

The background of the cover is a photograph of a river flowing through a deep, rocky gorge. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The river is surrounded by green vegetation and the steep, layered rock walls of the gorge frame the scene.

SHIRE OF NORTHAMPTON STRATEGIC COMMUNITY PLAN 2025- 2035



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Shire of Northampton respectfully acknowledges the Yamatji People, who are the Traditional Owners and First People of the land that this Strategic Community Plan covers. We would like to pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Yamatji People.



THE SHIRE OF NORTHHAMPTON UNIQUE, DIVERSE, PROUD

The Shire of Northampton is one of 137 local government authorities established under the Local Government Act 1995 providing services and facilities under legislation and regulation. The Shire recognises that its performance strongly influences the liveability, productivity, wellbeing, connection and identity of the community.

The Shire of Northampton is located in the Midwest region of Western Australia which is 475 kilometres north of Perth and has an area of 12,499 square kilometres. The Shire's main administration office is in the town of Northampton, 50kms north of Geraldton. There are two main town centres, Northampton and Kalbarri with smaller town sites of Horrocks, Port Gregory, Binnu, Isseka, and Ajana.

OUR HISTORY

The recorded history of the area now known as the Shire of Northampton is a rich tapestry, woven from the stories of its Aboriginal inhabitants through to the first known European contact. Indigenous peoples lived in the region for countless generations, developing a deep connection with the land.

European history in the area may have begun as early as 1629, when two survivors of the Batavia mutiny were marooned on the Western Australian coast—possibly near the mouths of the Murchison or Hutt Rivers. Later, in 1839, explorer George Grey was shipwrecked in the region and reported discovering one of the most fertile districts in Australia. He described encountering superior huts, well-marked roads, deeply sunk wells, and extensive warren grounds—all signs of a large, established population. Grey attributed this to the region’s remarkable capacity for supporting life, thanks to its rich soil and abundant food resources.

Lead was found in the area in 1847, followed by copper being discovered by Drummonds Shepherd in 1854. The convict hiring station ‘Lynton’ was established at Port Gregory from 1853-1856 and the first railway commenced in 1874, which ran from Geraldton to Northampton and was later extended to Ajana in 1913.

With the advent of a railway, activity expanded with more lead and copper mines being opened. Areas sown to cereal crops (mainly wheat) increased, together with growth of sheep flocks. Northampton was first known as the “The Mines” until 1864, at which point the townsite was gazetted and became known as ‘Northampton’. The town has long been known by its Aboriginal name ‘Mooniemia’.

The Local Government district of Northampton began in 1871, and its boundaries were prescribed from the north by a line that ran east from the mouth of the Murchison River, then west to the Indian Ocean, and south by a line running east from the mouth of the Buller River, with no eastern boundary included. The first Local Government office was built in 1898 in Northampton followed by new offices built in 1957, that were extended and modified in 1984 and again in 2001. The administration centre at Kalbarri is known as the “Allen Centre” and was opened in 1992.

OUR POPULATION

The Australian Bureau of Statistics Census figures from 2021 list the Shire’s population as 3,227 at that time. The current population comprises 53% of male and 47% of female with a median age of 53 years, which is significantly higher than the State average of 38 years.

If the population remains stable over the next ten years it will pose significant challenges in the management of current and future demands for quality lifestyles. However, if the population increases dramatically due to potential significant proposed projects in the region, this will present a different set of challenges for the Shire in relation to growth and demand on public infrastructure and services.

OUR ECONOMY

Predominant industries in the Shire are diverse and include broad acre agriculture, fishing and tourism, garnet mining, and beta carotene production. Proposed renewable energy and mining projects have the potential to transform the Shire’s economy and population but are subject to approval processes and companies deciding to proceed.

SHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE

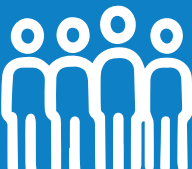
The Shire provides the following infrastructure:

- Shire Administration Offices in Northampton and Kalbarri
- Shire libraries in Northampton and Kalbarri
- 297km of sealed local roads
- 910km of unsealed local roads
- Waste management facilities at Northampton, Kalbarri, Port Gregory, and Binnu
- Recreation facilities in Northampton, Kalbarri, Horrocks, Port Gregory and Binnu
- Ablution facilities in Northampton, Kalbarri, Horrocks, Port Gregory and Binnu
- An airport in Kalbarri
- Parks and playgrounds across the Shire
- Cemeteries in Northampton and Kalbarri

QUICK STATS



12,499KM²
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA



3,227
POPULATION¹



816
FAMILIES¹



475KM
DISTANCE TO PERTH



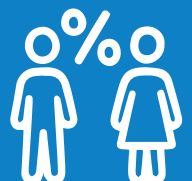
53
MEDIAN AGE¹
State Average = 38 years



2.2
PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD¹
State Average = 2.5



5.7%
ABORIGINAL AND TORES STRAIT ISLANDER¹
State Average = 3.3%



53%/47%
MEN/WOMEN GENDER %¹
State Average = 50%/50%



49.5%
PARTICIPATION IN THE LABOUR FORCE¹
State Average = 50%/50%

Source: ¹Australian Bureau of Statistics June 2021 except geographical area and distance from Perth, which has been provided by the Shire.

ABOUT THE PLAN

All local governments are required to produce a plan for the future under S5.56 (1) of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

The Strategic Community Plan (SCP) is part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The SCP outlines community long term (10+ years) vision, values, aspirations and priorities, with reference to other local government plans, information and resourcing capabilities. A key role of the SCP is to clearly link the community's aspirations with the Council's vision and long-term strategy. The SCP is not static. A full review is required every four years with a desktop review every two years. This iteration of the SCP is the result of a full review.

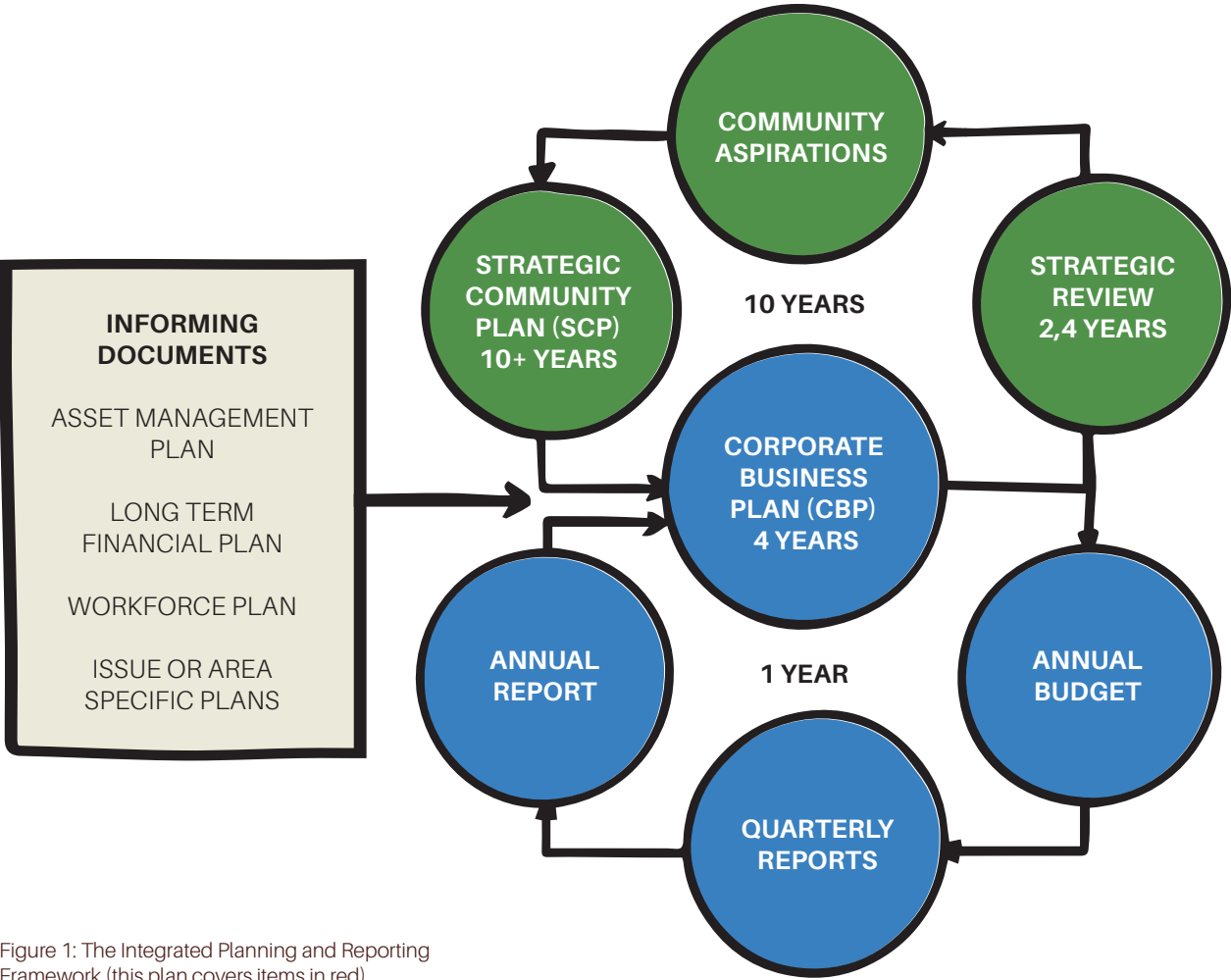


Figure 1: The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (this plan covers items in red)

Three key stakeholders are involved in the development of an integrated plan: the Council, the community and the local government administration led by the Chief Executive Officer; noting the interfaces and dependencies shared with other stakeholders too. The SCP is for all members of our community.

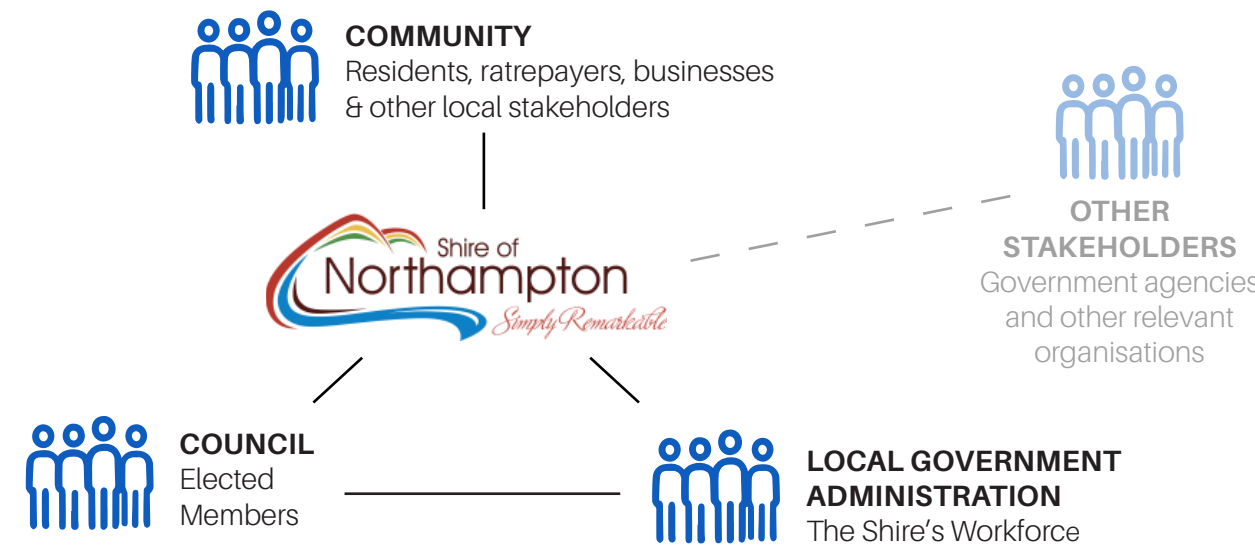


Figure 2: SCP Stakeholders

HOW TO USE THE PLAN

Community

Residents, ratepayers, businesses and other stakeholders of our Shire can use this plan to:

- See how your feedback has informed the plan.
- Identify the key priorities of your community and local government.
- Understand the framework and constraints that guide decision-making in your local government.
- Consider how your actions can contribute to achieving a positive future for the Shire of Northampton.

Council

Elected Members can use this plan to:

- Consider whether motions and proposals put forward by other Elected Members, community members, advocates and staff are contributing to the vision and outcomes of the plan.
- Ensure finances and resources are appropriately applied based on alignment to the plan.
- Ensure Shire policies support the overall shared vision.
- Monitor the Shire's performance against the vision and outcomes of the plan.

Local Government Administration

The Shire's workforce can use this plan to:

- Assess new tasks, projects and proposals to ensure they contribute towards the vision and outcomes of the plan.
- Plan and deliver Shire services based on strategic priorities, legislated needs, and community aspirations.
- Assess any competing priorities against the vision and outcomes of the plan to determine which provides the greater value.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Shire of Northampton is committed to meaningful engagement with our community, recognising it as an essential component of identifying long-term goals and priorities.

In March 2025, the Shire of Northampton commenced a major review of its previous Strategic Community Plan (SCP) 2015-2025. The SCP clearly links the community's aspirations with Council's vision and long-term strategy.

How we engaged

The Shire engaged an external consultancy company to independently facilitate community engagement. This was undertaken in line with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) core values, Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework guidance, and best practice community engagement, communication, and inclusivity principles.

The public consultation program was delivered via the following means:

- Community survey, available online and in paper-based format
- Youth-specific community survey, available online and in paper-based format
- A series of place-based community workshops held face-to-face around the Shire

4
LOCATIONS
+ ONLINE

+

107
SURVEY
RESPONSES

+

103
WORKSHOP
ATTENDEES

=

1000+
IDEAS AND
COMMENTS

via general & youth survey

across Northampton, Kalbarri, Port Gregory & Harrocks

What we heard

Of the hundreds of ideas and comments received throughout this engagement process, these are the top themes regarding what community members like most about living, working in, or visiting the Shire of Northampton.

- Community spirit, positivity, and friendliness
- Natural environment, beauty, and outdoor activities
- Peaceful, regional lifestyle and small-town living
- Location (accessibility and proximity)

These were the top themes shared regarding things to focus on for the future.

- Improved access to services that allow people to remain living in the area instead of needing to travel or relocate to Metro centres
- Preservation of the natural beauty of the area – protecting and enhancing natural features whilst optimising environmental practices such as recycling, weed control, and sustainable land care
- Managed and sustainable growth that increases employment and business opportunities in the region, supporting people to thrive locally and reducing the need to move away
- Promotion and facilitation of sustainable tourism initiatives that celebrate local heritage, nature, and community character
- Safe and inclusive activities and spaces for youth, children and teenagers and opportunities for youth engagement and leadership development



**A PROUD
AND UNIQUE
COMMUNITY,
RECOGNISING
THE PAST AND
CREATING THE
FUTURE.**



OUR VISION

**WE CELEBRATE OUR HERITAGE
AND THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF
OUR SHIRE.**

**TOGETHER, COMMUNITY,
COUNCIL AND SHIRE
ADMINISTRATION TAKE
COLLECTIVE AND PERSONAL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR CREATING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.
WE ARE COMMITTED TO
RESPECTFULLY CONSERVING
OUR HERITAGE AND NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT, RECOGNISING
THAT WE EACH HAVE A ROLE IN
NURTURING THEM.**

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Taking a regional partnership approach with relevant stakeholders and community, the Shire will facilitate and advocate for the strategic priorities and desired outcomes that contribute to realisation of the community's long-term vision and aspirations. A whole of Shire approach across five strategic focus areas will respect the individuality of townsites whilst ensuring connectivity and rural inclusion. These include;

OUR ECONOMY

OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

OUR PEOPLE

OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

OUR LEADERSHIP

OUR ECONOMY

The resilience of our local economy, the viability of local employment and business opportunities, and the securing of long-term economic sustainability.



“A THRIVING COMMUNITY THANKS TO WELL-MANAGED AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH PROVIDING LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES.”



Community Aspiration

We are proud of our diverse, resilient local economy, built on sustainable farming and fishing, vibrant high street businesses, tourism, mining, and other industrial opportunities. Managed, sustainable growth creates local employment and business opportunities in balance with protecting our natural assets, rural charm, and heritage. Ongoing investment in tourism and new attractions strengthens our reputation as a destination of choice. We are optimistic about the future and aspire to be a place of opportunity for all.

The Shire's Commitment

The Shire commits to securing government, grant, and other funding sources to support strategic initiatives and community priorities. It will uphold a relevant Local Planning Scheme that ensures effective compliance control and provides timely, accurate development advice and approvals. Through strategic zoning and, where appropriate, land acquisition, the Shire will facilitate sustainable growth, infrastructure development, and the long-term wellbeing of the community.

Desired Outcomes

1.1 Local and thriving

We feel supported to work and grow our businesses in the Shire and are confident in the Shire's willingness to make appropriate commercial investment to fill unmet needs for future development.

1.2 Diverse and prosperous

We are driving balanced and sustainable growth by embracing new opportunities for our economy, people, and culture to thrive, whilst ensuring primary industries remain profitable into the future.

1.3 Attractive and popular

Our reputation as a prime visitor destination is strong and we are optimising an ecologically friendly tourism industry.

OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Stewardship of our land and marine environments, foreshores, townscapes, and nature-based attractions.

“WE ENJOY THE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES, NATURAL ATTRACTIONS, WHALE WATCHING, WILDFLOWERS, FISHING. THE SKYWALK IS SPECTACULAR.”

Community Aspiration

We value and celebrate our unique natural environment, ensuring it remains clean, healthy, and sustainably managed for future generations. Careful stewardship of our land, marine environments, foreshores, townscapes, and nature-based attractions ensures long-term ecological health and prosperity. We take pride in our community's active role in environmental conservation, and we are committed to preserving the natural beauty of our region.

The Shire's Commitment

The Shire commits to playing its part to protect the environment in support of ecological sustainability and enhancing the human experience. It will advocate for effective coastal erosion management and work to optimise the use and preservation of the Shire's natural attractions, helping to ensure they remain accessible, resilient, and valued by current and future generations.

Desired Outcomes

2.1 A healthy ecosystem

The interconnected biodiversity of our flora and fauna is protected and nurtured.

2.2 A protected landscape

Our Shire balances human wealth and pleasure with protection of our coastlines, riverbeds, and other natural landscape and marine features.

2.3 Nature-based aesthetic appeal

The natural beauty of our Shire is conserved for our residents and to attract visitors.

OUR PEOPLE

Community and individual wellbeing and social connectedness, including availability and access to essential and lifestyle services.



“I LOVE THE WELCOMING, COUNTRY TOWN FEEL AND THE WAY THE COMMUNITY GETS INVOLVED IN PROMOTING POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND GROWTH.”



Community Aspiration

Our Shire is home to strong, connected communities where people of all ages feel safe, included, and supported. We provide a diverse range of services, activities, events and experiences that bring people together, promoting opportunities for residents to thrive and visitors to enjoy. We benefit from good access to health, transport, and community services that enhance wellbeing and social connection. Our inclusive community spirit reflects our commitment to offering quality of life for everyone.

The Shire's Commitment

The Shire commits to fostering intergenerational, accessible support services and social opportunities that enhance liveability, wellbeing, and community cohesion. It will promote an inclusive and vibrant culture that celebrates diversity, strengthens connections, and supports the evolving needs of all residents

Desired Outcomes

3.1 Socially connected and included

We feel supported to live well and prosper together, whatever our age or diversity of needs.

3.2 Outstanding recreation and tourism experiences

Community life and tourism is being enriched through a strong portfolio of events, activities, attractions, and historical heritage.

3.3 Healthy and safe community

We feel safe in our Shire and have reliable access to services that support our health and wellbeing.

OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Shire's buildings, roads, infrastructure, utilities, public amenities, and recreational and tourism facilities.

"HISTORIC COASTAL TOWN WITH OLD BUILDINGS AND THE SENSE OF PERMANENCE THAT THEY PORTRAY -NOT TOO FAR FROM A CITY WITH EASY ACCESS TO EVERYTHING!"



Community Aspiration

Our Shire's buildings, roads, infrastructure, utilities, public amenities, and recreational and tourism facilities are safe, functional, and fit-for-purpose. The Shire takes a proactive approach to general maintenance and land use planning, ensuring our physical assets enhance the liveability of our communities, promote accessibility, and support a sustainable local economy. Through thoughtful investment and responsible stewardship, we sustain a high-quality built environment that meets the current and future needs of our residents and visitors whilst ensuring we retain the rich heritage contained in our Shire's buildings.

The Shire's Commitment

Within the bounds of funding prioritisation, the Shire commits to delivering appropriate and functional buildings, roads, infrastructure, and amenities that meet the needs of the community. Where the Shire has influence to, it will ensure the effective and efficient delivery of roadworks and other infrastructure projects, supporting accessibility, safety, and long-term sustainability across the built environment.

Desired Outcomes

4.1 Fit-for-purpose infrastructure

Our buildings and other physical assets enhance functionality, experience, and ambience. Where appropriate and beneficial to the community, we are supporting the development of light commercial areas.

4.2 We are connected

We experience good utility provision, internet service, and phone connectivity across the shire.

4.3 We can move around effectively

A comprehensive strategy is driving effective management of roads, drainage, paths and parking facilities, ensuring maintenance and improvement of infrastructure is meeting increasing future transport demands.

OUR LEADERSHIP

Governance and decision-making, planning, communication and engagement and regional stakeholder collaboration.

“WE HAVE A WONDERFUL VIBRANT COMMUNITY WITH THE TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES WORKING WELL TOGETHER AND SUPPORTING EACH OTHER.”



Community Aspiration

Strong, transparent, and accountable leadership ensures good governance and responsible management of our Shire's resources. Informed decision-making is guided by robust strategic and operational planning, grounded in the needs and aspirations of our community. Through well-resourced and effective engagement with residents, stakeholders, and partners, our Shire prioritises clear and open communication that fosters trust and confidence. This empowers a truly collaborative approach to stewarding the future of our Shire.

The Shire's Commitment

The Shire commits to upholding accountability, good governance, and responsible stewardship, underpinned by transparent and effective communication. It will seek sufficient resourcing to ensure it is equipped to meet future challenges, enabling responsive, forward-thinking leadership that serves the best interests of the community.

Desired Outcomes

5.1 Excellent communication

We feel heard and valued, even when our ideas and requests can't be actioned.

5.2 Best practice stewardship

Our Shire continues to expand capacity and capability to maintain excellence in all areas of leadership and Council operations.

5.3 Collaborating for our future

We benefit from a partnership approach to sustainable development characterised by effective advocacy and strong relationships.

MONITORING THE PLAN

Many initiatives that the Shire undertakes or supports span across multiple focus areas. The following indicators demonstrate prioritisation and alignment of Shire activity to this plan.

Encouragement of managed and sustainable growth by influencing and responding to the market forces that drive economic development 

Optimisation of economic and lifestyle opportunities  of visitation through attractions and experiences that showcase our points of difference , and infrastructure that is functional, comfortable, and safe 

Delivery of key strategic projects that improve and optimise liveability throughout the Shire  support economic growth , and protect our natural environment 

Negotiation for the benefits of large non-Shire infrastructure projects flow to communities 

Stewardship of an economically and environmentally sustainable future  through compliant governance systems, sufficient and appropriate resourcing, and effective communication 

