

# SHIRE OF MEEKATHARRA

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## Local Planning Strategy

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Endorsed by the  
Western Australian Planning Commission

16 MAY 2025

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Consultation with the respective Local Government Authority should be made to view a current legal version of the Strategy.

Please advise the Department of Planning Lands & Heritage of any errors or omissions in this document.

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# SHIRE OF MEEKATHARRA

## PART 1

### LOCAL PLANNING STRATEGY

*March 2025*

# PLANWEST

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Regulation 11(2) of the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 states that a Local Planning Strategy shall:

- (a) set out the long-term planning directions for the local government; and
- (b) apply any State or regional planning policy that is relevant to the strategy; and
- (c) provide the rationale for any zoning or classification of land under the local planning scheme.

### 1.1. PREAMBLE

The Shire of Meekatharra's Local Planning Strategy has been prepared in two parts. The First Part (the Strategy) will contain an introduction with the main emphasis based on a series of **Objectives, Strategies** and **Actions**. This will provide an outline to guide the local government in the implementation of the Strategy, with an ability to monitor and track its progress.

The second part (The Background Information and Analysis) includes background information provided in support of the Strategy.

### 1.2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Local Planning Strategy are to provide;

- a 'leadership' document which provides strategic planning direction for the next 10 years or longer and which manages that growth within a strategic framework;
- a document which sets out the direction for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development based on comprehensive analysis of state, regional and local planning issues and objectives;
- a document which gives direction to local government, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, the WA Planning Commission and the Minister for Planning in assessment of development proposals and provides strategic planning support for this decision-making;
- a document which provides the basis for coordinated decision-making on future servicing of the local government area by local, state government and any other service agency;
- a document which explains and justifies the strategic direction for growth and development to all stakeholders, and;
- a basis on which the Local Planning Scheme may be amended or reviewed.

### 1.3. PURPOSE OF A STRATEGY

The Local Planning Strategy (Strategy) is intended to be a 'leadership' document that supports the new Local Planning Scheme (Scheme) provisions and mapping and will form the basis for future decisions regarding any changes to the Scheme.

The Strategy will be used as a guide for the Council over the next 10-15 years, setting out the future path for growth and development and the strategic direction for sustainable resource management and development in the context of state and regional planning. It is a document which sets out the direction for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development based on comprehensive analysis of state, regional and local planning issues and objectives.

It is a document that will provide the context for coordinated planning and programming of physical and social infrastructure at the local level and form the basis for coordinated decision-





making on future servicing of the local government area by local, State Government and any other service agency.

It will apply state and regional planning policies, and provide the rationale decision-making in relation to proposed scheme amendments, subdivision and development

Part two will provide the relevant background to the strategy, including analysis of information and the rationale for the strategy.

This Strategy background assesses the adequacy of housing, industrial and commercial areas in the settlements. Population trends and projections are examined to forecast the needs of the Shire in terms of accommodation, services and infrastructure. This information may be updated periodically and includes a series of topics, some affecting the Strategy more than others. It is intended the local planning strategy would integrate all relevant aspects relating to land use planning and development recognising the interrelationships between the individual elements of land use planning and development.

Review of the local planning strategy should be conducted in conjunction with the statutory five-yearly review of the local planning scheme. However, there may be occasions where changes in local circumstances necessitate a review or amendment such as those involving:

- major development initiatives not anticipated at the time the strategy was prepared;
- provision of major social or physical infrastructure (mining, educational, transport, communications, recreational and community);
- economic environment (employment, markets, industry, productivity);
- physical environment (climate, natural resource requirements, flora/fauna); and
- social makeup of the community (population, age, skills, health, lifestyle).

The strategy will be endorsed by the WA Planning Commission and will be posted on the local government and WA Planning Commission's website and updated as necessary as a consequence of any amendments made and approved from time to time.

## **2. VISION - MEEKATHARRA LOOKING FORWARD**

This Strategy will be the basis for future planning and possible changes to existing statutory plans. It will not only provide the strategic justification for the local planning scheme but also guidance for future scheme amendments.

The Shire's Vision is to be 'a place for community, opportunity and prosperity'. To achieve this, the mission statement as outlined in the Community Strategy is 'to be an efficient and influential Local Government that contributes to the healthy, prosperous and connected community of Meekatharra. The following objectives provide clear intentions on how to achieve this:

The Shire of Meekatharra will endeavour to meet the needs of current and future generations through the integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic sustainability.

The Shire will endeavour to diversify its current economic base (of pastoral and mining industries) by establishing rural and tourism industries that rely on similar environmental conditions but aim to appeal to alternative and more diversified and sustainable markets.

The Shire will continue to promote the use of best management practices in all its activities particularly in the development of its culture, arts, tourism, hospitality and service sector.

The Meekatharra town will continue to provide modern and efficient services to meet its district service centre role and will be supported as the focus of recreation, administration, commercial and residential development for the Shire and District. To this end the Council will encourage the supply of a range of residential lifestyles (and lot sizes) to provide a choice of living environments to meet a diverse range of prospective residents.



The Shire will also provide for new light, service and general industrial areas in order to promote new businesses and jobs based on economically sustainable principles. These jobs may be in a variety of disciplines including, general and service industries, primary industry, solar power, geo-thermal power exploration, bio-diesel development, tourism and cultural awareness. The Meekatharra townsite is well located on the intersection of Great Northern Highway and the Goldfields Highway between Newman and Cue providing a central location for service industries operating in the district.

The Shire will support closer development in rural areas where development complies with the WA Planning Commission rural planning policies and the local planning framework.

The Shire will continue to promote its mining and cultural resources and unique landscape without jeopardising the integrity of either asset.

The Shire will continue to protect its valuable indigenous cultural resources. To this end the Shire will promote continuing cooperation between itself, its residents and the relevant agencies set up to provide advice and assistance in these social and land management issues.

### **3. KEY STRATEGY-RELATED ISSUES**

These issues relate to those discussed in the background information and analysis report.

#### **3.1 OPPORTUNITIES**

##### **3.1.1 IMPROVE TOWN FACILITIES AND AMENITIES**

Accommodation, community facilities, youth activities, aged care facilities, encourage shops and entertainment/dining choices – continue to implement initiatives in the Shire of Meekatharra Revitalisation Plan.

##### **3.1.2 SERVICED LAND**

Available serviced land, residential and commercial, highway frontage. New industrial estate.

##### **3.1.3 TOURISM**

Areas of interest – capitalise on increased travel by baby boomers, improve Trail signage, continue with amenity and facility improvements, continue push to market Meekatharra.

#### **3.2 CONSTRAINTS**

##### **3.2.1 TYRANNY OF DISTANCE**

Time to travel to Meekatharra; provision of land for local servicing depots, provide for further Highway improvements.

##### **3.2.2 CLIMATE CHANGE**

Better understand changing rural land use patterns and implications for flora and fauna and increased severe weather events including bushfires and droughts.

##### **3.2.3 MINING ACTIVITIES NEAR TOWNSITES**

Constraints to town expansion due to mining activity areas and buffers from mining areas and open cut mines.

Impact of mining on town history and historic remains in smaller abandoned townsites.

##### **3.2.4 SERVICING REMOTE SETTLEMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT**

Cost of travelling/contracts to manage services, development control etc Water, power, rubbish, mining.



## 4. OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### 4.1 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT

Climate change is associated with various implications that have the potential to damage the future livelihood of Meekatharra. Climate change has the capacity to affect human health, water and energy supply, agriculture, ecosystems and biodiversity. Furthermore, a changing climate not only has environmental and social implications, but also can cause a detrimental effect on the economic prosperity of a district. Therefore, the Shire's capacity to adapt and mitigate the potential effects of climate change is a key concern for the future livelihood of the region.

The Strategy recognises the importance of climate resilient infrastructure as well better response services and systems such as bushfire management, which have the capacity to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Furthermore, Sustainability is a key response to climate change and environmental management. Therefore, the Shire should continue to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices including the introduction of land use management to ensure land use activity is sustainable. Additionally, the Shire should promote and encourage renewable energies and sustainable technologies in order to reduce current energy and water consumption levels.

#### Key Considerations

- A small population and the sensitive economic base provide less capacity to respond and adapt to the changing climate.
- The Shire's limited access to goods and services questions the ability to adopt sustainable practices such as solar energy and the implementation of water-wise development requirements.
- While bushfires are not a significant concern, given the nature of the landscape, it is acknowledged that such events must still be considered and appropriately managed.
- The need to protect the areas ecosystems and biodiversity, and promote the understanding of such systems within the community.
- Recognition to the importance of volunteerism and telecommunications in the case of a natural disaster.

#### OVERALL ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVE

***- To acknowledge the changing climate and its associated implications on the natural and built landscapes, in order to respond in a sustainable and appropriate manner.***

STRATEGY	ACTION
<b>4.1.1 Identify conservation areas and make residents and visitors aware of such areas and their cultural significance.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Insert a 'Conservation' reserve in the Local Planning Scheme to classify Crown Reserves that are designated for 'Conservation' purposes.</li><li>(b) Maintain an appropriate level of equipment along with an emergency response team to manage and maintain such conservation areas.</li><li>(c) Utilise appropriate infrastructure to protect such conservation areas e.g. broad walks, pathways etc.</li></ul>
<b>4.1.2 Diversification of income bearing activities, to improve the Shire's capacity to respond to climate change.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Support diversification of permits on pastoral leases where the predominant pastoral activity is not adversely impacted.</li></ul>



<b>4.1.3 Establish an on-going and sustainable means of maintaining the parks and recreation areas and facilities in the district.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Form a partnership with the local School to provide a non-potable water supply for the ongoing maintenance of the school's recreational facilities.</li><li>(b) Ensure the provision of an adequate and sustainable water supply to recreational areas to improve their amenity and usability.</li><li>(c) Investigate the potential and capacity for alternative water sources to provide water for irrigation.</li></ul>
<b>4.1.4 Ensure that all new development is built and maintained in a sustainable manner.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Introduce Government incentives for households that adopt water wise and energy efficient technologies.</li><li>(b) Encourage use of the Australian Government's Design for Climate principles for all new development where applicable.</li><li>(c) Investigate use of a Local Planning Policy to achieve more climate responsive housing design.</li><li>(d) Promote sustainable development through advertising to encourage new homebuilders to adopt such methods.</li><li>(e) Hold community meetings that educate citizens on the concept of Sustainability, encouraging residents to adopt such sustainable methods.</li><li>(f) Consider flood risk where new areas of development are proposed.</li></ul>
<b>4.1.5 Ensure the region is prepared to respond in the case of fire and emergency situations.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Introduce bushfire management activities such as fire prevention and preparation to minimise the impact and occurrence of such a natural disaster.</li><li>(b) Implement emergency response practices within the region, in accordance with the Shire's adopted Local Emergency Management Arrangements, to ensure the community is prepared in the case of an emergency.</li><li>(c) Investigate the need for a flood study and a flood mitigation plan for Meekatharra townsite.</li></ul>
<b>4.1.6 Protect and manage areas of conservation, environmental significance and the natural environment.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Work with community to protect the biodiversity values of high priority natural areas, including Threatened Ecological Communities and other significant flora and fauna associated with the Greenough, Murchison and Gascoyne Rivers and the Meekatharra Creek.</li><li>(b) provide access to information at the Shire offices and online on the ways to identify and protect the Shire's significant biodiversity values.</li></ul>

## 4.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENTS

There is a need to minimise the opportunities for scattered development throughout the Shire. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that the Council's resources are not spread too thinly placing stress on existing levels of service.

The analysis of privately owned properties in the background report identifies several properties, especially in abandoned townsites, that have to potential to be developed.

Where a private owner may want to develop in an abandoned townsite the Council will consider swapping land in that townsite for an alternative site held in Council's ownership in Meekatharra.

### Key Considerations

- Servicing scattered communities throughout the Shire.
- Offering owners in smaller undeveloped townsites the option of surrendering or exchanging land.
- Whether surrendered properties should be transferred to Council, or to Crown Land or Reserves.



## OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENTS OBJECTIVE

*- To ensure that urban development in the Shire be consolidated in Meekatharra townsite and serviced with the appropriate infrastructure.*

STRATEGY	ACTION
4.2.1 Ensure urban development is restricted to Meekatharra townsite to assist in providing sustainable Shire services.	(a) Restrict new development to occur only in areas easier and sustainable to service. (b) Offer Council owned lots at a discount rate to encourage development.
4.2.2 To divest the Council of on-going management obligations on land owned but not required by the Council.	(a) Investigate opportunities to dispose of any Council owned land that is no longer required by the Council and/or where it is not appropriately located to exchange. (b) Investigate opportunities to transfer land not required by Council to either a potential developer/resident or to the Crown.
4.2.3 Ensure that the major road network infrastructure is maintained to a level commensurate with its use.	(a) Consult with MRWA to identify and upgrade areas of the Great Northern Highway that need improvements to maintain an acceptable safety level. (b) Support the continual upgrades to the Goldfields Highway, including the intersection with the Great Northern Highway.
4.2.4 Assess the needs of the current and future community facilities.	(a) implement the findings of the Shire of Meekatharra Revitalisation Plan (CCS Strategic, 2014).

## 4.3 ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Presently there is limited economic diversification within Meekatharra, with the mining, tourism and pastoral industries acting as the region's primary sources of economic development. In terms of employment, the mining sector acts as a main employer within the community. However, relying solely on an industry as volatile as the mining sector is not economically sound. Furthermore, pastoral activities are continuing to decline as a result of climate change and competition associated with areas that have better access to ports, labour, and significantly shorter routes to markets.

However, Meekatharra holds potential for the establishment of an industrial estate located north of the town site. Such an industrial area has the capacity to accommodate the growing demand for a more diverse array of services and employment in the district. The location of such an area will need to be appropriately assessed to avoid any prospective areas and sensitive uses but still maintain easy access to transport routes like the Great Northern Highway and Goldfields Highway.

Additionally, there is potential to expand the tourism industry through the provision of more tourism accommodation i.e. Bed and Breakfasts, Farmstay etc. Such opportunities would further aid in the diversification of the economy of pastoral stations in the district.

The Shire's Economic Development Strategy (Urbis, 2014) addresses several issues including the centre revitalisation, the setting up of a one-stop-shop for business information, establishing a regional partnership with the Australian Government Department of Social Services and participation in a regional tourism network.

### Key considerations

- The level of uncertainty and unpredictability amongst the local community and potential stakeholders, regarding the capacity of future mining and pastoral activities.
- The extent to which prospective areas and existing mining activities limit further expansion of the town and therefore the potential for the region to grow and become more diversified.





- Requirements for the development of new industries including an industrial estate, which would also require improved road infrastructure in order to make potential industries accessible to residents.
- The need to protect any viable pastoral land to ensure sustainability of the agricultural industry, which plays a significant role in the economic base of the region.

## OVERALL ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE

*- To provide a more diversified economy to allow for a more robust range of employment opportunities.*

STRATEGY	ACTION
<b>4.3.1 Provide a new general and light industrial area with adequate separation distances from sensitive uses, space for expansion and access to major transport routes and services.</b>	(a) Investigate the options for a new 'General and Light Industry' area within Meekatharra. (b) Provide for a new general and light industrial area.
<b>4.3.2 Protect areas of prospectivity from development.</b>	(a) Consolidate urban development within the Meekatharra townsite.
<b>4.3.3 Encourage diversification of pastoral activities to increase income from rural areas.</b>	(a) Provide information guidelines on applications for diversification permits to allow pastoralists to generate alternative income streams. The permit allows Pastoral lessees to use parts of their land for non-pastoral uses such as agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, tourism & forestry. (b) Advertise and demonstrate the benefits associated with such permits to encourage more Pastoral lessees to apply.
<b>4.3.4 Assess the current and desirable direction for an economic development strategy for the Shire.</b>	(a) Implement recommendations of the Economic Development Strategy (Urbis, 2014).

## 4.4 DEVELOPING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tourism is an important industry in Meekatharra. Therefore, more focus needs to be put into making the area more attractive to visitors. This can be achieved through adequate provision of services and amenities as well as diversification of the market, which will cater to both residents and visitors. The Strategy acknowledges the importance of the preservation and maintenance of key tourist sites.

The potential for tourism development in Meekatharra is extensive. The Meeka Rangelands Discovery Trail provides a fascinating insight into indigenous heritage, natural wonders, settlement history and rich, red landscapes. The Meeka Town Heritage Walk also acknowledges the rich history of the town, acting as popular attractions for visitors.

The tourism industry has the capacity to help stimulate economic growth, as well as provide alternative forms of income to local residents and the Shire, through Council assets such as recreational parks and camping grounds. As a result, such an industry may stimulate both private and public investment, contributing to the upgrade of infrastructure and services of the area.

Furthermore, opportunity exists for the Shire to develop additional visitor facilities such as camping grounds or a hostel, to cater for the potential increase in 'Grey Nomads' travelling to or passing by the district. However, significant funding is required in order to improve the services and amenities of the area to attract tourists. In this regard, contribution to tourism initiatives could potentially be supported partly through relevant grant programs as they become available.



Additionally, mining operations are commonly seen as a deterrent to tourism. However, there is potential for such operations to be promoted as an attraction. Viewing platforms, information about the process and operations, and tours of facilities may form part of a tourism circuit.

## Key Considerations

- Increase and upgrade of signage within the area identifying the presence, location and routes of the various attractions.
- The need to increase and diversify accommodation within the town, to cater to different demographics.
- The need to improve tourist facilities and infrastructure to promote Meekatharra as an attractive tourist destination.
- Improvements to the harsh roads and trails, which link people to the attractions, so visitors not deterred to explore such sites and routes.
- Increase investment in the tourism industry through access to external funding sources.
- Monitoring of mining activity in regard to tourism attractions, as significant vehicle movements and noise/dust pollution associated with mining activities, have the potential to impact the attractiveness of an area from a tourism perspective.
- Encouraging local mining operations to make their facilities visitor-friendly.
- The protection and conservation of natural and historical tourism attractions, to ensure some degree of sustainability within the tourism industry.
- The provision of historic information and 'stories of interest' relating to the historic buildings and areas within the region.

## OVERALL TOURISM OBJECTIVE

***- To ensure the Shire provides tourist facilities and amenities that are able to respond to the increasing demands of a vital and growing industry.***

STRATEGY	ACTION
<b>4.4.1 To promote Meekatharra as a tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Provide brochures detailing tourist information of the District and make these readily available.</li><li>(b) Better advertise the area as a tourist destination.</li><li>(c) Encourage mining companies to help advertise the area through their operations.</li></ul>
<b>4.4.2 Ensure that the townsite provides suitable facilities and amenities to attract and retain tourists.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Provide more diverse short stay accommodation through supporting the establishment of bed and breakfast accommodation, as well as improvement of hotel/motel facilities.</li><li>(b) Ensure the provision of quality services and facilities, which will aid in retaining visitors in the area.</li><li>(c) Identify zones and facilitate land use and permissibility in the Scheme for the provision of a range of uses to improve night vitality which will encourage tourists to extend the duration of their visit.</li></ul>
<b>4.4.3 To ensure popular attractions are properly signposted and promoted.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Increase the use of signs to advertise popular tourism attractions, with all new signs on or abutting a major road to be referred to Main Roads WA.</li><li>(b) Upgrade existing Council signs where they are ineffective and rundown.</li><li>(c) Investigate the use of plaques within the town, to educate tourists on the history of the behind heritage buildings and sites.</li><li>(d) In consultation with MRWA, investigate installing signage to attractions on main tourist routes such as the Goldfields Highway.</li></ul>



<b>4.4.4 To have mining companies promote their operations as a tourist attraction.</b>	(a) Form partnerships with mining companies that allow limited access to their operations as a tourist attraction, which is mutually beneficial for both stakeholders. (b) Ensure mining operations undertake the appropriate health and safety measures, which enable visitors to access the site, however limited.
<b>4.4.5 Capitalise on the district's culturally significant areas through their narration, promotion and access to such sites.</b>	(a) Facilitate the development of a pocket history of the district including sites, photographic records and stories. (b) Encourage the preparation of an information package, in hardcopy and on the Council's web site, outline the cultural and natural assets of the district. (c) Allow access to such areas with the appropriate infrastructure such as walkways and fencing to ensure visitors do not degrade sites.

## 4.5 MINING AND PASTORAL ACTIVITIES

It can be assumed that mining activities are likely to continue to be the predominant economic base within the Shire with traditional pastoral station activities taking a less significant role. While mining can be viewed as both an issue and opportunity, in Meekatharra it is seen significantly as having a positive influence on the community, providing both direct and indirect economic benefits including the use of local accommodation and facilities.

The challenge remains to ensure that future mining activities do not conflict with existing land uses, particularly the pastoral industry, which is also a main economic base in the region. Additionally, it is important to note that under the *WA Mining Act 1978*, mining activity is exempt from planning approval and is instead determined in accordance with the provisions of that Act. Section 120(2) (b) of the *WA Mining Act 1978* does however require that mining activity must have due regard to the provisions of any relevant Local Planning Scheme. Therefore, in considering the future implications of mining activity within the Shire, it is important to maintain a close liaison with the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety to ensure that any proposal to commercially extract minerals does not unduly conflict with any provisions of the Scheme or Local Planning Strategy.

Another major issue related to mining activities is the factor of uncertainty associated with such an industry, and the effect that a potential mining downturn could have on areas such as Meekatharra. These mining activities have the potential to prevent the further expansion of the town, which in turn restricts the town's capacity to grow and meet future demands.

However, there are opportunities for the formation of partnerships between the Shire and various mining operators. As mentioned in the previous section, there is an opportunity for mining companies to capitalise on tourism through the inclusion of viewing platforms on operational open pits, or guided tours of operational facilities.

Mining operations can be encouraged to aid in the stimulation of the local economy through the housing of employees within the existing Meekatharra townsite. This will have significant spin-off benefits for the local economy in terms of the purchase of goods and services from local outlets.

### Key considerations

- Mining activities have both direct and indirect benefits on the community, e.g. provision of employment opportunities for residents, and the utilisation of local accommodation, amenities and facilities.
- To monitor and cater for mining activities and associated works.
- To encourage the residential component of the mining operations to locate in the main townsite.
- Under the *WA Mining Act 1978* mining activities are exempt from development approval.





- Land use conflict may occur between mining operations and other land use activities, particularly the pastoral industry.
- Mining activities restrict the expansion of urban development due to their impact buffers.
- Mining operations can significantly impact the visual amenity of a town, which can be a major deterrent for tourists and potential residents.
- There is potential for partnerships to be formed between the Shire and mining companies, such partnerships have the capacity to enhance economic development of the town.
- To support mining activities where an environmental management plan has been prepared and is acceptable to the Council and Environmental Protection Authority.

## OVERALL MINING AND PASTORAL OBJECTIVE

***- To ensure that the mining industry is not restricted by urban development and that mining operations contribute to the local economy and are sensitive to the cultural and historic features of the Shire. Additionally, ensuring that quality pastoral land is protected to ensure the industry's survival.***

STRATEGY	ACTION
<b>4.5.1 Ensure that the DMIRS understands the implications of a Local Planning Scheme and the need to consult with the community where a conflict may arise.</b>	(a) Develop an understanding with the DMIRS that enhances the lines of communication and ensures a mutual acknowledgement of the issues for each party. (b) Ensure that mining activities are closely monitored where they may impact settlements.
<b>4.5.2 Protect areas of prospectivity</b>	(a) Urban development to occur within Meekatharra townsite only. (b) Avoid zoning land for urban uses when the site has been identified as being prospective.
<b>4.5.3 Encourage the residential component of mining operations to establish in the Meekatharra townsite.</b>	(a) Provide flexibility within the Scheme to encourage and facilitate the residential component of mining operations in the Meekatharra townsite. (b) Provide the facilities and services that cater to the residential component of such operations to ensure employees are comfortable.
<b>4.5.4 Encourage local mining operations to use local employment.</b>	(a) Continue to build partnerships with mining operators and encourage such companies to make use of local employment. (b) Provide adequate services and facilities to encourage companies to utilise these establishments.
<b>4.5.5 Monitor the status of mining operations including rehabilitation activities.</b>	(a) The establishment of a partnership between the Shire and the DMIRS will enhance communication about any concerns the Shire has regarding mining operations.
<b>4.5.6 Encourage local partnerships between the Shire and local operators to help stimulate potential investments for town improvements.</b>	(a) Ensure mining operations that their contribution will be promoted and acknowledged on the completed development. (b) Educate mining operators on the potential benefits such contributions could have for the company's reputation and social standing.
<b>4.5.7 Encourage the continued use of land for pastoral station activity and encourage best practices.</b>	(a) Maintain efficient structure of transport routes for agricultural freight through the Shire to assist in the efficiency of pastoral activities. (b) Incorporating best-practice activity will ensure improved degree of sustainability within the industry.
<b>4.5.8 Ensure quality pastoral land is protected.</b>	(a) Restrict urban development to Meekatharra townsite to protect pastoral land.



## 4.6 LAND SUPPLY, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Maintaining a satisfactory land supply in country towns has been a serious economic issue for decades. The cost of buying an existing lot in a rural townsite is generally minimal compared with the cost of creating new lots – no matter what the proposed use is.

The cost associated with the servicing of land is the most significant challenge for the creation of new lots. Support funding by way of government development initiatives and programs, or some other external funding source is often how these cost challenges are addressed.

The area north of the Meekatharra Townsite, east of Great Northern Highway, is ideally located to provide for a new general industrial estate. There is little to no industrial land designated in Newman, however there is a substantial infrastructure developing in Capricorn (just south of Newman) that provides for several major activities including the Capricorn village (324 rooms), Capricorn Roadhouse, Outback Travel Centre, Ampol service station and a new truck servicing facility. This is fulfilling an unmet demand for such major land uses.

The Meekatharra townsite is located nearly 400 kilometres south of Capricorn over 100 kilometres from Cue, 180km from Mount Magnet and over 500km from Dalwallinu. There are very few constraints that would preclude the designation of this area for industries that require large areas of land for activities like transport depots, regional depots, mining services and the like. In order that the area can be appropriately planned for the longer term with a comprehensive drainage system, appropriate servicing infrastructure and a range of large and very large lots, a large area of over 200 hectares has been designated. Although the development will be staged to monitor lot size and locational demands, the Council is keen to designate the whole site in the Strategy however the Scheme will only be zoned following the preparation and approval of a structure plan. In the meantime, the estate area will be designated 'Future Industrial Land – Investigation Area' in the Strategy.

The supply of land zoned for industrial development in the existing Scheme is currently confined to land around Railway and Marmont Streets - with sensitive uses as neighbours. This factor puts restrictions on the accessibility of the sites by large articulated vehicles and the use of land for general industries.

The Council often receives inquiries about the availability of industrial land in the Meekatharra townsite – the most recent for a concrete batching plant.

General industries include those that can have an impact on the surrounding activities and are therefore best segregated from urban uses where possible.

**Figure 1** provides a potential site for a future general industrial estate. The location and design will need to be developed in consultation with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage and Main Roads WA.

The area has several advantages including;

- There is little to restrict its expansion in the future – if required;
- it can provide for a variety of lot sizes to suit any industry type;
- it is separated from sensitive urban uses;
- the drainage requirements can be managed as part of the design; and
- access to both the Great Northern Highway and the Goldfields Highway.

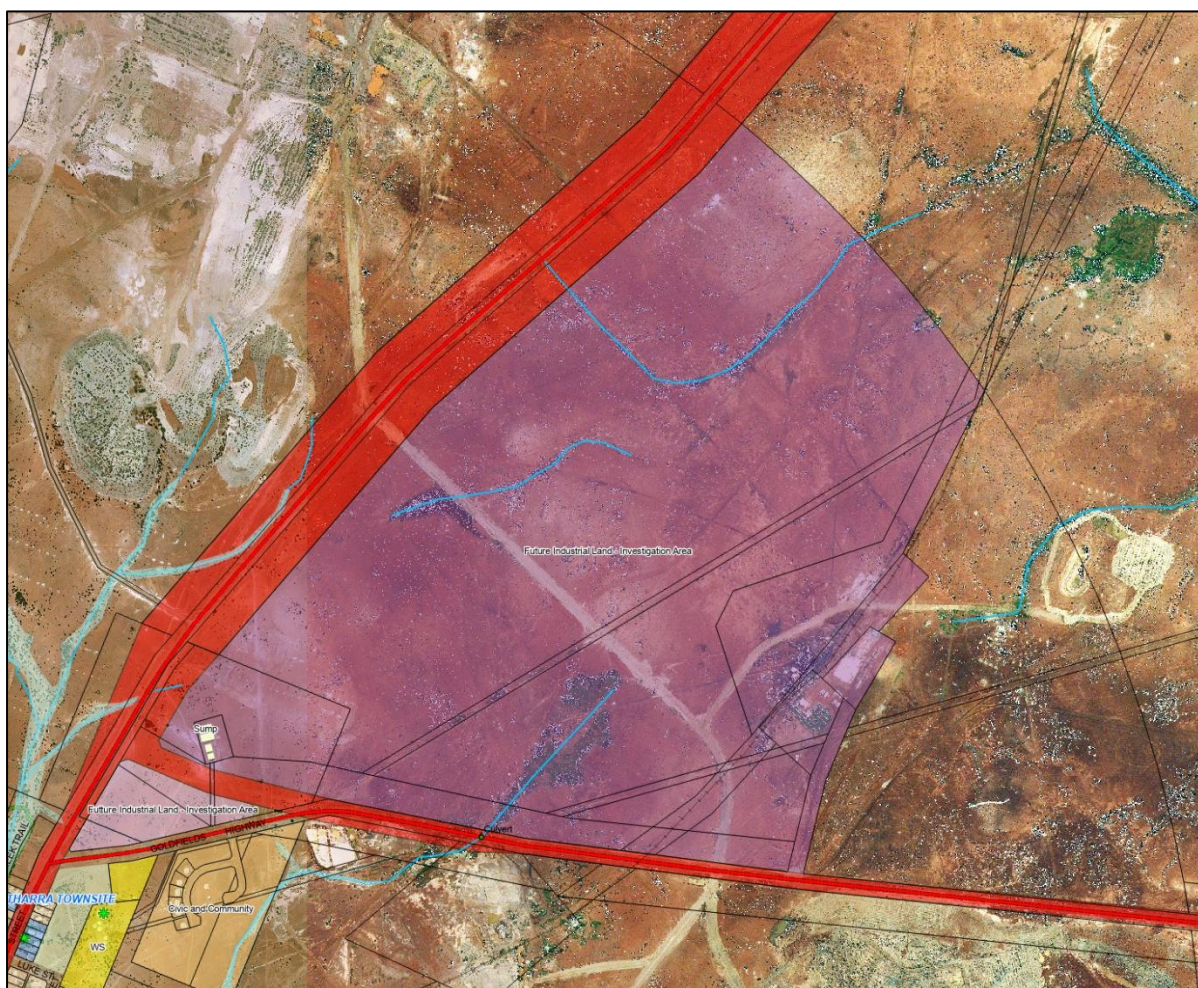
In Meekatharra townsite there are 123 vacant lots that are zoned 'Residential' the majority of which are not owned privately or by the Shire. 76 of these vacant residential lots are Crown lots (or VCL), with only 4 owned by the Shire. Nine vacant lots are zoned 'Commercial' with 4 owned by the Shire. Of the 7 vacant lots zoned 'Industrial' half are privately owned but none owned by the Shire, however when the new industrial area is established it is possible that the Council may relocate its depot from Oliver Street thus freeing up another 2.6 hectares for other light or service industries.





The Shire also owns 18 hectares north of High Street west of the Highway. This area is partly used for open space from the creekline, but also provides a suitable area for mining accommodation. The land is slightly separated from the normal residential areas thus providing a buffer from the impact of the mining accommodation's irregular hours.

**FIGURE 1 - FUTURE INDUSTRIAL LAND – INVESTIGATION AREA**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

### Key considerations

- Securing adequate land for urban uses including residential, commercial, public purposes and recreational uses.
- Securing adequate land for light and general industrial uses subject to further planning studies to confirm land suitability for industrial development.
- Ensuring that essential services are adequate to service potential new growth areas.
- Providing for a variety of lifestyles from small properties to larger 'lifestyle' blocks.
- Ensuring all age groups are catered for in the provision of services and amenities.
- Ensuring that Meekatharra remains an attractive place to settle.
- The protection of development from flooding.
- Maintaining safety of all major transport routes and modes.

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## OVERALL LAND SUPPLY AND INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVE

*- To provide serviced land and facilities for a range of diverse activities in and around Meekatharra.*

STRATEGY	ACTION
<b>4.6.1 To ensure adequate water supply for the creation of new lots and new developments such as mining campsites and industrial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Consultation with the Water Corporation and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, will aid in the determination as to the capacity of the existing water services and the potential for future upgrades or expansions</li> <li>(b) Conduct research as to the potential upgrade of existing water services to supply</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.2 To ensure adequate power supply for the creation of new lots and new developments such as mining campsites and industrial uses.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Consult with Horizon Power to ensure the existing power supply system has the capacity for any future upgrades or expansions.</li> <li>(b) Undertake research to assess the potential upgrade or expansion requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.3 To provide a diverse range of lifestyles and dwelling types within the region to cater for different demographics.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Examine the potential for off-site effluent systems to cater for a greater variety of residential densities in Meekatharra townsite.</li> <li>(b) Research the demand from the range of demographics within the region, to ensure dwelling options cater to the appropriate groups.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.4 To provide for adequate land for both commercial and retail development in a consolidated central area.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Zone land for commercial/retail purposes around the town centre.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.5 To provide public uses including parks, recreation and civic and cultural uses.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Designate land in the Scheme for the provision of civic and cultural uses in a central accessible area.</li> <li>(b) Provide adequate resources to ensure these uses are developed to a high standard and maintained appropriately.</li> <li>(c) Upgrade and improve the existing walk trail through the town and seek to enhance and extend the trail to include other town features of interest.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.6 To provide for a range of general, light and service industries.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Undertake further planning studies to confirm land suitability of the 'Future Industrial Land Investigation Area'. Prepare a structure plan as the basis for staging and zoning of land.</li> <li>(b) Relocate the Council depot to the new general industrial estate.</li> <li>(c) Promote the conversion of the existing industrial area in Meekatharra townsite for service and light industries once the new general industrial lots become available.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.7 To ensure land for new development is appropriately serviced with sealed roads and drainage infrastructure.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Require new lots to be provided with essential services.</li> <li>(b) Require all structure planning, subdivision and development that may impact the efficiency and/or safety of the road network, to be submitted in accordance with the WA Planning Commission's Transport Impact Assessment Guidelines.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.8 Form partnerships with relevant community groups and public housing providers for the provision of aged care or universal housing.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Form partnerships with the Department of Housing to help fund the development of affordable housing.</li> <li>(b) Potential to form partnerships with private agencies to help fund affordable housing.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.9 Encourage the provision of shade in the main street with verandas and planting of trees.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Prepare a Local Planning Policy, which includes design guidelines requiring all new buildings to install verandas.</li> <li>(b) Encourage the planting of trees on verges to provide shade along the street and increase amenity of the area through the improvement of streetscapes.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.10 Ensure the protection of water supply in the wellfields.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Ensure Priority 1 catchment areas are protected long term from incompatible land use and development.</li> <li>(b) Use appropriate infrastructure to ensure contamination of bores is minimised.</li> <li>(c) On-going monitoring quality of bores to ensure there is no contamination.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.11 Establish new water sources to service the potential expansion of the population.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Request the Water Corporation and the Department of Water to improve the capacity of the existing water services through upgrades or expansions.</li> </ul>





<b>4.6.12 Protect identified waterways or creeks and avoid development in areas known to be flood prone.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Compile a map indicating flood-prone areas within the town and make this information available to the public.</li> <li>(b) Protect waterways through the utilisation of infrastructure such as walkways and fencing, which allow visitors to access sites with minimal impact.</li> <li>(c) Provide signs and information as to the conservation of waterways and why it is important for the environment.</li> <li>(d) Acknowledge Paddy's Flat (east end of McLeary Street) development in the Scheme but set aside flood prone area.</li> </ul>
<b>4.6.13 Support improvements to the Goldfields Highway and other main roads to improve safety for users.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) In consultation with Main Roads WA, update and undertake appropriate road planning to ensure safety for users.</li> </ul>

## 4.7 CULTURAL AND HERITAGE PROTECTION

Places of historic and cultural significance are identified and recorded in the Council's Municipal Inventory and are then afforded the protection outlined in the Scheme. However, there are many places that still retain the footprint of their previous glory, albeit only foundations in many cases. As outlined in the background information and analysis many of these areas are in some of the abandoned townsites.

### OVERALL CULTURAL AND HERITAGE OBJECTIVE

*- To ensure that historic and culturally significant places or objects are identified, assessed and protected for the benefit of existing and future generations.*

STRATEGY	ACTION
<b>4.7.1 To ensure that the historic and heritage valued buildings and places in the Shire are identified and preserved.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Ensure that the Shires Municipal Heritage Inventory is constantly reviewed and updated to present the values of the community.</li> <li>(b) Follow the Burra Charter principles of preservation, conservation or in reconstructing damaged parts of a heritage building.</li> </ul>
<b>4.7.2 To ensure the appropriate level of protection for areas identified as being of heritage significance.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Follow the Municipal Inventory principles that identify the level of protection necessary to conserve and protect heritage sites.</li> <li>(b) Appropriately assess heritage sites to determine the appropriate level of protection.</li> </ul>
<b>4.7.3 To encourage the incorporation of local culture and art in the design of new developments throughout the town.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Encourage local artists to share their works with the community through the displaying and selling of local art.</li> <li>(b) Provide guidelines for local artists to contribute to the design of new developments.</li> <li>(c) Hold community workshops to help identify what the citizens believe represent Meekatharra. Incorporate these representations into the design of new developments to contribute to creating a 'unique sense of place.'</li> </ul>
<b>4.7.4 To record and present historic and heritage information for the benefit of tourists and the stimulation of better understanding of Meekatharra's past.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Convey information about heritage buildings on plaques to educate tourists and keep the history of the town alive.</li> <li>(b) Assemble historic artefacts, photographs and information regarding heritage sites in the Shire with a view of establishing a collection or museum.</li> </ul>
<b>4.7.5 Ensure that new developments built next to heritage sites are built to a standard sympathetic to the existing development.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Prepare a Local Planning Policy, outlining design guidelines that new buildings must meet, to ensure the design is sympathetic to existing development.</li> <li>(b) Refer to the Burra Charter when building a new development next to an existing heritage building.</li> </ul>



## 5. STRATEGY MAPS

### 5.1 SHIRE STRATEGY MAP

The Shire Strategy Map (**Figure 2**) provides a distribution of the Crown Reserves, water bodies (mostly salt lakes), areas of Aboriginal interest, recorded rare flora and threatened ecological communities, townsites, major transport routes, mineral resources and runways.

Although the mining tenements are scattered across the whole Shire the majority of mines are located centrally, or around Meekatharra townsite. The majority are related to gold including alluvial, dollied, tailings or just gold ore. This information is indicative only as it changes daily.

The Figure shows that the majority of the Shire is either Crown land or Crown Reserves (shown pink and green respectively). The uncoloured areas are either freehold or leasehold.

The centrally located green area is Collier Range National Park and will be designated as 'Conservation' in the Strategy. The other area in the north-east corner of the Shire is an Aboriginal Reserve and is afforded the same designation.

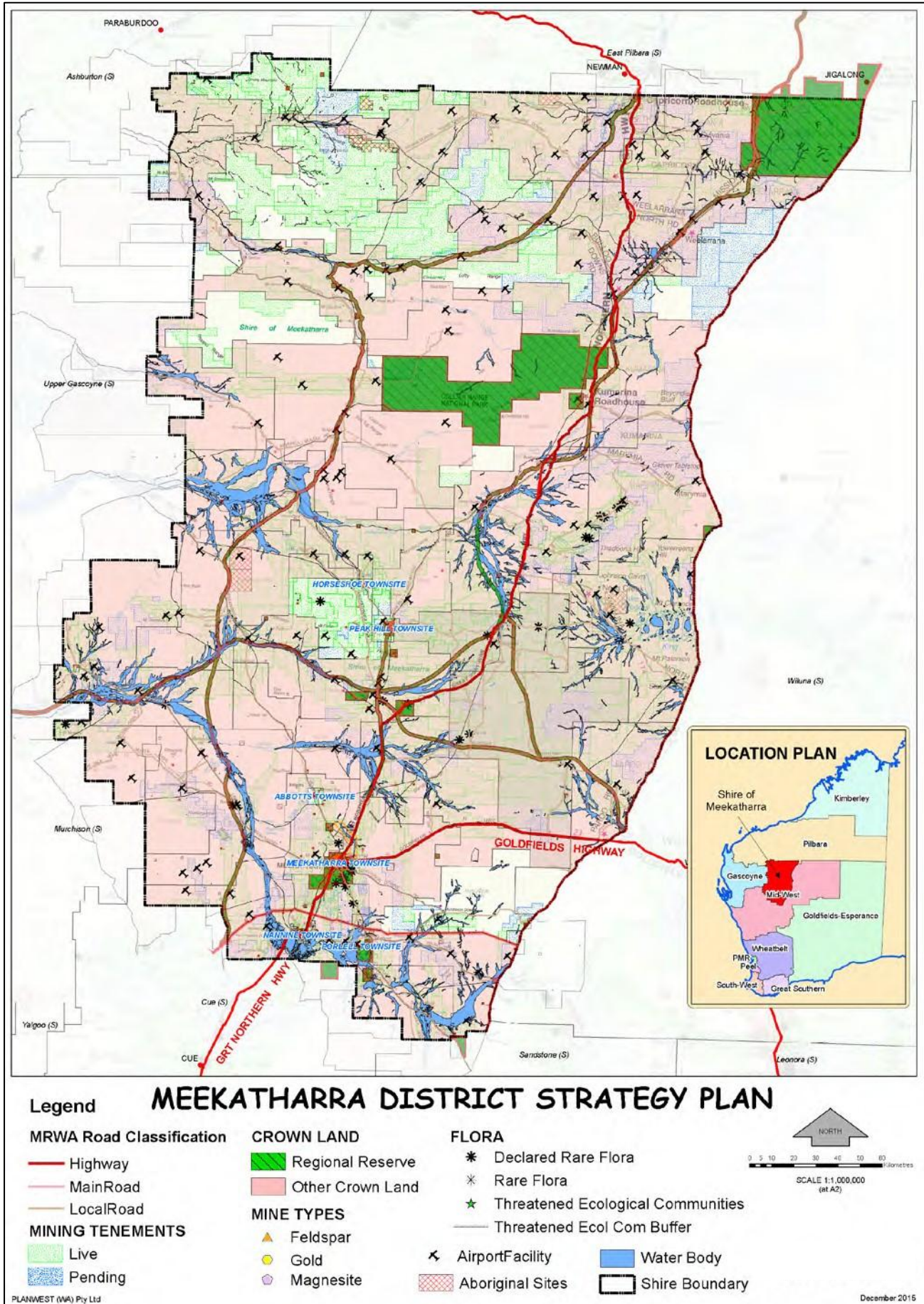
The pattern of stock routes criss-crossing the district can be appreciated from the Figure, as can the major water body areas all directed westwards to the coast.

Airstrips of varying sizes and qualities are distributed round the Shire to provide transport to some of the more remote areas where road movements are challenging and time-consuming.

The overall strategy for the district is to encourage both mining and pastoral activities to ensure a sound economic future for the Shire.



FIGURE 2 – SHIRE STRATEGY MAP



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## 5.2 MEEKATHARRA TOWNSITE STRATEGY MAP

The Meekatharra Townsite Strategy Map (**Figure 3**) shows the compact nature of the townsite. Although there are still vacant properties spread around the town many of them are government owned and not readily available for sale. The strategy does not seek to change too much in the existing townsite however does seek to transform the existing industrial area in Oliver Street into a light industrial area by creating a new general industrial area north of the town. This is discussed further around the Broader Townsite Figure.

### 5.2.1 CONSTRAINTS

**Figure 3** provides the extent of the constraints on land within the townsite boundary. Some of the existing open cut mines surrounding the town are shown with a nominal 100 metre buffer to each pit edge.

Other constraints include the nominal buffers to other features like the sewerage ponds, the power station, and potentially the general industrial area. The buffer to the existing rubbish tip and rifle range are better shown on the broader townsite strategy map.

Another main constraint is the system of creeklines around the urban area. Although the district gets little annual rainfall a downfall can quickly fill creeklines as the dry soils cannot readily absorb rain. This runoff makes flooding of the creeklines a reality and, as such, these areas should be avoided where possible in the consideration of new development. Now that 0.5m contours have been generated the preparation of flood mapping may be a priority.

### 5.2.2 PROPOSALS

Although a buffer, or setback, would normally be required by the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety and Petroleum from open pit mines and other workings these have not been applied as these areas are surrounded by either 'Parks' or 'Common' Crown Reserves.

Other land within the townsite, not already designated for urban uses and affected by the buffers, is designated as 'Rural' reflecting the current uses and buffers to those uses.

No **heavy haulage route** has been shown on the strategy map. The Council is aware that heavy vehicle traffic will inevitably increase over time, and that the impact of this traffic is likely to affect the amenity of the main street with risk, noise, dust and vibration.

Whilst the Council is aware of the need to maintain the safety of people in the town centre, it is also keen to maintain the level of activity flowing through the main street. Modifications to the Revitalisation Plan may be required to extend the central median refuge southwards on the highway to assist people crossing the main street.

The establishment of a new **general industrial estate** north of the town will provide opportunities for regional depots and infrastructure to establish in a central location. The intersection of the two highways and the prospectivity of the district provide an ideal location for a major regional industrial estate catering for large road trains and other heavy haulage vehicles. The design and configuration of the estate will need to properly cater for the manoeuvring and storage of these large, and long, vehicles, and the storage of large and varied materials and equipment.

Once the new general industrial estate is established the existing industrial area in Oliver Street can be designated as a **light and service industrial area**. This includes the area of the Council depot. Some of these uses would be better located in a new general industrial estate. The only uses to be allowed in the townsite industrial area are light and service industries that have no impacts on the surrounding sensitive uses.

The Council-owned land on the north side of High Street, west of the highway, is more than adequate to cater for additional **mining camp facilities**. The location of these sites in the townsite should be encouraged and supported as it provides financial spin-offs for local businesses. These types of facilities should be slightly separated from other residential areas





unless the proponents can satisfy the Council that the irregular hours of operation will not unduly impact the amenity of the existing residential areas.

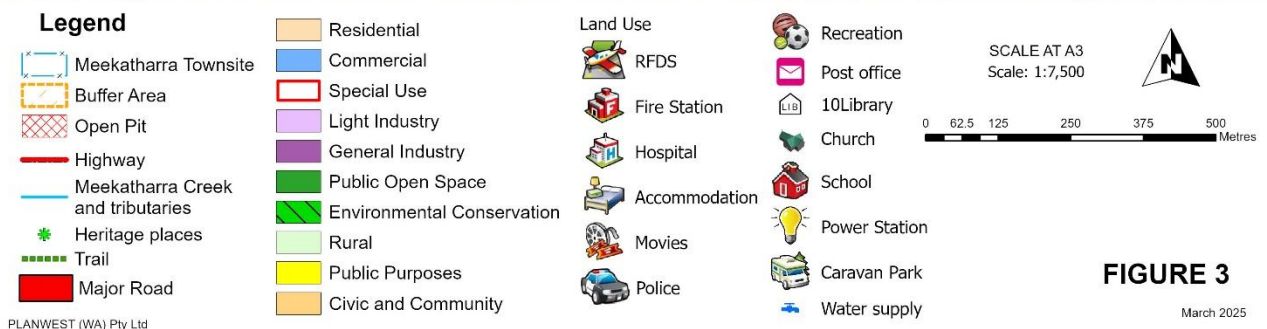
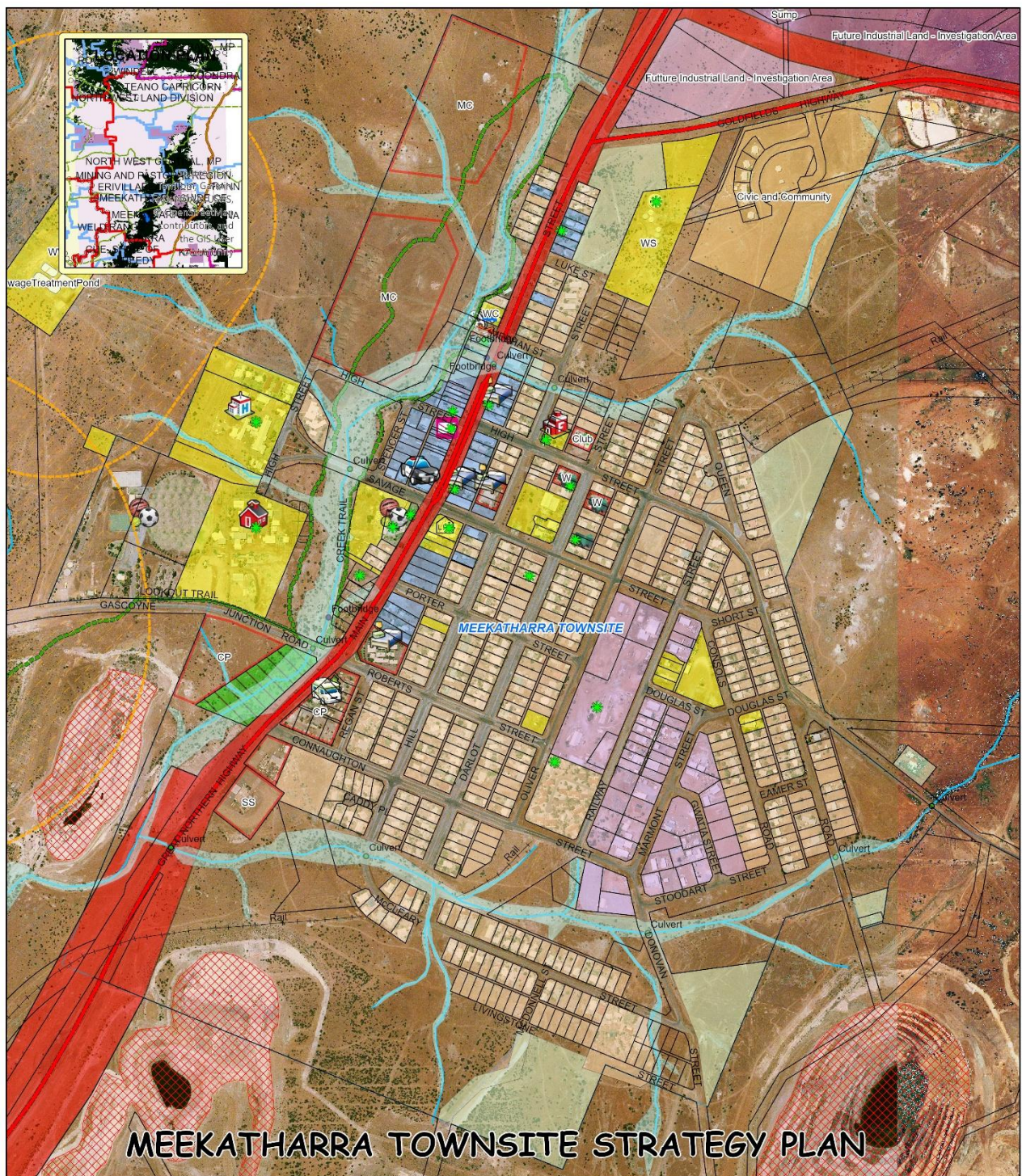
The undeveloped **caravan park** site on Gascoyne Junction Road is significantly restricted due to the open pit buffer, ownership and creeklines traversing the site. As a result, the site has been reduced in size to just include the privately owned portion of the site

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FIGURE 3 – MEEKATHARRA TOWNSITE STRATEGY MAP







### 5.3 BROADER MEEKATHARRA TOWNSITE STRATEGY MAP

**Figure 4** shows areas just beyond the townsite demonstrating the relationship of various proposals and buffers near the townsite.

This Strategy Map has been included due to the mapping of land considered potential for a future **general industrial area** to service Meekatharra. The area shown is extensive and includes large areas that may not be required for several years.

There is no intention to indicate that the area shown (222 hectares) needs to be developed in a single stage. Research into the potential demand for various lot sizes, and the subsequent take-up rate will guide future stages.

The district around Meekatharra has been determined as being rich in several minerals and has the potential to create a significant demand for general industrial land.

The existing **rubbish tip and rifle range** are located northwest of the town and are surrounded by Crown Reserves for 'Parks' and 'Commons'. As a result, no buffer areas are required.

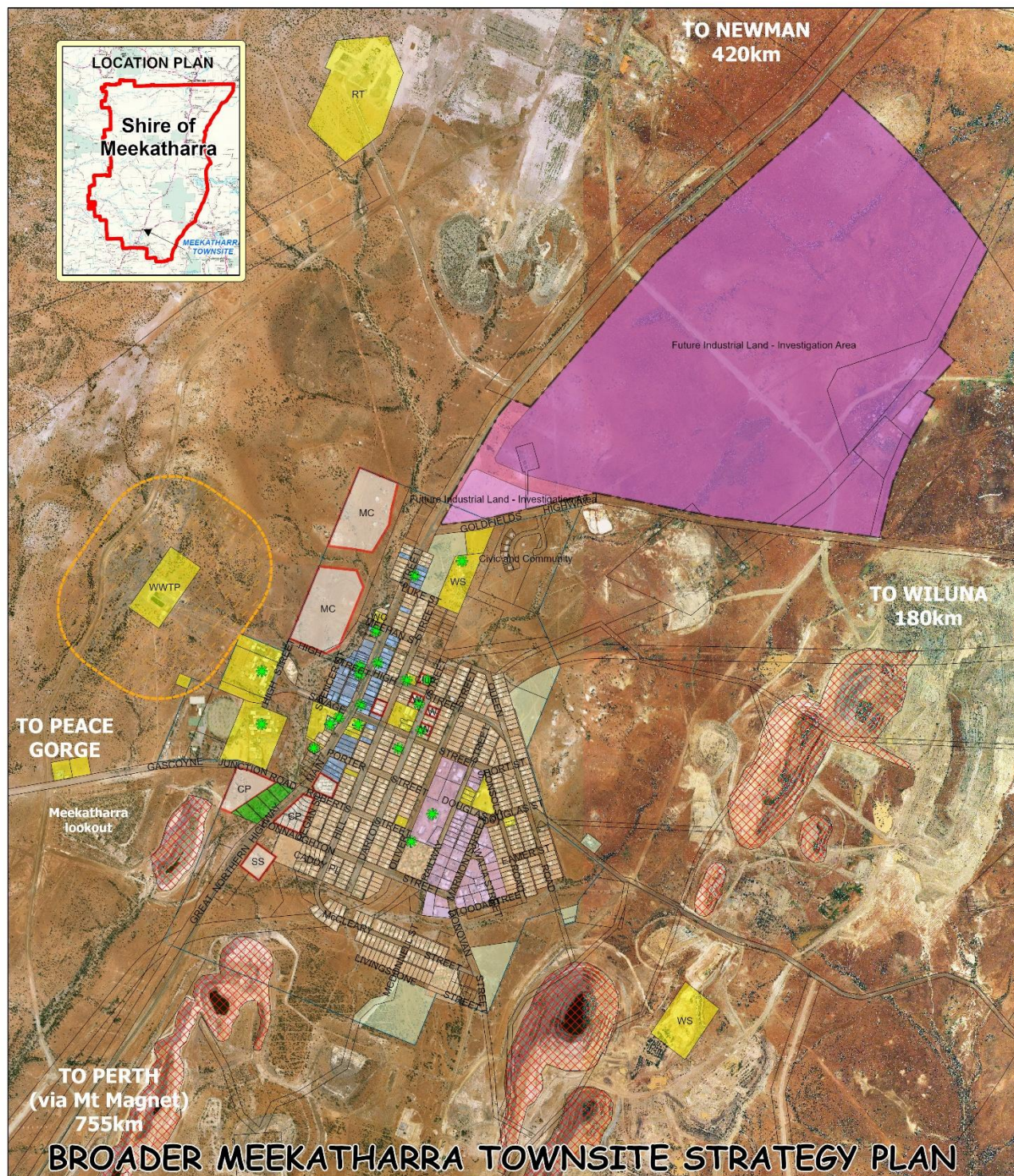
The existing **wastewater ponds** located northwest of the hospital only deal with wastewater rather than solids and as such only has a 300-metre buffer shown. Providing deep sewerage to the town in the longer term may be prohibitively expensive due to the hard nature of the ground in Meekatharra. The existing wastewater ponds currently only service the hospital, school and several commercial buildings in the main street.

About 9 kilometres northeast of the townsite, and beyond the areas shown in the figures, is the **Priority 1** area for protection of the town's water supply bores.





FIGURE 4 – BROADER MEEKATHARRA TOWNSITE STRATEGY MAP



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Legend

- Meekatharra Townsite
- Buffer Area
- Open Pit
- Highway
- Meekatharra Creek and tributaries
- Heritage places
- Trail
- Major Road

- Residential
- Commercial
- Caravan Park
- Service Station
- Light Industry
- General Industry
- Environmental Conservation
- Rural
- Public Purposes
- Public Purposes - Water Supply
- Public Purposes - Rubbish Tip
- Public Purposes - WWTP
- Public Purposes - High School
- Public Purposes - Hospital

- RFDS
- Fire Station
- Hospital
- Accommodation
- Movies
- Police
- Recreation
- Post office
- Library
- Church

- Power Station
- School
- Caravan Park

SCALE AT A3  
Scale: 1:15,000



0 62.5 125 250 375 500 Metres

PLANWEST (WA) Pty Ltd

FIGURE 4

March 2025





## 6. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & REVIEW

### 6.1 IMPLEMENTATION

This Local Planning Strategy has established a land use framework for the next 10-15 years for the Shire of Meekatharra. The Strategy has been prepared through an analysis of known social, economic and environmental issues and considerations affecting the local community at this time, and those likely to have an impact in the future.

To a large extent the outcomes of the strategy will be implemented through the preparation of the Shire of Meekatharra Local Planning Scheme. The preparation of the Local Planning Scheme concurrent with this Local Planning Strategy will support the implementation of many of the proposed strategies and actions within a short timeframe.

The Scheme was prepared in June 2003 and conformed to the model scheme text at that time.

There are however, strategies and actions recommended within this document whose implementation is in part the responsibility of State agencies and other organisations, or the responsibility of the Shire of Meekatharra through separate planning frameworks such as Local Planning Policies.

The analysis of the key issues and considerations included in this Strategy will raise awareness of key stakeholders of the possible scenarios facing the Shire into the future. Inclusion of the strategies and actions send a message about the priorities attributed to particular projects by the Shire and the community more generally, and their importance to the Shire of Meekatharra.

It will be important for all government agencies and key stakeholders to work collaboratively into the future to realise the key aspirations of the community as detailed in the Shire's Economic Development Strategy 2014 and as highlighted in this Strategy. The Shire should actively seek opportunities for these projects to be appropriately resourced by responsible organisations and through Commonwealth and State grant funding.

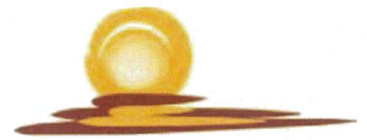
### 6.2 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Whilst the Meekatharra Local Planning Strategy is designed to provide a vision for the potential land use and development within the Shire over the next 10 to 15 years, it is inevitable that given this timeframe the land use issues and pressures affecting the Shire will evolve and change over time. In addition to having an adopted Strategy that provides a level of certainty to both State and local authorities and the community, it is equally important to establish a time frame for the regular review of the Strategy.

It is recommended that an audit of the Strategy be undertaken every five years, preferably in conjunction with any review of the Local Planning Scheme, unless the Shire or the WA Planning Commission considers an earlier review appropriate. A review of the strategy should be undertaken in ten years.

The audit would assess the performance of the strategy in relation to the objectives that have been achieved at each audit stage – acknowledging that many objectives are on-going.

The review of the Meekatharra Local Planning Strategy should follow the formal procedure as outlined in the *Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015*.



## ADVERTISING

The Shire of Meekatharra Local Planning Strategy certified for advertising on

.....18 February.....20.16

Signed for and on behalf of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

an officer of the Commission duly authorised by the Commission  
(pursuant to the Planning and Development Act 2005)

Date 16 May 2025

## ADOPTION

The Shire of Meekatharra hereby adopts the Local Planning Strategy, at the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on the.....19 November.....day of 2022..

SHIRE PRESIDENT

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## ENDORSEMENT

Endorsed by the Western Australian Planning Commission on

an officer of the Commission duly authorised by the Commission  
(pursuant to the Planning and Development Act 2005)

Date 16 May 2025

a golden prospect



# SHIRE OF MEEKATHARRA

## PART 2

### LOCAL PLANNING STRATEGY BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS

*March 2025*

# PLANWEST

(WA) PTY LTD A.B.N. 77 665 477 168

**CONSULTANTS IN PLANNING,  
DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Part 2 is to provide the background, context and **justification** for the planning objectives, strategies and actions set out in Part 1. The following sections of the strategy provide an overview of the key state, regional and local planning documents that are relevant to the Shire of Meekatharra and impact the local planning.

## 2. STATE AND REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

The context for local planning strategies includes both the existing state of development, natural resources and the environment (social, economic, natural, physical) as well as the state and regional policy context (strategies, policies, plans). Also, of relevance to the development of the strategy will be existing and proposed infrastructure, which may include major roads, rail facilities, ports, airports, water supply and waste treatment facilities as well as social infrastructure such as hospitals, education facilities and regional recreation cultural and entertainment facilities.

State and regional policy provide the framework for local planning, although in some instances, this will require local adaptation and implementation. An example of this would be the establishment of broad growth targets at the state or regional level, which leave open the precise form of such growth or which rely on local initiatives to stimulate the economic development necessary to drive settlement growth at the local level.

### 2.1 STATE PLANNING STRATEGY

This is the highest order planning instrument providing a broad strategic plan and directions for the whole state. It includes a vision of coordinated and sustainable development of the state, including the sustainable management of natural resources. It also includes a set of fundamental principles in relation to the environment, the community, the economy and infrastructure, which are intended to guide and coordinate action at all levels of government and across all agencies.

In 2014 the WA Planning Commission adopted a new State Planning Strategy 2050 (SPS). The SPS proposals are pitched at a regional level and suggest that the Meekatharra Townsite is identified as; an 'other centre'; part of an economic activity area; part of a State movement network; potential for wind energy; and the area is in a resource area. Providing the recognition of these components result in priorities for State infrastructure spending the Shire will be well-placed in terms of the revised SPS outcomes.

The SPS acknowledges the State's locational context, population forecasts, economy, climate change and several other factors that may influence the future of the State. The Shire of Meekatharra is included in the Central Sector (which includes the Gascoyne, Mid-West and Goldfields-Esperance regions).

*The SPS states that the Central sector has a diverse economy underpinned by mining, agriculture, fisheries and tourism, contributing significantly to the Western Australian economy. The sector is set to further contribute to the nation's mining, scientific, technological, research and innovation industries by 2050.*

*This sector encompasses some of the most iconic landscapes and diverse climatic conditions in Western Australia.*

The Central sector produces a diverse range of mineral resources including gold, iron ore, minerals and many other base and precious metals. The mining and resources industry is a major contributor to the Central sector's economy and the State's gross product.



The SPS deals with a series of topics at the wider state level. The majority of these are discussed in more detail through this Local Planning Strategy. These topics include;

**Economic Development** – including the provision of land, infrastructure, global competitiveness, economic diversity and innovation, research and industrial synergies.

**Education, training and knowledge transfer** – covering items including knowledge and learning, creativity, workforce and skill development.

**Tourism** – the supply of infrastructure, tourism planning, conservation, investment and cultural acknowledgement.

**Environment** – securing biodiversity, planning for climate change, resource conservation and consumption, and protection of the atmosphere environment.

**Agriculture and food** – including food security, protection of prime agricultural land, provision of appropriate infrastructure and ensuring global competitiveness.

**Movement of people, resources and information** – planning and protection of major movement networks connecting communities and freight logistics.

**Water, energy, waste and telecommunications** – including security of services, efficiency and conservation, wastewater harvesting, promoting sustainable servicing projects.

**Social Infrastructure** – promotion of liveable, inclusive communities and the identity, accessibility and liveability of spaces and places.

**Affordable and healthy living** – by promoting housing diversity, compact settlements, resource efficient designs and the provision of appropriate social and physical services and amenities.

**Land availability** – including the provision of supply and demand information, affordability and infrastructure.

**Remote Settlements** – ensuring that issues like land tenure (including Native Title) and social services are available through integrated planning.

**Security** – a strategic approach includes defence land, infrastructure and border control.

## 2.2 STATE PLANNING FRAMEWORK (SPP 1)

This Statement of Planning Policy (SPP 1) brings together existing State and regional policies and plans which apply to land use and development in Western Australia into a State Planning Framework. It also restates and expands upon the key principles of the State Planning Strategy in planning for sustainable land use and development.

The State Planning Framework unites existing State and regional policies, strategies and guidelines within a central framework which provides a context for decision-making on land use and development in Western Australia. It informs the WA Planning Commission, local government and others involved in the planning process on those aspects of State level planning policy which are to be taken into account, and given effect to, in order to ensure integrated decision-making across all spheres of planning.

## 2.3 STATE PLANNING POLICIES (SPPS)

This suite of policies is organised in accordance with the State Planning Framework Policy and includes policies relating to: environment and natural resources, urban growth and settlement, water resources, economy and employment, transport and infrastructure and regional planning and development. It is intended that the Shire of Meekatharra will comply with these SPPs in its decision making. The following provides a brief summary of each relevant SPP.



## **Environment and Natural Resources Policy (SPP 2)**

This SPP defines the principles and considerations that represent good and responsible planning in terms of environment and natural resource issues within the framework of the State Planning Strategy. SPP 2 recognises that Planning Strategies, Schemes and decision making should consider any relevant accredited natural resource management regional strategy, or catchment management strategies prepared by catchment groups and endorsed by the State Government agencies, with a view to integrating implementation of appropriate and relevant parts through town planning schemes and assessment of developments.

### **Planning for Basic Raw Materials (SPP 2.4)**

While this policy is not specific to areas outside of Perth and adjoining areas, the main objectives of identifying and protecting the location of land for the extraction of basic raw materials is relevant to the Shire of Meekatharra. The Council does not operate a quarry in the Shire but has various sites used to supplement required needs for sand and gravel.

### **Rural Planning (SPP 2.5)**

The main objectives of this policy are to protect productive agricultural land from incompatible activities; promote regional development and sustainable development in and adjacent to urban areas; protect and improve the environment and landscape assets; and minimise land use conflicts. The selection of rural living land in the Shire will be guided by this policy.

### **Water Resources (SPP 2.9)**

This policy aims to protect, conserve and enhance water resources that have significant economic, social, cultural and/or environmental values. It also aims to assist in ensuring the availability of suitable water resources to maintain living environments, while maintaining or improving water resource quality and quantity. The strategy reflects the need to protect these resources.

## **Urban Growth and Settlement (SPP 3)**

This State Planning Policy was released in February 2006 and applies throughout Western Australia. The Council acknowledges the policy objectives – especially as they relate to remote settlements - and has prepared its Strategy to be consistent with the objectives.

The objectives are;

- To promote a sustainable and well-planned pattern of settlement across the State, with sufficient and suitable land to provide for a wide variety of housing, employment, recreation facilities and open space.
- To build on existing communities with established local and regional economies, concentrate investment in the improvement of services and infrastructure and enhance the quality of life in those communities.
- To manage the growth and development of urban areas in response to the social and economic needs of the community and in recognition of relevant climatic, environmental, heritage and community values and constraints.
- To promote the development of a sustainable and liveable neighbourhood form which reduces energy, water and travel demand whilst ensuring safe and convenient access to employment and services by all modes, provides choice and affordability of housing and creates an identifiable sense of place for each community.
- To coordinate new development with the efficient, economic and timely provision of infrastructure and services.

### **Aboriginal Settlements (SPP 3.2)**

The WA Planning Commission gazetted State Planning Policy 3.2 (Aboriginal Settlements) (SPP 3.2) in May 2011. This policy provides a framework for the planning of Aboriginal settlements and is to be read in conjunction with three sets of guidelines. These guidelines



address layout plans, the provision of housing and infrastructure and layout plan exclusion boundaries.

SPP 3.2 (and the associated guidelines and planning bulletin) guides planning in Aboriginal settlements throughout Western Australia and form the basis for decision-making by the WA Planning Commission under the *Planning and Development Act 2005*.

### **Historic Heritage Conservation (SPP 3.5)**

SPP 3.5 provides guidance to conserve and protect significant historic heritage across the State through the planning system. Local planning strategies should have regard to heritage sites and areas with measures to identify and conserve places of significance. Local Governments can identify and classify places of heritage significance through a survey and then formalised in a heritage list under the local planning scheme to protect its heritage assets and ensure development is sympathetic to the cultural heritage values.

### **Bushfire (SPP 3.7)**

SPP 3.7 was adopted by the WA Planning Commission in 2016 and seeks to guide land use planning to address bushfire risk management across the State. The policy applies to land identified as bushfire prone areas as designated by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner. All strategic planning proposals, including a local planning strategy and scheme should take into account bushfire protection measures.

### **Industrial Interface (SPP 4.1)**

SPP 4.1 was adopted in 2022 and seeks to manage industrial and sensitive land uses to limit encroachment and prevent land use conflict. Industrial areas and uses are recognised as important to the local and State economy and should be planned and suitably located to ensure impacts to the environment and human health and amenity are adequately considered and a suitable interface provided. Local planning strategies and schemes should identify and plan for industry, including any investigation areas.

### **Road and Rail Noise (SPP 5.4)**

SPP 5.4 provides guidelines for minimising noise impacts from transport infrastructure. Within the Shire, Great Northern Highway (including Main Street, Meekatharra) and Goldfields Highway are identified as significant freight and traffic routes. Development within the identified buffer areas for these roads may require consideration of noise impacts and mitigation measures.

### **Residential Design Codes**

Residential Design Codes Volume 1 and 2 provides the basis for the control of residential development throughout Western Australia for single houses, grouped dwellings and multiple dwellings. The purpose of the policy is to address emerging design trends, promote sustainability, improve clarity and highlight assessment pathways to facilitate better outcomes for residents. They are also used for the assessment of residential subdivision proposals.

The policy outlines various objectives for residential development, planning governance and development process and sets out information and consultation requirements for development proposals. The policy also makes provision for aspects of specified design elements to be varied through the local planning framework.

## **2.4 REGIONAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS**

### **Mid-West Regional Planning and Infrastructure Framework**

The Mid-West Regional Planning and Infrastructure Framework provides guidance on land use, land supply, land development, environmental protection, infrastructure and priorities for





the delivery of physical and social infrastructure for the Mid-West region. The framework informs the decisions of the WAPC by establishing the regional context for the preparation of sub-regional and local planning strategies and outlines the WAPC's position on planning for population growth, transport, agriculture, conservation estate, remnant vegetation, mineral prospectively, and significant basic raw materials for the Mid-West.

There are no regional schemes or structure plans for this region.

## 2.5 OPERATIONAL POLICIES

There are several operational policies, predominantly to do with subdivision and development control. Some of the policies have indirect application in the preparation and assessment of local planning schemes. The Council is obliged to follow these guidelines as the WA Planning Commission uses them in the determination of a variety of applications for subdivision and development.

### **Government Sewerage Policy**

The Government Sewerage Policy was adopted in 2019 and sets out wastewater disposal requirements for subdivisions and developments with an objective to protect public health, the environment and water supplies. The policy includes discretionary provisions where subdivision and development may be possible without requiring connection to reticulated sewerage.

## 2.6 POSITION STATEMENTS AND GUIDELINES

### **Residential Accommodation for Aging Persons (Jun 2024)**

This Position Statement has been prepared by the WAPC to outline the requirements to support the provision of residential accommodation for ageing persons within Western Australia's local government planning framework. The position statement seeks to achieve consistent strategic planning consideration of residential accommodation needs for ageing persons in local planning strategies and consistent statutory planning guidance to standardise land-use definitions and zoning permissibility for residential accommodation for ageing persons in local planning schemes.

### **Renewable Energy Facilities (Mar 2020)**

This position statement has been prepared by the WAPC to outline the requirements to support the consistent consideration and provision of renewable energy facilities within Western Australia. The position statement seeks to:

- guide the establishment of renewable energy facilities to support the State Energy Transformation Strategy (March 2019);
- outline key planning and environmental considerations for the location, siting and design of renewable energy facilities;
- promote the consistent consideration and assessment of renewable energy facilities;
- facilitate appropriate development of renewable energy facilities while minimising any potential impact upon the environment, natural landscape, and urban areas; and
- encourage informed public engagement early in the renewable energy facility planning process.

### **Workforce Accommodation (Jan 2018)**

This position statement has been prepared by the WAPC to assist users of the planning system in understanding the land use planning considerations for workforce accommodation. The position statement seeks to:

- outline the development requirements for workforce accommodation under the *Planning and Development Act 2005* and associated regulation; and



- provide guidance to local governments on the role of the local planning framework in the planning and development of workforce accommodation.

### **Dark Sky and Astrotourism (Dec 2020)**

This draft position statement has been prepared by the WAPC to details its position on the provision and designation of dark sky locations, and the subdivision and development implications throughout Western Australia. This position statement seeks to:

- preserve and protect the night sky for future generations;
- minimise light and dust pollution;
- establish a set of dark sky principles to be implemented through land use planning mechanisms; and
- facilitate astrotourism through flexible local planning frameworks.

## **2.7 OTHER RELEVANT STRATEGIES, PLANS AND POLICIES**

### **Western Australian Climate Policy (Nov 2020)**

The Western Australian Climate Policy sets out the State Government's plan for a climate-resilient community and a prosperous low-carbon future. The policy underscores a commitment to adapting to climate change and working with all sectors of the economy to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The policy sets out the high-level priorities the State Government will implement to support a more climate-resilient community. The approach to climate adaptation recognises exposure to climate impacts, the diversity of the regions and the existing capability to manage and adapt to climate change. The policy outlines actions to guide the response by business, the community, local governments and State Government agencies to develop well-informed, timely and practical adaptation responses.

### **Central Regions Land Supply Analysis (Dec 2015)**

In 2015, the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage released a Central Regions Land Supply Analysis (Dec 2015).

The purpose of this document is to present the land supply mapping and associated analysis on existing and future land capacity as it relates to the Shire of Meekatharra local government area. It assists regional planning and informs strategy and scheme reviews. The analysis informs the land use supply recommendations of this local planning strategy.

The analysis suggests there is sufficient land capable of substantial further development (based on the current extents of zoned residential land and land identified for future residential purposes) to cater for population growth anticipated within the Shire of Meekatharra in the medium term.

**Table 1** shows an extract from that report outlining the development status of land in Meekatharra. Approximately 20ha of residential zoned land in the townsite is capable of further development, with an estimated population yield of 325ha from additional lots created at the R10 density code.

The report does not provide a capacity analysis of commercial and industrial land except to note that there is less than 1 hectare of industrial land and no commercial land.



**TABLE 1 – DEVELOPMENT STATUS OF LAND**

	Total	Developed (ha)	Capable of substantial further development (ha)
Residential	66	46	20
Future Residential	0	0	0
<b>Residential and Future Residential</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>20</b>
Rural Residential	0	0	0
Future Rural Residential	0	0	0
<b>Rural Residential and Future Rural Residential</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Rural Smallholdings	0	0	0
Future Rural Smallholdings	0	0	0
<b>Rural Smallholdings and Future Rural Smallholdings</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Commercial	8	8	0
Future Commercial	0	0	0
<b>Commercial and Future Commercial</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
Industrial	14	13	1
Future Industrial	0	0	0
<b>Industrial and Future Industrial</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>

Source: DPLH, Central Regions Land Supply Analysis (Dec 2015)

### 3 LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

#### 3.1 STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN 2020 – 2030

The Strategic Community Plan was adopted in April 2021 and is underpinned by community consultation that occurred in 2019/2020 and encompasses the community's priorities and needs.

The Vision outlined in the plan is that the Shire of Meekatharra is 'a place for community, opportunity and prosperity.'

The plan has five key areas with focused objectives to achieve the Shire's vision being:

1. **Social** – Contribute to a community that is connected, healthy, and engaged in creating the future they want.
2. **Natural Environment** – Maintain and preserve the natural environment, enhancing the 'remote' experience of Meekatharra.
3. **Built Environment** – Deliver and maintain assets and infrastructure that respond to community need.
4. **Economic** – Encourage a diversity of locally operating businesses to maximise employment opportunities.
5. **Governance** – Ensure effective, efficient use of Shire resources and provide leadership for the community.





### 3.2 HERITAGE INVENTORY REVIEW 2012

In 2012, the Council had a Heritage Inventory prepared to identify and recognise places of historic and heritage value (prepared by Laura Gray, Heritage & Conservation Consultant), as required by the *Heritage Act 2018* (as amended).

The inventory identifies 27 heritage places in the Meekatharra townsite, 13 regional places and 35 sites. These places have been deemed to have heritage value and assigned a management category from A to C to guide conservation and protection outcomes for the place based on its level of significance. Category A places are afforded the highest value given their identification as places of exceptional cultural heritage significance to the Shire and State. There are three places in Meekatharra that are included on the State Register of Heritage Places including the Presbyterian Church, Meekarratha, the Meekatharra Police Station and Courthouse, Meekatharra, and the Bundi Club, Meekatharra, which are identified as Category A places in the Shire's Inventory.

A key action of the strategy is to prepare a Heritage List to protect the Shire's local places of cultural heritage significance under the local planning scheme.

### 3.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Council commissioned the preparation of an Economic Development Strategy and received a draft of the document from Urbis in July 2014.

The report states that the Economic Development Strategy is regarded as a key strategic document by Council.

The purpose of the Economic Development Strategy is to respond to the existing economic situation in Meekatharra and Council's vision by presenting a clear and achievable Strategy action plan for the next six (6) years. This Strategy seeks to address the key challenges facing the Shire through five guiding themes (Physical, Social, Business, Tourism and Governance/Organisation). It also aims to leverage the competitive advantages of the town and broader region to capitalise on the identified growth and diversity opportunities.

The report states that the overarching vision for the future economic development of Meekatharra is as follows:

*'Meekatharra is a key strategic regional transport hub that benefits from its strong regional connections and leverages its local assets to promote economic growth, diversity and resilience. Taking advantage of its rich heritage and unique regional lifestyle, Meekatharra is an ideal location to stop, live, work and invest'*

The strategy goes on to acknowledge the Shire's competitive advantage including its characteristics of location, its facilities, natural attractions and heritage, true outback experience and availability of serviced land.

### 3.4 MEEKATHARRA REVITALISATION PLAN

In September 2014 CCS Strategic submitted a final report for the Meekatharra Revitalisation Plan. The project required the development of three separate master plans describing redevelopment concepts for:

- Main Street (that section of Great Northern Highway running through town from Connaughton Street to Goldfields Highway)
- The Sporting precinct accessed from Gascoyne Junction Road
- The Youth Precinct bounded by Savage, Darlot, High and Hill Streets.

The primary focus of the study was the revitalisation of the town centre which in turn informed the form and function of the youth and sporting precincts.



The key driver is the activation and effective utilisation of Shire owned facilities, particularly those on the main street, including the Shire offices and CRC building and specifically the Lloyds Outback Centre building, previously the retail heart of town providing the supermarket, newsagent, hardware and clothing stores.

The report established that, in terms of need, there are two imperatives.

**The first** is the preservation of existing assets to enable the current (largely incidental) use to continue and more importantly so that if, in future, demand increases, the reboot/rekindling option is not too dramatic.

**The second**, and perhaps most critical need is the activation of those spaces which residents have already voiced an interest in seeing redeveloped. Key here are retail and visitor opportunities in the main street, offered within a safer more aesthetically pleasing environment.

The attraction and retention of key services is also essential to the community, and this may require the Shire to take the initiative to create an opportunity and perhaps to even offer incentives to attract providers.

The Plan suggests costing and funding sources, recommends on-going engagement with various community groups, and the commencement of the Main Street development proposals to demonstrate its level of commitment.

### 3.5 LOCAL PLANNING SCHEME NO 3

The Shire of Meekatharra Town Planning Scheme No. 3. (Scheme 3) is the only local planning scheme operating in the Shire and applies to the Meekatharra townsite only. Scheme 3 was gazetted on 5 February 1993 and there have been three amendments to rezone land along Main and High streets, Meekatharra. **Figure 1** sets out these amendments with the adoption and gazettal dates.

**FIGURE 1 - SCHEDULE OF AMENDMENTS**

Amend No	Description of Amendment	Type of Amendment	Advertising Date	Adoption Date
1	Rezoning 6 lots in Main Street from Residential to Commercial	Rezoning	1996	Feb 1997
2	Rezoning of land from Rural & Recreation to Village Accommodation	Rezoning	1996	July 2011
3	Rezoning of Council Buildings from Commercial to Public Purposes	Rezoning	1998	Jan 1999

Source: DPLH, PLANWEST

**Amendment No 1** was initiated by the Council on behalf of several community groups including the Royal Flying Doctor, Homeswest and Community Welfare. Each of these services occupies a house structure but provide no residential accommodation. The lots were zoned residential when the Scheme was prepared to reflect the buildings rather than the uses and to discourage additional commercial activities in the area to the detriment of the town centre. It was preferred that the centre be consolidated prior to extending the commercial strip.

Due to an increase in the demand for home-based businesses in the town it was decided that these activities should be zoned commercial to clarify that they were not residences with commercial operations that would be seen as precedents for other home-based businesses.

**Amendment No 2** was initiated by the Council on behalf of St Barbara Mines. The mining operation is located several kilometers south of the town at the Blue Bird Mine site on Great Northern Highway.



The company established that there were economical reserves located below the existing accommodation on site and that, due to its age, the accommodation should move to Meekatharra townsite.

Due to the shift work nature of the work, and the fly in and fly out operation of the workforce, it was decided that the accommodation should be provided in a separate village environment on land leased from the Council. A site (18 hectare) located on the north west part of townsite was considered appropriate for the proposal.

**Amendment No 3** was initiated to provide for the Council's renovations and extensions to its administrative complex by rezoning the land from Commercial to Public Purposes. It has since been developed for a new library, telecentre and ablutions.

Scheme 3 was prepared prior to the update to the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015 and does not align with current requirements. This review includes preparation of the Shire's first local planning strategy and updates the local planning scheme to align with the Regulations and the State planning framework.

### 3.6 LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES (LPP)

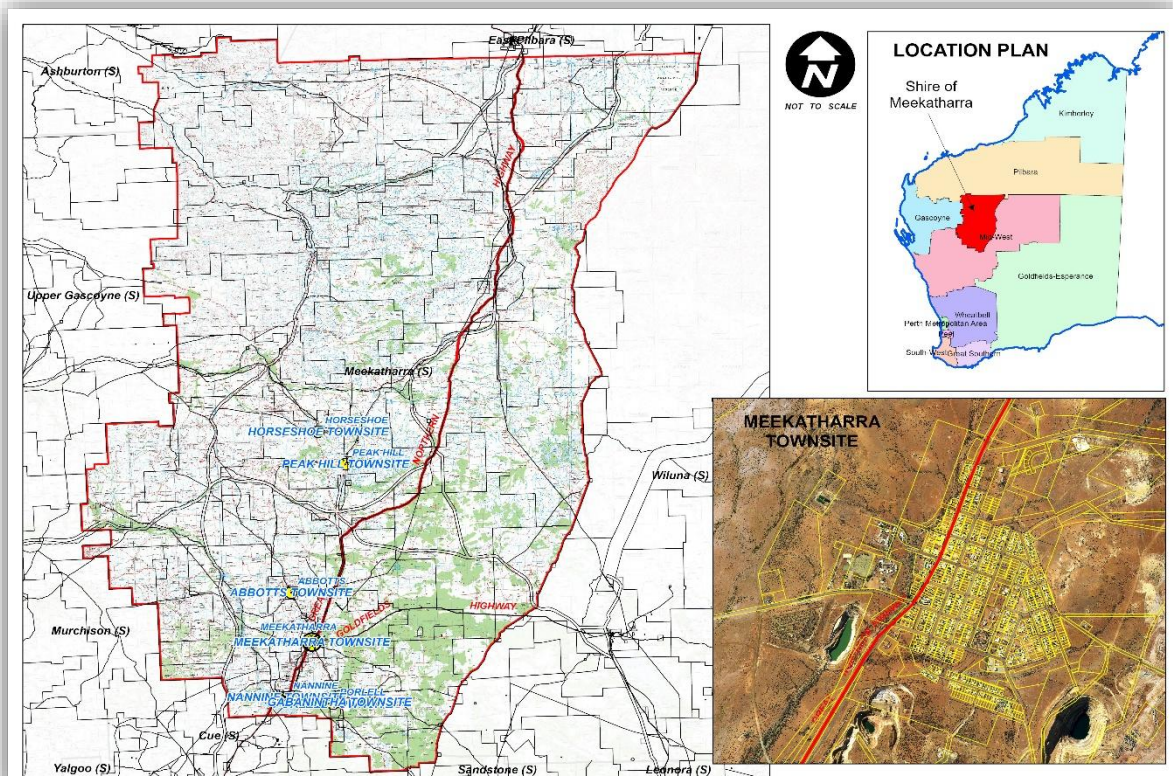
The Shire does not have any adopted Local Planning Policies.

## 4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFILE

### 4.1 LOCATION AND SNAPSHOT OF THE SHIRE

**Figure 1** shows the location of the Shire in relation to the Regions and the Perth Metropolitan Region.

**FIGURE 1 - LOCATION MAP OF MEEKATHARRA**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST



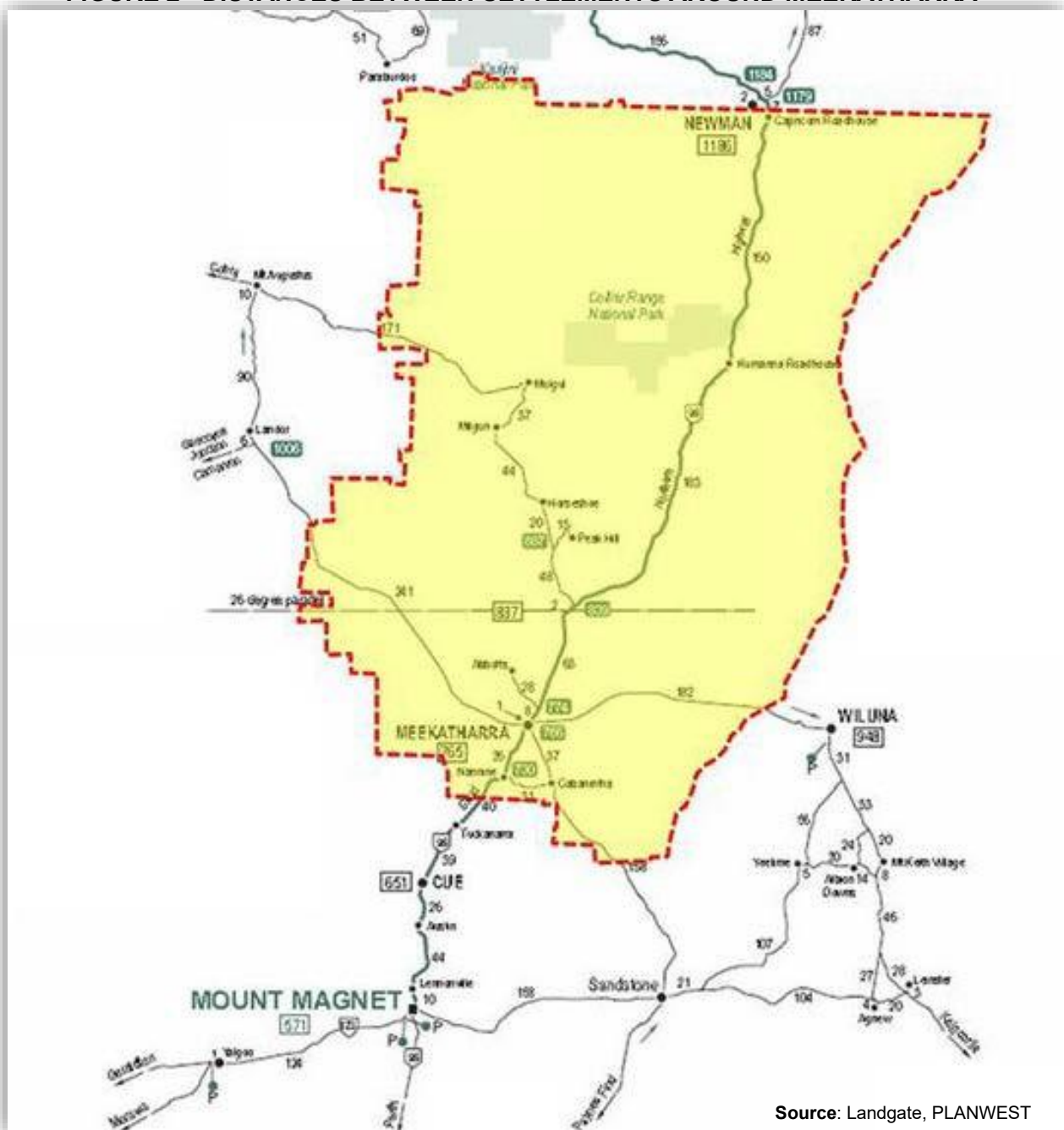


Some additional Council Statistics include the following;

Population:	1,200
Number of dwellings:	427
Length of sealed roads:	178km
Length of unsealed roads:	1,6323km
Area:	100,733km <sup>2</sup>
Number of Employees:	34
Number of Electors:	32
Total Rates Levied:	\$4,892,325
Total Revenue:	\$11,984,024

**Figure 2** provides a few distances between settlements in the region. What is demonstrated by the Figure is that access to the extreme western and eastern parts of the Shire are not so well developed.

**FIGURE 2 - DISTANCES BETWEEN SETTLEMENTS AROUND MEEKATHARRA**





The town came into being in the 1890s with the gold rush with the town of Meekatharra being settled in 1894. Today the Shire's economy is based on mining, cattle and tourism.

The Meekatharra townsite is about 764 kilometres from Perth by road via the Great Northern Highway. As the crow flies it is about 665 kilometres from Perth CBD. The Meekatharra Townsite map shows existing Scheme zones.

The Shire of Meekatharra covers an area of 100,733 square kilometres measuring over 250 kilometres in an east-west direction and 430 kilometres in a north-south direction.

The Shire is located in the Mid-West Region of Western Australia with its northern boundary on the southern edge of the Pilbara Region.

## 4.2 PHYSICAL FEATURES, CLIMATE, NATURAL HERITAGE AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

There are over 30 stations attributed to Shire of Meekatharra although some of these stations may straddle shire boundaries with an average station size 233,763ha ranging from 90,167ha to 406,489ha.

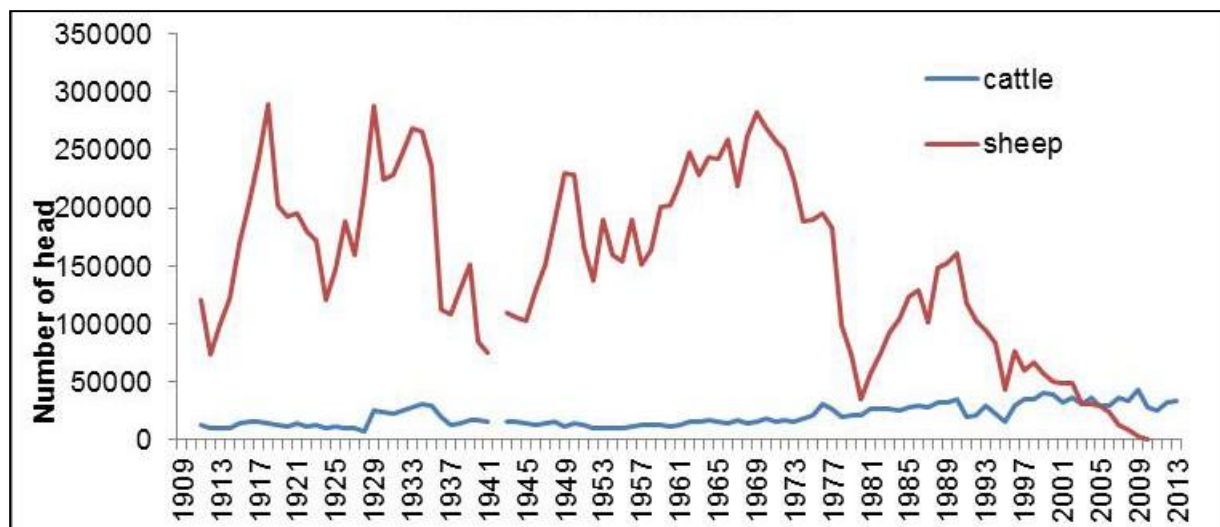
Land use	Percentage
Pastoral	73%
UCL	14%
DPAW	8%
Indigenous reserve	2%

### 4.2.1 PASTORAL CAPACITY

Total present carrying capacity based on last inspection is 335,900 Dry Sheep Equivalent (DSE) or 20.9 ha per DSE with a range from 4,480 DSE to 21,000 DSE. The total potential carrying capacity based on land system potential is 460,176 DSE or 15.2 ha per DSE. These areas range from 5,730 DSE to 55,230 DSE.

The present carrying capacity is calculated with the potential carrying capacity discounted for an assessed decline in range condition based on defined 'discount factors' for each land system. **Figure 3** provides stock statistics in Meekatharra over the last 100 years, showing the demise of the sheep market in recent years.

FIGURE 3 - STOCK STATISTICS IN MEEKATHARRA



Source: 1909 to 1989 ABS. 1990 to 2013 PLB Annual returns.



The potential carrying capacity is the estimated long-term carrying capacity for a paddock or station (lease) if all pastures / pasture types are in good range condition and the area fully developed (particularly with respect to water supply distribution and placement) and available to the grazing stock.

The actual carrying capacity over a 10-year average is 272,357 DSE or 25.7 ha per DSE; with a 5-year average of 264,343 DSE or 26.5 ha per DSE.

Although these statistics suggest the land has available carrying capacity it is not merely a statistical exercise as applying these rates across such a large area. Variations in rainfall, soil types, fencing, ownership and vegetation will impact actual capacities.

#### **Condition:**

The pasture condition at last inspection (2001 to 2009) was assessed as 25% good, 44% fair and 31% poor.

**Figures 4 and 5** provide extracts from Thomas P & Stuart-Street A 2014, *Pastoral potential of the Gascoyne, Mid-West and Goldfields–Esperance planning regions*.

The Gascoyne-Murchison sub-region is located in the arid shrublands of Western Australia, extending from the Indian Ocean to the Great Sandy Desert. The vegetation is dominated by chenopod and acacia shrublands and woodlands, but many vegetation types can be found.

Much of the area can be broadly described as the 'mulga zone'.

The CSIRO<sup>1</sup> acknowledges that the pastoral industry in the Pilbara and Southern Rangelands of Western Australia continues to face very difficult economic, social and ecological situations due to decline in terms of trade and ongoing decline in range condition.

Land administration by State government for the pastoral industry has a strong focus on environmental and ecological sustainability but these goals have largely not been achieved. Regional planning and incentive-based approaches have either failed or only been partly successful at pastoral lease scale. The authors' research paper identifies four broad economic, social and ecological landscape patterns ranging from economic, social and ecological sustainability to failure across all three dimensions. Some lessees are adapting to economic decline by obtaining work off station or diversification in the limited locations where these opportunities are available, in some cases facilitating landscape restoration.

Market-based incentives may be effective where economic viability is attainable, but lease buy-back may be required where leaseholders are locked into a poverty cycle. Carbon-based income is problematic until governance and economic parameters are resolved. Mapping the economic, social and ecological patterns in the landscape is a basis for policy and special purpose initiatives to resolve the current very difficult economic, social and environmental situation in the Pilbara and Southern Rangelands.

The paper looks at several scenarios where pastoral stations have differing capabilities to sustain ecological survival, economic viability and conservation and biodiversity.

Also, factors like the enforcement of lease conditions, cost benefit analysis carbon based income, financial and social hardship, previous approached to address the issue, are examined in the paper.

#### **Relevance to Strategy**

With areas of high and very high pastoral potential, such regions should be identified in the strategy and protected from uses that may restrict this potential.

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<sup>1</sup> Using economic, social and ecological spatial patterns to guide policy development in the Pilbara and Southern Rangelands of Western Australia by Rodney D. Safstrom and Peter-Jon Waddell, 2013

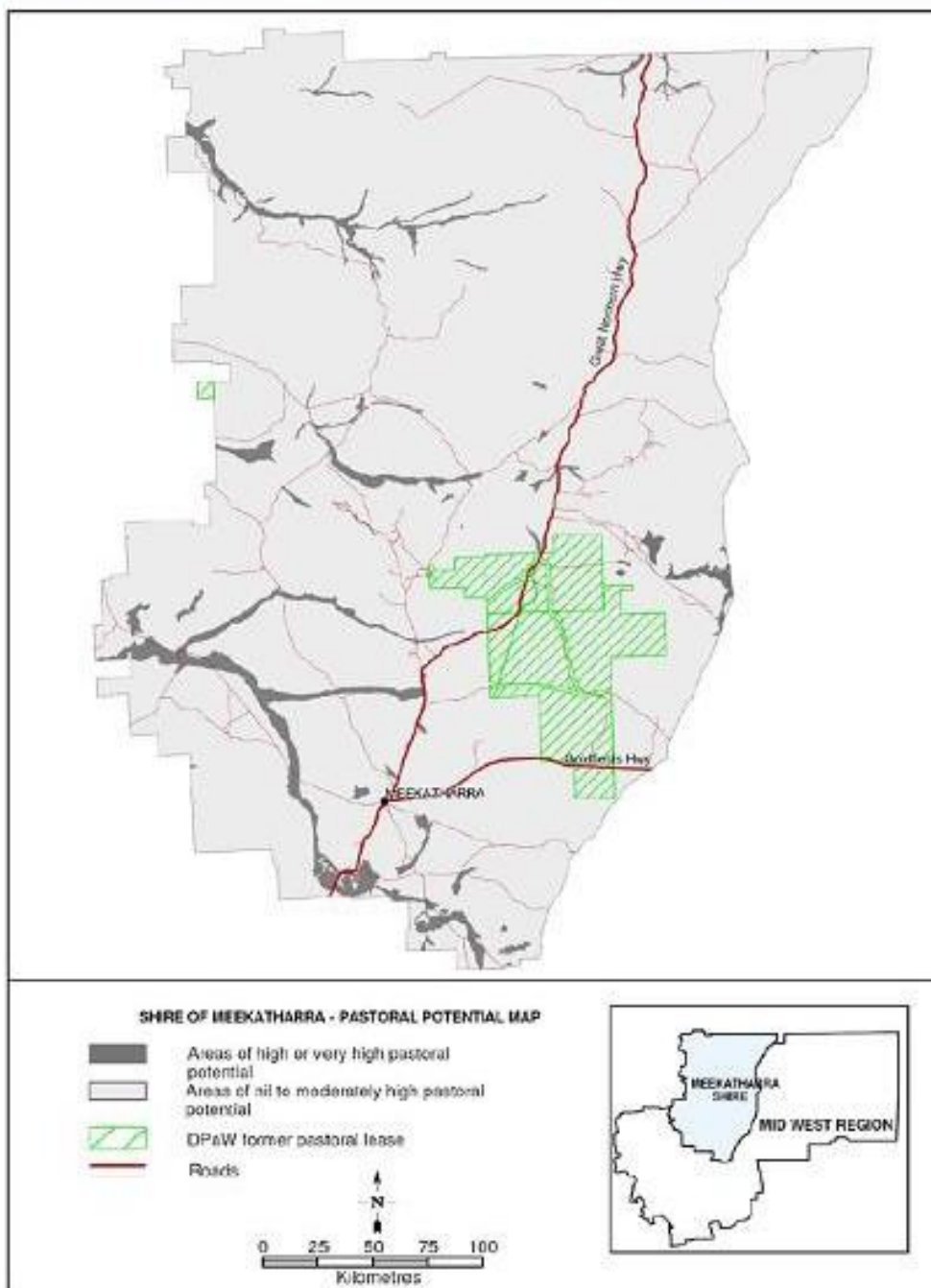




FIGURE 4 - HIGH PASTORAL POTENTIAL LAND SYSTEMS

## 2.6 Mid West Region – Shire of Meekatharra

Planning region: Mid West	Shire: Meekatharra
Area and percentage of high pastoral potential	343 863ha (3%)
Dominant high pastoral potential land systems	Beringarra, Ashburton and Gascoyne
Percentage of shire under pastoral land use	73%
Average winter rainfall	92mm
Average summer rainfall	127mm



Source: Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia, Perth, 2014



## FIGURE 5 - PASTORAL POTENTIAL LAND SYSTEMS

Table 8 High pastoral potential land systems within the Shire of Meekatharra

Land system	Area (ha)
Beringarra	59 143
Ashburton	51 492
Gascoyne	46 427
Mileura	43 624
Cunyu	36 252
Carnegie	32 679
River	18 855
Ero	12 911
Peedawarra	9 627
Austin	3 891
Jingle	1 899
Bibbingunna	721
Gumbreak	463
Steer	224
<b>Beard vegetation</b>	
Succulent steppe; samphire	25 655
<b>Total</b>	<b>343 863</b>

Example photographs of high pastoral potential land systems

	<p><b>Beringarra land system</b> is described as major riverine plains with active lower flood plains flanking channelled watercourses supporting mostly halophytic shrubland and mixed acacia shrubland. The soils vary between hardpan loams (&lt;1m) on the hardpan plains to hard setting duplexes on the alluvial and flood plains. The alluvial plains and flood plains are highly susceptible to water erosion.</p>
	<p><b>Ashburton land system</b> is described as active flood plains and back plains with deep (2m+) silty loam and clayey soils supporting tall shrublands and some tussock grasses.</p>

In the Meekatharra shire, the samphire vegetation mapped by JS Beard best relates to the **Mileura land system**. The Mileura land system is described as calcrete platforms and saline alluvial plains, supporting halophytic shrublands. The soils are generally sand or shallow earth on calcrete or saline duplex on the alluvial plains. The alluvial plains are highly susceptible to water erosion.

**Source:** Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. Department of Agriculture and Food, Western Australia, Perth, 2014.



#### 4.2.2 CONTAMINATED SITES

The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation maintains a data base of contaminated sites in the State. A search of the Shire of Meekatharra returns the below confirmed sites and classifications in the townsite. These are listed in **Figure 6** below.

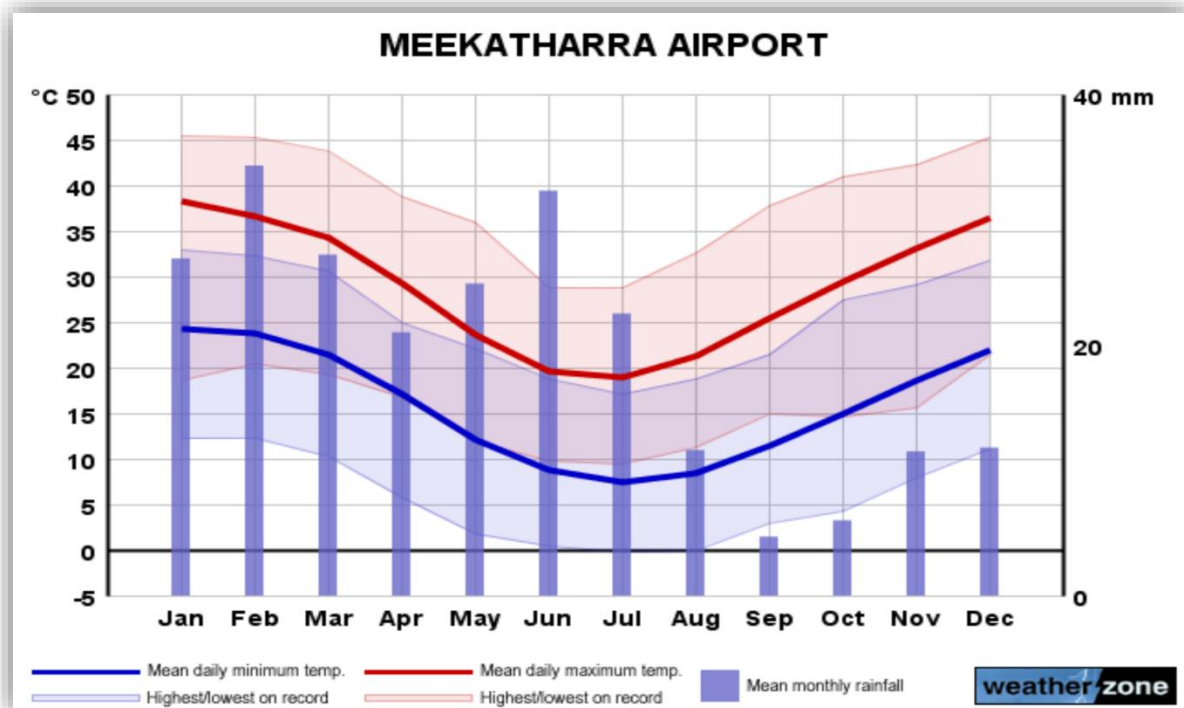
**FIGURE 6 - SCHEDULE OF CONTAMINATED SITES**

Location	Classification	Site Information
187 Main St Meekatharra 6642	Contaminated - restricted use	Basic Summary of Records
188 Main St Meekatharra 6642	Contaminated - restricted use	Basic Summary of Records
839 Savage St Meekatharra 6642	Contaminated – remediation required	Basic Summary of Records
850 Oliver St Meekatharra 6642	Remediated for restricted use	Basic Summary of Records

#### 4.2.3 CLIMATE

Meekatharra has a dry climate with hot summers and mild winters. The annual average rainfall is around 232 mm on an average and is fairly well distributed throughout the year although there is considerable annual variation. See **Figure 7**.

**FIGURE 7 - MEEKATHARRA RAINFALL, MAX AND MIN TEMPERATURES**



Source: Weather Zone 2025

May-June is usually the wettest months with an average rainfall of 26-27 mm. The other wet months are January to March when thunderstorms can often produce heavy localised falls in short periods. Although rare, tropical lows or weakening tropical cyclones that usually originate off the Pilbara coast can bring widespread rain to the region.

January is the hottest month with an average temperature of 38.1°C, but temperatures above 41°C typically occur once a week when hot, dry, northeast to north westerly winds arrive.

High temperatures are usually followed by a cool change from the south and occasionally a thunderstorm.





By contrast winters are mild with the July average maximum and minimum temperatures being around 19°C and 7°C respectively. Overnight temperatures can fall below 5°C about once a week in a typical winter. Such temperatures occur on clear nights following a day of cool southerly winds.

The implications of climate change are difficult to forecast, however it is expected that the district's economy will only be partially affected. The district's economy is currently based on primary industries, mining and pastoral activities.

The capacity of the land to continue to support a viable pastoral industry is uncertain as the carrying capacity of the land is already stretched, well demonstrated by the demise of the sheep industry in the Shire.

On the other hand, the impact of climate change on mining is expected to be minimal.

### **Relevance to Strategy**

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's Bulletin 4870 – Climate Change: impacts and adaption for agriculture in Western Australia identified the following trends for Meekatharra and other inland areas:

- Increased variable rainfall;
- Increased annual temperatures by 0.6-1.3 degrees Celsius by 2030;
- Greater shift in temperature extremes (longer hot spells); and
- Increased fire danger.

Such trends are already evident in the data, with levels of precipitation notably decreasing and temperature increasing within the area. Such changes may lead to more extreme weather events such as droughts. Additionally, if temperatures proceed to increase, this will increase the potential of more frequent bushfires. In turn, these noted extreme events would have an impact amongst the flora and fauna within the area, causing stress and then potentially leading to extinction of species.

The Strategy acknowledges that the management of development is necessary, in order to prevent degradation of the natural environment. Additionally, the plan recognises an immediate need to improve land use and resource management, to ensure the protection and preservation of natural landscapes.

Furthermore, the Strategy supports the adoption of more sustainable practices and technologies in order to mitigate the effects of climate change, in line with the Government's Western Australian Climate Policy. The increased potential of extreme weather events associated with global warming, i.e. bushfires and droughts, act as major threats to urban development and biodiversity within the area. Such events can be detrimental to the livelihood of a small town such as Meekatharra.

#### **4.2.4 RANGELANDS ACQUIRED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND ATTRACTIONS**

The then Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW) prepared a background paper in 2013 for the management of 48 former pastoral properties purchased for nature conservation in the southern rangelands. The Doolgunna-Mooloolool Station is one such pastoral station.

Because the properties were no longer intended to be run as commercial pastoral operations by private individuals or corporations, they were no longer able to comply with the pastoral lease provisions of the *Land Administration Act 1997*. Accordingly, the leases were surrendered at purchase, and the areas reverted to unallocated Crown land.

Following acquisition for conservation, former pastoral properties were generally destocked by the lessee as a condition of sale. Destocking typically took from one to three years based on stock numbers, size of property and prevailing weather conditions.





The former pastoral properties were purchased for addition to the conservation reserve system and now form important components of the network of conservation lands. It is not intended to return properties to pastoral uses.

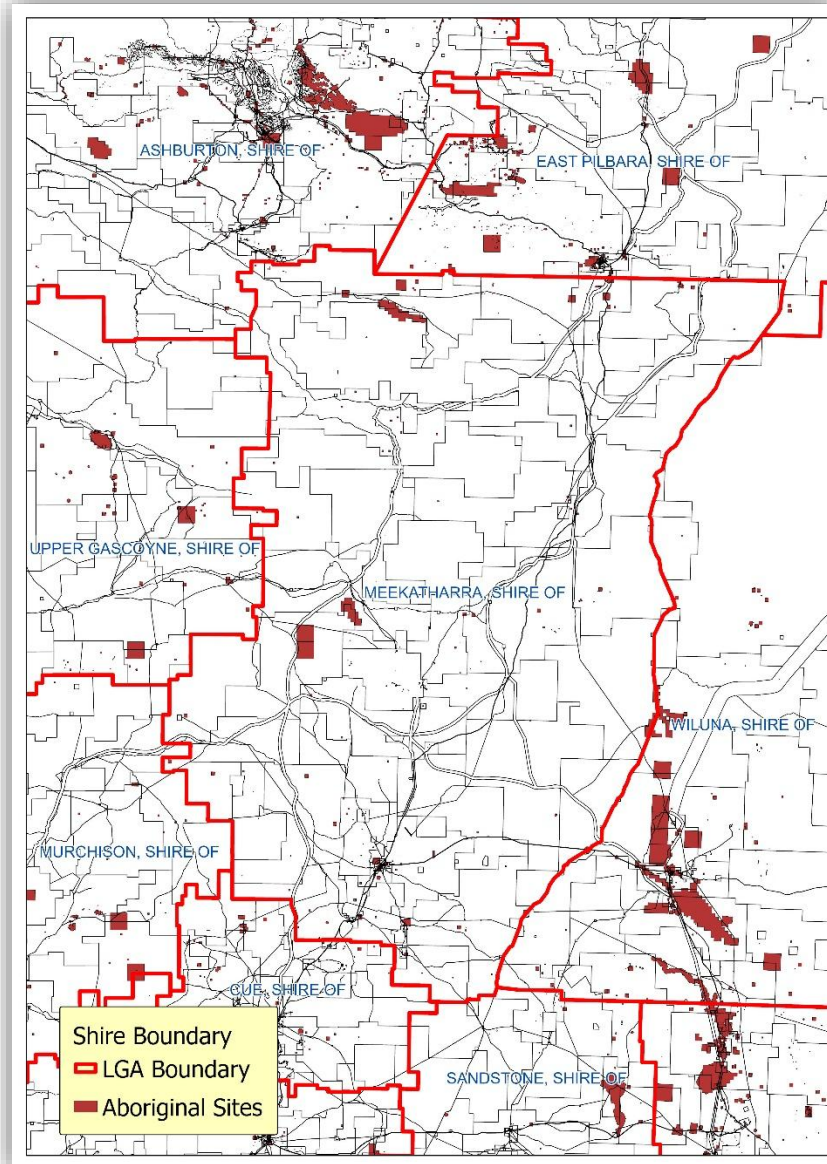
DBCA is responsible for management of the former pastoral properties including:

- neighbour liaison;
- closure of artificial waters (other than those required for pest animal control, fire management, or other strategic purposes);
- internal fencing and boundary fencing in partnership with neighbours; access control (for visitors and for management purposes); infrastructure maintenance (including homesteads);
- cultural heritage management; Aboriginal liaison;
- feral animal control; kangaroo control; weed control;
- condition monitoring; and
- research and biological survey.

#### 4.2.5 ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage's Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Inquiry System has 262 records shown in **Figure 8**.

**FIGURE 8 – REGISTERED ABORIGINAL CULTURAL HERITAGE PLACES**



Source: DPLH 2025



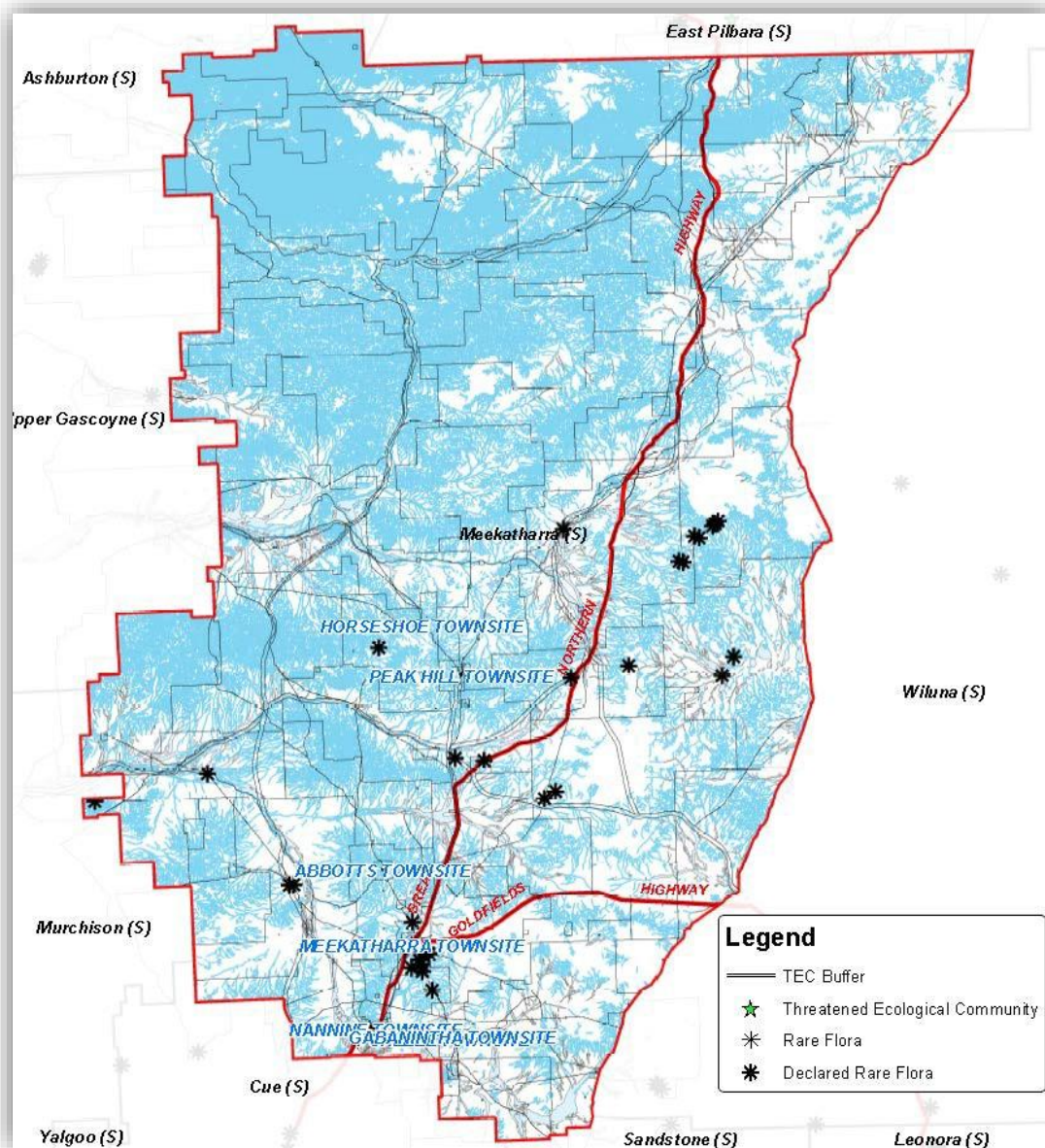
These records relate to registered Aboriginal Cultural Heritage places to protect a range of place types including artefacts, ceremonial areas, engraving, structures, mythological, painting and other places of cultural heritage value.

These sites of significance are areas that Aboriginal people value as important and significant to their cultural heritage. These sites are significant as they link Aboriginal culture and tradition to place, land and people over time. These areas form an integral part of Aboriginal identity and the heritage of Western Australia. The *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA)* protects all Aboriginal sites in the state. A field investigation to confirm the correct location of these sites should be considered by the relevant agencies before any developments near the assumed sites occur.

#### 4.2.5 FLORA

The flora in the Shire has mainly been mapped as being in the western part of the Shire. **Figure 9** shows the location of declared rare flora, rare flora and threatened ecological communities.

**FIGURE 9 - FLORA AND WATER FEATURES**



Source: Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) 2014.





The Figure also shows the abundance of waterways and creekways throughout the Shire, albeit most are dry.

There are no incidents of these occurring in or near the Meekatharra townsite, and it is unlikely that any proposals in this Strategy will impact any other flora or fauna incidents.

In spring, the red earth gives life to an array of wildflowers, creating some of Western Australia's most breathtaking displays. The Red Sturt Pea is the signature wildflower of the region (refer to **Figure 10**). As seen in **Figures 11** and **12**, a blanket of pink, yellow and white everlastings forms on what was previously red earth.

**FIGURE 10 - SIGNATURE WILDFLOWER THE RED STURT PEA**



Source: Dr Karl Brennan 2014

**FIGURE 11 - WILDFLOWER DISPLAY**



Source: Meekashire 2014.



**FIGURE 12 - FIELD OF PINK PARAKEELYA WILDFLOWERS**



**Source:** Drive Australia 2014.

*Acacia aneura* (Mulga) woodlands are also characteristic of the region. Commonly found around the mine sites in the area, along with *Hakea* and *Eremophila* open shrublands

*Maireana prosthocochaeta* is a priority 3 flora species. *Maireana prosthocochaeta* is described as an erect, open, glabrous, densely-leaved shrub, up to one metre high, with fleshy leaves and solitary flowers. This species has historically been recorded in the Ereman Botanical Province (Cue and Meekatharra); flowering period is July to August. It occurs in sandy loam, clays and salty soils and is found along hills and breakaways (DBCA, 2009).

When the winter rains fall, the red earth around Meekatharra gives life to a dazzling array of colourful wildflowers (Meekashire 2014)

#### **4.2.6 FAUNA**

Meekatharra Creek is home to many natural wonders. Two of its signature species include the red river gum and the white plumed honeyeater.

While out and about in Meekatharra you may also come across emus, red kangaroos, wedge-tailed eagles and bungarra lizards, which are prevalent in the area.

There have also been previous sightings of feral animals within the region such as foxes, cats, rabbits and goats.

#### **Relevance to Strategy**

Protection of known rare flora and fauna, declared rare flora and fauna, and threatened ecological communities, is an objective of the Strategy.

### **4.3 WATER MANAGEMENT**

#### **4.3.1 WATER FOR IRRIGATION**

The Shire of Meekatharra uses non-potable water for watering its parks and gardens. Currently water is pumped from the disused open pit mine located south west of the Great Northern Highway and the Gascoyne Junction Road. The Shire considers this to be an ideal and sustainable source that has no environmental impact.





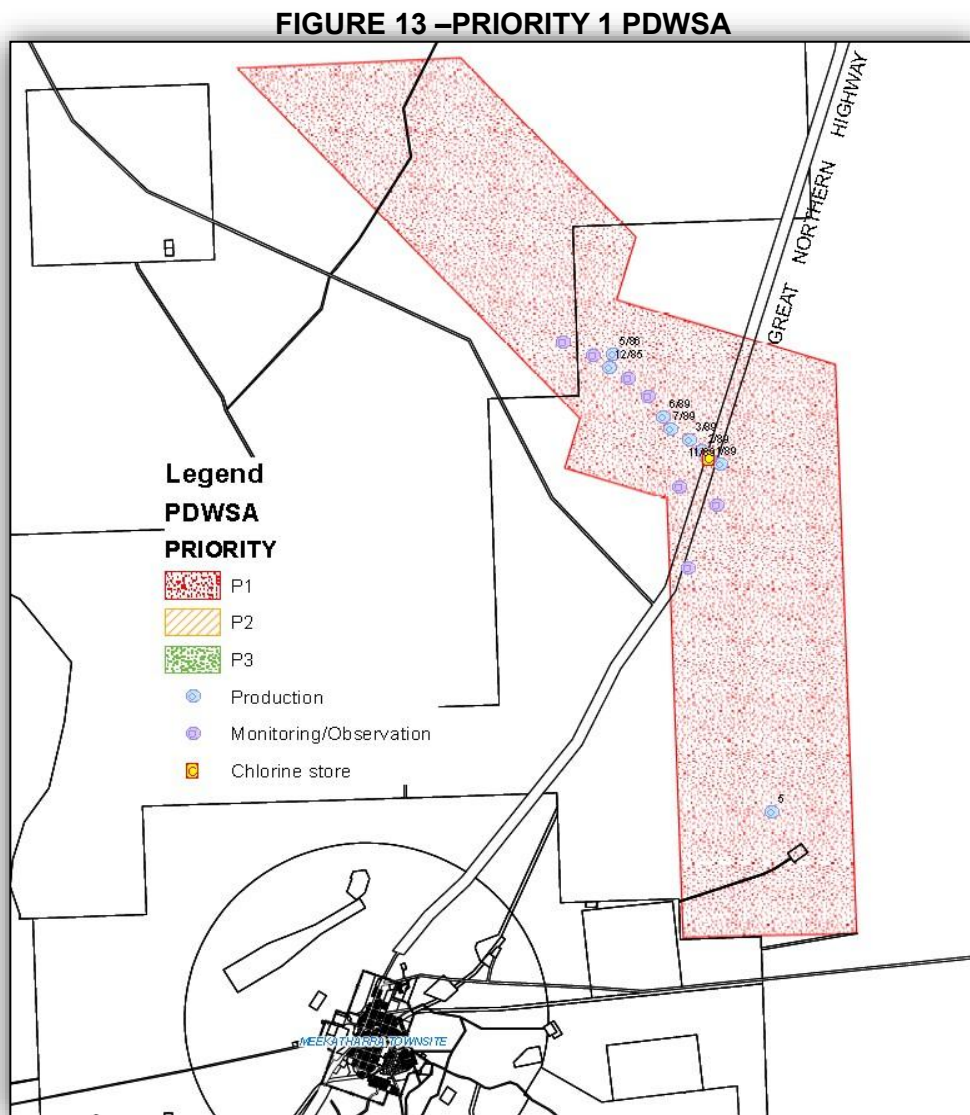
#### 4.3.2 PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SOURCE AREA

The Water Corporation supplies water to the town from seven bores in the Sherwood wellfield and one bore in the Domestic wellfield. The water supply bores abstract water from an unconfined alluvial formation. The water source has the potential to be contaminated by accidental spillages from transport along the Great Northern Highway and fuel storage at bores 5/85 and 12/85.

The current borefield capacity is sufficient to meet current and assumed future demands. The current licensed allocation of is 600,000 kL and the lower estimated sustainable capacity is 500,000 kL.

In 2022, the Water Corporation completed works to upgrade the Sherwood Pump Station by establishing a new desalination water treatment plant to improve the drinking water quality in Meekatharra. Works included two evaporation ponds, electro dialysis reversal unit and hybrid power system.

**Figure 13** shows the location of the Priority 1 Public Drinking Water Source Area (PDWSA) to protect the Meekatharra Water Reserve and the bore sites. The catchment is managed as a Priority 1 PDWSA as it represents the sole supply for the town of Meekatharra. The Meekatharra Water Reserve water source protection plan (2001) details the management approach and risks for use within the protection area.



Source: DWER, PLANWEST



An old domestic wellfield consisting of one production bore (No. 5) seven kilometres north east of the town has now been removed from the site.

#### 4.3.3 WATER SERVICES

The Water Corporation (WC) is the main service provider for water supply for Meekatharra. **Figure 14** shows the current extent of the network. Meekatharra town water supply is obtained from bores located about 11.6 km north east of the town. Infrastructure including bore and tanks are located on the west of the Great Northern Highway.

**FIGURE 14 - MEEKATHARRA WATER SUPPLY INFRASTRUCTURE**



Source: Locate 2014

There are 472 services in the town using 224,142 kL/year with 150 vacant services.

The bores provide a supply to the pump station site in the Meekatharra townsite (Reserve 11783) located south of the Goldfields Highway. The site is 2.66 hectares and is considered by the Department of Water to be adequate for the foreseeable future, and that the pump station noise buffer is contained on site.

a golden prospect





Meekatharra has an above average consumption/domestic service of 410kL (Table 4.4) and high compared to neighbouring towns. There is potential for savings to be made. The shower head swap programme had only 9 customers. Waterwise garden workshops have been held.

The shire and school area are high users. Further understanding of water use and patterns may identify areas of potential water efficiency/savings.

Water Management Strategy at a local level may prompt some of the recent events to engage the community including; The Meeka Goes Green committee has invited residents to participate in a 'Best Garden' competition with four different categories including:

- Best Improvement
- Best Waterwise Garden
- Best Edible Garden
- Most Creative Garden.

Yulga Jinna, Karalundi and the Kumarina roadhouse provide for their own water supplies.

### Relevance to Strategy

A Strategy objective is to ensure a sustainable potable water supply for the townsites in order to be proactive in providing for any additional development in the future.

#### 4.3.4 SURFACE WATER FEATURES

The Shire is well endowed with surface water features, most of which are seasonal.

**Figure 15** provides a distribution throughout the Shire of these creeks, waterways and river beds.

The Shire recognises the value of these waterways in the environment by preserving and enhancing their presence to retain the Shire's 'remote' identity. The major waterways in the Shire include the Gascoyne, Murchison and Greenough Rivers as well as the Meekatharra Creek. Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC's) in the Shire are associated with the tributaries / main channel of the Greenough River and Murchison River.

The Gascoyne River and Greenough River (and tributaries) are proclaimed under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914. The bed and banks of this river system are protected under this legislation administered by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

The Gascoyne River and Murchison River contribute to attracting tourism to the Shire of Meekatharra through the Gascoyne Murchison Outback Pathways – Kingsford Smith Mail Run and other tourism initiatives. Meeka Rangelands Discovery Trail winds around Meekatharra Creek.

#### 4.3.5 FLOOD EVENTS

Meekatharra Creek runs in a north-south direction just west of Main Street. **Figure 15** provides anecdotal evidence of flood levels throughout the Meekatharra Townsite. These areas have been plotted through a combination of on-ground evidence, detailed contour information and discussions with the Shire.

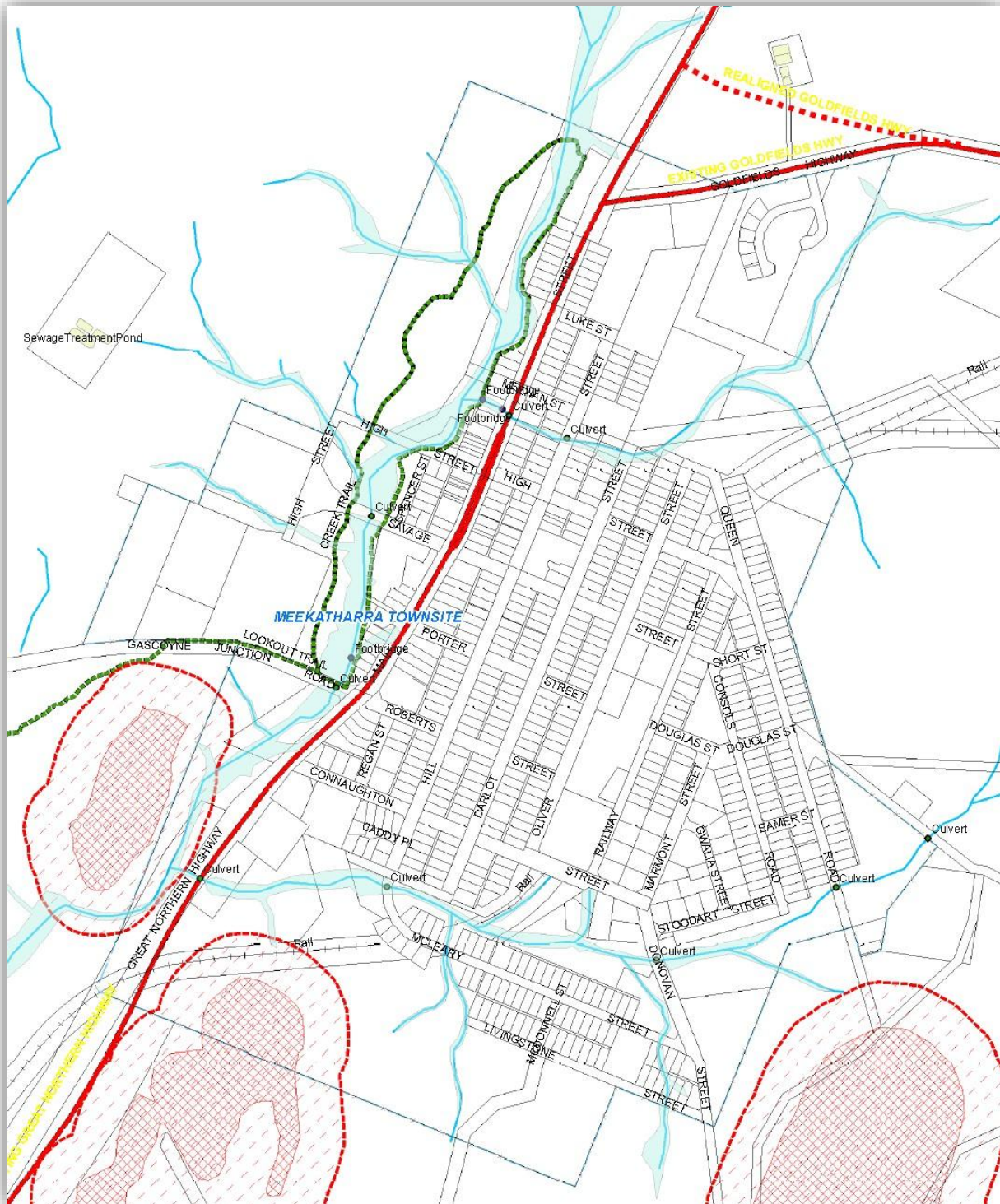
Many of these areas are already acknowledged in the existing Scheme and will be protected from at-risk development in the preparation of the new Scheme.

The areas shown in **Figure 15** are indicative only and may require further investigation. Where new areas for development are proposed, or where a structure plan is required, additional examination and analysis may provide more accurate information

The red cross-hatched areas indicate open pit mines, blue lines are water flow lines and light blue areas indicate where there has been evidence of flooding.



FIGURE 15 - MEEKATHARRA FLOOD RISK AREAS



a golden prospect

Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

## 4.4 POPULATION AND HOUSING, INCLUDING OFFICIAL FORECASTS

### 4.4.1 POPULATION

The Shire of Meekatharra, like most inland areas of Western Australia has had relatively small population numbers since the mid-1970s. Mining activity in the area contributes to the Shire's transient population trends over time, with periods of high activity seeing a greater influx of people living and working in the Shire.





**Table 2** shows the change in population over the last 3 Census periods demonstrating the sensitivity of the population to the prosperity of the primary industries in the region (and world). Since 2011, Meekatharra has seen a slight downward trend in its total population.

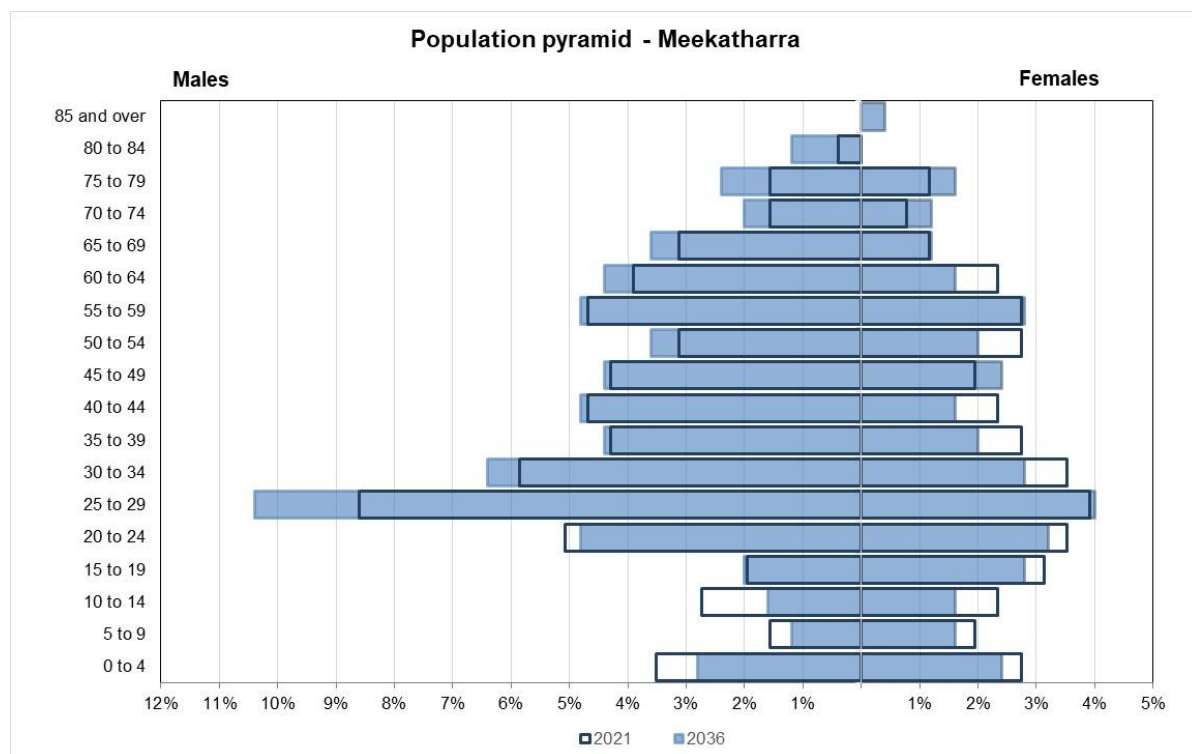
**TABLE 2 - POPULATION STATISTICS FOR MEEKATHARRA SHIRE**

Year	Gender	Count	TOTAL	Pop Change	% Change
2011	m	822	1,377		
	f	555			
2016	m	632	1,067	-310	-22.5
	f	434			
2021	m	482	849	-218	-20.4
	f	366			

Source: ABS Census (2011-2021).

**Figure 16** demonstrates the population pyramid of the Meekatharra Shire as at the 2021 Census and the forecast for 2036.

**FIGURE 16 - POPULATION AGE PYRAMID 2021**



Source: DPLH WA Tomorrow No. 12

The interests of all age groups need to be addressed to attract families to permanently settle in the area. These age-groups needs include childcare facilities, a variety of sporting and hobby clubs – with the appropriate managers and facilitators, education options, men's shed and other interest groups.

The Council is prepared to cater for an expected increasing number of people over 65 and their demands on future aged persons' facilities. One can assume that this aging population may want to settle in the district and as such will be demanding the appropriate services. If these services are not provided, these residents will seek an alternative town as a location to settle. The implications of an aging population profile include the need to adequately cater for appropriate accommodation, medical facilities and support services.



Aged persons' accommodation precincts need to be established. The area could incorporate a 'seniors' precinct' including recreation facilities and senior support amenities. Accommodation facilities need to be well located within walking distance the main commercial and community facilities and could benefit by grouping of these facilities serving residents with similar interests and needs.

The Shire will encourage the consolidation and growth of established community settlements and will seek to improve communications and services between these centres. The hierarchy of settlements must be agreed to avoid duplication of resources and maximise the use of available funding sources.

The Shire's distance from Perth, its climate and employment opportunities will remain the main factors affecting the rate of growth in the population. The Meekatharra Townsite's location on the Highway provides for a strategic stopping point for passing tourists and trade and will continue to be reliant on the continued mining operations in the District.

In order to provide a choice for prospective residents in the District the Council is keen to ensure that a range of alternative residential lifestyle options be made available. However, the townsite is constrained due to limited freehold land available outside of Meekatharra.

#### 4.4.2 HOUSING

The housing sector, being small, is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from, however it is clear that the proportions of households rented, owned outright and owned with a mortgage reflects the lack of permanency in the region and the reliance on the main industry.

**TABLE 3 - HOUSING IN MEEKATHARRA 20011-2021**

<b>Dwelling Type</b>	<b>2011 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2016 WA (%)</b>	<b>2021 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2021 WA (%)</b>
Occupied private dwellings	-	-	62.3	87.9
Unoccupied private dwellings	-	-	37.7	12.1
<b>Dwelling Structure</b>				
Separate house	84.5	79	81.1	80.4
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.	5.3	10.5	6.4	10.6
Flat, unit or apartment	1.1	8.1	1.3	7.9
Other dwelling	9.2	2.4	6.9	0.9
<b>Tenure</b>				
Owned outright	15.9	30.2	19.5	29.5
Owned with a mortgage	8.5	35.1	8.7	37.8
Rented	45.2	26	63.6	29.2
Other tenure type	1.1	1	1.7	1.1
Tenure type not stated	29.3	7.7	6.5	2.3
<b>Household Composition</b>				
Family	45.6	66.5	58.6	72.2
Single or lone	19.1	22.9	36.6	23.8
Group	4.9	3.3	4.7	4

Source: ABS 2021 Census.

#### Relevance/ application

The population and housing data is important to consider in order to properly assess the future growth (and therefore land allocation) requirements of Meekatharra.



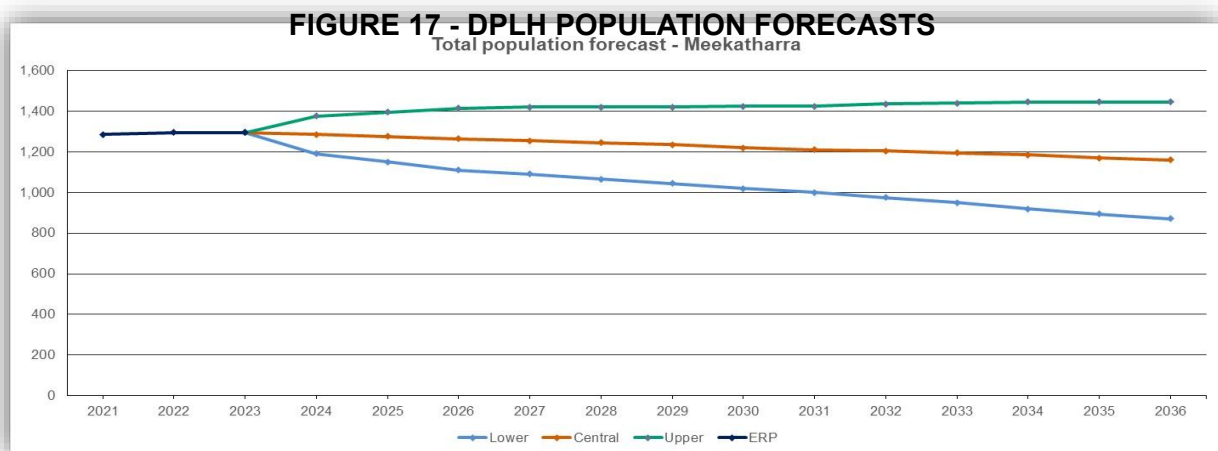
**Table 3** shows the prevalence of families within the Meekatharra community, it also displays resident's preference towards rental housing, a common characteristic of country towns, however where houses are owned they are more commonly owned outright. Such data demonstrates the need for a choice of housing, which caters to a diverse array of citizens. Additionally, due to the projected population increases, it is critical for the plan to address provision of infrastructure and services to meet the growing demands of the current and future populations.

#### 4.4.3 POPULATION FORECASTS

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage's forecasts for the Meekatharra Shire shows a range between 1,000 and 1,425 by 2031, with the median forecast indicating a total population of around 1,210 people in 2031. These forecasts are based on the 2016 population count, of 1,090. **Figure 17** shows a graphic representation of the range of scenarios from the WA Tomorrow 12 forecast, with the central and lower scenarios estimating a general downward trend (between -0.7 and -2.57% average annual growth rate) in Meekatharra's population over the next 10 years.

WA Tomorrow consists of three bands of forecasts upper, central and lower to the year 2036. The forecasts represent the best estimate of an area's future population size and age-sex structure if trends in fertility, mortality and migration continue. The 'Upper Band' represents a 10% probability that the population will be more than or equal to the Upper Band, and an 90% probability that it will be lower. Conversely, the 'Lower Band' represents a 10% chance that the population will be lower or equal to the Lower Band, and an 90% chance of it being higher. The Central Forecast, like the WA Tomorrow State forecast 'Band C', represents the best estimate of the future population based on past trends.

It is important to note that the smaller the population of an area, the greater the variance in the population itself and therefore, the wider the bands.



Source: WA Tomorrow No 12

#### 4.4.4 TOWNSITES

Meekatharra is the only populated townsite in the Shire. There are six other gazetted townsites, however these sites are historical townships that are no longer inhabited. A snapshot of these townsites, from north to south, is provided below.

**Horseshoe Townsite** is located about 126 due north of Meekatharra townsite and has an area of 43.2ha. **Figure 18** shows an aerial photograph of the area.

As the photograph above clearly shows the townsite remains undeveloped; however there is evidence of mining activities in the area.

The inset adjacent provides an indication of the land ownership. All the lots are Crown Land with the surrounding area a Crown Reserve for Townsite.

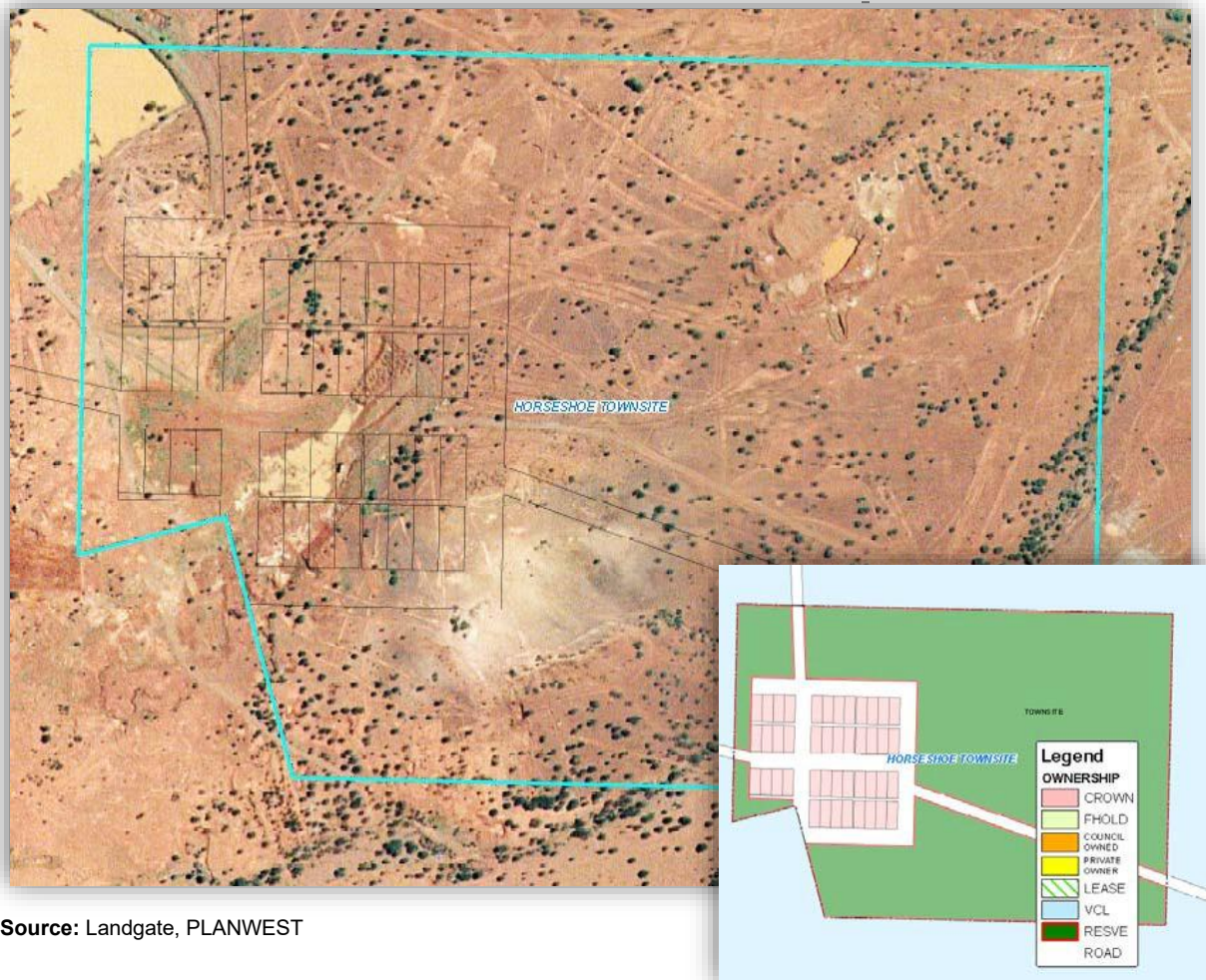




Following the discovery of gold in the immediate area in 1897 the government had an area thought to be suitable for a townsite surveyed in 1898. The area proved to not be satisfactory to the locals who wanted another area to be used. The new area was surveyed and the town was gazetted in 1901. The population of the town was 60 (60 males and no females) in 1898.

The town was often known as Horseshoe Bend as a result of one of the original leases in the area was the shape of a horseshoe. It was also commonly known as The Shoe.

**FIGURE 18 - HORSESHOE TOWNSITE**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

**Peak Hill Townsite** is 82.5ha and about 110 kilometres due north of Meekatharra Townsite, but still 35 kilometres from the nearest part of Great Northern Highway. **Figure 19** shows an aerial photograph and a land ownership plan. A house is located on the mid west part of the townsite.

The aerial photograph again shows the extent of adjacent mining activities. On the west side of the photograph can be seen the edge of a large open cut mine.

The land ownership is almost all VCL with several Crown Reserves – mostly for 'Government Requirements'. The land surrounding the townsite is a Crown Reserve for a 'Common'.

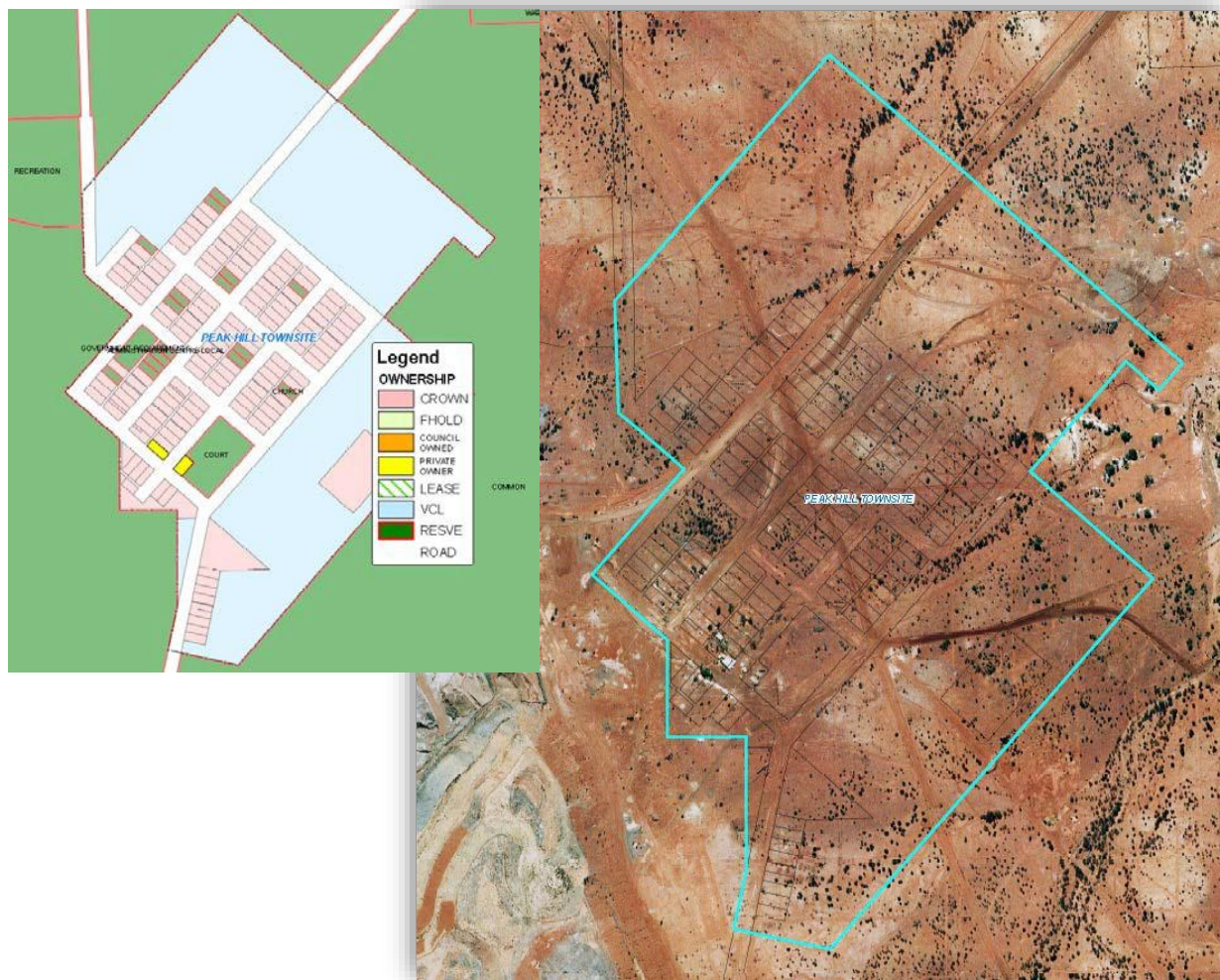
Early exploration at the site occurred in the 1890s when gold was discovered by William John Wilson in 1892. The townsite was gazetted in 1897, and the field has had varied fortunes even in early years. Before 1913, the mine produced some 270,000 ounces of gold. Peak Hill was also included as a location in a regional newspaper network of more outlying mining communities in the 1920s and 1930s. The population of the town was 190 (180 males and 10 females) in 1898.

a golden prospect





FIGURE 19 - PEAK HILL TOWNSITE



a golden prospect

Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

A Walker was the proprietor of the Peak Hill General Store up until 1954, when he retired to his daughter's farm (Nee Campbell) McCourt Farm, Peppermint Grove Beach, South of Capel. Mr Walker was the last full-time resident of Peak Hill.

In the 1970s it was reduced to a ghost town with a few remaining residents, however in the 1980s activity resumed, producing around 650,000 ounces of gold. The mine became dormant again the 2000s

**Abbotts Townsite** is located 31.5 kilometres northwest of Meekatharra townsite. The area is 33.4 hectares – the majority of which is a Crown Reserve for a 'Common' containing the signs of a creek line. The aerial photograph (**Figure 20**) shows evidence of mining activities in the area immediately east of the townsite boundary, however the townsite area appears to be free of such activity.

The ownership map shows the smaller lots as mostly VCL with a few Crown Reserves for various public uses.

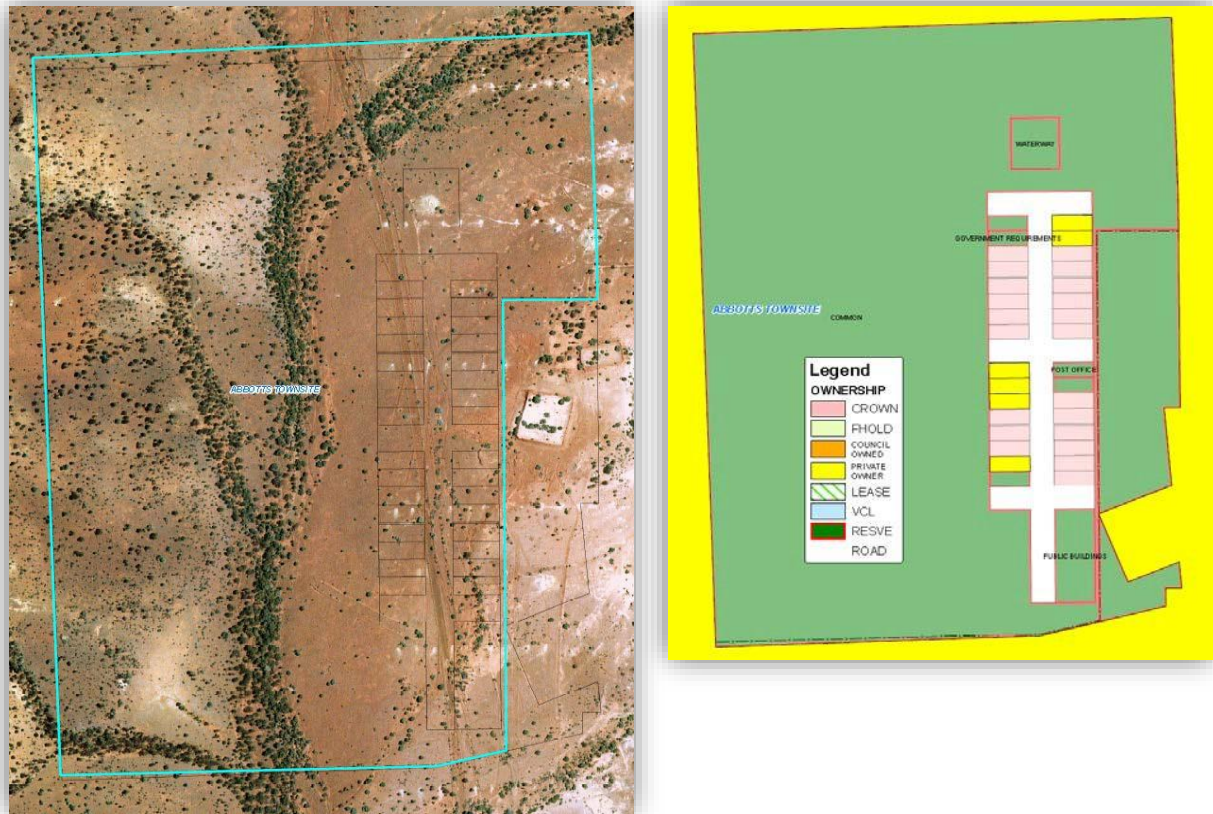
The townsite was initially established on 1898 and gazetted in 1900; the town is named after a prospector named Vincent Vrauizan who had changed his name to Vincent Abbott in 1893.

One of the earliest mines to open was the Black Iguana. In 1895 the Black Iguana and the Abbotts mine were both operating ten head stamp mills in the town for processing ore.

In 1902 all of the boarders at Abbott's Hotel were poisoned by eating tinned beetroot, many of the victims were given emetics, which were administered with much success. No fatalities were recorded from the incident.



**FIGURE 20 - ABBOTTS TOWNSITE**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

**Meekatharra Townsite** is the largest townsite in the Shire with an area of over 288 hectares and is located on the junction of the Great Northern and Goldfields Highway. The southern boundary of the Shire is about 55 kilometres along the Highway.

The aerial photograph shown in **Figure 21** shows the significant development of the townsite and the land ownership designations. A large portion of the town is in private ownership, with the remainder of lots being crown land either leased or managed by the Shire or another organisation.

The settlement provides a variety of services and amenities. Many government agencies are established in town including schools, fire station, hospital, motels/hotels, movie theatre, police station, recreation areas, post office, library, churches power station and caravan parks.

**Figure 22** provides a distribution of these uses but also identifies the vacant land for industrial and residential uses.

There are limited vacant industrial and commercial zoned lots in the townsite. A future industrial area subject to further investigation is identified to the north of Goldfields Highway. However, there is limited ability to expand beyond this given the majority of land outside of Meekatharra is used for mining and pastoral activities and there is limited freehold land available.

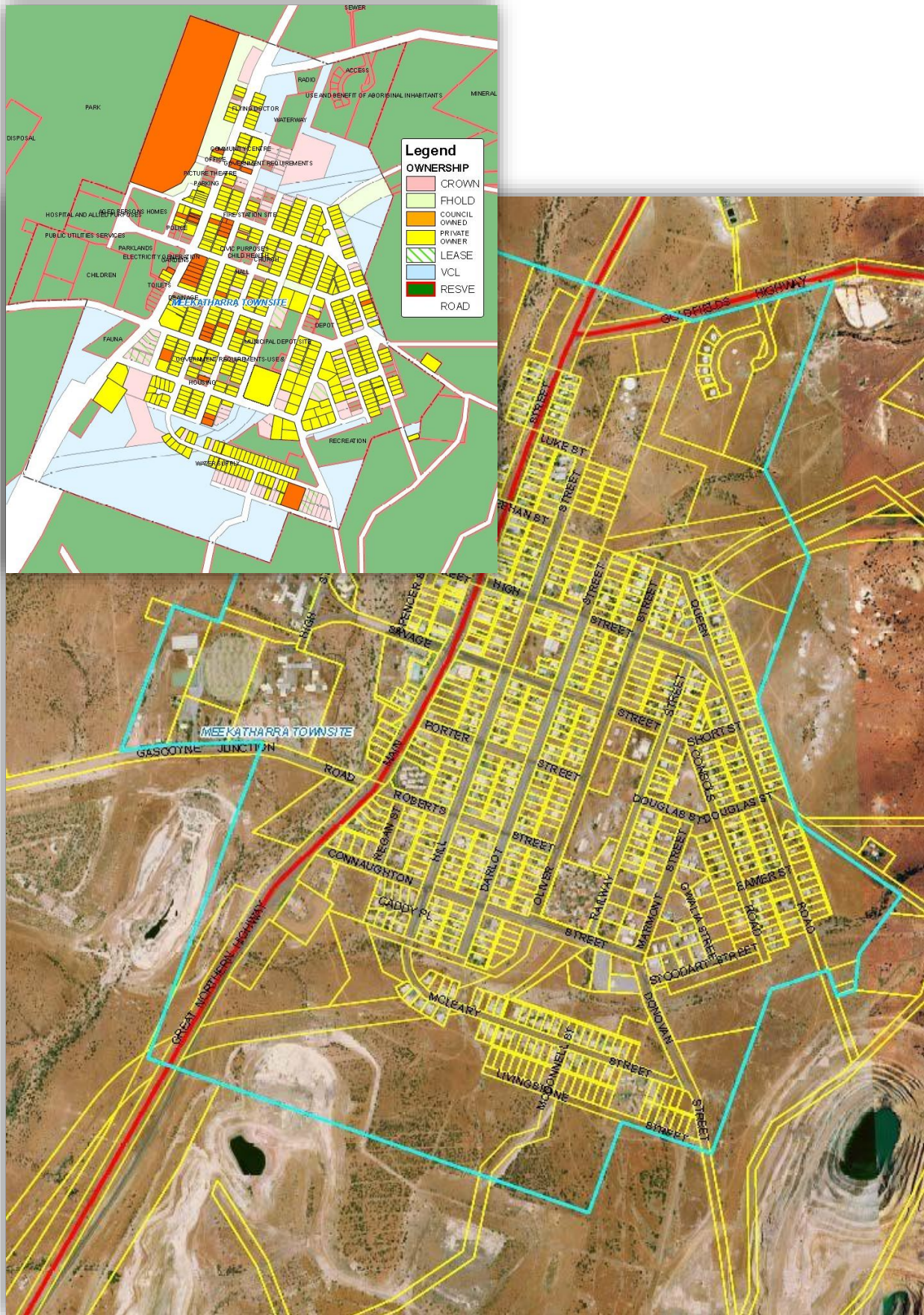
It seems the first settlement at Meekatharra occurred in 1894 and that, in May 1896, after the prospectors Meehan, Porter and Soich discovered gold, miners moved to the new settlement from the other East Murchison fields and mining grew rapidly in scale and sophistication. The Peak Hill mining town was founded in 1892 approximately 100 km up the road during this initial gold rush.

Success on the Meekatharra field was short-lived. It was only because a second gold discovery occurred in 1899 that the town survived. In 1901 the Meekatharra State Battery began operation and by Christmas Day 1903 the township had been officially gazetted.

a golden prospect



### FIGURE 21 - MEEKATHARRA TOWNSITE



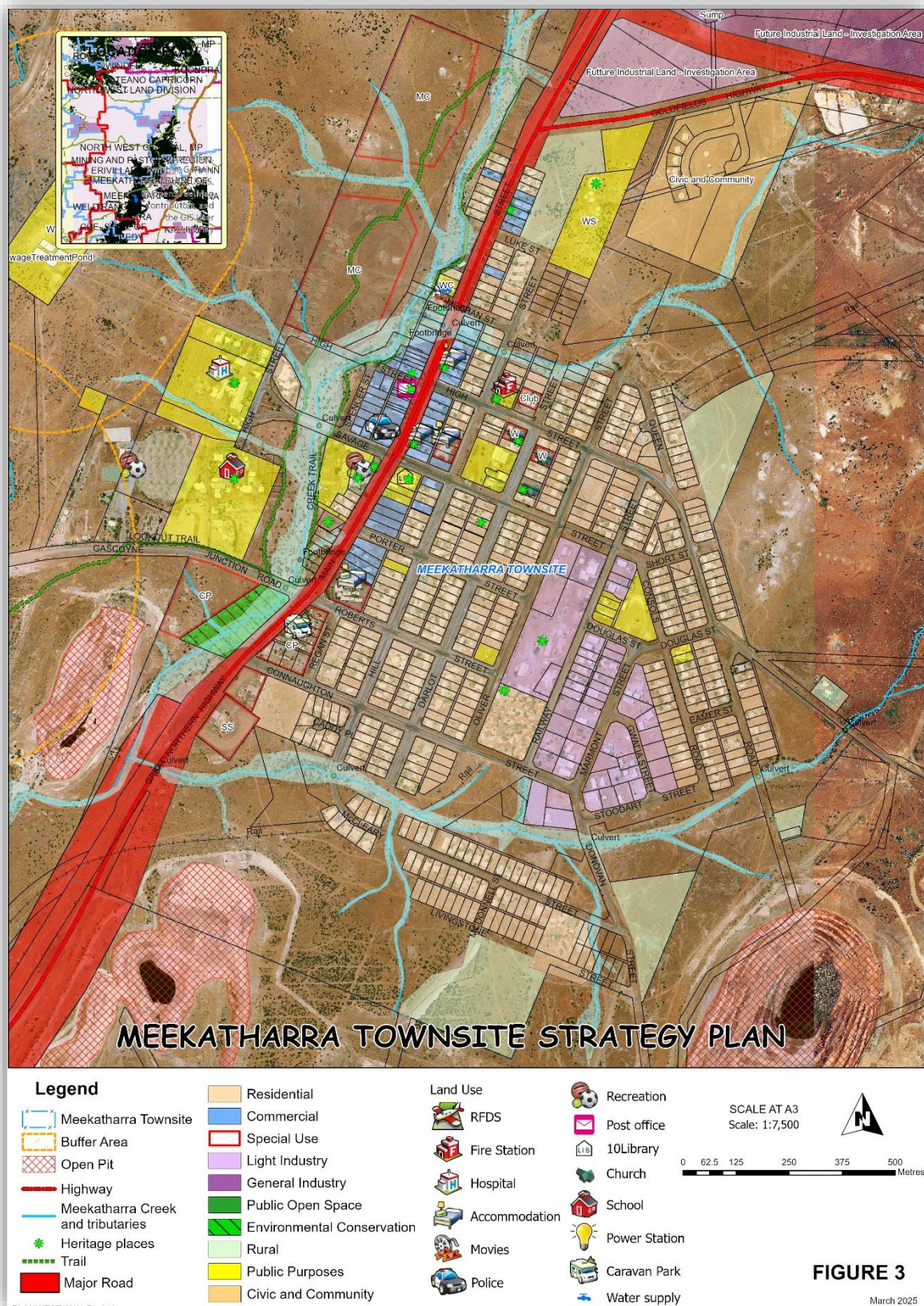
**Source:** Landgate, PLANWEST

# a golden prospect





FIGURE 22 - MEEKATHARRA TOWNSITE LAND USES



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

In 1906 Alfred Wernam Canning was appointed to develop a stock route from the East Kimberley to the Murchison. The stock route, comprising 54 wells, was completed in 1908 and, when the railway arrived in Meekatharra in 1910, the town became the railhead at the





end of the route. In many ways the railway ensured the town's survival. In 1910 it took the first shipment of wool out of the area and it continued to serve the local pastoral interests until it was closed down in 1978.

The town and surrounding stations were isolated by flood waters in 1926 resulting in provisions in the town running low after supplies were unable to get through after a week.

From 1927 until 1931, a railway line operated from Meekatharra to the manganese mine at Horseshoe, some 80 miles (128 km) distant.

A substantial gold deposit which lies just south of the townsite called the Paddy's Flat area was explored and mined by Western Mining Corporation and Dominion Mining Ltd in the 1990s

**Nannine Townsite** includes 75.4 hectares of land of which the majority remains unused. The townsite is located 36 kilometres south of Meekatharra just south of the Great Northern Highway. **Figure 23** shows the presence of an open cut mine to the east of the townsite boundary and the ponding works covering the northeast quadrant of the townsite area.

**FIGURE 23 - NANNINE TOWNSITE**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

a golden prospect





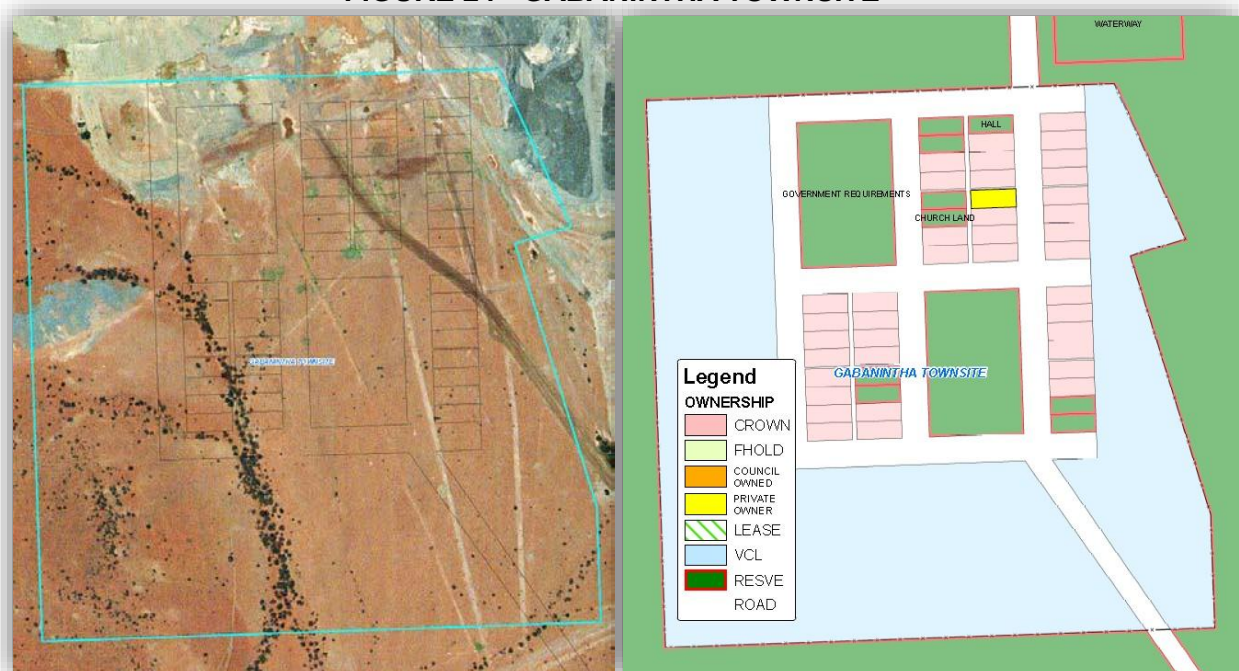
The figure also shows a creek line running through the northwest corner of the townsite area, The ownership plan below shows that the majority of the townsite remains VCL with several Crown Reserves for specific purposes.

A town was proclaimed in September 1891 and gazetted in 1893. It is claimed that it was the first town in the region. By 1894 the town was large enough to be given its own electoral district, and in 1896 construction began on a Northern Railway between Nannine and Cue, Western Australia, which was completed in 1903. The continuation of the line to Meekatharra was begun in 1909.

**Gabanintha Townsite** is 35 hectares in area and is located about 40 kilometres south of Meekatharra Townsite and over 30 kilometres east of Great Northern Highway. The open pit mine in the north east part of the townsite is part of the Historic Gold mining operation. As can be seen from **Figure 24** there is no other development in the townsite.

Again the presence of a creek line can be seen across the south west part of the area.

**FIGURE 24 - GABANINTHA TOWNSITE**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

The name of the town can be found on maps dating as far back as 1894, with gold mining leases being taken out in the surrounding areas in 1895 to 1910. In 1895, an abandoned lease known as The Emerald Isle Star of the East was taken up by a syndicate and renamed Gabanintha. While driving on the old workings 3ft of reef was exposed showing good gold.

shopkeeper from Nannine, William Small, built a hotel in the town and applied for a licence in 1896. The state government was petitioned in 1897 by the miners of the area to survey the townsite which had land reserved the following year resulting in the town being gazetted in 1898.

The population of the town was 46 (44 males and 2 females) in 1898.

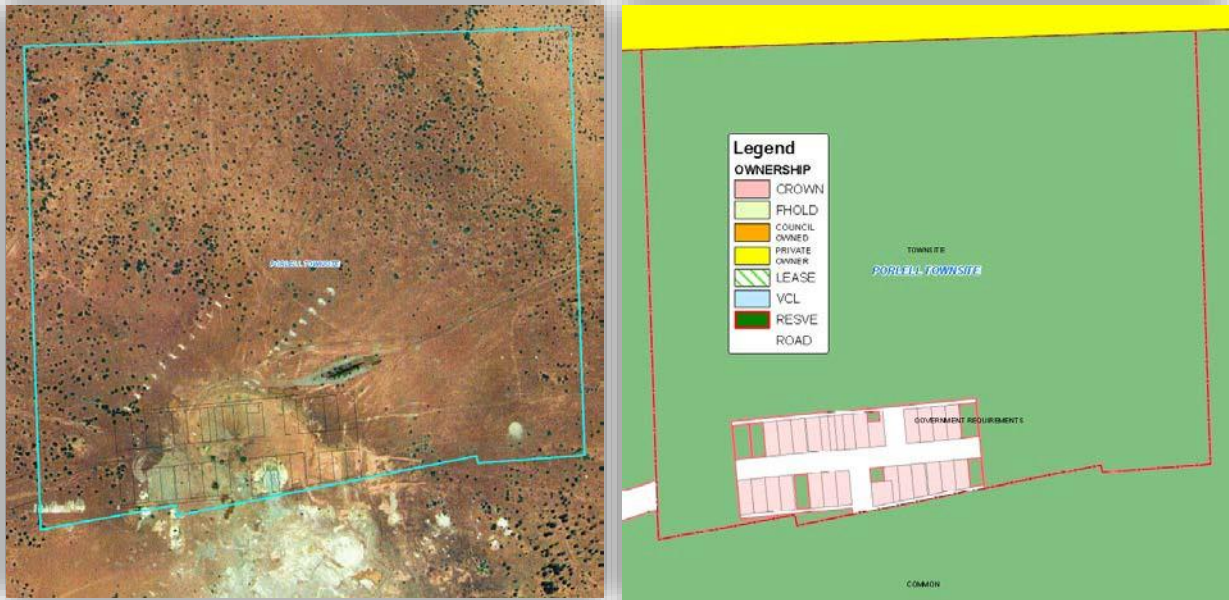
Lots were surveyed in 1905 and mining continued around the town until 1944.

**Porlell Townsite** is 53.5 hectares in area and located only about 4 kilometres west of Gabanintha townsite. Historic Gold also operates mining activities seen in the southern part of the townsite area. Most of the town is a Crown Reserve for 'Townsite', with the smaller lots mostly VCL. There is no other development in the townsite.



The townsite was gazetted in 1899 after significant development had been established. Star of the East was not considered to be a suitable name so the town took the name of a nearby lake, Porlelle Lake, which had been named when the area was surveyed in 1886. The spelling was amended for unknown reasons and the meaning of the name is unknown.

**FIGURE 25 - PORLELL TOWNSITE**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

The town supported Jules Gascards coachline, a weekly coach service that ran every Sunday to Nannine which was known to run from 1896. A postal service was established in 1896 as were two hotels; the Gabanintha Hotel and the Yagahong Hotel.

### **Relevance of Information**

The relevance of this information is to identify where majority of development is taking place. This will allow the Council to concentrate its servicing efforts in building the social and physical infrastructure in the main settlement of Meekatharra.

### **4.4.5 ABORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS**

The following two settlements are Aboriginal communities that are not formal townsites. These include Yulga Jinna and Buttah Windee (Gidgee Gully). Both communities have adopted Community Layout Plans prepared under the provisions set out in State Planning Policy 3.2 – Aboriginal Settlements. A third community, Madunka Ewurry, previously existed on the north eastern corner of the Meekatharra townsite. The community infrastructure, including six houses, was removed several years ago.

**Yulga Jinna** is located about 115 kilometres north of Meekatharra townsite. The community is about 47 kilometres west of the Great Northern Highway accessed via an unsealed road. **Figure 260** provides an aerial photograph of the area as well as an extract from the Community Layout Plan.

The population of the community, as identified in the 2016 ABS Census, is approximately 63 people. However, since then a number of new dwellings have been constructed. The Community Chairman has previously advised that Yulga Jinna currently has a population of 80 people. This figure tends to fluctuate considerably due to transient housing and living arrangements.

The community is located within the fully Determined Nharnuwangga (WAD72/98) Native Title claim area. Children of school age at Yulga Jinna attend the Yulga Jinna Remote Community School that caters for years k-10. Residents are employed to assist with work or administrative

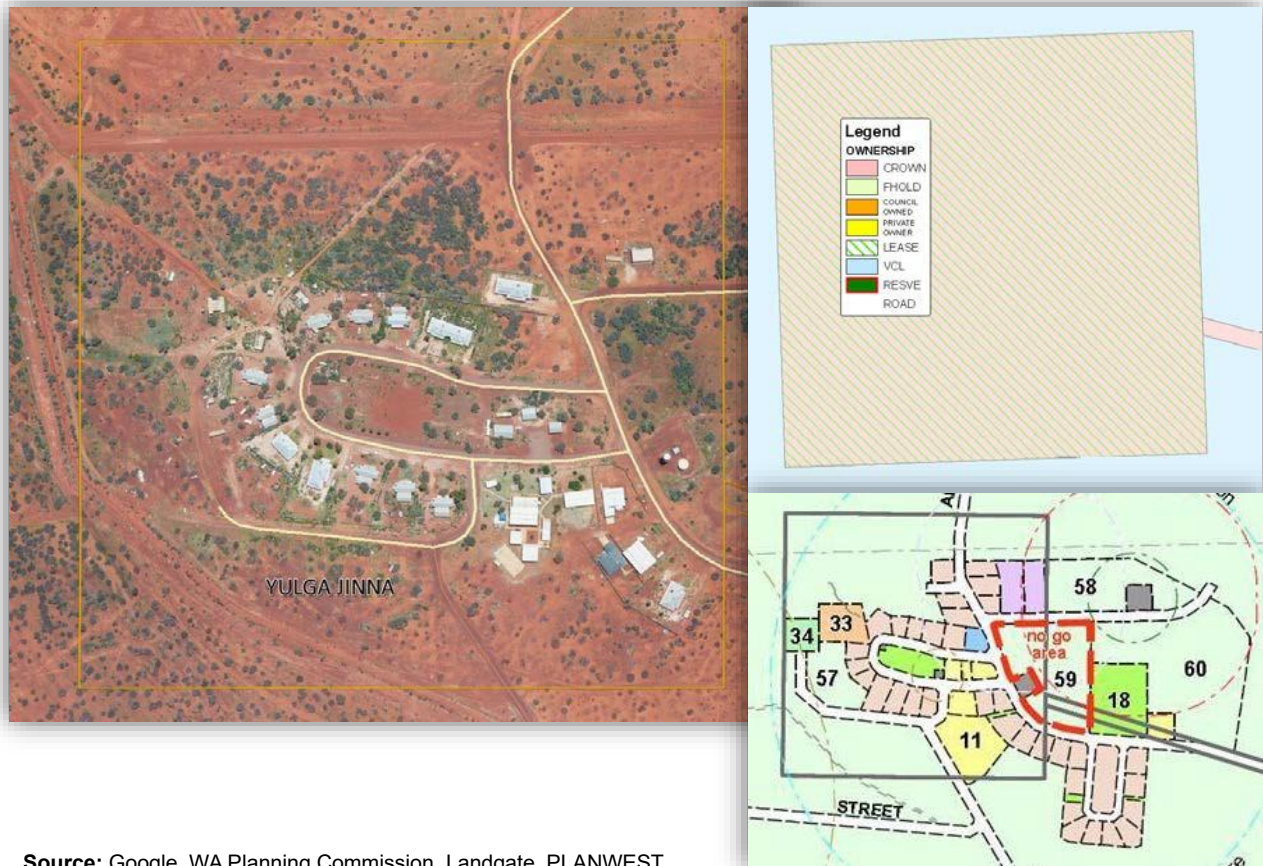




activities as part of managing the community, or obtain employment on nearby pastoral stations or mine sites.

The community is managed through its incorporated body, Yulga Jinna Aboriginal Corporation, incorporated under the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976 on 30 April 1993.

**FIGURE 26 - YULGA JINNA COMMUNITY**



Source: Google, WA Planning Commission, Landgate, PLANWEST

**Buttah Windee** is a small community located only 5 kilometres west of Meekatharra townsite just south of the Landor-Meekatharra Road. It is located on Crown Reserve 42783 and within the Registered Wajarri Yamatji (WAD6033/98) Native Title claim area.

The population of the Buttah Windee is approximately 12 people, however, this figure tends to fluctuate when family gatherings occur or there are sporting carnivals or a funeral in Meekatharra.

The community is managed through its incorporated body, Buttah Windee Aboriginal Corporation, incorporated under the Aboriginal Councils and Associations Act 1976 on 16 June 1993. I

**Figure 27** provides an aerial photograph of the community area, with the community layout plan adopted by the WAPC in 2007 and amended in 2012. In 2019, six solar hydropanels were installed to provide the community with up to 900 litres of potable water a month. A small fish farm is also serviced by the water supply which supports local employment.

### Relevance of Information

The planning of these two communities is subject to SPP 3.2 Aboriginal Settlements where community layout plans are prepared in accordance with the SPP guidelines. As the communities are located outside of the Scheme area, they are not zoned and development approval is not required. However, building and health approvals can still be issued by the

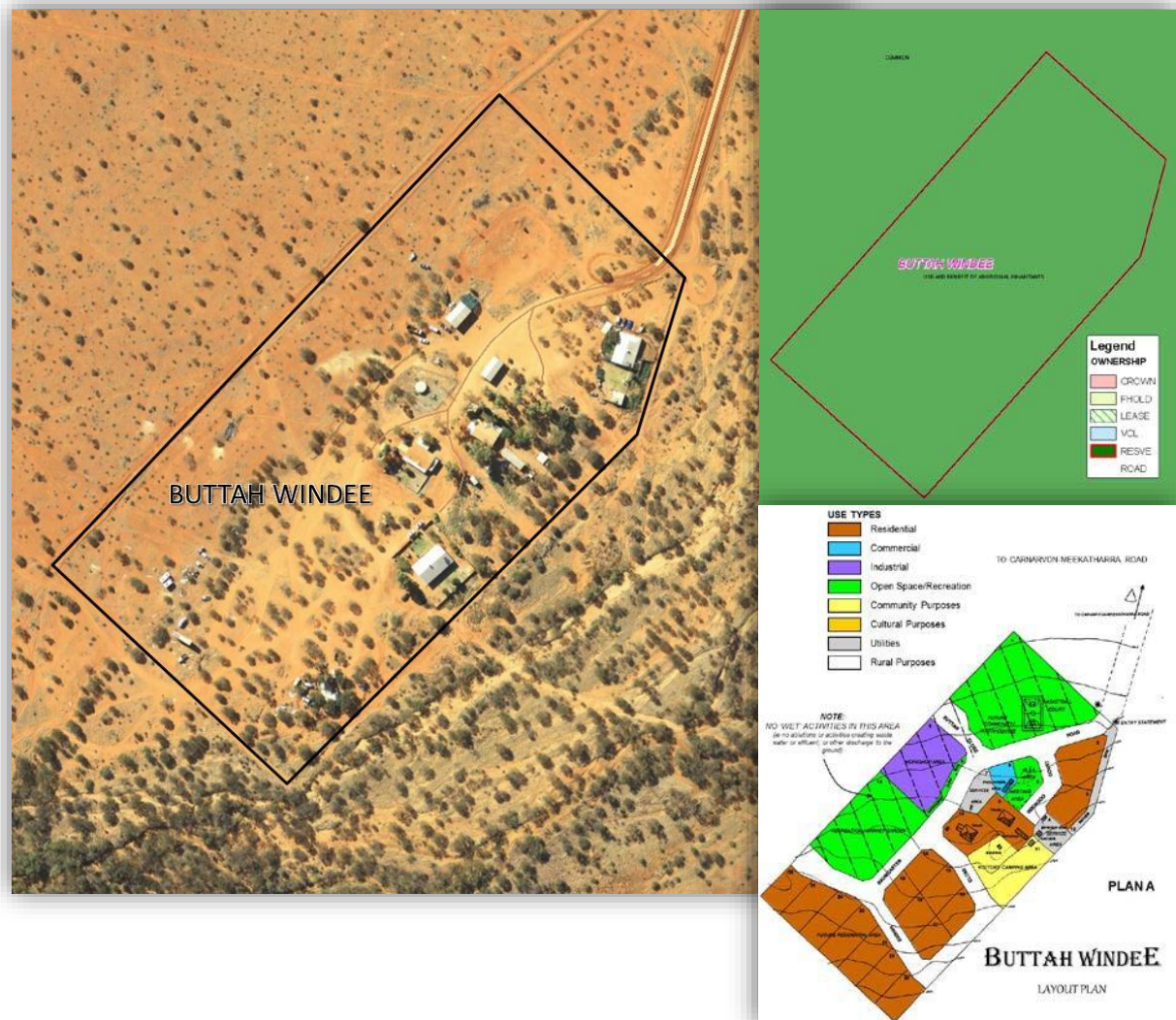
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local government. The adopted layout plan provides formal guidance for future development within the settlement.

**FIGURE 27 - BUTTAH WINDEE COMMUNITY**



Source: Google, Landgate, PLANWEST

**Karalundi Aboriginal Education Community** is located about 55 kilometres north of Meekatharra townsite.

The development is substantial and contains a school, shop, accommodation as well as other support services. The community has a fluctuating population of around 60 people. This figure includes school borders.

The community is located about 850 metres west of the Great Northern Highway serviced with a sealed access road. The community is serviced with power from Meekatharra and has its own water supply sourced from a series of bores along the access road.

The property is 212 hectares in size and is held in fee simple as shown in Figure 32. This Figure also shows a copy of the Community Layout Plan.

**Figure 28** shows the substantial development in the community. As with other sites outside the Meekatharra townsite, development does not require planning approval, however development is controlled through the Community Layout Planning process set out in State Planning Policy 3.2 - Aboriginal Settlements.

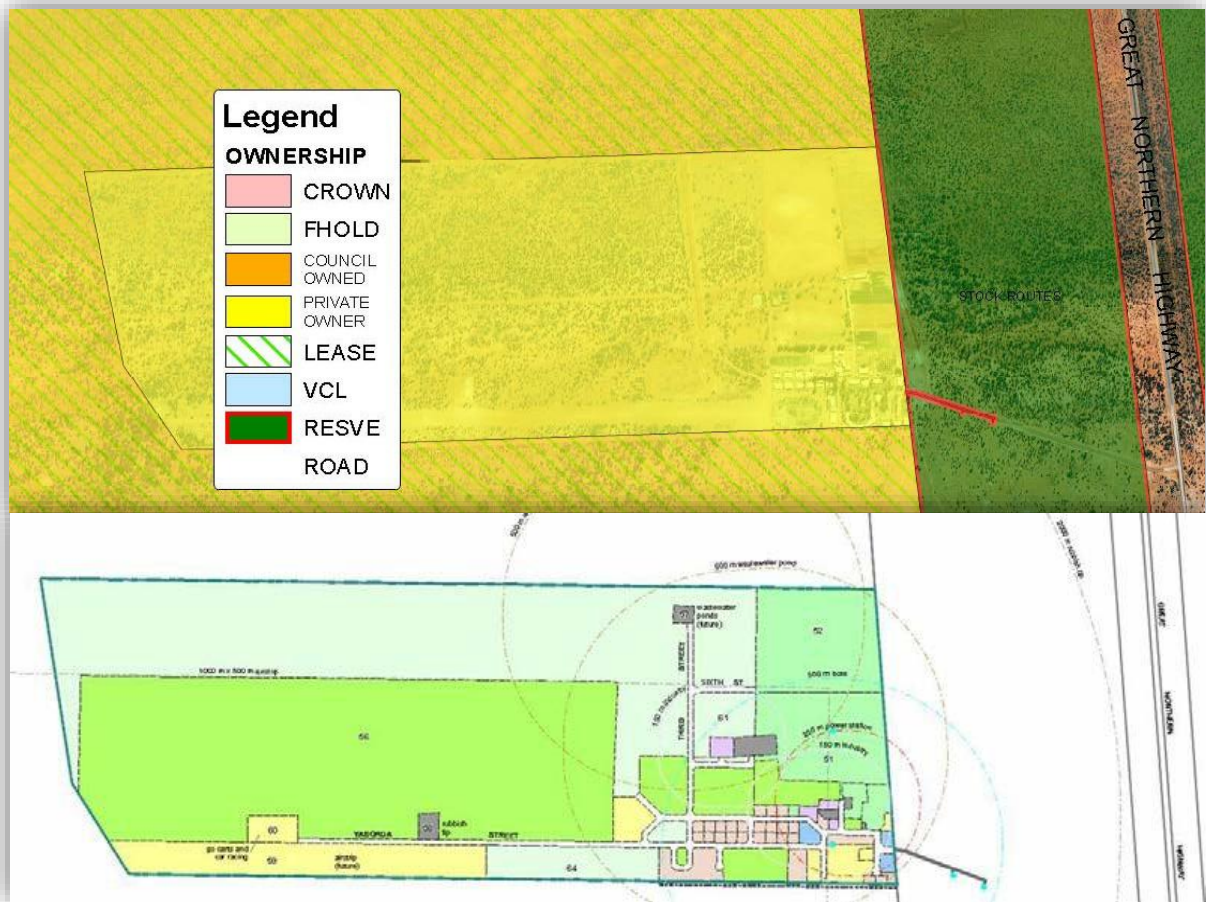
**Karalundi** was established in 1954 as an Aboriginal boarding school run by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Western Australia. It was begun after its founder Pastor Dudley Vaughan

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was challenged to begin such a work by Avy Curley OAM. The school served the Murchison, Upper Gascoyne, Pilbara and Western Desert regions. Classes began in September 1954, with a focus on literacy, numeracy and practical skills.

**FIGURE 28 - KARALUNDI COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**



**Source:** Landgate, PLANWEST

During its early years of operation, Karalundi was rated by the Western Australian Department of Education as a 'most efficient establishment' and commended for the 'relatively high standard of attainment' by students. Karalundi was closed in September 1974 in a government move to phase out church involvement in indigenous affairs. The property was sold into private hands and operated as a farm-stay enterprise for 12 years.

In the early 1980s, many past students came to recognise that under the state system, their children's education was inferior to their own. These parents lobbied the state government for Karalundi to reopen as an independent parent-controlled Christian Aboriginal boarding school, where children would be educated away from the problems associated with alcohol abuse and gain an education focusing on practical life skills, as well as literacy and numeracy. The advocacy group was supported by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and, in August 1986, Karalundi was reopened as such.

Karalundi has recently extended its secondary program to include Years 11 and 12 and is recognised as one of the leading schools in Aboriginal education in Western Australia.

**Figure 29** provides an aerial photograph of the community.

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**FIGURE 29 - KARALUNDI COMMUNITY**



Source: Google, Landgate, PLANWEST

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#### **4.4.6 ROADHOUSES**

The following two developments are roadhouses established along the Great Northern Highway in response to demand for such facilities.

**The Capricorn Roadhouse** is located less than 1 kilometre from the northern boundary of the Shire, about 13 kilometres from Newman and about 406 kilometres north of Meekatharra townsite. The Newman airport is only 5 kilometres north of the roadhouse. The total area of the 4 land areas occupied by the roadhouse is 11.36 hectares.

**Figure 30** shows the ownership type of these lots, and the extensive development on these properties to cater for business, trucking and tourism. The Capricorn Village boasts 324 hotel rooms with several recreational facilities including swimming pool, tennis court, darts, mini golf, fitness centre, playground and evening entertainment

The Capricorn caravan park provides powered and unpowered sites available for caravans, campers and motorhomes. On-site short-term accommodation is also available and includes a range of chalets and park home parks.

A site visit in September 2014 confirms the obvious demand for such a facility with a substantial number of road trains and other vehicles using the facilities and refuelling capacity of the roadhouse. Newman appears to have very little infrastructure to provide these services.

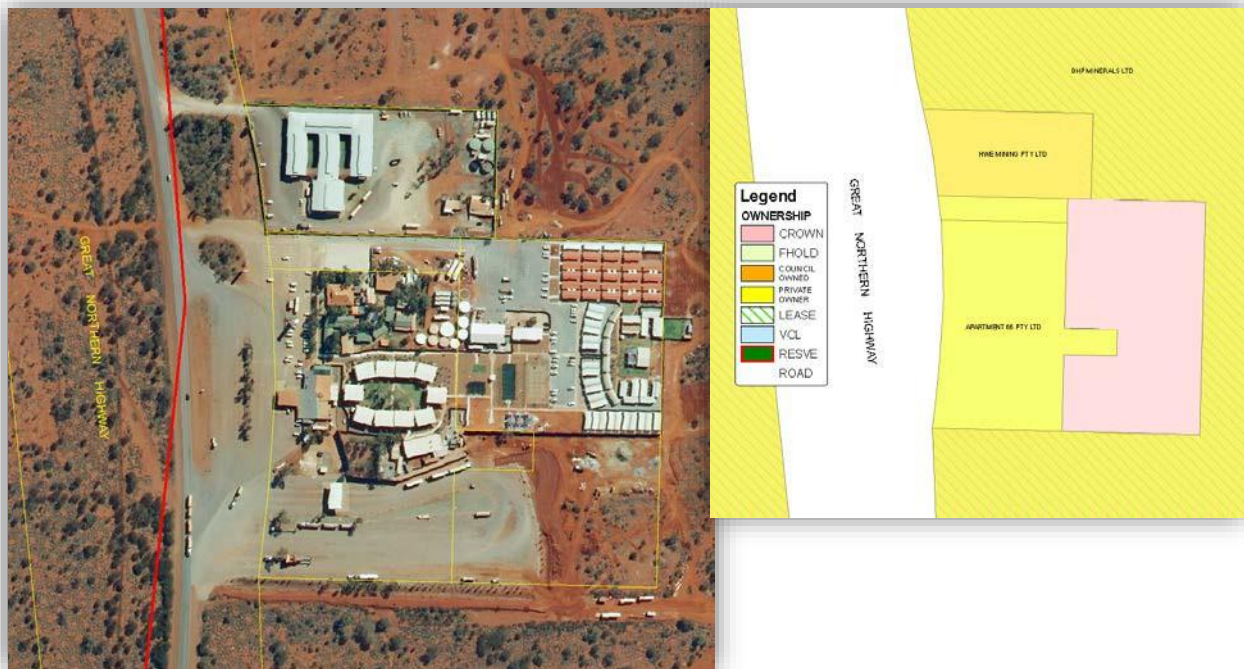
Ideas to expand the facility have been contemplated for the site such as the proposal to construct the 'Newman Truck Servicing Facility' (**Figure 31**).

As the Scheme only covers the Meekatharra townsite (approximately) there is no requirement for a planning approval for any development outside the townsite area.





**FIGURE 30 - CAPRICORN ROADHOUSE**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

**FIGURE 31 - CAPRICORN ROADHOUSE PROPOSAL**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

**Kumarina Roadhouse** is located about 160 kilometres south of Newman and about 257 kilometres north of Meekatharra townsit. **Figure 32** provides an aerial view and ownership status of the roadhouse.

The aerial photograph and cadastral boundaries appear to not coincide. This will need to be checked through the Landgate system to ensure the registration of the aerial photograph is geographically correct.

The roadhouse provides for a limited number of designated powered sites, on a dirt surface, with power and water connection' however there are no effluent disposal facilities.

Amenities include male and female amenities in 'donga' style building with flushing toilets and hot showers. Fuel, home-cooked meals, take-away food and drinks and alcohol (during tavern opening hours) are available.

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**FIGURE 32 - KUMARINA ROADHOUSE**



Source: Landgate, PLANWEST

#### 4.4.7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion it is evident that all the existing formal townsites – except Meekatharra – remain undeveloped for townsite purposes and have been treated as if they were ready for mining and exploratory purposes.

The other settlements of Yulga Jinna, Buttah Windee, Karalundi, Kumarina and Capricorn Roadhouse contain significant development, both residential and commercial. The former three settlements are residential and located away from major transport routes whereas the two roadhouses are located on the Highway as they rely on passing trade for their livelihoods.

#### 4.5 ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

Today the Shire's economy is based on mining, cattle and tourism.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS) base is now located at the Meekatharra Airport, it no longer includes the RFDS museum. The service employs a base administrator, medical officers plus fly in/fly out medical officers, 8 flight nurses (all Fly in/fly out), 5 pilots (some fly in/fly out) and 2 aircraft. RFDS services from Meekatharra includes emergency transfers to Meekatharra District Hospital, inter hospital transfers to Perth and fortnightly Primary Health clinics to the Mid- West and Gascoyne regions.

The Shire Council employs 29 people including administration and outside maintenance workers. The majority of other workers are employed in tourism and mining activities.

The tables below in **Table 4** provide the change in employment numbers between the 2016 and 2021 Census statistics. In 2021 the unemployment levels were down from the 2016 Census.

The occupations with the majority of people employed are labourers, machinery operators or drivers, technicians and trades and managers.

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As can be seen from the table the majority of the industry in which people are employed in relates to mining.

**TABLE 4 - EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS**

<b>Employment</b>	<b>2016 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2016 WA (%)</b>	<b>2021 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2021 WA (%)</b>
Worked full time	70	57	71	57
Worked part time	13	30	13	32
Worked away from home	12	5	6	6
Unemployed	6	8	5	5
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2016 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2016 WA (%)</b>	<b>2021 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2021 WA (%)</b>
Labourers	13	10	12	9
Machinery Operators and Drivers	18	7	18	8
Professionals	18	20	12	22
Managers	14	12	15	12
Community and Personal Service Workers	9	11	10	12
Clerical and Administrative Workers	6	13	8	12
Technicians and Trades	16	16	18	15
<b>Industry of Employment, top responses</b>	<b>2016 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2016 WA (%)</b>	<b>2021 Meekatharra (%)</b>	<b>2021 WA (%)</b>
Mining	39	6	30	8
Education and Training	11	9	13	9
Public Administration and Safety	9	6	6	6
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	8	2	9	2
Health Care and Social Services	6	12	7	14
Accommodation and Food Services	5	6	12	7

Source: ABS 2016 & 2021 Census

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As mentioned, the employment types, numbers and locations are largely dependent on the health of the mining industry. Other major influences will be in the ability of the Shire to encourage and facilitate the diversification of the district. The provision of a diverse range of services already stands the Shire in good stead compared with other centres nearby.

To encourage people to come, and stay, in the district will require the provision of services and amenities for all age groups from babies (baby-sitting etc) to aged care. The latter will encourage people to retire into the district if the appropriate housing and services are made available.

As mentioned, there is a significant number of people employed in the mining industry. Some of these will be accommodated on mine sites in mining camps. These facilities do nothing for the prosperity of the Shire. Food and services are flown in and virtually no provisions are sourced from Meekatharra.

The Strategy encourages preference for mining camps to be established in the Meekatharra townsite with focus on developing strong partnerships with local mining companies. Establishing mining accommodation in town will encourage the purchase of local goods and services to contribute to the viability of retail outlets and services and the local economy overall.

### **Relevance to Strategy**

The importance of a robust, diversified economy is vital to maintaining a healthy town. The Council will encourage resources and development in areas where it has some influence, for example tourism and providing support for mining operations.

## **4.6 INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

Industrial land in the Meekatharra townsite (ie zoned land) comprises less than 50 lots over about 16 hectares. This industrial area, like most rural towns, is located within the urban fabric of the townsite. These areas are no longer suitable for a range of general industries that require larger land parcels, more direct access to major transport routes and buffers from sensitive uses.

Sensitive uses include houses, accommodation, and schools which surround the town's industrial area.

Much of the heavy vehicle movements through the town and on the Highway are road trains. These road trains are permitted to 53.3 metres long and carry a variety of goods.

The Great Northern Highway roadhouses in the southern part of the town are not ideal for the larger operations that may demand larger and more versatile sites. For example, the movement of road trains are difficult on these sites and have required specific changes to sealed areas on the Highway reserve as well as the repositioning of pumps etc. Even with these changes the operations only just comply with Main Roads access requirements.

The facility at Capricorn Roadhouse is substantial. This facility evidently provides for refuelling, food, accommodation, servicing and layovers that are not provided for in Newman.

Kumarina Roadhouse provides some facilities like food, some accommodation, fuel and a caravan park however these are at a smaller scale than Capricorn Roadhouse. The distance between the two roadhouses probably cannot be economically justified.

However, it is suggested that a facility similar to that provided by Capricorn Roadhouse may be justified in Meekatharra - if the site(s) are made available.



## 4.7 RETAIL AND COMMERCE

The retail experience sees essential items only, supplied by Farmer Jacks and the associated Landmark outlet, which is a more contemporary version of a one-stop shop. The Shire Office, the Post Office, the pharmacy and the equipment hire outlet are the remaining indications of business within the town.

There are three hotels on Main Street. The inactivity of the Picture Gardens and Darrigan's House, the poor condition and presentation of the second-hand shop and (at the time of the initial assessment) the closure of the Yulella Aboriginal Corporation trading outlet present a dispiriting face to the town.

There is absence of a visitor's centre, art gallery, artist's studio and gift shop, which would aid in presenting and promoting Meekatharra and the Murchison region. Additionally, there is no coffee shop in town, however a coffee van commenced operations early in 2014.

The current retail provision in Meekatharra comprises the following:

- Foodworks (Farmer Jacks) – reasonable variety and offer in terms of packaged and fresh food.
- BP Service Station and Coles Express Meekatharra Roadhouse – convenience products and services.
- The Commercial Hotel, Royal Mail Hotel and Meekatharra Hotel – located on Main Street and offering alcohol, soft drinks and meals.
- Food Cart/Café – located across from the Police Station with a limited offer comprising of sandwiches, coffee, soft drinks and other take-away meals – a focus on healthier alternatives.
- Coles Express Roadhouse and BP – convenience food and beverage and supplies.
- Other retail – Meeka Meats, Meeka Thrifty Link, Midwest Ice, Meeka Bakery, Meekatharra Pharmacy, Julie's Beauty.

### Relevance to Strategy

Whilst the Council can encourage and facilitate retail uses in the town it cannot ensure any such action. However, it can ensure the provision of appropriately zoned land.

Given the above information, it is apparent that there are currently limited retail goods in Meekatharra, which in turn has resulted in higher prices due to limited business competitiveness. The town has also seen some retail outlets close down in recent times (eg. Lloyds building comprising a second supermarket, Rosie's Chicken, Café, Second Hand store). The exception to this is the entertainment offer, with 3 hotels as mentioned.

Whilst the retail offer is limited, it is reflective of a low permanent population base. Residents would however like to see a greater diversity of retail products, such as a permanent café with alfresco dining and additional healthier eating options etc.

## 4.8 TOURISM AND VISITORS, INCLUDING ATTRACTORS AND FACILITIES

### *Meeka Rangelands Discovery Trail*

The Discovery Trail winds around Meekatharra Creek and includes a lookout from which a 'superpit' mine and the town of Meekatharra can be viewed. Interpretive signage along the trail features information relating to Meekatharra's Indigenous and settlement history.

The Trail provides a fascinating insight into indigenous heritage, natural wonders, settlement history and rich, red landscapes.

### **Meeka Museum**

The museum contains more than 100 photographs and interesting items of memorabilia of life through the ages in Meekatharra. There is also a collection of quilts crafted locally. All items in



the museum have been donated by local people looking to preserve their heritage. The museum is located in the library in the Shire building.

### **Meeka Town Heritage Walk**

The walk is identified by heritage trail signs throughout the town, on the western side of the main street.

### **State Battery**

The State Battery was relocated to Main Street in Meekatharra's Centenary Year of 1994 in acknowledgment of the early prospectors and miners who followed them. It stands proudly along Meekatharra Creek with other interesting relics from Meekatharra's gold mining past.

### **Peace Gorge**

Peace Gorge is located 3km west of the town, this area is rich with granite rock formations creating an ideal picnic spot. Its reputation for picnics dates back to World War I when Meekatharra's service men were welcomed home with a gala picnic and sports day at the granites. Since that day, the area has been known as Peace Gorge.

### **Wildflowers**

When the winter rains fall, the red earth around Meekatharra gives life to a dazzling array of colourful wildflowers including the red sturt pea – the signature flower of Meekatharra. Wildlife prevalent in the area includes emus, kangaroos, wedge tailed eagles and bungarra lizards.

### **25 Mile Well**

This well, located 40km north on the Great Northern Highway has been restored as a monument to the many drovers and stockmen driving their charges through this rugged land.

### **Mt Gould Police Station**

This station was operating from 1888 to 1902 to enforce immediate action over sheep killing in the area and is located 156 km west of Meekatharra on the Meekatharra – Carnarvon Road.

### **Outback Festival**

Providing entertainment for all ages, the Outback Festival is held over the Queen's Birthday long weekend (Friday 26th - Sunday 28th September). The festival launches Friday evening with stalls, food vendors, clowns and children's rides, including the annual Meekatharra Rodeo and Outback Ball

### **Relevance to Strategy**

Tourism is a main industry of economic generation for Meekatharra. Therefore in terms of the town's future, the Strategy acknowledges the need for more focus to be put into making the area more attractive to visitors. This can be achieved through adequate provision of services and amenities as well as diversification of the market, which will cater to both residents and visitors. Furthermore, the plan recognises the importance of the preservation and maintenance of key tourist sites. Additionally, it is acknowledged within the plan, that there is a need to increase tourism accommodation facilities and services in order to cater to future needs of visitors.

## **4.9 RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

Meekatharra townsite is reasonably well-serviced with recreational facilities. These include the following;

**Swimming Pool:** On Main St. Open from October until April.

**Race Course:** Races are held over the long weekend in September, as part of the Meekatharra Festival. Significant infrastructure exists for racing and rodeo.





**Rifle Range:** This is a basic facility offering ranges up to 900m for full bore rifle and is in adequate condition. It currently has 5 members and hosts a big open day in July.

**Golf Club:** 18 hole oiled greens and dry fairways. The facility is used from April to October. In season 2013 it had approximately 20 members.

**BMX Track:** The BMX track is located within Lions Park, but has become very degraded, and in the view of an 'expert rider', the track is now unsafe.

**Kidzone:** This is an old kindergarten building that has been converted for activities for primary school aged children. A new playground has recently been installed in the grounds.

**Youth Centre:** This is a large tin shed with multiple rooms and storage areas. The drop-in lounge is very neat, and well-presented and equipped. The centre is utilised as an activities area for the youth of the town. The hard court at the front of the youth centre is also occasionally used as a roller-skating venue with perimeter railing installed.

Furthermore, there is incidental use of the squash, tennis and basketball courts. Indoor cricket operates in a fluctuating and cyclical pattern and residents have access to the gym for informal use. Additionally, at present the Shire offers green space or public parkland in various forms including the main oval at the sporting precinct, the Meekatharra Creek Park and Welcome Park.

#### 4.10 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The community facilities, except the airport infrastructure and the meteorological bureau., are all located in the town. These facilities include;

- Jundar Mudar Mia Playgroup
- Library: Located in the Shire Offices
- Community Resource Centre
- High speed Internet Café
- Westpac In-Store
- Uniting Church, Darlot Street
- Anglican Church, Darlot Street
- Catholic Church, Darlot Street
- Seventh Day Adventist, McCleary Street
- Meekatharra Health Services
- RFDS Clinic/Reception
- Meekatharra Hospital
- Community Health
- Aged Hostel
- Mental Health
- RFDS Medical Service
- Veterinary Service: Newman Vet does monthly visits to Meekatharra
- Police Station is located at the Corner of Savage St & Main St.
- Department of Mines & Petroleum - Clerk of Courts: renewals, mining information, Landgate maps & court house matters.
- St Johns Ambulance
- State Emergency Service (SES)
- Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service Emergency Calls - 000
- RFDS Base: Located at the Meekatharra Airport.
- Meteorological Bureau: The meteorological bureau is found near the Airport.
- Frontier Services

#### Relevance to Strategy

These activities and services are critical to the lifeblood of the town and every effort must be made to retain and sustain these services, a main objective of the strategy. Additionally, the



Strategy will ensure that the town of Meekatharra provides a broad range of recreational and community facilities to appeal to all age groups as part of the target of making Meekatharra a desirable place to live, work and play.

#### **4.11 RURAL LAND USE, SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT**

There is no rural residential or rural living zoned land in the shire as there is little demand for rural residential lots. Therefore, the viability of such lots (and estates) is doubtful and no areas have been identified for rural residential purposes

Plantations, forestry options or any other agricultural pursuits will also be assessed on their merits for the limited rural land zoned. Activities that seek to increase the population, workforce and activity in the area are encouraged in line with the Local Planning Scheme.

The Council will also support activities that aim to diversify the local employment in order to avoid relying on a narrow range of activities – providing the Council considers the new activity sustainable.

#### **4.12 URBAN DESIGN, CHARACTER AND HERITAGE**

Meekatharra offers a relaxed, outback lifestyle without compromising essential services and facilities. The region is characterised by its calmness, affordable housing and rich indigenous culture.

Meekatharra provides a low density, dispersed urban form, which makes one question the town's ability to create a strong sense of place. Within the town there is no cluster of activity or key meeting place that brings the community together or entices visitors/passing trade to stop and rest. It is also apparent that existing entry statements and community spaces are underutilised. An example of this is 'Welcome Park' which is a gated space, with large areas of hardstand and a lack of shaded spaces.

Additionally, many of Meekatharra's buildings are of historic value and require a high degree of protection in order to ensure their preservation. The characteristic of the area is extremely rustic and most of the buildings in the area are representative of the town's past.

While many old building are long gone, the community is very proud of those that remain. These existing sites give a real feel for what the town was once like, and now form a heritage trail to educate visitors of the fascinating stories behind these buildings.

The Local Planning Strategy recognises the need to preserve these historic buildings. The Strategy identifies that future developments must not threaten the existing character of the area. While expansion of the town is necessary, new developments with differing urban design can take place around these more historical areas.

In 2012, the Council reviewed the Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places in the region. The inventory records 27 places of heritage significance in Meekatharra. The review of the Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places is a requirement of the Heritage Act 2018.

Management categories provide guidance to the owners, managers and the Shire of Meekatharra, to respond appropriately to each heritage place. Based on the assessed values, management categories have been determined, consistent with the assessed level of significance for each place.

##### **Heritage Places Meekatharra Town:**

1. Town entry (Battery)
2. War Memorial Swimming Pool
3. War Memorial
4. Commercial Hotel



5. Commonwealth Hotel (Railway Hotel)
6. MMA Office (former)
7. Gerick's (Lloyd's) Store
8. Meekatharra Post Office
9. Meekatharra Hotel
10. Meekatharra Bakery (3 buildings)
11. Rinaldi's Buildings
12. Royal Mail Hotel
13. Picture Gardens
14. Darrigan's House
15. RFDS Base
16. Water tanks/lookout
17. Masonic Lodge (RAOB)
18. St Oswald's Anglican Church
19. Holy Rosary Convent & Catholic Church
20. Courthouse (Bundi Club)
21. Shire Hall
22. Meekatharra District High School
23. Meekatharra District Hospital
24. J Hayes & Co Butcher's Shop
25. Fire Station
26. Railway Station Group (Shire Depot)
27. Station Master's House

## 4.13 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

### 4.13.1 ROAD TRANSPORT

Roads 2040 Regional Strategies for Significant Local Government Roads 2022 outlines the Main Roads WA (MRWA) strategy for the maintenance and upgrading of State and Local Roads throughout the State to ensure these routes are safe and efficient. **Figure 33** provides an extract from the Roads 2025 document showing how the Shire includes the north eastern part of the Mid West Region.

#### **State Roads**

There are two State roads through the Shire. The first is the Great Northern Highway. This is a State Road that provides the major link from the Perth through the major mining regions of the Midwest, Pilbara and Kimberley Regions. The Highway also links these regions with the Eastern States via the Goldfields Region.

The Highway is a strategic freight, tourist and inter-town route that carries a diverse range of vehicle types. This road carries some extremely large oversize loads bound for the Pilbara and Kimberley Regions, specifically the iron ore and diamond mining operations. It also provides direct access to some large mining operations.

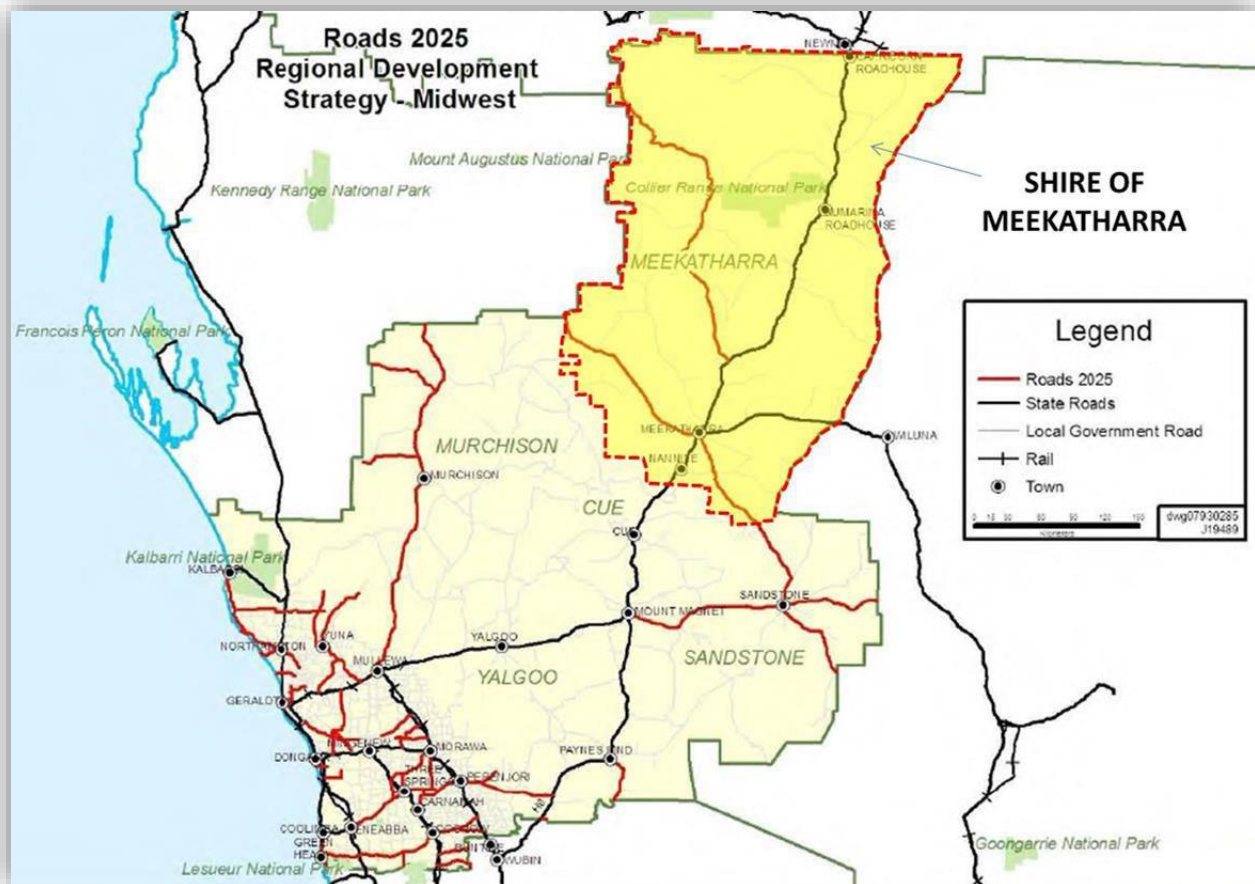
There is a significant mix of all vehicle types on this road, including higher than normal tourist traffic during the wildflower season. The Highway carries a high percentage of very large vehicle combinations transporting many different products such as various types of mineral ore, fuel, grain, fertilizer, explosives and livestock. Relatively high crash rates exist on the section Mt Magnet to Newman due to livestock straying onto the road.

A few mining operations are close to the current alignment and are looking to realign the roadway away from the open cut operations.





FIGURE 33 - EXTRACT FROM ROADS 2025



Source: Roads 2025, MRWA 2007

The MRWA strategy is to maintain the existing road to ensure the level of service is not reduced and reconstruct the narrow floodways to a 10m wide formation. The MRWA development strategy seeks to provide suitable overtaking opportunities at regular intervals to minimise driver frustration and improve the overall safety by erecting boundary fencing to prevent stray livestock encroaching onto the road reserve. The MRWA strategy seeks to improve the Highway's serviceability by upgrading floodways and creek crossings between Newman and Meekatharra.

There are several stops designated along the Highway, some with facilities, some just for rest areas.

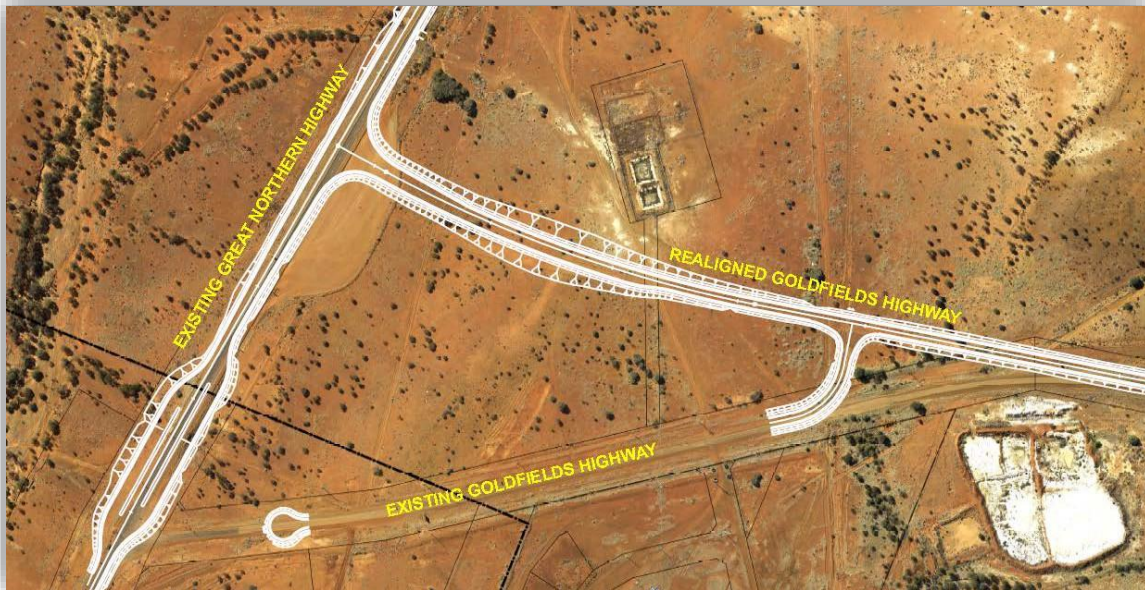
The second State road is the Goldfields Highway. This Highway provides part of the inter-regional route linking the Goldfields, Pilbara, Mid-West and Gascoyne Regions. It also links major towns and mining centres such as Kambalda, Kalgoorlie, Menzies, Leonora, Wiluna and Meekatharra. The Goldfields route also links the Eastern States with the Goldfields, Pilbara, Mid-West and Gascoyne Regions. It also connects the Great Eastern and Great Northern Highways.

This Highway has been identified as a key strategic freight, tourist and inter-town route.

Main Roads WA has prepared detailed plans for the relocation of the intersection of the two highways discussed above. The existing intersection is undesirable due to its oblique angle. The new alignment will be relocated about 350 metres northwards. **Figure 34** shows the proposed realignment, however, there has not been any further progression of the intersection project



**FIGURE 34 - GREAT NORTHERN - GOLDFIELDS HIGHWAY INTERSECTION**



Source: Roads 2025, MRWA 2007

### **Local Government Roads**

There are several local government roads throughout the Shire. These roads include; the Ashburton Downs – Meekatharra Road, Carnarvon - Meekatharra Route, Meekatharra – Sandstone Route and Meekatharra Airport Route

As mentioned, these roads are the responsibility of the local government and form an integral part of the road hierarchy network.

The Ashburton Downs – Meekatharra Road is a connection from Paraburdoo and the western Pilbara through Meekatharra to Perth. The road services a number of large operational mine sites as well as significant areas of exploration. It carries mining and tourist traffic in addition to serving the needs of Aboriginal communities and pastoral stations.

The MRWA sees a need for more direct access between Paraburdoo and Meekatharra to service a proportion of the Pilbara workforce, tourist travel, livestock agistment to southern pastures and general mining traffic. An improved standard of road is required for the proportionally high number of heavy mining and livestock transport vehicles. The road is subject to periods of closure at the Gascoyne River during only moderate rainfall; while seasonal it affects the serviceability. This crossing requires hard surfacing to minimise disruption to traffic.

The Landor – Meekatharra Road is part of the Carnarvon - Meekatharra Route. The route provides east-west connectivity between two major north-south freight routes, the North West Coast Highway and Great Northern Highway. It also links the regional population centres to Carnarvon and Meekatharra. It forms part of a broader inter-regional route from the Gascoyne Region through the Midwest and Goldfields-Esperance Regions.

Some horticultural produce from Carnarvon to the Eastern States is transported via this route in addition to livestock and general freight. The road is part of the Gascoyne Murchison Outback Pathways Project and also provides a western access to Mt Augustus.

The MRWA sees a need for an improved standard of road and a more direct east-west link between the Gascoyne, Mid-West, Goldfields-Esperance Regions and the Eastern States, to facilitate expanding horticultural markets and tourism interests. The road is conveniently located to service the future development of mining activities in the area.



The Meekatharra – Sandstone Road provides access to pastoral properties and services several mining operations currently active in the area. Meekatharra is the nearest regional centre for the community of Sandstone, with its regional hospital, Royal Flying Doctor Service, educational services and general shopping facilities. The road also has varying amounts of tourist traffic. This road has a role in linking the Miners Pathway as part of the Gascoyne Murchison Outback Pathways Project.

Suitable construction materials and water are scarce in this area which results in high demands for maintenance. Stabilised floodways and creek crossings would enhance its reliability and improve the economic and social circumstances of the mining and pastoral communities of the region.

The Meekatharra Airport Route connects Meekatharra Airport to the town of Meekatharra and the Great Northern Highway. It is the terminus of the Sandstone Road. It is also an important link with the other regional community centres and major mining operations in the Murchison that use the airport for commuting and the services of the Royal Flying Doctor Base.

### ***Meekatharra Heavy Haulage Route***

Over the past decades it has been ‘normal’ for Main Roads WA to prepare bypass road alignments for most country settlements. The aim of these plans was to redirect heavy haulage traffic around the settlements but still retain the local and tourist traffic into town.

Main Roads WA advises that there are no such plans for Meekatharra; however an unofficial heavy haulage track has been established on the west side of Meekatharra to cater for the off-road bulk ore carriers.

Currently all heavy haulage road vehicles pass through Meekatharra on the Highways (Great Northern and Goldfields). These vehicles travel at very low speeds and the highways are (and will be in terms of the Goldfields Highway) wide enough to safely cater for this traffic. Although the noise, dust and possible danger impacts are still present they are not considered greater than the need to maintain the visible activity in the centre of town.

In conclusion, it is not considered necessary to plan for, or provide, a heavy haulage route around Meekatharra at this time.

### **4.13.2 BUS SERVICE**

Trans WA provides a twice weekly bus service to Geraldton with frequent connections from Geraldton to Perth. Integrity Coach Lines has a weekly service to Perth.

### **4.13.3 RAIL TRANSPORT**

There is no longer a railway serving Meekatharra. The Mullewa-Meekatharra line was closed in 1978.

### **4.13.4 AIR TRAFFIC**

There are 16 named airstrips, airports and runways within the Shire. There are many others unnamed and used for accessing remote locations. The named airports include; Bullo Downs Station, Marymia, Three Rivers Homestead, Koonmarra, Belele, Yarlalweelor, Fortrum, Milgun, Horseshoe Lights, Peak Hill, Bryah, Plutonic, Mt Vernon Station, and of course Meekatharra aerodrome.

Skippers Aviation provides several flights a week through Wiluna from Perth. Other airports in the immediate region include Newman, Sandstone, Mt Magnet, Leinster and Paraburdoo.

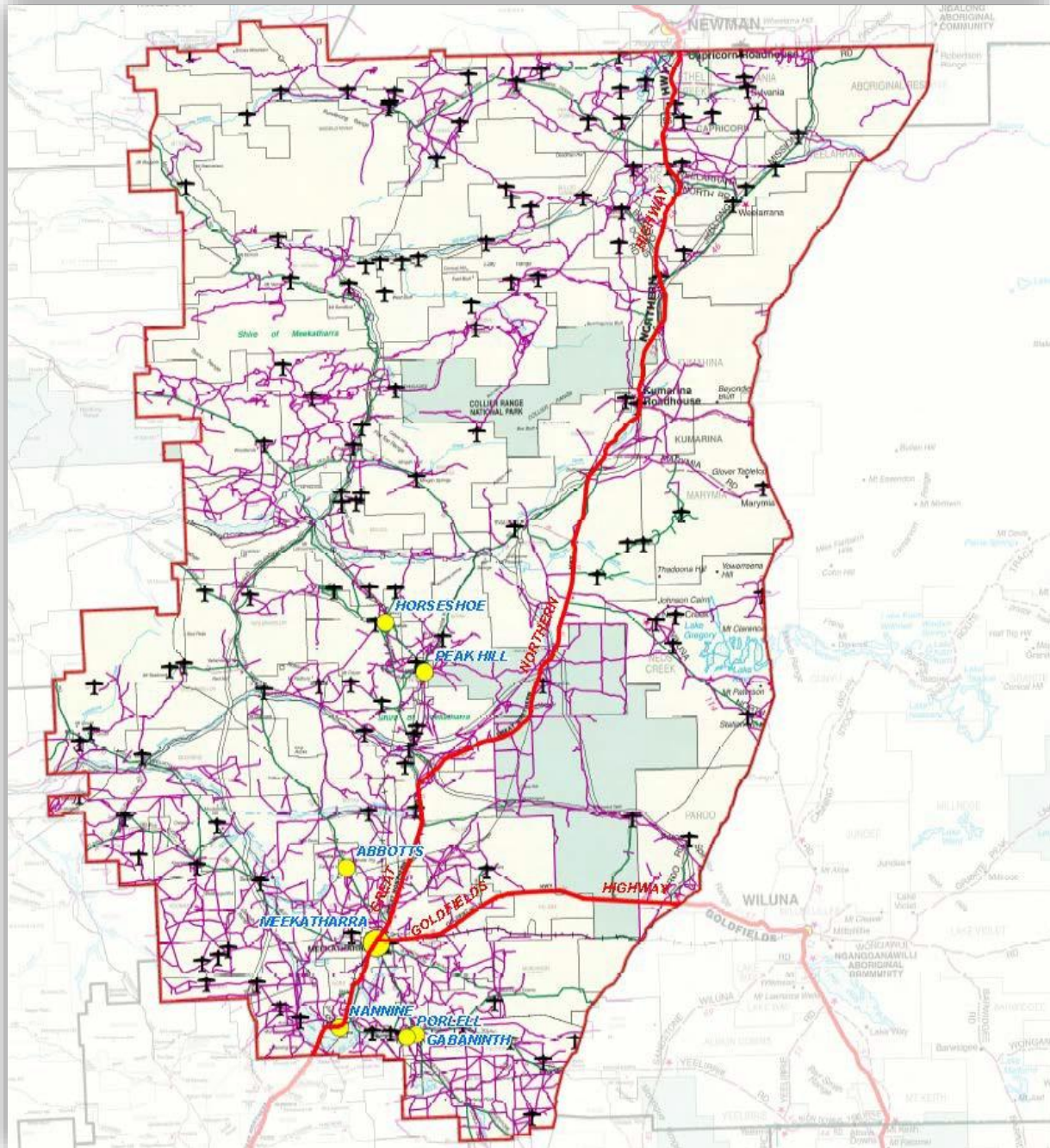
**Figure 35** shows the distribution of airports, landing strips and aerodromes throughout the Shire.

The Meekatharra aerodrome is a 2,181-metre runway originally built by the Americans during World War II. It serves as an important diversion airport for inbound transcontinental flights to Australia when Perth airport is unavailable.





**FIGURE 35 - LANDING STRIPS AND AIRPORT LOCATIONS**



a golden prospect

Source: Landgate 2014, PLANWEST





## 4.14 INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES.

### 4.14.1 SEWERAGE SERVICES

The Council operates three wastewater facilities in Meekatharra although the town is not deep sewered. These facilities are all designed to deal with liquids only and function as a community leach drain (septage ponds) providing for a limited sewerage disposal. The ground is very hard and may prohibit the economic servicing of every lot.

The hospital, school, the three hotels, aged persons facility, police station, DEMIRS (Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety) facility, the caravan park and several major commercial outlets are serviced via the site northwest of the hospital. This facility was originally set up for and managed solely by the hospital, however the Council agreed to take over the facility if it could be used the other developments mentioned.

This facility is located about 300 metres from the north-west part of the townsite. **Figure 36** shows an aerial photograph of this facility.

**FIGURE 36 - MEEKATHARRA WASTEWATER SITE**



**Source:** Locate 2014

The housing estate in Havelock Place (known as St Barbs or Ross Atkinson's) and the development known as 'Paddy's Flat' in McCleary Street use a smaller facility located about 600 metres south of the latter.

The third facility is located north of the Goldfields Highway originally established to service the group of six houses located on the Aboriginal Reserve just south of the Goldfields Highway. These houses have since been demolished.



#### 4.14.2 POWER SUPPLIES

Meekatharra townsite has its power station located about a kilometre from the town on the north side of the Landor – Meekatharra Road. **Figure 37** shows an aerial photograph of the existing facility owned by Horizon Power.

The power station site comprises of 12 diesel generators, transformers and a centralised solar farm and battery storage system. This site has expanded considerably since its commencement in 2003 following funding received by Horizon Power to deliver more clean energy options in the Mid West region.

**FIGURE 37 - MEEKATHARRA POWER INFRASTRUCTURE**



Source: Landgate 2025

The facility also supplies the Buttah Windee and Karalundi Communities. Kumarina roadhouse and Yulga Jinna community provide for their own power whilst the Capricorn roadhouse is supplied through the Newman grid.

#### 4.14.3 WATER SUPPLIES

Water supplies are detailed in 4.3 Water Management.

#### 4.14.4 GAS SUPPLIES

There is no reticulated gas supply in the Shire.

#### 4.14.5 WASTE DISPOSAL

The existing rubbish tip is located about 2 kilometres north of the Meekatharra town boundary. The site is service via a sealed road off the Highway about 600 metres north of the Goldfields Highway.

Rubbish tips are usually designated with a 500-metre buffer area that will preclude the development of any sensitive uses within this area. This will be in the form of a Special Control Area in the Scheme.





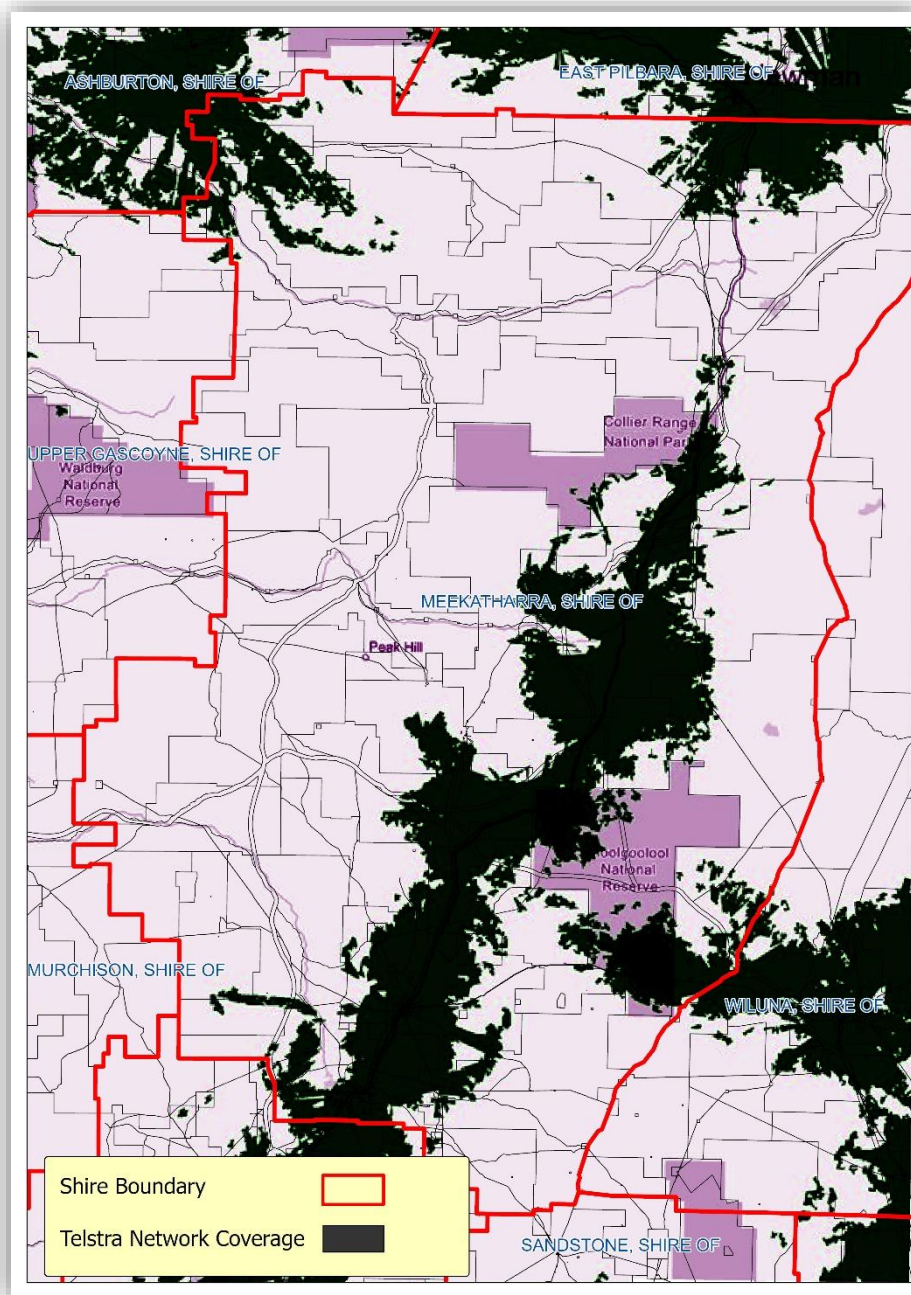
Rubbish in Meekatharra townsite is collected from households twice per week and weekly for commercial properties. The contractor also picks up rubbish from as far as Capricorn roadhouse.

#### 4.14.6 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The National Broadband Network (NBN) satellite service is available in the Meekatharra townsite, and a limited mobile network available outside the main settlement areas along the Highway as shown in **Figure 38**. The exception is the area of greater mining activity between Newman to the north of the Shire and Meekatharra in the southern part.

The blue areas indicate a typical download speed of 1.1 to 20 Mbps, the light blue areas have a typical download speed 550 kbps to 8 Mbps and the light brown areas have a typical download speed 550 kbps to 3 Mbps. Encouraging providers that can deliver high speed fixed connections would improve internet services for the Meekatharra community.

**FIGURE 38 - TELSTRA MOBILE NETWORK**



Source: Telstra 2025