

ABOUT CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL



PEOPLE

Over 169,000 people reside in Cairns (2021 ERP) and this is one of Australia's most vibrant multicultural cities. People from more than 109 nations choose to call Cairns home, with around 800 immigrants taking on Australian citizenship each year.



GEOGRAPHY

The Cairns Regional Council local government area encompasses 1687 km² of land on a narrow coastal strip between the Great Dividing Range and the Coral Sea. It extends from the Eubenangee Swamp (near Mirriwinni) in the south to the Macalister Range (near Ellis Beach) in the north. The region is part of Australia's Wet Tropics and is framed by the lush World Heritage listed Wet Tropics rainforest to the west and north and the Coral Sea and World Heritage listed Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to the east. These attributes make the region a world renowned tourist destination.

Cairns city is the principal centre of the region and is centrally located along the coastal strip with sub-regions to the north and south consisting predominantly good quality agricultural land and areas of high ecological significance. The region is an important gateway to the nearby Atherton Tablelands, Daintree and Wet Tropics rainforest, and the outback Savannah region beyond the Great Dividing Range. The Russell, Mulgrave and Barron Rivers are the main river systems within the region. The region also includes a number of offshore islands: Snapper, Fitzroy, Green and the Frankland Islands.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAIRNS

The lands that cover the Cairns region are the traditional home of the Bama, the Aboriginal rainforest people, who have rich and long histories. Our region has the highest proportion of First Nations people (9.5%) outside First Nations LGAs, more than double the Australian average. This includes the largest Torres Strait Islander population outside the Torres Strait region. We also have the most Traditional Custodian Groups within one Local Government Area anywhere in Australia.

The map at right shows where Traditional Custodian Groups are in our region:

- Djabugandji Language Group – Bulawai Djabugay and Yirriganydji
- Yidinji Language Group – Gimuy Walubara, Mandingalbay, Dulabed, Malanbarra, Bundabarra, Wadjanbarra, Wanyur Majay, Gunggandji
- Djirbal Language Group – NgadjonJii, Mamu

Officially founded in 1876 and named after the State Governor of the day, Sir William Wellington Cairns, it wasn't until 1903 that Cairns was formally declared a town with a registered population of 3,500. Initial white settlement in the region in the 1860s was driven by beche-de-mer (sea cucumber) fishing however it was the discovery of gold to the north (Palmer River field) and Atherton Tableland (Hodginkson River field) that saw the population begin to climb.

Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s European and Chinese settlers opened up the region to agriculture generating a large enough population base for the borough of Cairns to be declared a municipality and for the alderman to elect the first mayor, R.A. Kingsford, in 1885. The development of the Cairns to Herberton rail line in 1886, and subsequent expansion from Redlynch to Myola, is widely considered the catalyst for the city's expansion as it made travel through the difficult terrain easier as well as attracting a large number of immigrants involved in the construction. These immigrants went on to settle in the region and were responsible for establishing the sugarcane industry, predominantly in the low lands, and extensive fruit orchards on the cooler Atherton Tablelands.



INTRODUCTION

Cairns Regional Council is established under the Local Government Act 2009. The elected council is the law-making body and consists of the Mayor and 9 other Councillors who each represent a division. The administration is headed by the Chief Executive Officer. Cairns Regional Council has more than 1,200 staff and an annual budget of more than \$390 million (2022/23).

ADMINISTRATION

The administration of Council is divided into the following departments. Each department is headed by an Executive Director who reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer:

PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

- Human Resources
- Organisational Performance
- Wellbeing, Health and Safety
- Customer Service
- Governance
- Marketing and Communications

FINANCE & BUSINESS SERVICES

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

PLANNING, GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY

- Planning and Growth Management
- Development Services
- Property and Compliance
- Sustainability and Climate Change

CAIRNS INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSETS

- Building and Facilities Management
- Works Maintenance and Construction
- Major Projects
- Infrastructure Planning
- Resource Recovery
- Water Utility Services

LIFESTYLE & COMMUNITY

- Cairns Libraries
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Community Resilience and Safety
- Creative Life Venues and Services
- Natural Assets

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ADVOCACY

- Economic Development
- Advocacy
- Major and Economic Events

ELECTED MEMBERS: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS

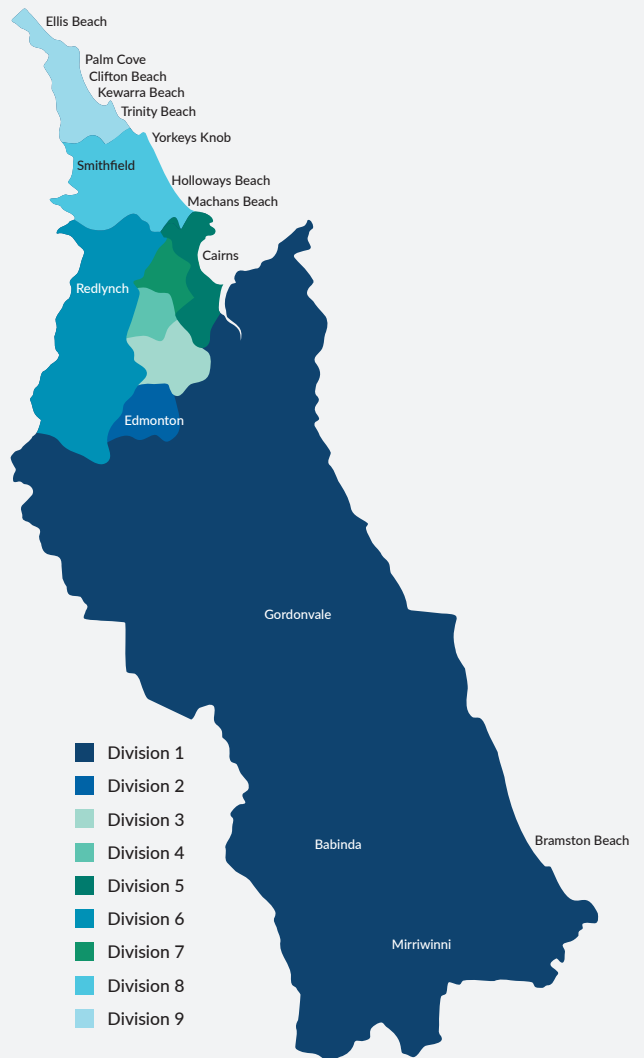
The Councillors represent nine divisions, and each Councillor is elected by eligible voters in each division. The Mayoralty is decided on a majority popular vote across the entire local government area which has over 104,600 enrolled voters. Local government elections are held every 4 years across Queensland.

Council decisions are taken by a majority vote of all the elected councillors. Each councillor in the council chamber has an equal vote - even the Mayor has a single vote. That means a decision by a majority of votes at a local government meeting is considered a decision of local government. In the case of a tied vote, the Mayor, acting as chairperson, can exercise a casting vote.

Councillors are elected to work collectively in the best interests of the community as a whole. Their key role is to plan for the future of their local community and put in place the strategies and policies to achieve those plans. Councillors must make decisions for the benefit of the entire local government area, not just the interests of the particular division they represent.

The Mayor has the same responsibilities as other councillors, plus additional roles including presiding over meetings, and representing the local government at ceremonial and civic functions. The Mayor is the most visible and high profile councillor in the local government and the person viewed as responsible for the performance of the council.

You can read more about the current Mayor and Divisional Councillors on Council's website at www.cairns.qld.gov.au



COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council meetings are the most visible work of local governments. The *Local Government Act 2009* lays down the basic requirements of Council meetings (including public access to meetings, councillor voting and the need to keep minutes of meetings) and Council's Standing Orders outline other meeting protocols and rules of conduct.

Council conducts Ordinary and Committee meetings each month. Meetings are attended by the Committee members (or all Councillors in the case of Ordinary meetings), the Chief Executive Officer (or representative), the Executive Directors and, where necessary, other Council officers. Matters discussed at Committee level do not become resolutions of Council until the recommendations of the Committee are adopted and carried at an Ordinary meeting.

Meetings are open to the public, and are live streamed and video-recorded (except during "closed" sessions). Agendas and minutes record the decisions



and ensure that Council's processes are properly documented, transparent and accountable.

Members of the public cannot participate / have a say in the meeting unless invited by Council to do so. Cairns Regional Council has the discretion to invite public deputations where members of the public can put forward a case or discuss a particular matter.

Special meetings are called when Council needs to consider extra-ordinary business items, including the handing down of the annual budget.

HOW A COUNCIL MEETING IS CONDUCTED

The Mayor acts as the impartial chair at all Council meetings and presides over the conduct of the meeting. If the Mayor is not present, the Deputy Mayor takes this role. In the absence of both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the meeting may elect one of the Councillors present to act as chairperson.

At meetings, report items are discussed and debated. Councillors can ask questions about the recommendations that relate to each report before they make a decision to support or object to it. The Councillors then decide whether to adopt the report's recommendations in full, amend some or all

Council may decide to hold a "closed" session during a meeting to discuss certain confidential matters or topics that would be inappropriate to be considered in a public meeting. Closed session topics may include matters relating to staff , budgets, contracts and legal matters. Resolutions (decisions) cannot be made in a closed session.

of the recommendations, or propose an alternative recommendation.

Voting at council meetings is open and decisions are decided by a majority of councillors present at the meeting. Each councillor present has one vote and, if the votes are equal or tied, the chairperson (usually the Mayor) also has a casting vote.

Decisions made at meetings are recorded in the form of "resolutions" which are recorded in the minutes. Resolutions take effect immediately once recorded and are binding until formally amended or repealed.

COUNCIL EMBLEMS

Council has a very strong public identity and reputation that is visually presented through clear and consistent visual branding. Council's branding suite comprises the official logo, crest and floral emblem.



LOGO

Council's logo was adopted in 2008, following the amalgamation of Cairns City Council and Douglas Shire Council (which subsequently deamalgamated in 2014). The logo design features the leaf of the Queensland Fan Palm, *Licuala ramsayii*, which is endemic to tropical rainforests across the entire footprint of the Council area.

- The green upper leaf represents the mountain range and rainforest clad coastline
- The lower blue leaf elements represent the ocean, the reef and the community's connection with both elements of nature.
- The dynamic splash at the heart of the leaf design represents the festive spirit of the Cairns regional community.

Floral emblem (above): The Golden Penda (*Xanthostemon chrysanthus*) is the city's official floral emblem. It is one of the tropical north's most splendid flowering trees and bursts into yellow bloom several times a year.



CREST

The crest is the official symbol of the Council. It is used for ceremonial applications, such as the Council Chambers and official City documents such as international agreements and civic events. The crest's colours are gold, blue and green. The crest features:

- picks and shovels, symbolising the historical significance of mining to the region (left)
- stylised bales of commerce and industry (centre)
- sugar cane (right)
- foliage depicting the region's diverse range of flora
- waves for the city's close proximity to the Great Barrier Reef
- a sun burst for the tropics

SISTER CITIES

Cairns is a Sister City to 7 international cities. Our Sister Cities relationships aim to foster long-term goodwill, cultural and social links and economic connections with other countries.

Our Sister Cities are:



MINAMI JAPAN
Since 1969



SIDNEY CANADA
Since 1984



LAE PAPUA NEW GUINEA
Since 1984



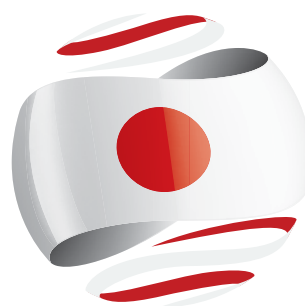
SCOTTSDALE USA
Since 1987



RIGA LATVIA
Since 1988



ZHANJIANG CHINA
Since 2004



OYAMA JAPAN
Since 2006

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL MILESTONES



- 1876** Decision made to create a community on the banks of Trinity Bay
- 1879** Cairns Divisional Board formed
- 1902** Cairns Divisional Board becomes Cairns Municipal Council
- 1903** Cairns proclaimed a town
- 1906** Local Harbour Board founded
- 1909** The Cairns Post newspaper opened
- 1911** The town's first water supply opened
- 1912** The brick and timber Cairns District Hospital started accepting patients
- 1913** The first Mulgrave Shire Council Chambers is built at 51 The Esplanade (now Mulgrave Gallery)
- 1923** (12 October) – Cairns proclaimed a city and Cairns Municipal Council becomes Cairns City Council
- 1925** Public electricity supply turned on
- 1925** Cairns High School and Technical College opens to students
- 1927** Cyclone Willis causes widespread destruction
- 1930** The first Cairns City Council Chambers is built in Abbott Street (now the city library)
- 1935** The South American cane toad was introduced
- 1935** Barron Falls Hydro Electricity scheme begins providing power for a major industrial expansion. The Barron Gorge Hydroelectric Station came on line in 1963
- 1936** 4CA becomes the City's first radio station
- 1939-1945** Cairns was used during World War Two as a base for Australian and Allied, especially American, troops destined for the Pacific arena. The fall of Singapore heralded a mass evacuation of the north with more than 7000 people leaving the region; many never returned
- 1947** (September) – the corvette HMAS Warrnambool collided with a sea mine killing 3 crew and injuring 86 others. 2000 mines were cleared from shipping lanes over the next 2 years.
- 1954** (March) – Queen Elizabeth 2 visited Cairns
- 1956** Strong winds from Cyclone Agnes damage vegetation and property
- 1956** The Olympic torch passed through on its way to the Melbourne Games
- 1958** Sewering of the City began
- 1962** The Green Island Jetty was opened in an event that has since become the annual Cairns Festival
- 1964** A bulk sugar terminal was opened on the Cairns waterfront
- 1966 (July)** The ABC becomes the first local television station
- 1970** Cairns City Council was the first municipality to have a Burroughs mainframe computer. It was the size of a domestic freezer and had a memory of 200 words
- 1974** Prime Minister Gough Whitlam officially opened the much-awaited Cairns Civic Centre
- 1975** Local identity Emrys "Rusty" Rees formalised the "hippie" market; it continues to operate as a predominantly fruit and vegetable market
- 1979** Residents could borrow books from the newly constructed Cairns Public Library
- 1981-83** The City's first high-rise buildings, apartments and a hotel complex, dominated the skyline
- 1987** Tjapukai Dance Theatre opened in Kuranda bringing attention to Indigenous tourism. The Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, at the Cairns suburb of Smithfield) opened in July 1996
- 1988** The Wet Tropics was included on the UNESCO World Heritage list
- 1992** The Court House and Police complex in Sheridan Street was opened
- 1994** Construction began on the SkyRail rainforest cableway
- 1995** Mulgrave Shire and Cairns City Council amalgamated
- 1995** The first public internet café in Cairns opened
- 1995** James Cook University opened its Smithfield campus
- 1996** Work began on the Cairns Convention Centre; it has since won many prestigious awards for its excellence in hosting events
- 1996** The Cairns Railway Station was demolished to make way for Cairns Central Shopping Centre which incorporated a new station
- 2000** Olympic Torch visits on its way to the Sydney Games. Vision of the region was beamed around the world
- 2003** The Cairns Lagoon, a 4800sqm saltwater swimming pool, was built as part of the redevelopment of the Cairns Esplanade
- 2008** Queensland Government amalgamates Cairns City Council and Douglas Shire Council, creating the new Cairns Regional Council
- 2014** Douglas Shire Council de-amalgamates from Cairns Regional Council
- 2016** Munro Martin Parklands re-opens following major redevelopment
- 2018** Cairns Performing Arts Centre officially opens, replacing the 1974-built Cairns Civic Theatre
- 2021** Esplanade Dining Precinct redevelopment completed