



**KIMBERLEY**  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

# Strategic Plan

2024-26

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## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners and Country

Kimberley Traditional Owners and the land, waters, and cultures for which they care, play a central role in the region, from the deep past to the present and into our shared future.

The social and economic opportunities of our region are enhanced by the involvement of all sections of the Kimberley community. More than half of the region's long-term resident population is Aboriginal, and native title has now been recognised for most of our region. These circumstances create new opportunities for securing social and economic success across the region with the active and mutually beneficial partnership of Aboriginal communities and the wider community.

The project of reconciliation in Australia is one of bringing together a truly Australian synthesis of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies – one which respects Aboriginal culture, history and custodianship while adopting new governance and development models that are inclusive, restorative, and resilient. The Kimberley can and will be a place where that reconciliation actually happens.

The Board and staff of the Kimberley Development Commission pay our respects to the region's Traditional Owners, their elders past, present, and emerging, and we do that by ensuring they are included and respected in all that we do.

## Message from the Chair

*Kimberley people and the region hold a unique place in Western Australia, with achievements, opportunities, and challenges that continue to attract and command attention.*

Unique, compelling landscapes are only part of the region's story. Kimberley people have a collective profile, shaped by millennia as well as by comparatively recent history.

Achievement of economic opportunity in our region is more obviously secured when it is underpinned with widespread shared local benefits and outcomes; it is undermined by activity that does not bring all of the people of the region, especially the permanent population, along with it.

The Aboriginal people of the Kimberley, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the permanent population, are intrinsically and especially key to our region's pathways to success. Partnerships, collaboration, persistence, and intelligent determination are all essential elements to securing development in the Kimberley.



The work of the Kimberley Development Commission within the architecture of the Cook State Government's regional development portfolio is enhanced by the focus and attention of its current Minister, Hon. Don Punch MLA. During his very busy first year in the role, Minister Punch has found the time to include a number of highly productive visits to the Kimberley. We're grateful for the time he has spent getting to know the region and our issues more deeply, and helping secure the resources and attention needed for durable and inclusive development for Kimberley people.

This strategic plan updates a key document for the Kimberley region which becomes a template for our immediate and longer-term collaborative work.

**Tom Stephens OAM**  
Chair

## CEO's Foreword

*A visitor new to the Kimberley is struck by many things. The extraordinarily unique and diverse land- and seascapes. The terrain overflowing with water in the wet season, swept by fire in the dry. The immensity of distances, and the sheer challenge and excitement of getting from A to B.*

As the visitor spends more time, other things become evident. The depth and resilience of Aboriginal nations spanning 50,000 years or more. The tight-knit nature of our towns and communities. The warmth and generosity extended to the visitor and new arrival alike. From my vantage point, as KDC's CEO, the opportunities for sustained and inclusive economic growth are just as apparent to me. Our region's economy is already diverse, including innovative and adaptive tourism, mining, agriculture and pastoral, and arts and creative sectors. New opportunities abound: renewable energy and hydrogen, caring and conservation industries, rare earths, new agricultural products, and even biomedical and space industries.



These opportunities can only be fully realised if we work together to establish the basic foundations for shared prosperity. Affordable and suitable housing, quality services, a capable and resilient workforce, and safe and thriving communities are essential to unlocking our opportunities.

Most importantly, economic success must be more widely shared. Inequality of opportunity and of outcomes are impossible to hide in our region. In this sense, there can be no practical delineation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal economic success; the two can only go hand-in-hand.

Easier said than done, of course. The KDC is committed to this vision, and to being a practical and effective partner in making it happen. This includes building our capabilities, especially in the areas of communications, economic analysis, and on-the-ground collaboration.

The Commission's Strategic Plan 2024-26 outlines our role in empowering Kimberley people to achieve a better future. It is an ambitious program of work and one we can only hope to achieve in close and respectful partnership with leaders from all walks of life across our region. I am deeply grateful for the efforts of our team of diverse and dedicated Board and staff members, and most especially for the trust and collaboration of the Kimberley community in working with us to achieve our shared aspirations.

**Chuck Berger**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Plan on a page

## Our purpose

Our purpose is to foster shared prosperity for all Kimberley people and to ensure WA Government decisions affecting our region are well-informed and effective.

## Our values

Trust   Excellence   Empowerment   Communication   Accountability

## Our role

Our role is to facilitate inclusive economic development in our region by joining up our communities with investment, insight and other support.

## Our toolkit

We provide regional intelligence, insight, and analysis.	We initiate and help drive transformative projects and partnerships.	We help our community secure funding and other support.	We convene and participate in forums to drive development goals.
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## Our priorities

### 1. Establish the conditions for economic success

Increase Aboriginal workforce participation	Improve housing availability and affordability	Increase availability of high-quality childcare services	Strengthen physical and digital connectivity
Increase access to capital and financial services			

### 2. Support the development of prosperous and diverse industries

Develop caring, creative, and conservation (CCC) industries	Diversify and expand tourism offerings	Foster thriving minerals and energy sectors	Enable sustainable growth of primary industries
Capture opportunities from the low carbon economy and ensure sound climate adaptation pathways	Facilitate Aboriginal economic empowerment	Attract public and private investment to the region and facilitate its deployment	

### 3. Ensure our people and communities have a good quality of life

Improve the liveability of our towns and communities	Improve the wellbeing of young people	Ensure structures of regional planning and governance are effective	
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### 4. Strive for organisational excellence

Build and maintain trust among our partners in the Kimberley	Uphold our position as an employer of choice, and maintain the highest standards in team and organisational capabilities and culture	Support a diverse and engaged KDC Board to lead the Commission's success	Ensure compliance, accountability and responsiveness within Government
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## Our vision

The Kimberley aspires to a future as one of the world's most successful and sustainable regions. The hallmarks of that success will be:

### People.

A culturally vibrant, well-educated, and healthy people enjoying an exceptional lifestyle in thriving and sustainable communities.

### Place.

A place where Country is looked after, and people find connection and meaning.

### Prosperity.

Shared prosperity arising from the success of modern and diversified industries, including resources and energy; tourism; creative industries; agriculture, aquaculture, and pastoral industries; and the services sector.

# 3 Our vision (cont.)

## WA Regional Development Framework

### Our portfolio

The WA Regional Development Framework establishes a high-level set of priorities to coordinate the work of the regional development framework. The KDC Strategic Plan is consistent with and aligned to the statewide framework, while incorporating goals and actions specific to our regional context.

The Framework establishes the following five areas for cross-portfolio collaboration:

- **Regional Liveability.** Making our regions good places to live is critical for the wellbeing of regional residents, and underpins labour market and community resilience.
- **Economic Development, Diversification and Innovation.** Diversification must leverage existing strengths in resources, primary industries, and tourism, and seek to develop and support new industries and careers.
- **Climate Resilience & Low Carbon Transition.** A changing climate alongside the global transition to a low carbon economy provide risks and significant opportunity for diversification and job growth in our regions.
- **Aboriginal Empowerment and Prosperity.** Partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal people, strong accountability and culturally responsive ways of working will enable regions to realise a 'future in which all Aboriginal people, families and communities are empowered to live good lives and choose their own futures from a secure foundation.'
- **Organisational Excellence.** The success of the Portfolio will be determined by the way the Portfolio works together to deliver strategic initiatives and building organisational excellence in collaborative and cooperative delivery of regional development.

## Our purpose

Our purpose is to foster shared prosperity for all Kimberley people and to ensure WA Government decisions affecting our region are well-informed and effective.

The Kimberley Development Commission is one of nine regional statutory authorities established under the Regional Development Commissions Act 1993 (WA). Regional Development Commissions play a vital role in identifying and advocating for development opportunities and coordinating across government agencies.

The objectives of the Commission are to maximise job creation, develop and broaden the region's economic base, and encourage, promote, facilitate, and monitor economic development of the Kimberley. The Commission also seeks to ensure quality of life and the general standard of Government services and access to services in the Kimberley is comparable to that of the metropolitan area.

## Our values

**Our core values help us achieve our purpose**

The Commission is committed to achieving excellence in sustainable economic and social development. Our core values promote a positive working environment and form the foundation of our actions and decisions.

- **Trust.** We do what we say we will do, and operate with absolute honesty.
- **Excellence.** We work diligently and skilfully for the people we serve.
- **Empowerment.** We seek opportunities to support Kimberley communities, businesses, and organisations to achieve their goals, as they understand and define them.
- **Communication.** We seek opportunities within the Commission and externally to share useful information, analysis, perspectives, and stories.
- **Accountability.** We assess the results of our work and seek evidence of our impact.

# Our strategic context

## The Kimberley in 2024: Re-igniting economic prosperity

As the Kimberley emerges from the global pandemic of 2020-22, and catastrophic flooding in early 2023, the economic landscape is one of both disruption and great opportunity.

The temporary closure of international and State borders presented challenges for our regional economy, even as it protected Kimberley people from the waves of infection and lockdowns experienced by much of the rest of the world. International tourism was suspended, and the cancellation of major events and closure of remote Aboriginal communities placed intense pressure on businesses and service providers. Border closures deprived the region's primary industries of the usual seasonal workforce and businesses struggled to operate at their usual capacity.

The lifting of border restrictions brought a welcome influx of visitors; however, enduring shortages of housing and workers are limiting the region's ability to bounce back fully.

This was further exacerbated by the unprecedented flooding in January 2023 by rainfall from Tropical Cyclone Ellie. Large areas of the Fitzroy Valley were inundated, dozens of homes destroyed or damaged, and hundreds of people evacuated. The vital bridge at Fitzroy Crossing was damaged beyond repair, leading to months of uncertainty and disruption. The Kimberley became the site of the world's longest detour, as the only sealed road connection from East to West of our region was severed.

Still, as visitors have returned after the pandemic and flood, so too has investment.

In the East Kimberley, the expansion of the Ord Irrigation Scheme and the establishment of a cotton gin at Kununurra will bolster the cotton industry and is expected to result in \$1.19 billion in exports over the next 10 years. New mining projects at Sorby Hills, and at several rare earths sites south of Halls Creek, come at a very welcome time, with the Rio Tinto Argyle diamond mine having ceased production at the end of 2020. Commitment to the sealing of the Tanami Road will facilitate further investment and improve regional connectivity.

In the West Kimberley, the Thunderbird mineral sands mine and refurbishment of RAAF Base Curtin will drive employment opportunities for Broome and Derby in particular. In Broome, the completion of the Town Beach and Chinatown precinct redevelopments, and the Dampier Road development, are providing even more impetus for the tourism industry and improved liveability for residents. Meanwhile, investment in flood recovery has provided a generational opportunity to secure a more prosperous economy for the Fitzroy Valley.

Across the region, Traditional Owners are building upon the resolution of native title claims with a greater focus on economic development off the base of land holdings. Aboriginal landholders and pastoralists generally are well-placed to build diverse portfolios of economic activity, blending modern pastoralism with ecosystem services, tourism, traditional use, and opportunities in renewable energy and hydrogen.

As the resource, primary and tourism sectors in the Kimberley reach and surpass pre-pandemic levels, greater opportunities will also arise in the services, arts, and creative sectors. Investment and innovation in the caring industries – childcare, aged care, disability support, health care and education – is vital for building truly resilient and thriving communities.

## Community Profile

Kimberley estimated residential population (2022)

38,925



Median Age

33



Home Ownership (Dwellings)

3,119



Completed Year 12

10,728



Median Household Income (\$ Weekly)

1762



Median Personal Income (\$ Weekly)

864

# 4 Our strategic context

## November 2023 Economic snapshot

GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT<sup>1</sup>  
(2021-2022)

# \$4.07 BILLION



Unemployment<sup>2</sup>

7.45%  
(June 2023)



Jobs<sup>1</sup>

15,650  
(Census 2021)



Businesses<sup>1</sup>

2,292  
(June 2022)



Annual Visitors<sup>3</sup>

425,000

Total Visitor Nights

3,123,000  
(21/22 Average)

### MAJOR COMMODITY VALUE<sup>7 8 9 10 11</sup>



Petroleum, Iron Ore,  
Nickel & Cobalt  
\$354.06  
MILLION



Diamonds,  
Gold & Silver  
\$74.45  
MILLION



Cattle &  
Calves  
\$329.08  
MILLION



Construction  
\$730.87  
MILLION

### TOP 3 EMPLOYERS<sup>1</sup>

Healthcare &  
Social Assistance

18.31%



Education &  
Training

13.55%

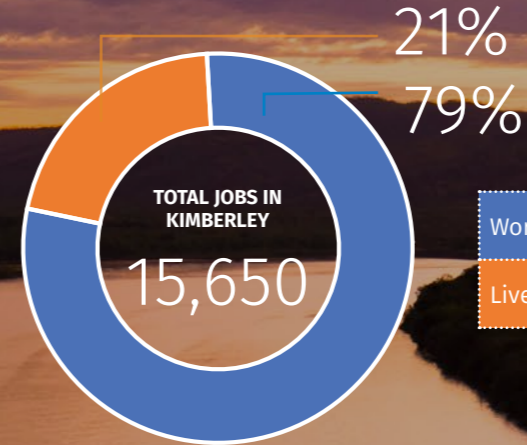


Tourism

10.17%



### EMPLOYMENT<sup>1</sup>



Works & Lives In Kimberley	12,383
Lives Elsewhere, Works In Kimberley	3,267

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS<sup>1</sup>

BROOME (S)	
Population (2022)	16,959
GRP (2022)	\$1.629 billion
Jobs (2021)	7,986

HALLS CREEK (S)	
Population (2022)	3,574
GRP (2022)	\$310.2 million
Jobs (2021)	1,130

DERBY-WEST KIMBERLEY (S)	
Population (2022)	7,075
GRP (2022)	\$1.254 billion
Jobs (2021)	2,516

WYNDHAM-EAST KIMBERLEY (S)	
Population (2022)	7,477
GRP (2022)	\$877.90 million
Jobs (2021)	3,537

### HOUSING OVERVIEW<sup>4 5</sup>

BUILDING APPROVALS  
(2022-2023FY)

73  
# Of Residential Approvals

### HOUSE SALES

(12 Months - 30/5/2023)

458 # of Sales  
\$574,759-\$607,246  
1.13% % Price Change

### RENTALS

(12 Months - 31/12/2022)

61 # of Rentals  
\$765 Median Price Per Week  
40.3% % Price Change

### COMMUNITY PROFILE<sup>1</sup>

18,849 Non-Indigenous Population	19,857 Indigenous Population	33 Average Age	34.66% Home Ownership	6,652 Full Time Education Enrolments
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#### DATA SOURCES:

1. Remplan (2023) - overview, Economy Profile, Output Profile, GRP Profile (2021 & 2022) & 2021 Census Workforce Data. 2. Department of Education, Skills & Employment - Small Area Labour Market Estimates - LGA (March 2023). 3. Tourism WA - Regional Development Commission Tourism Profile July 2022 (21/22 Data). 4. Corelogic Data & Insights Derived By RDC On Corelogic Data - Market Trends Report As At 30/5/2022. 5. Australian Bureau Of Statistics (2023) - Building Approvals (Detailed). 6. Australian Bureau Of Statistics (2020/21) - Value Of Agricultural Commodities Produced. 7. Department of Mines, Industry Regulation & Safety - Value Of Regional Commodities (2022). 8. ABS Business Counts - Entries & Exits (2020-2022) - June 2022. 9. ABS Census Of Population - 2021. 10. DPIRD (2023) Horticulture Analysis Western Australia. 11. Kimberley Ports Authority, 2022. Annual Report Data 2020/21 & 2021/22 - Total Trade.

NOTE: Gross Regional Product (GRP) is the net measure of wealth generated by the region. GRP can be measured by using the incomes approach, where all incomes earned by individuals (wages and salaries), firms (gross operating surplus) and governments (taxes on products or services) are added.

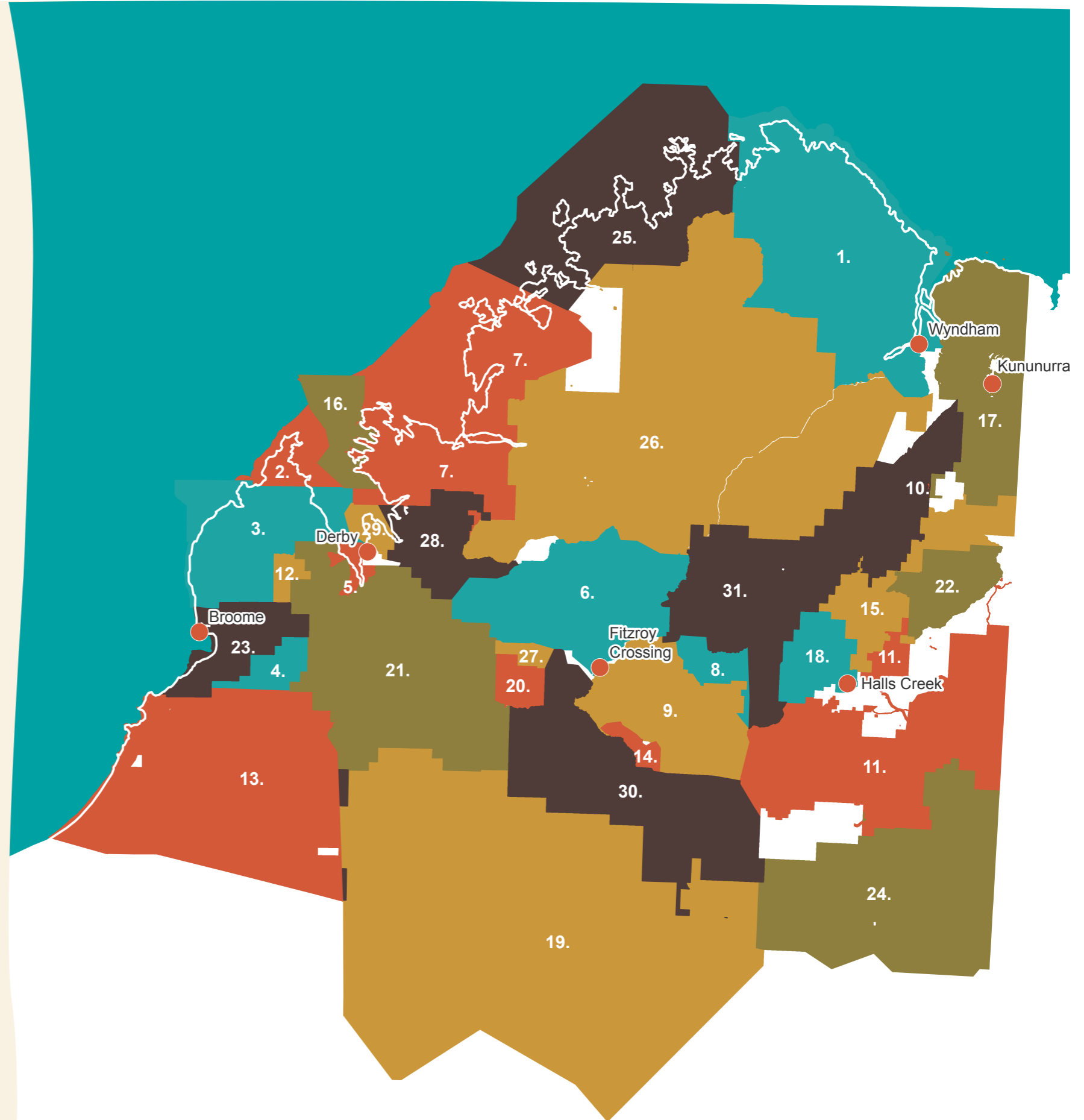
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# 4 Our strategic context

## Kimberley Native Title Determinations

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Balangarra                             | 17. Miriung & Gajerrong        |
| 2. Bardi & Jawi                           | 18. Ngarrawaji                 |
| 3. Bindunbur & Jabirr & Jabirr / Ngumbarl | 19. Ngurrawa                   |
| 4. Birriman - Gan                         | 20. Noonkanbah                 |
| 5. Booroola Moorool Moorool               | 21. Nyikina & Mangala          |
| 6. Bunuba                                 | 22. Purnululu                  |
| 7. Dambimangari                           | 23. Rubib & Yawuru             |
| 8. Giniyawarni Yoowaniya Riwi             | 24. Tjurabalan                 |
| 9. Goonyandi                              | 25. Uunguu & Uunguu B          |
| 10. Goorring                              | 26. Wanjina Wunggurr Wilinggin |
| 11. Jaru                                  | 27. Warlunurra                 |
| 12. Joombarn - Buru                       | 28. Warrwa Combined            |
| 13. Karajarri                             | 29. Warrwa Mawadjala Gadjidgar |
| 14. Kurungal                              | 30. Yi & Martuwarra & Ngurrara |
| 15. Marlargowem                           | 31. Yurriyangem & Taam         |
| 16. Mayala                                |                                |



 <p><b>Determined Native Title Land</b></p> <p>95.8%</p>	 <p><b>Language Groups</b></p> <p>30+</p>	 <p><b>Art Centres and Galleries</b></p> <p>24</p>
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Current at time of printing.  
Does not include native title claims yet to be determined.

# Our strategic context

## Our regional comparative advantage creates opportunities for diversified economic growth to drive shared prosperity

The Kimberley holds an enviable place in Australia's national imagination. As well as the compelling attraction of its landscape, it is home to Aboriginal cultures dating back 50,000 years or more. It is a place of vast distances, climatic extremes, remoteness and romanticism, high contrast and contradiction. The 'Kimberley mystique' draws visitors from around the world and more than a few decide to stay.

Stories of the Kimberley are intrinsically tied to the region's rich Aboriginal culture, traditions of pastoralism and pearling, and tales of exploration and adventure. Alongside this heritage is another story, one of a modern, adaptive region that is well-positioned with natural assets and human capabilities to take advantage of 21st century opportunities.

### The Kimberley's comparative advantages include:

**Natural resources**, including those needed for new and emerging industries:

- High-quality rare earths and mineral sands deposits utilised for cleantech and electronics, and other important metals such as iron, silver, and base metals;
- Abundant water and sunlight important for renewable energy and hydrogen, the Kimberley is the only region in Australia in which annual rainfall is projected to increase under most climate change scenarios;
- Extensive areas of land and sea suitable for mixed productive and culture/conservation activities such as sustainable food and fibre production, aquaculture, tourism, carbon, and conservation markets;

- High biodiversity enables bioprospecting, food production, tourism, and ecosystem services; and
- Extensive on-shore and off-shore gas deposits, at a time of very high global energy prices.

**A diverse resident workforce** with strong potential for increased engagement and productivity. The region can also draw upon a strong seasonal workforce, including tourists and seasonal foreign agricultural workers.

**An outstanding national and international profile** as a destination to visit, live and invest, with a strong reputation for key products including sustainable high-quality food, and world-class creative and cultural products ranging from pearls and diamonds to Aboriginal art and culture, and film production.

**Aboriginal peoples** with strong and diverse cultural traditions, and a growing capacity to translate Native Title and cultural heritage into modern economic success.

**A geographic position** that is increasingly recognised for its strategic value. The Kimberley is a gateway to Indonesia and South-East Asia, with opportunities for trade and other ties, including those that help maintain a strategic defence presence in the region. Kimberley ports and airports are increasingly suitable for commercial activity at scale, and the region has characteristics that are advantageous to space industries, including low light pollution and population centres relatively close to the equator.



**To unlock the full potential of these comparative advantages, important barriers to prosperity must be addressed. The most important of these are:**

**Inequitable economic and wellbeing outcomes.** The disparity between opportunities and life outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the Kimberley remains stark. In 2021, labour force participation in the Kimberley was 83.9% for non-Aboriginal people, but only 35.4% for the Aboriginal population. Aboriginal unemployment also remains much higher than in the non-Aboriginal population. Similar disparities exist across a wide range of social and economic indicators. These inequitable outcomes have a social and economic cost. Strategies to unlock the enormous productive potential of the Aboriginal resident workforce are perhaps the Kimberley's biggest and most important challenge.

**Housing availability and affordability.** A lack of housing across the region limits the region's ability to attract and retain workers, which limits economic activity both directly with worker shortages, and indirectly by having negative flow-on effects on key services such as childcare and health care. In some towns, housing

fluctuates greatly in response to 'peak and trough' economic cycles, while chronic shortages of suitable housing are experienced by some remote communities and the social housing system.

**Community safety and youth wellbeing.** Community concerns about safety have increased markedly in recent years, as periodic surges in high-profile offending behaviour have afflicted our towns and communities. High youth offending threatens the quality of life in the region, but worse it is an indicator of young lives not reaching their potential, and systemic failure of the social structures and institutions that are meant to help our young people succeed.

**Remoteness and sparseness.** Despite great improvements in digital connectivity and transport infrastructure, the Kimberley remains a very remote region, far from major markets. Sparse settlement patterns make it relatively expensive to deliver services and maintain infrastructure, and increase the cost of living. Ongoing programs to improve infrastructure and ensure maximum self-reliance within our small towns and communities are critical.

# 5 Our role

Regions are complex economic and social systems, and better outcomes require place-based consideration alongside collaboration and engagement by government, community, and industry.

Commissions are unique place-based entities with a deep understanding of regional needs, opportunities, and priorities built from regional intelligence, insights, and analysis.

Our role is to encourage, promote, facilitate, and monitor community and economic development in our region.

We work collaboratively across all spheres of government, regional industries, and community organisations in development and delivery of regional programs, policy, and services.

We succeed through the success of Kimberley organisations and communities, and our goals can only be achieved in close partnership.

We provide senior executive leadership, take up opportunities, respond to crises, and collaborate on place-based solutions. We know the people, we know the issues, and we can facilitate solutions.

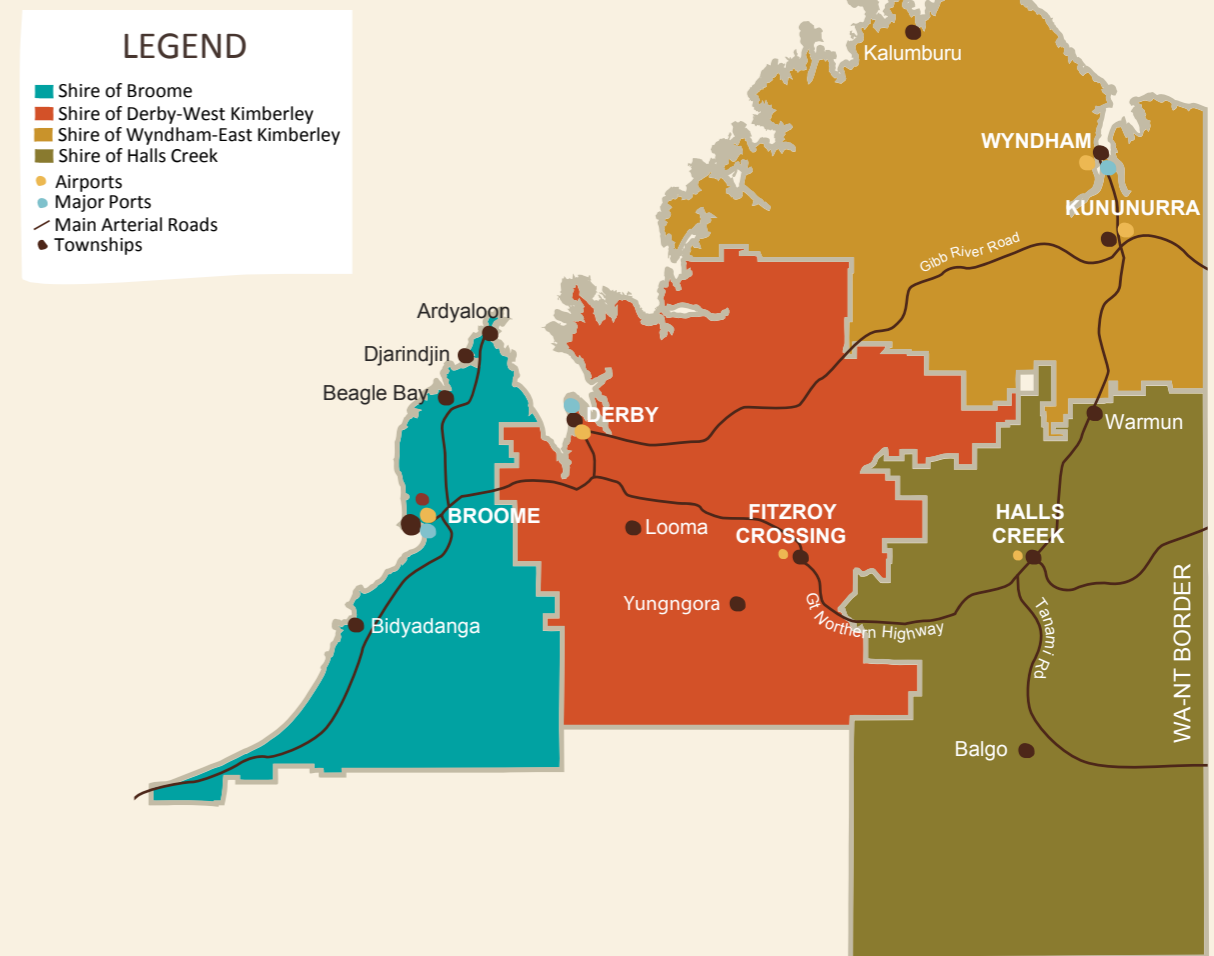
## Our toolkit

**We provide regional intelligence, insights, and analysis** across governments and for our community on issues related to the development of the Kimberley.

**We help initiate and drive transformative major projects and partnerships** with lasting regional benefit.

**We help our community secure funding and other support** for significant Kimberley projects, organisations, and partnerships.

**We convene and participate in forums** to deepen collaboration on the challenges and opportunities of our region.



# Our priorities

## What we hope to achieve for our region

### 1. Establish the conditions for economic success

The Kimberley region has a number of advantages that support the strength of its economy, including abundant natural resources and arable land, a diverse resident workforce, a positive national and international profile, diverse Aboriginal peoples and a geographic position close to the thriving South-East Asia markets.

However, the region is not without its challenges. The Kimberley remains a remote region, with sparse settlement patterns, requiring greater transport and digital infrastructure investment than more densely populated regions. Despite abundant land, the region suffers from a lack of housing and critical services to support growing the residential workforce.

There are significant disparities between opportunities and life outcomes for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. Strong local labor force participation stands out as a linchpin in unlocking the region's latent potential to elevate the current labor force participation rate of 55% toward the national average of 77%. Of particular significance is a focus on increasing Aboriginal participation, given the current low rate of 35% among this crucial segment of the region's long-term population. Recognising and addressing this disparity is central to ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Major investments that generate wealth without lifting prosperity for Aboriginal people in the Kimberley will exacerbate the social and development challenges for the region as a whole.

Economic development in the Kimberley must be tied to successful Aboriginal economic development, which can mean: support to help

create and grow Aboriginal enterprises; support for Traditional Owner groups and remote communities; support for regional governance structures; support for capacity building within Aboriginal enterprises; and support for major employers to attract and retain an Aboriginal workforce.

Another pivotal factor crucial to the region's economic vibrancy is the provision of adequate and affordable housing. The lack of housing investment in both private and public / organisational sectors is a handbrake on our economy, and a barrier to community and family wellbeing.

In tandem with housing concerns, the availability of childcare is a key determinant of workforce engagement. The insufficiency of childcare not only hampers willing workers' ability to participate in the workforce but also impacts the quality of life and developmental outcomes for children. Addressing this shortfall is not merely a workforce consideration but a holistic approach to fostering a thriving and healthy community.

An overarching condition for economic success is the establishment of robust physical and digital connectivity. Our prosperity and wellbeing depend on the establishment of reliable, resilient connections with the rest of the world through our roads, ports, airports, and digital networks.

Objectives	KDC initiatives	Measures of success
Increase Aboriginal workforce participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work intensively with 10 major investments across the region to maximise Aboriginal participation</li> <li>• Work with partners to improve training opportunities, employer capability, and support for workforce entrants across key growth sectors</li> <li>• Deliver industry plans and projects to unlock jobs growth</li> <li>• Facilitate access to capital for Aboriginal enterprises</li> <li>• Ensure a strong local workforce lens is applied to all other activities and engagement by the Commission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labour force participation</li> <li>• Proportion of labour force living and working in region long term</li> <li>• Length of time to fill a role</li> <li>• Closing the Gap indicators</li> </ul>
Improve housing availability and affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver regular data and analyses to our community and within Government on Kimberley housing issues</li> <li>• Advocate for policy changes to unlock investment in all sectors of the housing system</li> <li>• Support individual priority housing projects and programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home ownership rates</li> <li>• Rental vacancy rates</li> <li>• Property values and rents</li> <li>• Residential dwelling approvals</li> <li>• Overcrowding data</li> </ul>
Increase availability of high-quality childcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver regular data and analyses to our community and within Government on the Kimberley childcare sector</li> <li>• Support specific investments in centres and programs to improve capacity</li> <li>• Support workforce development initiatives to grow the long-term resident skilled childcare workforce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare places/centre capacity</li> <li>• Waiting lists</li> <li>• Employment in sector</li> </ul>
Strengthen physical and digital connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage opportunities from the Tanami Road project and others to maximise local employment and economic outcomes</li> <li>• Advocate for cornerstone investments in connectivity, together with the Kimberley Regional Group and other key stakeholders</li> <li>• Facilitate funding for remote community infrastructure, especially digital connection and airstrips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in downtime and disruptions in transportation infrastructure due to flooding and other events</li> <li>• Availability and affordability of air services</li> <li>• Major projects successfully delivered: Tanami Road, first point of entry (FPOE) for Kimberley ports, Kununurra runway extension, Great Northern Highway upgrades</li> <li>• Digital network reliability (coverage, speed, reliability, and cost)</li> </ul>
Increase access to capital and financial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build understanding of the factors limiting bank finance and insurance costs</li> <li>• Work with RDA Kimberley and other stakeholders to address market failure in capital and insurance markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of capital</li> <li>• Cost of insurance</li> </ul>

The pursuit of economic success in the Kimberley necessitates a multifaceted approach that not only capitalises on its inherent strengths but also addresses the identified priorities, ensuring a balanced and inclusive development trajectory.

Success, as envisioned for the Kimberley, transcends mere economic parameters and encompasses prosperity, resilience, sustainability, and inclusiveness as integral components of a thriving and harmonious community.

# Our priorities

## 2. Support the development of prosperous and diverse industries

The Kimberley is fortunate to have a diversified economic base, resulting in a resilient economy.

Key industries include mining, agriculture, pastoralism, tourism, and human services. Substantial diversity exists within each of these dynamic sectors, as well as synergies among them. Cotton seed production in the East Kimberley will be an important local feed supplement for the pastoral industry. Pastoral stations, in turn, are supporting tourism through the development of on-station experiences. Working holiday-makers provide seasonal labour for the agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industries. These synergies provide efficient opportunities for diversification.

There are substantial opportunities to grow the visitor economy across the Kimberley. Demand for experiences that involve Aboriginal cultural engagement, multi-day adventure, and high-value eco and food tourism continue to grow rapidly. Improved internal and external transport infrastructure, new national parks and an expanding profile mean the Kimberley is primed for strong tourism growth. The challenge exists in developing and maintaining tourism products and supporting services to keep pace.

Other opportunities for growth and diversification include aquaculture; clean energy, carbon, and hydrogen economy projects; and increasing sophistication and success in the Kimberley arts and creative industries. Human services, already the largest employer in the region, provides ample opportunities to grow the resident workforce and ensure critical services like childcare, disability care, and health care are comparable to metropolitan areas in terms of availability and quality.

The caring, creative, and conservation (“CCC”) industries have substantial public policy and other drivers for growth. CCC industries are multipliers for economic activity in other areas, as well as being among the best entry points for new workers in the region’s latent workforce and attracting additional funding from the Commonwealth and State that would otherwise “sit on the table” unused by the region. They also contribute directly to the region’s quality of life and cultural vibrancy.

The current economic context of the Kimberley is extremely favourable for Aboriginal economic success. Positive factors include: a solid foundation of Native Title rights; major investments aimed at fostering Aboriginal procurement and employment outcomes; a thriving and increasingly innovative Kimberley Aboriginal arts and culture industry; and a growing record of Aboriginal success across a diverse range of pursuits.

There needs to be an explicit focus on ensuring development happens for the benefit of the region, not just “in” the region. We can do this by supporting Aboriginal enterprises, communities, and families to achieve their aspirations, economic and otherwise.

Further diversification must leverage the Kimberley’s existing strengths, while also seeking to develop and support new industries and careers. While all industries have a potential role to play in our region, the following offer the strongest prospects for development during the period of this plan.

Objectives	KDC initiatives	Measures of success
Develop caring, creative, and conservation (CCC) industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver regional CCC industry reports to identify opportunities, gaps, and policy directions to stimulate growth and business sustainability</li> <li>• Work with regional and state stakeholders to advocate for and deliver common priorities that work to bridge market gaps</li> <li>• Deliver a Kimberley Arts and Creative industries study, and work with Pilbara Development Commission on areas of mutual interest</li> <li>• Support ranger programs to deliver jobs, sustainability, and economic development on country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of these sectors to gross regional product</li> <li>• Resident employment</li> <li>• Value of Commonwealth and State funding for delivery of CCC services</li> </ul>
Diversify and expand tourism offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and advocate for opportunities to diversify Kimberley tourism, including Aboriginal cultural and nature-based tourism experiences; high-end ‘glamping’ opportunities; and growth niche markets such as fishing, birdwatching, outdoor sports and adventure, and astro-/geo-tourism</li> <li>• Support WAITOC and Kimberley members to ensure the Jina Aboriginal Tourism Plan translates to the best economic empowerment outcomes possible</li> <li>• Working with Tourism WA and other stakeholders, ensure the Kimberley is prepared to host significant visitors during the 2028 solar eclipse</li> <li>• Undertake market research and work with stakeholders to develop a strategy for growing high-end tourism products in remote locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution of these sectors to gross regional product</li> <li>• Resident employment</li> <li>• Visitor numbers and satisfaction</li> <li>• Revenue and economic impact</li> <li>• Cultural preservation</li> <li>• Market trends</li> </ul>
Foster thriving minerals and energy sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and engage minerals and energy sectors as active and responsible stakeholders to maximise durable regional benefit</li> <li>• Actively engage with major projects (East Kimberley commodities corridor; West Kimberley mineral sands projects) to maximise local contracting and employment outcomes</li> <li>• Ensure housing and infrastructure needs to support sustainable growth of these sectors are identified and promoted</li> <li>• In partnership, build education and training pathways aligned to employment in the minerals and energy sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and expanded pathways for the minerals and energy sectors</li> <li>• Contribution of these sectors to gross regional product</li> <li>• Resident employment</li> </ul>
Enable sustainable growth of primary industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support relevant agencies and businesses to achieve:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate intensification of pastoral production</li> <li>• diversification on pastoral leases</li> <li>• deepening of appropriate horticultural activity in the Ord River Irrigation Area, Roebuck Plains, and Fitzroy Valley</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and expanded pathways for primary industries</li> <li>• Contribution of these sectors to gross regional product</li> <li>• Resident employment</li> </ul>

# Our priorities

## Support the development of prosperous and diverse industries (cont.)

Across the above objectives, seek to deliver the following:

Objectives	KDC initiatives	Measures of success
Capture opportunities from the low carbon economy and ensure sound climate adaptation pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for large-scale renewable energy projects in the region</li> <li>Support Traditional Owners and other land owners to lead and engage projects in clean energy, carbon farming, and biodiversity</li> <li>Contribute to collaborations and partnerships among governments, Aboriginal communities and businesses to facilitate place-based adaption planning and solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carbon footprint of the region</li> <li>Region understands and is prepared for climate disruption</li> <li>Contribution of clean industries to gross regional product and employment</li> </ul>
Facilitate Aboriginal economic empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Across all development initiatives, maintain an explicit focus on supporting Aboriginal enterprises, communities, and families to achieve their aspirations</li> <li>Support structural reform to ensure prescribed body corporates (PBCs) and other Aboriginal organisations have capacity to develop and implement place-based economic planning</li> <li>Support regional Aboriginal leadership bodies and structures to engage effectively with state government and to achieve their articulated objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closing the Gap measures</li> <li>Achievements of Aboriginal peaks, PBCs, and enterprises</li> </ul>
Attract public and private investment to the region and facilitate its deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver Regional Economic Development and other government grants</li> <li>Connect Kimberley communities to other grant opportunities</li> <li>Coordinate successful bids for State budget and other funding outcomes for Kimberley projects</li> <li>Support prospective investors to realise projects in the Kimberley</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public and private investment in the Kimberley</li> </ul>



# Our priorities

## 3. Ensure our people and communities have a good quality of life

Quality of life is, as they say, in the eye of the beholder. It can include the connection and strength from living on one's ancestors' Country, the wonder of a pristine star-filled sky, the support of living in a tight-knit community, and even the freedom from sitting in traffic and enduring long commutes.

It also includes more tangible qualities, areas that are among the many challenges in the region. This may include cost of living, access to digital and physical connectivity, quality of education and health care, youth engagement and wellbeing, access to childcare and aged care, access to affordable and suitable housing, and the availability of cultural and outdoor recreation amenities. These issues are particularly acute in remote communities and stations.

Quality of life is at the heart of regional development. Making our region a good place to live is critical for the wellbeing of residents, and underpins labour market and community resilience.

The Commission is committed to pursuing a future where the general standard of government services and access to those services in the Kimberley is comparable to that of our metropolitan counterparts.

The idea of equity between metropolitan and regional areas in government services is compelling, yet we know there are still opportunities to resolve gaps in living standards and that large disparities still exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations.

The Commission will continue to work towards a basic standard of living that enables our residents to lead lives of purpose and meaning while attracting visitors and new residents to build a prosperous economy. This includes efforts to improve housing, education, health care, and community safety, as well as proactive work to foster the cultural, sporting and recreational opportunities that make thriving communities.

Objectives	KDC initiatives	Measures of success
Improve the liveability of our towns and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate and support planning and investment to revitalise town centres</li> <li>Support major events, exhibitions, and other cultural activities</li> <li>Advocate for and support policies that empower remote communities to engage in services and economic activity</li> <li>Deliver service delivery profiles to identify needs, gaps, and policy shifts required to ensure services are comparable to metropolitan standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability, quality, and cultural suitability of critical services (including child care, aged care, disability care, transport, education, telecommunications, and housing)</li> <li>Community surveys and studies of satisfaction with town and community liveability</li> <li>Overall wellbeing and satisfaction of Kimberley residents</li> </ul>
Improve the wellbeing of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the Kimberley Schools Project is embedded in our schools and translates to higher attendance patterns</li> <li>Support the design and implementation of the Marlamanu on-country centre for at-risk youth</li> <li>Support the work of the Kimberley Aboriginal Youth Wellbeing Steering Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academic attainment, including standardised testing</li> <li>Youth wellbeing, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical and mental health</li> <li>lower rates of youth substance abuse</li> <li>reduced youth offending</li> </ul> </li> <li>Decreased disparities in educational outcomes among diverse youth populations</li> </ul>
Ensure structures of regional planning and governance are effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively partner with key regional networks, including the Kimberley Regional Group; District Leadership Group; Aboriginal Regional Governance Group / Kimberley Aboriginal Regional Body; Closing the Gap place-based partnerships; Empowered Communities; and other coalitions</li> <li>Provide data, analysis, and support to regional planning and governance forums</li> <li>Engage cross-governmental structures such as the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum (NAMF) as required to achieve policy and investment outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowerment of regional leadership forums, organisations, and individuals</li> <li>Policy and investment outcomes achieved through collaborative action</li> </ul>

# Our priorities

## 4. Strive for organisational excellence

The KDC is the lead agency for Kimberley-specific regional development. To be successful in this role, the KDC must maintain a committed and highly capable team, supported by quality systems and resources that enable our plans and aspirations to translate into effective action.

As a small agency with a large mandate, KDC can only hope to achieve our goals through close and trusted partnerships with others. Trust is paramount. We will carefully cultivate our reputation for reliable and effective advice and collaboration across our community, across governments and within the Regional Development Portfolio.

The Commission is committed to maintaining the highest standards as an employer of choice. We recognise the need for substantial improvement in our core management platforms to ensure we can collect and analyse data, communicate across multiple channels to key stakeholders, and manage resources and projects effectively

and efficiently. To achieve this, the Commission will invest in a modern suite of analytical and communication platforms over the course of this plan, to complement ongoing investments in our people and relationships.

The success of the Regional Development Portfolio will be determined by the way it works together to deliver strategic initiatives and build organisational excellence in the collaborative and cooperative delivery of regional development.

Objectives	KDC initiatives	Measures of success
Build and maintain trust among our partners in the Kimberley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate the role and work of the Commission effectively, including through email, web, broadcast media, social media, and direct engagement</li> <li>Build trusted partnerships across government, community, and private sectors</li> <li>Add value to our partners through promotion, connection across government, and provision of decision-relevant information</li> <li>Provide timely and relevant information, data, and analysis to support our partners to achieve their aims</li> <li>Demonstrate our commitment to the region through our behaviour:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>being open and honest</li> <li>always following through with our commitments</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive results in annual survey</li> <li>Communication reach through diverse channels</li> <li>Increased cross-departmental and cross-agency collaboration</li> <li>Participation in key government decision-making processes</li> <li>Consistent delivery of valuable and actionable recommendations</li> <li>Successful completion of joint projects and initiatives</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide professional development plans and opportunities for staff, articulating a clear vision for the organisation and connection to their work</li> <li>Build core business systems to facilitate effective and efficient operations</li> <li>Articulate a clear vision, strategy, and operational plans</li> <li>Implement recruitment strategies to attracting high-quality staff, especially among long-term residents and emerging leaders / professionals</li> <li>Promote a culture of high performance and teamwork, providing 'stretch' opportunities to build future capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff have a current professional development plan and investments are made in employee training and development</li> <li>Employee attraction and retention; low turnover</li> <li>Clear career progression and growth opportunities for employees</li> <li>A culture of open communication and idea sharing</li> <li>Evaluations by Board, staff, and external stakeholders</li> </ul>
Support a diverse and engaged KDC Board to lead the Commission's success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all board members are provided with appropriate induction, training, and ongoing support</li> <li>Hold board meetings on a regular basis with timely and relevant papers, appropriate agendas, and follow-through on actions</li> <li>Deliver accurate, timely, and useful advice and intelligence to the Board on regional development issues</li> <li>Leverage board connections and networks across the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Diverse board composition</li> <li>Board meeting attendance and active participation</li> <li>Positive feedback from stakeholders and community members</li> <li>Low board member turnover rate</li> </ul>
Ensure compliance, accountability and responsiveness within Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the Minister for Regional Development and other Ministers through the provision of timely information and advice, and effective facilitation of regional visits and events</li> <li>Implement relevant organisational policies, processes, and systems to ensure effective governance</li> <li>Implement grant programs with a high standard of probity and governance</li> <li>Work with DPIRD to ensure integrity and effectiveness of corporate services provided to the KDC by DPIRD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full compliance with all applicable regulations and requirements</li> <li>High levels of transparency and accountability in all operations</li> <li>Consistent operation within the allocated budget limits</li> <li>Efficient resource allocation to maximise cost effectiveness</li> <li>Consistent, on-time delivery of advice to the Minister and government stakeholders</li> <li>Provision of high-quality, well-researched advice</li> </ul>



# 7 Implementation, monitoring and evaluation

## Our approach to implementation

The Commission's approach to implementation is founded on empowerment. Across our strategic initiatives, we will seek to deliver positive outcomes by supporting the businesses, community groups, and other government agencies that are on the front line delivering economic activity, services, and social wellbeing.

Fundamentally, the Commission is dedicated to adding specific value – resources, data and analysis, networks and connections, or expertise – that allows project partners to achieve their goals. We will work collaboratively in partnerships, negotiating defined parameters for our contribution with a clear understanding of the purpose of our engagement.

Ultimately, the successful implementation of each element of this plan will be defined by the achievement of the specified outcomes and the extent to which our efforts enhance the long-term capability of people and organisations across the Kimberley.

## Our approach to monitoring and evaluation

The Commission will monitor and evaluate our efforts across four scales:

**Regional:** are economic and social circumstances improving across the Kimberley?

At this scale, the Commission works closely across the Regional Development portfolio and other relevant centres of expertise to track a wide range of regional data. Developments at this scale will also be measured through state and national data sets, such as progress reports under the National Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap. The Commission will report at this scale publicly through periodic publications on key economic and social data and trends.

**Systemic:** are specific systems working well for the benefit of Kimberley people and communities?

Systemic monitoring and evaluation concern the functioning of complex systems involving various participants – for example, the housing system, justice system, or even the system providing digital connectivity. The Commission's monitoring at this scale will most often involve specific pieces of in-depth analysis, either conducted in-house or commissioned externally for a particular purpose. This kind of analysis is essential for building strong cases in favour of investment or policy reform to improve systemic outcomes. The Commission will report at this scale on an ad hoc basis, as particular issues are identified.

**Project:** have individual projects and initiatives achieved their intended goals?

Project monitoring and evaluation are part of the Commission's commitment to accountability and transparency. This will include independent or internal assessments of the Commission's work, as well as assessment of the projects of others that are funded or supported by the Commission. Detailed reporting at this scale is through internal mechanisms of government, often with summary information available in our annual reports.

**Organisational:** is the Commission functioning well as an organisation, and achieving our mission and goals as a whole, consistent with our values?

The Commission's culture and effectiveness are subject to regular review, with direct accountability to the Commission's Board and Minister in the first instance. These reviews occur annually on a formal basis, with results included in our public annual report.

# Our relationship to other regional plans and frameworks

The Commission works in alignment with a range of State Government plans and regional plans and frameworks including:

- WA Regional Development Framework October 2023
- Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy Western Australia 2021-2029
- Closing the Gap Jurisdictional Implementation Plan Western Australia 2021
- Kimberley Land Council Strategic Plan 2020-2024
- Jina Plan (WA Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan) 2021-2025
- Regional Development Australia Kimberley Strategic Regional Plan 2022-25
- 2015 White Paper Developing the North Office of Northern Australia (ONA)
- Kimberley Regional Group Business Plan 2021-2025
- Kimberley Regional Group Strategic Community Plan 2021-2031
- Empowered Communities East Kimberley (binarri-binyja yarrowoo) Regional Development Agenda June 2021
- Empowered Communities West Kimberley (West Kimberley Futures) Our First Priorities March 2023
- Empowered Communities West Kimberley Strategic Plan 2023
- DPIRD Strategic Intent 2022-2026
- WA Planning Commission Regional Planning Strategies
- Diversify WA & Future State Accelerating Diversify WA
- WA Innovation Strategy
- WA Climate Policy
- WA Climate Adaption Strategy
- WA Sectoral Emission Reduction Strategy
- WA Hydrogen Strategy
- State Infrastructure Strategy – Foundations for a Stronger Tomorrow
- Primary Industries Plan 2020-2024





**KIMBERLEY**  
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION