

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



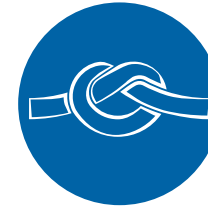
Responsibility

Transparency and responsibility to our community



Cairns-ness

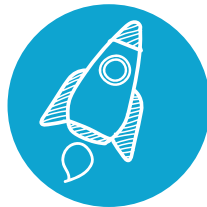
Pride in who we are and where we live



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



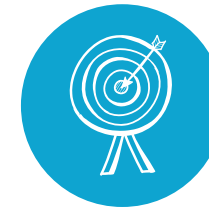
Design for liveability

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.

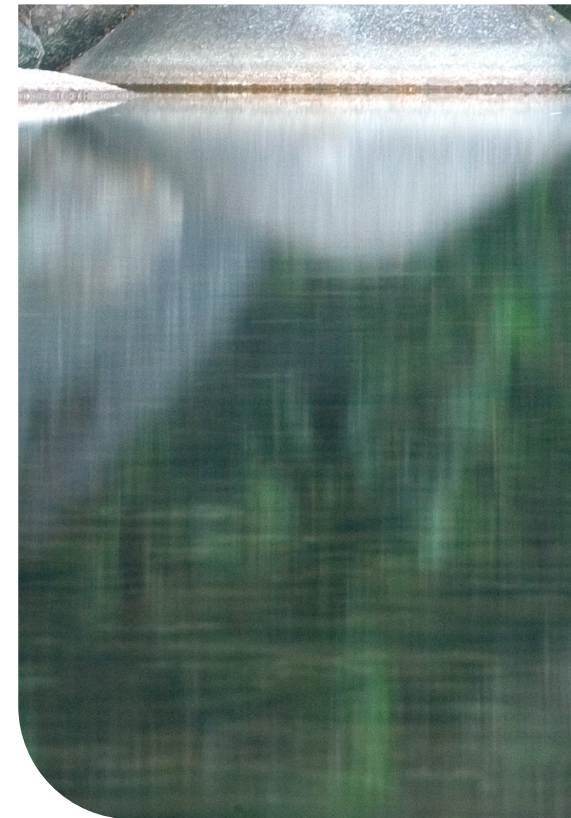
The Local Government Act 2009, along with the *Local Government Regulation 2012*, requires Council to adopt an annual Operational Plan that shall:

- 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

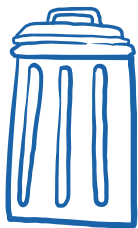


78,071
Water connections



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

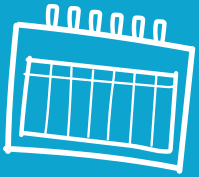
\$24M
Operating budget

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

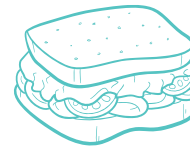
Development applications decided



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

85

Employees



406

Lots created

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	Lifestyle and Community	 	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	Lifestyle and Community		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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