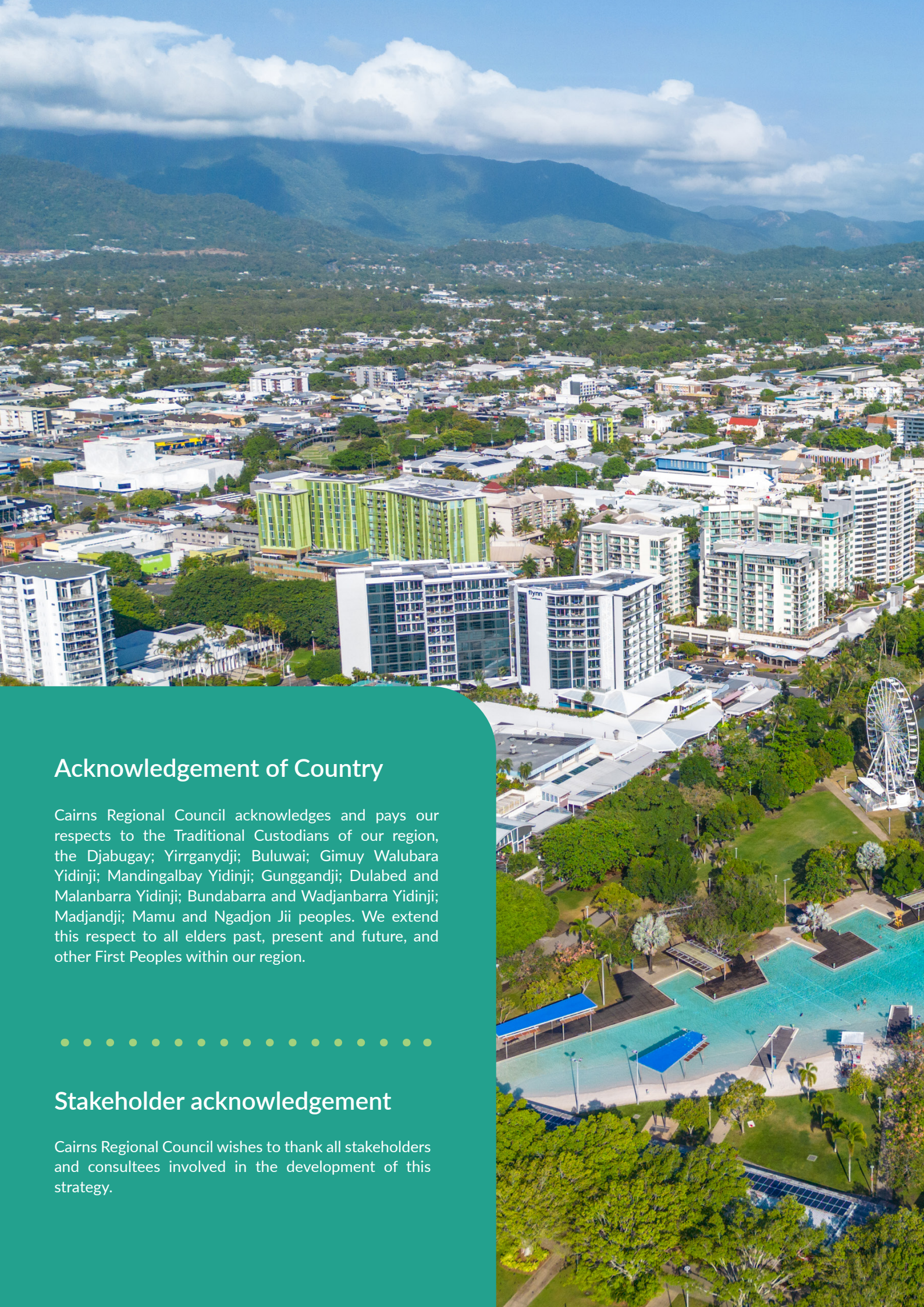




Cairns Regional Council

Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030

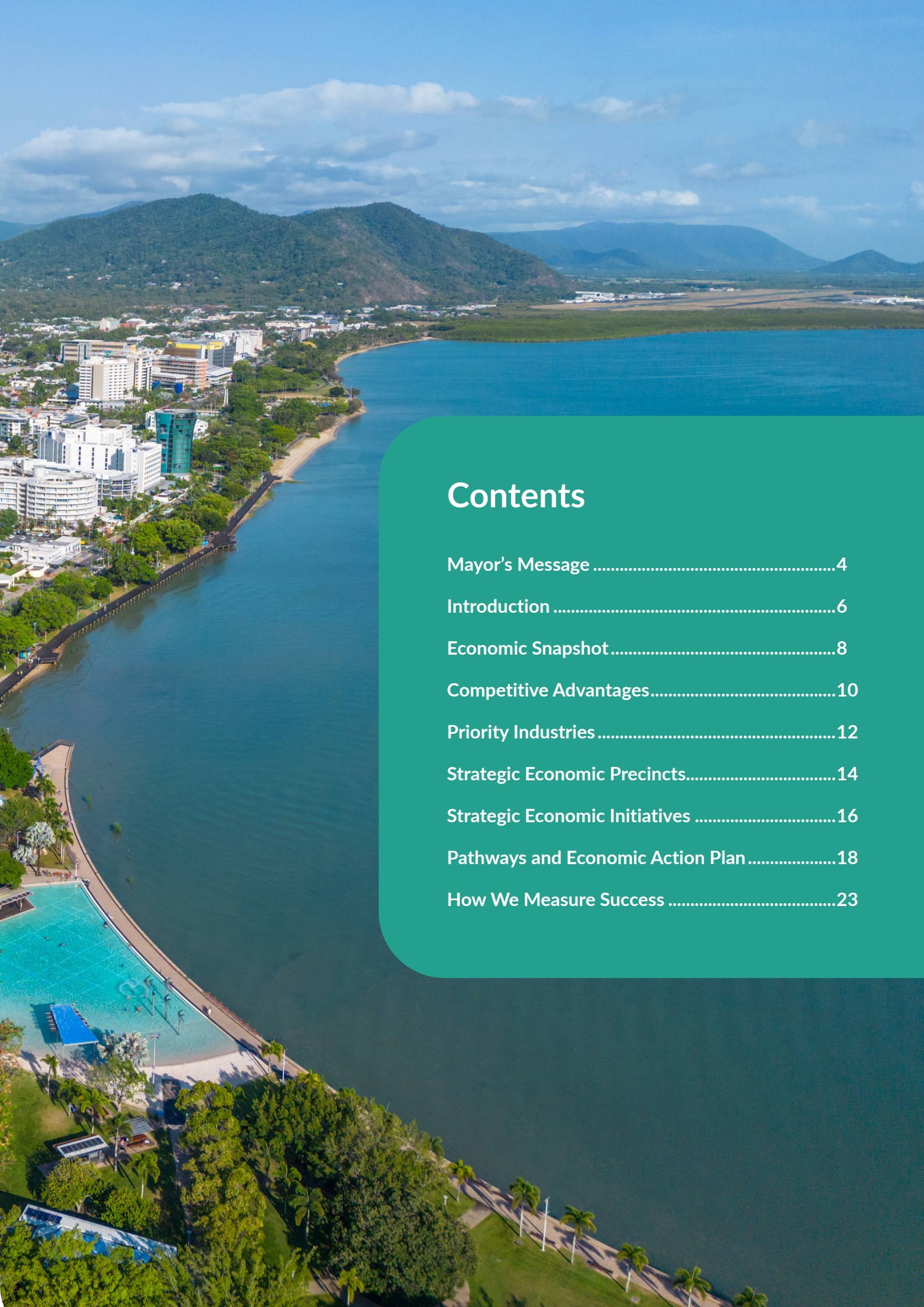


Acknowledgement of Country

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.

Stakeholder acknowledgement

Cairns Regional Council wishes to thank all stakeholders and consultees involved in the development of this strategy.



Contents

Mayor's Message	4
Introduction	6
Economic Snapshot	8
Competitive Advantages.....	10
Priority Industries	12
Strategic Economic Precincts.....	14
Strategic Economic Initiatives	16
Pathways and Economic Action Plan	18
How We Measure Success	23



Mayor's Message

Cairns is a city with enormous heart, ambition and opportunity.

We are the capital of Far North Queensland, a gateway to the Asia Pacific, and home to a resilient community that knows how to back itself. Our economy is already worth \$12.9 billion, but the true strength of Cairns has always been our people, our ideas, our natural advantages and our determination to keep moving forward.

This Economic Development Strategy is about building on those strengths with confidence, maturity and purpose.

It sets out a clear vision for how Cairns can continue to grow as a strong, resilient and future focused regional city, one that creates good jobs, attracts investment, supports local businesses, strengthens existing industries and unlocks new opportunities for future generations.

Importantly, this Strategy reflects what we have heard from our business community, industry leaders, residents and stakeholders. It is practical, but it is also ambitious. It recognises that Cairns has an increasingly important role to play, not only within our own region, but across Queensland, Australia and the broader Asia Pacific.

Council cannot deliver that future alone, but we can lead where it matters most. We must advocate strongly, invest wisely, bring people together and help create the right conditions for businesses, industries and communities to thrive.

Across our region, there is significant opportunity ahead.

The Southern Growth Corridor, including Edmonton and Mount Peter, will play a vital role in delivering the housing, infrastructure, services and liveability needed to support a growing population. At the same time, our region's established and emerging industries, including tourism, agriculture, construction, health, aviation, marine, mining, education, events and screen production, will help shape the next chapter of Cairns' economy.

We also have a once in a generation opportunity ahead of us with the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Cairns must be ready to step forward, tell its story with confidence and position itself as a regional city of choice for visitors, investors, athletes, businesses and new residents alike.

Economic development is about far more than figures, forecasts and strategy documents. It is about people. It is about the small business owner taking the next step. The young person choosing to build a future here. The family seeking secure work and a good life. The investor recognising Cairns as a place of confidence and possibility. A community proud of where it is heading.

That is why partnership will be central to the success of this Strategy. Delivering on our shared vision will require Council to work closely with business, industry, Traditional Owners, all levels of government and the broader community.

Cairns has always been a place of resilience, energy and imagination. Now is the time to harness that spirit and move forward together.

With the right focus, the right investment and the confidence to seize the opportunities ahead, Cairns can continue to grow as a vibrant, inclusive and globally connected regional city.

This is our opportunity, and our future is ours to shape.

Cr Amy Eden
Mayor

Cairns Regional Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030



Robust economy



Natural assets



Design for livability



Community and culture



Focused council

Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030

Our Vision

Shaping a robust, growing and diversified economy that supports a prosperous future for Cairns.

Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aviation Construction Education and Training Healthcare and Social Assistance Marine and Defence Tourism <p>Regionally supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture Mining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cairns Aviation Precinct Cairns Health and Innovation Precinct Cairns Major Events Precinct Cairns Marine and Defence Precinct Cairns South Development Precinct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place-based Initiatives Targeted Interventions

Pathways for Economic Development

- Investment Attraction and Promotion
- Strategic Precincts and Land Use
- Major Events and Visitor Economy
- Business Support, Innovation and Local Economy
- Engagement, Collaboration and Resilience

Economic Development Targets by 2030



Grow economy by \$1.5 billion
(2025 as baseline)



Create 10,000 new jobs
(2025 as baseline)

Introduction

What is economic development?

Economic development is the intentional practice of improving a community's economic wellbeing and quality of life. It includes a broad range of activities to attract, create and retain jobs. Economic development is a collaborative effort involving industry, business, government and community stakeholders.



Enabling conditions

Adequate housing supply, sufficient construction capacity, and development feasibility are critical enabling conditions for major precinct delivery. Strong housing accessibility enables workforce attraction and retention, supporting the economic conditions that underpin large-scale urban and regional development.

Who is involved in economic development?

Collaboration is key to successful economic development, and it forms a core part of this strategy. Council works together with public, private, and community stakeholders to deliver a collaborative approach to economic development, coordinating effort and minimising duplication.





What is Council's role in economic development?

Cairns Regional Council's Economic Development and Advocacy Directorate works closely with other Council teams, industry and business, the community, and State and Federal Governments. By collaborating with these partners, we aim to cultivate a strong business environment and support industry growth, driving economic development and creating prosperity for the people of Cairns. Council's role in economic development can vary between activities and initiatives depending on a range of factors.

The various roles Council can undertake are outlined below:



Advocate

Promoting economic development priorities to decision makers and influential bodies.



Partner

Forming partnerships and strategic alliances with other parties to progress economic development priorities.



Funder

Funding other organisations to deliver economic development outcomes.



Facilitator

Facilitating economic outcomes being delivered by others through a range of services and interventions.



Provider

Delivering services directly that support economic development.



Regulator

Regulating activities through policies which support economic development.

How was this strategy developed?

In formulating this strategy, Council undertook a review of the previous Economic Development Strategy and commissioned an external consultant to deliver detailed economic analyses and stakeholder engagement. This work, alongside Council's own assessment of Cairns' competitive advantages, industry strengths, economic drivers, and potential initiatives, was further informed by relevant plans, strategies, and community feedback through the Our Cairns survey. The outcome is a strategy that complements the efforts of other agencies and clearly defines Council's priorities for fostering economic development across the region.

Guiding principles of this strategy

This strategy has been developed, and will be delivered, with the following guiding principles:

- Data-driven
- Collaboration
- Leveraging Cairns' unique competitive advantages
- Building resilience through diversification
- Integration of sustainability and liveability
- Ensuring flexibility to enable the strategy to adapt to changing conditions and circumstances
- Development of a clear actionable plan

Economic Snapshot



GRP¹
\$12.86b

(NIEIR² 2025)



Local jobs
88,958

(NIEIR 2025)



Unemployment rate
4.7%

(SALM Dec 2025³,
quarterly smoothed LGA⁴)



Resident
population
179,334

(ABS⁵ ERP⁶, 2025)



Regional service
population
314,185

(QGSO⁷, 2025)



Local
businesses
15,166

(ABS 2025)

¹GRP - Gross Regional Product ²NIEIR - National Institute of Economic and Industry Research ³SALM - Small Area Labour Markets ⁴LGA - Local Government Area

⁵ABS - Australian Bureau of Statistics ⁶ERP - Estimated Resident Population ⁷QGSO - Queensland Government Statistician's Office

Sources: *economy.id



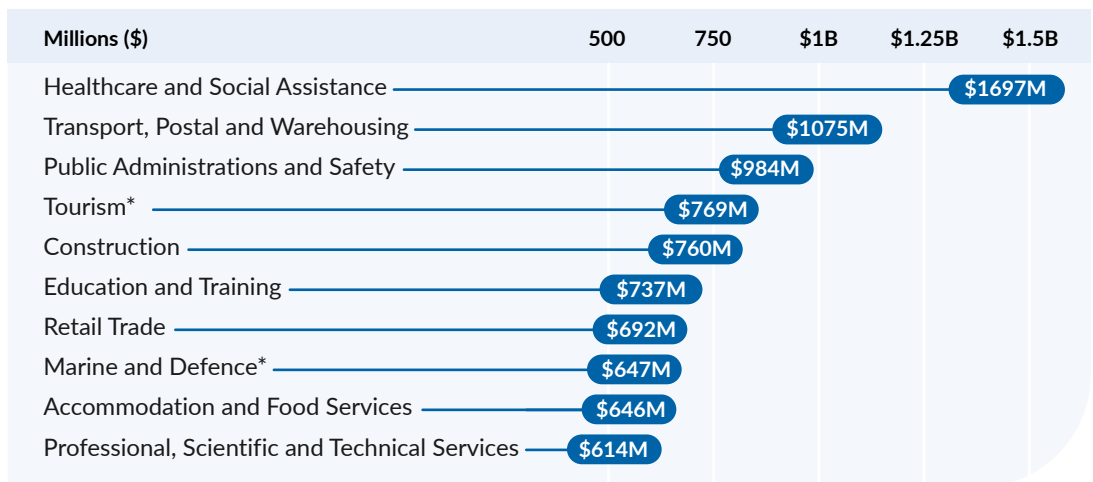


Top industries in the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA)



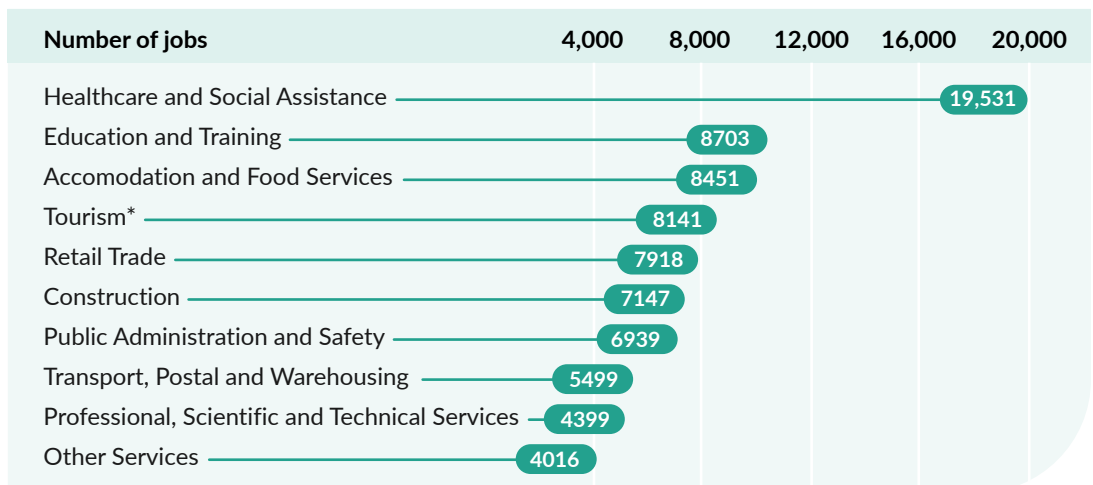
Top industries by contribution to the economy

(2024/25 Industry Value Added, Direct, \$M)



Top industries by employment

(2024/25, Total Jobs, Direct)



Note the Top Industries included in the graphs above depict the largest industries in Cairns by employment and contribution to Gross Regional Product (GRP) defined by the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) definitions.

*Priority industries identified in this Strategy such as Aviation, Marine and Defence, and Tourism are each non-standard industry classifications and draw from a cross-section of ANZSIC codes. The inclusion of non-standard industries in this strategy is a result of independent analysis of industries representing the best economic opportunity for the region.

Competitive Advantages

Building on what we have; Cairns has an excellent foundation on which to build a robust economy for the future.

The capital of Far North Queensland

Cairns is the economic and service heart of Far North Queensland (FNQ) and connects the region to communities and markets across Queensland, Australia and beyond. Servicing one of northern Australia's largest and fastest-growing regional populations, Cairns acts as the gateway to a nationally significant agricultural area which is also rich in critical minerals. Cairns is the commercial centre and export hub driving the FNQ region's continued economic growth and prosperity.



A diverse and resilient economy

Cairns has one of the most diverse regional economies in Australia. This is achieved through continued growth across multiple sectors, including Healthcare and Social Assistance, Education and Training, Aviation, Marine and Defence, Construction and Tourism, contributing to a resilient and adaptable regional economy.



Globally connected and Australia's northern gateway to the Asia-Pacific region

Cairns serves as Australia's northern gateway to the Asia-Pacific, connecting the region through trade, transport, education, and tourism. Its strategic location and aviation and maritime linkages support regional growth, and opportunities across business, logistics, and international collaboration. Cairns also plays an important role in Australia's National Security agenda, as a vital forward operating base providing maritime logistics, maintenance, and rapid response capabilities necessary to maintain regional stability across the Indo-Pacific.



© Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Tropical expertise

Living and working in the tropics has enabled businesses, research organisations, and health and science institutions to develop effective approaches for operating in remote, hot, humid, and seasonally variable tropical locations.



© Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Cultural diversity

Cairns is home to a uniquely high proportion of First Peoples and a diverse multicultural community, reflecting a rich mix of cultures from across the globe. This cultural diversity strengthens the region, supporting a vibrant and resilient community while contributing to the economy through tourism, education and international connections.

World-class universities and industry training

Cairns' workforce is supported by James Cook University and CQUniversity, which provide education and research capability across a broad range of disciplines. Industry-specific skills development is further strengthened through TAFE Queensland, the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College, and the Cairns Aviation Skills Centre, who each deliver training aligned to established industries and sectors with strong future growth prospects.



An emerging leader in the Smart Green Economy

With two World Heritage Sites on our doorstep, abundant renewable energy, strong economic and environmental alignment, and an entrepreneurial spirit, the region is perfectly positioned to unlock economic benefits in the green economy as we transition to a low-carbon, nature positive future.

© Tourism Tropical North Queensland

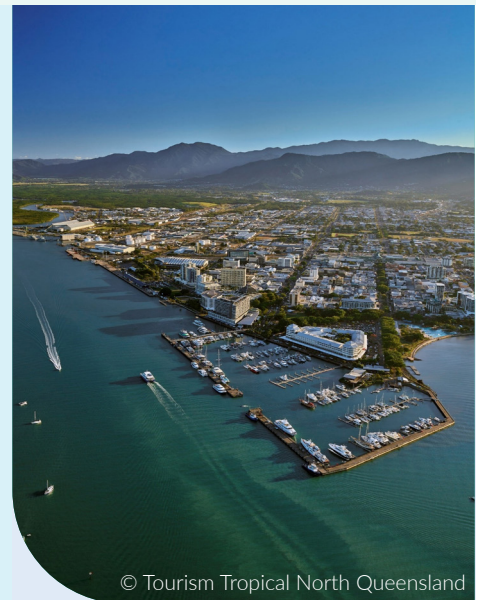


World Heritage listed reef and rainforest

The Cairns region encompasses two UNESCO World Heritage sites: the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforest, both internationally recognised for their rich biodiversity. These ecosystems provide significant environmental and economic value, while also supporting the distinctive lifestyle enjoyed by residents across the region.

Liveability

Cairns offers a high quality of life, with vibrant communities, accessible services, excellent cultural venues and facilities, a rich program of sporting, music and cultural events, and exceptional natural surroundings. Its climate, lifestyle, and strong social and cultural networks support both wellbeing and long-term regional prosperity.



© Tourism Tropical North Queensland



© Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Brisbane 2032 co-host city

As a co-host city for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Cairns will benefit from increased tourism, global exposure, infrastructure investment, and business opportunities, supporting long-term regional economic growth and development.


Priority Industries


Whilst Council remains committed to supporting broad economic growth across all sectors, this strategy prioritises the following industries because of their strategic contribution to local jobs, future economic growth and prosperity, and long-term economic resilience.


Aviation

Cairns is a major aviation hub for northern Australia, supporting domestic, regional and international services. Cairns Airport underpins tourism, freight, and connectivity to remote communities, while also enabling defence, emergency response, pilot training, manufacturing, maintenance services, and growing links to Asia-Pacific markets.



 **\$411M** Gross Value Added, Direct (NIEIR 24/25)


 **1,686** Local Jobs (NIEIR 24/25)


 **74** Local Businesses (ABS 2025)


Construction

Cairns' construction sector underpins regional growth, delivering residential, commercial and civil infrastructure. Activity is driven by population growth, housing demand, tourism development, and public and private investment, supporting local employment and supply chains while building resilience for tropical and remote conditions.



 **\$761M** Gross Value Added, Direct (NIEIR 24/25)

 **7,147** Local Jobs (NIEIR 24/25)

 **2,699** Local Businesses (ABS 2025)


Education and Training

Cairns' education and training sector supports regional workforce development and international engagement, anchored by James Cook University, CQUniversity, and vocational institutions such as TAFE Queensland, and enhanced by sector specific training institutions such as the Great Barrier Reef International Marine College, and the Cairns Aviation Skills Centre. The sector delivers skills for tourism, health, aviation, marine, and tropical science, while attracting domestic and international students to the region.



 **\$737M** Gross Value Added, Direct (NIEIR 24/25)

 **8,703** Local Jobs (NIEIR 24/25)

 **246** Local Businesses (ABS 2025)


Healthcare and Social Assistance

Cairns' healthcare and social assistance industry is a major regional employer, servicing Far North Queensland and remote communities. Anchored by Cairns Hospital and growing network of public, private, and community providers, the sector supports health, aged care, disability services, and workforce development.



 **\$1,697M** Gross Value Added, Direct (NIEIR 24/25)

 **19,531** Local Jobs (NIEIR 24/25)

 **1,460** Local Businesses (ABS 2025)

How we determined our priority industries

✓ Contribution to the economy

✓ Significance to the economy relative to the wider region

✓ Jobs in our region

✓ Growth to date and growth potential

✓ Alignment with Our Cairns Survey

✓ Alignment to State and Federal Government priorities

Marine and Defence



Cairns' marine and defence sector supports naval, commercial and research activity across northern Australia. Anchored by HMAS Cairns and a strong maritime services base, the sector delivers vessel maintenance, sustainment, manufacturing, logistics, marine tourism, research, and growing defence industry capability.

💰 **\$647M** Gross Value Added, Direct (NIEIR 24/25)

👤 **2,531** Local Jobs (NIEIR 24/25)

🏢 **340** Local Businesses (ABS 2025)

Tourism



The tourism sector is a key regional economic driver, attracting domestic and international visitors to the Great Barrier Reef, Wet Tropics, and other attractions. It supports accommodation, hospitality, transport, tours and events, fostering jobs, investment, and regional promotion while driving sustainable and experiential tourism.

💰 **\$769M** Gross Value Added, Direct (NIEIR 24/25)

👤 **8,141** Local Jobs (NIEIR 24/25)

🏢 **1,188** Local Businesses (ABS 2025)

Supported regionally by:

Agriculture



The region's agricultural sector produces sugar, bananas, tropical fruits, cattle, and horticultural crops. It supports regional employment, export markets, and value-added processing, while adopting innovative practices for sustainability, climate resilience and biosecurity across diverse tropical and rural landscapes. The industry also provides flow on benefits to other sectors within the Cairns economy including: tourism; transport, postal and warehousing; and professional, scientific and technical services.

💰 **\$1,426M** Gross Value Added, Direct (REMPAN)

👤 **7,888** Local Jobs (REMPAN)

Mining



The mining and critical minerals sector in Far North Queensland focuses on bauxite, zinc, gold, and emerging critical minerals such as silica. It drives regional investment, infrastructure, employment, and export opportunities, while supporting clean energy supply chains and sustainable resource development. Like agriculture, the mining sector also provides flow on benefits to other sectors within the Cairns economy.

💰 **\$1,052M** Gross Value Added, Direct (REMPAN)

👤 **1,826** Local Jobs (REMPAN)

Strategic Economic Precincts

These large-scale strategic precincts are distinct locations with committed investment that will build economic momentum, create jobs, strengthen confidence, and support sustained economic growth and diversification across the region.



Cairns Aviation Precinct

The Cairns Aviation Precinct will drive economic growth in the coming years through rising tourism, expanding air freight, aviation maintenance and manufacturing through organisations such as Jet Aviation and Skytek, aviation training through the Cairns Aviation Skills Centre, strategic defence operations and enhanced Asia-Pacific connectivity, supporting jobs, investment and regional business development.

Key parties:

- North Queensland Airports (Cairns Airport)
- General Aviation Organisations
- Cairns Aviation Skills Centre

Council's role:



Cairns Health and Innovation Precinct

The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHHS) has secured more than \$1 billion from the Queensland Government to progress the Cairns Health and Innovation Precinct, which will be a regionally and internationally significant driver of economic growth through advancing healthcare, research, education, and innovation. CHHHS are progressing the Master Plan in 2026 for this record investment in health infrastructure, incorporating James Cook University's Yeinie Campus Building and planned private sector investment. As it is developed, the first Stage of this Precinct will strengthen regional health and knowledge-based industries and support enhanced liveability for communities across the region.

Key parties:

- Queensland Health/Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service
- James Cook University
- Private sector medical and allied health businesses

Council's role:



Artist's impression of the new Health Innovation & Surgical Centre. Image used with permission of Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service.

Cairns Major Events Precinct

The Cairns Major Events Precinct is a strategic development project aimed at enhancing the city's sporting, cultural, and entertainment offering. It includes the Cairns Showgrounds and Barlow Park, which are critical for the city's sporting and cultural landscape. The precinct's vision is to strengthen Cairns as a destination for sport and entertainment, with development opportunities such as infrastructure renewal for the Cairns Show Association, high-performance training hub, and open spaces for community engagement. The precinct is also positioned to benefit from the 2032 Games legacy, making it a significant asset for the region.



Venue desing for illustration purposes only. Supplied by GIICA.

Key parties:

- Queensland and Federal Governments
- Cairns Regional Council
- Precinct tenants and other stakeholders

Council's role:



Cairns Marine and Defence Precinct

The Cairns Marine and Defence Precinct incorporating the HMAS Cairns Naval Base, private sector marine and defence supply chains and shipyards, Great Barrier Reef International Maritime College, and the proposed common user facility and associated ship lift, will continue to drive economic activity in the coming years through naval operations, vessel maintenance, component manufacturing, maritime logistics, defence industry growth, marine research, and marine training. The precinct will play a key role strengthening regional employment, investment, capability development, and north Australia's strategic maritime presence.



Key parties:

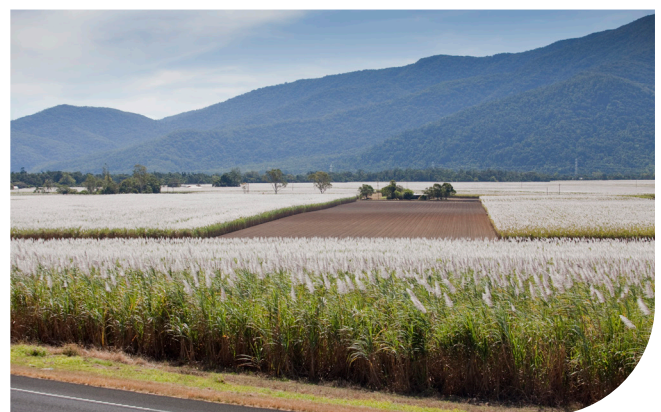
- Australian Department of Defence
- Queensland and Australian Governments
- Ports North
- Shipyards and wider maritime industry base

Council's role:



Cairns South Development Precinct

The Cairns South Development Precinct incorporates the Cairns South State Development Area (SDA) and the Edmonton Growth Corridor which includes Edmonton and the Mount Peter Priority Development Area (PDA). The Cairns South Development Precinct will underpin regional economic growth over the coming years through a range of industrial, residential, commercial, and mixed-use development. It will support jobs, investment, housing supply, infrastructure expansion, and strategic business operations, strengthening Cairns' urban, industrial, and regional economic capacity. The precinct also has the potential to provide opportunities for value added manufacturing and processing for the local sugar sector and regional agricultural industry more broadly.



Key parties:

- Queensland Office of the Coordinator General
- Economic Development Queensland
- Cairns Regional Council
- MSF Sugar and Canegrowers
- Private sector developers and construction, industrial and commercial business operators

Council's role:



Advocate



Partner



Funder



Facilitator



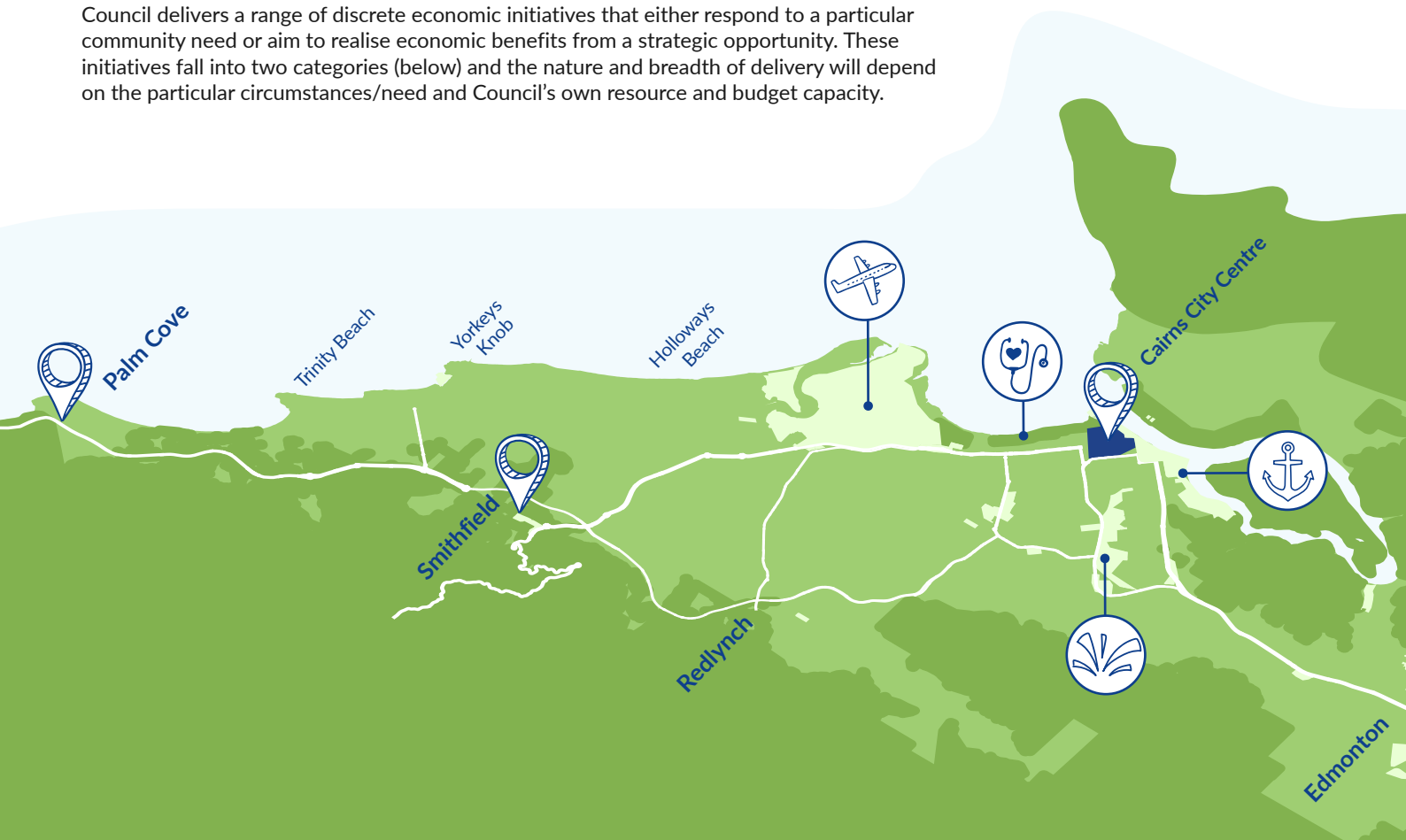
Provider



Regulator

Strategic Economic Initiatives

Council delivers a range of discrete economic initiatives that either respond to a particular community need or aim to realise economic benefits from a strategic opportunity. These initiatives fall into two categories (below) and the nature and breadth of delivery will depend on the particular circumstances/need and Council's own resource and budget capacity.



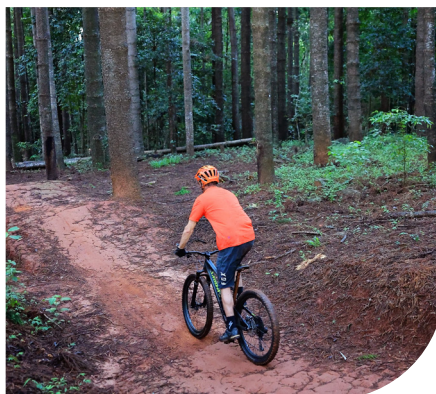
Place-based Initiatives

Council delivers a range of place-based initiatives and interventions outside the Strategic Economic Precincts which aim to support economic outcomes in particular communities and/or discrete geographies such as the Cairns City Centre, Gordonvale, and Babinda (where existing initiatives are already being delivered) or Smithfield and Palm Cove (where potential interventions are expected to be considered during the term of this strategy).

Where such initiatives are delivered, their scale, nature and timing (non-recurring or enduring), will vary depending on a range of factors including:

- Economic circumstances
- Demonstrated community need
- Council's role and responsibilities and the role and responsibilities of others
- The type of intervention needed
- Expected benefits

© Tourism Tropical North Queensland





Cairns Aviation Precinct



Cairns Health and Innovation Precinct



Cairns Marine and Defence Precinct



Cairns South Development Precinct



Cairns Major Events Precinct

Great Barrier Reef



Gordonvale



Babinda

Targeted Interventions

These interventions are not tied to a particular geographic area or place and aim to:

- support a targeted component of the economic ecosystem (e.g. small business, innovation);
- deliver tangible benefits from a discrete economic opportunity (e.g. 2032 Games); or
- leverage a strategic competitive advantage (e.g. Pacific engagement, Smart Green Economy, investment attraction, film sector support).
- Plan for and implement a range of initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of natural hazards and proactively positioning Cairns for funding for mitigation and adaption measures to respond to issues such as development feasibility, insurance gaps, and resilient design.

The scale, nature and timing (non recurring or enduring) of these interventions will vary depending on the relevant circumstances.



Pathways and Economic Action Plan

The actions contained within the Cairns Regional Council Economic Development Strategy 2026-2030 Action Plan below are organised into a series of Pathways – thematic groupings that bring together related actions under a common strategic focus. Each Pathway represents a distinct avenue for economic growth and activity, allowing Council and its partners to coordinate efforts, allocate resources effectively, and track progress in a coherent and meaningful way. Together, the Pathways form an integrated roadmap for delivering on the strategy’s vision for the Cairns economy.

The proposed actions have been considered based on their relevance to, and scope to support, the long-term economic growth, prosperity and resilience of the Cairns economy. The alignment of the actions to the Priority

Industries, Strategic Economic Precincts, and Strategic Economic Initiatives components of the strategy is clearly demonstrated, as is Council’s role in implementation, the relevant Council Directorates involved, and how success will be measured.

The action plan does not represent binding commitments of Council and may be amended from time to time to adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities. Whilst the action plan will inform Council’s annual operational planning and budgeting processes, it is noted that the action plan is subordinate to those activities and accordingly may need to be amended to reflect changing priorities and/or resource constraints identified through those processes. Progress against the action plan will be reported to Council on an annual basis.

Key acronyms used in this document:

CIA - Cairns Infrastructure and Assets

EDA - Economic Development and Advocacy

FBS - Finance and Business Services

L&C - Lifestyle and Community

PGS - Planning, Growth and Sustainability

POP - People and Organisational Performance

Pathway 1: Investment attraction and promotion

Action	Strategic alignment			Our role	Council Directorates involved	Success Measure	Year of delivery (FY)			
	Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives				FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30
1.1) Develop and share promotional material to showcase local investment opportunities for domestic and international markets.	✓	✓		Provider	EDA	Material developed and promoted	✓	✓		
1.2) Investigate and develop a scalable investment attraction plan including consideration of governance models.	✓	✓		Facilitator	EDA	Plan/model developed, and governance models considered	✓	✓		
1.3) Implementation of agreed long-term approach to investment attraction.	✓	✓		Facilitator Provider	EDA	Implementation of an agreed long-term approach to investment attraction		✓	✓	✓
1.4) Promote Cairns as a place to work, live, and play through the Choose Cairns brand and website, with consideration to expanding the brand.			✓	Facilitator Provider	EDA	Maintain the Choose Cairns website so it remains current and up to date	✓	✓	✓	✓

Pathway 2: Strategic precincts and land use

Action	Strategic alignment			Our role	Council Directorates involved	Success Measure	Year of delivery			
	Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives				FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30
2.1) Support the progression of the Cairns South State Development Area (SDA).	✓	✓		Advocate Facilitator Regulator	CIA EDA PGS	Actions taken in support of SDA development developed and promoted	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.2) Work with the Queensland Government, Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) and other stakeholders to progress the Mount Peter Priority Development Area (PDA) – supporting greenfield residential growth and advocate for funding needed to support related infrastructure delivery.	✓	✓		Advocate Facilitator Partner Provider	CIA EDA PGS	Land use and infrastructure planning progressed, infrastructure funding secured, development progressing	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.3) Monitor and consider emerging opportunities to support the Edmonton Growth Corridor.		✓		Advocate	EDA	Nature of opportunities identified and progressed (where possible)	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.4) Collaborate with CHHS and other stakeholders to support implementation of the Cairns Hospital Campus Master Plan and appropriate development within the Cairns Hospital and Innovation Precinct.	✓	✓		Advocate Facilitator Regulator	CIA EDA L&C PGS	Number and nature of support provided, and outcomes achieved	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.5) Support the progression of the Cairns Aviation Precinct through active engagement and advocacy.	✓	✓		Advocate	EDA	Advocacy support provided	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.6) Support the progression of the Cairns Marine and Defence Precinct through active engagement and advocacy and facilitate effective land use interface between the precinct and the adjoining parts of the Cairns LGA.	✓	✓		Advocate Facilitator Regulator	EDA PGS	Advocacy support provided and land use facilitation	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.7) Facilitate preparation of the Cairns Major Events Precinct Master Plan in consultation with key stakeholders.	✓	✓		Facilitator	L&C	Master Plan completed and endorsed by Council	✓			
2.8) Advocate for funding necessary to progress Council endorsed projects and priorities arising from the Cairns Major Events Precinct Master Plan.	✓	✓		Advocate	EDA	Number and nature of activities and outcomes achieved		✓	✓	✓
2.9) Work collaboratively with the Queensland Government and other stakeholders to support the Olympic Legacy upgrades to Barlow Park.	✓	✓		Advocate Facilitator	L&C	Active engagement with Qld Gov as upgrade progress to ensure legacy benefits delivered	✓	✓	✓	
2.10) Fast-track planning approvals for developments aligning with 'gentle density' and infill principles.			✓	Facilitator Provider Regulator	PGS	Fast-track planning approval process developed and implemented	✓	✓	✓	✓
2.11) Review and update of Council's Development and Investment Incentive Support Policy (or equivalent) including ensuring alignment with this Economic Strategy where relevant.	✓		✓	Facilitator Provider Regulator	PGS	Refreshed policy developed and implemented	✓			
2.12) Consider and if appropriate, implement a range of land use planning interventions (e.g. planning scheme amendments) aimed at supporting economic development consistent with this strategy.	✓	✓	✓	Facilitator Provider Regulator	PGS	Number and nature of interventions	✓	✓	✓	✓

Pathway 3: Major events and visitor economy

Action	Strategic alignment			Our role	Council Directorates involved	Success Measure	Year of delivery (FY)			
	Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives				FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30
3.1) Develop 2032 Games Roadmap for Cairns to leverage the legacy benefits (economic and other) for Cairns from the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to generate enduring economic impact.	✓	✓	✓	Facilitator Funder Provider	EDA	Roadmap finalised and endorsed by Council	✓			
3.2) Oversee the implementation of the 2032 Games Roadmap for Cairns.	✓	✓	✓	Advocate Facilitator Provider	EDA	Progress against the implementation plan		✓	✓	✓
3.3) Proactively collaborate with TTNQ, TEQ and other partners to secure and retain a diverse portfolio of major events in the region aligned with the Cairns and Great Barrier Reef Major Events Strategy 2026-2035.	✓			Advocate Facilitator Funder Partner	EDA	Number, nature and economic impact of major events supported	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.4) Facilitate appropriate Council support to progress Smithfield Mountain Bike Park trail network expansion and Wangetti Trail where required.	✓		✓	Facilitator	L&C	Active engagement and nature of support provided	✓	✓	✓	✓
3.5) Continued investigation and collaborative advocacy for a sustainable tourism funding model for Cairns.	✓			Advocate Partner	EDA	Further investigation and refinement of a sustainable funding model and outcomes of related advocacy to the Queensland Government	✓	✓	✓	✓

Pathway 4: Business support, innovation and local economy

Action	Strategic alignment			Our role	Council Directorates involved	Success Measure	Year of delivery (FY)			
	Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives				FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30
4.1) Partner with State and Federal Government departments and other stakeholders to deliver events for small business (e.g. Meet the Buyer).			✓	Partner Provider	EDA	Annual event delivered (Meet the Buyer or similar)	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.2) Continued collaboration with the Cairns Chamber of Commerce on Small Business initiatives.			✓	Partner	EDA	Number and nature of initiatives and outcomes achieved	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.3) Disseminate a monthly e-newsletter to local businesses.			✓	Provider	EDA	Monthly e-newsletter disseminated	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Strategic alignment			Our role	Council Directorates involved	Success Measure	Year of delivery (FY)			
	Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives				FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30
4.4) Disseminate a monthly digital welcome-pack to new businesses established in the Cairns region.			✓	Provider	EDA	Monthly digital welcome-pack disseminated	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.5) Support the Queensland Government's Small Business Friendly Council Program.			✓	Facilitator	EDA	Number and nature of initiatives supported	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.6) Monitor and measure the economic impact of Council's annual local spend (e.g. State of Procurement Report or equivalent).			✓	Provider	EDA FBS	Annual report produced	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.7) Strengthen local business participation in Council procurement through communication of anticipated procurement and capacity building (e.g. procurement related events and workshops).			✓	Provider	CIA EDA FBS	Number and nature of initiatives delivered	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.8) Partner with State and Federal Government departments, internal and external stakeholders to support events (e.g. Indigenous Business Month) and initiatives relevant to First Peoples businesses.			✓	Partner Provider	EDA L&C	Number and nature of initiatives supported	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.9) Support programs and initiatives that encourage innovation and support the local innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem (e.g. Tropical Innovation Festival, Business Excellence Awards).			✓	Facilitator Funder Partner	EDA	Number and nature of initiatives supported	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.10) Support the development of projects to access Council's Industry and Economic Development Fund (IEDF).			✓	Funder	EDA	Number of projects supported through the IEDF and outcomes supported	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.11) Work with key stakeholders to develop and promote initiatives aligned with smart green economy opportunity areas.			✓	Facilitator Partner	EDA PGS	Maintain the Smart Green Economy website so it remains current and up to date; development and promotion of new and existing case studies	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.12) Work collaboratively with Screen Queensland and other industry stakeholders to support the film and related industries in Cairns.			✓	Advocate Facilitator Partner Provider	EDA L&C	Number of screen productions supported through permit provision and wrap-around support and broader industry development support	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.13) Investigate place-based initiatives and interventions to support certain localities for example Cairns City Centre, Smithfield, Palm Cove, Babinda and Gordonvale. This may include planning initiatives aimed at realising potential economic opportunities.			✓	Provider	EDA PGS	Number and nature of initiatives and interventions investigated and where appropriate implemented.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Pathway 5: Engagement, collaboration and resilience

Action	Strategic alignment			Our role	Council Directorates involved	Success Measure	Year of delivery (FY)			
	Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives				27	28	29	30
<p>5.1) Manage Council's strategic partnerships with external economic development and advocacy organisations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance Cairns • Babinda District Community Association (Babinda Taskforce) • Babinda Visitor Information Centre • Cairns Chamber of Commerce • Cairns Taipans • Study Cairns • Tourism Tropical North Queensland including a geographic focus on Babinda, Gordonvale and Palm Cove • Tradelinked Cairns-PNG-Pacific 	✓		✓	Funder Provider	EDA	Effective management of strategic funding agreements; monitoring and evaluation of KPIs	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>5.2) Collaborate via Council's Memoranda of Understanding with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • James Cook University • CQUniversity • TAFE Queensland 	✓			Partner	EDA	Number and nature of collaborative initiatives reported each year	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>5.3) Collaborate with key industry organisations, state and federal agencies and other stakeholders to support strategic initiatives aligned with Priority Industries.</p>	✓			Advocate Facilitator Partner Provider	EDA	Number and nature of support provided and outcomes achieved	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>5.4) Coordinate economic development stakeholder meetings for Babinda and Gordonvale and receive feedback.</p>			✓	Facilitator	EDA	Minimum of two stakeholder meetings per year	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>5.5) Develop and implement a program of stakeholder engagement with the city's key employers and private sector operators to understand barriers to growth and consider potential action Council can take in response to key themes.</p>			✓	Advocate Facilitator Provider	EDA	Number and nature of engagement	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>5.6) Collaborate with Local, State and Federal Government organisations and key stakeholders, to progress advocacy priorities on behalf of the Cairns community as per Council's Advocacy Policy.</p>	✓	✓	✓	Advocate Facilitator Partner	EDA	Quarterly meetings held with key advocacy partners and local Members of State and Federal Parliament; advocacy priorities jointly prosecuted, and outcomes achieved	✓	✓	✓	✓
<p>5.7) Collaborate with key stakeholders to progress initiatives aimed at supporting Cairns' engagement with PNG and the Pacific.</p>	✓	✓	✓	Advocate Facilitator Partner Provider	EDA	Number and nature of initiatives and related outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Strategic alignment			Our role	Council Directorates involved	Success Measure	Year of delivery (FY)			
	Priority Industries	Strategic Economic Precincts	Strategic Economic Initiatives				27	28	29	30
5.8) Facilitate access to economic data for the purposes of informed decision making across Council, external stakeholders and the community including public reporting on the economic performance of priority industry sectors.	✓		✓	Facilitator	EDA	Facilitation of key data resources	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.9) Support Cairns Chamber of Commerce, Council's Disaster Management Unit, and other partners on opportunities to support business resilience and disaster preparedness.			✓	Facilitator	EDA POP	Number and nature of opportunities supported	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.10) Proactively coordinate the Cairns Local Disaster Management Group's Economic Recovery Sub-Committee (ERSC).			✓	Facilitator	EDA	Facilitation of annual pre-cyclone season ERSC meetings; and coordination of ERSC efforts in the event of disaster	✓	✓	✓	✓
5.11) Commence and progress the Master Mitigation and Adaption Plan – Central Cairns			✓	Partner Provider	PGS	Plan for and implement a range of initiatives	✓	✓		



How We Measure Success

Success will be measured by progress against the headline targets of growing Cairns' Gross Regional Product by \$1.5 billion by 2030, the creation of 10,000 jobs over this period, and the individual measures in the action plan.

Economic development targets by 2030



Grow economy by \$1.5 billion
(2025 as baseline)



Create 10,000 new jobs
(2025 as baseline)

119-145 Spence Street, Cairns, QLD, 4870, Australia
Phone: 1300 69 22 47
cairns.qld.gov.au

