



City Status Questions and Answers



Karratha

Dampier

Wickham

Roebourne

Point Samson

Cossack

1) What is city status?

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1995 (the Act)* there are three classifications of local government in Western Australia – City, Town or Shire. Establishing a local government district as a City or Town requires a number of criteria to be met including the District to have a minimum number of residents in the area. If all criteria are not met the District will be designated and referred to as a Shire, as in the Shire of Roebourne.

The Shire of Roebourne District includes the communities of Dampier, Karratha, Roebourne, Wickham, Cossack and Point Samson.

For a regional District, such as the Shire of Roebourne, to be designated a City it must have a minimum of 20,000 residents, of which, more than half live in an urban area.

2) Why is the Shire of Roebourne considering city status?

The Shire of Roebourne's estimated residential population, as indicated by the ABS 2012, stands at 24,916 which puts it in the position of being able to bid for city status. The change of status to a City is not merely a change of name, but a significant historical milestone for the community.

City status brings Federal and State Government recognition, not just in terms of funding, but also in the form of greater influence at both a political level and when dealing with government agencies.

Changing to City status will help raise the profile of the area, attracting more private investment and economic benefits which will result in improved facilities and services. This in turn will help bring more jobs and opportunities to local residents.

3) What is the process for obtaining city status?

- a) Establish that the Shire of Roebourne has more than 20,000 residents (The Shire of Roebourne has had official confirmation by the Chief Statistician at the ABS that as of June 2012 the estimated residential population was 24,916)
- b) Seek Council's endorsement to investigate the benefits of considering city status
- c) Engage in an appropriate period of public consultation
- d) Seek Council resolution for city status
- e) Submit formal written request, with the appropriate supporting documentation, to the Minister for Local Government
- f) Review by the Governor of Western Australia
- g) Public gazettal period
- h) Official launch of City with civic ceremony

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4) What has the Shire of Roebourne put in place to consider city status with an open and transparent approach?

At the Shire of Roebourne July 2012 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council resolved to establish a City Status Advisory Group to investigate the cost benefit in considering an application for city status and provide a report to Council recommending future direction.

At the November 2012 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council resolved to commission a random telephone survey of Shire of Roebourne residents seeking to ascertain the level of interest from the community in the Shire becoming a city as an initial stage of the community engagement process.

At the Shire of Roebourne September 2012 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council resolved to undertake further community consultation in the form of a call for public submissions and targeted consultation with indigenous groups, community associations and business groups using the recommended consultation strategy.

5) What are the advantages of city status?

Recognition: City status brings significant Federal and State recognition, not just in terms of funding, but also in “political clout”, particularly dealing with government agencies.

Marketing, Promotion & Investment: A City will attract private and government investment which will lead to economic benefits, improved facilities and services, more jobs and opportunities for local business. Significant funding is required for the proposed airport expansion, regional health campus and higher education campus. There is a strong case to support the view that arguments for this increased infrastructure and funding would be enhanced when bidding from the position of a city rather than a shire. City status will enable improved marketing efforts to assist tourism, investment and international relationships.

Civic Pride and Population Growth: City status will bolster efforts to promote the area as a successful, vibrant location of choice offering modern services and amenities which will attract and retain a broad range of people wanting to settle permanently in the region. City status is reflective of the region’s growing population. With a current estimated residential population of 24,916, the area has an aspirational target of 50,000 people.

Alignment with Government Policy: The city status project is in line with the State government’s Pilbara Cities vision which sets out to transform Karratha from a mining town and service centre to a major regional city.

6) What are the disadvantages of city status?

Local History: The Roebourne District has a long history as one of the earliest municipalities in the North West having been established since 1887. Local residents may feel that a change to a city and potential name change will lead to a diminishment of ties to the Shire's history.

Community Perceptions: There may be a perception that "small town" friendliness and sense of community and pride will be lost.

Costs: There will be an inevitable cost associated with a change of status as new branding and marketing will need to be developed and implemented.

Population: Having just over the 20,000 population threshold for transitioning to a city it may be regarded as premature to change to a City.

7) What are the costs associated with a transition to city status?

The estimated costs to transitioning to a city are in the vicinity of \$250,000 - \$350,000. Areas of costing will include community consultation, rebranding and marketing; signage replacement, stationery and uniforms. This could be progressively implemented over a period of 2-3 years in a systematic way to ensure costs are minimised. For example the usual replacement of road and community signage could be delayed so it is timed with the new City branding.

8) Will the change impact the Shire's service delivery?

The change to City will not impact the services or programs being delivered to the community or result in any increases in rates or fees levied.

9) What will the City be called and how will it affect other towns in the District?

Suggested naming for the proposed City is open for public comment and will be decided by Council. The transformation from a Shire to a City will not impact any of the other towns within the District, all will retain their names and identities and remain within the District.

For example: If it were decided to rename the District from the Shire of Roebourne to the City of Karratha, the new classification would still comprise of the communities of Dampier, Karratha, Roebourne, Wickham, Cossack and Point Samson.

10) Will we still have a Shire President?

Upon transition to city status, a Mayor will need to be elected. Council will determine if the Mayor is elected by councillors or by residents.

11) How will city status affect taxation on remote area travel and location allowances?

City status in itself does not impact on remote area travel and location allowances. Taxpayers will still be able to claim a tax offset (rebate) if they have lived in a remote area for at least half the year.