

Operational Plan

2025-2026



Acknowledgment of Country

Cairns Regional Council acknowledges the First Peoples within our region who are the Traditional Custodians of this country: the Djabugay; Yirriganydji; Bulawai; Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingabay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbara Yidinji; Wanyurr Majay; Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians 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

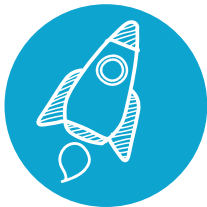
Pride in who we are and where we live



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 livability

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.

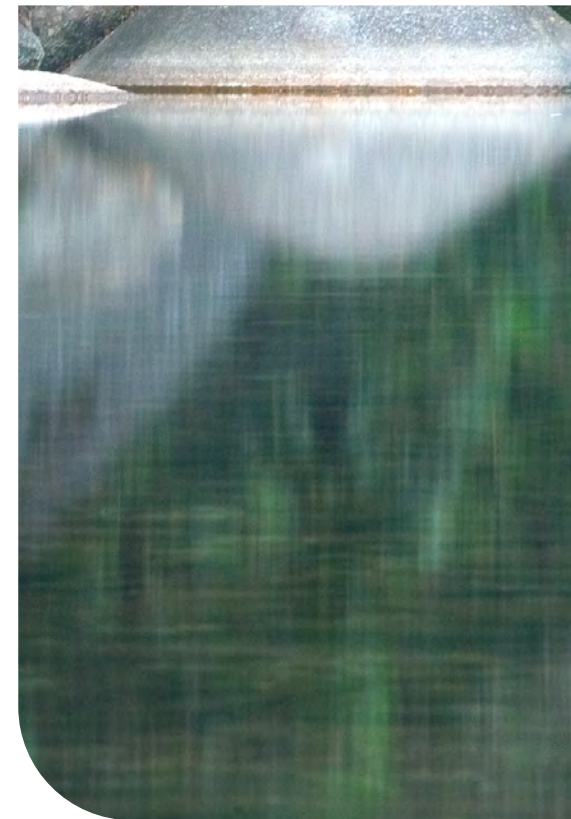
The Local Government Act 2009, along with the Local Government Regulation 2012, requires Council to adopt an annual Operational Plan that shall:

- 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

There are many risks, threats and opportunities that could potentially affect the achievement of objectives outlined in Council's strategic plans. Council currently has a number of risk management plans in place. Council's Risk Management Policy and the related Enterprise Risk Management Framework will ensure these plans are integrated in order to ensure an enterprise approach to risk management.



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


639
employees

Finance and
Business
Services


155
employees

Economic
Development
and Advocacy


11
employees

Lifestyle and
Community


393
employees

People and
Organisational
Performance


99
employees

Planning,
Growth and
Sustainability


82
employees

 **1,384** 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

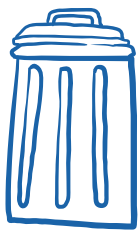


77,544
Water connections



1,407km
Roads maintained by Council

How they service the community every year



4.85M
Bins collected

1,356km
Sewer mains

639
Employees

2,330km
Water mains

\$240M
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 & Technology Services
- Procurement and Payables
- Revenue and Business Support



2,868
Active suppliers



88%
Of procurement with the local area

How they service the community every year



155
Employees

150
Software contractors

\$34M
Operating budget

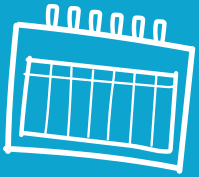


Telstra small cell mobile tower at Copperlode Dam & Behana Gorge Rd

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



12

Major events supported



\$32.6M

Estimated economic impact from events supported

How they service the community every year

Smart green economy

Promotion of the Cairns and Far North Queensland region as a leader in the smart green economy

11

Employees

\$8m

Operating budget

Advocacy
\$390M

In combined State/Federal funding commitments secured for Cairns Water Security Stage 1 through strategic advocacy

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



\$1.47M

Delivered in community grants



1.5M

Open spaces and leisure facilities attendances

How they service the community every year



\$5.6M

Investment in community safety

393

Employees

\$101M

Operating budget



375K

Markets, libraries and cultural facilities and 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
- Marketing and Communications
- Disaster Management Unit



233

Jobs recruited



93,804

Overall customer requests (CRMS)

How they service the community every year



87,733

Customer service inbound calls

42

Apprentices and trainees employed

99

Employees

811

Administrative action complaints resolved

\$21M

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



695

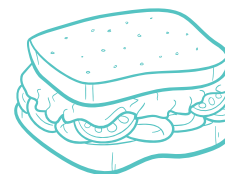
Development applications decided



14262

Compliance and regulatory services requests

How they service the community every year



1,409

Food premises inspections

\$13M

Operating budget



658

Lots created

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.



Major projects and initiatives

\$260.1M

Cairns Water Security Stage 1



\$21.8M

Community spaces



\$5M

Mount Peter reservoir



\$6.9M

Navigation Drive project



\$2.1M

Sporting facilities



\$1.1M

Lake Placid restoration



\$28M

Investment in safe drinking water



\$3.2M

Entertainment and the arts



\$6.1M

Smart water meter rollout



\$2.4M

Muddy's Playground revitalisation



\$950K

Cairns Community and Multicultural Centre

\$3.5M

To promote Cairns as premier tourism destination

\$32.9M

Sewage collection and treatment



\$2.9M

Waste services, collection and recycling

\$5M

Water main refurbishment program



\$3M

Improvements to parks and playgrounds



\$1.9M

Public toilets



\$2.6M

To fund arts, culture and museums



\$54.7M

Roads, footpaths and drainage

\$17M

Casuarina Street bridge



\$2.8M

Sewer refining program



\$1.3M

Pools and aquatic facilities

\$2M

Clifton Beach and Holloways Beach erosion protection



\$1.5M















To support major events



Focus one

ROBUST ECONOMY

Supporting a diversified and growing economy

Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s
Update Council's Economic Development Strategy ensuring alignment with Council's new Corporate Plan	Strategy Endorsed by Council	Economic Development and Advocacy	    
Complete update of the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Events Strategy in consultation with Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) and Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)	Strategy Endorsed by Council	Economic Development and Advocacy	  
Continued advocacy for Council's Securing Cairns Housing Foundations Plan - Implementing a Priority Development Area (PDA) to accelerate housing supply in the Mount Peter Southern Growth Corridor	PDA declaration by the State Government and State and Federal infrastructure funding secured	Economic Development and Advocacy	 
Pacific Opportunities – in consultation with key stakeholders, identify strategic opportunities for enhancing the Cairns region's engagement with Pacific Island Countries including PNG	Analysis completed and findings shared with Council and key stakeholders	Economic Development and Advocacy	 
Olympics and Paralympics (2032 Games) – strategically analyse priority opportunities for Cairns from the 2032 Games	Develop a road map for 2032	Economic Development and Advocacy	 














Focus two



NATURAL ASSETS

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

Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s
Establish service standards to maintain our natural assets	Service levels and deliverables defined	Lifestyle and Community	
Develop partnerships that protect Spectacled Flying-Fox populations	Strategy endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community	
Develop Water Efficiency Strategy	Strategy endorsed by Council	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets	  
Progress through construction phase for Cairns Water Security Strategy Stage 1.	Construction on track	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets	 
Resource Recovery - Community Engagement Recycling Behaviour	Actions delivered	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets	 
Review the Climate Change Strategy	Review completed	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	
Develop the Botanic Gardens Master Plan	Plan completed	Lifestyle and Community	

Focus three



DESIGN FOR LIVABILITY

A place-based approach that celebrates our community

Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s
Progress actions as listed within the Development & Planning Blueprint	Progress actions	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	
Develop the Planning Scheme Scoping Study post the Towards 2050 Growth Strategy	Draft plan commenced	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	
Develop Mitigation and Adaption Planning post the Towards 2050 Growth Strategy	Draft plan commenced	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	
Develop Council's approach to Place based planning and design	Progress actions	Lifestyle and Community	
Develop the Integrated Resilience Plan	Draft plan commenced	Planning, Growth and Sustainability	
Continue to develop the Cairns Gallery Precinct	Actions delivered	Lifestyle and Community	
Complete Community Disaster Plans for nominated communities	Number of plans completed	People and Organisational Performance	



Focus four



COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Fostering a vibrant, healthy and inclusive community

Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s
Develop the Cairns Aquatic Strategy 2025-2035	Strategy endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community	
Undertake improvements to Council's playgrounds	Number of projects completed	Lifestyle and Community	
Improved pathway connectivity for neighbourhoods	Number of projects completed	Lifestyle and Community	
Position Cairns as a destination for Women's Sport	Establishment of priorities	Lifestyle and Community	
Planning and implementation of Cairns Celebrates 150 year program throughout 2026	Official program endorsed by Council in 2025 and delivery of programming for 25/26 year	Lifestyle and Community	
Develop the Social Resilience Strategy	Strategy endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community	
Develop the Library Services Strategy	Service levels and deliverables defined	Lifestyle and Community	
Develop the Live Music Framework	Framework endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community	
Develop the Creative Life Strategy	Strategy endorsed by Council	Lifestyle and Community	



Focus five



FOCUSED COUNCIL

Delivering for community through strong governance and informed decision-making

Action	Success measure	Lead responsibility	Role/s
Develop an Employee Value Proposition (EVP)	EVP embedded within the organisation.	People and Organisational Performance	
Optimise the MyCairns App	Increased functionality for end users	People and Organisational Performance	
Develop an internal and external public awareness campaign on 'no tolerance' to aggressive behaviour by members of the public	Reduction in number and severity of reportable incidents	People and Organisational Performance	
Comprehensive review and update of Council's Grant Inwards process to maximise effectiveness and grant investment from other levels of government	Review completed, processes updated and communicated	Economic Development and Advocacy	
Development of Asset Management Improvement Roadmap and implementation	Progress actions	Cairns Infrastructure and Assets	
Establish a Council-wide Data Strategy and Governance Framework to enable informed decision-making and operational efficiency	Data Strategy and Governance Framework developed	Finance & Business Services	
Progress implementation of the Cyber Security Resiliency Program (CSRP)	Completion of Delivery Project 2. Commencement of Delivery Project 3.	Finance & Business Services	
Progress negotiations and certification of Council's Certified Agreement	Agreement certified	People and Organisational Performance	



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