



Resilient Families; Strong Communities

Pilbara Town-Based Reserves Project

What is this project?

Some Aboriginal people in Western Australia still live on reserves in or adjacent to a regional town.

Many of these residents are separated from economic and social opportunities in the town by poor living conditions, missing services and unusual legal arrangements for land and housing.

Through regional services reform, the State Government will progressively resolve these problems. The work will start in the Pilbara, with a \$20 million project to ensure that the reserve residents receive the same services and opportunities, and have the same payment responsibilities, as other residents of the town.

What is a town-based reserve?

A town-based reserve is a discrete place within the boundary of, or in close proximity to, a gazetted town, inhabited by Aboriginal people and located on a Crown reserve designated for the use and benefit of Aboriginal people.

How many town-based reserves are there in the Pilbara?

There are eight town-based reserves in the Pilbara, two of which are uninhabited. About 320 Aboriginal people live across the six inhabited reserves (see table below).

What services do reserve residents currently receive?

Services vary by reserve, but in contrast to the rest of the town:

- few households receive local government services
- Water Corporation services typically stop at the reserve boundary
- residents cannot own their homes
- there are usually no individual household lots and no gazetted roads or parks.

Few households on a reserve pay against an individual household power or water meter, or pay local government rates.

What does the project involve?

To ensure reserve residents have the same services and obligations as other town residents, the State Government can either:

- extend services and obligations to residents in their current homes, or
- support them to relocate to parts of the town that receive all relevant services and have all relevant responsibilities.

Both options involve capital and support service costs. The project will be undertaken in two stages:

- Stage 1: consultation with residents and other stakeholders (native title holders, local governments, State Government agencies and utility providers) about the development of a plan for each reserve.
- Stage 2: implementation of each plan.

How long will each stage take?

Stage 1 may take up to 12 months, depending on the complexity of the particular reserve and the levels of agreement. Stage 2 may take up to three years, depending on the extent of work to be carried out.

Why does the project include two abandoned reserves?

The State Government may still have legal responsibilities for these two reserves. As part of the project, the State Government is seeking to resolve those responsibilities in consultation with the relevant local government authorities and native title holders.

Who is managing the project?

The Pilbara Development Commission and Regional Services Reform Unit are jointly leading the project. They are working closely with government agencies, including the Aboriginal Lands Trust, Housing Authority and departments of Lands and Planning.

Table 1 – Pilbara town-based reserves

Reserve Name	Location	Houses	Approx. population
Tjalka Boorda (3 Mile)	Port Hedland	26 (10 occupied)	30
Parnpajinya	Newman	13 (11 occupied)	60
Bindi Bindi	Onslow	24	120
Cheeditha	Roebourne	14	30
Irrungadji	Nullagine	13 (12 occupied)	65
Goodabinya (Mirtunkarra)	Marble Bar	9	21
Tjalka Wara (12 Mile)	Port Hedland	Abandoned	
Pipunya	Marble Bar	Abandoned	