



Shire of Ashburton

# Onslow Townsite Strategy



July 2011

**Document produced by Shire of Ashburton in conjunction with the Department of Planning.**

The Onslow Townsite Strategy was formally adopted by the Shire of Ashburton in July 2010.

The strategy was endorsed by the Western Australian Planning Commission in March 2011.

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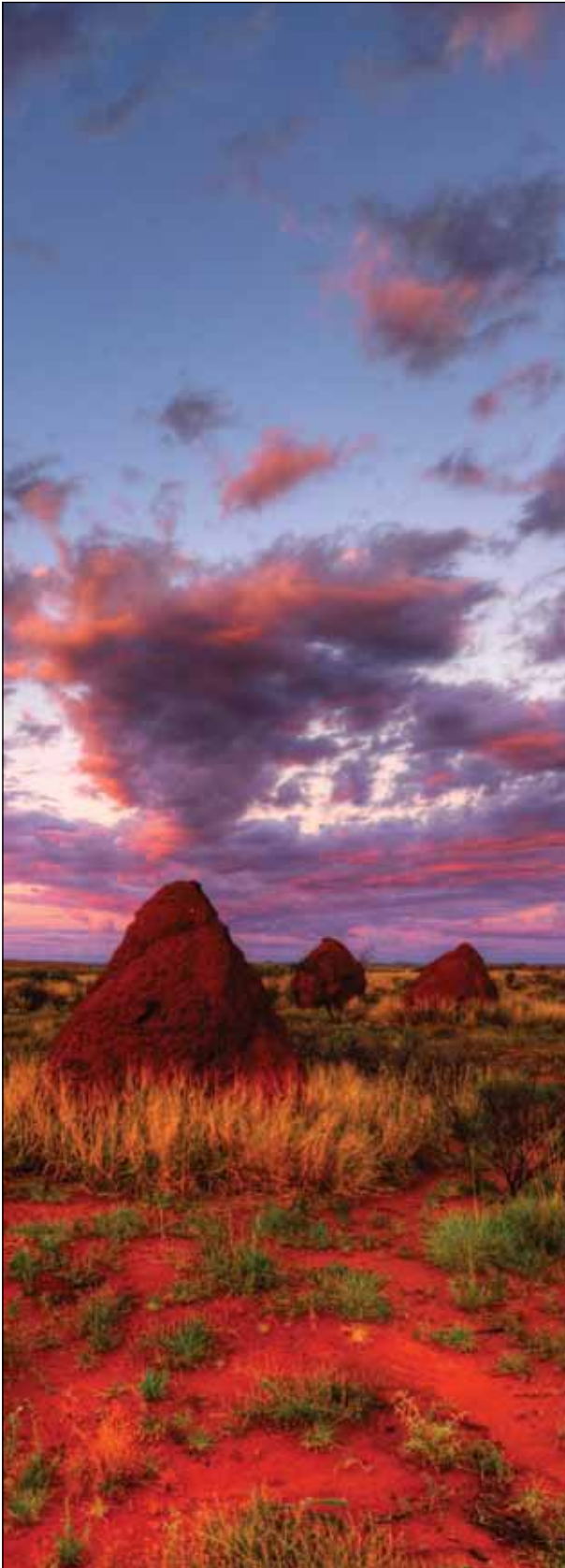
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**Department of  
Planning**



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# Section One

## Townsite Vision

### 1.1 Background

Onslow is a strategic location of interest to resource companies due to factors such as its location, deep-water access and proximity to off-shore gas reserves. A number of industry feasibility studies have identified the Onslow area in their assessments. The recent proposal to locate LNG facilities at the Ashburton North Strategic Industrial Area provides the impetus for a significant expansion of the town to accommodate LNG plant workers and their families. The ultimate development of Ashburton North will include a new port and general industry area that will provide the support to the LNG facilities, port and Onslow.

This, combined with a potential change in operational practices at Onslow Salt has the potential to provide the town with a long term economically sustainable future. However, in planning for the major expansion of the Onslow townsite, the community is anxious that both Onslow's character and its residents' easy-going lifestyle are maintained.



### 1.2 Vision

With the likely development of LNG facilities, the desire is to ensure that Onslow has a diverse economic and social base and is not known as just an LNG town. The town site will be developed in accord with the following vision:

**'That Onslow be a vibrant, sustainable and prosperous place for work, living and leisure - for both residents and visitors.'**



## 1.3 Goals

The townsite strategy seeks to fulfil three prime goals:

### Sustainable living

Manage development and change to accommodate economic and population growth in a manner which endorses community values, conserves natural resources and safeguards ecological systems.

### Economic vitality

Facilitate the diversity and expansion of Onslow's economy, by building on the town's human resources, skill base and environmental quality, whilst strengthening regional linkages, providing sufficient support networks, fostering innovation and rewarding enterprise.

### Community wellbeing

Provide living areas which maximise lifestyle quality and choice by engendering a healthy, caring and harmonious community, whereby individual and collective rights are respected and where there is fair and reasonable access to facilities and services.



## 1.4 Objectives

The objectives underpinning the townsite strategy are:

### Sustainable living

- Respect and build on Onslow's natural heritage values.
- Be sensitive to the cultural heritage values of Onslow's Indigenous community and protect areas of indigenous significance.
- Maintain and conserve Onslow's heritage places and buildings.

### Economic vitality

- Allocation of land to cater for anticipated economic demand.
- Ensure that resource and associated companies associated with Ashburton North utilise Onslow for operational purposes.
- Facilitate local job creation.
- Improve connectivity between places.
- Provide utility infrastructure in a coordinated, cost effective and timely manner.
- Provide for 'transient workforce accommodation' only where it ensures social, amenity and architectural cohesion.

### Community wellbeing

- Enhance liveability and lifestyle choice opportunities.
- Strengthen local sense of place.
- Provide community facilities and services in a coordinated and timely manner.
- Develop a secure and safe community.

### 2.1 Overview

Based on the development of Ashburton North SIA, Onslow will result in significant population growth. To facilitate this development, significant reorientation of Onslow’s urban structure is required to accommodate the residential, community and civic needs of an anticipated residential population expansion. This will remove the need for operational workforce camps.

The townsite strategy seeks to balance pressure for the establishment of new living areas with the need to revitalise and, where appropriate, restructure the existing residential precincts. Introducing higher densities in the existing areas will provide the opportunity to:

- Make these areas more viable in terms of urban and community services;
- Reduce the urban footprint thus conserving land with high biodiversity, cultural and pastoral value; and
- Identify under utilised land for ‘community purposes’ for residential use.

### 2.2 Population and Development Scenarios

#### Base Population

The resident population of Onslow, as defined by the 2006 Census, is 573 persons. However, the Shire contends that the Census for 2006 in Onslow and other areas was significantly flawed. The Shire has evidence to indicate that the 2006 population for Onslow was closer to 700 persons. However, in relation to the general characteristics of the population, ABS Census data will provide guidance.

#### Development Scenarios

The 8,000ha Ashburton North SIA site will be accessible by multiple users (anticipated to be Chevron, BHP Billiton/ExxonMobil). Ashburton North SIA is expected to place development pressures on Onslow and will result in the need for new residential, commercial, industrial and recreational areas.

Due to the uncertainties regarding the scale of development at Ashburton North, development scenarios have been generated to gauge the potential range of demand for housing and residential land. Five scenarios have been considered:

Scenario 1:	Base Case - additional base employment of 100, without the development of Ashburton North (ANSIA) - 160 additional working population.
Scenario 2:	Low Growth - additional base employment of 250 with 25% development of ANSIA - 400 additional working population.
Scenario 3:	Medium Growth additional base employment of 500 with 75% development of ANSIA - 800 additional working population.
Scenario 4:	High Growth - additional base employment of 1000 with 100% development of ANSIA - 1600 additional working population.
Scenario 5:	Extreme Growth - additional base employment of 1500 with >100% development of ANSIA - 2400 additional working population.



Table 2.1: Development Scenarios

Scenario	Employment		Household Formation		Housing Demand		Total Dwellings	Gross Residential Land (ha)
	Base	Indirect	Single 30%	Family 70%	Units (400m <sup>2</sup> )	Houses* (700m <sup>2</sup> )		
1: Base	100	60	48	112	48	162	210	21.40
2: Low	250	150	120	280	120	280	400	40.67
3: Medium	500	300	240	560	240	560	800	81.33
4: High	1000	600	480	1120	480	1120	1600	162.67
5: Extreme	1500	900	720	1680	720	1680	2400	244.00

\*Note: Base Case Scenario includes a need to cater for a latent demand for 50 houses (160+50)

### Assumptions

The scenarios are based on the following assumptions:

Base Employment:	Employment living on a residential basis in the Onslow township irrespective of the development of Ashburton North. It does not include Onslow Salt, support industrial, support community uses or tourism.	
Indirect Employment:	Additional employment generated by the ANSIA activities. This includes people working for contractors associated with ANSIA activities as well as people working in the service sector: teachers, nurses, council workers and retail staff. A base: indirect employment ratio of 1: 0.6 to has been used.	
Household Formation:	Two basic household types have been used: single (30%) and family (70%).	
Housing Demand:	It is assumed that single households will be housed in units and family households in houses.	
Gross Residential Land:	It is assumed that the net land (lot areas) required for residential purposes is 60% of the total land area. The remaining 40% is required for roads, drainage, open space and community facilities.	
Fly in-Fly out:	The Council of the Shire of Ashburton support “fly- in, fly-out” operations where it is directly related to the construction of the respective industry. There is an expectation that operational staff associated with the Ashburton North SIA and Onslow Salt will be located within the Onslow townsite.	

## Potential Population Growth

Based on the anticipated development of the Ashburton North SIA and Council's position on fly-in fly-out, it is anticipated that the High Development Scenario would eventuate in the longer term.

Assuming a high development scenario of an additional 1,600 dwellings and the State average of 2.2 persons per dwelling, then a population increase of over 3,500 persons in Onslow would be a possibility in the longer term.

The development of this housing stock would be staged over time. In the short term (1-5 years) a demand for at least 210 additional dwellings is anticipated.

## 2.3 New Residential Areas

A total area of 140 hectares has been identified for the potential development of new living areas. This land would be developed as a number of residential precincts.

### Development Principles

New residential, or living areas will be developed generally in accordance with the WAPC Liveable Neighbourhood principles:

- Provide safe, convenient and attractive residential precincts that provide lifestyle choice.
- Minimise non-renewable energy use and car dependence.
- Provide a coherent system of compact walkable precincts, which cluster to form neighbourhoods.
- Adopt a site responsive approach to precinct layout design.

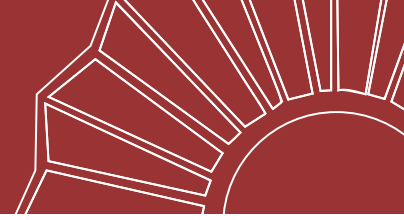
- Incorporate a movement network that has a clear hierarchy that distinguishes between different levels of vehicle penetration to residential areas.
- Provide for a network of well-distributed parks and recreation areas to an extent suitable for Onslow's climatic conditions.
- Respect environmental and hazard constraints, including soil erosion, flood and bushfire risk.
- Adopt best-practice approaches to urban water management.
- Respect the biodiversity values of the locality.
- Provide public utilities in a timely, cost-effective and coordinated manner.

In order to provide the opportunity for a variety of residential development, together with a tourist focus, a residential tourist marina is considered to be an acceptable form of development for Onslow. This is in accordance with the direction provided by the Council's Strategic Plan (2007-2011) and reflected in the Shire's Onslow Marina Feasibility Study. In this regard, it is likely that a potential marina would seek direct waterway access from Beadon Creek.

### Desired Future Character

Onslow's new living areas will be developed as a nesting of residential precincts. They will offer a variety of housing options, characterised by a mix of detached houses and terrace/town house dwellings that meet the needs of an expanded population's range of household types. The proposed realigned town access road will define the western edge of the new living areas.





The precincts will take advantage of site terrain to maximise connections and views to beach areas and other areas of open space. It will pay respect to cultural sites valued by Onslow's Indigenous community.

A well-connected movement network will provide a variety of routes for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists both within the precincts and to surrounding localities. The subdivision layout will be sympathetic to the retention of existing vegetation and maximise opportunities for the capture of sea breezes.

## 2.4 Commercial Centre

### Development Principles

The commercial centre is to be restructured and developed by the creation of a town centre that:

- is a flood-free commercial and civic centre.
- is lively and has a character that melds the old with the new.
- offers opportunities for a range of commercial and civic activities.
- is accessible to neighbouring residential areas.
- that connects with the beachfront and maximises ocean vistas.

In addition, within the 140 hectare 'new living area', it is appropriate to provide a commercial area to service the immediate surrounds. This is noted on the Strategy Map and will be determined in the future structure planning of the area. It is likely that the residential-focused retail uses may find it appropriate to establish in this area due to the opportunity to be designed within a 'greenfields master plan'.

### Desired Future Character

The town centre will continue to be the commercial and civic focus for Onslow. It will be well connected to Onslow's expanded residential areas as well as the town's beachfront and open spaces. It will provide a mix of retail and commercial facilities that provide for the needs of Onslow's residents and holiday visitors. It will offer a range of indoor and outdoor spaces with orientation and built form massing that assist the capture of sea breezes and ocean views.

Within the 140 hectare 'new living area', this commercial node will be integrated and designed within the master plan.

## 2.5 Onslow Salt Area

The Onslow Salt operations extend over an area of 60,000 hectares. It is essentially a 'broad-acre' industrial activity and represents an important economic cornerstone of the Onslow community, providing direct employment, indirect employment and associated material benefits to the town.

### Development Principles

- Development of the salt production and harvesting process in an environmentally sustainable manner.
- Minimise the level of noise and potential wind-blown salt from stock piles.

### Desired Future Character

The salt pans, salt stock piles, the conveyor belt systems and ship loading wharf are established emblematic features of Onslow. It is acknowledged that there will be a number of new salt pans formed as the company expands its production. However, such development

should be undertaken in a manner that respects the natural and cultural heritage of the locality, as well as the community wellbeing of Onslow's expanding population.

## 2.6 Townsite Industrial Areas

There is a need to provide a variety of industrial sites in the township.

### Development Principles

- Provide industrial areas to service town requirements.
- Provide support industrial areas for the embryonic Ashburton North SIA.
- Transit workforce accommodation (TWA) is considered to be an unacceptable use within industrial areas.

### Desired Future Character

The townsite industrial areas will be developed in accordance with demand. They will provide facilities for light manufacturing, fabrication, storage, transport 'lay down areas' and servicing. The built form will comprise standard factory units and hard surface areas for material storage. The industrial lots will not be connected to the town's waste water system. They will require moderate buffer areas, primarily for noise attenuation.



## 2.7 Beadon Creek Harbour

The Beadon Creek harbour and support industrial area represents an important commercial and recreational facility.

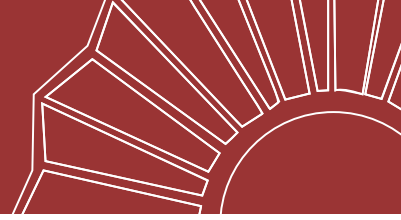
### Development Principles

- Development of the boat harbour in an environmentally sustainable manner, paying particular attention to mangrove communities in the creek.
- Need to maintain public access to the water via jetties and ramps.

### Desired Future Character

The future Beadon Creek harbour will be required to accommodate the growing needs of the marine servicing industry, as off-shore exploration and production intensify. There will be a need for additional wharf-side space for servicing and lay-down areas. There will be a need for a facility that will potentially have an extended wharf area with upgraded support facilities, such as an expanded marine fuel tank.

A residential tourist marina is considered to be an acceptable form of development for Onslow, subject to stringent environmental, social and development assessment. Should a residential marina be proposed, the general character should be "low key", comprising in the main single or two storey dwellings. However, there would be scope for multi storey apartment buildings and for a multi storey "landmark" building to be included within the complex. Road access will need to be improved to cater for such a development. Demonstration of significant community benefit from a residential-marina development would need to undertaken by its proponents.



## 2.8 Airport Area

Currently Onslow Airport is an underutilised transport facility. However, it is anticipated that the demand for air transport will increase dramatically with the development of the Ashburton North SIA. To accommodate large jet passenger aircraft, such as a Boeing 737, there will be a need for the existing main runway to be extended from 1,600 to at least 2,000 metres.

There may be scope to increase the length of the runway by a further 600 metres (to 2,200 metres) depending upon the relocation of the Onslow Salt access road on the Shire airport land. With the further development of the Ashburton North SIA, there may be a need in the future to establish an alternative airport site to the south of the township. This would only occur with the direct support of the operators of the Ashburton North SIA and the State Government.

### Development Principles

- The potential expanded function and operation of the airport will require the imposition of setbacks from the airport for sensitive uses, with respect to increased noise levels (setbacks and attenuation) and changes to development height limitations. If a decision is made to relocate Onslow's airport, this area would be predominantly used for industrial activities.
- In this regard, the current airport site is approximately 530ha. and provides the opportunity for the Shire to establish larger transport related industries without impacting on the airport. These larger lots are considered necessary for the development of Ashburton North SIA support businesses. Importantly, these lots can be established in the short and medium term to meet the anticipated demand.

### Desired Future Character

The Onslow airport precinct will be a higher volume air traffic facility, accommodating the needs of charter and corporate air travel. There is also potential for immediate industrial development within the precinct, without impacting upon the existing and future development of the airport.

## 2.9 Beaches

Onslow's beaches (Sunrise, Sunset and Four Mile) represent highly significant recreational resources for the town's residents and visitors.

### Development Principles

- Maintain public access to the town's beaches for residents and visitors.
- Maintain and enhance the environmental quality of the beach areas.

### Desired Future Character

Onslow's three beaches will continue to be the town's premiere recreation focus. There is a need to maintain access at prescribed points and to provide support facilities. A system of connected coastal walkways will be developed to provide beach access and to minimise adverse impacts on the natural environment.



## 2.10 Transient Workforce Accommodation

Currently within the Onslow townsite and under the Shire of Ashburton Town Planning Scheme No. 7 ('Scheme'), only the Residential and Tourism zones provide the opportunity to develop land for Transient Workforce Accommodation. The Scheme does not provide guidance as to the form such development may take. Experience elsewhere has generally resulted in the blighted development of camps of questionable quality and poor social interface with the existing community.

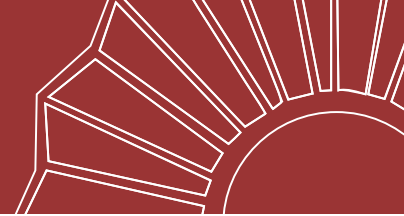
### Development Principles

- It is appropriate that any such Transient Workforce Accommodation be of a very high quality for the benefit of occupiers, as well as the community.
- Motel style development, with significant landscaping, quality design and materials, will be encouraged.
- A limitation on the overall proportion (%) of Transient Workforce Accommodation within a development should also be a consideration of the Amendment.

### Desired Future Character

A modification to the Scheme to reflect this desired outcome of design and development is recommended. In addition, it is noted that the Commercial and Civic zone prohibits Transient Workforce Accommodation. In this regard, it is appropriate that the Shire consider amending the Scheme to allow Transient Workforce Accommodation in this zone on the basis referred to above.





The following set of actions is considered necessary to progress the townsite strategy.

### 3.1 Roads and Transport

- Undertake detailed investigations to confirm the alignment of the proposed town access road and the incorporation of a levy to the south.
- Investigate the issue of the prime Onslow approach route passing through a WWTP buffer zone (smell issue).
- Ensure the expansion of the airport's functions, in its present location, is not constrained by future urban development.
- Identify potential sites for the future relocation of the airport.

### 3.2 Commerce

- Undertake detailed investigations for the proposed resiting of the commercial centre and the need for a neighbourhood shopping centre within the Development Investigation zone.
- Once determined, prepare a master plan to incorporate: commercial uses; civic functions including Shire office, hall, library and police station, as well as medium density residential.

### 3.3 Heritage Protection, Reserves & Buffer Areas

- Undertake consultation with Onslow's Aboriginal community to better appreciate

the values placed on the protection of identified heritage places.

- Delineate buffers for Onslow Salt operations, waste water treatment plant, airport noise contours and telecommunication towers.
- Define coastal reserve system and identify public access points and walkways.
- Retain European built heritage sites within appropriate precincts.

### 3.4 Residential Areas

- Commence development of vacant residential lots within the townsite.
- Undertake master planning for the 140 hectares of land designated for new housing areas and associated community facilities including a second school site and new hospital site (circa 6.0ha).
- Investigate the issue of the proposed Onslow approach route passing through a WWTP buffer zone (smell issue).
- Encourage a range of residential opportunities, including higher density and marina living.
- Potential to modify the Scheme to allow for lots currently zoned R12.5 to have an opportunity to seek a higher density on the basis of two dwellings per lot and higher density where amalgamation of lots is sought. This will be subject to an overall assessment to be undertaken on the implications on the floodway and development within it.

### 3.5 Industry

Determine hierarchy of industrial functions for existing and proposed industrial areas:

- Beadon Creek - existing and expanded areas:
  - Light industrial / service trades - local.
  - Marine based services - local.
  - Ashburton North marine based services prior to establishment of AN port facilities.
- Airport - proposed:
  - Light industrial/service trades for town servicing.
  - Airport related services.
  - Transport 'Lay down' area.
- SIA re-zoned to Special Use:
  - Potential for development including: light industry, large scale community uses and rural uses to be defined through the structure plan process.
  - The Amendment for the removal of the existing SIA and establishment of the Special Use zone to be initiated through the Ashburton North SIA Amendment.
  - The Council does not support two strategic industrial areas associated with Onslow. The Council believes that existing Onslow strategic industrial area is not required and its removal will allow opportunities for further town expansion and a mix of other uses including: light industry, large scale community uses and rural uses to be defined through the structure plan process.
  - The Shire will initiate an Amendment for the removal of the existing SIA and establishment of the Special Use zone in parallel with any zoning Amendment initiated for the Ashburton North SIA.
- Transit Workforce Accommodation: Ensure that transit workforce accommodation is not located within areas zoned for industry.



### 3.6 Community Facilities

- Determine the location of a future additional school site within the new living area to the south of the existing built up area.
- Investigate a site for future TAFE facility.
- Acknowledge the location of the swimming pool to be on Reserve R2090.
- Determine the location of a future alternative hospital site.
- Identify well-defined pedestrian linkages between school sites, ovals, multi-purpose recreation centre, swimming pool, hospital and new town centre.
- Identify with the community, those 'community purposes' sites no longer required for such purposes, which could be used for residential or other uses.
- Determine the need or otherwise to relocate the police station and associated police housing from the current floodprone site. If relocation is considered appropriate and supported by Western Australian Police, then structure planning be undertaken to review the development opportunities for the site.



### 3.7 Tourism

- Identify areas for a range of tourist accommodation types and facilities.
- Encourage a potential marina development to include tourist accommodation and facilities.
- Ensure that transit workforce accommodation is not located within areas zoned for tourism.

### 3.8 Utility Infrastructure

- Decommission Bindi-Bindi waste water treatment plant.

- Establish a new landfill facility at an agreed site south of the townsite.
- Establish a transfer station on an agreed site.
- Construct a new water storage tank (4.0ML) at the proposed site near the airport, to be associated with the development of new urban areas.
- Expand two pressure tanks and decommission one storage tank within the townsite as identified by WaterCorp.
- Investigate electricity generation, transmission and distribution options.
- Identify and implement water supply and storage options that address current shortages and cater for future anticipated demand due to town site growth.

### 4.1 Strategy Implementation

The implementation of the Onslow Townsite Strategy will require changes to the Shire's Town Planning Scheme No. 7, as it relates to Onslow. This would be undertaken by the Shire of Ashburton in consultation with the WAPC.

The following outlines the process that would need to be followed by the Shire in order to undertake the Scheme Amendment.

#### 4.1.1 Local Planning Scheme Amendment Process

The following key points summarise both the time frames and activities that would form part of a LPS Scheme Amendment (or Amendments, depending upon the proponent/s):

- Preparation of the LPS Amendment (including environmental assessment as necessary by the proponent);
- Proponent submit LPS Amendment document to the Council of the Shire of Ashburton;
- Shire of Ashburton resolves to adopt the Amendment;
- Shire of Ashburton refers the Amendment to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA);
- EPA has 30 days to determine if an assessment of the proposal will be undertaken;
- Should the EPA determine to undertake a full assessment of the proposal, there would be no statutory time limit for the EPA assessment – the proponent would be responsible for addressing the

environmental assessment issues determined by the EPA;

- Assuming that the EPA approves the application (with or without conditions) Council will refer the amendment to the WAPC for approval to advertise;
- Amendment advertised for public comment;
- Council resolves to support the Amendment/s with or without modification or recommend refusal;
- Amendment submitted to the Minister of Planning for determination;
- Minister determines the LPS Amendment; and
- If the Minister approves the Scheme Amendment, it is gazetted and becomes a statutory instrument.

#### 4.1.2 Site Investigations and Clearances

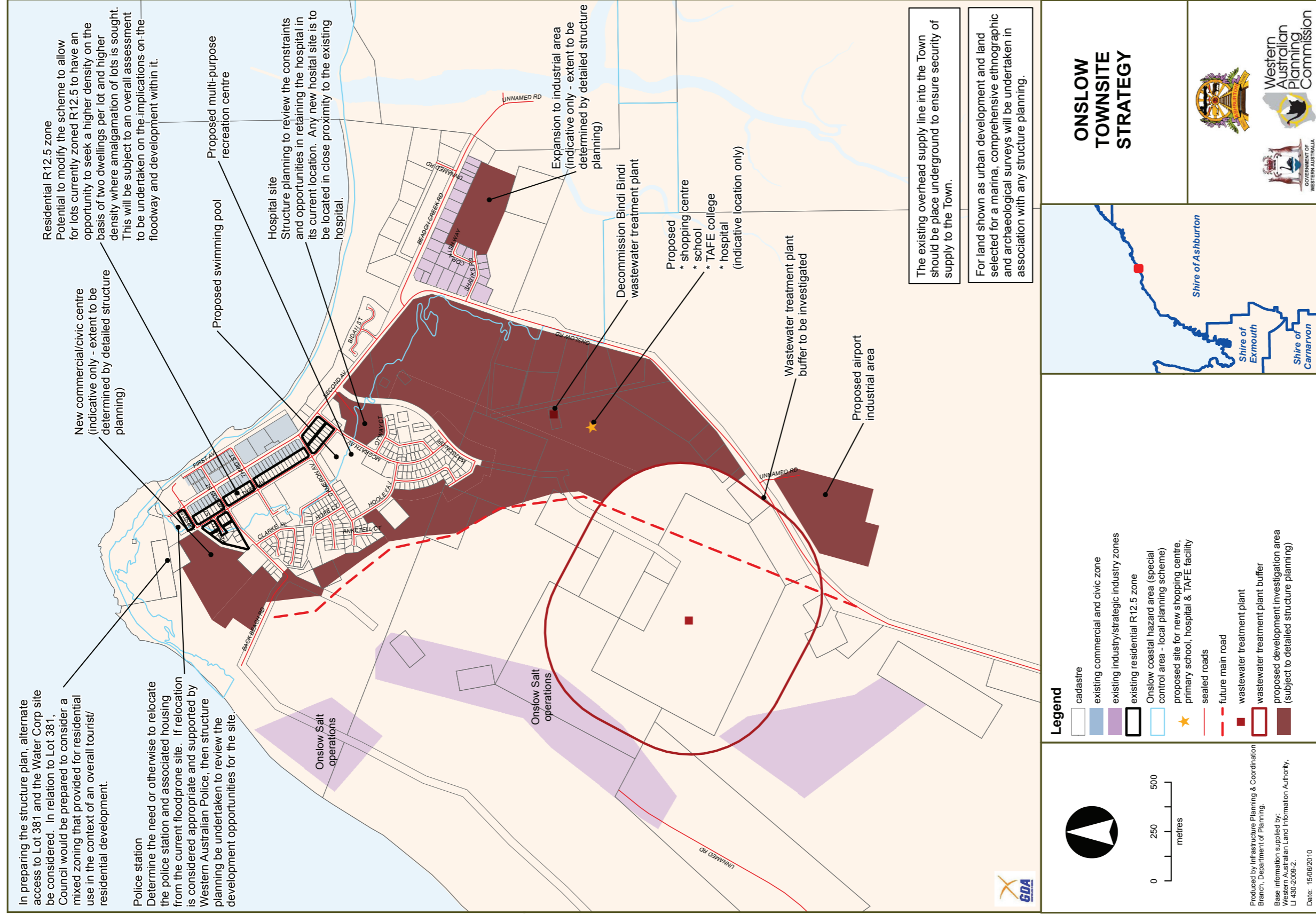
Prior to development, a series of investigations and clearances would be required. These would include:

- Native Title clearances;
- Cultural heritage studies;
- Flora and fauna studies;
- Geotechnical investigations; and
- Buffer investigations.

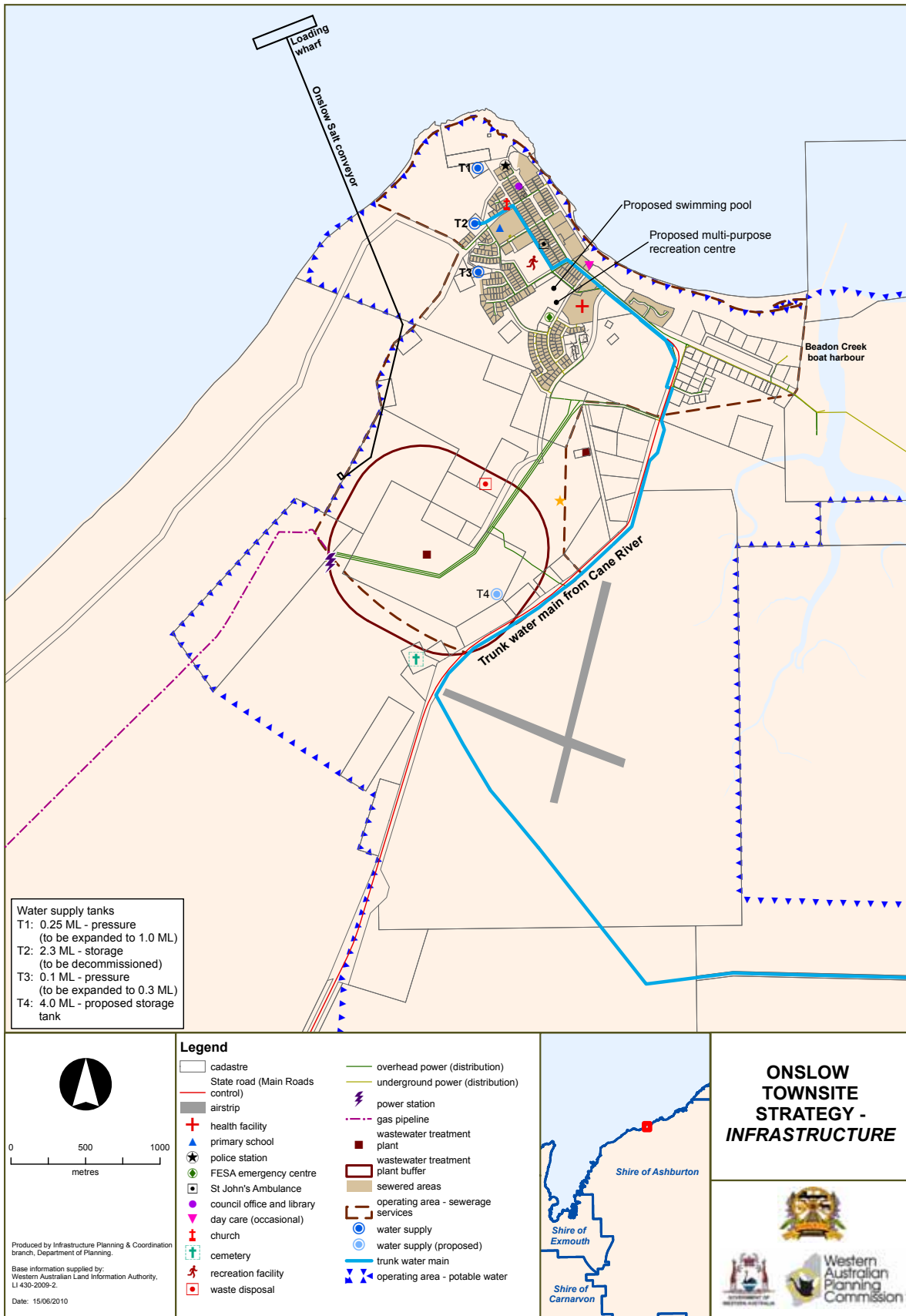
### 4.2 Monitoring and Review

The townsite strategy will be reviewed every five years.





Map: Onslow Townsite Strategy



Map: Onslow Townsite Strategy – Infrastructure

