

# ROEBOURNE AND SURROUNDS

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

**NGARLUMA & YINDJIBARNDI  
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After colonisation, Aboriginal people in the Pilbara were forced to abandon traditional ways of life developed over thousands of years. They endured exploitation, oppression, violence, and massacres. Displaced from their homelands, many were relocated to the Roebourne Reserve, where living conditions were inhumane and assimilation into a foreign culture was the only path offered. Government decisions have consistently failed the community, often made without their input. Ngarda-Ngarli have faced ongoing harm through exploitation in the pastoral and pearling industries, the destruction of Country through mining and infrastructure development, and persistent disparity despite the wealth generated on their own lands. This timeline reflects the enduring impacts to the community.

### European Arrival

Francis Thomas Gregory and his exploration party land in Nickol Bay

**1861**



First Contact: Rock Art of a Ship near Roebourne - WA Museum

### Cossack Founded

Cossack was established in 1863, initially named Tien Tsin and later renamed to Cossack in 1872. It served as a key port for the pastoral, pearling, and gold industries.

**1863**

### Mt Welcome Station Established

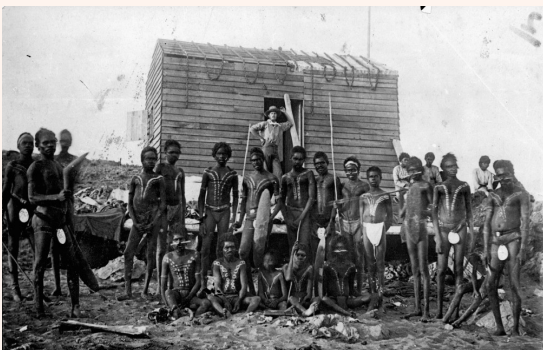
Pastoralists hired Aboriginal people under a "contract" system that often led to exploitation through poor wages and conditions. Some continued living traditional lives on Ngurra - Country.

**1864**

### Pearling Industry Emerges

Sparked by a struggling pastoralist asking his pearl shell-adorned Aboriginal servants to reveal their 'shell places', pearling began. The pearling industry commonly used 'blackbirding', forcibly or deceptively recruiting Aboriginal labour including women (in some cases heavily pregnant) and children as young as ten. Diving had a 50% survival rate. Delambre Island acted as a 'barracoon', holding Indigenous and Asian divers captive until they were required for pearl diving.

**1866**



Ngarluma People wearing Pearl Shell, Maitland River 1890's State Library WA

### Roebourne Established

In the same year, Roebourne becomes the first Gazetted town in the North West.

**1865**

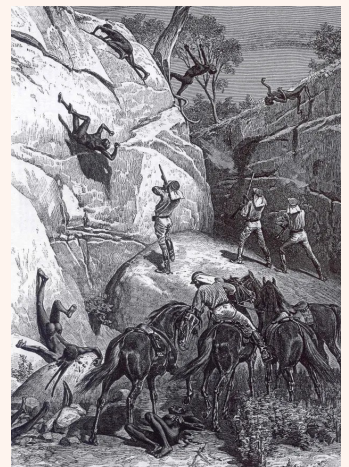
### Smallpox Epidemic

In 1865, the smallpox virus reached the area, killing Aboriginal people in epidemic proportions.

**1868**

### Flying Foam Massacre

The Flying Foam Massacre began February 1868 and continued for months, ultimately devastating the Yaburara people. It led to the loss of cultural continuity and custodianship of Murujuga, a land rich in ancient rock art. Descendants continue to seek recognition, protection and truth-telling.



Example of Colonial Violence  
Australian Museum

**1888**

### Discovery of Resources

Copper is Discovered at Whim Creek in 1888 & Gold Near Ieramugadu (Roebourne) the following year.

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### Leprosy First Recorded

WA's First recorded case was in Roebourne, 1889. It later spread to Aboriginal people and the Cossack Lazarette was established to quarantine those with the condition. In 1914, a doctor described the camp as cruel, lacking trees or shelter from the harsh sun.

**1889**

### Her Majesty's Regional Prison

The current Roebourne Gaol was built in 1896 by Aboriginal prisoners under colonial custody, replacing an earlier stone gaol constructed in 1887 (though the first gaol was established in 1884). That structure featured four cells fitted with iron rings in the floor for restraint, along with heavy neck chains.

**1896**



Aboriginal prisoners in chains outside Roebourne Prison 1896 - State Library WA

### Royal Commission on The Condition of the Natives (WA)

The 'Roth Report' examined conditions in north-west towns like Roebourne and Cossack. It found children as young as 10 were arrested without understanding their sentences, and 14-year-olds were chained like adults. Some prisoners were chained for up to three years. Chains were briefly banned, then reinstated for another 52 years. In the pearling industry, Aboriginal people worked under indentured conditions with no wages, only rations, clothing, blankets, and medical care. Employers were not vetted, so even known criminals could hire Aboriginal workers without oversight. The findings led to the Aborigines Act 1905, which gave the Chief Protector control over Aboriginal lives and employment. It did little to improve their treatment and instead entrenched coercive state control, especially over children and families.

**1905**

### Point Samson Established

Gazetted in 1909, Point Samson replaced Cossack as a port due to silting. From the late 1940s to 1966, it became a key site for exporting blue asbestos from Wittenoom, with the jetty used to load asbestos trucked in from the mine inland.

**1909**

### Moseley Royal Commission

Allegations of slavery, mistreatment of Aboriginal people, and abuse of Aboriginal women led to a Royal Commission, resulting in 26 recommendations. Key proposals included making all existing reserves permanent and exclusive to Aboriginal people, relocating native camps away from towns, and requiring permits for Aboriginal people to enter towns.

**1935**

### Ngarda-Ngarli Forced from Tablelands to Roebourne

In the late 1920's, the Government relocated Aboriginal people from ration camps to coastal reserves. After the 1927 closure of the Tablelands Ration Camp (Buminyjinha), Yindjibarndi people were moved to 'Two Mile' Reserve near Roebourne.

**1927**



PEOPLE AT TWO-MILE, 1929-1933.  
IMAGE COPYRIGHT OF KIM FLETCHER

'People at Two-Mile' - Juluwarlu Group

**1936**

### Native Administration Act 1936

The 1936 Native Administration Act amended the Aborigines Act 1905, expanding the powers of the Chief Protector, renamed Commissioner for Native Affairs, by granting legal guardianship over all Aboriginal children under 21. It broadened the definition of "native" and enabled forced relocations, reinforcing assimilation policies.



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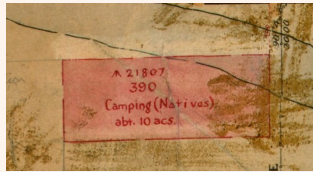
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### Roebourne Reserve #21807 Formally Established

**1938**

Created February 2nd 1938, for "Camping Natives". For a long time the reserve lacked basic facilities, a fact which station owners used as an excuse for not improving conditions for their workers. The reserve remained until May 2nd 1975. At one point it grew to 300 inhabitants and was the largest reserve in WA.

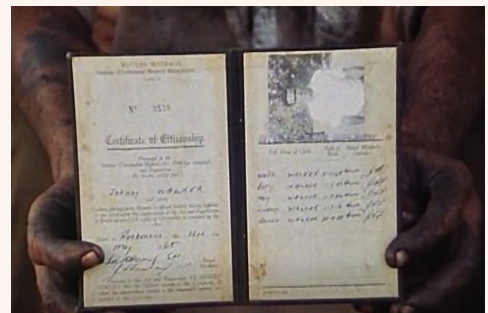


Roebourne Map 1953 - State Records WA

### Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act (WA)

The Act allowed Aboriginal people to apply for citizenship if they renounced cultural ties and met strict conditions including living apart from community, adopting "civilised" habits, speaking English, and being disease-free. While citizenship granted legal rights, it erased identity; many called the certificates "dog licences." The process was invasive and final. The Act was repealed in 1971.

**1944**



Certificate of Citizenship - Exile and the Kingdom 1993

### Pilbara Aboriginal Strike

On May 1st 1946, around 700 Aboriginal pastoral workers across 25 different stations. Aboriginal workers demanded fair pay and conditions, station labor costs rose. Many Aboriginal people walked off stations, protesting generations of unpaid and poor working conditions. The strike continued to 1949. The government gradually closes ration camps with the exception of the Roebourne Reserve.

**1946**

### Connection to Country

*"Natives of this area are very much attached to their home country, and until recently accepted inferior conditions rather than leave."*

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs

**1951**

### Aboriginal Children Still Denied Schooling

In the 1952 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs it was noted that Ngarda-Ngarli children were excluded from the town school due to objections from local authorities and residents. The reserve community fought for their own school, leading to the creation of a separate 'native school' in 1955. Aboriginal children were allowed to join the Primary School in town in 1961.

**1952**

**Roebourne described as the  
"most neglected district north of  
the twenty-sixth parallel"**

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs

**1953**

### Native Welfare Act (WA)

The Act gave the Commissioner of Native Welfare broad powers over Aboriginal people, including legal guardianship of children, which led to widespread removals and contributed to the Stolen Generations. Its legacy continues to affect communities like Roebourne through intergenerational trauma and loss of cultural connection.

**1954**

### At least 150 'natives' live in the Reserve.

*"No 'full bloods' live in Roebourne town. At least 150 'natives' live in the Reserve. 30 children who live in humpies walk to school each day."*

**1956**

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs



Ngarda Ngarli Children 1948 - State Library WA

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### Roebourne Reserve Numbers Continue to Grow

*"There is little change in this category from last year. The greatest need still seems to be in Roebourne. The population on this reserve is still increasing and is in the vicinity of 120 permanents. Itinerants have at times raised this number to 200."*

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs

**1957**

### Conditions Continue to Deteriorate at the Reserve

*"The school-room, which over 60 native children now occupy, has now been condemned for some time. Lighting is bad and it is unsafe in cyclone weather."*

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs

**1959**

### Offshore Oil & Gas Exploration

#### NEW MOVE IN W.A. OIL SEARCH

PERTH, Tuesday.—The California Asiatic Oil Co. will take up half of Shell's interest in the permit to explore an area of 103,700 square miles off the north-west coast of Western Australia.

The permit to explore the area was granted to Woodside (Lakes Entrance) Oil Co. N.L., in May 1963, and early this year Shell Development (Australia) Pty. Ltd. and Burmah Oil Co. of Australia each took up a one-third participating interest in the permit.

The Canberra Times 5/6/64

Woodside pays £100 for a permit to explore 370,000km<sup>2</sup> off the Western Australian coast. First oil is discovered in 1964 on the North West Shelf by Western Australian Petroleum Ltd (WAPET) and Chevron joined Woodside and Shell in an exploration joint venture which later became the North West Shelf Project.

**1963**

### The Same Year: The Native Welfare Act

The Native Welfare Act (WA) comes into effect and emphasises the 'economic and social assimilation' of 'natives', and specified that only 'natives' and specified persons were to enter or remain on reserves.

### Roebourne Reserve

North-West Division - *"It is recognized that the need for native reserves to be maintained within this Division will remain for years to come notwithstanding the implementation of a policy of suitable natives graduating to transitional dwellings in townships."*

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs

**1965**

### Roebourne Reserve Conditions Remain Unchanged

*"It was not possible during the year to extend the water system or improve the laundry facilities as intimated as likely in last year's report. Facilities on the reserve remain basically unaltered with the exception of a three-roomed hut built from bush timber and other scrap material. This was constructed by a patrol officer and natives belonging to the reserve."*

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs

**1958**

### Iron Ore Embargo is Lifted

In 1960, the Australian Government lifted its iron ore export embargo, opening the Pilbara to large-scale mining. This shift, driven by global demand, especially from Japan, triggered a rush for leases and transformed the region into a major iron ore hub.

**1960**



A giant power shovel and 95-ton trucks working on the Hamersley railway, May 1966  
National Museum Australia

### Dampier Construction

Construction begins on the town of Dampier, Parker Point Iron ore facility and the railway connection between Mt Tom Price and Dampier.



Rail construction, Dampier, September 1965 - State Library WA

**1965**



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### First Shipment of Iron Ore Exported from Dampier

**1966**



Iron ore loaded into Houn Maru at Dampier 22 Aug 1966 - State Library WA

Iron ore was transported from the Mount Tom Price mine via the Hamersley & Robe River railway to Parker Point at Dampier, and then loaded onto the ship, Houn Maru, bound for Japan.

### Dampier Salt Established

In 1967, WA passed the Dampier Solar Salt Industry Agreement Act, approving a deal with Dampier Salt Limited to establish a solar salt operation, which began production that year.

**1967**

### The 1967 Referendum

On 27 May 1967, Australians voted to amend the Constitution, allowing Aboriginal people to be counted in the census and enabling the federal government to make laws for them. While it did not grant full rights or end discrimination, it was a powerful step toward recognition and laid the groundwork for future advocacy and reforms.

### Karratha Planning Begins

By 1968 Dampier had outgrown its original plan and planning of the new town of Karratha begins. First buildings are constructed in 1970 and first residents begin to move in by mid 1971. The town was a State government - Hamersley Iron project to meet the expanding accommodation needs of the mining company.

**1968**

**1968**

### Resource Industry Impact to Cultural Sites

*"Expanding industrial activity, particularly in the fields of oil and mineral exploration, have brought to notice sites of cultural significance to Aboriginies, which were previously known only to the Aboriginies themselves."*

Annual Report Of the Commissioner of Native Affairs

### New Homes in Wickham

Gazetted on November 27, 1971. The town was established to provide housing and support facilities for the Cliffs Western Australia Mining Company's operations at the nearby Cape Lambert port.

**1971**

**1971**

### Mob Still on the Reserve

12 kilometres from the newly constructed town of Wickham, Ngarda-Ngarli continue to live on the Roebourne Reserve. Meanwhile, due to the rapid influx of construction and mining workers, the Vic Hotel in Roebourne became one of the top five liquor outlets in WA. Buses were organized from the work camps and there would be 500 or 600 people crammed into the beer garden, where only jugs, not glasses, were served.



A family in front of their new house in Wickham 1971 - State Library WA



Living Conditions on the Roebourne Reserve - Juluwarlu Group

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### Aboriginal People told to Leave the Reserve

In January 1973, a deeply disruptive departmental decision was announced relocating Aboriginal people from the Reserve to a town area known as 'The Village'.

1973

### Pressure continues for People to Leave the Reserve

*"There was pressure on the reserve residents to leave, maintenance on the reserve ceased. Sewerage systems became overloaded, water and electricity supplies erratic. It literally became a 'cess-pool' by December 1974"*

At least 25 families refused to move into state housing near the cemetery known as The Village, saying, *"We never believed in living so close to where our people were buried."*

1974

### Gas Export Approved

In 1977, gas export approval was granted along with tax concessions to lower project costs. State and Federal governments also approved a combined domestic gas and LNG export plan.

1977

### Murujuga Chosen for Woodside Gas Plant

A port and land planning report on the Burrup Peninsula found no major conflict between industrial development and conservation, despite another report highlighting the area's high archaeological and scientific value and urging Aboriginal consultation. Approval is granted based on the port and land planning report, construction begins in 1980.

1978



Murujuga c1970's

Murujuga 2025

### Displaced again: The Village

In 1975, housing was built around Roebourne cemetery to relocate residents from the overcrowded reserve. It is likely that housing was built on top of gravesites. The community was not consulted, and many were profoundly distressed about living so close to the cemetery. A 1990 report to the Equal Opportunity Commission described it as *"an ill-conceived example of town planning, with disastrous consequences."* The relocation disrupted tribal and family structures, leading to a breakdown in discipline and respect systems.

1975

### The Reserve is Demolished

*"Our eviction from the reserve was accomplished by a Wajbala (White Man) trick. On the excuse that a cyclone was coming, the state told our people to evacuate the Reserve immediately. It turned out it was not the cyclone that destroyed our shacks and humpies, but State bulldozers, so those of our people that wanted to stay there had no choice."*

S. Warrie (Juluwarlu Group)

The Reserve was no longer maintained by the Community Welfare Department. An approaching cyclone became the Department's justification for abolishing the Reserve, deepening the social dislocation that had been unfolding for over a decade.

### Cheeditha Community

Cheeditha, also known as Old Woolshed, is a small dry community near Roebourne, founded by Yindjibarndi elders after the Old Reserve was bulldozed. Refusing to be relocated to the State Housing Village, they built their own community as an act of defiance and independence. 12 Houses are built 10 years later in 1985.

### Roebourne Gaol is Reopened

Aboriginal prisoners were detained in extremely harsh conditions at the Roebourne Gaol Precinct between 1887 and 1924. It was temporarily reopened between 1975 and 1984 to accommodate the overcrowded police prison of Roebourne. The prison was eventually replaced by Roebourne Regional Prison.



# ROEBOURNE AND SURROUNDS

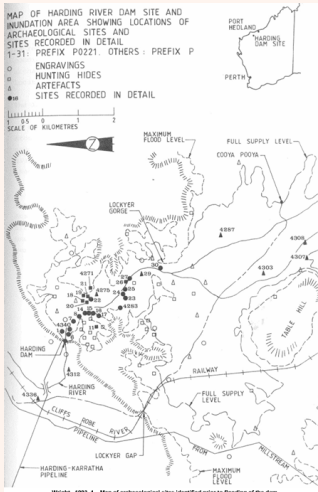
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### Harding Dam Construction

As industry and population grew, improved water access became a priority.



Dam construction led to the flooding and loss of culturally significant sites—such as thalu, rock art, ceremonial, burial, and camp sites which were of ongoing importance to the Yindjibarndi and Ngarluma people.

**1982**

### Deaths in Custody:

#### John Pat, Roebourne

In 1983, 16-year-old John Pat, a Yindjibarndi youth, died in police custody in Roebourne following a violent altercation between off-duty police officers and a group of Aboriginal men. He was taken into custody where he later died from head injuries. His death, amid longstanding concerns about the treatment of Aboriginal people by police, sparked national outrage and became a pivotal moment leading to the establishment of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1987. One in every three Aboriginal people in Roebourne was arrested in a period of three months during 1983.

**1983**

### Ngurrawaana Community

Ngurrawaana means 'a place of homecoming'. It is the only permanent residential community with secure title for Yindjibarndi people in their ancestral lands. Founded by respected elders it was pioneered in 1982 as an occupation of tribal country and an alcohol rehabilitation camp.

### Cyclone Exposes Housing Inequality

In 1984, Severe Tropical Cyclone Chloe struck near Roebourne, destroying homes, particularly the poorly built asbestos houses in 'The Village' provided by the State Housing Commission for Aboriginal families. These homes suffered the worst damage, leaving many homeless. The SES criticised the substandard building practices, and an enquiry later that year highlighted the lack of repairs and inadequate housing conditions.

**1984**

**1984**



Damage in the Village from TC Chloe - State Library WA



### Karratha Gas Plant (KGP)

#### Commissioned

In 1984, the same year homes were destroyed in Roebourne, the Karratha Gas Plant was commissioned, fed by the North Rankin offshore platform, with domestic gas delivery beginning across southern WA.



North Rankin 'A' platform on the North West Shelf, ca.1985  
State Library WA

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### Aboriginal Land Enquiry WA

The inquiry explored Aboriginal people's connection to land and recommended improved access for traditional purposes, protection of sacred sites, greater control over mining, compensation for dispossession, and reforms to the Aboriginal Heritage Act.

1984

*"We feel just this in our hearts - it is very hard to feel proud of ourselves. Nothing will be put right while our culture is being destroyed" - "All the mining companies didn't give us any consideration when Wickham, Cape Lambert, Karratha and Dampier were put in"*

The Aboriginal Land Inquiry - 17 Sept 1984

### Mingullatharndo Community

Also known as '5 Mile', the community secured a lease in 1991 and now offers employment, support for those overcoming addiction, and a safe, nurturing space for families and healing.

1991

### Native Title Becomes Law

The Native Title Act 1993 recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' connection to Country survived colonisation, giving them a legal process to claim land rights and make agreements, though many struggled under strict tests and limits where native title was extinguished.

1993

### LNG First Shipment

In June 1989 KGP produces it's first LNG, The First LNG shipment from the Northwest Shelf (NWS) later occurs.

1989

### Equal Opportunity Report

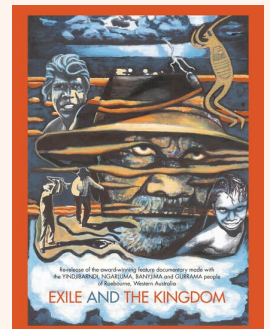
A 1989 Equal Opportunity Commission report found that Roebourne was significantly disadvantaged in funding and services compared to nearby towns, despite the Shire's wealth. Roebourne lacked basic infrastructure, and spending per resident was less than half the Shire average.

*"The amount of revenue generated by the Shire of Roebourne makes it one of the richest Councils in the State outside the metropolitan area. The contrast between the town of Roebourne and other towns in the municipality is extreme. 'Roebourne has been relegated to little more than a backwater suburb, primarily for Aborigines' where residents acknowledge 'Karratha's domination and their present peripheral status'"*

Equal Opportunity Commission Report 1989

### Exile and the Kingdom Released

A documentary by Frank Rijavec on the Aboriginal people of Roebourne, showing how colonisation, slavery, and mining booms affected the Yindjibarndi, Ngarluma, Banjima, and Gurrama peoples.



### 18 Years Later: NYFL Established

Eighteen years after construction began, the Ngarluma Yindjibarndi Foundation Ltd. was established in 1998 as the Traditional Owner representative body for the Woodside-operated North West Shelf Project.

1998

### Burup Land Acquisition

In 2000, the WA Government moved to acquire land on the Burrup Peninsula and Maitland for heavy industry, extinguishing native title of the Ngarluma Yindjibarndi, Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo, and Yaburara Mardudhunera peoples. The deal included compensation, land transfers, and heritage protections, but caused deep concern over loss of title and damage to sacred Country.

2000

1999

### Weymul Community Established

Weymul (Chirrata) is an Aboriginal community south of Karratha. In 2024 alcohol was banned to support health and safety and is adopting solar power, clean water, and native seed trials for sustainability and self-determination.

2001

### Ammonia Plant at Murujuga

In mid 2001 The WA Government announces Burrup Fertilisers' plans for \$600 million WA ammonia plant on the Burrup Peninsula. Construction begins April 2003.



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### Burrup and Maitland Industrial Estates Agreement - BMIEA

Signed in 2003, the BMIEA facilitated industrial development on the Burrup Peninsula by extinguishing native title rights of Traditional Owners in exchange for land and financial compensation. A key clause in the agreement prevents the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation (MAC), which represents five Indigenous groups, from lodging objections to development proposals on the land. This "no objection clause" has been widely criticized as silencing Traditional Owners and limiting their ability to protect sacred sites, including some of the world's oldest rock art. Many elders say they were not fully informed of the clause's implications at the time.

**2003**

### Pluto Gas Discovery

The Pluto gas field, North West Shelf of Australia, was discovered in April 2005.

### Ngarluma Native Title Determination

On 2 May 2005, the Federal Court recognized Ngarluma native title over areas around Wickham, Point Samson, and Karratha, excluding the towns due to legal complexities. A 2008 application later secured non-exclusive rights over the towns in 2015, affirming what Ngarluma people have always known:

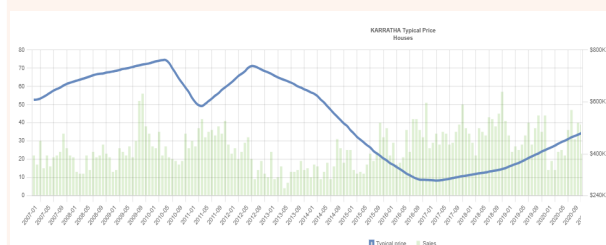
*"It's something that they have always recognised that they're Ngarluma people and it's their Country."*

**2005**

### The 'Boom'

Karratha's resource boom began around 2008, driven by major construction and global demand for iron ore. By 2014–2016, it was one of Australia's most expensive regional centres. As projects ended and demand fell, the downturn hit hard, property values dropped by up to 75% by 2019.

**2008**



Karratha House Prices & Sales 2007 to 2020 - Source: htag.com.au

### Murujuga: Second Gas Plant

Construction of the Pluto project began in late 2007, with gas exports initially planned for the end of 2010. However, due to weather and design issues, completion was delayed until March 2012, and production commenced in April that year.

**2007**



Pluto Project, Source: Woodside

### 'Roebourne Report' and the Tragedy that Followed

In June 2009 the *Roebourne Report* is released highlighting issues faced in the town including overcrowding, social and housing issues. Three months later a two-year-old boy is tragically killed from an electric shock at a Roebourne Homeswest property that lacked a required safety device, despite reports claiming it had been installed.

**2009**

### Roebourne poverty amid wealth 'a crime'

A news article in March highlights the ongoing disparity of the region despite the resource boom.

*"It seems to me that Roebourne is the blackfellas' town and Karratha is where the mainstream live," he said. "There's no consideration for investment into Roebourne, as opposed to the investment in Karratha. I think that it's criminal and it's a shame."*

The West Australian 17 Mar 2010

**2010**

A year after the release of the *Roebourne Report* the WA government announces funding and that 12 homes will be built and 25 homes in the Village demolished.

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### Technical Ammonium Nitrate (TAN) Plant

**2011**

The Yara TAN Plant was announced and received its first works approval in 2013. It officially opened in September 2017 and is located at Murujuga, adjacent to Burrup Fertilisers, in which Yara acquired a majority interest in 2012.

### Shire of Roebourne Name Change

The name change is discussed at a council meeting and is strongly opposed by Roebourne residents, with many feeling it disregarded the town's Aboriginal heritage. The community voiced their frustration, "This place is growing because of our minerals and deposits on our land and yet they don't recognise us as well." Despite opposition the name is changed to City of Karratha on July 1st 2014.

**2013**

### Prison Scrutiny

**2014**

Roebourne Regional Prison was criticised in 2014 for overcrowding, extreme heat, and poor infrastructure, with cells reaching 50°C and lacking air conditioning. With high reoffending rates and limited rehabilitation, 30 recommendations were made to improve conditions. Air conditioning was announced in 2022, delayed through 2024, and finally installed in mid-2025, ending 141 years of extreme heat exposure for prisoners.

### 6718 Advantage Strategy

The 6718 Advantage Strategy, led by Roebourne's community, focuses on safety, education and healing. It helped shape the WA Government's West Pilbara Plan, aimed at addressing abuse and intergenerational disadvantage. While some progress has been made, such as safe houses and cultural programs, local elders have raised concerns about delays and missed opportunities. As of 2025, the community is still waiting for a formal progress report on the plan.

**2018**

### Inquiry into the Opportunities and Challenges of the Engagement of Traditional Owners

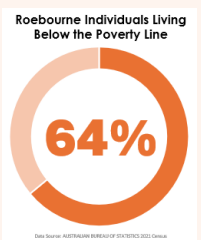
**2019**

The 2019 federal inquiry, found Traditional Owners are vital to Northern Australia's development but face barriers like complex land tenure and limited access to capital. It called for reforms to support Indigenous governance, improve resource access, and ensure Traditional Owners lead economic initiatives grounded in self-determination.

### Extreme Disparity Continues

According to the 2021 Census, Roebourne's median weekly income is \$366 for individuals and \$990 for families, well below the poverty lines of \$489 for a single adult and \$1,027 for a couple with two children. Roebourne's 2021 Census SEIFA score ranks it among Australia's most disadvantaged areas, reflecting high unemployment, low income, limited education, and poor housing. These conditions highlight ongoing barriers to opportunity and access to essential services.

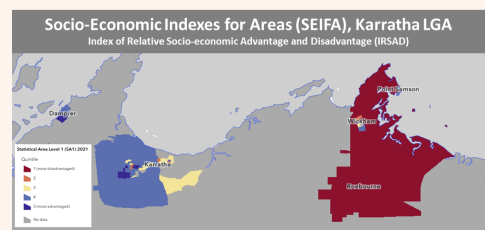
**2021**



### Pilbara an 'Economic Powerhouse'

In 2022, the Pilbara region experienced a robust economy, driven primarily by its mining industry. The Pilbara region reports Gross Regional Product (GRP) of \$74.8 Billion. The City of Karratha's GRP in 2022 totals \$12.3 billion. The median weekly wage for the Pilbara in 2022 is \$1,632.

**2022**





# ROEBOURNE AND SURROUNDS

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

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### Murujuga Construction:

#### Pluto Train 2

2022

The \$12.5 Billion dollar project, part of the Scarborough Energy Project, commenced in 2022. The second processing train will handle gas from the Scarborough field, with first LNG production targeted for 2026.



Arrival of Modules for Pluto Train Two - Dec 2024, Source: Woodside

### More Construction at Murujuga:

#### Perdaman Urea Plant

Construction of the \$6 billion Perdaman Urea Plant began in April 2023. In a joint announcement with the WA Government (May 2025), Perdaman reveals 31 of a planned 100 homes are being built in Karatha to house the plant's operational workforce.

2023



Perdaman Urea Plant Construction, Source: Clough

### North West Shelf Extension

2025

Woodside's proposed extension of the North West Shelf gas project and its Browse development awaits final approval. The extension would allow the Karatha Gas Plant to operate until 2070, processing gas from new sources like the Browse Basin.



Burrup Hub; Source: Woodside

2025

### Major Projects & Investment in a Diverse & Dynamic Region

At the 2025 Pilbara Summit, the theme "*Major Projects & Investment in a Diverse & Dynamic Region*" captured the momentum of a region on the cusp of transformation. With a project pipeline valued at nearly a quarter of a trillion dollars, the Pilbara is being positioned as a global frontier for innovation, development and economic growth.

### Economic Apartheid

This vision of prosperity stands in stark contrast to the lived reality of many Aboriginal people in the region, whose exclusion from economic benefits dates back to colonisation and has been perpetuated ever since. Professor Peter Yu, speaking at the Pilbara Summit, named this enduring injustice for what it is: "*economic apartheid*." The message was clear, this cycle of disparity cannot continue. Breaking it requires more than investment; it demands a fundamental shift toward First Nations-led development, cultural governance, and community-driven decision-making.

### World Heritage Listing

On 11 July 2025 the Murujuga Cultural Landscape is added to the UNESCO World Heritage list, recognising the Ngarda-Ngarli peoples' 50,000-year connection to Country and its vast collection of ancient rock art. This listing affirms the cultural and spiritual significance of Murujuga and strengthens Traditional Owners' role in caring for and managing the site. While the recognition is welcomed, concerns remain about nearby industrial activity. Still, Traditional Owners see the listing as a vital step in protecting their knowledge, lore, and Country for future generations.



Petroglyph Murujuga National Park  
Source: Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation



Overlooking lera mugardu, Roebourne

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