COVID-19
CAIRNS LOCAL RECOVERY PLAN

Cairns
REGIONAL COUNCIL

AUGUST 2020 V2

Introduction

COVID-19 is having wide-ranging human, social and economic impacts throughout the world. Effectively managing and mitigating these impacts will be one of the biggest challenges faced by our generation.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions associated with containing the spread of the virus have had a significant impact on the economy and the social and emotional health of the Cairns community. Due to Cairns' geographical location, independent evidence indicates the impact of the crisis in Cairns will be more severe and the likely recovery times longer than for most other regions in Australia.

Pre-COVID-19, the Cairns economy was in a relatively strong position. Gross Regional Product (GRP) growth was above Queensland and Australian levels, and unemployment was below both the State and National levels. However, a reliance on tourism and other export sectors means the economic impacts of COVID-19 on GRP and employment on Cairns will be severe. The tourism sector, which 'pre-COVID' contributed annual visitor expenditure of $3.5 billion to the TNQ region, has collapsed. Domestic and international visitors have disappeared and the impact of this has spread to all industries. GRP and employment rates are now projected to be worse than national and State averages.

These economic impacts are having significant flow-on effects on the health (in particular mental health) and social well-being of the Cairns community. Sector feedback indicates an increased degree of anxiety, loneliness and uncertainty related to restrictions on freedoms, severe financial distress and dramatic changes to lifestyle and livelihoods. In addition, pre-COVID-19 prevalence of mental health issues, housing stress, homelessness and domestic violence has been exacerbated by the event. Reports indicate increased levels of mental health and use of harmful substances, disruptions in access to in-home care and health support services (particularly for vulnerable cohorts), and impacts on access to nutritious food and physical health regimes. The risks for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, youth and culturally and linguistically diverse communities are particularly acute during the event.

Given these impacts, recovery objectives will continue to consider immediate needs, as well as aiming to contribute to longer-term recovery through diversification, building adaptive capacity and reducing regional vulnerabilities. Ultimately, the strategies seek to build increased resilience to pandemics, other hazards, and all forms of adversity. The Plan also provides flexibility due to the unfolding nature of the event. Regular reviews will provide the ability to ensure the Plan remains aligned to community needs.

Cairns Local Government Area
COVID-19 response and recovery planning

On 22 March 2020, a disaster declaration related to COVID-19 was issued across Queensland. The Cairns Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) went to stand-up on 23 March and established its Incident Management Team to coordinate immediate support to people affected. The Cairns Local Community Disaster Recovery Plan (CRC, 2019) identifies five functional pillars of recovery:

- Economic
- Human & Social
- Environment
- Infrastructure (Built)
- Infrastructure (Roads & Transport)

Given the impacts outlined, Council prioritised response and recovery efforts across the economic and human and social pillars and incorporated considerations across the remaining pillars consistent with the approach of other regions. Two committees were activated to take carriage of response and recovery planning and implementation.

- The Economic Response and Recovery Sub-Committee (ERRSC) and
- The Human and Social Response and Recovery Sub-Committee (HSRRSC)

On 20 April 2020, the LDMG transitioned to focus on recovery planning. Recovery strategies were developed based on an in-depth assessment of impacts and need.

This Plan aims to identify and meet short-medium term needs – both acute and developmental – while informing longer-term recovery and resilience. The draft Plan was endorsed by Council on the 26th August 2020 and the Local Disaster Management Group on the 15th September 2020.

This Plan has also been developed acknowledging that the event is still unfolding at this time. Regular reviews are intended to ensure that the process can account for potential delayed effects and that the Plan continues to reflect the needs of the community. While focussed on Cairns LGA, the process also considers cross-regional impacts.

[1] Source: Economy id, "Cairns Economy Impacts from COVID-19," 12 May 2020
[2] Source: Economy id, "Cairns Economy Impacts from COVID-19," 12 May 2020
[3] Tourism & Events Queensland, "Tropical North Queensland Regional Snapshot, Year Ending December 2019," available online at: https://cdn2-teq.queensland.com/~/media/0c4a71e5ffb14458a17c6a8e49c7d3df.ashx?vs=1&d=20200514T163143
[4] Economy id, "Cairns Economy Impacts from COVID-19," 12 May 2020.

Plan oversight and implementation mechanisms

The Plan provides a framework for an integrated approach to recovery based on specific support needs, corresponding recovery goals and nominated leads.

As an operational document, the Plan will be used by the Cairns Regional Council Local Recovery Committee to direct their work and monitor progress in partnership with regional stakeholders.

The Plan is owned collectively and responsibility for implementation will need to be shared among stakeholders to ensure its full realisation.

To support this process, Council facilitates the COVID-19 ERRSC and the HSRRSC. These groups assess impacts, develop responses and coordinate activities on behalf of the Cairns LGA using a process tailored to the unique requirements of each pillar and the stakeholders each represents.

The Chairs of both Committees report on a regular basis through the Local Recovery Coordinator (within Cairns Regional Council) to the Local Recovery Committee and the Local Disaster Management Group. Both groups also report to a Local Leadership Group, comprising senior representatives from all three tiers of government as a mechanism to escalate matters of importance.

This tailored approach aligns with the standing Cairns Local Community Disaster Recovery Plan framework and follows the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) methodology. The QRA assisted with the facilitation to develop the plan, including alignment with Regional and State recovery planning processes. This approach is intended to position the region to access State and Federal funding as well as other forms of recovery support.

These groups will continue to engage with the community, services and organisations, as well as with Federal and Queensland Government agencies on recovery strategies going forward.

LINKS

This Plan fits within the framework of the following Strategic Documents: Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience (QRA, 2017); Cairns Local Disaster Management Plan (CRC, 2018); Cairns Local Community Disaster Recovery Plan (CRC, 2019); Regional Recovery Plan (QRA, 2020); Unite and Recover for Queensland Jobs (Queensland Government, 2020); State Recovery Plan (QRA, 2020).

EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS

Cairns is a role model city under the United Nations Making Cities Resilient Campaign. As such the region follows the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and uses the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Disaster Resilience Scorecard to assess resilience capabilities. Complementary principles and indicators from the 100 Resilient Cities framework will also be applied, particularly those related to institutional change and addressing chronic social stressors.

Recovery plan structure

Informed by the State Recovery Planning framework and Queensland Reconstruction Authority methodology, the Plan follows the structure of: impact assessment, recovery objectives and measures of success, underpinned by tasks critical to meet the objectives. Each pillar undertook a process tailored to the unique circumstances and needs of its stakeholders, sectors and the nature of the impacts. The plan is a functional document developed for the use of discrete groups. As such, the format and terminology is tailored to each user group.

The process resulted in an Overview and Action Plan specific to each pillar. A detailed description is provided in the sections following –

1 **COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan**

2 **COVID-19 Human and Social Recovery Plan**

Further information and publications are available at https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/council/covid19

COVID-19 RECOVERY STRUCTURE

Local Disaster Management Group

Local Leadership Committee

LOCAL RECOVERY COMMITTEE
(LOCAL RECOVERY COORDINATOR)
Local Recovery Committee includes all five pillars of recovery (Economic; Human and Social; Infrastructure Roads and Transport; Infrastructure Built Environment; and Environment)

Economic Response & Recovery Sub-Committee

Human and Social Recovery & Response Sub-Committee

COVID-19
economic
Response and Recovery - Overview

In March 2020, Council established a regional COVID-19 Economic Response and Recovery Sub-Committee (ERRSC) to support and help coordinate economic recovery in the Cairns Local Government Area in response to the impacts of COVID-19.

Chaired by Cairns Regional Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), members of the ERRSC include representatives of:

- Advance Cairns
- Cairns Airport
- Cairns Chamber of Commerce
- Far North Queensland Region of Councils
- Ports North
- Queensland Government – Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation
- Queensland Government – Queensland Reconstruction Authority
- Regional Development Australia – Tropical North
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Council and the ERRSC produced the following key documents:

- Cairns Regional Council, "Cairns Pathway to Recovery from COVID-19", May 2020.
- Cairns Regional Council, "COVID-19: Cairns Economic Response and Recovery Sub-committee: Recommended Business Survival Initiatives", 27 March 2020.
- Cairns Regional Council, "COVID 19: Cairns Economic Response and Recovery Sub-committee: Stimulus Initiatives", 21 April 2020.
- Council also commissioned an independent economic advisory firm, .id Consulting Pty Ltd, in May 2020 to analyse the anticipated impacts of COVID-19 on the local economy.

These publications are available at https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/council/covid19

The preparation of the Economic Response and Recovery Action Plan involved broad engagement with local stakeholders, including businesses, industry groups, government departments and agencies. The Plan was developed through the following engagement processes:

a) Impact Assessment sessions: two online sessions on 4 June 2020 with 49 attendees.
b) Recovery planning workshops: three face-to-face sessions, facilitated by the QRA, held on 18 and 19 June, with 63 attendees.
c) Numerous individual discussions with local stakeholders across a range of sectors.

Response approaches have been integrated with the Human and Social Recovery Plan because of the cross-cutting nature of many impacts and needs.

KEY SUPPORT REQUIRED

The two short-term key needs identified by the business community to rebuild the Cairns' economy back to pre-COVID-19 strength are:

Extension of JobKeeper and of the suite of business support measures implemented by the Queensland and Australian Government

Re-establishment of domestic aviation capacity and connectivity, coupled with strong investment in destination marketing
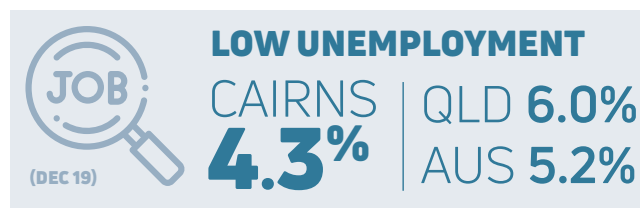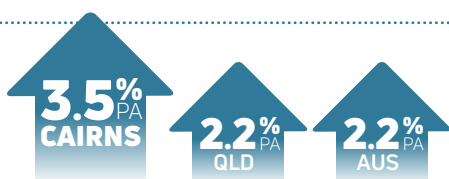
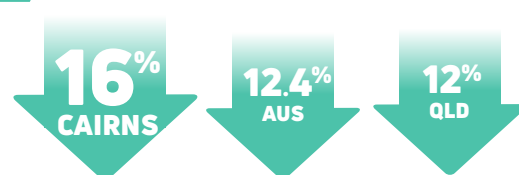# Event summary at May 2020

BEFORE COVID-19

$9.6B GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT (GRP)

82,500 LOCAL JOBS

$4.7B EXPORT VALUE

STRONG GRP GROWTH OVER THE THREE YEARS TO JUNE 19

3.5% PA CAIRNS

2.2% PA QLD

2.2% PA AUS

LOW UNEMPLOYMENT

(DEC 19)

CAIRNS **4.3%** | QLD **6.0%** AUS **5.2%**

SERVICE POPULATION 198,000

167,000 RESIDENTS & 31,000 VISITORS

(DEC 19)

12,286 TOURISM JOBS

14.9% OF TOTAL CAIRNS JOBS

4.9M AIRPORT PASSENGERS

YEAR ENDED 31/12/2019

AIRPORT PASSENGER MOVEMENTS TO POPULATION RATIO

CNS **31.6**

BNE **9.7**

SYD **9.0**

IMPACT OF COVID-19

FORECAST GRP DROP $386M IN JUN 20 QTR

16% CAIRNS

12.4% AUS

12% QLD

SECOND MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED REGIONAL CITY IN AUSTRALIA IN % JOBS LOST AND % LOSS OF GRP (JUN 20 QUARTER)

7,700 JOBS LOST + **21,000 JOBS SUPPORTED BY JOBKEEPER***

HIGHEST NUMBER OF JOBKEEPER RECIPIENTS (EMPLOYERS) OF ANY POSTCODE IN QUEENSLAND

WITHOUT JOBKEEPER, JUN 20 UNEMPLOYMENT **FORECAST TO EXCEED 15%**

UNEMPLOYMENT FORECAST

(JUN 20)

CAIRNS **12.3%** | QLD **10.5%** AUS **10%**

SERVICE POPULATION 167,000

RESIDENTS ONLY. MANY RESIDENTS HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS OR HAVE REDUCED CAPACITY TO SPEND

90% OF BUSINESSES REPORTING NEGATIVE EFFECTS

AIRPORT PASSENGER MOVEMENTS

96.5% DOMESTIC

99.9% INTERNATIONAL

10% HOTEL OCCUPANCY

LOWEST EVER ON RECORD

*Estimate based on a straight line labour force based pro-rata of national JobKeeper statistics
Cairns Economy: Impacts from COVID-19' prepared by .idConsulting Pty Ltd and Cairns Regional Council

Snapshot of preliminary and interrelated event impacts

BUSINESS CHALLENGES, IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Loss of sales, revenue and income across all sectors, with impacts on ability to predict earnings into the future. An expected multi-year timeframe for the economy to return to pre-COVID-19 levels leading to questionable viability of many businesses.

- Staffing levels decreasing and anticipated to fall further. JobKeeper has been widely utilised, with uncertainty surrounding retaining staff after JobKeeper ends.

- Loss of forward bookings for goods and services. Uncertainty about funding, access to finance, investment and sponsorship due to negative impacts on investor confidence.

- Disruption to supply chains, pre-arranged purchases and ability to access stock. Positively, renewed focus on local supply chains.

- Unknown additional costs and implications of COVID safe requirements on operations e.g. Physical distancing reducing customer capacity.

- Disruption to branding and development of strategic partnerships, including international partnerships.

- Some positive examples of effective cross-industry dialogue and collaboration.

- Attractive living conditions may attract southern workers looking to leave the city and work from anywhere remotely.

- Opportunities and costs from shift to online sales or delivery of services. Many small businesses unsure steps to take to fast-track online presence, pivot and find more markets.

- Lack of understanding of business planning, financial modelling or forecasting to make business decisions. Multiple agencies providing information but no 'one stop shop' for small business support and coaching.

- Perceived barriers for many small to medium sized businesses to successfully tender and deliver public sector projects.

- Vibrancy of the city centre severely diminished through lockdown, reduced tourist numbers and increased vacancy rates.

TOURISM, NATURAL ASSETS AND SUSTAINABILITY

- The Cairns tourism industry has hit an all-time low, with impacts felt across a range of industries including accommodation, food services, arts, transport and attractions, particularly businesses focused on International tourist markets. Businesses are struggling to meet ongoing fixed costs.

- Some businesses able to re-open to cater for domestic audiences. Immediate need to realign tourism focus from International and interstate tourists towards domestic and local markets, which is a smaller and less profitable market.

- Deep uncertainty about the future as COVID-19 situation fluctuates in domestic and international markets. Fears of illness and potential future lockdowns impacting traveller demand and forward bookings.

- Many natural resource businesses showed strong resilience to continue operations during the lockdown and have opportunities to provide new jobs in new projects, subject to continuity of funding.

RECOVERY TIMEFRAME

SHORT TERM
JUNE 2020 - JUNE 2021

SHORT TERM: Focus on the immediate support measures needed to help businesses survive the crisis and be in a position to recommence/re-escalate operations and re-employ staff as the crisis passes. For the overall benefit of the economy, return airport passenger movements and visitor numbers to pre-COVID-19 levels.

MEDIUM TERM
UP TO JUNE 2022

MEDIUM TERM: Focus on the projects, programs and policies that will create employment and economic activity and rebuild business confidence. Success is envisioned as returning the economy to pre-COVID levels of key economic indicators, including unemployment rate, GRP, export value, commercial vacancy rates, building approvals, airport passenger movements, visitor numbers, and population growth.

LONG TERM
ONGOING

LONG TERM: Continued implementation of an economic recovery plan that will see the economy exceed economy to 'pre-COVID' levels but with a more diverse and resilient foundation. Leverage the stronger, more resilient economic foundation for long-term growth and prosperity.

SKILLS, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- All tertiary and Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers have reported a loss of students.
- English language schools and study tour companies experienced a complete loss of international visitors undertaking short term study.
- All providers across the sector shifted to delivering on-line or virtual classes. Significant changes with primary and secondary schooling adaption to digital delivery.
- Difficulties for education institutions to maintain enrolments. Predicted further impacts in Semester 2 with further reduced international student numbers.
- Impacts to training pathways for skills in key sectors.

CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

- Arts and recreation services sector heavily impacted. In March, almost 100% cancellation of forward bookings for events, exhibitions and programs across all venues in the city. Associated loss of thousands of dollars' worth of sales, revenue and income, impacting artists, venues and organisations.
- Shift to online for many events is not projected to generate anywhere near normal levels of revenue for artists and curators.
- Mass stand-downs of staff and high number of casual, part-time, temporary staff (gig economy), volunteers and contractors who are not employees highly impacted and not eligible for JobKeeper.
- Concerns that creatives will leave the sector given the fragile nature of employment, particularly in the Cairns region.
- Loss of audience confidence and interest and quality contemporary cultural product from the region.
- Positive opportunity for new partnerships, and to 'think outside the box' and test creative ideas.
- Significant losses for Indigenous artists reliant on key market events e.g. Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair (CIAF).

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

- Aviation severely impacted through lockdowns and travel restrictions. Domestic and international aviation passenger movements decreased by over 90% in March and April. Deep uncertainty about forward flight schedules and bookings in response to COVID cases in target markets. International flight movements not predicted to return to normal for numerous years.
- Connectivity and capacity of freight reduced for export markets, and some reduced demand for export product, alongside increased biosecurity protocols in airports.
- Naval and marine industries showed resilience, generally continued operations throughout lockdown. Some delays and impacts to shipping and interruptions to logistics and superyacht charters, but opportunities for boats to undertake maintenance repair and overhauls.
- Construction businesses generally able to continue working, however some losses of forward workload as projects put on hold, particularly private sector projects.
- Digital connectivity has come to the fore as an essential service to keep the economy functioning in a time of crisis, for businesses, education (including home schooling) and personal connectivity.

A full overview of initial COVID-19 Impacts and Needs are outlined in "Cairns Economy Impacts from COVID-19" (.id Consulting Pty Ltd, 2020), available at https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/council/covid19/recovery

RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

PRIORITY SECTORS

- Tourism and aviation
- Education and training
- Enabling Infrastructure (water, roads, digital etc)
- Healthcare and social assistance
- Naval and marine
- Population retention and growth
- Service centre for food and agricultural production
- Strategic physical location (proximity and connectivity to Asia, PNG and the Pacific)
- The 'Green Economy'

TOURISM, NATURAL ASSETS AND SUSTAINABILITY

1. Champion innovation and resilience to strengthen a future-focused local tourism industry.
2. Promote Cairns as the capital of the Smart Green Economy in Australia, through leveraging the economic benefits of our natural assets, the city's existing "green" reputation and unlocking sustainable development projects.

LOCAL STRENGTH AND ADVANTAGE

3. Encourage ongoing economic diversification and resilience by building on regional strengths as well as supporting emerging industries.
4. Investigate region-specific incentives to drive employment and population growth in Cairns.
5. Unlock local manufacturing and value-adding of existing supply chains to leverage Cairns' strategic position and location.

COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT

6. Sustain local businesses through increased local spending and improved pathways to public and private sector procurement opportunities.
7. Inspire increased vitality and activity in the city centre.

SKILLS, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

8. Align the development of world-class skills, training, and education capabilities to meet future requirements of key sectors and emerging industries.
9. Support innovation, research and development to provide for evolving needs of the local economy.

CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

10. Foster the development of new pathways for Indigenous inclusion in the local economy to deepen collaboration and understanding of place.
11. Grow our diverse and inclusive arts, cultural and events sector and recognise contribution towards liveability, economy and wellbeing of the community.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

12. Investigate and support expansion of local naval and marine capabilities.
13. Strengthen trade through improved passenger and freight efficiencies to leverage our strategic location as the gateway to Northern Australia, PNG, Asia and the Pacific.
14. Plan and deliver infrastructure upgrades to increase resilience and provide for future population and economic growth, including digital connectivity opportunities.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Tourism, Natural Assets and Sustainability

1. Champion innovation and resilience to strengthen a future-focused local tourism industry.

1.1 Restore tourism visitation to the Cairns region, through:
   1.1.1   Aviation capacity, including re-establishment of key domestic and international services and introduction of new routes.

timeframe **SHORT** | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

   1.1.2   Destination marketing, targeted to appeal to wider markets including food, agribusiness, nature-based, sports and events tourism.

timeframe **SHORT**

1.2 Support the creation of new experiences and infrastructure that drive the region's competitive advantages for high value travellers and increase future resilience, including:
- Authentic cultural experiences led by Indigenous owned businesses.
- New leisure infrastructure such as the Northern Beaches Leisure Trail project, Cairns Gallery Precinct, Wangetti Trail and expansion of mountain biking trails.
- Sustainable tourism funding model, e.g. visitor levy.
- Discuss stronger industry-wide focus on sustainability linked with direct contributions towards management of key natural assets eg. Great Barrier Reef & Wet Tropic rainforest.

timeframe **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

1.3 Support increased resilience of tourism industry through opportunities for productive use of workforces and infrastructure for secondary purposes during times of lower tourist demand.

timeframe **SHORT** | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

Measures of Success (Objective 1):

In the medium to longer term, achieve 3 million visitors plus to the region per year, with visitor expenditure exceeding pre-COVID levels.

Resilient tourism businesses able to continue viably operating during a period of reduced tourist numbers.

Successful development and attraction of new tourism experiences and infrastructure supported with a sustainable tourism funding model.

Protected natural assets to support longevity of the industry e.g. Great Barrier Reef & Wet Tropics rainforest.

More Indigenous-owned cultural tourism businesses, experiences and product woven through local tourism industry.

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2. Promote Cairns as the capital of the smart, green economy in Australia, through leveraging the economic benefits of our natural assets, the city's existing green reputation and unlocking sustainable development projects.

2.1 Source funding to undertake a scoping study and implementation plan, supported by a local cross-industry Project Steering Committee, to progress the vision of Cairns as the capital of the smart, green economy in Australia focusing on growth sectors including, but not limited to:
- Renewable energy/hydrogen/ biofuels, particularly Cairns' potential as a Priority Renewable Energy Zone.
- Circular economy.
- Climate adaptation and resilience.
- Tropical expertise and related education, training and technical services.
- Sustainable advanced manufacturing.
- Natural resource management opportunities.

timeframe **MEDIUM**

2.2 Unlock further efficiencies to reduce and reuse waste, including:
- Secure funding assistance for a Priority Regional Recycling and Reprocessing Hub in Cairns.
- Support for businesses to manage waste and energy more efficiently.

timeframe **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

2.3 Secure resources to continue to pro-actively manage healthy resilient natural assets for current and future generations.

timeframe **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

Measures of Success (Objective 2):

Increased private investment and jobs in "green" sectors.

Wide network of engaged local stakeholders committed to adoption of green, smart approaches in their businesses.

Reduced waste going to landfill (tonnes/week) and increased viability of reuse of waste for local businesses.

Recognition of Cairns and FNQ as a nationally significant renewable energy producer.

Cairns region recognised a world leader in the investment in natural asset management and resilience.

Innovative business models and revenue streams developed to protect natural assets.

FNQ as a living lab for innovation in tropical expertise.

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Local Strength and Advantage

3. Encourage ongoing economic diversification and resilience by building on regional strengths as well as supporting emerging industries.

3.1 Enable and deliver growth in diverse industries that build on the region's natural and economic strengths such as tourism, marine industries, agriculture, education and health, as promoted by the Projects, Programs and Policy detailed in the Cairns ERRSC Preliminary Report to LLC – Stimulus Initiatives, dated 21 April 2020. ttps://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/337794/ERRSC-Stimulus-Initiatives.pdf

timeframe **SHORT MEDIUM**

3.2 Refresh the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision and the Cairns Regional Council Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022 with input and commitment from all levels of government and key stakeholders.

timeframe **MEDIUM**

3.3 Advocate for continuation of business survival initiatives to support longer term economic recovery, including:
• JobKeeper into 2021.
• Other Federal and State Government support programs including tax waivers, grants and assistance.

timeframe **SHORT**

Strong, aligned and diversified pillars of the economy that meets needs of the community, reduces risk and provides multiple revenue streams.

Improvement from pre-COVID levels of key regional indicators such as unemployment, GDP, GRP, export value, commercial vacancy rates, building approvals, airport movements and tourist numbers.

Future planning processes to effectively engage all stakeholders and levels of government throughout the region, underpinned by baseline data and implementation targets for monitoring of progress.

4. Investigate region-specific incentives to drive employment and population growth in Cairns.

4.1 Enable new markets and encourage diversity of the economy through strategies such as:
4.1.1 Undertake review of opportunities to target workers to consider relocating to Cairns while employed elsewhere utilising digital connectivity.
timeframe **SHORT MEDIUM**
4.1.2 Advocate for relocation of private sector offices and decentralised State and Federal departments from southern cities.
timeframe **MEDIUM LONG**
4.1.3 Establish initiatives to retain and attract youth workforce.
timeframe **SHORT MEDIUM**

4.2 Investigate and advocate for Cairns specific regional incentives such as:
• A Special Economic Zone for industry growth.
• A Cairns City Deal to formalise collaboration between three levels of government.
• Regional tax benefits.
• Specific coronavirus recovery funding programs, as detailed in the Cairns ERRSC Preliminary Report to LLC – Stimulus Initiatives, dated 21 April 2020.
• Reset of Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund.
• Fair insurance costs for both domestic and commercial uses.
timeframe **MEDIUM LONG**

4.3 Promote development of a Regional Population and Migration Strategy for Cairns that sets population growth targets, forecasts supporting policy and investment needs, and measures progress.

Increased new businesses established and based in the region.

Sustained positive population growth above State average.

Increased collaboration and commitment from all three levels of Government.

5. Unlock local manufacturing and value-adding opportunities in existing supply chains to leverage off Cairns' strategic position and location.

5.1 Foster innovative research and development to increase resilience and economic value of regional agricultural production and supply chains.
timeframe **SHORT MEDIUM LONG**

5.2 Investigate and support research for new manufacturing opportunities such as advanced manufacturing, Industry 4.0 and IoT (internet of things).
timeframe **MEDIUM LONG**

Increased private sector investment and number of jobs.

Increased new markets for agricultural produce.

Increased investment in local advanced manufacturing opportunities.

Construction of Industry 4.0 and IoT infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Collaboration and Support

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
6. Sustain local businesses through increased local spending and improved pathways to public and private sector procurement opportunities.	**6.1** Bring together targeted support services for small to medium sized business to survive COVID-19 and leverage community awareness of importance of supporting local businesses, eg. Keep It in Cairns campaign. *timeframe* **SHORT** **6.2** Foster initiatives to increase business morale and confidence through collaboration, positive messaging and celebration of local heroes. *timeframe* **SHORT** **6.3** Support the diversification and resilience of the region's communities, e.g. through renewed focus on implementation of the Gordonvale and Babinda Economic Development Plans. *timeframe* **SHORT MEDIUM LONG** **6.4** Refine public sector and large business procurement policies to support local diversity, including: • Clarify definition of 'local content' and targets for spend from local businesses. • Explore quotas for product purchasing and project delivery from Indigenous businesses and small to medium sized enterprises. • Investigate pathways to link local businesses as Joint Ventures to deliver large projects. • Improve tendering information and assistance available to encourage more local small to medium sized businesses to tender for projects. *timeframe* **SHORT MEDIUM LONG**	Increased numbers of local small to medium-sized enterprises, indicating consumer support for quality, locally made products. Improved business morale and confidence. Implementation of Gordonvale and Babinda Economic Development Plans. Private sector and all three levels of government increased commitment to local, Indigenous and small to medium sized business spend in product purchasing and project delivery. Increased diversity targets in procurement in both public and private sectors.
7. Inspire increased vitality and activity in the City Centre.	**7.1** Seek support to fast-track planned projects in the city centre, including: • Cairns Gallery precinct. • Cairns Esplanade dining precinct. • Implementation of Cairns CBD Masterplan (2019 review). *timeframe* **SHORT** **7.2** Consider initiatives that would support wider diversity of uses in the city centre, including: • Increase the numbers of people living in the city centre. • Support conversions of existing buildings and commercial space into other uses, including other commercial uses or residential. • Develop and implement an Infrastructure Charges incentive policy to apply to all development in Cairns City. • Educational institutions and student accommodation. • New high-quality commercial office development. • Creative projects that incorporate Indigenous storytelling to deepen understanding of place. • Outdoor uses and events in public space, including temporary uses. • Creative ways to fill empty shops with new uses. • Co-working spaces for small business and entrepreneurs. • Increased car parking coupled with improved accessibility, wayfinding, public transport and active transport infrastructure. • Undertake a review of the Cairns City Centre Master Plan 2019. • Continue to implement tropical urbanism principles and urban heat mitigation measures to reinforce Cairns as the capital of the smart, green economy. *timeframe* **SHORT MEDIUM LONG**	Increased residential dwellings in the city centre. Lively public realm retail and outdoor dining, in all weather, throughout the whole year. Reduced commercial and office vacancy rates in the city centre. Reduced crime incidents and increased sense of safety in the city centre. Increased number of pop-up temporary uses and events in public realm in the city centre.

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Skills, Research and Innovation

8. Align the development of world-class skills, training, and education capabilities to meet future requirements of key sectors and emerging industries.

8.1 Increase awareness, and encourage industry collaboration with educational institutions to explore supported training systems to address regional skills gaps post-COVID-19 that support young people to create and maintain local career pathways.

timeframe **SHORT**

8.2 Attainment of University Hospital status for Cairns Hospital and investigation of health sector growth opportunities including projects to increase local health research knowledge base.

timeframe **MEDIUM** **LONG**

8.3 Advocate for the safe return of international students, exploring potential for specific quarantine arrangements, then investigate scaled up international education presence in Cairns with wider student post-study work rights.

timeframe **MEDIUM** **LONG**

8.4 Advocate for stronger education presence in the city centre through increased student accommodation and the CQUniversity permanent New City Centre Campus.

timeframe **SHORT** **MEDIUM**

8.5 Provision of Commonwealth and International Supported Places through JCU Medical School.

timeframe **MEDIUM** **LONG**

Population growth coupled with attraction and retention of human capital.

Comprehensive career development opportunities across sectors to encourage talent to stay in the region.

A strong education and training sector that has comprehensive course offerings that meet the need of the region from school and beyond in existing and developing industries.

Greater diversity of local health services offered as well as number of jobs in the sector.

Increased local domestic and international student numbers.

Increased number of impactful, locally engaged research projects to assist with sustainable long-term development of the region.

9. Support innovation, research and development to provide for evolving needs of the local economy.

9.1 Support for businesses that have 'pivoted' through COVID-19 to maintain new models, e.g. online connectivity, physical adaptations, new services.

timeframe **SHORT**

9.2 Enable greater innovation and entrepreneurship through collaboration between start-ups, entrepreneurs, social enterprise, the local innovation sector, key stakeholders, and streamlined access to government services and resources.

timeframe **MEDIUM** **LONG**

9.3 Advocate for sustainable funding for education institutions allowing for increased research in emerging industries.

timeframe **MEDIUM** **LONG**

Coordinated approach to innovation across the region between all key stakeholders.

Local businesses successfully integrate new processes adopted during COVID-19 and adopting innovative business models for long term use.

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Creativity and Culture

10. Foster the development of new pathways for Indigenous inclusion in the local economy to deepen collaboration and understanding of place.

10.1 Explore opportunities for new engagement and representation of Indigenous people in business to give a stronger voice for Indigenous people on local affairs eg. More seats for Indigenous people on boards and committees.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

10.2 Increase awareness of culturally-sensitive education and training pathways for Indigenous people, eg. apprenticeships and traineeships with investment in country, people, culture.

timeframe | **SHORT**

Inclusion of more local Indigenous groups in shared decision making, including boards and committees.

Increased knowledge, to all that visit or reside in Cairns, of local Indigenous stories and understandings.

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11. Grow our diverse and inclusive arts, cultural and events sector and recognise contribution towards liveability, economy and wellbeing of the community.

11.1 Investigate collaborative, creative pathways between local and independent arts organisations to reopen facilities, restart events, upgrade infrastructure to comply with COVID-safe requirements and foster new cultural product and infrastructure.

timeframe | **SHORT**

11.2 Promote innovative sources of investment in emerging artist development and new creative products, including:
- Arts, including visual arts, theatre, live entertainment, dance, makers, exhibitions, major events and more.
- Expand opportunities to grow Queensland's screen industry with local filming.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

11.3 Proceed with the Cairns Gallery Precinct project, subject to Federal and State funding, and investigate concept of National Indigenous Heritage Centre, based in the Cairns region.

timeframe | **SHORT** | **MEDIUM**

Thriving and vibrant arts ecology, in full partnership with all levels of government and the education sector, delivering community cultural engagement programs including events, exhibitions, performances and more.

Event participation, sponsorship and sales levels exceeding pre-COVID levels and growing local events to world class levels.

Increased diversity in arts offerings, sharing the rich tapestry of culture and knowledge of our Indigenous and multicultural community.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

12. Investigate and support expansion of local naval and marine capabilities

12.1 Continue to assist the Cairns Marine Precinct to remain competitive to take advantage of opportunities for increased investment by the Department of Defence.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

12.2 Promote strategic projects to diversify and strengthen local marine industries, such as:

12.2.1 Completion of Cairns Port Master Planning, including options for expansion of Cairns Seaport for trade.

timeframe | **SHORT**

12.2.2 Cairns Marine Maintenance Precinct.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

12.2.3 Pacific Engagement through delivery of the national Pacific Step-Up Program.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

12.2.4 Pacific Patrol Boat/Guardian Patrol Boat Training programs.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

12.2.5 Reestablishment of boat/ship manufacturing capacity in region building on existing skills base.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

12.2.6 Growth opportunities for the Superyacht sector.

timeframe | **MEDIUM** | **LONG**

Increased public and private sector investment and number of jobs.

Cairns established as the leader in Northern Australia for marine and naval capabilities.

Implementation of key strategic projects .

OBJECTIVE	TASKS	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
13. Strengthen trade through improved passenger and freight efficiencies to leverage our strategic location as the gateway to Northern Australia, PNG, Asia and the Pacific.	**13.1** Seek to build, between key stakeholders, a regional provenance branding story for local produce e.g. 'tropical food bowl' branding. *timeframe* — **MEDIUM** **13.2** Promotion of increased aviation connectivity within Australia and throughout Asia and the Pacific, both for passengers and freight, and for strategic aviation projects, such as: 13.2.1 Potential facilities that would support export supply-chain/logistics development (eg. Irradiation Facility). *timeframe* — **MEDIUM** **LONG** 13.2.2 Cairns Aviation Excellence Precinct. *timeframe* — **MEDIUM** **LONG** 13.2.3 Cairns Metro/Airport Link. *timeframe* — **MEDIUM** **LONG** 13.2.4 Stage 2 CQU Asia Pacific Aviation Hub. *timeframe* — **SHORT** **MEDIUM** 13.2.5 Continued support for air freight connectivity for critical routes. *timeframe* — **SHORT** 13.2.6 Sectoral benchmarking and positioning. *timeframe* — **SHORT** **13.3** Investigate ways to utilise Cairns' strategic location for increased international trade and export support programs and infrastructure, including: • Export growth incubator. • Reset Export Market Development Grants. *timeframe* — **MEDIUM** **LONG**	Increased public and private sector investment and number of jobs. Government supporting trade & investment into agile, diversified sectors. Local aviation capacity exceeding pre-COVID levels, with new passenger and freight routes established and strongly supported. Increased regional agriculture export to international markets. Establishment of regional Cairns provenance branding for local produce. Increased local business partnerships with Pacific and Asian nations. Aviation capacity is expanded to increase competitiveness and diversification opportunities and support new aviation-related jobs.
14. Plan and deliver infrastructure upgrades to increase resilience and provide for future population and economic growth, including digital connectivity opportunities.	**14.1** Collaborate between government and key stakeholders to produce a sequenced long-term plan and implementation program for upgrades to key strategic road infrastructure in line with population growth, including: • Captain Cook Highway (Draper Street to Smithfield). • Cairns Western Arterial Road. • Kuranda Range Road. *timeframe* — **SHORT** **14.2** Collaborate between government and key stakeholders to produce a sequenced long-term plan and implementation program for key long-term strategic water security needs, including: • Draper Road Water Treatment Plant. • Barron River Water Treatment Plant. *timeframe* — **SHORT** **14.3** Seek support for upgrades of digital infrastructure to support economic growth, including: • Investigation of 5G Pilot. • Feasibility of a secure data storage facility for the region. • Support and training for local businesses to adapt to new online business models, such as e-commerce capability. • Establish and strengthen international trading relationships through e-commerce and digital engagement. *timeframe* — **MEDIUM** **LONG** **14.4** Review processes and requirements for building and development approvals to identify opportunities to streamline processes and incentivise appropriate development to support economic recovery. *timeframe* — **SHORT** **14.5** Expand understanding of the long-term benefits of dams to assist with future development of water infrastructure in the Region. *timeframe* — **SHORT**	Increased public and private sector investment and number of jobs. Clear infrastructure plan outlining key needs for the next 10 years with supporting construction targets (including social housing). Increase in number for development approvals and building permits. Increase in construction activity. Infrastructure plans and investments are aligned to economic, sustainability, social and positive population growth strategies and development plans. Infrastructure upgrades targeting problem areas limiting growth and restricting future development are prioritised and commenced. More agile, profitable local businesses connected to wider markets through increased digital connectivity and e-commerce. Increased investment and fast tracked capital works and essential public infrastructure (including social housing).

Implementation

Successful economic recovery will require commitment from all relevant stakeholders and levels of government to deliver the recovery objectives and tasks identified in the Action Plan. The ERRSC will continue to meet as a future-focussed collaborative group to oversee implementation of the Plan. There will be an annual review of the Plan with key stakeholders. Updates on the delivery of tasks will be provided to the ERRSC.

CONTRIBUTING STAKEHOLDERS

- Advance Cairns
- Advance Queensland
- AFL Cairns
- Agforce
- Arts Nexus
- Arts Queensland
- Australian Banana Growers Council
- Babinda Taskforce
- BDO Australia
- Bumma Bippera Media & Dreamtime Dive & Snorkel
- Cairns Airport
- Cairns Aquarium
- Cairns Art Gallery
- Cairns Business Women's Club
- Cairns Chamber of Commerce
- Cairns Indigenous Art Fair
- Cairns Indigenous Tourism Hub, AppOriginee & Abriculture
- Cairns Museum
- Cairns Primary Health Network
- Cairns Regional Manufacturing Hub, (DRDM)
- Cairns Taxis
- Cairns Young Chamber
- Canegrowers
- CQUniversity
- Davis, S.
- Department of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
- Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
- Department of Environment and Science
- Department of Housing and Public Works
- Department of Local Government, Racing & Multicultural Affairs

- Department of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy.
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation
- Department of Transport & Main Roads
- Digeralia
- Dive Queensland
- Djunbunji Ltd & Mandingalbay Cultural Tours
- Down Under Tours
- End Credits Film Club
- Energy Queensland
- Excellence Coaches
- Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
- Fibre Optics P/L, July 2020
- FNQ Dance Academy
- FNQ Agriculture
- FNQ Plastics
- FNQ Tropical Dance Festival
- Global Forwarding
- Gordonvale Chamber of Commerce
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- Indigenous Business Australia
- InkMasters Print Workshop
- James Cook University
- John Hartigan Associates
- Jute Theatre Company
- Mainie
- Master Builder
- MiHaven
- Miriki Performing Arts / Nintiringanyi
- National Indigenous Australians Agency
- New Century Resources
- Norship

- North Site Contemporary Arts
- Ochre Restaurant
- Outdoor Solutions Queensland
- Ports North
- Pryce Centre for Culture & Arts
- Pullman Reef Hotel Casino
- Queensland Agriculture Workforce Network
- Queensland Health – Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service
- Queensland Museum
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority
- Queensland Sugar Limited
- Regional Development Australia – Tropical North
- Savannah Guides Limited
- Screen Queensland
- Seaswift
- Study Cairns
- Strait Support
- Sunbus
- Superyacht Group Great Barrier Reef
- Terrain NRM
- Tourism Events Queensland
- Trade Investment Queensland
- Tradelinked
- Trinity Anglican School
- Tropic Now
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- Umi Arts
- Urban Development Institute of Australia
- Y(E)P Entrepreneurship Facilitators Cairns
- Yurika

COVID-19
human & social
Response and Recovery - Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on the economy and the social and emotional health of the Cairns community. Due to the regional context, independent evidence indicates the impacts of the pandemic in Cairns will be greater in severity and the likely recovery times longer in duration, than for other regions in Australia.

These economic impacts are having significant flow on effects on the health and social well-being of the Cairns community. The health, human and social services sectors indicate an increased degree of anxiety, loneliness and uncertainty related to restrictions on freedoms and dramatic changes to lifestyle, livelihood and severe financial distress. Research also indicates many sections of the community have been affected by forms of hardship and vulnerability for the first time (financial, emotional) and require ongoing assistance. Additionally, pre-COVID-19 prevalence of mental health, housing stress and homelessness, and domestic violence has been amplified by the event, consistent with the experience of other regions.

Sector feedback also indicates increased levels of mental health and use of harmful substances, disruptions in access to in-home care and health support services (particularly for vulnerable cohorts), and impacts on access to nutritious food and physical health regimes.

The risks for vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, young people and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities are particularly acute during the event. Disadvantaged groups experienced immediate and disproportionate impacts.

There are also other groups that are particularly vulnerable, who were initially or entirely unaccounted for within government safety nets. These include international students, people on temporary visas (e.g. tourist or working visas), casuals and certain sectors (e.g. universities).

While these issues are consistent across the Far North region, the event also highlighted the role of Cairns as a significant service centre hub for surrounding communities. While there is a need to build regional service capacity, the reliance on Cairns services is anticipated to increase as the full impacts of COVID-19 are realised. Investment support should be proportionate to this demand and cross-regional recovery approaches are essential to deal with the complexity of issues as outlined below.

For many in the Cairns LGA, COVID was an event of first-time experiences:
First time to: access welfare payments, accessing counselling supports, suffering extreme financial hardship, and for some, a first time experience of family violence.
This involved needing to navigate new service pathways.

The strength of the Cairns area's community assets was highlighted during the event. The health, social and community services sector was dedicated and able to quickly organise and respond to the emerging needs of the community – residents and visitors alike. In addition, the specific economic contribution and needs of the health and assistance services sector as a workforce (14% of the local workforce and the only sector to grow in the period March-June (by 9%)), the level of demands on the sector's capacity, and the essential contribution of the sector to supporting the local population to be ready and able to participate in the region's economic recovery was recognised.

Likewise, there were many grass-roots community-led initiatives that evolved to meet the needs of the local population. Small local groups were able to self-organise and create neighbourhood level outreach to help more vulnerable residents, create and move to virtual support forums, and many offered to volunteer their time and services. These community strengths provide a proud and solid foundation on which to build future recovery initiatives and build long term resilience.

Integrated recovery strategies will aim to identify and meet short-medium term needs – both acute and developmental - and in this way will inform longer-term recovery and contribute to building longer term resilience.
With this intent, initiatives will focus on
- **Strengthening social cohesion and capital;**
- **building adaptive capacity (including self-reliance) and;**
- **reducing vulnerability.**

The initiatives will be underpinned by the principles of community-led, place-based, strengths-based and equitable as key attributes of building community and social resilience.

These initiatives will be implemented through four key approaches:
1) Place-based community supports;
2) Health and social sector coordination and planning in pandemics;
3) Strengthening health and social services for pandemics; and
4) Building knowledge and using learnings.

Snapshot of preliminary and interrelated event impacts

INCREASED FINANCIAL INSECURITY

- Workforce/Economic Participation (job instability; welfare safety net (Jobkeeper/JobSeeker); adequate employment supports – including retraining and redeployment).
- Financial Impacts/severe financial distress (individually; household level).
- Housing stress and homelessness (mortgage stress; housing availability and affordability; overcrowding; rough sleeping; congregational living; temporary accommodation).
- Inclusive economic development (lack of access to diversified and inclusive economies).

REDUCED HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Workforce readiness and participation (employment support – COVID safe workplaces – for clients and staff; retraining; health and wellbeing).
- Social Cohesion and Social Capital (prior belonging; inclusion, social connection; collaboration and mutual support).
- Community Safety (antisocial behaviour; increased racism and discrimination).
- Mental Health (escalations in emotional and psychological health; increased substance use, self-harm and addictive behaviours).
- Vulnerable groups (increased vulnerability for seniors, youth, people with a disability, people with complex health/medical issues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups, those at risk of domestic violence, and temporary visa holders).
- Food insecurity (interrupted supply chains; self-sufficiency).
- Disruption to community gatherings and networks (closure of venues; COVID compliance.

BARRIERS TO DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

- Infrastructure (Capability - load; Accessibility-coverage).
- Inclusion/Accessibility (low competency levels; systems standardisation; device access; data access).

SERVICE SYSTEM CHALLENGES

- Coordination and Integration (challenges in coordinated leadership; capacity; communication and information; service capacity; agility; compliance).
- Gaps in knowledge and learnings (full impact assessment; community of practice; service strategies; service integration).
- Addressing gaps in community support (gaps in evidence-based strategies; community-led; innovation in pandemics).
- Reduced revenue due to interruptions to fundraising and donations.

A full overview of COVID-19 Impacts and Needs are outlined in the Rapid Social Needs Assessment (JCU, 2020).

PLANNING TIMEFRAMES & RATIONALE

SHORT TERM JUNE 2020 -DEC 2020 → **MEDIUM TERM** JAN 2021 -JUNE 2021 → **LONG TERM ONGOING**

Monitoring review cycles will occur every three months (initially) to track progress and relevance and feed into annual progress reviews.

The focus of this iteration of the the Human and Social Action Plan is the short to medium term, and has been developed has been developed based on the best available information. Given the cross-cutting nature of many impacts and needs, response approaches integrate with the Economic Action Plan.

Initial consideration is also given to longer-term recovery and future resilience building approaches. These strategies will be fully accounted for in future iterations of the plan, as more in-depth evidence is available to inform impacts and response needs. These stages are captured in the tasks and timelines outlined.

ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

Council facilitates a regional COVID-19 Human and Social Sub-Committee (HSSC) to assess impacts and facilitate coordination of response and recovery activities related to human and social systems of the Cairns region.

- HSRRSC fully activated in March 2020 (37 participants met weekly)
- Rapid Social Needs Assessment (facilitated by JCU to provide preliminary assessment of priority support needs) – comprising 10 interviews across sectors; Focus Group (36 participants). Final report 17th August 2020.
- Federal and State senate inquiry development – consultation with sector leads.

RECOVERY OBJECTIVES

1. Health, community and social services are more prepared and equipped in the short-medium term, to respond to community need in pandemics (and other hazards) and to contribute to addressing other forms of adversity (including chronic social stressors).

2. Residents and visitors are more prepared in the short-medium term to respond to hazards (acute shocks) and other forms of adversity (individual and collective).

3. Residents' quality of life is increased in the short-medium term, through place-based supports that strengthen a sense of health, wellbeing and self-sufficiency, capacity for connectivity (including digital) and contribute to longer-term resilience.

4. The ongoing community and social resilience of the Cairns community is increased through long-term recovery efforts that build overall capability and capacity to 'bounce forward' in response to acute shocks, social stressors or changing conditions.
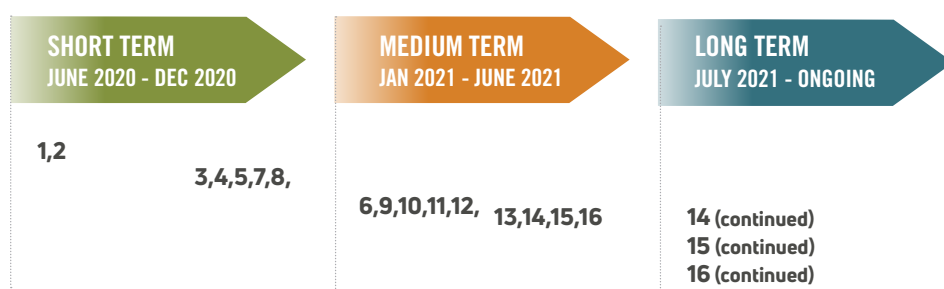
Cross-cutting recovery tasks

1. Coordinate local planning session/s via lead organisations and networks to continue to develop priorities for collective action – short-medium term recovery strategies.

2. Coordinate local community engagement process to gather community input into place-based recovery support strategies.

3. Undertake advocacy and lobbying for resources and service models that are: delivered via out-reach or street-level servicing; aimed at prevention and early intervention (before escalation); fully integrated across the range of response agencies.

4. Explore backbone function including resourcing to drive coordination of sector development strategies.

5. Participate in cross-regional coordination and advocacy to support human and social recovery objectives.

6. Develop strategies to address impacts to fundraising and donations and develop formal arrangements (e.g. MOUs) to support donations of goods, services and financial support in events.

7. Plan, prioritise and stimulate community gatherings, events and activities (consistent with QH directives) across all partnering organisations and agencies, fostering improved wellbeing, community safety and cohesion.

8. HSRRSC to inform disaster management pandemic specific response arrangements, including engagement with lead agencies, organisations and networks to raise awareness and endorsement.

9. Collaborate with the human and social sector to develop a cross-sector development plan to increase capacity for response and recovery (pandemics and all hazards), including service coordination and business continuity.

10. Advocate and secure funding for workforce / sector development capacity building to respond to pandemics.

11. Establish a pandemic specific communications plan (response and recovery) that considers strategies to increase digital inclusion and connectivity.

12. Establish a knowledge sharing symposium and community of practice approach is established to identify and share learnings.

13. Establish an overarching coordination group specific to assess and manage localised responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This includes the requisite authority to influence cross-agency responses.

14. Establish an overarching evaluation plan in collaboration with HSRRSC to monitor the effectiveness of implementation and guide recovery efforts ongoing.

15. A comprehensive assessment of impact and research is commenced – this includes understanding community strengths, types of risks, definitions of vulnerability, and understanding of response and recovery strategies including immediate (e.g. stimulus) versus developmental (e.g. systemic; coordination vs service capacity issues).

16. Social Resilience Plan is commenced, outlining integrated approaches to building long-term social resilience in the greater Cairns community. Life styles and living conditions are improved by addressing chronic social stressors amplified during an event.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. **Short-medium term action plans are finalised by November 2020.**

2. **Integrated monitoring and evaluation plan established by November 2020.**

3. **That people's quality of life is enhanced and they experience increased well-being, self-sufficiency and capacity for connectivity.**

4. **That the Cairns LGA demonstrates increased levels of individual and collective response and recovery capacity (residents, visitors, sector).**

5. **Evidence of need is incrementally and more effectively applied to identify and resource placed-based community supports.**

6. **Evidence of need is successfully applied to advocate and lobby for additional resources or policy reform.**

7. **Ongoing sector engagement is established and more effectively applied to review and further develop integrated response and recovery coordination and service approaches.**

8. **Ongoing recovery planning is community led - underpinned by principles of community development (participatory and strengths-based) - and informs longer-term resilience planning.**

9. **Research and development opportunities are established and implemented to capture learnings, fill knowledge gaps and share intelligence across sectors.**

10. **Ongoing recovery and resilience planning is more grounded in evidence as in-depth knowledge of risks, vulnerability and holistic response options are filled.**

11. **Social Resilience Plan is established that enhances integrated community resilience efforts.**

Recovery tasks timeline

SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
JUNE 2020 - DEC 2020	JAN 2021 - JUNE 2021	JULY 2021 - ONGOING

1,2

3,4,5,7,8,

6,9,10,11,12,   13,14,15,16

14 (continued)
15 (continued)
16 (continued)

ACTION PLAN

RECOVERY APPROACH 1: *Placed-Based Community Supports - to increase a sense of safety, wellbeing and self-sufficiency. (Focus initiatives on strengthening social cohesion, social capital, adaptive capacity and reducing vulnerability).*

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	CROSS-CUTTING TASKS
Recovery Objective 2: Residents and visitors are more prepared in the short-medium term to respond to hazards (acute shocks) and other forms of adversity (individual and collective). **Recovery Objective 3:** Residents' quality of life is increased in the short-medium term, through place-based supports that strengthen a sense of health, wellbeing and self-sufficiency, capacity for connectivity (including digital) and contribute to longer-term resilience. **Recovery Objective 4:** The ongoing community and social resilience of the Cairns community is increased through long-term recovery efforts that build overall capability and capacity to 'bounce forward' in response to acute shocks, social stressors or changing conditions.	**MOS 3:** That people's quality of life is enhanced and they experience increased well-being, self-sufficiency and capacity for connectivity. **MOS 4:** That the Cairns LGA demonstrates increased levels of individual and collective response and recovery capacity (residents, visitors, sector). **MOS 5:** Evidence of need is incrementally and more effectively applied to identify and resource placed-based community supports. **MOS 6:** Evidence of need is successfully applied to advocate and lobby for additional resources or policy reform. **MOS 7:** Ongoing sector engagement is established and more effectively applied to review and further develop integrated response and recovery coordination and service approaches. **MOS 8:** Ongoing recovery planning is community led - underpinned by principles of community development (participatory and strengths-based) - and informs longer-term resilience planning.	TASK 1: Conduct local planning session/s via lead organisations and networks to continue to develop priorities for collective action – short-medium term recovery strategies. TASK 2: Conduct local community engagement process to gather community input into place-based recovery support strategies. TASK 3: Undertake advocacy and lobbying for resources and service models that are: delivered via out-reach or street-level servicing; aimed at prevention and early intervention (before escalation); fully integrated across the range of response agencies. TASK 5: Participate in cross-regional coordination and advocacy to support human and social recovery objectives. TASK 7: Plan, prioritise and stimulate community gatherings, events and activities (consistent with QH directives) across all partnering organisations and agencies, fostering improved wellbeing, community safety and cohesion. TASK 16: Regional Social Resilience Plan is commenced, outlining integrated approaches to building long-term social resilience in the greater Cairns community.

ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESS:

- Place-based projects are identified and investment is secured to address cross-cutting and complex social needs.
- Solutions work at a grass roots level to engage services users, services and funders, and reflect the unique and integral place of local services within communities.
- Strategies consider the specific needs of groups most acutely impacted – seniors, people with a disability, people from a migrant background, First Peoples, youth.
- Proportionate investment in responses between stimulus (short term sugar hit) and longer term proactive (developmental) work.
- Effects are adequately managed as a result of withdrawal of stimulus policies (e.g. Job Keeper) and event lag effects.
- Targeted support exists to support social and economic recovery by addressing immediate support needs and access to critical services e.g. employment services, mental health.
- Further information is gathered on employment needs to inform strategies for workforce and economic participation.
- Fragmentation and social inequity is addressed between employed and unemployed, virus and virus fee, exacerbation of existing and generational inequalities, racial discrimination, risky behaviors and other issues.
- Economic recovery considers Inclusive Economies to expand opportunities for new industries and inclusive growth (e.g. social enterprise).
- Plans exist to ensure the community has access to adequate levels and types of safe and affordable housing (private rentals and social housing) including specialist supports, during events and ongoing (business as usual).
- Integrated thinking bridges economic, social and environmental responses to capture and addresses complex and multiple issues. For example, stimulus funding for construction is targeted to address critical shortages in social and affordable housing based on completion of Local Housing Plans.
- Account for the disproportionate impacts on Cairns as a service center for regional communities, particularly at risk groups.
- Local organisations are resourced to delivery services (rather than those removed from the region) – as proximity allows an intimate awareness and agility in responding to local needs.
- Recognition of the health care and social assistance sector as key employers in the region (approx. 14%), with specific sector support needs, its contribution to the local economy, and its role in sustaining healthy and functioning communities.

RECOVERY APPROACH 2: *Health and Social Sector Coordination and Planning in Pandemics*

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	CROSS-CUTTING TASKS
Recovery Objective 1: Health, community and social services are more prepared and equipped in the short-medium term, to respond to community need in pandemics (and other hazards) and to contribute to addressing other forms of adversity (including chronic social stressors). **Recovery Objective 4:** The ongoing community and social resilience of the Cairns community is increased through long-term recovery efforts that build overall capability and capacity to 'bounce forward' in response to acute shocks, social stressors or changing conditions.	**MOS 1:** Short-medium term action plans are finalised by November 2020. **MOS 2:** Integrated monitoring and evaluation plan established by November 2020. **MOS 4**: That the Cairns LGA demonstrates increased levels of individual and collective response and recovery capacity (residents, visitors, sector). **MOS 7:** Ongoing sector engagement is established and more effectively applied to review and further develop integrated response and recovery coordination and service approaches. **MOS 11:** Social Resilience Plan is established that enhances integrated community resilience efforts.	TASK 6: Develop strategies to address impacts to fundraising and donations and develop formal arrangements (e.g. MOUs) to support donations of goods, services and financial support in events. TASK 8: HSRRSC to inform pandemic specific disaster management response arrangements. Including, engagement with lead agencies, organisations and networks to raise awareness and endorsement. TASK 9: Collaborate with the H&S sector to develop a cross-sector development plan to increase capacity for response and recovery (pandemics and all hazards), including service coordination and business continuity. TASK 10: Advocate and secure funding for workforce / sector development capacity building to respond to pandemics. TASK 14: Establish an overarching evaluation plan in collaboration with HSRRSC to monitor the effectiveness of implementation and guide recovery efforts.

ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESS:

- Disaster Management (DM) planning ensures an all hazards approach including pandemic sub-plan (complementing the Queensland Health Pandemic Plan) with identified triggers for activation, messaging, communication and interventions. Takes account of climate variability in relation to pandemics and multi-hazard overlay.
- Sector-specific business continuity and pandemic response plans are established and monitored.

- Responses are systematic, not reactive.
- Connectivity with Federal and State Health is effective.
- DM dashboard as point of truth.
- Integrated social, economic and environmental responses as part of holistic disaster response and recovery.
- Roles and responsibilities of agencies are established and owned.

- Supply chains for essential PPEs are secured and resourced.
- Effective volunteering model specific to pandemics is established.
- Account for Cairns as a service center for regional communities, particularly at risk groups.

RECOVERY APPROACH 2.1: *Communication and Information*

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	CROSS-CUTTING TASKS
Recovery Objective 1: Health, community and social services are more prepared and equipped in the short-medium term, to respond to community need in pandemics (and other hazards) and to contribute to addressing other forms of adversity (including chronic social stressors). **Recovery Objective 3:** Residents' quality of life is increased in the short-medium term, through place-based supports that strengthen a sense of health, wellbeing and self-sufficiency, capacity for connectivity (including digital) and contribute to longer-term resilience.	**MOS 4:** That the Cairns LGA demonstrates increased levels of individual and collective response and recovery capacity (residents, visitors, sector). **MOS 7:** Ongoing sector engagement is established and more effectively applied to review and further develop integrated response and recovery coordination and service approaches. **MOS 8:** Ongoing recovery planning is community led - underpinned by principles of community development (participatory and strengths-based) - and informs longer-term resilience planning.	TASK 6: Develop strategies to address impacts to fundraising and donations and develop formal arrangements (e.g. MOU's) to support donations of goods, services and financial support in events. TASK 11: Establish a pandemic specific communications plan (response and recovery) that considers strategies to increase digital inclusion and connectivity.

ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESS:

- A unified communication and information mechanism is established that provides situational awareness and service information to support self-sufficiency.
- Single source of information, distilled messages fit for purpose and audience using multiple communication pathways to increase access.
- Information and key messaging is consistent and reassures the community.

- Health and service information is widely communicated and tailored to target audiences (including translation).
- Leadership and messaging around issues of community re-engagement and social cohesion.
- Multiple delivery channels used.
- Good news stories are captured and promoted.

- Education and awareness strategies include messaging related to water and sewage treatment, particularly desired behavior changes related to non-flushable items.
- Digital inclusion strategy that strengthens accessibility, competency and integrates with infrastructure development strategies.

RECOVERY APPROACH 3: *Strengthening Health and Social Services for Pandemics*

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	CROSS-CUTTING TASKS
Recovery Objective 1: Health, community and social services are more prepared and equipped in the short-medium term, to respond to community need in pandemics (and other hazards) and to contribute to addressing other forms of adversity (including chronic social stressors). **Recovery Objective 4:** The ongoing community and social resilience of the Cairns community is increased through long-term recovery efforts that build overall capability and capacity to 'bounce forward' in response to acute shocks, social stressors or changing conditions.	**MOS 1:** Short-medium term action plans are finalised by November 2020. **MOS 2:** Integrated monitoring and evaluation plan established by November 2020. **MOS 4:** That the Cairns LGA demonstrates increased levels of individual and collective response and recovery capacity (residents, visitors, sector). **MOS 7:** Ongoing sector and community engagement is established and more effectively applied to review and further develop integrated response and recovery coordination and service approaches. **MOS 9:** Research and development opportunities are established and implemented to capture learnings, fill knowledge gaps and share intelligence across sectors. **MOS 10:** Ongoing recovery and resilience planning is more grounded in evidence as in-depth knowledge of risks, vulnerability and holistic response options are filled. **MOS 11:** Social Resilience Plan is established that enhances integrated community resilience efforts.	TASK 4: Explore backbone function to drive coordination of sector development strategies. TASK 6: Develop strategies to address impacts to fundraising and donations and develop formal arrangements (e.g. MOU's) to support donations of goods, services and financial support in events. TASK 9: Collaborate with the H&S sector to develop a cross-sector development plan to increase capacity for response and recovery (pandemics and all hazards), including service coordination and business continuity. TASK 10: Advocate and secure funding for workforce / sector development capacity building to respond to pandemics. TASK 12: Establish a knowledge sharing symposium and community of practice approach to identify and share learnings. TASK 13: Establish an overarching coordination group specific to assess and manage localised responses for First Peoples. This includes the requisite authority to influence cross-agency responses. TASK 16: Regional Social Resilience Plan is commenced, outlining integrated approaches to building long-term social resilience in the greater Cairns community. Life styles and living conditions are improved by addressing chronic social stressors amplified during an event.

ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESS:

- The health, social assistance sector is supported to respond to pandemics (and other hazards) at an organisational level, including workforce development, business continuity and specialist skills.

- Recognition of the health care and social assistance sector as key employers in the region (approx. 14%), with specific sector support needs, its contribution to the local economy, and its role in sustaining healthy and functioning communities.

- Account for the disproportionate impacts on Cairns as a service center for regional communities, particularly at risk groups.

- Workforce development for working in pandemics.

- Service, organisational and sector-level development and capacity building includes establishing, integrating and monitoring integrated service and community of practice models as learning opportunities.

- Standardised community level/client focused Needs Assessment processes (to inform service integration and collaborations).

- Sector-specific business continuity and pandemic response plans are established. This includes guidelines for safe operations; identifying essential services; resourcing safety plan implementation. Include contingency planning for a repurposing or value-adding grants-based funding to sustain operations and accounting for a contracted fundraising base.

- Local organisations are resourced to deliver services (rather than those removed from the region) – as proximity allows an intimate awareness and agility in responding to local needs.

- Consider model and resourcing for backbone function.

RECOVERY APPROACH 4: *Building Knowledge and Using Learnings*

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	CROSS-CUTTING TASKS
Links to Preliminary H&S Local Recovery Plan Recovery Objectives: **Recovery Objective 1:** Health, community and social services are more prepared and equipped in the short-medium term, to respond to community need in pandemics (and other hazards) and to contribute to addressing other forms of adversity (including chronic social stressors). **Recovery Objective 2:** Residents and visitors are more prepared in the short-medium term to respond to hazards (acute shocks) and other forms of adversity (individual and collective). **Recovery Objective 4:** The ongoing community and social resilience of the Cairns community is increased through long-term recovery efforts that build overall capability and capacity to 'bounce forward' in response to acute shocks, social stressors or changing conditions.	**Links to Preliminary H&S Local Recovery Plan Measures of Success:** **MOS 4:** That the Cairns LGA demonstrates increased levels of individual and collective response and recovery capacity (residents, visitors, sector). **MOS 8:** Ongoing recovery planning is community led - underpinned by principles of community development (participatory and strengths-based) - and informs longer-term resilience planning. **MOS 9:** Research and development opportunities are established and implemented to capture learnings, fill knowledge gaps and share intelligence across sectors. **MOS 10:** Ongoing recovery and resilience planning is more grounded in evidence as in-depth knowledge of risks, vulnerability and holistic response options are filled. **MOS 11:** Social Resilience Plan is established that enhances integrated community resilience efforts.	TASK 12: Establish a knowledge sharing symposium and community of practice approach is established to identify and share learnings. Task 14: Establish an overarching evaluation plan in collaboration with H&SS-C to monitor the effectiveness of implementation and guide recovery efforts. TASK 15: A comprehensive assessment of impact and research is commenced – this includes understanding community strengths, types of risks, definitions of vulnerability, and understanding of response and recovery strategies including immediate (e.g. stimulus) versus developmental (e.g. systemic; coordination vs service capacity issues).

ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SUCCESS:

- Research and development opportunities are implemented to capture and share learnings, fill knowledge gaps and provide new insights to guide response, recovery and build longer-term resilience. This includes iterative reviews to account for lag effects.

- A deeper and more considered understanding of the full span of impacts and response and recovery options is developed.

- Data to support understanding of vulnerability, risk and fragility (differentiated between disaster and pandemic) is sourced.

- An evidence-base is established to advocate and lobby for funding and services to meet sector and community need.

- Sector collaboration that supports a coordinated data capture and sharing mechanism for data and information is established.

STAKEHOLDERS

A range of lead and/or contributing stakeholders will be involved in implementation, including:
• Human and Social Response and Recovery Committee
• Health, Community and Social Assistance Services Sector
• Cairns Alliance of Social Services
• Research and Education: James Cook University; Central Queensland University.
• Government Agencies: Department of Communities, Disability Services and Seniors; Queensland Health; Multicultural Affairs Queensland; Human Services; Home Affairs; CRC / DMU (CRC).
• Peak bodies: Queensland Council of Social Service; Australian Council of Social Services; Community Services Industry Association.

The HSRRSC will undertake a process to negotiate and assign leads for tasks based on a collective prioritisation of objectives during August/September 2020.

REFERENCES

Access Community Housing, 2020
Cairns Alliance of Social Services, Annual Position Papers, 2020
Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service, 2020
Group of 8, 2020; Centre for Aboriginal Policy and Economic Research, 2020
Headspace, 2020
Herron Todd White, January 2020
Human and Social Response and Recovery Sub-Committee, 2020
James Cook University, 2020
Primary Health Network, 2019
Queensland Council of Social Services, 2020
Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network, 2020
Queensland Mental Health Commission, 2019
Queensland Reconstruction Authority, 2017.
Rockefeller Foundation, 100 Resilient Cities - https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/city-resilience-framework-2/
United Nations Sendai Framework for Diaster Risk Reduction - https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/what-sendai-framework
Uniting Community Care, 2020

ACRONYMS

CCIQ: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland
CHHHS: Cairns Hinterland Hospital and Health Service
CQU: CQUniversity
CRC: Cairns Regional Council
DAF: Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
DATSIP: Department of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships
DES: Department of Environment and Science
DESBT: Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
DHPW: Department of Housing and Public Works

DLGRMA: Department of Local Government, Racing & Multicultural Affairs
DNRME: Department of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy
DRDM: Department of Regional Development and Manufacturing
DSDTI: Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation
ERRSC: Economic Response and Recovery Sub Committee
FNQ: Far North Queensland
HSRRSC: Human and Social Response and Recovery Sub Committee
IBA: Indigenous Business Australia

JCU: James Cook University
LLC: Local Leadership Committee
NAIF: Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility
NIAA: National Indigenous Australians Agency
PNG: Papua New Guinea
QRA: Queensland Reconstruction Authority
RDA: Regional Development Australia – Tropical North
RTO: Registered Training Organisation
TAFE: Far North Queensland TAFE
TIQ: Trade Investment Queensland
TTNQ: Tourism Tropical North Queensland
VET: Vocational Education and Training

MORE INFORMATION

Cairns
REGIONAL COUNCIL

For more information, see: www.cairns.qld.gov.au/council/covid19