

Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade at Barlow Park



THE VISION

Cairns Regional Council has a vision of transforming Cairns city into a premier regional events destination through the development of a Major Events Precinct in close proximity to the CBD.

As the first step in achieving this vision, a Stage 1 – Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade is proposed for Barlow Park to support Council in the attraction of national sporting content (rugby league, rugby union, football), significant cultural and music events, and the delivery of regional activations for the 2032 Olympic games.

The Stage 1 lighting upgrade will be delivered by Council in 2022-2024 while a Major Events Precinct master planning process is underway, to further inform the medium to long-term Precinct vision.

AT A GLANCE

PROJECT

Cairns Major Events Precinct Stage 1 – Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade at Barlow Park

Location: Corner Scott & Severin Streets, Cairns
Electorates: Leichhardt (Federal), Cairns (State)

INVESTMENT/ ECONOMIC BENEFIT

\$10 million over 2 years

Job creation (direct and indirect):
41 FTEs during construction, 57 FTEs ongoing upon completion

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications Supporting Regional Australia Agenda and Policy Initiatives

THE PROBLEM

Barlow Park is Cairns' premier multipurpose outdoor entertainment stadium that accommodates a vast array of users and content. The stadium is owned and managed by Cairns Regional Council which plans to pursue opportunities for more frequent state, national and international content.

To enable expansion of the content offering, Council must meet compliance criteria set by major event and sporting authorities. To achieve this **Barlow Park requires a lighting upgrade to comply with digital television broadcasting standards.**

The need for significant lighting upgrades at Barlow Park was identified by Council some time ago, however, the project was placed on hold to allow for wider community and stakeholder consultation on the future needs and vision for the Cairns Major Events Precinct.

The spectator experience at the venue is also compromised due to the lack of a high-standard scoreboard and replay screen.



THE SOLUTION

To deliver on the vision for a Major Events Precinct near Cairns' CBD, Council proposes to commence staged upgrades of existing infrastructure, starting with the installation of an LED lighting solution at Barlow Park that meets broadcast requirements for digital television.

The Stage 1 – Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade requires an investment of \$10 million over 2 years to enable Cairns to compete with other regional centres for major sporting and cultural events. A tender ready, detailed design for the project has been completed by Cairns Regional Council and the \$10 million project cost is supported by an independent cost estimate.

When completed, the project will ensure that Barlow Park's field lighting meets TV broadcast requirements, supporting the negotiation of up to 6 major sporting events per annum. These are expected to be made up of practice/pre-season and home and away matches across the NRL, A-League and Super Rugby sporting codes.

The upgrade will include installation of a large video replay/streaming screen to significantly enhance the spectator experience.

The project will also support the Queensland Government's ambition to use Barlow Park as a host venue for Olympic Football as part of the 2032 Brisbane Olympic Games, complementing further venue upgrades anticipated in the lead up to the Olympics.



BACKGROUND

As a tourism-oriented economy, Cairns is rebounding from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which at its peak, resulted in a loss of an estimated 7700 jobs with corresponding flow-on effects on incomes and businesses. To support the region's long-term recovery and meet the needs of the community, projects like the Stage 1 – Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade at Barlow Park are important to providing an opportunity to increase economic activity. It is anticipated that this will be achieved through improved attractiveness of the region for hosting major events, leading to increased visitation, support for local businesses and employment in one of Cairns' key economic sectors.

Barlow Park is a national quality rectangular sporting venue located in close proximity to the Cairns CBD. While the venue has previously hosted national level sporting events, in recent years Council has been unable to attract major sporting events due largely to the venue's lighting being non-compliant for night fixture broadcasting. The Stage 1 – Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade project will address this issue by introducing lighting upgrades and an LED screen that meets broadcasting requirements while also enhancing the spectator experience.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

\$13.1M

INJECTION INTO
THE CAIRNS
ECONOMY
(ECONOMIC OUTPUT)

\$7.7M

REVENUE
FOR LOCAL
BUSINESSES

41

FTE
CONSTRUCTION
JOBS (DIRECT &
INDIRECT)

Independent economic analysis indicates construction of the Stage 1 – Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade is estimated to directly inject \$13.1 million into the Cairns economy, delivering a total of \$7.7 million in business revenue for local construction businesses and businesses throughout the supply chain. This is estimated to directly support a total of 21 full time equivalent (FTE) construction jobs for people in the Cairns LGA, with a further 20 FTE jobs estimated to be supported through supply chain and flow-on impacts. Based on 2016 Census data, it is estimated two FTE jobs for indigenous persons can be supported during construction, including direct and flow-on activity.

In total, the jobs supported during construction are estimated to provide \$3.7 million in wages and salaries (including \$2.0 million directly) for Cairns households and contribute \$5.3 million to Cairns GRP (including direct and flow-on activity).

OPERATIONS PHASE

57

POST-
CONSTRUCTION
FTE JOBS (DIRECT
& INDIRECT)

\$5.3M

ANNUAL
CONTRIBUTION
TO GRP

Once construction of the lighting upgrade and LED screen is complete, the facility is conservatively anticipated to attract five additional major sports events (including pre-season and competition games for the NRL, A-League and Super Rugby) and one national performer per annum on average. These events could deliver around 67,500 patrons to these fixtures/ events, of which around 25% may reasonably be expected to be visitors to the region attracting around \$4.2 million in visitor spend to Cairns annually.

Including operational activity for the facility, game/event day coordination activity and attracted visitor spend, once operational the project is estimated to contribute \$5.2 million per annum to GRP and support 57 FTE jobs per annum (including 44 directly).

In addition, Barlow Park has been identified as a host venue for the 2032 Olympics which is expected to result in the attraction of Olympic Games football events to Cairns. For indicative purposes, where Barlow Park hosts four Olympic football matches (in addition to the annual schedule of events) this is estimated to provide an additional one-off contribution of \$8.1 million to GRP and support 91 jobs.

A cost benefit analysis highlights the project is highly economically desirable, returning \$1.35 for every \$1 of cost with a Net Present Value of \$3.62 million (at a 7 % discount rate) over the 22-year assessment period (reflecting two years of construction and 20 years of operations, in line with the anticipated useful life for the project).



NEXT STEPS

A tender ready, detailed design has been completed by Cairns Regional Council and construction on the Stage 1 – Digital Broadcast Lighting Upgrade is able to start as early as August 2022.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED

\$10 million is sought from the Commonwealth over 2 years, generating 41 FTE jobs, \$3.7 million in wages and contributing \$5.3 million to Cairns GRP during construction.

	2022-2023	2023-2024
Commonwealth Government	\$2M	\$8M

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.cairns.qld.gov.au/advocacy

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