

ORDINARY MEETING	12
23 AUGUST 2023	

CAIRNS RECREATIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY

79/7/6-01 | #7237918

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorses the Recreational Trails Strategy

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Nil.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Recreational Trails Strategy (The Strategy) forms the second component of Council's overarching Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy (CCWS) and sits alongside the Active Transport Strategy (Part 1).

Council has not previously had a strategic direction or framework for this asset class, and the strategy addresses the following critical issues:

- Council does not have clear roles and responsibilities for trails.
- Council has no explicit position on informal trails.
- Risks with the use and expectations of informal trails
- Trails have not been mapped or planned for at a strategic level.
- There are no specific requirements for the design, management, and maintenance of Council's trails.

The delivery of this strategy will be a response to key issues and opportunities identified, adding significant value to both Council's asset management approach and the broader trail user community.

Developing a strategy and policy position on trails will add significant value for money to Council and it's local community by:

- Increasing efficiencies with the ability to plan for and align trail maintenance.
- Prioritising key actions to ensure high priorities and potential risks associated with the existing trail network issues are addressed first.
- Planning for life cycle asset management through the ability to better monitor, track, and record asset conditions
- Anticipating growth needs, potential issues, and opportunities for informing future provision
- Ensuring Council can be more proactive than reactive in planning for and delivering the trail network.

This report recommends that Council endorses the Recreational Trails Strategy, noting it will be reviewed in five years. Following Council's consideration the report will be posted to Council website.

BACKGROUND:

Council's intention when commencing this work was to develop one Cycling and Walking Strategy for Cairns that incorporated both active transport and recreational trails. During the development phase, it was determined that two separate strategies were required due to the disparities between the general acceptance and understanding of formal pathway infrastructure. The Active Transport Strategy: Part one of the Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy (CCWS) was endorsed by Council in 2020.

Council has not previously had a strategic direction or framework for recreation trails and has not mapped or planned for trails at a strategic level for both existing trails and future expansion opportunities. The process for developing this strategy (part two) has involved the existing situation review and analysis, community engagement, strategy preparation, consultation, and finalisation.

A review of the current situation and status of trail provision in the Cairns local government area identified influencing factors and potential issues which needed to be addressed by the strategy.

Council does not have clear roles and responsibilities for trails and there is currently heavy reliance on volunteer programs which lack capacity for moderate and major maintenance regimes. Local clubs who solely manage large trail networks are under resourced with less than 2% of Cairns MTB Club members currently volunteer to maintain trails at Smithfield MTB Park.

There are currently no specific requirements for the design, management, and maintenance of Council's trails, with improvements based on an ad-hoc basis, often only where necessary. Monitoring trails predominantly relies on the community to raise concerns and notify Council of issues.

There is also an extensive network of informal trails which are often aligned with rail trails or fire access routes. These trails are unsanctioned or illegally constructed trails, and not maintained to any adopted standard. Council has no explicit position on informal trails, resulting in risks with the use by the community and expectation of informal trails to be maintained by Council.

Council has no formal agreement with the State Government for how informal trails are managed and these trails are often in environmentally sensitive area and would be subject to complex approvals if formalised.

Walking and mountain biking is rapidly evolving with constant change influenced by sector led growth, event expansion, technological enhancements, local demand and wellbeing opportunities, tourism interest, industry trends and global recognition, highlighting a need to adopt a plan for the region's trail network.

COMMENT:

The project commenced in alignment with the broader Walking and Cycling planning for Cairns. It involved early stages of reviewing existing guidance, best practice, and local trail provision as well as the assessment of key contributing and underlying factors for guiding the strategic direction of the strategy. Initial consultation findings via a community survey indicated top trail improvements as expanding the network with more trails, maintaining existing trails and improving the safety and signage of trails. This formed the

foundation for the strategy and highlighted the need to establish a trail hierarchy, greater prioritisation, and standardised management plans for trails to better guide asset provision.

Six priorities were identified and agreed to ensure the strategy is reflective of community needs and responsive to underlying issues, potential risks, inherent benefits, and future demand:

1. Clearly articulate Council's role and responsibilities in relation to local trails, investment, and resourcing
2. Adopt a clear position on informal trails that reflects Council's capacity.
3. Improve community safety and wellbeing in using recreational trails.
4. Provide clear guidance for strengthening our existing walking and mountain biking trails asset provision.
5. Outline key actions for how to better deliver, maintain and manage the trail network.
6. Establish and support strong partnerships to improve the trail network.

By implementing this strategy, significant value can be added to both Council's asset management approach and the broader trail user community by:

- Increasing community health and wellbeing opportunities
- Supporting high demand activities and recreation
- Build the regional economy for FNQ and expand ecotourism opportunities.
- Providing more opportunities to protect, experience and appreciate our co-located natural assets and unique landscape.

The following recommendations reflect the list of priority projects and actions in the strategy and are based on the standardisation, management, and growth of the trail network. Recommendations relate more broadly to all Local Government controlled trails in general. These actions have been grouped into the following themes which are explained in detail in the strategy:

- Fit for purpose network
- Management
- Expanded networks
- Signage
- Collaboration
- Consultation and engagement
- Marketing and promotion

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (recommended):

That Council endorses the Recreational Trails Strategy

Option 2:

That Council does not endorse the Recreational Trails Strategy and provides an alternative course of action.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Risk management

Financial risk - By adopting the strategy Council will be able to prioritise projects and programs based on their alignment with the Strategy's position and principle. The strategy also reduces Council financial risk by establishing a position on informal trails and an assessment criterion for evaluating potential new trails.

Heritage, environment, and climate - The strategy reduces environmental risks by outlining how Council can help mitigate potential impacts and by not assuming ownership of informal trails which often occur in environmentally sensitive areas. The strategy also highlights the need to respectfully acknowledge, address the needs of and collaborate with Traditional Owner's.

Planning, managing, and maintaining infrastructure - The strategy action plan details how Council will successfully plan and manage trails in the future to better inform future maintenance regimes and clearly define the roles and responsibilities for trail provision.

Information security – The strategy suggests improvements to how trail data is recorded and made available to the public to reduce liability issues and improve data accuracy.

Reputation - Ensuring that Council trails are managed and promoted in a way that is responsive to community needs will ensure that Council has a positive relationship with the community. The strategy suggests actions for addressing community expectations, increased demand on the network and impacts on landowners.

Disaster management - Council can minimise the risk during a natural disaster by ensuring an appropriate maintenance program occurs regularly as needed and appropriate signage is installed where necessary for emergency contact information.

Governance, accountability, and ethical decision making - The strategy will provide staff with a framework to ensure that all decisions are made in line with Council's adopted position to create a working group for trails and Standardised Management Plans which clearly define the roles and responsibilities of trails.

Wellbeing, health, and safety - The Strategy will ensure all trail provision and maintenance is underpinned by the appropriate Australian standards and best practice guidelines. The strategy suggests signage warning of expected trail conditions, and where appropriate where trails are informal and not maintained, to mitigate community safety risks.

Workforce planning - The Strategy will ensure staff have a clear understanding of the expectation for trails, how Council expects them to be managed and maintained including the skills required, level of service needed and how that expectation is communicated to the wider community.

Council Finance and the Local Economy:

Mountain biking in Cairns alone supports approximately 206 FTE jobs, an output of \$35.4 million, \$18.8 million in gross regional product, and wages and salaries of \$13.4 million (AEC, 2023). Recent studies have indicated MTB riding in Cairns could induce up to \$140 million in visitor expenditure with further development (AEC, 2023). It is within Council's

capacity to enhance regionally significant experiences that make the destination of Cairns even more appealing to visitors.

The Strategy provides a foundation for responsible financial decision-making ensuring Council has a framework in place for defining, providing, managing and maintaining trail assets to align with existing and future needs for the region.

A strong network of recreational trails will help build the region's economy and expand ecotourism opportunities as a key infrastructure component of community and visitor experiences of Cairns. There is no impact to the existing budget arising from the endorsement of this strategy. Recommendations from this strategy will inform future budget discussions.

Community and Cultural Heritage:

The strategy will improve community wellbeing by:

- Enabling greater access by a wider cross section of the community.
- Responding to community feedback for trail improvements including expansion, maintenance, and safety
- Increasing community health and wellbeing opportunities
- Supporting high demand activities and recreation
- Providing more opportunities to protect, experience and appreciate our co-located natural assets and unique landscape.

The strategy will help foster greater cultural awareness by:

- Exploring how First Peoples can help guide the provision and management of recreational trails in the region.
- Investigate opportunities to partner with First People's including establishing ranger programs, and support or involvement in the recreational trail network.
- Explore opportunities for truth telling, sharing of stories, and education.
- Protect First People's spiritual connection with the land and cultural heritage including artefacts or places of significance along recreational trails.
- Where relevant, engage with the First People's Advisory Committee (FPAC) for advice and assistance regarding community engagement activities providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Cairns Local Government Area with input into Council decision making processes.

Natural Environment:

The strategy acknowledges trails occur almost exclusively in naturally significant environments. Adopting the strategy will reduce potential negative impacts on the natural environment by:

- Not absorbing informal trails located in ecologically sensitive areas.
- Maintaining trails to manage erosion, pollution from rubbish and the spread of weeds.
- Supporting volunteer programs leading regeneration of trail environments.
- Detailing an appropriate environmental management approach for each trail as part of a Standardised Management Plan (SMP).
- Installing warning signage where appropriate of potential environmental impacts.

Corporate and Operational Plans:

The Strategy is directly aligned with Council's Corporate Plan and addresses objectives across all 5 focus areas:

- **Robust Economy** - Optimise visitation and tourism opportunities; and promote Cairns as the place to relocate.
- **Natural Assets** - Value and protect Cairns' pristine natural environment.
- **Design for Liveability** - Proactive advocacy and collaboration with state and federal governments, enhance community wellbeing and safety; and deliver valued suburban community infrastructure.
- **Community and Culture** - Support diverse sport, cultural and community groups that contribute to wellbeing.
- **Focused Council** - Build effective partnerships with community and governments; and ensure decision making is collaborative, transparent, and accountable.

Further to this, it is Identified in Council's Operational Plan as a key action for delivering objectives of "Designing for Liveability."

Policies and Planning:

Strategic plans, policies and reference material which underpin this policy include:

- Council's Corporate Plan
- Council's Operational Plan
- Active Transport Strategy
- TRC Recreational Trail Planning, Design and Management Guidelines [2020]
- Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy [2018]
- Queensland Walking Strategy [2019]
- Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) Regional Mountain Bike Strategy [2015]
- Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines [2019]
- Guidelines for the Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance of Recreational Trails in South Australia [2016]
- Cairns Regional Council Signage Guidelines 2023
- National Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style Manual [2006]

CONSULTATION:

Development of this strategy has involved consultation and involvement with both internal and external stakeholders:

- Cairns Regional Council Officers
- Queensland Government - Department of Environment and Science (DES)
- Queensland Government – Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS)
- Queensland Government – Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)
- Far North Queensland Regional Association of Councils (FNQROC)
- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS)
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
- Traditional Owners and First People's

- Track and Trails Volunteer Group
- Green Space, Our Place Volunteer Group
- Cairns Trails Working Group (including elected officials and industry experts)
- Cairns Mountain Bike Club
- Cairns BMX
- Southside Mountain Bike Club
- Other NFP local clubs
- Relevant private landowners
- World Trails
- Wangetti Trail project representatives
- General public
- Other local community / walking groups
- Local, state, national and international MTB event operators (e.g. Crankworks)
- Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA)

Note: The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavours basis by Council Officers and may not be exhaustive

A public survey was conducted as part of the Broader Cairns Walking and Cycling Strategy 2020 engagement process to consult with the local community on Active Transport. The month-long online form of engagement was based on a social pinpoint platform allowing map-based feedback from 285 participants. A total of 728 comments were received including feedback provided via Council's website and social media channels. The responses have directly shaped focus areas of the strategy and have provided genuine insights into the need for improving trail network condition, safety and distribution.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1 – Recreational Trails Strategy



Tim Dendle
Executive Manager Community Spaces



Destry Puia
Director Lifestyle and Community



Recreational **Trails** Strategy

2023



READER DISCLAIMER:

The Recreational Trails Strategy is part two of Council's broader Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy. This document should be read in conjunction with the core guidelines, policies and standards referenced in this strategy.

Please refer to Appendix D for further information and links to download the associated documents.



Recreational **Trails** Strategy

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

2023



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND AND WATERWAYS ON WHICH WE WORK AND LIVE, INCLUDING THE LAND AND TRAILS DESCRIBED IN THIS STRATEGY. WE RECOGNISE THE CONTINUING CONNECTION TO COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY BY THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS WHO HAVE CARED FOR THIS LAND FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. WE PAY RESPECT TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE AND EXTEND THAT RESPECT TO ALL FIRST PEOPLES IN THIS REGION.

THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY CLEARLY OUTLINES COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY AND ESTABLISHES DIRECTION FOR HOW TO PLAN, MANAGE AND MARKET EXCEPTIONAL TRAIL EXPERIENCES IN CAIRNS.

The Recreational Trails Strategy (the Strategy) is part two of Council's overarching Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy (CCWS).

The Strategy has been developed to provide a clear, coordinated and strategic approach to guide Cairns Regional Council's planning, development, management and promotion of recreational walking and mountain bike trails (trails) for the first time.

It considers a range of walkers and mountain bikers and the varied experiences trail cater to, ensuring the network provides for a broad community including both residents and visitors alike.

Council recognizes trail development is often a collaboration between State and Local Government as well as community groups and Traditional Owners.

The Strategy details a new hierarchy for trails and explains the standards associated with formalised trails. It details the considerations for managing and maintaining trails as well as the future strategic trail projects for expanding the current network.

A detailed set of guidance is provided to capture relevant considerations, design principles, criteria and guidelines for ensuring a high quality network of trails across the region.

A implementation plan is outlined to ensure the successful delivery of key outcomes throughout this strategy.

The extensive list of priority actions are provided to guide Council's considerations for investment in, and advocacy for trails, informing the next phase of this project.





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THIS SECTION PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF THIS STRATEGY INCLUDING THE BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT SURROUNDING TRAILS, KEY ISSUES AND DRIVERS FOR CHANGE.

SECTION 01:

CONTEXT

CONTEXT:

INTRODUCTION

THIS DOCUMENT ESTABLISHES A PLAN MOVING FORWARD FOR THE TRAIL NETWORK IN CAIRNS BY PROVIDING CLEAR DIRECTION FOR DESIGNING, MAINTAINING, AND MANAGING THE NETWORK.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Recreational Trails Strategy for Cairns intends to provide a comprehensive and coordinated document to assist with the planning, development, construction, management, and promotion of walking and mountain bike trails across the region. It aims to:

- Explore key drivers which establish the need for a dedicated strategy
- Identify the opportunities and benefits of delivering the strategy including catalyst projects for expanding the trails network
- Clearly articulate Council's position and goals in relation to the provision of trails
- Set a hierarchy for trails with minimum standards for trail building
- Establish Council's role in the management and maintenance of trails clearly articulating responsibilities
- Summarize relevant guidance material for consideration in providing trails

- Capture engagement, partnership, consultation and marketing opportunities involved in implementing the strategy
- Prioritize actions to implement key outcomes of the strategy relating to future trail provision and the maintenance, upgrades and renewal of existing trails
- Planning for life cycle asset management through the ability to better monitor, track and record asset conditions
- Anticipating growth needs, potential issues and opportunities for informing future provision
- Ensuring Council can be more proactive than reactive in planning for and delivering the trail network.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions apply to this document and should be noted.

- This strategy does not intend to guide investment in non-Council owned or controlled land or be used to influence regional economic development
- Trail use for motorbikes, other All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) and horse riding is not considered
- Bicycle Motocross (BMX) and skate facilities such as pump tracks or skills parks are excluded
- Pedestrian and cycling pathway networks (on bitumen or concrete surfaces) which are managed through Council's Active Transport Strategy are excluded

WHY HAVE A STRATEGY?

The walking and mountain biking network of Cairns has never previously been mapped or planned for, at a strategic level, contributing to the issues and concerns with the existing trail network. Developing a strategy and policy position on trails will add significant value for money to Council and it's local community by:

- Increasing efficiencies with the ability to plan for and align trail maintenance
- Prioritising key actions to ensure high priorities and potential risks associated with the existing trail network issues are addressed first

DOCUMENT APPROACH

The recent growth and focus on trails in Australia and more broadly has resulted in an abundance of information for guiding trail planning and design.

This document does not intend to replace what exists, but rather summarise what's relevant and supplement it by providing clarity around the coordinated management approach required for local trails in Cairns.

Whilst the region has many existing tracks, recreational walking and mountain biking is not actively managed or coordinated. Given Cairns is uniquely positioned to leverage the significant community and economic benefits associated with these assets, a strategic management approach is required.

COUNCIL'S BROADER STRATEGY

Council's intention when commencing this process was to develop one Cycling and Walking Strategy for Cairns that incorporated both active transport and recreational trails. During the development phase, it was determined that two separate strategies were required due to the disparities between the general acceptance and understanding of formal pathway infrastructure, when compared to the ambiguity around recreational trails (refer to Appendix C for further information on the process for preparing this Strategy).

The Active Transport Strategy: Part one of the Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy (CCWS) was endorsed by Council in 2020 and is publicly available via the Council website (refer to Appendix D for further information).

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

The Recreational Trails Strategy forms part two of Council’s overarching CCWS focusing primarily on trails for walking and mountain biking across the region.

The document has been structured in four sections to assist with navigating the content provided to set the context, outline direction, summarize relevant guidance and for implementing the Strategy. Further detail is provided below.

WHO IS THIS DOCUMENT FOR?

The Strategy has been designed primarily for Council use and as a resource for other government agencies, industry groups as well as the broader community. Not all of the content within these guidelines will be relevant for every user or trail. It is intended that the reader will select what they need from the content presented and seek additional information where relevant, from the material referenced in the Appendices.



CAIRNS CYCLING AND WALKING STRATEGY



PART 1 ACTIVE TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2020



PART 2 RECREATIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY 2023



- CONTEXT**
Section one explores the under-pinning context and key drivers
- FRAMEWORK**
Section two establishes Council’s position, objectives and overarching strategies
- ASSET PROVISION**
Section three provides guidance and outlines requirements for trail building
- IMPLEMENTATION**
Section four describes opportunities for collaboration, actions for implementing the strategy and next steps

CONTEXT:

POLICY + PLANNING

THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY FOR CAIRNS IS INFORMED BY RELEVANT NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING GUIDANCE. IT SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER KEY DOCUMENTATION RELATING TO THE PLANNING, DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF RECREATIONAL TRAILS.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Below is a summary of key strategic plans and policies which underpin this strategy. This strategy seeks to expand on the recommendations within the Tropical North Queensland Regional Mountain Bike Strategy (2015) and fits within the below planning context.



TRC Recreational Trail Planning, Design and Management Guidelines [2020]

These guidelines aim to help develop world class trails and experiences. They help understand and evaluate how the existing experience can be improved or enriched, providing tools and examples of best practice to guide future trail provision.



Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy [2018]

The Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy was commissioned to gain an understanding of the existing and projected demand for mountain bike trails, identify gaps, constraints and opportunities, and provide strategies to guide trail investment decisions. The strategy aims to develop a strategic prioritisation framework to guide investment decisions.



Queensland Walking Strategy [2019]

The Queensland Walking Strategy 2019–2029 is part of a holistic approach adopted by the Queensland Government to encourage Queenslanders to enjoy and participate in regular physical activity to improve their health and wellbeing. It builds on feedback which identified barriers to walking and develops a range of priorities to improve walking environments across the state. It outlines opportunities for further development of walking tracks and trails to support ecotourism.



Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) Regional Mountain Bike Strategy [2015]

The TNQ Regional Mountain Bike Strategy was developed by the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Council (FNQROC). It responds to a need for a clear, region-wide blueprint to guide stakeholders across North Queensland. The strategy builds on the success of the grass roots evolution of mountain biking, identifying opportunities for cross-region collaboration and formalization of leadership roles. Given the level of growth in this industry and region, this document will be reviewed to address current demands, trends and local growth opportunities.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The documents below are referenced in this strategy and contain supplementary information which should be considered when reading this document. Please refer to Appendix D for further information and links to download these associated documents.



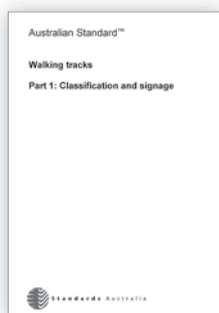
Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines [2019]

These guidelines were developed in response to a growing need to establish and implement an Australian specific trail development process that guides mountain bike trail planning from proposal to implementation. They provide guidance to ensure a consistent approach to planning, designing, constructing and managing sustainable mountain bike trails.



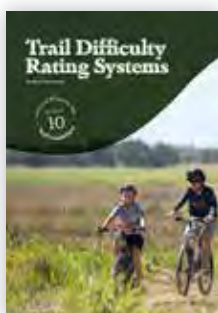
Guidelines for the Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance of Recreational Trails in South Australia [2016]

These guidelines provide a comprehensive and coordinated document with standards for trails or guidelines to assist with the planning, development, construction, management, and promotion of recreational trails.



Australian Standard 2156.1 Walking Tracks – Part 1 Classification and Signage [2001]

This Standard provides a classification system for walking tracks, guidance for the design, fabrication and use of track markers, and information signs to be used for walking tracks. It enables consistency in the provision of information for users to minimize risk, preserve natural features and enhance recreation opportunities associated with the use of walking tracks.



Trail Difficulty Rating Systems - Australian MTB Trail Guidelines [2020]

The Australian Trail Difficulty Rating System is based on the International Mountain Bicycling Association's (IMBA) rating system with some additional difficulty classifications. The rating system aids in the planning of trails, supports users to make informed decisions, encourages visitors to use trails that match their skill level, manages risk, minimizes injuries, and improves the outdoor experience for a wide variety of visitors.

CONTEXT:

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY ALIGNS WITH COUNCIL'S BROADER OBJECTIVES SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN.

CORPORATE PLAN [2021-2026]

The Cairns Regional Council Corporate Plan 2021-2026 is a 5-year plan and forms the basis from which Council strategies, plans and policies are developed.

The Recreational Trails Strategy for Cairns is directly aligned with the five focus areas and addresses some of the key objectives for delivering the goals of the Corporate Plan.

Council's Operational Plan, together with the Corporate Plan and Annual Budget, guides Council in delivering outcomes for the Cairns community. The Operational Plan identifies the Recreational Trails Strategy as one of the key actions for implementing the liveability focused objectives.

FOCUS AREAS:



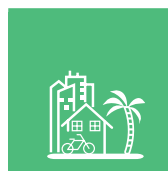
ROBUST ECONOMY

SUPPORTING A DIVERSIFIED AND RESILIENT ECONOMY THAT BACKS BUSINESS INNOVATION, GROWTH AND JOBS



NATURAL ASSETS

PROMOTING, PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR ICONIC NATURAL ENVIRONMENT NOW AND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME



DESIGN FOR LIVEABILITY

CREATING A SAFE, SUSTAINABLE AND CONNECTED PLACE THAT SUPPORT A QUALITY LIFE



COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

FOSTERING A VIBRANT AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE FEELS THEY BELONG

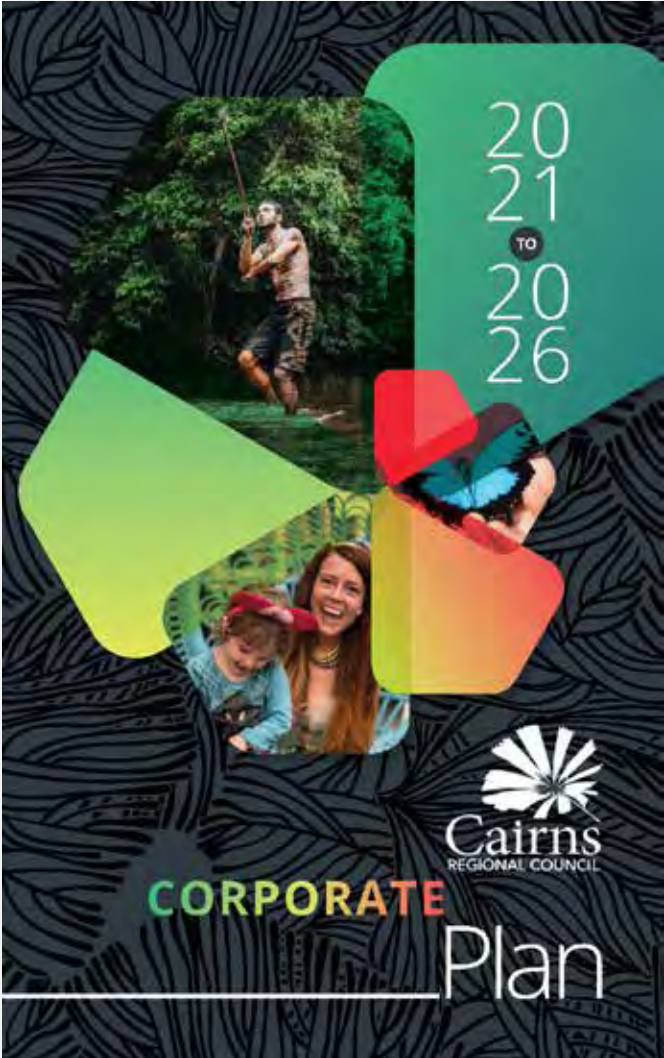


FOCUSED COUNCIL

BEING A LEADER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

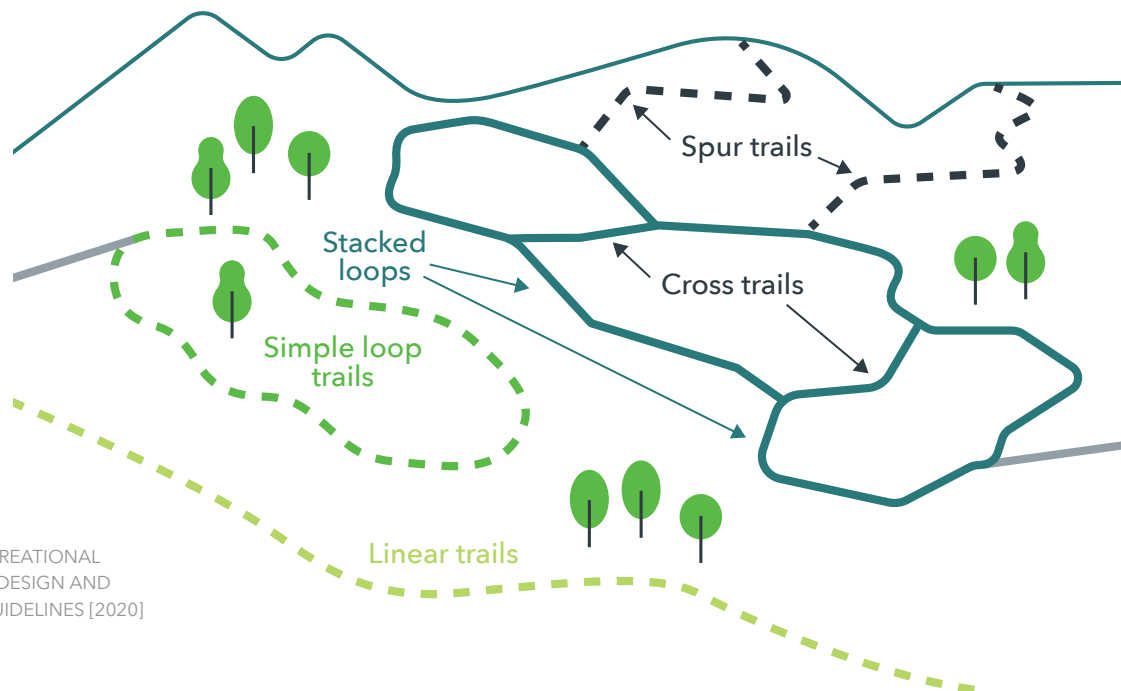
RELEVANT OBJECTIVES:

- Optimise visitation and tourism opportunities
 - Promote Cairns as the place to relocate
-
- Value and protect Cairns' pristine natural environment
-
- Proactive advocacy and collaboration with state and federal governments
 - Enhance community wellbeing and safety
 - Deliver valued suburban community infrastructure
-
- Support diverse sport, cultural and community groups that contribute to wellbeing
-
- Build effective partnerships with community and governments
 - Ensure decision making is collaborative, transparent and accountable



CONTEXT:

WHAT ARE TRAILS



SOURCE: TRC RECREATIONAL TRAIL PLANNING, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES [2020]

RECREATIONAL TRAILS IS A TERM FOR PATHS AND ROUTES USED PARTLY OR SOLELY FOR ACTIVE RECREATION, LEISURE AND TOURISM PURPOSES. THEY VARY IN APPEARANCE AND SUPPORT A RANGE OF USES INCLUDING WALKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING.

DEFINING RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Trails are pathways for people to explore the local landscape, connect with nature and experience the great outdoors. They provide opportunities to improve health and wellbeing of land and people, benefitting residents and visitors alike through shared positive outdoor experiences (Recreation SA, 2016). Trails are often unsurfaced and in high-value natural areas such as reserves, state forests and national parks however may warrant alternative surface treatments (in areas impacted by high demand).

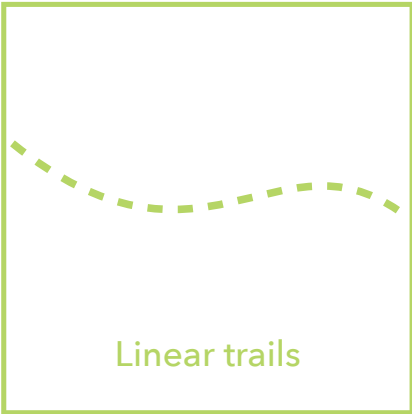
TRAIL SYSTEMS

Trails can be stand-alone routes or part of a larger trail system with several linear trails, loop trails, or other facilities linked together (MBA Ltd, 2019). Trail systems designed with loops that offer several options and a variety of experiences are often preferable while stacked trail loop systems can appeal to a range of user groups (TRC Tourism, 2018).

The layout and design of a trail system is dependent on the location's characteristics and attributes including:

- Location of the trailhead
- Topography and environmental conditions
- Land ownership
- Attractions / destinations

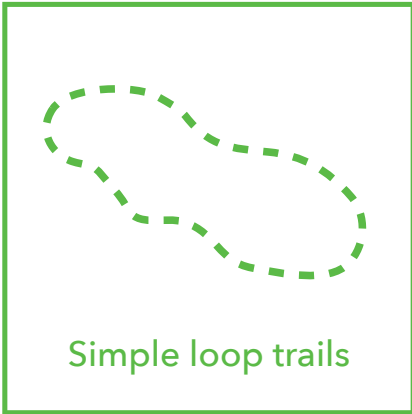
A WELL DESIGNED TRAIL NETWORK HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CATER TO ALL LEVELS OF FITNESS, ENCOURAGE PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT IN SKILL, AND MOTIVATE USERS TO ADVANCE THEIR FITNESS FOR TRAVERSING DIFFICULT TERRAIN.



LINEAR TRAILS
 Linear trails are point to point routes that start and finish in different places. These trails may have trailheads at both ends and/or at common entry points along the route. Linear trails can be used to link destinations, attractions or other trails and may be appropriate when certain factors impact the ability to accommodate loop trails.

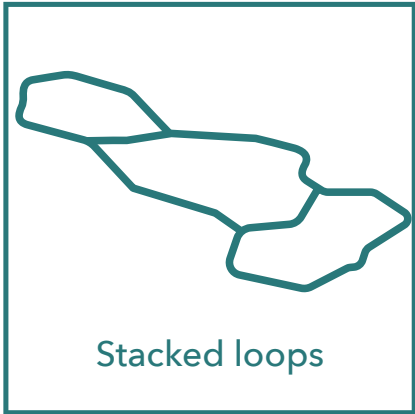
Long-distance linear trails can also enable an uninterrupted trail experience over a significant distance.

Descending trails with an uplift service (e.g. shuttle or chairlift) are an increasingly popular style of linear trail. These are designed to get riders up to the top of the park as fast as possible allowing for more downhill skill experience.



LOOP TRAILS
 Loop or circular trails are trails that start and finish in the same place and often have a single trailhead.

Loop trails are an efficient design that allow for longer trail lengths within the available space (refer Appendix E for examples of loop trails) and help users avoid the need to back track.



STACKED LOOPS
 Loops can be stacked on top of each other, enabling trail users to rider shorter or longer sections and vary the route option chosen by users.

Stacked loop designs are a series of loop trails that radiate from a trailhead and core trail, usually in a single direction.

A stacked trail loop system will provide opportunities to design trails that appeal to different user groups. A core trail, which leads from the trail head, can be wide, smooth, open and flowing; while other loops branching from it can be narrower and more challenging.

CONTEXT:

USING TRAILS

WALKERS AND MOUNTAIN BIKERS ARE CONSIDERED THE PRIMARY USERS OF TRAILS FOR THIS STRATEGY, EACH WITH VARYING INTERESTS AND NEEDS ASSOCIATED WITH A FIT FOR PURPOSE NETWORK OF TRAILS.



WALKING

This strategy defines walking as all forms of recreational walking and a variety of trail experiences from a leisure based stroll to a strenuous trek across rugged terrain. Recreational trail walking is also referred to as bush walking or hiking.

Walking can be for commuting or exercise, could occur in national parks and reserves, and includes overnight and multi-day experiences.

Hiking and walking trails are predominantly provided through natural and undeveloped land, usually with vary degrees of elevation and may have sections shared with mountain bike riders.

The Australian walking track grading system describes walkers in terms of level of difficulty (Refer to Appendix F for trail classifications).



MOUNTAIN BIKING

Mountain biking is generally considered any cycling off-road on a variety of unsealed surfaces typically though a natural setting which involves maneuvering through obstacles.

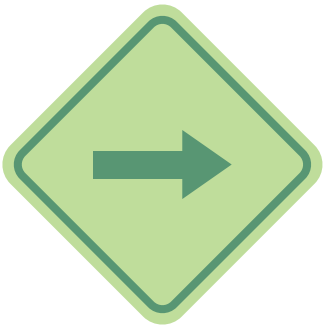
It is considered an adventure recreation activity usually undertaken by those on bikes which support wider tyres, an upright riding position and advanced suspension (QLD MTB Strategy 2018).

Mountain bike trails are enjoyed by a diverse range of user types, who have varying motivators, needs and expectations. Mountain bike users range from beginners and family groups, to more adventurous cross-country and downhill riders including competition participants. (Refer to Appendix G for more information on MTB trail types)

The trail difficulty rating systems outlined in the Australian MTB Trail Guidelines [2020] describes mountain bike trails in terms of level of difficulty (Refer to Appendix F for trail classifications).

OTHER USERS

While walkers and mountain bikers are considered the primary users of trails for this strategy, it is noted other activities often coexist in certain areas including horse riding, motorbikes or other off road vehicles.



A RANGE OF FACTORS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF CATEGORIZING A TRAIL AS SINGLE USE OR SHARED USE. THIS CLASSIFICATION WILL IMPACT THE LEVEL OF USAGE, ACCESSIBILITY AND APPEAL TO THE LOCAL TRAIL USER POPULATION.

SINGLE USE:

An important component of a sustainable trail design is determining whether the trail is single or dual direction, as well as whether it is single or shared use.

SINGLE DIRECTIONAL TRAILS

Trails designed for use in a single direction provide a predictable user experience by eliminating risk of collision and alleviating congestion. They also enable advanced technical trails with tight turns and corners, short and obstructed sightlines, single direction features and obstacles, and extreme descents (Mountain Bike Australia, 2019). Single directional may limit trail user experience and requires clear and consistent signage.

DUAL DIRECTION TRAILS

Trails designed for use in both directions double the length of the trail available in a single corridor. Dual direction trails provide a varied user experience but can increase encounters and the risk of collisions between trail users traveling in different directions. A range of design measures should be considered when designing dual directional trails (refer to section 3 of this strategy for further information)

It is common practice for most MTB trails to be dual directional unless otherwise signposted.

SHARED USE:

Shared use trails or facilities are designed, constructed, sanctioned, managed, used and shared by more than one user group. These often include mountain bikers, bush walkers, trail runners, horse riders and off road vehicles (Mountain Bike Australia, 2019).

The International Mountain Bicycle Association (IMBA) advocates for shared use trails as they maximize the use of space and accommodate a broader range of users.

Shared use trails are often preferred by trail managers to ensure return on investment by capitalising on the economic benefits of multiple users. Sharing also helps build a trail community with users encouraged to collaborate to preserve and protect the common resource.

A range of elements should be considered when designing shared trails are outlined in section 3 of this strategy.

CONTEXT:

EXISTING TRAILS

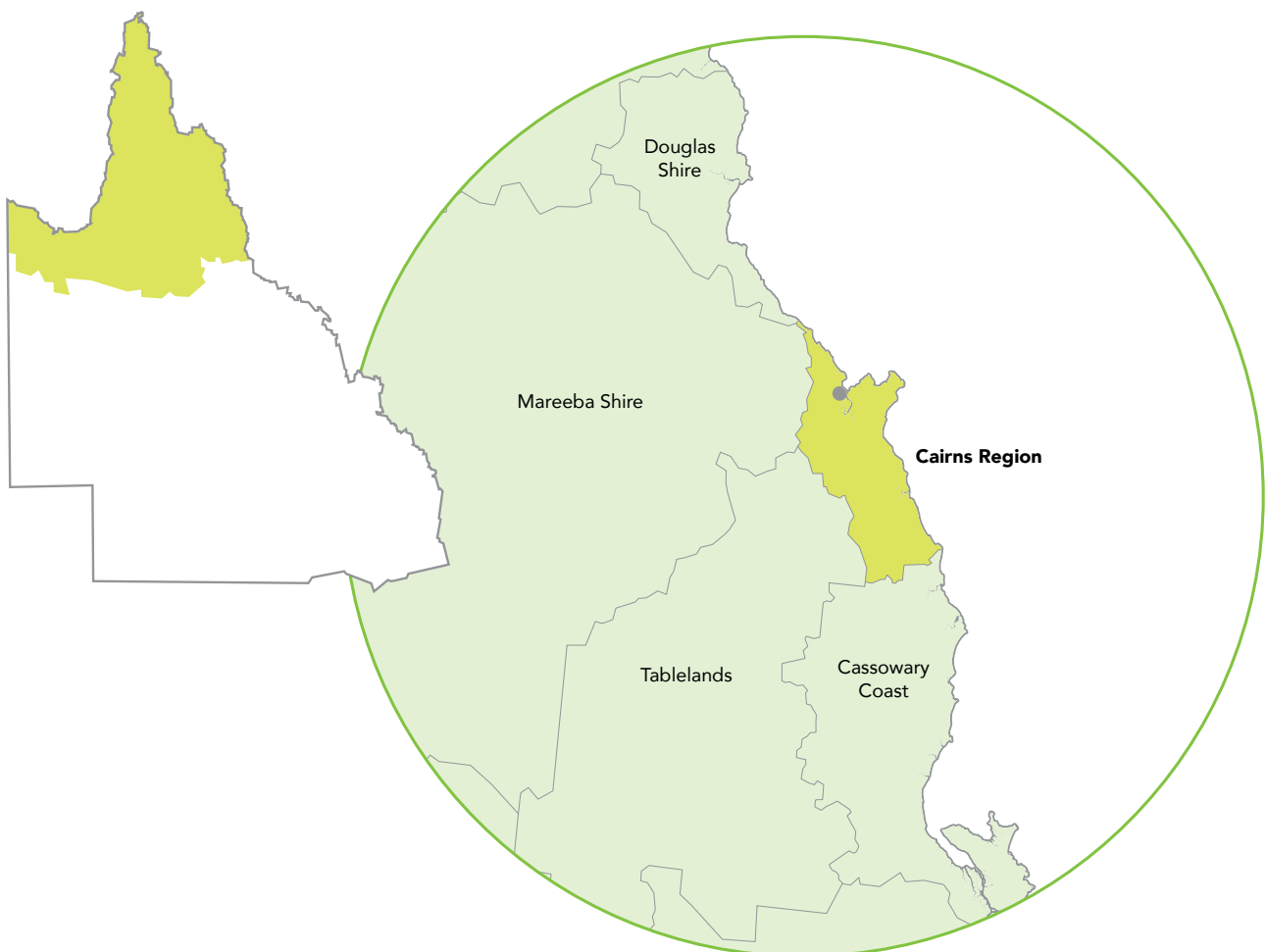
THE CAIRNS REGION SUPPORTS AN EXTENSIVE TRAIL NETWORK CONSISTING OF BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL TRACKS FOR WALKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING.

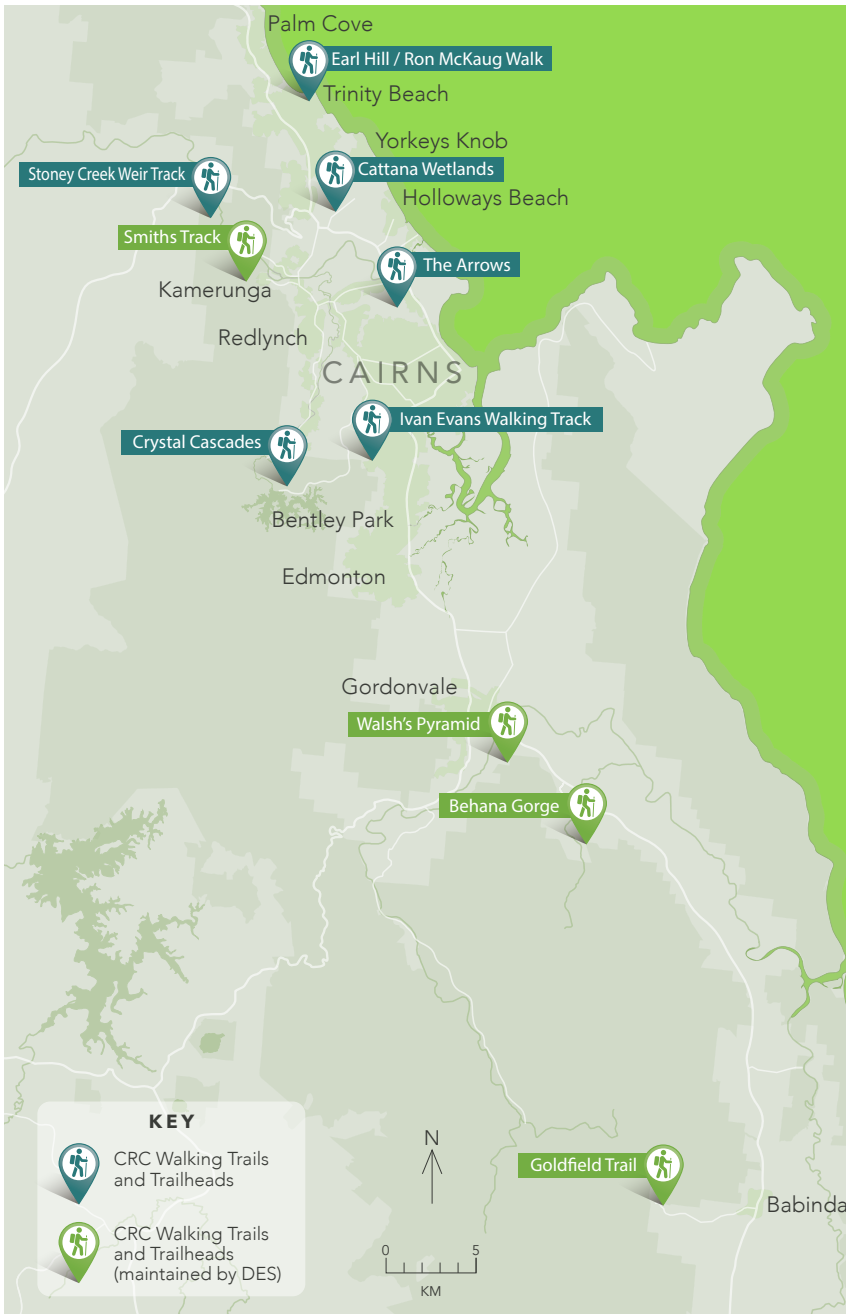
There are a number of existing trail networks of varying scales across the region which form part of the broader trail network for Tropical North Queensland.

TYPES OF TRAILS

The following plans highlight the types of trails in the Cairns area including:

- Formalised walking trails (maintained by state government or local council)
- Formalised mountain bike trails (maintained by private organisations)
- Informal trails (unmaintained)





FORMALISED RECREATIONAL WALKING TRAILS IN CAIRNS

FORMALISED RECREATIONAL WALKING TRAILS

Formalised recreational walking trails are considered those maintained by either:

- The QLD Department of Environmental and Science (DES) or
- Cairns Regional Council (CRC)

Most walking trails are on state controlled land and most trailheads to these trails are on Council controlled land (mainly in road reserve).

COUNCIL ASSETS

Council is currently responsible for the following portfolio of formalised assets within the trails network:

TRAIL AND TRAILHEADS

Ivan Evans Walking Track, Bayview Heights

The Arrows, Mount Whitfield Conservation Park

Earl Hill (part only), Earl Hill Conservation Park

Cattana Wetlands, Smithfield

Crystal Cascades

Ron McKaug Walk, Trinity Beach

Stoney Creek Weir Track, Barron Gorge National Park

TRAIL HEADS ONLY

Smiths Track, Barron Gorge National Park

Goldfield Trail, Wooroonooran National Park

Behana Gorge, Wooroonooran National Park

Walsh's Pyramid, Wooroonooran National Park

Refer to Appendix H for additional information on formalised recreational walking trails.

FORMALISED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Formalised mountain bike trails are considered sanctioned, purpose-built trails which are predominantly on public and private lands; demonstrating the result of strong partnerships between community groups and land management agencies.

Existing provision across the Cairns region is concentrated in two locations servicing both the northern and southern suburbs including:

- Smithfield Mountain Bike Park - maintained by Cairns MTB Club
- Edmonton Trails maintained by the Southside MTB Club

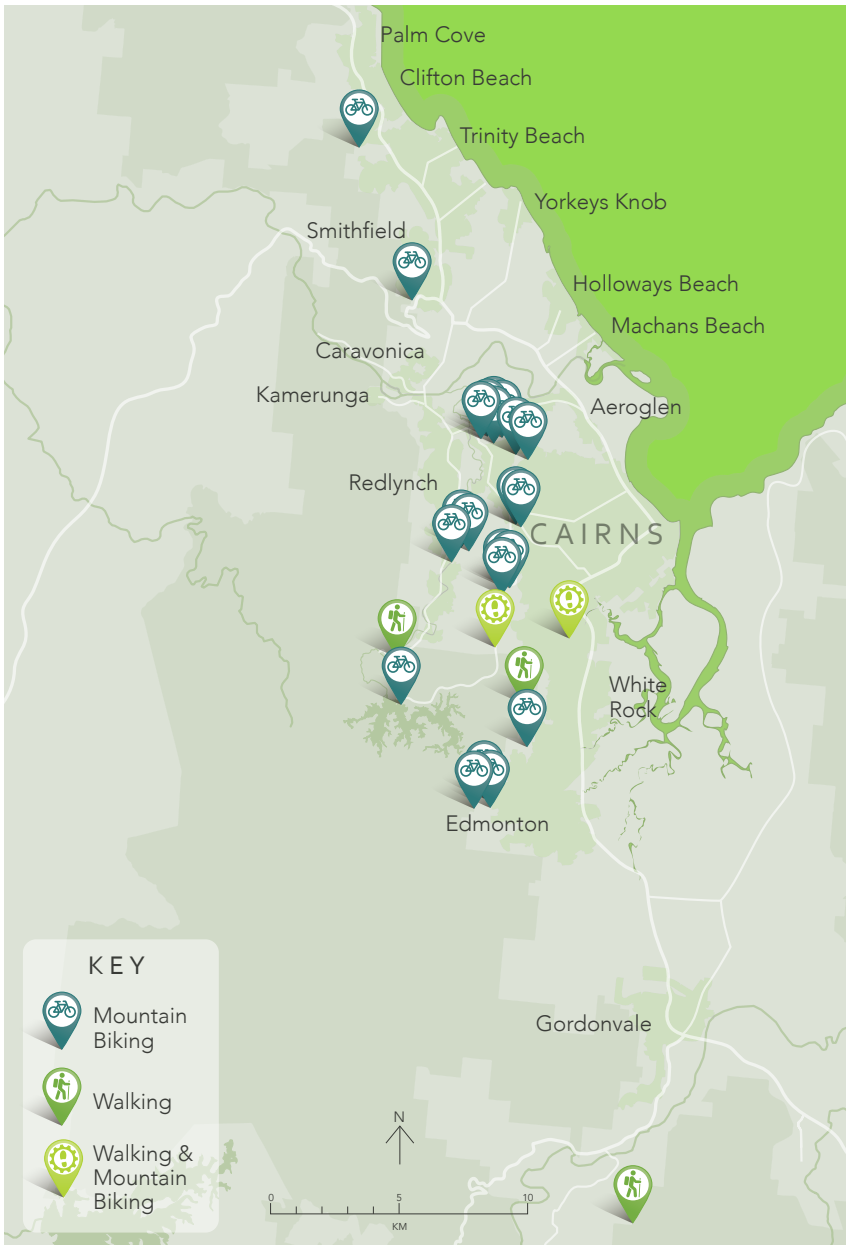
Smithfield Mountain Bike Park is the primary destination for formalised MTB trails in Cairns and is currently operated by the Cairns MTB Club.

Significant MTB trails exist outside of the Cairns Local Government Area (and excluded from this strategy) including the Atherton Forest Mountain Bike Park (60km), Davies Creek Mountain Bike Park (25km) and the Bump Track to Port Douglas. Most other MTB trails are informal and on state controlled or private land.

Refer to Appendix H for additional information on formalised mountain bike trails.



FORMALISED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS IN CAIRNS



INFORMAL RECREATIONAL TRAILS IN CAIRNS

INFORMAL TRAILS

An extensive network of informal trails currently exist across the Cairns Local Government Area (LGA). These are usually considered:

- Unmaintained trails
- Rail trails, fire access routes and other trails that may permit walking access or mountain bike access
- Unsanctioned or illegally constructed trails
- Trails located on private land that are only open to the public for special events

Known informal trails are shown on the following map noting it is not intended to represent every informal trail in Cairns but acknowledge that this form of trail does exist. Refer to Appendix H for additional information on informal trails.

NOTE

Trails adopted on Council's informal trails map are based on the Trailforks* indicator. Trailforks is a crowd sourced database and trail management system for outdoor enthusiasts, trail builders/associations, government and tourism.



CONTEXT:

ANALYSIS

THE CURRENT SITUATION AND STATUS OF TRAIL PROVISION IN THE CAIRNS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, WAS ANALYZED TO EXAMINE ALL FACTORS INFLUENCING TRAILS IN THE REGION.

SHARED LAND TENURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trails are unique in that the responsibilities for ownership and maintenance sit with both state and local governments in an inconsistent manner, and are often intricately tied to the land and waterways of Australia's First Peoples.

The need to develop this strategy was driven by the lack of clear definition of Council's roles and responsibilities in relation to trails. Where the roles between Council and the state government are clear for active transport infrastructure, the recreational trail network is more complicated as trails are often created by locals over many years and traverse both local and state government land.

Trails that are wholly or partly managed by Council, are often partially maintained through Council's volunteer program (Green Space Our Place) however, these programs lack the capacity for moderate and major maintenance regimes. In addition to this, trails built as part of urban developments are unlikely to be managed by Council in the future.

LACK OF OWNERSHIP OF INFORMAL TRAILS

The continued growth in the use of recreational trails for walking and mountain biking has seen users seeking out trails that are unknown to most, in order to avoid crowds on popular trails.

Creation of these informal trails, has the potential to impact the environment, cause conflict with other land uses, increase user risk and increase land manager liability.

These informal trails are a key point of contention between Council, the relevant State Government departments and the community, highlighting the need for Council to establish a position on managing informal trails.

The general community perception is that all trails are to be Council owned and controlled and it is expected that all trails are maintained to the same standard as formal trails.

INCREASED DEMAND AND EXPECTATIONS

The demand for trails has grown significantly in the past two years, partly due to the closure of structured



Ivan Evans Walk – Source: Cairns Regional Council

recreational facilities such as gyms due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also with increased awareness of trails through location sharing and GPS tracking accessed via the internet and social media. While hiking and mountain biking has always occurred, there is now increased awareness and publicity of these informal trails.

Furthermore, the popularity of these activities has resulted in increasing requests from the community to improve or expand the trail network. There is an emerging expectation from the community that Council is required to maintain a trail once it has reached a point of popularity – irrespective of the fact that Council did not create the trail.

LIMITED RESOURCES

It is undeniable that the local community and visitors are increasingly seeking quality experiences that are easily accessible and well maintained.

Council recognises the limited resources available (both land and financial) for the development of trails within Council's remit.

Council also understands the current constraints of clubs to manage large trail networks. Currently tracks are solely maintained by a only a handful of people - with less than 2% of Cairns MTB Club members volunteering to maintain trails at Smithfield MTB Park (AEC, 2023).

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Despite walking being one of the most popular forms of physical activity, there are still barriers that prevent people from using recreational walking trails or mountain biking including:

- Lack of knowledge and/or experience in nature
- Fear of being alone and getting lost or injured
- Lack of motivation – inactivity, physical unfitness
- Lack of time – work and family commitments
- Distance - destination is too far away or the trail
- Accessibility - a physical disability prevents people from participation

- Cost – this relates to mountain biking as a quality bicycle can be expensive

Due to the nature of the activities, verified statistical data on recreational walking and mountain biking is not widely available.

ISSUES AND GAPS IN THE CURRENT NETWORK

The walking and mountain biking network of Cairns has never previously been mapped or planned for, at a strategic level.

A comprehensive list of the trails in the region and their current condition also did not previously exist within Council's records or mapping system contributing to the issues and concerns with the existing trail network.

This meant trails requiring renewal, upgrades, maintenance or new infrastructure were not previously monitored or recorded further supporting the need for this strategy.

Refer to Appendix I for the detailed Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) analysis of trail provision.



Misty Mountains – Source: Tourism Tropical North Queensland

CONTEXT:

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

CONSULTATION WITH THE BROADER COMMUNITY WAS INTEGRAL TO UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THIS STRATEGY.

ACTIVE TRANSPORT SURVEY

A public survey was conducted as part of the broader Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy consultation process to gather feedback on the existing active travel issues and opportunities across the region (Refer to Appendix J for further community consultation feedback relating specifically to walking and mountain biking).

Key trail network data was collected in relation to the following:

- **Current trail usage** - favourite tracks, location of high use tracks and reasons for popularity
- **Understanding trail usage** - frequency of trail usage, reasons for trail usage, positive attributes of trails, trail improvements, essential facilities at trailheads, trail length preferences and suggestions for existing trails

Safety improvements, maintenance and more trails were the three most requested trail improvements across the board highlighting a key area of focus

for this strategy and for consideration in the provision of trails across Cairns more broadly.

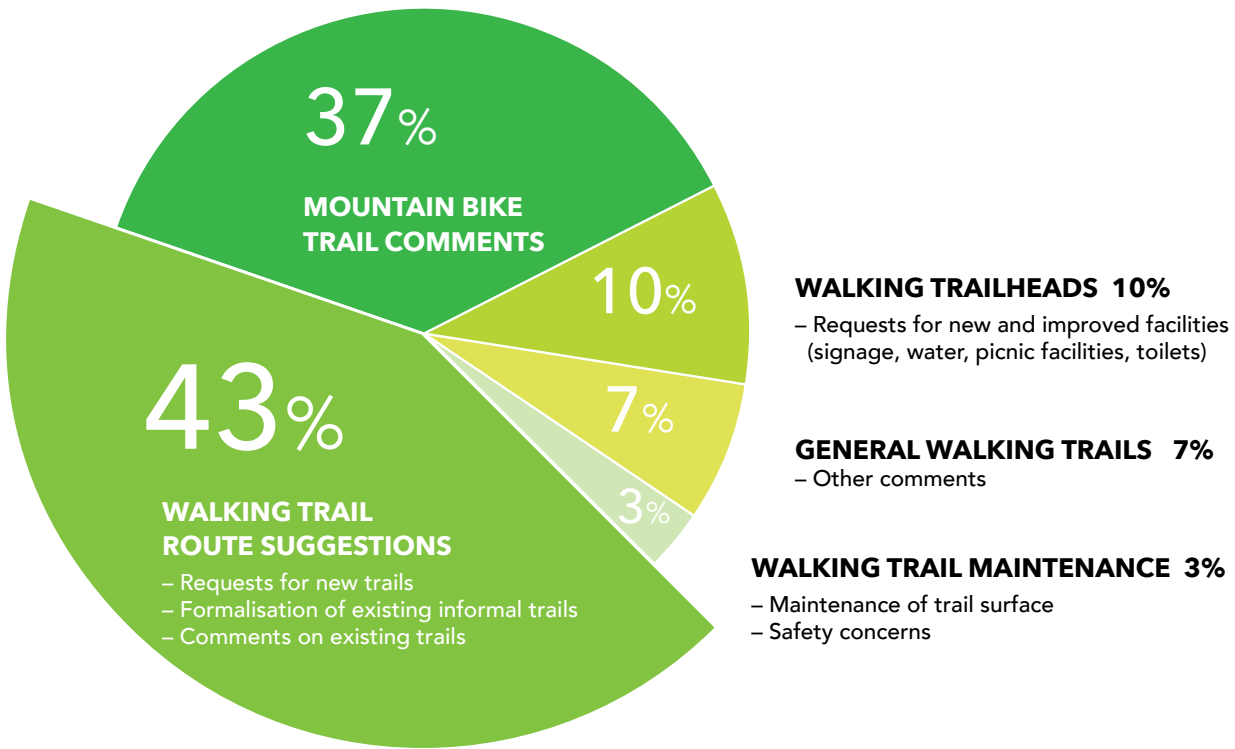
The results of the survey also align with and reflect key findings of the analysis process previously detailed, indicating common barriers relating to trail usage.

The most common barriers included trails which require renewal, the lack of formalised trails and the number of areas without trail networks and / or associated facilities.

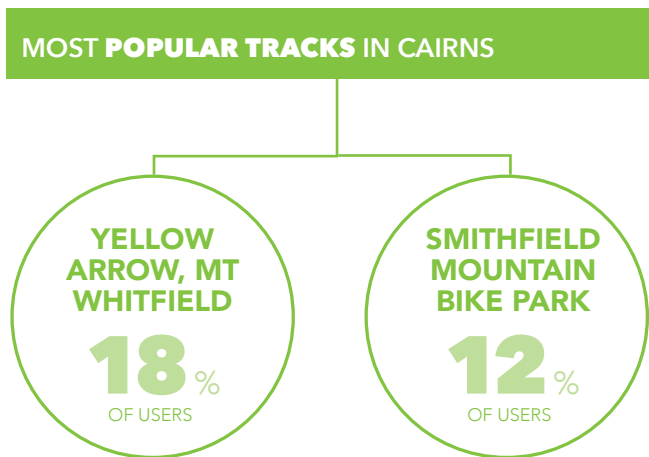
OUR CAIRNS SURVEY

In addition to this survey, Council conducted the second OurCairns Survey in 2020 which asked the community to identify the extent of activities that enhance the liveability or quality of life in Cairns.

Using tracks and paths for exercising or walking was the second highest ranked answer from respondents illustrating a key opportunity to build on and enhance the lifestyle offer in Cairns.



WALKING TRAIL AND MOUNTAIN BIKE SURVEY RESPONSE BREAKDOWN



CONTEXT:

INFLUENCING FACTORS

WALKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING IS RAPIDLY EVOLVING WITH CONSTANT CHANGE INFLUENCED BY SECTOR LED GROWTH, TECHNOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS, LOCAL DEMAND AND TOURISM INTEREST, HIGHLIGHTING A NEED TO ADOPT A PLAN FOR THE REGION'S NETWORK.

LOCAL CHANGE



Planned expansion - The TNQ region's network of trails is expanding with plans for 52km of new trails for the Smithfield MTB Park, the Wangetti Trail and a proposal for Mount Peter, as well as other network expansions more broadly across the Cassowary Coast, Mareeba and Tablelands Local Government Areas.



Local MTB event expansion - A range of local events including Reef to Reef (a 4 day MTB staged race), Croc Trophy (a 7 day event) and other enduro events, continue to gain popularity for both participants and the public, contributing to the local economy.

LOCAL EVENTS



Ironman Asia-Pacific Championship - Deemed the world's best Ironman Championship where competitors swim, run and ride in the regions iconic landscape, drawing a strong spectator following.



Cairns Port Douglas Trail Ultra Marathon - An annual event from Cairns to Port Douglas appealing to a broad audience with a series of races for all skill levels and abilities utilising the region's trail network.



Cairns Marathon - The 7 Cairns Marathon is North Queensland's premier marathon event and a lead up to many world events. It forms part of the popular three marathons in 3 days event for experienced runners.



Pyramid race - The Great Pyramid Race is an annual trail and mountain running event held in Gordonvale Far North QLD every year since 1959 and is celebrated broadly across the local community.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION



A New Olympic Sport - With mountain biking an Olympic sport in 2032, there is an opportunity for Cairns to support a pre/post games mountain biking legacy with Olympic training and development programs and associated tourism.



UCI Mountain Bike World Championships - The region is an iconic location for mountain bike and downhill enthusiasts with the UCI Mountain Bike World Championships held in Cairns, attracting more than 500 competitors and 20,000 spectators.



Crankworks - Cairns is now one of five locations globally to hold Crankworks - an international tour of mountain bike festivals that take place in Australia, New Zealand, Austria, and Canada bringing together the some of the best athletes to compete in elite-level competition.

INDUSTRY TRENDS



Rapid growth - Mountain biking is growing rapidly across the globe and nationally with renowned trails at Derby earmarking a shift in gear across Australia, particularly in Queensland.



Pump track popularity - Pump tracks are becoming increasingly popular for providing local family friendly activity spaces which support a range of users and skill levels.



Technological changes - Tech advancements has fueled a rapid uptake in ebikes and adaptive mountain biking (off-road hand-cycling for riders with limited abilities) supporting those not previously able to experience trails.



Women in riding - Women are now more widely represented in the industry reflecting the focus of club and local government initiatives to address participation barriers including women-only events and coaching / introductory skills programs.



Adventure therapy - Increasing awareness of the potential mental health opportunities beyond the general healthy lifestyle benefits of exercise with the growth of adventure therapy utilising trail networks for reducing anxiety, depression, negative moods and improving self-esteem.

CONTEXT:

THE OPPORTUNITY

CAIRNS IS UNIQUELY PLACED TO CREATE A WORLD CLASS HIKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING DESTINATION WHICH CAN CAPITALISE ON THE REGION'S NATURAL ASSETS WHILE PROVIDING EXTENSIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS .



INCREASE COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Studies show that greater provision of trails in natural areas would encourage people to walk more (market facts, 2019) with over 70% of Queenslanders already walking for recreation and exercise, demonstrating the health benefits of recreational trails (Market Facts 2019).

Research has for many years drawn the correlation that improved physical fitness not only prevents disease, it improves mental health. 36% of Queenslanders surveyed in the Queensland Walking Survey indicated they are motivated to walk because they like spending time outdoors (Market Facts, 2019) and trails provide a free opportunity for residents and visitors to be physically active and having a net benefit on health services.

Those living in Cairns have ranked paths and tracks as the 2nd highest for improving liveability in the region (OurCairns Survey 2020) indicating a clear need to better provide, manage and maintain our trail network.



SUPPORT HIGH DEMAND ACTIVITIES AND RECREATION

Mountain biking is considered one of the fastest growing recreational activities and competitive sports, attracting over 15,000 members and 175 affiliated clubs nationwide. Over the last few years MTB rider participation has grown nearly 25%, with approximately 423,200 now across Australia (AusPlay, 2022) highlighting the need to better anticipate future needs of a growing sector.

Recreational walking is equally important with walking, running and jogging listed as three of the top five physical activities of Queenslanders (DTIS, 2016). When combined with cycling and bushwalking, these are among the 10 most popular activities at national and state levels (AusPlay, 2022), with hiking attracting mostly young Australians (20-24yrs) and those over 60.



BUILD THE REGIONAL ECONOMY FOR FNQ

Significant economic benefits are attributed to the MTB industry across Australia. The estimated mountain bike participants throughout Australia directly spend \$630.8 million per annum and support 6,095 full time employees annually through riding at their local trails (AusCycling 2021).

For Cairns in particular, mountain biking supports approximately 206 FTE jobs, output of \$35.4 million, \$18.8 million in gross regional product, and wages and salaries of \$13.4 million (AEC, 2023).

Visitor expenditure is the key contributor to the Cairns Economy which arises from ancillary local and visitor spend, with general user expenditure representing 79.5% of total direct output and event visitor spend representing 8.8% of total direct output. This demonstrates the significant value of Cairns as a MTB destination for tourists and events. (AEC, 2023)



EXPAND ECOTOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

Tourism more broadly, is a \$23 billion industry for Queensland, generating \$65 million a day in visitor expenditure across the state (Tourism and Events Queensland, 2016). It is now widely recognised that walking/hiking trails and mountain biking is a significant travel motivator amongst local, domestic and international visitor markets.

Within the Cairns region, tourism is a major “base” industry attracting approximately 3.4 million visitors in 2018/19 (AEC, 2023). Recent studies have indicated MTB riding in Cairns could induce up to \$140 million in visitor expenditure with further development (AEC, 2023), highlighting a need to plan and invest in the trails network now.

While the role of local government in contributing to major ecotourism attractors is limited, it is within Council’s capacity to enhance local or regionally significant experiences that make the destination of Cairns even more appealing to visitors. Council has identified the significance of continued dialogue with the State Government to capitalise on the ecotourism market as a tourism and employment opportunity for Cairns.



PROTECT AND ELEVATE THE NATURAL ASSETS OF CAIRNS

Queensland’s natural environment is it’s strongest competitive advantage (QLD Ecotourism Plan 2020). Residents and visitors of the Cairns region in particular, have a rich appreciation for the natural environment and uninhibited access to nature-based activities as a attractor to the region. An opportunity exists elevate the opportunities to appreciate and protect the region’s co-located natural assets and unique environment with world heritage tropical rainforest co located along the coastline of the Great Barrier Reef.

By preserving and creating recreational open spaces, we can add value to the quality of life for the community. Walking trails which help protect the environment by localising impacts, have the ability to enhance the natural, cultural and historic experience of the area.

A shared approach to delivering and maintaining trails is key at a government level as well as within the local community to increase environmental awareness. Volunteer programs, including Green Space Our Place, demonstrates community pride and the many benefits to increased community ownership of trails, through participation in conservation and re-vegetation work.

CONTEXT:

PROJECT DRIVERS

THE DELIVERY OF THIS STRATEGY WILL BE A RESPONSE TO KEY ISSUES, RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE ANALYSIS PROCESS, ADDING SIGNIFICANT VALUE TO BOTH COUNCIL'S ASSET MANAGEMENT APPROACH AND THE BROADER TRAIL USER COMMUNITY. THE STRATEGY WILL FOCUS PRIMARILY ON THE FOLLOWING SIX PRIORITIES WHICH UNDERPIN COUNCIL'S INTENT:

01 - COUNCIL'S ROLE

CLEARLY ARTICULATE COUNCIL'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO LOCAL TRAILS, INVESTMENT AND RESCOURING

02 - INFORMAL TRAILS

ADOPT A CLEAR POSITION ON INFORMAL TRAILS THAT REFLECTS COUNCIL'S CAPACITY

03 - SAFETY

IMPROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELLBEING IN USING RECREATIONAL TRAILS

04 - THE TRAIL NETWORK

PROVIDE CLEAR GUIDANCE FOR STRENGTHENING OUR EXISTING WALKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS ASSET PROVISION

05 - MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

OUTLINE KEY ACTIONS FOR HOW TO BETTER DELIVER, MAINTAIN AND MANAGE THE TRAIL NETWORK


06 - ADVOCACY / PARTNERSHIPS

ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT STRONG PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE THE TRAIL NETWORK



Red Arrow Walking Track – Source: Cairns Regional Council



A photograph of a mountain biker in a dark jersey and shorts riding a trail through a forest. The biker is leaning forward, and the front wheel is kicking up a cloud of dust. The background shows a dense forest of green trees under a clear blue sky.

SECTION TWO ESTABLISHES COUNCIL'S POSITION AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES INFORMING THE THREE STRATEGIC MOVES FOR THE TRAIL NETWORK IN CAIRNS.

SECTION 02:

FRAMEWORK

FRAMEWORK:

COUNCIL'S POSITION:

ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE AND FIT FOR PURPOSE TRAILS THAT SUPPORT A RANGE OF ACTIVITIES, PROMOTE THE REGION'S NATURAL ASSETS TO VISITORS, WHILE IMPROVING LIVEABILITY FOR THE LOCAL CAIRNS COMMUNITY.

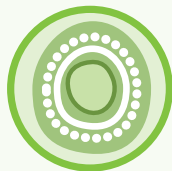
PRINCIPLES

Five key principles underpin councils position statement and reflect the themes prioritised from the strategy's consultation and engagement outcomes.



NATURE CONSERVATION / APPRECIATION

Create a network of sustainable trails that encourage the appreciation of our environment and showcase the region's natural assets.



CULTURAL AWARENESS + EDUCATION

Advocate for greater cultural awareness and education through the incorporation of our land's embedded history and stories.



ENHANCED + SAFE USER EXPERIENCE

Enhance the experience and safety of trail users with a diverse network, catering to all abilities and user group needs.



HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELLBEING

Improve the existing trail network to encourage the increased use of trails for mental health, wellness and to experience the unique lifestyle offer of our region.



TRAIL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Establish clear standards to guide the design, provision, management and maintenance of trails in Cairns.

OBJECTIVES

Three key ideas for trails are based up standardisation, management and growth. These strategic moves are expanded upon to describe the intended outcomes for the recreational trails network.



01: A FIT FOR PURPOSE NETWORK

Defining a new hierarchy to categorise trails and establish standards for the provision of ancillary infrastructure, facilities and minimum standards to create high quality trails which adhere to relevant legislative and safety requirements.

02: A CLEAR MANAGEMENT APPROACH

Establishing Council's position on trail governance to support successful trail network operation and performance, acknowledging that sound conception, planning and execution of trails is required for the design, ongoing management and maintenance of trails.

03: AN EXPANDED TRAIL NETWORK

Expanding the existing iconic and premier trail networks through catalyst projects which create new tourism opportunities and deliver significant social and economical benefits to Cairns and the local community.

FRAMEWORK:

1 - A FIT FOR PURPOSE NETWORK

A CLEAR IDENTIFIABLE HIERARCHY AND SET OF MINIMUM STANDARDS, WILL ESTABLISH A STANDARDISED APPROACH FOR HOW COUNCIL CONSIDERS ITS FORMALISED TRAIL NETWORK ACROSS THE REGION.

HIERARCHY OF TRAILS

User classification levels which identify trails based on difficulty and user ability have been, up until now, the primary source of information for categorising trails across the region (refer to Appendix F).

The lack of formal trail hierarchy has created ambiguities around the features, level of priority and infrastructure provision expectations for each trail.

The following hierarchy of trails has been adopted for formalised walking and mountain bike trails in Cairns. It establishes ancillary infrastructure and facilities as well as minimum standard for safe, quality trails through adherence to relevant legislative and safety requirements.

- **ICONIC TRAILS**
An iconic trail is a destination and key tourism attractor supporting high yield, trail based tourism and requiring a high standard of management.
- **PREMIER TRAILS**
A regionally significant trail provides a unique experience for the Cairns community and those visiting FNQ.
- **LOCAL TRAILS**
Locally significant trails are generally used for local residential recreation and are often in close proximity to residential catchment areas.



Yellow Arrow Walking Track - Source: Cairns Regional Council



INFORMAL TRAILS

The increased use of informal trails is an emerging issue for Council and the State Government with pressure from the community and adjoining landowners to formalise these trails and trailheads. Kilometres of informal trails exist across the Local Government Area and the rapid expansion of existing informal trails is creating an expectation that Council will absorb these trails into its asset portfolio. This is not feasible for Council for the following reasons:

- Land tenure – these trails frequently cross multiple types of land tenure with multiple landowners both private and government. Council and the State Government do not have an agreement regarding management of trails that cross multiple land tenures.
- Council could not simply maintain the existing informal trails “as is, where is.” Council would need to develop the trails to meet Australian Standards for Walking Tracks or MTB Guidelines which has a financial implication on the capital works budget.
- The development of trails is environmentally sensitive and usually subject to a complex approvals process.
- The increase on the annual operational budget to maintain these informal assets is not built into current models.

WHAT IS COUNCIL'S POSITION?

Council's position on informal trails is as follows:

1. Council does not assume ownership for informal trails nor maintenance of same. Signage may be installed, if necessary, indicating that the natural area is not maintained by Council and warning users to be aware of hazards;
2. Council will continue to promote the formalised recreational trail network on Council's website;
3. Council may proactively seek to have information from other sources corrected; and
4. Council extends an invitation to the Department of Environment and Science and its relevant agencies to establish a Cairns Trails Working Group to discuss management of informal trails and general trail management across the region.

FRAMEWORK:

1 - A FIT FOR PURPOSE NETWORK

ICONIC (NATIONAL) TRAILS

An iconic trail attracts national, international and interstate visitors due to the unique Far North Queensland experience that it involves, and is a significant economic generator. Iconic trails support high yield, trail based tourism products including accommodation.

Iconic trails are considered destinations in their own right and require a high standard of management and promotion. These include:

- Wangetti Trail - planned future trail (refer to Appendix K for proposed trail alignment information)

TRAIL LENGTH	>80km
PROPORTION OF SINGLE TRACK	>50%
MINIMUM LAND AREA (SITE)	>1,500ha
LOCATION	<180km from airport/major transport links
ROAD ACCESS	<20km from major highway
MANAGEMENT	Comprehensive management plan required
MINIMUM INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trailhead car park ▪ Amenities ▪ Trail head signage including interpretive signs ▪ Shelter ▪ Trail markers ▪ Eco accommodation /camping facilities ▪ Event hosting capabilities ▪ Water bubbler's ▪ Bins ▪ Visitor information ▪ Bike racks
DESIRABLE ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bike hire ▪ Food and beverage opportunities ▪ Shuttle service / transportation
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Derby in Tasmania ▪ When completed, the Wangetti Trail will be an example of a nationally and internationally significant trail in FNQ.

PREMIER (REGIONAL) TRAILS

A regionally significant trail caters for a unique experience for locals and visitors alike. Premier trails can attract high level events and competitions. They can contribute to tourism, targeting the short stay (weekend) trip market, and attract international visitors which can generate a significant economic benefit to the whole region. These include:

- The Arrows - Mount Whitfield Conservation Park
- Smithfield Mountain Bike Park
- Goldfield Trail, Wooroonooran National Park

(Refer to Appendix L for regional trail maps)

TRAIL LENGTH	20-80km
PROPORTION OF SINGLE TRACK	>50%
MINIMUM LAND AREA (SITE)	>500ha
LOCATION	40km from 15,000 population
ROAD ACCESS	<10km from highways and major roads
MANAGEMENT	Site specific management plan required
MINIMUM INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Car park ▪ Amenities block (if trail is greater than 50km) ▪ Trail head signage, including interpretative signs ▪ Shelter ▪ Seat ▪ Trail markers ▪ Water bubbler's ▪ Bins ▪ Visitor Information ▪ Bike racks
DESIRABLE ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shuttle service ▪ Nearby food and beverage opportunities ▪ Event hosting capabilities
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mount Whitfield Conservation Park (the Arrows) ▪ Smithfield Mountain Bike Park has hosted international events, however, still has less than 80km of trails. Pending the proposed expansion of the trail network proceeding, this site is likely to be considered an Iconic Trail in the future

FRAMEWORK:

1 - A FIT FOR PURPOSE NETWORK

LOCAL TRAILS

Locally significant trails can be a single trail or trail type that provides a recreational opportunity for local residents, typically generating localised benefits for the area. Many are located within close proximity to residential areas and are often connected to community services and open space areas. These include:

- Ivan Evans Walking Track, Bayview Heights
- Walsh's Pyramid, Wooroonooran National Park
- Behana Gorge, Wooroonooran National Park
- Glacier Rock, Stony Creek, Douglas Track and Smith's Track, Barron Gorge National Park
- Southside MTB trails
- Earl Hill (part only), Earl Hill Conservation Park
- Cattana Wetlands, Smithfield
- Crystal Cascades
- Ron McKauge Walk / Trinity Beach Pathway

(Refer to Appendix M for further local trail information and maps)

TRAIL LENGTH	Up to 20km
PROPORTION OF SINGLE TRACK	>80%
MINIMUM LAND AREA (SITE)	>250ha
LOCATION	Generally, within a suburb
ROAD ACCESS	At least public access road
MANAGEMENT	Site specific management plan required
MINIMUM INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trail head signage ▪ Trail markers ▪ Water bubbler's ▪ Bike racks
DESIRABLE ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amenities ▪ Car park ▪ Bins (needs assessment)
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ivan Evans Walking Track



Red Arrow Walking Track – Source: Cairns Regional Council

STRATEGY 1 - ACTIONS

AUDIT ALL EXISTING TRAILS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH TRAIL HIERARCHY REQUIREMENTS

DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR EXISTING TRAILS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH ALL RELEVANT AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS

AUDIT TRAILHEADS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH TRAIL HIERARCHY REQUIREMENTS

DEVELOP AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR TRAILHEADS

UNDERTAKE A SIGNAGE AUDIT FOR ALL TRAILS AND TRAILHEADS

DEVELOP A SIGNAGE UPGRADE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

FRAMEWORK:

2 - A CLEAR MANAGEMENT APPROACH

ESTABLISHING TRAIL GOVERNANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL OPERATION, DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE OF TRAILS.

There are four main management models identified for recreational trails in Cairns:

1. Solely managed by government - a model adopted for some local trails
2. Shared management by government - a model used for some local trails
3. Government and community group partnership - a model adopted for premier regional trails
4. Government and commercial partnership - a model suited for iconic national trails

Council's preferred model differs for each trail hierarchy and in some cases each individual trail due to the complexities associated with every trail. There are however clear advantages and disadvantages recognized for each management model which should be considered as part of each trail project.

SOLE MANAGEMENT MODEL

All responsibility lays with the government agency exclusively identified for managing trails in this arrangement including funding and management.

Partnerships with Traditional Owners are critical in sole management arrangements for trails.

Benefits of a sole management model include the following:

- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Can enable quick decision-making
- Easier to apply consistent service standards

Known disadvantages include:

- Consumer and tourism industry are vulnerable to agency performance
- Limited ability to leverage funding and broader community support
- Less collaborative

1 - SOLELY MANAGEMENT BY GOVERNMENT

In this scenario, one federal, state or local authority manages the trail exclusively. The land is typically on public land, although may traverse small sections of private land.

Locally, this is the preferred model for Ivan Evans Walking Track and associated trailheads which are solely managed by Cairns Regional Council.



Source: Tourism and Events Queensland



SHARED MANAGEMENT MODELS

Shared management models can be more complex where the trail is managed by multiple partners across multiple land tenures that may have different managers, operators and legislation or regulations guiding their use.

Partnerships with Traditional Owners are critical to the management arrangement of all shared models detailed below.

Benefits of shared arrangements include:

- Leverages a broader resource base for maintenance, development, funding, expansions and events
- Shared risk
- Requires stakeholders to enter into management arrangements that defines roles and responsibilities

Known disadvantages include:

- Stakeholders can be held accountable if partners do not meet expectations or uphold responsibilities.
- Roles and responsibilities can overlap and cause confusion
- Multiple agencies, particularly government with increasing bureaucracy that can delay decision making

2 - SHARED MANAGEMENT BY GOVERNMENT

In this scenario, one or more federal, state or local authorities manage the trail or part of the trail in conjunction with each other.

Locally, this is the preferred management model for Earl Hill Walking Track where the majority of the trail is managed by Queensland Parks and Wild Services, while the access track and trailheads are managed by Cairns Regional Council.

3 - GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY GROUP PARTNERSHIP

A partnership arrangement is where one or more federal, state or local authority manages the land and permits a not for profit community group to maintain the land for a specific use. Additionally, government may partner with a volunteer group to assist in trail management.

This is the current management model at Smithfield Mountain Bike Park which is managed by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services. Cairns Mountain Bike Park have an agreement to construct and manage mountain bike trails on the land while Council manages the trailhead and permitted trailhead infrastructure (public toilets, pump track, car parking) to be constructed by the club via a road permit.

Mount Whitfield Conservation Park is also considered a shared government and community group partnership arrangement whereby the park is held in trust by Council who manages the "Arrows". Council is supported by the Tracks 'n' Trails volunteer group who assist with general track maintenance at Mount Whitfield.

4 - GOVERNMENT AND COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIP

In this scenario one or more federal, state or local authority permits a commercial entity to conduct guided tours, provide accommodation or other ancillary services on a trail that is managed by the government authority.

Locally, this is the preferred model for the future Wangetti Trail which will be managed by the Queensland Government while providing opportunities for eco accommodation providers, guided tours and cultural heritage tours.

It is plausible that a trail could be developed on privately owned land however, any current use of private land is considered informal use.

FRAMEWORK:

2 - A CLEAR MANAGEMENT APPROACH

**COUNCIL
RECOGNISES ITS ROLE
AND RESPONSIBILITY
IN CONTRIBUTING TO
A WELL MANAGED
TRAIL NETWORK FOR
CAIRNS.**

COUNCIL'S MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Trail management varies due to the broad range of land tenures. In the Cairns LGA, trails are predominately on State Government controlled land with the trailhead often on Council controlled road.

Council's recent functional review has resulted in a specific approach for the Mt Whitfield Arrows Tracks and the Ivan Evans Walking Track assets. This review enabled two Council resources to be allocated to trail operational requirements, including: inspections, undertaking minor works, contractor management and importantly, coordinating volunteers.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Council's volunteer trail care program "Tracks 'n' Trails" was formed in 2016 as a three month trial to see if people were interested in participating in a volunteer program to work on the Mt Whitfield Arrow Tracks.

The enthusiastic response from the public was catalyst for creating a permanent role at Council to expand the program.

Volunteers have since become an integral part of Council's recreational trail management, and are involved with general track maintenance including:

- Repairing steps
- Leveling surfaces
- Resurfacing with decomposed granite and cold mix bitumen
- Re-vegetation
- General track maintenance

Green Space Our Place is another volunteer program which demonstrates community pride and the many benefits to increased community ownership of trails, through participation in conservation and re-vegetation work.



Cairns Regional Council,
Tracks 'N' Trails Volunteer Program



Cattana Wetlands Jabirus Volunteer Program –
Source: Cairns Regional Council



AN OPPORTUNITY EXISTS TO MINIMISE FUTURE MAINTENANCE DEMANDS THROUGH CAREFUL CONCEPTION PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF TRAILS. A CLEAR AND CONCISE TRAIL MANAGEMENT PLAN SHOULD BE PREPARED TO INFORM PRIORITIES AND RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION.

MAINTAINING THE NETWORK

Ongoing trail maintenance is a crucial component of effectively developing a trail network. While trails are generally low maintenance, adequate trail auditing is necessary to ensure the safety of users and manage erosion, trail degradation, the spread of weeds and deterioration of assets.

Council adheres to the Local Government Mutual Services (LGMS) Recreation Areas Guide 2019. The guide is intended to be used as an information source, as well as a reference document in the production of Council's own policies, procedures, standards and frameworks. Council adopting and implementing their own documents based on this guide will likely reduce their exposure to legal liability risks associated with recreation areas.

STANDARDISED MANAGEMENT PLANS

The adoption of a Standardised Management Plan (SMP) is recommended for all trails in Council's portfolio and should include:

- Trail hierarchy and description - key information, maps, history, characteristics (incl. Length, track type, access, location)
- Classifications - Grade and difficulty ratings, experience, gradient
- Minimum Standards of Provision and desirable infrastructure
- Users - Target user group and intention for user experience
- Management - Land tenure, clearly defined management roles and responsibilities
- Design - Trail construction standards
- Level of Service - to be provided
- Maintenance - Annual trail maintenance program and trail inspection/ audit timetable
- Environmental management
- Risk management plan, with emergency and evacuation plans

STRATEGY 2 - ACTIONS

DEVELOP A STANDARDISED MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE TO BE USED FOR ALL RECREATIONAL TRAILS IN CAIRNS

DEVELOP A STANDARDISED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR EACH EXISTING TRAIL WITHIN COUNCIL'S PORTFOLIO

ENSURE A STANDARDISED MANAGEMENT PLAN IS PREPARED FOR ALL FUTURE TRAILS DELIVERED AS PART OF COUNCIL'S PORTFOLIO

ADVOCATE FOR THE ADOPTION OF STANDARDISED MANAGEMENT PLAN'S FOR ALL TRAILS IN THE REGION (INCLUDING THOSE ON STATE OR PRIVATE LAND)

DEVELOP OF OPERATIONAL LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR TRAILS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TRAIL HIERARCHY

INVESTIGATE LOCATIONS FOR INSTALLING TRAIL COUNTERS TO MONITOR TRAIL USAGE



FRAMEWORK:

3 - AN EXPANDED TRAIL NETWORK

THREE MAJOR PROJECTS DISTRIBUTED ACROSS THE REGION, WILL BE CATALYST FOR EXPANDING THE LOCAL CAIRNS TRAIL NETWORK.

Change is already underway with recent growth of the trail network more broadly across Tropical North Queensland as well as multiple proposals for additional trail network development.

These projects are catalyst for change drawing interest and investment to support this growth sector of Cairns.

WANGETTI TRAIL

The Wangetti Trail is the region's future iconic trail with 94km of walking and mountain biking trail proposed from Palm Cove to Port Douglas. It will showcase the stunning coastal and hinterland scenery of the World Heritage-listed Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef.

As Queensland's first purpose built walking and mountain biking track in a national park, it will be one of Australia's leading adventure based ecotourism experiences, attracting visitors on an international scale.

This dual direction track is planned as a 1-3 day shared-use trail; a hop on / hop off route with optional trail experiences and range of incorporated features catering to a wide audience.

Queensland Government has committed to delivering the \$47.1 million trail with \$39.1m in funds allocated for construction and \$8m investments into the project from the Australian Government's National Tourism Icons Program.

SMITHFIELD MTB PARK EXPANSION

The Smithfield MTB Park manages one of the region's premier trail networks, and is planning to increase its current 30km trail network to 82km as part of an expansion project.

In 2022, the QLD Government provided funding to enable concept design for the proposed expansion.

The Smithfield MTB trail network is well established and has previously played host to world class mountain biking events. Expansion would help secure the long-term future of international events such as Crankworks whilst delivering significant economic and social benefits to the community including but not limited to:

- Building the region's reputation as a mountain biking destination both nationally and internationally and as a result, delivering jobs and economic growth through mountain bike related tourism and visitation.
- Enhanced health and wellbeing outcomes delivered through increased participation in mountain biking.

MOUNT PETER TRAILS

The rapid southern expansion of Cairns is driving a need for community infrastructure to match the significant residential population growth in suburbs such as Edmonton and Gordonvale. Opportunities exist to develop a new local trail network in Mount Peter to service the southern corridor, provide for localised recreation and encourage healthy lifestyles. There are already a range of informal trails in the area, in addition to opportunities for trail integration into the fabric of large scale residential developments currently underway.

A network of walking and cycling tracks linked to key destinations and recreation nodes would provide opportunities for adventure based activities, such as hiking, mountain biking, horse riding, rock climbing and more.



STRATEGY 3 - ACTIONS



COLLABORATE WITH RELEVANT COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES TO ASSIST WITH PROGRESSING THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF WANGETTI TRAIL

ADVOCATE FOR PROJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FUTURE MOUNT PETER TRAILS

SUPPORT EXPANSION OF THE SMITHFIELD MTB PARK BY COLLABORATING WITH SMB CLUB, RELEVANT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND EVENT REPRESENTATIVES

INVESTIGATE FUTURE ICONIC TRAIL PROJECTS IN ALIGNMENT WITH RECREATIONAL TRAILS FOR SEQ

KEY

-  Existing Formalised Trails
-  New/Expanded Trails
- I** Iconic Trail
- P** Premier Trail
- L** Local Trail

FUTURE FORMALISED TRAIL NETWORK FOR CAIRNS



SECTION THREE OUTLINES GUIDANCE FOR THE PROVISION OF TRAIL ASSETS INCLUDING CLASSIFICATIONS, TRAIL BUILDING PRINCIPLES, DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS, TRAIL VIABILITY, APPLICABLE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS.

SECTION 03:

ASSET PROVISION

ASSET PROVISION:

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

STANDARDISED CLASSIFICATIONS EXIST FOR BOTH WALKING TRAILS AND MOUNTAIN BIKE TRACKS, INDICATING THE EXPECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND GRADING OF ROUTES WITHIN THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS NETWORK.

WALKING TRAIL CLASSIFICATION






The Australian Walking Track Grading System classifies tracks into the five grades which are based on the Australian Standard for walking track construction (AS 2156).

The grading is designed to assist walkers by informing people about the features of the tracks. The system assesses a walk's difficulty based on several criteria, including: experience required, steps, gradient, path quality and signage. The walk's final grade is based on the most difficult of these 5 criteria, rather than an average. Standardised level of difficulty or track grading helps users gauge whether a track is suitable for their level of ability and fitness.

APPLICATION

The application for the Australian Walking Track Grading System is a two-step process. The first step is a technical grading of the walk. The land manager determines a walk's grade of difficulty using descriptors taken from the Australian Standard 2156.1 – 2001 Walking Tracks – Classification and Signage (refer to Appendix F). The second step is to communicate to the public why a walk has received its grading – translating a technical grading into 'plain English' (Department of Sustainability and Environment).

Public land management agencies across Australia have adopted the Australian Walking Track Grading System plain English language description to describe walks to the public (refer to Figure 1 below).







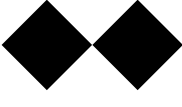
SYMBOL	SHORT DESCRIPTION
	GRADE ONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable for the disabled with assistance Up to 5km
	GRADE TWO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable for families with young children Up to 10km
	GRADE THREE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended for people with some bushwalking experience Up to 20km
	GRADE FOUR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended for experienced bushwalkers
	GRADE FIVE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended for very experienced bushwalkers

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

The Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines (2020) outlines the Trail Difficulty Rating System adopted in this strategy and summarised in the following table. These guidelines have adopted the IMBA system with minimal additions and interpretations (refer to Appendix F for further details).

Mountain bike trails are classified based on the physical attributes presented and the technical challenge of the trail, rather than the exertion and fitness that may be required by the user. The classification of a trail must reflect the most difficult section of that trail for visitor risk management purposes. It is important to provide this information to:

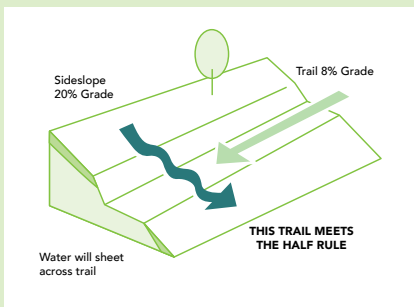
- Help riders make informed decisions
- Encourage riders to use trails that match their skill level
- Manage risk and minimise injuries
- Aid in the planning and design of trails (Mountain Bike Australia, 2019)

SYMBOL	SHORT DESCRIPTION
	<p>Very easy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wide trail with a gentle gradient smooth surface and no obstacles ▪ Suitable for beginner cyclists with basic bike skills, and most bikes
	<p>Easy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wide trail with a gentle gradient smooth surface ▪ Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks ▪ Suitable for beginner cyclists with basic mountain bike skills, and off-road bikes
	<p>Easy with intermediate sections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Likely to be single track with a moderate gradient, variable surface and some obstacles ▪ Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks ▪ Suitable for mountain bikers with mountain bikes
	<p>Intermediate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles ▪ May include steep sections ▪ Suitable for skilled mountain bikers with mountain bikes
	<p>Intermediate with difficult sections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitable for competent mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes ▪ Expect large and unavoidable obstacles and features ▪ Challenging and variable with some steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces
	<p>Difficult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitable for experienced mountain bikers, use to physically demanding routes ▪ Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable ▪ Expect large, dangerous and unavoidable obstacles and features ▪ Challenging and variable with long steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces ▪ Some sections will be easier to walk
	<p>Extreme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitable for highly experienced mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes. Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable ▪ Severe constructed trails and/or natural features, all sections are challenging ▪ Includes extreme levels of exposure and/or risk ▪ Expect large and unavoidable obstacles and features ▪ Some sections will be easier to walk

ASSET PROVISION:

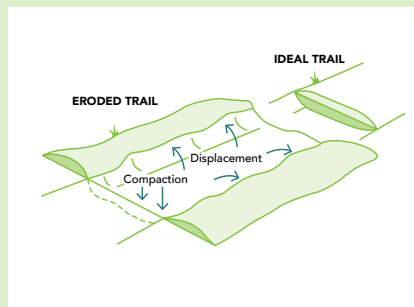
TRAIL BUILDING PRINCIPLES

TRAIL BUILDING PRINCIPLES ARE SUMMARISED BELOW, OUTLINING SUSTAINABLE TRAIL BUILDING TECHNIQUES WHICH SHOULD BE APPLIED TO ANY NEW TRAIL OR EXISTING TRAIL UPGRADE.



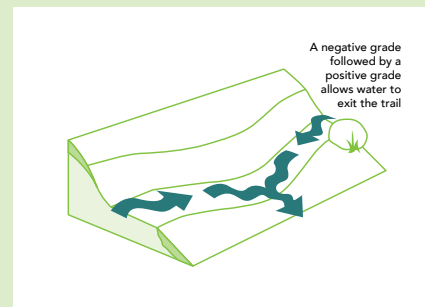
THE HALF RULE

A trail grade should not exceed half the grade of the side slope. If the trail is steeper than the fall line, then it is considered a fall-line trail.



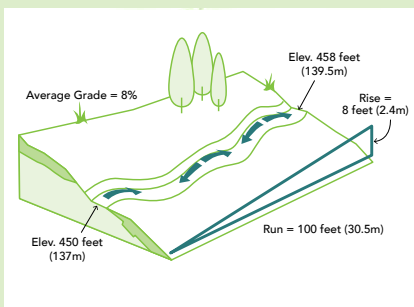
TREAD ARMOURING

Armouring is a method of using large rocks to pave a trail and prevent erosion.



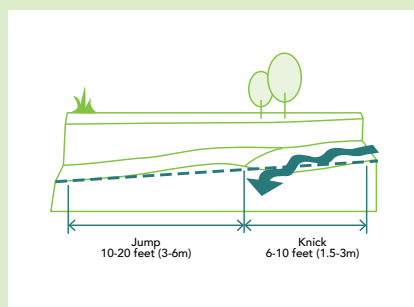
GRADE DIPS AND REVERSALS

A reverse in the trail grade is usually indicated by a short dip followed by a rise, creating a small watershed and forcing the water off the trail.



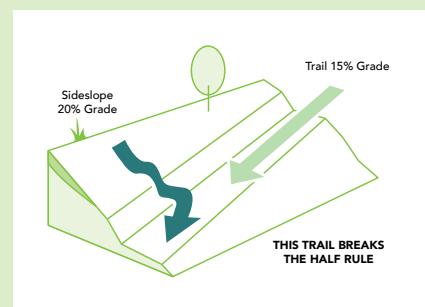
THE 10% AVERAGE

Generally, an average trail grade of 10% or less is most sustainable.



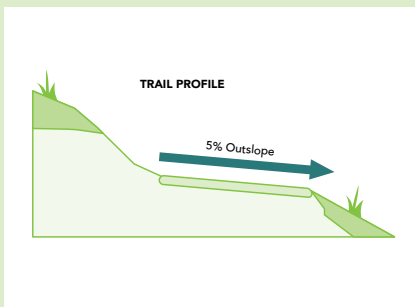
ROLLING GRADE KNICKS

Rolling grade knicks are characterized by a knick is a semi-circular, shaved down section of the trail, that is canted to the outside (and lower slope) to draw water off the trail.



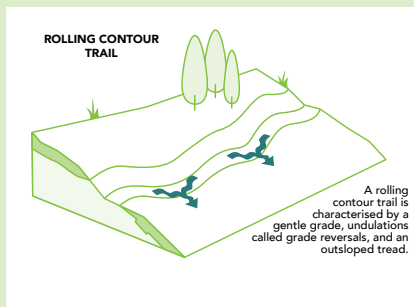
MAXIMUM TRAIL GRADE

The maximum sustainable trail grade is typically 15 - 20% but is site specific and varies (with track alignment, use of the half rule, soil type, annual rainfall, vegetation, use of grade reversals, type of users, number of users and level of difficulty).



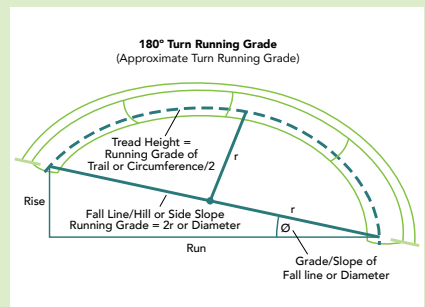
OUTSLOPE

Outslope is a method of tread construction that leaves the outside edge of a hillside lower than the inside, in order to shed water in sheet flow.



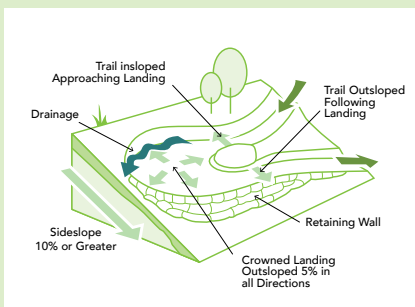
TRAIL FLOW

Trail flow is described as a trail that allows riders to carry momentum through turns, minimising braking and skidding to avoid soil disturbance and displacement (for MTB).



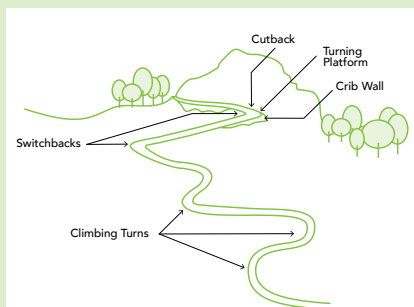
BERMED CORNER

A bermed corner has a banked outer edge that runs the entire length of the corner, allowing the rider to maintain a faster speed (for MTB).



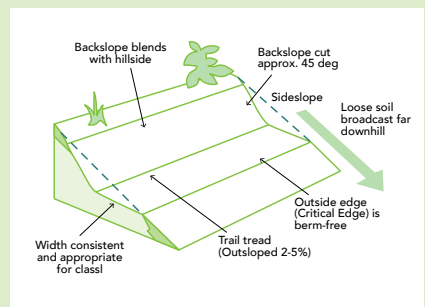
ROLLING CROWN SWITCHBACK

This technique involves a sustainable turn on a hillside engineered for drainage. The upper approach is insloped and the lower approach is outsloped.



CLIMBING TURNS

A climbing turn should be used on shallow slopes that are free flowing and gentle. Grade reversals before the turn to help divert water away and avoid erosion.



TRAIL CORRIDOR

A trail corridor is considered the full dimension of the trail, including the area on either side of the tread and the space overhead that needs to be cleared of bush and obstacles.

Refer to Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines, Trail Difficulty Rating System and the Guidelines for Trail Planning, Design and Management for full details and guidance on trail design and establishment.

ASSET PROVISION:

TRAIL DESIGN + VIABILITY

A RANGE OF FACTORS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS PART OF DEVELOPING RECREATIONAL TRAILS.

Existing and future trails should be assessed against these five measures to ensure the network reflects best practice trail design principles.

The following elements underpin successful trails and should be applied when considering new trails or upgrades to existing trails:



CONNECTIVITY

ENSURING TRAILS ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE AND CLOSE TO PROXIMITY TO TRAILHEADS



QUALITY

TRAILS DESIGNED AND CONSTRUCTED TO CATER TO A MIX OF USERS, FITNESS LEVELS AND SKILL SETS



EXPANSION

ALLOWANCE FOR THE TRAIL TO GROW AS POPULARITY INCREASES



NATURAL FEATURES

A VARIETY OF NATURAL FEATURES TO ENHANCE USER EXPERIENCE



EVENT CAPABILITY

POSSIBILITY FOR COMPETITIVE EVENTS TO INCREASE EXPOSURE





Walsh's Pyramid – Source : Jilara Kuch

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Specific design considerations exist for dual direction trails and shared trails.

DUAL DIRECTION TRAILS

Design of dual direction trails must consider appropriate measures, including:

- Long and clear sightlines
- Passing opportunities
- Slowing points prior to turns, technical trail features (TTF's) and intersections
- Appropriate warning signage prior to turns, TTF's and intersections

SHARED TRAILS

When designing shared use trails, the following should be considered:

- Optimum trail speed is achieved through the flow of the trail
- Trail anchors and demarcation are included to control speed and keep users on the trail
- Inclusion of single track to slow users without affecting experience
- Use slow point and chicanes to control speed
- Turns and corners placed appropriately to maintain sightlines and control speed
- Passing opportunities and clear sightlines included
- Safe intersection design (Mountain Bike Australia, 2019)





ASSET PROVISION:

TRAIL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

PROPOSALS FOR NEW TRAILS SHOULD BE EVALUATED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CRITERIA TO ENSURE THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE ASPIRATIONS FOR THE BROADER TRAIL NETWORK IN CAIRNS.

This assessment criteria was developed to assist both land managers and community groups in assessing the relative merits of new trail proposals and existing trail upgrades or extensions.

The criteria is intended to inform and guide decision-making regardless of the land tenure or land manager.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

The assessment criteria is divided into primary and secondary considerations:

Primary criteria - trail proposals should meet these seven criteria. Proposals that cannot meet these criteria are unlikely to be supported.

Secondary criteria - trail proposals which align with these additional criteria greatly enhance their chances of support.

PRIMARY CRITERIA

The proposed trail will:

1. Have the support of the landowner/ manager;
2. Be easily accessible to the Cairns' community and visitors and offer a unique experience;
3. Meet an identified community need and will have the support of the general community;
4. Be sustainable;
5. Provide quality experiences for users and where appropriate, be supported by facilities, signage and interpretation;

6. Be feasible to develop, manage and maintain; and

7. Meet approved construction standards and guidelines.

SECONDARY CRITERIA

1. Urban trails and trails close to population should have potential to cater for shared use; and
2. The proposed trail should have the potential to improve local economic activity.

PRIORITISATION OF TRAILS

The prioritisation of projects should be based on the following considerations:

- Addresses new areas of high demand or under serviced areas that would achieve a high return on investment in relation to new users
- Enhances connections to places of significance and iconic locations
- Complete gaps in an existing trail network
- Support events that attract investment in the region
- Responds to community interest or demand
- Addresses safety concerns in the network

ASSET PROVISION:

TRAIL SIGNAGE

A CONSISTENT SIGNAGE APPROACH SHOULD BE ADOPTED FOR ALL RECREATIONAL TRAILS WHICH CONVEYS CLEAR MESSAGING TO MANAGE RISKS, EDUCATE USERS AND CLEARLY IDENTIFY THE CAIRNS TRAIL NETWORK.

Provision of signage will vary in complexity depending on the trail objectives, safety concerns, key messaging and extent of infrastructure along each trail.

Signage provision requirements are dictated by the Australian standards for walking and mountain biking trails. All signage must also comply with Council's Signage Strategy 2023 (where appropriate) and the National Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style Manual (please refer the useful documents linked in Appendix D for further information).

Appropriate trail signage is critical in trail management and should:

- Clearly identify trails
- Provide easy orientation and direction information for users
- Clearly define and explain trail difficulty
- Function as a method for managing end user risks and other safety warnings
- Include opportunities to educate users about environmental impacts / warnings
- Outline clear emergency management information
- Inform users of trail etiquette
- Convey where appropriate, historical or cultural information (interpretive signage)

A bespoke signage suite should be developed to ensure there is a consistent approach adopted for all relevant trails within the region that is clearly identifiable.

WALKING TRAIL SIGNAGE

A classification and grading system for walking tracks is provided for in AS 2156.1 – 2001 Walking Tracks: Classification and Signage (refer to Appendix F). The document also provides guidance on the design, fabrication and use of trail markers and informative signs.

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL SIGNAGE

A classification and grading system for mountain bike trails is provided for in the Trail Difficulty Rating Systems - [2020] (refer to Appendix F).

Further guidance is provided by the Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines (2019) which includes detailed information regarding trailhead signage, themed signage and trail markings.

The combined documents highlighted in this section should be used to develop a signage suite specific to Cairns recreational trails.

KEY ACTIONS

AUDIT EXISTING SIGNAGE PROVISIONS ON COUNCIL MANAGED TRAILS

DEVELOP A SIGNAGE UPGRADE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO ENSURE ALL TRAILS MEET STANDARDS


DEVELOP A SIGNAGE SUITE SPECIFIC TO RECREATIONAL TRAILS IN CAIRNS BASED ON EXISTING GUIDELINES





Crystal Cascades Signage – Source: Cairns Regional Council



A photograph of a person running up a wooden staircase in a forest. The person is wearing a light blue t-shirt and dark shorts. The staircase is made of wide wooden planks and is set on a gravel path. The forest is lush with green trees and foliage. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up the stairs.

SECTION FOUR PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF THE APPROACH ADOPTED FOR IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES OF THIS STRATEGY. IT INCLUDES A HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COLLABORATION, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, MARKETING AND A CONSOLIDATED LIST OF KEY ACTIONS.

SECTION 04:

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION:

COLLABORATION + PARTNERSHIPS

BROAD STAKEHOLDER BUY IN AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT NOT ONLY FACILITATES SHARED OWNERSHIP BUT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO ASSIST WITH APPROVALS, ATTRACT FUNDING, AND HELP UNLOCK NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAIL PROJECTS.

Trails are unique assets that require multi-level government management and genuine engagement with the community. A successful trail network can only be achieved with a clear management approach that involves and works with the local community to achieve what is known now to be, shared aspirations for the broader region.



WORKING WITH PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

Many trail projects in the region pass through First People's land or traverse private property. It is essential to have a working relationship with these landowners. The process for this should take into consideration, their goals, interests, fears, and concerns and could potentially involve a local land trust to seek guidance or support.

TRADITIONAL OWNERS

As part of the detailed implementation plan for this strategy, Council should explore how First People's can help guide the provision and management of recreational trails in the region.

By applying the Council's First People's Engagement Guidelines, this process can be enhanced beyond acknowledgment and paying respects, to ensure genuine and meaningful collaboration with Traditional Owners (guidelines are currently under development - refer to Appendix D

for further information on useful documents). Other key considerations should include:

- Investigate opportunities to partner with First People's including establishing ranger programs, and support or involvement in the recreational trail network
- Explore opportunities for truth telling, sharing of stories, and education about the many native languages and dialects
- Protect First People's spiritual connection with the land and cultural heritage including artefact's or places of significance along recreational trails
- Where relevant, engage with the First People's Advisory Committee (FPAC) for advice and assistance regarding community engagement activities providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the Cairns Local Government Area with input into Council decision making processes



Red Arrow Walking Track – Source: Cairns Regional Council

KEY ACTIONS

ESTABLISH A CAIRNS TRAILS WORKING GROUP

INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTNER WITH FIRST PEOPLE'S

SUPPORT NFP CLUBS IN OBTAINING FUNDING TO CONSTRUCT TRAILS

UNDERTAKE A MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF THE TRACKS 'N' TRAILS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR POTENTIAL EXPANSION OPPORTUNITIES

PURSUE EXTERNAL GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP NEW TRAILS

INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ALIGN NEW TRAILS WITH STATE FUNDING / GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

OTHER PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

Building relationships with a broad range of stakeholders can encourage early support, flag potential issues before they manifest, and reveal opportunities early, assisting with the successful delivery of trail projects.

Other partnership opportunities could include specific trail user groups, conservation groups, adjacent land owners, local businesses or those representing relevant industries, public health initiatives or tourism partners which have a vested interest in the development from an economic perspective.

Volunteer programs including the existing Tracks 'n' Trails volunteer program should be reviewed to identify further opportunities for program expansion.

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Establishing a Cairns Trails Working Group with relevant stakeholders will be critical for ensuring focused engagement opportunities regarding the provision of trails. Potential stakeholders could include:

- Local representatives from Department of Environment and Science
- Representatives from Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport
- Traditional Owners
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- Cairns Regional Council officers from relevant departments
- Elected officials
- Industry experts
- Local clubs

FUNDING

Given the extent of the trails network across Cairns, various funding opportunities should be explored to aid in the delivery, ongoing management and maintenance of trails including state and national grant funding for new trails and providing support for not-for-profit clubs to obtain their own funding.

These strategic initiatives should be explored in more detail as part of the subsequent implementation plan to assist Council with delivering the outcomes of this strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION:

CONSULTATION

INVOLVING RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY IN TRAIL PLANNING WILL BE KEY TO ENSURING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH DEVELOPING THE TRAIL NETWORK. INVESTMENT OF TIME AND ENERGY IN COMMUNITY CONSULTATION IS NECESSARY TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND OWNERSHIP OF TRAILS.

ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This strategy is underpinned by the consultation and engagement process conducted as part of the broader Cycling and Walking Strategy for Cairns which included the following:

- **Community engagement** - a public survey to gain a better understanding of the community insights around the current usage of existing trails, needed improvements, potential new sites and ideal trailhead infrastructure (refer to Appendix J for further details).
- **Review** - draft strategy reviewed by elected members
- **Workshops** - an internal stakeholder workshop and external stakeholder workshop
- **Council engagement** - draft strategy presented to Council for endorsement
- **Public engagement** - Public notification

ONGOING CONSULTATION PROCESSES

Consultation will be a key component in the ongoing planning, implementation and management of trails.

A range of consultation methods exist to engage stakeholders where relevant including:

- Meetings or workshops
- Letter box drops
- Public displays and signage
- Media releases
- Council website content
- Brochures
- Online surveys
- Public information sessions, presentations, events and open days

The appropriate consultation method should be determined and adopted for each project where relevant.

Projects which include genuine and transparent consultation are more likely to be successful and can generate a level of community buy in which often assists with ongoing trail management once construction is completed.

STAKEHOLDERS

Once formed, the Cairns Trails Working Group will become the primary stakeholder group engaged for trail projects. A complete list of relevant stakeholders is provided for consideration. The identification of interested parties is provided on a best endeavors basis by Council officers and may not be exhaustive. It represents a point in time and is subject to change over time.



Source: Adobe Stock 112958612

RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

- _____ Cairns Regional Council
- _____ Queensland Government - Department of Environment and Science (DES)
- _____ Queensland Government – Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport (DTIS)
- _____ Queensland Government – Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR)
- _____ Far North Queensland Regional Association of Councils (FNQROC)
- _____ Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS)
- _____ Traditional Owners and First People’s
- _____ Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ)
- _____ Track and Trails Volunteers
- _____ Cairns Trails Working Group (including elected officials and industry experts)
- _____ Cairns Mountain Bike Club
- _____ Cairns BMX
- _____ Southside Mountain Bike Club
- _____ Other NFP local clubs
- _____ Relevant private land owners
- _____ World Trails
- _____ Green Space, Our Place Volunteers
- _____ Wangetti Trail Project representatives
- _____ General public
- _____ Other local community / walking groups
- _____ Local, state, national and international MTB event operators (e.g. Crankworks)
- _____ Mountain Bike Australia (MTBA)

KEY ACTIONS

- _____ UNDERTAKE ONGOING CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT LAND MANAGERS AND RELEVANT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WHERE REQUIRED
- _____ UNDERTAKE CONSULTATION WITH THE BROADER COMMUNITY AND RELEVANT USERS WHERE NECESSARY
- _____ ENGAGE WITH THE CAIRNS TRAILS WORKING GROUP AS NEEDED

IMPLEMENTATION:

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

ESTABLISHING A RECOGNIZABLE BRAND FOR TRAILS ACROSS CAIRNS CAN ASSIST WITH MARKETING AND PROMOTING RECREATIONAL WALKING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AS WELL AS THOSE TRAVELING TO EXPERIENCE TRAILS IN CAIRNS.

Consistency is identified as the primary element for marketing the trail network as a key Council asset. Currently, trails across the region, lack an easily recognisable brand and cohesive approach to the network.

As part of the implementation phase of this project, Council needs to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to build awareness of existing trails and the potential of new trails which considers the following elements:

- **Website** - Establish an inviting, engaging and easy to navigate online presence containing all content relevant to trails including track information, maps, volunteering opportunities, participation and engagement opportunities, current projects and updates. Links to other guidance, local partners, clubs and events should be included, with online access considered the most popular method of accessing information.
- **Digital mapping** - Refined online mapping of Council's recognised trails to provide a consolidated suite of trail information (Recognising the large volume of mapping already available online for informal trails (via other sources such as Strava, Trail Fork, All Trails).
- **Social media** - Establish a presence on relevant social media outlets including Facebook to reach a broad range of users and trail groups which inform Council of maintenance concerns and other key issues.
- **Signage** - Provide appropriate signage as per the approach outlined previously, including interpretive signage, maps, and signage for wayfinding and navigation such as trail markers.
- **Print marketing** - Prepare brochures, trail maps, local paper press releases and email marketing for supporting tourism and visitors to the region as well as to encourage greater participation.
- **Outreach** - Utilise annual events and festivals as educational and marketing opportunities. Explore initiatives to connect with regional and statewide agencies, extending the reach and role this strategy plays in the broader network of trails.
- **Sponsorship** - Investigate sponsorship opportunities which accommodate varied levels of budget and recognition particularly with events and associated programs.

KEY ACTIONS

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE MARKETING STRATEGY WHICH PROVIDES GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPING A WEBSITE PRESENCE, DIGITAL MAPPING, SOCIAL MEDIA, PRINT MARKETING, OUTREACH AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

ESTABLISH A RECOGNISABLE BRAND TO IDENTIFY CAIRNS RECREATIONAL TRAILS

REVIEW AND UPDATE EXISTING WALKING AND MTB TRACKS ON THE MYCAIRNS APP AND OTHER COUNCIL RESOURCES



Source: Tourism and Events Queensland

IMPLEMENTATION:

ACTION PLAN

SPECIFIC ACTIONS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY OF THE OUTCOMES DETAILED IN THIS STRATEGY.

The following tables outline a prioritized list of projects and initiatives for recreational walking and mountain bike trails in Cairns Local Government Area.

Actions relate more broadly to all local government controlled trails in general. Specific actions for individual track improvements within the wider recreational trails network will be developed as part of the ongoing implementation of this strategy.

Actions have been prioritised into the following four categories:

- **Low** - Low priorities may be dependent on the completion of other actions, require alignment with future projects or be longer term aspirations within the strategy.
- **Medium** - Medium priorities have a lower risk profile to Council and should be forward planned for medium-long term implementation.
- **High** - High priorities are identified for short term implementation. Actions are to be included in upcoming operational planning, and should address any time sensitive opportunities or potential risks to Council.
- **Ongoing** - Ongoing priorities often correlate with consultation and engagement actions which are anticipated to continue indefinitely.

SUMMARY OF RECREATIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY ACTIONS

1 - FIT FOR PURPOSE NETWORK	PRIORITY
Audit all existing trails for compliance with trail hierarchy requirements	HIGH
Develop an implementation plan for existing trails to ensure compliance with all relevant Australian Standards	HIGH
Audit all trailheads for compliance with trail hierarchy requirements	HIGH
Develop an improvement plan for trailheads	HIGH
Undertake a signage audit for all trails and trailheads	HIGH
Develop a signage upgrade implementation plan	HIGH
2 - MANAGEMENT APPROACH	PRIORITY
Develop a Standardised Management Plan template to be used for all recreational trails in Cairns	HIGH
Develop a standardised management plan for each existing trail within Council's portfolio	MEDIUM
Ensure a standardised management plan is prepared for all future trails delivered as part of Council's portfolio	MEDIUM
Advocate for the adoption of standardised management plan's for all trails in the region (including those on state or private land)	LOW
Develop of operational levels of service for trails in accordance with the trail hierarchy	MEDIUM
Investigate locations for installing appropriate and cost effective trail counters to monitor trail usage.	HIGH
3 - EXPANDING THE NETWORK	PRIORITY
Collaborate with relevant community partners and government agencies to assist with progressing the design and delivery of Wangetti Trail	HIGH
Advocate for projects associated with the future Mount Peter trails	LOW
Support expansion of the Smithfield MTB Park by collaborating with SMB club, relevant government agencies and event representatives	HIGH
Investigate future iconic trail projects in alignment with recreational trails for SEQ	MEDIUM

SIGNAGE	PRIORITY
Audit existing signage provisions on Council managed trails	MEDIUM
Develop a signage upgrade implementation plan to ensure all trails meet standards	MEDIUM
Develop a signage suite specific to recreational trails in cairns based on existing guidelines	MEDIUM

COLLABORATION / PARTNERSHIPS	PRIORITY
Establish a Cairns Trails Working Group with relevant stakeholders	MEDIUM
Investigate opportunities to partner with First People's communities to establish ranger programs, support involvement in the recreational trail network	MEDIUM
Support NFP Clubs in obtaining funding to construct trails on state or local government managed land when the project aligns with the objectives of this strategy	ONGOING
Undertake a management review of the Tracks N Trails volunteer program for potential expansion opportunities	LOW
Pursue external grant funding opportunities to develop new trails in the local government area when there this strategy identifies the need.	ONGOING
Investigate opportunities to align new trails with state funding / grant opportunities	LOW

CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT	PRIORITY
Undertake ongoing consultation with relevant land managers and relevant government agencies where required	ONGOING
Undertake consultation with the broader community and relevant users where necessary	ONGOING
Engage with the Cairns Trails Working Group as needed	ONGOING

MARKETING	PRIORITY
Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy which provides guidance for developing a website presence, digital mapping, social media, print marketing, outreach and sponsorship opportunities	MEDIUM
Establish a recognisable brand to identify Cairns recreational trails	MEDIUM
Review and update existing walking and MTB tracks on the mycairns app and other Council recourses	MEDIUM

IMPLEMENTATION:

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

THE ACTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES IN THIS STRATEGY INDICATE COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING THE REGION'S RECREATIONAL TRAILS NETWORK.

The recreational trail network in the Cairns Local Government Area is an asset class that is highly utilised, socially relevant and politically topical at present.

The intent of this document was to set out Council's first management direction for trails. This document reflects a point in time, indicating the need for a strategic review within five years, in addition to annual monitoring and review.

The implementation of the strategy objectives and subsequent action plan for trails summarises Council's intention to audit the existing trail network and begin to implement minimum standards for trails and strive for a cohesive, quality network of trails.

NEXT STEPS

The next phase of this strategy will include a more detailed implementation plan to ensure the delivery on outcomes from this strategy including:

- Continued stakeholder consultation and engagement
- Further investigations of recommendations within the strategy
- Detailed actions for informing project specific improvement and implementation plans

Council recognises that as the network and local context continues to evolve, so must this strategy to ensure it remains relevant and reflective of it's users.





Thorsborne Trail – Source: Tourism and Events Queensland





SECTION 05:

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX B:

DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATV - All Terrain Vehicle

BMX - Bicycle Motor Cross

CCWS - Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy

DES - Department of Environment and Science Queensland

DTIS - Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport Queensland

DTMR - Queensland Government – Department of Transport and Main Roads

Ecotourism - Nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas

FNQ - Far North Queensland

FNQROC - Far North Queensland Regional Association of Councils

FPAC - First People's Advisory Committee

IMBA - International Mountain Bicycling Australia

LGA - Local Government Area

LGMS - Local Government Mutual Services

MTB - Mountain Bike

NFP - Not for profit organisations and clubs

QPWS - Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services

QLD - Queensland

SMP - Standardised Management Plan

SMB - Southside Mountain Bike

TNQ - Tropical North Queensland

TO - Traditional Owners

TTF - Technical Trail Features

TTNQ - Tourism Tropical North Queensland

TRC - Tourism, Recreation, Conservation

TTNQ - Tourism Tropical North Queensland

APPENDIX C:

PREPARING THE STRATEGY

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT:

Council's intention when commencing this process was to develop one Cycling and Walking Strategy for Cairns that incorporated both active transport and recreational trails. During the strategy development for Active Transport, it was determined that two separate strategies were required due to the profound difference in general acceptance and understanding of the importance of active transport infrastructure compared to the ambiguity around recreational trails.

<p>Stage 1 Existing situation review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review relevant documents and strategies ▪ Understand best practice and industry standards ▪ Define existing trail network ▪ Undertake analysis ▪ Map existing informal and formal trails
<p>Stage 2 Strategy preparation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review results of community survey conducted as part of original active transport strategy development ▪ Establish trail hierarchy ▪ Establish prioritisation ▪ Define management models ▪ Develop action plan
<p>Stage 3 Consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce draft strategy to elected members ▪ Internal and external stakeholder workshop ▪ Peer review
<p>Stage 5 Finalisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft strategy endorsed by Council ▪ Public notification ▪ Final Strategy adopted by Council

APPENDIX D:

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

COUNCIL RESOURCES

Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy [2020]

https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/329506/Reduced-web-copy-Active-Transport-Strategy.pdf

Cairns Regional Council First People's Engagement Guidelines - currently under development

(Please contact Council directly for a copy of this document)

Cairns Regional Council Tracks & Trails information

<https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/experience-cairns/sport-and-leisure/cycling-walking-fitness/tracks-and-trails>

Cairns Regional Council's My Cairns App

<https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/council/contact-us/mycairns-app>

Cairns Regional Council Signage Guidelines 2023

(Please contact Council directly for a copy of this document)

GUIDELINES

TRC Recreational Trail Planning, Design and Management Guidelines [2020]

https://www.trctourism.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TRC_Tourism_Trail_Guidelines_2020.pdf

Guidelines for the Planning, Design, Construction and Maintenance of Recreational Trails in South Australia [2016]

<https://www.southernaustraliantrails.com/files/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/trail-design-guidelines.pdf>

Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines - Trail Difficulty Rating Systems [2020]

https://assets.auscycling.org.au/s3fs-public/2021-12/ccj18482-revisions-to-tdrsguidelines-october-2020-fa-web-section-10-singles.pdf?fGmUNGzVkh3_y7JNp8VXNfuaNszFJ13=

Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines [2019]

<https://shop.auscycling.org.au/products/australian-mountain-bike-trail-guidelines>

Australian Adaptive Mountain Bike Guidelines [2018]

<https://breaktheboundary.com.au/resources/guidelines/>

Aus Cycling Facility Guide [2023]

https://assets.auscycling.org.au/s3fs-public/2023-03/acy1651-auscycling-facility-guide_final.pdf?VersionId=qX0iNkheTCR58oT.1BcEg77KflrxliVj

STRATEGIES

National Aquatic and Recreational Signage Style Manual [2006]

<https://www.lifesavingsupport.com.au/Downloads/National-Aquatic-Recreation-Signage-Manual.pdf>

Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy [2018]

https://www.mtba.org.au/wp-content/uploads/QLD-MTB-MASTER-PLAN-Single-Pages_FINAL-180706_.pdf

Queensland Walking Strategy [2019]

<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Travel-and-transport/Pedestrians-and-walking/Queensland-walking-strategy>

Queensland Cycling Strategy [2017-2027]

<https://www.publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/queensland-cycling-strategy-2017-2027>

Tropical North Queensland Regional Mountain Bike Strategy [2015]

<https://www.fnqroc.qld.gov.au/regional-programs/regional-mountain-bike-strategy>

STANDARDS

AS 2156.1 – 2001 Walking Tracks – Part 1: Classification and Signage [2001]

<https://www.saiglobal.com/PDFTemp/Previews/OSH/as/as2000/2100/21561.pdf>

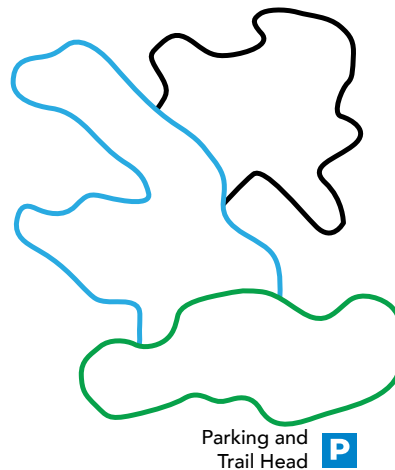
Trail Difficulty Rating Systems - Australian Mountain Bike Trail Guidelines [2020]

https://assets.auscycling.org.au/s3fs-public/2021-12/ccj18482-revisions-to-tdrsguidelines-october-2020-fa-web-section-10-singles.pdf?fGmUNGzVkh3_y7JNp8VXNfuaNszFJ13=

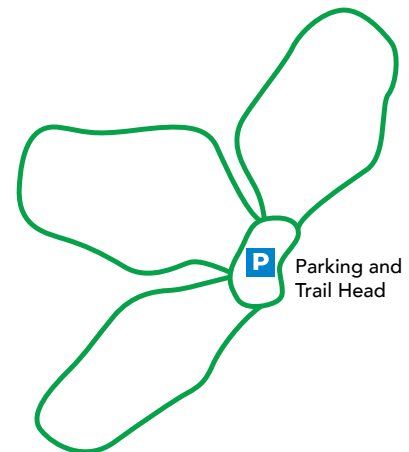
APPENDIX E:

EXAMPLES OF LOOP TRAIL DESIGNS

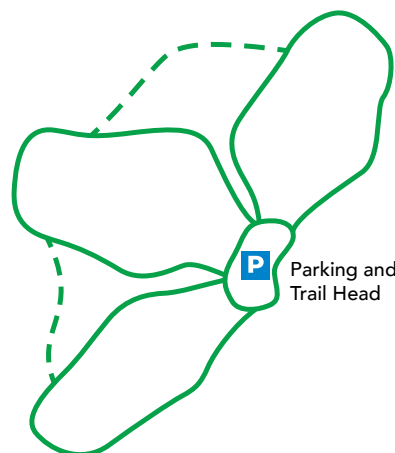
LOOP TRAILS ARE AN EFFICIENT DESIGN THAT ALLOW FOR LONGER TRAIL LENGTHS WITHIN THE AVAILABLE SPACE



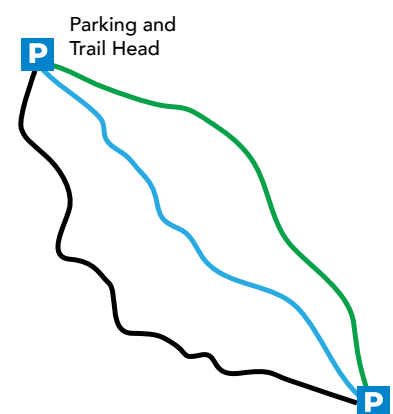
Stacked Loop designs are a series of loop trails that radiate concentrically from a trailhead and core trail, usually in a single direction. This means that there are loops inside other loops. Linear trails can link loops together, meaning the trails can be used in any combination.



Cloverleaf designs are a series of loop trails that radiate from a central trailhead and core trail. Linear trails can link loops together meaning the trails can be used in any combination.



Linked loop – similar to the cloverleaf design, with linkages between trails to enable trail users to try a different trail without having to go back to the trailhead.



Trail fingers fan out from the core trail or trailhead at various points giving users a simple choice of options, trails could be loops or linear.

APPENDIX F:

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS






There are separate grading systems for walking trails and mountain bike trails which are detailed below.

WALKING TRAIL CLASSIFICATION AND GRADING:

The Australian Walking Track Grading System is designed to assist people by informing people about the features of the tracks. Standardised level of difficult or track grading helps users gauge whether a track is suitable for their level of ability and fitness. Walks should be described as they actually are, and a walk gets its grading from its hardest component. Therefore, a walk will often have components that are easier than the walk's ultimate grade.

The application for the Australian Walking Track Grading System is a two-step process. The first step is a technical grading of the walk. The land manager determines a walk's grade of difficulty using descriptors taken from the Australian Standard 2156.1 – 2001 Walking Tracks – Classification and Signage. The second step is to communicate to the public why a walk has received its grading – translating a technical grading into 'plain English' (Department of Sustainability and Environment).


Public land management agencies across Australia have adopted the Australian Walking Track Grading System a plain English language description to describe walks to the public (refer to Figure 1 below). Under the system, walking trails are graded on a difficulty scale from grades one to five:

AS 2156.1-2001 Walking Tracks – Classification and Signage	The Australian Walking rack Grading System benchmarks to AS 2156.1-2001. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Grade 1 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 1 track A Grade 2 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 2 track A Grade 3 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 3 track A Grade 4 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 4 track A Grade 5 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 5 and 6 track 				
Descriptions	Walk features are described as they exist. For example, the description of a Grade 2 walk gradient is "gentle hills". However, if the walk is flat it should be described as flat.				
Distance	The distance given is the actual distance traveled to complete the walk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One way if the walk is promoted as a walk from one point to another (Point A - Point B) Return if the walk is to a point and back (point A – Point B – Point A); or Circuit or loop if the walk is a loop For Grades 1-3 distance is given to the nearest 100 meters (e.g. 4.2km) For Grades 4-5 distance is given to the nearest kilometre.				
Grade	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Distance	Up to 5km	Up to 10km	Up to 20km	N/A	N/A
Experience required	Experience required refers to the degree of bushwalking experience required to safely complete a specific grade walk. Bushwalking experience required benchmarks to AS 2156.1-2001. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Grade 1 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 1 track A Grade 2 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 2 track A Grade 3 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 3 track A Grade 4 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 4 track A Grade 5 walk corresponds to AS 2165.1 Class 5 and 6 track 				
Gradient (or slope)	The Australian Walking Track Grading System uses text to describe gradient to the public. Technical descriptions (e.g. ratios or degrees) are used to technically grade the walk.				
Grade or Level of Difficult	The grade of the walk is determined by its hardest characteristic. Specific symbols are assigned to each grade.				
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
					
Steps	A structure with a series of risers (steps which provides pedestrian access from one level to another.				

APPENDIX F:

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

EASY MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL - AUSTRALIAN TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEMS [2020]

		Technical description (for land Manager use)	Trail description (for public information)	Generic description (for public Information)	Short classification key
Grade of trail		Easy			
Description		Likely to be a combination of fire road or wide single track with a gentle gradient, smooth surface and relatively free of obstacles Short sections may exceed these criteria	Likely to be a combination of fire road or wide single track with a gentle gradient, smooth surface and relatively free of obstacles Short sections may exceed these criteria	Wide trail with a gentle gradient smooth surface Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks Suitable for beginner cyclists with basic mountain bike skills, and off-road bikes	Wide trail, gentle gradient, some obstacles For beginner mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills
GUIDING CRITERIA	Trail width	900 mm plus or minus 300 mm	Handlebar width or greater		
	Trail surface	Mostly firm and stable	Mostly firm and stable		
	Trail gradient	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow, but trail may include some moderately steep sections Ave. Trail grade – 7% or less Max. Trail grade – 15%	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow, but trail may include some moderately steep sections		
	Quality of markings	Trailhead signs and route markers at intersections	Clearly signposted		
MANDATORY CRITERIA	Level of trail exposure	Exposure to either side of the trail corridor includes downward slopes of up to 10%	N/A		
	Natural obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTFs)	Unavoidable obstacles to 50 mm high, such as logs, roots and rocks Avoidable, rollable obstacles may be present Unavoidable bridges 900 mm wide Short sections may exceed these criteria	Trail may have obstacles such as logs, roots and rocks		
	Experience required	Suitable for beginner / novice cyclists with basic bike riding skills Suitable for off-road bikes	Suitable mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills Suitable for most bikes		


EASY/INTERMEDIATE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL - AUSTRALIAN TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEMS [2020]

	Technical description (for land Manager use)	Trail description (for public information)	Generic description (for public Information)	Short classification key
Grade of trail	Easy with intermediate sections			
Description	Likely to be single track with a moderate gradient, variable surface and some obstacles. Short sections may exceed these criteria	Likely to be single track with a moderate gradient, variable surface and some obstacles Short sections may exceed these criteria	Likely to be single track with a moderate gradient, variable surface and some obstacles Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks	Single track, moderate gradient and some obstacles For beginner mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills
GUIDING CRITERIA	Trail width	750 mm plus or minus 200 mm	Handlebar width	
	Trail surface	Mostly firm and stable	Mostly firm and stable	
	Trail gradient	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow, but trail may include some moderately steep sections Ave. Trail grade – 7% or less Max. Trail grade – 20%	Climbs and descents are mostly shallow, but trail may include some moderately steep sections	
	Quality of markings	Trailhead signs and route markers at intersections	Clearly signposted	
MANDATORY CRITERIA	Level of trail exposure	Exposure to either side of the trail corridor includes downward slopes of up to 20%	N/A	
	Natural obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTFs)	Natural Obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTFs) Unavoidable obstacles to 100 mm high, such as logs, roots and rocks Avoidable, rollable obstacles may be present Unavoidable bridges 900 mm wide Short sections may exceed these criteria	Trail may have obstacles such as logs, roots and rocks	
Experience required	Suitable for beginner / novice mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills Suitable for off-road bikes	Suitable mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills Suitable for most bikes		


APPENDIX F:

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

INTERMEDIATE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL - AUSTRALIAN TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEMS [2020]

		Technical description (for land Manager use)	Trail description (for public information)	Generic description (for public Information)	Short classification key
Grade of trail		Intermediate			
Description		Single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles Dual use or preferred use	Single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles	Single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles	Single trail, moderate gradients, obstacles and some steep sections
GUIDING CRITERIA	Trail width	600 mm plus or minus 300 mm	Handlebar width or greater	May include steep sections Suitable for skilled mountain bikers with mountain bikes	For skilled mountain bikers
	Trail surface	Possible sections of rocky or loose tread	Possible sections of rocky or loose tread		
	Trail gradient	Mostly moderate gradients but may include steep sections Ave. Trail grade – 10% or less Max. Trail grade – 20%	Mostly moderate gradients but may include steep sections		
	Quality of markings	Trailhead signs and route markers at intersections	Signposted		
MANDATORY CRITERIA	Level of trail exposure	Exposure to either side of the trail corridor includes downward slopes of up to 20%	N/A		
	Natural obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTFs)	Unavoidable obstacles to 200 mm high, such as logs, roots and rocks Avoidable, obstacles to 600 mm may be present Unavoidable bridges 600mm wide Short sections may exceed these criteria	Trail will have obstacles such as logs, roots and rocks		
	Experience Required	Suitable for skilled mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills Suitable for mountain bikes	Suitable for skilled mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills Suitable for mountain bikes		


INTERMEDIATE/DIFFICULT MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL - AUSTRALIAN TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEMS [2020]

	Technical description (for land Manager use)	Trail description (for public information)	Generic description (for public Information)	Short classification key
Grade of trail	Intermediate with difficult sections			
Description	Likely to be a challenging single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles Dual use or preferred use	Likely to be a challenging single trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles Suitable for competent mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes	Suitable for competent mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes Expect large and unavoidable obstacles and features	For competent mountain bikers Large, unavoidable obstacles and features Some steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces
GUIDING CRITERIA	Trail width	600 mm plus or minus 300 mm	Handlebar width or greater	Challenging and variable with some steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces
	Trail surface	Possible sections of rocky or loose tread	Possible sections of rocky or loose tread	
	Trail gradient	Mostly moderate gradients but may include steep sections Ave. Trail grade – 15% or less Max. Trail grade – 20%	Mostly moderate gradients but may include steep sections	
	Quality of markings	Trailhead signs and route markers at intersections	Signposted	
MANDATORY CRITERIA	Level of trail exposure	Exposure to either side of the trail corridor includes downward slopes of up to 25%	Exposure to either side of the trail corridor includes downward slopes of up to 25%	
	Natural obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTFs)	Unavoidable obstacles to 300 mm high, such as logs, roots and rocks Avoidable, obstacles to 1000 mm may be present Unavoidable bridges 600 mm wide Short sections may exceed these criteria	Trail will have obstacles such as logs, roots and rocks	
	Experience Required	Suitable for skilled mountain bikers with basic mountain bike skills Suitable for mountain bikes	Suitable for competent mountain bikers with good mountain bike skills Suitable for mountain bikes	

APPENDIX F:

TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

DIFFICULT MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL - AUSTRALIAN TRAIL DIFFICULTY RATING SYSTEMS [2020]

	 Technical description (for land Manager use)	Trail description (for public information)	Generic description (for public Information)	Short classification key
Grade of trail	Difficult			
Description	Likely to be a challenging single trail with steep gradients, variable surface and many obstacles Single use and direction Optional lines Suitable for cross country, downhill or trials	Likely to be a challenging single trail with steep gradients, variable surface and many obstacles	Suitable for experienced mountain bikers, used to physically demanding routes Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable	For experienced mountain bikers Challenging trail Large, unavoidable obstacles and features
GUIDING CRITERIA	Trail width	300 mm plus or minus 150 mm for tread and bridges	Can be less than handlebar width	Expect large, dangerous and unavoidable obstacles and features Challenging and variable with long steep climbs or descents and loose surfaces Some sections will be easier to walk
	Trail surface	Variable and challenging	Variable and challenging	
	Trail gradient	Contains steep descents and climbs Max. Trail grade – 25%	Contains steep descents and climbs	
	Quality of markings	Trailhead signs and route markers may be limited	Limited signs	
MANDATORY CRITERIA	Level of trail exposure	Exposure to either side of the trail corridor includes steep downward slopes or free fall	Exposure to either side of the trail corridor includes steep downward slopes or free fall	
	Natural obstacles and Technical Trail Features (TTFs)	Unavoidable obstacles 380 mm high, such as logs, roots, drop off 's or constructed obstacles Avoidable, obstacles to 1200 mm may be present Unavoidable bridges 600 mm wide Short sections may exceed these criteria	Unavoidable obstacles such as logs, roots, drop off's or constructed obstacles	
Experience required	Suitable for experienced mountain bikers with good skills, used to physically demanding routes Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable Suitable for better quality mountain bikes	Suitable for experienced mountain bikers with good skills, used to physically demanding routes Navigation and personal survival skills are highly desirable Suitable for better quality mountain bikes.		

APPENDIX G:

MTB TRAIL TYPES

MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

Mountain bikes are designed with wider tyres, a more upright position, and lower gearing than their on-pavement counterparts, and can accommodate a wide variety of riding surfaces, including pavement, gravel, rock and most soils (Koepke, 2005).

There are a range of mountain bike trail types that accommodate different users and riding styles which sit under the broad heading of mountain bike riders who can range in skill level from beginner to elite professionals, as briefly described below:

CROSS COUNTRY

– Primarily single-track oriented with a combination of climbing and descending and natural trail features of varying technicality.

FLOW TRAILS

– Typically contain features like banked turns, rolling terrain, various types of jumps and consistent and predictable surfaces.

ALL MOUNTAIN -

Similar to Cross Country and primarily single-track oriented, with greater emphasis on technical descents, with nontechnical climbs.

GRAVITY / ENDURO -

Like All Mountain with greater emphasis on steep, fast, technical descents. Gravity / Enduro trails can cater for timed competitive events.

DOWNHILL

– Purely descent trails with emphasis on speed and technical challenge and focus on skill development. These trails can cater for timed competitive racing.

FREE-RIDE

– Typically, descent focused trails with emphasis solely on technical challenge and skill development. Trails feature both built and natural terrain technical features with a focus on drops and jumps.

PARK

– Built feature environments with an emphasis on manoeuvres, skill development and progression.

TOURING

– Typically, long distance riding on reasonably uniform surface conditions and lower grades. Touring trails are dual direction linear trails or long-distance circuits with a focus on reaching a destination (Pelling & Jones, 2021).

APPENDIX H:

LIST OF TRAILS

FORMALISED RECREATIONAL WALKING TRAILS:

TRAIL NAME	LOCATION	TRACK GRADE / DIFFICULTY (IF KNOWN)	LENGTH	TRAIL MAIN- TAINED BY	TRAILHEAD MAINTAINED BY?	DOGS ON LEAD?
Earl Hill	Flagship Dr Trinity Beach	3	2.9km	DES	Council	Yes
	Ellen Close and Toogood Road, Bayview Heights	3	2.4km (return)	Council	Council	Yes
Yellow Arrow	Mt Whitfield Conservation Park, Edge Hill	3	1.9km	Council	Council	No
Red Arrow	Mt Whitfield Conservation Park, Edge Hill	3	1.5km	Council	Council	No
Blue Arrow	Mt Whitfield Conservation Park, Edge Hill	4	6km	Council	Council	No
Green Arrow	Mt Whitfield Conservation Park, Edge Hill	4	3km	Council	Council	No
Walsh's Pyramid	Moss Access, Alooomba,	5	6.2km (one way)	DES	Council	No
Glacier Rock	Stoney Creek Road, Kamerunga Barron Gorge National Park	4	3.6km	DES	Council	No
Goldfield Trail	The Boulders Road, Babinda Wooroonooran National Park	5	19km (one way)	DES	Council	No
Douglas Track	Stoney Creek Road, Kamerunga Barron Gorge National Park	Easy/ moderate	7.8km (one way)	DES	Council	No
Smiths Track	Stoney Creek Road, Kamerunga – Barron Gorge National Park	Moderate / difficult	8.25km (one way)	DES	Council	No
Ivan Evans Walking Track	Bayview Heights	Easy / moderate	2.4km (one way)	Council	Council	Yes
Behana Gorge	Behana Gorge Road, Wooroonooran National Park	Moderate/ difficult	6.6km	DES	Council	No
Crystal Cascades	Crystal Cascades, Redlynch Intake Road, Redlynch	2	1.2km (one way)	Council	Council	No
Cattana Wetlands,	Dunne Road, Smithfield	Easy	3.7km	Council	Council	No
Ron McKauge Walk	Vasey Esplanade (southern end), Trinity Beach	Moderate	750m return	Council	Council	Yes
Stoney Creek Weir	Stoney Creek Road, Kamerunga Barron Gorge National Park	Easy	2km	Council	Council	No

FORMALISED MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS:

TRAIL NAME	LOCATION	TRACK GRADE / DIFFICULTY (IF KNOWN)	LENGTH	TRAIL MAINTAINED BY?	TRAILHEAD MAINTAINED BY?	DOGS ON LEAD?
Southside Mountain bike Club trails	Edmonton	Green	2.4km	Southside Mountain Bike Club	No official trailhead	No
Smithfield MTB Park*	Smithfield Conservation Park	Multiple	19kms	Cairns Mountain Bike Club	Cairns Mountain Bike Club	Yes (part)

*Refer to <https://cairnsmtb.com/trail-maps-info/> for full trail map.

KNOWN INFORMAL TRAILS:

TRAIL NAME	LOCATION	ACTIVITY
White Rock Peak	Foster Road to Lamb Range	Walking
Peets Falls	Goldsborough	Walking
Slipperies	Bayview Heights (Lamb Range)	Walking/ Mountain Biking
Waddlebla	Bayview Heights (Lamb Range)	Walking/ Mountain Biking
Extendies Descent	Redlynch (Lamb Range)	Mountain Biking
Boi Boi	Redlynch (Lamb Range)	Mountain Biking
Scorpion	Redlynch (Lamb Range)	Mountain Biking
Redlynch Adventure Loop	Redlynch	Mountain Biking
Crystals	Lamb Range	Mountain Biking
Marino's Hill Descent	Kanimbla	Mountain Biking
Double D Bumble Bee	Brinsmead	Mountain Biking
Black Monster Half Nelson	Brinsmead	Mountain Biking
Palmers XC Climb	Brinsmead	Mountain Biking
Pines XC	Brinsmead	Mountain Biking
Palmers (Main Track)	Brinsmead	Mountain Biking
Papua New Guinea	Brinsmead	Mountain Biking
To The Moon	Brinsmead	Mountain Biking
Cliftons	Clifton Beach	Mountain Biking
Cheepis	Redlynch	Mountain Biking
Old Boot/ Green Ant	Edmonton	Mountain Biking
Old Quarry Track	Edmonton	Mountain Biking
Bull Ant	Edmonton	Mountain Biking
Project Mayhem	Edmonton	Mountain Biking
5G	Bentley Park	Mountain Biking

APPENDIX I:

ANALYSIS OF TRAIL PROVISION

Analysis

A range of external factors have influenced the current situation and status of trail provision in the Cairns Local Government Area. These factors were examined as part of a political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal (PESTEL) analysis. This assessment identified key contributing and underlying factors for guiding the strategic direction of the Recreational Trails Strategy.

Political

- The responsibility of trail construction is dependent on land tenure (a one size fits all scenario does not exist)
- The responsibility of trail maintenance is unclear particularly when there are several levels of government as land owners.
- Requires a partisan approach to be successful given trails in the region generally traverse both local and state government land.
- Use of local contractors.

Economical

- Universally recognised that a return on investment is realised for trail construction projects.
- Eco & adventure tourism is an emerging sector for economic stimulation.
- Job creation in trail construction & maintenance + ancillary services (hospitality, tours).
- Private sector investment opportunities.
- Well established networks attract events which generate economic benefits.

Social

- Culturally significant to Australia's First People.
- Active recreation supports health in communities.
- Improved community health via exercise reduces demand on health services.
- Trails support social interactions as users can opt to participate as a group contributing to a sense of belonging.
- Conflicts between walkers and mountain bikers.
- Trail care programs encourage volunteerism.

Technological

- Unofficial trail maps which use geospatial data, increase accessibility.
- More users tracking informal trails with GPS data and uploading to the internet increases use of informal trails that may not be desirable to land managers.
- Trail counters required to monitor use and inform asset management.
- Trail management by volunteers is limited by technical competence.

Environmental

- Impact on land conservation - priority for land owner.
- Unplanned use or overuse can cause undetected erosion / degradation.
- Litter and human waste polluting natural areas.
- Emerging trends in outdoor recreation popularity as people seek out nature experiences.
- Trail maintenance expertise often a limited resource.
- FNQ has unique challenges with trail development due to the Wet Tropics World Heritage listed area.

Legal

- Access to trails can impact private property (privacy, safety, trespassing, quiet enjoyment).
- Complex legislation & approvals is synonymous with trail development.
- Formalised trails must comply with relevant Australian standards and adhere to guidelines for sustainable trail building.
- Adequate trailhead signage required to inform users of risk associated with use of trails.
- Risk management approach required for trail maintenance.

APPENDIX J:

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

A community survey was undertaken by Otium Planning Group to gain a better understanding of the community insights around the current usage of existing trails, needed improvements, potential new sites and ideal trailhead infrastructure. The survey was part of the broader Cairns Cycling and Walking Strategy consultation, and ran for one month (20 Feb 18 – 21 March 18) attracting 63 responses.

Despite it being targeted at active transport, walking trails and mountain bike related responses made up 9% of the total responses. Of these responses, the most common theme was new trails or improving and formalising existing informal trails, including:

- Better paths and facilities through Mount Whitfield Conservation Park, concentrating on the existing Arrow trails.
- Comments about paths around the northern beaches including the back of Palm Cove and connectivity to Port Douglas.
- Better paths and facilities around the Mount Sheridan area including White Rock Peak (lookout).

The following section outlines more detailed results from the survey.

CURRENT TRAIL USAGE:

Respondents were asked to identify their favourite tracks, where they were located and the reason for use. In total there were 27 different tracks, trails and paths identified across 15 different locations. The most popular track was the Yellow Arrow, located at Mt Whitfield. Walking was the most common use of the trails, accounting for almost half the responses (49%), followed by cycling and mountain bike riding (33%). The tracks identified are detailed in Table A:

TRACK NAME (SUBURB)	RESPONSES
Yellow Arrow (Aeroglen)	12
Smithfield MTB Park	8
Red Arrow (Edge Hill)	7
Glacier Rock (Stoney Creek/Kamerunga)	6
Earl Hill (Trinity Beach)	5
Brinsmead to Freshwater	4
Douglas Track (Kamerunga)	2
Behana Gorge (Gordonvale)	2
Redlynch Valley	2
Palm Cove to Clifton Beach	2
Pete's Falls (Gordonvale)	2
Davies Creek MTB Park (Mareeba)	1
Pyramid Track (Gordonvale)	1
Smiths Track (Kamerunga)	1
Trinity Beach to Palm Cove	1
Brinsmead Pump Track	1
Freshwater Creek trail	1
Ivan Evans (Woree)	1
Red Peak	1
Green Arrow (Edge Hill)	1
UNK (Redlynch)	1
Atherton MTB Park	1
Northern Beaches cycling path	1
Black Snake (Smithfield)	1
Old Cairns Track (Gordonvale)	1

APPENDIX J:

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

UNDERSTANDING TRAIL USAGE:

TABLE B: FREQUENCY OF TRAIL USAGE

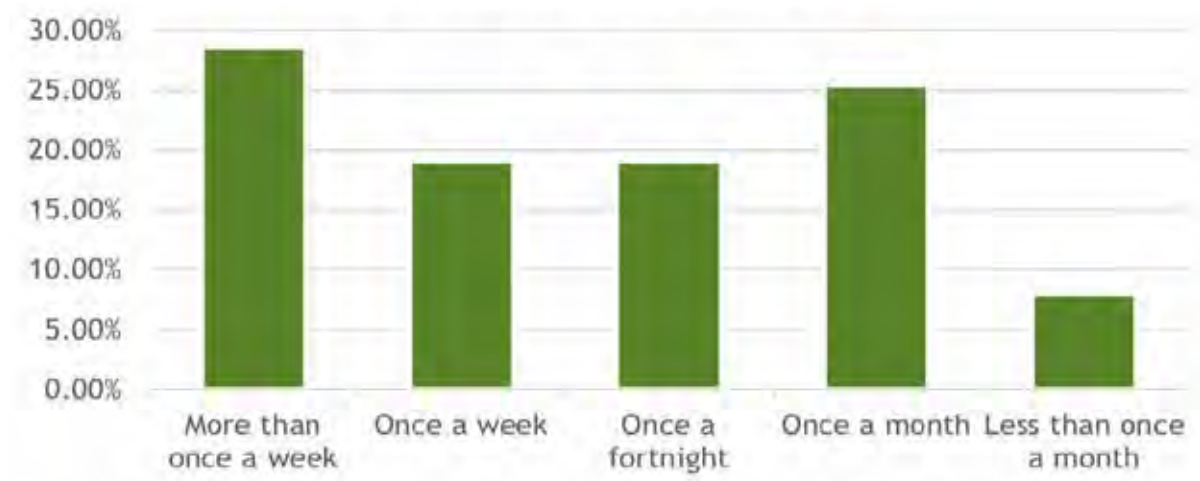


TABLE C: REASONS FOR TRAIL USAGE

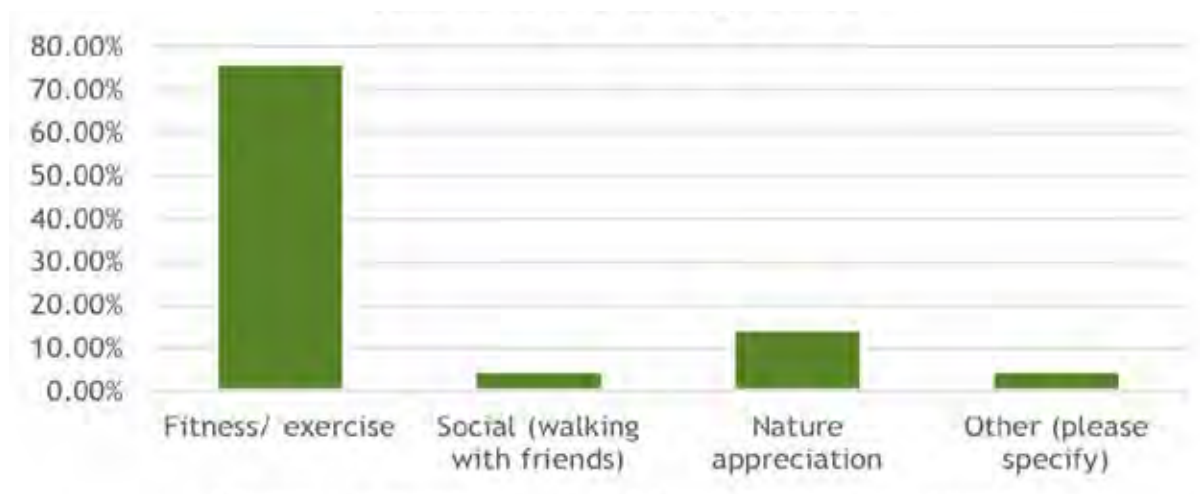


TABLE D: POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF TRAILS.

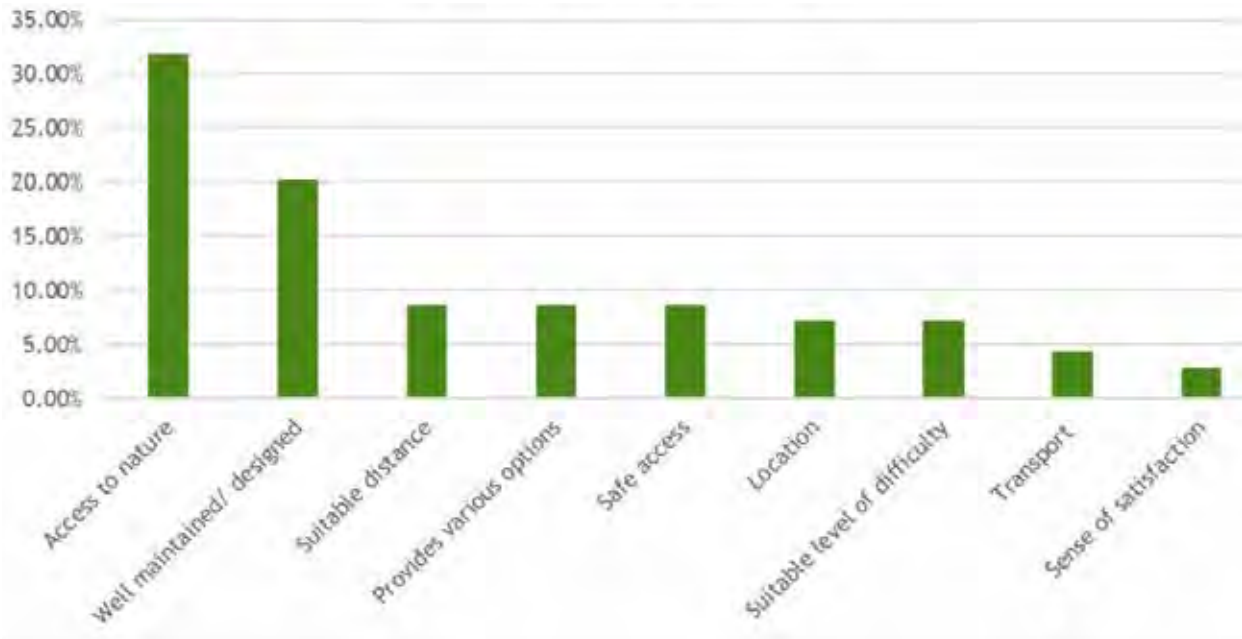


TABLE E: TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

THEME	RESPONSES
More Trails	10
Maintenance	10
Safety Improvements	7
Erosion Prevention	7
Water	5
Parking	3
Seating	2
Amenities	2
Wider Paths	1
Signage	1
Multi-use	1
Coffee/food Outlets	1

APPENDIX J:

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

TABLE F: ESSENTIAL FACILITIES AT TRAILHEADS

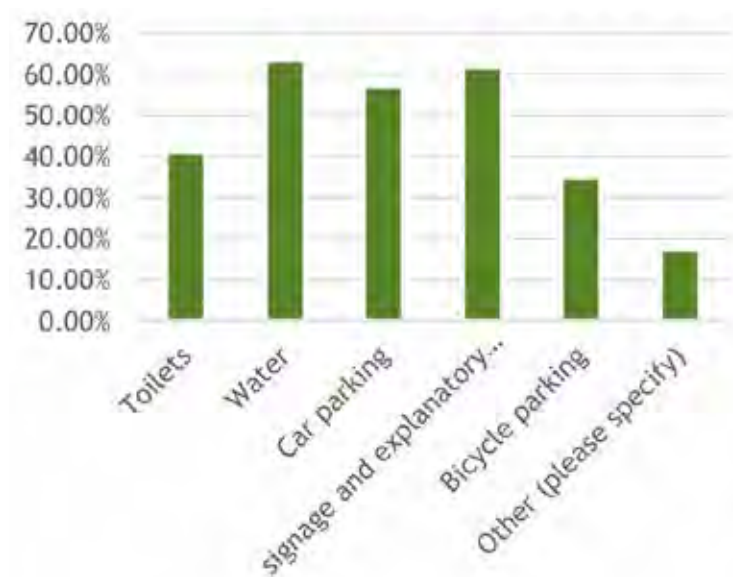


TABLE G: IDEAL TRAIL LENGTH PREFERENCES

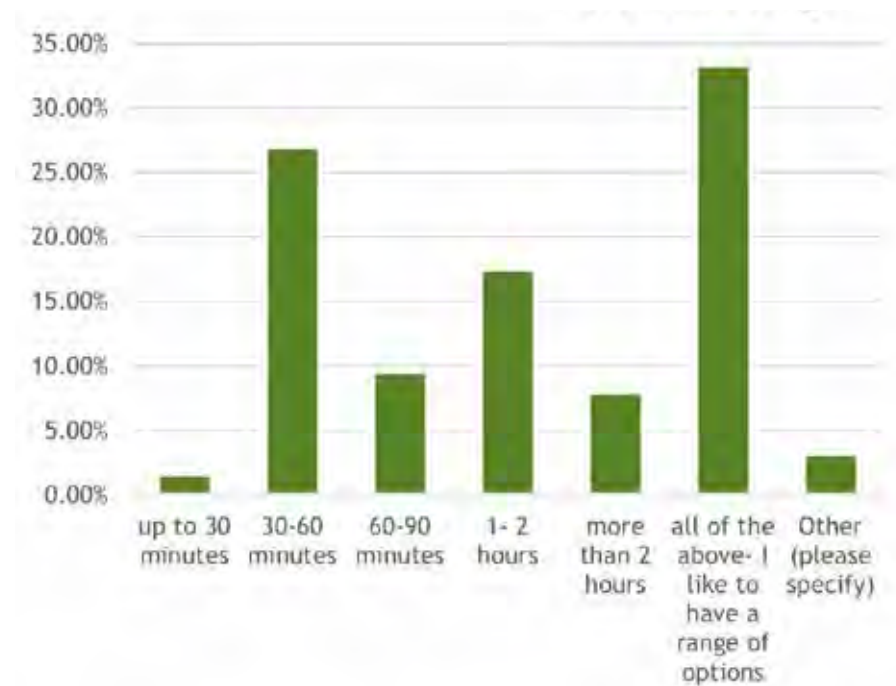
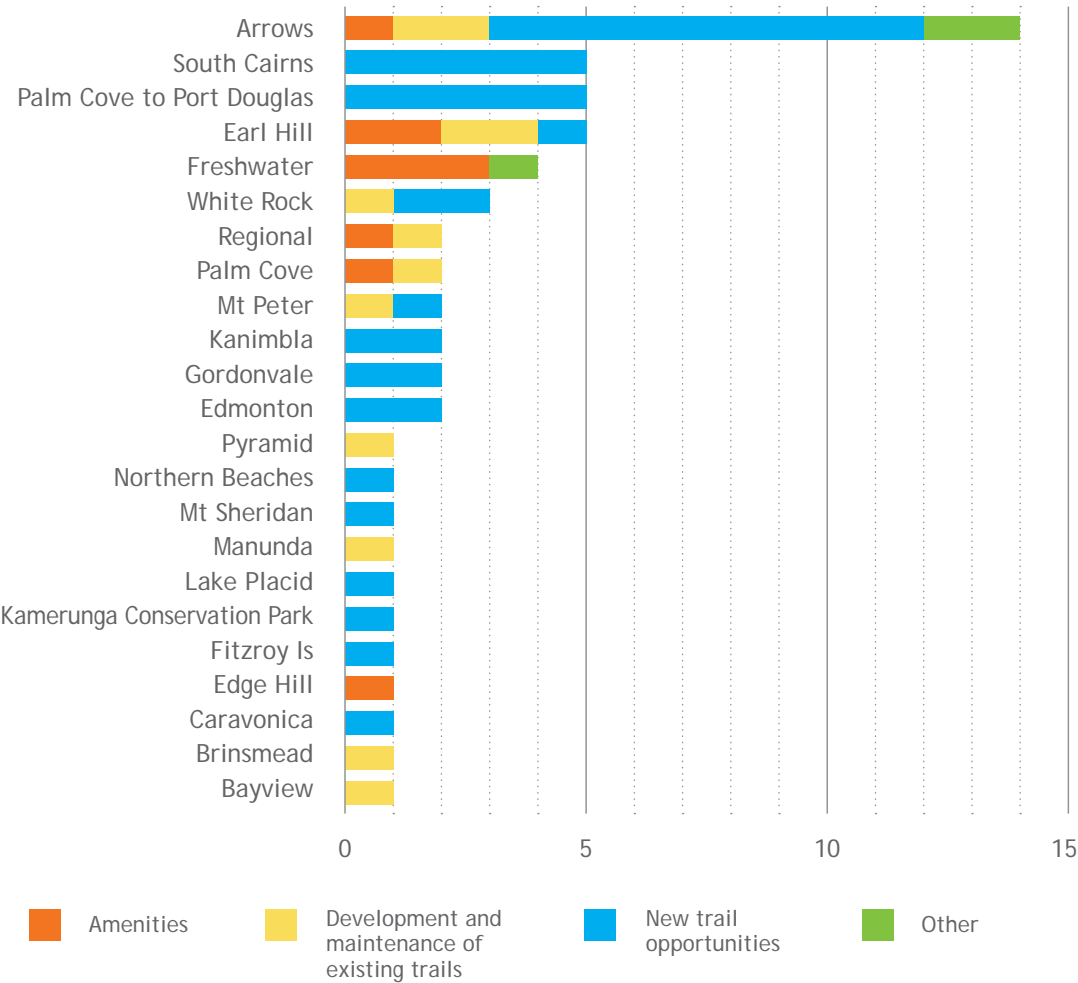


TABLE H: COMMUNITY SUGGESTING FOR EXISTING TRAILS

Location and Category Distribution

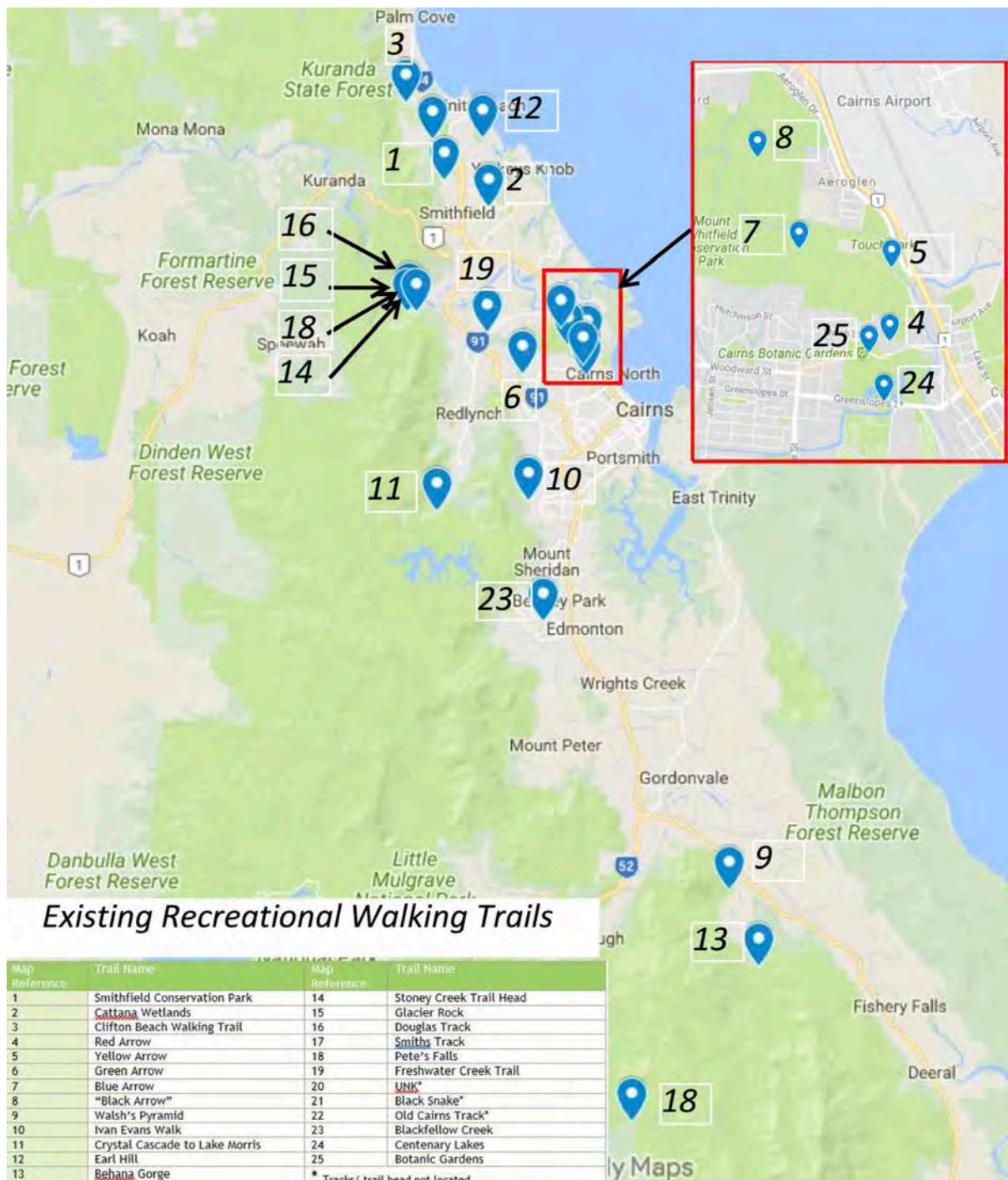


APPENDIX J:

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED EXISTING TRAILS:

TABLE I: DRAFT LOCATION MAP OF IDENTIFIED RWTS

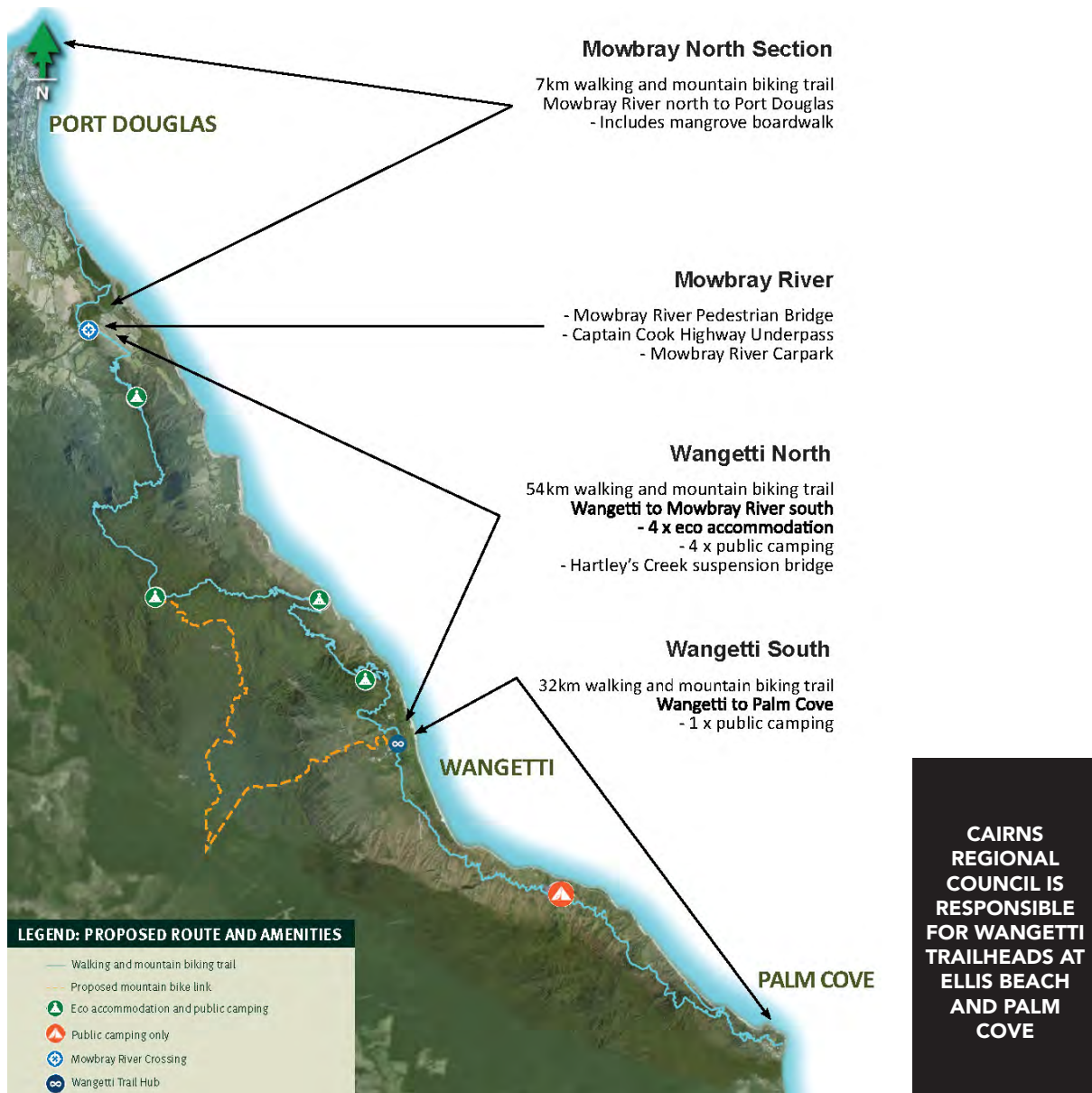


APPENDIX K:

ICONIC TRAIL MAPS

WANGETTI TRAIL

The Wangetti Trail is a proposed 94km route from Palm Cove to Port Douglas providing an iconic walking and mountain biking track for experiencing the region's unique natural environment and world heritage areas.



<https://www.dtis.qld.gov.au/tourism/qld-ecotourism-trails/wangetti-trail>

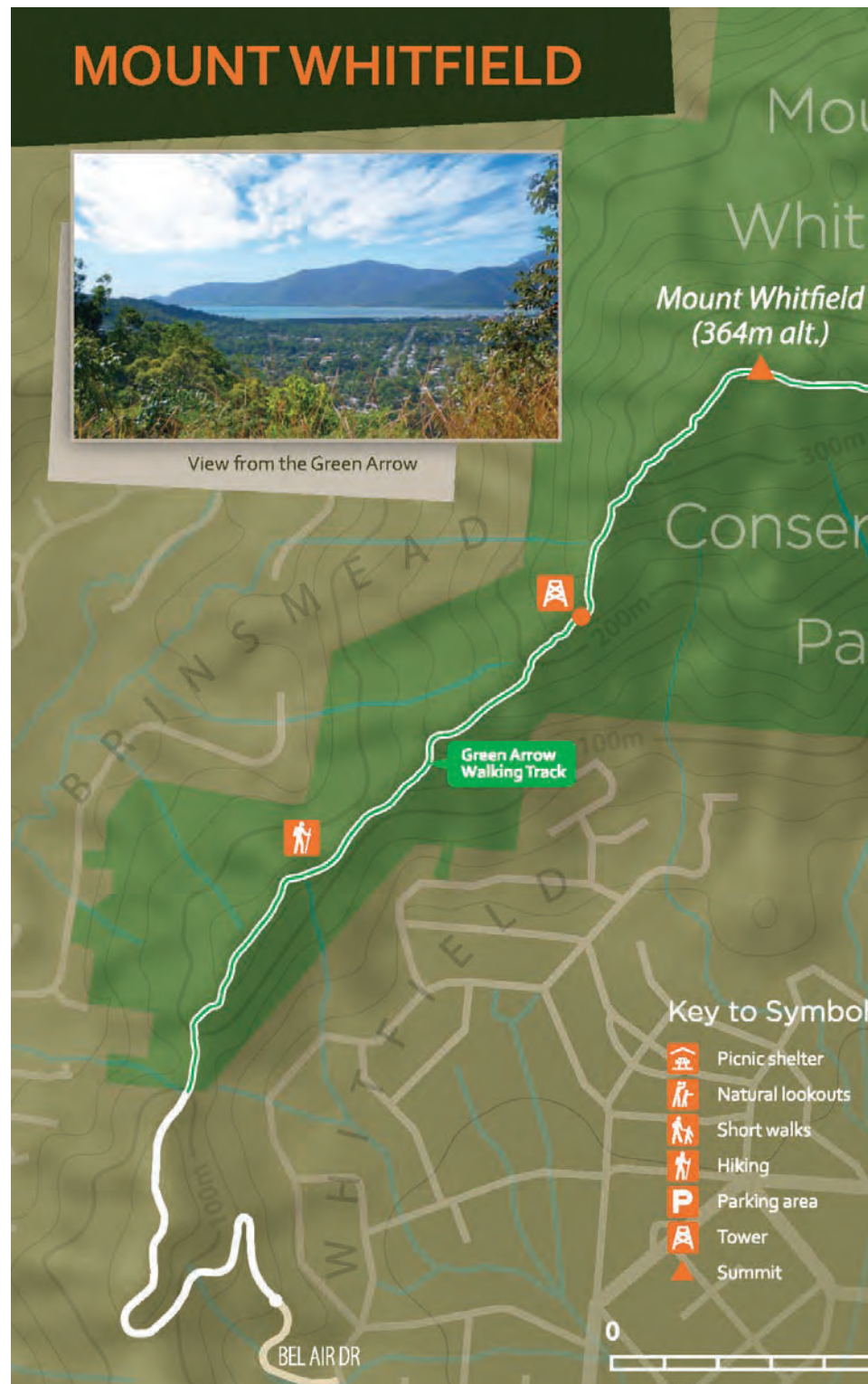
APPENDIX L:

PREMIER (REGIONAL) TRAIL MAPS

THE ARROWS, MOUNT WHITFIELD CONSERVATION PARK

Four linked circuit walks ascend the slopes of the Whitfield Range, providing views over the city and to the north.

	RED ARROW – GRADE 3
Distance:	1.5 km
Time:	1 hour (return)
Gradient:	Short steep hills
Quality of path:	Formed track
Quality of markings:	Clearly sign posted
Steps:	Many steps
Experience required:	No experience required
<p>The Red Arrow circuit is classified as a Grade 3 Walking Track. It is steep in places, contains a number of steps and requires a general level of fitness. The track is clearly distinct, free of obstacles and sign posted accordingly.</p>	
	YELLOW ARROW – GRADE 3
Distance:	1.9 km
Time:	1.5 hour (return)
Gradient:	Steep
Quality of path:	Formed track
Quality of markings:	Sign posted
Steps:	Many steps
Experience required:	No experience required
<p>The Yellow Arrow circuit is classified as a Grade 3 Walking Track. The windy track contains many steps and requires a general level of fitness. The track is clearly distinct, free of obstacles and sign posted accordingly.</p>	
	BLUE ARROW – GRADE 4
Distance:	6 km
Time:	5 hour (return)
Gradient:	Very steep
Quality of path:	Formed track, some obstacles
Quality of markings:	Sign posted
Steps:	Many steps
Experience required:	Some bushwalking experience recommended
<p>The Blue Arrow is classified as a Grade 4 Walking Track, and will require a moderate level of fitness and some bushwalking experience. The track contains numerous steps, obstacles such as tree roots and rocks are also common. Track signage is also present at all major intersections and where the track is indistinct.</p>	
	GREEN ARROW – GRADE 4
Distance:	3 km
Time:	1.5 hour (one direction)
Gradient:	Very steep
Quality of path:	Formed track, some obstacles
Quality of markings:	Sign posted
Steps:	Many steps
Experience required:	Some bushwalking experience recommended
<p>The Green Arrow is a Grade 4 Walking Track contains steep slopes, obstacles such as tree roots, rocks and fallen debris. The track is sign posted accordingly, some bushwalking experience would be recommended.</p>	



https://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/154121/Mt-Whitfield-Brochure2019.pdf

**CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
ARROW'S TRAILS AND
TRAILHEADS**



APPENDIX L:

PREMIER (REGIONAL) TRAIL MAPS

SMITHFIELD MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

In the foothills of the coastal range, the Smithfield Conservation Park features a number of shared trails for walking and mountain bike riding. This spectacular rainforest network of trails offers some of the most iconic climbs and descents in the country for mountain bike riders. Trails sculpt their way through magnificent vine-wrapped jungles with many offering views overlooking the Great Barrier Reef. The park has over 30km of trails including UCI level technical short and long climbs plus technical descents for advanced riders.

	TRAIL	RIDING TIME	DISTANCE (ONE WAY)
EASY	GREEN FROG	10 MINS	570 M
	PUMP TRACK	5 MINS	190 M
	DANS TRAIL	2 MINS	120 M
	GREENFIELDS	15 MINS	900 M
	FLAT SNAKE	10 MINS	450 M
	MTB ACCESS	5 MINS	120 M
	WC XC GREENFIELDS	5 MINS	880 M
	WC XC FINISHING STRAIGHT	1 MIN	280 M
	RING ROAD	5 MINS	410 M
INTERMEDIATE	BLACK SNAKE	15 MINS	630 M
	PINES	7 MINS	340 M
	STUMPIES	7 MINS	330 M
	BLUE MARLIN	10 MINS	270 M
	WOBBEGONG	10 MINS	950 M
	TANK ACCESS	15 MINS	500 M
	MP 39 LINK	5 MINS	70 M
	MP 39	5 MINS	260 M
	WC XC MORANAS	3 MINS	460 M
	WC XC VEMASS	3 MINS	1.3 KM
	PANGUNA RIDGE LOWER	60 MINS	3.0 KM
	MOORE LOOP UPPER	30 MINS	430 M
	MOORE LOOP LOWER	30 MINS	780 M
DIFFICULT	BLACK MARLIN	10 MINS	430 M
	PANGUNA RIDGE	17 MINS	1 KM
	WC XC MYNDAS	15 MINS	1.03 KM
	WC XC WHISKERS O'FLAHERTY	15 MINS	640 M
	STINGERS LINK 1	1 MIN	70 M
STINGERS LINK 2	1 MIN	40 M	
EXTREME	STINGERS	8 MINS	1.34 KM
	HAPPIES	7 MINS	480 M
	WC XC BARRAMUNDI	5 MINS	370 M

These are indicative trail times and distances only and do not allow for transit to and from trails.



<https://cairsmtb.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Smithfield-MTB-Park-Trail-Map.pdf>



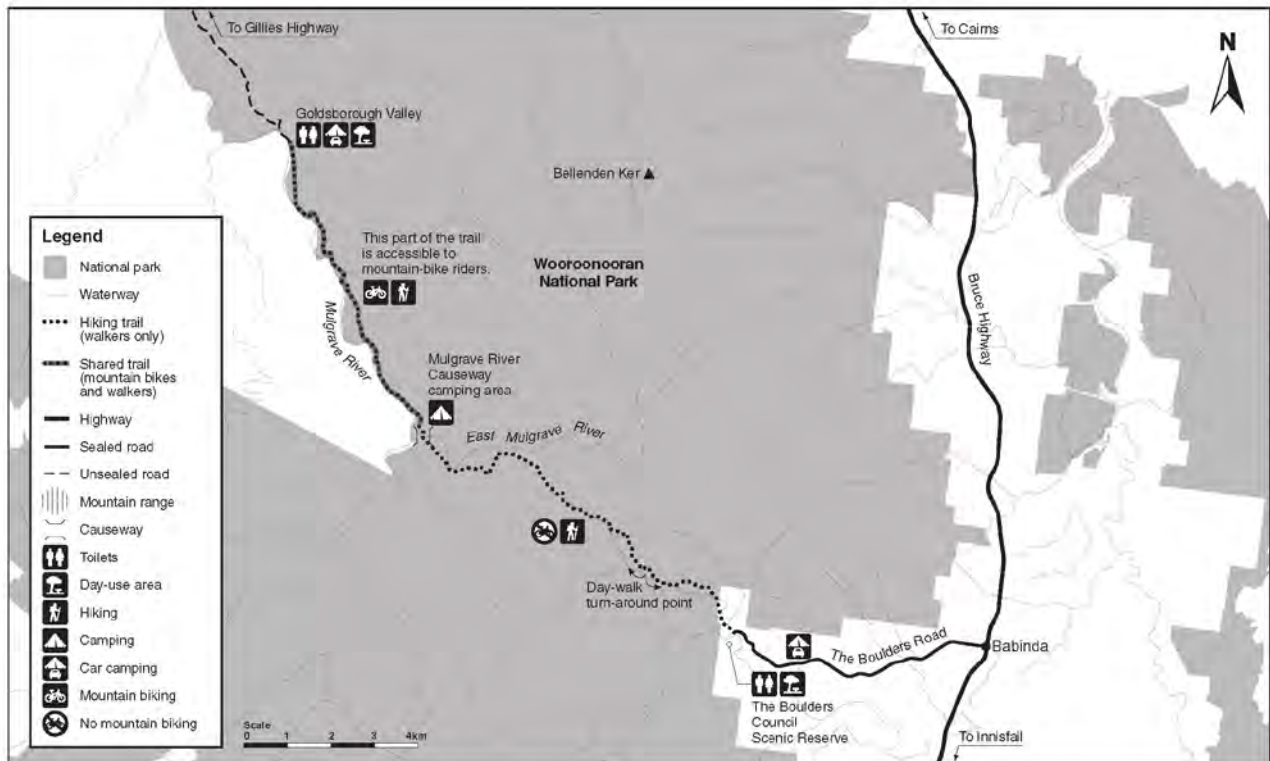
APPENDIX L:

PREMIER (REGIONAL) TRAIL MAPS

GOLDFIELD TRAIL

The Goldfield trail allows visitors to experience the beauty and diversity of Wooroonooran National Park. The Grade 4 trail is 19km one way, taking approximately 7–9hr walking time. The trail links the Boulders Scenic Reserve and Goldsborough Valley day-use and camping area and travels through a lush tropical rainforest with refreshing creek crossings. The trail follows Babinda Creek upstream and after 1km enters Wooroonooran National Park. The trail may also be walked in the other direction, starting from the Goldsborough Valley camping area and finishing at The Babinda Boulders.

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GOLDFIELD TRAILHEAD



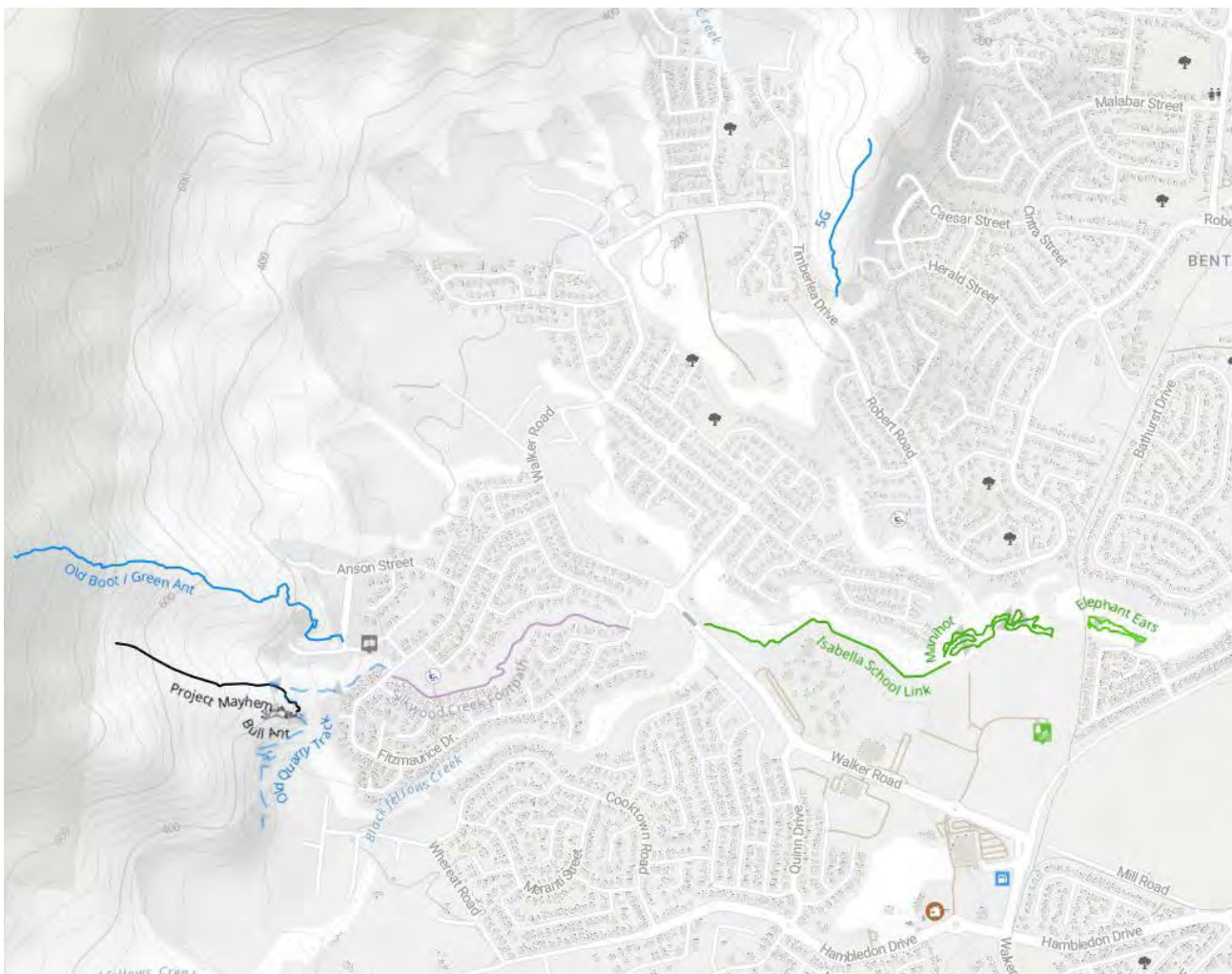
APPENDIX M:

LOCAL TRAIL MAPS

SOUTHSIDE MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS

A range of formalised and informal trails exist on the southside of Cairns and are largely managed by the Southside MTB Club.

title	difficulty
Manihot	
Old Boot / Green Ant	
Silkwood Creek Footpath	
5G	
Old Quarry Track	
Elephant Ears	
Isabella School Link	
Project Mayhem	
Behana Gorge	
Bull Ant	



<https://www.trailforks.com/region/southside-edmonton-trails-28166/?activitytype=1&z=14.6&lat=-17.01617&lon=145.71814>

APPENDIX M:

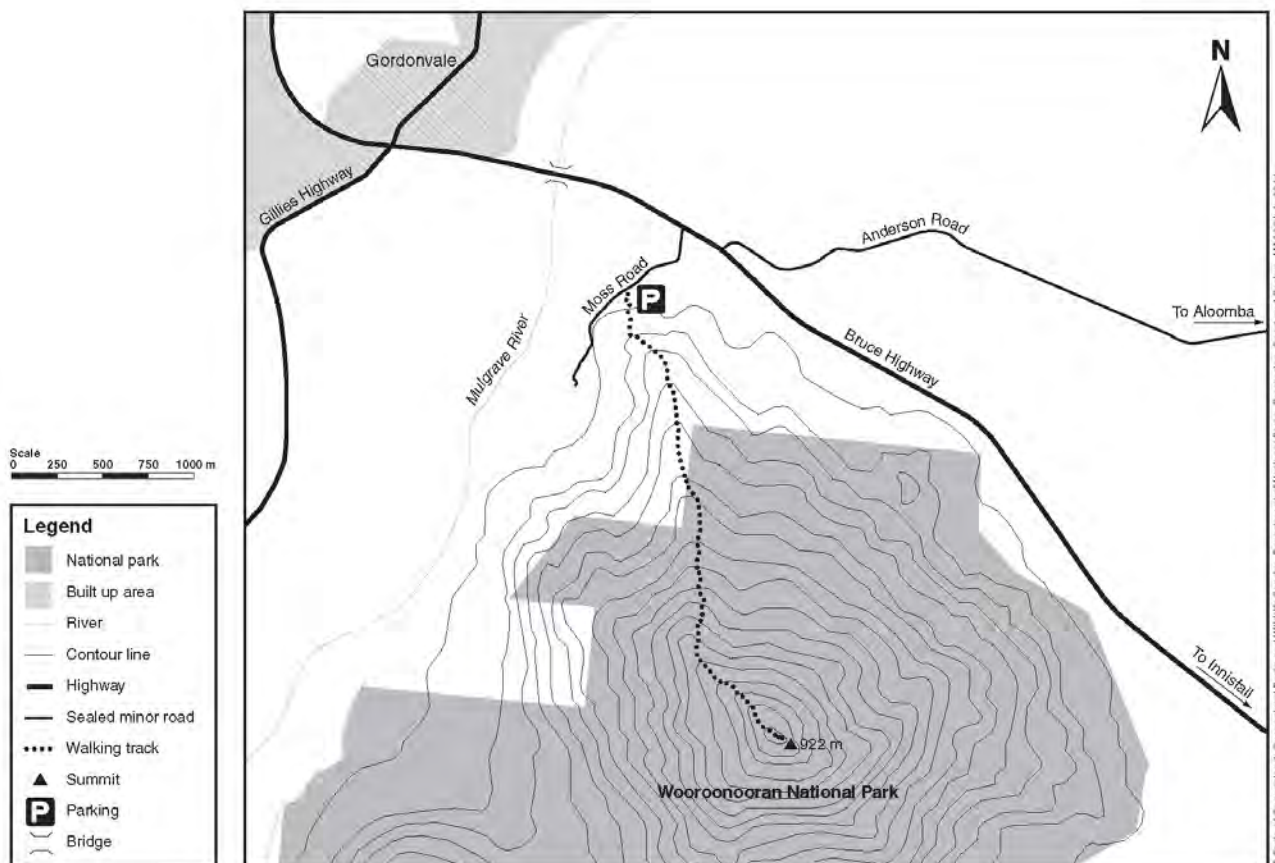
LOCAL TRAIL MAPS

WALSH'S PYRAMID

Situated at the northern end of Wooroonooran National Park, within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Walsh's Pyramid is a granite core left standing in the form of a pointed hill after older, less resistant metamorphic rocks were eroded away.

The track up Walsh's Pyramid is steep and rocky, with stunted vegetation that offers no shade. Although a difficult track, walkers who make it to the summit are rewarded with stunning views of the surrounding ranges and local landscape.

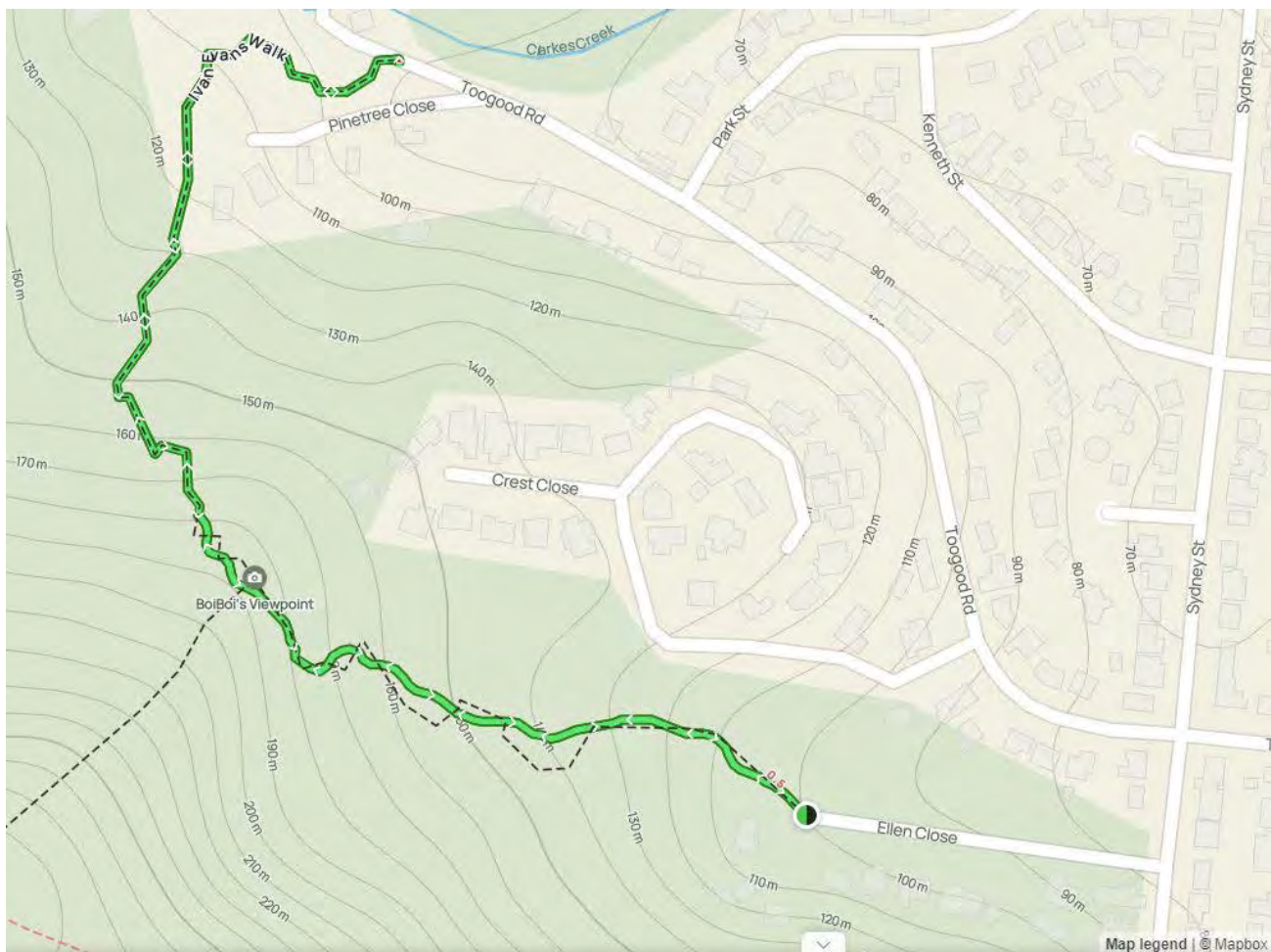
CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WALSH PYRAMID TRAILHEAD



IVAN EVANS WALKING TRACK

The Ivan Evans Walk is a formalised recreational trail located between Elen Close and Toogood Road in Bayview Heights. The track is 1.2km in length, taking approximately one hour to complete from start to end and back again. The trail travels through rainforest and is steep in parts, culminating at a lookout at the highest point of the trail. Dogs are allowed on a lead..

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IVAN EVANS WALKING TRACK AND TRAILHEAD



<https://www.alltrails.com/explore/trail/australia/queensland/ivan-evans-walk?mobileMap=false&ref=sidebar-static-map>

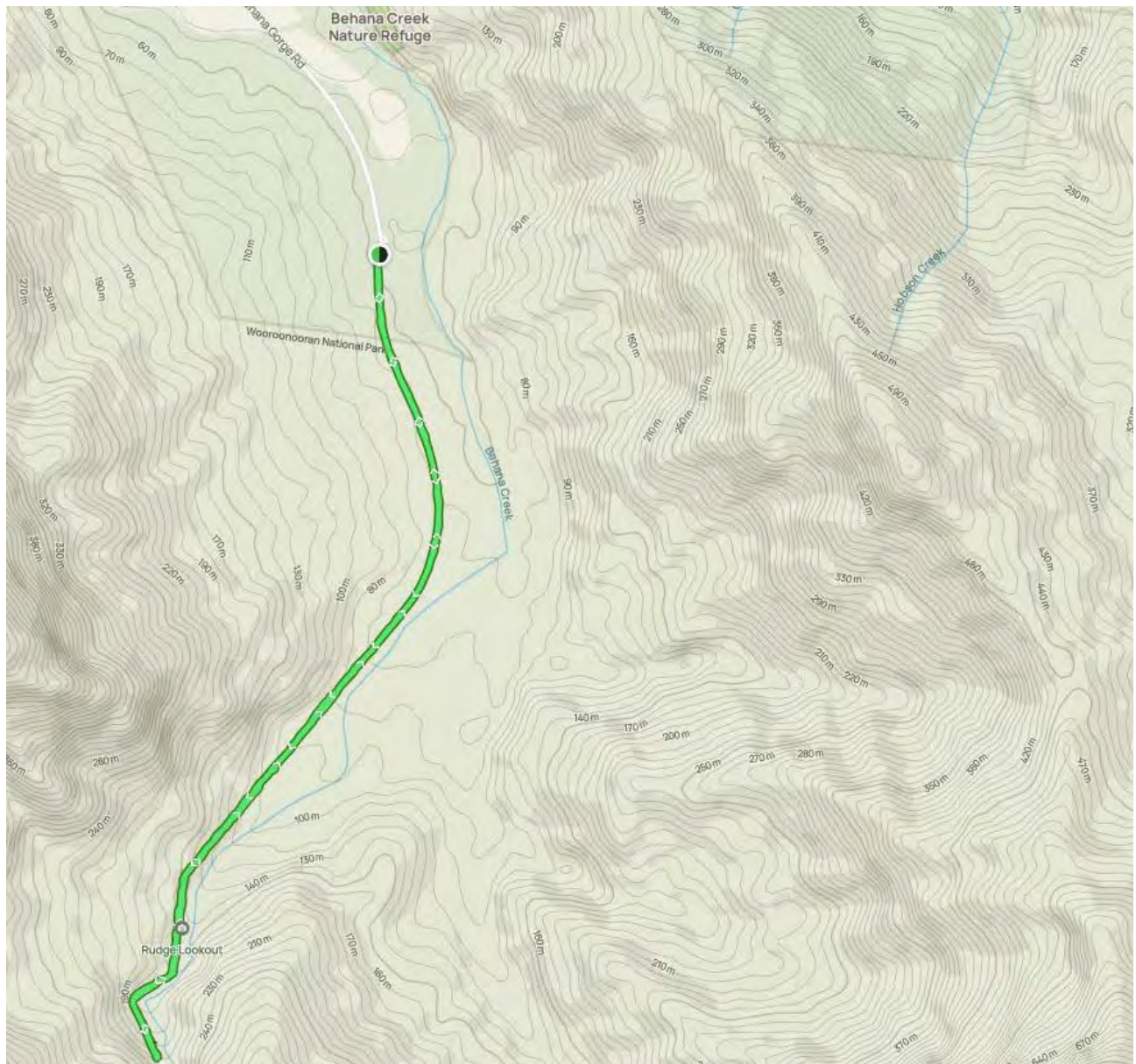
APPENDIX M:

LOCAL TRAIL MAPS

BEHANA GORGE

Behana Gorge is a granite boulder lined freshwater rainforest gorge located approximately 10km southwest of Gordonvale. Approximately 6.6-km return trail near Alooomba, Queensland, into Wooroonooran National Park. It's generally considered a moderately challenging route and takes an average of two hours to complete. The walking track has several steep inclines and is best suited for moderate to fit walkers.

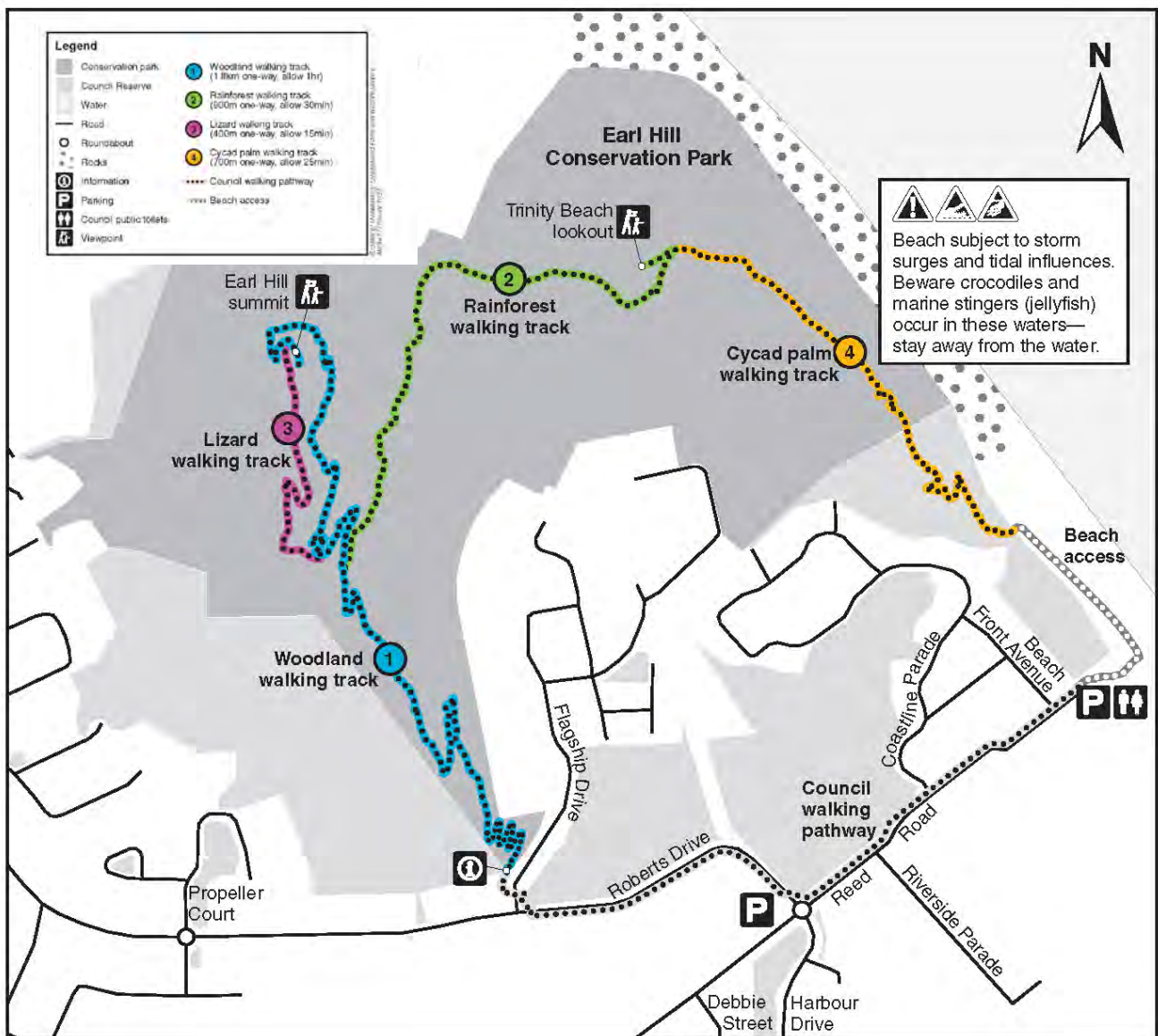
**CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
BEHANA GORGE TRAILHEAD**



EARL HILL CONSERVATION PARK MAP

Earl Hill Conservation Park offers a range of walking track options. Walking tracks can be completed in sections, as return walks, or as a circuit by walking along a small section of beach and a local council walking path. Woodland walking track is a popular grade three, 3.6km return route to the summit (from the trailhead on Flagship Drive taking approximately 2 hours to complete).

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TRAILS AND TRAILHEADS AT EARL HILL CONSERVATION PARK



https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0024/263247/earl-hill-conservation-park-map.pdf

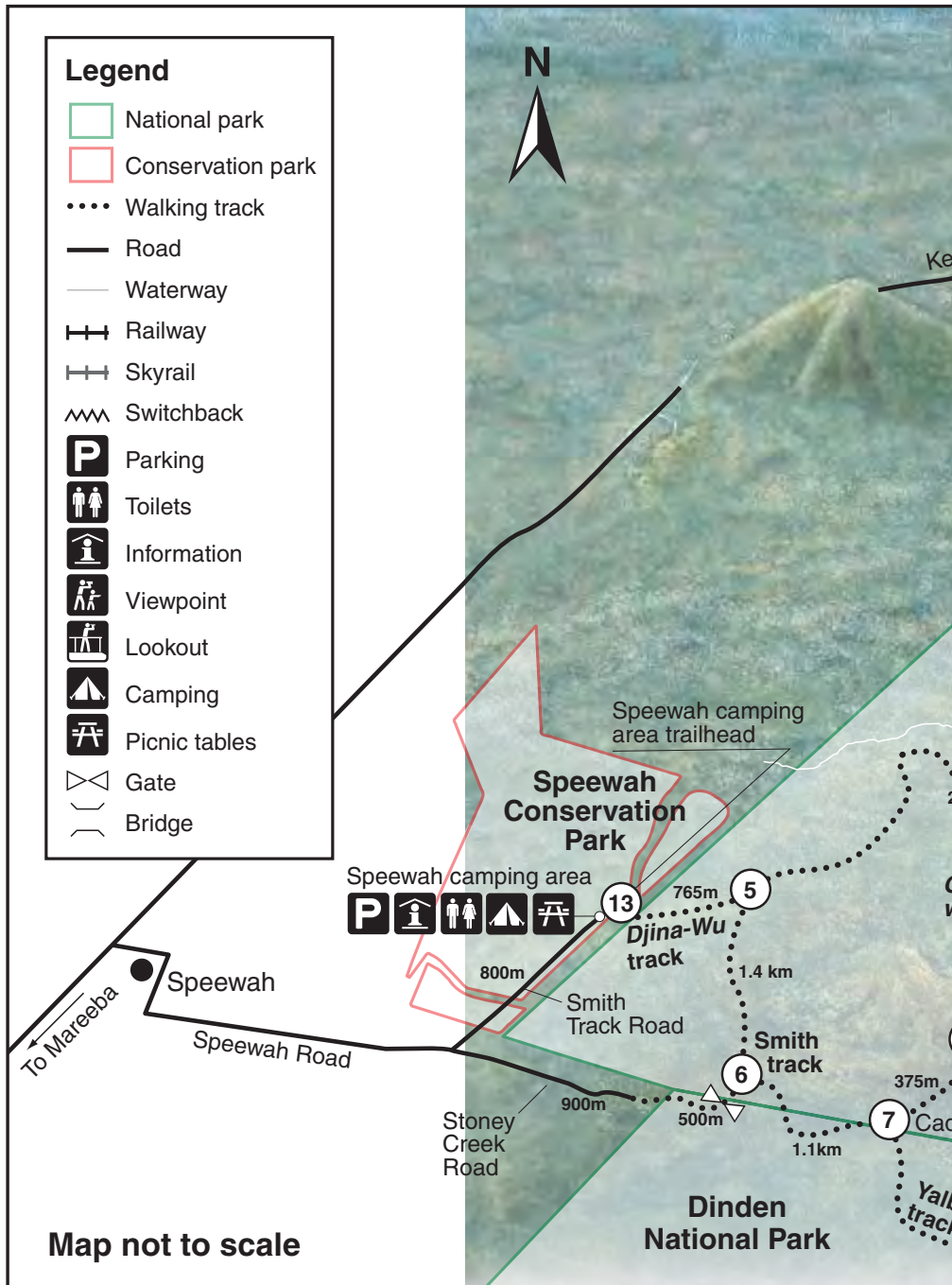
APPENDIX M:

LOCAL TRAIL MAPS

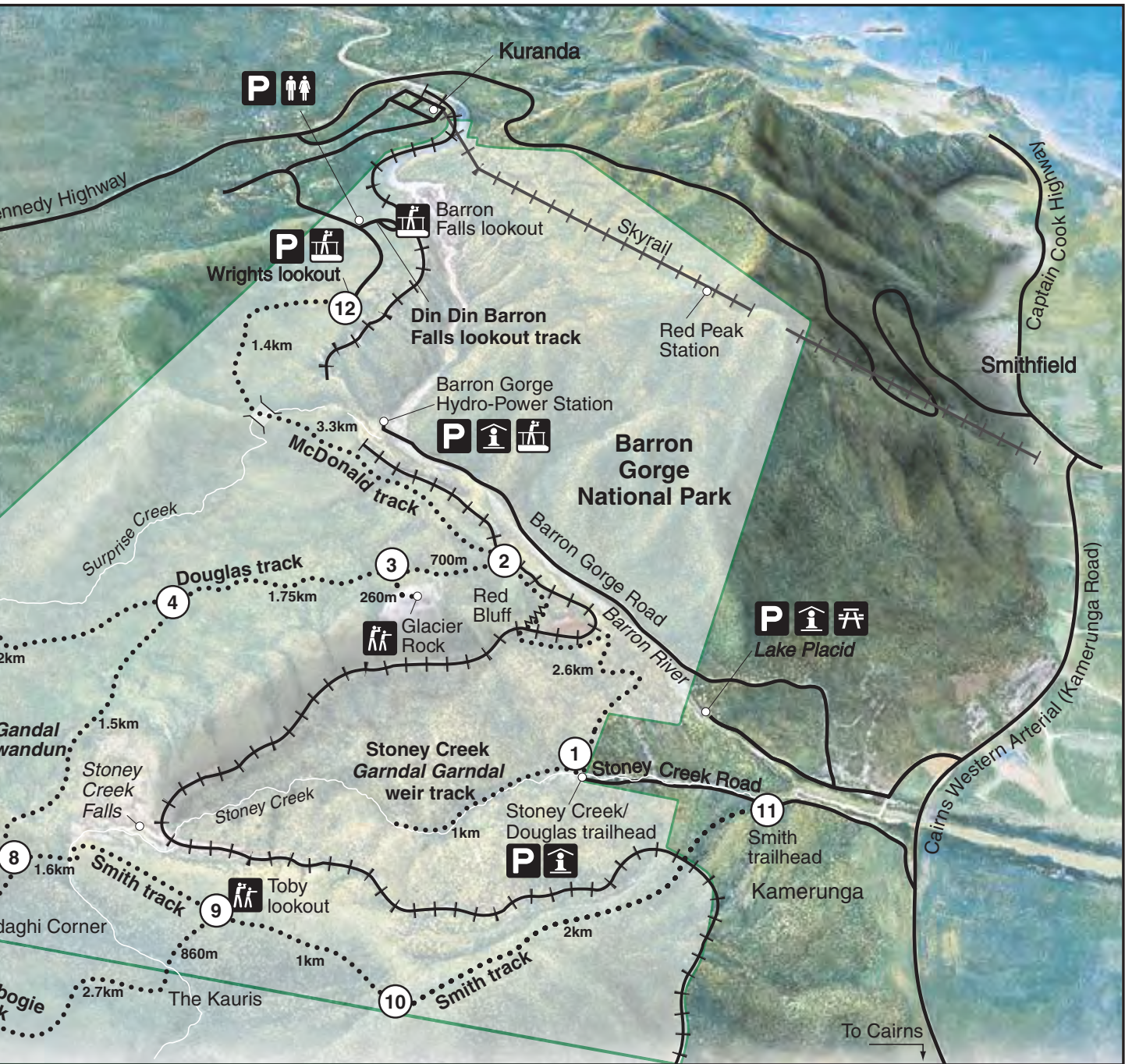
BARON GORGE NATIONAL PARK WALKING TRAILS

A network of tracks provides long-distance walks between the four main trailheads—Smith, Stoney Creek/ Douglas, Wrights lookout and Speewah camping area. You need to be fit, experienced and well-prepared to undertake the longer day walks. Popular routes include:

- Glacier Rock - Grade 4 - 3.6km route one way
- Smiths Track - moderate to difficult, 8.25km one way
- Douglas Track - easy to moderate - 7.8km one way
- Stoney Creek Garndal Weir Track - easy - 2km return - 40min walk time



CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE STONEY CREEK WEIR TRACK AND TRAIL HEAD AS WELL THE SMITHS TRACK TRAILHEAD



https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/157509/barrongorge-dg.pdf

APPENDIX M:

LOCAL TRAIL MAPS

CATTANA WETLANDS,
SMITHFIELD

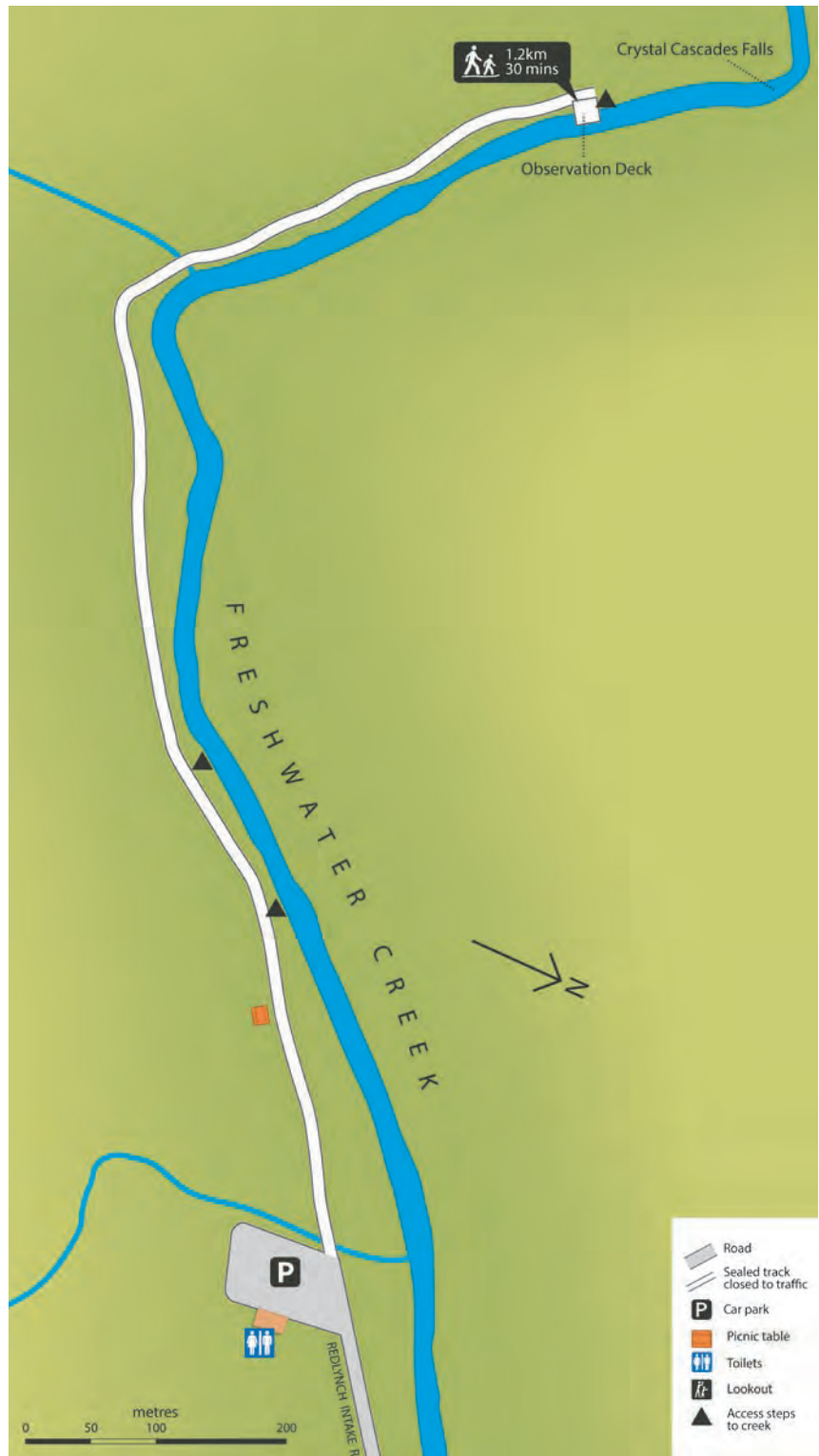
Approximately 3.7km of formalised circuits allow for a range of experiences through the wetlands environmental park in addition to other unsealed walking tracks which also exist. Initially a sugar cane farm and sand mining quarry, Cattana Wetlands has been converted into a conservation park lush with tropical wildlife. A 420m boardwalk takes visitors through rainforests and palm forestry and is suitable for parents with prams or young kids on bikes. Dogs are not allowed here.

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
CATTANA WETLANDS TRAILS AND
TRAILHEAD



CRYSTAL CASCADES

Starting from Crystal Cascades car park, a 1.2km paved pathway runs alongside Freshwater Creek. Rainforest scenery surrounds this walkway, and explorers can expect to take about half an hour from start to end and back again. As a secluded freshwater swimming hole hidden in a tropical rainforest, it has a series of small waterfalls that flow into large pools. Park facilities include electric BBQs, picnic tables and a toilet block.



CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRYSTAL CASCADES TRAILHEAD AND TRAIL.

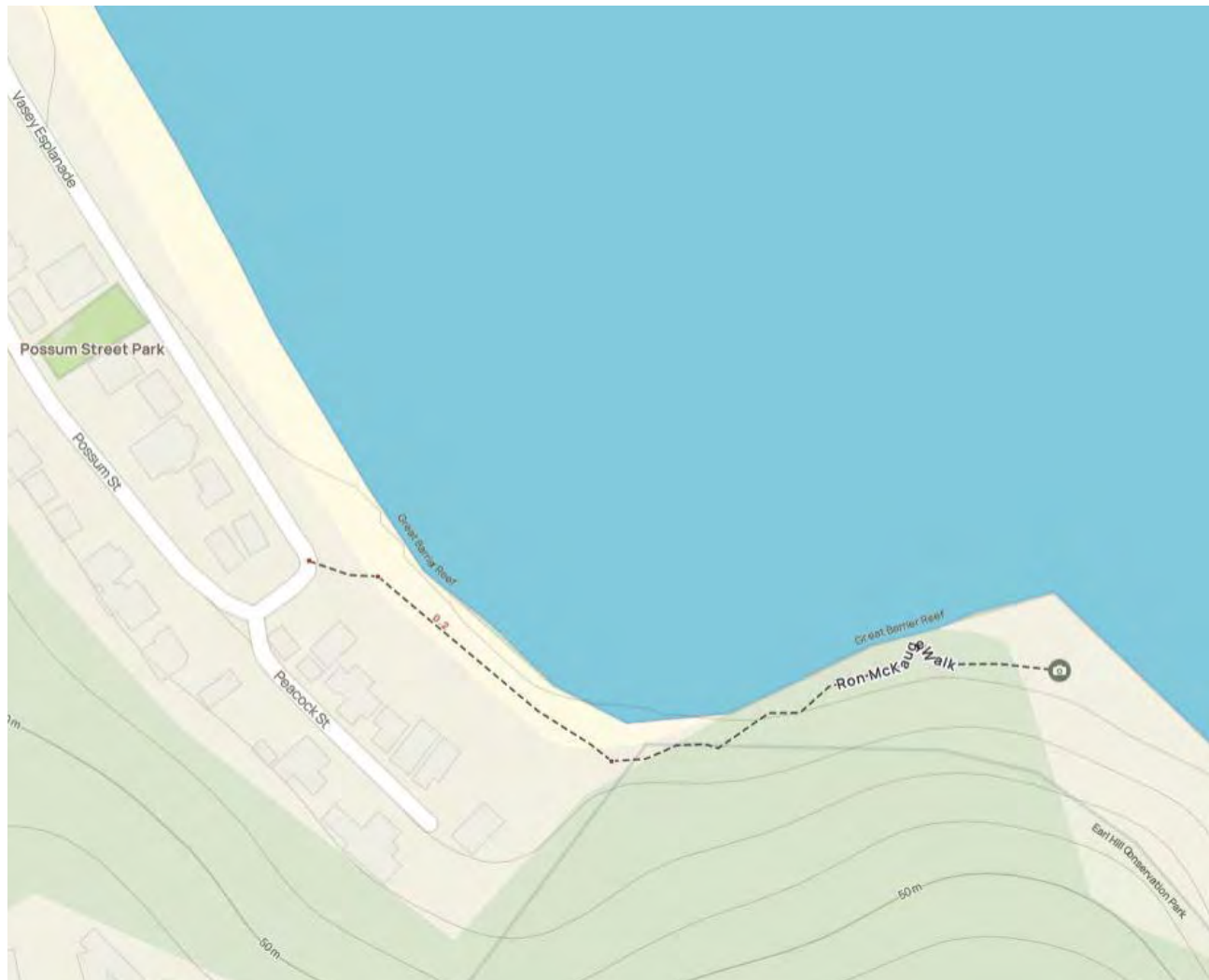
APPENDIX M:

LOCAL TRAIL MAPS

RON MCKAUGE WALK

Expected to take about 20 minutes for a return journey, the Ron McKaige Walk takes visitors along a rocky track complete with views looking out over the ocean. Moderate fitness is required for this track and visitors should expect to climb over rocks and uneven terrain.

**CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL
IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
RON MCKAUGE WALK AND
TRAILHEAD**



APPENDIX N:

WALKING TRACK RISK INSPECTION CHECKLIST

<i>Council Logo</i>	WALKING TRACKS RISK INSPECTION CHECKLIST	Authorised by:
LOCATION OF INSPECTION Inspected By (1) (2) Signature (1): (2) Date of Inspection:/...../..... Time:AM/PM		

NOTE: All questions should be answered by marking the appropriate column with a (✓)
(Y) = Yes (N) = No (NA) = Not Applicable

Also, notations should be made in the Comments column, even if only to note the relevant item had been inspected.

No	Item	Y	N	NA	Comment
1. MAIN ENTRANCE/EXIT POINT AT					
1	Is entry gate in good condition? (Check lock/vandalism)..				
2	Are signs in good condition?				
3	Are signs well placed and easy to read?				
4	Are signs appropriate to the types of hazards?				
5	Has a check been made to ensure all signs are in place and have not been stolen or removed?				
2. SECONDARY ENTRANCE/EXIT POINT AT					
1	Is entry gate in good condition? (Check lock/vandalism)..				
2	Are signs in good condition?				
3	Are signs well placed and easy to read?				
4	Are signs appropriate to the types of hazards?				
5	Has a check been made to ensure all signs are in place and have not been stolen or removed?				

No	Item	Y	N	NA	Comment
3. TRACK					
1	Is the track in a reasonably sound condition? (Check for areas washed away/requiring maintenance)				
2	Are there any dangerous overhanging trees/limbs?.				
3	Is the slope of the track on an acceptable incline?				
4	Are all fences in place and functional?				
5	Are there any signs of recent rock falls/slippages?				
6	Is any maintenance/stabilising work required?				
7	Are there any signs of walkers taking short cuts?				

Supervisor

Name:	Signature:	Date:
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Comments

Manager

Name:	Signature:	Date:
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Comments

