town and across the Shire. For example, long-time residents, new arrivals, young adults, families, Aboriginal community members, and volunteers.

There is an opportunity to develop initiatives that can serve both as a community program and an event year-round. There is also the chance to celebrate the characteristics of each town under a single initiative. Further, we can coordinate these efforts with actions in the My Pilbara Home Arts Strategy and the Shire's Reconciliation Action Plan to make a bigger positive impact!

The aim of this Strategy is to:

Support the development of sustainable Community Programs and Events with community members as active participants and providers.

To achieve this aim, this Strategy is structured under the following focus areas that were identified from community feedback:

1. **Capacity building:** Supporting the effectiveness and sustainability of community programs and events

2. **Participation:** Supporting the levels of community participation in community programs and events

3. **Volunteer recruitment and recognition:** Recruiting more volunteers and celebrating their contributions.

4. **Coordination and collaboration:** Fostering a connected and active network of community programs and events.

The Shire's 'Strategic Community Plan 2022 to 2032' captures the views of our diverse community, our vision for the future, our planning imperatives and provides direction for the next decade. The Shire delivers services to its community in line with its values and strategic goals set out within the Strategic Community Plan. Each of the goals, under the headings People, Place, Prosperity and Performance, has several outcomes the Shire seeks to achieve.

Guided by the Strategic Community Plan, the actions in the 'My Pilbara Home Community Programs and Events Strategy' should:

- Help coordinate delivery of projects for the community [People 1.1] by fostering and strengthening partnerships with local networks to drive social prosperity [People - 1.2.1]

- Provide, promote and deliver social and cultural community celebrations, events and activities [People - 1.2.3] by ensuring, where possible, the access and inclusion of people with a disability is considered in facility and recreational design, ensuring everybody can participate [Place – 2.7.4]

- Work with community in maintaining safety and amenity in the district (Prosperity – 3.3.4] and including encouraging and providing programs to foster learning and participation in the community [People – 1.3.2] and information services that meet changing community expectations [People - 1.3.3]

- Deliver a range of effective opportunities for the community to receive information in a timely manner [Performance – 4.3].

- Grow opportunities for events through provision of quality, well-maintained and purposeful community facilities [Place – 2.7] and advocating for sustainable commerce and tourism opportunities [Prosperity – 3.4]

For each key focus area in the strategy, implementation actions have been developed that assist us to break down the work into realistic and achievable actions that will be implemented by the Shire in collaboration with community and with support from organisations such as Tourism WA and the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC).

Actions in the Community Programs and Events Strategy support one or more of these themes, as indicated by the following icons:

People

Place

Prosperity

Performance

3.2 Action plan

The table below provides a summary of actions to be undertaken over the three years to implement the Community Programs and Events Strategy. Internally these actions are further refined and detailed, and written into an operational plan.

Action	Town				Shire role and resourcing	Other stakeholders
	Ons	Panna	Para	TP		

1. **CAPACITY BUILDING: supporting the effectiveness and sustainability of Community Programs and Events**

		Ons	Panna	Para	TP	Shire role and resourcing	Other stakeholders
1.1	Transform the Shire's delivery of Community Programs and Events to demonstrate and promote an Asset Based Community Development approach that empowers residents and makes the most of local strengths.	●	●	●	●	Facilitator Provider	Community groups, clubs and organisations
1.2	Develop a Shire of Ashburton Community Development Framework tailored to each town in collaboration with community members and stakeholders.	●	●	●	●	Facilitator Provider	Community groups, clubs and organisations
1.3	Develop a Shire of Ashburton 'Signature Event Policy' for events delivered by the Shire defining the approach and outcomes of Asset Based Community Development and the 'Strategic Community Plan'	●	●	●	●	Provider	

Timing			What success looks like
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
●	●	●	Community Development Team works within an Asset Based Community Development model.
●			Framework is implemented both internally with the Community Development Team and externally with stakeholders to demonstrate the Asset Based Community Development model and town asset maps.
	●		Shire of Ashburton 'Signature Event Policy' developed and endorsed by Council and shared with community stakeholders and corporate partners.

Action	Town				Shire role and resourcing	Other stakeholders
	Ons	Panna	Para	TP		

1. **CAPACITY BUILDING** continued

Action	Town				Shire role and resourcing	Other stakeholders
1.4 Detailed asset mapping for each town to be completed in collaboration with community members and stakeholders.	●	●	●	●	Provider	Community groups, clubs and organisations
1.5 Develop and implement a Community Capacity Building Project in each town in collaboration with community members and stakeholders.	●	●	●	●	Facilitator Provider	Community events providers and committees Aboriginal Corporations in the Shire Tourism WA DLGSC
1.6 Develop and publish a Community Programs and Events Toolkit which provides guidance on how to plan and run Community Programs and Events.	●	●	●	●	Facilitator Provider	Community events providers and committees

Timing			What success looks like
2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
	●		Asset mapping complete for each town and Community Development Framework updated
	●	●	Community Capacity Building Project completed in each town.
		●	Toolkit developed reflecting the Asset Based Community Development model and made available on the Shire website.

Action	Town				Shire role and resourcing	Other stakeholders
	Ons	Panna	Para	TP		

2. PARTICIPATION: Supporting the levels of community participation in Community Programs and Events

| 2.1 | Promote and measure community member (resident) and stakeholder involvement in the planning and delivery of Community Programs and Events. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Funder Partner Provider | Community participants Groups, Clubs and stakeholders |
| 2.2 | Increased promotion of, and accessibility to, the 'What's On' online calendar as a reliable and combined source of information about scheduled Community Programs and Events. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Facilitator | Tourism office Program providers |

3. VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RECOGNITION: Recruiting more volunteers and celebrating their contributions

| 3.1 | Cooperate with the Club Development Lead to stage Events celebrating volunteers, such as Volunteer Week, Active Ashburton Awards and Citizen of the Year across the Shire. | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | Provider | Community participants Groups, Clubs and stakeholders |

Timing			What success looks like
2024/25	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	
⦿	⦿	⦿	Demonstrated increase in community member and stakeholder involvement in the planning and delivery of programs and events.
⦿	⦿	⦿	A current and comprehensive online calendar published on the Shire website that is accessible and promoted through stakeholder channels to residents and visitors
⦿	⦿	⦿	Demonstrated increase in community members volunteering. Volunteers report high satisfaction with level of recognition for their efforts.

Action	Town				Shire role and resourcing	Other stakeholders
	Ons	Panna	Para	TP		

4. COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION: Fostering a connected and active network of Community Programs and Events

Action	Ons	Panna	Para	TP	Shire role and resourcing	Other stakeholders
4.1 Develop business case for a Signature Events Officer to support delivery of key annual events in collaboration with community and regional stakeholders.	●	●	●	●	Provider	BNTAC Nintirri Centre Tourism WA Pilbara LGAs
4.2 Run regular coordination meetings, similar to What's on Onslow, with community stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach to Community Programs and Events in each town.	●	●	●	●	Facilitator Provider	Community groups, clubs and organisations
4.3 Collaborate with other Pilbara local government teams to create and maintain a calendar of Community Programs and Events held across the Pilbara Region.	●	●	●	●	Facilitator Partner	Pilbara LGAs
4.4 Deliver a minimum of one (1) Signature Event each year in Tom Price and Onslow.	●			●	Provider	Community groups, clubs and organisations Local businesses Lotterywest

Timing			What success looks like
2024/25	**2025/26**	**2026/27**	
●			A business case for a dedicated Signature Events role is developed and submitted for approval.
●	●	●	A yearly Community Program and Events planner is developed, maintained by the Shire, and regularly updated to avoid calendar clashes and enable maximum participation and volunteer contribution
●	●	●	A yearly Community Program and Events planner includes regional events to identify opportunities for maximum regional efficiency, participation and volunteer contribution
	●	●	Demonstrated promotion, awareness of, participation in, and satisfaction with Passion of the Pilbara (PoP) and Jundunmunnah Nameless Festival by community members (residents) and visitors.

4. Staying on *track*

The Shire will check the progress of this Strategy Action plan on a fixed schedule.

When	What	Who
Ongoing	Review community feedback results Report key findings to Manager Communities	Community Development Officer(s)
Every 3 months (February, May, August, November)	Collect information from Clubs, Community Groups, Program partners, Sponsors involved with Strategy actions, programs, initiatives and activities Enter how the Strategy actions are progressing in the Implementation Plan Report key issues to Manager Communities	Club Development Lead Community Coordinators
Every 3 months (March, June, September)	Report on the progress and status of the Strategy actions to Shire Executive and Council	Manager Communities
Every year (November/December)	Survey Clubs, Community Groups, Program partners, Sponsors to learn about the effectiveness of Strategy Actions	Community Development Officer(s)
Every year (January/February)	Review survey results Report key findings to Manager Communities	Community Development Officer(s) Community Coordinators Grants Administrator
Every year (March/April)	Adjust Implementation Plan, as needed	Manager Communities