It’s an exciting time for Cairns – the city is currently experiencing the highest level of commercial development for many years which is not only changing the very landscape of our city centre, but also providing the infrastructure required to drive future economic growth.

Our city centre has experienced many changes over the years, especially the transformation of its public spaces. From the development of the Cairns Esplanade to the more recent refurbishments of Lake Street and Shields Street, the creation of Munro Martin Parklands, and the construction of the new Cairns Performing Arts Centre, our city is constantly evolving as it should be.

Many of these changes were a product of the 2001 Esplanade Master Plan and the 2011 City Centre Master Plan which have served us well and provided a guide to how these developments would occur.

Now it’s time for a new City Centre Master Plan to enable our central business and tourist district to go to the next level and fulfil the community’s wishes outlined in the 2016 Our Cairns community survey and forums. We heard that the community wants a “Future Cairns” to be recognised as a green tropical region that values its natural assets, but with greater economic diversity, and we know how important our tropical lifestyle is to you.

In response to this community feedback, Council has identified three areas to initially focus on as the first steps in the development of a new master plan – a renewed Esplanade Parklands, the Esplanade Dining Precinct, and the Gallery Precinct.

The city centre is a place for everyone – a welcoming and accessible place that supports and celebrates Cairns tropical lifestyle, climate and natural beauty.

I invite you to share your ideas and suggestions to help shape the future through the new City Centre Master Plan.

Cr Bob Manning
Mayor of Cairns
WHY A CITY CENTRE MASTER PLAN?

Council is committed to ensuring that community values will underpin the new City Centre Master Plan. It will reflect Council’s corporate strategy of “promoting our environment which values and enhances our unique lifestyle, iconic natural assets, supports a sense of community and furthers our economic prosperity.”

THE CITY CENTRE MASTER PLAN AIMS TO:

• Celebrate our tropical city centre
• Better connect the city to its waterfront
• Support culture, creativity and the arts
• Build economic growth
• Promote a sustainable, safe and connected city

As the first step in developing the new City Centre Master Plan, Council proposes three project ideas (see page 6 for details):

• A renewed Esplanade Parklands
• Esplanade Dining Precinct
• Gallery Precinct

The population of Cairns continues to grow and tourist numbers are on the rise.
Over the past five years, the population of the Cairns city centre has grown by around 3 per cent annually – a rate twice that of the broader Cairns Local Government Area. This rate of growth is expected to continue over the next decade, increasing the demands on inner-city public places and community facilities.

Renewed private investment and Council’s significant capital works program are delivering unprecedented growth and transforming the shape of the city.

A new plan is needed to guide the city’s ongoing evolution as a vibrant, liveable space for a broad range of users.

Drivers for a New Plan

- 3% residential growth in city centre
- 30,000 visitors nightly in Cairns City
- 2,000 new residential apartments
- 800 new hotel rooms

A Plan for the Future

Council is committed to ensuring that community values will underpin the new City Centre Master Plan. It will reflect Council’s corporate strategy of “promoting our environment which values and enhances our unique lifestyle, iconic natural assets, supports a sense of community and furthers our economic prosperity.”

The City Centre Master Plan Aims To:

• Celebrate our tropical city centre
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of the city centre... Make the city centre a special place... Create a vibrant national level... Turn the city into a clean green vibrant modern place to be

- Cairns residents, 2016 Our Cairns community survey
Cairns city has transformed remarkably during the lifetime of the 2011 City Centre Master Plan – and it continues to change today as a result of public and private investment, industry activity and population growth.

In recent years, Cairns Regional Council has successfully developed and delivered a range of major public infrastructure projects in the city (see sites marked * on map at right). These works have not only brought value to the community through an enhanced lifestyle, but have helped restore confidence, attract investment and intensify business activity within the area.

In addition, billions of dollars’ worth of private sector tourism, residential and commercial development is now underway, recently completed or confirmed for the future. These investments include game-changing projects such as the $55 million Cairns Aquarium, the GA Group’s $370 million investment in three major hotels, and the $550 million Nova City complex.
Council has listened to the community and understands how much local residents value a liveable city that celebrates a tropical outdoor lifestyle. The three project ideas proposed for the new City Centre Master Plan aim to build upon the investment and growth to date, and deliver on the community’s most important values as voiced through the Our Cairns community survey – a liveable city that celebrates a tropical outdoor lifestyle.

IDEAS...

One of the city’s most loved areas, the Esplanade Parklands are an important meeting and recreation destination for locals and tourists. Since it was first developed in 2002, additional facilities and connections have been added in response to ever-increasing popularity. That growth has, however, presented some challenges:

- Inconsistent and sometimes confusing pedestrian and cycle paths
- Uneven usage and activation, with southern areas crowded and northern areas under-used
- Tendency for most activity to be located in the limited space between the Lagoon and Muddy’s Playground
- Ageing and outdated facilities and infrastructure
- Poor connection between Fogarty Park and the Lagoon

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

- A clear plan for future additions, enhancements and possible expansion
- New points of interest (eg, viewing platforms, interpretive displays) along the full length of the parklands
- Better connections between the different spaces and uses
- Well-defined paths for pedestrians, runners and cyclists
- A wider promenade to accommodate increased use

HAVE YOUR SAY

What do you think about these ideas?
How would YOU like these public places to look in the future?

Visit www.cairns.qld.gov.au/citycentre to share your views on our interactive Ideas Wall and take our short survey to tell us what’s important to you.
Outdoor dining is one of the great features of the Cairns lifestyle. The cafes and restaurants along the Esplanade have a prime waterfront location that offers a uniquely tropical outdoor dining experience for locals and visitors. The area’s full potential is yet to be realised and community feedback over many years has identified a number of issues:

- Narrow, crowded footpath
- Constrained space for outdoor dining
- Traffic and car parking that detracts from views and dining experience
- Disconnection between dining and park areas
- Visual clutter arising from a mix of designs and styles

**IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE**

- Create a distinct dining precinct with a vibrant tropical character
- Generous pedestrian and mobility-friendly footpaths
- Strong links and improved views to waterfront and Esplanade Parklands
- Enhanced outdoor dining opportunities
- Complementary pavements, landscaping and lighting
- A roadway suitable for vehicle and pedestrian uses

Cairns is well placed to be recognised as the Arts and Cultural Capital of Northern Australia. This vision is supported by a vibrant cultural and heritage tourism industry, and key regional attractions including the Cairns Art Gallery, internationally-acclaimed Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair, newly-redeveloped Cairns Museum, and the upcoming Cairns Performing Arts Centre. There is now an opportunity to develop a gallery precinct featuring the Cairns Art Gallery, old Courthouse and former Mulgrave Shire buildings. This precinct will further evolve the city as a cultural capital. Current issues include:

- Constrained size of current Cairns Art Gallery
- Lost opportunities to host significant touring exhibitions due to lack of international-standard space

**IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE**

- An innovative precinct of connected galleries and outdoor spaces for multiple arts and cultural uses
- World class, multi-arts facilities able to host small community exhibitions through to large touring exhibitions
- Good connections with Fogarty Park, the Esplanade and Abbott Street
- Flexible use of garden areas (including Fogarty Park) to celebrate art, culture and creativity

**GALLERY PRECINCT**

Of 6404 respondents in the Our Cairns community survey, almost 7 out of 10 people supported some form of temporary or permanent partial closure of the Esplanade (Shields St to Aplin St) to create shared zones.
PLANNING THE FUTURE FOR CAIRNS CITY, TOGETHER

Together, we can make Cairns city centre one that not only meets the needs of our community, but showcases the best of our city to the world.

Have your say between 4 and 30 April 2018 and help shape the future of the city centre.

Complete the short online survey at www.cairns.qld.gov.au/citycentre
Talk to one of the Master Plan engagement team during Festival 2018 on the Esplanade
Share your thoughts on our interactive Ideas Wall at www.cairns.qld.gov.au/citycentre
Email your feedback to citycentre@cairns.qld.gov.au

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This first stage of consultation involves gathering community ideas, priorities and aspirations for three significant public spaces within the Cairns city centre. Council will consider all feedback, ideas and suggestions to refine and develop the project ideas.

Council will also revisit other elements of the 2011 Cairns City Centre Master Plan – in particular, accessibility and transport, environment, streetscaping and landscaping, built form and urban design.

These elements will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the new Cairns City Centre Master Plan and updated where necessary to ensure these elements remain contemporary and reflect other current strategy documents including:
- CairnsPlan 2016
- Tropical Urbanism policy
- Strategy for Culture and the Arts 2022

A draft Cairns City Centre Master Plan will then be prepared for further consideration.

In the long term, as individual projects are defined and funded, Council will undertake further concept design, technical investigation, testing and community engagement.