

Chapter 4

Economic & Social Context



4 ECONOMIC & SOCIAL CONTEXT

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the economic and social content within which this development will take place, as well as to present the anticipated economic and social benefits at both a local and regional scale.

4.1 ECONOMIC CONTEXT

According to Deloitte Access Economics' quarterly review for June 2015, the NT economy is expected to grow by 3.9 % in 2014 – 15. For that period, the NT is expected to have the highest economic growth of all jurisdictions (which range from 0.6 % in the Australian Capital Territory to 2.9 % in New South Wales). Nationally, the economy is expected to grow by 2.4 %. Deloitte Access Economics further state that growth in the NT is expected to be underpinned by private equipment, engineering and commercial investment. This is expected to be partly offset by a decrease in private housing investment.

The *Territory Economic Review* published by September 2015 by the NT Government Treasury confirms that in 2014 – 15 private capital expenditure in the NT increased by 11.3 % to \$12.8 billion, the highest level on record. This was the highest increase of all states, which varied between a 14.6 % decline in Queensland and a 7.4 % increase in Tasmania. Private capital expenditure in the NT for 2014 – 15 was driven by non-dwelling construction activity which increased by 14.1 % to \$9.5 billion. This was partly offset by a decrease of 12.3 % in new dwelling investment. That decline follows a strong increase in the previous year when a number of large, multi-unit dwelling complexes were constructed; however, the value of dwelling construction in the NT remains at elevated levels.

4.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

In order to consider the potential social impacts of the development, it is important to understand the social profile of the area in which it would be built, and the demographic characteristics of people in the surrounding area. The following demographic profile is based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *2011 Census of Population and Housing*. The study area is located within the census small area (SA1) 7103507, which is identical to the Statistical Suburb of Noonamah (as shown in Figure 4-1) within the Municipality of Litchfield (see Figure 1-4). Changes in the boundaries of this census area between the 2006 and 2011 censuses make time series comparisons difficult.

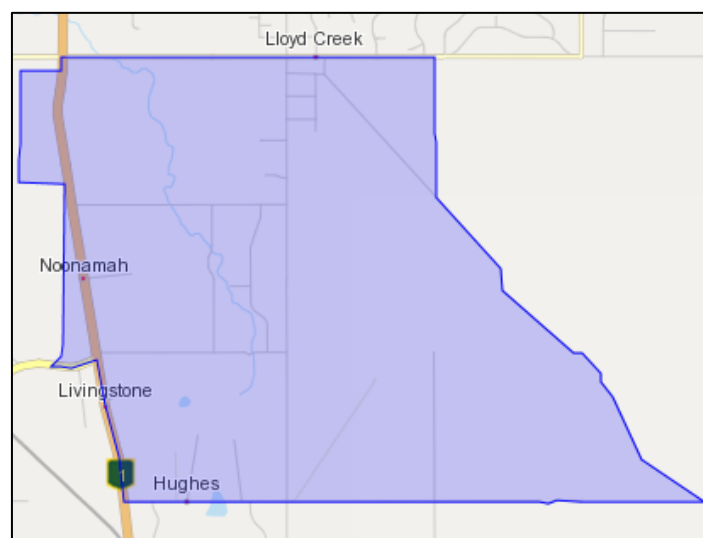


Figure 4-1. Map showing the extent of the Statistical Suburb of Noonamah as used by ABS

4.2.1 Demographic profile

Noonamah

In comparison with the Municipality of Litchfield – Noonamah showed the following demographic characteristics (see Table 4-1):

- A very small population of 528 residents.
- Higher proportions of babies and young children (0 – 4 years) and older adults (55 – 64 years), but a lower proportion of people aged 5 – 24 years. These factors contribute to a median age of 37.
- A higher proportion of single parent families and a smaller proportion of couples with no children. The proportions, however, were similar to the NT average.
- Almost 10 % of the population identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage, which is higher than the municipal average but considerably lower than the NT average.
- Only one quarter of the population completed high school. There are comparatively higher proportions of technician and trades workers, with the highest proportion of workers employed in the construction industry, followed by public administration and safety.
- A higher proportion of the population live in dwellings classified as ‘other’ types. This can include caravans, cabins, improvised dwellings and flats attached to shops, and may include accommodation for workers on resource projects within the municipality.
- Rates of home ownership are lower, with a high proportion stating tenure as ‘other’ or ‘not stated’. These factors may partly explain the transience of the population, with only around 40 % living at the same address as five years previously
- Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) rank areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. Despite higher median mortgage repayments (\$2,383 per month), Noonamah’s lower SEIFA value of 990 indicates it is an area of higher disadvantage compared with the Municipality of Litchfield.

Municipality of Litchfield

In comparison with the NT as a whole, the Municipality of Litchfield shows the following demographic characteristics (see Table 4-1):

- A very high growth rate (22 %) over the past five years.
- A similar age profile, although with a lower proportion of babies and young children, and a higher proportion of people aged over 55 years. At 36 years, the median age is notably older than the NT.
- A higher proportion of family households and a lower proportion of single parent families.
- Lower proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and a lower proportion of overseas born residents.
- The highest median household income of all three comparison areas.
- Comparatively high proportions of technician and trades workers. The most common industries are public administration and safety (a similar proportion to the NT), followed by construction.
- More than one third of residents have completed high school, which is lower than the NT rate. However, a higher proportion of residents have a certificate level qualification
- Most dwellings are detached houses. There is also a higher proportion of ‘other’ dwelling types.
- Higher proportions of properties either owned or being purchased, and a higher proportion of dwellings occupied.

- Higher rents (\$300 per week).
- A lower rate of socio-economic disadvantage overall.

Table 4-1. Key demographic characteristics for Noonamah, Litchfield and the NT

Blue shading indicates the highest value for that characteristic (where relevant)

Indicator	Noonamah suburb	Municipality of Litchfield	Northern Territory
Area (km²)	97.9	2903.2	1,348,198.7
Population (2006)	n/a*	15,554	192,900
Population (2011)	528	18,994	211,945
Change 2006 to 2011 (%)	n/a*	+22.1	+9.9
Population density (persons/km²)	5.4	6.4	0.16
Age groups (%)			
0-4	7.8	6.3	8.1
5-14	14.2	14.9	15.1
15-19	6.5	7.4	7.0
20-24	3.8	7.4	7.9
25-54	45.0	45.2	46.4
55-64	16.7	12.2	9.8
65 and over	6.1	6.5	5.6
Median age (years)	37	36	31
Household type (%)			
Family household	79.5	77.9	72.3
Lone person	18.2	18.7	21.9
Group household member	2.3	3.4	5.8
Average household size (no. people)	2.8	2.8	2.9
Family composition (%)			
Couples with children	47.7	47.8	46.3
Couples without children	33.9	38.4	34.0
Single parent families	18.3	12.8	17.9
Cultural diversity (%)			
Aboriginal or TSI heritage	9.9	7.1	26.8
Overseas born	9.1	12.3	16.6
Speaks language other than English at home	3.8	5.4	26.7
Most common non-English language spoken at home	Malay (1.1%)	Vietnamese 1.1%)	Kriol (1.9%)
Median weekly household income (\$)	1,465	1,767	1,674
Labour force status persons aged 15+ (%)			
Employed full-time	67.8	68.6	66.9
Employed part-time	20.2	19.7	20.1
Unemployed	4.7	3.4	5.3
Top three occupations (%)			
Professionals	-	-	19.9
Technicians and trade workers	23.7	20.1	15.1
Clerical and administrative workers	-	15.6	14.7
Managers	17.8	13.2	-
Labourers	13.2	-	-
Top three industry of employment (%)			
Public administration and safety	12.4	20.7	20.9
Construction	15.6	13.5	-
Retail trade	-	7.8	-
Health care and social assistance	-	-	10.0
Education and training	-	-	8.9
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	8.7	-	-
Highest year of school completed (% aged 15+ and not in school)			
Year 12	26.2	35.3	39.9
Post school education (% aged 15+ with qualifications)			
Postgraduate degree	1.1	2.2	4.7
Graduate diploma/certificate	0.0	2.1	3.2
Bachelor degree	9.1	12.6	18.4
Diploma/Advanced Diploma	7.3	11.0	11.6
Certificate level	31.0	42.8	33.4

Indicator	Noonamah suburb	Municipality of Litchfield	Northern Territory
Housing types (%)			
House	84.5	86.0	67.6
Semi-detached house	0.0	3.9	11.3
Apartment	0.0	1.6	16.6
Other	15.5	8.3	4.1
Housing tenure (%)			
Owned outright	26.2	28.4	15.7
Owned with a mortgage	46.2	50.1	30.6
Rented	18.5	18.2	49.1
Other/not stated	9.2	3.4	4.7
Dwelling status (%)			
Occupied private dwellings	90.3	93.3	87.6
Unoccupied private dwellings	9.7	6.7	12.4
Housing costs			
Median mortgage repayment (\$/month)	2,383	2,167	2,058
Median rent (\$/weekly)	275	300	225
Motor vehicle ownership			
Average motor vehicles per dwelling	2.2	2.3	1.7
Same usual address as 5 years ago	41.2	49.0	46.9
SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage	990	1030	925.8

* There were changes in the boundaries (and hence area) of the Noonamah census area between 2006 and 2011

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2006. SEIFA data from ABS 2011 and Profile.id City of Darwin (NT)

4.2.2 Economic profile

At the 2011 Census, there were approximately 1,750 businesses within the Municipality of Litchfield – including horticultural, agricultural and industrial interests. The most common industries in which the Municipality of Litchfield residents worked were public administration and safety (20.7 %) and construction (13.5 %). The most common occupational category was technicians and trade workers (20.1 %), followed by clerical and administration workers (15.6 %).

Current developments within the municipality include:

- Coolalinga Shopping Complex
- New prison at Holtz
- Ichthys LNG Project

An \$85 million abattoir was recently completed at Livingstone and a new \$150 million hospital is planned for Holtze.

4.3 EXISTING SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Although there is little in the way of social infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of Noonamah Ridge, there are many local-level facilities in the various rural communities near the site. These can be relatively easily accessed by vehicle at present. In addition, there are a large number of local, district and regional level facilities and services on offer within Palmerston and surrounding areas, which are within approximately 20 km (a 20-minute drive) of the site. There are also many natural areas for recreational activities within a similar distance.

4.3.1 Local facilities

Humpty Doo is the nearest rural activity centre to the Noonamah Ridge site – approximately 6 km to the north.

Schools

The nearest schools to Noonamah Ridge are shown in Table 4-2. Many of these schools are close to capacity, although there is some ability to absorb more students in the short term. The nearest two primary schools – Bees Creek and Humpty Doo Primary Schools – are on reasonably constrained sites, with some opportunities for expansion. The nearest high school – Taminmin College – is located in Humpty Doo and has limited spare capacity, but occupies a large site with scope for expansion.

From the 2011 Census, around 30 % of primary school students and 35 % of secondary school students in the Municipality of Litchfield attended non-government schools. Both of the non-government schools nearest to Noonamah Ridge are understood to have capacity to accept new enrolments.

Table 4-2. Schools within proximity to Noonamah Ridge

School	Enrolments		Utilisation (%)		Enrolment comment
	2013	2014	2013	2014	
Primary schools					
Humpty Doo Primary School	396	394	90.5	91.7	Fluctuating – close to capacity
Bees Creek Primary School	351	365	93.3	92.5	Stable – close to capacity
Howard Springs Primary School	252	245	89.6	89.5	Stable – close to capacity
Girraween Primary School	419	435	91.6	91.1	Stable – close to capacity
Berry Springs Primary School	220	210	92.2	90.6	Stable – close to capacity
High schools					
Taminmin College – Humpty Doo	1,012	1,001	87.9	85.3	Stable – close to capacity
Independent schools					
Sattler Christian College (Transition to Year 9) – Bees Creek	-	142	-	-	Seeking new enrolments to expand further
St Francis of Assisi School (Transition to Year 7) – Humpty Doo	-	229	-	-	Stable – some capacity

* Provides middle years schooling for students in Years 7 – 9, senior schooling for Years 10 – 12, and VET pathways.

Childcare

Several childcare centres currently operate at Bees Creek (Goodstart Early Learning Centre which provides a pre-school and childcare, and Sattler Christian College which provides a pre-school and after hours childcare) and Humpty Doo (Saint Francis of Assisi School Early Learning Centre which provides childcare and Humpty Doo Community and Child Care Centre which provides childcare). A review of childcare centres indicates that there appears to be spare capacity in most of these centres at present. However, the size of the new development will require new childcare facilities to meet the needs of new residents.

Shopping

The nearest shopping facilities to Noonamah Ridge are at Humpty Doo Shopping Centre. Howard Springs and Coolalinga also have shopping centres – the latter being the largest in the rural area.

Medical facilities

Humpty Doo has Arafura Medical Centre, Humpty Doo surgery and another GP medical practice. At Coolalinga is Coolalinga Medical Centre.

Other facilities

Within Humpty Doo is the Taminmin Community Library – a college library shared with the wider community; the Village Green – including a community hall, sport and recreation facilities; Didgeridoo Hut art gallery and art centre; a golf course; a hotel and a tavern.

Recreational facilities

The area is well located for a wide range of quality outdoor adventure and recreational options. Within close proximity to Noonamah Ridge are:

- Humpty Doo Village Green Reserve, which offers picnic grounds, playground equipment and BBQs. There is also a community hall used by a range of community groups, a scout hall, skate park and bowls club within the reserve.
- Freds Pass Sport and Recreation Reserve, which includes a community hall and meeting rooms, as well as a variety of sporting and recreation facilities such as equestrian facilities
- Humpty Doo and Rural Area Golf Club, which offers an 18-hole course for members, guests and visitors. The club also has a putting green and driving range; a clubhouse with bar, gaming room and restaurant; and a children's playground.

4.3.2 Regional facilities

The location and distribution of existing human services and community facilities within the region are shown in Figure 4-2 and are described below.

Hospitals and medical facilities

Regional hospital and medical facilities include:

- The Royal Darwin Hospital, which has approximately 360 beds and more than 1,700 staff. It provides a broad range of services in all speciality areas to the Darwin urban population as well as serving as a referral centre to the Top End of the NT, Western Australia and South-East Asia. Royal Darwin Hospital is the largest teaching hospital in the NT and is recognised as Australia's National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre. The hospital campus also accommodates the Menzies School of Health Research.
- Darwin Private Hospital, which is located adjacent to the campus of Royal Darwin Hospital. It has 87 multi-day beds – including eight special care nursery beds, a sleep study unit, rehabilitation service, day surgery unit and chemotherapy service. It provides acute healthcare services to the NT, northern Western Australia and South-East Asia.
- Once built, the new Palmerston Regional Hospital planned for Holtze (to the north of Palmerston) will be the closest to Noonamah Ridge. It will have 116 beds and provide a range of core services including general medicine, surgery, maternity and child services, emergency department and outpatient services, specialist support services and ambulances.

Community health facilities

Community health facilities are currently provided at the Palmerston Community Care Centre and through clinics offered within the Palmerston Health Precinct. Department of Health services at the Palmerston Community Care Centre include:

- Child and maternal health
- Post-natal home visiting
- Immunisations
- School health surveillance
- Treatment room services and primary health care
- Home nursing services – including palliative care and ‘Hospital in the Home’
- Pensioner concessions
- General health education and information services
- Social work services
- Visiting health professionals include:
 - Mental health services
 - Speech pathology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy
 - Community dietician
 - Disability information officer
 - Family planning services
 - Other specialists such as an ophthalmologist, obstetrician and gynaecologist, orthopaedic specialist and an ear, nose and throat specialist.

Cultural facilities

Cultural and conference facilities in the region include:

- Darwin Entertainment Centre is the major cultural venue for the city and provides a variety of facilities for performing arts. These include two theatres seating up to 1000 people, along with facilities for smaller gatherings and functions, rehearsals and classes. The centre has undergone a major refurbishment in the last two years, with further work still to be undertaken.
- Darwin Convention Centre provides conference, exhibition and function facilities for up to 4,000 people, with a variety of spaces including large auditorium, halls and meeting rooms.
- Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory provides displays of natural history and historical significance for the Top End, and displays art from the region.

Government services

Government services (such as Medicare and Centrelink) occupy commercial accommodation in a variety of city and local centres.

Justice services

Justice and correctional services include courts within the CBD, and Darwin Correctional Centre, which is the main reception prison in the NT (with capacity for 450 prisoners).

The NT Government has recently announced the site of a new correctional centre at Noonamah that will have capacity for 1,000 prisoners.

Tertiary education

Charles Darwin University has campuses at Casuarina and Palmerston providing undergraduate, post-graduate and vocational education through the Faculties of Law, Business, Arts, Education, Health, Science and Technology. Charles Darwin University also specialises in areas unique to its location – including tropical and desert region studies and Indigenous research and education. The university campus

incorporates a number of institutes of advanced studies – including the Menzies School of Health Research, the School of Social and Policy Research, the Research School of Environmental Studies, and the Graduate School of Health Practice.

The Casuarina campus occupies a large site with space available for future expansion. It is understood that the Palmerston campus of Charles Darwin University has struggled in recent years to attract students to maintain its viability. Further population growth in the area may help address this issue.

Regional sporting centres

Marrara Sports Complex includes the TIO Stadium, Darwin Football Stadium, Marrara Indoor Stadium and several smaller sports-fields for hockey and athletics. The facilities cater for competitions in a range of sports at regional, national and international levels.

Other regional sport facilities include the Hidden Valley Motor Sports Complex, Darwin Racecourse and golf courses in Darwin and Palmerston.

Major parks and gardens include the George Brown Botanic Gardens (which includes an outdoor amphitheatre for performing arts seating up to 7,000 people), Charles Darwin National Park, Casuarina Coastal Reserve and East Point Recreation Reserve.

Swimming attractions that serve the wider region include the Darwin Wave Pool, the Waterfront Lagoon, Leanyer Water Park, Palmerston Water Park and Lake Alexander. The nearest public swimming pool to Noonamah Ridge is Palmerston Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre.

Emergency services

The nearest police station is in Humpty Doo. The nearest ambulance service operates out of Palmerston. The nearest hospital is in the Darwin northern suburb of Tiwi, with a new hospital proposed for Palmerston.

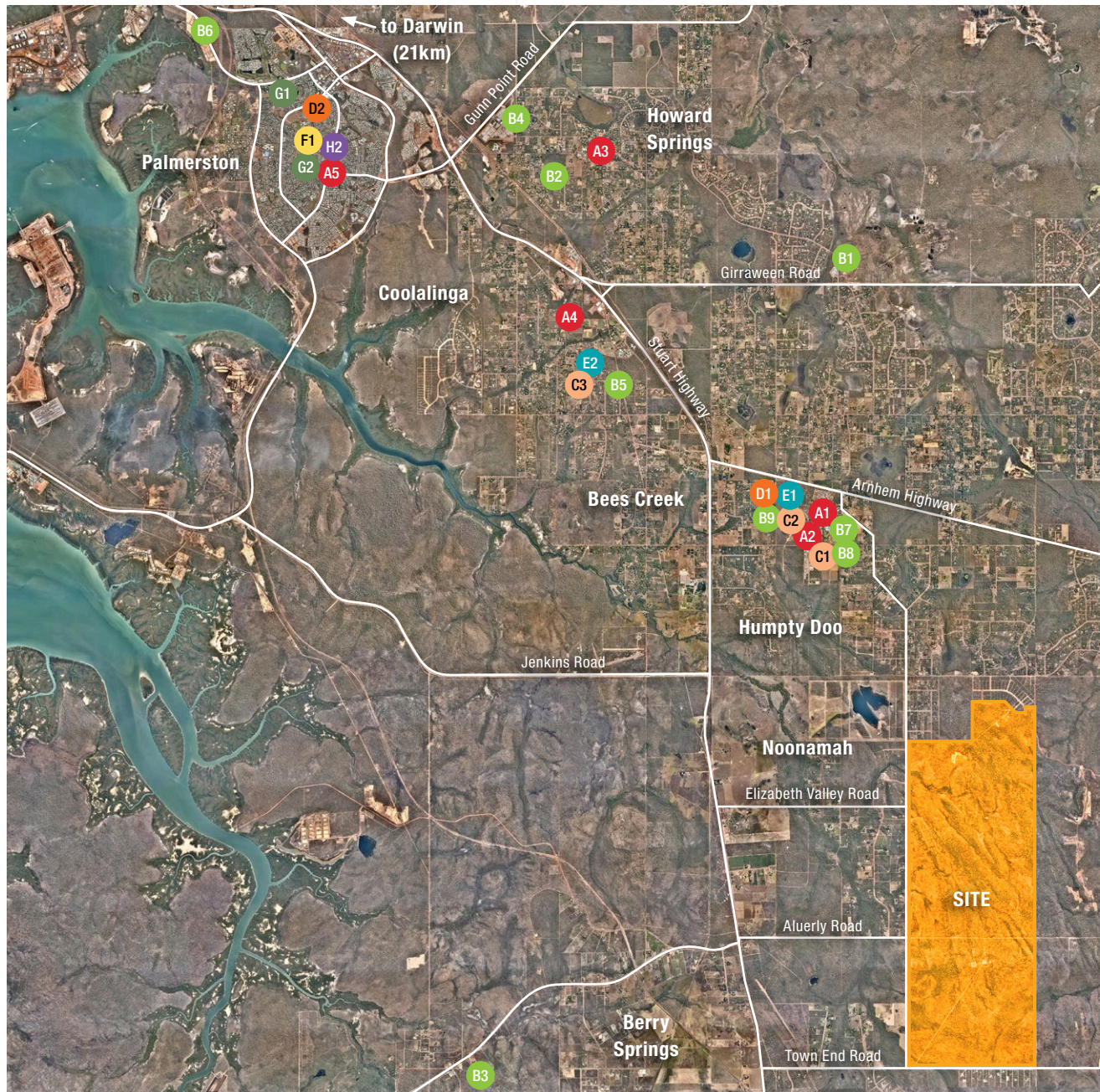
The project area is within the boundaries of Bushfire NT (Vernon Council Region). Livingstone Volunteer Brigade is responsible for the area south of Alverly Road. The area from Alverly Road to Goode Road is not gazetted to a brigade but is taken on by Elizabeth Valley Volunteer Brigade. The project area lies just outside of the NT Fire and Rescue emergency response area (Goode Road is southern boundary). If there is a house fire during business hours, the nearest fire brigade is at Humpty Doo. After hours, the nearest brigade is in Palmerston.

Conservation areas

A large number of conservation areas, parks and reserves are within one hour's drive of Noonamah Ridge:

- Fogg Dam Conservation Reserve (35 km east)
- Black Jungle Conservation Reserve (25 km north-east)
- Lambells Lagoon Conservation Reserve (25 km east)
- Harrison Dam Conservation Area (30 km east)
- McMinns Lagoon Wildlife Reserve (10 km north)
- Berry Springs Nature Park (20 km south-west)
- Manton Dam Recreation Area (30 km south)
- Howard Springs Hunting Reserve (20 km north)
- Howard Springs Nature Park (20 km north-west)
- Shoal Bay Coastal Reserve (60 km north)
- Litchfield National Park (75 km south-west)
- Kakadu National Park (120 km to the east).

Noonamah Ridge Facilities Map



- HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL FACILITIES**
 - A1 Arafura Medical Centre, Humpty Doo
 - A2 Humpty Doo Surgery
 - A3 Arafura Medical Centre, Howard Springs
 - A4 Coolalinga Medical Centre
 - A5 Palmerston Super Clinic
- SCHOOLS**
 - B1 Girraween Primary School
 - B2 Howard Springs Primary School
 - B3 Berry Springs Primary School
 - B4 Good Shepherd Lutheran College
 - B5 Bees Creek Primary School
 - B6 Sattler Christian College
 - B7 Humpty Doo Primary School
 - B8 Saint Francis of Assisi School
 - B9 Taminmin College
- CHILD CARE**
 - C1 St Francis of Assisi School Early Learning Centre
 - C2 Goodstart Early Learning, Bees Creek
 - C3 Humpty Doo Community and Child Care Centre
- LIBRARIES**
 - D1 Taminmin Community Library
 - D2 Palmerston Library
- OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**
 - E1 Humpty Doo Village Green
 - E2 Freds Pass Sport and Recreation Reserve
- DISABILITY SERVICES / COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES**
 - F1 Somerville Community Services Inc, Palmerston (2 centres)
- EMERGENCY SERVICES**
 - G1 Police Palmerston
 - G2 Palmerston Fire Station
- TERTIARY**
 - H2 Charles Darwin University, Palmerston campus

Figure 4-2. Map of existing human services and community facilities in the region

4.3.3 Summary

The range of existing facilities and services is appropriate for the current population and could accommodate some growth over time. However, given the significant increase in local population expected at Noonamah Ridge, there will be a need for new local- and district-level community facilities and services to meet the needs of this new population. Some will be provided within the Noonamah Ridge development, while others will be accommodated within existing facilities in the region.

4.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS – REGIONAL

Considering the economic context described in Section 4.1 – and the ongoing role the construction and building approvals sectors have in underpinning the NT economy – the development is likely to have a significant positive impact on economic development and employment in the region, particularly in association with the construction phase.

4.4.1 Economic

For calculating the value of the development – assuming approximately 4,155 new residential properties, associated social and public buildings, and the enterprise area – there will be of 6,000 new purchasable properties. Based on an average intended sale price of \$330,000 per property, this extrapolates to a total project value of approximately \$1,980,000,000 thereby representing an investment of nearly two billion dollars into the NT economy.

In addition, there will be peripheral industries and services that benefit from the development; specifically flow-on demand for goods and services resulting from property industry activity. These will primarily be:

- Electricity, gas, water and waste services
- Administrative and support services
- Non-property-related financial and insurance services
- Accommodation and food services

Noonamah Ridge will be developed over approximately 30 years and so, assuming escalation, at completion the total project value is likely to be substantially higher than stated above.

4.4.2 Employment

With a development timeframe of 30 years, this development is likely to have a medium-to-long-term employment benefit to the region. Jobs are likely to be both directly and indirectly generated by the development – with employment onsite, as well as in peripheral industries related to the provision of the abovementioned supporting services, as well as raw materials for use in the construction stage of the development. It is envisaged that there is a sufficient skill-set and adequate personnel located within the greater Darwin region to avoid the need for any recruitment from outside of the region. The timeframe of commencement of the development will also provide the opportunity to provide employment to tradesmen currently employed through major projects in the region that are currently nearing the end of their construction cycle, specifically the Inpex Ichthys project.

Direct employment

The construction and delivery of the project – meaning roads and services to provide developable lots will contribute approximately 300 full-time jobs over a thirty-year period. In addition, building construction of new dwellings will contribute further full-time and part-time jobs, accompanying the rate of development of the new community. At present, construction provides 15,297 jobs in the Darwin region, and even if housing construction at Noonamah Ridge was to only constitute 10 % of these jobs, this would still represent a substantial and sustained job creation of conservatively 1,500 jobs over a 20 to 30 year period. As outlined

in Table 4-3, the construction industry is currently the third highest generator of employment in the region, with the proposed development expected to contribute to the sustainability of this industry and the ongoing contribution to the local economy and employment.

Table 4-3. Employment by sector (as at May 2015)

Blue shading indicates those relevant to the Noonamah Ridge development

Industry sector, original data, numbers	Full-time	Part-time	Total	% of total employment
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	1420	118	1538	1.15%
Mining	5114	158	5272	3.95%
Manufacturing	3335	265	3600	2.70%
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	2408	36	2444	1.83%
Construction	14,066	1231	15,297	11.45%
Wholesale trade	2531	229	2760	2.07%
Retail trade	6047	3456	9503	7.11%
Accommodation and food services	5456	2752	8208	6.15%
Transport, postal and warehousing	6073	730	6803	5.09%
Information media and telecommunications	1321	334	1655	1.24%
Financial and insurance services	1591	232	1823	1.37%
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1708	190	1897	1.42%
Professional, scientific and technical services	6757	1504	8262	6.19%
Administrative and support services	3102	1315	4416	3.31%
Public administration and safety	19,968	2988	22,956	17.19%
Education and training	8422	2724	11,146	8.34%
Health care and social assistance	12,337	3812	16,149	12.09%
Arts and recreation services	2505	959	3463	2.59%
Other services	5298	1074	6372	4.77%

Source: ABS Cat No 6291.0.55.003

Indirect employment

Table 4-3 highlights those sectors that will expect to benefit indirectly from the proposed development, specifically those areas outlined in Section 4.4.1. This indicates that over 50 % of the local economy and employment drivers will benefit from the proposed development.

4.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS – LOCAL

Benefits of the development to the existing local community are expected to include:

- Increased housing availability and affordability, enabling the provision of new housing in a range of sizes, styles and price points.
- Increased local employment opportunities from both the construction and occupancy phases of the development.
- Amenity and community cohesion via the creation of a quality, master-planned community.
- Vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist permeability and access – both within the development, and between the development and surrounding areas.
- New community services and facilities – including public transport, road networks, health services, education and emergency services.
- Improved local government capacity through an increased rates base.

The ways in which these benefits will become apparent from the development are discussed below.

4.5.1 Increased housing availability and affordability

The need for appropriately zoned land to meet demand for Darwin's growing population is identified in *Darwin's Regional Land Use Plan* (DLPE 2015), which suggests the Noonamah/Hughes area could accept additional growth. A range of lot sizes and dwelling types are required to meet the needs of diverse population groups. As discussed in Section 1.3.1, predicted increases in economic growth, employment and the population of Darwin all point to the need for additional housing options to ease the housing supply and affordability burden. Moreover, the delivery of additional rural properties to cater for increasing demand in this market segment is not accommodated within the traditional land release programs, and is instead limited to *ad hoc* and infrequent subdivision by private landowners in accordance with existing zoning rights. Consequently, there is the lack of rural land supply and of housing options within the rural community.

The Noonamah Ridge development is expected to yield a maximum of 4,200 dwellings on mostly rural lots ranging from 1,000 m² to 8 ha in size. This could provide housing for approximately 11,000 residents, thus contributing significantly to the forecasted demands. The Noonamah Ridge development proposes a range of lot sizes and types – including single-dwelling residential, multiple-dwelling residential, rural residential, rural living and rural lots. This would contribute towards population diversity by offering a range of options in style and affordability for people at different stages of the life cycle, with different household formations and with different housing preferences. A range of lot sizes would also enable properties to come on the market at a range of prices, with the smaller lots generally being more affordable than the larger lots. This creates opportunities for first home buyers, as well as for buyers wishing to scale back but remain within their community. The concept master plan (Figure 2-2) is designed to allow lot sizes and allotment types to be interspersed, depending on land suitability. This will provide some diversity in appearance and visual interest across the site.

There is no intention for Noonamah Ridge to be restricted to high-income earners or developed as a 'gated community'. Rather, the range of lot sizes will encourage a diversity of residents and households from across life cycle stages to locate within the site, and many would be expected to be attracted from other nearby communities.

4.5.2 Increased local employment opportunities

The inclusion of two new rural activity centres (villages) within Noonamah Ridge will provide employment opportunities for new and existing residents, in addition to the employment that would be generated during development construction. The villages will offer opportunities for retail and commercial activities to serve this community and nearby rural centres such as Humpty Doo. In addition, the allocation of land within the villages for community facilities such as a fire service, a primary school and a community hall will also provide ongoing employment.

Many people who will work in the villages will live within Noonamah Ridge or nearby rural areas. This will support the long-term sustainability of the new community and contribute towards the economic well-being of the population, by providing income and connections for people from a range of age groups and experience levels.

The concept master plan includes around 275 ha for an enterprise area. A population of approximately 11,000 people will require a range of employment-generating facilities, especially given the villages' distance from other such rural activity centres. There will be a need for a relatively wide range of shops and services including:

- Shops – such as full-line supermarkets and smaller retail outlets for daily convenience needs (e.g. fruit and vegetables, butchers, chemists, newsagent, liquor outlets etc.).
- Other everyday services – such as a post office, bank or ATM, and hairdresser.
- Places to socialise and gather, such as cafes and pubs.
- Childcare for parents with pre-school aged children and babies.
- Educational, coaching, training and life-long learning opportunities.
- Access to library services.
- Business support services – including places for meetings and access to resources such as photocopying or IT support.

Such services will provide many types of local employment, especially as the local community becomes well established.

4.5.3 Amenity and community cohesion

The concept master plan has been designed with the aim of creating a desirable and attractive community that recognises the important rural values of the Top End, while also building on the community's expressed values and established development characteristics.

Many new master-planned communities employ a community development worker charged with introducing new residents to their neighbours and organising social events to encourage interactions and social cohesion from the early stages of moving into the new area. These, and many other practical measures for defining and developing a sense of place in a new community, will be undertaken in the later stages of planning, when residents are moving into the new community.

However, preliminary planning through the rezoning process will lay the groundwork for these important community-building strategies. Ongoing community engagement will continue to provide opportunities to obtain local community inputs into a design that reflects the area's character and landmarks. These steps – through the later stages of development – will help build community networks and connect residents to other households, activities and shared interests.

4.5.4 Permeability and access

The development has been carefully planned to recognise and complement the existing topography and rural character. The street pattern is based on a loose grid, allowing easy access between parts of the community. A plan will be prepared that incorporates shared pedestrian/cycle paths to encourage pedestrian and cycle movements, and thereby community use of open space and recreational facilities.

Planned road networks will allow residents of the new community to access the Stuart Highway main arterial transport links to Darwin and other destinations in the wider region. The internal road layout will be designed to accommodate possible future bus services through the site that would better link the new community and the town centre to Coolalinga, Palmerston and Darwin.

4.5.5 Provision of new community services and facilities

During the consultation process described in Section 1.7, existing local residents identified a need for better access to shops and quality produce, to medical facilities and to community facilities – including schools, childcare and for ageing residents.

In the early stages, Noonamah Ridge will rely on many facilities and services in Humpty Doo and Palmerston until it has reached thresholds to make its own facilities and services viable. Based upon the Palmerston benchmarks, upon completion Noonamah Ridge will have:

- 3 – 4 neighbourhood meeting rooms
- 2 local multi-purpose community centres
- 5 – 6 childcare centres
- 2 primary schools
- 1 middle/high school
- A family services hub with family support services, early childhood services and space for government programs.

Village One will contain a concentration of commercial and retail activity (potentially including a supermarket) located on the main street. Also included will be provision for aged care and retirement living. The village will be centred around a lake and extensive parklands. A community garden and sports-fields will be in within walking distance of the surrounding residents.

To enable connection to other areas within the greater Darwin region, extensions to existing bus services will be investigated prior to development.

The expected future population would not be large enough, however, to warrant the provision of higher order district-level facilities and would rely primarily on those to be provided within the neighbouring cities of Palmerston and Darwin.