

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL OPERATIONAL PLAN 2026-27 AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN 2026-27

83/3/1-01 | #7706578

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopts the Cairns Regional Council Operational Plan 2026-27 and Annual Performance Plan 2026-27.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Cairns Regional Council's Corporate Plan 2025-30 (Corporate Plan) outlines Council's strategic direction including our vision, values, focus areas and strategic priorities as well as key performance indicators that are used to monitor progress.

The Corporate Plan is implemented through an annual operational plan in accordance with section 174 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. Cairns Regional Council's Operational Plan 2026-27 (Operational Plan) details 42 actions to be advanced over the financial year and demonstrates Council's role in achieving these activities.

Progress on the Operational Plan is monitored through quarterly reports to Council and an annual report at the end of the financial year.

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to Section 175(1) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, Council's annual operational plan must:

- a) Be consistent with its annual budget.
- b) State how the local government will:
 - i. Progress the implementation of its five-year corporate plan during the period of the annual operational plan; and
 - ii. Manage operational risks.

Whilst recent changes to the *Local Government Regulation 2012* have removed the requirement for local governments with commercial business units to develop an annual performance plan; Council will continue this reporting for the following business units, for 2026-27 as part of our commitment of maintaining accountability and transparency.

- 1. Cairns Water; and
- 2. Cairns Resource Recovery.

An assessment of Council's progress towards implementing the annual operational plan will be presented to Council quarterly.

The 42 actions outlined in the Operational Plan 2026-27 align to the five Corporate Plan focus areas:

- **Focus One** - Robust Economy: Supporting a diversified and growing economy
- **Focus Two** – Natural Assets: Promoting, protecting and enhancing our iconic natural environment now and for generations to come
- **Focus Three** – Design for Liveability: A place-based approach that celebrates our community
- **Focus Four** – Community and Culture: Fostering a vibrant, healthy and inclusive community
- **Focus Five:** Focused Council: Delivering for community through strong governance and informed decision-making

Each action is required to align with the relevant strategies within the Corporate Plan focus areas and clearly identify the role or roles Council will undertake in delivery. These roles are defined as follows:

- **Advocate:** promoting the interests of the community to decision-makers and influencers.
- **Facilitator:** enabling participation by bringing together groups and interested parties to support collaboration and involvement.
- **Funder:** providing financial support to other organisations to deliver services or outcomes.
- **Partner:** forming partnerships and strategic alliances with other parties to achieve shared objectives in the interests of the community.
- **Provider:** directly delivering services to the community.
- **Regulator:** establishing and enforcing local laws, policies and regulatory activities.

COMMENT:

The Executive Leadership Team, in consultation with Executive Managers and other Council Officers as required, have developed Council's Operational Plan to ensure the key actions align and deliver the five strategic goals outlined in Council's Corporate Plan and are consistent with allowances made in Council's annual budget for 2026-27.

Attached to this report is a copy of Council's annual Operational Plan for 2026-27 (Attachment 1) and Annual Performance Plans Cairns Water and Cairns Resource Recovery 2026-27 (Attachment 2).

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council adopts the Cairns Regional Council Operational Plan 2026-27 and Annual Performance Plan 2026-27.

Option 2

That Council **does not** adopt the Cairns Regional Council Operational Plan 2026-27 and Annual Performance Plan 2026-27 and provides Council Officers with recommended changes to the plan or details of further information required by Councillors before a decision to adopt the Operational Plan 2026-27 is made.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk Management:

Quarterly reporting on the implementation of the Operational Plan will enable Council and the community to monitor and review progress.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

The Operational Plan sets out Council's key actions for 2026-27. The budget has been prepared to support the efficient and effective use of resources.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The purpose of the Operational Plan is to outline how Council will progress the implementation of the Corporate Plan.

Statutory:

The Operational Plan has been developed consistent with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2009* and *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

CONSULTATION:

Consultation was undertaken with key internal stakeholders during the development of the Operational Plan. The key actions were also discussed in a workshop with the Councillors.

ATTACHMENTS:

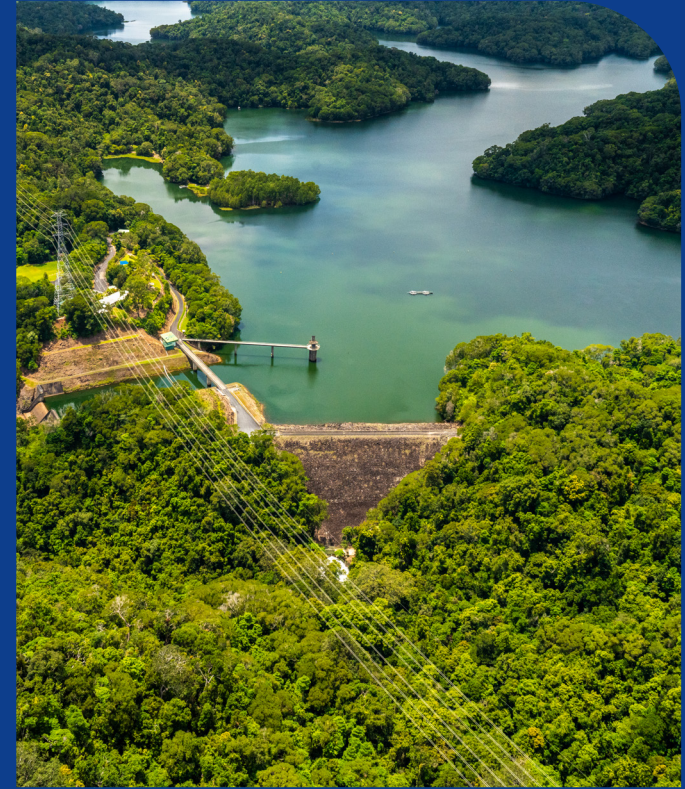
1. Cairns Regional Council Operational Plan 2026-27 #7890757 (separate attachment)
2. Annual Performance Plans Cairns Water and Cairns Resource Recovery 2026-27 #7890755 (separate attachment)



Mandy Wise
Executive Manager, Organisational Performance



Holly Mc Bride
Director, People and Organisational Performance



Operational Plan

2026-2027



Acknowledgement of Country

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Custodians of our region, the Djabugay; Yirrganydji; Buluwai; Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingalbay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji; Bundabarra and Wadjanbarra Yidinji; Madjandji; Mamu and Ngadjon Jii peoples. We extend this respect to all elders past, present and future, and other First Peoples within our region.

Our vision

Shaping a tropical future

Our values



Trust

Honouring the trust of our residents, each other and staff



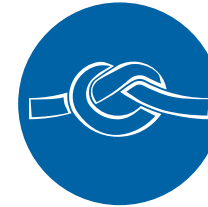
Responsibility

Transparency and responsibility to our community



Cairns-ness

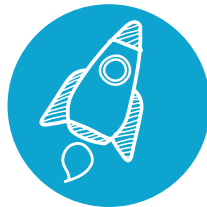
Pride in who we are and where we live



Resilience

Adapting, enduring, growing stronger

Our focus



Robust economy

Supporting a diversified and growing economy



Natural assets

Promoting, protecting and enhancing our iconic natural environment now and for generations to come



Design for liveability

A place-based approach that celebrates our community



Community and culture

Fostering a vibrant, healthy and inclusive community



Focused council

Delivery for community through strong governance and informed decision making

About the Operational Plan

The Operational Plan is a major, annual planning document within Council's corporate performance, planning and reporting framework. It outlines the key activities and actions Council will undertake for the financial year in accordance with the adopted Annual Budget.

Together with the Corporate Plan and Annual Budget, it guides Council in delivering outcomes for the Cairns community.

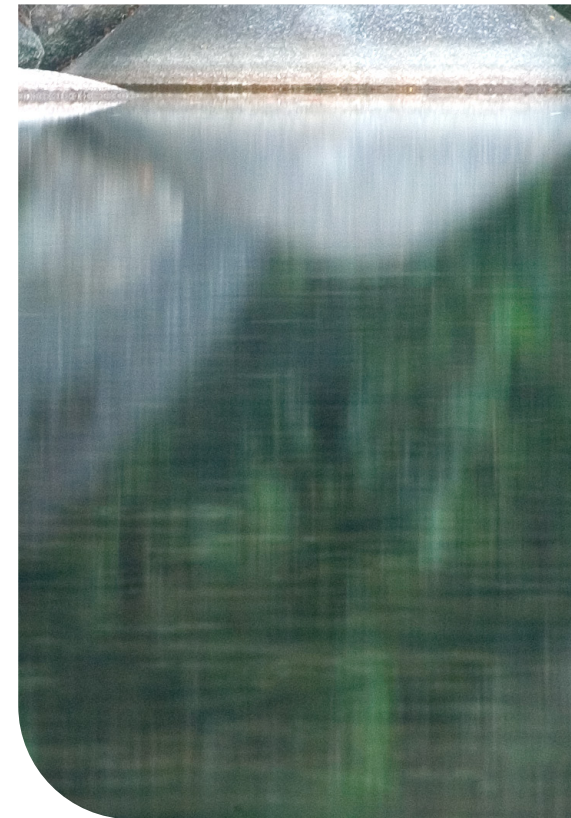
The Local Government Act 2009, along with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, requires Council to adopt an annual Operational Plan that shall:

- Be consistent with Council's Annual Budget.
- State how Council will progress the implementation of the Corporate Plan.
- Manage operational risks.
- Include an annual performance plan for each commercial business unit of Council.

A report is tabled every quarter at Council Ordinary Meetings on the progress of the initiatives within the Operational Plan, with a full report produced at the end of each financial year.

How we manage operational risks

Council operates in a dynamic environment where a range of risks, threats and opportunities may impact the achievement of objectives outlined in its strategic plans. To manage this, Council applies a structured and integrated approach to risk management through its Risk Management Policy, Enterprise Risk Management Framework and Fraud and Corruption Framework. These guide the consistent identification, assessment, management and monitoring of risks across the organisation, enabling Council to respond effectively to emerging risks while continuing to deliver on its strategic and operational priorities.



Strategic planning framework



Our teams

Council operates through six directorates, each with distinct roles and responsibilities, under the leadership of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Working collaboratively, these directorates deliver services that are guided by the strategic priorities outlined in the Operational Plan.

The Office of the CEO

The Office of the CEO provides executive and administrative support to the Mayor and Councillors, drives strategic direction-setting to ensure the successful operation of Council, and effectively manages all organisational and legislative responsibilities. The Office of CEO oversees the leading of the six Directors of the Executive Leadership Team.

 **5** employees in the CEO's office

Cairns
Infrastructure
and Assets


648
employees

Finance and
Business
Services


153
employees

Economic
Development
and Advocacy


11
employees

Lifestyle and
Community


392
employees

People and
Organisational
Performance


102
employees

Planning,
Growth and
Sustainability


85
employees

 **1,396** total employees for Council

Cairns Infrastructure and Assets

This directorate is responsible for Council's built environment portfolio, managing all stages of the community infrastructure program from planning and design through to construction, maintenance, and upgrades. The portfolio covers transport, stormwater, water and wastewater, resource recovery, buildings, facilities, plant fleet and marine assets, which are managed by two sub-directorates with eight branches in total:

- Engineering Services
- Service Delivery

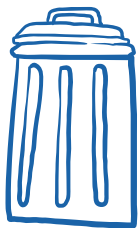


78,071
Water connections



1,427km
Roads maintained by Council

How they service the community every year



4.87M
Bins collected

1,361km
Sewer mains

648
Employees

2,305km
Water mains

\$280M
Operating budget

Finance and Business Services

This directorate works across all areas of Council to ensure the effective procurement, financial sustainability and technological capability of our operations. Its four branches provide essential internal services that support the organisation to deliver services to the community:

- Finance
- Information and Technology Services
- Procurement and Payables
- Revenue and Business Support



2,850
Active suppliers



89%
Of procurement within the local area

How they service the community every year



153
Employees

Facilitated financial assistance for more than 12,000 ratepayers, including Pensioners and Not-for-Profit Community & Sporting Organisations, via Council's Concession Policies

Improved mobile coverage at The Tanks Precinct

Payable e-Services Platform
- Delivered a modern and user-friendly digital payment experience for customers

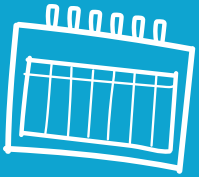
\$24M
Operating budget

Community Digital Inclusion Initiative
- Provided retired Council laptops and equipment to Not-for-Profit Community & Sporting Organisations

Economic Development and Advocacy

This directorate works to deliver a prosperous environment for business and industry, enabling growth and wealth creation for our residents by creating a strong, diversified and growing economy through:

- Diverse and secure employment opportunities
- A foundation for new and existing businesses to grow and succeed
- Advocacy for priority issues
- The attraction and retention of investment
- Support for major events



14

Major events supported



\$38.6M

Estimated economic impact from events supported

How they service the community every year

11

Employees



Advocacy

Securing Cairns Housing Foundations plan aimed at supporting housing availability and affordability in Cairns. Priority Development Area declared for Mount Peter and State and Federal infrastructure funding to support housing development secured.

\$8m

Operating budget

Lifestyle and Community

This directorate celebrates and strengthens our quality of life and community spirit by creating opportunities for residents and visitors to be active, informed and involved in the life of our region. It ensures our community resources such as our facilities, events, festivals, and activities - are safe, accessible and inclusive. Services and programs are delivered by this directorate's three branches:

- Creative Life
- Community Life
- Community Spaces



\$1.6M

Delivered in community grants



2M

Open spaces and leisure facilities attendances

How they service the community every year



\$6.1M

Investment in community safety

392

Employees

\$109M

Operating budget



879K

Markets, libraries and cultural facilities venues attendances

People and Organisational Performance

This directorate ensures the workforce is engaged to deliver Council's vision of 'Shaping our tropical future'. It achieves this by recognising and building a contemporary workplace that prioritises the wellbeing, health and safety of our skilled and dedicated staff who are passionate about the community it serves. It comprises three branches:

- Organisational Performance
- Wellbeing, Health and Safety
- Strategic Communications and Engagement
- Disaster Management Unit



257

Jobs recruited



84,407

Customer Requests

How they service the community every year



79,713

Customer service inbound calls

52

Apprentices and trainees employed

102

Employees

429

Administrative action complaints resolved

\$24M

Operating budget

Planning, Growth and Sustainability

This directorate advances the organisation's contribution to better outcomes for people, places, environment and the economy. It does this by overseeing the planning and development process from end to end – long term strategic growth and environmental design, planning, assessment and regulation. The goal of the directorate is to protect and enhance our natural and built environment by planning, monitoring, applying and enforcing compliance with Local, State and Federal regulations and laws. This directorate's three branches have a focus on livability, sustainability and prosperity:

- Growth and Sustainability
- Development and Planning
- Licensing and Compliance



467

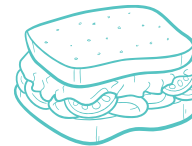
Development applications decided



14,160

Compliance and regulatory services requests

How they service the community every year



1,305

Health Inspections (food, accommodation, high risk personal appearance services, festivals, and compliant inspections)

\$14M

Operating budget



406

Lots created

85

Employees

52,260

Illegal Dumping Litres removed from Environment

2025 – 2030 Corporate Plan



Focus 1 - Robust Economy	Focus 2 – Natural Assets	Focus 3 – Design for Liveability	Focus 4 – Community & Culture	Focus 5 – Focused Council
Supporting a diversified and growing economy	Promoting, protecting and enhancing our iconic natural environment now and for generations to come	A place-based approach that celebrates our community	Fostering a vibrant, healthy and inclusive community	Delivering for community through strong governance and informed decision-making
<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Promote and protect the growth of diverse industries and small business 1.2 Promote Cairns as a place to work, live and play 1.3 Optimise Cairns' role as the FNQ regional service hub 1.4 Leveraging Cairns' proximity and connection to our Asia Pacific neighbours 1.5 Inspire innovation and entrepreneurship 1.6 Optimise visitation and tourism opportunities 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Prioritise water security to accommodate population growth 2.2 Maximise resource recovery through innovative solutions, partnerships and efficient waste management 2.3 Value and protect Cairns' pristine natural environment 2.4 Encourage community and businesses to adopt sustainable practices 2.5 Progressing in our management of blue and green networks and coastal resilience 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Deliver future focused planning that supports our tropical lifestyle 3.2 Proactive advocacy and collaboration with state and federal governments 3.3 Align policy and investment to create diverse outcomes 3.4 Address opportunities for connected communities 3.5 Invest in community infrastructure and services 3.6 Promote a vibrant community that supports wellbeing, safety and resilience 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.1 Position Cairns as the leading arts and cultural hub of North Australia 4.2 Support diverse sport, cultural and community groups 4.3 Establish Cairns as the preeminent destination for women's sport in Australia 4.4 Turn up the support for live music and major events 4.5 Provide spaces and programs for the benefit of the community 	<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.1 Maintain and drive a safety culture of everyone home safe and well today and every day 5.2 Implement and continually improve a contemporary governance framework 5.3 Deliver a positive customer experience to the community 5.4 Support an inclusive organisational culture that invests in continuous improvement, learning and leadership 5.5 Build effective partnerships with community and governments 5.6 Maintain strong financial management including robust long-term modelling 5.7 Deliver quality services to the community 5.8 Enable informed decision-making that is collaborative, transparent and accountable

Our role

Cairns Regional Council has multiple roles in delivering the Operational Plan. These are:



Advocate

Promoting the interests of the community to other decision makers and influencers.



Facilitator

Assisting others to be involved in activities by bringing groups and interested parties together.



Funder

Funding other organisations to deliver services.



Partner

Forming partnerships and strategic alliances with other parties in the interests of the community.



Provider

Delivering services.



Regulator

Regulating activities through local law or policy.






















Focus one

ROBUST ECONOMY

Supporting a diversified and growing economy

No.	Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s	Link to Corporate Plan Focus 1 Strategies
1	Finalise 2032 Games Roadmap for Cairns and commence implementation	Cairns 2032 Games Roadmap endorsed and 2026/2027 actions delivered	Economic Development and Advocacy	  	1.4, 1.6
2	Review and update Advocacy Priorities	Updated Council Advocacy Priorities endorsed by Council and tactical plans developed	Economic Development and Advocacy		1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6
3	Refresh and broaden Council's Choose Cairns website	Review complete and website updated	Economic Development and Advocacy		1.2
4	Develop promotional material to showcase investment opportunities and explore a scalable investment attraction plan/model	Promotional material developed/updated and scalable investment attraction model explored/developed	Economic Development and Advocacy	 	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
5	Collaborate with stakeholders to support Cairns' engagement with PNG and the Pacific	Number of initiatives and related outcomes delivered	Economic Development and Advocacy	    	1.4
6	Deliver Stakeholder Roundtable Series	Roundtables delivered with agreed actions	Economic Development and Advocacy		1.1
7	Support the progression/ development of Cairns' Strategic Economic Precincts as appropriate considering Council's role with respect to each precinct	Council actions undertaken in support of precinct development/progression and associated outcomes	Economic Development and Advocacy	   	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6














Focus two



NATURAL ASSETS

Promoting, protecting and enhancing our iconic natural environment now and for generations to come

No.	Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s	Link to Corporate Plan Focus 2 Strategies
8	Undertake Cairns Flood Study	Completion and endorsement of revised flood mapping	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets	 	2.5
9	Develop Water Efficiency Strategy	Strategy endorsed for implementation	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets	 	2.1
10	Progress through commissioning phase for Cairns Water Security Strategy Stage 1	Commissioning milestones achieved	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets		2.1
11	Commence Resource Recovery (RR2040) strategy development for long-term resource recovery initiatives, including stakeholder engagement and investigation of future waste and resource recovery opportunities	Advisory process completed and draft strategy developed	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets		2.2
12	Commence the development of the Cairns Urban Greening Strategy	Heat and canopy analysis completed, opportunities identified and draft strategy development commenced	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	 	2.4, 2.5
13	Deliver the Energy Management Plan	Energy Management Plan completed, including assessments, actions and implementation roadmap	Planning, Growth and Sustainability		2.3, 2.4
14	Finalise the Cairns Integrated Resilience Plan	Cairns Integrated Resilience Plan finalised and presented for Council consideration	Planning, Growth and Sustainability		2.3, 2.5
15	Implement Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy	Monitoring pilot and Private Property Guidelines guidelines completed	Planning, Growth and Sustainability		2.5

Focus three



DESIGN FOR LIVEABILITY

A place-based approach that celebrates our community

No.	Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s	Link to Corporate Plan Focus 3 Strategies
16	Develop Animal Management Strategy	Strategy endorsed by Council	Strategy endorsed by Council	 	3.6
17	Develop Cairns Community Safety Program 2027-2031	Program developed	Lifestyle and Community	  	3.2, 3.6
18	Finalise the Cairns Aquatics Strategy	Strategy endorsed by Council	Strategy endorsed by Council		3.5
19	Complete Community Disaster Plans for communities vulnerable to isolation due to flooding	Plans developed	People and Organisational Performance		3.6
20	Commence Stage 1 of the Master Mitigation and Adaptation Plan - Central Cairns	Stage 1 investigations and stakeholder engagement activities commenced	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	 	3.1, 3.6
21	Continue the review of the current Planning Scheme and finalise the new Planning Scheme Scoping Study	Planning Scheme Scoping Study completed, including review findings, project scope and recommended delivery pathway	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	 	3.1, 3.3
22	Develop a Development and Planning Strategic Blueprint	Finalise Short-term Strategic Deliverables and advance delivery of Medium-term Strategic Deliverables	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	 	3.1, 3.3
23	Progress the amendments to the CairnsPlan under the Scheme Supply Fund	Amendment packages submitted to the State Government by mid- 2027 in line with grant requirements	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	  	3.1, 3.3
24	Advance Mount Peter Priority Development Area	Council actions and strategic coordination activities for the Mount Peter PDA identified and progresses, including infrastructure planning, stakeholder engagement and alignment with growth and development priorities.	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	  	3.1, 3.3, 3.4
25	Interim Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) Amendment	Project scope, governance framework and technical work completed, commencing supporting investigations	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	 	3.1, 3.3

Focus four



COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Fostering a vibrant, healthy and inclusive community

No.	Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s	Link to Corporate Plan Focus 4 Strategies
26	Deliver the Major Events Precinct Master Plan and Project Validation Report	Endorsed by Council and funding acquitted with the Federal Government	Lifestyle and Community		4.2, 4.3, 4.4
27	Develop Cultural Strategy	Strategy endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community	 	4.1, 4.5
28	Develop Library Services Strategy	Strategy endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community		4.1, 4.5
29	Develop Live Music Framework	Strategy endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community	 	4.1, 4.4



Focus five



FOCUSED COUNCIL

Delivering for community through strong governance and informed decision-making

No.	Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s	Link to Corporate Plan Focus 1 Strategies
30	Undertake a Condition Assessment Program	Information informs Council's future operational and capital budget requirements	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets		5.8
31	Develop Depot Master Plan	Depot Master Plan endorsed	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets		5.7
32	Development and implementation of Asset Management Improvement Roadmap	Roadmap approved and implemented	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets		5.6
33	Implement Service Delivery Operational Data Program	Datasets integrated and dashboards implemented	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets		5.8
34	Implement Council's Artificial Intelligence Governance Framework	Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy and Administrative Instruction endorsed and implemented	Finance and Business Services		5.2
35	Implementation of Council's Data Governance Strategy	Data Governance Panel Established. Data Discovery & Classification program commenced. Enterprise Content Management capability assessment complete and implementation program commenced.	Finance and Business Services		5.2
36	Review Community Spaces Manual	Review completed and improvements identified	Lifestyle and Community		5.7
37	Implement the Employee Value Proposition (EVP)	EVP embedded in the organisation and socialised with potential employees through positive recruitment practices	People and Organisational Performance		5.4
38	Implement and maintain AS/NZS ISO 45001 Safety Management System	Certification achieved and maintained	People and Organisational Performance		5.1
39	Optimise MyCairns App	Improved customer experience	People and Organisational Performance		5.3
40	Develop People Strategy	Strategy endorsed	People and Organisational Performance		5.4
41	Optimise Licensing & Compliance Services	Priority actions progressed	Planning, Growth and Sustainability		5.2, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7
42	Leveraging Council's Property Portfolio	Review completed, and improvements identified	Planning, Growth and Sustainability		5.2, 5.6, 5.8

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Performance Plan

Cairns Regional Council business units
2026-2027

A photograph of a dense, mossy forest floor. The scene is dominated by various shades of green, from deep forest greens to bright, vibrant greens of ferns and other plants. A large, flat rock covered in thick moss runs horizontally across the middle of the frame. The background is filled with more foliage, including ferns and other leafy plants, creating a sense of a thick, undisturbed natural environment. The lighting is soft and diffused, typical of a forest interior.

Acknowledgment of Country

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Shaping a tropical future

Our values



Trust

Honouring the trust of our residents, each other and staff



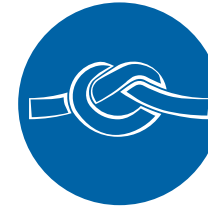
Responsibility

Transparency and responsibility to our community



Cairns-ness

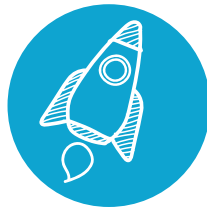
Pride in who we are and where we live



Resilience

Adapting, enduring, growing stronger

Our focus



Robust economy

Supporting a diversified and growing economy



Natural assets

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Community and culture

Fostering a vibrant, healthy and inclusive community



Focused council

Delivery for community through strong governance and informed decision making

Annual Performance Plan

Cairns Water business unit

Cairns Water's mission

To deliver quality and reliable water and wastewater that meet the needs of our community. In all undertakings, Cairns Water strives to achieve service provision to the Cairns community in a manner which maximises both Council and community ideals. This is achieved through economic, social, and environmental objectives being assessed in all stages of Cairns Water's operations from long term planning through to operational delivery.

Cairns Water - commercial business unit

Water and wastewater services are conducted in a Commercial Business Unit of Cairns Regional Council known as Cairns Water. This Annual Performance Plan encompasses the requirements set out in the *Local Government Regulation 2012* for Commercial Business Units, as well as the requirements for the Annual Report which is prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

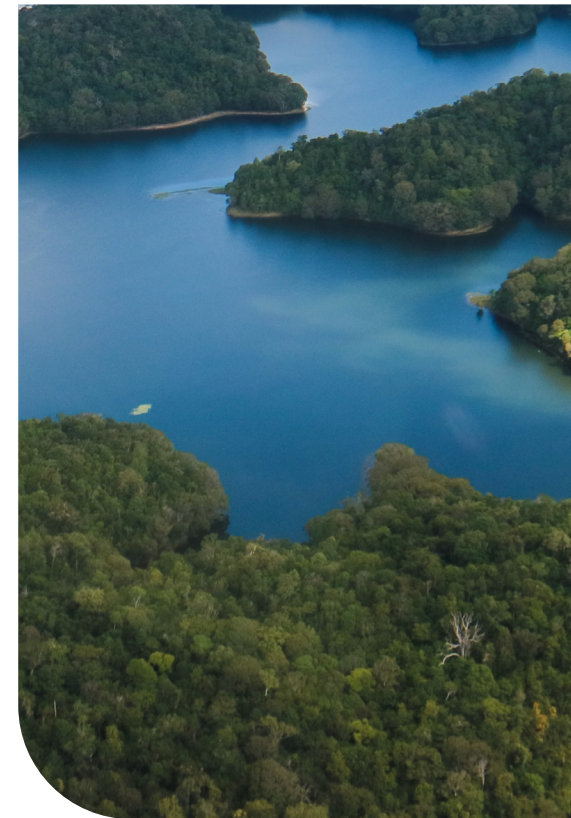
Delegations

Cairns Water has delegations in a variety of legislation. Delegations for staff working in the Cairns Water Business Unit are available through the RelianSys system.

Registers

The following registers are maintained by Council for Cairns Water:

- Cairns Infrastructure and Assets Directorate Business Risk Register;
- Drinking Water Quality Risk Register;
- Register of Delegations available in the RelianSys system;
- Corporate Register - gifts;
- Register of AGENDA Items and Resolutions;
- Asset Register;
- Drinking Water Quality Management Plan Risk Management Improvement Program;
- Environmental Risk Register;
- Cairns Infrastructure and Assets Directorate Legal Register; and
- Drinking Water Quality Critical Customer Register.



Water and wastewater services

Cairns Water

1. Unit objectives

Cairns Infrastructure and Assets (CIA) directorate's Utility Services Branch efficiently and effectively treats water to meet and exceed Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Cairns Water delivers a quality and reliable water supply from major reservoirs to customer connections.

Cairns Water also aims to:

- Provide reliable collection of wastewater from properties and ensure delivery in an environmentally sound manner to the Wastewater Treatment Plants;
- Efficiently and effectively treat wastewater by recovering useable streams for recycled use; and
- Limit discharge to waterways.

2. Nature and extent of business activity

Cairns Water conduct works on:

- Water supply intakes;
- Water Treatment Plants;
- Reticulation mains;
- Reservoirs;
- Pumps;
- Residential connections;
- Wastewater stations;
- Collection mains; and
- Wastewater Treatment Plants.

All works are executed in line with Water Standard Operating Procedures, industry best practice and Cairns Regional Council's legislative requirements.

3. Non-financial targets

Cairns Water is required under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to implement Customer Service Standards. It is a requirement of this legislation that the standards be formally reviewed every 5 years and submitted to the Regulator. The 5-yearly review has been conducted by Council in June 2025, and submitted to the Regulator.

4. Major capital works (proposed major investments)

Major capital works for Cairns Water are set out in Council's annual budgeted capital expenditure program which is adopted in June or July each year.

5. Outstanding and proposed borrowings

Cairns Water has outstanding borrowings from Economic Development Queensland of \$281.25K.

6. Principal assets

Cairns Water operates nine water supply schemes. The main water sources are the Copperlode Falls Dam and Behana Creek which supply the area from Gordonvale to Palm Cove. The small southern communities draw water from several intakes on local streams.

Cairns Water manages six wastewater schemes. The distinct catchment areas within Cairns are serviced by six plants as follows: Marlin Coast, Northern, Southern, Edmonton, Gordonvale, and Babinda. The Wastewater Treatment Plants are a combination of activated sludge and biological treatment processes, with the two larger plants (Northern and Southern) also having membrane filtration processes. The smaller plants treat effluent to a secondary standard, while the larger plants treat to tertiary standards. The management of the systems is covered by a development approval issued by the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

Principal assets include:

Water supply	
Major water sources	Copperlode Falls Dam (Lake Morris), Behana Creek
Major water treatment plants	Freshwater Creek, Tunnel Hill
Kilometres of water mains	~2305km*
Water pump stations	53**
Water reservoirs	72**
Intakes	9**

*Data sourced from Cairns Regional Council Operational Plan July 2025 to June 2026

** Data source from SSA Maps / DM# 7882268

Wastewater	
Major wastewater treatment plants	6**
Sewerage pump stations	195**
Kilometres of sewer mains (including gravity sewer mains, pressure mains and vacuum mains)	~1361km**

**Data sourced from Cairns Regional Council Operational Plan July 2025 to June 2026

** Data source from SSA Maps / DM# 7882268

7. Key deliverables / additional services

Cairns Water is responsible for the provision of water and wastewater services to consumers throughout the Cairns Region, including the following:

- Reticulated treated water services;
- Planning, design, documentation and construction of water and wastewater services infrastructure;
- Demand management services, including meter testing;
- Water laboratory;
- Water, recycled water, and wastewater reticulation maintenance services;
- Maintenance of community facilities at Copperlode Falls Dam;
- Development assessment;
- Reticulated wastewater services including wastewater treatment and by-product disposal;
- Treated effluent and biosolids for re-use purposes;
- Plumbing and trade waste services;
- Review of plumbing applications;
- Hydraulic information;
- As-constructed information; and
- Maintenance of systems.



8. Service indicators

Performance indicators listed below were implemented when the Customer Service Standards were approved in June 2025.

*QG KPI	Performance indicator	Performance measure	Target threshold
QG 4.5	Total water main breaks (S)	Breaks per 100km /year	≤18
QG 4.6	Total sewerage main breaks and chokes (S)	Breaks and chokes per 100km/year	≤16
QG 4.7	Incidence of unplanned interruptions – water (S)	Water Interruptions Per 1000 properties	≤120
QG 4.8a	Average response time for water bursts	Hours	≤2
	Average response time for water leaks	Hours	≤24
QG 4.9a	Average response time for sewerage main breaks	Hours	≤2
	Average response time for sewerage main chokes	Hours	≤24
QG 4.10	Water Quality Complaints (S)	Per 1000 properties/year	≤3
QG 4.11	Total water and sewerage complaints (S)	Per 1000 properties/year	≤10

*Codes relate to Queensland State Government water KPIs and definitions outlined in the State-wide Information Management System (SWIM).



Cairns Water and the community

1. Community service obligations

- Rates Based Financial Assistance for Water and Sewerage rates.

Cairns Water also engages in the following activities for the benefit of the community:

- Maintenance of Copperlode Falls Dam facilities;
- Water concessions for patients receiving home dialysis;
- Concealed Water Leakage Rebate program;
- Provision of communications relating to major projects and operations;
- Provision of resources on water, wastewater and stormwater education and community engagement through Council's Water Education webpage, which includes:
 - STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Maths) activities - Easy-to-manage projects all about water, to encourage critical thinking skills and scientific processes while having fun;
 - Water Wonders - Engaging water education activities for children under 5 years old, for kindy programs, early learning centres and at home learning; and
 - Mobi's Catchment Challenge - Fun online learning tools to encourage individuals and schools to access and understand live data from a gauging station located in Saltwater Creek.

2. Cost of, and funding for, the community service obligations

The Community Service Obligations of Cairns Water are 100% funded by Council.

Activities	Description of the nature of the community service obligation	Cost of CSO \$'000
Water	Water rates based financial assistance	79
	Total	79
Wastewater	Sewerage rates based financial assistance	1,091
	Total	1,091
	Total	1,170



Cairns Water financials

1. Notional capital structure, and treatment of surpluses

Cairns Water is a wholly owned commercial business unit of Cairns Regional Council. Cairns Water's notional capital structure is via 100% equity funding from Council. Any surplus earned by a business unit of Council is returned as a dividend to Council. This return is in recognition that business units have been established to further the good governance of the region. Funds earned by Council through dividends are utilised to provide enhanced services and infrastructure to the Cairns region.

2. Capital works - expenditure by program

Note that the details included in the table below reflect the 2026/27 budget.

Capex program	2026/2027 budget \$'000
Wastewater services	32,992
Water Services (excl CWSS)	25,862
Cairns Water Security Stage 1	65,561
TOTAL	124,415

3. Funding of capital works

For the 2026/27 financial year, the capital works program will be funded through a combination of developer contributions, Council contributions and Council borrowings.

4. Proposed major investments

Cairns Regional Council is progressing the Cairns Water Security Stage 1 (CWSS1) project to deliver a new drinking water supply to the Cairns community. It will augment existing supplies from Copperlode Falls Dam, Behana Creek, and Council's smaller rural intakes. The CWSS1 total budget as endorsed by Council is \$472M.

The project involves building a new water intake at the Mulgrave River, Gordonvale, in addition to Council's existing intake at Behana Creek. New pipelines from each source will then take the water to the new Water Treatment Plant at north Gordonvale. It is one of the largest capital works projects ever undertaken by Cairns Regional Council.

Key components of the project are:

- A new water intake on the Mulgrave River, Gordonvale;
- A new Water Treatment Plant and water reservoirs at north Gordonvale;
- A network of new pipelines to take raw water from the water intake to the water treatment plant, and treated water from the treatment plant to the Cairns residents; and
- Associated works to improve the treatment of the existing Behana Creek water supply.

5. Financial targets

Note that the details included in the table below reflect the 2026/27 budget.

Performance measure - budget to actual	Target	Frequency	Q1 \$'000	Q2 \$'000	Q3 \$'000	Q4 \$'000	2027/27 Budget \$'000
Operating revenue	Budget	Quarterly	49,509	49,998	49,063	49,056	197,626
Operating expenses	Budget	Quarterly	26,699	27,544	30,082	33,415	117,704
Net Operating result	Budget	Quarterly	22,811	22,454	18,981	15,640	79,886
Capex	Budget	Annually					124,415

Cairns Water reports to Council

Cairns Water reports to Council will contain both financial and non-financial information and such information will be reported to Council either at ordinary meetings or at relevant Council committees.

Annual Performance Plan

Cairns Resource Recovery

business unit

Cairns Resource Recovery's mission

To deliver quality and reliable waste and resource recovery services that meet the needs of our community. In all undertakings Cairns Resource Recovery strives to achieve service provision to the Cairns community in a manner which maximises both Council and community ideals. This is achieved through economic, social, and environmental objectives being assessed in all stages of Cairns Resource Recovery's operations from long term planning through to operational delivery.

Cairns Resource Recovery - commercial business unit

Waste and resource recovery services are conducted in a Commercial Business Unit of Cairns Regional Council known as Cairns Resource Recovery. This Annual Performance Plan encompasses the requirements set out in the *Local Government Regulation 2012* for Commercial Business Units, as well as the requirements for the preparation of the Annual Report.

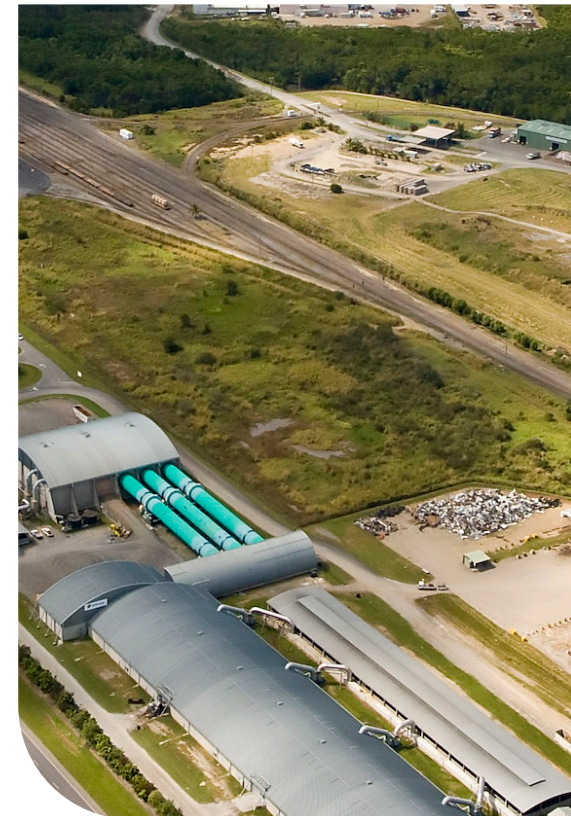
Delegations

Cairns Resource Recovery has several delegations covering a variety of legislation. Delegations for staff working in the Cairns Resource Recovery Business Unit are available through the RelianSys system.

Registers

The following registers are maintained by Council for Cairns Resource Recovery:

- Cairns Infrastructure and Assets Directorate Business Risk Register;
- Register of Delegations available in the RelianSys system;
- Corporate Register - gifts;
- Resource Recovery Agenda and Resolution Register;
- Asset Register;
- Environmental Risk Register; and
- Cairns Infrastructure and Assets Directorate Legal Register.



Waste services

Cairns Resource Recovery (CRR)

1. Unit Objectives

In February 2018 Cairns Regional Council adopted the Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy 2018 – 2027 (the Waste Strategy). The Waste Strategy sets out how the waste and resource recovery needs of the Cairns region will be met over the next 10 years and provides a strategic direction for moving Cairns towards a future in which landfills are the last option.

It puts a priority on reducing waste and minimising the amount sent to landfill. It emphasises the importance of community engagement and encourages avoidance of waste, maximising the recycling of materials that are left and supporting the move towards a circular approach.

At the heart of the strategy is the need to change our perception of waste. We all need to start viewing waste as a potential resource and think about how we can use it more efficiently.

The five objectives focus on addressing the current resource recovery and waste management challenges and opportunities in the Cairns region, as follows:

- **Provide education and awareness:** empowering our community to embrace waste avoidance, reduction, and reuse;
- **Reduce waste:** where Council and community take responsibility for reducing their own waste and using resources effectively;
- **Maximise resource recovery:** to reduce landfill disposal through resource recovery opportunities;
- **Secure our future needs:** where our capacity and capability to manage future waste is secured; and
- **Advocacy and collaboration:** to lead strategic alliances and partnerships to support best practices in waste management.

Changing waste and recycling legislation and regulation will shape the Cairns Resource Recovery business and operating strategies adopted by Council over the 2025/2026 financial year, including:

- Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011
- Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2023
- Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2025
- National Waste Policy Action Plan;
- National Plastics Plan;
- Federal Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020 (National Export Ban).
- Queensland Energy from Waste Policy;
- Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy
- Queensland Organics Strategy and Action Plan 2022 - 2032
- Queensland Waste Disposal Levy;
- Queensland Container Refund Scheme (Containers for Change)

2. Nature and extent of business activity

Cairns Resource Recovery is responsible for the collection and recovery of solid waste and recyclables. Cairns Resource Recovery is a Significant Business Activity under the provisions of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy vision is:

“Innovative waste management providing economic, social, and environmental benefits for the tropical north Queensland region”.

The Cairns Resource Recovery operational business comprises of the following key business areas:

Waste and Recycling Collection (under contract)

- 62,000 weekly waste collections with 50,000 tonnes of waste collected per year.
- 70,000 fortnightly recycling collections with 10,000 tonnes of recycling collected per year.

Transfer Stations

- Five (5) transfer stations with 50,000 tonnes of waste received per year.

Buy Back Shop

- One (1) Buy Back Shop retail shop with 1,077 tonnes of material reused per year.

Materials Recovery Facility

- One (1) Materials Recovery Facility with 13,000 tonnes of recycling processed per year.

Glass Processing Facility

- One (1) Glass Processing Facility with 10,000 tonnes of glass processed per year.

Regional Waste Management (under contract and includes Mareeba and Douglas Shire Councils)

- One (1) Advanced Resource Recovery Facility with 65,000 tonnes of received per year.

3. Non-financial targets

Cairns Resource Recovery have non-financial targets relating to resource recovery outlined in the Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy, as follows:

- Reduce Municipal Solid Waste (Domestic) waste generation per capita by 5% by 2027;
- Reduce Municipal Solid Waste (Domestic) waste to landfill by 15% by 2027;
- Increase the Municipal Solid Waste (Domestic) recovery rate to 70% by 2027; and
- Increase the Council generated waste recovery rate (to be established).

A full copy of the Waste Reduction and Recycling Strategy is available on Council's website.

Under the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*, Cairns Resource Recovery does not have a legislative requirement to supply levels of service that customers can expect. However, as a best practice and improvement strategy, several Cairns Resource Recovery levels of service have been incorporated into the Cairns Water and Resource Recovery Customer Service Standards. These standards are formally reviewed every 5 years and reported on annually. The standards were approved by Council in June 2025.

4. Major capital works (proposed major investments)

Major capital works for Cairns Resource Recovery are set out in Council's annual budgeted capital expenditure program which is adopted in June or July each year.

5. Outstanding and proposed borrowings

Cairns Resource Recovery has no outstanding or proposed borrowings.

6. Principal assets

Cairns Resource Recovery manages a range of solid waste operations, activities and services across the region including kerbside waste and recycling collection contracts, a regional waste management contract (through an Advanced Resource Recovery Facility), a material recovery facility, glass processing facility, transfer stations, drop bin sites and landfills. Principal assets include:

Materials recovery facility	Portsmith
Regional container processing facility	Portsmith
Waste transfer stations	Babinda Gordonvale Portsmith Smithfield Bramston Beach
Buy Back Shop	Portsmith
Landfills (closed)	Portsmith White Rock Babinda Gordonvale Yorkeys Knob Machans Beach
Waste disposal	Contractual arrangement with a commercial entity Veolia to accept and dispose of all Council waste

7. Key deliverables

Cairns Resource Recovery is primarily responsible for the management of municipal solid waste services (collection, recovery, and disposal) to the community, including the following:

- Provision of kerbside waste and recycling collections;
- Provision of the Transfer Station network;
- Operation of the Materials Recovery Facility;
- Contract management including regional Advanced Resource Recovery Facility, kerbside and Public place collections;
- Management and monitoring of closed landfill sites; and
- Management of waste and recycling education campaign.

8. Service indicators

Performance indicators listed below were implemented when the Customer Service Standards were reviewed in June 2025.

	Performance indicator	Performance measure	Target
Effective collection of residential waste	1 New bin delivery	Response time for new bin delivery	100% within 48 hours
	2 Missed services - kerbside waste	Number of missed services per month	≤ 1 per 5,000 services
	3 Response time to missed services - kerbside waste	Response time for collection of missed kerbside waste services	95% within 24 hours
	4 Missed services - kerbside recycling	Number of missed services per month	≤ 1 per 5,000 services
	5 Response time to missed services - kerbside recycling	Response time for collection of missed kerbside waste services	95% within 24 hours
	6 Response time to repair/ replacement requests - kerbside waste and recycling	Response time to repair/ replace requests for kerbside waste and recycling	95% within 48 hours



Cairns Resource Recovery and the community

1. Community service obligations

- Free green waste disposal initiative conducted quarterly.
- Charity exemptions for waste disposal.
- Collection and disposal relating to community clean up events (such as Council's 'Clean up Cairns' program).
- Free hazardous waste disposal to prevent incorrect disposals.
- Provision of free recycling services for schools within the Cairns region.
- In-kind waste and recycling collections; and donations of Buy Back Shop items to charity.

Cairns Regional Council Resource Recovery also engages in the following activities for the benefit of the community:

- Conducts waste education specific information campaigns and provides resources on proper household recycling and waste disposal practices.
- Provides free waste education sessions for schools, early learning centres, and community groups through presentations, workshops and excursions to Council's Resource Recovery Facilities in Portsmith.
- Collaborating with national, state, and local initiatives to deliver annual waste reduction, reuse, and recycling events aligned with national campaigns like National Recycling Week and Council's Trash to Treasure event.

2. Cost of, and funding for, the community service obligations

The Community Service Obligations of Cairns Resource Recovery are 100% funded by Council.

Activities	Community Service Obligation Description	Cost of CSO \$'000
Waste services Total	Free green waste conducted four times a year	786
	Charity exemptions for waste disposal	124
	Collection and disposal relating to community clean up events	-
	Free hazardous waste disposal to prevent incorrect disposals	296
	Recycling services fee free of charge to schools	14
	In kind waste and recycling collections	9
	Donations of buy back shop items to charity	2
	Total	1,231

Cairns Resource Recovery financials

1. Notional Capital Structure, and Treatment of Surpluses

Cairns Resource Recovery is a wholly owned commercial business unit of Council. Cairns Resource Recovery's notional capital structure is via 100% equity funding from Council.

Any surplus earned by a business unit of Council is returned as a dividend to Council. This return is in recognition that business units have been established to further the good governance of the region. Funds earned by Council through dividends are utilised to provide enhanced services and infrastructure to the Cairns region.

2. Capital works - expenditure by program

Note that the details included in the table below reflect the 2026/27 budget.

Capex program	2026/27 Budget \$'000
Resource Recovery	10,795
Total	10,795

3. Funding of capital works

For the 2026/27 financial year the capital works program will be funded through a combination of Council contributions and Council borrowings.

4. Financial targets

Note that the details included in the table below reflect the 2026/27 budget.

Performance measure - budget to actual	Target	Frequency	Q1 \$'000	Q2 \$'000	Q3 \$'000	Q4 \$'000	2026/27 Budget \$'000
Operating revenue	Budget	Quarterly	15,549	17,653	17,249	18,090	68,541
Operating expenses	Budget	Quarterly	13,018	14,837	15,945	15,939	59,739
Net operating result	Budget	Quarterly	2,530	2,816	1,304	2,152	8,802
Capex	Budget	Annually					10,795

Cairns Resource Recovery reports to Council

Cairns Resource Recovery's reports to Council will contain both financial and non-financial information and such information will be reported to Council either at ordinary meetings or at relevant Council committees.

