Ieramugadu (Roebourne) Place Plan Discovery Report

July 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Town Team Movement and PLACE Laboratory acknowledge the Ngarluma people as the traditional custodians of this land and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise the special relationship and connection that Ngarluma people have with this Country.

We recognise the significant contribution the Ngarluma people have played in caring for Country.

For time immemorial they have maintained a tangible and intangible cultural, social, environmental, spiritual and economic connection to these lands and waters.

Cover Image: City of Karratha

Contents

Introduction 3

About Ieramugadu: history and characteristics 4

Existing Elements 7

Vision, Values + Aspirations 8

What We've Discovered: existing priorities, initiatives and plans

- Environment + Landscape 9
- Culture, Community + Economy 10
- Infrastructure + Built Elements 11
- Recreation Amenities 12

PLACE LABORATORY

TOWN TEAM MOVEMENT

Introduction

Ieramugadu (Roebourne), located on the banks of the Ngurin River, has seen a lot of community engagement, studies and plans over recent years.

Building on this past work, the Ieramugadu (Roebourne) Place Plan will create a roadmap for the next four years to help bring the Community Vision for Ieramugadu to life, together: residents, businesses, industry, organisations and the City of Karratha ('the City').

The Place Plan especially builds on recent community engagement for the City's Strategic Community Plan (SCP). The focus of that plan was City-wide, and while there was some engagement on different towns, further work is needed to prioritise and then implement priority actions. SCP engagement resulted in the Community Vision For Ieramugadu - the starting point for the action-focused Place Plan.

This report discusses some of the history and characteristics, the Community Vision, and existing priorities for Ieramugadu. Priorities will be discussed and refined through community and stakeholder conversations to identify a clear set of actions.

Existing elements, priorities and plans are shown in a set of maps. These are only a 'conversation starter' - to be improved together through the project, helping shape the Place Plan and agreed actions. Maps cover:

- Existing Elements
- Environment + Landscape
- Culture, Community + Economy
- Infrastructure + Built Elements
- Recreation Amenities

This report has been informed by past work including:

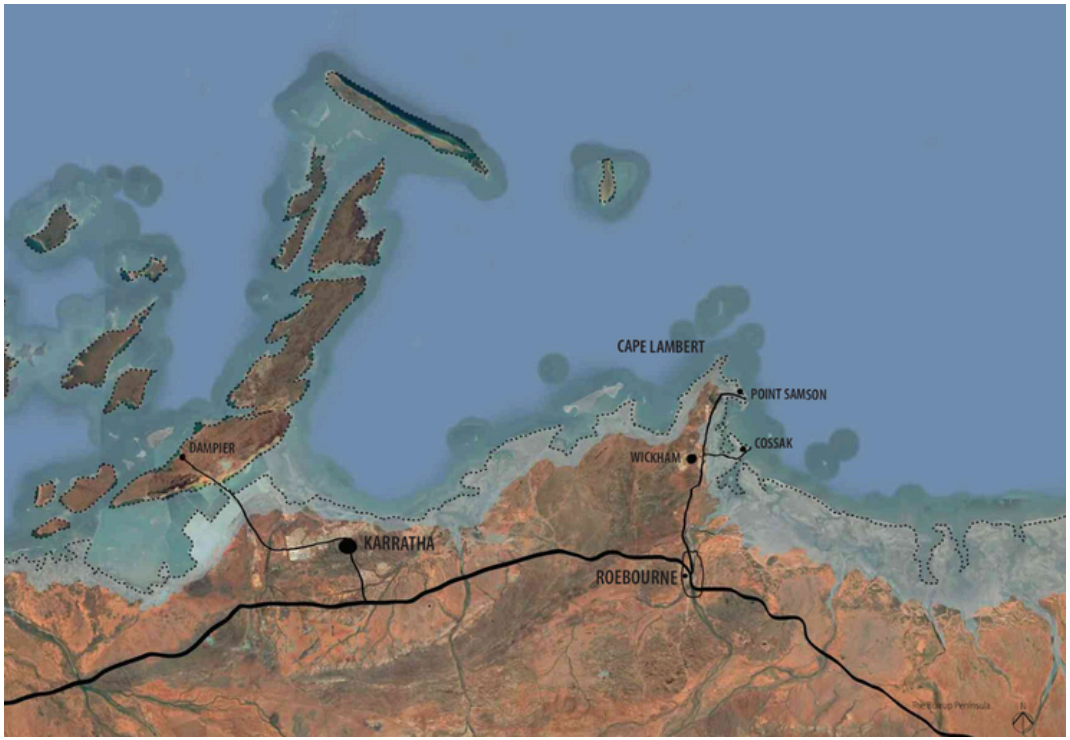
- Community Vision for Ieramugadu (Artwork) from Strategic Community Plan engagement (2024)
- Roebourne Recreation Precinct Draft Masterplan Report
- Roebourne Streetscape Masterplan
- Roebourne Structure Plan
- Roebourne Services and Facilities Strategy
- Strategic Community Plan engagement findings (2024-25)

About Ieramugadu: history + characteristics

Located on both sides of the Ngurin (Harding) River - the lifeblood of the town - Ieramugadu (Roebourne) is around 35 kilometres southeast of Karratha, along the Northwest Coastal Highway in Western Australia's Pilbara region.

Ieramugadu is located on Ngarluma Country. Yindjibarni Country is next t to Ngarluma Country, and Yinjibarni people are also connected to the area. Ieramugadu is the centre for many Aboriginal Language Groups which include the Ngarluma, Yindjibarndi, Banyima, Gurrama and Marduthunia peoples.

The area has been used continuously by Traditional Owners for over 30,000 years. In 1866, it became the first gazetted town in Australia's northwest, being named as 'Roebourne'. In its early days as 'Roebourne' it was set up to support the farming industry in surrounding areas. It was also the first location for the Roebourne Shire Council's offices, until they moved to Karratha in 1971.



Source: Roebourne Recreation Precinct Draft Masterplan Report

The mid 1970s to early 1980s were a very difficult time of social and economic change for Ieramugadu and its communities, with increasing use of police force, particularly against the Indigenous community.

In 2007, the Ngarluma Aboriginal Corporation was granted Native Title on behalf of Ngarluma people of parts of the land surrounding Roebourne, and in 2015 a consent determination of the Federal Court confirmed Ngarluma as the native title holders of land in the towns of Dampier, Wickham, Roebourne, Point Samson and Karratha.

Ieramugadu is now a predominantly Indigenous town, with 68% of its 700 people identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2021 Census).

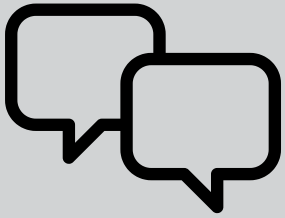
About Ieramugadu: history + characteristics

AGE

Median Age: 34

A relatively high population aged over 50

LANGUAGES



Native Speakers:

Yindjibarndi: ~700

Ngarluma: ~20

+ others

LOCAL ECONOMY

Development of an increasing number of Aboriginal businesses

Workforce participation rate of 40%

MOVEMENT

21.7% moved within the last year

53.5% moved within the last five years

About Ieramugadu: history + characteristics

FOCUS AREAS FOR A STRONGER FUTURE

Ieramugadu is working on some main priorities:

- Improving housing conditions and reducing overcrowding
- Supporting health and wellbeing — especially around diabetes, heart health, mental health and asthma
- Making the community safer
- Boosting education participation and lifelong learning
- Expanding economic and income-generating opportunities

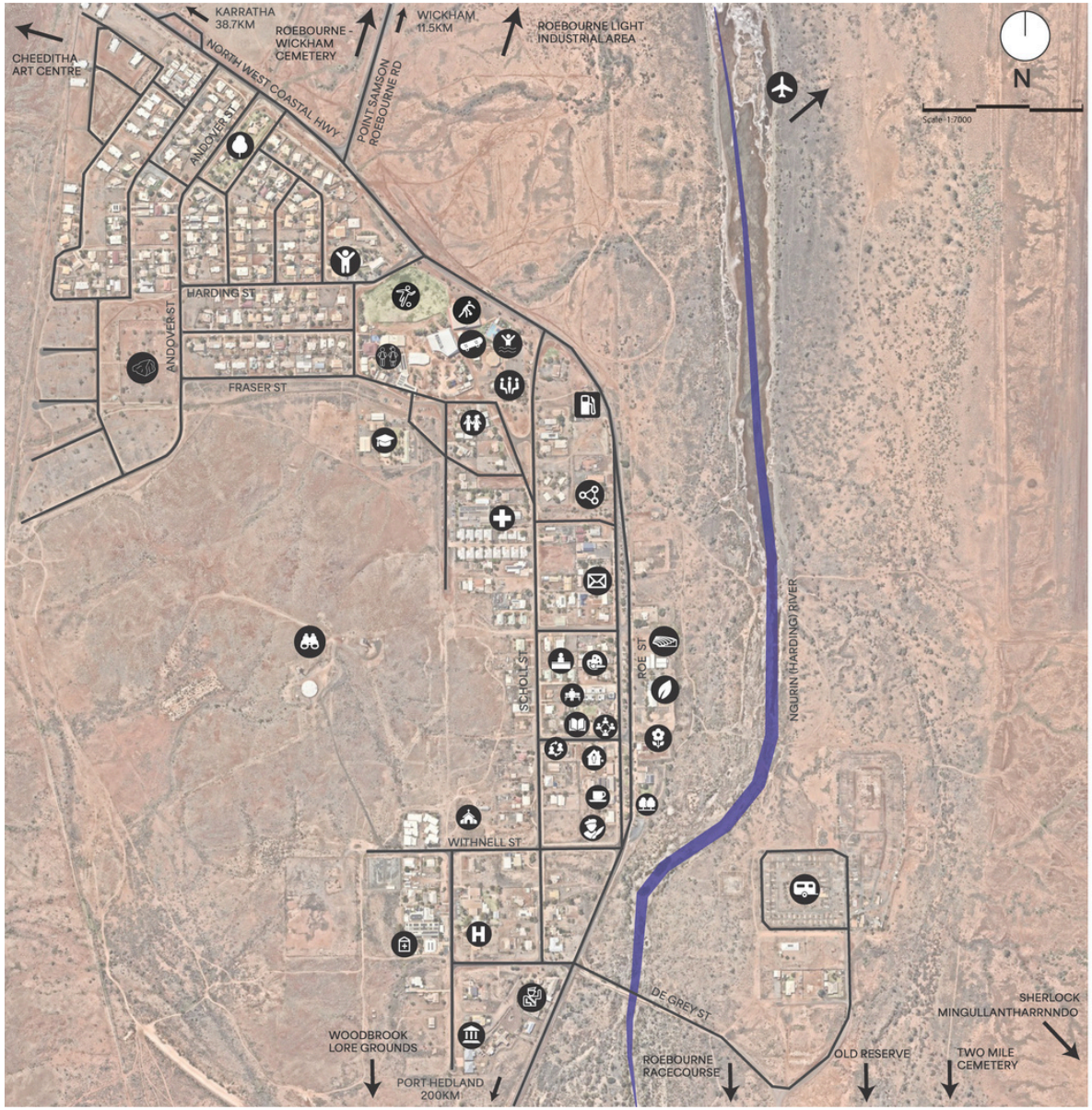
IERAMUGADU'S STRENGTHS

Ieramugadu has many community strengths and unique assets:

- Resilient spirit: A determined community that often bounces back
- Rich cultural heritage: A diversity of Traditional Owner language groups strengthening its identity
- Thriving art scene: Becoming renowned for a strong and growing art community, which brings beauty, expression, and economic opportunity.
- Tourism potential:
  - vibrant art community
  - historic heritage precinct
  - located on the major Northwest Coastal Highway
- Powerful community organisations: A wealth of existing programs dedicated to improving health and wellbeing
- Economic opportunities: New ventures are being explored and developed to create a prosperous future for Ieramugadu

Existing Elements

Key existing elements of Ieramugadu identified through a review of documents are captured in map below. These form a basis for planning with community and stakeholders and can be added to or refined as the Place Plan project progresses.



Roebourne (Ieramugadu) Existing Elements

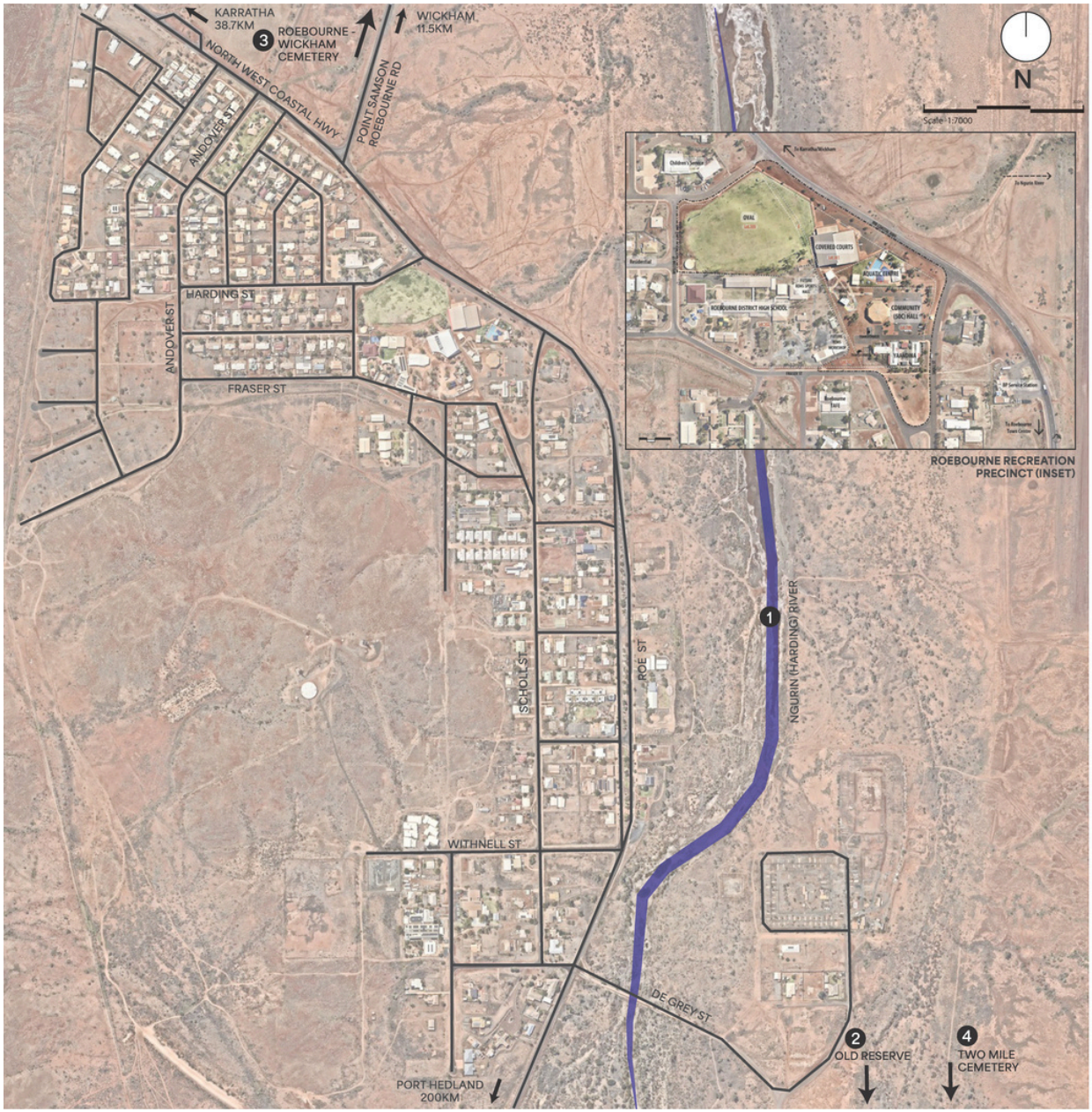
- 50 CENT COMMUNITY HALL
- ANDOVER PARK
- LIBRARY
- CAFE - IERAMUGADU STORE, GALLERY + CAFE
- ROEBOURNE DISTRICT HOSPITAL
- GANALILI CENTRE (CLOSED)
- DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES
- ROEBOURNE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL
- SCHOOL OVAL
- TAFE
- ROEBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL
- ROEBOURNE AQUATIC CENTRE
- MAWARNKARRA HEALTH SERVICE
- AUSTRALIA POST AND CENTRELINK OFFICE
- YAADINA COMMUNITUY SERVICES + AGED CARE
- POLICE STATION
- SKATE PARK
- MT WELCOME LOOKOUT
- INFORMATION BAY
- AIRPORT
- HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
- BIG HART DIGITAL LAB
- ABORIGINAL CHURCH + OP SHOP
- ROEBOURNE HERITAGE PRECINCT
- YINJAA-BARNI ART CENTRE
- OLD ROEBOURNE CEMETERY
- NGAARDA MEDIA
- NGURIN CENTRE + AMPHITHEATRE
- GRATEFUL REMNANTS ART STUDIO
- BP SERVICE STATION + STORE
- UNDERCOVER BASKETBALL COURT
- CITY OF KARRATHA OFFICES
- ROEBOURNE CARAVAN PARK
- ONE TREE GURLU GURLU MAYA CHILDREN'S SERVICE
- JUBILEE PARK

Vision, Values + Aspirations

This Community Vision for Ieramugadu was created during engagement in 2024 for the City of Karratha's Strategic Community Plan. It will be the starting point for exploring implementation. The statements of 'what we like' in this Vision will be tested through community engagement, helping to clarify the values that will guide the Place Plan's development and implementation, and the key aspirations that support prioritisation.

Environment + Landscape

The following are identified as existing priorities from past planning and engagement, and are a starting point for exploring priorities.



Environment + Landscape

Potential improvements previously identified by community and documents.

SPECIFIC LOCATIONS:

1. Establish stronger connections to the Ngurin (Harding) River, the lifeblood of the town
2. Interpretive signage and shade at Old Reserve.
3. Upgrades and potential expansion of Roebourne-Wickham Cemetery.
4. Improvements to Two Mile Cemetery including fencing, grave site identification, general maintenance and headstones.

TOWN WIDE:

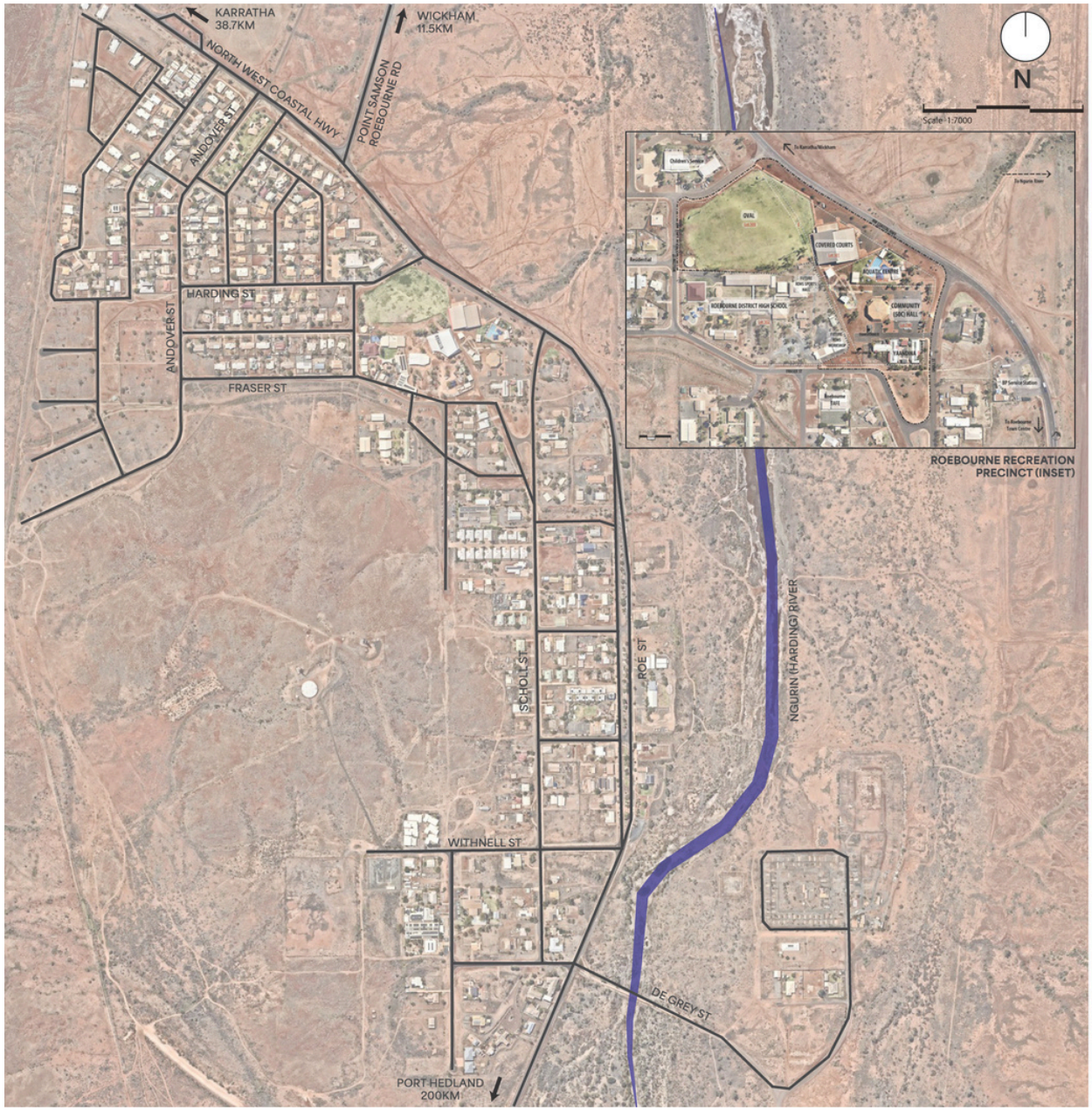
5. Dual naming.
6. Ieramugadu Road signage to highlight what is in town for visitors.
7. Increased tree planting.
8. Explore native and/or fruit trees on the street
9. Access to water/water fountains
10. Provide improved shade and seating.
11. Acknowledge 24 hour use of outdoor spaces
12. Preserve and rehabilitate significant vegetation around disturbed/eroded areas of town, especially along roadways.

ROEBOURNE STREETSCAPE MASTERPLAN (30 YEAR TOWN WIDE PLAN):

- A Introduce more trees.
- B Introduce new landscaping with grassed areas, garden beds, shrubs and trees.
- C Introduce new street furniture including concrete benches and natural boulders.
- D Provide new shade structures that complement existing use and functionalityIntroduce new pavement and landscaping to improve the areas around the War Memorial and Withnell Monument.
- E Opportunity for revitalisation of the War Memorial and the Emma Withnell Monument.

Culture, Community + Economy

The following are identified as existing priorities from past planning and engagement, and are a starting point for exploring priorities.



Culture, Community + Economy

Potential improvements previously identified by community and documents.

SPECIFIC LOCATIONS:

To be identified through Place Plan engagement.

TOWN WIDE:

1. Dual naming.
2. Introduce and build on art in the town (public art and works for sale).
3. Establish and build on tourism initiatives.
4. Support and grow markets.
5. Support and establish more community events.
6. Support, develop and enhance health and wellbeing initiatives.
7. Establish Cultural Safety.
8. Increased retail and opportunities inlcuding cafes.
9. Increase business diversity (e.g. bush foods).
10. Create a welcoming, clean, attractive town.
11. Youth empowerment and leadership development.
12. Build youth employment skills through involvement in design, delivery, maintenance and upkeep.
13. Develop and support training and education opportunities.
14. Demonstrate respect for Elders.
15. Enhance a sense of belonging.
16. Support connection to Country.
17. Enable a more connected community.
18. Celebrate and build on distinctive characteristics to express a strong identity and sense of place.
19. Establish Men's Healing and Women's Healing Centre

ROEBOURNE STREETSCAPE MASTERPLAN (30 YEAR TOWN WIDE PLAN):

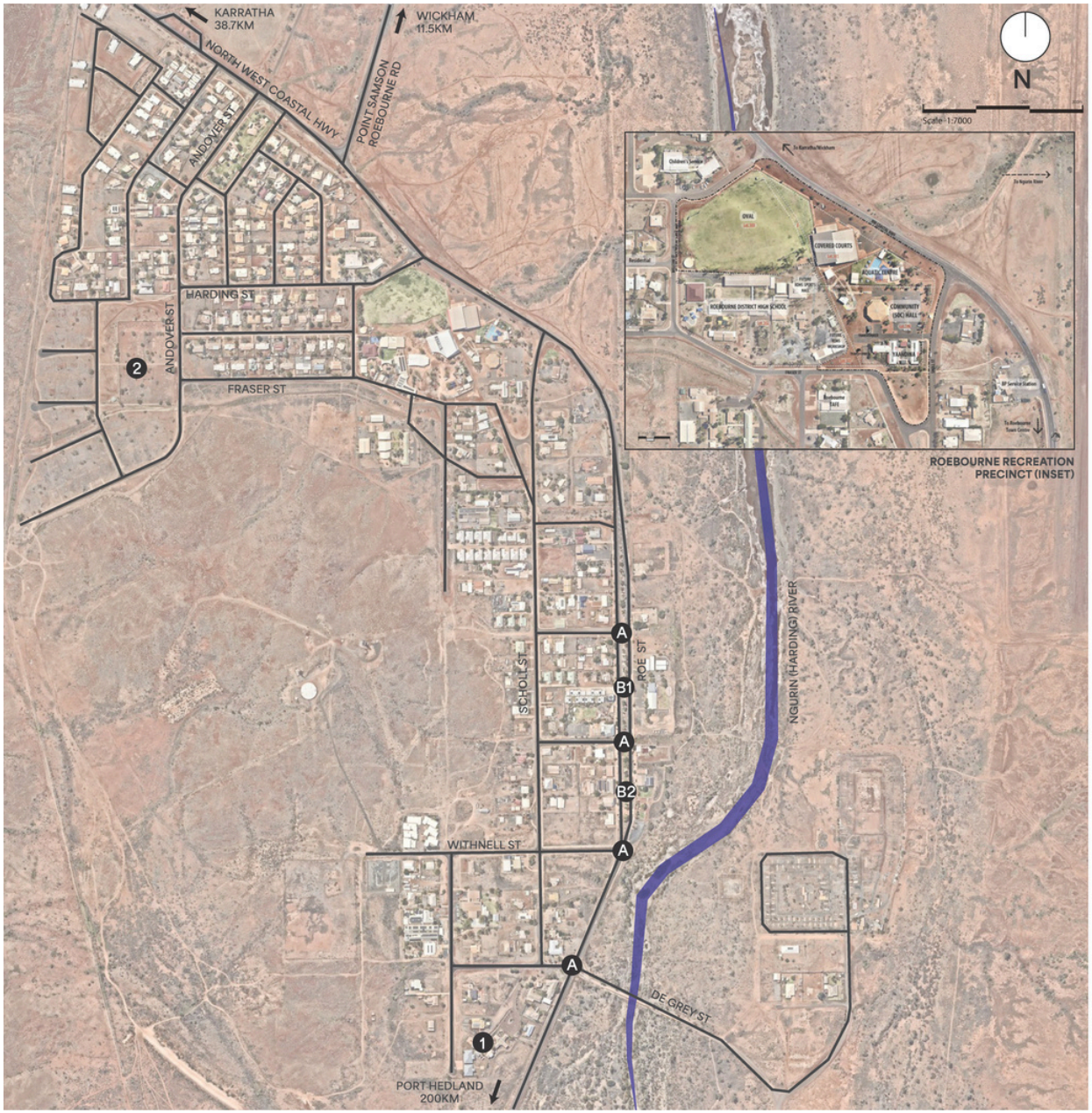
A. Incorporate local history, stories and culture through the use of local materials, plants, artwork, language and interpretation information.

B. Mark key entry points with large town signs/ artwork, to identify the town boundaries to welcome locals and travellers.

C. Local artist designs may be applied to concrete bench seats.

Infrastructure + Built Elements

The following are identified as existing priorities from past planning and engagement, and are a starting point for exploring priorities.



Infrastructure and Built Elements

Potential improvements previously identified by community and documents.

SPECIFIC LOCATIONS:

1. Protect and enhance heritage buildings.
2. Upgrade Old Roebourne Cemetery.

TOWN WIDE:

3. Explore provision of toilets (separate genders) and proper hand washing facilities in parks.
4. Investigate introducing enclosed shower spaces/areas for changing etc.
5. Provide better footpaths on the route to school, and better pedestrian crossings.
6. Have regular street clean-ups, and clear broken glass.
7. Progress better homes and ownership.
8. Design to keep kids safe.
9. Acknowledge 24 hour use of outdoor spaces.
10. Upgrade residential street lighting, especially at key intersections and areas considered unsafe.
11. Proposed heavy vehicle diversion route to address noise, dust and safety issues. This is a recognised turnoff from the highway to avoid leading visitors directly around town (causing a town bypass).
12. Establish a heavy vehicle breakdown area.

ROEBOURNE STREETSCAPE MASTERPLAN (PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2)

PHASE 1:

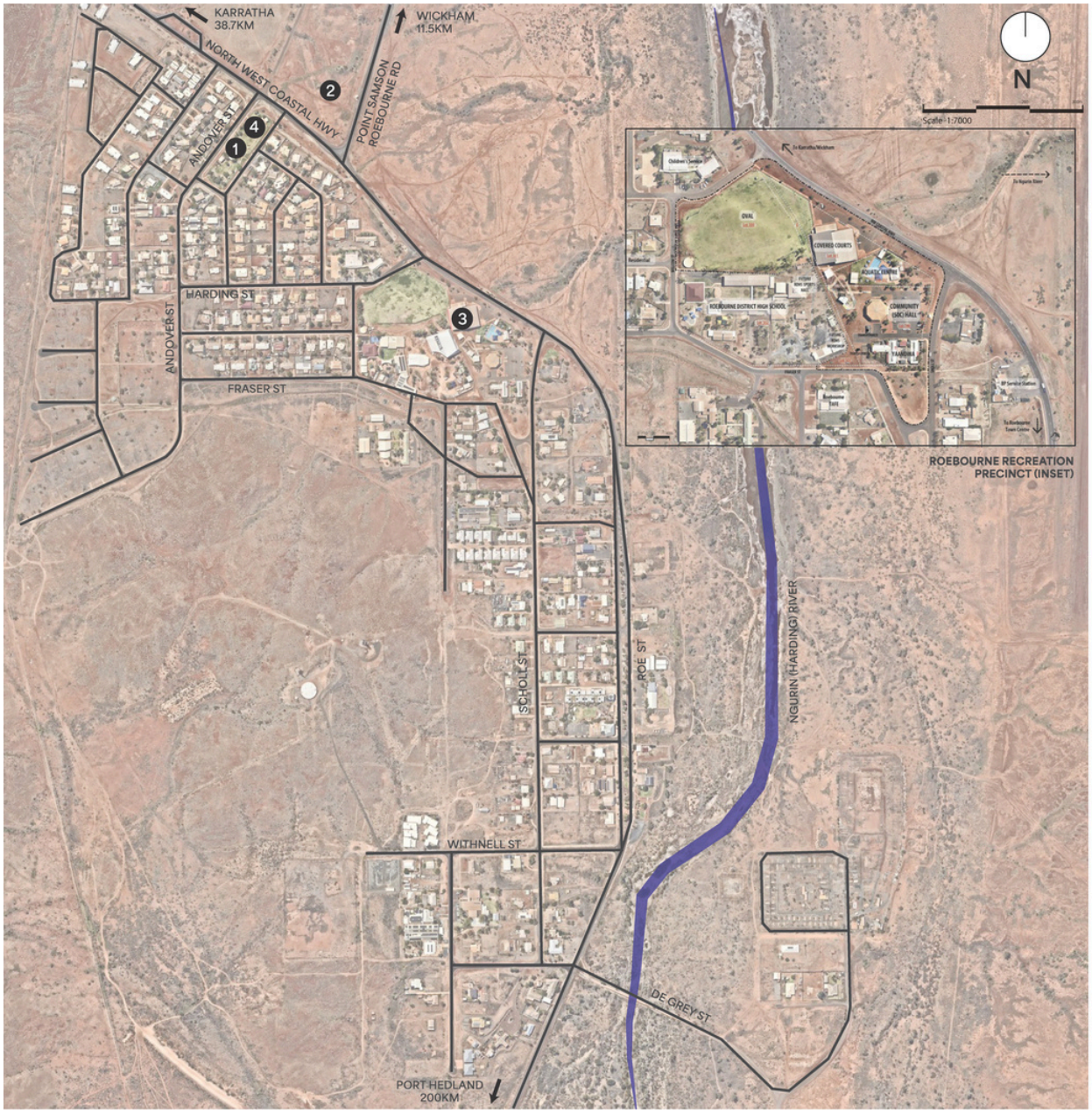
- A Improve intersections at Queen, Withnell, Padbury and Wellard Streets.

PHASE 2:

- B1 Improve the walking environment, including footpaths and crossings.
- B2 Improve streetscape around existing war memorial.
- C Continued use of town centre for heavy vehicles and road trains.
- D Provide new shade structures that complement existing use and functionality.
- E Introduce new street furniture including concrete benches and natural boulders.

Recreation Amenities

The following are identified as existing priorities from past planning and engagement, and are a starting point for exploring priorities.



Recreation Amenities

Potential improvements previously identified by community and documents.

SPECIFIC LOCATIONS:

1. Finalise upgrade to Andover Park.
2. Restore old Roebourne Oval.
3. Upgrade the basketball court and fencing.
4. Improved lighting (including skatepark) in Andover Park.

TOWN WIDE:

5. Establish a greater mix of indoor and outdoor activities including water play and more shade.
6. Outdoor activities could include an athletics track, bowling, mini golf, BMX/dirt bike track, splash pad, or trails along the river or to the hills.
7. Consider playgrounds for different ages and abilities, including a ninja style playground and enced and accessible playgrounds (e.g. sensory tools, less sand).

ROEBOURNE RECREATION MASTER PLAN:

A. Provide integrated, multi-use facilities for all ages.

B. Create an entrance to the Precinct by linking the Community Hall and Aquatic Centre entrances and building a new office area/foyer.
Provide storage for equipment.

C. Provide more flexible spaces that can be used for indoor and outdoor activities.

D. Establish multiple uses of the facilities: Community Hall could be used as a community gym when not otherwise used, or parking areas could accommodate markets and events.

E. Expand the range of outdoor recreational opportunities (e.g. gym, BMX trails, trampolines, obstacle courses, climbing activities, open-air exercise/training equipment, adventure and nature play areas, etc.)

F. Establish more recreational walks, cycle paths and fitness trails that link to the Ngurin, Andover Park, and Gus Jager sports oval.

G. Establish more cultural recreational opportunities (e.g. yarning circle, bush garden, language integration for all signage).

H. Beautify the recreation precinct though landscaping including carpark, creation of a landscape buffer between facilities and the highway, refurbishment/upgrade of existing .

I. Consider parking requirements with more extensive use of the community precinct (e.g. identify and communicate overflow parking areas.