



Cairns

Recreational
Fishing Strategy
2018-2022



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Mayor's Message



Cairns has a long and proud history as one of the foremost fishing destinations anywhere on the planet. The first 1000+ pound black marlin was caught off our coast in 1966, which sparked international attention and established a sport fishing industry that still thrives today.

The abundance of fish in our Great Barrier Reef region is also famous and envied worldwide with large numbers of locals and tourists participating in recreational fishing activities on a daily basis.

Cairns now has an extensive inshore net free zone set aside for recreational fishing. Iconic trophy fish such as the legendary barramundi, tropical threadfin, queenfish, giant trevally, mangrove jack and golden snapper, just to name a few, frequent this area and are now increasing in size and number. With commercial gill net fishing now prohibited in the bay from False Cape to the north of Trinity Beach, and all waterways upstream of that line, the region's diverse fish species now have the opportunity to return to their previous levels of abundance.

Cairns Regional Council recognises the significant role recreational fishing plays in our local community. It is an important leisure and social activity enjoyed by many residents, contributes significantly to our regional economy, in particular our tourism economy, and encourages and educates our community on the benefits of sustainable natural resource management and conservation. With

recreational fishing a part of daily life for many in our community, Council has welcomed the opportunity to work with key stakeholders to develop the Cairns Recreational Fishing Strategy 2018-2022.

This strategy sets a clear vision for recreational fishing in our region with specific objectives developed for our fisheries habitat and environment, sustainable fisheries development, recreational fishing infrastructure and access, marketing and promotion, and business and event development. Through Council's recent Our Cairns survey, our community has expressed a clear message that valuing and preserving our unique natural assets and resources is a key priority. This strategy supports our initiatives in this regard through our vision to be recognised as one of the world's most diverse, dynamic and sustainable recreational fishing destinations.

I look forward to working with recreational fishers and stakeholders more broadly to ensure recreational fishing continues to be a way of life for our community for generations to come.

Yours faithfully

Cr Bob Manning
Mayor of Cairns



Executive Summary

The Queensland Government's introduction of a commercial Net Free Zone in Cairns on 1 November 2015 has provided the impetus for Cairns Regional Council ('Council') to work with representatives of the recreational fishing sector and other key stakeholders to develop the Cairns Recreational Fishing Strategy 2018-2022.

OUR VISION

The Cairns region will be recognised as one of the world's most diverse, dynamic and sustainable recreational fishing destinations

STRATEGIC THEMES THAT SUPPORT OUR VISION

Five core strategic themes have been developed to support the vision:

1. Ecology and natural environment
2. Fisheries development
3. Enhancing marine infrastructure and access
4. Marketing and promotion
5. Business and event development

Specific objectives have been developed within each of these strategic themes.

IMPLEMENTATION

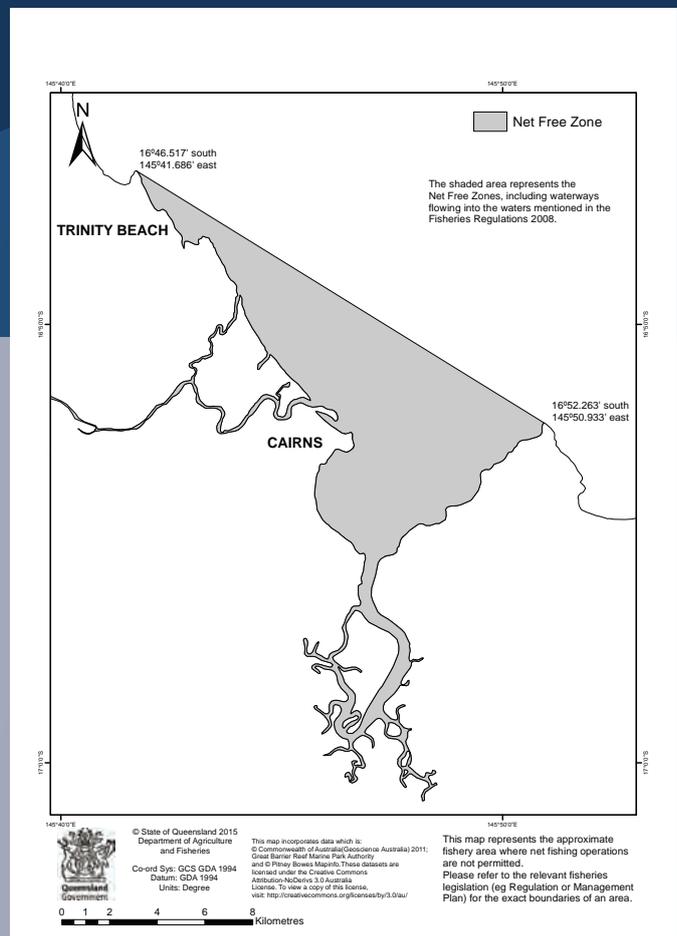
Implementation of the strategy has clear community and economic benefits and aligns with Council's Corporate Plan 2017-2022. The successful implementation of this strategy will require ongoing collaboration between the many stakeholders involved in the recreational fishing sector. Council looks forward to being an active contributor and collaborator in the delivery of the actions outlined in this strategy.

Purpose and Scope of the Strategy

This Strategy sets a framework for the sustainable development of recreational fishing in the Cairns region. It provides for increased opportunities, infrastructure and services for recreational fishers in the local community as well as supporting the continued promotion and growth of Cairns as a destination for domestic and international visitors seeking recreational fishing experiences. It also places significant emphasis on the sustainability of fishery resources, natural asset management and community stewardship to ensure recreational fishers are able to enjoy dynamic and improving fishing experiences for generations to come. The Strategy focuses on the Cairns region and also encompasses our wider primary fishing areas, including:

- Deep Sea/ Offshore - marlin, sail, tuna, wahoo, mahi mahi
- Reef – coral trout, giant trevally, emperor, mackerel, sweetlip, tuna, barracuda
- Inshore and estuary - barramundi, tropical threadfin, grunter, mackerel, permit, mangrove jack, crab
- Freshwater - barramundi, jungle perch, sooty grunter, archer, tarpon
- Impoundment- barramundi, sooty grunter, red claw

The Queensland Government introduced commercial Net Free Zones (NFZ) in Cairns, Mackay and Rockhampton on 1 November 2015. The NFZ in Cairns covers Trinity Bay from False Cape to Taylor’s



Point and all waters upstream including the Cairns Inlet as depicted in the above diagram.

Prawn trawlers were removed previously and now the use of gill nets by commercial fishing boats is also prohibited within the NFZ. However, recreational fishing activities are permitted and encouraged.

In addition to building and conserving fish stocks, the potential of NFZs to increase recreational fishing opportunities and to support tourism and economic growth are obvious and were explicitly recognised when the zones were announced.

Recent steps to support the sustainability of fish species including the Queensland Sustainable Fisheries Strategy (including the establishment of the NFZ) have had a significant positive impact on recreational fishing. This provides significant opportunity for further development of recreational fishing activities for the benefit of both visitors and the local community. However, there are multiple stakeholders involved and without a clear strategy outlining the direction and basis for collaboration, there is potential for opportunities to be missed and resources and effort to be incorrectly targeted.

This strategy ensures a clear vision for recreational fishing in the Cairns region is established and this vision is supported by the key objectives and initiatives that will enable it to be realised. It also ensures the roles, responsibilities and contribution of key stakeholders are clearly defined.

Recreational Fishing in the Cairns Region – Situation Analysis

OVERVIEW

Cairns has a long and proud history as one of the foremost recreational fishing destinations anywhere in the world. The abundance of fish in our Great Barrier Reef region is also famous and envied worldwide with large numbers of locals and tourists participating in recreational fishing activities on a daily basis.

There are currently 11,229 boat registrations in the Cairns Local Government Area ('LGA') which equates to approximately 1 boat for every 14 residents. From 2005 to 2016, there has been a significant increase in the incidence of boat ownership in the Cairns LGA. The projected size of the recreational boating fleet is expected to continue to rise in the foreseeable future.

The table below provides an overview of the current boating facilities in the Cairns LGA.

BOAT RAMPS		LANDINGS	
Facilities	Lanes	Pontoons	Jetties
13	*34	6	2

Source: GHD Report for Department of Transport and Main Roads - Queensland Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study 2017.

*Includes MIIIP announced projects/upgrades as at December 2016.

Council and the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads are the key stakeholders investing in, and managing boat ramps and associated 'back of ramp' facilities.

The Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads is responsible for the provision of recreational boating infrastructure (ramps, landings and associated facilities). The Department works in partnership with Council for facility maintenance, and with other stakeholders including Council, port and water authorities and the local recreational fishing community, to provide improvements and new ramps as demand increases.



LOCAL DEMAND

The majority of usage of the region's boat ramps is from Cairns and Atherton Tablelands residents, demonstrating the importance of these assets to our local communities. User groups include:

- Local community fishers
- Tourist fisher – Domestic and International
- Sport fisher
- Charter/ guided fishers
- Impoundment fishers
- Game fishers
- Educational - school programs on sustainable use, tilapia busting, kids clinics etc
- Club/social fishing
- Tournaments / Fishing competitions
- Rescue and compliance

Due to our region's tropical climate and direct access to the Great Barrier Reef, recreational fishing is enjoyed year round but the focus on different species varies widely across seasons. Offshore fishing is weather dependent with wind conditions impacting fishers' ability to safely access offshore fishing locations. A combination of seasonal and weather conditions generates very strong levels of peak demand at boat ramps and other fishing locations, especially when favorable weather conditions align with weekends and/or public and school holidays.

Whilst capacity can be extended at some sites, catering for these very strong levels of peak demand is challenging. In Cairns, fishing (rather than other watersports or other recreational activities) is the dominant demand driver of boat ramp usage.

Key factors influencing demand include:

- Growing population: The population of the Cairns Regional Council LGA is projected

to increase from 162,451 persons in 2016 to 226,125 persons in 2036, or by 1.7% per annum, above the state-wide five year forecast average of 1.6%.

- Windy weather significantly reduces the annual number of days that are suitable for offshore boating, causing much higher traffic on calmer days.
- Vessel inflows from outside the LGA are likely from the Mareeba Shire Council, Tablelands Regional Council, Etheridge Shire Council, Douglas Shire Council and Cassowary Coast Regional Council LGAs. This broader region had a total population of 252,132 persons in 2016 and is also growing.
- The projected size of the recreational boating fleet is expected to continue to rise in the foreseeable future with the increasing popularity of recreational fishing throughout Australia and the local region.
- More recreational fishers will desire access to our NFZ as reputation establishes and increases.

A GHD Report for the Department of Transport and Main Roads (Queensland Recreational Boating Facilities Demand Forecasting Study 2017) sets out the current and future demand for public recreational boating facilities in Cairns over the next 20 years. Key issues identified in this report relate to:

- Crocodile attack safety
- Security of vehicles and vessels
- Lack of sheltered facilities for all tide, all weather access; and
- Overcrowding



VISITOR DEMAND

Recreational fishing is a hugely popular leisure and tourism activity throughout the whole of Australia and worldwide. Our tropical weather provides a strong opportunity for Cairns and a natural incentive for visitors to come here, especially in their cooler months.

There is significant demand for recreational fishing infrastructure in Cairns and the surrounding region as a result of tourism. For the year ending December 2017, the region welcomed 1,819,000 domestic overnight visitors and 897,000 international overnight visitors.

From a domestic visitor perspective, for the year ending December 2017, approximately 165,000 visitors (just under 10% of total domestic visitors) to the Cairns region (TNQ) undertook fishing as an activity.

From an International visitor perspective, for the year ending December 2017, approximately 44,958 visitors who had a stopover in TNQ/ Queensland participated in a fishing activity while on their trip to Australia. The new NFZ provides a new product for Cairns to add to the mix of fishing opportunities.

Increasingly, domestic and international visitors are seeking a variety of tourism experiences when choosing a holiday destination. Expanding the awareness and promotion of the recreational fishing activities on offer in the Cairns region provides an opportunity to not only attract additional visitors, but also increase a visitor's length of stay.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

There are a number of stakeholders involved in the recreational fishing industry in Cairns. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders and ensuring their buy in to this strategy is critical to its successful implementation.

The table below provides a summary of key stakeholders and their role and responsibilities.

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY
Recreational Fishing Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion stewardship of the fishery and the environment that supports it • Partner with agencies and organisations focusing on: monitoring of fish stocks and catch; ecosystem repair and maintenance that support ecosystem services and values important to fish and fisheries; and education and engagement of the wider RecFishing community • Looking after our fisheries by adhering to all rules and regulations • Protecting the environment • Respecting the rights of others • The overriding objectives above form a framework incorporating more specific principles. These principles are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Quickly and correctly returning unwanted or protected species to the water; o Quickly and humanely dispatching fish that are kept for consumption; o Using only appropriate, legal tackle, attending all fishing gear and valuing our catch; o Taking no more than our immediate needs; o Supporting and encouraging activities that preserve, restore and enhance fisheries and fish habitat; o Understanding and observing all fishing regulations and reporting illegal fishing activities; o Preventing pollution and protecting wildlife by removing rubbish; o Taking care when boating and anchoring to avoid damage to wildlife and habitat; o Using established roads and tracks; o Reporting environmental damage; o Avoiding unnecessary interactions with wildlife species and their habitats; o Practicing courtesy towards all those who use inland and coastal waters; o Obtaining permission from landholders and traditional owners before entering their land; and o Caring for our own safety and the safety of others when fishing.
Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory role, monitoring, recording and surveying • Size, take and possession limits; fishing seasons; closed waters etc • Satellite tracking of boats • Provides regional specific fish guidelines • Fisheries development and monitoring • Commissioning appropriate research, monitoring and assessment
Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access to all-tide, sheltered boat ramp facilities, within a one-hour drive time where practical • Sets out the infrastructure planned and funded for implementation until the end of the June 2020 under the Marine Infrastructure Fund (MIF) and Marine Infrastructure Investment Program (MIIP) • Funds and builds the in-water components of a facility • Registration of boats and personal water craft

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE/RESPONSIBILITY
Cairns Regional Council (CRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ramp and 'Back of Ramp' maintenance on behalf of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) as asset owner Community promotion and development Community engagement Support for the economic development potential of recreational fishing Coordination of stakeholder engagement and collaboration
Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination marketing for the Tropical North Queensland region
Ports North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cairns Port management and operations including land based access within port confines
Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance monitoring
Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of activities within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP)
Maritime Safety Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine safety regulations
CAREFISH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides Cairns with a leadership group to liaise with and lobby government and non-government organisations on recreational fishing issues
Cairns Professional Game Fishing Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership group representing the professional game fishing charter operators and the people who work within the industry and works to strongly and effectively lobby government and industry on behalf of its members.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION AND USAGE

Boat Ramps

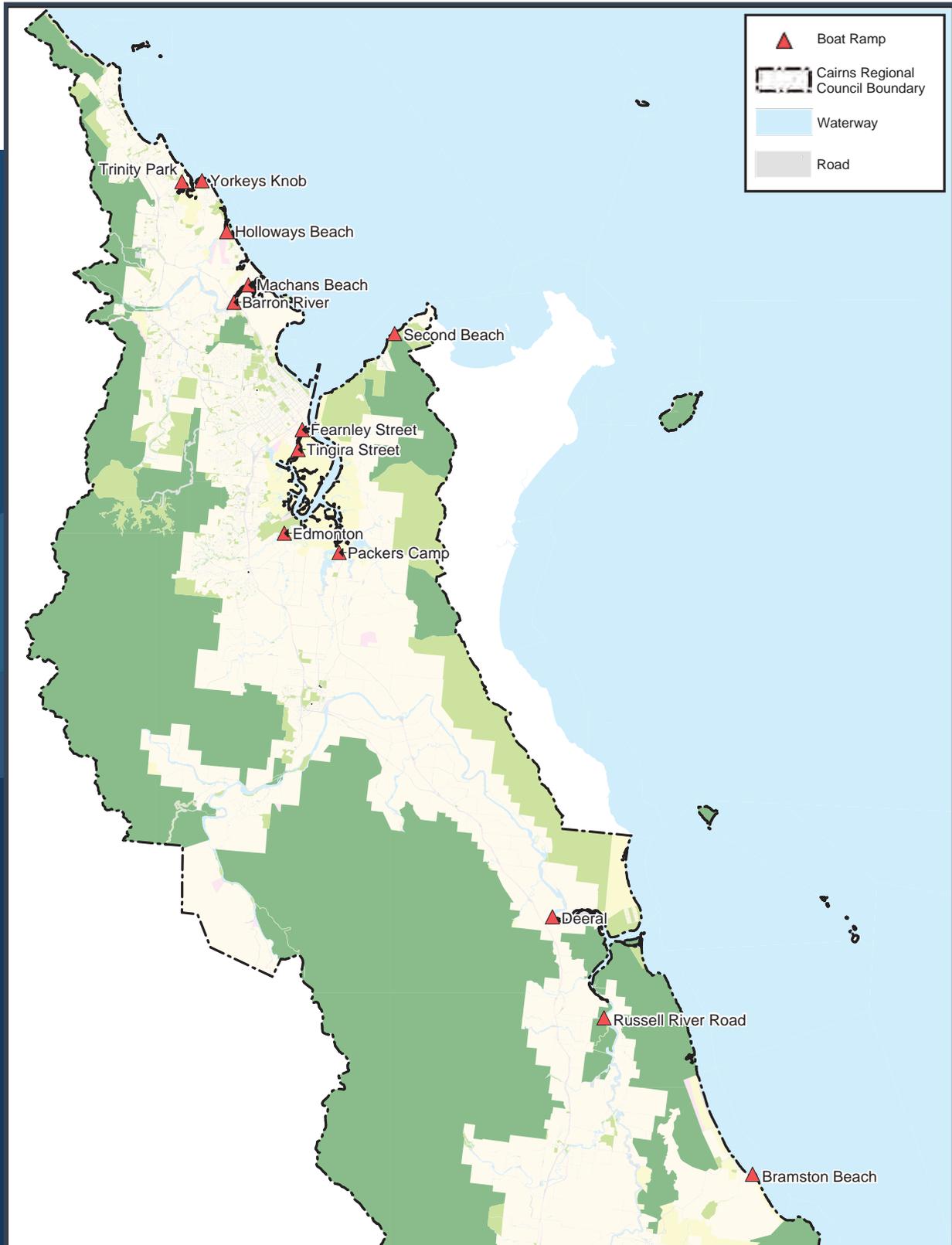
Currently there are 13 boat ramp facilities in the Cairns LGA, consisting of 27 boat ramp lanes, as of December 2017. The ramps are situated as follows:

- Bluewater canal estate (Trinity Park)
- Yorkeys Knob
- Acacia Street, Holloways Beach
- Greenbank Rd (Barron River)
- The Esplanade, Machans Beach
- Second Beach, Yarrabah Road
- Fearnley St, Portsmith

- Tingira St, Portsmith
- Fishermans Road, Edmonton
- Packers Camp (Redbank Rd, Mackey Creek)
- Ross Road, Deeral
- Russell River Road, Bellenden Kerr
- Bramston Beach

Existing ramp facilities service the main population centre close to the Cairns CBD, the growth areas of Edmonton and Gordonvale to the south of Cairns, and the Cairns northern beaches area and provide open-water access, or access to estuarine reaches of the numerous river and creek systems, with some facilities providing access to both.

BOAT RAMPS IN CAIRNS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA



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Boat Ramps
 Cairns Regional Council



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Land Based Fishing

Along the Cairns Inlet, there are a number of locations to fish, with the more central options including the Esplanade Foreshore, Marlin Marina, the Children's Fig Tree Tree-House area (where a dedicated fishing wharf has been provided by Ports North) and wharves adjacent to the Cairns Cruise liner terminal (when available).

All the northern beaches and their headlands, creek and river mouths provide excellent and easily accessed fishing locations and all have a history of wonderful fishing experiences.

Key locations for land based fishing include:

- Tingira Street pontoon
- Fig Tree fishing wharf
- Marlin Marina
- Along the Cairns Esplanade (hospital flats)
- River and creek mouths including the Barron River delta
- Palm Cove Jetty
- Barron River (old Bridge) at Stratford and Kamerunga crossing
- Russell River
- Mulgrave River
- Northern and Southern beaches
- Many headlands
- Fitzroy and Frankland Islands

For comprehensive information on where you can access the best land based fishing spots in Cairns and how to fish them, visit:

www.queensland.com/journey/catch-a-barra-to-a-whiting-and-everything-in-between

NEEDS ANALYSIS

In developing this recreational fishing strategy, an informal working group comprising a number of stakeholders was initiated. This working group included representatives from a number of local recreational fishing groups, tourism industry representatives, Council officers and Department of Transport and Main Roads representatives amongst others.

Recreational fishing groups represented on the working group included:

- CAREFISH, a regional stakeholder advocacy group with 140 associated business, fishing club, media and science members who each have their own significant networks
- Cairns and FNQ Fishing Group, a social media based recreational fishing network with approximately fourteen thousand members

A SWOT analysis of recreational fishing in the Cairns region has been undertaken by the working group to identify areas of competitive advantage as well as the potential risks and opportunities to further development of recreational fishing in the region.

Strengths

- Gill Net and Trawler Free Zone
- Wide range of fishing locations - dam, rivers, islands, reef, beach, deep sea, estuaries etc
- Diversity of species
- Established core fishing participants
- Committed public, private and community sector partners
- Strong existing partnership between Council and the recreational fishing sector
- Large local, domestic fishing participants
- Established/growing international interest
- Existing recreational fishing infrastructure and facilities
- Large and long established tourism industry related infrastructure and connectivity
- History of 'blockbuster' fishing
- Direct access to the GBR
- Weather (warm all year round)
- Other adjacent primary tourist attractions (reef, rainforest, outback, Cape York etc) and visitor facilities

Weaknesses

- Flooding and tidal events in the region are a reality - short term damage can occur to fishing infrastructure
- Differentiators as a fishing destination (for marketing) not yet clearly articulated
- Some recurring issues noted with non-compliance in the recreational and other fishing sectors e.g. compliance with boating and recreational fishing gear regulations, fish size and possession limits, fishing in Green Zones, illegal netting etc
- Security and lighting are issues at some fishing locations
- Limited marketing of the opportunities offered by the Net Free Zone to this point
- Signposting for NFZ absent
- Awareness/educational information for fishing visitors could be improved
- Willingness or inspiration for the various fishing groups and stakeholders to collaborate or become involved not strong
- Media support not known or coordinated
- Overcrowding at existing infrastructure during periods of peak demand

Opportunities

- Effective environmental and fisheries development (incl restocking) provides an opportunity to both increase catch rates and secure the long term sustainability of the recreational fishing sector in the region
- Anticipated growth in recreational fishing generated by the NFZ
- Grow further awareness of the NFZ - signposting, marketing and positioning
- Making it easier for visitors to undertake recreational fishing activities (signage, online content, information, packaging and itineraries etc)
- Creating a unique market positioning for Cairns' fishing opportunities
- Continued investment in addressing habitat improvement measures
- Targeted investment in recreational fishing infrastructure - ramps, parking, toilets, lighting, CCTV etc can increase participation
- Landside platforms provide opportunities for more accessible recreational fishing
- New business and product development opportunities - charters, guiding, tours etc
- Grow visitation from broader leisure markets as well as the core fishing market
- Proximity to leading tourism attractions and leisure destinations - Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforest can be further leveraged
- Refreshed and improved marketing to grow awareness and drive visitation in target markets
- Utilising high profile professional events as a means of growing awareness of the destination as a fishing hub
- Development and support of recreational fishing competitions
- Develop a recreational fishing code of conduct to demonstrate and encourage stewardship amongst participants
- Restocking
- Promotion of health and family benefits of recreational fishing as an important outdoor activity

Threats

- Competition from other fishing destinations
- Popular sites - an accident/vandalism in this type of location may lead to access being stopped
- Reputation of recreational fishing sector damaged by behavior/actions of a minority
- Potential for over fishing if sustainable fishing practices are not adopted
- Illegal fishing activities impact sector reputation and sustainability
- Infrastructure investment not sufficient/targeted/ coordinated to meet demand
- Without close collaboration between stakeholders, risk that individual actions/initiatives conflict and/or do not support the strategic direction
- Pollution spills
- Water quality
- Low fish numbers and catches adversely impact the perception of Cairns as a fishing destination with both locals and visitors.
- Fishway barriers
- Invasive species

Vision

The Cairns region will be recognised as one of the world's most diverse, dynamic and sustainable recreational fishing destinations

Strategic Themes

Five key strategic themes have been identified which underpin the vision. These themes represent key areas of focus for the strategy and address the specific needs and issues that have been identified as a result of the SWOT analysis. The five themes are as follows:

ECOLOGY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT

ENHANCING MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESS

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

BUSINESS AND EVENT DEVELOPMENT

Ecology and Natural Environment

OVERVIEW

Without a healthy ecology and natural environment, fish species will struggle to survive and prosper. It's why ensuring healthy freshwater, estuarine and marine waterway systems is essential to support a robust fishery and the long term sustainability of recreational fishing. This is the responsibility of all levels of government as well as

recreational fishers and other stakeholders. Conservation of the natural marine environment and maintenance of the ecosystem services provided by waterways in the built environment will support the ongoing enjoyment of recreational fishing activities for generations to come.



KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Water quality
- Fish barriers
- Storm water management
- Litter
- Invasive species management
- Ecosystem services provided by urban and agricultural catchment

STAKEHOLDERS

- Cairns Regional Council (CRC)
- CQUniversity
- Tropwater - James Cook University
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
- Department of Environment and Science (DES)
- Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy
- Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
- Recreational Fishing Community (RecFishers)
- Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Partnership (WTHWP)
- Landcare tree planting groups
- Terrain Natural Resource Management (Terrain NRM)
- OzFish Unlimited
- Local Marine Advisory Committees (LMAC)
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
- InfoFish



PROJECT/INITIATIVE	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	PRIORITY	ACTION
Improving ecosystem health	CRC Landcare tree planting groups OzFish Terrain NRM WTHWP	High	Ensure actions are taken to improve water quality, ecosystem health and connectivity within the NFZ and in existing waterways and wetland areas in both the natural and built environment
Ecosystem health report	WTHWP CRC Terrain NRM Info Fish	High	Report on the health of the Trinity Inlet with regards to water quality through the Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Partnership Report Card Water quality monitoring program on Moon River, Barron River, Trinity Inlet, Mulgrave/Russell River and Babinda Creek
Indigenous Sea Rangers and similar programs	DES Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation	Medium	Work with State and Federal Government to acquire an Indigenous Sea Ranger Support for the continued remediation and maintenance of the East Trinity area
Fish surveys	DES DAF RecFishers	High	Support fish surveys to support the Department of Environment and Science with the development of a Wet Tropics Fish model. This model will be used to monitor the health of fish communities over time and will be reported through the Wet Tropics Healthy Waterways Report Card
Protecting important habitat areas and the ecosystem services they provide	DAF GBRMPA Terrain NRM OzFish CRC Community Groups	High	Identify and protect important fish habitats through policies and management plans
		High	Ensure Planning Scheme identifies and protects important riparian and aquatic habitats. Consider the fishery values and ecosystem system services provided by all waterways in the built environment when planning and developing maintenance strategies
		Medium	Support the Fish Habitat Area extension proposed by State government
		Medium	Support Voluntary Code of Practice to cease fishing efforts in known spawning areas (seasonally)
Urban waterway management	CRC Terrain NRM OzFish	Medium	Support projects/programs that engage the community in understanding their local ecosystems, the services they provide and what actions they can take to ensure they are sustainable

Fisheries Development

OVERVIEW

Effective fisheries development will ensure there is an abundant supply and variety of fish stocks for generations to come. This not only supports recreational fishing activities, but also supports the health of the marine and connected ecosystem. The long term sustainability of fishery resources is the ultimate aim. The Queensland Government established the net-free fishing zones to increase recreational fishing opportunities in Queensland, thereby supporting tourism and economic growth. By recognizing the total value of spending by recreational fishers, the net-free fishing zones improve the potential for fishing-based tourism in our regional areas.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Code of conduct (development, implementation, education and promotion)
- Community engagement promoting stewardship of the fishery and the environment
- Community monitoring
- Aspirational fisheries management plan
- Pest management
- Fish stocking
- Cultural/traditional owner input
- Advocacy
- Compliance

STAKEHOLDERS

- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)
- Recreational Fishing Community (RecFishers)
- Cairns Regional Council (CRC)
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
- Fish Stocking Groups
- Biosecurity Queensland
- Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation (ARFF)
- InfoFish
- Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol
- Recreational Charter Fishers



KEY PROJECTS / INITIATIVES

PROJECT/ INITIATIVE	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	PRIORITY	ACTION
Voluntary Code of Practice	RecFishers ARFF CRC	High	Development and promotion of a voluntary Code of Practice for the recreational fishing sector
Compliance	QBFP RecFishers DAF GBRMPA	High	Raise community awareness of the need to comply and report illegal activities Improve compliance with recreational fishing legislation
Citizen science	DAF Tackle Shops RecFishers	Medium	Support fish monitoring programs
Tilapia eradication Invasive Species - Flora and Fauna	DAF CRC Biosecurity Qld DNR RecFishers	Medium	Support programs/tournaments that aim to eliminate the fish pest Tilapia and other pest flora and fauna species that impact the ecosystem
Restocking programs	Fish stocking Groups Universities CRC Corporates RecFishers DAF	High	Engage with corporates/sponsors to fund fish restocking Work with the local fishing groups/universities on restocking programs Develop innovative funding solutions and approaches to raise funding for fish stocking

Community Groups

Enhancing Marine Infrastructure and Access

OVERVIEW

High quality infrastructure and the accessibility and location of that infrastructure is critical to facilitating land and water based recreational fishing activities.

Recreational fishing related infrastructure includes:

- Boat ramps, pontoons and lighting
- Back of ramp facilities (car parks, amenities, CCTV etc)
- Land based fishing platforms and access including amenities e.g. wash down, bins, measuring stations, fish cleaning facilities etc
- Artificial reefs/fish aggregating devices
- Island visits and camping
- Signage
- Public jetties

Key issues relating to access include:

- Crocodile safety
- Lighting
- Security
- Education (best practices)
- Water for cleaning at land based platforms, and boat wash down at boat ramp launching facilities.
- Map/guides for fishing locations/infrastructure.
- Parking
- Amenities – toilets and showers

The projects and initiatives included within this strategic theme provide for a planned and collaborative approach to the further development of recreational fishing infrastructure and access recognising the fact that there are multiple stakeholders involved.

Infrastructure needs to be appropriately located to meet the current and future demand of both local residents and visitors, it needs to be well maintained and upgraded as required to ensure its ongoing accessibility, amenity and to meet the expectations of recreational fishers. Safety and security are also key considerations as is the integration of infrastructure.

Fishing platforms and land based fishing areas are as important as boat ramps for locals and visitors. There should be a variety of locations throughout the region which provide opportunities for locals and visitors to ‘throw a line in the water’ and appropriate signage and information available to inform the public where these locations are. Maintaining and increasing access to key land based fishing locations and the promotion of such locations (through physical and online signage and mapping) is critical as is the responsible use of such facilities by recreational fishers.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Access to recreational fishing locations (including land based)
- Audit of current infrastructure/access to identify gaps and areas of need
- Boat ramps (number/location/capacity) and back of ramp infrastructure and facilities (car parks, amenities, CCTV, lighting etc) including close collaboration between stakeholders and planning to ensure integration
- Potential use of artificial reefs/fish aggregating devices to attract and support fish stocks
- Signage/mapping (both physical and online) to inform recreational fishers of fishing locations and access and also inform the public of potential risks (e.g. crocodiles)

STAKEHOLDERS

- Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR)
- Cairns Regional Council (CRC)
- Recreational Fishing Community (RecFishers)
- Ports North
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)

KEY PROJECTS / INITIATIVES

PROJECT/INITIATIVE	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	PRIORITY	ACTION
Prioritising Recreational Fishing Infrastructure Enhancement Program	TMR RecFishers CRC	High Medium	Implementation of MIIP and MIF funded projects. Current and announced projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single 6-lane boat ramp with 2 floating walkways at Yorkeys Knob Installation of new floating walkway at Bluewater Marina boat ramp Relocation of boat ramp at Bramston Beach Installation of new floating walkway/pontoon at Edmonton boat ramp Other projects include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional lane, a floating walkway and expand parking at Deeral Install deep-draught accessible public pontoon in the Cairns CBD Expand existing facility at Tingira St to incorporate a new 4 lane, boat ramp, floating walkway and expanded parking
Establish and implement a strategic signposting program incorporating destination welcome and Net Free Zone signage (at access points in the NFZ).	TTNQ CRC TMR Ports North RecFishers	High	Installation of directional and wayfinding signage
Implement an online resource detailing recreational fishing locations and associated information	TTNQ/TEQ CRC RecFishers	High	Identify available land based fishing opportunities and identify and resolve access issues if they exist Develop (or enhance if existing) an online/web based listing of recreational fishing locations together with relevant associated details (potential species at each location, details of site infrastructure, recommended rigging etc)
Development of working protocols relating to the provision of future recreational fishing infrastructure	CRC TMR RecFishers Ports North	High	Establish working protocols between TMR, CRC, Ports North and RecFishers to ensure integrated planning and implementation of new infrastructure to ensure such infrastructure is appropriately prioritised and meets the needs of the recreational fishing community Build productive and collaborative working relationships between parties to ensure access issues are able to be considered and resolved as and when they arise in a productive and positive manner
Land based fishing access/platforms	Ports North CRC RecFishers	High	Investigate opportunities to establish land-based fishing platforms in accessible locations, providing land based fishing opportunities for the local community and visitors alike

Marketing and Promotion

OVERVIEW

There are two aspects to the marketing and promotion of the region's recreational fishing opportunities:

- Marketing and promotion to visitors/tourists – domestic and international
- Marketing and promotion within the local community

Effective marketing and promotion of the Cairns region's recreational fishing opportunities to potential tourists/visitors provides positive economic impacts to the region's tourism and allied industries. It further diversifies the region's tourism offering and encourages increased visitation and length of stay. The region enjoys significant competitive advantage in this regard by virtue of its well-connected domestic and international airport, access to a variety of pristine saltwater and freshwater fishing options and multiple fish species including iconic tropical fish such as the barramundi and black marlin, and a wide variety of other world-class tourism offerings to encourage visitation and extended stay. Ease of access to rivers and land based fishing options and the proximity between accommodation and numerous fishing locations and marina facilities also



provides the region with a competitive advantage.

Marketing and promotion within the local community of recreational fishing also has significant benefits. In addition to the economic benefits associated with increased levels of recreational fishing activity, it also provides a variety of social benefits to the local community. Increased recreational fishing can support the community's awareness and engagement with environmental and natural resource management.

The 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' (VFR) market is strong in Cairns. Encouraging locals who fish to take their VFRs fishing is an important part of developing a broader awareness of recreational fishing opportunities in the region. Encouraging locals who don't fish to book a charter to experience fishing in the region for the first time is also an opportunity to increase future involvement.



KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Promotion of recreational fishing within schools and the broader local community with an emphasis on sustainability and natural resource management
- Develop a regional recreational fishing 'brand' and differentiators to assist with marketing and promotion
- Work with businesses involved in the recreational fishing sector to understand existing 'product'/'experiences' and potential gaps/constraints
- Develop marketing campaign/s to promote the region's recreational fishing experiences locally, domestically and internationally

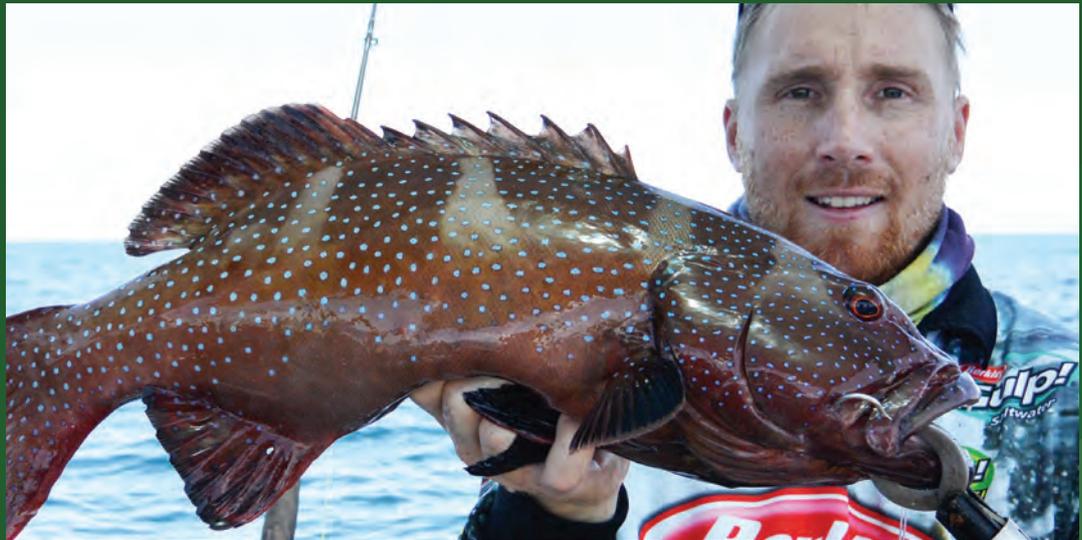
STAKEHOLDERS

- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
- Cairns Regional Council (CRC)
- Recreational Fishing Community (RecFishers)
- Tackle retailers
- Recreational Charter Fishers

KEY PROJECTS / INITIATIVES

PROJECT/ INITIATIVE	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	PRIORITY	ACTION
Develop strategic marketing approach for the Cairns Region (incl NFZ)	TTNQ RecFishers Fishing industry and related businesses	High	TTNQ working with local fishing operators to identify key fishing destinations, species and experiences to market with sufficient distinction from other States and Territories TTNQ exploring the fishing markets in Cairns i.e., core, local, domestic, international and creating a strategy for a targeted approach for each Create fishing specific content through the current fishing network Create a fishing brochure to be created, printed and distributed through tourism networks and digital platforms
Development of regional identity/ brand	TTNQ RecFishers	High	Seek a fishing champion to promote fishing through various digital and media channels Educate the travel trade on fishing as a new market through famils and informative events created and supported by TTNQ
Digital marketing campaign	TTNQ CRC RecFishers	High	Audit current digital information in the fishing area. Create a comprehensive strategy that incorporates all digital platforms Promote fishing and fishing stories on the TTNQ digital platforms
Implement an online resource detailing recreational fishing locations	TTNQ CRC RecFishers	High	Develop an online/web based listing of recreational fishing locations together with relevant associated details (potential species at each location, details of site infrastructure etc)
Promote recreational fishing in conjunction with environmental sustainability (incl schools and the broader community)	RecFishers CRC	Medium	Support/develop programs which promote sustainable recreational fishing activities in schools and the broader community to enhance the sector's reputation and increase participation

Business and Event Development



OVERVIEW

The recreational fishing industry has wide ranging positive impacts on local businesses and the economy of Cairns. Key businesses and industries that benefit from recreational fishing include:

- Charter operators and fishing guides
- Boat and marine sale yards
- Marine maintenance and repairs
- Tackleshops
- Accommodation providers and hospitality (servicing visiting recreational fishers)
- Bait suppliers
- Boat hire
- Tour operators
- Fuel retailers
- Pubs and clubs that host fishing groups

Increasing the level of participation by the community and visitors alike in recreational

fishing will result in improved business conditions for those listed above. Growing recreational fishing activities and opportunities in the Cairns region will stimulate economic activity and increase employment in related industry sectors.

There is also opportunity for fishing event development which would assist with the region's promotion as a recreational fishing destination, provide social and leisure opportunities for locals and visitors and have significant benefits for the region's tourism industry particularly where such events are held outside the traditional tourism 'high season'. Such events may also provide an opportunity to raise funds to contribute to fish stocking and other sustainable fisheries development activities.



KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Tournament, competition and event development in Cairns
- Business engagement strategy to include greater collaboration with tourism and business development opportunities that recognise the NFZ as the primary driver for business development
- Data to support business development (DAF, recreational fishers and charter operators)

STAKEHOLDERS

- Cairns Regional Council (CRC)
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
- Business community
- Recreational Fishing Community (RecFishers)
- Recreational Charter Fishers
- Fishing Tackle Retailers

KEY PROJECTS / INITIATIVES

PROJECT/INITIATIVE	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED	PRIORITY	ACTION
Product development	TTNQ RecFishers	High	<p>SWOT Analysis of Fishing experiences in Cairns</p> <p>Audit fishing tour operators to identify leaders in product and service and identify gaps in the market where operators require support</p> <p>Ensure operators are Tourism ready</p> <p>Development of Indigenous fishing experiences through investment, support and mentoring in the indigenous fishing products to ensure that they are market-ready</p> <p>Create fishing experiences in module form so that the travel trade including: Fully Independent Travelers (FIT); Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) and international re-sellers can confidently sell fishing in the Cairns region</p>
Fishing event / tournament development	TTNQ TEQ CRC RecFishers	Medium	<p>Research current tournaments, their participation, reach and ROI</p> <p>Support and develop existing and new fishing events and tournaments that align with NEATFish (A Standard for the National Environmental Assessment of Tournament Fishing)</p> <p>Seek partnership opportunities to support these events</p> <p>Review ROI on virtual tournament participation such as the Pirtek Fishing Challenge and similar tournaments</p> <p>Identify specialty fishing events across Australia where pre and post touring to Cairns is viable</p>
Business development	CRC Fishing Tackle retailers Recreational Charter fishers	Medium	<p>Provide training, skills development and support, where the NFZ is recognised as the primary driver for business development, to assist business start-up and growth as part of CRC's ongoing support for small business</p> <p>Increase the level of participation by the community in recreational fishing through the promotion of opportunities provided by the NFZ including improved access and infrastructure and education and knowledge provided by local business</p>
Accommodation	TTNQ	Medium	<p>Contact and engage accommodation providers to demonstrate and promote potential of new clientele</p> <p>Engage accommodation houses to actively participate in, cater for and promote fishing tourism in Cairns</p>

Implementation

Collaboration between stakeholders will be critical to the successful implementation of this strategy. Accordingly, it is proposed that a Cairns Recreational Fishing Steering Group be established to 'own' and guide the delivery of this strategy. Membership would be representative of the diverse range of partners, including private, public and community representatives that are stakeholders in recreational fishing in the region. All key stakeholders should be represented to ensure a coordinated and balanced approach is taken to implementation. Ongoing liaison and partnership between stakeholders to ensure alignment of infrastructure investment priorities will also be required.

The Cairns Recreational Fishing Steering Group will assume responsibility for identifying resources to implement the strategy. Recreational fishing has an ability to contribute to a wide range of policy agendas, including education, accessibility, conservation, environment, sport and recreation, marketing and events, tourism and business development - external funding opportunities may potentially be available in these areas to support elements of strategy implementation. Whilst funding may not currently be available/committed to deliver all elements and objectives contained in the strategy, the strategy will provide a basis for seeking such funding and ensuring it is committed to objectives and initiatives which support a clear vision.

Establishment of this strategy is an important milestone and has been the result of the goodwill, collaboration and the passion of those involved. It provides a solid foundation for guiding the future of recreational fishing in our region, a future which will see Cairns become recognised as one of the most diverse and sustainable fishing destinations anywhere in the world!

Photo credits

Cover (top left), p4, p22 – Copperlode Fish and Kayak

Cover (top right), p24 – Dan Kagellis

P15 (far right) – Tourism Tropical North Queensland

P16 – Dan Hammersley

P22 – Justin Gibbons, All Tackle Sports Fishing

