

Mr Sam Mastrolembo, CEO  
Shire of Broome  
Cnr Weld and Haas Street  
Broome, Western Australia, 6725

February 6, 2026

Via email [shire@broome.wa.gov.au](mailto:shire@broome.wa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Mastrolembo

### **Shire of Broome - State of the Environment Report – public comment**

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the State of the Environment report.

We provide the following comments broadly on the Shire's approach to environmental management –

1. Ratepayers are not satisfied with the Shire's management of the environment – this is evidenced from repeated surveys
2. The objectives of the 2016 Environmental Management Plan were largely unmet

*"...longstanding challenges remain in vegetation protection, stormwater infrastructure, fire management, and organisational capacity. Sediment levels flowing into Roebuck Bay have not shown a clear reduction, invasive weeds continue to spread, and gaps in governance persist. The community is increasingly seeking practical action, calling for not only policy development but also visible implementation, transparency, and accountability."*

Source: State of the Environment 2025 (Rev 1) Prepared by: Land Insights | Sept 2025

Given the limited commitments in the 2026 State of the Environment Report, we currently don't have confidence that much will change over the next 10 years.

While we understand the constraints of Local Government income, we note that several developments in Broome have attracted over \$100 million in state and Federal Government funding in total. Unfortunately, none of the funds were to improve the natural environment.

We strongly recommend the Shire adopt the following commitments –

1. Employ staff dedicated to environmental management and coordinating new projects – there are multiple avenues of funding the Shire could seek to protect assets -
  - a. the internationally significant Ramsar listed wetland Roebuck Bay which is also a marine park
  - b. monsoon vine thickets at Minyirr park and on the Dampier Peninsula
  - c. Pindan woodlands which contain the threatened *Corymbia paractia* community
  - d. Mangrove systems that are crucial for healthy fish and crustacean populations

2. Identify and adopt Water Sensitive Urban Design principles that are relevant to the climate and landscape here
3. Develop a Stormwater Management Plan with the Department of Water
4. Develop Management Plans for Shire reserves
5. Develop targets -
  - a. Aim to be net-zero by 2030 – through solar and battery
  - b. Replace Shire vehicles with electric vehicles
  - c. Have a water efficiency target based on kilolitres used per hectare of land
  - d. Have the highest possible energy and water efficiency targets in developments
6. Recognise that the Shire will be unliveable by the end of the century on current emission trajectory and –
  - a. Plan for increased heating – cool landscapes, cool facilities for people to be able to shelter in heatwaves
  - b. Have a policy of no new fossil fuel development
  - c. Encourage and advocate for renewable energy
7. Recognise that rising seas due to climate change will inundate parts of Broome and that ultimately, infrastructure to try and mitigate this will fail. We call on the Shire not to support largescale mitigation measures that destroy ecosystems and coastal habitats
8. We note that -

*“...the community expressed support for phasing out environmentally harmful practices, such as hydraulic fracturing...”*

We call on the Shire to have a policy position that objects to fracking.

Currently, the Shire of Broome cannot boast of being environmentally friendly or a leading Shire in terms of sustainability. Given that the general population, especially younger generations, is becoming increasingly aware and is seeking better management of the environment and actively look for sustainability in the places they take holidays in, the Shire needs to up its game in terms of sustainability. It could even aim to be the most sustainable tourism destination in the country, if it has the appetite. It is very clear that this is what ratepayers are calling for.

Environs Kimberley recognises that Local Government leadership is not easy and can be incredibly challenging. We do note though that when the Shire of Broome advocates for development it has succeeded in obtaining large sums of funding for infrastructure. We believe the potential is there to become a sustainable town and Shire, if the will is there.

Environs Kimberley is aware of a whole of host of initiatives other Shires and Councils undertake for the environment and would be happy to discuss how a long-term sustainability strategy could be developed.

We provide some more detailed comments on the State of the Environment and Environmental Management Plan 2025 below.

Yours sincerely



Martin Pritchard  
Executive Director  
Environs Kimberley

## **Feedback on SOB State of the Environment and Environmental Management Plan 2025**

The report states that there are real challenges relating to.

- Land degradation
- Biodiversity loss
- Waste management

The report further states these are persistent issues linked to development and land usage stemming from poor policy and gaps in governance which hinder sustainable policy. The report states it is also vital that these issues be addressed however in the 9 years since the 2016 EMP report little has been done.

The report wants clear actions on “Strengthening biodiversity protection”, “Treating water as a valuable resource” and the “Need for innovation in waste management” yet delivers very little detail on how this will be accomplished.

The section on key stakeholders gives a description of each of those who were engaged in consultation for the report including Native Title Holders, DBCA and various community groups. Absent from this list were FESA, Water Corporation, Main Roads, Volunteer Bushfire Brigades and Remote Community administrators, all key groups to carrying out recommendations and actions described in the report. Were they consulted? Are they aware of their responsibilities? What is being done to engage them in the process?

The report talks about allocating funding to environmental programs including revegetation, coastal hazard adaption, feral animal control and waste minimisation however there is an absence of detail on costings and implementation.

The report also states that there are limited resources allocated for the environment. If this is the case how can there be an expectation that in the future there will be any change, as demonstrated by the following extract from the report.

*Community engagement throughout this process has demonstrated strong support for sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and climate adaptation. However, participants also expressed frustration with the perceived lack of progress and the fragmented nature of available environmental information and support. Local community groups and school-led sustainability programs have contributed meaningfully to environmental protection efforts. Despite their dedication and outcomes, these initiatives often lack formal structural or financial support to expand their impact.*

It states in the report that only 122 people were engaged in giving feedback which accounts for less than 0.01 of Broome’s population. This could be attributed to apathy or a lack of confidence in the Shire of Broome to listen to feedback, especially when it comes to the state of the environment. It begs the question is the SOB really interested in environmental issues because they want to improve it for their constituents or are they paying them lip service because of statutory or governance requirements? See below an extract from report.

*The first role available to the Shire is the allocation of funding to environmental programs... the Council demonstrates its priorities and provides the resources needed to turn plans into action. Effective administration involves leading by example, supporting others, and sharing the successes of funded projects with the community and stakeholders.*

*Promoting environmental education in culturally appropriate, practical, and engaging formats which also celebrate local achievements, will be essential to build trust and momentum over the coming decade.*

Please see below specific comments related to EMP actions

#### **Topic 4: Land Management**

##### **5.6 EMP Actions (2025-2035)**

###### **Action 1.4 on pg 46 of the document**

Don't support the formation of a staff-based Environmental Technical Group as described in 1.4, particularly if an Environment Officer is not employed. If existing staff have the capacity and skills to address the issues in this report, why is it not happening already?

What is needed is a group that merges the expertise of staff with community and Councillor representatives who have on ground expertise. There are several precedents. Eg the Shire already has Reference or Workings Groups who monitor implementation of Shire reports (eg Arts & Culture; Community Safety). There needs to be a similar group monitoring progress with implementing the SOE report's Action Plan. If this was formed, then it would be OK for the Shire to have a Technical Group as long as it fed info into the Working/Reference Group.

#### **Topic 5: Biodiversity**

###### **Action 2.3 on pg 63 of the document**

Suggest illegal activities should include actions to reduce dumping.

###### **Action 2.9 on pg 66 of the document**

The SOE states the Shire's Animal Management Plan includes actions to manage and capture feral cats and reduce numbers and that \$5K is allocated to this activity. However, looking at the Animal Management Plan reveals that Objective 5 only includes 2 activities for feral cat management – procuring additional feral cat traps to be loaned to community members and reviewing procedures and fees for processing feral cats captured on private property. These activities, while valuable, are unlikely to have any real impact on feral cat numbers, particularly out of the Broome town-site. Far more drastic actions are required to get any traction on feral cat numbers.

#### **Topic 6: Water Resources**

##### **2025 Situation Engagement Outcome on pages 74 and 75 of the document**

Paragraph 2 on both pages refers to concerns about the ecological integrity of Roebuck Bay due to drains carrying weed seed. This must also refer to Minyirr Park as drains on the western side of the Broome peninsula all carry weed seed into Minyirr Park with obvious catastrophic results.

###### **Recommendation 3.5 on pages 79 and 80 of the document**

Recommendation for the SOE plan that all future Precinct Plans and Structure Plans incorporate water-sensitive urban design principles as an essential element of any planned development or development proposal.

Additional actions for the Shire for the Water Resources section

- Improve management of properties with septic systems to ensure there is no leaching into ground water
- Ensure that no further bores are drilled within the townsite including Coconut Wells and explore options for making owners of bores pay for their use of water.

## **Topic 8 Waste Management**

### ***6.8 Investigate opportunities for monitoring noise, dust and odour emissions on pages 114 and 115 of the document.***

There needs to be some background information about this issue in the initial section of Topic 8. The number of aircraft flights and heavy haulage trucks travelling on Gubinge Road has increased markedly since 2016 and now causes distress and annoyance to many residents. Action is needed to establish how near these pollutant levels are to nationally agreed unacceptable levels and what mitigation strategies could be deployed to reduce the impacts on resident's amenity.

*Change 6.8 "Investigate opportunities for monitoring noise, dust and odour emissions" to 'Advocate with relevant agencies who are tasked with monitoring noise and air pollution to ensure that they undertake regular best practice monitoring of these matters in the Broome townsite particularly at peak periods to establish baseline data and annual change'.*

## **Additional General Comments on EMP Actions**

### **Land Management**

- Urban expansion leads to environmental degradation clear guidelines needed to minimize this.
- Government agencies, Main Roads, DFES, Water Corp. Landcorp need to be engaged, partnered with and be made accountable.
- Native Title holders are engaged.
- Very community group driven, shire funding needs to recognise and reward this.

### **Biodiversity**

- Feral cat control implemented but little detail how it will be ongoing and effective.
- More support needed for community groups to educate wider community.
- No indication in EMP about noise, light or air pollution.

### **Water Resources**

- Still massive reliance on Broome aquifer. Will we see a repeat of Hedland issue?
- Runoff into Roebuck Bay still a major issue, roads acting as drains contribute to the problem. Kerbing in Old Broome adds to this again.
- Education needed, Broome one of highest water users per capita in WA.
- What is the recycled water plan?

### **Coastal Environment**

- Need to accept our coastal environment will be affected by rising sea levels and mitigation will only be a temporary measure.
- Closing Cable Beach for longer periods needs to be considered.

## **Energy Emissions**

- Solar uptake high.
- EV charging station a positive step forward

## **Waste Management**

- Poor recycling uptake means more education needed. Reduction and reuse first.
- Free mulch an excellent initiative.
- Environmental Officer a non-negotiable.

## **Climate Change**

- 2025 EMP recognizes Climate Change as a standalone, however this is only the first step
- Climate change will impact all other management areas.
- Will affect liveability of Broome.