



Date & time: Wednesday 22nd June 4pm-6pm Gratwick Hall, Civic Centre

Participants:

- Trish Brennan (Pilbara Development Committee)
- Ric Dale (Mission Australia)
- Steve McKernan (BHP)
- Owen Hightower (RPS)
- Filipe Viera (RPS)
- Daniel Marsh (WorleyParsons – Facilitator)
- Ned Baxter (WorleyParsons- Scribe)
- Cassandra Woodruff (ToPH – Scribe)

Session Objectives & Process

The session objectives were to gain stakeholder insight into focus questions prepared by the consultants.

A short presentation was made to introduce the Pilbara's Port City Growth Plan, summarise the relevant work done to date and present the context for the key issues.

The key issues identified by the consultant team were:

- Housing is critical for the attraction of a workforce, both mining and services
- Housing critical for the development of a sense of place and sense of community
- The aesthetic attributes of a place is important to the housing equation
- Energy efficiency likely to be a concern in the future
- Fly in/fly out not universally popular, but makes good sense when nothing else on offer
- There is inadequate housing and a mix of housing stock which does not fully address housing need
- The cost of construction in Port Hedland is a major contributor to poor affordability
- Key workers – police, teachers, nurses, utility workers - GEHA not able to maintain quality or quantity of housing
- There is currently an inadequate supply of serviced land
- Affordability dire for some sectors of the community

Confirming Key Issues

The group was invited to add additional issues perceived as key for consideration by the Growth Plan, or to qualify or redirect the consultant team on the list of issues. There was some discussion about the relative effect on affordability of (a) the price of subdivided land and (b) construction costs. The price of the median residential building block in Hedland is less than in the Perth Metropolitan area but the median house price is much higher.



Advice on Strategic Directions

Participants concurred with the analysis presented and agreed this issues impacts on many aspects of life in Port Hedland. The intractability of the issue was attributed to the complexity of the twin-speed economy and some participants suggested this was something that could not be overcome very easily.

“This housing issue is not going to have a straight forward to solution”

However, increased land supply was seen as the single biggest issue in addressing the problem:

“It’s obvious there is a demand for new houses to be built and governments need to get moving on creating the capacity to get the serviced land that is needed to do this; if this isn’t done all the other problems don’t matter”

Anecdotally, access to finance – both for individual home-owners/investors and larger scale investors – was a barrier to investment in new dwelling creation.

“Banks don’t understand the market here and because of that, are reluctant to lend against growing property values”

The education of commercial lenders should be considered as a short-term measure in the Growth Plan.

The part of high construction costs in limiting affordability was confirmed. In particular, a short-term solution is required to address the lack of temporary worker accommodation for housing construction workers.

“We don’t have the accommodation for new builders. Even if there was, the rental market demands that they are paid more, pushing the costs of building up even further”

Many options were discussed at length to overcome these issues with current initiatives such as ballot land allotments being part of the solution but not the whole solution.

Because housing and temporary worker accommodation is THE key issue linked to so many other issues inhibiting the growth of Port Hedland into a regional city, it was suggested the Growth Plan consider the creation of a ‘task-force’ in the model of the current ‘Dust Management Task Force’.