



shire of Ashburton
opportunity to community

Economic **Development Strategy**

2024 - 2028

Fern Pool, Karijini National Park




Acknowledgment 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.

Onslow



The Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028 complements and assists with delivering **Opportunity to Community**.

Section 5.56 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 and Section 3.1 of the Local Government Act 1995 give legislative mandate to Local Government to focus on economic development in their core agenda.

The Shire of Ashburton is committed to supporting economic development outcomes for the region, including maximising our resource industry whilst expanding emerging sectors, creating liveable and vibrant communities, achieving economic prosperity, attracting investment for expansion/ industry growth, and becoming a place of choice to live/ visit/ invest.

This Economic Development Strategy is a refresh of the Shire of Ashburton's Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2019.

The creation of this Economic Development Strategy was formed on a robust evidence base, which identified the competitive advantages, challenges, and opportunities of the region and formed the basis of the strategy. These technical documents, attached as appendices should be read in conjunction with this strategy.

We would like to thank all contributors and stakeholders involved. In particular, the Onslow Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Pilbara Inland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Councillors, and all other stakeholders who participated in tourism and economic development workshops over the past few years.

Supporting Appendices

The Economic Development Strategy is supported by technical appendices, which should be read in conjunction with the strategy, including:

- **Appendix A: Evidence Base:** This document provides a summary of the background information and analysis informing the development of the Economic Development Strategy, to support an understanding of future vision and strategic objectives, strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This report can be used to support the development of future business cases, funding applications, and industry contributions requests.
- **Appendix B: Priority Projects:** This document provides an overview of the priority projects for Council, to be updated and endorsed by Council each year.



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We are pleased to present the Economic Development Strategy 2024 to 2028 for the Shire of Ashburton.

As we embark on shaping the future of the Shire of Ashburton, I am pleased to introduce our renewed Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028.

While the contribution of the resource industry remains vital to our economy, we are focused on ensuring value is generated for our residents.

This Strategy's mission is to leverage the continued growth of the resources sector to grow our communities, encourage prosperity, and enhance liveability across the Shire.

In this Strategy, we present our vision for the Shire to deliver more value to locals through new community infrastructure and changes in government and private sector policies. We see our Shire becoming one which is a vibrant and highly liveable place with quality infrastructure, affordable housing, and strong educational opportunities, encouraging the retention of multi-generational residents.

I extend gratitude to all in our Shire and region who have contributed to the development of the Strategy. Let's work together to build a secure, thriving community with improved infrastructure and enhanced liveability.



Audra Smith
Shire President

The Shire of Ashburton Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028 is an important document that sets clear direction to enhance economic and community outcomes across the Shire.

This renewed Strategy underscores our commitment to plan, secure funding, and deliver upon the services and infrastructure required to grow and benefit our community. We recognise the role the resource industry plays in the delivery of this and the enrichment of our society more broadly.

In this Strategy, we identify a pathway to grow the liveability of our community. We also highlight the importance of remaining agile to the changing environment to ensure we consistently provide good governance and deliver quality services and outcomes.

I look forward to working with Shire staff to ensure we have the capability, knowledge and experience to fulfil our vision.

We commit to working with our industry partners to achieve future growth and improvements for our towns and continuing to provide to the State and the national economy as a significant contributor.



Kenn Donohoe
Chief Executive Officer



Our Commitment

Opportunity to Community

We will be a welcoming, sustainable, and socially active district, offering a variety of opportunities to community.

Our Role In Economic Development:

- Supporting continued growth in the resources sector.
- Identifying and pursuing diversification opportunities (particularly high value industries).
- Creating vibrant and liveable towns through new infrastructure and commercial opportunities.
- Advocating for changes to state and federal government policies.

The Economic Development Strategy in Context

The Economic Development Strategy aligns with Regional, State, and National strategies/ plans as well as complies with Section 5.56 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 and Section 3.1 of the Local Government Act 1995.

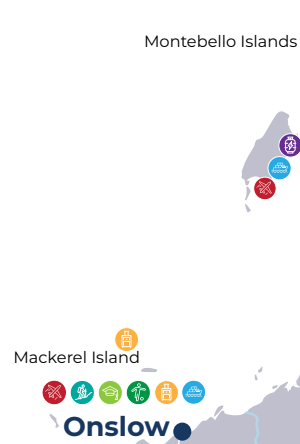
The Economic Development Strategy is an important informing strategy within the Shire’s Integrated Planning Framework.



Introducing the Shire of Ashburton

Ashburton is located in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, about 1,400 km north of Perth, covering 105,000 km² (nearly half the size of Victoria). Our major towns are Tom Price, Paraburdoo and Pannawonica, originally created to service the needs of the local mining industry, and Onslow which is expanding beyond its heritage to service the expanding resource sector consisting of salt, liquid natural gas and iron ore industries. There are also a number of small remote Aboriginal communities (comprising around 9.7% of the population).

- Accommodation
- Tourist Attraction
- Education
- Recreation Facility
- Microgrid
- Natural Gas
- Mines
- Other Industry
- Ports
- Airports
- National Parks
- Rivers
- Roads
- Rail



Our Region



7,800

Resident Population

(0.68% growth in 2022
versus 1.45% in WA)

12.5%

ATSI

(3.5% in WA and
3.4% in Aus)

32%

Born Overseas

(35% in WA and
28% in Aus)



\$37 B

GRP

(9% of WA 1.6 % of Aus)

\$4.7 M

GRP per Capita

(\$145,000 in WA and
\$88,800 in Aus)

\$9.5 B

across the Pilbara

Royalties Generated

(84.7% of WA)



12,500

FIFO Workers

(35% of FIFO in the Pilbara)

90.1%

Participation Rate

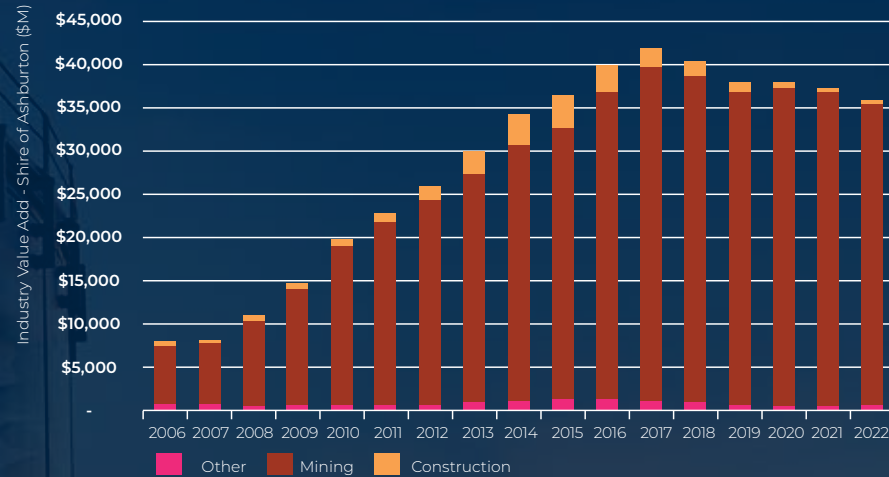
(15 to 65 Years)

(87% in WA and 80.7% in Aus)



Role of the Resource Sector

98% of economic activity comes from the resources sector



Iron Ore

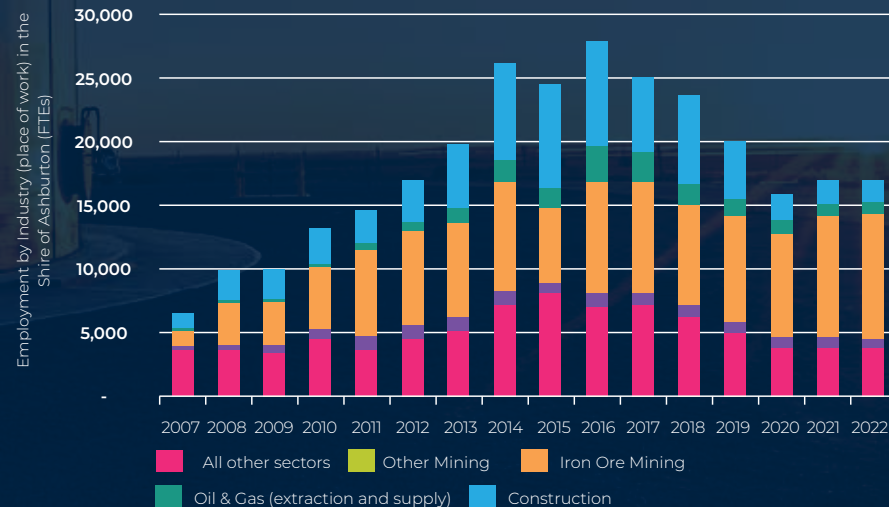


LNG



Salt

79% of all jobs are from the resources sector



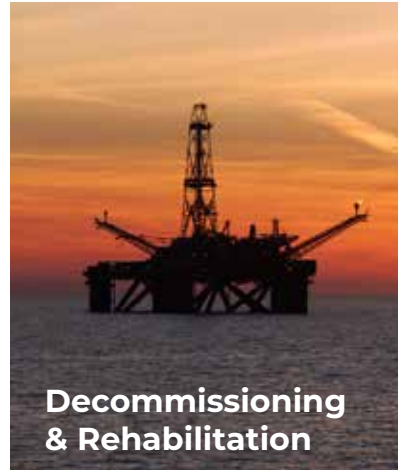
Shire of
Ashburton

16%
of WA's gas jobs

6%
of WA's iron ore
jobs

Our Future Growth

The resources sector will continue to drive growth through:



**Local Opportunities
can be maximised by:**



Local purchasing
of materials and
services



Increasing the
local workforce
(reducing FIFO
reliance)

New industry opportunities that exist in Ashburton include:



Realising our growth opportunities requires resolution of several challenges:



Reliance on FIFO for workforce



High cost of freight
(retail and industry supply)



Availability and cost of air travel (to/ from Perth)



Availability and cost of housing



Concentrated property ownership (all types)



Limited land ready for development



Limited accommodation options for tourists



Limited social and commercial services



Few local education and training opportunities



Tom Price

Our Economic Development Vision

Our vision is to become:



A Global Resources Powerhouse

- ▶ Continued development of resource industries
- ▶ Gas industry supports global and local decarbonisation efforts
- ▶ Global targets for net zero are achieved through production of green energy, green ore and green chemicals



A World-Class Tourist Destination

- ▶ International recognition for Karijini National Park and growing recognition of Onslow as a visitor destination
- ▶ Development of unique attractions, experiences and events
- ▶ Leisure destination of choice for FIFO workers in the Pilbara



A Thriving Community

- ▶ A vibrant and highly liveable place with quality infrastructure, affordable housing, social clubs, and community events
- ▶ Strong education opportunities with direct links from schools to local workplaces
- ▶ A sustainable population with long-term, multi-generational residents



A Great Place to Have a Small Business

- ▶ Small business can grow with access to affordable land, skilled local workforce, and local supply contracts
- ▶ Council attracts investment through proactive incentives and forward-planning
- ▶ Local entrepreneurship, innovation and collaboration is encouraged/ supported



Pannawonica

To achieve the vision:



New community infrastructure that supports both community liveability and tourism has been delivered, including:

- Tom Price/ Paraburdoo Community Liveability Infrastructure Plan
- Marine tourism infrastructure in Onslow (Onslow Towards a Visitor Economy - Gateway to the Mackerel Islands)
- Airport upgrades (Onslow and Paraburdoo)
- Tourism infrastructure (access, park amenity, accommodation, trails) in Karijini National Park
- Ashburton Ranges Mountain Bike Trails
- Millstream National Park (enhancing the visitor experience and road access)
- Onslow arts and cultural centre
- Dreamers Hill Convention Centre and Amphitheatre (Onslow)
- Sealed Manuwarra Red Dog Highway
- Enabling infrastructure to support town growth (roads, sewer, water, drainage, electricity, waste, ICT, telecommunications)
- Health infrastructure (hospitals)
- Education and training (university hub/ training opportunities)



Private investment has been attracted to key sectors:

- Tourism and liveability (accommodation, guided tours, retail and food services)
- Iron ore, gas, salt, rare earths, uranium extraction, processing and export
- Green industry manufacturing (green iron, green hydrogen, green chemicals)
- Renewable energy generation



Government policy has changed, improving the business environment and supporting a larger resident population:

- Local/ resident worker requirements in major project approvals
- Subsidised Regular Public Transport flights to Onslow and Paraburdoo
- General goods freight subsidy for the Pilbara (similar to the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme)
- Cyclone reinsurance pool reform to reduce insurance costs
- Remote Tax Allowance changes and Fringe Benefits Tax concessions to support local workforces



The policies of major companies:

- Encourage opportunities for workers (and their families) to move to the Shire of Ashburton
- Support continued investment in community (contribution policies)
- Encourage local worker “staycations” / enable workers to be tourists in the Shire
- Incentivise local procurement of goods and services



Continue to deliver business as usual activities:

- Visitor marketing
- Business friendly Council support
- Signature event funding

Our Economic Development Mission

Our mission is to leverage the continued growth of the resources sector to grow our communities, encourage prosperity, and enhance liveability across the Shire whilst supporting the diversification of our economy.

Actions We Will Deliver

Annual Priority Setting

- Confirm annual priorities
- Community liveability survey
- Publish annual priorities

Advocacy

to ensure we have our fair share of essential services.

- State and Australian Government Budget/ Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook submissions
- Host in-bound delegations of ministers and senior bureaucrats
- Attend regional delegations to Parliament (Perth and Canberra)

Land Use Planning

- Update planning scheme to accommodate identified opportunities
- Engage with local traditional owner groups to resolve native title in priority development areas

Infrastructure Planning

- Review and expand the Onslow Towards a Visitor Economy document to encompass projects promoting liveability (i.e., a consolidated Onslow Community Growth Plan)
- Deliver capital projects in the long term financial plan
- Deliver the actions in the Community Lifestyle and Infrastructure Plan for Tom Price and Paraburdoo

Company Engagement

- Maintain Industry Contribution to Social & Community Infrastructure Policy
- Develop a pipeline of planned projects for investment



Development Leadership

- Consider the establishment of a not-for-profit entity to support affordable residential and commercial property development (such as a “housing trust”)
- Unlock the barriers to developing new tourism product including sustainable marine tourism opportunities on the Pilbara Inshore Islands and mountain bike trails in Tom Price, Paraburdoo, and surrounds

Investment Attraction

- Investigate new industry opportunities in emerging sectors including but not limited to Agriculture, New Technologies (Green Energy, Steel and use of critical minerals), Defence and Tourism.
- Develop a business in Ashburton brand
- Develop investment/ business opportunities prospectus
- Identify and engage with investors on targeted opportunities
- Develop partnerships with relevant industry associations
- Develop and implement an investment incentives policy
- Attend relevant trade shows

Small Business Support

- Support the Onslow Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Pilbara Inland Chamber of Commerce and Industry initiatives
- Become a Business Friendly Local Government in line with the State Government process
- Produce guides to support local supply of Council procurement
- Create guides to support businesses in supplying Council (doing business with council guide) and starting up a home-based business (home based business guide)

Regional Promotion

- Lead regional tourism promotion through the continued growth of the Visit Ashburton Brand
- Develop and execute a tourism marketing strategy (including a digital media asset renewal program)
- Maintain Visitor Information Centre services in Tom Price and continue providing funding to the Onslow Tourism & Progress Association to run the Onslow Visitor Centre
- Grow the level of events in the region and support signature events such as the Karjini Experience
- Expand the 'Inside Ashburton' guide into a liveability brand, and develop/ execute a campaign

Measuring Success

We will measure the success of this Economic Development Strategy in the following ways:

1. **Performance** – Undertaking the actions we said we would do
2. **Effectiveness** – Realising the vision/ outcomes we set out to achieve
3. **Impact** – measured by real-world change in:
 - ▶ Resident population
 - ▶ Non-mining economic activity
 - ▶ Diversification of employment (health, education, retail, etc.)
 - ▶ Regional visitation (leisure, business, VFR)
 - ▶ Qualitative evidence, which may include community satisfaction (Community Liveability Survey)

The Community Liveability Survey can provide an understanding of...

- General perception of the Shire
- Likelihood to recommend the Shire as a place to live to a friend or relative
- Likelihood of moving away from the Shire within the next five years
- Satisfaction with access to community services (health, education, retail, recreation)
- Satisfaction with the condition/ design of public spaces and realm
- Sense of personal safety
- Satisfaction with access and safety of walking, cycling, and/ or public transport
- Satisfaction with house prices, tenures, and structures
- Satisfaction with access to employment opportunities
- Sense of a welcoming and connected community

Our Partners In Progress

The key to the success of this Economic Development Strategy is collaboration between local stakeholders, all tiers of government, and private sector proponents.

We look forward to working with you as we realise the aspirations of the different communities in our shire.



Federal Government

- RDA Pilbara
- Office of Northern Australia
- AusTrade
- Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility
- Tourism Australia

State Government

- Pilbara Development Commission
- Tourism WA
- Development WA
- Invest and Trade WA
- Infrastructure WA
- WA Planning Commission
- Small Business Development Corporation WA

Tourism Associations

- Australia's North West
- Pilbara Tourism Association (Destination Pilbara)
- Tourism Council WA
- WA Indigenous Tourism Operators Council (WAITOC)

Industry Partners

- Rio Tinto
- Mineral Resources
- Chevron
- Fortescue Metals

Local Business Groups

- Onslow Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Pilbara Inland Chamber of Commerce and Industry



For more information, please contact:

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Mackerel Islands, Pilbara Inshore Islands