

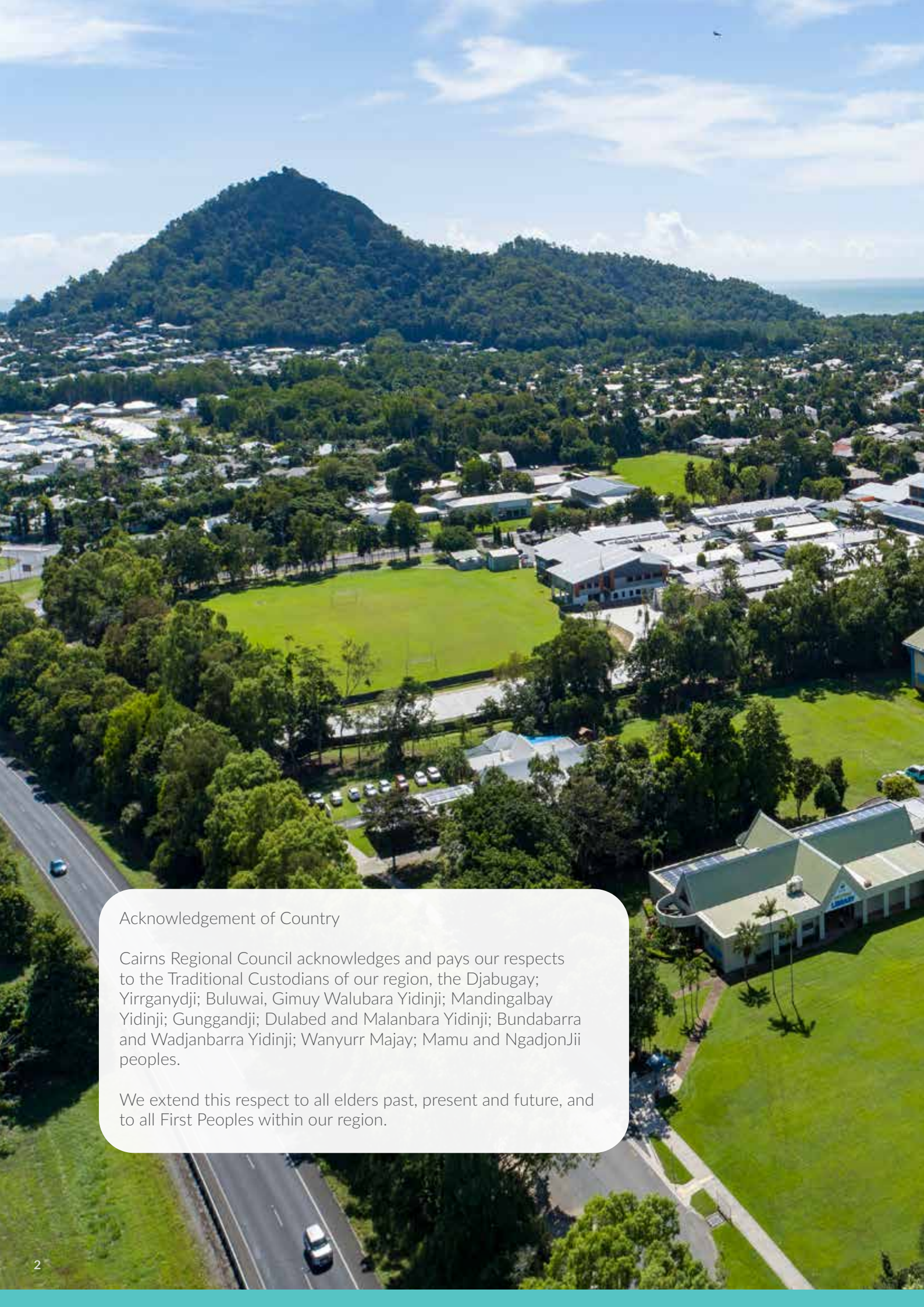
Towards 2050

Growth Strategy



September 2025





Acknowledgement of Country

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Custodians of our region, the Djabugay; Yirrganydji; Buluwai, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingalbay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbara Yidinji; Bundabarra and Wadjanbarra Yidinji; Wanyurr Majay; Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples.

We extend this respect to all elders past, present and future, and to all First Peoples within our region.

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Section 1

INTRODUCTION





PURPOSE OF THE GROWTH STRATEGY

The Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy (the Growth Strategy) is a long-range, community-informed initiative that establishes strong foundations and comprehensive strategies for managing future growth and development of Cairns.

It serves as a roadmap for the next 25 years, informed by insights from the past and present to guide the city's evolution and support continued prosperity.

An additional 72,000 people are likely to call Cairns home by 2050. The key role of the Growth Strategy is to identify how Cairns will accommodate this growing population and the city's diversifying economic potential in a sustainable way, which protects what the community and visitors love about Cairns.

The Growth Strategy establishes the foundations for Cairns' long-term planning and will guide future policy development and decision-making by Council.

For millennia, First Peoples have embodied the responsibility to care for Country, caring for the lands, waters and skies of the region with future generations in mind. The Growth Strategy recognises and honours this wisdom and endeavours to reflect a care-taking approach in managing growth and working towards environmental sustainability, positive social impact and considered planning outcomes.

It has been developed through a multi-phased process, with extensive community engagement to capture diverse perspectives on Cairns' future. These insights, together with the background data and analysis provided by various background studies, informed a directions paper (released in mid-2024), which explored potential growth scenarios for Cairns leading up to 2050. Engagement on that directions paper provided important feedback to help shape this Growth Strategy.



Message from the Mayor

Amy Eden



Cairns is renowned for its natural beauty — from the lush greenery of our parks and open spaces to the pristine waters of our creeks and rivers. These treasured “green and blue arteries” are the lifeblood of our city, pumping vitality into our environment, providing wildlife habitat, spaces for recreation, and enriching our lifestyle.

Our Towards 2050 Growth Strategy has been shaped through extensive community engagement at every stage. It reflects the strong expectations of our residents for better planning outcomes that uphold the principles of tropical urbanism and affordability.

At its core, this strategy embraces place-based planning — an approach tailored specifically to Cairns. It balances housing diversity, whether through infill or new neighbourhoods, with the protection of our natural arteries. It charts a path for creating communities where everyone can thrive, in homes and neighbourhoods designed for our unique tropical setting.

This is our roadmap to a future where growth enhances, rather than compromises, what makes Cairns such an exceptional place to live.

Warm regards,
Amy Eden
Mayor of Cairns



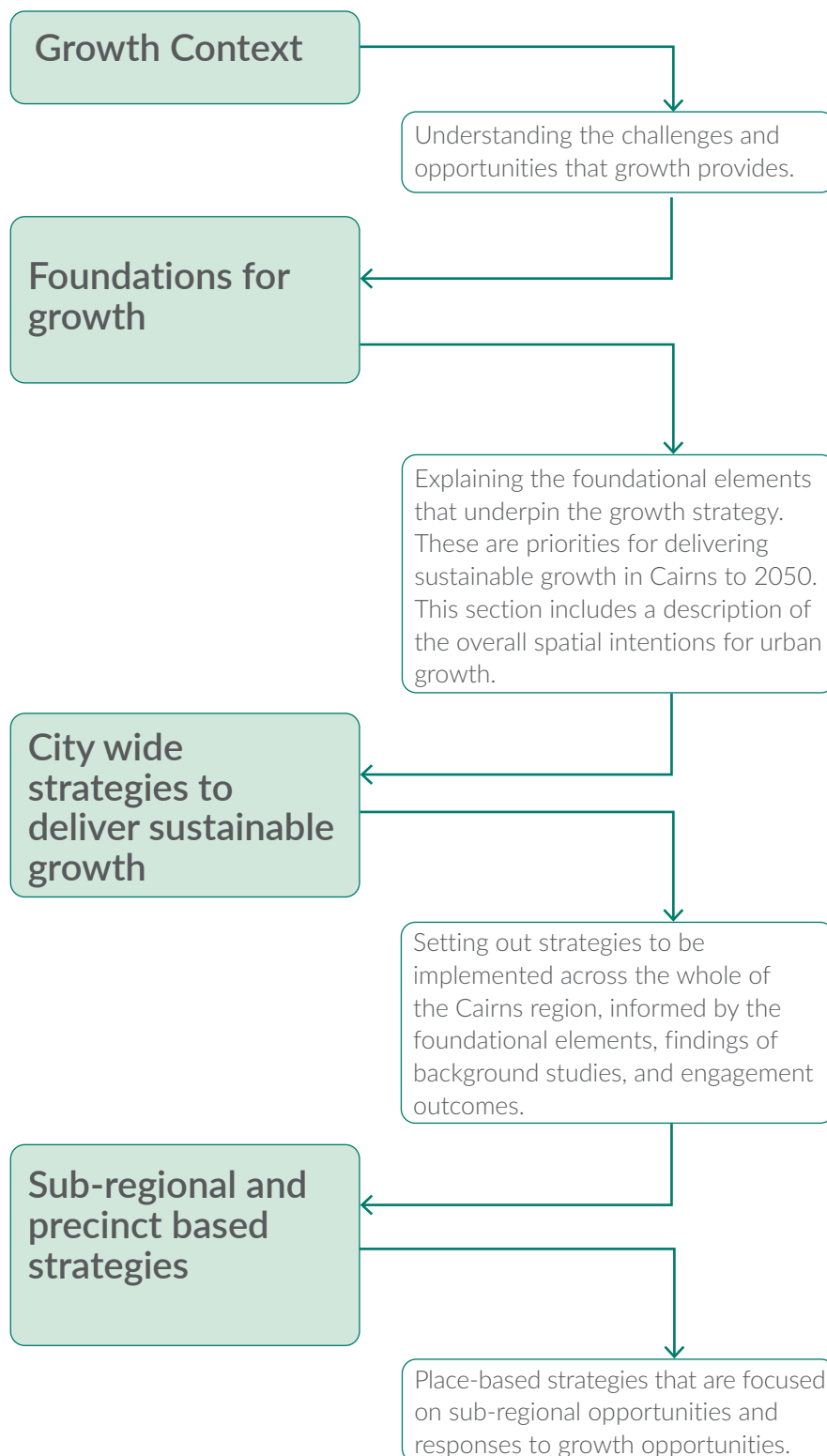
Enticed by
opportunity

Live for
Lifestyle

Embrace
the future

Cairns, the
tropical
capital of
Australia

DOCUMENT STRUCTURE



INTER-GOVERNMENT FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Growth Strategy aligns with existing frameworks at the federal, state, regional, and local levels that shape planning and development outcomes.

Effective growth planning requires unified collaboration across all levels of government under a shared vision. The planning process plays a critical role in identifying appropriate areas for development while safeguarding vital green and blue spaces. It also ensures the efficient and equitable provision of physical infrastructure - such as roads and utilities - and social infrastructure, including schools and community facilities.

Federal

At the federal level, regulations are in place to safeguard Australia's matters of national environmental significance, including the preservation of the World Heritage Areas surrounding Cairns. Additionally, the federal government has introduced targets for each state for sustainable and affordable housing through the National Housing Accord. This initiative aims to deliver over 1.2 million well-located homes across the country within five years from 1 July 2024. Cairns has a role in contributing to this housing supply while addressing the growing demands of its diverse community.

State

The Queensland Government regulates the overall planning and development system within the state, providing direction through the State Planning Policy (SPP). The SPP focuses on matters of State Interest for which the Growth Strategy needs to be consistent.

In addition, the Queensland Government may declare State Development Areas (SDAs) or Priority Development Areas (PDAs) as a means of driving economic growth and community benefits of state level significance across Queensland.

In Cairns, the State Government has recently declared Mount Peter as a Priority Development Area and the Cairns South State Development Area (SDA)

to facilitate economic growth through regionally significant industrial development and to meet the long-term needs of the region.

Regional

In addition to state-wide regulations, the Queensland Government establishes a regional planning framework of direct relevance to planning and development in Cairns.

Cairns Regional Council is working closely with the State Government in its current review of the Far North Queensland (FNQ) Regional Plan. This strategic document guides land use and infrastructure planning across the region, setting a long-term vision for development and encouraging mutual cooperation between local governments and joint program delivery to enhance community wellbeing. This Growth Strategy has been prepared to align with and assist in implementing the regional plan outcomes.

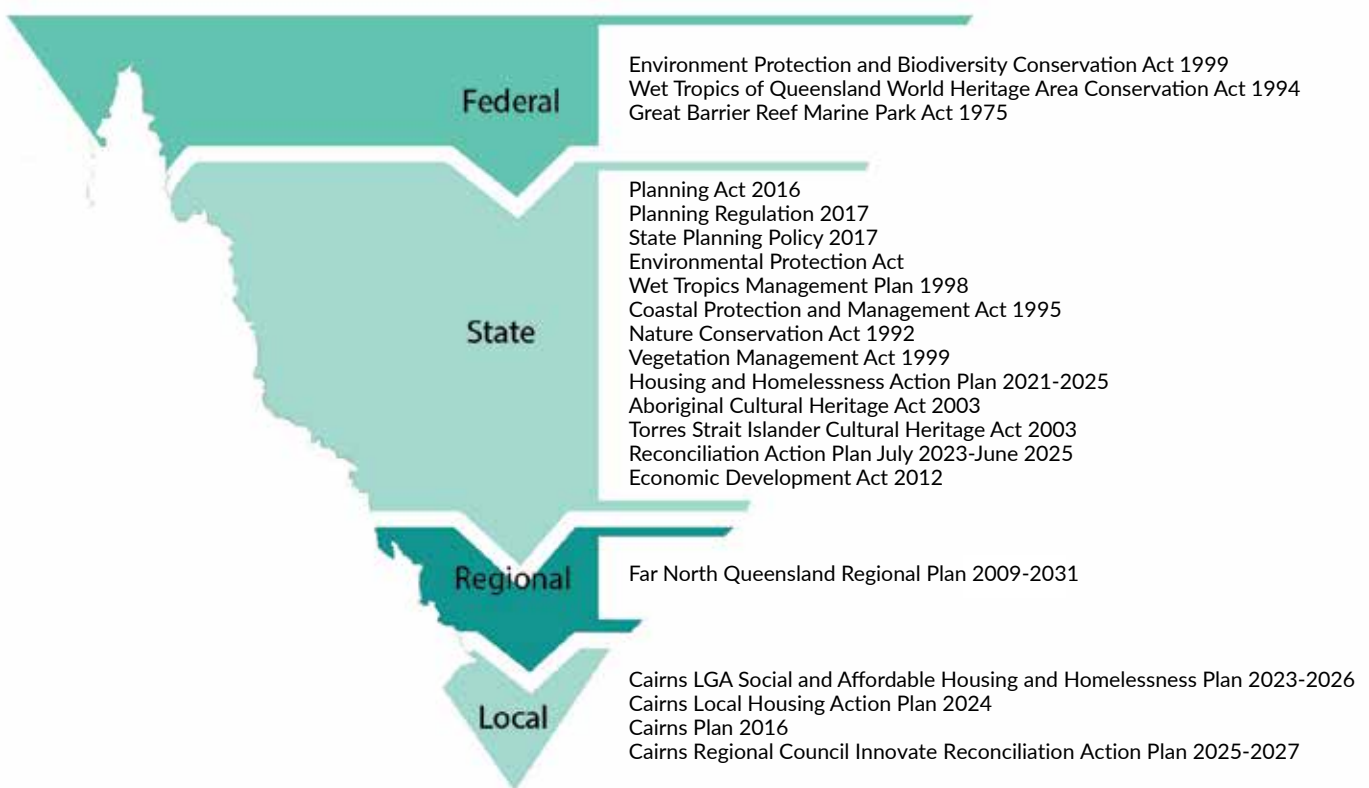
In alignment with the Regional Plan, the FNQ Regional Infrastructure Strategy outlines essential projects aimed at accommodating population and economic growth while bolstering community resilience.

Local

At the local level, Council plays a crucial role in shaping planning and development outcomes that reflect the distinct characteristics of the Cairns community and promote sustainable growth. In doing this, it must integrate and coordinate state and regional interests with local policy directions that align with community aspirations.

The Growth Strategy will set key directions for a new planning scheme for Cairns – which will be the regulatory basis for managing growth and development in the future. It will also inform other non-statutory strategies and actions initiated by Council, which collectively work towards achieving a sustainable and prosperous future for the region.

Policy document hierarchy





TOWARDS 2050 A PLAN FOR GROWTH

The original caretakers of the Cairns region are the Djabugay; Yirrganydji; Buluwai, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingalbay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbara Yidinji; Bundabarra and Wadjanbarra Yidinji; Wanyurr Majay; Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples. This Growth Strategy recognises and honours their wisdom.

This document is the outcome of a range of studies and wide engagement. Phase 1 of the project focused on community engagement and gathering insights about what people think and feel about Cairns currently, and their hopes and concerns for the future.

Phase 2 tested this feedback at a youth summit and a community summit. In parallel, the project developed an understanding of the existing conditions in Cairns and evaluated how the region could grow under current policies. A range of background studies were conducted that explored natural hazards, housing choice, diversity and affordability, future employment and centre growth, neighbourhood character, the rural economy, community infrastructure, and scenic amenity values.

In Phase 3, the community and stakeholders were invited to review a directions paper, which outlined a comprehensive suite of citywide growth directions including options for the northern, central, and southern parts of the Cairns region. These directions were tested at a second youth summit and community summit. The insights received during this phase have been instrumental in shaping the Growth Strategy.

Phase 4 focused on sharing the draft Growth Strategy with community members, stakeholders, Traditional Owners, and First Peoples and capturing their feedback. The project team held pop-up events across Cairns to share the draft Growth Strategy, and hosted workshops to gather in-depth feedback. The feedback gathered during Phase 4 helped to inform this Growth Strategy.

We engaged with Traditional Custodians and First Peoples to discuss the future direction of the region and key cultural priorities of this direction.



Section 2

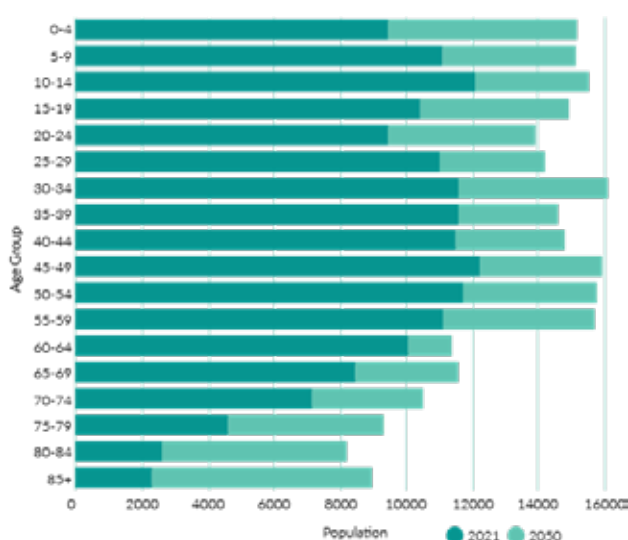
GROWTH CONTEXT



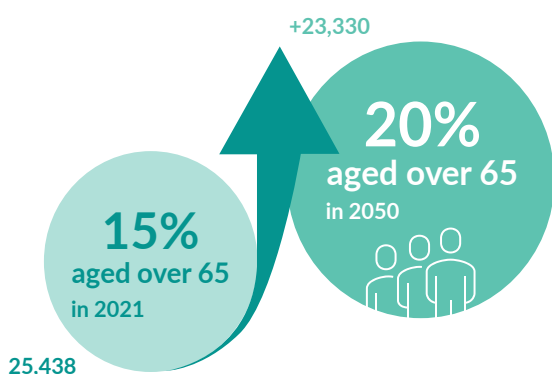


OUR GROWING CITY

This section outlines the major drivers and implications of the growth Cairns is likely to experience to 2050. It also identifies community priorities expressed during engagement to date and summaries the findings of a wide range of background studies that have been undertaken as part of the Towards 2050 project. These matters have been critical to understanding what growth may look like, the opportunities that need to be harnessed, and the challenges that need to be managed.



Snapshot of Cairns (ABS, retrieved 2024).

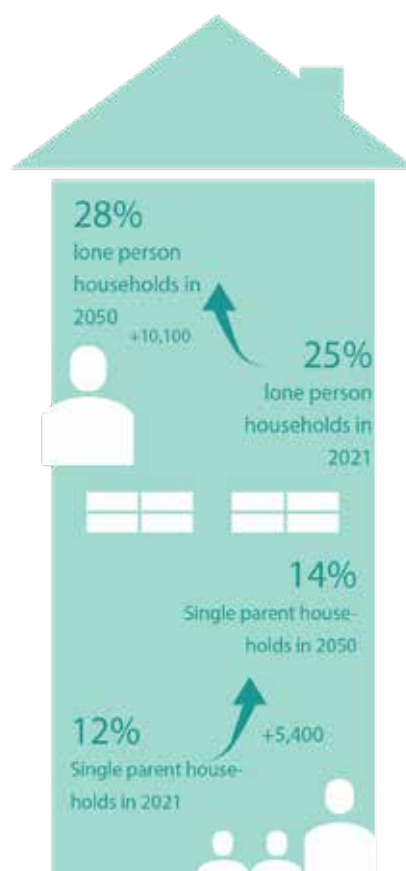


Over 65s Population Projection.

Projected Growth

Cairns is one of the largest and fastest growing regions in northern Australia, which has experienced sustained growth over recent decades.

From 2021 to 2050, Cairns is likely to grow by around 43%, with up to 72,000 additional people and a total population of approximately 241,000¹.



Household Composition Projections

¹ These estimates are based on the Queensland Government Statisticians Office's (QGSO) 2023 medium series, projected outwards to 2050.

Cairns is growing

Cairns is the fifth largest city in Queensland. As the primary service centre for the Far North Queensland (FNQ) region, it provides key services such as healthcare and social assistance, construction, transport and education. The FNQ region has established economic strengths in mining and agriculture, and a competitive advantage in emerging clean energy industries.

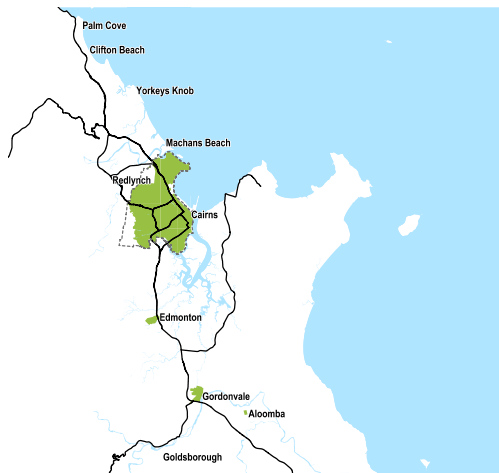
The Cairns area encompasses 1687km² of land on a narrow coastal strip between the Great Dividing Range and the Coral Sea. It extends from the Eubenangee Swamp (near Mirriwinni) in the south to the Macalister Range near Ellis Beach (just north of Palm Cove) in the north.

The plans below show that over the past 70 years, urban development has extended throughout the corridor. Future growth will be largely focused on not extending the boundary further into agricultural or environmental areas, instead focusing on more consolidated growth.

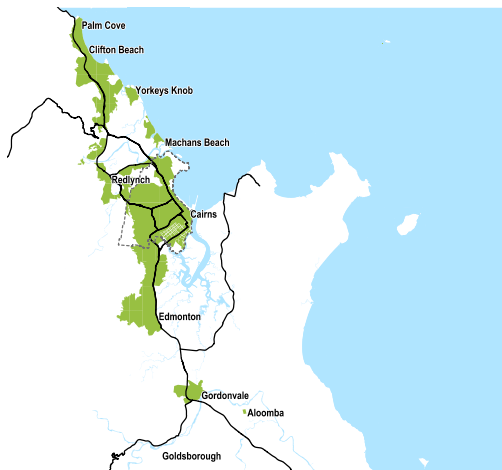
1952



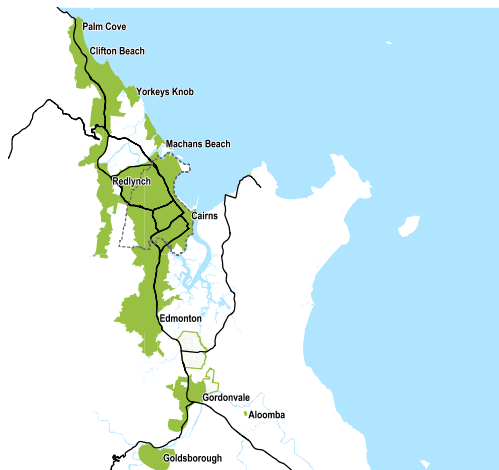
1971



1997



2023



CHANGING HOUSING NEEDS

As Cairns' population grows and changes, the composition of families and households is continuing to shift away from traditional households, necessitating diverse housing options to meet the community's needs into the future. Matching housing provision with housing needs is critical to support equitable and sustainable communities.

- 1. Lone Households:** Currently, one in four people live alone, with an estimated additional 10,000 lone-person households expected by 2050. Lone households are now a diverse household type with affordability being a key requirement for most occupants.
- 2. Single-Parent Families:** Representing 12.5% of households, single-parent families are projected to increase by 5,400 by 2050, accounting for around 14% of all households. These families often require typically 3-4 bedroom housing close to schools and other facilities, highlighting the need for more housing options that support public transport, mobility and accessibility.
- 3. Ageing Population:** By 2050, individuals over 65 are expected to make up about 20% of the population. Many elderly residents live alone, creating a demand for smaller, well-located housing that provides access to essential services and infrastructure, facilitating the option for them to age in place, such as retirement and respite care facilities.
- 4. Young People:** The young adult population is likely to decline as a proportion of the total population, reflecting a trend of young people leaving in search of employment and educational opportunities.
- 5. Rising Housing Costs:** In 2021, approximately one third of Cairns' low-income households were experiencing housing stress. As housing costs increase, even more people will be put into housing stress, extending beyond just low-income households, with full-time workers struggling to secure permanent housing.

THE BENEFITS OF POPULATION GROWTH

Cairns is projected to grow by an additional 72,000 people by 2050. The need to house, employ, educate, and support the expected population increase will result in a noticeable change to the Cairns landscape and an opportunity to deliver positive outcomes.

Population growth presents the potential for positive outcomes stemming from change:

Increased housing choice

A growing population means we need to provide more homes. Not all homes can be delivered in greenfield areas as this can impact our natural environment and farmlands. While greenfield development outside of protected areas will be important to support our community, we need to consider alternative housing options in established neighbourhoods. This presents opportunities for smaller, attached housing products. This ultimately increases housing choice, providing alternative housing options that can support the needs of a diverse community at ranging stages of life.

Increased services

With an increased population comes greater potential to establish better dispersion and availability of community services and infrastructure. This promotes community access and inclusion to services, improving opportunity for communities to engage with public transport, employment, local centre and cultural activities, and green spaces.

Greater employment opportunities

A larger population can significantly boost employment opportunities by attracting new businesses and educational institutions. As more people choose to live near existing services, infrastructure, and urban centres, the demand for goods and services increases. This, in turn, encourages the establishment of strong commercial and employment hubs, which enhances local career prospects and improves employee appeal and retention.

Better public and active transport networks

With greater populations comes greater potential to expand the public and active transport networks (i.e. walking and cycling). Currently, most of the Cairns population travel via private vehicles. By focusing population growth in established areas and creating well serviced neighbourhoods, we can encourage greater diversity in travel opportunities. By encouraging alternative travel methods, we can reduce congestion on the roads, improve air quality, and support more enjoyable ways to travel.





CAIRNS AIRPORT

CITY CENTRE

PORTSMITH MARINE

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

A total of 106,500 jobs are projected to be needed by 2050 to support the growing population - an increase of around 32,000 jobs from the present.

Notably, jobs in the health care and social assistance sector are projected to double by 2050, driven by an ageing population and increasing demand for services. The health care sector currently contributes approximately \$1.31 billion to the local economy, having grown by \$391 million (42.7%) over the past five years, representing nearly 68% of the total growth in value added across all industry sectors in Cairns.

The Growth Strategy aims to ensure sufficient land for employment in key sectors (construction, health care, tourism, education, and retail) while promoting diversification for economic growth and sustainability. Fostering diverse employment precincts through appropriate planning policy and infrastructure provision is vital for fostering job creation and enhancing economic growth and resilience.

There is also a need for affordable and accessible housing near employment centres, ensuring that the workforce can easily access employment opportunities and is supported by essential services and facilities.



Employment by Industry 2021 Census vs 2021/22 Cairns Economic Profile

WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

This strategy has provided a platform for various voices to discuss the future of Cairns, including local residents (with specific activities undertaken for young people), key stakeholders, business owners, and traditional owners. Their concerns, priorities, and hopes offered important direction in addressing the issues of change and growth: a primary focus across all groups was maintaining Cairns' lifestyle and environmental qualities.

Continuous engagement with the Cairns community has emphasised some clear priorities for the region, to 'grow well' through to the year 2050. These priorities have directly informed the growth pattern and strategies set out in this document.

Ongoing engagement with Traditional Custodians and First Peoples, including the First Peoples Advisory Consultants (FPAC), is crucial for fostering meaningful relationships and ensuring culturally respectful practices. By consulting FPAC and other First Peoples representatives throughout this process, we can incorporate valuable insights and perspectives that honour Indigenous heritage and knowledge. This engagement not only promotes inclusivity and mutual respect but also enhances the project's social and cultural impact. Furthermore, it can lead to improved community relations, increased support for initiatives, and the creation of opportunities for Indigenous employment and collaboration.

Feedback from community members included their responses to whether the initiatives, outcomes and strategies included in the draft Growth Strategy met their expectations. Responses showed that the draft Growth Strategy spoke to a lot of people, with the responses being over 50% for 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with the directions of the citywide strategies. Respondents also indicated that the sub-region strategies met their expectations, with strategies for:

- Northern Cairns at 63% agree
- Central Cairns at 67% agree
- Southern Cairns at 60% agree.

Cairns Growth Priorities

Enhancing Blue and Green

'Blue and Green' refers to natural elements such as the ocean, waterways, wetlands, and lakes (blue), and plants, trees and open spaces (green). The community has expressed that a high level of importance is placed on these blue-green elements, acknowledging their contribution to the Cairns identity. The value of these natural assets is understood, as the Growth Strategy looks to enhance the urban landscape by encouraging a growth pattern that dedicates blue-green corridors across the region. Protecting these values is an important part of addressing key community concerns, and will assist in minimising exposure to heat, maintaining scenic amenity, mitigating risks of hazards, and promoting sustainable infrastructure.

Strengthening sustainable transport solutions

Reducing car reliance, improving congestion, lowering emissions, and creating a strong transport network that offers alternative and more sustainable means of mobility were important aspirations expressed by the community. Of particular importance, the community expressed a desire to expand the region's public and active (e.g. footpaths, cycle lanes) transport networks to facilitate short and long-distance travel alternatives. The growth pattern to 2050 encourages the establishment and growth of these alternative transport opportunities reducing the demand for private vehicle trips.

Investing in the community

Community infrastructure and services (e.g. libraries, sporting facilities, healthcare services, schools, and community halls) support community well-being, sustainability, and resilience. The community has emphasised a desire for further investment in these assets as well as improving the supply for social and affordable housing.

The Growth Strategy promotes the enhancement of these outcomes by encouraging well-located residential development that enhances accessibility and supports effective public investment in key services and facilities, as well as increased opportunities for the delivery of social and affordable housing.

Promoting a thriving economy

The community of Cairns has identified that safeguarding the economy through industry diversification and employment retention is a key objective.

Particular enthusiasm was expressed for encouraging sustainable and 'green' industrial activities, acknowledging the region's natural setting. Healthcare and well-being, education and training services and facilities were also identified as key industries that are critical in Cairns' future and its growth.

The Growth Strategy seeks to support strong and green economic growth by fostering successful economic and employment precincts and synergies between enterprises, and supporting efficient provision of infrastructure (including enhanced public transport networks) to support these areas. Strategies are also aimed at ensuring greater opportunities for key worker and affordable housing that supports access to jobs and economic growth.

Improving safety

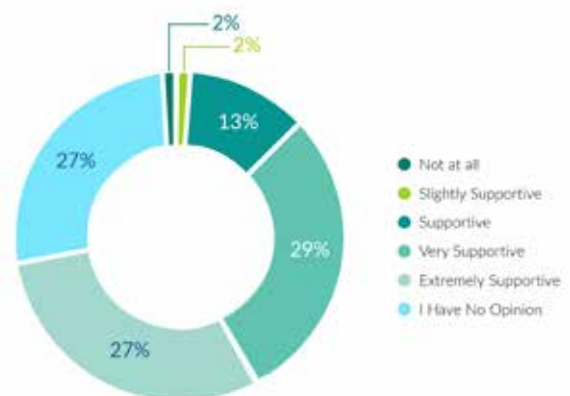
The Cairns community wants to feel safe in the neighbourhoods they live, work, and play.

The Growth Strategy seeks to support safer outcomes by prioritising design approaches that will create safer environments and considered responses to the risks posed by the natural hazards.

Sub regional feedback

Community feedback on the citywide growth directions and specific growth options presented in the directions paper provided the following insights:

- Northern Cairns: Feedback indicated strong support for sustainable development practices and enhancing local amenities. Residents expressed a desire for improved public transport and recreational spaces to accommodate the growing population while preserving the area's natural beauty.
- Central Cairns: Respondents highlighted the importance of maintaining the character of Central Cairns while encouraging mixed-use developments. Many emphasised the need for increased affordable housing options and better infrastructure to support both residents and businesses in the area.
- Southern Cairns: Feedback in this area focused on the necessity for robust transport links and the integration of green spaces. Community members also expressed concerns about traffic congestion and the need for planning that prioritises pedestrian access and safety.



How supportive are you of urban change to accommodate growth in Cairns, question in community engagement (Studio THI, T2050 Being a Future Shaper Survey, 2023).

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND FIRST PEOPLES

The Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy engagement process with Traditional Custodians and other First Peoples made clear that typical approaches to planning and development often continue the impacts of colonisation.

Participants spoke about how growth, when done without care, can impede cultural connections to Country, make access to land more difficult, push people out of their communities, and overlook Indigenous knowledge and leadership.

Across the engagement sessions, people described a different approach and forward-thinking vision, where growth is guided by mutual respect, protection of culture, and equitable distribution of opportunities. This kind of development, they said, can only happen through long-term relationships with local First Peoples and real, ongoing conversations that recognise the rights and roles of Traditional Custodians.

Housing was raised as a major issue. Many spoke about the lack of affordable and suitable homes, especially for single people, couples, Elders and extended families living together. Overcrowding is a continuous and growing concern, particularly as families relocate from other communities after emergencies or due to housing shortages. While some groups hold freehold land, these areas are often flood-prone or highly regulated, making it hard to build on them. Participants called for more diverse and culturally appropriate housing, including communal housing options and designs that are climate- resilient and adaptable to changing needs.

Climate change was another strong theme. People described how the seasons are shifting, extreme weather is becoming more common, and hazardous areas should be avoided having regard to risk.

Waterways were spoken about not only in environmental terms, but also as places of cultural and spiritual significance. There were clear concerns about the impact of population growth on the region's ecosystems.

When it came to the economy, people emphasised the need for genuine inclusion of First Nations people, not just as workers, but as decision-makers and business owners. Cultural tourism was mentioned as a key opportunity, but only if led by community. Many called for support for small Indigenous businesses, more jobs in land and sea management, and better access to training and mentoring for young people. The economic future of the region, they said, must be built in partnership with First Nations communities to be truly mutually beneficial.

There was also a shared interest in stronger community infrastructure, to create places and spaces where young people can connect with culture, learn from Elders, and feel safe. People also wanted to see more action to support wellbeing, tackle racism, and make neighbourhoods more inclusive and liveable.

Throughout the engagement process, local Traditional Custodians and First Peoples made it clear they are ready and willing to be involved, and to lead where appropriate. But they also stressed that engagement needs to be respectful, culturally safe and ongoing. They reiterated that one-off meetings do not allow for holistic thinking, where cultural ways of being and thinking at a systems level come into play and allow for greater outcomes to be achieved together. The Growth Strategy should not be a final answer, but a starting point for a living, evolving conversation about how to grow Cairns in a way that honours Country and includes everyone.



WHAT WE LEARNED FROM CITY-WIDE ENGAGEMENT

During the course of the Towards 2050 project, directions and analysis were drawn from a range of existing Council-led and State Government strategies and data. These included high level documents like Cairns Regional Council's Corporate Plan, Climate Change and Coastal Hazard Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, and State documents such as the State Planning Policy, FNQ Regional Infrastructure Plan, and Qld Housing and Homelessness Plan.

A number of new investigations were also undertaken to provide a deeper understanding of the drivers of, and implications for, growth including analysis of Cairns' future housing needs, economic influences and requirements for centres, industry, and other employment lands, the future of Cairns' primary industries and rural land, and the implications of natural hazards such as floods, bushfire, and storm tide.

These various investigations and adopted strategies have provided a comprehensive understanding of critical issues facing the region over the planning horizon to 2050.

Most critically, they make clear:

- The Cairns region is facing significant population growth, while the demographic profile of the community (and their needs) is changing – including an ageing population and increasing levels of disability, a large and strong First Peoples community, a large proportion of international migrants, relatively high levels of transience, and components of the community including young people, key workers, and some communities demonstrating high social economic disadvantage.
- Although there is substantial capacity for infill growth (through redevelopment) within existing urban areas, there has been limited market uptake of infill opportunities (due to a combination of complex factors) and very little housing diversity delivered through greenfield development.

- While greenfield residential land supply is sufficient for the 25 year horizon, its readiness is constrained by the need for significant investments in sewerage and water supply and treatment and transport infrastructure. By contrast, the central parts of the city are 'infrastructure rich' – in terms of engineering networks, social infrastructure, and access to employment opportunities.
- Land supply for economic and employment generation is more than sufficient, with a long-term oversupply of industrial land. However, there is a shorter-term need for 'shovel ready' industrial land. There is also sufficient land zoned for retail and centre uses, although there are opportunities to rationalise some commercial land, and an ongoing need for a strong centres network policy that facilitates the successful functioning and evolution of all centres as economic trends change. Importantly, there are strong emerging clusters of economic activity in Cairns, which can drive further growth and diversification for the city and the wider region.
- Opportunities for further outward expansion of the urban area are very limited as the city has a number of physical constraints at its limits and the loss of further sugar cane land is likely to have a substantial impact on the viability of the industry. In addition, there are few options that would be free of flood, storm tide, or bushfire hazards. As a consequence, there is a compelling need to ensure that urban development is consolidated, and existing greenfield land is used efficiently.

- Large parts of Cairns' existing urban area are exposed to a range of natural hazards, and the risks associated with this exposure are likely to worsen with climate change. Flooding and storm surge are the most significant hazards with which Cairns is faced, although some parts of the city are also affected by significant bushfire risk. This creates challenges not only for how new growth is managed, but how existing communities may be protected through mitigation measures.
- Another consequence of climate change is increasing urban heating. Coupled with development trends which have seen increasing site cover by buildings and hard surfaces, this will become a significant health issue.

How engagement and technical inputs have come together to form the Growth Strategy



In some cases, these various studies and strategies give rise to competing objectives which the Growth Strategy aims to balance. For example, there is a need to balance potential exposure to hazards with the benefits of promoting infill development in inner areas and the economic need for further investment in tourism accommodation. There is also a need to balance the desire to protect existing neighbourhood character, with the need to accommodate growth and changing housing needs, especially in well located areas.

The strategies and growth pattern proposed in this document reflect an extensive process of evaluation and engagement to strike an effective balance and establish a sustainable framework for managing growth in the Cairns region to 2050.



Section 3

FOUNDATIONS FOR
GROWTH





INTRODUCING THE FOUNDATIONS

This section outlines foundational directions on which the Growth Strategy is based. These foundations sit within an overarching framework which recognises and prioritises Cairns' Blue-Green elements which shape the region and its unique tropical identity. The blue+green framework and the six foundational elements collectively identify those things that are critical for sustainable growth and provide direction for all other parts of this growth strategy.

This section also includes a strategic intent statement which describes the future pattern of growth that this Growth Strategy aims to establish for Cairns towards 2050.

Our Role as Custodians

For millennia, First Peoples of what is now known as Cairns have spoken about their role as Custodians of the land. It means to have responsibility for and care for Country. They understand the vital connection between the land that sustains us and our lives upon it. In honouring their wisdom and values, we too must ensure our focus on development and expansion considers the impacts of our decisions and footprint on future generations. This is essential for crafting a sustainable strategy for Cairns as both a place and a community where people are proud to live and want to live.

Through the lens of Custodianship, we can continue to evolve our approach to development to one that focuses on responsibility for bettering our community and the land. We have an opportunity and a choice to grow well, and approach development with a guardian lens.

By adopting a custodian approach, we can shape a future for Cairns. This vision can prioritise economic, social, and environmental objectives by elevating the significance of our natural blue-green environments, making them central to our decision-making processes. Ultimately, this approach and the establishment of clear foundation elements will guide development and growth through this guardian lens in a manner that ensures a sustainable and thriving future for Cairns and its residents.



URBAN



GREENWAYS



STREETSCAPES



SUGAR CANE LANDS



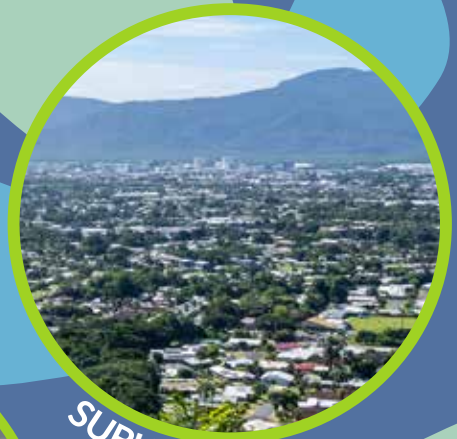
COASTAL



WATERWAYS



SUBURBAN



ADOPTING A BLUE+GREEN FRAMEWORK

The community has consistently told us about the value they place on the blue-green elements of our region. These elements encompass natural and built landscapes, watercourses, ecology, rural landscapes and cultural heritage.

Shaping the future of Cairns involves a comprehensive framework that emphasises blue-green elements, ensuring that development respects the tropical climate, natural environment, and cultural heritage. The future is about harmonising growth with our landscape and culture to preserve the values we cherish.

The blue-green elements have been cared for since time immemorial by the local First Peoples and, in focusing on them, the strategy hopes to carry the sentiments of that care forward.

The blue - green framework underpins six foundational elements that each help guide growth within the city.



WATERFALLS



Foundational Elements

Delivering the Blue + Green framework.

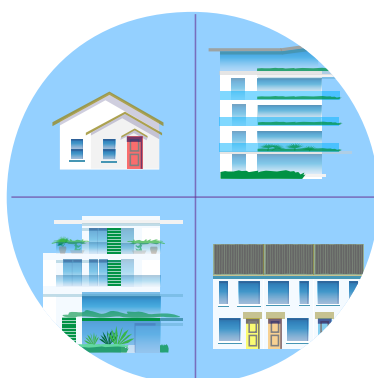


Protect & celebrate our blue, green tropical landscape

Cairns and its immediate surroundings are unique.

Background studies have reinforced that we must prioritise infill development in our existing urban areas. Infill development occurs where new buildings are built on land in existing urban areas that is vacant or underused. This development allows us to use this land more efficiently.

These studies also emphasise that further outward urban expansion, or greenfield development outside those areas that already identified for development and/or investigation, should be avoided to make sure we protect and celebrate the tropical qualities of the region.



Diverse housing for our changing community

Housing in Cairns is increasingly not meeting the changing needs and budget of our growing community. Many cities and regions across Queensland are experiencing this problem too.

Whether urban development occurs in a new greenfield community or an existing urban area, we need to make sure that there is a diverse range of housing sizes, types and affordability. Providing this diverse range of housing requires a shift in our approach to planning and development.

Housing diversity that meets community needs and is designed for the tropics is critical for the future of Cairns.



Proactively plan for natural hazards

Studies into the risks associated with natural hazards have highlighted the need to avoid exposure in new urban areas and respond carefully to the nature of the hazards affecting our existing urban areas. These studies have also highlighted the need to examine the feasibility for wider region scale mitigation or adaptation solutions beyond what is already planned for at an individual house scale.

Planning for hazard resilient infrastructure can also act as a catalyst for future growth, particularly around the city centre and key economic precincts.



Consolidated, focused growth

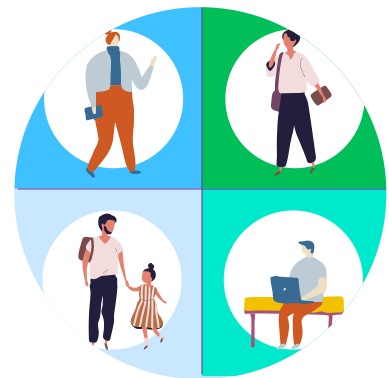
Cairns is defined by its mountains to the north and west, its reef to the east, and Trinity Inlet and extensive cane lands to the south. This means that our growth must occur within the part of our region that has already been identified for urban development. The background studies show there is capacity for development in this area. Increasing the uptake of infill development opportunities in the well-served central areas of our region is an important part of this equation. Infill development occurs where new buildings are built on land in existing urban areas that is vacant or underused. Infill development also supports the efficient provision and use of infrastructure such as roads, sewer and water, as well as community infrastructure and services.



Create great tropical neighbourhoods

All future development needs to create buildings and neighbourhoods that are better designed for the tropical climate. This development also needs to enhance the character the Cairns community and visitors value so highly.

Our urban areas, spaces and streets also make an important contribution to the tropical character of Cairns. They will complement new development and connect places through design that responds to the climate.



Support a thriving economy

Population growth in Cairns needs to be matched by a growing and diverse economy that provides competitive job opportunities. Attracting growth in established and new key industry sectors and supporting the development of strongly performing centres, industry precincts and connected economic clusters will drive business and employment opportunities that are critical to the region's growth and prosperity.

Strategic intent for the growth of Cairns

By 2050, Cairns will be an exciting and lively city that embraces a global perspective. We will foster a friendly, inclusive, sustainable, safe and thriving community, welcoming around 72,000 new residents who will contribute to our vibrant way of life.

To support this population growth, at least 33,000 additional dwellings and 32,000 jobs will be required, which will largely be accommodated within existing designated urban areas, including focus areas for infill and sufficient greenfield land.

Rural centres and townships and rural residential living areas will continue to provide additional lifestyle and housing choices. Rural landscapes will contribute to the region's sense of identity, with the continued support of a diversity of agricultural production serving Cairns and the broader region.

Growth is to be promoted in the existing urban areas, with higher concentrations in central areas that are well serviced by transport, infrastructure, services and jobs. This will include the city centre and identified tropical urban villages. These villages will become the focal point for higher density living within high amenity urban environments.

Medium density housing and mixed use development will also be focused in and around major centres, and incremental dwelling diversity will be introduced across the city, through gentle density forms of housing.

Mount Peter in the southern growth corridor will provide the majority of new homes to meet the needs of the growing population and accommodate an increasing diversity of housing types.

New residential supply in the northern beaches will be provided in the existing urban area through a range of housing types that suit the local character, with some increased density in and around centres and in tourism focus areas. Appropriate and well-located community, education, sport, and recreational facilities are to be provided to support residents and create complete and sustainable communities.

Babinda, Gordonvale, coastal and rural townships and rural residential communities provide an important alternative lifestyle for residents and provide the main service, retail, community and employment opportunities for these areas. Babinda will continue to grow leveraging opportunities created by the mill site redevelopment, existing supply of serviced land and strong and diversifying agriculture and tourism sectors.

While development of various forms may continue to occur in Cairns' other small rural and coastal townships and rural residential living areas, these communities are not intended to grow substantially given their remoteness from services and the extent to which they are constrained by hazards and natural values.

The agricultural sector in Cairns is a key pillar to the regional economy, servicing both Cairns and the broader region. Cairns and its growth will continue to support the agricultural sector through protection and enhancement of rural land and the promotion and diversification of agricultural uses.

Cairns will be underpinned by transport connections that serve resident populations and support economic growth through a network of public transport and active transport, freight routes and key airport and port infrastructure. Transport routes that are resilient to climate change and natural hazards connect the city to surrounding regions and further afield.

New development and infrastructure will be designed with sustainability and resilience in mind, responding to natural hazards and the effects of climate change. To the greatest extent practical, new growth will be directed away from areas subject to natural hazards which place people or property at greater risk.

However, many existing urban areas (such as parts of the city centre and inner suburbs) are already significantly exposed to hazards, requiring a careful balance between the potential for new development and the effectiveness of available mitigation measures. Focus areas for infill development will avoid significant hazards as far as possible.



The Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas that surround Cairns, are two of Australia's most important environmental assets. These and other local, state and national environmental values are to be prioritised, through the protection and enhancement of the blue-green infrastructure network that underpins the city's structure and identity. The region's natural environment, resources, ecological processes and biodiversity values are recognised and valued as ecological, social, tourism and economic assets for present and future generations.

The economy is supported by strong tourism, rural and population servicing sectors, as well as emerging technologies, industries and markets. Cairns Airport and Portsmith marine precinct are strategically important facilities supporting the city's growing economy. The city centre will be strengthened as the region's business, administrative and entertainment core, complemented by a network of major centres at Smithfield, Edmonton and Earlville and district and local centres which will provide shopping, employment and community facilities to meet the needs of their surrounding communities.

Sufficient, well-serviced land for industrial purposes is facilitated, especially in regional economic clusters around the port (Portsmith-Bungalow) and Cairns Airport, and in the Cairns South State Development Area (SDA) and at Edmonton, with future opportunities for industry and technology uses fostered as part of an emerging regional economic cluster at Smithfield.

Rural lands surrounding the urban area are protected from urban encroachment and are valued for their contribution to the economy and scenic amenity of the region. Sugar cane lands underpin one of Cairns' most enduring industries and support significant employment, both on farm and at the Mulgrave Mill. Sugar cane lands are also an important part of the city's identity and scenic backdrop. Urban development is to be managed to ensure further loss of sugar cane land does not occur.

Urban development adapts to the changing climate and is reflected in buildings and urban spaces with responsive tropical design characteristics. Public spaces are accessible, safe and facilitate social interactions which enhance community and cultural life. Urban greening is achieved through a network of planting in streets, public spaces and private developments, connecting park networks, waterways and areas of environmental significance.

Northern beaches – tourism and lifestyle hubs

Smithfield-JCU regional economic cluster – focus for knowledge, technology and innovation, fostering employment and economic growth in the northern sub-region

Barron floodplain – blue-green lungs providing intra-urban break and key ecosystem services

Tropical urban villages which benefit from proximity to employment and services throughout the city centre

Cairns city centre is an economic cluster driving continued regional prosperity and national and international connections supporting tourism, industry, knowledge enterprises and services; encompassing the city centre, Dugurrdja health and innovation precinct, Cairns Airport and industry area and Bungalow and Portsmith marine precinct

Edmonton investigation area – an important long term growth area for the Southern Growth Corridor, which is to be investigated to ensure it complements the Cairns South SDA, Mount Peter Priority Development Area (PDA) and supports the Edmonton Town Centre.

Edmonton town centre – emerging as the primary service node for the southern sub-region, including major services and employment opportunities and supported by higher density housing

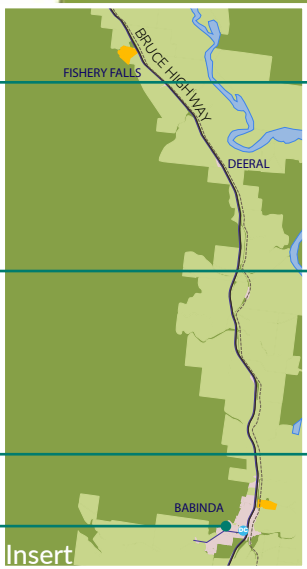
Newly dedicated Mount Peter PDA will deliver a significant proportion of growth to 2050 in well designed, tropical neighbourhoods and framed by a strong network of blue-green elements.

Gordonvale and Babinda – traditional town centres providing important services and a community focus for their localities, while accommodating incremental growth

Growth Plan Overall

Legend

- Arterial Road network
- Rail line and stations
- Urban footprint (white line)
- Principal Activity Centre
- Major Centre
- District Centre
- District Centre - Traditional Town Centre
- Urban development
- Rural residential
- Rural
- City lungs - Barron rural lands and Trinity inlet
- Existing green spaces
- Regional economic clusters
- Priority Development Area (PDA)
- State Development Area (SDA)
- Housing focus growth areas



Cairns South State Development Area - a critical long term supply of industrial land and employment opportunity for the southern sub-region

The northern beaches area is defined by its green and blue edges (mountains and ocean front) and numerous east to west green corridors.

The hillside of the city creates a natural western boundary to the city's growth but also plays a critical role in the scenic amenity and environmental values of Cairns.

The Barron floodplain is a significant blue-green element for the region and plays an important role as a sugar cane production area, an intra-urban break and in providing a range of eco-system services and opportunities for strategic rehabilitation. It can become Cairns' blue-green heart and lungs.

The Esplanade and other key streets in the city centre create 'greenways' linking key precincts and creating destinations themselves.

Blue-green elements within central Cairns are critical to supporting tropical urban lifestyles, cooling and eco-system services. Connections between open space and waterways are to be reinforced and celebrated.



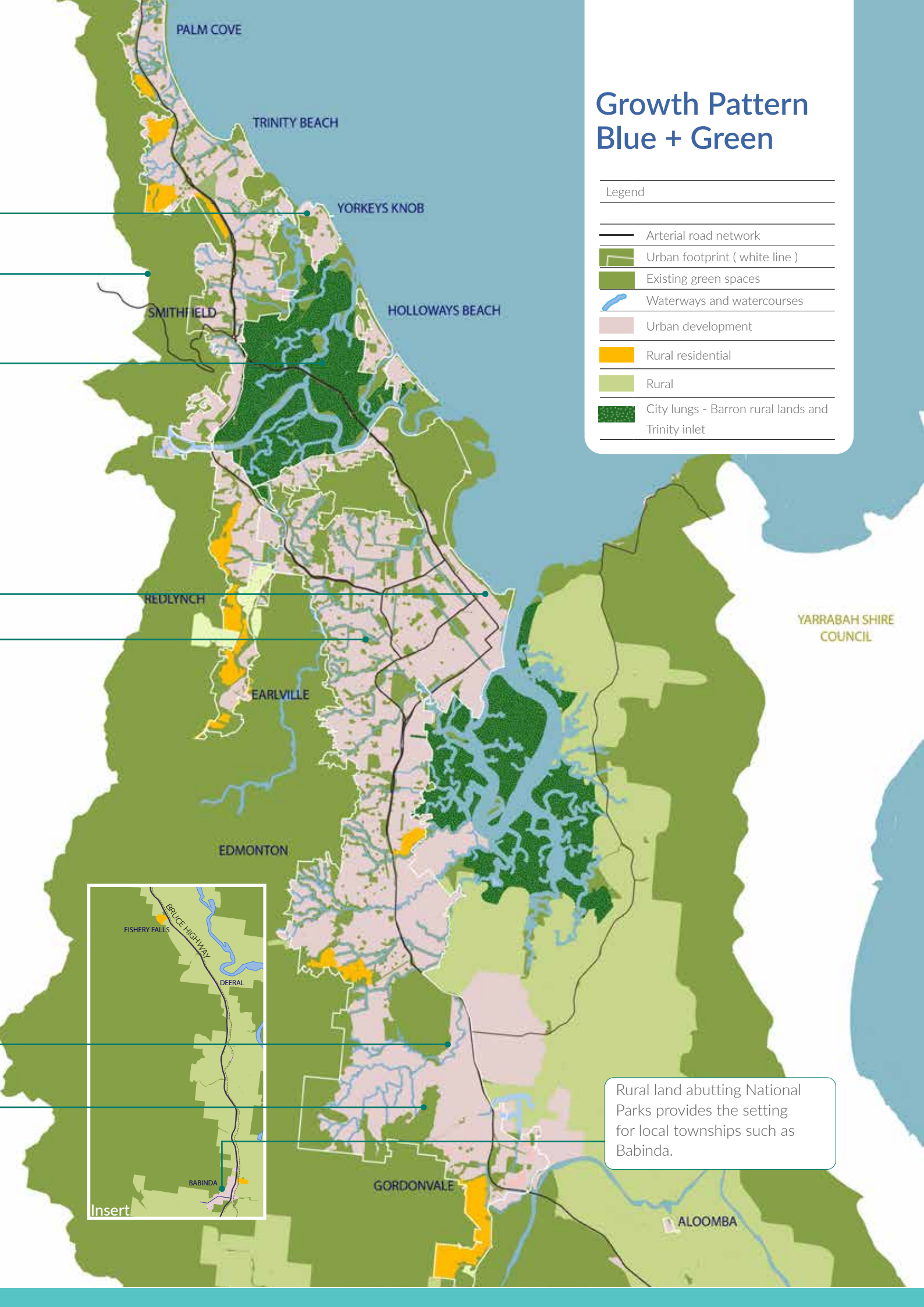
East to west links, linking the mountains to the sea are key blue-green elements that help define Cairns' tropical character. New urban areas will need to ensure that these links are rehabilitated as they are critical to maintaining the Cairns identity and protecting its rich natural environment.

Cairns' urban area is shaped by the region's topography, environmental and rural values, resulting in an urban footprint that is well defined and constrained by blue-green elements. The plan highlights the extent of open space and the role of east west corridors that provide, visual amenity, ecological value and hydrological function. A focus to ensure these corridors are either reinforced, maintained or established will be critical for the future growth of Cairns.

Growth Pattern Blue + Green

Legend

- Arterial road network
- Urban footprint (white line)
- Existing green spaces
- Waterways and watercourses
- Urban development
- Rural residential
- Rural
- City lungs - Barron rural lands and Trinity inlet



YARRABAH SHIRE
COUNCIL

Rural land abutting National
Parks provides the setting
for local townships such as
Babinda.

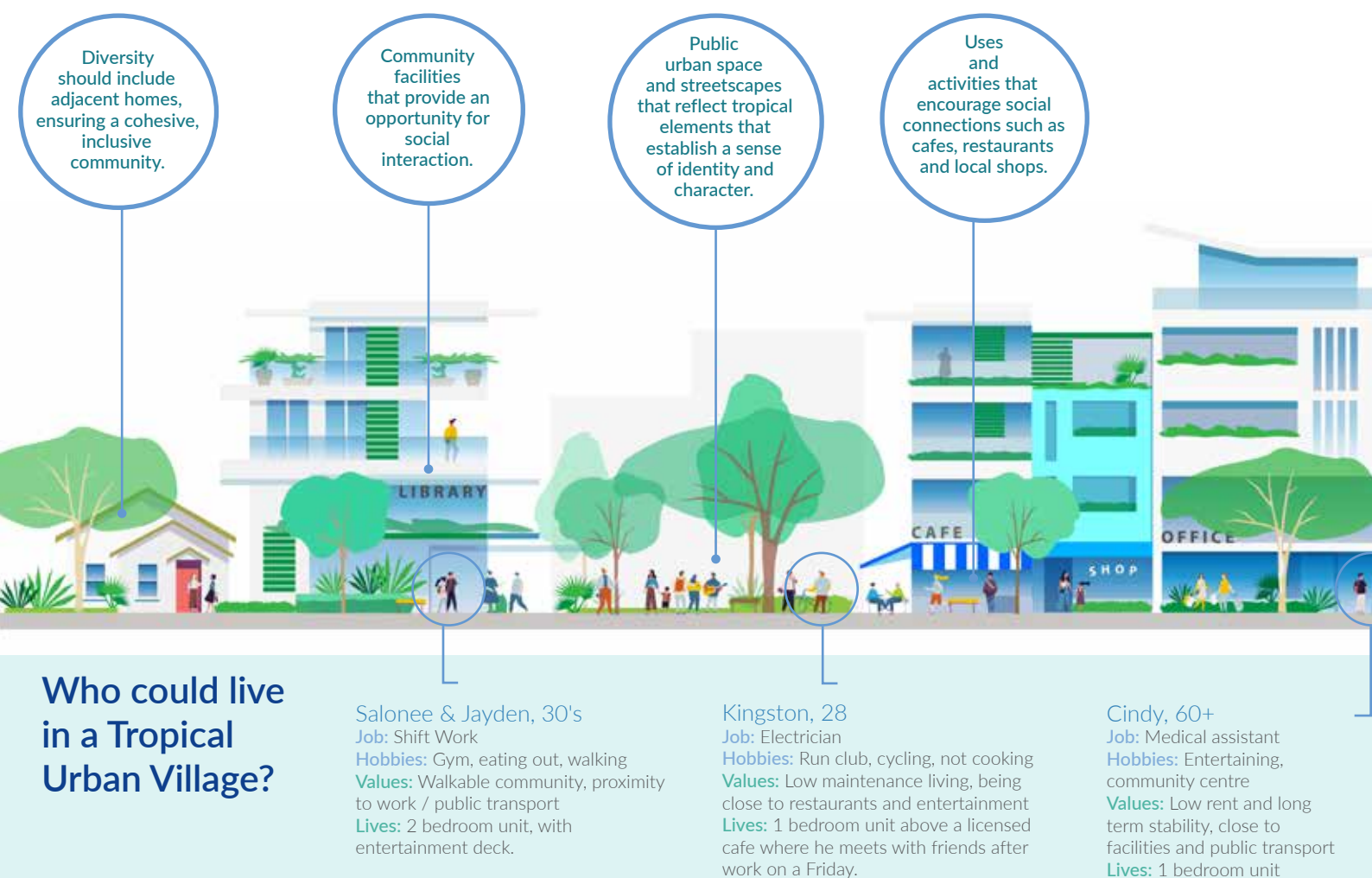
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Tropical Urban Villages

A place based approach to planning and a key initiative to deliver on the Foundational Elements

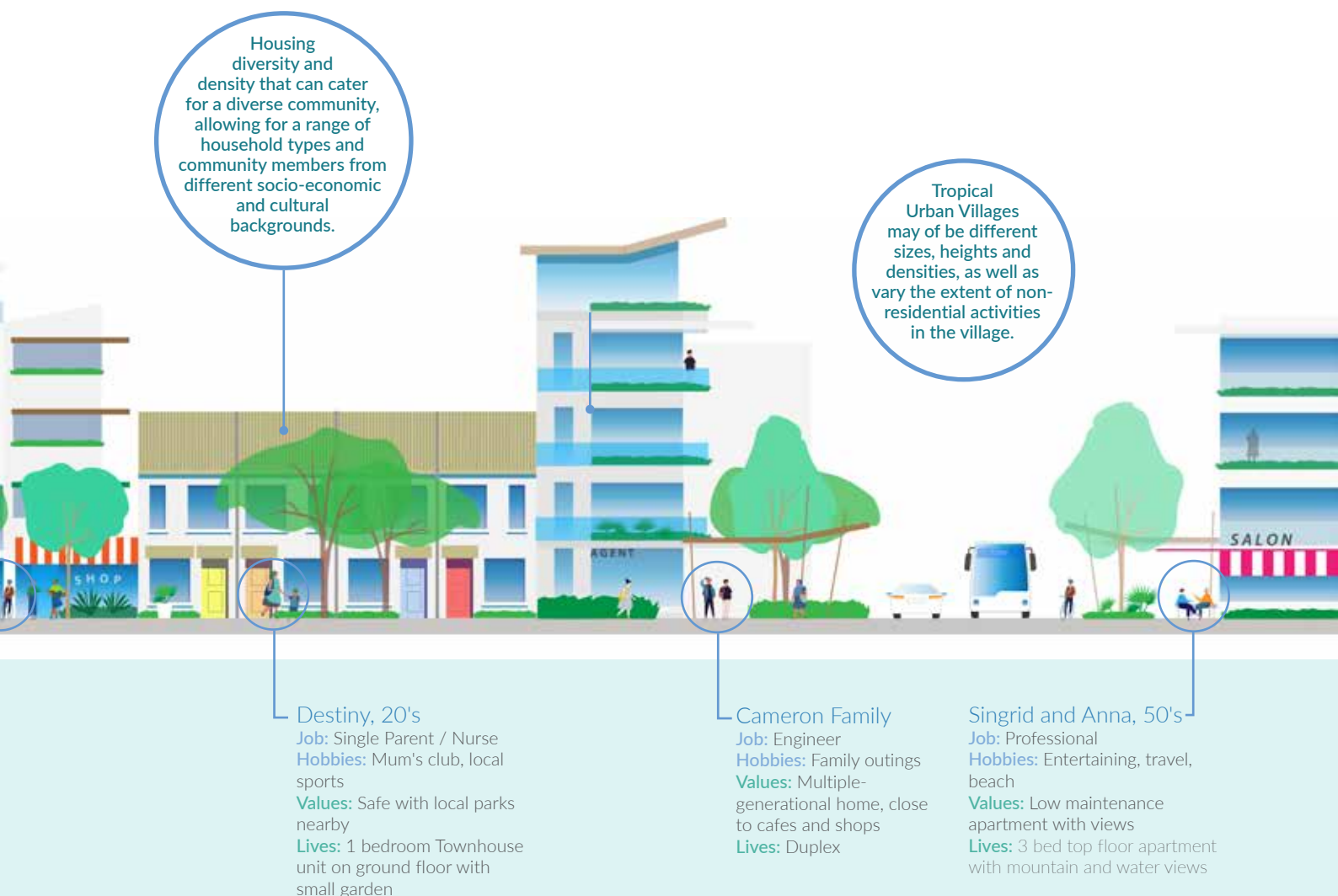
As Cairns is located in Australia's wet tropics region, we need to consider the impacts of the climate and design outcomes that respond to this climate. We also have to manage the impacts of the continued outward expansion of urban development.

As a result, it is crucial to make better use of our well serviced infill areas, creating sustainable urban communities with high-amenity that focus on housing diversity, connectivity, and lifestyle.



These areas of focus are known as **Tropical Urban Villages**. Their defining features are:

- A strong community focus,
- Walkable, shady environments with high-quality public spaces,
- A range of housing options, focused in Manunda, Manoora, Earlville, Edge Hill, Westcourt & Bungalow, and
- Opportunities for Tropical Urban Villages integrated within new infill developments and greenfield areas such as those new communities within Mount Peter.



Section 4

CITY WIDE
STRATEGIES





City wide strategies

The city wide strategic outcomes and strategies contained in this section set out the primary policy directions for managing growth.

Each section contains a short introductory section providing context, and sets out strategic outcomes for Cairns and strategies which will help achieve them. These city wide directions are supported by the sub-region and precinct based strategies in Section 5.

We will cater for growth by making sure that we:

- Have a sufficient supply of land for development in greenfield or new urban development areas
- Promote focus areas for infill development in central areas that are already well serviced by transport, infrastructure, services and jobs
- Work to increase the diversity of housing types in both our greenfield and infill development areas which will give people more choice about how they live (e.g. in a house, a townhouse or an apartment).

Strategy 1

Protecting the natural environment and scenic amenity

Strategy 2

Housing that meets our changing needs

Strategy 3

Creating great tropical neighbourhoods

Strategy 4

Supporting a thriving economy

Strategy 5

Diverse cultures and heritage

Strategy 6

Delivering sustainable infrastructure

Strategy 7

Improving resilience to natural hazards and climate change



STRATEGY 1

PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SCENIC AMENITY

Cairns is defined by its green and blue – the mountain ranges of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to the west and the Great Barrier Reef to the east are internationally known. It is also recognised for its extensive sugar cane, vegetated hillslopes, healthy waterways and lush tropical urban environment.

The Cairns lifestyle and sense of identity are shaped by this setting. The region's natural land (and seascapes) also have deep and enduring cultural connections for First Peoples.

Protection of the region's natural environment has been identified as a key priority. Growth needs to be effectively managed to maintain biodiversity, ecological processes and ecosystem services, and reinforce opportunities for people to connect with natural areas, contributing to healthy lifestyles and community identity.

The region contains an extensive array of matters of national, state and local significance, much of which is protected by a strong legislative framework provided at Commonwealth and State Government levels. Additionally, the State Planning Policy sets out expectations for local government planning schemes to protect matters of environmental significance.

While vegetation in rural areas has largely been cleared to give way to sugar cane farming and urban development, important remnants and corridors remain, especially along waterways, around wetlands and on the hills and headlands that help to define the different neighbourhoods and communities within the region.

Water and riparian quality is also a critical value for the region, for the health of the habitats they support, and for the health of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, into which the region's catchments drain. The Barron Floodplain will provide increasingly important ecosystem services, related to flood and storm tide protection, water quality management and wetland functions. It may also provide a focus for both environmental and carbon offsets and strategic rehabilitation.

Protecting Cairns' natural environment must recognise the traditional values and practices of Traditional Owners that have sustained the lands for millennia. Pathways for protecting and enhancing Cairns' green and blue must integrate Indigenous knowledge and practices, re-centering the role of Traditional Owners in leading the region's efforts as custodians of the land and water.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1

Matters of national, state and local environmental significance

Manage growth and development to avoid further loss or fragmentation of important habitats and values, in order to maintain biodiversity and increase ecological resilience to climate change.

1. Maintain a strong urban and rural residential footprint boundary and preclude further urban expansion into natural and coastal areas.
2. Investigate matters of local environmental significance (MLES), and priority species, as expected by the SPP. SPP to provide a holistic understanding of the combined matters of state environmental significance (MSES) and MLES network, to identify priority areas and values to be retained, important corridors to be protected or enhanced and offset strategies for values that may be impacted by future development. This will include consideration of climate change resilience for species and habitats.
3. In planning of greenfield areas, ensure environmental values to be retained are identified and effectively protected, and viable ecological connectivity is maintained through strong blue-green corridors.
4. In urban areas, enhance remaining habitat and natural waterways and coastal environments.
5. Establish appropriate buffers / separation distances to be incorporated between development and retained habitat areas, wetlands and waterways; ensuring any firebreaks, services, or recreational infrastructure are located outside of ecologically significant areas.
6. Establish a coordinated rehabilitation and offset strategy, including management for enhanced vegetation to ensure bushfire risks to nearby communities are managed.
7. Recognise Traditional Owners and their Native Title rights, acknowledge cultural connections and other interests in land, sea and sky, and work with Traditional Owners and First Peoples Rangers in the planning and management of natural areas. Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers care for Country, successfully combining traditional knowledge of Country with specialised training and experience in the practice and science of managing natural and cultural resources.

STRATEGY 1

PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SCENIC AMENITY

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 2

Water quality and waterway health

Protect the quality of both surface and ground waters, and the ecological and hydrological processes of catchments, waterways and wetlands.

1. Protect and enhance waterways, wetlands and riparian areas to maintain water quality and ecological functions.
2. Protect water resource catchments and high value waters by avoiding any intensification of development within them.
3. Ensure new development incorporates drainage, stormwater and waste water management measures that protect ground and surface water quality and achieve the specified environmental values and meet the objectives established in the SPP.
4. Recognise the Barron Floodplain and Trinity Inlet for their role in providing important ecosystem services that are to be protected and optimised through strategic rehabilitation and environmental and carbon offsetting projects.

Outcome 3

The coast and islands

Protect and manage the natural processes, landforms and native vegetation of Cairns' coast and islands, to ensure their ecological, landscape, cultural and tourism values are maintained for current and future generations.

1. Confine urban development to existing committed urban areas along the coast.
2. Ensure coastal processes, landforms and habitats are maintained in a natural state.
3. Maintain or improve public access and use of foreshore areas, in a way that protects public safety and coastal resources.
4. Continue to limit inappropriate development on Green Island, Fitzroy Island and Double Island while accommodating nature-based tourism, by ensuring development footprint and built form are small in scale and subservient to the natural landscape and impacts are managed to avoid environmental harm.
5. Continue to maintain the Frankland Islands and Haycock Island as development-free nature refuges.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 4 Scenic amenity

Ensure identified landscape and scenic values are managed to minimise the extent of visual change so that these visual elements continue to provide social, cultural and economic benefits to the Cairns Region.

1. Protect identified landscape values, regional gateways, significant natural features, viewpoints and scenic routes and buffers which contribute to Cairns' identity, and determine what nature and extent of development may be compatible with them.
2. Protect identified inter-urban breaks by maintaining a strong urban and rural residential footprint boundary and precluding further urban expansion into rural, natural and coastal areas.
3. Enhance the scenic amenity in established and new growth areas and in inter-urban breaks, through increased urban greening and commitment to tropical urbanism.
4. Preserve hill slopes, ridgelines and headlands to maintain their visual prominence and ecological values and functions, preventing development that would compromise their scenic amenity or ecological integrity.

STRATEGY 2

HOUSING THAT MEETS OUR CHANGING NEEDS

By 2050, Cairns is likely to be home to up to 72,000 more people and require up to 33,000 additional dwellings. An increase in the proportion of smaller households, the ageing of the population, the proportion of renters and affordability pressures mean there will be a growing need for varied housing options and for more rental properties, although the need for detached dwellings will continue to be important.

Greenfield land, primarily in the southern parts of the city, has capacity for over 20,000 additional dwellings. This indicates Cairns has a comfortable land supply for the short to medium-term. However, this supply may tighten over the long term (up to 2050 and beyond) depending on the take up of infill opportunities and densities achieved in new subdivisions.

Detached dwellings currently account for 68% of all housing and are the predominant product in the region's greenfield areas, with a clear trend towards smaller lots accommodating larger houses. Despite policy settings which support a mix of housing types, limited diversity in the housing stock has been produced. To meet future needs based on our changing demographic trends, the proportion of other types of housing in Cairns will need to increase substantially by 2050.

There will also be a growing need for aged care and retirement housing, as well as affordable and well-located housing for students and key workers in tourism and health (among other industries). An increasing supply of social housing and emergency housing will also be needed for a growing segment of the community which is under housing stress.

Infill in the well-located central parts of the city is critical to address these needs and will become increasingly important for the northern part of the city, where there is limited greenfield land remaining. Infill opportunities will also be important for increasing the stock of tourist accommodation in these areas.

The outcomes and strategies set out below aim to create a more equitable, liveable, sustainable and resilient community in Cairns, reflecting the region's distinctive needs and aspirations. They recognise that housing is a shared responsibility across government and non-government sectors and complement Cairns LGA Social and Affordable Housing and Homelessness Plan 2023-2026 (CSAHP).



What is a Tropical Urban Village

An urban village is characterised by a strong community focus, within a walkable, pedestrian focused tropical and shady environment and a high quality public realm. They support a range of medium to higher density housing options.

Urban villages may occur at different scales and will vary in the height and intensity of built form and extent of non-residential activities: larger scale urban villages may be part of a mixed use centre, while smaller scale villages may be lower rise and may contain no or limited commercial floor space.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1

Focused and efficient use of land

Cairns' urban settlement pattern supports the efficient use of finite land resources and costly infrastructure, including a shift from reliance on greenfield development to greater uptake of gentle density and medium to higher density infill housing.

1. Maintain a strong urban and rural residential footprint boundary and preclude further urban expansion into sugar cane, ecologically and visually sensitive areas, and land affected by natural hazards.
2. Undertake master planning of remaining greenfield development precincts and implement through the planning scheme to guide layout, housing mix and density and climate responsiveness. This will also address cost effective infrastructure provision for the growth corridor (refer to infrastructure section).
3. Work with the State Government to achieve a collaborative approach across all levels of government to support efficient and well serviced delivery of greenfield development.
4. Planning for the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor provides for a significant increase in the density and diversity of dwelling types to meet the changing housing needs of the community and ensure the most efficient use of remaining greenfield land and infrastructure investment.

STRATEGY 2

HOUSING THAT MEETS OUR CHANGING NEEDS

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1

Focused and efficient use of land (continued)

Cairns' urban settlement pattern supports the efficient use of finite land resources and costly infrastructure, including a shift from reliance on greenfield development to greater uptake of gentle density and medium to higher density infill housing.

5. Invest in and catalyse the infill opportunities nominated in section 5 as priority focus areas for uplift, creating increased housing capacity as well as focal points of high amenity, and tropical urban living. This will include:
 - undertaking focused precinct planning and urban design for these areas;
 - altering zoning where necessary to accommodate a broader mix of housing and varying building heights;
 - promoting a well-integrated mix of uses where these focus areas are based on centres elsewhere, allowing for limited small scale commercial and community uses (such as cafes and offices providing local services) to provide a focus for community life, but which does not undermine nearby centres;
 - develop and implement streetscape improvement and public space strategies to create a high quality, well shaded public realm;
 - ensure streetscape and deep planting zones within lots have a direct reduction on the heat island effect;
 - investigate opportunities to incentivise private development (such as targeted charges discounts) within the tropical urban villages, and consider investing in government-led exemplar projects;
 - work with the State on inclusionary housing models to facilitate social and affordable housing products.
 - achieve higher net density for housing at around 100 to 150 dwellings per hectare.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1

Focused and efficient use of land (continued)

Cairns' urban settlement pattern supports the efficient use of finite land resources and costly infrastructure, including a shift from reliance on greenfield development to greater uptake of gentle density and medium to higher density infill housing.

6. Rationalise the current suite of urban residential zones, to establish clearer and more consistent relationships between built form, height and lot size ² and provide more opportunity for gentle density in both the low-and low-medium residential zones (except where avoiding high hazard areas). Key parameters include:
 - Low density residential zone - consider accommodating small lots, secondary dwellings and dual occupancy as part of the scheme review and place based planning.
 - Low-Medium density residential zone - Accommodate attached housing and small lots and allow for up to three storey development.
 - Medium-density residential zone - Accommodate three to six storey apartment development. Lot sizes should be retained in larger parcels to promote this form of housing.
 - High-density residential zone - Accommodate apartment development over six storeys (again, retaining lots in larger sizes).
7. Review the way residential development is facilitated in centres and mixed use zones. This includes providing more flexibility for housing (including standalone residential development).
8. Investigate opportunities to transition rural residential zoned land to urban zones where the land is hazard free, able to be serviced and in a configuration that supports the emergence of walkable urban neighbourhoods.
9. Through the strategies outlined above, aim to achieve 30-40% of all new housing to 2050 as infill development within existing urban areas, and 60-70% in greenfield areas.

² Built form and lot size-based requirements are recommended for existing residential areas/zones rather than density targets or requirements. This is because density, while a useful analytical parameter, will depend on unit size and is not always directly related to the preferred built form outcomes.

STRATEGY 2

HOUSING THAT MEETS OUR CHANGING NEEDS

Outcomes

Outcome 2 Sufficient capacity

Sufficient greenfield land and infill capacity are provided to accommodate the extent and mix of housing to meet the needs of a growing and changing community. This includes ensuring an adequate supply of land is available to avoid unnecessarily constraining supply and ensuring regulatory settings do not unduly delay supply or add to the cost of housing.

Strategies

1. Monitor and maintain a 10-year land supply pipeline of greenfield land. Only support additional land into the urban footprint when needed (possibly around 2046).
2. Prioritise infill development within less constrained parts of the city central areas, in nominated tropical urban villages within the city and surrounds (refer to section 5).
3. Investigate opportunities to unlock underutilised and government owned land, including within the designated Edmonton town centre area, and in and around infill areas.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 3 Housing diversity

Improved housing diversity is delivered to:

- meet the needs of a diverse, changing and growing population, and
- support more socially and environmentally sustainable housing, with equitable access to housing options in well located, liveable neighbourhoods.

1. Investigate how to improve flexibility in the low density and low-medium residential zones for house-scale gentle density such as secondary dwellings, small scale attached housing and smaller lot housing, as well as for retirement, residential care, relocatable home parks and multiple dwellings on large lots (e.g. >3000m²) which can accommodate a compatible building scale.

Refer also to the supply strategies above.

2. Provide adaptive planning provisions that accommodate emerging housing forms (however defined under the mandatory regulated requirements), such as build-to-rent, tiny houses, and co-living, in a form appropriate to the relevant zone and overlays.
3. Treat residential care and retirement villages consistently, ensuring they are able to be accommodated in all residential, centre and community facility zones.
4. Adopt dwelling mix requirements for greenfield development (including the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor) to ensure land is used efficiently while providing increased density and diversity of dwelling types needed by the community and enhancing opportunities for private greenspace.

STRATEGY 2

HOUSING THAT MEETS OUR CHANGING NEEDS

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 4

Housing affordability and availability

Housing in Cairns is affordable and available to persons and households on low to moderate incomes, including key workers, vulnerable groups, and people with special needs.

1. Ensure that a sufficient supply of land and flexible opportunities for a wide range of housing types in both infill and greenfield contexts are accommodated.
2. Ensure the protection of existing affordable housing assets by discouraging their redevelopment or requiring their redevelopment into similar housing outcomes.
3. Monitor the impacts associated with the use of dwellings as short-term rental accommodation (e.g. through Airbnb, Stayz etc) on housing availability and affordability, and implement regulation if adverse effects escalate.
4. Facilitate specialist disability housing, social and affordable housing, residential care facilities and retirement accommodation in all residential, centre and relevant mixed use and community facility zones, where appropriate.
5. Advocate to the State Government for increased provision of social and affordable housing, and government led catalyst and inclusionary housing pilot projects.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 5 Housing design quality

New neighbourhoods and infill housing are well designed, enhancing local streetscapes, amenity and liveability, and reflecting the tropical character of Cairns.

1. Include more effective and locally responsive assessment benchmarks to ensure small lot, medium- and high-density housing reflects a tropical character, with access to greenery and on-site open space, giving households (including children and older residents) opportunities for interaction and outdoor activity and facilitation of setbacks and spaces for ventilation and cooling, whilst considering its impact on cost/benefit for development.
2. Ensure assessment benchmarks support walkability and active transport, safe and inviting streets and public spaces, and ensure trunk and local infrastructure networks are planned to deliver integrated pedestrian, cyclist, and micro transport networks and public spaces.
3. Work with and advocate the State Government to develop/ review model codes for neighbourhood design and the Queensland Housing Code to establish a Far North Queensland code that reflects the climatic conditions and development considerations.

STRATEGY 3

CREATING GREAT TROPICAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

Cairns has its own unique character and identity and this is expressed through the existing architecture and the urban spaces, streets and natural surroundings. New developments through their design and placement within the urban fabric of the city need to contribute to this character and respond to the tropical climate of Cairns.

The spaces between buildings are just as important and should be designed to complement the architecture and character of the city while providing opportunities for the community to congregate, work and live.

The improved walkability of neighbourhoods and the city is essential for environmental and social reasons, so strategies to achieve this outcome including through supporting physical connections and shading are important.

The connections between Cairns and the surrounding natural features of the hillslopes, the beaches and the ocean are intrinsic to the character of the city. Vegetation, gardens and other green infrastructure are important in a tropical climate and are encouraged to complement the built form and to create cool, shaded spaces for the community, partly to address the health and environmental impacts created by the urban heat island affect. With impacts being increasingly felt due to climate change, the design for climate adaptive buildings and landscaping is critical to a thriving and healthy community.

Traditional housing in Cairns is a defining feature of many neighbourhoods, showcasing distinctive design elements such as roof forms, wide verandahs, and timber and tin construction. These architectural styles, prominent in homes built before mid-last century, reflect the region's tropical climate and cultural heritage, contributing significantly to the charm and character of the community.

Partnering with local First Peoples to embed perspectives into place naming, planning and design, Cairns can develop neighbourhoods that are not only functional and sustainable but also culturally rich and inclusive. Creating culturally vibrant neighbourhoods enhances community well-being and fosters stronger ties between First Peoples and non-Indigenous residents.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1 Tropical Urban Villages

Develop and implement tropical urban villages that feature a variety of housing types, designed to adapt to tropical climates, and centred around essential community and public spaces.

1. Incorporate place-based planning mechanisms within the Cairns Planning Scheme to guide and encourage a variety of tropical urban villages within infill and green fill locations.
2. Plan place-making programs including streetscape and public space improvement plans and investment in catalyst infrastructure and development.

Refer also to strategies for meeting our changing housing needs above.

Outcome 2 Climate and place-responsive design

Plan and design buildings and neighbourhoods to respond to the tropical climate to create cool, sustainable buildings and spaces and reduce the effects of urban heating.

1. Orient lots and buildings (to the extent possible) to take advantage of the northern sun and prevailing breezes.
2. Ensure that assessment benchmarks seek built form that incorporates features and design responses that embed tropical character³, such as shading through eaves and awnings, articulation, verandahs and fenestration and light materials.
3. Ensure that green infrastructure is incorporated through the use of deep planted landscaping areas, street trees, green roofs and walls to provide shading and reduce surface temperatures.
4. Promote sustainable design measures to reduce the need for artificial temperature control and lighting and energy use and to support water conservation.
5. Minimise urban heat island effects through the prioritisation of on-site green space and shade planting, building separation and reduction of expanses of hard surfaces and cover.
6. Promote and increase urban tree canopy and landscaping, especially through implementation of street tree planting in existing urban areas and development standards requiring street trees located at regular intervals in new development.

³ Planning schemes are precluded from regulating matters dealt with in the building assessment provisions. They can, however, deal with place based character and design responses.

STRATEGY 3

CREATING GREAT TROPICAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 3 Neighbourhood character

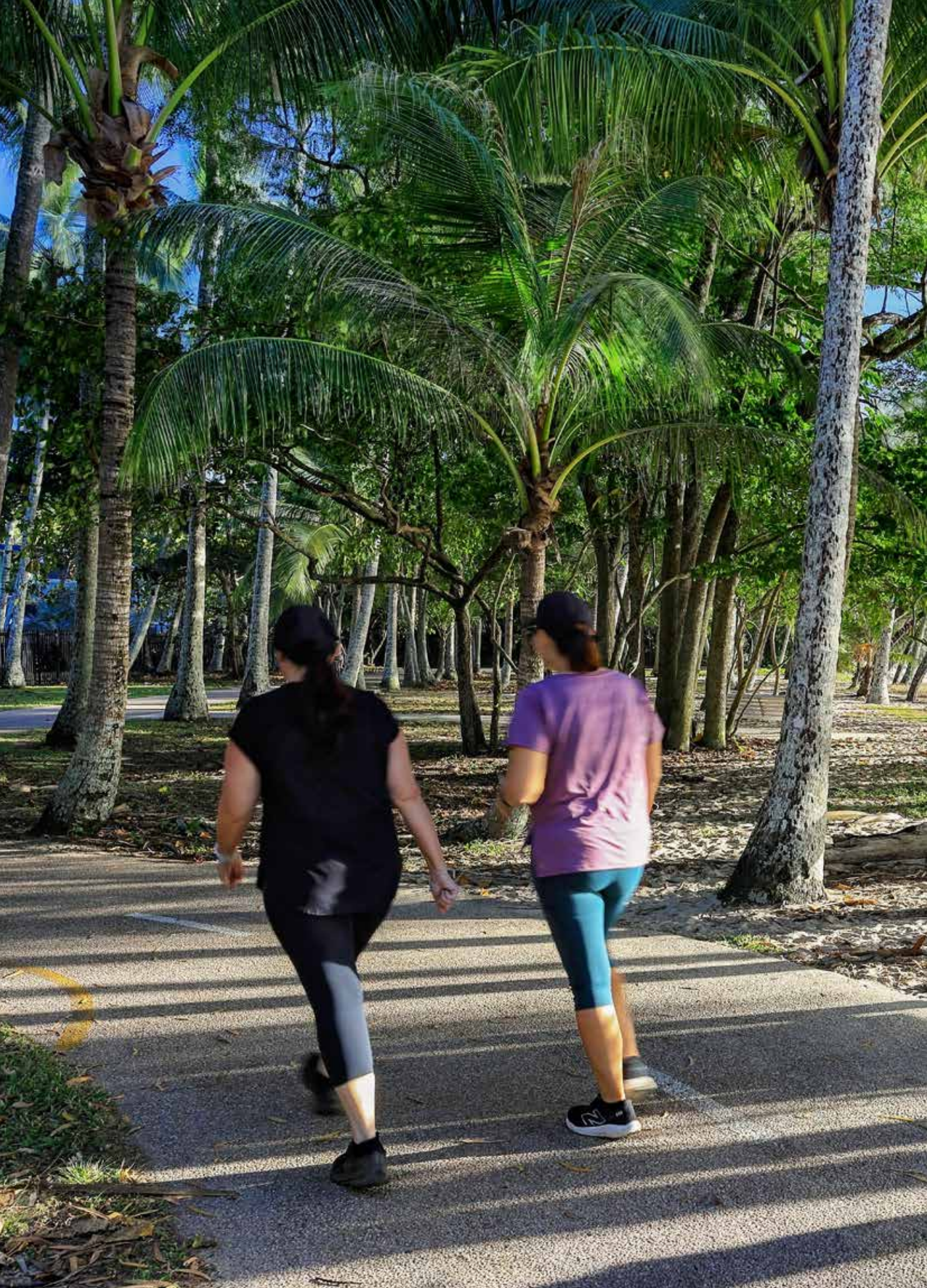
Protect traditional housing and landscape character in key localities, to maintain neighbourhood identity and the unique streetscape elements that contribute to Cairns' identity.

1. Protect the built form, streetscapes and landscape elements that create distinctive traditional neighbourhoods. In areas identified as priorities for infill housing, new housing forms that increase density but respect the area's character are supported.
2. Support renovations and restorations of character buildings by allowing flexibility for changes and additions, while protecting unique architectural styles and features of significance.
3. Ensure assessment benchmarks require new development in neighbourhood character areas that complement (but do not replicate) the traditional streetscape, landscape and building elements.

Outcome 4 Walkable neighbourhoods

Design new developments to improve walkability and other active transport modes.

1. Establish assessment benchmarks to ensure subdivision design creates walkable catchments to connect residents with local services and facilities via shaded footpaths or bikeways to reduce car dependency.
2. Design new developments to increase active transport by prioritising walking and through street layout and design, footpath provision, minimising vehicle crossovers and improving street tree planting for shaded paths. Discourage the use of street verges for car parking through using upright rather than rollover kerbs and planting of street trees.
3. Create developments that promote street activity and shading through building design and landscaping to increase social interaction, provide a strong visual connection between private and public space and increase passive surveillance.
4. Plan for public transport to be easily walkable by all residents, with no more than a 400m distance to a bus stop.



STRATEGY 4

SUPPORTING A THRIVING ECONOMY

By 2050, Cairns will strengthen its role as the major economic centre for Far North Queensland, serving as the main connection between the region and the rest of the state, country and into South East Asia. It will become a frontrunner in the smart green economy by leveraging its tropical expertise, renewable energy resources and commitment to sustainable practices. The city's strategic focus on eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture and the circular economy will seek to drive innovation, attract investment, and create sustainable job opportunities, ensuring economic resilience and a thriving future for generations to come. Cultural tourism will continue to serve as a significant industry and attractor, cementing Cairns' role as the gateway to the north.

Cultural tourism particularly supports Traditional Owner-led businesses and initiatives but must be sustainably managed to avoid cultural exploitation and protect culturally significant sites.

Population servicing activities, including construction, health care, education and retail, will continue to underpin the mix and scale of employment opportunities, particularly within growth corridors. These will be supplemented by increased diversification and depth of economic activities.

Employment and industrial land is needed that supports a wide range of activities and evolving industry technologies, and enhanced provision for employee and business services and amenities. Industry precincts need to facilitate these opportunities as well as enabling innovation in building design (including height) and the capacity to adopt circular economy and renewable energy systems. However, care will be needed to ensure evolving industry needs are accommodated without impacting the successful functioning of centres, including the Cairns City Centre.

There is approximately 1,400ha of industrial land across the local government area, and at historic take-up rates of 5ha per annum, this would represent at least 165 years supply. Even significantly higher

assumptions about take-up rates to accommodate stretch targets and opportunities, this could represent at least 41 years supply of industry land (with a take-up rate of 20ha per annum).

Cairns' major industrial areas are strategically vital to economic and employment growth. They include:

- Portsmith – Bungalow - Woree Industrial Area
- Stratford Aeroglen (including Cairns Airport)
- Edmonton industry land
- Cairns South State Development Area

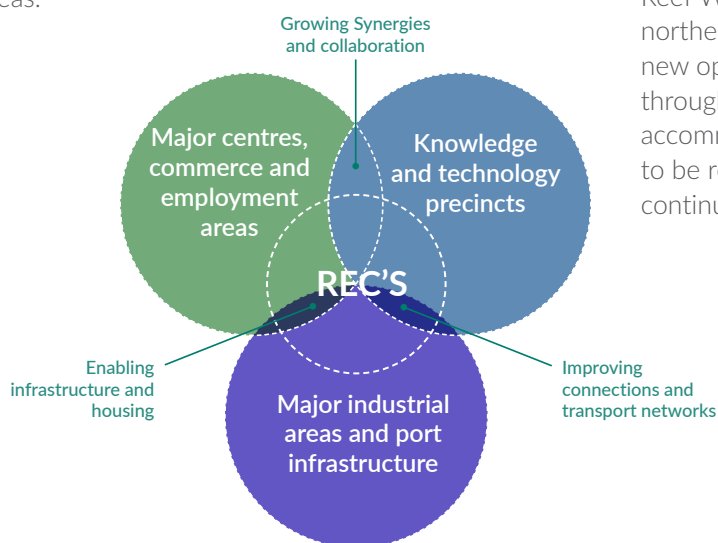
While the supply of land for industrial uses is adequate at a long-term and city wide scale, there is a shortfall of 'shovel-ready' industry land to cater for short-term needs. There is also a need for industry land in the northern Cairns area to cater to local servicing and warehousing demand.

Structural shifts in the way people work and in retail trends have particular implications for the nature and scale of centres. Nonetheless, the network of centres in Cairns remain an important foundation for planning policy: providing for optimum convenience and accessibility to a range of commercial and community services and facilities and jobs and supporting improved city wide productivity, more efficient infrastructure delivery and a range of other social benefits.

With a 2050 population of 242,000, Cairns will require one principal centre, three major centres, ten district centres and 30 local centres. These centres will evolve to become more than just shopping centres, providing hubs of community and economic activity, including entertainment and social meeting spaces, health and education facilities, as well as retail facilities. Intensified built forms in centres will support growth in population servicing activities, and an increasing mix of uses, including medium and higher density housing.

Regional economic clusters have emerged based on the connectivity to the city centre, particularly around the Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation precinct, the Stratford, Aeroglen and Cairns Airport precinct and the Bungalow and Portsmith marine precinct. A potential regional economic cluster has also been identified based on the James Cook University Campus, centre and business lands at Smithfield, with the potential for an education, knowledge and technology focus.

These clusters are supported by the Cairns Economic Development Strategy, which recognises geographic and industry areas of specialisation in these focus areas.



Successful economic clusters are to be supported through coordinated policy and marketing, and fostering of innovation and synergies across existing and emerging business activities.

These regional economic clusters will assist in creating cleaner, greener and employment friendly spaces that attract and support emerging and new economy enterprises (including automated-oriented and technology-based industries).

Tourism continues to be a mainstay of the Cairns economy, with an increased focus on nature based and green tourism. The Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas, Cairns' islands and northern beaches will continue to attract visitors, with new opportunities emerging for rural based tourism throughout the region. Infrastructure, including tourist accommodation, to support this sector will continue to be required. The planning framework must also continue to facilitate tourism.

WHAT IS A REGIONAL ECONOMIC CLUSTER (REC)?

Regional economic clusters, or RECs, are defined as geographically connected localities that have regionally significant levels of employment and specialisation in a range of outwardly focussed industry sectors. They may combine a number of different components, including major centres, industrial areas, knowledge and technology precincts and major infrastructure.

They present important opportunities to foster economic growth and innovation through resource and knowledge sharing, sharing of export orientations and leverage other business synergies, and enhancing the capacity to attract workers. They may be supported by enhanced communication and transportation infrastructure, creating a high quality environment with services and amenities that support workers and businesses, and access to nearby housing.

STRATEGY 4

SUPPORTING A THRIVING ECONOMY

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1 Employment land

Provide and protect sufficient employment land to ensure a steady supply is available to the market to meet the demands of the growing and diversifying economy.

1. Support the supply of land suitable for employment activities that is appropriately zoned, adequately serviced by infrastructure and connected to transport, including ensuring at least 10 years supply of shovel ready industrial land. This should involve accommodating a wider range of industries in greenfield industrial zoned land.
2. Advocate to the State to review intentions for the Cairns South State Development Area (CSSDA) to better support its role in providing land for a wide range of industrial uses and to ensure the area is serviced and available when needed.
3. Review intentions and local planning for the Edmonton investigation areas to rationalise industrial and commercial outcomes and optimise opportunities for residential development, in light of long term oversupply of industrial land.
4. Investigate opportunities to improve outcomes for under-utilised industrial land in existing industry precincts and re-prioritisation of some mixed use zone areas to industry zone uses.
5. Focus the use of industrial zoned land for industrial uses, with non-industrial uses only considered where they support an industrial use, serve workers or businesses in the immediate locality or there is no other practical location available.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 2 Centres

Provide opportunities for economic growth through the centre's network, servicing the growing population's retail, business, entertainment and social needs.

1. Plan for a centre's network in accordance with the table included below:
 - Principal: Cairns City Centre - providing for the highest intensity of development, a diverse mix of retail, commercial, administrative, community, cultural, tourism, entertainment, residential activities and a 24 hour economy.
 - Major: Smithfield, Earlville, Edmonton – supporting the highest order and largest scale of retail and commercial, cultural, entertainment and community facilities as well as permanent and short term accommodation.
 - District: Redlynch, Manoora, Gordonvale, Mount Sheridan, Westcourt, Manunda and an emerging centre in the Northern Beaches - generally serving catchments of 15,000 to 20,000 people, anchored by one or more full line supermarkets as part of their retail function, plus a range of community, entertainment and potentially government services.
 - District – traditional town centres: Gordonvale and Babinda play important community service roles and have the potential to incorporate higher order retailing (although they may not have the space or demand to support additional full line supermarkets) and a range of community, entertainment and government services.
 - Local: Around 30 centres, including generally supporting catchment populations of 4,000-8,000 and containing up to full line supermarkets where the catchment is not otherwise served by a district centre
 - Neighbourhood: Over 50 centres throughout the urban area, providing various small scale and locally focussed services for their immediate communities.
2. Centre activities are to be directed to the designated centres. Regular reviews of the network and evolving community needs should be undertaken to ensure centres remain capable of accommodating required floorspace. This will help to ensure that out-of-centre development is avoided.

STRATEGY 4

SUPPORTING A THRIVING ECONOMY

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 2 Centres (Continued)

Provide opportunities for economic growth through the centres network, servicing the growing population's retail, business, entertainment and social needs.

3. Continue to facilitate increased diversification in major centres to adapt to the changing way people use retail, business and entertainment activities, including higher density residential land uses and possible increase to building height outcomes. Undertake local area planning of these major centre precincts to optimise built form, centre consolidation and land use mix outcomes (including possible incorporation of nearby mixed use zone land).
4. Maintain and support the Cairns City Centre as the primary regional service, administration, entertainment and retail centre with capacity to cater to workers, businesses, residents and tourists.
5. Review design requirements and investigate opportunities for centre/streetscape improvement plans to support a high quality urban form that responds to the tropical climate. This should have a particular focus on providing adequate shade through trees and awnings, on site deep planting and green building responses and tropical built form providing for outdoor living, and place-based character responses.
6. Create community focal points in centres that underpin social cohesion, resilience, and identity by enhancing accessibility, convenience, amenity and a sense of place.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 3

Regional economic clusters

Support the creation of high-value economic opportunities within the city through the facilitation of regional economic clusters (RECs).

1. Support the creation of regional economic clusters (RECs) across the city to enhance economic growth, by facilitating a compatible mix and forms of development and investigating opportunities to incentivise key industries and specialisation in areas such as aviation, defence and marine, knowledge, health and allied services. Those clusters for initial focus include the following locations:
 - City centre and Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation precinct
 - Cairns Airport precinct
 - Portsmouth Marine precinct
 - James Cook University (Nguma-bada) Smithfield
2. Where appropriate, facilitate the necessary infrastructure to support the success of RECs such as the Port of Cairns, Cairns Airport, freight linkages, data and energy.
3. Facilitate opportunities for services and amenities for workers and business within clusters, without undermining centre roles and functions, and opportunities for housing within or near to the RECs to support attractive and affordable lifestyles for employees.
4. Support the Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation precinct to improve health and education services to Cairns and the surrounding region, while also further connecting the precinct to the City Centre, delivering enhanced urban design outcomes to the community.
5. Investigate opportunities to improve connectivity between RECs, centres and other major employment and knowledge precincts.

STRATEGY 4

SUPPORTING A THRIVING ECONOMY

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 4 Rural economy

Support the contribution of the rural economy to the city and region through protection of prime agricultural land from inappropriate development and encouragement of complementary uses, including agri-tourism and food processing.

1. Protect sugar cane from urban development, by establishing strong growth boundaries for urban and rural residential land and promote infill and efficient use of greenfield land to slow the incremental loss of sugar cane land within urban designations.
2. Protect all rural land from further fragmentation through subdivision or loss to non-rural purposes that could be established in a more suitable zone/location.
3. Ensure ongoing operations of the Mulgrave Mill are protected, and its growth and diversification is supported particularly through the southern part of the Cairns South SDA.
4. Ensure rural activities can continue to flourish and grow in locations which are suitable, with diversification of product supported to contribute to the economy. This will be particularly important in southern parts of the region which contain land suitable to a range of crops.
5. Support the development of small scale on-farm processing of product and supplementary agri- or eco-tourism ventures to support economic sustainability and growth.
6. Allow for the economic functioning and growth in small rural communities through the support for a mix of commercial, community, retail and housing and visitor accommodation uses within the township and other relevant zones to meet local community needs.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 5 Tourism

Support the contribution of tourism to the Cairns economy, including protecting the natural features that attract visitors and facilitating a diverse range of accommodation, entertainment and services.

1. Optimise tourism opportunities and experiences through economic development, and promotional and incentive strategies that support Cairns' existing reputation as a premier destination for national and international tourists.
2. Ensure regulatory settings in the planning scheme and local laws facilitate tourism and recreation opportunities, and supporting infrastructure in urban and non-urban areas, with clear and practical directions about how potential impacts on natural values, scenic amenity and urban character and amenity are to be minimised and mitigated.
3. Support the provision of appropriate amounts of accommodation, considering the impact of short-term rental accommodation on the local housing market. Tourist accommodation should continue to be facilitated in core locations including the city centre and northern beaches, as well as the small scale, sustainable island resorts. Other holiday rentals may occur throughout the urban area, subject to on-going monitoring (refer to housing strategies). Opportunities for small scale nature-based and agri-tourism in non-urban areas should also be supported.
4. Support cultural tourism opportunities to share First Peoples heritage.

STRATEGY 5

DIVERSE CULTURES AND HERITAGE

Planning for the future of Cairns must recognise that the places inhabited today hold stories and histories from time immemorial and that these continue in culture today. The Traditional Owners of the region are recognised as the first planners, architects, agriculturalists and place shapers, in having cared for Country for over 65,000 years. Cairns Regional Council aspires to include voices of Traditional Custodians, Elders and those emerging in ongoing conversations about the city's shared future. The Towards 2050 Growth Strategy has commenced dialogue with the region's First Peoples as the basis for an ongoing engagement about what is important to consider in policy, planning and on-ground outcomes.

Cairns is surrounded by areas recognised for their significant world, national and local heritage significance including the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics. These natural assets are central to Cairns' identity and way of life, contain biodiversity and ecological values of world renown and underpin the region's tourism economy. The way in which urban growth and development and ongoing rural activities are managed is key to protecting these important values.

Cairns also contains many places of post settlement cultural heritage, including places of State and local significance, which contribute to community identity and connections to the region's evolution.

The growth projected for Cairns indicates an increase in the city's population diversity in 2050. Population diversity promotes investment in community and cultural infrastructure and services that benefit the wider community. With Cairns' evolving population, it is critical that growth and development is designed to be inclusive (both in the physical environment it creates and the opportunities it facilitates) and that infrastructure and services to accommodate the community's diverse needs are provided.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1 Indigenous cultural heritage

Recognise and protect Indigenous cultural heritage in the planning for the city.

1. Continuously engage with First Peoples on matters to ensure their views and aspirations regarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage are reflected and considered.
2. Provide opportunities for First Peoples cultural heritage and economic aspirations to be reflected in new developments.
3. Protect culturally significant sites through the use of cultural heritage overlays in the planning scheme that have been developed in collaboration with Traditional Owners.

Outcome 2 World and national heritage

Avoid or mitigate adverse impacts of development on the cultural significance of a World or national heritage place or area.

1. Maintain a strong urban and rural residential footprint to avoid direct and indirect pressures on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.
2. Ensure that new development in Cairns hillslopes and other areas near to the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area avoid adverse impacts on matters of cultural heritage significance and other scenic and natural values, and ensure council's activities are consistent with the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 and the Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020 – 2030.
3. Urban water quality and runoff and other pollutant sources are to be appropriately managed by developments to protect the Great Barrier Reef and are consistent with Reef 2050 plan and related management strategies. (Note that the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* has created regulatory controls over pollutant loads from rural activities.)
4. Adverse impacts on the cultural heritage significance of national heritage places prescribed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* are to be avoided.
5. Respect and protect the contribution that natural features, the surroundings hills, beaches, islands and marine environment make to the character of Cairns.

STRATEGY 5

DIVERSE CULTURES AND HERITAGE

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 3 State and local heritage

Conserve places of state or local heritage significance for their cultural significance, tourism value and importance to the history and identity of the region.

1. Conserve and protect areas of state or local heritage significance, avoiding impacts on the cultural heritage significance of the place in the first instance, and ensure development on or near heritage places does not compromise, diminish or obscure historical or cultural values.
2. Support adaptive re-use of heritage places where the use is compatible with the significance of the site.

Outcome 4 Inclusive design

Design Cairns' neighbourhoods, centres, employment areas, public spaces and transport networks to be inclusive and safe.

1. Ensure streets and public spaces are designed to respond to the needs of a diverse range of users, including people of all ages and abilities, cultures, languages and genders.
2. Ensure assessment benchmarks require development to implement crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) design principles.
3. New development, public and open spaces cultivate a sense of place and community belonging, especially in centres and urban villages.
4. Encourage public art and places for continuing and growing cultural practice.
5. Prioritise inclusive public transport and active transport options that meet the needs of the broader community taking into consideration economic, social and physical circumstances.
6. Support cultural agency and partner with local First Peoples to incorporate traditional place names, ensuring the stories and significance behind these names are shared with the community (with appropriate permissions).



STRATEGY 6

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure plays a critical role in shaping the region and opportunities available to the community as it grows. It also underpins the social, environmental and financial sustainability of growth.

Urban communities need roads, active and public transport networks, sewer, water and energy. Importantly, they also need access to open space and other community infrastructure that provide places and services that build social connections, encourage cultural expression, support healthy lifestyles and create a strong sense of belonging. Cairns also plays a critical role in providing services and facilities for the wider Far North Queensland region, including Cairns Hospital and allied health services, James Cook University, Central Queensland University and TAFE Cairns.

The delivery of this infrastructure represents a major financial burden for the government and can affect Council's own financial sustainability. Infrastructure therefore needs to be provided and used efficiently. Effective integration with land use planning is critical because the settlement pattern (the location, spread and density of growth) is a primary influence on optimising the capacity of existing services and cost effectively expanding and augmenting infrastructure networks.

In Cairns, the city centre and inner suburbs are 'infrastructure rich' - meaning there is both a wide range of available services and facilities and capacity to be utilised. For this reason, the settlement pattern aims to consolidate housing, growth and economic activities in these areas (to the extent that flood and coastal hazards allow). This will also limit or slow urban sprawl, and the need to establish costly new networks.

Growth occurring in the right locations also helps improve accessibility and in managing congestion and the region's carbon footprint – by ensuring more people are closer to the jobs, services and facilities they need and by supporting public and active transport as alternatives to private vehicle use.

Council is working with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to plan for future transport needs. The State Government's recently released FNQ Infrastructure Plan 2024 and upcoming FNQ Regional Plan are also key to ensuring effective planning for and delivery of the infrastructure the community will need up to 2050. These plans will collectively identify priorities and will be used to guide future investment decisions to support Cairns as it grows.

This Growth Strategy is informed and supported by other Council plans, including the Community Infrastructure Plan prepared as one of the background studies in the Cairns 2050 project, and Council's existing Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) and the Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1 Blue-Green infrastructure

Blue-Green infrastructure is recognised and valued to protect ecosystem services, enhance resilience to natural hazards and mitigate urban heat.

1. Protect the Barron Floodplain from further urbanisation and other uses that would diminish the ecosystem services it provides, including flood storage and mitigation, water quality management, fish habitat, and potential carbon or environmental offsets.
2. Protect waterways and wetlands and associated riparian vegetation and buffers, in existing and newly developing areas, as critical contributors to urban cooling, as well as their ecosystem service and potential recreational roles.
3. Retain remnant habitat in and near urban areas, ensuring active management of vegetation to mitigate any bushfire risk associated with these areas.
4. Develop an urban greening strategy, which prioritises and invests in shading street trees, and review standards for spacing and type of street trees in newly developing areas.
5. Adopt water sensitive urban design (adapted to the wet tropics environment) and integrated water cycle management as the basis for engineering and water efficient landscaping standards.
6. Investigate and prioritise public works to mitigate flood and storm tide hazards, especially those impacting the city centre and inner suburbs, in order to support infill housing, economic opportunities and important community infrastructure and services within these areas (refer also to natural hazard strategies).
7. Ensure new developments integrate multifunctional blue-green infrastructure to enhance urban resilience and promote sustainability, combining recreational functions, water management systems and wildlife habitats, flood resilience and climate-positive design.

STRATEGY 6

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 2

Region shaping infrastructure

Region shaping infrastructure is prioritised and delivered to expand economic opportunities, enhance liveability and reinforce the settlement pattern.

1. Support the implementation of the:
 - a. Cairns Transit Network (busway network), in particular prioritising, connections to and between the identified tropical urban villages, centres and regional economic clusters, the southern growth corridor to the CBD and northern beaches to the CBD; and
 - b. Principal Cycle Network Plan, including the Cairns Southern Access Cycleway from Gordonvale to the CBD and cycleways from the CBD to Smithfield.
2. Support the evolution of the Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation Precinct based on Cairns Hospital within the city centre, and facilitate the growth of a diverse range of supporting activities and housing in the vicinity.
3. Continue to support the marine precinct based on Ports North and Defence facilities, in establishment and expansion of ancillary industrial and associated value adding and service activities, and protect key functions from encroachment.
4. Continue to support the Cairns Airport and regional trade distribution centre precinct, in the establishment and expansion of supporting industrial and associated value adding and service activities, and protect key functions from encroachment.
5. Work with the State Government to facilitate the infrastructure required to unlock the Cairns South State Development Area.
6. Support development in the southern growth corridor (Edmonton and Mount Peter). In particular, commitment to trunk wastewater reticulation and treatment infrastructure and Bruce Highway and interchange upgrades need to be prioritised and funded with State Government support.
7. Advocate the timely upgrades to the Captain Cook Highway and interchanges between the CBD and Smithfield.
8. Ensure regulatory provisions for the precincts mentioned above (to the extent they are controlled by Council) are clear and consistent in how they intend flood and coastal hazards to be managed and mitigated – to provide certainty.
9. Foster partnerships with state and federal governments to align funding and responsibilities, enhancing resource efficiency and strategic infrastructure development for the region.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 2

Region shaping infrastructure

10. Support the growth of James Cook University, CQUniversity, and TAFE Queensland to strengthen local education-to-employment pathways and boost career opportunities for Cairns residents.

Outcome 3

Accessibility and connectivity

A transport network that prioritises public transport and active transport and facilitates social and economic opportunities, by efficiently connecting people, places and employment.

1. In collaboration with the State, as part of the Cairns Transport Strategy, plan and deliver a strategic transport system that:
 - a. supports population growth and economic development;
 - b. is integrated across all modes of transport;
 - c. connects key centres and employment areas, educational and health precincts with communities – including opportunities to effectively connect the identified regional economic clusters;
 - d. provides competitive, reliable, frequent public transport services, integrated with local active transport infrastructure;
 - e. supports the timely establishment of public transport to outer growth areas, including the southern corridor and northern beaches; and
 - f. supports freight movements between ports, industrial areas and regional economic clusters.
2. Ensure urban design in centres and residential neighbourhoods facilitates walkability and other modes of active transport, through permeability and convenience, design of paths and streets, safety and comfort and user facilities.
3. Protecting efficient and safe operation of freight routes and transport hubs, including the Port of Cairns and Cairns Airport.
4. Advocate to the State Government for progress implementation of the Cairns Transit Network and the Principal Cycle Network Plan to support high frequency and reliable public transport and active transport facilities across the city.

STRATEGY 6

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 4

Integrated and efficient infrastructure and land use

Land use planning and the settlement pattern are integrated with infrastructure planning, to support cost effective provision and efficient use of services and facilities, and create 'complete' communities which support healthy and enriched lifestyles.

1. Coordinate and integrate the planning and delivery of infrastructure using a consistent set of growth assumptions, and using a repeatable growth model.
2. In planning greenfield areas (refer to housing strategies), prepare infrastructure delivery plans which identify and cost required infrastructure, and investigate opportunities for infrastructure agreements to support the delivery of timely, quality and fit-for-purpose community infrastructure.
3. Revise the LGIP to plan for trunk infrastructure networks to support the growth pattern, and investigate infrastructure charging which will incentivise greater uptake of housing opportunities in well serviced areas, to maximise the use of existing capacity.
4. Support co-located and multiple use of facilities, especially to provide social infrastructure that is accessible and adaptable to meet future community needs.
5. Investigate demand management, technological or other solutions which help to defer the need for substantial infrastructure augmentations.
6. Review desired standards of service for trunk infrastructure and development standards for non-trunk infrastructure to ensure cost-effective design based on the whole of asset lifecycle costs, having regard to climate change resilience, universal design for all abilities access (where relevant) and opportunities for co-location.
7. Protect major infrastructure facilities and corridors by preventing further encroachment by sensitive land uses and establishing reasonable standards to manage impacts where development already exists.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 5

Renewable energy and low carbon transition

The Cairns region transitions to a low carbon future, maximising the opportunities associated with renewable energy and a circular economy.

1. Facilitate renewable energy projects in appropriate locations, avoiding encroachment into areas of environmental significance and land used or suitable for use for sugar cane farming, or agricultural class A or B land.
2. Ensuring the regulatory framework supports value adding, circular economy / waste re-use or waste to energy or local energy generation/reticulation systems.

STRATEGY 7

IMPROVING RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Cairns region is prone to natural hazards and vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The ability to cope with and adapt to these challenges is vital to the community's social, environmental and economic resilience.

Land use focused risk assessments have been undertaken for flooding, storm tide and coastal erosion, bushfire and landslide. These natural hazards affect existing communities and developed areas and influence the location of new urban growth.

Flooding and storm tide inundation are particularly significant hazards in the Cairns region, affecting large parts of the city centre, inner suburbs and coastal communities, as well as the Barron Floodplain. In coastal parts of the region, there is a high degree of coincidence between flood prone land, areas subject to storm tide and areas at risk of erosion associated with potential sea level rise by 2100. The Port of Cairns, the Cairns Airport, and a number of waste treatment facilities and significant areas of industrial land are also exposed to these hazards.

Bushfire and landslide primarily affect the edges of urban areas adjoining steeply sloping vegetated areas. However, Cairns' rural residential communities are significantly exposed to these hazards (especially bushfire). Water infrastructure across the region is also significantly exposed to these hazards.

In newly developing areas, the management of hazard related risks can be achieved by avoiding affected areas or, where appropriate, filling land or adopting other mitigation works. In existing developed areas, the response requires a more complex consideration of the degree of impact that may be tolerated: balancing existing investment and potential for growth and change with the ability to adequately mitigate and manage risks.

The way in which natural hazards are to be managed has a significant impact on the ability to achieve employment targets and infill in otherwise well-serviced, central locations. It could also impact on the growth of the tourism industry, which relies heavily on high amenity beachside and natural locations. The extent to which new development changes the overall risk profile of these areas needs to be carefully balanced. Improving resilience to natural hazards and climate change must adopt the Traditional Knowledge of First Peoples, recognising their thousands of years long experience within the region and tropical weather.

Urban heat and heat-waves are another hazard which will need to be managed through climate responsive design of neighbourhoods, centres and buildings (this is addressed further under the tropical neighbourhoods and sustainable infrastructure strategies).

The Growth Strategy is informed and supported by a number of other strategies, such as the Cairns Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy, Cairns Climate Change Strategy and Cairns Local Disaster Management Plan.



STRATEGY 7

IMPROVING RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1

Risk responsive and resilient growth pattern

The region adapts to and effectively manages natural hazards and the increasing risks associated with climate change while accommodating growth and economic diversification and improving community resilience.

1. Maintain a strong urban and rural residential footprint boundary and preclude further urban expansion (beyond already designated greenfield land) into land affected by natural hazards.
2. Undertake planning of remaining greenfield development precincts to delineate:
 - land exposed to hazards where development is to be avoided (for example, where flood or coastal hazards are high or very high or where flood conveyance needs to be maintained), and
 - developable areas in which hazards are to be mitigated and managed.

This may involve adjustment of zone/precinct boundaries, subject to investigation of existing development commitments and site circumstances.
3. Focus infill development in well-connected, inner urban and city centre areas that are hazard free or subject to low or moderate flood or coastal hazards, where risk can be tolerated and site-based or local/district level mitigation measures can be effectively implemented.
4. Avoid intensification of development on existing urban land within very high and high flood or coastal hazards. Elsewhere, ensure relevant hazards can be effectively mitigated. This may involve adjustment of zone/precinct boundaries, subject to investigation of existing development commitments and site circumstances.
5. Avoid any expansion or intensification of existing environmental management and rural residential zoned land, which are significantly affected by bushfire hazards, and to varying degrees, landslide and flood hazards, and in limited cases coastal hazards.
6. In the coastal communities of the Barron floodplain, avoid any further expansion or intensification of urban development at Yorkeys Knob, Holloways Beach and Machans Beach.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 1

Risk responsive and resilient growth pattern (continued)

The region adapts to and effectively manages natural hazards and the increasing risks associated with climate change while accommodating growth and economic diversification and improving community resilience.

7. Avoid new vulnerable uses and critical community infrastructure in areas exposed to hazards, and ensure an appropriate level of mitigation is implemented where changes are required to existing facilities in hazard prone areas (including the ability to evacuate, continue or recover operations, as relevant).
8. In partnership with relevant stakeholders, investigate feasible local/district-wide natural hazard mitigation works, especially for flood and coastal hazards in the city centre and inner suburbs.
9. Provide clear and practical requirements which provide certainty for new development within areas affected by hazards. Requirements should be based on Council's assessment of acceptable and tolerable risk, and a balanced consideration of existing development and risk exposure.
10. Continue to ensure disaster management plans address embedded risk in areas exposed to all hazards including:
 - adaptation and awareness plans and campaigns;
 - access to fire fighting assets and other disaster response capabilities; and
 - evacuation planning commensurate with the available warning times.

STRATEGY 7

IMPROVING RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 2 Flood hazards

Growth and development occur in a way that avoids or mitigates the impacts of flood hazard on people, property, economic activity and the environment to an acceptable or tolerable level. Similar to coastal hazards, a number of major facilities are affected by high and very high flood risks.

1. In high and very high flood risk areas, expansion and intensification of development is to be avoided wherever possible.
2. Where development already occurs or where infill development is likely, in these areas, protection and mitigation solutions to mitigate the flood risk should be prioritised (both site specific and public).
3. Protect flow paths and flood conveyance functions in all risk categories.
4. Mitigate flood risks in moderate and low risk areas, encouraging resilient built form and ensuring earthworks are compensatory and mitigation measures do not reduce floodplain storage capacity or worsen flood conditions for other properties.
5. Encourage the continued development of risk resilience and evacuation plans for major facilities and critical infrastructure affected by flood hazards.
6. Investigate possible retreat/relocation plans for major facilities and critical infrastructure at significant risk, where practicable.
7. Investigate appropriate and practical responses in low and high 'flood islands'.
8. Recognise and coordinate with (but avoid duplicating) mitigation requirements established by the building assessment provisions for residential and community buildings.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 3 Coastal hazards

Growth and development occur in a way that avoids or mitigates the impacts of coastal hazard on people, property, economic activity and the environment to an acceptable or tolerable level.

1. Generally avoid (where existing commitments allow) intensification of development on land within the very high and high storm tide inundation risk categories, which also corresponds with land potentially subject to inundation from sea level rise.
2. Where avoidance is not possible due to existing development commitments or the presence of significant public facilities, protection and mitigation measures (as identified in the Our Cairns Coast project) should be investigated and prioritised.
3. In areas where storm tide inundation risk is lower, ensure new development occurs in a way that incorporates relevant mitigation measures.
4. Encourage the continued development of risk resilience and evacuation plans for major facilities and critical infrastructure affected by coastal hazards.
5. Investigate possible retreat/relocation plans for major facilities and critical infrastructure at significant risk, where practicable.

STRATEGY 7

IMPROVING RESILIENCE TO NATURAL HAZARDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Outcomes	Strategies
Outcome 4 Landslide hazards	
Growth and development occur in a way that avoids or mitigates the impacts of landslide hazard on people, property, economic activity and the environment to an acceptable or tolerable level.	1. Avoid expansion or intensification of development in highly exposed hillslope areas, including land in the environmental management and rural residential zones. 2. Avoid intensification of land in urban zones exposed to moderate, high or very high landslide risk, especially where the land remains in an undeveloped state. 3. Where avoidance is not possible due to existing commitments, and in low and very low risk areas ensure geotechnical investigations confirm the presence and significance of the risk and identify appropriate mitigation measures.

Outcomes

Strategies

Outcome 5 Bushfire hazards

Growth and development occur in a way that avoids or mitigates the impacts of bushfire hazard on people, property, economic activity and the environment to an acceptable or tolerable level.

1. Avoid expansion or intensification of development in highly exposed environmental management and rural residential zones and the other significantly affected communities.
2. Where avoidance is not possible due to existing commitments, ensure mitigation measures (including possible evacuation plans) are adopted.
3. Plan greenfield areas to ensure new development is separated from hazardous vegetation and suitable access options, and water supplies are available.
4. Balance mitigation of bushfire risks with the protection of vegetation of significance, and establish clear directions for new development about what is required.
5. Encourage the continued development of risk resilience and evacuation plans for major facilities and critical infrastructure affected by bushfire hazards.
6. Recognise and coordinate with (but avoid duplicating) mitigation requirements established by the building assessment provisions for residential and community buildings.

Section 5

SUB-REGION AND
PRECINCT BASED
STRATEGIES





NORTHERN CAIRNS LIFESTYLE COAST+ INNOVATION CORRIDOR

This section sets out strategies that are more specific to Cairns' three distinct sub-regions, which focus on their differing opportunities and challenges. The sub-regions are:

- Northern Cairns: lifestyle coast + innovation corridor
- Central Cairns: economic coast + inner city tropical living
- Southern Cairns: growth and opportunity corridor

For each area, there is a short introduction providing context, an outline of the area's overarching role and key directions for growth and development. Each part also outlines intentions for key precincts that will have a particularly important role in growth management to 2050, and the key initiatives to catalyse their development. These strategies apply in addition to the City Wide Strategies set out in section 4.

Northern Cairns has been a key focus for accommodating growth and development to date. Shaped by its natural setting and known for its natural beauty, the area supports diverse lifestyles across coastal villages, rural residential, suburban and higher density beach-front communities. These characteristics have also contributed to its prominence in the tourism industry.

The area is home to James Cook University (Nguma-bada campus), Smithfield major centre and nearby employment and service areas, and a number of smaller service centres. It also supports continuing sugar cane farming in the Barron Floodplain.

The natural setting, and the natural hazards that are associated with them (including bushfire, landslide, coastal erosion, storm tide inundation, and flooding), constrain future outward expansion opportunities in Northern Cairns. Nonetheless, the area will remain a desirable place to live and visit, and will continue to experience significant growth.



Sub-region's role

Northern Cairns will continue to play a vital role in the Far North Queensland tourism industry, supporting a range of visitor accommodation options, tourist attractions, dining and recreation and entertainment facilities. It will also continue to accommodate medium and higher density permanent residential opportunities in and around the tourism nodes from Palm Cove to Trinity Beach.

In addition to these more intensive areas, a greater mix of dwellings is needed across the northern parts of the city, to accommodate continued growth, and to increase opportunities for housing that is more affordable and meets the needs of different households (including older people, young people, students and smaller families). This will occur through a new focus on diverse housing in and around the James Cook University campus and throughout the Smithfield corridor, as well as opportunities for gentle density housing in all areas and low-medium and medium density housing in and around local and district centres.

Increased local employment options in the north will be promoted through diversified economic activities and mixed-used development in a regional economic cluster (REC) based on the corridor between James Cook University (Nguma-bada campus) and the Smithfield major centre. This northern REC will provide for growth in employment opportunities, in service enterprises and, increasingly, in innovation, knowledge and technology-based enterprises (refer to key precinct intentions below).

To support further growth in the area, principles around creating better walkable communities and supporting improved active and public transport outcomes will need to be adopted across the region.

⁴Options for coastal protection works have been identified in *Our Cairns Coast: Adapting for the Future (Cairns Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy)*.

The management of natural hazards will be critical for many communities in the north, particularly for coastal and hillside communities and the Barron Floodplain. Exposure to hazards limits opportunities for further expansion of the urban footprint, especially in exposed and isolated communities at Yorkeys Knob, Holloways Beach and Machans Beach. Where new development occurs within existing urban areas, there will be a need for mitigation measures to be implemented, including investigation of coastal protection works in some locations⁴.

The north will continue to be a major contributor to Cairns' blue-green functions and character, accommodating direct and important links between the mountains and rainforests of the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef. These blue-green elements accommodate important ecological functions, contribute significantly to Cairns' image, reinforce the identity of local communities within the area, and provide increasingly significant ecosystem services.

This Growth Strategy sets a target for Cairns' northern area to accommodate around 10% of the city's required new housing to 2050.

This will occur through new growth focusing on:

- Increased housing diversity and incremental changes in density through gentle density within existing areas.
- Continued scale-appropriate residential density at Palm Cove, Clifton Beach and Trinity Beach.
- Increased medium and higher density housing in and around the JCU and Smithfield Precinct, including student, worker and affordable and social housing.

Key directions

- Fostering a regional economic cluster based on James Cook University (Nguma-bada campus) to Smithfield Centre by facilitating a compatible mix of developments and its supporting infrastructure by incentivising specialisation in knowledge, innovation, health and allied services, supporting infrastructure and housing diversity.
- Reinforcement of the Barron Floodplain as a Blue-Green heart and lungs for Cairns.
- Continued medium-high density housing and accommodation and lifestyle-supportive development in Palm Cove-Clifton Beach-Trinity Beach.
- Increase in housing diversity and more affordable housing options through encouragement of gentle density.
- Supporting well designed, accessible local and district centres, accommodating mixed use development opportunities, community facilities and services in addition to meeting the retail needs of their catchment populations.
- Subject to pre-existing development commitments, containment of further outward expansion into areas affected by natural hazards and investigating protection and mitigation measures for development within existing exposed areas.
- Protection of the area's iconic scenic amenity and strong Blue-Green connections from mountains to coast.

Palm Cove and Trinity Beach are nationally and internationally renowned destinations and a key asset for Cairns' tourism industry. Together with Clifton Beach, they also support a large and growing residential communities.

Medium and higher density nodes form tropical urban villages which support great lifestyles for residents and great visitor experiences. They will continue to develop with an emphasis on high quality tropical building design and public realm, and ensuring development incorporates site based mitigation where land is exposed to natural hazards.

The medium-high density hubs at Palm Cove, Clifton Beach, and Trinity Beach will remain distinct, with lower-rise residential areas in between, offering both permanent and visitor accommodation. As noted above, opportunities for more diversity through gentle density will be sought throughout these areas.

The tourist and residential communities within these areas will continue to be supported by the network of local and neighbourhood centres, with a new centre to emerge at Trinity Beach. Opportunities for additional low-medium and medium density residential development to be accommodated within and around these centres will also be investigated.

Northern Cairns Key Precinct - James Cook University (Nguma-bada Campus) and Smithfield REC

Intent

The emergence of the James Cook University-Smithfield corridor as a Regional Economic Cluster (REC) provides opportunities to foster a concentration of education, knowledge, technology and health-based enterprises with a focus on research and innovation. This REC will encompass the Smithfield major and local centres, the university campus (including Cairns Institute, JCU Ideas Lab, Australian Tropical Herbarium, JCU Eduquarium, Environmental Research Complex and more), mixed use zoned land and connecting land, and important community facilities including a potential health hub and expanded library and cultural spaces.

Economic activity and growth in this cluster should be promoted through resource and knowledge sharing amongst enterprises as well as marketing, innovation and business support strategies. Investment in infrastructure and transport services, including digital infrastructure, should be prioritised to support business connections and accessibility and amenity for workers and students within the REC and strengthen connections to other economic clusters and market/export gateways.

Local area planning should be undertaken to identify clearer and mutually supportive sub-precinct roles and investment priorities. This may include:

- promoting the Smithfield major centre as an administrative focus and high amenity centre for workers, visitors and residents;
- ensuring the mixed use zone can facilitate a wide range of technological and industrial activities, without detracting from the successful functioning of the major centre;
- incorporating opportunities for medium and higher density housing and student and worker accommodation and affordable and social housing throughout the area (including within centre and mixed use areas); and
- investigation of mitigation strategies for natural hazards that may affect parts of the area.

Fostering growth in this key precinct offers a range of city wide and local benefits, including enhancing employment opportunities and services available in the northern part of the city, attraction of workers with critical and specialised skillsets, growing the vitality of the university campus and surrounding enterprises to attract visitors and increase job creation and retention, and provision of more opportunities for diverse and affordable housing.

Key initiatives

1. Continue to implement and build on economic development strategies under the Cairns Regional Council Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026 to attract specialised, entrepreneurial, knowledge and training-based businesses and activities, which leverage the University.
2. Undertake local area planning to focus sub precinct roles within the REC and identify priorities for infrastructure investment.
3. Work with the State Government and housing providers to deliver temporary and short-term tenancy arrangements consolidated around the education and knowledge corridor (e.g. build-to-rent and student accommodation).
4. Work with the State Government to plan for improved public transport to and within the REC.

Northern Cairns Key
Precinct - James Cook
University (Nguma-bada
Campus) and Smithfield
REC

Legend

Regional Activity Cluster

Road network

Northern Cairns Key Precinct - Barron

Intent

The Barron rural lands is one of the most significant blue-green spaces supporting the whole of the region. It will continue to support an important northern precinct of sugar cane farming, connected to the Mulgrave Mill through the sugar cane rail network.

The area also provides critical ecosystem services, most notably providing important flood storage and conveyance functions, protection from storm tide inundation and a wide range of ecological processes. Increasingly, it will also become a focus for strategic environmental rehabilitation, and environmental and carbon offsetting opportunities. It also contributes to the scenic amenity and visual character of this part of Cairns, effectively acting as an inter-urban break between Central Cairns and the Northern Cairns sub-regions. The Barron floodplain also holds significant cultural value to Cairns' Traditional Owners, with many Dreaming Stories and sacred sites within these wetlands. Protecting the delta is not just about environmental protection and scenic amenity, but also their millennia long cultural value, and any initiatives within the area must be approached with care.

Because of these important functions and the significant natural hazards affecting the area, there will be no further urban expansion of Yorkeys Knob, Holloways Beach and Machans Beach and communities on the western edges of the floodplain (Caravonica and Kamerunga).

Key initiatives

1. Develop a specific blue-green heart strategy for the Barron floodplain, to identify and co-ordinate continued support of sugar cane farming and opportunities for rehabilitation and off-setting projects, enhancement of ecosystem services and ecological functions, scenic amenity and recreational experiences. This should include engagement with Traditional Owners.
2. Work with the State Government to investigate mitigation and protection works to increase resilience of Barron Floodplain urban communities to flooding and coastal risks.
3. Protect the sugar cane rail network connecting the northern sugar cane with the Mulgrave Mill from encroachment by development that would impact its safe and efficient operation.

Northern Cairns Key Precinct - Barron

Legend

Existing community facility

Precinct boundary

Road network

Existing green places

Existing waterways

Barron rural lands



CENTRAL CAIRNS THE ECONOMIC COAST + INNER CITY TROPICAL LIVING

The significance of central Cairns' economic role and the opportunities it provides for new housing that is close to employment and a wide range of services and facilities, means that there is an imperative for investment in substantive protection works to reduce the area's vulnerability to flood and coastal hazards.

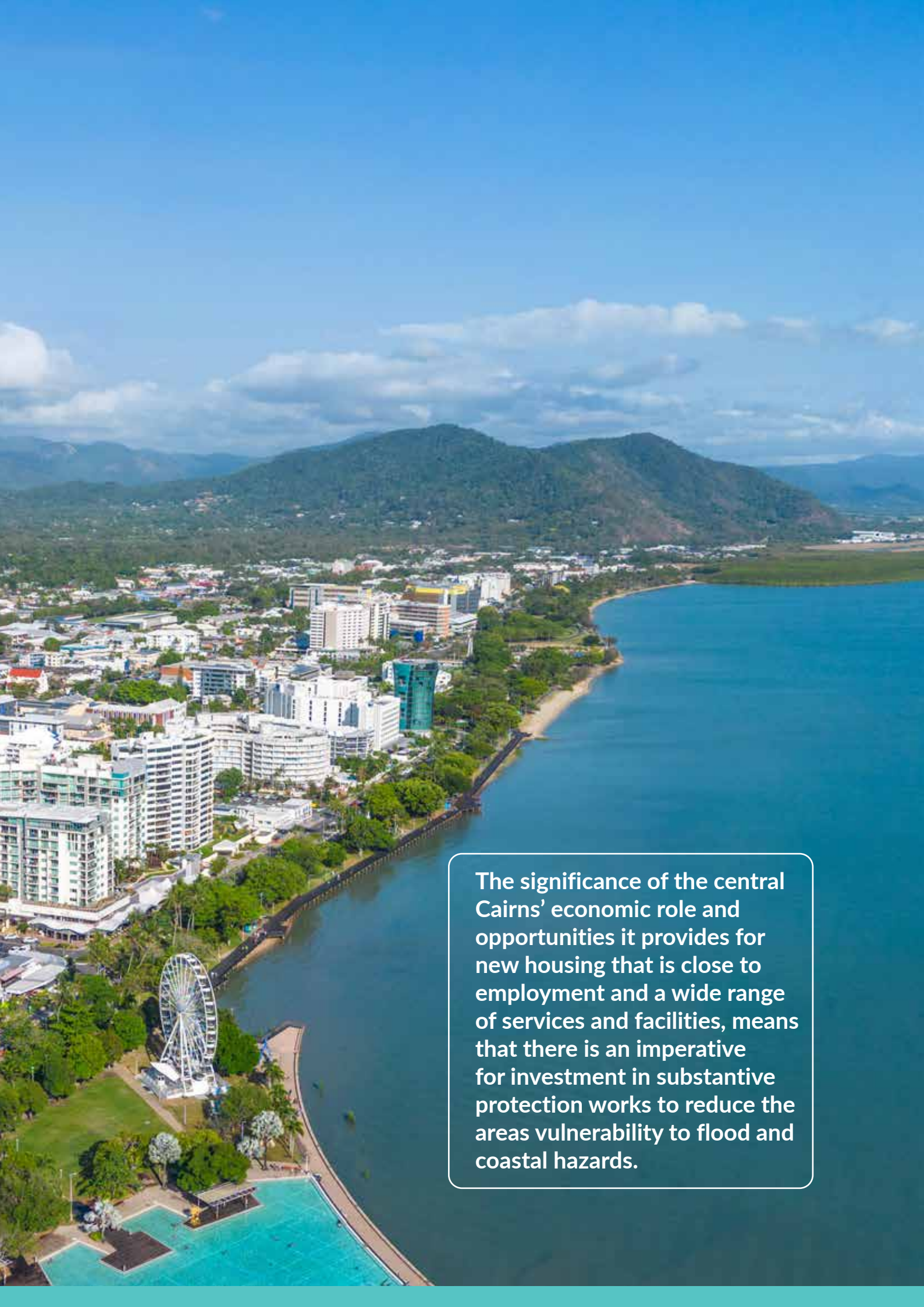
Central Cairns serves a critical role as the regional capital and epicentre of economic activity for Far North Queensland, hosting a diverse mix of uses and activities. It is also a focus for regional health services and governance, air and sea port infrastructure, tourist accommodation and attractions.

The inner suburbs surrounding the City Centre accommodate well established communities with diverse needs, and include character housing areas and some heritage places which connect the community to the city's recent history. It is generally well-served by an established centres network, infrastructure and community facilities, and is more accessible to employment opportunities than other parts of the region.

The area also includes the Redlynch Valley to the west of the City Centre and inner suburbs and is framed by the hillslopes of the Wet Tropics to the west, Trinity Inlet to the east and Chinaman Creek to the south.

A significant proportion of the City Centre and inner suburbs are affected by flooding, storm tide and coastal erosion hazards, while some areas located on and near the hillslopes, such as Redlynch, are affected by bushfire and landslide risks.





The significance of the central Cairns' economic role and opportunities it provides for new housing that is close to employment and a wide range of services and facilities, means that there is an imperative for investment in substantive protection works to reduce the areas vulnerability to flood and coastal hazards.

Sub-region's role

Central Cairns will continue to play a critical role as the economic core of the city and region. It will continue to evolve and drive growth within the region through its key precincts and regional economic clusters, including the City Centre, Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation Precinct, Cairns Airport Precinct, and Portsmouth Marine Precinct.

The central parts of the city will also play an increasingly important role in accommodating population growth, where more people can benefit from access to a range of key employment opportunities and higher order community services and facilities.

Redevelopment and intensification in identified tropical urban villages are to be prioritised and incentivised through the creation of high amenity, higher density tropical urban villages. These areas build on nodes of community activity and focus on areas that are less constrained by potential flood and coastal hazards.

Linking these tropical urban villages to key economic clusters within the City Centre through enhanced public and active transport and creating improved amenity through the public realm are priorities for supporting well managed growth.

This Growth Strategy sets a target for Central Cairns to accommodate around 30% of the city's required new housing to 2050.

This will occur through new growth focus on:

- Increased key worker, affordable and social housing in City Centre, Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation Precinct and mixed use zoned areas.
- Medium and higher density housing in identified tropical urban villages, creating tropical urban villages.
- Increased housing diversity and incremental changes in density through gentle density throughout surrounding suburbs.

Key directions

- Strengthened role for Cairns City Centre as the primary employment, government, and business centre for the region.
- Strengthened regional economic clusters within Central Cairns, based on key facilities including the hospital, airport, port and surrounding precincts, which leverage opportunities for specialisation, innovation and economic growth by fostering a compatible mix of development, and improved connections within and between the clusters.
- A focus on achieving consolidation and increased housing diversity, with infill development prioritised and incentivised in well-located nodes that are less exposed to flood and storm tide inundation hazards and provide the basis for creating high amenity tropical urban villages.
- Enhanced role as a tourism destination, supported by a wide range of accommodation options and well-connected entertainment and cultural facilities, high quality public realm and transport connections to other parts of the region, and supporting high quality infrastructure and services for visitors.
- Rationalisation and local planning of extensive mixed use zoned areas to promote consolidation of commercial activities in centres, to facilitate uses and activities supporting nearby regional economic clusters and major industrial precincts, and to optimise opportunities for medium and higher density housing.
- Enhanced blue-green links within central Cairns, with targeted creek and waterway rehabilitation and creation of walkable 'greenways' featuring extensive tree cover along key streets.
- Prioritisation of area-wide mitigation and protection works to reduce vulnerability to flood and coastal hazards and support the uptake of infill capacity.

Central Cairns Key Precinct

Legend

Regional Activity Cluster

Precinct boundary

Central Cairns Key Precinct - The Economic Coast

Intent

As the region's principal centre, the Cairns City Centre is well-positioned to support economic and housing growth, capitalising on its rich infrastructure and strategic location. It includes the highest order and greatest mix of retail, commercial, administrative, community, cultural, tourism, recreation and entertainment functions.

It has strong physical and economic connections to nearby regional economic clusters around the hospital, airport and port, supporting them with a range of services, worker amenities and short term and permanent housing opportunities.

This precinct provides a strong foundation for urban development and revitalisation and is supported by continued investment in key community facilities including the Cairns Esplanade, Performing Arts Centre, Munro Martin Park, Bulmba-ja Arts Centre, Cairns Gallery Precinct, Cairns Museum, Cairns Convention Centre, Central Queensland University and James Cook University campuses and Cairns City Library.

This precinct supports population growth and housing diversity, offering higher-rise and higher density housing typologies than elsewhere in the region, including apartments, and student and tourist accommodation. As the precinct grows, further investment into place making and public spaces, community facilities, and public and active transport will support a strong economic base and a sustainable environment for residents and visitors.

Key initiatives

1. Continue to strengthen the City Centre's important business, commercial and administrative functions, and maintain its city wide primacy through a strong centres network policy in the planning scheme and continued implementation of economic development strategies.
2. Review planning scheme settings to ensure it supports the intensification of built form, where appropriate, especially for higher density residential development.
3. Prioritise tropical urbanism design responses in built form, including an emphasis on shade and articulation, air flow and ventilation, greening buildings and streetscapes, and for residential development, indoor/outdoor living.
4. Investigate in improving the quality of the public realm and active transport, and 'greenway' connections between key destinations within the City Centre and in nearby regional economic clusters, including along the Esplanade, Sheridan Street, Florence Street and Lake Street.
5. Work with the State Government to improve public transport services to and within the area, including to nearby regional economic clusters.
6. Continue to encourage businesses and services that support both a day- and night-time economy, including bars, restaurants and food stalls, temporary/pop-up events, and small-scale festivals/live music through regulatory settings and economic development initiatives.
7. Enhance blue-green elements and links through the rehabilitation and enhancement of biodiversity corridors like Lily Creek, Saltwater Creek, Chinamans Creek and Smiths Creek, and enhanced tree canopy cover and landscaping in streets, creating 'greenways' along key connections, and open spaces.
8. Work with the State Government to investigate area wide mitigation and protection works to increase resilience to flooding and coastal risks.

Central Cairns Key Precinct - Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation Precinct

Intent

The Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation Precinct is identified as a regional economic cluster, reflecting its position as a leading health hub for Far North Queensland, and the opportunity to build a wider centre of knowledge and innovation. Development of the precinct will leverage the co-location of existing health services, education and training facilities including the presence of JCU, as well as the nearby CQU and TAFE, to expand and catalyse further investment in complementary uses in and around the precinct.

The State Government investment in the precinct will see a greater need for future key worker housing and student accommodation to support the necessary workforce and educational institutions.

Key initiatives

1. Facilitate the co-location of activities that support and enhance the function of the Cairns Hospital and Cairns Private Hospital including health, education and training facilities, research and health technologies, short-term accommodation and worker/visitor amenities.
2. Attract employment of health care and support workers, as well as other specialised health and allied health professionals, by providing affordable housing options that are in walking distance (400 metre radius) to the precinct and worker amenities within the precinct, and facilitate alternative housing opportunities including retirement and aged care, emergency housing and student accommodation.
3. Invest in improving the quality of the public realm and walkable 'greenway' connections linking the precinct to the foreshore and along Lake Street to the City Centre and education facilities.
4. Work with the State to investigate area wide mitigation and protection works to increase resilience to flooding and coastal hazards.

Central Cairns Key Precinct -Bungalow & Portsmith Marine Precinct

Intent

The Bungalow & Portsmith Marine Precinct consists of the Port of Cairns, the HMAS Cairns naval base and surrounding industrial and commercial land in Portsmith and Bungalow. Ports and marine infrastructure within this area support expanding freight, cane and commodities trade, tourism, shipbuilding and fishing industries, and defence functions.

The precinct has been identified as a regional economic cluster and will accommodate a dynamic hub for a wide range of industries and complementary functions. Opportunities for advanced manufacturing and innovation, circular economy and green/renewable energy initiatives should be promoted.

Local planning should be undertaken with a focus on:

- Identifying underutilised industry and mixed use zoned land to optimise industrial opportunities and minimise uptake by showrooms, retail and other activities that would be best located in centres;
- Improving visitor experience and connections to and from the cruise terminal area;
- Improving interface with residential, recreational and commercial activities in and near the precinct;
- Identifying priorities for infrastructure investment to best support the REC;
- Improving tree canopy and shade throughout the area, and identifying 'greenway' connections through the precinct and connecting to the City Centre and other key destinations (such as the cruise terminal, Barlow Park and showgrounds);
- Investment in transport infrastructure and services should improve connectivity to the City Centre, Dugurrdja FNQ Health and Innovation Precinct and Stratford, Aeroglen & Cairns Airport Precinct; and
- Transport infrastructure to the broader region should also be supported to connect the precinct to regional supply chain opportunities.

Key initiatives

1. Protect the operation and growth of the port and HMAS Cairns, and connecting freight infrastructure by ensuring encroachment by incompatible development is minimised.
2. Work with the Ports North to implement the port master plan and develop complementary land use policies for surrounding enterprise lands, ensuring intended activities support the purposes of the REC, prioritise industrial activities over commercial uses, and facilitate the adoption of new technologies, including renewable energy and circular economy initiatives. Any commercial activities should support workers and local enterprises but should not undermine the function of centres external to the precinct (including the City Centre business district).
3. Work with the State Government to improve transport connections (including public transport) between the precinct, the City Centre and other regional economic clusters.
4. Continue to implement and build on economic development strategies under the Cairns Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026 to attract specialised marine and defence and manufacturing enterprises.
5. Undertake local area planning to focus on the opportunities to better utilise industrial land, enhance cruise ship arrival experience, improve tree canopy and green connections to the Cairns city centre and other key destinations, address interface with sensitive uses and identify priorities for infrastructure investment.
6. Work with Ports North and the State Government to investigate area wide mitigation and protection works to increase resilience to flooding and coastal hazards.

Central Cairns Key Precinct - Cairns Airport and Industry Precinct

Intent

The Cairns Airport provides an important gateway function for the city and FNQ region, creating and fostering national and international tourism and trade opportunities. The airport will need to grow to meet the growing needs of the city and tourism projections.

This precinct is recognised as an important regional economic cluster, with expanding opportunities in aerospace industries, advanced manufacturing and innovation, freight and logistics and associated education and training.

Enterprises with strong synergies across these growth areas are to be fostered both within airport land and in surrounding industrial land in Stratford and Aeroglen, and mixed use zoned land in Cairns North.

Economic activity and growth in this cluster should be promoted through resource and knowledge sharing, marketing, innovation and business support strategies. Investment in infrastructure and transport services should be prioritised to support business connections and accessibility to the nearby central business district, and the Health and Innovation and Marine Precincts as well as transport connections to support the regional supply chain. Transport infrastructure to the broader region should be supported to connect the precinct to regional supply chain opportunities.

Key initiatives

1. Protect the operation and growth of the Cairns Airport by ensuring development within operational areas and noise affected areas are appropriately managed.
2. Support Cairns Airport in implementing the airport land use plan and developing complementary land use policies for surrounding enterprise lands and aviation precincts including visitor facilities and amenities.
3. Ensure regulatory settings facilitate the adoption of new technologies, including renewable energy and circular economy initiatives, and ensure any commercial activities do not undermine the function of centres external to the precinct (including the City Centre).
4. Work with Cairns Airport and the State Government to improve freight and transport connections (including public transport) between the airport, the City Centre, other regional economic clusters, and tourism areas, while also enhancing freight transport links to areas outside the city to ensure efficient movement of goods to the airport.
5. Ensure protection and promote enhancement of surrounding waterways and critical blue-green links including the Barron River.
6. Work with Cairns Airport and the State Government to investigate area wide mitigation and protection works to increase resilience to flooding and coastal hazards.

Central Cairns Key Precinct - Inner City Village Ring

Intent

Proposed tropical urban village areas are identified within well-located and serviced suburbs located close to the City Centre. They each present a critical opportunity to promote the uptake of medium and higher density housing while fostering a high amenity, walkable, tropical urban village lifestyle, supported by services, public and active transport and great public spaces.

They reflect important opportunities for infill development that will be less exposed to flood and coastal hazards than other parts of the Central Cairns sub-region. A key criteria in determining these focus areas is based on avoiding risks associated with known hazards. It is expected that future mitigation within and around the City Centre may also provide opportunities for other tropical urban villages to establish.

Tropical urban villages at the heart of these communities are to be focused on community nodes such as centres, local libraries, and community spaces or other local amenities, with the clustering of these facilities being key to creating vibrant, functional hubs. They are intended to provide an exemplar for tropical urban living at higher densities. While the catalyst or base for each tropical urban village is different as set out below, this strategic clustering will assist in catalysing wider infill and redevelopment opportunities.

This will establish a network of transit-oriented, high amenity nodes that are the focus of walkable neighbourhoods, and can be interconnected by an efficient public transport loop, which also provides access to the City Centre and Earlville major centre.

The tropical urban villages are to be prioritised for local planning and design processes to review built form policies and Council incentives. This is to ensure that housing mix and yield are optimised and building design assists in reinforcing a clear village heart and strong street interfaces. In addition, focus will be placed on improved streetscapes and public spaces, to create a high quality, well-shaded public realm, and on addressing other community-specific requirements.

Opportunities for government-led catalyst development will be investigated, possibly using underutilised government land, and working with the State Government on inclusionary housing models to facilitate social and affordable housing products.

Opportunities to incentivise private development in these focused areas will also be investigated.

The tropical urban villages include:

- Edge Hill – A well established and popular destination, focused on Collins Avenue. This precinct presents an opportunity to build on an existing high amenity core to create an exemplar tropical urban village.
- Manunda and Manoora – These nodes build on the existing centres, with the opportunity to invest in enhanced streetscapes, creeks and parks, better utilise government owned land and promote a mix of uses that creates a strong community heart and local identity for each of these tropical urban villages. Proximity to major roads can be leveraged to provide improved accessibility by public transport.
- Earlville – With the major retail centre as the anchor and well-positioned on a transit hub, this area can support a greater diversity of housing and the creation of a tropical urban village character along the surrounding streets.
- Westcourt & Bungalow – Strategically located near the City Centre, Cairns Showgrounds and Barlow Park, this area is a smaller yet significant locality for an additional inner-city tropical urban village. With hazard mitigation it can leverage enhanced amenity from investment in local open space, recreation and supporting facilities and plays an important role in providing increased residential diversity to nearby employment hubs.

Central Cairns Key Precinct - Inner City Village Ring

Legend

Existing community facility

Precinct boundary

Road network

Indicative public transport linkages

Proposed inner city public transport stop (indicative)

Existing green spaces

Existing waterways

Indicative urban village focus areas

Indicative green elements and linkages



Central Cairns Key Precinct - Inner City Village Ring

Key initiatives

- Undertake local area planning to review place-based solutions that consider building height and built form provisions in the identified areas, including design measures that establish better tropical design outcomes.
- Guided by local planning and design processes, invest in the public realm and street planting/streetscape works focused on the areas identified for future tropical urban villages to create high-amenity, walkable, and climatically comfortable community spaces, particularly at the core of villages and along key connections to major community destinations.
- Work with the State Government on strategies for better use of underutilised government land and delivering social and affordable housing, and inclusionary housing models, which assist in catalysing infill development in well-located areas.
- Work with the State Government to deliver an inner city public transport network that connects the tropical urban villages, the city centre and major employment areas.
- Transform Chinaman Creek, Lily Creek, Smiths Creek, Gordon Creek and Moody Creek by reinstating natural features and ecological values, to create vibrant blue-green corridors for people and wildlife.
- Work with the State Government to investigate area wide mitigation and protection works to increase resilience to flooding and coastal hazards within the inner suburbs area.
- Consider the opportunities for community facilities to be integrated into new tropical urban village outcomes to foster a greater sense of community.

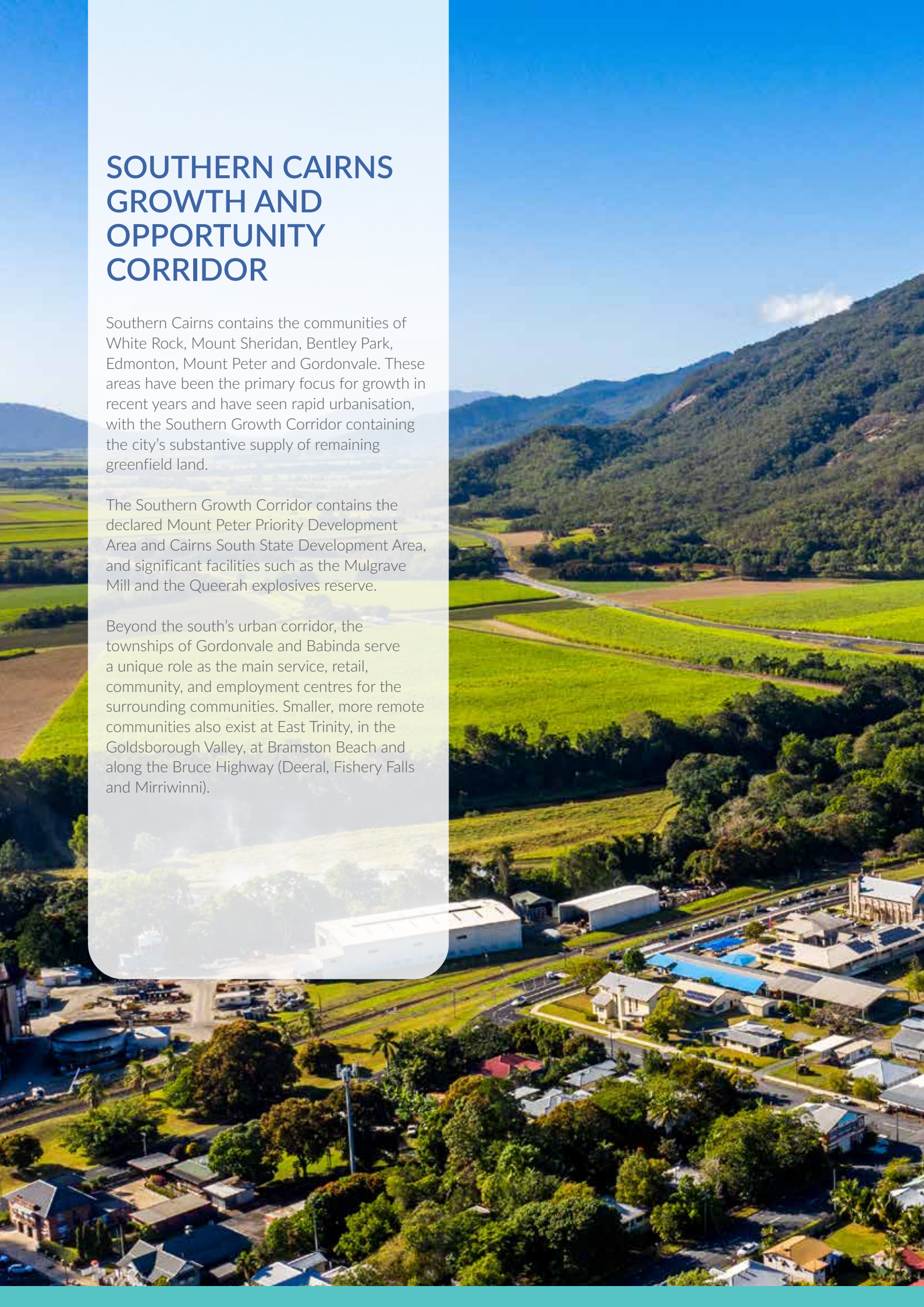


SOUTHERN CAIRNS GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY CORRIDOR

Southern Cairns contains the communities of White Rock, Mount Sheridan, Bentley Park, Edmonton, Mount Peter and Gordonvale. These areas have been the primary focus for growth in recent years and have seen rapid urbanisation, with the Southern Growth Corridor containing the city's substantive supply of remaining greenfield land.

The Southern Growth Corridor contains the declared Mount Peter Priority Development Area and Cairns South State Development Area, and significant facilities such as the Mulgrave Mill and the Queerah explosives reserve.

Beyond the south's urban corridor, the townships of Gordonvale and Babinda serve a unique role as the main service, retail, community, and employment centres for the surrounding communities. Smaller, more remote communities also exist at East Trinity, in the Goldsborough Valley, at Bramston Beach and along the Bruce Highway (Deeral, Fishery Falls and Mirriwinni).





Sub-region's role

Southern Cairns will play a significant role in Cairns' growth to 2050. Urbanisation will continue, with the designated Mount Peter Priority Development Area (PDA) providing a significant land supply for new housing. Additionally, the Edmonton Investigation Area can play an important role in providing another residential urban growth opportunity in a well-located and serviced area. It is increasingly important that land in the southern corridor is developed efficiently to make the best use of high-cost infrastructure investments and to reduce pressure for further outward expansion that may undermine the sugar cane industry. It is also increasingly important that greenfield land accommodates more diverse and better-designed housing to meet the needs of the future population.

These new communities will need to be supported by centres, community facilities and infrastructure, and more extensive local employment opportunities. The Edmonton Town Centre will evolve into a critical hub for the south, and a focus for higher density housing, while emerging major industrial areas will be facilitated in the Edmonton industrial zoned precinct and the Cairns South State Development Area. These industrial areas are to accommodate a wide range of industrial activities including opportunities for advanced technology, clean industries and higher impacting industries.

Transport networks (including commuter and local walking and cycling facilities and public transport) will need to improve connections between communities and employment areas east and west of the Bruce Highway, and improve accessibility to the City Centre and identified regional economic clusters for southern corridor communities.

Babinda and Gordonvale will continue to serve their local communities as traditional town centres for services, retail, community, and employment. While they will not accommodate significant growth, they will continue to serve Cairns with their unique lifestyle and character housing offerings, and through their importance as service centres for rural communities and in the tourism industry.

The area's important sugar cane industry and substantial natural values (and the various natural hazards that are associated with them) are to be protected. In particular, this is to be achieved by avoiding further pressure for outward urban expansion.

This Growth Strategy sets a target for southern parts of Cairns to accommodate around 60% of the city's required new dwellings to 2050.

This will occur through new growth focus on:

- The Mount Peter Priority Development Area which will supply more than half of all growth to 2050.
- More attached product and lot size diversity in greenfield locations.
- Incremental density increase through gentle density in existing areas.
- Increased density and diversity such as key worker, affordable and social housing close to centres and services, including within the Edmonton town centre zoned land.

Key directions

- Efficient delivery of greenfield growth and well-designed new communities.
- Facilitation of increased housing diversity and more affordable housing options through gentle density throughout the existing urban area.
- Working with the State Government to plan for, and deliver, the necessary transport, water supply and sewerage infrastructure to support the timely release of greenfield residential land and unlock the Cairns South State Development Area.
- Evolution of major industrial areas in Edmonton (north east) and in the State Development Area, allowing a wide range of industrial activities.
- Facilitation of well designed, accessible local and district centres, as well as the longer term emergence of a major centre in Edmonton, accommodating mixed use development opportunities and meeting the needs of their catchment populations.
- Ensuring traditional town centres in Gordonvale and Babinda continue to meet the retail, employment and services needs of their local communities and incremental increase of housing supply that is in keeping with existing scale and character.
- Strengthened blue-green elements and linkages in greenfield development (in both residential and employment areas), protecting waterways and key habitats, complementing tropical urban outcomes and highlighting Cairns' highly valued natural environment.

Gordonvale will continue to support its local community, comprised of low-density living, rural lifestyle areas, and productive farmlands. While retail functions will be split with the Draper Road centre, Gordonvale's traditional town centre will maintain an important community service role, with the potential to incorporate higher order retailing, community, entertainment, and government services. As a gateway to Cairns, Gordonvale will maintain its historic features, sugar town heritage, and status as a unique lifestyle destination, including for retirement and aged care, while also allowing for gentle density housing opportunities.

Babinda will continue to serve as the main service, retail, community and employment hub for the far south community. Babinda will continue to grow, with opportunities to attract new residents and visitors associated with the mill site redevelopment, and strong and diversifying agriculture and tourism sectors. Babinda will maintain its traditional town character, traditional main street and character housing, and will continue to be a desirable place to live within the Cairns region.

Gordonvale and Babinda are both geographic focus areas of Council's Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026.

Southern Cairns Key Precinct - Mount Peter

Legend

 Existing community facility

 Precinct boundary

 Road network

 Proposed new roads

 Employment focus areas

 Existing green (parks, open space, conservation)

 Existing waterways

 Indicative green elements and linkages

Proposed Deppeler Road upgrade as part of the Cairns Bruce Highway Upgrade and ultimate link to Swallow Road

Opportunity to attract and locate key employment opportunities to the region with the SDA areas

STATE DEVELOPMENT AREA

STATE DEVELOPMENT AREA

GORDONVALE

Housing diversity to include a range of densities, with higher densities located around public transport opportunities.

An opportunity to establish a vibrant new urban community, shaped by tropical urban villages that serve as localised hubs for diversity, community amenities and spaces for social connection.

Southern Cairns Key Precinct - Mount Peter

Intent

The Mount Peter Priority Development Area (PDA) is the primary growth area in the southern corridor and Cairns' major supply of greenfield land which is an important resource that needs to be used efficiently. This is especially important because Cairns has few longer term options for urban expansion. It must also provide greater housing diversity than has been achieved in the past, responding to increasingly diverse community needs.

At the same time, greater priority needs to be placed on creating walkable, tropical neighbourhoods, with room for shade trees on lots and in streets, climate responsive dwellings and well-considered Blue-Green corridors.

To support the creation of self-sufficient and resilient communities, the growth area must also provide adequate local and neighbourhood centres – as the walkable focus for neighbourhoods – as well as open space and recreation facilities and community services. These centres should provide the basis for the emergence of a network of tropical urban villages within the greenfield context.

The Mount Peter PDA will require renewed master planning to ensure these objectives are achieved. It also requires the timely provision of trunk infrastructure that will unlock land supply as it is needed. This includes major investments in water network and transport infrastructure, requiring whole of government collaboration.

Key initiatives

1. Refresh master planning to support growth within Mount Peter PDA and State Development Areas, focusing on making efficient use of the available land, while achieving greater housing diversity, climate responsive design, and liveable, walkable tropical neighbourhoods. Local planning should also review centre locations and roles, reflecting commitments for higher order services at Edmonton town centre, and Gordonvale and Draper Road district centres.
2. Ensure the urban structure is shaped by blue-green elements and linkages, including Wrights Creek and other waterways that connect to adjacent and surrounding corridors and implementation of urban greening in streetscapes.
3. Undertake a review of the design standards to support better tropical urbanism outcomes, and advocate to the State Government for a tropical design response in Queensland Development Code (QDC) to help drive well designed greenfield housing outcomes.
4. Work with the State Government to prioritise the delivery of infrastructure necessary to support growth within the Mount Peter PDA and State Development Areas, including trunk wastewater infrastructure, road interchange upgrades, public transport networks and active transport infrastructure.
5. Build industry interest and capability to deliver medium and higher density infill and attached products within a greenfield context.
6. Consult First Peoples on matters to ensure their views and aspirations are reflected and considered.

Southern Cairns Key Precinct - Cairns South State Development Area

Intent

The Cairns South State Development Area (SDA) has an important role as a major employment precinct for the southern corridor, and in providing a substantial supply of industrial land up to 2050 and beyond. It will facilitate substantial investment and diversified employment opportunities for Southern Cairns.

The State Government intends for the SDA to deliver “a special economic zone for regionally significant industrial development”. It has the capacity to accommodate a wide range of medium and high impact industries, intermodal/logistics-oriented industries and other emerging enterprises. The Mulgrave Mill and a large, rural-based ‘sugar research’ precinct also form part of the SDA, supporting diversification of value-adding industries.

The SDA is a State-controlled area, covered by the Cairns South State Development Area Development Scheme. The State Government is committed to infrastructure planning to facilitate its development.

The development of the SDA must align with the anticipated growth of the Mount Peter PDA to support employment targets and ensure the southern corridor reaches its full economic potential.

Key initiatives

1. Work with the State Government to review and refresh development scheme intentions to ensure a wide range of industrial and related employment opportunities are facilitated and initiate the development of the SDA land.
2. Work with the State Government to identify and fund key infrastructure required to unlock the area and to improve connectivity between the SDA and emerging residential areas at Edmonton and Gordonvale.

Southern Cairns Key Precinct - Edmonton Town Centre

Intent

Edmonton will serve as southern Cairns' major hub, delivering the highest order and largest scale of retail and commercial activities for the south, together with higher order community, education, health facilities, and government services, as well as entertainment and recreation facilities and important associated employment opportunities.

However, the existing district centre is only expected to evolve into a major centre scale over the longer term (from around 2041-2046) and is unlikely to require the full extent of land currently designated for centre purposes. It is intended that some of this land will accommodate a significant supply of medium and higher density housing, integrated with the centre precinct and supporting a high amenity urban lifestyle. This should also include aged care, key worker and social and affordable housing products.

As a greenfield town centre, the precinct will be designed as a tropical urban village, with a mix of housing and commercial uses, defined by a street focused, walkable centre, with active frontages, and an attractive, shady pedestrian environment and public realm.

Key initiatives

1. Revise local area planning for the town centre to accommodate higher density housing as an integrated part of centre outcomes (especially in areas formerly expected to be used for hospital purposes), and ensuring cohesive, high-quality, tropical urbanism outcomes.
2. Review planning scheme settings for land surrounding the centre to optimise opportunities for medium and higher density housing.
3. Work with landowners to promote or catalyse development to deliver community, recreational, commercial, and housing outcomes, including investigating opportunities to unlock underutilised and government-owned land.

Southern Cairns Key Precinct -Edmonton Investigation Area

Intent

The Edmonton Investigation Area is to be reviewed to ensure this greenfield land is utilised for an optimal purpose in managing Cairns' long-term growth to 2050 and beyond. Contemporary planning should be undertaken to ensure the Edmonton Investigation Area provides urban uses that complement the Cairns South SDA, Mount Peter PDA and supports the Edmonton Town Centre.

The northern part of the area, currently zoned for industry use, will be needed to accommodate a wider range of industrial uses than the current low impact industry zone anticipates and will remain an important stock of industrial land. Its early take-up for industrial activities is to be encouraged. While trade supply outlets or retail showrooms/bulky goods could be contemplated as a catalyst for the area, these should not diminish industrial potential or impact on existing or planned centres.

Key initiatives

1. Continue to assess the Edmonton Investigation Area for future urban potential, with a focus on how it can complement the proposed outcomes and staging of the Mount Peter PDA.
2. Review intentions for the currently low impact industry zoned land to ensure it can accommodate a wider range of industries and minimise the potential for its take up by more large format retailing and other activities that are more commercial in nature.
3. Work with the State Government to identify key infrastructure requirements to unlock the area and to improve connectivity between the east (Edmonton Investigation Area) and west (Edmonton town centre).



Section 6

IMPLEMENTATION





IMPLEMENTATION

Effective Governance for the Towards 2050 Strategy

Effective Governance for the Towards 2050 Strategy
Effective governance is crucial for implementing the Towards 2050 Growth Strategy and achieving its long-term goals while meeting current community expectations. The strategy emphasises the need to change our approach to growth and how we value the land we live, work, and play on, adopting a custodian approach. It addresses the need for change at both governance and decision-making levels, as well as strategic and operational levels.

Why is Governance Important?

Governance is essential for establishing clear leadership and decision-making processes and criteria. A key outcome of the strategy is to integrate environmental values and considerations into all decision-making processes. Additionally, foundational elements have been identified as critical for decisions related to the city's growth, these are:

- Protect and, celebrate our blue, green tropical landscape
- Diverse housing for our changing community
- Proactively plan for natural hazards
- Consolidated focused growth
- Create great tropical neighbourhoods
- Support a thriving economy

Strategic Recommendations

1. Embed the Growth Strategy foundational elements in governance frameworks

Council has the opportunity to lead the industry in embedding strategic growth considerations into the organisation through its corporate plan, project management, risk assessment and decision making. The intent of this recommendation is to ensure that all new strategies, policies, and plans address the Growth Strategy's foundational elements.

2. Review Planning Scheme

Although the strategy is a 25-year plan for growth, the key instrument that Council has to guide and inform development outcomes is through their planning scheme. The strategy has been clear around a number of design considerations and responses to existing and future opportunities and risks. The recommendation is the review of the planning scheme to either develop new planning mechanisms, supported by updated technical studies that address planning scheme requirements to address the immediate issues identified around growth, or establish key intents that will help to guide future expectations around growth outside the life of the next planning scheme. In addition, a review of the Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) is recommended to be undertaken to ensure the provision of necessary infrastructure and services, and address the need to focus growth in key areas.

3. Ongoing engagement and dialogue on planning, growth and urban change

The Growth Strategy established a comprehensive engagement program that provided a mechanism to have conversations around growth and development and develop understanding and literacy on planning matters. It is important to continue these conversations and build awareness and knowledge in future planning projects, especially planning scheme amendments and the new planning scheme. Engagement with community members, stakeholders, young people, First Peoples and Traditional Owners should be integral in future projects.

4. Establish Indicators of Success

A change in process needs to ensure that outcomes are an improvement and are in line with the adoption of a custodian approach to future generations. Council will need to determine key success indicators that are integrated across the organisation that primarily address the foundational elements and develop appropriate monitoring and reporting.

5. Adopt a place-based planning approach

The Growth Strategy recommends that a place-based planning approach is used to plan for areas identified for growth at the sub region and precinct level to enhance and grow tropical urban villages and neighbourhoods. The place-based approach takes a holistic organisational and community centred approach to planning ensuring integrated and coordinated outcomes resulting in better design, infrastructure and investment outcomes for Council and the community.

6. Proactively plan for natural hazards

The Growth Strategy identifies the need to identify feasible mitigation and adaptation options at a citywide scale to realise and unlock the planned growth outlined in the strategy. Mitigation feasibility, planning, detailed design and delivery should be programmed over time in line with growth and against state and federal funding as they emerge.

7. Adopt a Blue and Green Framework

The community has consistently told us about the value they place on the blue-green elements of our region. Shaping the future of Cairns involves a comprehensive framework that emphasises blue and green elements, ensuring that development responds to the tropical climate, reduces urban heat, protects the natural environment, and respects cultural heritage. The blue and green framework should be embedded at an organisational level and considered in future strategies, policies, and plans.

8. State Government Partnership

The Growth Strategy highlights the significant role the State Government can play in the city's development, considering local conditions and opportunities. Cairns and its immediate surroundings, including other areas of the Wet Tropics, are unique to Queensland due to their climatic conditions. Consequently, many planning policies established for Queensland may need to be reviewed to ensure future growth is fit for purpose in this region. Future collaboration and strategic planning around the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor and the Cairns South State Development Area involving both government levels and the private sector, will create opportunities for greater development efficiency and future economic growth.

Section 7

GLOSSARY





GLOSSARY

Adaptive Re-use

Adaptive re-use is a process that changes a disused or underutilised space into a new space that can be used for a different purpose.

Blue-green elements

The blue-green corridors, features and areas within the natural environment: blue - watercourses, water bodies, beaches and natural drainage patterns, and green - natural habitat, green spaces, trees and landscaping.

Blue and green elements within and framing the built environment help to create local identity, make cities more resilient and liveable, and can also underpin competitiveness and economic success.

Ecosystem services

The benefits of ecosystems, which support human well-being and quality of life, including provision of food and resources. Protection from climate and natural hazards, water quality and water cycle functions, soil formation and nutrient cycles, and cultural meaning and recreational opportunities.

Gentle density

Housing types with a house-like scale that fit comfortably and often unnoticeably within a typical low or low-medium density streetscape. It includes secondary dwellings and 'Fonzie flats', split lots/small lot housing, semi-attached or built to boundary housing, dual occupancies and low rise attached (terrace housing).

Greenfield land/development

Larger parcels of undeveloped or previously rural land, typically on the edge of cities and towns and intended for urban development – for residential, industrial, commercial or a mix of purposes.

Greenway

Urban streets which have been prioritised for walking, cycling and other 'micro modes' of transport, that are characterised by extensive tree canopy and shading and a high quality public realm and often link key destinations.

Infill development

Redevelopment within established urban areas typically facilitating housing in new and often more intensive built forms.

Key worker/key worker housing

Key worker refers to workers whose roles are essential to society, often in areas like health care, education, or emergency services, and who may face challenges accessing affordable housing.

Key worker housing refers to affordable housing options that are available to key workers close to the places and facilities where key workers are employed.

Mixed use development

A mix of residential and commercial uses (and occasionally light or artisanal industry) within a precinct or within a single building. The mix and proportion of use types may vary according to specific intentions for particular localities.

Natural hazards

Natural hazards refer to flooding, storm tide and sea level rise, coastal erosion, bushfire and landslide hazards with the potential to cause loss or harm, and which have been mapped for Cairns. Heatwaves, especially associated with increasing urban heating, are also recognised as a hazard, but are not subject to spatial definition.

Priority Development Area (PDA)

Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are tracts of land within Queensland identified for development to deliver significant benefits to for community and economic development purposes. The Minister for Economic Development Queensland (MEDQ) may declare a PDA under the *Economic Development Act 2012*.

Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) manages development projects in some PDAs. Projects may include, for example, commercial development, industrial opportunities and residential estates in partnership with local government and industry.

Regional economic clusters (RECs)

Concentrations of similar or comparable industries and activities that foster economic growth and innovation through resource and knowledge sharing, synergies of activity and opportunities for specialisation and sharing of export orientations and enhancing the capacity to attract workers and investment.

They may be supported by enhanced communication and transportation infrastructure, a high quality environment and housing, services and amenities that support workers and businesses.

State Development Area (SDA)

Clearly defined areas of land in which State claims jurisdiction, delineated on a plan, and declared under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* to be a State Development Area. The declaration is generally made to promote economic development in Queensland.

Tropical urban villages

An urban village is characterised by medium to higher density housing supported by a high quality public realm and local services that support an urban lifestyle with a strong community focus within a walkable, pedestrian focused, tropical and shady environment.

Tropical urban villages are priority areas for facilitating increased housing capacity within well-located and serviced suburbs in proximity to the Cairns city centre. Tropical urban villages may occur at different scales and vary in the height and intensity of built form and extent of non-residential activities: larger scale urban villages may be part of a mixed use centre, while smaller scale villages may be lower rise and may contain no or very limited commercial floor space.

Tropical urbanism

Tropical urbanism is the integration of climate-responsive design elements into the urban environment. This includes lush, shady streetscapes and landscaping, and open, shady and articulated tropical built forms, whether in low, medium or higher density settings.

Urban fabric

Means the physical characteristics of an urban structure or urban area in our cities and towns. This includes the streetscapes, buildings, soft and hard landscaping, signage, lighting, roads, and other infrastructure.

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