



shire of Ashburton  
opportunity to community



# *Onslow* Towards a Visitor Economy

*June 2022*



# opportunity *to community*

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

At the Shire of Ashburton, we are dedicated to developing vibrant, active, and connected communities through our Strategic Community Plan's focus on People, Place, Prosperity and Performance

Our focus on developing the visitor economy delivers on a number of the outcomes under our strategic plan. Tourism Australia's Thrive 2030 Strategy highlights that the visitor economy 'generates jobs, trade, investment, and creates opportunities in cities and regions. It also contributes to communities by driving socioeconomic development and inclusive growth – providing diversity in employment, opportunities for innovation, supporting the arts, culture and sport, and delivering amenities that benefit local populations as well as visitors.'

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## References

Commonwealth of Australia 2022, THRIVE 2030: The Re-Imagined Visitor Economy. A national strategy for Australia's visitor economy recovery and return to sustainable growth, 2022 to 2030 (available here: <https://www.austrade.gov.au/news/publications/thrive-2030-strategy>)

Development WA, Pilbara Vernacular Handbook, Part 5 – Onslow (available here: <https://developmentwa.com.au/projects/residential/pilbara-vernacular/overview>)  
economy.id 2019/20 - <https://economy.id.com.au/ashburton>

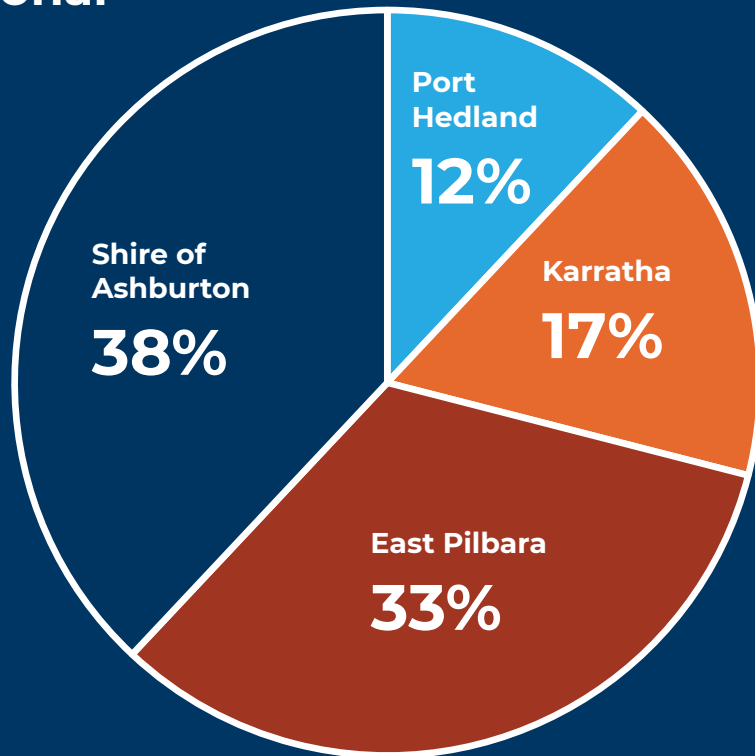
Tourism Western Australia, Corporate Plan 2020-21 (available here: [https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/About-us/Strategies-plans-reports/Pages/Strategies-plans-and-reports.aspx#/#/](https://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/About-us/Strategies-plans-reports/Pages/Strategies-plans-and-reports.aspx#/))

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Photo Credit: Tourism Australia, Andrew Lloyd, Amy Bishop, Tourism Western Australia.

# Shire of Ashburton Economy

## Pilbara Region Gross Regional Product



**362,000**  
3-year average annual visitors 2019-2021

**\$38.6 billion**  
GDP

**\$34.4 billion**  
in exports

**\$17.1 billion**  
oil and gas

**\$14.8 billion**  
iron ore and metals

**27,249**  
jobs in Ashburton

**63,850**  
jobs supported in the Pilbara region

**1.9%**  
of Australia's GDP of \$2.02 trillion



# Message from the Shire President

*The Shire of Ashburton continues to be a driving force of the Pilbara region and the Western Australian economy.*

Diversification and growth of our local economy over the past decade has resulted in Onslow playing a critical role in supply chain, export, and business growth.

Council continues to drive, attract and source investment to the region to ensure ongoing expansion of services, accessibility, commercialisation and industry growth.

We believe the visitor economy is crucial for the long term sustainability and livability of Onslow and the Shire of Ashburton.

This positioning paper highlights the visitor economy vision of the community, the actions that we have taken to date and those we plan to undertake.

The visitor economy does not occur in isolation, but rather strengthens resource investment by delivering long term livable communities, community wellbeing and sense of pride.

It is paramount to the sustainability of Onslow that the historical character, look and feel of our community is retained whilst new industry is embraced. We believe that the visitor economy can provide opportunity to community.

We look forward to working together to cement Onslow's position and achieve our visitor economy vision.

**Cr Kerry White**  
Shire President  
Shire of Ashburton



# Strategic Alignment



# Shire of Ashburton

Prosperity is one of the four pillars included in the Shire of Ashburton Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032, which states that we will advocate and drive opportunities for the community to be economically desirable, resilient, and prosperous. Sustainable commerce and tourism opportunities is a key strategy adopted in the pursuit of this objective.

The Shire's Economic and Tourism Development Strategy 2019 was developed to compliment and assist with delivering outcomes aligned to the Strategic Community Plan. Given the impact of COVID-19 on Australian tourism, the Shire has prepared this *Positioning Paper* to highlight the potential of Onslow as a visitor destination as well as set the future strategic direction of visitor economy development. This paper also considers the importance of the strategic direction of both the State Government of Western Australia and the Australian Government.

The draft Onslow Tourism Destination Management Plan 2022 – 2027, currently under development, will outline the practical actions the Shire and industry can implement over the next five years to grow the industry.



# Government of Western Australia

The Corporate Plan for 2020-21 will focus on a Global Recovery Strategy, particularly in the first half of 2020-21, and continue to build on the achievements of the Two-Year Action Plan for Tourism Western Australia - 2018 and 2019 (Two-Year Action Plan) released in March 2018.

# Australian Government

The Re-Imagined Visitor Economy (THRIVE) Strategy 2030 (the Strategy) provides the national strategy for recovery and the return to sustainable growth for Australia's visitor economy. The visitor economy is a significant driver of growth, prosperity and wellbeing for Australia. It supports jobs and businesses, generates trade and investment, and promotes regional growth.







# Why the Visitor Economy?

## Striving for Quality Outcomes

In 2018, the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) completed an Economic Development Framework project to facilitate a strategic approach to economic development (ED) in the sector. This project found that whilst economic development doesn't have a consistent definition, local economic development usually focuses on building up the economic capacity of an area in order to improve quality of life. Economic development therefore focuses on quality outcomes while economic growth focuses on the quantity of outcomes.

### ***THRIVE 2030: The Visitor Economy delivers quality outcomes for the community and industry***

The term 'visitor economy' is used to reflect a more contemporary definition of tourism, that includes people traveling not just for leisure, but for business, work, education and visiting friends and relatives. It brings together those industries that directly service visitors, for example accommodation, transport providers, tour companies and attractions, as well as indirectly, such as retail, medical and food production.

The visitor economy is crucial for Onslow and the Shire of Ashburton. The visitor economy does not occur in isolation, but rather strengthens resource investment by delivering long term livable communities.

'Australia's visitor economy plays a critical role in driving our economy, wellbeing and sense of national identity. It generates jobs, trade, investment, and creates opportunities in cities and regions. It also contributes to communities by driving socioeconomic development and inclusive growth – providing diversity in employment, opportunities for innovation, supporting the arts, culture and sport, and delivering amenities that benefit local populations as well as visitors.'

### ***Development WA – Pilbara Vernacular Handbook***

Prior to the construction of the Wheatstone LNG project, Onslow was unique in the Pilbara due to the industry base consisting of small-scale operations employing local people, as opposed to larger-scale resource industries with a fly-in fly-out employment base. Tourism was recognised as the industry which has the potential to bring economic prosperity outside of the dominance of gas projects and provide a variety of employment opportunities and a longer-term lifestyle for residents.



# Onslow is Western Australia's Ultimate Reef Experience

Onslow, in the Shire of Ashburton, is the gateway to Western Australia's best kept secret, The Mackerel Islands. Like nowhere else, the Shire of Ashburton balances the economic driving force of industry and pristine natural assets including Karijini National Park and the Pilbara Inshore Islands. The Shire of Ashburton is Western Australia's ultimate reef to range experience.

## History

Old Onslow was gazetted as a European settlement in 1885 as a port for the pastoral and pearling industry. It provided a secure means of exporting wool from the remote stations to key markets in Britain. The town moved to its current location in 1926 and continues to be a vital hub for exports with 8.9million tonnes of LNG produced annually from Chevron's Wheatstone Project and BHP's Macedon gas development producing 20% of the State's domestic gas market. In addition to LNG exports, the Onslow Salt solar marine salt field has the capacity to produce 2.7M/t of salt each year for export.

## Overview

Onslow is located 1,380 km north of Perth via Highway 1 and accessed by 82 km of all-weather sealed road from the North Western Coastal Highway.

Onslow has an estimated population of 1,100. This includes the estimated resident population of 850 (2016 Census) with an increase of approximately 150 - 250 people due to the newly established Chevron residential workforce.

## Looking Ahead to the Visitor Economy

Onslow has benefited from significant investment over the past decade. Planned investment for the next ten years is strategic, evidence-based and in most parts driven by innovation.

With key social and infrastructure projects complete, Onslow is well positioned to capture a growing share of the visitor market.

As the 'Gateway to the Mackerel Islands', Onslow is the launchpad to the ultimate Western Australian reef experience. Each year, visitors with a spirit of adventure descend on Onslow to soak up the warmer winter weather, exceptional fishing and snorkeling conditions, four-wheel driving opportunities and coastal lifestyle.

As well as holiday makers, Onslow attracts a growing number of business travelers and is well positioned to capitalise on this market

The following projects highlight the actions we have taken to date and our planned strategic direction.



# *Onslow Foreshore Revitalisation Vision*





# Critical Land Parcels

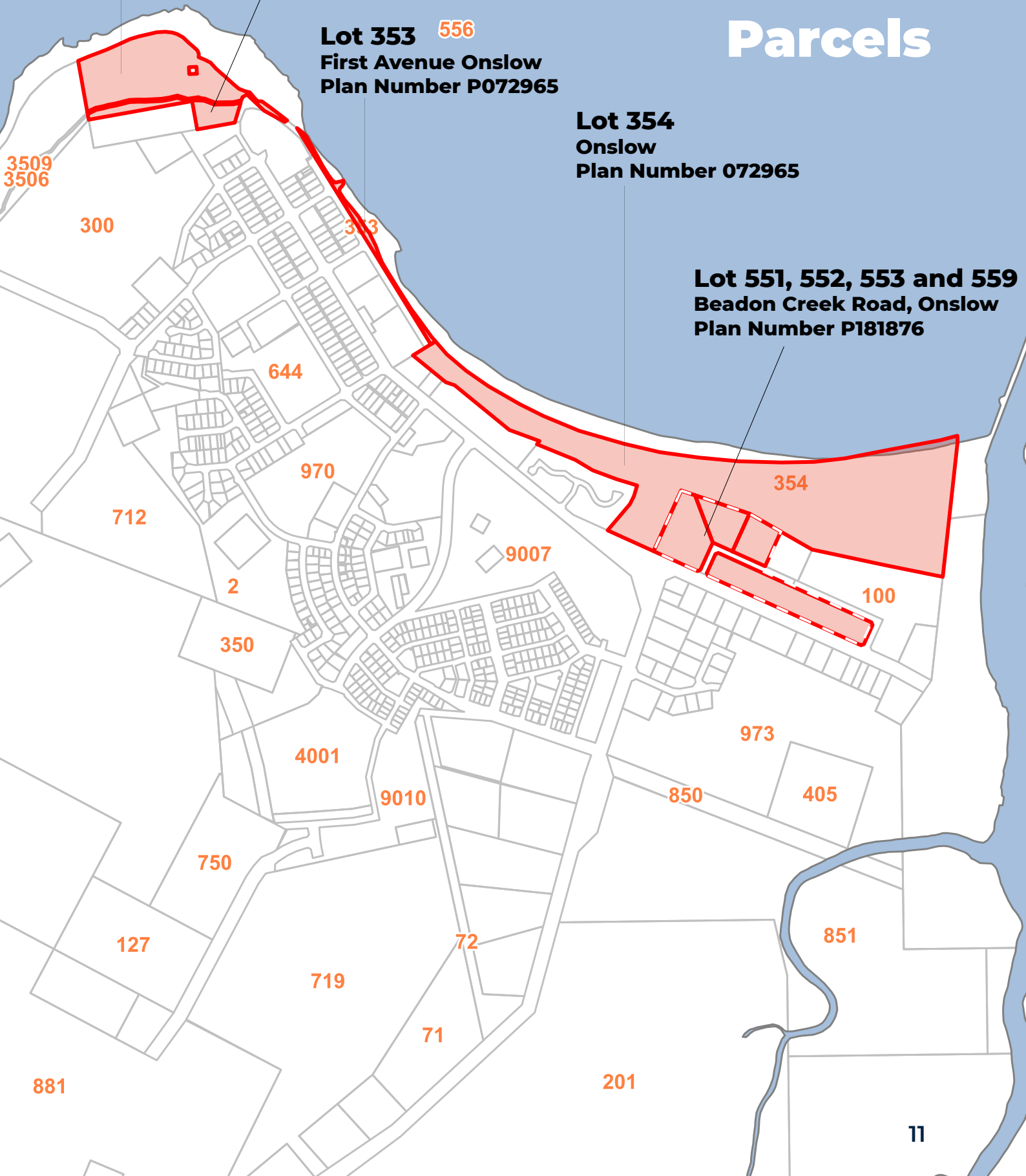
**Lot 3503**  
Onslow  
Plan Number 408853

**Lot 3504**  
Second Ave Onslow  
Plan Number 408853

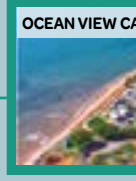
**Lot 353** 556  
First Avenue Onslow  
Plan Number P072965

**Lot 354**  
Onslow  
Plan Number 072965

**Lot 551, 552, 553 and 559**  
Beadon Creek Road, Onslow  
Plan Number P181876







Town Amenities	
<b>Town Services</b>	
H Hospital	12 ANZAC / War Memorial
3 Police	13 Paparazzi Dogs
4 Volunteer Emergency Services	14 Community Garden
5 Volunteer Marine Rescue Group	15 Ian Blair Boardwalk (BBQ area)
i Visitor Centre & Museum	16 Playground (BBQ area)
7 Cemetery	17 Thalanyji Oval (cold water showers)
8 Shire Depot / Dog Pound	18 Skate Park
9 MPC (Evacuation Centre)	19 Water Park
10 Shire Office - 9184 6001	20 Shell Museum
11 Swimming Pool	
<b>Essential Retail</b>	
21 Chemist	26 Beadon Bay Hotel - 9184 6002
22 Post Office	27 Discovery Park - 9184 6007
23 Supermarket	24 Onslow Beach Resort - 9184 6586
<b>Food &amp; Beverage</b>	
24 Onslow Beach Club	28 Ocean View Caravan Park - 9184 6053
25 Onslow Sports Club	29 Onslow Sun Chalets - 9184 6058
26 Beadon Bay Hotel	30 Mackerel Islands - 9184 6444
<b>Accommodation</b>	



Mackerel Islands  
Indian Ocean



# Onslow



- Completed Projects
- Current Projects
- Planned Projects
- Future pedestrian walkway
- Existing pedestrian boardwalk
- Existing pedestrian footpath



# Completed Projects



The following completed projects highlight the work we have done to date to lay the foundations of success.



## **Ocean View Caravan Park, Major Upgrade – Stage Two [2021]**

The beach front Caravan Park offers powered and unpowered sites, and self-contained cabins. The park is ideal for families, beach goers, fishing enthusiasts and offers direct access to Front Beach, boardwalks and exquisite views of the ocean. Upgrades include: Wi-Fi, new powered sites, boat parking area, new ablution block, fish filleting facilities and a dump point.



## **Onslow Marine Support Base [2017]**

The vision is for Onslow to become a key marine hub, servicing the offshore oil and gas industry and tourism operations. The base provides 204m of hard backed wharf, a berth pocket dredged to 8m lowest astronomical tide (LAT) with a channel depth of 6m LAT, and a 700t wharf side lift pad that was complemented by two 18m LCT ramps designed to meet specification requirements of major users in the region.



## **Onslow Airport Redevelopment [2015]**

This project saw the construction of a new 1900m runway, taxiway, and apron (to cater for code C aircraft). The 1200sqm Onslow Airport terminal was designed with Pilbara conditions at the forefront of thinking. Environmentally Sustainable Design initiatives were focused on to achieve a state-of-the-art facility for operators, commuters, and the general public alike.



## **Continuous Improvement Program [2020/21]**

A \$2M continuous improvement program was completed in 2021 to ensure compliance with aviation industry standards and to enable economic opportunities for Onslow Airport. This included significant upgrades to taxiways Charlie and Bravo, upgrades to the runway embankment as well as the addition of two General Aviation hangers incorporated into the airport precinct and infrastructure upgrades to the Rotary Wing Hangar to enable the site to be used as a rotary wing base

## **Four Mile Creek Fishing and Day Use Facilities [2013]**

With day use facilities including toilets, barbecues, picnic tables and shelters, the redeveloped Four Mile Creek is the perfect location to watch the sun set and the lights of Chevron come on whilst trying your luck to land a catch.



## **Ian Blair Memorial Walkway [2010]**

A 1km walkway from Beadon Point over the sand dunes to Sunset Beach commemorates Ian Blair, a West Australian policeman. At the eastern end of the walkway, you'll find the Onslow Memorial Park which features a spectacular sculpture based on the insignia of the ADF's Rising Sun cap badge. It is positioned so that each Anzac Day, the rays of the rising sun shine directly through the arch.



# Current Projects



These current projects are designed to grow visitor demand in the short term.



## Community Boating Precinct – Stage One & Two

Council commenced work in October 2021 on delivering the first stage of a planned \$20 million upgrade of recreational boating facilities at Onslow. The Onslow Community Boating Precinct (CBP) will provide a new boat ramp and central holding jetty with suitable space for the development of a small marina. Stage 2 includes public jetties and berthing, completed landscaping and car parks, serviced development lots, community open space and ablutions.



## Onslow Sun Chalets – Stage One

Onslow Sun Chalets provide affordable, comfortable and ideally located beach front accommodation consisting of a range of room types, from spacious two bedroom chalets perfect for families or workers, twin motel units, beach front and road frontage motel units. Stage 1 improvements include enhanced front elevation to the property and chalets and motel rooms upgrades.



## Onslow Eclipse 2023 & Dark Sky Tourism

On April 20, 2023, in an event lasting close to three hours, the sun, the moon and the earth will align to create a Total Solar Eclipse, a unique and fully immersive astronomical event, just off the Onslow coast at the Mackerel Islands. An estimated 5,000 visitors will descend on Onslow for the event. The Shire will use this opportunity to kick start a long-term Dark Sky Tourism strategy leading into the 2038 Onslow Total Solar Eclipse.



## Visit Ashburton Destination Marketing

The Shire is developing a new tourism marketing strategy, including an overhaul of current branding, the re-development of a tourism website, introduction of a comprehensive social media strategy and a targeted campaign called 'Slip into Onslow'.



## Onslow Tourism Destination Management Plan 2022 - 2027

The Draft Onslow Tourism Destination Management Plan 2022 – 2027 is a coordinated delivery plan for both the tourism industry and the Shire of Ashburton. A number of key actions have been identified to help drive the industry forward over the next 5 years.

# Planned Projects

## Principle 1

We will embrace our foreshore as a place for people to stay, meet and experience our unique way of life







## Onslow Foreshore Revitalisation

The vision includes a coordinated design strategy that activates the beach front and significantly improves the beach experience. Offering modern public amenities to locals and visitors alike, proposed outcomes of the project include way finding signage; cultural, heritage and biodiversity interpretive information; car parking; beautification of surrounds landscaping; public seating; shade structure; public art; boardwalk and pedestrian pathways; improved lighting; and multipurpose areas with capacity for events.



## Onslow Jetty Restoration

The original Onslow jetty was an iconic destination for locals and tourists alike, providing some of the region's most spectacular views.

The jetty was destroyed several years ago, with its replacement now a community priority. The new jetty will create ongoing tourism opportunities and support an increase in tourist night stays.



## Dreamers Hill 360° Cultural & Convention Centre

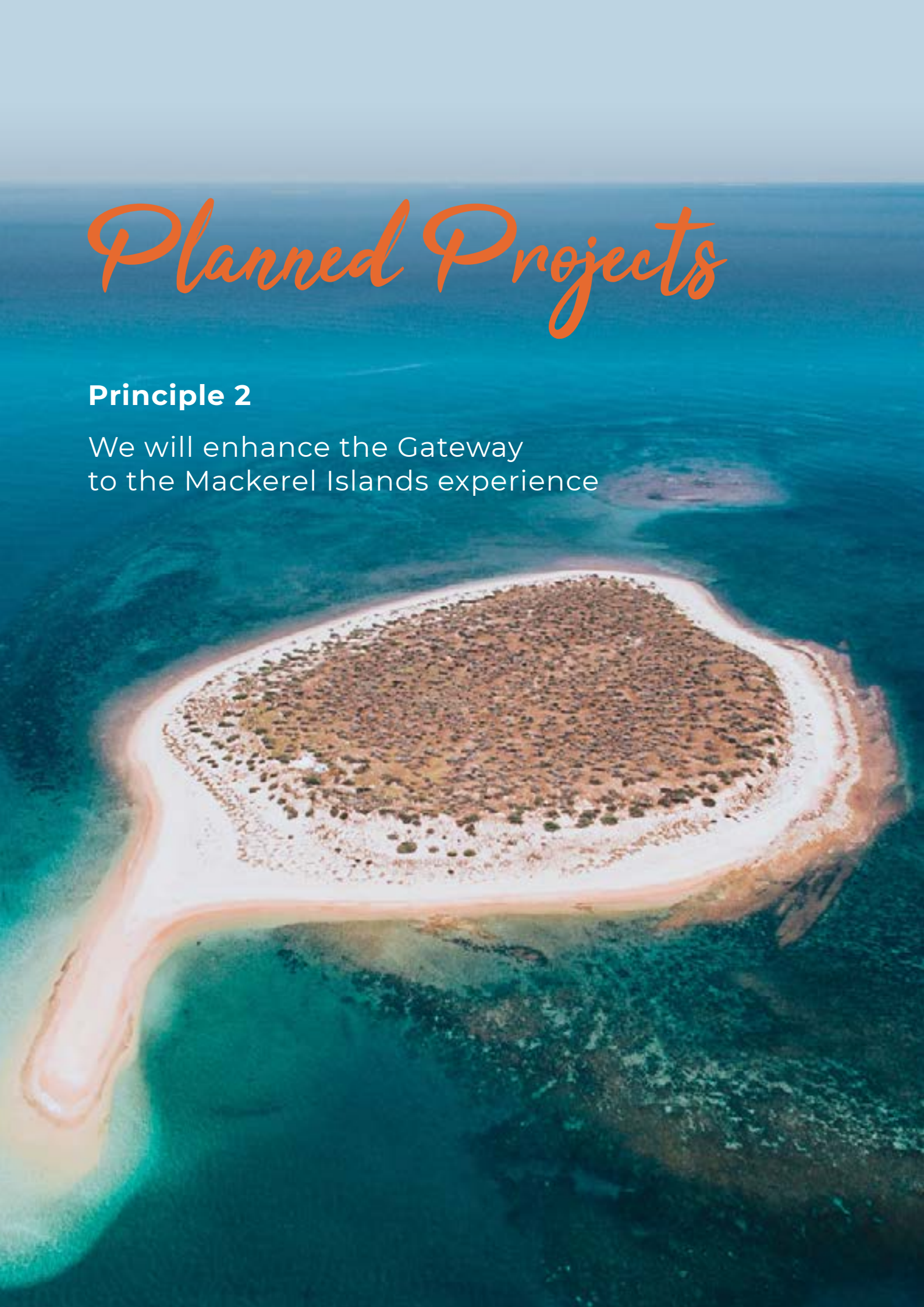
The development of Dreamers Hill, a culturally significant and prominent Aboriginal site in Onslow that overlooks Beadon Bay, Sunset Beach and the Indian Ocean, will provide a space unrivalled in Onslow. The proposal includes terraced seating, outdoor amphitheatre and yarning circle, local art, a picnic area, walkway, landscaping, and space for events and functions. A car park and public toilets will also be developed at the site.



# Planned Projects

## Principle 2

We will enhance the Gateway to the Mackerel Islands experience





### Community Boating Precinct Stage Three

Council is currently delivering Stage 1 of the Onslow Community Boating Precinct (CBP) which will provide a new boat ramp and central holding jetty with suitable space for the development of a small marina that may contain fully serviced boat pens at the Beadon Creek (Onslow) Maritime Facility. Stage 3 will incorporate a future fishing club, providing economic and community benefits to the region and will also see a portion of land available for development for community groups such as Volunteer Marine and Rescue.



### The Pilbara Inshore Islands Tourism Initiative

The Pilbara Inshore Islands Nature Reserves comprises over 170 islands, islets and rocks, and spans the area between Exmouth Gulf and Cape Preston. Many of the islands are protected as nature reserves, home to migratory shorebirds, marine turtles and seabirds. The islands also offer incredible tourism value. The Shire will develop the Pilbara Islands Authority (PIA) under the provisions of a Government Act with the islands of Long, Anchor, Besserie, Thevenard, Direction, Brodie and Airlie vested under the PIA.



### Rigs to Reef

This project delivers a new artificial reef habitat from decommissioned in-situ offshore mining infrastructure from Chevron operations. Council is seeking support from the State Government through the Minister for Environment to progress the Rigs to Reef Project, and if required, seeks to fast track any approvals to expedite the project. This will become a destination for charter boats, visitors and locals.







## Onslow Airport Expansion Investigation

The Shire is currently investigating how the Onslow Aerodrome facilities can support 737-700 operations as a major airline and operator of the airport moves to retire the Fokker 100 fleet.

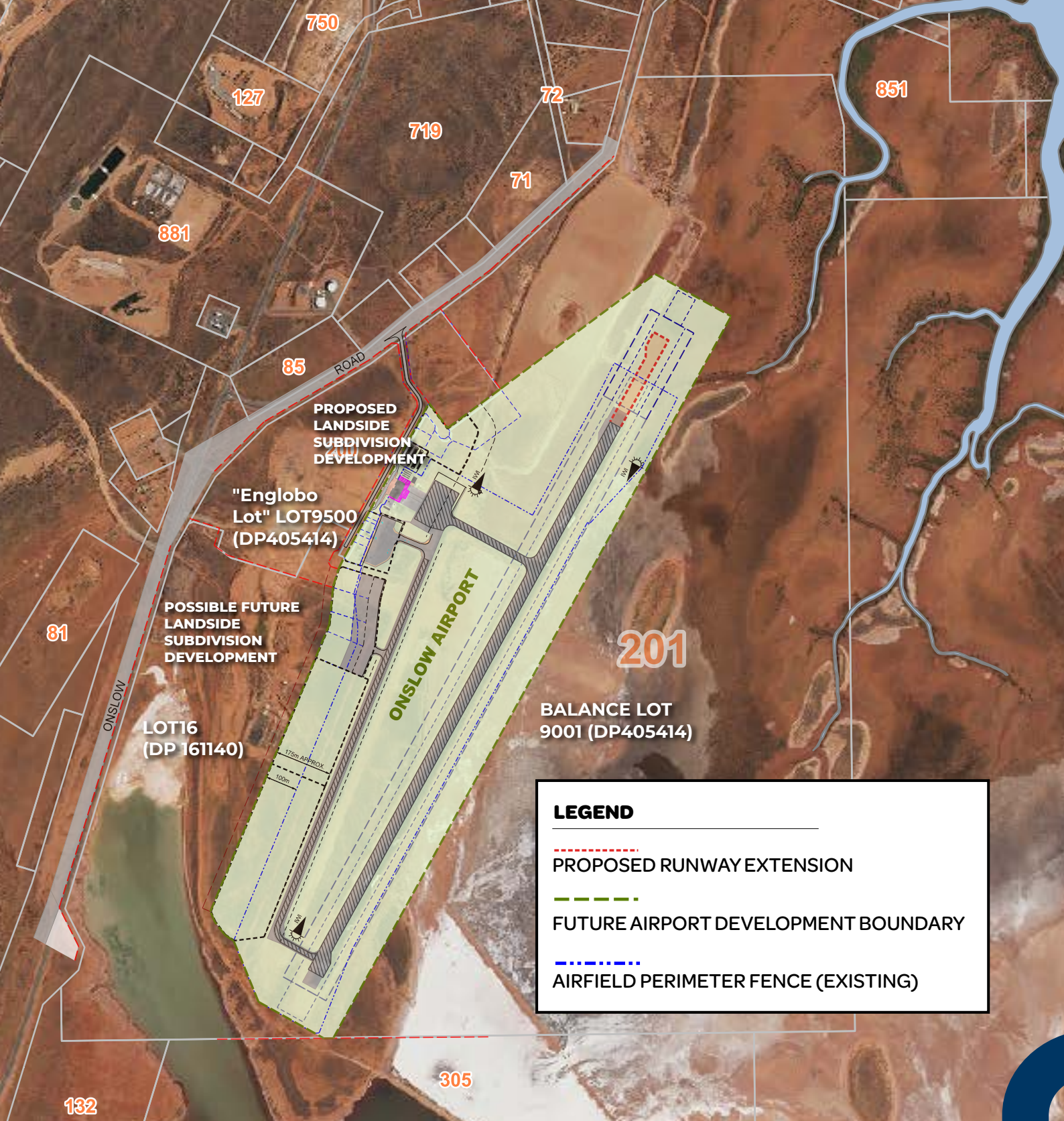
A study undertaken by the aerodrome operator to address the impact of introducing the 737-700 aircraft to the Onslow aerodrome is currently in progress. This study (aircraft compatibility assessment) will assess the aerodrome physical characteristics and obstacle limitation surfaces suitability for the new aircraft type as prescribed by The Civil Aviation Safety Regulations 1998 (CASR), and the Part 139 (Aerodromes) Manual of Standards(MOS).

The items being assessed include (but are not limited to):

FACILITY ITEMS	DESCRIPTION
<b>Aerodrome reference code (ARC)</b>	Potential use of an aerodrome facility by a more demanding aircraft type than that supported by the nominated ARC requires careful evaluation and consideration. The 737-700 is a code 4 aircraft and Onslow aerodrome is code 3. There is precedent of code 4 aircraft operating into code 3 aerodromes, for example Newman (YNWN) airport, if the assessment confirms an acceptable level of safety can be established to support that operation and the aircraft operator accepts the risk including operating to a narrow runway supplement.
<b>Runway length</b>	At 1900m and with low TODA gradients it is not anticipated that runway length will be a limiting factor but this is part of the assessment.
<b>Pavements assessment</b>	The bearing strength of the runway will need to be assessed due to the different aircraft weight and pavement strength. Also, configuring sub grade strength and landing gear configuration of a different aircraft.  ** this may require a pavement update or restrict number of annual movements or reduce the life of the pavement**
<b>Runway strip width</b>	If an upgrade to code 4 was required, this could require substantial works and result in infringements to the transitional surface.
<b>OLS (code 3 v code 4)</b>	Aircraft tail height which may impact the transitional surface.  Increased conical height and would require additional ground survey of the second section length of the approach surface and the horizontal section.
<b>Manoeuvring area including apron, taxiway and runway</b>	Wingspan impacting aircraft parking and taxiing operations;  It is likely a new parking position on the existing apron will be recommended which may restrict full 3 bay operations down to 2 bays  Jet blast clearances and velocity and GSE equipment storage will need to be assessed
<b>Airfield lighting PAPI Apron flood lights</b>	It is likely a safety case will meet the requirements for the PAPI
<b>Refuelling</b>	Impact on fuel uplift requirements will need to be assessed.

Please note special procedures may be required to be implemented by the Shire of Ashburton. These could include alternative measures such as operational procedures/restrictions being introduced which should be reviewed periodically to assess and assure their continued validity.





**LEGEND**

- PROPOSED RUNWAY EXTENSION
- FUTURE AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY
- AIRFIELD PERIMETER FENCE (EXISTING)

# Gateway to the Mackerel Islands







# Planned Projects

## Principle 3

We will create vibrant spaces, places and experiences that reflect our history, culture and character





## Onslow Arts & Culture Precinct

Creative industries offer incredible value to people and communities, as well as significant economic, tourism, health and social benefits. Creativity also allows our diverse culture and stories to thrive, reflecting our community's beliefs, values and heritage. Despite all this, there is currently limited capacity and coordinated support provided to local or regional artists, limited opportunities to showcase innovative or quality works, and limited visitor access to a diverse range of arts and cultural experiences or activities.

A creative space for local artists as well as a venue for arts and cultural exhibitions and workshops so that performance, music, art and culture can be celebrated and enjoyed.



## Onslow Main Street Upgrade

The Onslow Main Street Revitalisation project will deliver a vibrant, safe, well designed and attractive town centre for the growing community, local businesses and visitors.

The upgrade will include improved pathways, pedestrian crossings, storm water drainage, landscaping, traffic management, streetscaping, road improvements, way-finding signage and street furniture.



## Visit Ashburton App – A self-guided interpretive visitor circuit

This is an extension of the first stage unique self guided tour highlighting the points of interest in and around Onslow.

Highlights include industrial tourism overlooking Salt Jetty and Chevron's operations, to the future water tank murals and the interactive Old Onslow App experience. Visitors can learn about Old Onslow's history, culture and way of life.







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