



Published Minutes

Ashburton Economic And Tourism Development Committee
Meeting

Tuesday, 13 June 2023

Date:	Tuesday 13 June 2023
Time:	9:00am
Location:	Clem Thompson Sports Pavilion, Stadium Road, Tom Price
Distribution Date:	Friday 16 June 2023



Shire of Ashburton
Ashburton Economic And Tourism Development Committee Meeting

The Chief Executive Officer recommends the endorsement of these minutes at the next Ashburton Economic And Tourism Development Committee Meeting.

K Donohoe
Chief Executive Officer
16 June 2023

These minutes were confirmed by Council as a true and accurate record of proceedings at the Ashburton Economic And Tourism Development Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 13 June 2023.

Presiding Member

Date

8/08/2023

Disclaimer

The Shire of Ashburton warns anyone who has an application lodged with Council must obtain, and should only rely on, written confirmation of the outcomes of the application following the Council meeting, and any conditions attaching to the decision made by Council in respect of the application. No responsibility whatsoever is implied, or accepted, by the Shire of Ashburton for any act, omission, statement, or intimation occurring during a Council meeting.

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1 Declaration Of Opening

The Chief Executive Officer declared the meeting open at 9:42am

1.1 Acknowledgement Of Country

As representatives of the Shire of Ashburton Council, we respectfully acknowledge the local Indigenous people, the traditional custodians of this land where we are meeting upon today and pay our respects to them and all their elders both past, present and emerging.

2 Announcement Of Visitors

Nil

3 Attendance

3.1 Present

Elected Members:	Cr M Lynch Cr A Smith Cr T Mladenovic Cr A Sullivan	Tom Price Ward Tom Price Ward Tom Price Ward Paraburdoo Ward
Employees:	K Donohoe C McGurk R Miller D Kennedy A Lennon R Marlborough A Furfaro N Cochrane	Chief Executive Officer Director Community Development Director Infrastructure Services Director Corporate Services Manager Media and Communications Senior Governance Officer Governance Officer Council Support Officer
Guests:	Neil McGilp – Pilbara Tourism Association	
Members of Public:	There were no members of the public in attendance at the commencement of the meeting.	
Members of media:	There were no members of the media in attendance at the commencement of the meeting.	

3.2 Apologies

Nil

3.3 Approved Leave Of Absence

Nil

3.4 Election of the Presiding Member and Deputy Presiding Member

The Chief Executive Officer to preside at the meeting in accordance with clause 3, Schedule 2.3 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, until the offices detailed are filled.

Election of Presiding Member

In accordance with section 5.12(1) and clause 2, Schedule 2.3 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the office of Presiding Member is to be filled as the first matter dealt with at the first meeting of the committee after an ordinary election.

How elected:

The election of the Presiding Member is to be conducted in accordance with clause 4, Schedule 2.3 of the *Local Government Act 1995* as follows:

1. The committee is to elect a committee member to fill the office.
2. The election is to be conducted by the CEO in accordance with the procedure prescribed.
3. Nominations for the office are to be given to the CEO in writing before the meeting or during the meeting before the close of nominations.
4. Nominations close at the meeting at a time announced by the CEO, which is to be a sufficient time after the announcement by the CEO that nominations are about to close to allow for any nominations made to be dealt with.
5. If a committee member is nominated by another committee member the CEO is not to accept the nomination unless the nominee has advised the CEO, orally or in writing, that he or she is willing to be nominated for the office.
6. The committee members are to vote on the matter by secret ballot as if they were electors voting at an election.
7. Subject to clause 5(1), the votes cast under subclause (5) are to be counted, and the successful candidate determined, in accordance with Schedule 4.1 (which deals with determining the result of an election) as if those votes were votes cast at an election.
8. As soon as is practicable after the result of the election is known, the CEO is to declare and give notice of the result in accordance with regulations, if any.

Nominations from Cr Matthew Lynch, Cr Audra Smith and Cr Alana Sullivan were received in writing to the Chief Executive Officer for the position of Presiding Member.

An election was conducted in accordance with clause 4, Schedule 2.3 of the *Local Government Act 1995* to fill the position of Presiding Member. Following the ballot the Chief Executive Officer, as the returning officer informed the committee that Councillor Matthew Lynch was elected as the Presiding Member of the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee.

Election of Deputy Presiding Member

How elected

The election of the Deputy Presiding Member is to be conducted in accordance with clause 8, Schedule 2.3 of the *Local Government Act 1995* as follows:

1. The committee is to elect a committee member (other than the presiding member) to fill the office.
2. The election is to be conducted in accordance with the procedure prescribed by the presiding member, or if he or she is not present, by the CEO.
3. Nominations for the office are to be given to the person conducting the election in writing before the meeting or during the meeting before the close of nominations.
4. Nominations close at the meeting at a time announced by the person conducting the election, which is to be a sufficient time after the announcement by that person that nominations are about to close to allow for any nominations made to be dealt with.
5. If a committee member is nominated by another committee member the person conducting the election is not to accept the nomination unless the nominee has advised the person conducting the election, orally or in writing, that he or she is willing to be nominated for the office.
6. The committee members are to vote on the matter by secret ballot as if they were electors voting at an election.
7. Subject to clause 9(1) the votes cast under subclause (5) are to be counted, and the successful candidate determined, in accordance with Schedule 4.1 as if those votes were votes cast at an election.
8. As soon as is practicable after the result of the election is known, the person conducting the election is to declare and give notice of the result in accordance with regulations, if any.

Nominations from Cr A Smith and Cr A Sullivan were received in writing to the Chief Executive Officer for the position of Deputy Presiding Member.

An election was conducted in accordance with clause 8, Schedule 2.3 of the *Local Government Act 1995* to fill the position of Deputy Presiding Member. Following the ballot the Chief Executive Officer, as the returning officer informed the committee that Councillor Audra Smith was elected as the Deputy Presiding Member of the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee.

4 Declaration By Members

4.1 Due Consideration By Councillors To The Agenda

Councillors noted they have given due consideration to all matters contained in this agenda.

4.2 Declaration Of Interest

A member who has an Impartiality, Proximity or Financial interest in any matter to be discussed at this meeting must disclose the nature of the interest either in a written notice, given to the Chief Executive Officer, prior to the meeting, or at the meeting immediately before the matter is discussed.

A member who makes a disclosure in respect to an interest must not preside at the part of the meeting which deals with the matter, or participate in, or be present during any discussion or decision-making process relative to the matter, unless the disclosing member is permitted to do so under Section 5.68 or Section 5.69 of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

The following declarations of interest are disclosed –

Nil

5 Public Agenda Items

5.1 Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee Terms of Reference and 2023 Meeting Dates

File Reference	ED278
Applicant or Proponent(s)	Not Applicable
Author	J Bray, Manager Governance
Authorising Officer	D Kennedy, Director Corporate Services
Previous Meeting Reference	Nil
Disclosure(s) of interest	Author – Nil
	Authorising Officer – Nil
Attachments	1. Draft Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Terms of Reference

Report Purpose

Council is required to consider the draft Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee (Committee) Terms of Reference and proposed meeting dates for the remainder of 2023.

The purpose of this report is to present a Terms of Reference to provide clarity on the role of the Committee.

Council is requested to adopt the proposed Committee Terms of Reference and meeting dates.

Background

At its meeting held 19 October 2022, Council resolved, in part, as follows:

“Creates the following Committees, with the following general terms –

- *Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee*
 - *The general purpose is to identify and develop strategies to promote tourism so there is a positive impact at a regional level and to advise Council on suggested actions to address relevant issues raised with, and by, the Committee.*
 - *Meeting cycle is as required.*
 - *Responsibility assigned to the Chief Executive Officer.*

Appoints the following Councillors to the following Committees –

- *Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee*
 - *Councillor Cr M Lynch*
 - *Councillor Cr T Mladenovic*
 - *Councillor Cr A Sullivan*
 - *Councillor Cr A Smith”*

Comments

It is good governance to have an adopted and regularly reviewed Committee Terms of Reference which provide clear responsibilities and guidance on meeting requirements. Clear Terms of Reference assist the Committee to run efficiently and effectively, which in turn helps the community understand the purpose, structure and function of the Committee. As such, a new comprehensive Committee Terms of Reference has been developed.

As part of the review and to align to best practice, the Terms of Reference has expanded to include provisions relating to:

- Roles and Responsibilities – what the Committee is responsible for,
- Delegation – no delegated powers are proposed to be provided to the Committee,
- Membership – no change is proposed to the membership (ie. four elected members are appointed members of the Committee, with all other elected members being deputies,
- Quorum – in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995*,
- Meetings – sets out how the Presiding Member and Deputy Presiding Member are elected to the Committee and how and when meetings will be scheduled, and
- Reporting – clarifying that the Committee reports to Council on any recommendations it makes.

The revised Terms of Reference will be made available on the Shire’s website.

The proposed meeting dates have been scheduled to coincide with Council meeting day to allow for meetings to be held in person.

To encourage public participation and maintain the Shire’s value of openness, it is intended that this Committee will be open to the public. Therefore, the meeting details as endorsed by Council, will be published on the Shire’s official website.

In the future, the Terms of Reference will be submitted to the Committee for review biennially following each local government ordinary election. Meeting dates will be scheduled annually and advertised prior to each new calendar year (approximately November).

Consultation

The Terms of Reference and proposed meeting dates have been prepared in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer and Manager Business and Economic Development.

Strategic Community Plan

Shire of Ashburton Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032

Strategic Objective	4. Performance - We will lead the organisation, and create the culture, to deliver demonstrated performance excellence to the community.
Strategic Outcome	4.6 Visionary community leadership with sound, diligent and accountable governance
Strategy	3 Deliver best practice governance and risk management.

Council Policy

Nil

Financial Implications

Current Financial Year

Nil

Future Financial Year(s)

Nil

Legislative Implications

Section 5.8 of the *Local Government Act 1995* provides Council with the power to establish committees of three or more persons.

Regulation 12(2)(b) of the *Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996* requires the Chief Executive Officer to publish the meeting details for committee meetings which are intended to be open to the public, on the Shire's official website.

Risk Management

Risk has been assessed against the Shire of Ashburton Risk Management Framework.

Theme	Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Inherent Risk Rating	Risk Treatment
Compliance	Elected members are unclear on the roles and responsibilities of the Committee.	Possible (3)	Minor (2)	Moderate (5-9)	Adopt the draft Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee Terms of Reference.

Based on the inherent risk rating and risk treatments, the residual risk to the Shire is considered to be low.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Officer Recommendation

That with respect to the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee Terms of Reference and 2023 Meeting Dates, the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee recommends that Council,

1. Adopts the terms of reference as detailed in Attachment 1, and
2. Endorses the following meeting details,

Date	Time	Location
8 August 2023	9:00am	Council Chambers, Onslow Shire Complex, Second Avenue, Onslow
14 November 2023	9:00am	Ashburton Hall, Ashburton Avenue, Paraburdoo

Committee Decision

Moved Cr A Smith

Seconded Cr T Mladenovic

That with respect to the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee Terms of Reference and 2023 Meeting Dates, the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee recommends that Council,

1. **Adopts the terms of reference as detailed in Attachment 1, and**
2. **Endorses the following meeting details,**

Date	Time	Location
8 August 2023	9:00am	Council Chambers, Onslow Shire Complex, Second Avenue, Onslow
14 November 2023	9:00am	Ashburton Hall, Ashburton Avenue, Paraburdoo

Carried 4/0

5.2 Bank Closures in Regional Australia

File Reference	ED01
Applicant or Proponent(s)	Not Applicable
Author	P Hanlon, Manager Business and Economic Development
Authorising Officer	K Donohoe, Chief Executive Officer
Previous Meeting Reference	Nil
Disclosure(s) of interest	Author – Nil
	Authorising Officer – Nil
Attachments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shire of Ashburton Submission - Bank closures in regional Australia 2. Local Government Association of Queensland - Bank closures in regional Australia

Report Purpose

Council is required to consider the impact on the community of no face-to-face banking services in the Shire of Ashburton.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee of national efforts to address bank closures in regional Australia to develop a position as a Shire.

Council is requested by the Committee to support positive advocacy and engagement with the Australian Local Government Association for a business paper to be prepared investigating how and if local governments can facilitate or deliver face to face banking services through the recommendation presented for consideration.

Background

Following the closure of the Tom Price Westpac Branch, there are no physical banks left in the Shire of Ashburton apart from the limited services provided by Australia Posts Bank@Post.

In November 2022, Tom Price community members and representatives from the business community joined the Shire of Ashburton for an open discussion on the closure of the Westpac Bank. The session allowed for the community to discuss the banking requirements of residents, community organisations and local business following Westpac's announcement that they will shut the only local bank branch in December.

The community voiced their frustration over a lack of options for large cash handling from a business perspective and business banking requirements, along with community groups and organisations who without a local branch will not be able to access club accounts and for cash services. The group also discussed the impact that a lack of face to face services would have on vulnerable members.

A community bank model was also discussed, with the discussion group interested in forming a steering committee to research this option further.

Upon enquiring with Bendigo Bank to investigate their Community Bank model, the Shire of Ashburton received correspondence stating that a Community Bank would not be commercially viable in Tom Price or the Shire of Ashburton in general. A follow up working group meeting was held in November 2022 where it was decided that no further action be taken to assess the impacts of Westpac's closure.

National Attention

The impact of bank closures in regional Australia are being assessed at a national level. The issue has been at the centre of an Australian Government taskforce review and is currently under a formal Senate Inquiry. Finally, the topic has been raised as a motion of consideration at the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly in June.

Regional Banking Taskforce (2022)

The Local Government sector was represented by the Australian Local Government Association on the previous Federal Government's *Regional Banking Taskforce*, which brought together banks and other relevant parties to share information, assess the impact of regional bank branch closures and identify possible solutions. A copy of the Taskforce's final report can be found here:

[Regional Banking Taskforce - Final Report | Treasury.gov.au](#)

Australian Government Inquiry - Bank closures in regional Australia (Current)

The Shire of Ashburton provided the attached submission to the Australian Government's Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport *Bank closures in regional Australia* Inquiry.

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Rural_and_Regional_Affairs_and_Transport/BankClosures

Australian Local Government Association – National General Assembly (June 2023)

Motion 123 made by the Snowy Valley Council, NSW states that:

"This National General Assembly calls on the Australian Government to set in place appropriate legislation to ensure access to 'face to face' financial transactions through banks and/or building society branches in rural and regional areas across Australia."

[NGA23-BusinessPapers-WEB.pdf \(conferenceco.com.au\)](#)

Comments

The Shire continues to be a driving force of the Pilbara region and the Western Australian economy, delivering 12% or \$38.6B of WA's Gross Regional Product and 1.9% of Australia's Gross Domestic Product in 2021. Each worker within the Shire of Ashburton produces almost 11 times the Australian average for industry value add.

The resident population in the Shire of Ashburton is 7,785 people. Although growth is expected to continue, as natural gas and iron ore mining expands, the main employing industries in the Shire (being the resources sector) have moved a significant portion of the workforce to "fly in fly out" (FIFO). These workers live in the Shire on a temporary basis and are generally not counted in official population statistics. It is estimated that 7,300 people reside in mining camps and Aboriginal communities.

Despite the economic strength of our region, access to key services such as banking services are diminishing. With the recent closure of the Westpac Branch in Tom Price, none of our towns have a physical banking branch presence aside from limited services provided by Australia Post's Bank@Post.

This means that our residents must make the following round trips to Karratha to access physical banking services:

- Pannawonica – 400km
- Onslow – 600km
- Tom Price – 700km
- Paraburdoo – 850km

This travel will have an impact on vulnerable members of our community as well as on the productivity of businesses in the Shire if they are required to travel those distances to access banking services.

Possible Solutions to Investigate

Australia Post Bank@Post

An expanded Australia Post Bank@Post service. The attached Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) noted in their submission to the senate inquiry that the Bank@Post service needs to be enhanced. It is understood that Bank@Post is purely a transactional service which doesn't enable people to open financial products including accounts and loans. There is a concern about the impact that this will have on everyday services as well as on the availability of capital for investment purposes. Given the vast distances in the Shire of Ashburton and regional Australia, there will be reduced availability to 'have a conversation' with the local branch manager to access credit to purchase a home or start a business.

Alternate Options

The LGAQ submission also states that The Regional Banking Taskforce noted other possible options including:

- co-location (where banking services are co-located with other businesses at the same location)
- co-branding (where different bank brands are co-located)
- community banks (where there is a franchise or joint venture relationship between a bank and local company)
- reduced opening hours (where branches continued to operate by reducing their opening hours)
- banking hubs (where several banks use a common space to provide in-person banking services)
- advisory hubs (where banks provide information)
- mobile branches (where bankers travel to their customers)
- smart ATMs (which provide a broader variety of services than standard ATMs including the ability to deposit cash).

One possible solution to the above ideas that could be investigated is whether the Australian Local Government Association could look to establish a banking service as a commercial enterprise. Whilst there are many pressures on local government in Australia, with the right funding model and support there could be a system to utilise the buildings, staff, and presence of local government to facilitate or deliver this service to regional communities.

In practice, the customer facing part of Council may act as a connection between regional communities and a centralised banking service. This service could form the basis of Strategic Business Hubs with co-located services. Any profits could then be reinvested into regional Australian communities.

Whilst banking models like Bendigo Bank's Community Bank have delivered services like this in the past, recent experience suggests that this model is dwindling for new branches. The Shire of Ashburton enquired with Bendigo Bank to look at the Community Banking model in Tom Price but were told that it was not commercially feasible in our Shire.

For local government areas where the above model may prove too challenging, a less onerous option could be to have existing Council buildings upgraded and utilised on an agreed basis as a mobile branch with agents such as Armaguard and Commercial banks delivering face to face services for an agreed fee. Again, these profits could be invested into vital community projects.

Regional Australia needs innovative solutions and support to solve these complex problems to ensure no Australian gets left behind. As this is a national issue impacting Australian communities.

Consultation

Chief Executive Officer

Western Australian Local Government Association

Strategic Community Plan

Shire of Ashburton Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032

Strategic Objective	3. Prosperity - We will advocate and drive opportunities for the community to be economically desirable, resilient, and prosperous.
Strategic Outcome	3.4 Sustainable commerce and tourism opportunities
Strategy	2 Ensure Shire processes support the development of strong and sustainable local business opportunities.

Council Policy

Nil

Financial Implications

Current Financial Year

Nil

Future Financial Year(s)

Nil

Legislative Implications

Nil

Risk Management

Risk has been assessed against the Shire of Ashburton Risk Management Framework.

Theme	Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Inherent Risk Rating	Risk Treatment
Reputation (social/community)	There is a risk to the Council's reputation if we do not act as the trusted voice for the region on important social/economic issues.	Possible (3)	Moderate (3)	Moderate (5-9)	Following the officer's recommendation will ensure the Shire takes further action advocating on behalf of the community.

Based on the inherent risk rating and risk treatments, the residual risk to the Shire is considered to be low.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Officer Recommendation

That with respect to Bank closures in Regional Australia, the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee recommends that Council, authorises the Chief Executive Officer to request the Australian Local Government Association to prepare a business paper investigating how local government can facilitate or deliver face to face banking services in regional areas.

Committee Decision

Moved Cr A Sullivan

Seconded Cr A Smith

That with respect to Bank closures in Regional Australia, the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee recommends that Council, authorises the Chief Executive Officer to request the Australian Local Government Association to prepare a business paper investigating how local government can facilitate or deliver face to face banking services in regional areas.

Carried 4/0

5.3 Ashburton Ranges Trail Park Preliminary Concept

File Reference	ED01
Applicant or Proponent(s)	Not Applicable
Author	P Hanlon, Manager Business and Economic Development
Authorising Officer	K Donohoe, Chief Executive Officer
Previous Meeting Reference	Ordinary Council Meeting 9 June 2020 - Item 14.1 – 92/2020 Ordinary Council Meeting 10 May 2022 - Item 11.1 – 051/2022
Disclosure(s) of interest	Author – Nil
	Authorising Officer – Nil
Attachments	1. Ashburton Ranges Trail Park - Preliminary Concept

Report Purpose

Council is required to consider the Ashburton Ranges Trail Park Concept as a key tourism project proposal.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee of the opportunity to create a coordinated trail experience (mountain biking, hiking and all abilities trail) across Tom Price and Paraburdoo.

Council is requested to endorse the Ashburton Ranges Trail Park Preliminary Concept as a key tourism project for the Shire.

Background

The popularity of mountain biking continues to grow globally and is fast becoming one of the world's most popular sport, recreation and physical activities. This trend is similar in Western Australia with participation levels at all time records with the most recent AusPlay data recording 53,116 people participating in mountain biking in WA across 2021 (WA Mountain Bike Strategy 2022-2032). Cycle tourism has been identified globally as an attractive market for tourism operators as a key growth adventure tourism activity due to its low-impact, high-spend, and high dispersal nature. Cycle tourists typically stay longer, spend more and engage in a broader range of experiences than the average visitor.

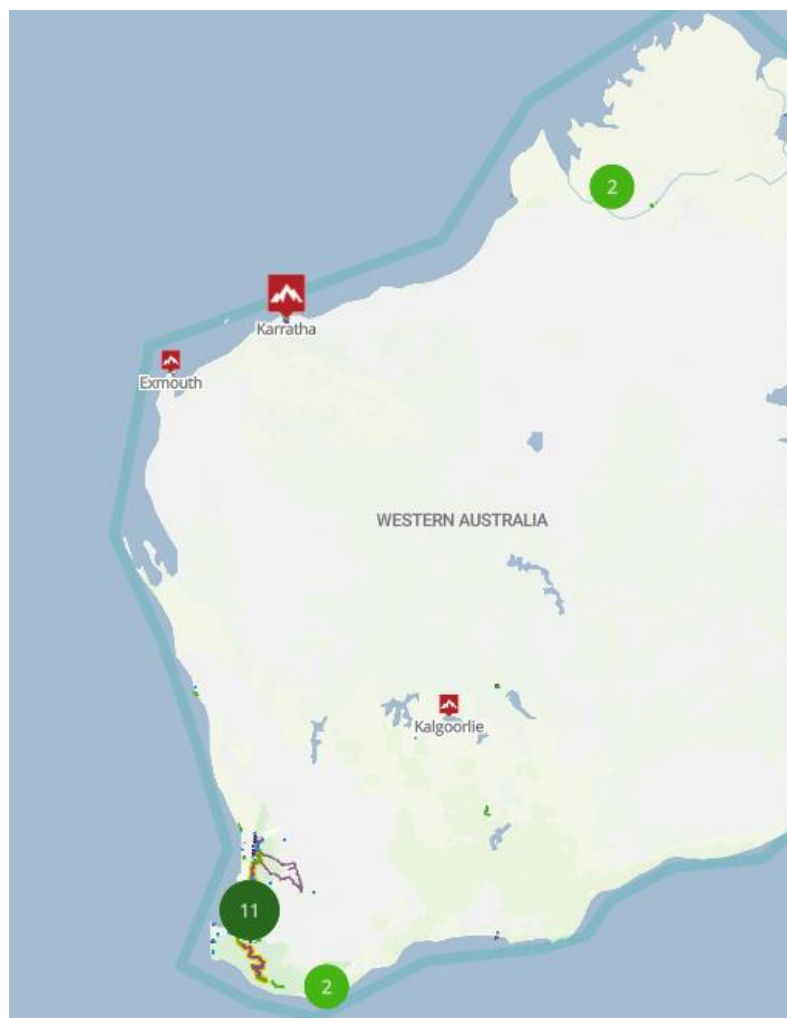
Western Australia is blessed with diverse terrain, offering locals and visitors alike the opportunity to engage in a variety of mountain bike experiences across a variety of landscapes.

Western Australia has benefited from record investment into major trail developments in recent years, with prominent new mountain bike trail networks in Collie, Dwellingup, Margaret River, Nannup and Perth Hills, and with trails in Walpole, Mt Barker and Albany in the planning and development stages. However, the majority of WA trail experiences are in the south-west of the State which presents a great opportunity for the Shire.

The Opportunity: North of the 26th Parallel

The majority of mountain biking trail infrastructure in WA is concentrated in the south-west, which provides a significant opportunity to capitalise on the winter tourist market. According to Trailforks, a prominent trail website, only Karratha, Exmouth, Derby and Fitzroy Crossing have recognised mountain bike infrastructure north of the 26th Parallel. Whilst these trails exist, only Karratha features in the top 10 WA Mountain Bike Trails according to the RAC ([Best mountain bike trails in WA | RAC WA](#)).

Winter in the Pilbara is perfect for outdoor adventure sports. The average daytime temperature in Tom Price during winter is between 23 – 25.5 degrees and the mean rainfall for the month between 10mm and 25mm (Monthly Climate Statistics, Tom Price, BOM). During the same period, Perth’s average daytime temperature during winter is between 18.5 – 19.5 degrees and the mean rainfall for the month between 124mm and 147mm (Monthly Climate Statistics, Perth, BOM).



(Western Australia Mountain Biking Trails: Trailforks)

<https://www.trailforks.com/region/western-australia/?activitytype=1&z=4.2&lat=-24.36823&lon=107.52221>

The Opportunity: Tom Price and Paraburdoo Elevation

Fundamentally, Tom Price and Paraburdoo are naturally gifted with several peaks that offer the competitive advantage of significant elevation. Mountain bike trail development areas should provide the maximum possible elevation opportunity (Whitsunday Trails Concept Plan, Dirt Art 2020).

Complimentary Market – Capitalising on Karijini National Park

Mountain bike riding as a complementary activity has risen dramatically in popularity in recent years, as the sport has moved beyond the ‘extreme sport’ image of the past, and more towards the accurate perception of the sport as a safe, inclusive and fun ‘adventure’ activity.

Complementary visitation is a key component of a successful government-backed mountain bike destination as it allows the capture of a much larger target audience, and promotes longer stays, and increased travel party size. Complementary tourists include valuable family markets, who will often stay longer and spend more than solo and small group tourists (Whitsunday Trails Concept Plan, Dirt Art 2020).

Comments

The Shire of Ashburton continues to be a driving force of the Pilbara region and the Western Australian economy. Our Shire delivered 12% or \$38.6M of WA’s Gross Regional Product and 1.9% of Australia’s Gross Domestic Product. This contribution is dominated by the mining and resources sector.

Developing a visitor economy in Tom Price and Paraburdoo is recognised as an alternative industry for employment that adds to the liveability of the region. As noted above, mountain biking and hiking projects offer a viable tourism activity to drive demand into the town centres.

Why the visitor economy?

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 Strategy: <https://www.austrade.gov.au/news/publications/thrive-2030-strategy>

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 includes industries that directly service visitors, such as accommodation, transport, tours and attractions, as well as indirectly, such as retail, medical and food production.

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

The Regional Australia Institute’s ‘Understanding Regional Liveability Discussion Paper 2019’ highlighted that there are six indicators of liveability:

- Health services
- Education services
- Cost of living
- Amenity
- Connections to community, friends and place
- Lifestyle and opportunity

The Institute found that liveability plays an important role in the decision-making process to move to or to stay in regional Australia. The visitor economy is seen as a sustainable opportunity to deliver these long-term benefits to the community and to sustain a strong industry workforce.

Ashburton Ranges Trail Park – Preliminary Concept

The Shire of Ashburton endorsed the development of the Pilbara Trails network as a Priority Project in 2022. Financial Support for Stage 2 of the Pilbara Trails Masterplan was endorsed by Council on 9 June 2020. Stage 1 of the Masterplan recognised that the development of Mountain Bike Trails in Tom Price could turn the Pilbara into a Mountain Bike Destination.

The Ashburton Ranges Trail Park is a preliminary concept for further development. Detailed concept planning will enable the project to be put forward for grant funding submission, partnership investment and Shire budget submission.

Consultation

Chief Executive Officer

Community Lifestyle Infrastructure Plan Technical Advisory Group

Strategic Community Plan

Shire of Ashburton Strategic Community Plan 2022-2032

Strategic Objective	3. Prosperity - We will advocate and drive opportunities for the community to be economically desirable, resilient, and prosperous.
Strategic Outcome	3.4 Sustainable commerce and tourism opportunities
Strategy	4 Partner with the Pilbara Development Commission, key resource industry partners and State Government to target investment opportunities designed at stimulating more diversified business and economic development to benefit the community.

Council Policy

Council Policy – Tourism Support and Promotion

The Shire recognises that tourism will continue to be a major employer and contributor to the economy within the Shire of Ashburton, and that it needs to play an active role to facilitate the growth and development of tourism in Ashburton.

Financial Implications

Current Financial Year

\$95,000 (excl. GST) has been set aside in the 2022/2023 Annual Budget under Job J3159 Consultancy – Business and Economic Development which must be committed prior to 30 June 2023.

Future Financial Year(s)

Early estimates have indicated that the project will cost approximately \$4 million. Detailed concept designs will be prepared to provide project costing for future budget submissions.

Legislative Implications

Nil

Risk Management

Risk has been assessed against the Shire of Ashburton Risk Management Framework.

Theme	Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Inherent Risk Rating	Risk Treatment
Reputation (social/community)	Trails experiences have been identified as a Priority Project for the Shire of Ashburton.	Possible (3)	Minor (2)	Moderate (5-9)	By following the officer's recommendation, the risk will be mitigated as the project will be endorsed for further development which will enable the project to be put forward for funding consideration.

Based on the inherent risk rating and risk treatments, the residual risk to the Shire is considered to be low.

Voting Requirements

Simple Majority

Officer Recommendation

The with respect to the Ashburton Ranges Trail Park Preliminary Concept, the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee recommends that Council,

1. Endorses the concept as a key tourism project for the Shire of Ashburton,
2. Endorses the Ashburton Economic and Tourism Development Committee to be on the project working group,
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to commence detailed concept planning and development with an update report to be presented to the Committee for consideration its the November 2023 meeting.

6 New Business Of An Urgent Nature Introduced By Council Decision

Nil

7 Next Meeting

The next Ashburton Economic And Tourism Development Committee Meeting will be held at 9:00am on Tuesday 8 August 2023 at Council Chambers, Onslow Shire Complex, Second Avenue, Onslow.

8 Closure Of Meeting

There being no further business, the Presiding Member closed the meeting at 10:00am