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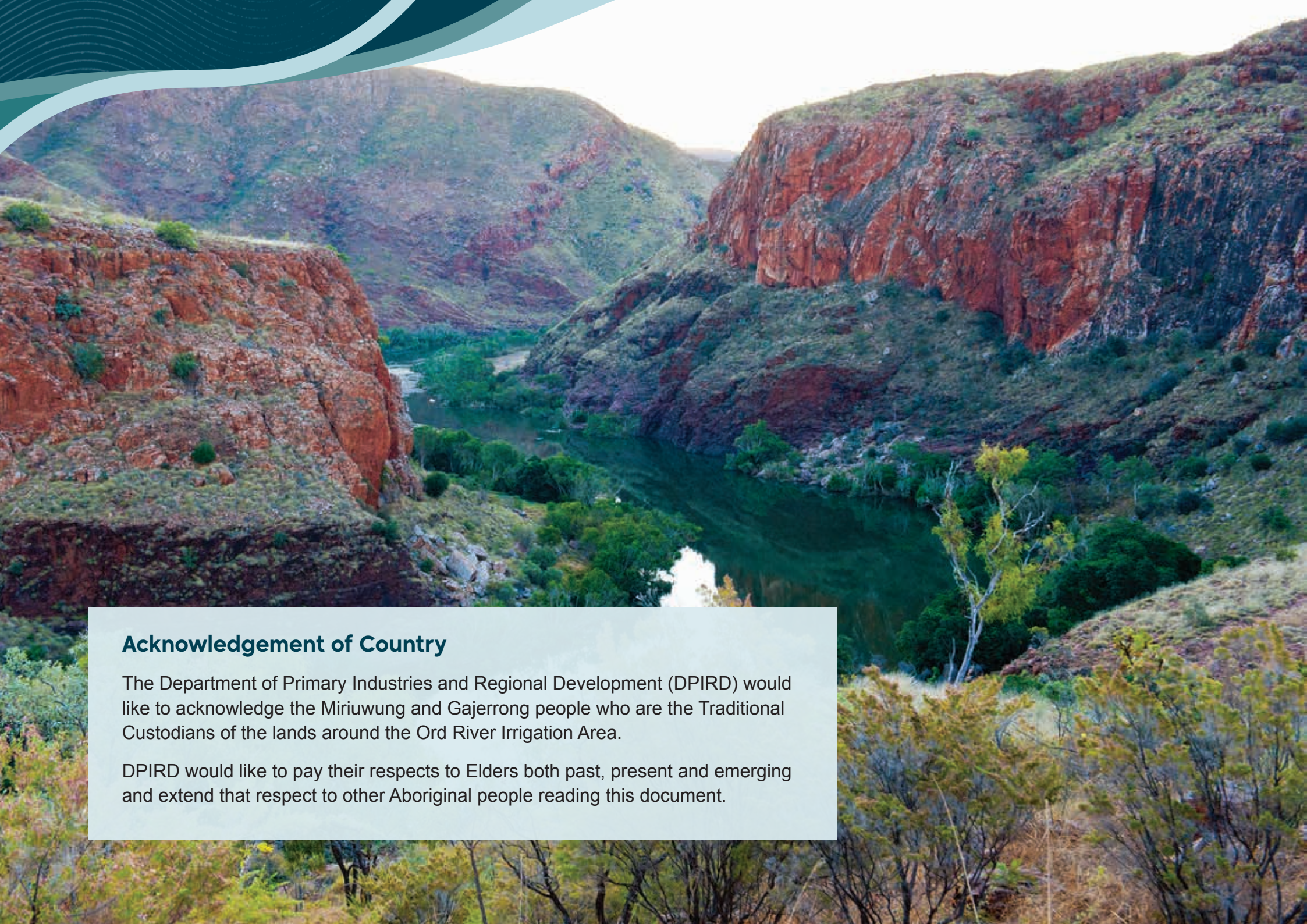


Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Protect
Grow
Innovate

Ord River Irrigation Area Strategy 2024-34

September 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) would like to acknowledge the Miriwung and Gajerrong people who are the Traditional Custodians of the lands around the Ord River Irrigation Area.

DPIRD would like to pay their respects to Elders both past, present and emerging and extend that respect to other Aboriginal people reading this document.

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Minister's Foreword

Western Australia's (WA) agricultural industry represents \$11.1 billion¹ of the state's economy and employs close to 30,000 people². It is an important industry for our people and our economy. For this reason the WA Government is committed to continuing our support for the future development of the Ord River Irrigation Area (ORIA), a productive and sustainable farming region in the East Kimberley.

The WA Government in collaboration with industry and Traditional Owners, has invested significantly in the ORIA over the last 50 years through the development of critical irrigation infrastructure and the release of land parcels totalling 28,000 hectares (ha). Built on a history of resilience and innovation, the ORIA is on the cusp of capitalising on historic and recent investment and on the pathway to realising its full potential.

The emerging cotton industry and the cotton gin currently being constructed to the north of the Kununurra townsite is a significant step forward in the ORIA's development. As too is the \$77.1 million state Government investment in the upgrade of the arterial water infrastructure required for the Knox farmland that will underpin the production volumes required for a sustainable cotton industry.

To support ongoing development, the ORIA Strategy 2024–34 has been developed to set the strategic direction for the next 10 years to achieve a vision of:

A productive, self-sustaining, and environmentally responsible farming region of up to 50,000 hectares, supported by value-add processing that creates opportunity, jobs and prosperity for the residents of the East Kimberley and generates economic return for the state.

¹ Department of Jobs, Science, Technology and Innovation. 2024. Western Australia Economic Profile – July 2024
² Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021. Census of Population and Housing – Industry of Employment, TableBuilder



**Hon. Donald (Don) Thomas
Punch MLA**
BPsych; BSocwk; MBA
*Minister for Regional
Development; Disability
Services; Fisheries; Seniors
and Ageing; Volunteering*

The activities and investment undertaken by local industry will drive the achievement of the ORIA Vision, with government playing an enabling role in providing an environment conducive to development in line with the objectives for the region.

A thriving agricultural sector in the ORIA is crucial to the future prosperity of the region – driving up the gross value of agricultural production, creating additional employment opportunities and economic benefits for the Miriuwung and Gajerrong people, who are proud partners in this journey.

The long-term benefits of having a thriving agricultural sector includes the creation of additional gross value of agricultural production and additional employment opportunities.

A prosperous agricultural sector will drive economic development and value – adding opportunities in the East Kimberley, however, it is recognised that more will need to be done to support broader social development objectives and improve the liveability of the region.

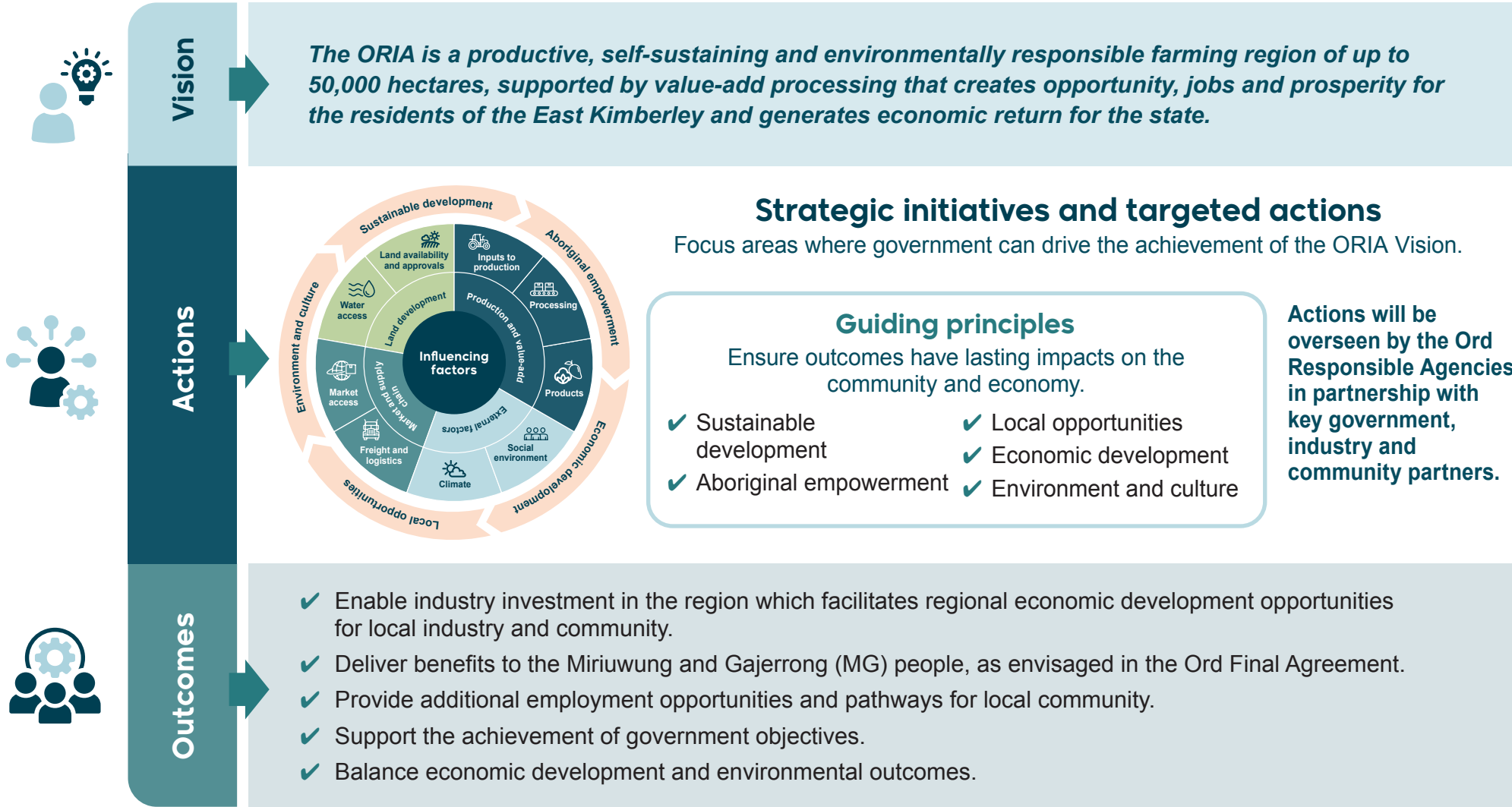
I look forward to working with Native Title holders, primary producers, government, industry and other stakeholders on the implementation of this strategy.





The ORIA Strategy 2024-34

Setting the strategic direction that will guide agricultural development over the next 10 years.



Agriculture in the ORIA

An overview of the history and growth

The ORIA is a highly productive agricultural region in north-west WA with over 28,000 ha of productive agricultural land currently serviced by the 10,000 gegalitre (GL) Lake Argyle, the Kununurra Diversion Dam and the Ord Irrigation Scheme.



ORIA Strategy 2024–34

The agriculture sector is a key driver of economic activity in the Wyndham-East Kimberley region, with the untapped potential of the ORIA presenting a unique opportunity to build on the region's strengths and capitalise on new and emerging opportunities.

The *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* sets a collective 10-year vision, identifying key areas for focus as well as defining key roles and responsibilities to drive the achievement of this vision.

It provides direction for government to continue to work alongside and support industry and the community to achieve positive development outcomes. As such, it has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders across local industry, Traditional Owners and community groups.

Ultimately the activities undertaken by local industry will drive the achievement of many of the outcomes sought by the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34*, with government playing an enabling role in providing an environment conducive to development in line with the economic, social and environmental objectives for the region. Local producers have continually demonstrated an ability to innovate and adapt in response to changing conditions and market drivers over time, and this agility will be important to achieving the growth ambitions for the ORIA.

Achieving good regional development outcomes requires a mix of economic and social investment. While the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* is primarily focused on the development of the agricultural sector within the ORIA, it is recognised that the outcomes sought will result in flow-on impacts to other industry sectors within the region and the broader Kimberley and WA geographies. As such, the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* will provide opportunities to further define, inform and support the development for the future regional planning, including exploring wider social development objectives for the region.



Development history of the ORIA

Aboriginal history in the ORIA

For thousands of years, Aboriginal societies with their own languages, defined rights and cultural responsibilities have inhabited the East Kimberley region. Aboriginal Australians have inhabited the region for at least 18,000 years.

In the early 2000s the Native Title rights of the MG people were formally recognised over large parts of the north-east Kimberley region.

The signing of the Ord Final Agreement (OFA) in 2005 provided a platform for partnerships between the MG people, the state government, industry and developers through a broad package of measures, and paved the way for the expansion of Ord Stage 2.

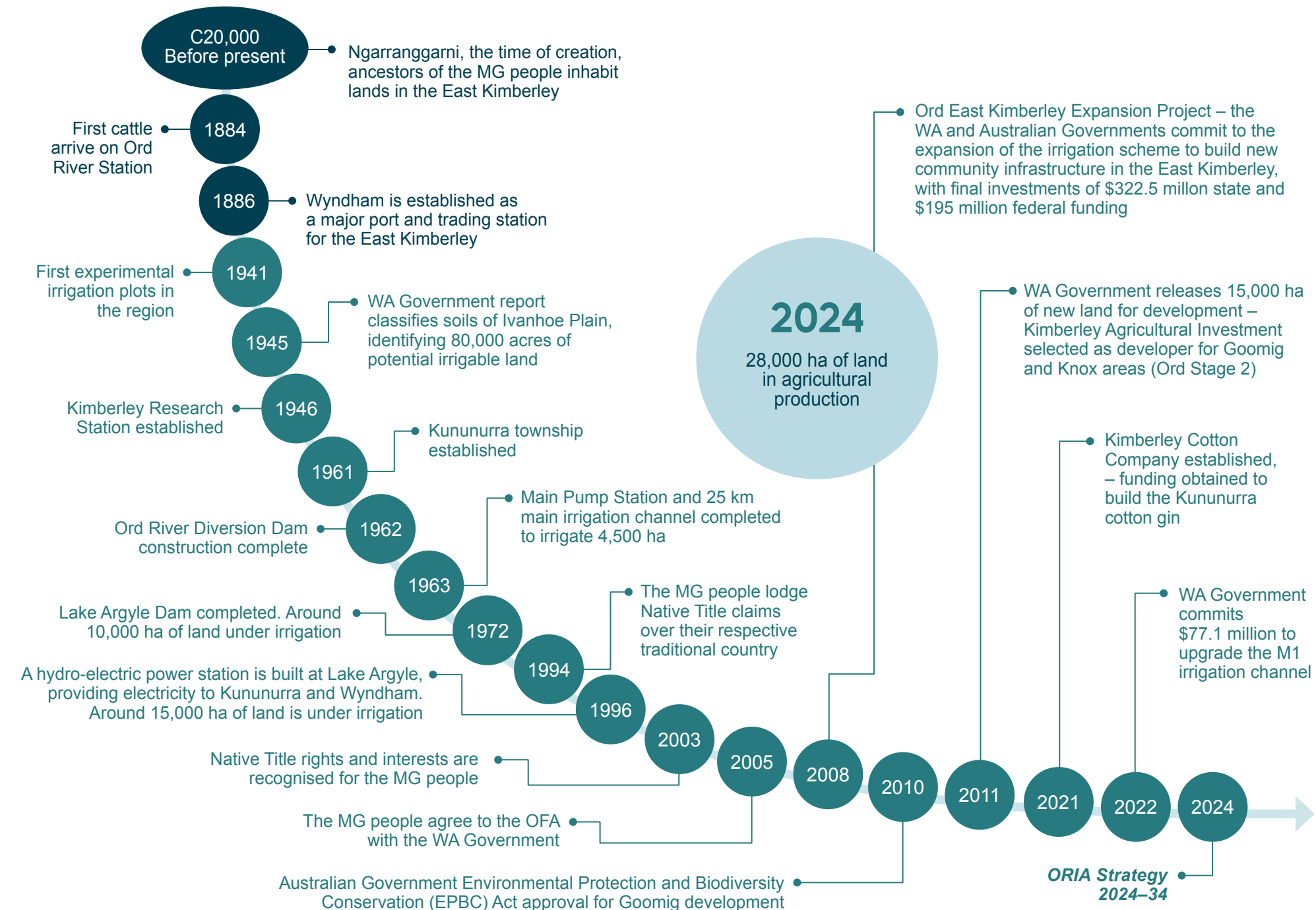
Delivery of the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* will support the achievement of benefits to the MG people under the OFA (refer to the OFA snapshot on page 15 for more detail).

Agriculture in the ORIA

The ORIA has a rich history of pastoral and agricultural development. The pastoral industry first established itself in the region in the late 1800s with the establishment of the Ord River Station.

The first steps to agricultural production in the ORIA occurred in the 1940s with experimental plots and the establishment of the Kimberley Research Station (KRS). With the construction of the Ord River Dam in the early 1960s, and Lake Argyle Dam in the 1970s, large-scale irrigation became possible. This led to the establishment of a diverse range of crops, including sugarcane, bananas, and a variety of tropical fruits and vegetables.





The ORIA has since become a major agricultural hub, serviced by the township of Kununurra, contributing significantly to the economy of the Kimberley region.



Unique characteristics of the ORIA

In the context of agricultural production across the state of WA, the ORIA exhibits a range of unique natural and established characteristics that make it an optimal place to pursue growth in agriculture.

Some of the key comparative advantages that make the ORIA a unique agricultural production region and contribute to its potential as a growth area with possibilities for diversification, technological advancement and increased productivity include:

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
|  | Water availability | While many agricultural areas Australia-wide increasingly face challenges with water scarcity and agricultural production, the ORIA has a significant advantage due to the abundant supply of water with very high reliability provided by the Ord Irrigation Scheme and Lake Argyle. |
|  | Suitable climate | The region enjoys a tropical monsoon climate, which means a distinct wet season and dry season, supporting diverse crop cycles and allowing for the cultivation of a variety of crops not easily grown in other parts of WA. |
|  | Suitable land for agriculture | The region contains large parcels of land that have been identified as well suited to agricultural production with the ability to support a wide range of crop types. In addition, existing Native Title agreements over large parts of this land support a pathway for development. |
|  | Proximity to markets | The region is close to Asian markets making it well positioned for export-oriented agriculture and reducing transportation costs for trade with countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. |



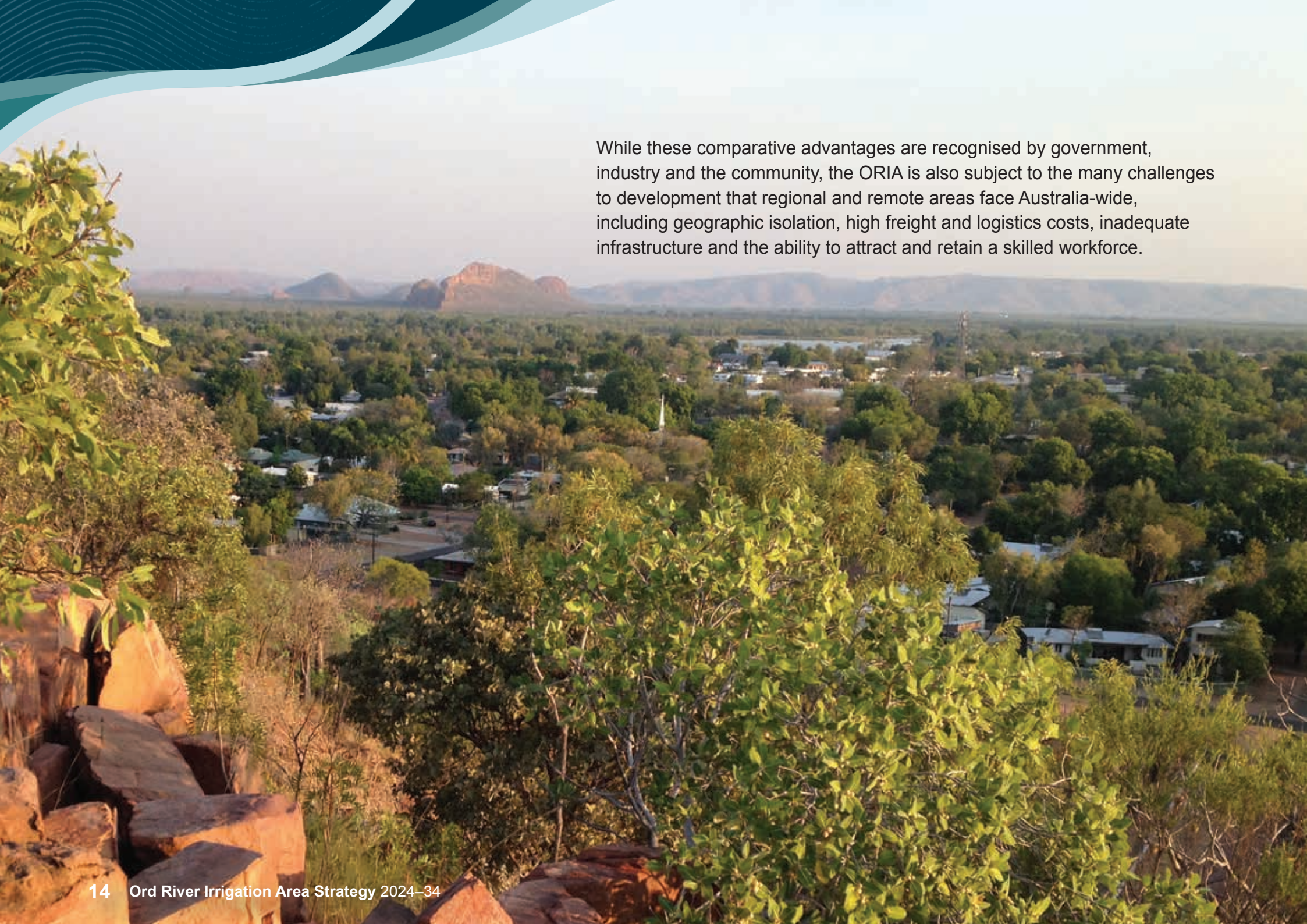
| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Active community engagement | The region experiences strong Aboriginal and community engagement. Traditional Owners are actively engaged in the development of agriculture in the region in partnership with industry, driving improved economic outcomes for the local community. |
|------------------------------------|--|



| | |
|--|---|
| Strong renewable energy credentials | The Ord River hydro-electric power station at Lake Argyle provides electricity for the Kununurra and Wyndham townships (including the ORIA), generating 212 GWh of renewable energy for the region each year. |
|--|---|



| | |
|--|--|
| Building blocks for an integrated pastoral and agriculture system | Comparative advantages in pastoral and agricultural production within the region provide the building blocks to capitalise on potential inter-relationships between these sectors and generate additional value-adding opportunities for the region. |
|--|--|



While these comparative advantages are recognised by government, industry and the community, the ORIA is also subject to the many challenges to development that regional and remote areas face Australia-wide, including geographic isolation, high freight and logistics costs, inadequate infrastructure and the ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce.

Ord Final Agreement

The OFA is an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) which was signed between the WA Government, the MG people and various private sector interests in 2005.

The OFA provides a broad package of measures to create a platform for future partnerships between the MG people, government and developers, for the benefit of the MG community and the wider East Kimberley region.

The agreement compensated the Traditional Owners for past acts, established land for conservation, provided for 50,000 ha of freehold land at Yardungarri (see detailed map on page 35) and a pathway for the development of land for agriculture. Land for conservation, agricultural development and freehold transfer to MG Corporation was excised from the pastoral estate with the pastoralist receiving freehold land for agricultural development on Carlton Plain, Mantinea and Ord West Bank land parcels under the agreement.

As part of the agreement the parties consented to the development of land parcels at Goomig and Knox, Mantinea, Ord West Bank, Ord East Bank and Darrum (Packsaddle) (see detailed map on page 35) subject to a benefits package in favour of MG Corporation that includes an Aboriginal Development Package (ADP) and percentage of developed land. MG Corporation are entitled to freehold transfer of environmental buffers surrounding developed land.

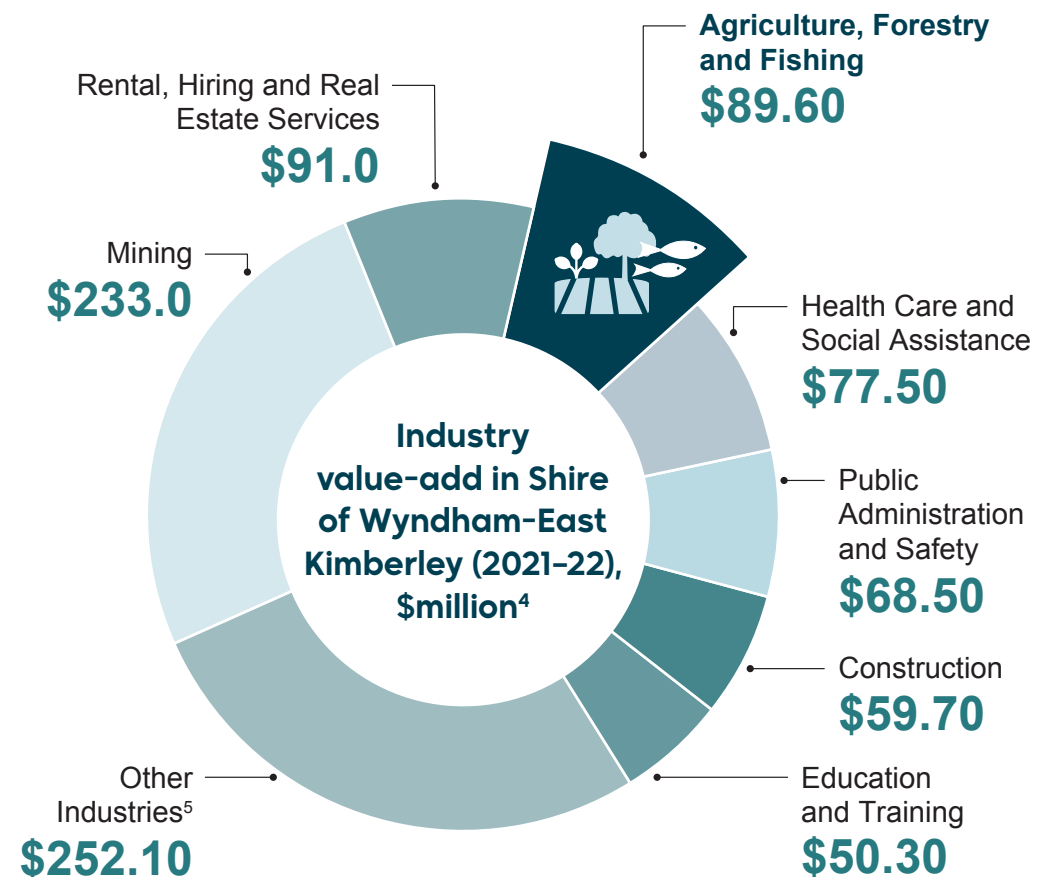
To date the Goomig and Knox areas have been developed with the state government delivering ADP and land benefits for the Goomig Farmlands under the Ord-East Kimberley Expansion Project. Consistent with the OFA, the ADP valued at \$12.5 million included education, training and business opportunities for the MG people. Freehold title of Goomig Lots 15 and 16 has been transferred to MG Corporation. The Knox land is under development in 2024 with the developer providing for the ADP and land benefits.

Regional economic development in the ORIA

The ORIA has long been considered a place of untapped opportunity due to its unique comparative advantages. Maximising the utilisation of historic government and private sector investment through further targeted and responsible agricultural development will enable the ongoing achievement of regional economic and social development objectives.

Successive governments have invested significantly with the objective of diversifying the regional economy and enabling regional economic and social development.

Evidence suggests the support for the agriculture industry is delivering positive outcomes for the regional economy and continuing to drive industry diversification, with the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing industry accounting for around 10% of total gross value added³ for the Wyndham-East Kimberley in 2022. Similarly, employment in the industry has grown by one-third since 2006, with an increasing share of employees in the industry of Aboriginal heritage (11.8% in 2021 compared to 6.7% in 2006).



³ Gross value added represents the cost of output to consumers minus the cost of inputs used in production to producers ⁴ REMPLAN. 2023 ⁵ 'Other Industries' classification consists of the total Value Add of remaining 12 ANZSIC industry sectors not reported

Key enabling investments in the ORIA

Several critical enabling infrastructure investments in the region have provided the strong basis for industry to capitalise on historic investment in the region:



Construction of the Ord River Diversion Dam, Main Pump Station and 25 km main irrigation channel (M1) enabling irrigation of 4,500 ha.



Construction of Lake Argyle Dam wall, enabling expansion of Ord Stage 1 to 15,000 ha.



Construction of hydro-electric power station supplying power to Wyndham and Kununurra and the ORIA.



Ord-East Kimberley Expansion Project to extend main water supply channel (M2 channel) and de-risk and attract private sector investment to develop an additional 7,760 ha of irrigated land at Goomig.

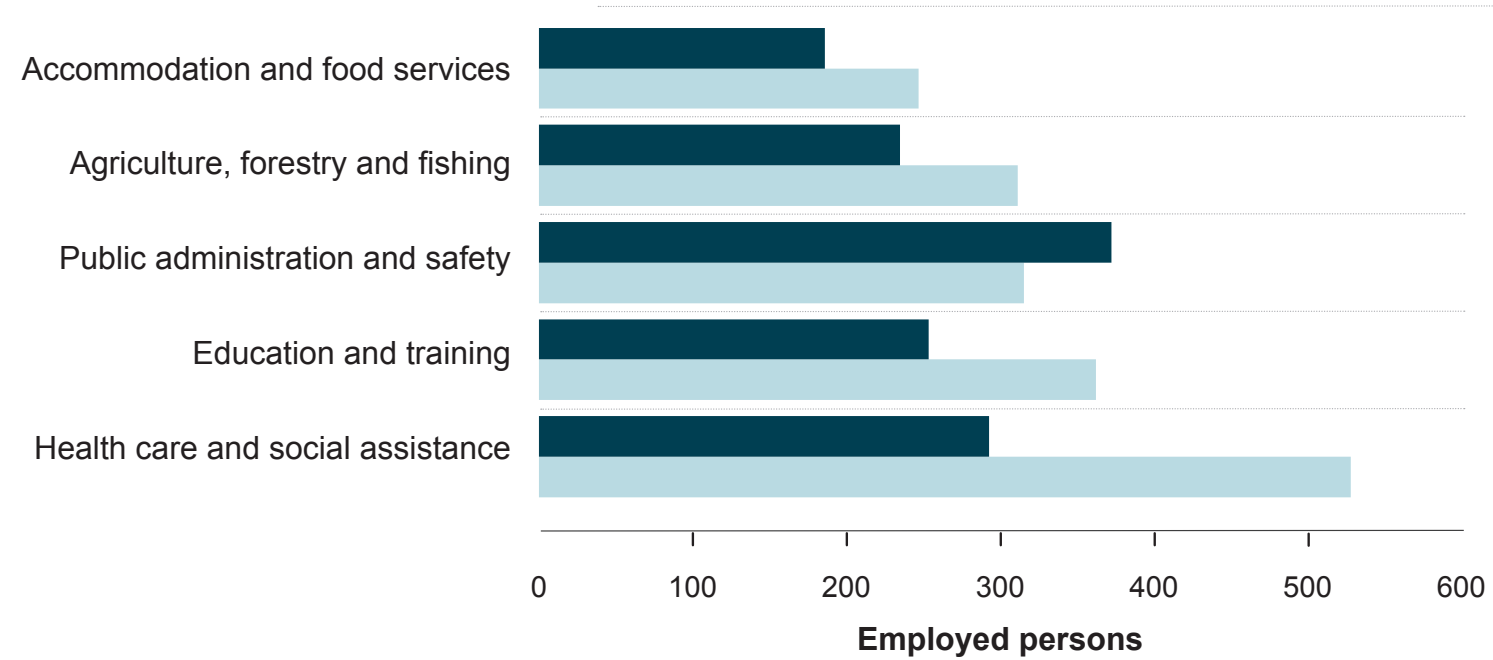



Upgrade to the M1 Channel to enable the development of 5,400 ha on the Knox Plain.




Kununurra Cotton Gin (in progress) enabling local processing capability for emerging cotton industry.

Employment by industry, Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley (2006 and 2021)⁶






32%
increase in employment in the
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
industry between 2006 and 2021



6.7–11.8%
share of Aboriginal employment in
the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
industry (2006 vs 2021)



7.6–9.6%
share of total employment in the
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
industry (2006 vs 2021)

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2006 and 2021. Census of Population and Housing, TableBuilder



Agricultural production in the ORIA

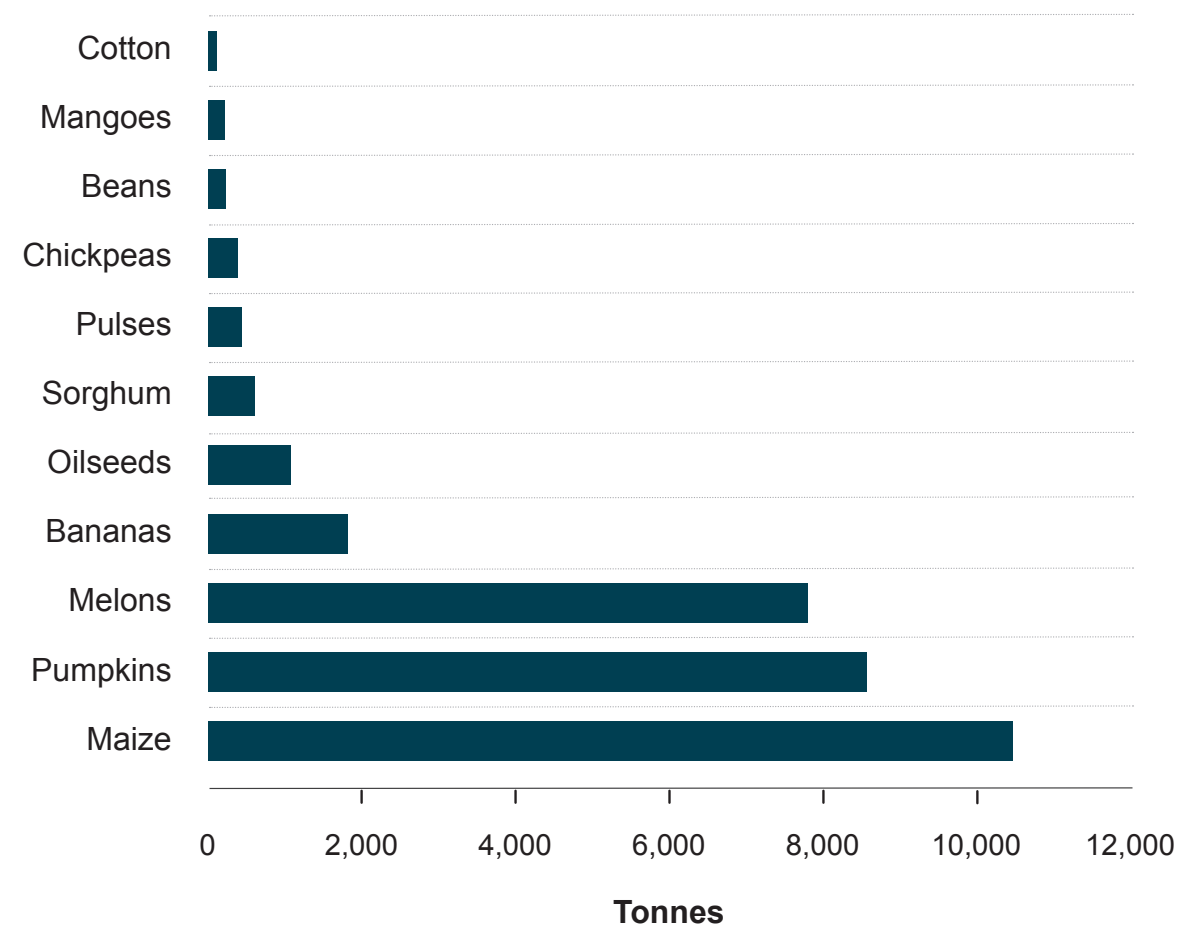
Today the ORIA consists of over 28,000 ha of productive agricultural land. Current commodities include sandalwood, maize, cotton, melons, pumpkins, mangoes and other horticulture.

One of the historic challenges limiting the competitiveness of the ORIA has been the ability to achieve sufficient scale of production. A primary commodity is required at adequate volume and value in order to underpin the sustainability and viability of the region’s irrigated agricultural sector.

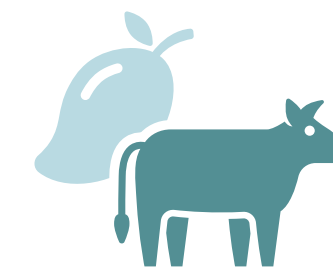
This primary commodity is expected to create the consolidation and the foundations from which to build additional opportunities for the region, providing a reliable and sustainable baseline of economic activity to build upon.



Agricultural production in the Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley (2020–21)⁷



⁷ ABARES, Agricultural Census 2020-21. *Note – production in the ORIA varies on a year-to-year basis based on prevailing market conditions*



18,088
Mango trees

131,794
Beef cattle

129
Other livestock

Cotton as the emerging primary crop

Following years of development the Bollgard 3 cotton variety has proven itself to be resistant to pests that have previously limited attempts at growing cotton in the ORIA. This variety has allowed the cotton industry to be more water efficient and use reduced pesticides and is considered suitable to fulfil the primary crop function for the region. Trials are showing cotton yields comparable to anywhere in Australia, as well as the quality of the cotton lint produced in the ORIA being of superior quality. In addition, as traditional cotton-growing regions are challenged by increasing climate, social and economic pressures, the ORIA can play a unique role in contributing to the resilience of cotton supply chains through leveraging its comparative advantages such as water availability and security.

In 2021, local investors including Ord River District Cooperative (ORDCO), Kimberley Agricultural Investment (KAI) and MG Corporation, partnered to develop a cotton gin in Kununurra through a mix of private and debt funding. The investors raised \$10 million and secured a \$34 million loan through the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility to construct the gin. The gin is now under early construction and will provide local processing capability for growers.

The local processing capability offered by the gin will deliver significant freight benefits to growers. Currently, cotton grown in the area is transported to Dalby in Queensland for processing the lint and seed. It will also provide opportunities for the livestock industry as cotton seed could be incorporated into feed rations.

Key to the sustainability of the local cotton gin is ensuring sufficient land is available to underpin cotton supply. In the short-term local growers have signed cotton supply agreements with the Kimberley Cotton Company (KCC) to provide certainty of throughput for the first few years of operations. Over the long-term, additional land for development is required to enable production to scale up, while also ensuring sufficient land is available for:

- Rotational crops – to minimise the risk of pests and disease from monoculture.
- Supplementary crops for cotton seed-based cattle rations, such as corn and hay, required to take advantage of the value-add opportunity associated with cotton seed and livestock intensification.
- High value horticulture crops and other existing opportunities within the ORIA.

A sustainable cotton industry is dependent not only on exporting the cotton lint that is produced but also uptake of additional value-added processing and downstream opportunities. With cotton fulfilling the primary crop function in the ORIA, the long-term sustainability of the region will rely on ensuring additional land beyond that needed to support the cotton gin is available to support growth in the broader agriculture system.

With the emergence of cotton as the primary crop it is likely some existing land parcels within the ORIA will increasingly transition toward growing cotton over other uses – for example as sandalwood plantations reach maturity. This would support additional scale within the local industry.



10-year vision

The future development of the ORIA

The ORIA Vision sets the direction for a cohesive future for the ORIA, aligning government, industry and community efforts toward a singular goal for agricultural development in the region.

Developed in partnership with key stakeholders across government, industry and the community, the vision will guide decision-making and shape activity in the region that supports economic development and improves community outcomes over the next decade. It prioritises economic growth by promoting the expansion of agricultural capacity and investment, optimising the use of resources and maximising value-add opportunities.



The ORIA is a productive, self-sustaining and environmentally responsible farming region of up to 50,000 hectares, supported by value-add processing that creates opportunity, jobs and prosperity for the residents of the East Kimberley and generates economic return for the state.



Government has a critical role in enabling and supporting the achievement of the ORIA Vision by facilitating investment, supporting knowledge and capability development, and minimising costs and barriers including regulatory barriers where appropriate.

Achieving the ORIA Vision requires coordinated action. Government, industry and the community must work together to transform objectives into tangible outcomes, fostering a thriving and sustainable agricultural sector and contributing to the broader social objectives over the next decade.

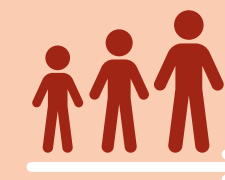
Achievement will:

- ✓ Enable industry investment in the region which facilitates regional economic development opportunities for local industry and community.
- ✓ Deliver benefits to the MG people, as envisaged in the OFA.
- ✓ Provide additional employment opportunities and pathways for the local community.
- ✓ Support the achievement of government objectives.
- ✓ Balance economic development and environmental outcomes.

Outcomes have the potential to support economic development opportunities within the ORIA over the next decade of:



Over \$400 m
Gross value of
production each year⁸



More than 300
Additional employment
opportunities

⁸ Gross value of production represents the gross revenue generated by businesses in the industry, also defined as total income/sales

Key strategic initiatives

Strategic initiatives have been identified below to guide key focus areas where government can drive the achievement of the 10-year vision and influence development outcomes.

- Identify suitable land and water resources to support new projects of strategic importance.
- Support planning for more efficient use of water through both on-farm and off-farm improvements to create a more resilient industry.
- Sustainable management of natural resources.
- Work with industry to plan for and develop strategies to meet the workforce needs of the agriculture industry including consideration of housing, education and other social requirements.
- Empower Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs to develop enterprises that support Aboriginal employment and business opportunities in the agriculture industry.

- Supporting innovative ideas, products or production methods which provide a value add and/or efficiency benefit.
- Supporting the northern beef industry to sustainably intensify production through maximising the integration of pastoral and irrigated agriculture systems.
- Applied research to maintain and increase productivity.
- Growth through ag-tech and digital connectivity.
- Strengthen WA's road, rail and marine logistics networks to support the agriculture industry and regional communities.
- Promote and build a strong brand for WA agricultural products.
- Work with industry and state agencies to build resilience and the ability to adapt to change – whether to a changing climate or rapidly changing markets.



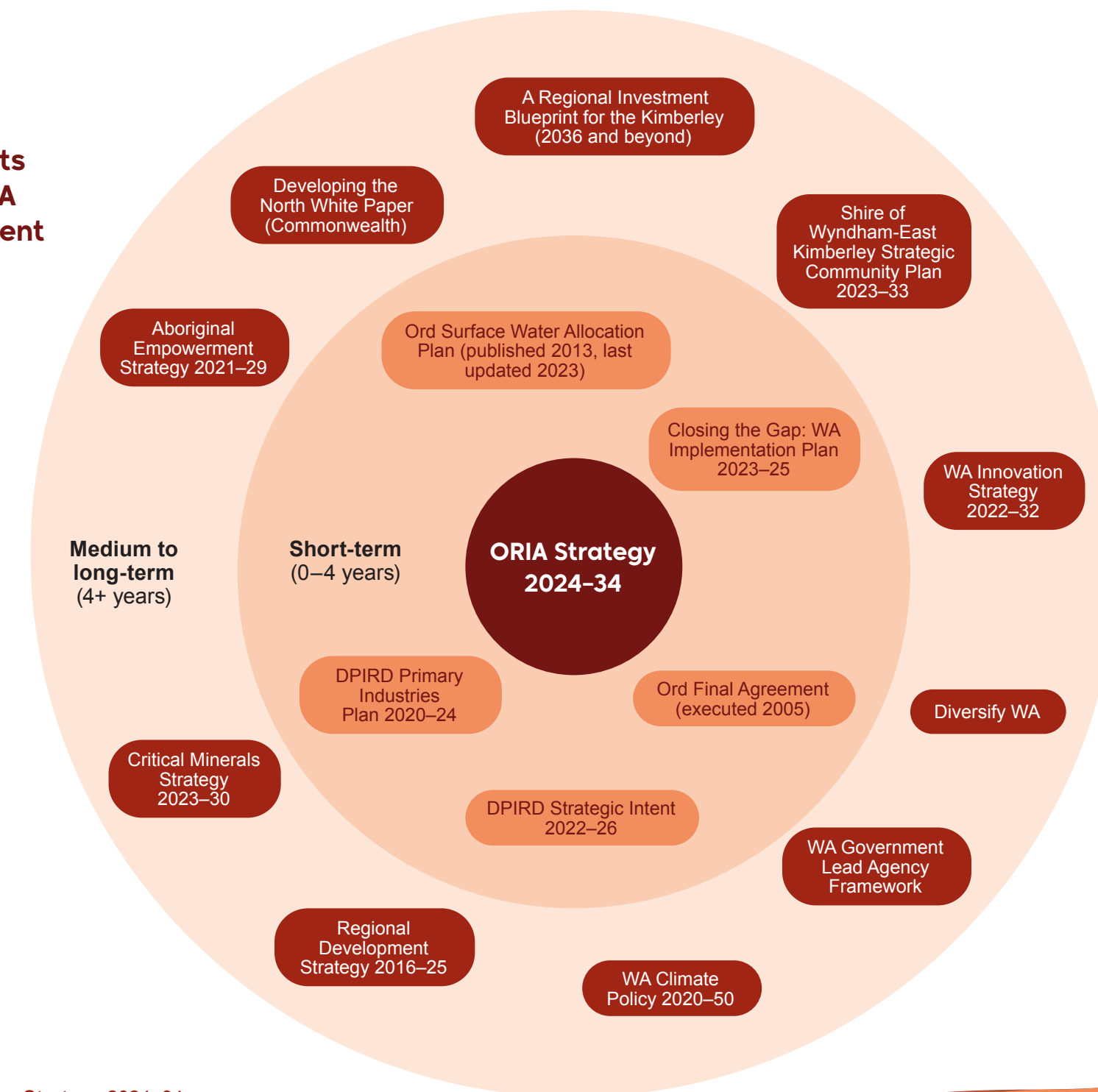
Alignment of strategies and frameworks

The *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* has been developed to align with existing WA Government strategic documents. Agricultural development continues to be a focus for government over the short, medium and long-term due to its ability to promote economic development, industry diversification and better social outcomes for regional communities.

The diagram on the following page highlights key strategic documents that have informed the development of the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34*.



Strategic documents influencing the ORIA Strategy development



Achieving the ORIA Vision

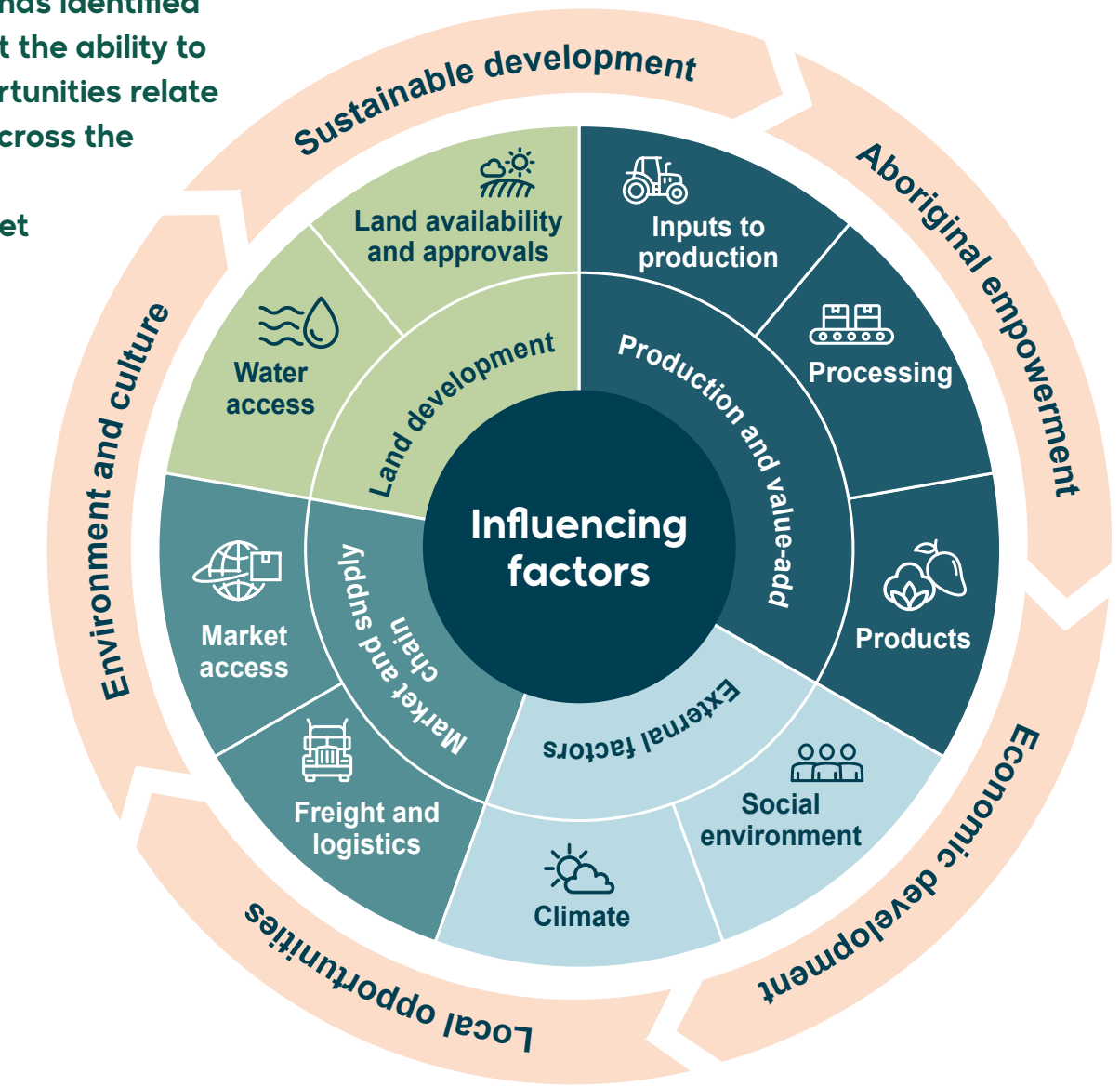
Influencing key factors

Agriculture production systems are reliant on the effective coordination of activities across the production value chain. The achievement of the 10-year vision is dependent on the ability to deliver on key action areas across this value chain.



Consultation across government and industry has identified challenges and opportunities which will impact the ability to achieve the vision. These challenges and opportunities relate to an interconnected system of key enablers across the entire agricultural value chain including land development, production and value-add, market and supply chain and external factors.

A key focus of the *ORIA Strategy 2024-34* is to ensure that the outcomes achieved generate lasting benefits to both the economy and the community. Five key development principles have been defined which include; Aboriginal empowerment, economic development, local opportunities and balancing sustainable development with environmental and cultural values.



Guiding principles

Five key principles have been defined to guide the development of the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* to ensure the outcomes achieved will have lasting impacts on the community and economy.



Aboriginal empowerment

The WA Government is committed to ensuring it contributes to better outcomes for Aboriginal people, built around genuine partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders, strong accountability, and culturally responsive ways of working as set out in the *WA Aboriginal Empowerment Strategy*. Achievement of the 10-year vision relies on strong partnerships with local Aboriginal communities, recognising the role of local leaders/elders and the community at large as landholders and first inhabitants of the ORIA. Empowering and providing opportunities for local Aboriginal communities to play a key role in the expansion and growth of the ORIA will enable better economic and social outcomes for these communities.



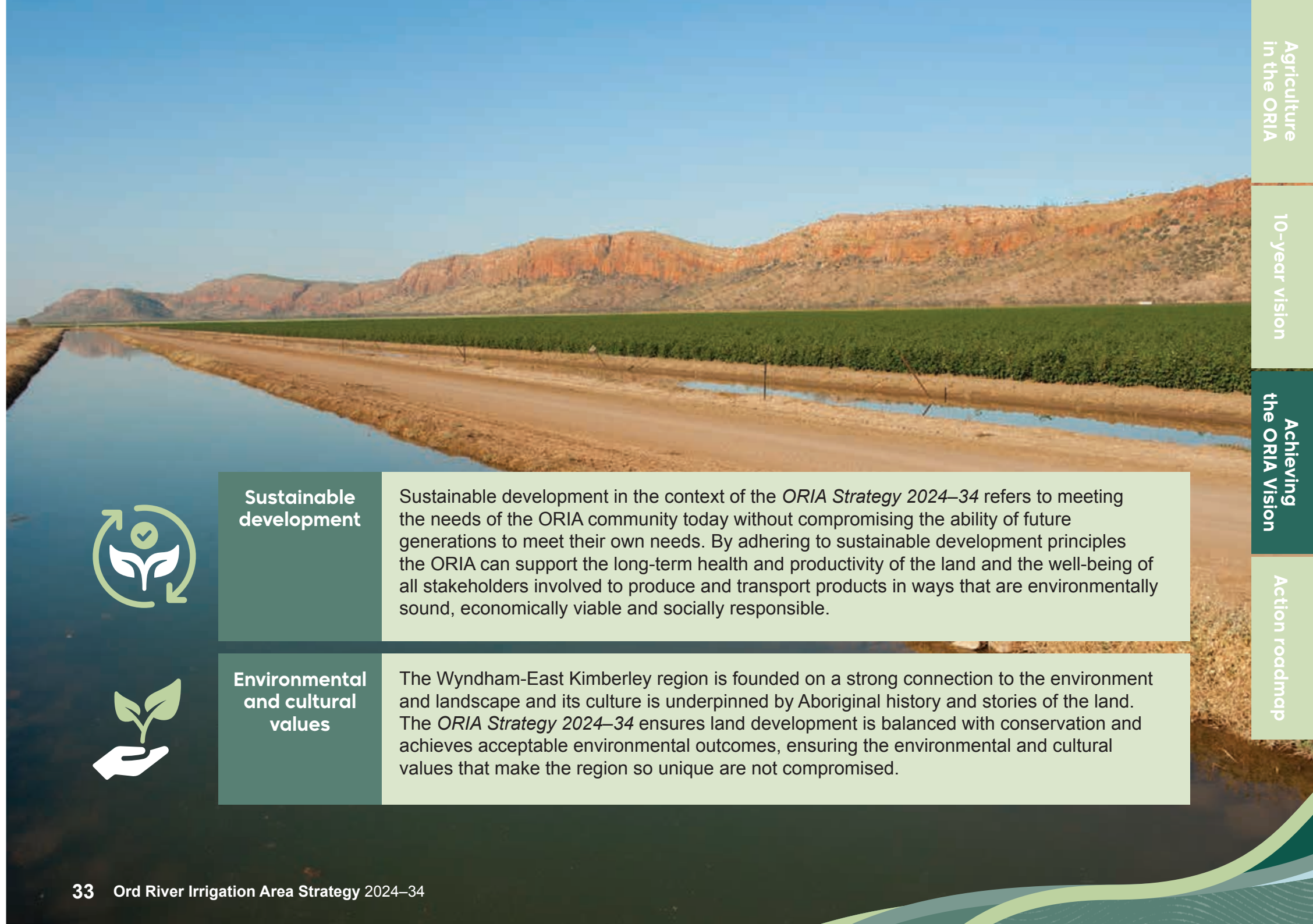
Economic development

The agriculture sector is a major driver of economic output for the Wyndham-East Kimberley region, accounting for around 10% of total gross regional product for the region, and 10% of total employment. By focusing on the pursuit of regional development opportunities in areas of relative comparative advantage (see page 6), the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* aims to maximise the potential economic development opportunities for the region.



Local opportunities

A central tenet in the definition of the ORIA Vision is ensuring the opportunities created maximise the benefits to the region and support economic development for local communities.



Sustainable development

Sustainable development in the context of the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* refers to meeting the needs of the ORIA community today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. By adhering to sustainable development principles the ORIA can support the long-term health and productivity of the land and the well-being of all stakeholders involved to produce and transport products in ways that are environmentally sound, economically viable and socially responsible.



Environmental and cultural values

The Wyndham-East Kimberley region is founded on a strong connection to the environment and landscape and its culture is underpinned by Aboriginal history and stories of the land. The *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* ensures land development is balanced with conservation and achieves acceptable environmental outcomes, ensuring the environmental and cultural values that make the region so unique are not compromised.

Land development

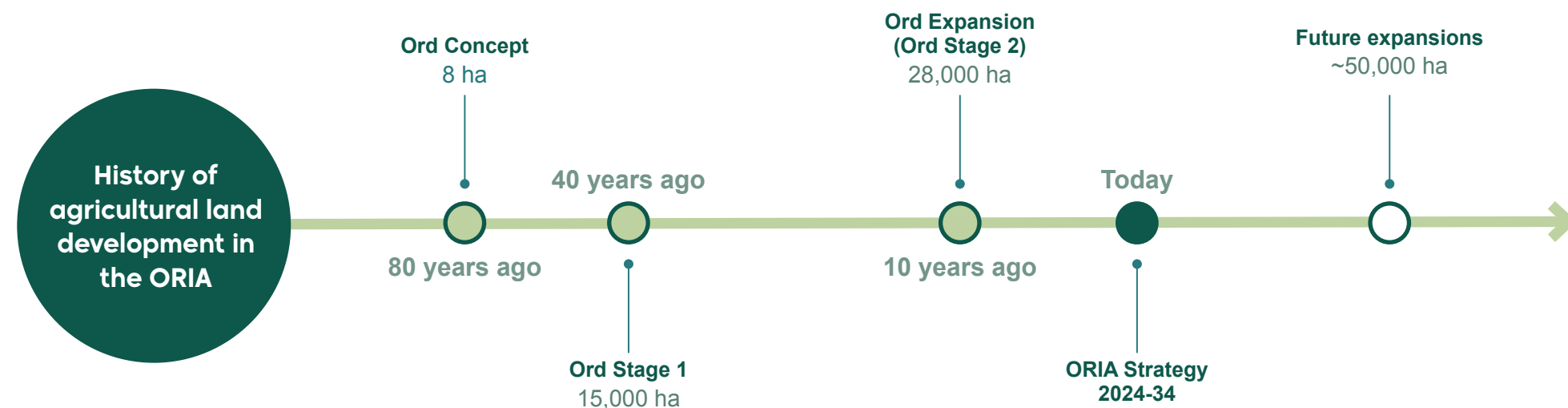
Agricultural land development

Throughout the ORIA's development, the state's focus has been to unlock the region's agricultural potential, boost the local economy and support the creation of opportunities for local communities.

Development of the agriculture industry in the region has been enabled by historic land releases for irrigated agriculture, accompanied by necessary investments in infrastructure. The industry has navigated complex issues including land rights,

environmental sustainability and availability of water supply to enable the expansion of agricultural production in the region.

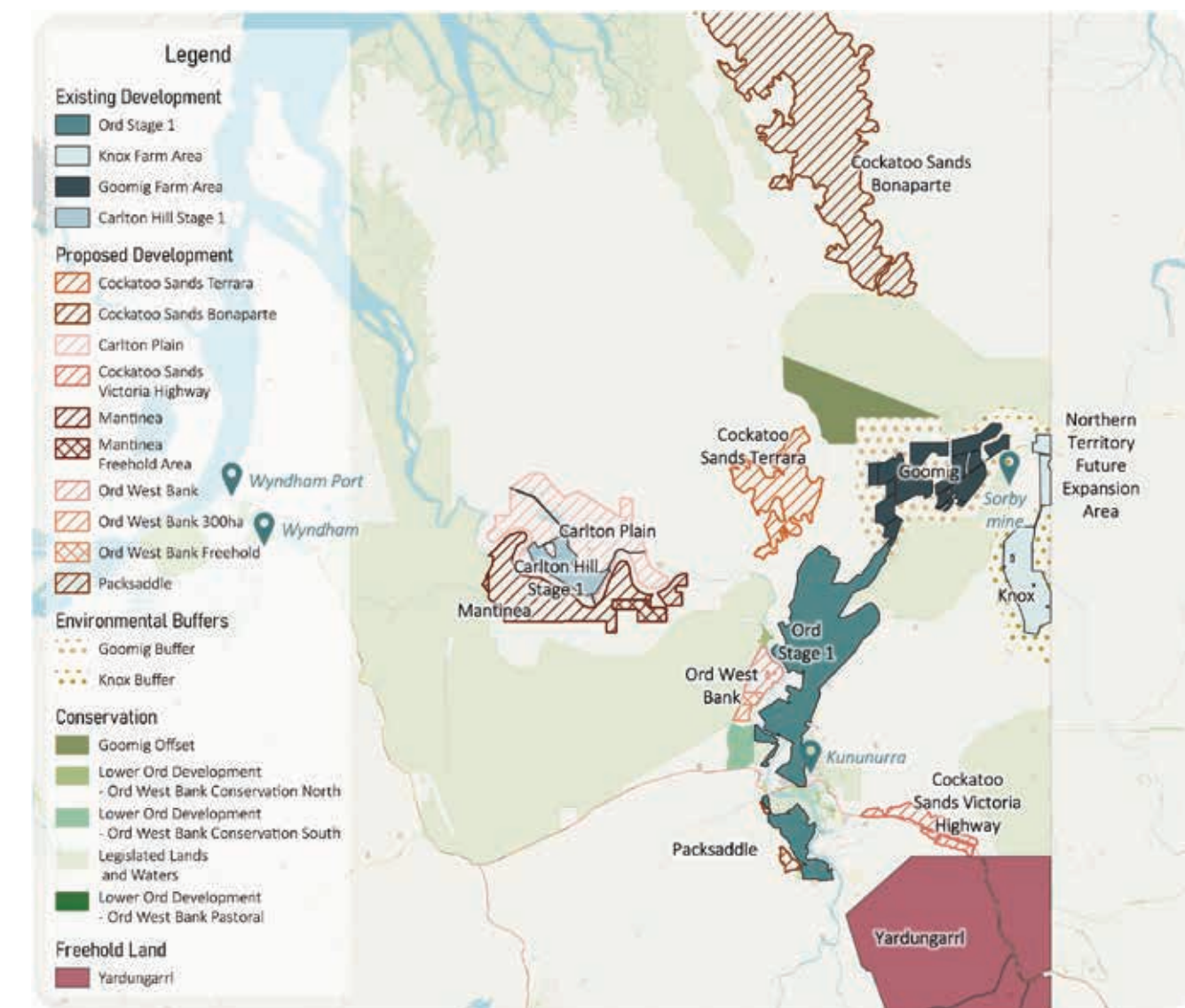
The ORIA is currently at a critical juncture in its development, marked by the recent investment in the Kununurra Cotton Gin. The emergence of cotton as a primary crop and the desire from industry to further expand the agricultural footprint to maximise this opportunity for the region requires the expansion of the current 28,000 ha footprint.



A range of historic studies investigating soil and water resources within the ORIA have been undertaken to assess the potential for agricultural development and to guide the sustainable use of land resources for expanding irrigated agriculture, with the intent of informing future land releases.

Additional land parcels identified for future expansion include Carlton Plains Phase 2 and Mantinea (8,000 ha), Ord West Bank (1,700 ha), Cockatoo Sands Tarrara (4,000 ha), Cockatoo Sands Victoria Highway (2,200 ha) and the Keep Plains on the Northern Territory (NT) side of the border.

The incremental development of these land parcels over time will be key to achieving the scale of development set out in the ORIA Vision. Government should look to identify water availability, infrastructure, land release and Native Title requirements for these developments to assist in de-risking proponent-led development.



Proponent-led development in the ORIA

Government has a responsibility to provide a robust regulatory regime to protect the community and environment from adverse or unintended consequences of development. The WA Government is committed to continuing to work with industry to ensure sustainable development opportunities are realised by ensuring regulatory processes are comprehensible, timely and easy to navigate.

The state’s role in future development will be focused on providing enabling support to proponents. Government will play a key role in the regulatory approvals processes, identifying and releasing land and negotiating development agreements, while proponents will be required to manage their own infrastructure needs, environmental approvals and Native Title negotiations.

Delays in government regulatory processes can significantly impact proponent-led developments by increasing costs, stretching project timelines and creating uncertainty, which may deter investment and disrupt project planning. Such delays can also affect the economic momentum of development by postponing the creation of jobs and the generation of potential revenue. This ultimately undermines investor confidence and the attractiveness of a region or sector for future development opportunities.

The WA Government’s *Lead Agency Framework* sets guidance for the effective management of industry development proposals and establishes principles and expectations for WA Government

agencies and proponents, respectively. The achievement of future development in the ORIA requires government agencies to adhere to these principles of effective, timely and accurate communication between agencies and proponents, which ensure proponents are well informed about expectations and timelines before entering the approval process.



Key areas of government responsibility for future land development in the ORIA



Regulatory framework

Government establishes the laws, regulations and policies that govern land use and development. These regulations include environmental approvals and land permits that control how land can be converted to agricultural use. They also encourage use of land in a manner that prevents and mitigates land degradation and promotes soil conservation. Such frameworks are necessary to ensure sustainable development and to prevent negative impacts on the environment, local communities and other economic sectors.



Land allocation

Government is responsible for managing state-owned land. This involves identifying parcels of land suitable for agricultural development and releasing them through leasing, sale or allocation to proponents.



Environmental protection

Agricultural development must balance economic and environmental objectives including land use considerations, maintenance of biodiversity, natural resources, surface water quality and groundwater regimes.



Native Title

The government has been instrumental in mediating and implementing Indigenous Land Use Agreements with the Traditional Owners, ensuring that Native Title rights are respected and facilitating Aboriginal leadership in agriculture.



Infrastructure development

While developers will be responsible for funding infrastructure required to enable agricultural production, depending on circumstances government may be required to invest in upgrades or expansions of common-user infrastructure (e.g. major irrigation channels, roads, bridges and utilities that serve the broader community). Further investment in common-user infrastructure will be subject to business cases to assess the relative merit of these potential projects.

Balancing development and conservation

There is an existing policy and legal framework that regulates development to conserve biodiversity and protect the environment and water resources. In addition there is an existing and growing expectation among consumers and the community that products are produced in an environmentally responsible manner. As such the long-term economic success of agricultural production in the ORIA requires a conscious and sensible balance between development, conservation and environmentally responsible agricultural operations.

The integration of conservation and biodiversity considerations into land use planning for agricultural expansion is essential for the sustainability of both ecosystems and agricultural production. By adopting a strategic approach to land use planning that balances the needs of agriculture with the preservation of natural habitats, development can occur that is resilient, productive and capable of supporting future generations.

In the context of releasing new land for agricultural production, this means considering the impact on local ecosystems, habitats and species. It involves producers adopting regenerative and sustainable farming practices and avoiding activities that could lead to habitat loss or species extinction.

‘As part of the OFA, signed in 2005, six new conservation areas were established to support future development of Ord Stage 2, to be jointly managed between the WA Government and MG Corporation. Future land development in the region will need to ensure appropriate conservation outcomes are achieved, and that these expected outcomes are clearly communicated to potential proponents, so they are well informed before entering the approval process.’

Maintenance of water quality and aquatic ecological health and species is also critical for industry to maintain social licence as well as meet regulatory obligations. DPIRD is pursuing a collaborative catchment, or sub-catchment, management approach to maintaining Keep River water quality and ecological health.

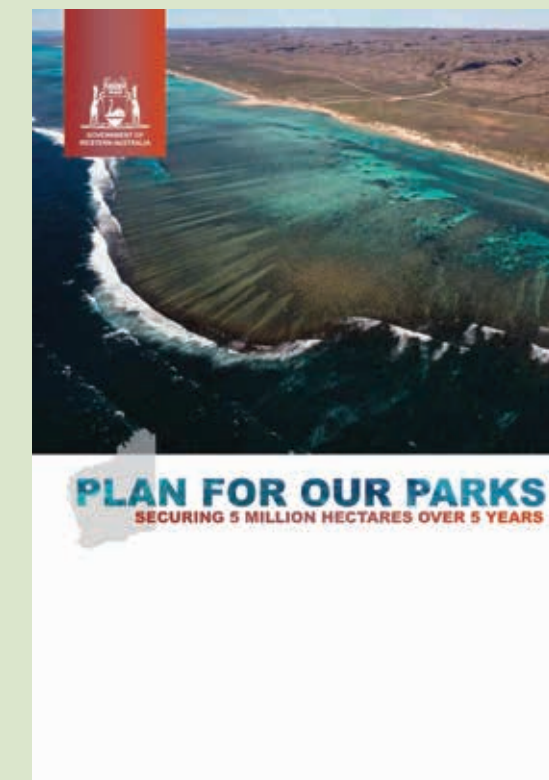


Insight — Plan for Our Parks

The WA Government *Plan for Our Parks* initiative is creating new and expanded parks across WA, from the Kimberley in the north, across WA’s Midwest and Goldfields, through areas from Perth to Bunbury to the south-west forests. This includes three new Kimberley marine parks in the Buccaneer Archipelago, as well as a potential new marine park on the southern coastline. Areas that have been identified in the plan have high conservation and cultural heritage values and pave the way for enhanced tourism and Aboriginal joint management. Additionally, *Plan for Our Parks* conservation areas within Miriuwung and Gajerrong Country are currently being considered by Government.

Plan for Our Parks considers biodiversity and other values, Native Title and mineral prospectivity of the areas to be reserved and the practicalities for long-term management, bringing all of this together at a state-wide scale.

Plan for Our Parks will provide long-term employment and joint management outcomes supporting Aboriginal people’s desire to manage country and respond to the growing demand for on country jobs for Aboriginal rangers. It is designed to complement other initiatives, such as the successful Aboriginal Ranger Program.



Empowering Aboriginal landholders to pursue opportunities in agriculture

For Aboriginal peoples land is not merely a physical resource but a repository of identity, history and social cohesion, playing a pivotal role in maintaining their way of life and preserving their unique cultures. Beyond its cultural significance the land also presents the primary economic opportunity for Aboriginal communities. This dual significance of land as both a cultural anchor and an economic avenue can be harnessed by Aboriginal peoples to improve their economic and social outcomes.

Within the ORIA there are opportunities for Aboriginal landholders to pursue business opportunities in the pastoral, irrigated agriculture, value-add and logistics and supply chain sectors, as well as to partner with proponents to pursue joint ventures and collaborative models of development. Government plays a key role in facilitating and empowering Aboriginal landholders to pursue opportunities in the agriculture industry, in turn providing capacity building, employment and economic outcomes.



MG Corporation's role in agricultural development and OFA entitlements

In return for the surrender of Native Title over large parcels of land in the ORIA, the OFA grants MG Corporation the right to a proportion of land in agricultural development areas including Goomig, Knox Plain, Mantinea and the Ord West Bank.

- **Goomig** – Under the OFA MG Corporation received freehold interest in two lots within the Goomig development as part of Ord Stage 2 expansion. MG Corporation has the option to develop the land itself or enter into a commercial leasing arrangement with a third party.

- **Ord East Bank** – while the OFA does not provide MG Corporation with any land entitlement within the Ord East Bank area, it provides a right for MG Corporation to receive a cash payment of a defined share of the value of any lots.
- **Knox Plain** – MG Corporation elected to receive a payment in lieu of its entitlement to freehold interest in agricultural land in the Knox Development. An ADP was negotiated with KAI in 2015, which comprises a benefits package including training and employment targets, land clearing and development obligations, milestone payments and a joint venture proposal between the two parties.
- **Ord West Bank and Mantinea** – MG Corporation's entitlements with respect to future potential development of Mantinea are yet to be determined.

Outside of the OFA the government will continue to empower MG Corporation to pursue future land development and farming opportunities.



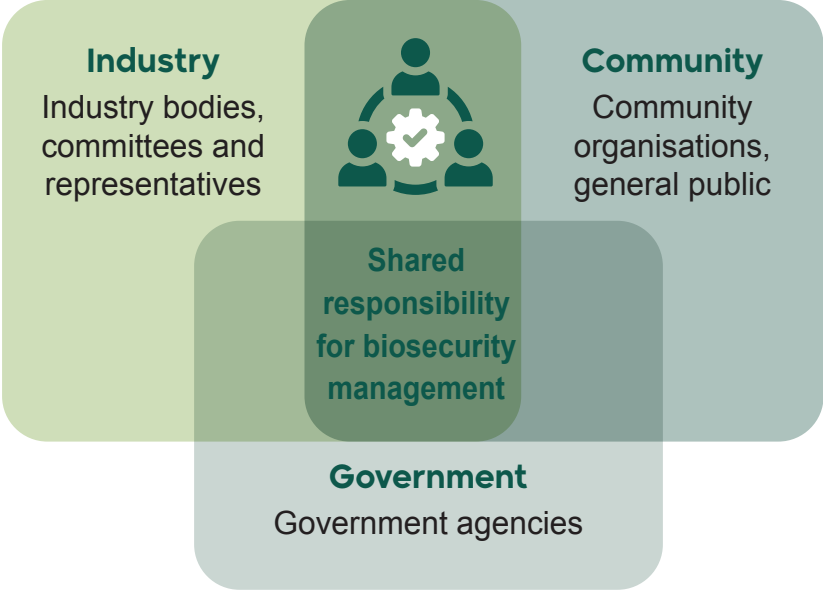
Biosecurity as a shared responsibility

The ORIA is renowned for producing high-quality, clean and safe agricultural products. This reputation is a crucial enabler for maintaining a strong presence in target markets. The region’s geographic isolation acts as a natural barrier, limiting the likelihood of biosecurity threats such as pests and diseases. However, despite this advantage the region must remain vigilant to maintain this status.

The consequences of temporary or prolonged impacts from biosecurity risks include environmental damage, economic losses and social disruption.

A robust and proactive approach to biosecurity is imperative for the protection of the ORIA’s ecosystems and the continuation of its agricultural industries. This responsibility becomes even more pressing in the face of climate change where changes in temperature and rainfall patterns may alter growing seasons, leading to biosecurity challenges that could affect key sowing and harvesting times. It is also critical given further development in the region will bring additional biosecurity risks that will need to be managed. For example potential expansion of the ORIA into the NT will lead to increased cross-border freight movements, and projects such as the sealing of the Tanami Road will also improve accessibility to the region (see page 69).

To tackle biosecurity threats effectively collaborative efforts are required. Partnerships between government bodies, industry groups and communities foster a stronger biosecurity framework, underpinned by shared knowledge, resources and action.



Everyone, from local landowners to tourists, has a role to play in detecting and responding to biosecurity threats, such as reporting unusual pests or implementing clean-down procedures for equipment and vehicles.

Under the shared responsibility model, governments offer support and coordination while industries invest in research, surveillance and response. Communities are the eyes and ears on the ground, crucial to early detection and rapid response.

By fostering existing relationships and building upon existing strengths, industry, government and community can create a resilient biosecurity system, safeguarding the ORIA’s agricultural industry and contributing to the prosperity of WA.

This is recognised within the ORIA, as evidenced by the membership of the Ord Biosecurity Committee, which is led by DPIRD, with membership from the local primary, logistics and tourism industries, local council and MG Corporation.

Insight — *Typhonium* sp. *Kununurra*

The native herb *Typhonium* sp. *Kununurra* was listed as threatened (Endangered) under conservation legislation in 2010 and is currently listed within the *WA Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Typhonium grows in the wet season and dies back to become dormant over the dry season. This presents a challenge for finding Typhonium and mapping its habitat, particularly as it co-exists with fast growing, larger grass species.

DPIRD has undertaken a significant body of work in recent years to survey land within the ORIA to better understand Typhonium and its habitat as well as develop strategies for offsetting and managing the impacts of further development on Typhonium. This includes the development of Typhonium Management Plans for development areas in collaboration with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

Other established groups include the Kimberley Rangelands Biosecurity Association. Continuing to build cooperation and communication through these partnerships and networks will lead to a broader base of knowledge, expertise and shared responsibility.

Opportunity — Aboriginal Ranger Program

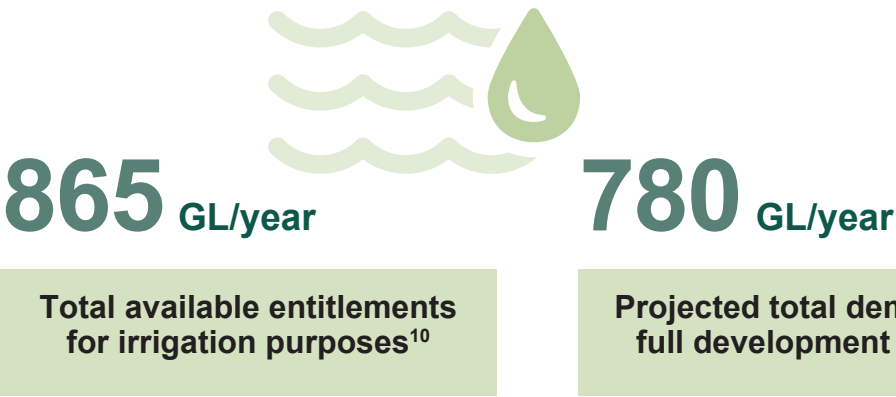
The WA Government developed the Western Australian Aboriginal Ranger Program (ARP) to help Aboriginal organisations manage country and protect the environment in partnership with public and private sectors. Funding is available for jobs for Aboriginal rangers, training and community development as well as research, tourism and other expansion activities. The individual ranger programs are led by Aboriginal peoples while the ARP as a whole is administered by the Parks and Wildlife Service of the DBCA.

The expansion of conservation area in the ORIA will require additional rangers to monitor for biosecurity risks. There is an opportunity to upskill local Aboriginal peoples as rangers to support this task. The WA Aboriginal Ranger Program could be leveraged to support this opportunity.

Water availability

The ORIA is supplied by the Ord River, which runs south to north towards the Kimberley coast. There are two dams on the river: Lake Argyle (10,000 GL total capacity) and the Ord River Diversion Dam. The Diversion Dam creates a constant water level for the irrigation scheme supplied by releases made from Lake Argyle. Two main water channels carry water to farms within the ORIA (the M1 and M2 channels).

This water storage is managed by Water Corporation and is used to provide water for irrigated agriculture, mining industry, hydroelectric power and environmental, social and cultural purposes. Irrigation is the dominant consumptive use of water from Lake Argyle. Town water for Kununurra is not sourced from Lake Argyle water storage but from an unconfined groundwater aquifer.



Since the 1950s the vision for the Ord irrigation project has been to develop all the irrigable soils on the greater Ord and Keep River floodplains⁹ and this has been a key driver of historic investments in water infrastructure in the region. Currently less than half of the potential available water allocations for irrigation have been licenced.

Under the existing Ord surface water allocation plan, up to 865 GL per year of licence entitlements can be granted at 95% reliability from the Ord River downstream of Lake Argyle for irrigation purposes. Based on the potential future development of the land parcels identified for future expansion DPIRD projections indicate that there may be demand of around 780 GL per year once at full production.

As new agricultural development occurs in the ORIA and irrigation requirements increase, there will be increasing competition for available water. Should future demand for water approach available allocation amounts there is potential for water trading markets to emerge within the ORIA, which may trigger a review of water availability for the region.

⁹ WA Government Department of Water. 2013. Ord Surface Water Allocation Plan ¹⁰ 750GL/yr from the Main Ord subarea and 115GL/yr from the Carlton-Mantinea subarea
¹¹ Based on DPIRD-provided land use data and water demand projections as at August 2023 and potential cropping approach



Insight — regional industry development

Agriculture is not the only potential user of water in the ORIA or the East Kimberley region. As further regional economic development occurs there will be an increasing need to balance the use of water in the region across industries. The region is a highly prospective resource area, as evidenced by the development of the *BOAB Metals Limited – Sorby Hill Lead/Silver Project* in close proximity to the Goomig development.

Future mineral exploration developments in the region may require access to water and this will need to be balanced across industry and environmental needs. For example, the *Aboriginal Clean Energy Partnership (ACE Partnership)*

owned by MG Corporation, Kimberley Land Council, Balanggarra Ventures, and Pollination has been formed to develop and deliver one of the nation’s largest clean energy projects in the region. The intent is to produce green hydrogen products for domestic and export markets by converting fresh water from Lake Kununurra into green hydrogen and exporting the product via Wyndham Port. Should this project proceed it will likely require access to water allocations under the *Ord surface water allocation plan*. This also provides opportunities for agriculture to collaborate with emerging industries in the region to maximise the value associated with investments in shared common user infrastructure.

Water use and management

A key focus from both industry and government is ensuring the efficient use and management of available water resources across the entire water value chain. In the face of increasing climate variability, a continued understanding of where additional efficiencies can be created in the irrigation system through upgrades to common-user infrastructure and on-farm processes will be important for the ongoing resilience of the ORIA. This will also be important to optimise water use in an environment where a greater share of the total available water allocations are being used within the ORIA.



Opportunity — water efficiency developments

There are a number of potential opportunities to enhance water efficiency within the ORIA, including exploring the viability of potential options to minimise losses in common-user distribution networks as well as research and implementation of on-farm efficiency enhancements.

DPIRD is currently undertaking trials to understand the benefits to ORIA farms of tailwater recycling systems. Two tailwater recycling systems have been built and implemented on two farming properties within Ord Stage 1. Co-funding for the project was provided by the National Water Grid Fund, which aims to improve water security, while being economically and environmentally responsible. These systems collect and reuse water for irrigation using a pump and ditch or pipeline conveyance system. Not only does this type of system improve on-farm water usage and efficiency, but it also reduces the amount of contaminants and pesticides entering waterways and reduces costs to the farmer. If successful the trial may provide a foundation for future funding and grant programs.





Enabling infrastructure

For future land development in the ORIA developers will be responsible for providing on-farm infrastructure needs, such as connections to channels. Any further potential investment in common-user infrastructure (for example water, energy and transport infrastructure) to support agricultural expansion in the ORIA will be subject to individual business cases to assess the relative merit of these potential projects.

Water Corporation is currently delivering upgrades to the M1 channel to expand capacity by 570 ML/day by 2027 to deliver increased peak water flows and better manage and control the delivery of water to growers and support the development of 5,400 ha of land on the Knox Plain. As production in the ORIA evolves over time through the expansion of the cotton industry and the release of additional parcels of land, peak water demands may change with potential impacts on downstream users of the ORIA channel infrastructure. Peak flow demands will need to be monitored regarding the availability and accessibility to water during cotton planting as all growers will likely plant at the same time during a break in monsoonal weather in February/March.



Insight — Northern Territory expansion (Keep Plains)

The Australian Government, through the National Water Grid Fund, contributed to the development of a preliminary business case (PBC) to investigate opportunities to expand the ORIA across the WA-NT border. The expansion will bolster broadacre farming and a spectrum of tropical and sub-tropical crops. If the expansion is successful, both domestic and export opportunities in horticulture will be enabled bringing economic and social advantages for the Kimberley region (for both WA and the NT). Importantly, it prioritises involvement and benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Northern Australia.

The PBC identified a number of potential infrastructure options for delivering water to the NT from Lake Argyle, with the potential to produce irrigated agriculture (expanding the ORIA geographic extent into the NT) should water be

made available. Based on the outcomes of the PBC, the NT Government has submitted a proposal to the National Water Grid to develop a Detailed Business Case to explore in further detail the water infrastructure delivery options identified. AAM Investment Group has been selected by the Northern Territory Land Corporation as the proponent to lead the development of the Keep Plains.

If the expansion is to proceed, it will bring additional complexity to water management in the ORIA through cross-border interests, and additional governance arrangements will need to be considered and implemented. The WA and NT Governments are currently progressing an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) relating to NT accessing water from the Ord River Irrigation Scheme.



Production and value-add

Labour attraction and retention

The adequate supply and quality of labour is critical to the successful expansion of production in the ORIA and is a critical input into the agriculture value chain. Regional and remote communities have historically faced several challenges in accessing adequate labour supply. This includes the attractiveness of living and working in a remote region, housing and services availability, and workforce seasonality (particularly for the agricultural industry).

Further economic development in the ORIA will provide a range of additional employment opportunities for the community. While a proportion of this employment may require migration from outside of the region to meet targets, a key focus of successful regional development is ensuring opportunities are maximised for the region’s existing resident population.

The Kununurra region is characterised by a relatively young population, many of whom leave the region to access higher education. The region is also characterised by high unemployment and low labour force participation among the local Aboriginal population, demonstrating a source of untapped potential if labour force engagement rates can be lifted and training opportunities provided.

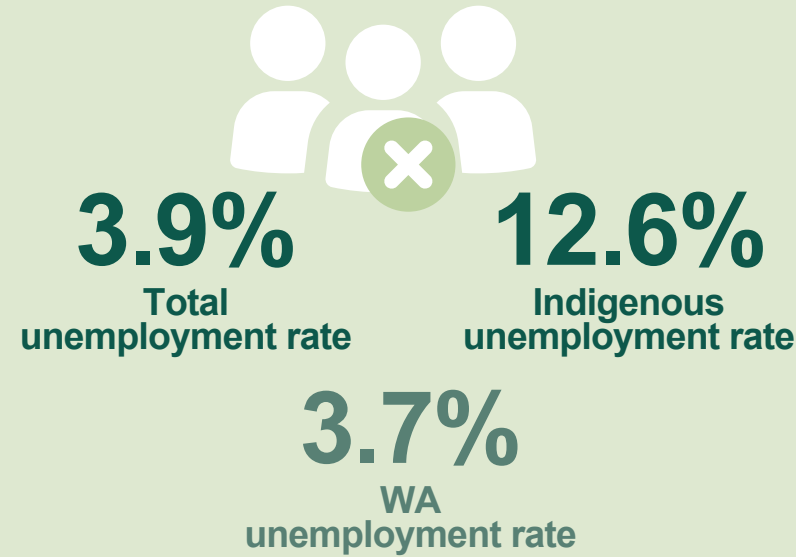
The East Kimberley region is actively exploring place-based initiatives to attract workers to the region, retain younger workers and empower more local Aboriginal Australians to seek employment. These initiatives will be critical in supporting the delivery of the ORIA Vision.



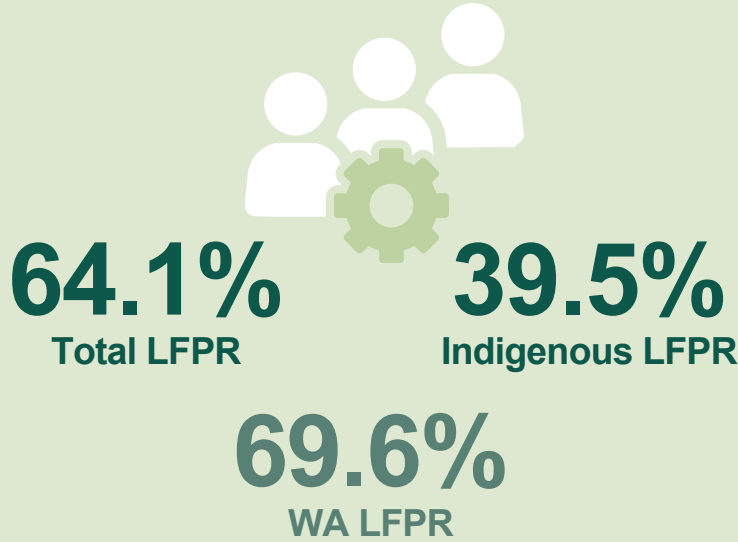


**Insight — local employment capacity —
Kununurra SA2¹²**

The Indigenous unemployment rate in Kununurra is 12.6% relative to the total unemployment rate at 3.9%.



Labour force participation rates (LFPR) are at 39.5% for the Indigenous working-age population in Kununurra compared to 64.1% of the total working-age population.



Kununurra’s population pyramid demonstrates a large proportion of working-age residents compared to those age 65+ or below 15 years.



¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021. Census of Population and Housing and Australian Bureau of Statistics., 2023. Labour Force, Australia, TableBuilder

Training and education

Economic development in the ORIA can be leveraged to establish the region as a centre for Aboriginal training and education. There are several existing organisations across the Kimberley region that provide training and education support such as East Kimberley Job Pathways and the Wunan Foundation.



Aboriginal training and education opportunities

Aboriginal Pastoral Academy¹³

The Aboriginal Pastoral Academy (the Academy) is a collaboration between a group of industry and community stakeholders that aims to support employment pathways for Aboriginal Australians in the pastoral industry. The Academy engages and collaborates with station owners and training providers, creating links between a range of quality training opportunities, mentoring and workplace placements to deliver job opportunities and meet industry workforce requirements.



The delivery of the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* will provide additional opportunities for Aboriginal Australians to gain employment in the pastoral industry for example through increased pastoral activities associated with cotton seed feed supplements.

Kununurra Research Station Experience

There is an opportunity for the KRS to make available its facilities to host school-based students to support the upskilling and engagement of the local Aboriginal workforce. Such a program would seek to empower the Aboriginal youth to seek employment opportunities in the agricultural sector. The KRS is currently undertaking scoping work for this opportunity.

Technological advancements and digital connectivity

Technological advancements have the potential to make agricultural production more efficient, sustainable and resilient to the challenges posed by climate change. Development and adoption of precision agriculture, automation, data analysis and optimisation technologies are currently maximising the use of resources, reducing environmental impacts and improving crop yields and profitability.

Adequate infrastructure, such as reliable internet connectivity, is essential for the successful adoption of technology in agriculture and increasingly important to the continued improvement of agriculture sector productivity.

The quality of connectivity in the Kimberley region impedes the uptake of these new technologies, with many communities restricted to the use of satellite connections¹⁴. Many agricultural businesses with limited or no mobile coverage are reliant on geo-stationary satellite services that are relatively costly and subject to performance issues.

Beyond agricultural production, digital connectivity enables access to health, emergency services and education services and impacts liveability and broader commercial activity in the region. The region's remoteness and low population density constrain private sector investment in terrestrial connectivity solutions to meet the growing needs of residents, businesses and visitors.



The WA and Australian Governments have established various funding programs aimed at expanding cellular mobile, fixed wireless, fixed line and community-scale Wi-Fi services in the region, but new technology approaches are required to achieve large scale improvements.

Advances in low earth orbit (LEO) satellite solutions are expected to transform the connectivity landscape in remote areas over the next few years, integrating with ground-based telecommunications infrastructure to increase capacity and resilience, and connecting handheld devices at any location with a clear view of the sky. This should help drive productivity and efficiency gains across all areas with constrained access to quality telecommunications services at present.

¹³ DPIRD and East Kimberley Job Pathways

¹⁴ Infrastructure Australia. 2022. Regional Strengths and Infrastructure Gaps

Northern beef development

The pastoral beef sector within the East Kimberley region is characterised by rangeland grazing which typically involves the management of livestock on natural grasslands using techniques like rotational grazing, appropriate stocking rates and adaptive management to preserve ecosystem health and productivity.

The live export market generally accounts for over 70% of all sales with around 200,000 cattle exported each year to Indonesia, Israel, Malaysia, Turkey, China and Vietnam¹⁵.

The emergence of cotton within the ORIA, combined with local ginning capacity, provides an opportunity to sustainably enhance cattle production in the East Kimberley and NT region. By enabling

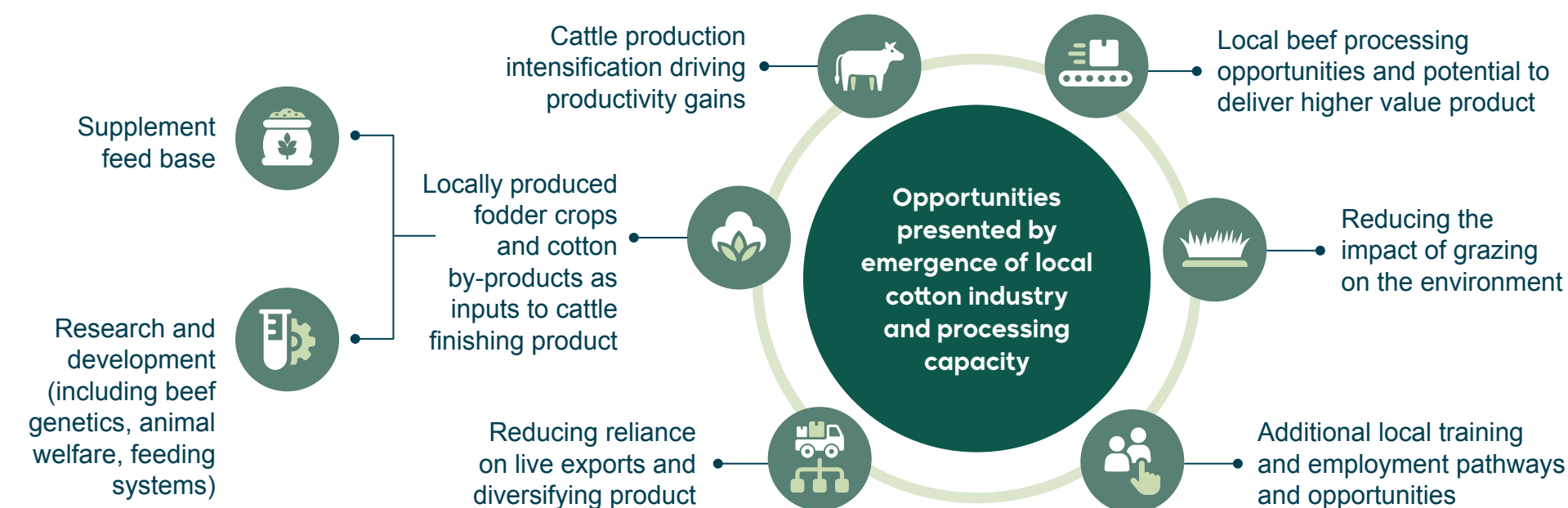


¹⁵ Regional Development Australia Kimberley, 2020. Pastoral Industry

access to a local cotton seed product, a protein-rich food source can be fed directly or alongside fodder crops during the dry season as a supplementary feed or potentially in feedlots as a valuable component of a tropical feed ration.

The synergies between local agriculture and beef production in the East Kimberley have the potential to deliver a number of benefits and value-add opportunities, including:

- Improving the overall health and productivity of cattle in the Kimberley region, by enabling producers to supplement feed, allowing for consistent growth and better utilisation of resources, as well as providing an opportunity for agriculture in the ORIA to provide fodder crops as an input to cattle feed supplements or as a ‘finishing’ feed ration.
- Improving management of the rangeland environment by reducing the impact of grazing pressure during the dry season through more intensive management of cattle.
- Opportunities for local beef processing to open new markets (domestically and internationally) and reduce the industry risk associated with the live export market.
- Providing additional employment opportunities for local community in supporting cattle intensification through handling, feed supply, maintenance and management activities, including for local Aboriginal pastoral ventures.
- Further research and development to optimise the value that can be generated from integrating pastoral and irrigated agriculture systems (for example optimising beef genetics).





Opportunity — scaling-up of cattle production in WA, enabled by feed products from irrigated cropping

Planning is currently being progressed for a research project to establish a pilot cattle feeding facility in the East Kimberley region utilising a range of tropical feed rations sourced from the irrigated cropping industry (including cotton by-products and corn).

A key focus of the study (supported in part by the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia) is to determine to what extent feed products from irrigated cropping from the ORIA can contribute to local cattle finishing systems, ultimately to produce a universally marketable animal and reduce the reliance on live export markets.

It is expected the pilot project will establish a new knowledge base of feeding systems which will enable optimal backgrounding and grow-out systems to be developed for cattle in the Kimberley region.

The project will assess whether intensive feedlots are appropriate, economic and sustainable for northern WA and support future investment planning.

Long-term it is hoped the outcome of the project will be an environmentally friendly intensification of northern beef production systems based on an affordable source of protein which enables local processing.

Kununurra Research Station

The KRS was established in 1945 on the banks of the Ord River, covering 450 ha of flood-irrigated clay soil farmland with an additional three ha of sandy loam levee soil under pressurised irrigation. Since establishment, the KRS has led research into sugar cane, cotton, rice, sorghum, maize, winter cereals, safflower, linseed, peanuts, lemongrass, kenaf and other fibre crops. The KRS will continue to play an important role in the ongoing development and sustainability of the ORIA by trialling new technologies, crop types and processes, de-risking production and providing important value-add information for growers in the ORIA.

A key focus for ORIA growers currently is evaluating crops that will fit into a cotton production sequence as growing a single crop



type year after year can lead to a deficiency of nutrients in the soil and a build-up of disease. KRS will play a valued role in identifying production systems that underpin the expansion of a sustainable and viable cotton industry in the ORIA because maintaining a variety of crop types in the ORIA will be important to maintaining the productivity of the land.



Opportunity — KRS Centre of Excellence

There is an opportunity for the KRS to become a centre of excellence for tropical agriculture to showcase the potential of northern agriculture production.

The centre could attract universities and other higher education programs to undertake additional research studies. The centre would also play a role in de-risking agricultural production in the ORIA and attracting new investment into the region.

There are also opportunities for the KRS to work together with the National Water Grid Authority and Science Program on projects which invest in long-term water security to support future efficient use and management of available water resources in the ORIA.



Native seed collection and bush foods

Seed collection and storage is an emerging industry that can assist with native restoration efforts. Demand for native seeds in WA is high with mining companies requiring significant seed quantities to meet their post-closure revegetation obligations. Native seed collection and storage is currently underway as part of the Argyle Diamond Mine restoration project.

The Pilbara Development Commission is currently undertaking a Northern Native Seed Industry Development Initiative (NNSIDI) to support the creation of new and innovative seed protection enterprises throughout the Pilbara, Goldfields-Esperance and the Kimberley.

There is an opportunity to undertake native seed collection in the ORIA beyond the rejuvenation of the Argyle Diamond mine to include other natural environments in the region and provide ongoing employment opportunities for local and Aboriginal peoples.



Bush foods and their connection between Country and Aboriginal peoples

The ORIA is home to an abundance of native flora and fauna species which are valued from both an environmental and cultural perspective. The bush foods and medicine found in the ORIA have been consumed for thousands of years by local Aboriginal peoples and represent a sacred connection between Country and people. The cultural knowledge of collecting, using, and preparing bush products has been passed down for many generations.

Recently, there has been an increased popularity in the use of native ingredients in the wider food, beauty and medical industries.

There are opportunities for local businesses to develop a sustainable and culturally significant bush foods market in the ORIA utilising local native species. Such an opportunity could provide economic, social and cultural benefits to local Aboriginal peoples. The success of these initiatives relies on access to Country and an understanding of harvesting and collection techniques and business acumen. It also relies on maintaining authenticity and cultural sensitivity.

This opportunity provides a unique market differentiator for local communities.



Image courtesy: Gelganyem Group

Processing and value-add

Value-add opportunities to products prior to going to market can enable growers to maximise their potential returns given relatively high costs of production in the ORIA due to the region's remote location and high input costs. Additional products and/or economic value can be provided using processing facilities located within the region to demand high prices for products developed in the region. Value-add facilities help promote scale in the region and will provide new employment opportunities.

Value-add opportunities typically exist within product processing. For cotton key opportunities include ginning (already underway) and oil extraction (see diagram to the right). For livestock opportunities include feed lots and meat processing. For other crop types such as horticulture opportunities could include food dehydration or cutting and packaging facilities.

The provision of common-user value add infrastructure requires the availability of appropriately zoned land types (e.g. industrial land) which the government plays a key role in providing. The *ORIA Strategy 2024–34* supports the exploration of new value add opportunities within the ORIA.



Opportunity — exploring circular economy principles for waste management in the ORIA

As with many regional and remote areas there are a range of legacy issues associated with landfill sites in the Wyndham-East Kimberley Shire. Waste management continues to be a challenge for local government with the Shire estimating the existing Kununurra landfill site is quickly approaching the end of its useful life.

There is a need to explore opportunities for waste avoidance, reduction and reuse within the region, including consideration of approaches to waste management that adopt circular economy

principles to alleviate capacity constraints and move toward a more environmentally sustainable region. This could include exploration of the feasibility pyrolysis technology.

Pyrolysis technology can produce biochar and other products as inputs for soil health and crop protection, reducing the requirements for synthetic inputs, and can produce alternative energy generation.

The Shire of Wyndham-East Kimberley is currently exploring potential waste management options for the region.

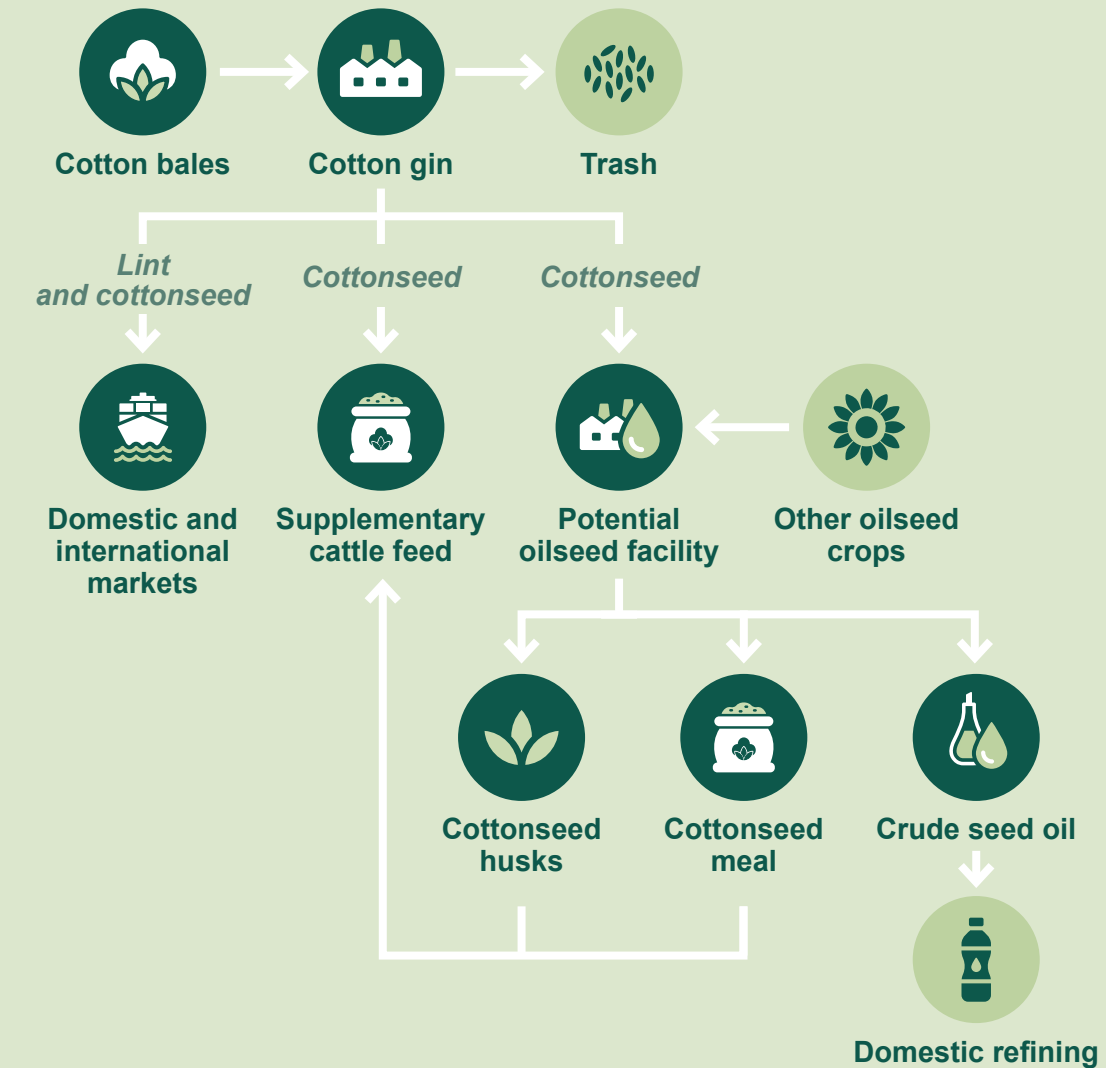


Opportunity — oil seed press

DPIRD has progressed a pre-feasibility assessment of the potential development of an oil press facility in the Kimberley. The oil press facility could process cottonseed and potentially future seed crops such as safflower, sunflower or peanut.

The potential for a local oilseed processing facility could provide additional local value-add opportunities to the emerging cotton industry as well as support the intensification of local cattle production systems using a locally produced supplementary cattle feed (cottonseed meal). It would provide an opportunity for local cotton growers to realise additional value-add from these crops, diversify the region's products and markets and provide opportunities to keep this value chain within the ORIA. The figure to the right demonstrates the role an oilseed facility may have in the value chain of cotton in the region¹⁶.

Additional studies will be required to determine the financial feasibility of an oil press facility in the ORIA.



¹⁶ Ernst & Young, 2023. Pre-feasibility study of an oil press facility in the Kimberley

Market and supply chain

The ORIA is serviced by key trunk transport infrastructure to support the current freight task, including the Victoria Highway (linking east to west through the Kununurra township), the Great Northern Highway (linking north to south), the East Kimberley Regional Airport and the Port of Wyndham. Industry expansion in the region across the agriculture and mining industries will result in an increasing cumulative freight task over time, placing pressure on existing logistics networks and infrastructure. The ability of existing

infrastructure to meet these growing demands will need to be monitored to ensure it continues to enable ongoing productivity and efficiency of the supply chain.

While the location of the ORIA provides unique advantages for agricultural production and activity, the remoteness of the region also presents a range of challenges to freight and logistics operations. This directly influences the cost, frequency and reliability of transporting goods to and from the area.



Opportunity — supply chain innovation and technology

Supply chain management is continuing to evolve with new technologies improving the efficiency, transparency and maturity of supply chains. Key advancements include; digitisation of consignment and tracking, utilising artificial intelligence for data analysis and supply chain efficiency, automation of processing and logistics coordination. These technologies can reduce risks by increasing visibility and reducing the complexity of operations.

The cost of freight is a significant challenge for the ORIA given the remoteness of the region. Using new and innovative technologies to gain a better understanding of freight movements and inventories across the region may enable greater contestability and utilisation of freight and logistics assets. Research and testing will be essential before any significant changes to supply chain processes are implemented in the region.



Cost of freight transport

The long distances from major urban centres and manufacturing hubs add to the cost of freight due to higher fuel consumption, vehicle wear and tear, and the need for drivers to cover vast areas with less dense delivery points. Businesses may also have to pay premium rates to incentivise freight providers to service these remote locations.



Inventory and logistics planning

Given the relative infrequency of deliveries (relative to metropolitan freight tasks) and the risk of delays, businesses in the ORIA may need to maintain higher levels of inventory to ensure they have sufficient stock to manage between deliveries. This requirement for higher inventory levels ties up capital and increases storage costs.

An additional logistical challenge is also the seasonality of the freight requirements of the region, particularly with the growth of broadacre crops such as cotton, which require large volumes of product to be transported within a very short cropping window. This can place pressure on the availability and price of freight transport during these high demand periods, especially during periods where there are competing demands for freight in other cropping regions.



Infrastructure

With a less developed transport infrastructure network than more populated regions the ORIA faces fewer transport options, which can be particularly problematic during extreme weather events that may damage infrastructure or make roads impassable. This can lead to delays and may result in forgone production.

In the ORIA, as with many agricultural regions, timely planting within specific windows is critical to the success of crop yields. Planting windows are determined by climatic conditions that ensure the best chances for crop germination, growth and maturity. Delays in logistics can severely impact the planting of crops in the ORIA as timing is often tightly linked to distinct seasonal weather patterns.

Infrastructure resilience

During the wet season a significant amount of transport infrastructure in the Kimberley is damaged due to flooding. During these times it is more challenging, and often impossible, to get freight in and out of the region. Coordinated and targeted recovery support is necessary to ensure infrastructure is operational as soon as possible. Ongoing enhancements to the resilience of road infrastructure in the Kimberley region are required to support resilient supply chains in the ORIA.



¹⁷ Main Roads WA. 2024. New Fitzroy River Bridge



Insight — Great Northern Highway, Fitzroy Crossing¹⁷

In December 2022 and January 2023, heavy rainfall from ex-tropical cyclone Ellie led to flooding in many communities and cut major roads across the NT and the Kimberley region of WA. It caused significant damage to sections of the Great Northern Highway and Fitzroy Crossing. The Fitzroy Bridge was significantly damaged, cutting access and impacting a number of local businesses and imposing significant costs to producers in the ORIA. The bridge is usually relied on as the only all-weather road connection between the west and east Kimberley. Road transport had to be rerouted while barge and low-level floodway solutions were implemented. In December 2023, the construction of a new bridge with more flood-resilient features was successfully completed by Main Roads.



REDUCE
SPEED





Opportunity — road infrastructure

Kununurra heavy vehicle bypass route

Victoria Highway is part of the national highway network connecting WA with the NT. The highway crosses the Ord River at the Ord River Diversion Dam and passes through Kununurra, with heavy vehicles interacting with local traffic in the township. The road width over the dam is only 6.8 m wide, constraining the size of loads that can use this route and creating road safety issues at the dam as traffic volumes increase.

Main Roads is well progressed with planning to explore options for a suitable heavy vehicle route that bypasses the Kununurra township, including consideration of new road alignment and provision for a new bridge over the Ord River. The primary objective of the potential bypass route is to improve road serviceability for freight and improve road safety for the community.

Continuing development in the ORIA, as well as broader industry development in the region, will continue to drive a growing freight task and increased interaction between freight vehicles and the community. Establishing the required timing of investment for the bypass route will be important in ensuring the road network is ready to cater to increased freight traffic and to ensure the ongoing safety and efficiency of the road network.



Current daily traffic volumes across
Ord River Diversion Dam¹⁸

676

Average daily vehicle
trips

22%

Of all trips are heavy
vehicles

Estimated additional heavy vehicle
trips each year¹⁹

~2,000–4,500

Heavy vehicle trips each year to service
emerging cotton industry

Tanami Road sealing²⁰

The Tanami Road links Alice Springs to the Great Northern Highway near Halls Creek. It also provides access to several remote Aboriginal communities, mine sites and tourist attractions. Large sections of the road can become corrugated and difficult to travel on and can often be closed and damaged during the wet season.

Work is now underway to seal the whole road length, which will provide safer, reliable and more efficient access in the region and reduce costs associated with freight in and out of the ORIA. It is anticipated that the upgrading will take about 10 years to complete, and of the 313 km long section in WA 10 km has been sealed with another 30 km to be sealed in 2024/25.



Image courtesy: Main Roads WA

¹⁸ Main Roads WA. Traffic Map ¹⁹ Kimberley Cotton Company consultation 2023

²⁰ Main Roads WA. 2024. Tanami Road Upgrade

Port of Wyndham

The Port of Wyndham was established in the late 1880s to support the cattle and pastoral industries in the Kimberley region, serving as a key export point for beef and other agricultural products. Its development was also linked to the gold rushes that occurred in the Halls Creek area, which led to increased demand for transportation and infrastructure to support mining operations.

Over the years the Port of Wyndham has undergone several expansions and modernisations to accommodate the growing needs of the surrounding region. It has diversified operations, and today, the port handles a variety of cargo including live cattle exports, fuel, general cargo and occasionally cruise ships.

The Port's strategic location also makes it an important gateway for trade with other parts of Australia and countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Its proximity to some of the most remote areas in Australia means that it plays a vital role in the supply chain, ensuring the delivery of essential goods and services to communities in the Kimberley region.

The Port of Wyndham is owned by Kimberley Ports Authority (KPA) and operated by Cambridge Gulf Limited (CGL). The Port of Wyndham is also a significant employer of local Aboriginal people in Wyndham and surrounding communities.

First Point of Entry

The Port of Wyndham is currently a restricted first point of entry (FPOE) Port. The restricted FPOE status prevents the import of certain cargo into the Port of Wyndham which negatively impacts trade, logistics chains and economic growth in the Kimberley region. In recent years, the restricted FPOE determination has led to a loss of international import trade opportunities, such as containers, break bulk and passenger cruise activity at the Port.





Opportunity — potential role of Port of Wyndham in the cotton supply chain

With the Kununurra cotton gin due for completion in mid-2025 and cotton quickly becoming a dominant crop in the ORIA, there is an opportunity for the Wyndham Port to play a meaningful role in the supply chain for import (empty 40 ft containers) and export (loaded 40 ft containers) to service the cotton industry once FPOE restrictions are lifted.

Cotton growers in the region are currently identifying the optimal path to market for the products being grown and processed in the region and have sought estimates of fees to import/export containers through the Port of Wyndham. CGL attempted to put forward a proposal, however, due to the non-FPOE approval, shipping companies would not provide a quote and CGL could not offer a suitable proposal to cotton growers.

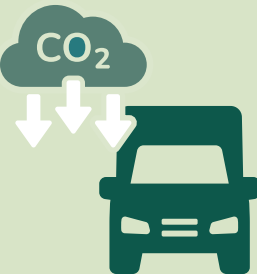
If this issue is unable to be resolved in the short-term the Port of Wyndham may miss the opportunity to play a role in the cotton supply chain, as cotton growers are fast approaching the point where a decision needs to be made and contracts signed. Growers indicate that a potential alternative solution appears to be transporting the cotton to Katherine by road and then to Adelaide by rail.

This not only reflects a relatively inefficient utilisation of resources but potentially will add additional costs to the local industry and result in additional environmental emissions relative to export/import from the Port of Wyndham.

KPA is currently progressing a proposal to obtain FPOE status at Wyndham.



Environmental impact²¹ of a laden 40-foot container journey from Kununurra to:



Port of Wyndham

Darwin

Adelaide via Katherine

0.17 tonnes
CO2-e per laden trip

1.4 tonnes
CO2-e per laden trip

2.62 tonnes
CO2-e per laden trip



~100 km
journey distance

~800 km
journey distance

~2,500 km
journey distance

²¹ KPMG analysis and Australian Transport Assessment Planning Environmental PV5



Insight — Port of Wyndham master plan development

KPA is currently progressing the delivery of strategic port masterplans for all four regional ports under KPA control, including the Port of Wyndham²².

The development of the masterplans will include extensive external stakeholder engagement with the aim of ensuring the ports under KPA control remain fit-for-purpose into the long term. This planning will be critical to ensuring the Port of Wyndham meets the changing supply chain demands in the ORIA.



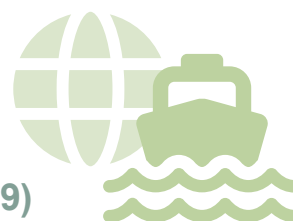
Proximity to global markets

The ORIA is located in close proximity to growing international markets, particularly in the Asia-Pacific. By 2030 there is expected to be 4.9 billion middle class consumers worldwide of which two thirds will reside in Asia²³. There is an increasing demand from Asian markets for high quality products which can be fulfilled by the ORIA. The WA Government will continue to work alongside the Australian Government to enhance access to key markets through supporting trade negotiations and agreements.

Forecast middle class consumer spending in the Asia-Pacific²⁴

\$4.9
trillion USD (2009)

\$32.9
trillion USD (2030)



Top Australian cotton export destinations in 2022–23²⁵

40%
to Vietnam

11%
to Indonesia

²² KPA Media Release. 2023 ²³ DPIRD. 2020. Primary Industries Plan 2020-2024 ²⁴ Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade. 2022. Agribusiness 2030

²⁵ Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. 2023. Report to the International Cotton Advisory Committee.



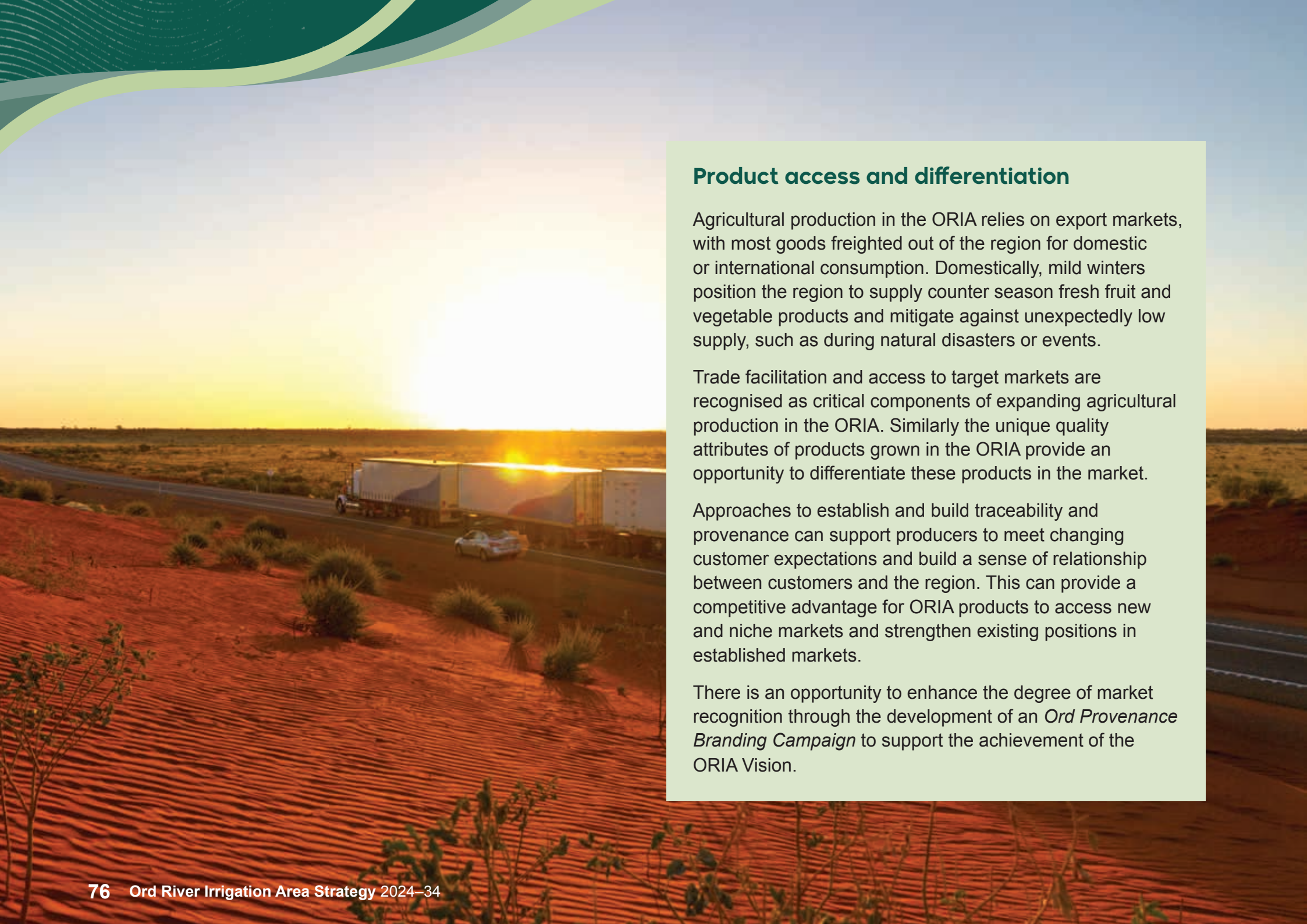
Opportunity — Agri-tourism

The Kimberley region is a unique and popular tourist destination, attracting visitors who want to experience its natural environment and authentic Aboriginal and cultural experiences. Tourism is a key industry of employment in the Kimberley, representing over 10% of employment in the region²⁶. The Kimberley receives around 400,000 visitors annually, the majority of whom are domestic travellers²⁷. There are opportunities to capitalise on the expanding agricultural industry in the ORIA to promote new tourism offerings.

Key aspects could include:

- Aboriginal food and heritage (including bush food and native plants)
- Dining and restaurant partnerships (existing and new)
- Farm cellar door/shops/tours
- Farm stays and accommodation

²⁶ Kimberley Development Commission. November 2023. Economic Snapshot ²⁷ Regional Development Australia. 2020. Kimberley Tourism Industry Report



Product access and differentiation

Agricultural production in the ORIA relies on export markets, with most goods freighted out of the region for domestic or international consumption. Domestically, mild winters position the region to supply counter season fresh fruit and vegetable products and mitigate against unexpectedly low supply, such as during natural disasters or events.

Trade facilitation and access to target markets are recognised as critical components of expanding agricultural production in the ORIA. Similarly the unique quality attributes of products grown in the ORIA provide an opportunity to differentiate these products in the market.

Approaches to establish and build traceability and provenance can support producers to meet changing customer expectations and build a sense of relationship between customers and the region. This can provide a competitive advantage for ORIA products to access new and niche markets and strengthen existing positions in established markets.

There is an opportunity to enhance the degree of market recognition through the development of an *Ord Provenance Branding Campaign* to support the achievement of the ORIA Vision.



Insight — megatrends shaping Australian agriculture

The Australian Government has recently undertaken a review of the key megatrends that will define the future of agriculture in Australia to 2040. Identifying these megatrends is the first step in helping individuals, enterprises, sectors and governments to explore and prepare for an uncertain future. Key megatrends shaping the Australian agriculture industry which will influence growth in the ORIA include²⁸:



Consumer growth in emerging economies

Rising incomes in emerging economies such as Asia will create increased demand for food and products.



Geopolitics

Shifts in economic, military and cultural power will continue to shape international trade and relations.



Productivity and efficiency

Maintaining profitable agricultural enterprises will require ongoing innovation and change.



Environmental pressures and climate change

Changing environments are creating multiple risks and challenges.



Technological advancements

New technology will change how food and fibre products are made, marketed and delivered.

²⁸ Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. 2021. Stocktake of Megatrends Shaping Australian Agriculture.

Enhancing environmental, social and governance credentials

Consumers, supply chain participants, regulators and financiers are increasingly focusing on enhancing environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations as part of a broader shift in the community toward a more holistic and responsible approach to business which acknowledges success should not come at the expense of poor environmental outcomes, social injustice or poor governance.

Key dynamics driving this ESG focus include:



Consumers

Consumers in global and local markets are demonstrating an increased preference for agricultural goods that demonstrate consideration of environmental and social outcomes. This includes 85% of consumers indicating that they have shifted their purchasing behaviour to be more sustainable.²⁹



Supply chain participants

Large domestic and international retailers, as well as food manufacturers, have increasingly set targets related to the emissions intensity of their suppliers. For instance, Woolworths Group is seeking to reduce its scope 3 emissions by 19% by 2030.³⁰ Supply chain organisations are also integrating sustainable practices into their procurement policies. As examples, Cotton On and Woolworths Group both joined the Better Cotton Initiatives to promote sustainable procurement across their suppliers.³¹

²⁹ Business Wire. 2021. Recent study reveals more than a third of global consumers are willing to pay more for sustainability ³⁰ Woolworths Group. n.d. Sustainability ³¹ Better Cotton Initiative. n.d. Find Members

Key dynamics driving this ESG focus include (continued):



Regulators and policymakers

In 2022, the Australian Government committed to 43% reduction in emissions on 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero by 2050.³² As part of achieving this goal agricultural emissions must be reduced. To further support the sector in its emissions reduction efforts the government announced in July 2023 its intention to sector-specific decarbonisation plan for the agriculture and land sector.³³



Export markets

Sustainability is being increasingly interwoven into trade policies and practices. A growing number of trade agreements to which Australia is a party are explicitly promoting activities that contribute to sustainability outcomes. For example the AU-UK Free Trade Agreement explicitly promotes trade and investment in environmental goods and services.³⁴



Financiers

Australia’s key agricultural financiers have also committed to reducing the impact of their loan books and investment portfolios. Australia’s largest four banks³⁵ have signed onto the Net Zero Banking alliance, setting 2030 and 2050 emissions reductions targets. As approximately AUD\$100bn of finance is provided to primary industries each year, agriculture will be a key components of these commitment.³⁶

³² DCCEEW. 2022. Climate Change Act 2022 ³³ DCCEEW. 2023. Agriculture key to Australia’s sustainable future ³⁴ DFAT. n.d. AU-UK FTA ³⁵ NZBA. n.d. Members ³⁶ ABARES. 2023. Farm sector debt

The ORIA, as an agricultural production region, is uniquely positioned to leverage its strong ESG credentials as a key strength in the marketing of the products produced. These ESG credentials include:

Environmental sustainability

- **Water quality management** – which is critical to maintaining the health of the ecosystem, preserving aquatic habitat and broader environmental outcomes.
- **Balancing development and conservation** – supporting biodiversity conservation by preserving habitat and minimising impacts wherever possible on native flora and fauna.
- **Renewable energy generation** – production and activity within the ORIA is powered by a hydropower dam at Lake Argyle, aligning with ESG goals related to environmental responsibility.
- **Natural resources management** – ensuring development adheres to sustainable land use practices preventing land degradation, soil erosion and other negative environmental impacts.

Social impact

- **Employment opportunities** – agriculture in the region is a key employment generator for the region, and its expansion will further contribute to wellbeing by providing employment opportunities for the local community, enhancing economic stability and reducing unemployment rates.
- **Community development** – growth in the region of sustainable agriculture can act as an enabler for further investment in the region, including social infrastructure improvements, which can enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

Governance



- **Stakeholder engagement** – engaging with local communities, Traditional Owners, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process reflects good governance. This involvement can lead to more inclusive and sustainable development practices. Native Title holders in the ORIA are actively involved in the development of agricultural land to provide sustainable economic development opportunities for the community.







External factors

Climate variability

The impacts of climate change pose a number of current and emerging challenges for the ORIA now and into the future in response to increasing variability of weather patterns and climate, including:

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
|  | Higher temperatures | Climate projections currently indicate by 2030 the mean annual temperature may increase by between 0.6–1.3°C in the Kimberley region ³⁷ . This rise in average temperatures and increased frequency of heatwaves could result in higher evapotranspiration rates, which may increase demand for irrigation water to maintain crops, thereby putting additional demand on water resources. Similarly increasing intensity of heatwaves and hot spells could also be expected to add to peak water requirements during these periods. |
|  | Regional liveability | Currently temperatures in Kununurra can range from an average maximum of 30.2 degrees in July to 38.8 in November. ³⁸ Rising temperatures will impact on the liveability of the region, placing pressure on the ORIA’s ability to attract and retain labour, impacting future industry capacity. |

³⁷ DPIRD. 2021. Climate Projections for W A ³⁸ Kununurra Visitor Centre 2024. Kununurra Weather

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
|  | Rainfall variability | While projections for the Kimberley region indicate changes in average rainfall are expected to be small relative to current natural variability in rainfall, there may be an increase in the intensity of rainfall events over time. ³⁹ Changes in the frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and storms is also envisioned. This volatility can disrupt the consistency and reliability of water supply for irrigation and can also directly damage on-farm infrastructure, supply chains and crops. |
|  | Pest and disease pressure | Changing climate conditions can also promote the proliferation of pests and diseases that affect crops, which may lead to reduced yields and increased costs for pest and disease management. |
|  | Crop viability | The suitability of particular crops currently grown in the ORIA could be affected by changing climate conditions. Some crops may no longer be viable if climate changes impact optimal growing conditions, which could force a shift in agricultural practices and crop selection. |
|  | Soil health | Changes in rainfall patterns can lead to soil erosion, degradation, and changes in soil moisture levels, which could impact crop productivity and the sustainability of the soil for future cultivation. |

³⁹ DPIRD. 2021. Climate projections for WA

Adapting to these challenges will require strategic planning from government and industry including research and investment in innovative farming practices, water-efficient technologies, development of climate-resilient crop varieties, improved weather forecasting and sustainable water management practices. The WA Government supports projects that promote climate-resilient agriculture and regional communities through initiatives such as the Agriculture Climate Resilience Fund.

Similarly steps to move toward a low-carbon future consistent with the *Western Australia Climate Policy* will be required to ensure the long-term sustainability of agriculture production. The *Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategy (SERS) for Western Australia* sets out a pathway for the agriculture industry to support the achievement of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The SERS acknowledges that agricultural emissions are difficult to abate, underscoring the need for additional technological solutions to substantially reduce key sources of emissions within the industry, while maintaining and enhancing land-based sequestration has also been identified as crucial to achieving net zero emissions.

Key enablers identified to support the agriculture industry in moving toward net-zero emissions include:

- Decarbonisation information and tools that are fit-for-purpose for small and medium enterprises
- Reliable data on land use sequestration and offsetting potential
- Improved knowledge and skills in emissions accounting and decarbonisation methods to meet international and domestic demand for low-emissions produce
- Research, development and demonstration of decarbonisation methods for hard-to-abate sectors such as sheep, cattle and cropping.

Social environment

The Kimberley region's social challenges are complex and unique and have the potential to impact the achievement of the ORIA Vision over the next decade.

There are currently several social drivers impacting the liveability of the region, including access to and cost of housing, cost of living pressures, high demand for social infrastructure and high rates of anti-social behaviour. These are not unique to the region and are impacting many regional and remote communities.

Despite the many attractive characteristics and untapped potential of the ORIA and the surrounding region, these social drivers factor into the decision-making process when attempting to attract and retain labour, placing pressure on the ability to do business in the region.

If further expansion of the agriculture industry in the ORIA over the next decade is met through attracting labour from outside of the region, this will place further pressure on existing social infrastructure including education, childcare, housing and health services. Maximising opportunities to meet this growth using the local workforce will not only deliver enhanced economic outcomes for the local community, but also reduce the impact on social infrastructure within the region.

The WA Government will leverage the broad range of existing programs and initiatives available — including local, state and federal programs — to pursue further economic development and expansion of the agricultural industry as well as support broader social development objectives and improve the liveability of the region.

Action roadmap

Achieving the vision

Achievement will require coordinated action across government, industry and the community over the next 10 years.



The WA Government is committed to supporting further agricultural production and expansion in the ORIA through the delivery of the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34*.

To achieve the desired outcomes of the strategy a range of strategic initiatives and actions have been identified for progression in the short to medium-term. Many of these are currently underway or have been previously identified, while others will need to be investigated further.

It is important to recognise that the actions identified represent a current-state assessment of requirements in the development of the ORIA, and the opportunities and challenges faced within the ORIA will continue to evolve over time. The strategic direction and actions will need to remain agile and continue to respond to the changing needs of the region to achieve the desired regional economic development objectives.



Governance and delivery

For the ORIA Strategy to have a material impact on the development of the agricultural industry, government and industry need to work together to deliver upon the strategic initiatives and actions. To oversee this collaboration there is an opportunity to consider establishing governance forums to assist in achieving the delivery of the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34*.

Ord Responsible Agencies

The Ord Responsible Agencies (ORA) governance structure was originally established as part of the Ord East Kimberley Expansion Project and provides a collaborative forum for state government agencies to ensure a collaborative cross-agency approach to development in the ORIA in line with the WA Government's *Lead Agency Framework – for effective case management of projects and proposals in Western Australia* principles.

Key responsibilities for delivery include:

- ✓ Ensuring a common cross-agency approach to delivery in line with government policy and strategic intent
- ✓ Ensuring a forum is available to discuss and resolve complex, continuous and/ or otherwise significant matters affecting government objectives for the Ord
- ✓ Driving cross-government collaboration and interface with stakeholders during delivery.

Local insights and decision making

The achievement of the ORIA Vision will require ongoing collaboration between government, industry and the community.

While informal engagement between government, industry and the community currently occurs, the establishment of an Industry and Community Reference Group would provide a formal and regular basis for key opportunities and challenges for development to be shared and reflected to the ORA.

Potential responsibilities could include:

- ✓ Sharing insights, opportunities, challenges and threats that need to be overcome to deliver the *ORIA Strategy 2024–34*
- ✓ Prioritising the strategic initiatives and actions for Government consideration
- ✓ Identifying next steps and implementation considerations
- ✓ Identifying new actions as required in line with emerging priorities for development in the ORIA.

These responsibilities are to be determined and agreed upon, if the mobilisation of this group is to be established.



Strategic initiatives and actions



| Focus area | Strategic initiative | Action | Responsibility |
|------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| Land Development | Identify suitable land and water resources to support new projects of strategic importance in the ORIA | • Continue to work with proponents to explore development opportunities for the next stage of development | ORA (DPIRD led) |
| | | • Manage development proposals in line with the WA Government's Lead Agency Framework to define clear roles and responsibilities and provide effective, timely and accurate communication between government agencies and proponents | ORA (DPIRD led) |
| | | • Identify further land development opportunities to achieve the ORIA Vision 50,000 ha, including water availability, tenure, infrastructure requirements, land release and Native Title requirements | ORA (DPIRD led) |
| | | • Continue to work with NT Government on the Keep Plains agricultural development to support the expansion of the ORIA into the NT | ORA (DPIRD led) |
| | Support planning for more efficient use of water through both on-farm and off-farm improvements to create a more resilient and sustainable industry | • Explore opportunities to optimise the available water resource and identify efficiencies in common-user infrastructure | ORA (DPIRD led) |
| | | • Work with industry to identify and explore feasibility of adopting potential on-farm water efficiency measures | DPIRD |
| | Sustainable management of natural resources | • Manage impacts of further land development on biodiversity, including on <i>Typhonium</i> sp Kununurra | ORA |
| | | • Develop a Keep River catchment management approach | DPIRD |
| | | • Work with industry to develop and implement a Biosecurity Plan for the ORIA | DPIRD |
| | | • Support industry to improve water quality outcomes on-farm | DPIRD |
| | | • Work with industry to manage potential impacts associated with changes to groundwater under future production scenarios | DPIRD |



| Focus area | Strategic initiative | Action | Responsibility |
|--------------------------|---|---|----------------|
| Production and value add | Work with industry to plan for and develop strategies to meet the workforce needs of the agriculture industry including consideration of housing, education and other social requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively support locally driven initiatives focused on training, upskilling and developing local capacity and attracting and retaining new labour | ORA |
| | Empower Aboriginal communities and entrepreneurs to develop enterprises that support Aboriginal employment and business opportunities in the agriculture industry | Explore opportunities to support and expand Aboriginal Ranger Programs | ORA |
| | | Empower local Aboriginal peoples to participate in bush foods and native seed collection business opportunities | DPIRD |
| | | Leverage training opportunities at KRS to expand the Aboriginal Pastoral Academy into irrigated agriculture, research and environmental training | ORA |
| | | Empower MG Corporation to explore future land development and farming opportunities | ORA |
| | | Empower Aboriginal landholders to develop business opportunities including pastoral, irrigated agriculture and value-add | ORA |
| | Supporting innovative ideas, products or production methods which provide a value add and/or efficiency benefit | Support industry to progress additional feasibility planning for a local oil seed press facility in the ORIA | DPIRD |
| | | Work with SWEK to explore the feasibility of adopting circular economy principles in the management of waste through investment in a pyrolysis waste management facility in the region, including exploring the potential for by-products created to be used as fertiliser and stock feed | DPIRD |

| Focus area | Strategic initiative | Action | Responsibility |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------|
| Production and value add (continued) | Supporting the northern beef industry to sustainably intensify production through maximising the integration of pastoral and irrigated agriculture systems | Deliver a pilot research program exploring the viability of cattle feeding facilities for intensification of cattle production in the East Kimberley | DPIRD |
| | | Lead research and development which supports the pastoral industry to optimise the use of cotton seed and other locally produced feed supplements | DPIRD |
| | | Identify suitable locations for value-add livestock production | DPIRD |
| | | Undertake feasibility studies to support the development of new supply chains including assessing the viability of local beef processing capacity | DPIRD |
| | Applied research to maintain and increase productivity | Position the KRS as a centre of excellence for tropical agriculture to showcase the potential of northern agricultural production, build partnerships and undertake research that demonstrates best practice and implementation of innovative approaches | DPIRD |
| | | KRS is to support the identification and evaluation of crops that will fit into a cotton production sequence and explore opportunities for new high-value horticulture crops | DPIRD |
| | Growth through ag-tech and digital connectivity | Support ongoing improvements in regional telecommunications to facilitate innovation and uptake of new technologies | DPIRD |

| Focus area | Strategic initiative | Action | Responsibility |
|-------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Market and supply chain | Strengthen WA's road, rail and marine logistics networks to support the agriculture industry and regional communities | • Establish the required timing of investment for a new road alignment and bridge over the Ord River to improve road serviceability for freight and improve road safety for the Kununurra community | ORA |
| | | • Progress the achievement of Port of Wyndham First Point of Entry Status | KPA |
| | | • Actively engage in the Kimberley Port Authority masterplan development to ensure changing needs of the ORIA are reflected in Port of Wyndham infrastructure planning requirements | ORA |
| | Promote and build a strong brand for WA agricultural products | • Work with industry to define and promote an Ord Provenance Branding Campaign to enhance the degree of market recognition in existing and new/ niche markets | DPIRD |
| External factors | Work with industry and state agencies to build resilience and the ability to adapt to change, whether to a changing climate or rapidly changing markets | • Continue to support projects and activities that promote climate-resilient agricultural industry and regional communities | DPIRD |
| | | • Undertake a climate risk assessment for the East Kimberley region to understand how the region will be impacted by climate change in the long-term and inform adaptation/mitigation measures | DPIRD |
| Other | Leverage existing governance arrangements and seek community and industry feedback and involvement | • Facilitate and support local industry representatives to lead development on a supplementary industry action plan to prioritise and drive critical industry actions over the next one to five years, in alignment with the ORIA Strategy initiatives | DPIRD |



Important disclaimer

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