Shire of Chittering

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2026 - 2031

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Shire of Chittering wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land within the Shire of Chittering, the Yued and Whadjuk peoples. We would like to pay respect to the Elders of the Nyoongar nation, past and present, who have walked and cared for the land. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture, and the contributions made to this region.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shire of Chittering Economic Development Strategy 2026–2031 provides a coordinated framework to guide sustainable growth, diversify the economy, and enhance liveability. Building on the Shire's strengths, its rural character, natural landscapes, and strategic location near Perth, the Strategy outlines actions to foster a resilient, thriving, and future-ready local economy.

The Strategy establishes clear direction ensuring that each initiative delivers measurable outcomes and highlights return on investment (ROI) for the community and stakeholders under 5 core pillars, including

Pillar 1 – Economic Growth & Investment Attraction
Pillar 2 – Local Business Development & Workforce Capability
Pillar 3 – Visitor Economy and Tourism Development
Pillar 4 – Infrastructure, Connectivity & Liveability
Pillar 5 – Strategic Partnerships

By focusing on attracting investment and supporting local business growth, the Strategy creates employment opportunities and strengthens the economic base. Leveraging assets such as the Muchea Industrial Park, improving transport access, and streamlining planning processes. At the same time, enhancing workforce capability is central to the Shire's approach. Partnerships with education and training providers will ensure residents have the skills required for local employment, while small and medium enterprises are supported to innovate, expand, and remain competitive. This combined focus on business development and workforce readiness strengthens local resilience and reduces economic leakage to surrounding areas.

Tourism is recognised as a key driver of diversification, with Chittering's agritourism experiences and scenic trails offering significant growth potential. Collaborative regional initiatives across local shires and targeted marketing will extend visitor stays, increase local spending, and build the Shire's profile as a unique and accessible rural destination.

Underlying these initiatives is a commitment to identify infrastructure, connectivity, and liveability developments. Investment in digital access, utilities, and community facilities will support population growth, attract visitors and investors, and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Strategic partnerships underpin all efforts, ensuring that the Shire can leverage expertise, secure funding, and respond effectively to economic, environmental, and social challenges. By collaborating with neighbouring local governments, regional bodies, state agencies, and industry, Chittering will maximise opportunities and strengthen resilience across all sectors.

Collectively, this Implementation Plan sets out a roadmap for a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable Shire, one that fosters local enterprise, attracts visitors and investment, develops a skilled workforce, and maintains the unique rural character that defines Chittering.

INTRODUCTION - WHAT SETS US APART

The Shire of Chittering is at a pivotal point in its economic evolution. Strategically located just north of Perth, the Shire offers a unique combination of lifestyle, industry, and natural assets that position it as an attractive location for investment, business growth, and tourism. With the completion of the Tonkin Highway, improved freight access, and the development of the Muchea Industrial Park (MIP), Chittering is increasingly connected to metropolitan markets, creating opportunities for logistics, agri-processing, development of tourism and other emerging industries.

The Shire of Chittering Economic Development Strategy 2026–2031 focuses local challenges and the factors that enable economic growth, while outlining the local government's role in this process. The streamlined Strategy is built around five interconnected pillars, each designed to promote sustainable growth, strengthen local businesses, attract visitors, enhance infrastructure, and build economic resilience. For each pillar, specific enablers and key performance indicators (KPIs) are identified to measure progress and success.

Chittering's landscape is equally compelling for lifestyle migration and tourism. Scenic valleys, high-quality agricultural land, and rural lifestyle living offer experiences not easily found in other regions within the same proximity to Perth. The Shire's towns provide a liveable environment with the potential for enhanced infrastructure, local services, and limited community facilities, making it attractive for families, young professionals, and small business operators seeking a regional lifestyle.

What sets Chittering apart is the combination of strategic location, natural amenity and lifestyle appeal. Its proximity to Perth allows businesses to access large markets while benefiting from lower costs and flexible zoning. The Muchea Industrial Park offers 1,150 hectares of industrial land, making it highly suitable for investment. At the same time, the Shire's natural and cultural assets support a growing visitor economy, providing opportunities for agritourism, trails, and eco-tourism experiences.

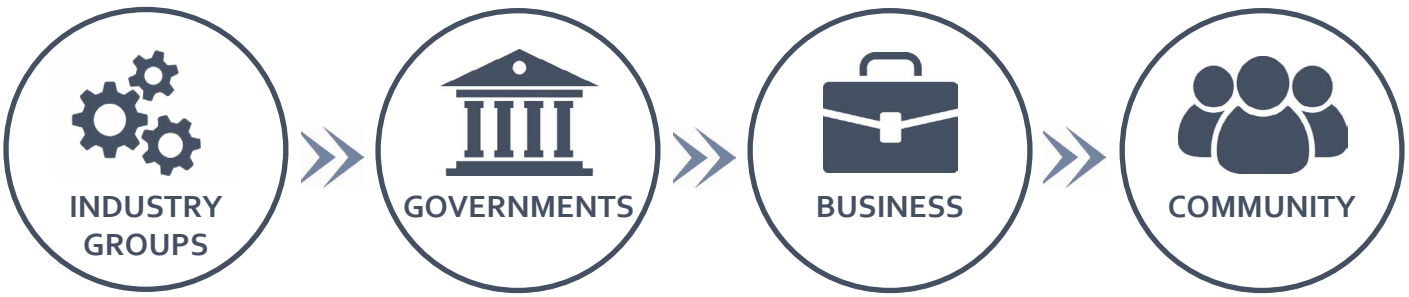
This integrated mix of industrial potential, lifestyle attractiveness, and tourism appeal forms the foundation of Chittering's economic development strategy. By leveraging these strengths, the Shire can attract new investment, support local businesses, enhance liveability, and build a resilient, diversified economy over the next decade.

Why the framework matters

The Strategy provides a clear, integrated approach for decision-makers, illustrating how investment, business support, tourism, infrastructure, and partnerships reinforce one another. By linking objectives, initiatives, and outcomes, the framework ensures resources are allocated efficiently, and progress can be measured against tangible results.

Who can contribute to this plan

The Shire of Chittering's Economic Development Strategy is shaped to be delivered through collaboration between multiple stakeholders. The Shire Council provides leadership and oversight, while local businesses, industry groups, and select associations inform initiatives. State and federal agencies, regional alliances, educational institutions, and the community all contribute to funding, expertise, workforce development, and engagement, ensuring the strategy is practical, inclusive, and aligned with local and regional priorities.



STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The strategy is structured around five pillars with interconnections and measurable outcomes.

Pillar 1 – Economic Growth & Investment Attraction

Why it Matters

This pillar focuses on attracting new investment and diversifying the Shire's economic base. It leverages key assets such as the Muchea Industrial Park and improved access, while supporting the evolution of local businesses into a diverse and resilient mix of small to medium enterprises.

Why it is Important

Sustained economic growth drives Gross Regional Product (GRP), job creation, and investment retention. Strategic and well-managed investment supports long-term sustainability and ensures the Shire remains competitive amid population growth and regional change.

Key Initiatives

1. Advocate for the Bindoon Road Realignment

   Continue to engage with state and regional stakeholders to prioritise road upgrades that enhance connectivity, safety, and freight efficiency.

2. Building flexibility into the Shire's Local Planning Strategy that creates an enabling environment for commercial and industrial developments.

3. Market the Shire's Competitive Advantages

   Develop and distribute an investment attraction prospectus and digital marketing materials that:

   - Highlight key investment opportunities.
   - Provide a clear overview of the Shire's business environment and lifestyle benefits.

- Share across industry networks, trade shows, and targeted investor engagement.
- Build strong partnerships and referral networks to identify potential investment leads.

4. Streamline Planning and Facilitation Processes

   Develop investor guides and improve pre-lodgement processes to ensure a transparent, simplified and efficient development approval experience; and

   Facilitate investment through introductions to relevant agencies and provide support for proponents throughout the investment journey.

5. Promote Education, Training and Workforce Readiness

   Strengthen partnerships between local businesses, tertiary institutions, and training providers to align skills development with industry needs; and

   Encourage tailored training programs to build local capacity and improve employment outcomes.

6. Support and Grow Local Small-to-Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

   Recognise that a large portion of new jobs and investment originate from existing businesses. Implement programs and initiatives that help local businesses innovate, expand, and become more competitive.

7. Identify Opportunities for Multi-Purpose Residential Housing Developments

   Identify and plan for the development of multi-purpose residential housing sites in Muchea and Bindoon to meet the needs of local workers, downsizers, and new residents.

Measures of Success

- Develop and distribute a comprehensive Investment Attraction Prospectus.
- A minimum of 10 investment, development, and business attraction opportunities supported by the Shire per financial year, where "supported" is defined as receiving documented facilitation, advisory assistance, or advocacy by Shire officers.

Action No.	Key Action Initiatives	Expected Outcomes	Key Stakeholders
1	Advocate for the Bindoon Bypass	Improved transport access and freight efficiency	Shire of Chittering, Main Roads WA, Regional Development WA
2	Flexible Planning Approach	Increased availability of development-ready land	Shire Planning, DPLH, Landowners
3	Develop Investment Attraction Prospectus	Increased investor awareness and engagement	Shire Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce
4	Streamline planning processes	Faster approvals, improved investor confidence	Shire Planning & Development, WALGA
5	Promote training and workforce readiness	Better skilled local workforce, reduced out-commuting	Shire, Local Businesses, Training Providers, TAFE
6	Support SME growth	Job creation, stronger local economy	Shire, Business Associations, RDA Wheatbelt
7	Identify opportunities and plan for multi-purpose housing developments	Increase availability of a diverse range of housing options for different demographics with access to essential services	Shire Planning, Landowners, Developers and Health Providers and local businesses

Pillar 2 – Local Business Development & Workforce Capability

Why it Matters

A strong local business community and skilled workforce are the foundation of a resilient economy. Supporting existing enterprises to innovate, collaborate, and grow ensures that more of the economic value generated within the Shire stays within the community.

Local businesses are often the first employers, community sponsors, and service providers, their success directly enhances local prosperity. Strengthening the workforce helps reduce economic leakage to neighbouring regions, improves employment self-sufficiency, and builds capacity in emerging industries such as tourism, logistics and agribusiness.

By fostering partnerships with training providers, universities, and industry associations, the Shire can bridge the gap between local workforce capabilities and industry demand. This approach builds a stronger pipeline of skilled workers and empowers local people to participate fully in the regional economy.

Why it is Important

Most businesses within the Shire are micro or small enterprises, and local employment opportunities are limited. Strengthening business capability and workforce skills will:

- Retain talent and reduce the outflow of skilled workers to surrounding areas.
- Encourage entrepreneurship and business innovation.
- Build a more adaptable and future-ready workforce.
- Attract external investment by showcasing a skilled, reliable local labour pool.

Key Initiatives

1. Support the development of a local business growth program

   Collaborate with and support the Northern Valleys Business and Tourism Group (NVBT) to lead the design and delivery of the program: and

   Encouraging NVBT to build capacity within their organisation to deliver ongoing business growth initiatives as the industry representative body.

2. Partner with Vocational and Higher Education Providers

   Collaborate with TAFE, universities, and industry groups to design and deliver targeted skills programs, apprenticeships, and traineeships aligned to local industry needs; and

   Support pathways for youth and career changers to access local employment opportunities through trainee ships.

3. Enhance the Shire website to better support local businesses

   Easier access to grant, jobs, events, and practical information (such as guidance on development approvals); and

   Improving visibility and collaboration among local businesses through a more user-friendly and resource-rich online platform focusing on existing tools like the Shire website.

4. Promote Buy Local and Local Procurement Initiatives

   Implement a "Buy Local" campaign and strengthen local procurement policies to encourage residents, Council, and regional partners to source goods and services locally; and

   Highlight success stories and create incentives for local supply chain development.

5. Enhance the Night-Time Economy and Service Hubs in Bindoon

   Support the development of evening activities, hospitality venues, and small business clusters in Bindoon and surrounding areas to increase local spending, vibrancy, and employment opportunities.

Measures of Success

- Support a minimum of 15 local businesses annually through advisory services, workshops or facilitated programs.
- Deliver or co-host at least 4 business capability or workforce development activities per year.
- Number of night-time economy activations and business participation initiatives delivered

Action No.	Key Action Initiatives	Expected Outcomes	Key Stakeholders
1	Local Business Growth Program	Local Business Growth Program Facilitate connections, information sharing, and training for local businesses.	Lead: NVBT - lead, design and deliver the program Secondary Support Shire of Chittering
2	Partner with Vocational & Higher Education Providers	Workforce aligned to local industry needs; more apprenticeships	Shire, TAFE, Universities, Industry Associations
3	Refresh and Maintain Shire Website To Support Business Growth	Enhanced local visibility and collaboration; improved job matching	Shire, Local Businesses, Job Network Providers
4	Implement Buy Local & Procurement Policies	Increased local spending and economic retention	Shire Procurement, Local Businesses, Northern Valley Business Assoc.
5	Enhance Night-Time Economy & Regional Service Hubs	More vibrant town centres; increased visitor and resident spending	Shire, Local Businesses, Tourism WA, Local community groups

Pillar 3 – Visitor Economy and Tourism Development

Why it Matters

Tourism plays a vital role in diversifying the Shire's economy and showcasing its natural, cultural, and agricultural assets. By growing the visitor economy, the Shire can create new income streams for local businesses, expand employment opportunities, and strengthen community identity.

Chittering's authentic rural character, scenic drives, agritourism experiences, and proximity to Perth position it perfectly to attract day-trippers and overnight visitors seeking nature, food, wine, and outdoor recreation. Developing the tourism offer to include pop up / glamping accommodation to events and trails ensures that visitors stay longer, spend more, and contribute to a vibrant and sustainable local economy.

Why it is Important

Tourism:

- Diversifies the economic base and reduces reliance on traditional sectors.
- Increases local business turnover, especially in hospitality, retail, and agritourism.
- Enhances town vibrancy through events, dining, and cultural activities.
- Encourages private investment in accommodation options.
- Builds regional collaboration through partnerships in the Northern Valleys.

Key Initiatives

1. Develop a Tourism Action Plan

   Create a dedicated Tourism Action Plan that outlines a clear focus for tourism initiatives to be reviewed in a 24-month period including brand position, and investment priorities; and

   Emphasise the Shire's unique tourism assets such as trails, farm experiences, self-drive itineraries, local produce, and seasonal events.

2. Attract Private Investment in Accommodation

   Facilitate and promote opportunities for eco-accommodation, farm-stay experiences, glamping, and short-stay facilities; and

   Streamline approvals and provide clear guidelines for sustainable tourism development.

3. Strengthen the Northern Valleys Brand and Partnerships

   Collaborate with neighbouring Shires, Gingin and Victoria Plains, to deliver cohesive marketing, visitor itineraries, and cross-promotion; and

   Position the region as an accessible rural tourism destination within reach of Perth.

4. Enhance Visitor Information, Wayfinding, and Digital Tools

   Introduce cohesive signage, interpretive trails, and digital visitor apps to improve navigation and storytelling; and

   Develop new print and online collateral showcasing local attractions, businesses, and itineraries.

5. Activate Vibrant Tourism Hubs and Experiences

   Build on local creativity by supporting initiatives such as a container café strip, pop-up events, and seasonal markets; and

   Develop a camping facility at the old Lower Chittering Community Hall site to attract more overnight visitors and caravanners.

6. Deliver Signature Events and Festivals

   Develop and promote annual flagship events that reflect local culture, produce, and heritage; and

   Encourage private event organisers and community groups to contribute to a year-round events calendar.

7. Partner for Regional Marketing Corridors to promote likeminded activities

   Work with Tourism WA, Destination Perth, and regional associations to co-market Chittering; and

   Advocate for investment in tourism infrastructure, trails (trails WA), and digital connectivity to enhance the visitor experience.

Measures of Success

- Tourism Action Plan developed within Year 1 and reviewed every two years.
- Facilitate or support a minimum of 5 tourism development or investment enquiries annually.
- Support delivery of at least 3 events or tourism activations per year.
- Participate in a minimum of 3 regional or state tourism marketing initiatives annually.

Action No.	Key Action Initiatives	Expected Outcomes	Key Stakeholders
1	Develop Tourism Strategy	Clear direction for investment, marketing, and product development	Shire of Chittering, Tourism WA, RDA Wheatbelt
2	Attract Private Investment in Accommodation	Increased overnight capacity and visitor expenditure – Campgrounds, glamping etc	Shire, Private Developers, Investors
3	Strengthen Northern Valleys Branding	Unified regional tourism identity and increased visitation	Shire's of Chittering, Gingin, Victoria Plains, NVBT
4	Improve Wayfinding & Visitor Tools	Enhanced visitor experience and navigation	Shire, Tourism WA, Local Businesses
5	Activate Tourism Hubs (e.g. café strip, Night markets)	Increased local vibrancy and extended visitor stays	Shire, Local Businesses, Event Organisers
6	Develop Signature Events	Stronger destination appeal and repeat visitation	Shire, Community Groups, Event Partners
7	Regional Marketing	Improved visibility and supporting trails, self-drive itineraries	Shire, Tourism WA, Destination Perth

Pillar 4 – Infrastructure, Connectivity & Liveability

Why it Matters

Infrastructure and connectivity are the backbone of a thriving and resilient community. Well-planned roads, utilities, digital networks, and public amenities enable business investment, tourism growth, and residential development.

As the Shire's population and economy expand, the delivery of modern, reliable, and connected infrastructure becomes essential. Quality infrastructure not only supports economic activity but also enhances liveability, making Chittering an attractive place to live, work, visit, and invest.

Why it is Important

Infrastructure underpins every aspect of economic and community development. Without upgraded roads, utilities, and high-speed internet, growth is constrained, and opportunities for investment, workforce attraction, and tourism are limited.

Strategic infrastructure investment:

- Improves accessibility and safety across the Shire.
- Enhances town centres and public spaces, fostering community pride.
- Enables new housing, business, and tourism developments.
- Strengthens digital connectivity to support local SMEs and remote work.
- Increases resilience to population growth and environmental change.

Key Initiatives

1. Conduct a comprehensive Infrastructure Gap Analysis to Support Industry Growth

   Audit existing utilities, digital infrastructure, and community amenities to identify gaps relative to current and projected community needs; and

   Use the findings to advocate to State and Federal governments for the infrastructure required to support the Shires growing population requirements, recognising that responsibility for major infrastructure delivery lies with these levels of government rather than local government.

2. Advocate for Funding of Strategic Infrastructure Projects

   Work with State and Federal Governments to secure funding for road upgrades, town centre enhancements, footpaths, and trail connections; and

   Ensure infrastructure priorities align with regional growth and transport strategies.

3. Upgrade Public Facilities and Placemaking Initiatives

   Invest in the renewal of parks, community halls, and public spaces to improve amenity, accessibility, and aesthetic appeal; and

   Enhance the vibrancy of town centres through landscaping, public art, and street activation.

4. Enable Community Growth through Local Planning

   Review and update the Local Planning Strategy and develop a Public Open Space Strategy to accommodate new community facilities and public spaces, particularly in areas such as Lower Chittering; and facilitate social infrastructure planning that meets the needs of a growing population.

5. Facilitate Private Investment in Mixed-Use and Townsite Developments

   Encourage the development of mixed-use precincts that integrate retail, and community spaces; and

   Provide clear planning pathways and incentives for private sector participation.

6. Enhance Digital Connectivity and Smart Infrastructure

   Partner with DPIRD and telecommunications providers to expand high-speed internet and mobile coverage across the Shire; and

   Support digital initiatives that improve business operations, visitor experiences, and community connectivity.

Measures of Success

- Submit at least 3 external funding or advocacy submissions annually for priority infrastructure projects.
- Number of regional priority infrastructure and planning projects progressed
- Support external infrastructure funding applications, measured by the cumulative value of grant and funding submissions facilitated, coordinated, or endorsed by the Shire within each financial year.

Action No.	Key Action Initiatives	Expected Outcomes	Key Stakeholders
1	Deliver Infrastructure Development Plan	Coordinated delivery of infrastructure and growth enablers	Shire of Chittering, Main Roads WA, DPIRD
2	Advocate for Funding of Key Projects	Increased investment in roads, town centres, and public spaces	Shire, State & Federal Governments, RDA Wheatbelt
3	Upgrade Public Facilities & Placemaking	Enhanced liveability and community pride	Shire, Local Community Groups
4	Update Local Planning Scheme	Improved readiness for community and social infrastructure growth	Shire Planning, DPLH
5	Facilitate Mixed-Use Developments	More vibrant, integrated townsites and local services	Shire, Private Developers, Investors
6	Expand Digital Connectivity	Improved business productivity and community connectivity	Shire, DPIRD, Telcos, NBN Co

Pillar 5 – Strategic Partnerships

Why it Matters

Strong partnerships are essential for achieving sustainable growth and resilience. By working collaboratively with neighbouring local governments, regional agencies, state and federal departments, and the private sector, the Shire can leverage shared expertise, attract joint funding, and respond effectively to emerging challenges.

Strategic partnerships strengthen the Shire's ability to manage economic, environmental, and social change. They also ensure that local initiatives align with regional and state priorities, maximising opportunities for investment and long-term prosperity.

Why it is Important

Resilience is built on collaboration and adaptability. The Shire's capacity to manage risks from economic transitions to climate impacts, depends on its ability to work cohesively across sectors and jurisdictions.

By fostering strategic relationships, the Shire can:

- Access greater funding and investment opportunities.
- Improve coordination of infrastructure and regional projects.
- Strengthen local industry and workforce resilience.
- Ensure that planning and decision-making are informed by expert advice and evidence.
- Sustain long-term development through shared leadership and accountability.

Key Initiatives

1. Conduct Strategy Reviews

   Regularly assess the Economic Development Strategy to ensure it remains relevant, data-informed, and responsive to emerging opportunities and risks; and

   Engage community, industry, and regional partners in the review process.

2. Formalise Alliances with Neighbouring LGAs and Regional Partners

   Establish Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or partnership frameworks with key stakeholders such as neighbouring Shires, Regional Development Australia (RDA) Wheatbelt, and State agencies; and

   Coordinate cross-boundary initiatives in areas like tourism, and regional investment.

Measures of Success

- Formalise at least 3 strategic partnerships with regional or government stakeholders by Year 3.
- Deliver or participate in a minimum of 4 collaborative regional initiatives annually.
- Complete biennial reviews of the Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Action No.	Key Action Initiatives	Expected Outcomes	Key Stakeholders
1	Conduct Biennial Strategy Reviews	Strategy remains current, responsive, and aligned with regional priorities	Shire of Chittering,
2	Formalise Alliances with Neighbouring LGAs & Agencies	Stronger regional collaboration and shared project delivery	Shire, Gingin, Victoria Plains, RDA Wheatbelt, State Agencies

CONCLUSION

The Shire of Chittering's Economic Development Strategy provides a clear and actionable roadmap for sustainable growth, economic diversification, and community resilience. Through its five interconnected pillars, the Plan outlines how the Shire will leverage its unique assets, strengthen local enterprise, and attract new investment while maintaining the area's distinctive rural character and liveability.

Economic growth and investment attraction will be driven by the strategic use of assets such as the Muchea Industrial Park, improved transport links, and a pro-investment approach to planning and facilitation. Supporting existing businesses and building local workforce capability will ensure that growth is inclusive and that residents can access new opportunities close to home.

Tourism and the visitor economy are key growth areas, with Chittering's natural beauty, agritourism potential, and strong regional partnerships positioning the Shire as a destination of choice for authentic, nature-based experiences. Targeted initiatives in accommodation, events, and branding will help extend visitor stays and boost local spending.

Continued investment in infrastructure, connectivity, and liveability will underpin this growth. These foundations are critical to attracting residents, visitors, and investors alike.

Finally, strong strategic partnerships will ensure coordinated delivery and long-term resilience. Collaboration with neighbouring Shires, regional agencies, state departments, and industry stakeholders will amplify resources, align priorities, and help the Shire adapt to economic and environmental change.

Together, these pillars form a cohesive framework for achieving a thriving, diverse, and future-ready local economy, one that creates opportunities for residents, supports innovation, and celebrates the unique lifestyle and landscape that define the Shire of Chittering.

Chittering - *offering an idyllic rural lifestyle in Muchea, Lower Chittering, Chittering, Mooliabeenee, Bindoon and Wannamal*