OVERVIEW OF KEY PRIORITIES

‘It’s time to invest in the future of Cairns and the Far North’

Cairns Regional Council is calling on the Queensland Government to commit to the following key priorities in the State’s Budget for 2019/20.

**CAIRNS ROAD NETWORK**
$370 million for capacity improvements on the Cairns Western Arterial Road (CWAR) linking Smithfield to south Cairns. Agreement with the Federal Government on the extension of the National Land Transport Network to the Cairns Airport and Smithfield and investment of $64 million in support of capacity enhancements on this road corridor. Commitment (in conjunction with the Federal Government) to the upgrade of the Kuranda Range Road to address significant safety, capacity and reliability issues. Confirmation of Queensland Government funding of $269 million to deliver the Smithfield Bypass, Cairns Southern Access Corridor - Stage 3 (Edmonton to Gordonvale) and Cairns Southern Access Corridor - Stage 4 (Kate St to Aumuller St) projects.

**CAIRNS AVIATION ROUTE DEVELOPMENT**
Additional funding allocation of $50 million to the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund (over the budget year and forward estimates) to support international aviation route development and specific allocation from this fund to be made for regional airports.

**CAIRNS SEAPORT MASTER PLANNING AND INVESTMENT**
Expeditious completion of the detailed master planning for the Cairns Seaport and immediately adjoining interfaces and provision of an appropriate funding allocation in the forward estimates for master plan implementation.

**NULLINGA DAM**
Commitment to complete the project’s full business case as a matter of urgency and a budget funding allocation of $425 million towards the project’s construction and implementation.

**CAIRNS GALLERY PRECINCT**
$13.3 million funding commitment towards the estimated capital cost ($39.8 million) of the Cairns Gallery Precinct as part of the proposed tripartite (Federal, Queensland and Local Governments) funding arrangement for this iconic cultural and tourism infrastructure project.

**CAIRNS HOSPITAL**
$90 million commitment from the Queensland Government towards the establishment of a research institute at the Cairns Hospital to support the goal of Cairns Hospital becoming a university hospital in the short to medium term. $15 million commitment in support of upgraded emergency department facilities and infrastructure at the Cairns Hospital.

**CAIRNS METRO/AIRPORT LINK**
$400,000 in funding to undertake the market needs assessment and business case for this innovative public transport project.

**CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE**
$176 million over the budget year and forward estimates to complete the refurbishment and expansion of the Cairns Convention Centre.

**UNIFORM (ELECTRICITY) TARIFF POLICY**
Commitment to a continuation of the Uniform (Electricity) Tariff Policy over the budget year and forward estimates to support the affordability of electricity for businesses and consumers in regional areas of Queensland including Cairns.

In addition to these key priorities, this document also sets out a series of additional priorities that should be implemented to help deliver economic prosperity and liveability for the Cairns region.
Foreword

‘A targeted plan to deliver jobs, growth and liveability in Cairns and Far North Queensland’

Cairns is the capital of Far North Queensland (FNQ), the largest region in Northern Australia (population circa 286,000) and is a strategic gateway to the Pacific, Asia and beyond. With a resident population of 165,000 people and an average 30,000 additional visitors staying in the city on any given night, Cairns is one of the largest and most dynamic regional cities in Australia. Unique liveability and solid economic fundamentals have seen Cairns experience significant population growth (2.3% per annum in the 15 years to 2016) – well in excess of the national growth rate. Significant private investment and renewed business confidence has also seen the Cairns region unemployment rate reduce significantly in recent years. The region’s unemployment rate currently sits at 5.8% (SA4, Jan 19). A unique combination of economic potential and superior liveability means Cairns is ideally positioned as a growth centre of strategic significance to the State of Queensland. But in order to realise this potential, Cairns and indeed the FNQ region, requires investment in the infrastructure, programs and policy that will provide the foundation for future growth.

A FAIRER SHARE

Capital investment by the Queensland Government is critical to delivering the infrastructure and projects that will support the future prosperity of the Cairns region. Set out on the opposite page are some highlights from analysis undertaken by Cairns Regional Council on Queensland Government budgeted capital expenditure over the seven years ending 2018/19. Over that seven-year period, the Queensland Government budgeted capital expenditure allocation per person for the Cairns region was the lowest of any region outside of SEQ. In 2018/19, budgeted Queensland Government capital expenditure for Cairns decreased by 11% compared to the prior year whilst for the State overall, there was an increase of 14%. Cairns deserves a fairer share of investment from the Queensland Government and this document sets out where this investment should be directed.

If Cairns had been allocated the same per capita capital funding as the Toowoomba/Darling Downs region over the seven years ending 30 June 2019, it would have been sufficient to fund all of the Key Priorities contained in this document.

TARGETED INVESTMENT

It is recognised that in order to be effective, regional investment and policy needs to be developed in the context of a broader regional strategy to ensure such initiatives are complementary and contribute to the realisation of a long term vision. With this in mind, Cairns Regional Council and key regional stakeholders have worked together to develop the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision (www.cairns.qld.gov.au/vision2050). This vision also incorporates the views and priorities of the Cairns community as expressed through the 2016 Our Cairns Survey, a community survey conducted by the Cairns Regional Council which attracted over 6,000 responses. The Cairns 2050 Shared Vision provides a framework that will deliver economic prosperity, quality of life and liveability for the Cairns community both today, and for the generations that follow. It sets out the projects, investment and policy required for the vision to be realised. The Cairns 2050 Shared Vision has provided the foundation for the priorities contained in this document.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Cairns 2050 Shared Vision was developed in the context of policy and strategy settings at the Federal, State and Regional level. From a State perspective, investment in the priorities contained within this document aligns with, and will support the implementation of, a number of key Queensland Government strategies and plans including (amongst others): The Queensland Plan: Queenslanders’ 30-year vision 2014; State Infrastructure Plan 2016; Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031; and Advancing North Queensland – Investing in the Future of the North (2016) plan. Accordingly, investing in the priorities contained in this document not only contributes to the delivery of the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision, it also supports the delivery of the state-wide strategic objectives of the Queensland Government.
WHERE'S OUR SHARE?

Compared to other Queensland regions, over the past seven years the Cairns region has received a significantly lower share of State Government budgeted capital expenditure. Our region deserves a fairer share.

We had the same $ per capita allocation as the Toowoomba/Darling Downs region over the past seven years we could have:

- Built 44 Performing Arts Centres
- Dredged Trinity Inlet 24 times over
- Paid for the Smithfield Bypass 19 times over
- Paid for the Convention Centre Expansion 16 times over

18/19 BUDGETED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PER PERSON

STATE GOV BUDGETED CAPITAL PURCHASES PER PERSON TREND

TOTAL QLD GOV BUDGETED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (CHANGE ON PRIOR YEAR)

CAIRNS $1715
TOWNSVILLE $3214
MACKAY $2670
FITZROY $4156
WIDE BAY $1695
TOOWOOMBA DARLING DOWNS $4184
Cairns Road Network

‘Investing in an integrated road network that will support the future economic prosperity, liveability, safety and resilience of the Cairns and FNQ community’

**COMMITMENT REQUIRED**

$370 million for capacity improvements on the Cairns Western Arterial Road (CWAR) linking Smithfield to south Cairns.

Agreement with the Federal Government on the extension of the National Land Transport Network to the Cairns Airport and Smithfield and investment of $64 million in support of capacity enhancements on this road corridor. Commitment (in conjunction with the Federal Government) to the upgrade of the Kuranda Range Road to address significant safety, capacity and reliability issues.

Confirmation of Queensland Government funding of $269 million to deliver the Smithfield Bypass, Cairns Southern Access Corridor - Stage 3 (Edmonton to Gordonvale) and Cairns Southern Access Corridor - Stage 4 (Kate St to Aumuller St) projects.

The road networks both within Cairns and connecting Cairns to regions located to the north, south and west are critical enablers for the regional economy. An effective road transport network also contributes to the region's liveability by facilitating efficient travel both within region and to/from outside the region for work, leisure and social purposes. Safety for all modes of transport is also an important consideration as is the resilience of the region’s road network to weather events and flooding.

There are six key road network projects that are critical to the delivery of an integrated road transport network for Cairns and to support enhanced connectivity with the surrounding region. The projects all contribute to the priorities contained in the Queensland Government’s Far North Regional Transport Plan (Draft) 2018. Each project is depicted in the adjacent diagram with further commentary in the paragraphs that follow.
PRIORITIES FOR CAIRNS

KEY ROAD NETWORK PROJECTS

Cairns Southern Access Corridor
Stage 3: Edmonton to Gordonvale

Cairns Southern Access Corridor
Stage 4: Kate St to Aumuller St

Cairns Western Arterial Road (CWAR)

Kuranda Range Road

Smithfield Bypass

National Highway 1
Draper Street to Smithfield

Smithfield Bypass

Cairns Southern Access Corridor
Stage 3: Edmonton to Gordonvale
Cairns Western Arterial Road

The Cairns Western Arterial Road provides an important linkage to the north, west and south of Cairns via its connections to the Captain Cook Highway, Kuranda Range Road and Bruce Highway respectively. The road corridor alleviates traffic flows through the Cairns City Centre by providing an alternate ‘bypass’ route to the National Highway 1 route that traverses through the Cairns City via Sheridan Street. Whilst elements of the Cairns Western Arterial Road are ‘dual laned’ in each direction, further investment is required to ensure this road corridor can deliver to its full potential supporting the efficient and safe movement of freight and people. Cairns Regional Council have identified a range of upgrades on this road corridor that would significantly enhance its capacity and improve connectivity and safety. Projects include ‘dual laning’ of the northern section of the road through to upgrades to McCoombe Street to deliver improved connectivity with the Bruce Highway to the south. An estimated investment of $370 million from the Queensland Government is required to deliver these enhancements and unlock this road corridor’s full potential.

National Highway 1 – Draper Street to Smithfield

The National Land Transport Network (NLTN) currently terminates at the corner of Comport and Draper Streets (just south of the Cairns City Centre). As a result, the section of the National Highway 1 that connects the southern fringe of the Cairns City to Smithfield via Sheridan Street is unable to benefit from the 80/20 (Federal/State) funding arrangements that apply to roads within the NLTN. The road corridor provides key connectivity to the Cairns Seaport, Cairns City Centre, Cairns Airport and Smithfield (including the Cairns Campus of James Cook University). Significant investment in capacity enhancements to this road corridor are required to ensure the efficient movement of freight and people particularly to the city’s air and sea ports. Population growth in Cairns’ northern suburbs has also seen increased commuter congestion along this route. The Queensland Transport Minister has recognised the strategic importance of this road corridor and has made a written request to the Federal Transport Minister for the extension of the NLTN to Smithfield as part of the Federal Government’s NLTN Determination Review. Cairns Regional Council strongly supports this extension and is advocating to the Federal Government for its approval. A series of capacity enhancements on this road corridor have been identified by Cairns Regional Council. The estimated cost of these enhancements is $320 million which would require a Queensland Government investment of $64 million should the request for NLTN extension be successful. The proposed enhancements would also complement the Queensland Government’s Smithfield Bypass project which is currently underway.

Kuranda Range Road

The Kuranda Range Road links Smithfield to Kuranda and provides critical connectivity between Cairns, the Atherton Tablelands (including Mareeba), the Cape York and the Gulf of Carpentaria. The FNQ region’s agricultural sector is a key driver of the need for an improved Kuranda Range Road. With a sector value of $2.95 billion and export value of $1.81 billion and potential for significant further growth (particularly if the region’s enormous water and arable land resources are further developed), this road link to Cairns needs to be significantly upgraded to unlock the sector’s full economic potential. An Impact Assessment Study of the road by Maunsell McIntyre (now AECOM) in 2000, identified that the road’s inadequacies contributed to poor safety, poor economic performance (travel times, vehicle operating costs and inability to accommodate freight-efficient vehicles) and poor reliability. 18 years on, these issues have not been adequately addressed with significant investment now needed to deliver increased capacity, improved safety and to enable the road to deliver its full economic potential for the region. Cairns Regional Council is calling on the Queensland and Federal Governments to commit $200 million and $800 million respectively towards a $1 billion improvement project on this road of regional and national strategic importance.
SMITHFIELD BYPASS

The 3.8-kilometre-long bypass between the McGregor Road roundabout and the Cairns Western Arterial Road (CWAR) and Captain Cook Highway (CCH) roundabout will provide an alternative route to the Captain Cook Highway. The bypass aims to ease congestion at the Smithfield and Carivonica roundabouts thereby improving traffic flows and reducing the risk of crashes on the Captain Cook Highway. The project is also complementary to the proposed CWAR and Kuranda Range Road projects referred to previously. The project is currently underway and scheduled for completion in late 2020. The Queensland Government’s funding commitment of $152 million towards the project should be confirmed in the Queensland Budget for 2019/20.

BRUCE HIGHWAY—CAIRNS SOUTHERN ACCESS CORRIDOR—STAGE 3: EDMONTON TO GORDONVALE

Cairns Regional Council commends the Queensland Government on its commitment to this project which includes the ‘dual laning’ of the Bruce Highway in both directions between Edmonton and Gordonvale. The project will deliver long-term improvements to traffic flow, freight delivery, road safety and connectivity between Gordonvale and Edmonton and destinations to both the north and south. It will also complement the industry development envisioned in the Queensland Government’s recently announced Cairns South State Development Area, thereby supporting further economic activity and job growth in the region. Early procurement works have started and construction is expected to commence in early 2020 with project completion scheduled for mid-2023. The Queensland Government’s funding commitment of $96.2 million towards the project (total cost of $481 million with $384.8 million to be contributed by the Federal Government) should be confirmed in the Queensland Budget for 2019/20.

BRUCE HIGHWAY—CAIRNS SOUTHERN ACCESS CORRIDOR—STAGE 4: KATE STREET TO AUMULLER STREET

Cairns Regional Council commends the Queensland Government on its commitment to this project which will deliver long-term improvements to traffic flow, freight delivery and road safety south of Cairns, through reducing urban congestion, reducing highway travel times and improving road access. As well as capacity improvements to the Southern Access Corridor between Kate Street and Aumuller Street, the project will deliver additional improvements from Comport Street to Kenny Street. The project is underway and expected to be completed in mid-2021. The Queensland Government’s funding commitment of $20.8 million towards the project (total cost of $104.1 million with $83.3 million to be contributed by the Federal Government) should be confirmed in the Queensland Budget for 2019/20.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:

- The Queensland Plan: Queenslanders’ 30-year vision 2014
- State Infrastructure Plan 2016
- Future-proofing the Bruce (Highway) policy document 2017
- Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031
- Far North Regional Transport Plan (Draft) 2018
- Advancing North Queensland – Investing in the Future of the North (2016) plan
- Queensland Tourism and Transport Strategy 2018
Nullinga Dam

‘A multigenerational infrastructure project that will unlock the full potential of the FNQ region’s agricultural sector and support the long term urban water security of Cairns’

Water security and quality are key priorities underpinning the future development of the Cairns region and Northern Australia. With 60% of Queensland’s annual water run-off and significant tracts of underdeveloped arable land, the FNQ region’s agricultural potential is enormous. To unlock this potential, it is imperative that there be investment in the infrastructure required to harness the region’s water resources. Urban water security is also an important strategic issue that needs to be addressed in order to meet the challenges of a Cairns population that is expected to nearly double in the next 30 years. Based on historical growth rates, the FNQ region’s population is expected to reach half a million people by the middle of the 21st century.

The proposed Nullinga Dam project, located on the Walsh River on the Atherton Tablelands, has been proposed as a critical piece of water supply infrastructure that will:

• Stimulate and expand irrigated agriculture in the region by supplementing existing water supplies.
• Support the long term urban water security necessary to cater for the Cairns region’s growing population.

Nullinga Dam would underpin additional agricultural production worth an estimated $200 million a year to FNQ and is vital to the further growth of FNQ’s agricultural industry, which already leads the way in Northern Australia and is well placed to become one of the country’s most important food bowls. This in turn would lead to maximising our export and distribution industries thereby contributing to job growth and increased economic activity across the FNQ region. A preliminary business case for the Nullinga Dam project was completed in 2017 and a detailed business case is currently being completed by Building Queensland engaging with the project proponent (SunWater) and stakeholders more broadly. Funding commitments are required to ensure this critical infrastructure project of regional and national significance, that will deliver benefits for multiple generations of the FNQ community, is able to proceed.

**STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**

This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:

• The Queensland Plan: Queenslanders’ 30-year vision 2014
• State Infrastructure Plan 2016
• Advancing North Queensland – Investing in the Future of the North (2016) plan
Health and wellbeing are critical foundations to a community’s quality of life and are essential if communities are to continue to grow and prosper. The Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service (CHHHS) is the FNQ region’s largest employer with approximately 6,000 staff delivering a wide range of hospital and health services across the region. The Cairns Hospital is a critical facility within the CHHHS network and caters for approximately 80,000 patient admissions every year. The hospital also deals with a diverse range of health and wellbeing needs of the regional community including the region’s significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

Expansion of the facilities and status of the Cairns Hospital as well as investment in the broader regional services managed by the CHHHS will be required to meet the future needs of a growing regional population. The region’s unique demographics, including significant visitor and Indigenous populations, are also key considerations when planning for the future health needs of Cairns. The aim is for Cairns Hospital to become a university hospital within the short to medium term and for the hospital to continue to expand the higher level of services offered locally.

Key priorities for Cairns Hospital include:
- Development of a research centre (including land acquisition and facility development) to support the goal of Cairns Hospital becoming a university hospital in the medium term. A $90 million commitment is required from the Queensland Government to complement commitments of $60 million already made Federally.
- Investment in a new/upgraded emergency department facilities and infrastructure. There were 71,118 presentations to the emergency department at the Cairns Hospital in 2017/18, a 22% increase over the preceding five years (the Cairns Hospital emergency department is the fifth busiest in Queensland). A $15 million commitment is required from the Queensland Government to implement these urgent upgrades.
- Ongoing investigation into the potential to provide higher level services locally at the Cairns Hospital that are currently only available ‘outside of region’ (e.g. neurosurgery).
- Continued development of specific models of care to address chronic disease, particularly in the region’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

Confirmation of funding to ensure the full delivery of the following key initiatives that have already been announced should also be included in the upcoming Queensland Budget:
- Delivery of a new mental health unit at the Cairns Hospital ($70 million).
- Delivery of the Cairns Southern Corridor Health Precinct ($15 million).
- Delivery of second catheterization laboratory (‘cath lab’) ($2.8 million).
- Delivery of hybrid theatre for vascular surgery ($4 million).

This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:
- The Queensland Plan: Queenslanders’ 30-year vision 2014
- Our Future State: Advancing Queensland’s Priorities (2018) plan
- Queensland Department of Health Strategic Plan 2016-2020
- State Infrastructure Plan 2016
- Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service Strategic Plan 2018-2022
Aviation Route Development

‘Delivering the air connectivity required to support job growth and economic activity in the region’s tourism, international education and high value agricultural export sectors’

Air connectivity is key to the economic development of the Cairns region. It opens up new visitor markets for the tourism sector, provides opportunities for the export of high value agricultural produce and promotes growth of the international education sector. A daily international wide-body flight to Cairns is potentially a $200 million a year export business, with $100 million of international visitor spend, $50-150 million of agricultural produce sales, and the potential to deliver more than 650 new jobs for the region. There are additional flow-on benefits as other trade is enabled by new air routes. These benefits are widely dispersed across businesses in the sector and the region. Currently more than 80% of international visitors through Cairns Airport travel on domestic flights. Due to the volume of international passengers flying-in on domestic routes, domestic capacity is also being constrained. Limited direct international aviation capacity is a key constraint to the region’s tourism economy. Analysis by Tourism Research Australia for the year ended 30 September 2018 indicates international tourism visitation and expenditure in TNQ reduced by 3.3% and 2% respectively compared to the prior year. Contrast this with the results for Brisbane and the Gold Coast over the same period where international tourism expenditure increased by 20.5% and 13.3% respectively. Increasing direct international aviation together with tourism product development and direct investment in destination marketing is required to address this worrying trend for the TNQ tourism sector.

There is significant international visitor growth that would be unlocked by additional capacity without reducing passengers on existing flights. To unlock this growth, Cairns Airport is targeting four new priority routes: one each from the Middle East and Southeast Asia (to serve Europe); one from Shanghai, and one from North America. Together, these four new air routes would provide $800 million per year in additional economic benefit to the $14 billion Cairns economy. More international services direct to Cairns will create more capacity for domestic visitors and encourage international visitors to stay longer and spend more whilst in the region.

But whilst the case for new international aviation routes into Cairns is compelling, temporary ‘start up’ funding packages are required to de-risk initial establishment for the airlines involved and secure these new routes in what is an extremely competitive international market. Cairns Airport is seeking to assemble four airline support packages to support the start-up on the four key routes identified above.

Additional funding allocation of $50 million to the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund (over the budget year and forward estimates) to support international aviation route development and specific allocation from this fund to be made for regional airports.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT
This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:

- Advancing Tourism 2016-20
- Queensland Tourism and Transport Strategy 2018
- Tourism and Events Queensland Strategic Plan 2018-2022
- Advancing North Queensland – Investing in the Future of the North (2016) plan
- Advancing Tourism in North Queensland 2016-20
Cairns Seaport Master Planning and Investment

‘Effectively planning for the long term needs of the Cairns Seaport and committing the investment required to realise the Seaport’s full economic potential’

Cairns Seaport is a critical enabler for the city of Cairns and the broader FNQ region. The Port is also strategically located from a naval, marine logistics and marine tourism perspective with close physical proximity to Asia, PNG and the Pacific. Importantly, the Port is part of the community, and it is infrastructure of State and National importance.

The Port has served as the natural consolidation and redistribution centre for supplies shipped to the coastal communities north of Cairns as well as the Torres Strait Islands and the Gulf of Carpentaria. It also acts as a supply and service centre for the Freeport mine operations in Indonesia, with regular shipping operations transiting through the Port. Cruise shipping, freight and logistics, marine maintenance, commercial fishing, super yachts, navy and marine based tourism are just some of the many users and stakeholders reliant on an effectively operating and protected Seaport.

The Port’s existing masterplan has guided historical port development and is due for review. Future expansion of Seaport operations, an increasing regional population and balancing the competing needs of the wide variety of Seaport users and stakeholders needs to be considered in the detailed master planning review. The completion of long term and detailed master planning for the Seaport and immediately adjoining interface areas is a critical initiative as will be investment in the infrastructure and development required to deliver that master plan to meet the demand. The objective of this master planning will be to properly assess market demands and optimise and protect the use of key Port infrastructure and address operational, economic, environmental and community relationships, supply chains and surrounding land uses.

The master planning is currently underway and due for completion in the first half of 2020. Funding allocations should be made in the forward estimates of the 2019/20 Queensland Budget to support Cairns Seaport master plan implementation.

**Commitment Required**

Expeditious completion of the detailed master planning for the Cairns Seaport and immediately adjoining interfaces and provision of an appropriate funding allocation in the forward estimates for master plan implementation.

**Strategic Alignment**

This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:

- The Queensland Plan: Queenslanders’ 30-year vision 2014
- State Infrastructure Plan 2016
- Advancing North Queensland – Investing in the Future of the North (2016) plan
- Advancing Tourism 2016-20
- Advancing Tourism in North Queensland 2016-20
Cairns Gallery Precinct

An iconic arts and cultural precinct that will deliver significant ongoing jobs and economic benefits to the FNQ region and cement Cairns’ position as the Arts and Cultural Capital of Northern Australia

Cairns is recognised as the Arts and Cultural Capital of Northern Australia. The Cairns Gallery Precinct is a project that strongly supports this status and complements recent regional investment in arts and cultural facilities, events and programs. These include the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF), Cairns Performing Arts Centre (CPAC), Munro Martin Parklands and Centre of Contemporary Arts among others. The project will transform and connect three heritage listed buildings in the Cairns City Centre (the Cairns Art Gallery, ‘Old’ Court House and former Mulgrave Shire Council offices) and establish a new world class gallery building to create a dynamic and unique gallery precinct with benefits for both the local community and domestic and international visitors.

The project would have a particularly strong connection to the region’s Indigenous community.

A significant proportion of Cairns’ population identify as First Nations peoples. Cairns is also the principle connection point for the exchange and celebration of Indigenous art and culture from communities throughout Cape York and the Torres Strait. The Cairns and Great Barrier Reef region is also home to Australia’s highest proportion of Indigenous Australians and its greatest diversity of Indigenous cultures. Community demand for the arts, the burgeoning local creative sector, the opportunity to showcase more Indigenous arts, and the need to diversify our tourism offering all contribute to the need for increased scale and diversity of Cairns’ visual arts infrastructure.

Establishment of the precinct will also have significant positive impacts to jobs and economic growth. In addition to the significant economic impact and employment created during construction, once operational, the project will add $20.7 million per annum to the regional economy (Gross Regional Product) and support 177 ongoing full time jobs through its direct operation and induced tourism expenditure. Cairns Regional Council is advocating for a tripartite funding arrangement for the project with Federal, State and Local (Council) Governments each contributing one third of the project’s total capital cost of $39.8 million. The project business case is expected to be completed in late March 2019.

**STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**

This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:

- Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031
- State Infrastructure Plan 2016
- 10-Year Roadmap for the Arts, Cultural and Creative Sector (Discussion Paper)
- Advancing Tourism 2016-20
- Advancing North Queensland – Investing in the Future of the North (2016) plan
- Advancing Tourism in North Queensland 2016-20
The Cairns Metro concept would provide for a direct and high frequency public transport link between the Cairns Airport and the Cairns City Centre including the proposed Tropical North Global Tourism Hub site. The adjacent diagram provides an overview of the proposed route for the service (approximately 7.5 kilometres long) and the key stops/attractors along that route. Cairns is a regional city with unique potential for such a service given the region’s high visitor population (almost 3 million visitors per year) and the fact the Cairns International Airport is the seventh busiest airport in Australia with in excess of five million passenger movements each year. The Cairns community has expressed a desire to see innovative public transport options progressed.

The Cairns Metro concept could potentially see the deployment of electric tram like vehicles or alternate innovative transport solutions. The project could also link to the future expansion of a wider public transport network to the north and south of the city centre and contribute to the delivery of a wider transport strategy for the region. Cairns Regional Council has engaged with the Queensland Transport Minister, the Hon Mark Bailey, regarding the project and Council has also worked collaboratively with representatives of the Department of Transport and Main Roads (‘TMR’) to identify the steps required to further develop the concept.

A business case is now required to determine the market demand for such a service, investigate the alternative options for servicing that demand and undertake commercial, financial and economic analysis for the preferred option. Cairns Regional Council is seeking $400,000 in funding from the Queensland Government as part of the 2019/20 Budget to fund the preparation of the business case.

**STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT**

This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:

- State Infrastructure Plan 2016
- Advancing Tourism 2016-20
- Queensland Tourism and Transport Strategy 2018
- Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031
- Far North Regional Transport Plan (Draft) 2018
- Advancing Tourism in North Queensland 2016-20
An innovative public transport solution connecting the Cairns Airport to the City Centre

- Cairns Domestic Terminal
- Cairns International Terminal
- Cairns North Sporting Precinct
- Cairns Hospital
- Cairns Performing Arts Centre
- Cairns Central Shopping Centre
- Cairns Performing Arts Centre & Munro Martin Parklands
- Cairns North
- Cairns Central
- Cairns Hospital & Health Precinct
- Cairns Aquarium
- Esplanade Parklands & Sports Precinct
- Esplanade & Lagoon
- Northern Esplanade Playground

Key attractor
Key accommodation region

Proposed CBD to airport route
Active transport links
400m catchment
800m catchment

Lake Street Bus terminal
Train Station
University Campuses
Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal
Cruise Liner Terminal
Reef Fleet Terminal
Proposed Global Tourism Hub
Convention Centre
Proposed Art Gallery Precinct
The operations of the Cairns Convention Centre are currently constrained by the size and layout of existing centre facilities. These constraints limit the ability of the centre to attract large conferences and run multiple events concurrently.

The existing centre facilities also require refurbishment to maintain the centre’s competitive position in the national and international conference market. Future expansion plans will need to consider the surrounding land uses contemplated in the proposed Global Tourism Hub development as well as Cairns Regional Council’s City Centre Master Plan. To address these issues, a significant expansion of the centre, coupled with a refurbishment of existing facilities is required. This investment will result in significant direct employment benefits from the centre’s expanded operations as well as flow on employment and economic benefits to the region’s tourism, accommodation and allied industries as a result of increased visitation.

Business and events tourism has a key role to play in delivering growth in international visitation to TNQ. Analysis by Tourism Research Australia for the year ended 30 September 2018 indicates international tourism visitation and expenditure in TNQ reduced by 3.3% and 2% respectively compared to the prior year. Contrast this with the results for Brisbane and the Gold Coast over the same period where international tourism expenditure increased by 20.5% and 13.3% respectively. Enhancing the region’s capacity to attract and host international events and conferences, together with aviation route development and direct investment in destination marketing, is required to address this worrying trend for the TNQ tourism sector.

The previous Queensland Government announcement of $176 million in funding to support the project is welcomed and will deliver significant economic and social benefits to Cairns.

A business case for the $176 million Queensland Government investment is currently being completed by Building Queensland. The business case focuses on both the economic and social benefits the centre’s expansion will provide. The business case is expected to be completed in mid-2019. Formal commitment of Queensland Government funding to deliver the project should be made in the 2019/20 Queensland Budget in recognition of the significant benefits this project will deliver.
Uniform (Electricity) Tariff Policy

‘A commitment to fairer and affordable energy for Cairns and FNQ’

The aim of the Uniform Tariff Policy (UTP) is to ensure, wherever possible, that customers of the same consumption class should pay no more for their electricity merely because of their geographic location in Queensland. UTP will deliver electricity as an essential service, on a fair basis, regardless of location and encourage economic development in regional Queensland. Continuation of the principles underlying the UTP are critical to the region’s ongoing competitiveness. Higher electricity and energy prices are continually identified by businesses operating throughout the Cairns and FNQ region as a key constraint to growth. Confirmation of the extension of this policy for the budget year and over the forward estimates is critical to ensuring consumers are able to access electricity at a fair and reasonable price thereby supporting ongoing jobs and economic growth.

Commitment Required

Commitment to a continuation of the Uniform Electricity Tariff Policy over the budget year and forward estimates to support the affordability of electricity for businesses and consumers in regional areas of Queensland including Cairns.

Strategic Alignment

This priority aligns with and supports the implementation of the following Queensland Government strategies and initiatives:

• Powering Queensland Plan 2017
Additional Priorities

In addition to the Key Priorities outlined in this document, set out over the following pages are a series of additional priorities that are consistent with the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision and would also support the long term economic prosperity and liveability of the Cairns region. A number of these projects/initiatives require support through funding allocations as part of the Queensland Government 2019/20 Budget.

CAIRNS CITY DEAL
The Cairns 2050 Shared Vision provides a framework to deliver long term economic prosperity and liveability for the Cairns community both today and for the generations that follow. The vision identifies the projects, policy and investment that will be critical to realising these objectives. Cairns Regional Council is advocating for the establishment and implementation of a City Deal for Cairns based on the shared vision that will facilitate the delivery of a number of the vision’s key projects. This initiative is consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Federal and Queensland Governments to Establish and Implement City Deals. We are calling on the Federal and Queensland Governments to execute a Statement of Intent with Cairns Regional Council to establish a City Deal for Cairns based on the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision.

TROPICAL NORTH GLOBAL TOURISM HUB
In 2017, the Queensland Government announced a proposed Global Tourism Hub for Tropical North Queensland with a preferred site on Port North’s strategic port land within the Cityport precinct at Wharf Street, Cairns. A multi-phase procurement process is being conducted by the Queensland Government in relation to the project. Cairns Regional Council is seeking Queensland Government commitments to the following:

- Regular engagement and consultation with regional stakeholders as assessment progresses and commitments to ensure economic benefits, appropriate city centre integration and public realm benefits are defined and delivered.
- Reinvestment (in the Cairns region) of any casino taxes and levies flowing to the Queensland Government from the development.

WANGETTI TRAIL
The Wangetti Trail is a proposed 76 kilometre dual use (mountain biking and hiking) trail stretching along the coastal plains and mountain hinterland between Palm Cove and Port Douglas. The trail will be one of Australia’s leading adventure based ecotourism experiences, attracting visitors on an international scale. The trail will provide walkers and mountain-bike riders with a wilderness bushland and ocean experience, showcasing the beauty of the Wet Tropics Rainforest, national parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Capital costs for implementation are expected to be in the vicinity of $35 million. Cairns Regional Council welcomes the Queensland Government taking the lead on this exciting new tourism development with international potential. Specific capital funding allocations for trail design, construction and implementation should be made in the Queensland Budget for 2019/20.

DRAPER ROAD WATER TREATMENT PLANT
Security of supply of water for urban use will be critical if the Cairns region's population and economic growth potential are to be realised. This proposed new water treatment plant would be located on Council land near Draper Road, Gordonvale. It has been identified by Cairns Regional Council’s Water Security Advisory Group (WSAG) as a key priority to meet the short to medium term urban water security needs of Cairns. Servicing the southern urban development front of Cairns, the plant would treat water from Behana Creek and the Mulgrave River. The capital cost of the plant is estimated to be in the vicinity of $200 million and is scheduled for construction in Council’s capital works program over the four years ending 30 June 2026. Council is seeking a contribution from the Queensland Government towards this regionally significant water infrastructure project with an appropriate allocation to be made in the outer estimate years of the Queensland Budget for 2019/20.
**CAIRNS SHIPPING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The Cairns Shipping Development Project will provide critical infrastructure necessary to support the expansion of Cairns’ cruise ship, naval defence and commercial marine activities. The project will significantly enhance the operations and capabilities of the Cairns Seaport. The project has direct linkages with and supports the growth of Cairns’ marine maintenance industries, which service the naval, tourism and commercial fishing sectors. Specific initiatives include: dredging to widen, deepen and lengthen the existing outer shipping channel (Trinity Inlet); widening and deepening of the existing inner harbour channel and Crystal Swing Basin; establishment of a new shipping swing basin (Smith’s Creek Swing Basin) to enable future expansion of the HMAS Cairns Navy base; wharf upgrades and placement of material from capital dredging on land. Necessary approvals for the project to proceed have now been granted and the Queensland Government has previously committed $120 million towards the project. Confirmation of the funding necessary to deliver the project should be made in the Queensland Budget for 2019/20.

**GREAT BARRIER REEF/WET TROPICS RAINFOREST (MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE/FUNDING)**

Cairns lies at the gateway to two of the world’s greatest natural wonders in the Great Barrier Reef (GBR) and Wet Tropics Rainforest (WTR), both of which are World Heritage listed. As well as the GBR’s unquestionable environmental value, it also underpins significant components of the Cairns region’s economy, in particular tourism. Recent analysis by Deloitte Access Economics estimated the GBR had an asset value of $56 billion, contributed an estimated $6.5 billion annually to the Australian economy and supported 64,000 jobs. The preservation and effective management of the GBR and WTR must be recognised as a strategic priority of national and global importance if their significant social, community and economic benefits are to be secured for future generations. Cairns Regional Council is calling on all levels of Government to work together to:

- Review the current management structures for the GBR and WTR with a view to achieving consolidation and simplification.
- Agree on an appropriate funding model (including quantum of funding) for GBR and WTR management and preservation recognising the significant social and economic value of both assets.

**EXTENSION OF RELEVANT FUNDING PROGRAMS OVER THE BUDGET YEAR AND FORWARD ESTIMATES**

**WORKS FOR QUEENSLAND**

The $600 million Works for Queensland (W4Q) program supports regional councils to undertake job-creating maintenance and minor infrastructure projects. Cairns Regional Council commends the Queensland Government on this successful and important initiative which supports employment and community outcomes in regional Queensland. Council is calling on the Queensland Government to commit to a funding allocation of $200 million per annum towards this program over the budget year and forward estimates with councils having two financial years within which to expend the annual funding allocation on eligible projects.

**BUILDING OUR REGIONS**

Building our Regions is a $445 million multi-year targeted regional infrastructure program for Local Government projects. In the 2018/19 Queensland Budget, an allocation of $70 million was made for round four of this program. Cairns Regional Council is calling on the Queensland Government to commit funding allocations to the continuation of this funding program across the forward estimates contained in the Queensland Budget for 2019/20.

**MAKING QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA’S EVENTS CAPITAL**

The Queensland Government allocated funding of $36 million over the three years ending 30 June 2021 towards this program in the 2018/19 Budget. The program aims to drive growth of major events throughout Queensland. Cairns has a proven track record of hosting major events with examples including the Ironman Asia Pacific and the Mountain Bike World Championships. Cairns Regional Council is calling on the Queensland Government to commit further funding towards this important initiative over the budget year and forward estimates. Cairns Regional Council also requests that a specific allocation of this fund be made to supporting major events in regional Queensland with increased promotion of regional areas (such as Cairns) as a destination of choice for major events. For Cairns, the focus should be on events that take advantage of our proximity and connectivity to Asia, showcasing our natural assets, encouraging mass community participation, and promoting our Indigenous culture.

**GROWING TOURISM, GROWING TOURISM JOBS**

The Queensland Government allocated funding of $94.6 million over the five years ending 30 June 2022 towards this program in the 2018/19 Budget. The allocation included funding for aviation attraction, cruise ship attraction and tourism infrastructure, product and experience development. Cairns Regional Council is calling on the Queensland Government to commit further funding towards this important initiative over the budget year and forward estimates. Council also requests that a specific allocation of this fund be made to initiatives located in regional Queensland in recognition of the unique challenges associated with growing tourism in regional areas.
INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT
Queensland Government support is also required for a number of industry development projects in the Cairns region that have the potential to deliver economic growth and diversification as well as increased employment.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL EXPORT DEVELOPMENT
Cairns Regional Council is calling on the Queensland Government to commit $10 million towards the establishment of a Regional Export Distribution Centre in Cairns. An EOI for the establishment of this centre in Cairns has been lodged and the Queensland Government has confirmed the Cairns bid will now proceed to the business case stage. There is also a need for a detailed agricultural export review to be undertaken for Cairns and FNQ to identify how potential export links can be further developed. An analysis of potential export markets, focusing on those markets that either already have established air/sea links with Cairns or where there is significant potential for direct links to be established, should be undertaken to identify potential demand for agricultural products from the region. This should include analysis of potential demand for agricultural products already being produced in the region as well as new crops/livestock that could be produced having regard to the region’s climatic and other conditions. Feasibility analysis is then required for the entire supply chain (including logistics) to determine the commercial feasibility of these potential markets and to identify which markets/industry sectors should be the focus for further development and investment. Expansion of high value agricultural exports through the Cairns airport would also contribute positively to further airline route development and sustainability by expanding the factors underpinning the development beyond tourism visitation alone. We are calling on the Queensland Government to allocate funding in the 2019/20 Budget to undertake this important imitative.

CAIRNS MANUFACTURING HUB (IMPLEMENTATION)
The Queensland Government has previously announced an initial $10 million in funding to support the delivery of the Cairns Manufacturing Hub with an initial focus on marine, aviation and food manufacturing. Cairns Regional Council welcomes this commitment and looks forward to confirmation of funding in the 2019/20 Budget in support of the project to ensure its successful delivery.

STUDY CAIRNS (FUNDING)
International education is a key growth sector of the Cairns economy and supports regional economic diversification. The sector is high yielding with the length of stay of international students being significantly longer than domestic and international tourists. Family and friends visiting international students while they study in Cairns also provides a boost to the local economy. Study Cairns represents organisations, institutions and businesses in Cairns that are dedicated to providing help and support to students when they are studying in the Cairns region. Study Cairns also actively promotes the region’s education sector to international markets. The current Queensland Government funding commitment to Study Cairns expires on 30 June 2020. Cairns Regional Council is calling on the Queensland Government to confirm an extension of its funding for Study Cairns beyond June 2020 to support the continued development of the international education sector in the Cairns and FNQ region.

QUEENSLAND SUPERYACHT STRATEGY 2018-23 (FUNDING)
The Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018-2023 was finalised by the Queensland Government in 2018 and recognises the significant potential of the superyacht industry to deliver jobs and economic growth for the state of Queensland. The superyacht sector in Cairns is well established with 71 superyachts visiting Cairns in 2017 which contributed $25.5 million to the regional economy and supported 77 full time jobs. Cairns Regional Council supports the Queensland Superyacht Strategy 2018-2023 but is calling on the Queensland Government to commit specific funding allocations for strategy implementation in the priority areas of policy development, infrastructure, destination promotion and supply chain development.
The priorities and projects contained in this document have been drawn from the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision. The development of this vision was led by Cairns Regional Council in consultation with key regional stakeholders. The vision provides a framework to secure long term economic prosperity and liveability for the Cairns region. To find out more about the Cairns 2050 Shared Vision visit www.cairns.qld.gov.au/vision2050 and sign on to help us secure an even better future for the Cairns community.
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