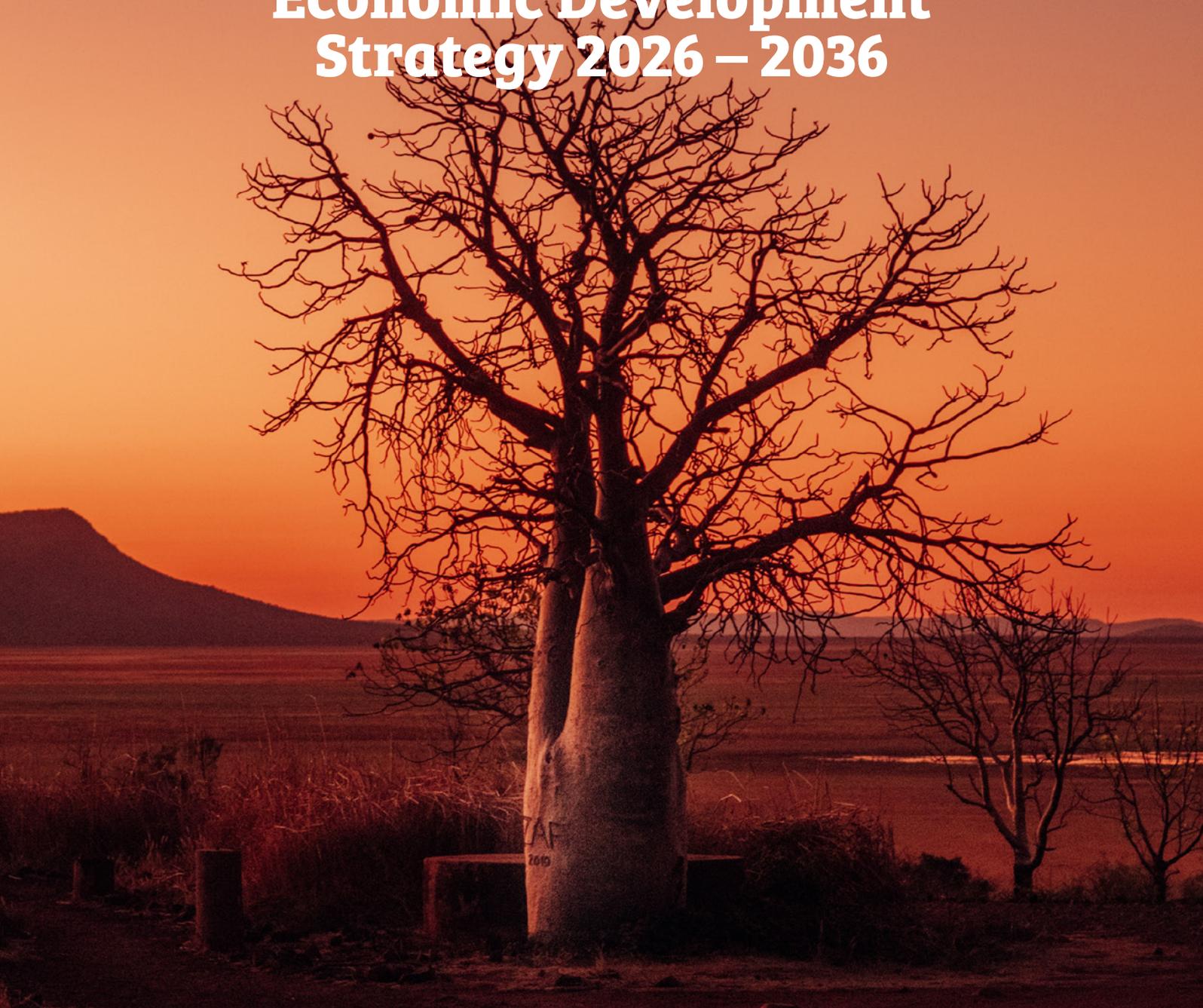


Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley

Economic Development Strategy 2026 – 2036



The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley acknowledges the traditional custodians of the East Kimberley, the Doolboong, Gajerrong, Gamberee, Kadjerong, Kija, Kwini, Miwa, Miriwoong, Ngarinyin, Worla, Worora, Wunambul and Yijji people.

We pay our respects to Elders both past and present and their connection to the land, waters and community.

Acknowledgements

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley would like to acknowledge and thank those who provided valuable input into this Economic Development Strategy. They include members of the community, business and industry representatives, government staff, Shire councillors and staff.





A Message from the Shire President.

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley is focused on building a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous future. This Economic Development Strategy sets a clear direction for growth, job creation, and a diverse economy that benefits our community for the long term.

As the gateway to Northern Australia, the East Kimberley is rich in natural resources, cultural heritage, and tourism appeal. We're working to strengthen our core industries—agriculture, mining, tourism, and services—while attracting investment and embracing innovation.

Thanks to strong advocacy and community vision, the Shire has secured significant state and federal funding for many of the key projects identified in our Strategic Community Plan. While the next few years will focus on delivering these priorities, it's also time to look forward—refining our approach to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing world.

This Strategy is about more than economics. It's about building places where people want to live, work, invest, and belong. It's about empowering local businesses, creating opportunities for young people, and working in partnership with Traditional Owners, governments, industry, and community.

Together, we can shape a stronger East Kimberley—one that honours our heritage, embraces partnerships and collaboration, and builds a better future for all.

Content

Introduction	6
About the Shire	7
Recent Progress	8
Developing the Strategy	9
The Shire's Role	10
Community Engagement	11
Economic Snapshot	12
Current Socioeconomic State	13
<i>Population</i>	13
<i>SEIFA Deciles</i>	13
<i>Specialised Industries</i>	14
<i>Opportunities</i>	14
Priority Industries	15
Minerals and Energy	16
Agriculture	18
Tourism	20
Strategic Context	22
Key Economic Challenges	23
Key Economic Strengths & Opportunities	24
Bring the Vision to Life	26
Economic Pillars	28
<i>Pillar 1 Leadership & Advocacy</i>	29
<i>Pillar 2 Liveability & Place</i>	30
<i>Pillar 3 Business, Industry & Workforce Development</i>	32
<i>Pillar 4 Housing & Accommodation</i>	34
<i>Pillar 5 Land & Critical Infrastructure</i>	36
Opportunity Prioritisation Framework	38
Implementation	40

Introduction

The Economic Development Strategy 2026–2036 sets a clear path for building a stronger, more inclusive economy in the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley. It was developed through extensive community engagement and reflects the region’s evolving needs, priorities, and opportunities.

Although the previous strategy was developed just four years ago, it emerged during a time of global uncertainty, as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were still being felt. The Shire responded quickly – prioritising projects and advocating for funding opportunities created through national recovery efforts. These projects

were identified through community input and targeted for their potential to deliver lasting economic benefits.

Many of those priorities have now been funded and are well underway. This progress prompted a timely review of the Strategy to ensure it remains relevant, forward-looking, and community-driven.

Guided by five refreshed pillars—Leadership & Advocacy; Liveability & Place; Housing & Accommodation; Business, Industry & Workforce Development; and Land & Critical Infrastructure—this Strategy sets the foundation for a resilient, sustainable, and thriving East Kimberley.



About the Shire

Spanning more than 121,000 km², the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley is a place of remote beauty, strong culture, and unique opportunity. It is one of four local governments in the Kimberley region and includes the towns of Kununurra and Wyndham, along with a number of Aboriginal communities.

The Shire is home to over 7,000 residents and also supports a seasonal workforce and growing visitor population. Key industries

include mining, agriculture, construction, tourism, and services.

The region’s economy is anchored by the Ord River Irrigation Area - Western Australia’s largest irrigated agricultural precinct - supporting jobs in both agriculture and tourism. More than 30% of the population identify as Aboriginal, giving the region a rich cultural heritage and deep community connections.

Recent Progress

Since adopting the 2021 Economic Development Strategy, the Shire has focused on turning ideas into action—securing funding, developing plans, and delivering priority projects.

Key initiatives funded, progressed or completed include:

Community Infrastructure

- Kununurra splash pad and 50 m swimming pool
- Clarrie Cassidy Oval lighting and change rooms
- Wyndham Community Hub
- Celebrity Tree Park All-Abilities Playground
- Kununurra Leisure Centre upgrades (Stage 1)

Tourism and Public Spaces

- Kununurra Town Centre Masterplan and Revitalisation Strategy
- Lake Kununurra Foreshore Masterplan
- East Kimberley Tourism Plan

Housing and Liveability

- Water Lily Place Affordable Key Worker Housing

Transport and Access

- East Kimberley Regional Airport runway and facility upgrades
- Wyndham boat launching facility
- Barytes Road realignment

Planning and Resilience

- Natural Disaster and Community Resilience Study

This strong foundation creates momentum for the next phase - delivering long-term outcomes through coordinated leadership, planning, and investment.



Developing the Strategy

This Economic Development Strategy (EDS) is a key part of the Shire's planning framework. It helps ensure decisions are forward-thinking, aligned with community goals, and focused on delivering the best outcomes with available resources.

The EDS sits under the Shire's 10-Year Strategic Community Plan and aligns with the 4-Year Corporate Business Plan, Annual Budget, and other key strategies. It sets out priorities that will guide advocacy, support the community, and catalyse investment from business, industry, and government.

This Strategy will:

1. Help Council set priorities and make decisions
2. Guide service delivery and budget planning
3. Support funding bids by linking projects to community needs
4. Inform collaboration with partners, agencies, and other levels of government
5. Show investors and developers where and how they can contribute
6. Track progress toward the community's long-term goals

Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework:





The Shire's Role

Through this Strategy, the Shire takes an active role in supporting economic development. Aligned with the Shire's Strategic Community Plan 2023-33, the Shire contributes in seven key ways:

- **Lead:** Set direction through planning and policy
- **Provide:** Deliver infrastructure and essential services
- **Fund:** Invest in priority projects or support others to do so
- **Regulate:** Ensure compliance with laws and standards
- **Partner:** Work with government, industry and community
- **Advocate:** Represent local needs to other decision-makers
- **Monitor:** Track outcomes and improve transparency

The Western Australia Local Government Association (WALGA) Economic Development Framework:

This Strategy follows the WALGA Economic Development Framework, which defines the role of local governments in growing local economies.

Local governments should focus on enabling business growth - not competing with it. They play a critical role in building the foundations for success: clear policies, strong infrastructure, and a business-friendly environment.

In regional areas like the East Kimberley, local governments often go further - filling gaps the market doesn't cover. This includes:

- shaping regional policies and plans to drive investment
- reducing red tape and barriers to business accessing opportunities
- investing in infrastructure to unlock development.

By following this approach, the Shire helps drive long-term economic resilience and prosperity for the region.

Community Engagement

The Strategy was shaped by our community.

Catalyse, a community research company, ran the 2024 MARKYT® Community Scorecard survey to identify key issues and priorities. The results informed the initial planning.

In the first half of 2025 the Shire also hosted a number of economic development focused engagements:

- community and business workshops
- one-on-one interviews
- drop-in sessions
- online surveys
- social media engagement
- direct stakeholder communication.

Participation Statistics

- 11,758 people reached via paid social media
- 652 link click throughs from paid socials media
- 32 people engaged via direct mail
- 16 survey responses received

- 39 workshop attendees
- 8 one-on-one interviews conducted

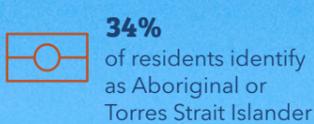
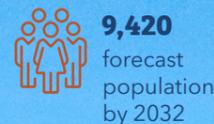
What We Heard: Community Priorities for the Shire's Economic Development

People want the Shire to lead with purpose, making real changes that improve everyday life. They want towns that are safe, welcoming, and alive with activity, with good parks, public spaces, and services that bring people together and reflect the region's unique culture. They want real opportunities for young people, families, and visitors to enjoy and thrive in the region.

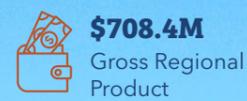
Locals also want a strong economy with more local jobs, better support for small and Aboriginal businesses, and stronger links between learning and work, so people can build careers and grow businesses here. Housing came through as a big issue - people want more homes that suit all stages of life, including affordable and rural options. They also want the Shire to plan ahead, making sure there's enough land and the right infrastructure to support homes, jobs, tourism, and industry, without losing what



Economic Snapshot



Location



Top three employing industries

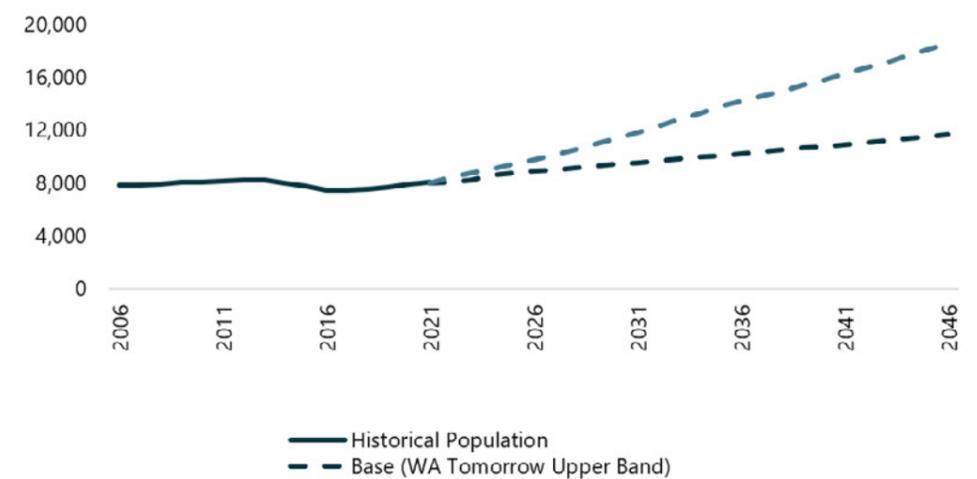


Current Socioeconomic State

The following demographic and socioeconomic indicators provide additional insights into the local economy, highlighting the Shire's unique characteristics and potential opportunities for capacity building and industry growth in the Shire.

Population

The Shire's population has fluctuated between 7,500 to 8,200 people from 2006 and 2021. These fluctuations are likely correlated with the imported workers associated with the Irrigation Scheme stages and mining booms. The region experiences a high rate of population churn of 23%, the top 8% of all Australian local government areas with a population greater than 1,000. The transience of the town is largely comprised of temporary professional service workforce, the seasonal tourism workforce, and the Aboriginal population migrating to Kununurra during the wet seasons. Increasing housing supply is required to support a higher population retention and growth.



Historical and Forecasted Population (ABS 2021)

SEIFA Deciles

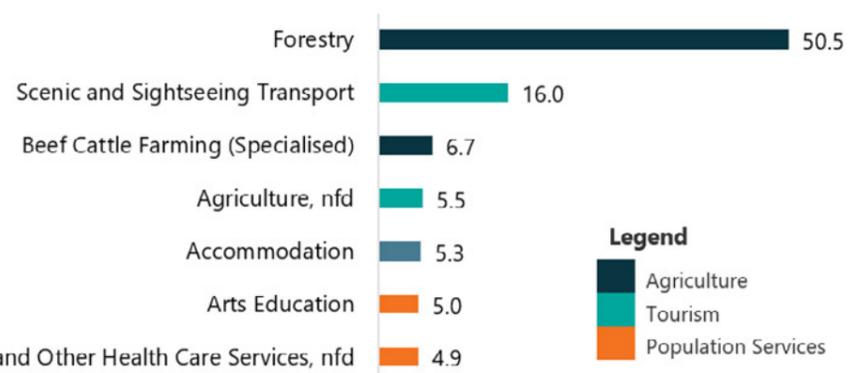
The Shire places in the lowest two deciles in Australia for the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage.

This Shire places in the lowest decile in Australia for Index of Economic Resources, likely representing the low number of people owning houses (27%) compared to renting (55%).



Specialised Industries

The presence of local industry specialisations is indicated by high employment concentration factors (ECFs) across a range of export-oriented industries, where a value of one represents the state average for each industry. Industry specialisations in the region are predominantly agricultural and tourism.



Employment Concentration Factors (ABS 2021)

Opportunities:

- Undertake a rigorous Housing Needs Assessment to demonstrate the need of more housing to Government authorities
- Investigate modular housing solutions and advocate for State housing that reflects local living requirements and environmental conditions
- Deliver flexible and fit-for-purpose local training options to suitably qualify workers
- Address factors that improve housing affordability and workforce participation and retention, including childcare availability

Desired Outcome: improve housing affordability and the supply of suitably qualified workers to reduce population churn.

Priority Industries

The following have been identified as the region's key strategic industry sectors. Each industry possesses high employment, output, and concentration factors.

Minerals and Energy

- \$246 million direct contribution to Gross Regional Product
- 132 persons directly employed
- 100 persons indirectly employed

Agriculture

- \$91 million direct contribution to Gross Regional Product
- 330 persons directly employed
- 921 persons indirectly employed

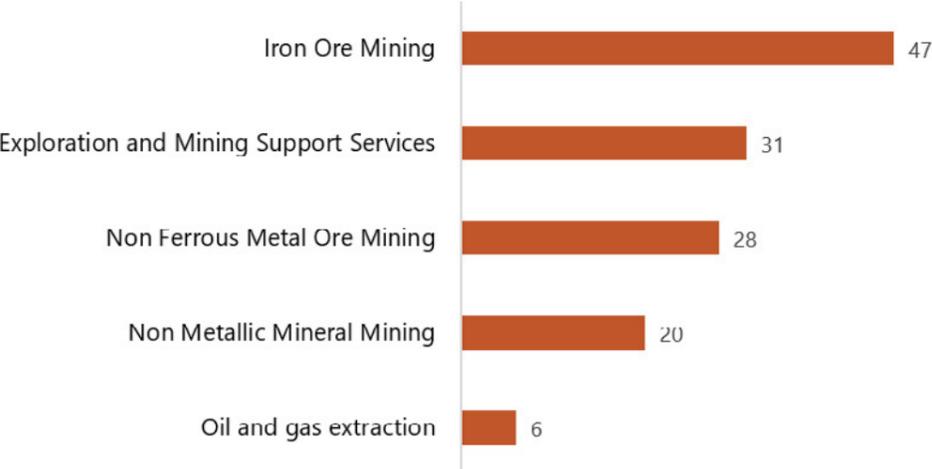
Tourism

- \$31 million tourist spend
- 129,000 annual visitors
- 321 persons directly employed

Minerals and Energy

Activities and Profile

Metal ore mining and exploration support services mostly comprise the industry's activities. Economic activity predominately has a project-based lifecycle and requires large injections of temporary workers and capital equipment. The industry has efficient export supply chains and remains the largest exporter in the region. These factors has seen employment fluctuate (from imported workers arriving and departing) and economic output insulated to relatively narrow supply chains.



Mining Employment by Industry (ABS 2021)

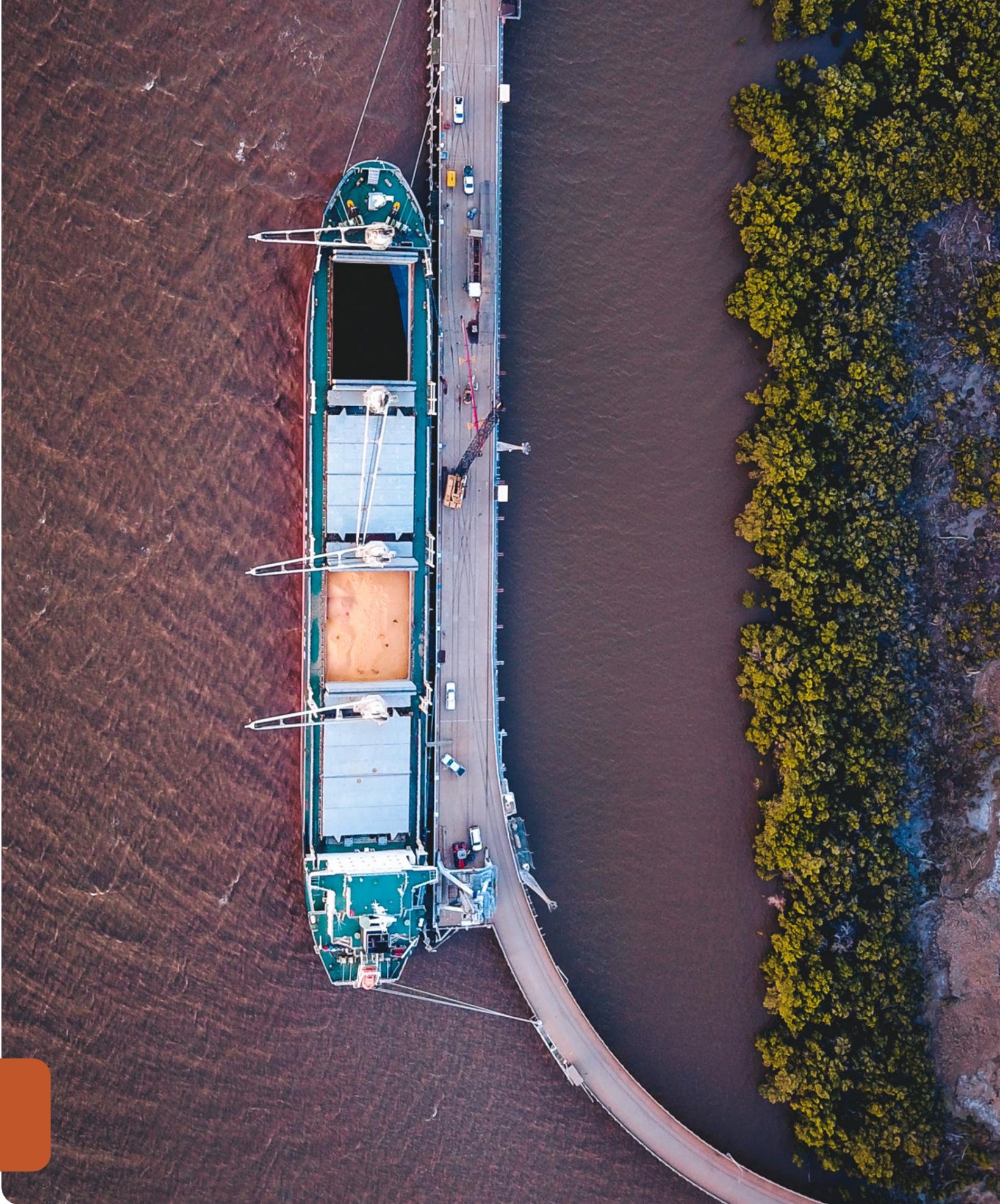
Key Strength

- Established green-energy infrastructure capabilities
- Kununurra's attractive natural assets and lifestyle relative to other mining towns
- Close proximity to South-East Asian market
- Port infrastructure

Key Opportunities

- Key-worker temporary accommodation for seasonal and project workers
- Advocate for the coordination of state government departments in delivering infrastructure and developments
- Advocate for state and federal government policies that private investment in housing

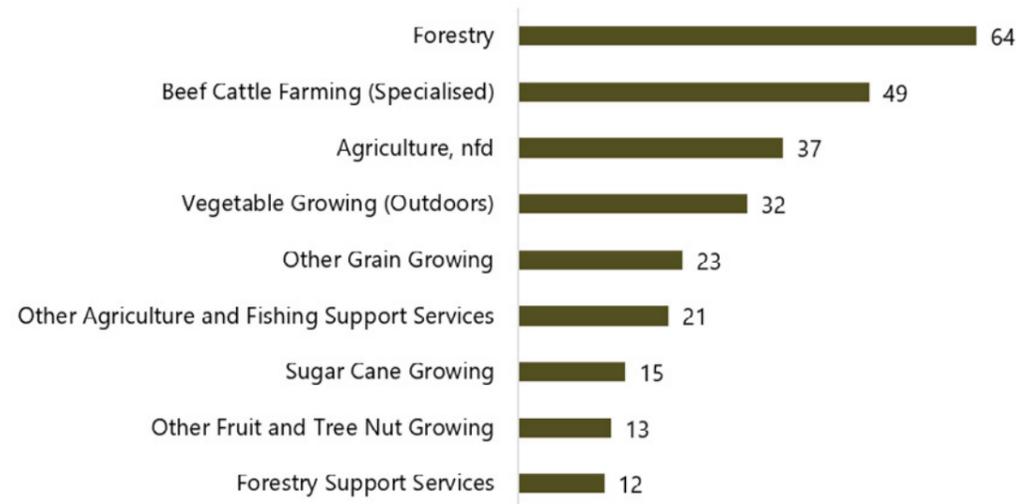
Desired Outcome: Ensure mineral and energy projects deliver sustainable local community and economic benefits.



Agriculture

Activities and Profile

Agriculture is a diverse and dynamic industry that utilises wide, local supply chains. The Ord River Irrigation Scheme and accompanying hard infrastructure has allowed the industry to have high-yield crop-producing capabilities and be a dynamic industry. Forestry, beef cattle farming, and horticulture are especially prevalent activities. Predominant exported crops have historically been in flux due to volatile market conditions and the region's higher costs, restricted market access, and remoteness all yielding high production costs.



Agriculture Employment by Industry (ABS 2021)

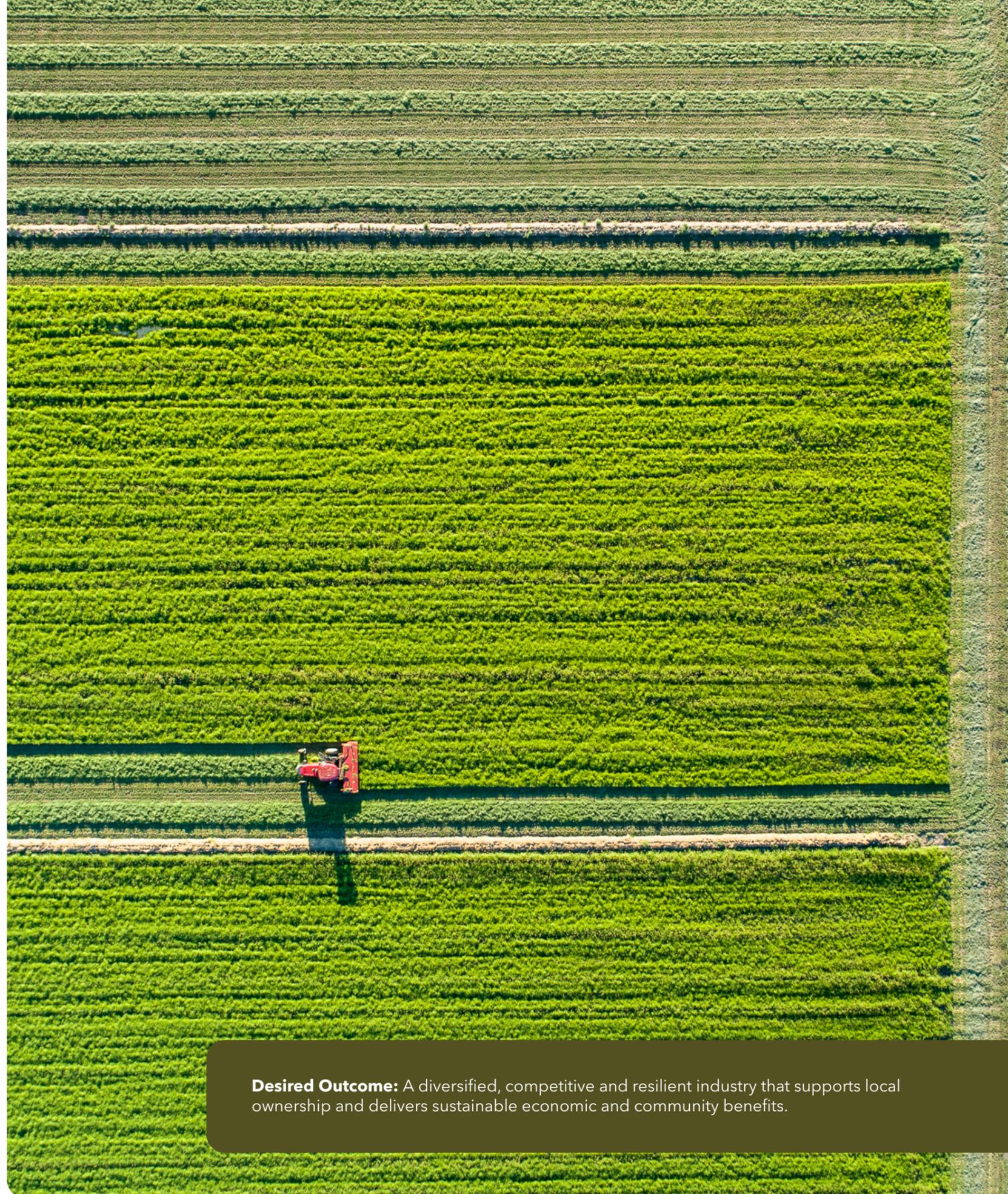
Key Strength

- Ord River Irrigation Scheme / established green-energy infrastructure capabilities
- Monsoonal climate
- Proximity to South-East Asian market
- Port infrastructure

Key Opportunities

- Expedite implementation of Wyndham Port's approved "First Point of Entry" status
- Advocate for government policies that support industry diversification and value-add opportunities
- Deliver flexible and fit-for-purpose local training options to suitably qualify workers
- Expand freight capacity to support horticulture exports and identify rapid export opportunities for high-value perishables

Advocate for land tenure models that support local ownership and maximise local economic and community benefit

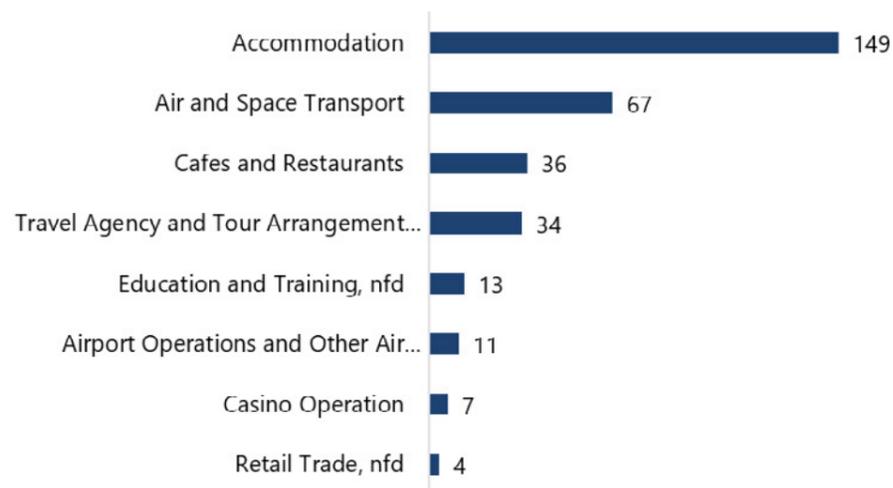


Desired Outcome: A diversified, competitive and resilient industry that supports local ownership and delivers sustainable economic and community benefits.

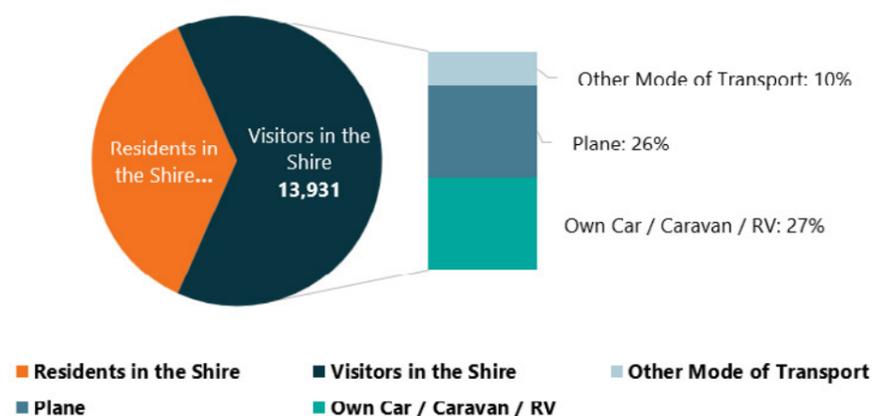
Tourism

Activities and Profile

Accommodation, transport, and cafés and restaurants comprise most of the sector. The region’s monsoonal climate contributes to the industry having a distinct peak tourist season (April to September). The peak season sees 85% of all annual holiday visitors, with almost two-thirds arriving by car. Business visitors have a later peak season (July to December) and 83% of them arrive by plane.



Tourism Employment by Industry (ABS 2021)



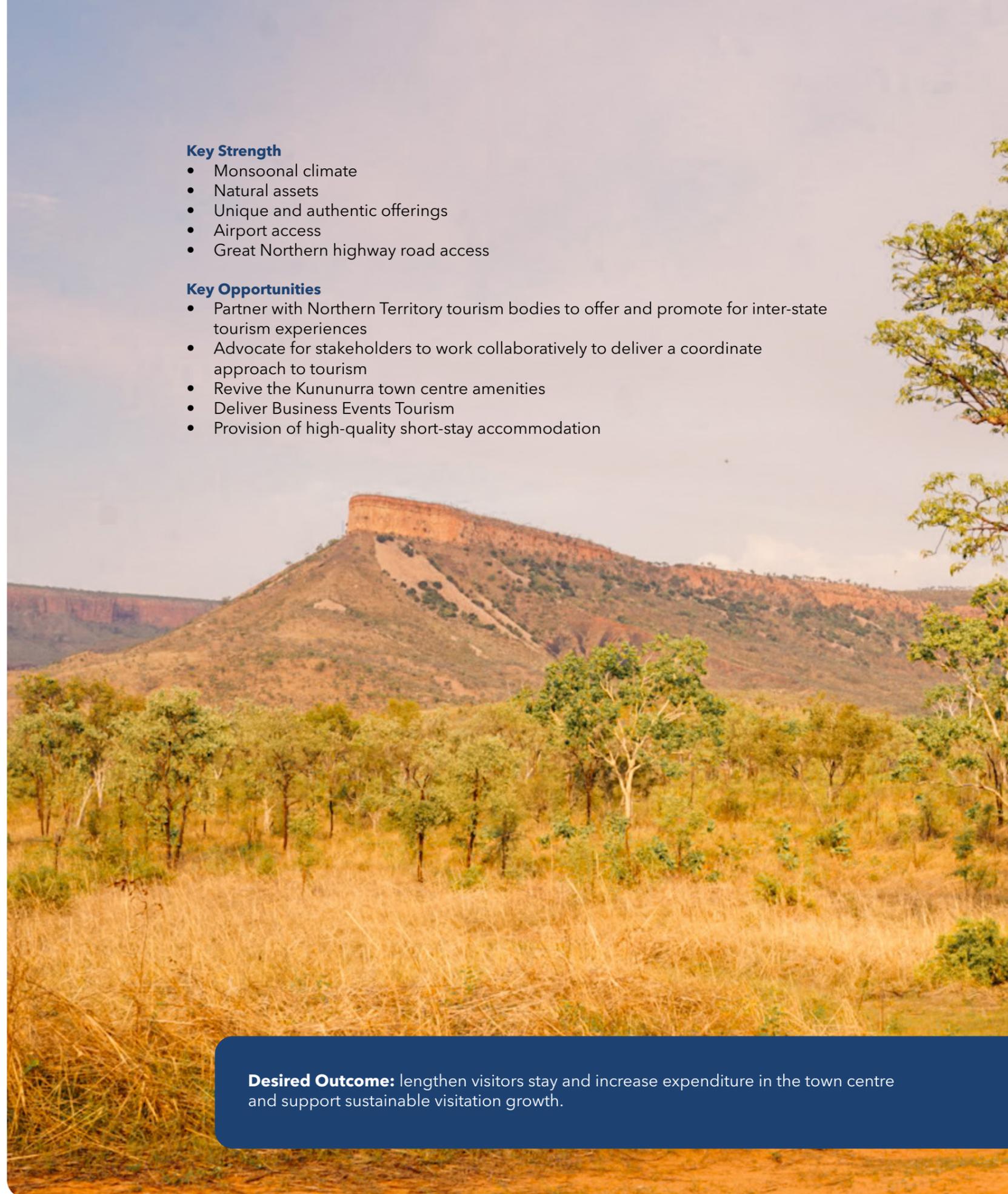
Peak-Season Economy (Tourism Western Australia 2020, three consulting 2018, Pracsys 2025)

Key Strength

- Monsoonal climate
- Natural assets
- Unique and authentic offerings
- Airport access
- Great Northern highway road access

Key Opportunities

- Partner with Northern Territory tourism bodies to offer and promote for inter-state tourism experiences
- Advocate for stakeholders to work collaboratively to deliver a coordinate approach to tourism
- Revive the Kununurra town centre amenities
- Deliver Business Events Tourism
- Provision of high-quality short-stay accommodation



Desired Outcome: lengthen visitors stay and increase expenditure in the town centre and support sustainable visitation growth.

Strategic Context

Local, state, and federal strategic documents and other contextual documentation were reviewed to identify overarching objectives for the Shire and to understand pertinent socioeconomic factors that will influence future development. Some common themes for Shire's objectives include:

- better access to Kununurra (flying and driving).
- increased supply of critical infrastructure.
- improved short-stay accommodation availability.
- improved housing affordability.
- improved skilled local workforce.
- having a safe, attractive town centre with amenities.
- increased supply of available land for development.
- improved cost of living.
- better population attraction and retention.
- greater economic diversity.
- increased capacity for quality tourism offerings.



Key Economic Challenges

The East Kimberley region, while rich in opportunity, faces persistent and complex economic challenges that constrain inclusive and sustainable growth. Structural issues such as limited population critical mass, high unemployment, and low labour force participation—particularly among Aboriginal residents—undermine efforts to build a robust and diverse economy. The region also contends with high living and business costs, underdeveloped infrastructure, and a lack of housing, all of which make it difficult to attract and retain workers and businesses.

Geographic isolation amplifies transport and logistics costs, while limited supply chain resilience and business creation stifle local entrepreneurship. Climate risks, uncertain government funding, and a dependence on a narrow industry base further impact economic stability. Closing the gap in socio-economic outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remains one of the region's most pressing challenges, as inequities persist in employment, health, education, and housing. Additionally, rising community concerns around youth wellbeing and safety signal the urgent need for systemic, long-term social investment.

- Challenges attracting and retaining skilled workers
- Lack of housing availability and affordability
- Barriers to workforce participation and retention, including a lack of childcare availability
- Limited business creation and weak supply chain resilience
- High living, logistics, and operational costs due to remoteness
- Seasonal economy reduces year-round stability
- Under-developed economic and social infrastructure
- Remote geography increases cost and complexity of service delivery
- Heavy reliance on a small number of core industries
- Economic vulnerability to commodity markets, trade policies, and climate risks
- Community safety concerns and high youth disengagement
- Persistent disparities and inequitable outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations
- Limited population base reduces economies of scale

Key Economic Strengths & Opportunitites

The East Kimberley's enduring strengths and untapped potential offer a compelling foundation for long-term economic transformation. The region's globally recognised tourism assets characterised by dramatic natural beauty, rich biodiversity, and Aboriginal cultural heritage continue to attract national and international visitors. Vast natural resources, including land, water, mineral deposits, and renewable and low carbon energy sources, provide a strategic edge in emerging industries such as hydrogen, cleantech, carbon markets, and agribusiness.

The Wyndham Port and region's strategic northern location position it as a gateway to Southeast Asia, with growing potential for trade, investment, and strategic partnerships. The recognition of Native Title rights and the increasing economic participation of Aboriginal communities represent transformative opportunities to build human and cultural capital, enhance inclusivity, and support intergenerational prosperity.

East Kimberley's proven capacity to deliver major infrastructure, combined with active leadership and cross-sector collaboration, enhances investor confidence. Investments in digital and transport infrastructure, support for local entrepreneurs, and a focus on renewable energy, Aboriginal enterprises, and the creative economy all point to a diversified and resilient economic future.

Key Strengths

- Established green-energy infrastructure capabilities
- Kununurra's attractive natural assets and lifestyle relative to other mining towns
- Close proximity to South-East Asian market

- Port infrastructure
- Ord River Irrigation Scheme / established green-energy infrastructure capabilities
- Monsoonal climate
- Proximity to South-East Asian market
- Port infrastructure
- Monsoonal climate
- Natural assets
- Unique and authentic offerings
- Airport access
- Great Northern highway road access

Key Opportunities

- Implement a project-prioritisation framework and project approval process
- Key-worker temporary accommodation for seasonal and project workers
- Advocate for the coordination of State Departments in delivering infrastructure and developments
- Advocate for State and Federal Government policies to incentivise corporations to develop more housing
- Advocate to accelerate the Wyndham port to have "First Point of Entry" status
- Advocate for government policies to be tailored to remote communities
- Deliver flexible and fit-for-purpose local training options to suitably qualify workers
- Expand the freighters fleet and loading capacity to be able to transport horticulture products and identify opportunities for rapid export of high-value perishables
- Advocate for land tenure and expansion to maximise local and economic community benefit.
- Partner with Northern Territory tourism bodies to offer and promote for inter-state tourism experiences
- Advocate for stakeholders to work collaboratively to deliver a coordinate approach to tourism
- Revive the Kununurra town centre amenities
- Deliver Business Events Tourism
- Provision of high-quality short-stay accommodation





Bringing the Vision to Life

This Strategy is built around five key pillars that drive local economic development in the East Kimberley. Each one reflects the region's strengths, challenges, and community aspirations.

These pillars guide how we grow a strong, inclusive economy that supports businesses, creates jobs, and builds vibrant communities.

What Hasn't Changed

We continue to:

- Analyse trends in demographics, industry, and the global economy
- Respond to the current strategic and political environment
- Build on the strengths of our region—our people, industries, and partnerships
- Consider workforce, training, business needs, supply chains, and economic principles
- Focus on the areas where Council can have the most meaningful impact
- Align with the aspirations and needs of key partners and stakeholders
- Collaborate across all levels of government, business, and community

What's New

We've strengthened this Strategy by:

- Putting the community at the centre of everything we do – clearly defining our guiding principles and the Shire's role
- Directly linking our economic goals to the broader community vision
- Listening to a wider range of voices to reflect the diverse needs and ideas of the community
- Treating economic development as a whole-of-Council responsibility—not just a list of projects
- Focusing more on big, systemic changes that create real opportunities and long-term solutions
- Being flexible – setting a clear direction while allowing room to adapt as new opportunities arise

This strategy provides a roadmap for achieving our community vision. It helps us stay focused on long-term goals while remaining responsive to change. Above all, it guides how we work together to build a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable East Kimberley.

A strong, diverse, and inclusive economy.

Our Vision

Our Mission

Working together to enable economic success in the East Kimberley, creating meaningful job opportunities and a good quality of life for all.

Guiding Principles

- **Inclusive** - Everyone can participate and benefit.
- **Sustainable** - We act with economic, social, cultural, and environmental responsibility.
- **Collaborative** - We build strong partnerships across sectors and communities.
- **Proactive** - We lead with strategic action and forward-thinking policy.
- **Respectful of Cultures and Heritage** - We respect Aboriginal leadership and honour local cultures and heritage.

Economic Pillars



Leadership & Advocacy

Driving long-term economic development and community wellbeing through purposeful leadership, strong advocacy and strategic partnerships.

- Project planning & prioritisation
- Policy & advocacy
- Strengthening Aboriginal partnerships



Liveability & Place

Strengthening the region's identity and creating great places to live, work, visit, and invest.

- Cultures & place identity
- Amenity, recreation & events
- Youth & families
- Access to services
- Community safety



Business, Industry & Workforce Development

Building a stronger economy through business and industry growth, alongside a skilled workforce.

- Business support
- Training and workforce development
- Industry development
- Logistics and connectivity



Housing & Accommodation

Making housing and accommodation more available, affordable, and diverse to support a growing community.

- Housing and residential land
- Visitor accommodation



Land & Critical Infrastructure

Unlocking sustainable growth through land use and infrastructure planning that supports long-term development.

- Future-focused planning
- Critical infrastructure
- Unlocking land for growth
- Investment attraction



How the pillars align with the Strategic Community Plan



Pillar 1 Leadership & Advocacy

Driving long-term economic development and community wellbeing through purposeful leadership, strong advocacy and strategic partnerships.

Community Aspirations for Leadership and Advocacy

The community wants a Shire that leads with purpose – championing local strengths, guiding policy and collaboration, and delivering impactful, community-driven outcomes. Residents value leadership that is proactive, forward-thinking, innovative and focused on creating opportunities and prosperity for everyone in the long term. The community wants leaders who show clear direction and make a real difference to everyday life.

Background Information

Strong local leadership is essential to realising the region's full potential. It helps build partnerships,

secure investment, and deliver projects that reflect what the community needs and wants. The Shire has already secured funding for key infrastructure and initiatives and is committed to completing these while planning for future opportunities shaped by local priorities and aspirations.

Leadership must go beyond simply delivering projects. It means supporting local ideas, advocating for fair and lasting reforms, and investing in the foundations of long-term wellbeing. This includes strategies that nurture strong families, healthy communities, vibrant cultures, and empowered local economies.

By working in partnership with Aboriginal leaders and organisations such as the Kimberley Regional Group, the Shire can create conditions where local knowledge and priorities guide inclusive, sustainable development.

Focus Area	What the Shire will do
Project planning & prioritisation	Plan and deliver the right community-led projects, attract funding, and keep the community involved every step of the way. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure priority projects are aligned with community needs and funding-ready • Focus on projects that improve liveability and support sustainable economic growth • Create business cases and investment strategies to attract funding
Policy & advocacy	Work with others to make sure programs, policies, and investments help the community thrive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence policies and funding decisions that improve local liveability and resilience • Focus on foundational areas like early education, housing, digital inclusion, youth, and family wellbeing • Develop and contribute to long-term policies that strengthen communities and support local growth
Strengthening Aboriginal partnerships	The Shire will listen to Aboriginal people, act on their priorities, and embed their leadership, knowledge, and aspirations into how it plans, delivers, and evaluates services and projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-design and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan • Regularly update MOUs with Traditional Owners • Develop and implement an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy • Engage meaningfully and inclusively to ensure Aboriginal voices shape Shire planning and decision-making



Pillar 2 Liveability and Place

Strengthening the region’s identity and creating great places to live, work, visit, and invest.

Community Aspirations for Liveability and Place

The community wants vibrant, welcoming towns with access to quality infrastructure, services, and public spaces that support wellbeing, connection, and opportunity. They want places that reflect the region’s unique culture and identity and offer real opportunities for young people, families, and visitors. In simple terms: people want towns that are safe, lively, full of opportunity for everyone, and reflect their identity and culture.

Background Information

Liveability is central to attracting and keeping residents, businesses, and visitors. The Shire helps create safe, connected, culturally rich places that support healthy living and strong communities.

Recent upgrades to community facilities including the regional airport have already made life better with apron upgrades and a runaway extension. Future projects like the Wyndham boat ramp, the Celebrity Tree Park All-Abilities Playground, upgrades to the Kununurra Leisure Centre, and the new Wyndham Community Hub will continue to lift liveability even further.

After listening to the community, the Shire is also working to refresh important areas like the Kununurra and Wyndham town centres and the Lake Kununurra Foreshore, in partnership with the community, as funding becomes available.

Beyond building infrastructure, the Shire advocates for better access to vital services like healthcare, education, childcare, and wellbeing programs, especially in areas that need them most.

Community safety is a top priority too. Initiatives like better lighting, more CCTV, and safer public spaces are combined with early intervention, education, and youth programs to create long-term change.

The Shire is also committed to supporting families and young people. A Youth Strategy – co-designed with local youth and service providers – will focus on improving services, education pathways, and opportunities to thrive.

The Shire is working hard to make the region safer, stronger, and more connected – for families, young people, and the whole community.

Focus Area	What the Shire will do
Cultures & place identity	<p>Make sure the region’s culture is celebrated and visible in everything we do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect the region’s diverse culture and heritage in the built environment. • Support the visibility of local cultures and creative enterprises • Support local artists and cultural activities • Establish a unique, inclusive identity for the East Kimberley.
Amenity, recreation and events	<p>Create public spaces and experiences that improve everyday life and support economic and social wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance public spaces • Improve amenity and community pride • Improve access to quality infrastructure • Support a vibrant local events calendar • Increase participation in recreation and events
Youth & families	<p>Ensure young people and families have the support, spaces, and opportunities they need to thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth wellbeing and engagement through services, programs and facilities • Increase access to childcare, education, youth and family support services
Community safety	<p>Create safer towns by supporting community leadership, partnerships, smart design, and prevention programs.</p>

Pillar 3 Business, Industry and Workforce Development



Building a stronger economy through business growth, industry support, and a skilled local workforce.

Community Aspirations for Business, Industry and Workforce Development

The community wants a strong and diverse economy with plenty of local jobs, more support for small and Aboriginal businesses, and better links between education, training, and industry. They value a region where people can build careers, grow businesses, and contribute to a resilient, future-ready economy. In simple terms: people want good jobs, thriving businesses, and a clear path from education to employment.

Background Information

A resilient economy depends on successful businesses and a workforce with the right skills and opportunities to match. The Shire plays a key role by helping businesses grow, building industry partnerships, and supporting better access to training, education, and jobs.

This includes simpler Shire processes and helping businesses with advice, grants and training opportunities, including through partnering with groups like the East Kimberley Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Shire also supports the growth of important sectors including tourism, agribusiness, mining, and renewable energy.

Workforce development is essential to meet growing demand. Programs like the Regional University Study Hub, the Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), and local job-readiness pathways help people of all ages access education, training, and work – and help businesses find the workers they need.

Aboriginal Businesses:

Aboriginal-owned businesses are a vital part of the East Kimberley economy. They don't just create jobs and income – they also deliver important cultural, social, and community benefits.

Research shows that for every dollar of revenue, Aboriginal businesses generate over \$4 in combined social and economic value. They also employ more Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal businesses, helping to strengthen local capability and cultural connection.

The Shire is committed to supporting Aboriginal enterprises through targeted business support, building partnerships, and improving access to local procurement opportunities. Aboriginal leadership is essential to building on the region's strengths and achieving inclusive development.

Focus Area	What the Shire will do
Business support	<p>Help local businesses grow and succeed by making it easier to work with the Shire and get advice, support and funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure support for small and Aboriginal businesses • Improve local supplier participation and procurement • Make planning, approvals, and business information easier to access • Promote local success stories
Training and workforce development	<p>Help people get the skills and opportunities they need for good jobs, now and in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a skilled and local workforce • Support youth through local leadership and employment pathways • Expand access to university-level study • Grow digital and tech capabilities

Industry development

Help strategic industries to grow by monitoring and advocate for clean energy, agri-business, tourism and mining investment and sector planning

Focus Area	What the Shire will do
Logistics and connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to make transport and digital connections stronger to support businesses and industries • Advocate for port upgrades, expanded air access, digital infrastructure, and better local roads
Tourism	<p>Help grow tourism by improving visitor experience and supporting key tourism organisations in the East Kimberley.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support delivery of the East Kimberley Tourism Plan • Enable delivery of tourism infrastructure to attract and support visitors, including a Welcome to WA Centre • Partner with tourism organisations to promote the East Kimberley and support the tourism sector
Agribusiness	<p>Support farming and agriculture businesses to grow and diversify</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Ord Strategy and regional Biosecurity Plan • Enable agri-tourism and value-added agriculture through the planning framework
Minerals and Energy	<p>Encourage responsible development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor industry trends and ensure mineral and energy projects deliver sustainable outcomes • Support investment in green energy



Pillar 4 Housing and Accommodation

Making housing and accommodation more available, affordable, and diverse to support a growing community.

Community Aspirations for Housing and Accommodation

The community wants a region where everyone - young people, workers, families, and visitors - has access to safe, secure, and appropriate housing at every stage of life. People want a range of housing options - from social and affordable housing to private rentals and home ownership - to support both personal stability and regional growth.

Background Information

Affordable, appropriate housing is a cornerstone of a liveable and thriving community. It helps businesses attract and retain staff, supports strong families, improves wellbeing, and makes communities more resilient.

In the East Kimberley, housing shortages, overcrowding, and lack of diversity have been long-standing challenges. These issues impact businesses, government services, residents and

visitors.

The Shire is working to expand housing opportunities across the board, from affordable accommodation to rentals, home ownership, and rural living options. This includes targeted support for key sectors like childcare, tourism, and seasonal workforces.

Key initiatives already underway include progressing new developments at Water Lily Place and Millington Drive and pushing for new land releases at Crossing Falls and Drivers Rest. The Shire will also lead the development of a Housing Action Plan to coordinate long-term strategies that increase supply, ease rental pressures, promote home ownership, and make housing more accessible for everyone.

By working closely with government, developers, and housing providers, the Shire can help to unlock land, influence policies, and build a more inclusive and responsive housing system.

Focus Area	What the Shire will do
Housing and Residential Land	<p>Progress housing solutions that suit different needs and incomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase housing supply and diversity by working with the state government on residential land releases • Enable innovative and affordable housing solutions by working with stakeholders, housing providers and state and federal governments. • Deliver key worker housing to support essential services
Visitor Accommodation	<p>Help create more places for visitors and seasonal workers to stay, boosting tourism and the local economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand short-term accommodation options to meet seasonal demand. • Support new, flexible tourism accommodation types. • Promote a range of new accommodation types – like eco-lodges, farm stays, boutique hotels, and short-term rentals – to attract different visitors and support tourism growth





Pillar 5 Land and Critical Infrastructure

Unlocking sustainable growth through land use and infrastructure planning that supports long-term development.

Community Aspirations for Housing and Accommodation

The community wants the Shire to plan ahead - making sure there's enough land for homes, businesses, tourism, and industry, and that the right infrastructure is in place to support growth, sustainability, and liveability. People want good planning that gets land and infrastructure ready for the future without losing the natural wonders that makes the East Kimberley special.

Background Information

A strong future depends on having land ready to use and critical infrastructure that meets the needs of a growing community. In the East Kimberley, having enough development-ready land and modern services like water, waste, and

roads is crucial to building more homes, creating jobs, and growing local businesses.

The Shire will take a proactive, long-term approach – planning for different types of land uses, unlocking key sites, and pushing for upgrades to critical services. This will help support housing, business, tourism, and industrial development that aligns with the community's goals.

Improving infrastructure, especially water and wastewater systems in Kununurra and Wyndham, will unlock new opportunities for growth. Strategic land use planning will also ensure that Crown land, Shire-owned land, and other assets are managed in ways that benefit the community socially, culturally, economically, and environmentally.

At the same time, the Shire will actively attract investment by promoting regional opportunities and partnering with governments, industry, and the community to make major projects happen.

Focus Area	What the Shire will do
Future-focused planning	Plan ahead to make sure land is available and ready for business, tourism, and industry growth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure enough land is zoned and serviced for future growth • Identify and zone sites for general, light, and heavy industry development • Make planning responsive and development-ready by collaborating with government and industry
Critical infrastructure	Secure and improve critical infrastructure that helps communities thrive and economies grow. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve critical infrastructure to support liveability and growth. • Advocate for water and wastewater upgrades in Kununurra and Wyndham • Support a circular economy and local waste solutions.
Unlocking land for growth	Identify and activate strategic land parcels to support business and industry. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a land register to track development opportunities • Activate strategic land to support business and population growth. • Manage Shire-owned land to create the best social and economic outcomes • Partner with governments, developers, and industry to unlock high-potential land
Investment attraction	Promote the East Kimberley's potential and attract the investment needed for future growth through partnerships and clear development pathways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote strategic opportunities and undertake regional branding. • Facilitate joint ventures and secure investment in catalytic projects.



Opportunity Prioritisation Framework

The opportunity prioritisation framework is an evaluation system for prioritising opportunities and actions identified in this Strategy and economic development projects. The framework is a resource to allocate resources to undertake high-value projects which are aligned to funding and investment opportunities and the Shire's priorities. Using this approach, the Shire will take a proactive role in progressing projects that address key opportunities to encourage economic development.



The following metrics are suggested as the criteria against which the Shire should evaluate the value of potential projects. These criteria are closely aligned with the criteria used by regional, state and federal governmental bodies to award funding for projects and the community's and Shire's priorities.

Criteria	Overall Weighting
<p><i>Strategic Alignment</i> How well a project complements existing or planned initiatives and aligns with broader state, federal, and funding priorities to maximise long-term impact</p>	25%
<p><i>Social Benefit</i> How much a project enhances community wellbeing through better amenities, improved liveability, health outcomes, education, social cohesions, safety, and environmental care</p>	25%
<p><i>Local Economic Benefit</i> How well a project contributes to economic growth by supporting key sectors, creating local jobs, and promoting a diverse employment base</p>	15%
<p><i>Value for Money</i> The size of social, economic, and environmental returns relative to public expenditure</p>	15%
<p><i>Community Support</i> Level of key stakeholder interest, including local businesses, elected officials, governments, the community, and Aboriginal groups</p>	10%
<p><i>Financial Sustainability</i> The project's impact on the Shire's budget, the scale of capital investment needed, and alignment with financial sustainability standards</p>	5%
<p><i>Project Readiness</i> How ready the project is to proceed (e.g., investor commitment, approval status, and whether a business case is in place)</p>	5%



Implementation

The Shire will develop an Economic Development Action Plan to bring this Strategy to life. The Action Plan will identify key projects, partnerships and timelines to support implementation across each of the five pillars.

Progress will be integrated with the Shire’s Corporate Business Plan and tracked in its Annual Report, ensuring ongoing alignment with the Strategic Community Plan and clear accountability to the community.



Measuring Success

Key Economic Indicators

The following indicators reflect the broader economic health and resilience of the East Kimberley region. While not all are within the Shire’s direct control, they provide important signals about how well the region is progressing toward our shared economic goals.

To promote transparency and community engagement, the Shire will publish an Annual Economic Development Report that highlights achievements, challenges, and regional trends.

Indicator	Current	Goal
Number of businesses	670	Increase
Number of jobs	1,107	Increase
Population	8,315	Increase
Non-residential building approvals	\$66.39M	Increase
Residential building approvals	\$8.83M	Increase
Gross Regional Product	\$777M	
The Shire’s Local and Aboriginal Procurement (% of total expenditure)	*** 2023 available (local)	Develop baseline and increase



Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley
20 Coolibah Drive, Kununurra 6743

