

KARRATHA 2050

Australia's New Northern City
Vision | Strategy | Action

KARRATHA 2050 VISION

By 2050, Karratha is Australia's new northern city—a dynamic global gateway celebrated for its vibrant economy, diverse community, and enviable lifestyle.

Beyond traditional industries, Karratha excels in renewable energies, advanced manufacturing, and innovative technologies, strategically connecting Australia with the Asia-Pacific.

Iconic architecture, thriving arts and cultural festivals, and exceptional recreational amenities make Karratha a year-round destination for residents and visitors from around the world.

Karratha sets the global standard for Ngarda-ngarli (Aboriginal people) self-determination and inclusive community wellbeing.

Committed to sustainability, Karratha champions environmental resilience and visionary urban living.

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PREFERRED STATE - KARRATHA 2050

In 2050, Ngarda-ngarli have genuine self-determination and control their own destiny and affairs. Cultural precincts shine, showcasing art, heritage, and cultural events that unite traditional and contemporary practices. Ngarda-ngarli-led businesses flourish, reflecting self-determined governance and robust economies. Each street and service resonates with Aboriginal wisdom, forging an inclusive city identity that honours culture and ensures shared prosperity.

Karratha is seamlessly connected through cutting-edge autonomous transit, regional and city-wide rail, and efficient sea routes. A state-of-the-art airport connects the city Australia wide and globally, particularly through strategic corridors like Singapore. High-speed fibre underpins a thriving digital economy and digital literacy is universal, bridging communities and fuelling innovation. Electric fleets powered by green hydrogen complement climate-resilient infrastructure, ensuring long-term security. Strategic defence partnerships enhance regional stability, while premium tourism experiences position Karratha as a dynamic, future-focused hub of opportunity.

As a beacon of renewable energy innovation, Karratha harnesses solar and hydrogen solutions. Green corridors and water-sensitive urban designs cool the city. Circular economy practices flourish, driving advanced manufacturing and nearly eliminating waste. Marine biodiversity thrives under strong protective measures. Resilient infrastructure safeguards against climate extremes through biomimicry, and expansive nature reserves anchor the city's commitment to net-zero achievements and ecological harmony.

Globally recognised for energy innovation, Karratha leads with solar power, hydrogen, and carbon capture technologies. Restored landscapes and thriving alternative protein industries fuel circular growth. Direct shipping routes connect local businesses to global markets, while specialised education programs foster a skilled, tech-savvy workforce. Vibrant small businesses, premium tourism offerings, and strong Indigenous economic participation secure an inclusive, resilient future built on diversified foundations.

Karratha is an architectural icon, seamlessly blending desert-inspired sustainable design with lush green corridors and walkable neighbourhoods. Vibrant waterfront squares energise city life, while extensive new housing supports intergenerational communities.

Affordable housing and diverse housing solutions enable community resilience and stable, intergenerational communities. This creates a family-friendly, climate-adaptive city that honours Pilbara identity and cultural heritage.

The city thrives through dynamic, transparent governance, empowered by regional autonomy and strong community involvement. Youth-led initiatives shape future-focused decisions, guided by passionate "2050 Ambassadors." Public-private partnerships accelerate inclusive infrastructure, fostering collaborative ties across the Asia-Pacific. Under the unified brand—

"Australia's new northern city"—government, industry and residents commit to accountability, pride, and transformative growth.

Karratha is renowned for holistic community well-being, featuring modern healthcare hubs, telemedicine, comprehensive mental health services, and integrated education and university centres. Vibrant public spaces host sports, nature-based recreation, and inclusive festivals celebrating unity. Social equity initiatives, guided by robust "Closing the Gap" frameworks, ensure a safe, welcoming environment. Karratha proudly stands as northern Australia's hub for health, education, and opportunity.

As Australia's northern global gateway, Karratha warmly welcomes sister-city visitors from Singapore, China, and India. Major recreational attractions, from mountain biking trails to marina festivals and interactive wildlife experiences, enliven the region year-round. Dynamic arts precincts showcase Indigenous creativity, enriching the cultural landscape. Forward-thinking innovation hubs and think tanks ensure regional stability and continuous growth, allowing Karratha to thrive with enduring Pilbara spirit, global connections, and vibrant community life.

PURPOSE

A bold and shared journey for Karratha's future

Karratha2050 is more than a plan. It's a shared invitation — to community, government and industry — to come together and shape a thriving, resilient and connected future for our city. It responds to the challenges we face today while setting our sights on what's possible by 2050. With clear direction and united action, we can turn today's decisions into tomorrow's opportunities.

Resilient by design, ready for the future

As our region faces increasing environmental pressure and extreme weather, we're taking decisive steps to prepare. Karratha2050 is about making smart choices today that protect our tomorrow — through sustainable infrastructure, climate-conscious planning and investment in clean, reliable energy and water systems. It's a future where our environment and economy work together and where climate resilience is part of who we are.

Homes, services and support that grow with us

Karratha is growing — and with it the need for affordable, accessible housing and strong community services. This vision takes a holistic approach to social and economic inclusion, aiming to meet the diverse needs of our community while attracting long-term residents and workers. By working together, we can deliver the housing, healthcare, education and community infrastructure that gives people a reason to stay, and the support they need to thrive.

A new economic future, shaped by innovation and partnership

Karratha2050 reimagines our economic future — not by abandoning our roots, but by building on them. It opens doors to new industries like renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, cultural tourism and creative enterprise. This is a call to government and industry to partner with us in creating a more diverse, resilient economy. One that provides secure jobs, builds local capability, and positions Karratha as a dynamic new northern city on the national and global stage.

Smarter, more inclusive ways of leading

This vision also rethinks how we lead and make decisions. It calls for smarter governance, stronger local leadership, and a culture of transparency and collaboration. We're embracing technologies and systems that support responsive, community-driven decision-making and we're inviting everyone to be part of that process. Whether you're a young person with ideas, a Traditional Owner with cultural wisdom, or a business ready to invest; your voice matters here.

A City defined by its people, proud of its place

At the heart of Karratha2050 is a belief in who we are and who we can become. We are a city rich in culture, history and landscape — and our future must reflect that. This vision celebrates our identity and strengthens the bonds between people and place. It gives us all a reason to be proud, and a reason to contribute.

Let's create something extraordinary — together

Karratha2050 is not a document on a shelf. It's a living vision, grounded in our community and powered by partnership. Now is the time to act — to bring together residents, businesses, government and industry to make this future real.

Let's build the Karratha of 2050 — together.

PROCESS

The development of the Karratha 2050 Vision was shaped by a rigorous, inclusive, and forward-thinking process. Guided by collaboration, it brought together a diverse group of voices - local government leaders, industry experts, community organisations, and Traditional Owners - to collectively chart a bold path for the region's future.

At the foundation of the process was a comprehensive review of existing strategies, supported by interactive workshops, in-depth consultations, and detailed policy analysis. This ensured that the priorities, perspectives, and concerns of all stakeholders were meaningfully captured and integrated into the plan.

To strengthen and accelerate this work, the City embraced cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. These AI-driven tools were instrumental in analysing vast and complex datasets - ranging from existing strategic documents and consultation transcripts to workshop insights and governance frameworks. The use of AI enabled the team to systematically identify key strategic themes, spot emerging trends, and detect both critical gaps and areas of overlap.

Importantly, this innovative approach also served as a robust quality assurance mechanism - cross-checking findings for consistency, depth, and strategic alignment.

This commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and evidence-based planning sets Karratha apart as a global leader in forward-thinking city planning. The result is a shared Vision and Strategic Plan that positions Karratha to thrive - ready to embrace new opportunities, adapt to emerging challenges, and lead with purpose on the world stage.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: WALKING TOGETHER - EMPOWERING NGARDA-NARLI LEADERSHIP AND HONOURING CULTURE

By 2050, Traditional Owners will have genuine self-determination, with the freedom and authority to control decisions that affect their people, land, culture and communities.

Cultural precincts will flourish, highlighting art, heritage, and cultural events that blend traditional and contemporary practices. Aboriginal-led enterprises will thrive, creating resilient economies. The city creates opportunities for Aboriginal people to lead environmental stewardship through traditional ecological practices.

Public spaces and services will reflect Aboriginal wisdom, fostering a city identity that celebrates culture, promotes reconciliation, and ensures shared prosperity.

Objective 1: Governance and Leadership

Traditional Owner leadership and cultural authority is deeply embedded within Karratha's governance frameworks. Structured decision-making processes exist between the City and Traditional Owner groups to support Indigenous self-determination, eliminate systemic racism, and promote respect for Aboriginal culture.

Objective 2: Cultural Celebration

Celebrate, preserve, and prominently integrate Ngarda-Narli culture and truth telling into community life, enhancing cultural understanding and reconciliation through consolidated community events, educational initiatives, and an Indigenous-managed Cultural Gateway Precinct.

Objective 3: Economic Empowerment

Accelerate economic autonomy and prosperity for Indigenous communities by nurturing entrepreneurship, supporting targeted business incubation, education and employment initiatives.

Objective 4: Cultural Sustainability, Heritage and Urban Development

Safeguard Indigenous heritage and cultural practices through proactive preservation, adoption of Indigenous design principles in city planning and housing, and active incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into contemporary urban solutions.

Objective 5: Relationship and Community Development

Enhance relationships among Indigenous groups, local government, and broader community stakeholders through structured reconciliation initiatives and sustained cultural competency programs.

GOAL 2: CONNECTED CITY - MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE LINKING PEOPLE AND OPPORTUNITIES

By 2050, Karratha will be a globally connected, future-ready city—seamlessly linked through smart transport systems, cutting-edge communications, and sustainable energy.

Integrated regional and urban rail, autonomous transit, and world-class ports will drive mobility and commerce. A modern airport will amplify regional and international ties, with a strong focus on the Southeast Asia trade corridor.

High-speed fibre networks will underpin a thriving digital economy - equipped with universal digital literacy, inclusive of Indigenous communities and equitable access for all.

Within a purpose-built hybrid renewable energy precinct, green hydrogen will power electric vehicle fleets, while climate-resilient infrastructure will protect against environmental extremes. Biomimicry and cyclone-resistant design will form the backbone of our infrastructure strategy.

Strategic defence investments will strengthen Karratha's role in regional security, while bold tourism developments - guided by cultural heritage and environmental respect - will establish Karratha as a vibrant destination and regional powerhouse.

Digital literacy will be universal - bridging communities, powering innovation, and unlocking opportunity.

Objective 1: Transportation Infrastructure and Connectivity

Establish Karratha as a strategically connected city through world-class, sustainable, and innovative transport infrastructure, integrating, autonomous transit and comprehensive air, sea and land networks to drive economic growth, enhance community cohesion, and improve accessibility.

Objective 2: Digital and Communication Networks

Enhance city-wide digital and telecommunications infrastructure, ensuring robust connectivity. Advance digital literacy as an equitable foundation for Indigenous inclusion, bridging technological divides and fostering equitable participation in community and economic opportunities.

Objective 3: Energy and Sustainability Infrastructure

Position Karratha as a clean-energy leader—embracing innovation to deliver climate-smart, cyber-secure, and resilient energy systems.

Objective 4: Defence Strategic Infrastructure

Leverage Karratha's strategic location to enhance Australia's regional security role and strengthen international partnerships.

Objective 5: Urban Integration and Regional Connectivity

Foster regional prosperity through thoughtful integration—bridging townships, infrastructure, strategic urban design and workforce opportunities.

Objective 6: Technological Innovation and Integration

Position Karratha as a smart city—harnessing advanced technologies to streamline services, grow capability, and create new economic pathways.

Objective 7: Tourism and Recreational Infrastructure

Develop Karratha as a unique tourism destination—celebrating land, sea, and culture through sustainable and immersive visitor experiences.

GOAL 3: GREEN FUTURE - PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENHANCING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

By 2050, Karratha will be recognised globally for its bold environmental leadership and ecological integrity. The city will flourish with a network of lush green corridors, expansive nature reserves, and innovative urban reforestation initiatives that cool the city and foster vibrant biodiversity.

With a strong focus on climate resilience, Karratha will pioneer adaptive infrastructure, water-sensitive design, and sustainable land use planning to safeguard against extreme weather and environmental shocks. Circular economy principles will underpin sustainable waste systems, water reuse, and resource optimisation—dramatically reducing landfill and carbon impacts.

Marine and terrestrial ecosystems will be protected through Indigenous-led stewardship, cutting-edge conservation strategies, and restoration of degraded landscapes. This is a future where nature and people thrive together—a net-zero city defined by ecological harmony, cultural respect, and a deep commitment to the planet.

Objective 1: Renewable Energy and Advanced Manufacturing

Karratha is a global pioneer in sustainable energy, transitioning from fossil fuels to a diverse mix of renewable sources—supported by advanced manufacturing and battery recycling lifecycle strategies.

Objective 2: Green Infrastructure and Urban Forestry

Transform Karratha into the Pilbara's flagship green city by leveraging biomimicry, green infrastructure, and climate-sensitive design. Expand urban tree canopy and ecological corridors to mitigate heat and strengthen community connections to nature.

Objective 3: Sustainable Water and Waste Management

Advance sustainable water management and innovative waste and waste-to-energy solutions. Combined desalination, recycling, and circular economy practices to secure water resources, optimise resource use, and manage carbon impacts.

Objective 4: Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management

Safeguard and regenerate biodiversity through marine and terrestrial conservation, Indigenous-led management, pastoral lease management and ecosystem restoration—including innovative artificial marine habitats.

Objective 5: Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

Ensure community safety and resilience by embedding adaptive design into infrastructure. Address climate extremes and disaster preparedness through robust planning, urban growth boundaries and integrated ecological corridors.

Objective 6: Agricultural and Food Security Initiatives

Support food and water resilience by advancing sustainable farming, aquaculture, and pastoral innovation to secure local food systems for future generations.

Objective 7: Circular Economy and Sustainability Initiatives

Embed circular economy models into city systems— prioritizing sustainable waste management, recycling, and fuelling a low-carbon economy powered by renewable energy.

Objective 8: Environmental Targets and Metrics

Monitor and manage environmental progress with clear, localized performance metrics that support transparency and accountability.

Objective 9: Large-Scale Reserves

Create expansive, world-class nature reserves that celebrate biodiversity and enrich daily life - ensuring everyone can connect with and benefit from nature.

GOAL 4: INNOVATIVE ECONOMY - DIVERSIFYING INDUSTRIES AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

By 2050, Karratha will lead the world in clean energy transformation and innovation—standing proudly as a powerhouse of renewable energy and advanced manufacturing. Pioneering advancements in solar, hydrogen, geothermal, carbon capture, and bio-based fuels will drive new industries, unlock export opportunities, and cement Karratha’s global status as a future-focused innovation hub.

This transformation will be enabled by cutting-edge infrastructure, strategic partnerships, and inclusive innovation precincts - supporting local capability, climate resilience, and economic diversity. Large-scale land rehabilitation and the rise of alternative protein industries will accelerate a thriving circular economy, while clean energy precincts power sustainable growth across sectors.

A bold, future-focused education system will equip a tech-savvy workforce ready to lead in automation, robotics, and AI - supported by strong small businesses, dynamic Indigenous economic leadership, and distinctive tourism experiences. Together, these forces will build a resilient and inclusive economy - grounded in opportunity, pride, and global relevance.

Objective 1: Energy Innovation & Renewable Infrastructure

Position Karratha as a global leader in clean energy and advanced manufacturing by accelerating the transition from fossil fuels to a diverse renewable energy mix. This objective unites innovation, infrastructure, and industry to unlock economic opportunity, regional resilience, and environmental sustainability.

Powered by solar, hydrogen, geothermal, and emerging bio-based solutions, Karratha will lead the charge in carbon capture, battery recycling, and sustainable fuels. Advanced energy precincts, multinational partnerships, and transmission upgrades will anchor Karratha as a northern powerhouse for future energy and innovation.

Objective 2: Economic Diversification and Resilience

Transform Karratha’s economy from resource dependence toward a future-ready industrial ecosystem. Embed circular economy principles, innovation precincts, strategic land use, and emerging sectors such as alternative proteins, while nurturing decentralized entrepreneurship clusters. Strategic decommissioning of extractive industries on land and offshore.

Objective 3: Strategic Connectivity and Infrastructure

Elevate Karratha’s economic and geopolitical standing by investing in transformative shipping routes, advanced manufacturing using local resources, and strategic logistics and defence hubs—positioning the city as a critical northern capital for Australia.

Objective 4: Workforce Development and Education

Align education and workforce development with the industries of the future—automation, robotics, and AI—positioning Karratha as a northern education hub with world-class innovation centres. Empower youth and local talent through targeted skills pathways and strong workforce retention strategies.

Objective 5: Small Business and Entrepreneurship

Unlock the power of local entrepreneurship by investing in small business incubators, structured retail strategies, mentoring programs, and innovation demonstration centres. Enable SMEs to become a cornerstone of economic growth and innovation.

Objective 6: Tourism Development

Transform tourism into a key pillar of the economy by integrating marine and recreational infrastructure, celebrating Indigenous culture, leveraging World Heritage locations like Murujuga, and curating premium experiences across eco, cultural, and industrial tourism.

Objective 7: Indigenous Economic Empowerment

Ensure Indigenous communities are central to economic transformation through entrepreneurship support, genuine procurement, and a reimagined role in resource sector engagement that enables equitable benefit-sharing.

Objective 8: Strategic Planning and Investment

Coordinate long-term investment planning with clear transformation targets and proactive risk management, while advocating for greater state funding to realise the region's economic potential.

Objective 9: Agricultural and Local Supply Chain Resilience

Strengthen Karratha's food and agricultural systems through agri-tech, sustainable aquaculture, and strengthened regional supply chains—enhancing food security and economic resilience.

GOAL 5: LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES - CREATING A HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE, VIBRANT AND CULTURALLY RICH CITY THAT SUPPORTS COMMUNITY WELLBEING, LIFESTYLE, IDENTITY AND LONG-TERM POPULATION GROWTH.

By 2050, Karratha will be recognised as one of Australia's most liveable and connected regional cities — a vibrant northern community where people choose to live, work, learn, and belong.

Climate-responsive neighbourhoods, diverse housing, green public spaces, and integrated community infrastructure will create a city that supports all stages of life and reflects the unique Pilbara identity.

Connected hubs, recreation facilities, arts and cultural experiences, tourism attractions, and vibrant civic spaces will foster inclusion, wellbeing, creativity, and community pride. Karratha will celebrate Aboriginal culture, embrace innovation, and provide outstanding access to health, education, sport, and lifestyle opportunities.

As a welcoming northern gateway with strong regional and international connections, Karratha will attract residents, students, visitors, businesses, and investment — strengthening social cohesion, economic resilience, and long-term community sustainability.

Objective 1: Liveable Neighbourhoods and Urban Identity

Deliver well-designed, climate-responsive neighbourhoods that integrate distinctive architecture, green infrastructure, walkability, public spaces, and strong Pilbara identity to create an attractive and resilient city.

Objective 2: Housing, Population Growth and Community Retention

Provide diverse, affordable, and innovative housing solutions that support multigenerational living, attract and retain residents, reduce transiency, and strengthen long-term community stability.

Objective 3: Community Infrastructure, Health and Education

Develop accessible, connected, and inclusive community infrastructure that delivers high-quality healthcare, education, childcare, aged care, recreation, and essential community services for all residents.

Objective 4: Community Wellbeing, Safety and Inclusion

Strengthen community wellbeing through inclusive planning, social cohesion, cultural understanding, accessible services, and proactive responses to inequality, vulnerability, and community safety.

Objective 5: Recreation, Sport, Arts and Cultural Life

Create vibrant recreational, sporting, artistic, and cultural opportunities that promote healthy lifestyles, celebrate local identity, support creativity, and strengthen community participation year-round.

Objective 6: Tourism, Destination and Global Connections

Position Karratha as Australia's leading northern destination by strengthening tourism experiences, international relationships, cultural exchange, eco-tourism, and regional attractions that celebrate the Pilbara lifestyle and environment.

Objective 7: Innovation, Creativity and Economic Participation

Support innovation, creative industries, Indigenous-led enterprise, education partnerships, and emerging lifestyle economies that enhance liveability, strengthen local participation, and diversify opportunity.

Objective 8: Integrated Governance and Smart City Planning

Embed forward-thinking governance, integrated land-use planning, data-driven decision-making, and emerging technologies to support sustainable urban growth, infrastructure coordination, and improved quality of life.

GOAL 6: COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE - TRANSPARENT, ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS DRIVING OUR SHARED VISION FORWARD

By 2050, Karratha will lead as a model of dynamic and transparent governance, driven by regional autonomy and active community engagement.

Youth-led initiatives will play a central role, supported by passionate "2050 Ambassadors" and inclusive youth advisory groups.

Strategic public-private partnerships will enable inclusive infrastructure development, enhanced by global collaboration - especially across the Asia-Pacific. A strong, unified city brand - "Australia's New Northern City" - will inspire pride, foster accountability, and align government, industry, and community around a bold, transformative future.

Objective 1: Strategic Governance and Institutional Reform

Advance political and administrative reforms, through decentralised governance frameworks, regional autonomy, and innovative governance structures tailored specifically for Northwest Australia.

Objective 2: Community Engagement and Inclusive Decision-Making

Empower community - especially young people and cultural knowledge holders- as active contributors to effective local decision-making, ensuring transparency and ownership.

Objective 3: Public-Private Partnerships and Financial Innovation

Accelerate infrastructure delivery through strategic funding tools, innovative financing mechanisms, and collaborative investment models.

Objective 4: Strategic Partnerships and International Collaboration

Strengthen economic and social ties through international partnerships, particularly across the Asia-Pacific.

Objective 5: Accountability, Leadership, and Implementation

Embed accountability and visionary leadership into every layer of strategic delivery.

Objective 6: Strategic Communication and Branding

Amplify a shared city identity through clear, consistent messaging that unites and inspires.

Objective 7: Advocacy and Strategic Alignment

Align city priorities with broader state and federal agendas to secure investment and policy support.