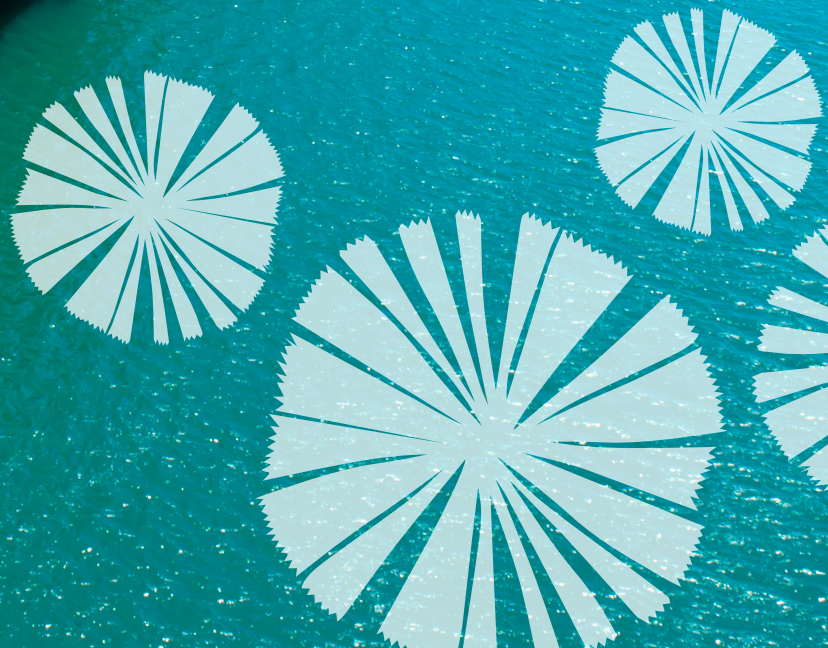




Cassowary Coast Regional Council
**Economic Development
Strategy**

Growing Stronger Together
2023-2033



Acknowledgement of Country

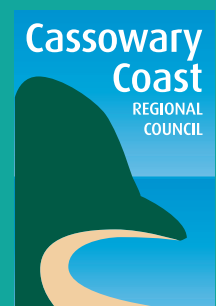
Cassowary Coast Regional Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and sea on which we operate, the Mamu, Djiru, Girramay, Gulgnay, Warrgamay, Jirrbal and Bandjin Peoples. We wish to acknowledge our respect for their current and emerging leaders and those in the dreaming. We thank all First Nations people for the contributions they make in building this community.

Acknowledgement of Engagement

The Council would like to thank all stakeholders that were involved in and supported the development of the Cassowary Coast Economic Development Strategy 2023-2033. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Economic Development Advisory Committee with representation from:
 - Innisfail CANEGROWERS
 - Tully CANEGROWERS
 - Innisfail District Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Tourism
 - Tully Chamber of Commerce
 - Cardwell Chamber of Commerce
 - Cassowary Coast Tourism
 - Cassowary Coast Banana Growers
- Advance Cairns
- BNI Cassowary Coast
- Djiru Warrangburra Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
- Girramay People Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
- Giringun Aboriginal Corporation
- NBN Co
- Ports North
- Queensland Government Departments and Agencies including:
 - Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training
 - Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Regional Development Australia –Tropical North
- Queensland Small Business Commissioner’s Office

The Council extends its recognition and appreciation to over 100 community members and businesses for their participation in the stakeholder and industry engagement process that forms the foundation of this document.





Disclaimer

While every effort has been made to ensure information in this Plan is current and factual, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council makes no representation to any person or organisation with regard to the completeness or accuracy of the data or information contained in this document and, to the extent permitted by law, disclaiming all liability for any loss or damage (including indirect, special or consequential loss or damage) incurred by any person or organisation arising from the use of, or reliance upon, the data or information contained herein.





Economic Development Strategy

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Mayor's Message



Dear Residents and Stakeholders,

I am honoured to share the 2023-2033 Cassowary Coast Economic Development Strategy. This Strategy provides the roadmap for our Community to achieve our Vision of Growing Stronger Together.

Together, as One Coast:Cassowary Coast, we will grow a strong, sustainable and resilient economy that positions our region for a prosperous future.

The Economic Development Strategy underscores our commitment to resilience, business support and sustainable growth in our tropical paradise. With over 3,000 local businesses, this Strategy is built on the principle of supporting businesses of all sizes, recognising the pivotal role they play in the prosperity of our community.

Through the four pillars of Advocacy and Collaboration, Sustainability and Innovation, Workforce Development and Industry Planning and Prioritisation; we acknowledge the vital role our community and stakeholders play in partnering with Council to deliver outcomes that fit with our values, vision and unique environment, ensuring economic growth and resilience.

Implementation of the Strategy will focus on our priority industries of Agribusiness and Food, Transport and Logistics, Aquaculture and Tourism, bringing new opportunities whilst recognising the importance of existing industry and businesses.

We recognise that our investments extend beyond economic outcomes. Our investments in the health and wellbeing of our community coupled with recognition of our history and acknowledgement of First Nations Peoples will set us apart from other regions, and continue to make the Cassowary Coast a place that people want to call home.

I sincerely thank all those who have contributed to this Strategy – our Council team, businesses, community members, government, industry and First Nations' representatives.

Together, we will meet the challenges and opportunities that lay ahead, ensuring that our region will be an exemplar of innovation, vitality and growth in the heart of the Wet Tropics.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Nolan

Mayor





Growing Stronger Together

Economic Development Strategy 2023-2033

Offering an enviable lifestyle, an abundance of business and investment opportunities, a solid economic base built upon agriculture and tourism, and a resilient and innovative community, the Cassowary Coast has a strong future. However, a new economic path must be established to combat the challenges of shifting population scale and demographics and volatility in regional economic performance.

Positioned between the two largest population centres in Northern Australia, Cairns and Townsville, and maintaining a base of high quality infrastructure assets, there is significant potential for the Cassowary Coast. The Cassowary Coast Regional Council (the Council) and key industry stakeholders are focused on leveraging this potential and are committed to the vision of growing a **stronger, resilient and more sustainable economy** that will create jobs, attract investment and will deliver greater prosperity for the region in the future.

Our 2033 Goals



Sustainable and Resilient Economy

\$2.2B

2033 GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT TARGET



Attractive Place to Invest and Do Business

20%

TARGETED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH TO 2033 (FTES)



Vibrant and Prosperous Communities

20%

TARGETED POPULATION GROWTH TO 2033

Cassowary Coast Economic Development Strategy 2023-2033

The **Cassowary Coast Economic Development Strategy 2023-2033** (the EDS or the Strategy) provides a comprehensive and contemporary overview of the region and proposes priorities and actions that are expected to place the region in a position of strength for growing the economy. Developed through a comprehensive stakeholder consultation process, the document presents a roadmap to achieving the economic vision and goals, and provides transparency to industry and community stakeholders regarding the approach being adopted in the process.

The Council, in collaboration with the independent Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), will play a lead role in implementing the Strategy. The Council and EDAC will prioritise and action the recommendations outlined in the Strategy as a means of facilitating economic activation and growth of the community.

OUR 2033 VISION

Together, grow a strong, sustainable and resilient economy that positions our region for a prosperous future.

OUR 2033 GOALS

Sustainable and Resilient Economy

\$2.2B

TARGETED GROSS REGIONAL PRODUCT

26% INCREASE ON 2022 GRP

Attractive Place to Invest and do Business

20%

TARGETED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

15,668 LOCAL JOBS

Vibrant and Prosperous Communities

20%

TARGETED POPULATION GROWTH

35,526 TOTAL POPULATION

PILLARS

Advocacy and Collaboration

Strong Economic Leadership

Industry, Government and Community Engagement

Tropical North Queensland Collaboration

Sustainability and Innovation

Leading Environmental Stewardship

Business and Industry Sustainability

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Workforce Development

Workforce Definition and Strategy

Worker Attraction and Retention

Workforce, Skills and Training

Industry Planning and Prioritisation

Strategic Industry Planning

Infrastructure and Project Prioritisation

Investment Attraction

PRIORITY INDUSTRIES

Agribusiness and Food

Transport and Logistics

Aquaculture

Tourism

Introduction

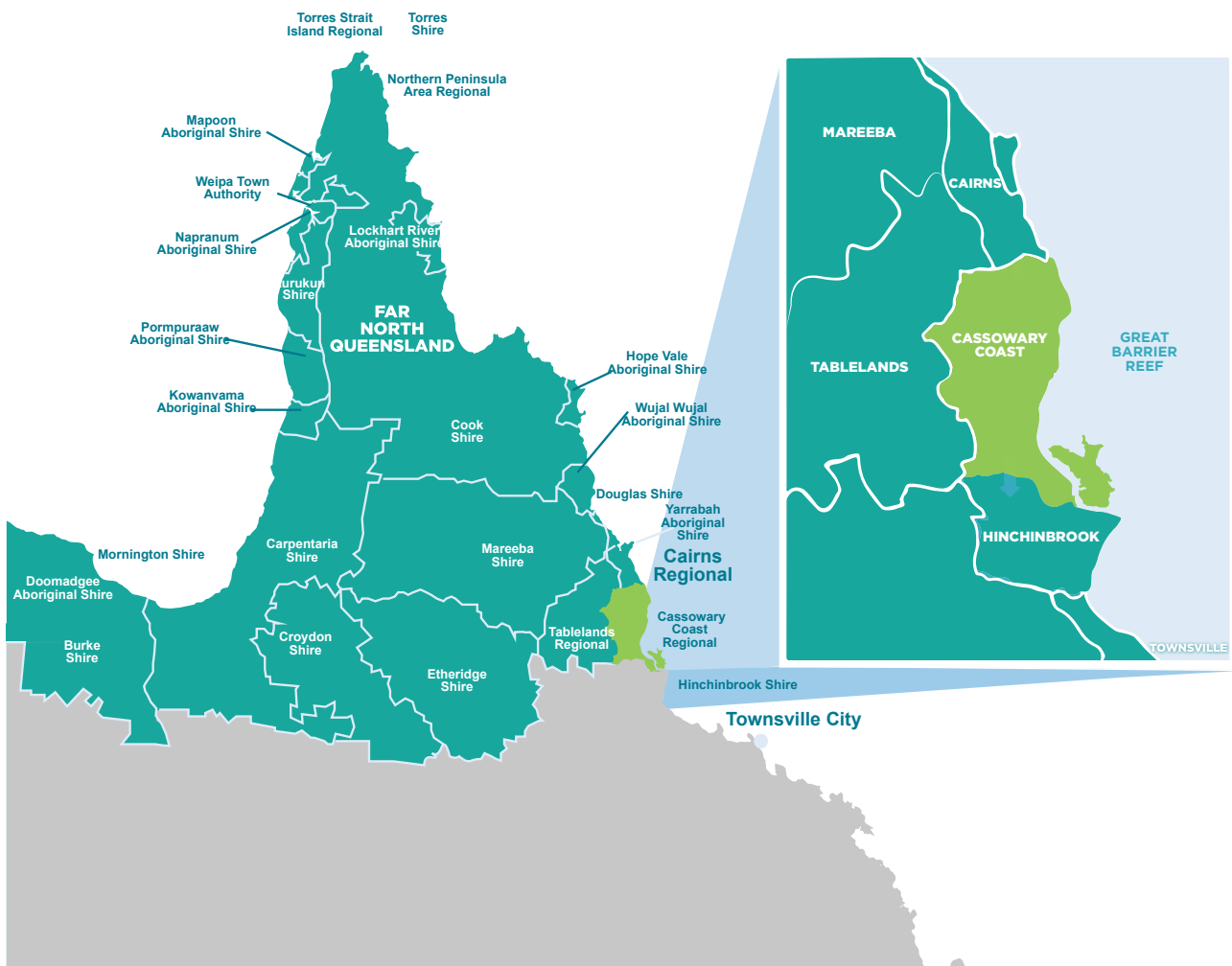
Encompassing the townships of Innisfail in the north and Tully, Mission Beach and Cardwell in the south, the Cassowary Coast has a long history of growth and economic prosperity. While in recent times the region has faced its share of challenges, the unwavering ambition and resilience of the community has seen the Cassowary Coast triumph against adversity.

A naturally unique region with diverse communities, the Cassowary Coast has an established economy that supports over 3,000 micro, small and medium sized businesses. An attractive lifestyle, abundance of business and investment opportunities, and affordable living have been drivers to past population and economic growth.

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council (CCRC or the Council) is focused on continuing the region's recent growth trajectory and is committed to growing a stronger, resilient and more sustainable economy that will create jobs, attract investment and deliver greater prosperity for the Cassowary Coast.

The **Cassowary Coast Economic Development Strategy 2023-2033** (the EDS or the Strategy) provides a comprehensive and contemporary overview of the region and proposes priorities and actions that are expected to place the region in a position of significant strength for growing the economy into the future.

This document presents a roadmap to achieving the objective of growing a stronger, resilient and more sustainable economy, and provides transparency to industry and community stakeholders regarding the approach being adopted in the process.



Strategy Value

The Strategy strives to go beyond what is considered ‘business as usual’ economic growth and seeks to identify opportunities that will ‘shift the dial’ in terms of job creation, investment attraction and diversification, and the delivery of overall prosperity for the region. A growing economy will provide benefits for the whole of the Cassowary Coast community.

As an industry and community led initiative, the Strategy reflects the agreement on priorities and has support from both public and private sector stakeholders. The Strategy is intended to provide greater certainty and direction for Government, investors, businesses and community members alike.



As the preceding strategy, *Tropical Futures 2016*, concludes, it makes sense to periodically reassess the region’s economic future amid evolving domestic and global environments, and identify opportunities and priorities that will lead the region to greater prosperity.

Developing the Strategy

The Strategy reflects the collective effort and input of many stakeholders in the Cassowary Coast. This has been supported by a comprehensive research process and evaluation of broader domestic and global market trends, regional priorities, and Government planning and policy priorities and initiatives.

A robust consultation process was undertaken with key industry, Government, community and Traditional Custodian stakeholders to inform the priorities and opportunities for the region.

One Coast: Cassowary Coast

Council's overall vision and mission for the region are encapsulated within the Corporate Plan 2021-2025. As the primary strategic document, the Corporate Plan provides a framework for decision making and policy setting in relation to the Cassowary Coast region and informs the EDS.

OUR VISION

We aspire to provide *great experiences, deliver value and create a sustainable future for our community*. Delivering outcomes that embrace value in everything we do is fundamental to a vibrant and prosperous community that 'loves the place we live' and is summed up in our vision statement - '*One Coast: Cassowary Coast*'.

OUR MISSION

We are committed to delivering great service and value, economic growth, opportunity, prosperity and a relaxed lifestyle.

CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2021 - 2025

COMMUNITY
OUR PEOPLE

INFRASTRUCTURE
OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMY
OUR FUTURE

REGION
OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

ORGANISATION
OUR TEAM

CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2033

Council's Role in Economic Development

The Council, in collaboration with the independent Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC), will play a lead role in the implementation of the Strategy for the economic development of the region. The Council and EDAC will prioritise and action the recommendations outlined in the Strategy as a means of facilitating economic activation and growth in community prosperity.



Image courtesy of Canegrowers Innisfail

Our Cassowary Coast

The Cassowary Coast is a unique region that features a blend of towns and rural and coastal communities. The region covers an area of approximately 4,700 square kilometres, spanning south from the township of Innisfail, through Tully and Mission Beach to Cardwell.



4,700km²
Area



1,200km
Roads



18,817
Rateable Properties



120 km
Coastline



48%
Wet Tropics World
Heritage Area



3,124mm
Average rainfall



“

We are the gateway to the greatest tropical rainforest in the world.



“

The Cassowary Coast has the possibility to be a unique and prosperous region. I am excited to experience the journey of economic development in our region and encourage more business growth and employment for our youth.

The Economy Now

The region's Gross Regional Product (GRP) has recovered strongly since the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing by approximately 17% from 2019/20 to 2021/22. The GRP of \$1.7 billion is only 5% below its recent peak in 2011/12.

Micro, small and medium-sized businesses make a significant contribution to the region's economy, accounting for approximately 96% of all businesses that operate in the region.



\$1.74B

in Gross Regional Product (GBR)



13,056

Local jobs



3,257

Local businesses



21.5%

Employed within agriculture, forestry or mining



17%

Growth from 2019/202



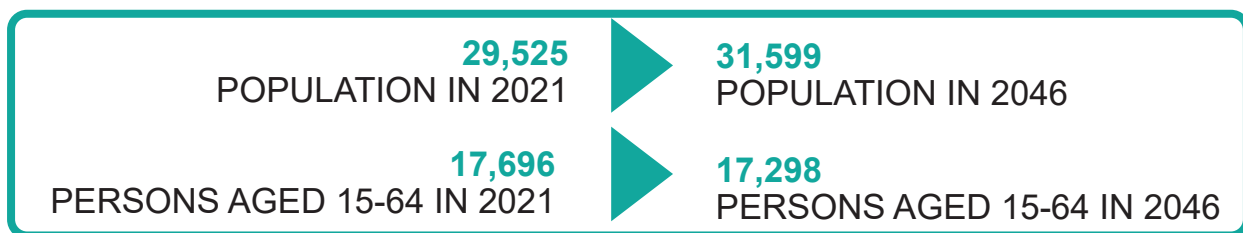
96%

Micro, Small and Medium sized businesses

Sources: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) (2023). Cassowary Coast Regional Council | Economic Profile.

Current Projected Population and Workforce

The Cassowary Coast is facing the challenge of a slowing population growth rate coupled with an aging demographic. In the absence of structural economic development and investment attraction, this trend is likely to continue.



Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) (2023). Queensland Government population projections, 2023 edition: Local Government areas snapshot.






Key Industries in the Cassowary Coast

The region's economy is underpinned by the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry (primarily raw sugar and banana production), which accounts for 35% of total economic value add and 23% of total full-time equivalent (FTE) employment in the Cassowary Coast (see below).

In comparison, the next top three industries, including health care and social assistance, manufacturing and construction, collectively account for 22% of the region's total value add and 34% of employment.

To ensure future prosperity of the region's economy it is critical to support the traditional industries, such as agriculture, but to identify opportunities to enhance the level of economic diversity in the region and to grow new industries that will support and complement the economic foundation of the Cassowary Coast.

TOP INDUSTRIES 2021/22

	Industry	Value Add Contribution	Jobs (FTEs)
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		\$517M	2,547
Health Care and Social Assistance		\$117M	1,206
Manufacturing		\$111M	998
Construction		\$92M	772
Tourism		\$50M	797
TOTAL		\$1,461M	10,972

1: Tourism in Australia is not reported as a single industry and reporting generally takes in a number of sectors and industries.

2: Total employment (direct and indirect) created by tourism. Source: .idcommunity (2023). Cassowary Coast Regional Council | Economic Profile.

3: Source: NIEIR (2023). CCRC | Economic Profile.



Image courtesy of Law Transport

Why the Cassowary Coast

We are a region like no other, with expansive natural attractions, strong and diverse Indigenous cultures and long-standing industries that have fostered a resilient community focused on opportunities. The future of our region will be built upon these distinctive foundations that set us apart.

Economic Foundation

The Cassowary Coast region has a long history in agriculture and tourism. Today these industries still underpin the economy and the community. The ideal climate, coupled with the expansive natural assets, position these pillar industries for further growth into the future. Industry diversification will improve the resilience and sustainability of the region, while prioritisation of our environmental stewardship will be paramount.

Strategic Transport Assets

The region is strategically located on the Bruce Highway between Townsville and Cairns, and is connected to the Atherton Tablelands and the Cape via the Palmerston Highway. With access to the national rail network, a major deep water port and an expanding airport, this strategically important transport infrastructure is unique and provides a strong foundation for future growth.

Enviably Lifestyle

The Cassowary Coast has a tropical climate and location with plenty of sunshine and waterways, incredible biodiversity and a relaxed, healthy lifestyle. From weekend reef trips to rainforest hikes and authentic Indigenous cultural experiences there is something for everyone. Coupled with affordable living and global connectedness, the Cassowary Coast is desirable on many levels. These lifestyle offerings result in unsurpassed liveability, that in turn enhance the attractiveness for businesses to operate, invest and diversify.

Diverse Community

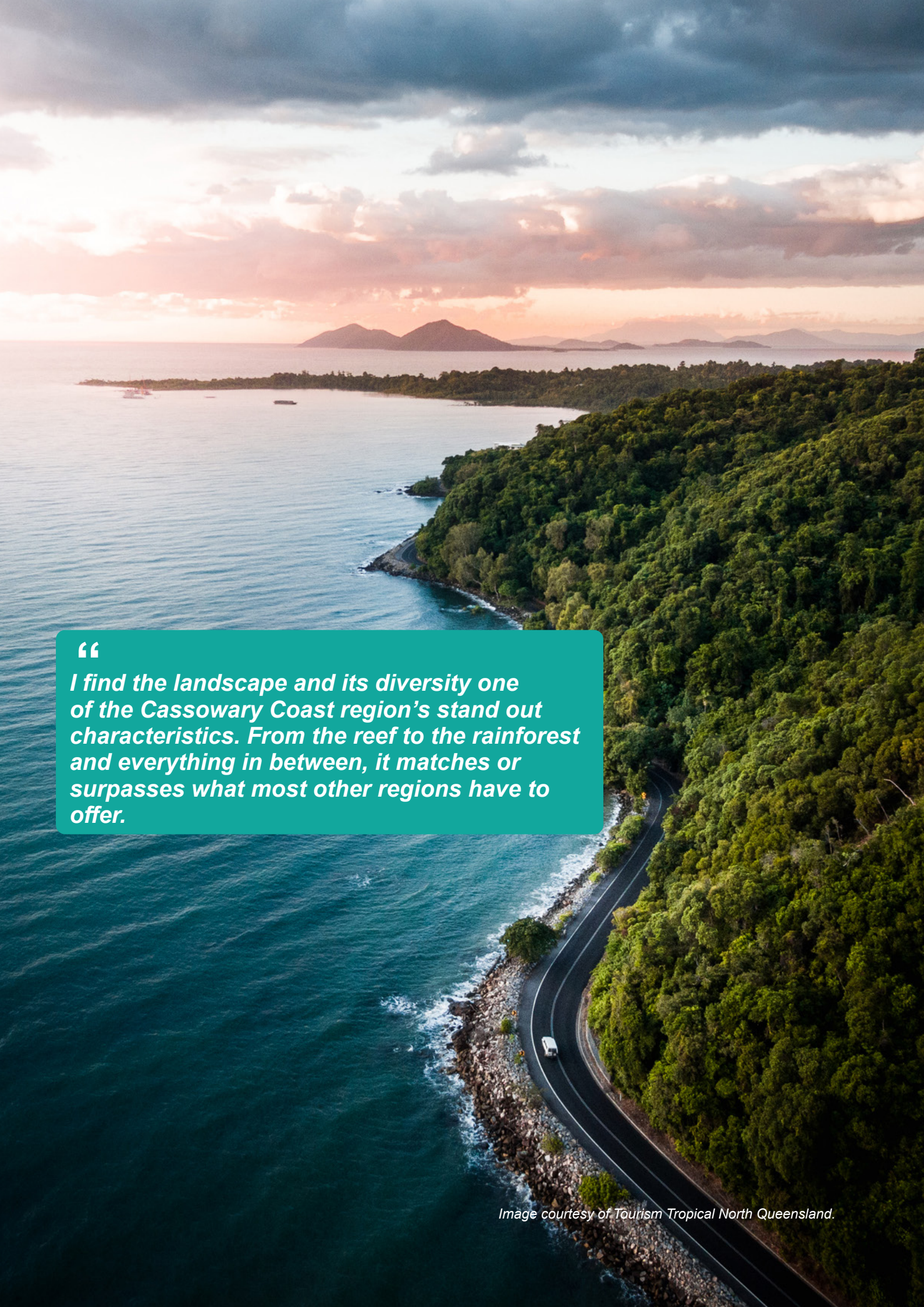
With over 11% of the population comprising of Indigenous and/or Torres Strait Islander People, and being home to a multicultural community, the region has a unique cultural landscape. This landscape creates the bedrock for a stronger, ambitious and more resilient community. The benefits to the economy from this diversity extend across innovation and entrepreneurship and fosters potential opportunities in industry diversification.

Natural Opportunities

The economy of the region, has been shaped by the region's natural attractions, such as the GBR, the Wet Tropics, Dunk and Hinchinbrook Islands and the waterways and waterfalls. With the rapid global shift towards environmental sustainability coupled with a growing demand for nature based experiences, the Cassowary Coast is well positioned to leverage these strengths to further grow opportunities in the region.

Northern Connections

Centrally located between the two largest population centres in Northern Australia, Cairns and Townsville, the Cassowary Coast is also in geographical proximity to many of Australia's largest trading partners in South East Asia. The region has ease of connection through the Cairns and Townsville airports and seaports to locations domestically and around the globe.



“

I find the landscape and its diversity one of the Cassowary Coast region's stand out characteristics. From the reef to the rainforest and everything in between, it matches or surpasses what most other regions have to offer.

Image courtesy of Tourism Tropical North Queensland.

Cassowary Coast Banana Industry

The Cassowary Coast is the primary banana growing region in Australia.

With cultivation focused on the agriculture areas surrounding Tully and Innisfail, the banana industry is a significant driver of economy activity and employment within the region. The industry also supports a range of related industries such as transport, accommodation and manufacturing. It is for this reason, that there is an imperative to continue to support and nurture the industry going forward.

The potential for the industry to continue to contribute to the region's economy and future prosperity is high. However, to achieve this potential the industry must transform and adapt to the shifting environmental regulations and the ongoing biosecurity challenges faced. To secure a long and resilient future for the industry, the investigation and implementation of future opportunities to diversify revenue will be critical. This could be achieved through the integration of circular waste solutions, production of bio products (e.g. banana paper and fibre) and operational optimisation through the adoption of emerging technologies.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2023). Cassowary Coast 2021 Census All persons QuickStats; Queensland Government (n.d.). Growing Bananas in Queensland.



\$417 MILLION

TOTAL PRODUCTION VALUE
OF BANANA'S IN 2020/21



1,324 PEOPLE

APPROX. INDUSTRY
EMPLOYMENT IN 2020/21

“

Bananas are Australia's largest horticultural industry and are the highest selling supermarket product.

Investing In Our Future

Our 2033 Vision - Growing Stronger Together

Together, grow a strong, sustainable and resilient economy that positions our region for a prosperous future.

The vision for our region acknowledges the value of our established industries and seeks to support their growth, while also promoting sustainable diversification both within and beyond these industries. Ensuring the protection of the environment and embracing the uniqueness of our communities will attract people, businesses and investment to the region, laying the foundation for a **stronger, resilient and more prosperous future** for all.

Our 2033 Goals



Sustainable and Resilient Economy

We will grow a resilient economy that supports our traditional industries, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, fosters environmental stewardship and leverages the region's natural characteristics to ensure the region can withstand economic challenges into the future.

\$2.2B
TARGETED
GROSS REGIONAL
PRODUCT
26% INCREASE ON 2022
GRP



Attractive Place to Invest and Do Business

We will be a destination of choice for businesses to establish, operate and invest by establishing the infrastructure, workforce and services that will deliver thriving business environment.

20%
TARGETED
EMPLOYMENT
GROWTH
15,668 LOCAL JOBS



Vibrant and Prosperous Communities

We will be a destination of choice for businesses to establish, operate and invest by establishing the infrastructure, workforce and services that will deliver thriving business environment.

20%
TARGETED
POPULATION
GROWTH
35,526 TOTAL
POPULATION

Our Guiding Principles

The principles outlined below embody the core values identified by industry stakeholders and the community as vital for evaluating and prioritising investments and initiatives. These guiding principles will underpin future decision making in relation to economic development activities.



Environmental Stewardship

We will maintain an unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability.



Recognition and Advancement of Traditional Custodians

We will develop pathways for greater recognition and participation of Traditional Custodians in the economic future of the region.



Liveability

We will enhance the attractiveness of the Cassowary Coast for people to live, work and visit.



Innovation and Digital Advancement

We will adopt technological advancements and embed a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the Council, industry and community.



Connectedness, Collaboration and Cohesion

We will facilitate greater engagement and collaboration between the Council, industry, State and Federal Government and the community.



Traditional Custodians' Holistic View of Economic Development

In conjunction with 'Recognition and Advancement of Traditional Custodians' as a guiding principle, the engagement process with Traditional Custodian stakeholders confirmed the importance of considering Traditional Custodians' holistic viewpoint of economic development.

Traditional Custodians consider economic development to encompass social and cultural considerations, with the understanding that economic progress should not come at the expense of cultural heritage and social cohesion.

For Traditional Custodians, sustainable economic development must align with and preserve cultural practices, connections to land and traditional knowledge systems. Economic development entails creating opportunities that empower Indigenous communities, respect Traditional Custodians' spiritual relationship with land, and ensure the continuation of cultural identity. By integrating social and cultural considerations into economic development, Traditional Custodians prioritise holistic and intergenerational well-being, fostering a balanced and harmonious approach to progress that honours their heritage and enriches their present and future lives.

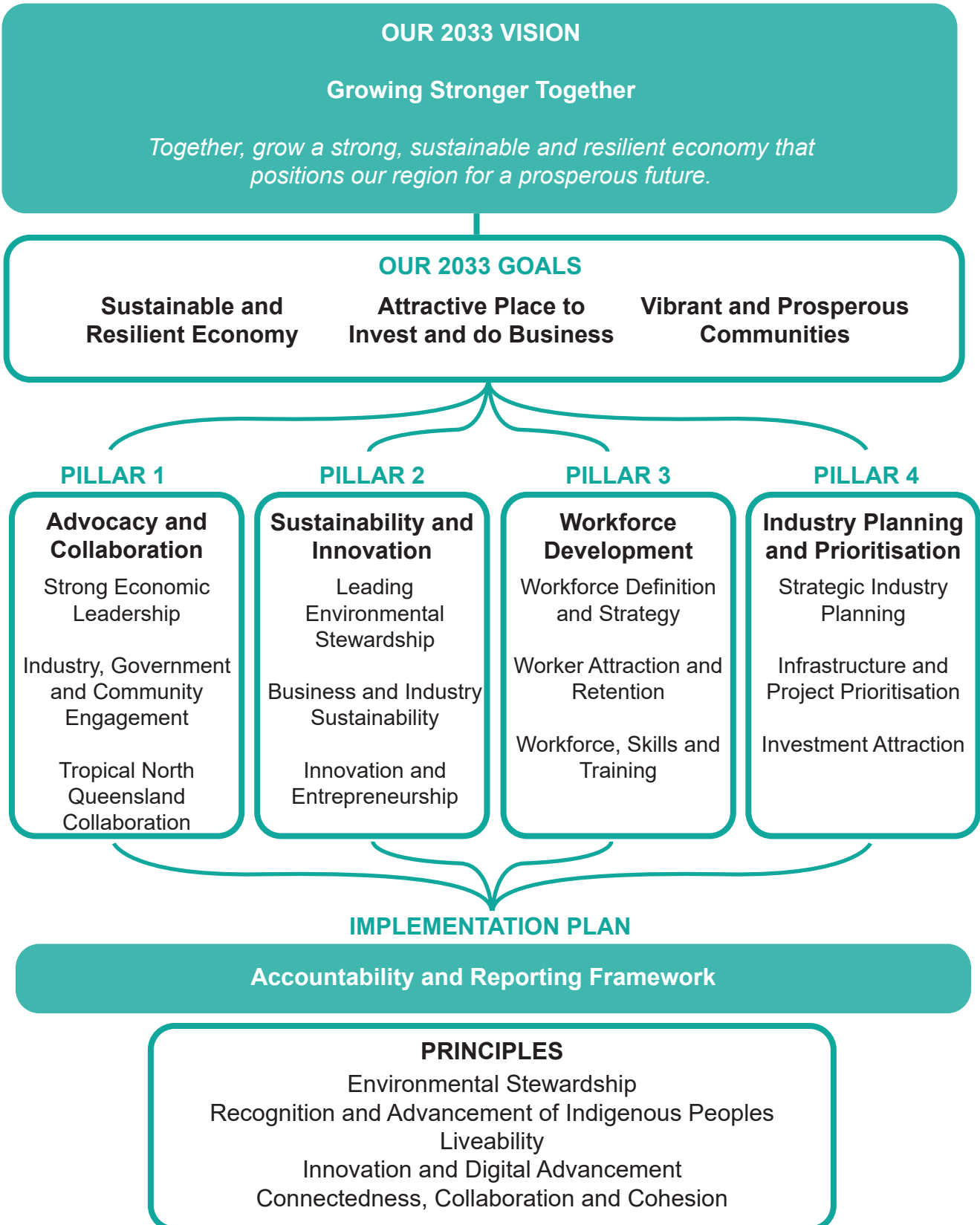
Traditional Custodians' holistic viewpoint must be considered in the development of the region's economy and when evaluating and prioritising investments and initiatives.

Image courtesy of Tourism Tropical North Queensland.



Economic Development Strategy

The Strategy encompasses those activities that are required to achieve the economic vision and goals for the region. The pillars underpinning the Strategy will provide a clear pathway, outlining the specific actions and initiatives required to drive economic development in the Cassowary Coast.



Pillar 1 - Advocacy and Collaboration

KEY THEMES

- ▶ Establish strong economic leadership to promote the region, drive strategic initiatives and advocate for Cassowary Coast's priorities at regional, state and federal levels.
- ▶ Facilitate genuine engagement and collaboration between Council, industry, Government and the community to facilitate action or agreed priorities.
- ▶ Work with regional Local Governments and advocacy groups in Tropical North Queensland to contribute to, progress and deliver regionally beneficial initiatives and projects.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Strong and effective leadership is critical to achieve the vision and goals in the Strategy. A focus on advocacy and promotion of the Cassowary Coast at a regional, state and federal level to raise awareness of our vision, priorities and opportunities, will be a primary enabler of achievement of economic development in the region. Effective advocacy may influence policy and investment decisions that have the potential to positively impact the region's goals and aspirations, and may also secure the necessary funding to support the projects, services and assets that are agreed priorities.

Genuine engagement and collaboration are keys to harnessing the collective expertise, resources, and opportunities for economic development on the Cassowary Coast. Fostering collaborative partnerships within and outside the region, may unlock a broader knowledge base, new funding sources, and specialised expertise that will support strategic initiatives. These collaborations facilitate the exchange of best practices, the sharing of innovative ideas, and the identification of synergies that maximise the region's economic potential.

Engagement with other local Government areas in Tropical North Queensland will facilitate a more unified approach to the conceptualisation, design and delivery of projects and initiatives that benefit the whole region. Such collaboration may also unlock collective benefits in terms of promotion and advocacy to ensure a strong regional identity is developed and the collective voice of Tropical North Queensland is heard by policy and decision makers.

KEY INITIATIVES

- Define and establish the regional economic leadership structure and governance framework that is required to implement the EDS.
- Facilitate greater engagement between Council, industry and community to enhance collaboration amongst economic stakeholders and progress initiatives outlined in the EDS.
- Enhance advocacy with State and Federal Government ministers, agencies and departments to raise awareness of the region and to identify and secure funding commitments for priority projects and catalytic infrastructure, in accordance with the Council's Advocacy Plan.
- Facilitate greater engagement between the local Chambers of Commerce in the Cassowary Coast through combined chamber meetings, to enhance information and knowledge sharing, promote business development activities and promote a collective 'Cassowary Coast' vision.
- Engage with other local governments in Far North and North Queensland to progress and deliver complementary initiatives, offerings and projects, and to avoid the duplication of comparable infrastructure.
- Facilitate an annual local business awards program, with support from the local Chambers of Commerce, to recognise local businesses for excellence and contribution to the economy.

Pillar 2 - Sustainability and Innovation

KEY THEMES

- ▶ Commit to safeguarding the region's natural assets within the Cassowary Coast and continue to be a leader in environmental sustainability.
- ▶ Encourage and incentivise businesses and industry participants to implement environmentally sustainable practices through innovation and adoption of technology.
- ▶ Foster an environment that encourages entrepreneurship focused on leveraging the rapid global movement towards environmental sustainability and decarbonisation, and to unlock new economic opportunities for the region in this space.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

The Cassowary Coast is renowned for its natural assets, including pristine rainforests, coastlines and diverse ecosystems. Focusing on sustainability safeguards protects these unique attributes and ensures their availability for future generations.

Given the unique surroundings, and the importance of these natural assets to future prosperity, it is important that the region strives to be a leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability. Environmentally sustainable economic development can foster a greater alignment between our built and natural environments, positively influencing lifestyle and liveability aspects of the region.

Adoption of innovative practices and technologies will be a critical enabler for businesses and the broader industry to enhance regional sustainability. Access to the necessary digital infrastructure and high speed internet is paramount to achieve this. Importantly, businesses that embrace innovation are more capable of streamlining processes, boosting productivity, and delivering superior products and services. Additionally, the provision of digital infrastructure will attract new businesses and skilled people to the region.

Embracing sustainability as a guiding principle will prioritise the development of environmentally conscious ventures, such as in cultural and eco-tourism, and sustainable agriculture. This strongly aligns with evolving consumer demands and global trends and will broaden the region's economic base and improve industry diversification. A stronger economy also enables opportunities to enhance the natural environment through ongoing resource management and restoration programs. With an abundance of renewable energy technology inputs through water, sun, wind and agricultural by-products, a plethora of entrepreneurial opportunities are available in the region.

KEY INITIATIVES

- Develop a framework that establishes a common definition of 'sustainability', outlines sustainability principles and initiatives for the region, and enables the region to assess and monitor performance against key initiatives.
- Continue to progress towards the attainment of the ECO Destination Certification from Ecotourism Australia.
- Engage with NBNCo and other telecommunications providers to define the digital infrastructure requirements for the region and plan for its implementation across the Cassowary Coast, thereby supporting local businesses to increasingly operate in the digital environment.
- Facilitate partnerships between research and development organisations and tertiary education providers to undertake research focused on enhancing sustainability of key industries and sectors in the region.
- Engage with Government departments to develop and maintain pathways for Traditional Custodians to apply traditional methods of managing and utilising land and sea to create new economic ventures and pathways.
- Investigate the establishment of an 'Innovation Hub' in the Cassowary Coast to provide business support services, working spaces and accelerator programs.
- Continue to implement the Council's Reef Guardian Program Action Plan and, as part of this, engage with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as necessary.

Pillar 3 - Workforce Development

KEY THEMES

- ▶ Define and plan the capability and capacity requirements of the region's current and future workforce needs.
- ▶ Attract and retain skilled and unskilled workers to the Cassowary Coast to support local businesses and industry.
- ▶ Establish partnerships between Council, industry, education and training providers and institutions to facilitate workforce capability uplifts.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Workforce capability and capacity have been identified as a significant risk and limitation for industry growth and development now and into the future. The creation of a strong and capable workforce is a catalyst to driving economic expansion in the Cassowary Coast and broader Tropical North Queensland region.

It is imperative that the skills and specialisations of the local workforce align with and adapt to the evolving needs of industries in the region. By clearly defining the workforce needs and providing access to training, education, and upskilling opportunities, the region will be well placed to address the current and future skill gaps. Furthermore, a focus on workforce requirements may facilitate improved retention of younger workers and foster an environment to invest in and retain highly skilled personnel.

Further, developing a versatile and skilled workforce will become increasingly crucial as the region seeks to support the continued competitiveness and evolution of traditional industries and to grow new opportunities in less mature industries in the region.

The development of knowledge and skills comes through the provision of access to high quality educational and training services. Development of partnerships with leading educational and training providers, and establishing facilities in the region that support these, is a fundamental requirement to broaden the skills base locally.

KEY INITIATIVES

- Engage across Far North and North Queensland regions to provide input into workforce planning and development initiatives, such as region-wide workforce and skills development plans and strategies.
- Attract greater funding commitments (via direct funding contributions or in-kind resource commitments) for education and training courses delivered in the region.
- Partner with other Far North and North Queensland Councils to advocate for appropriate skilled regional migration programs that attract and retain skilled and unskilled workers in the region now and into the future.
- Develop and roll out promotional campaigns that highlight the Cassowary Coast's lifestyle and employment opportunities to attract new residents to the region.
- Engage with Indigenous advancement organisations, such as Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) and Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), to progress partnerships and relationships and, where possible, provide support to Traditional Custodians with existing, emerging or new majority-Indigenous owned businesses to develop workforce capabilities.

Pillar 4 - Industry Planning and Prioritisation

KEY THEMES

- ▶ Understand the global demand for the region's goods and services and support and incentivise priority industries and to attract investment and new businesses to the region.
- ▶ Prioritise critical infrastructure and projects that will support the 10-year economic vision and objectives for the Cassowary Coast.
- ▶ Promote key priorities and opportunities in the region to attract investment from the Queensland and Australian Governments as well as the private sector.

RATIONALE AND PURPOSE

Strategic industry planning includes a strong focus on market demands and changes, and the identification of priority industries and projects that have the potential for the greatest economic return for the region. This level of planning will provide a clear path towards supporting and nurturing the existing business community while also seeking to diversify and develop the economy and achieve the economic vision and goals outlined within this Strategy.

Targeted industry planning will focus resources within Council, Government and industry that may be applied towards growing and developing the priority industries and projects. Industry planning will also identify the infrastructure and support services required to meet the specific needs of key industries.

It is important to clearly define those core economic development zones and infrastructure classes and projects that will be required to support the growth initiatives. Master planning, infrastructure definition and land designations within the local Government boundaries for development zones will be an important step to provide transparency and certainty to inbound investors in relation to new projects and investments. Clear definition of the supporting infrastructure requirements will also support funding requests to the State and Federal Governments for priority projects.

Definition and promotion of the priority growth industries and projects within the region will focus efforts on attracting inbound investment, and will support initiatives in relation to growing and strengthening the business community.

KEY INITIATIVES

- Advocate for the development of strategic industry development plans for key industries to identify actionable approaches capable of unlocking growth and development.
- Engage with strategic infrastructure asset owners (e.g. Ports North), regional authorities and advocacy groups to complete master planning and develop designated economic development zones and precincts for priority industries.
- Develop targeted promotion campaigns and initiatives to attract investment in key industries.
- Identify, prioritise and advocate for infrastructure development that supports the needs of key industries for economic development.
- Establish a 'Project Prioritisation Framework' to enable the ongoing identification, assessment, prioritisation and progression of Council, industry and private sector projects that will contribute to the economic vision for the region.
- Conduct a capacity and infrastructure assessment to identify opportunities for the Cassowary Coast region in the lead up to the 2032 South East Queensland Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Review Council's existing investment incentives program and, as necessary, consider alternative approaches to attract private sector investment to the region.

Priority Industries and Projects

Arising from an extensive stakeholder consultation process, priority industries were identified that were regarded as having the potential to deliver the 'economic step change' desired for the region. Where supported through strong leadership and planning these industries are expected to support the **growth of a strong, sustainable and resilient economy that positions our region for a prosperous future.**

Agribusiness and Food

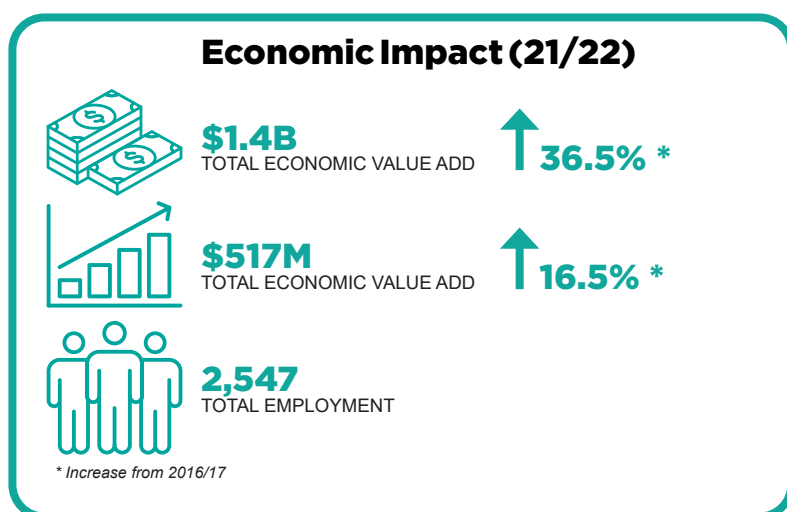
The Cassowary Coast has a thriving agriculture, forestry and fishing industry. In 2021/22, the total value added by the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry in the region was \$517 million, primarily driven by banana and sugarcane production with contributions from the tropical fruit and vegetable growing, cattle grazing, timber production and fishing. Overall the industry also supports over 2,500 jobs and countless micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

The established economic base and mature industry operators, coupled with the expansive fertile soils, favourable climate and access to major transport and processing infrastructure reinforces the importance and expected future prosperity of the industry.

Despite its historical performance, the industry faces many challenges in the form of rising operating costs, reduction and fragmentation of farming land, supply chain disruption, biosecurity and disease and commodity price volatility. These challenges must be considered as the future for the industry is mapped out.

To continue to grow the contribution of bananas and sugar to the Cassowary Coast, it is important to support the existing producers and to develop pathways, through funding, planning and infrastructure delivery, to ensure they can sustain their current operations and grow through investment and diversification.

To support this, the region must consider expansion of crop diversification and value add processing options for smaller producers (outside of sugar and bananas) to ensure that their contribution can continue to grow. Future opportunities in the agri-tourism and agri-education spaces have the potential to yield significant benefits for the industry.



The Future of Sugarcane Production

The sugarcane industry has been a pillar of the economy in the Cassowary Coast since the late 1800s. As a significant contributor to economic activity and employment in the region, the industry is expected to continue to play an important role in driving the future growth and prosperity of the Cassowary Coast.

Whilst the industry has traditionally been founded upon the growing and milling of sugarcane, there exists an opportunity for the industry to transform to become the backbone of Australia's future bio-economy. Diversification into the production of sugarcane by-products, such as biofuels and bioplastics, is expected to enable milling operations to continue to sustainably produce raw sugar for future generations.

With the strategic shift towards sustainable energy, there is an opportunity to generate greater renewable energy through bagasse, a sugar milling by-product. With support from Government, this can support the sugarcane industry to have a long and vibrant future in the Cassowary Coast beyond traditional sugar growing and milling.

Economic Impact (21/22)



\$346M

GROSS INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION



770

ESTIMATED INDIRECT JOBS SUPPORTED BY THE INDUSTRY



1,651 FTES

DIRECT INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

image courtesy of Cane Growers Innisfail



MSF South Johnstone Mill Green Power Project

MSF Sugar (MSF) is an integrated grower, processor, marketer and exporter of raw sugar in Queensland. Operating 3 mills, producing over 600,000 tonnes of raw sugar, employing 500 FTEs and supporting over 630 growers, MSF is a significant contributor to the Far North Queensland (FNQ) economy annually.

As the operator of the South Johnstone Mill, MSF is faced with challenges to the mill's long term viability caused by farmland fragmentation and loss. To counter these challenges, MSF is transforming their business to enhance the future sustainability of their operations through the Green Power Project.

The Green Power Project involves the construction of a "green" power station that will use bagasse produced by the mill to generate 32MW of green electricity annually. The project is expected to improve the efficiency of their existing operations and may improve income diversity through the potential supply of renewable energy to the Cassowary Coast community.

Improving the financial return for both MSF and the local farming community, the project has the potential to catalyse significant economic growth in the region and generate growth in future employment. The Green Power Project is an important step to protecting a key pillar of the Cassowary Coast economy and ensuring the future contribution of the sugarcane industry to the region.

Sources: MSF Sugar (2023)

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By converting sugarcane by-products into biofuels and other renewable energy sources, the region can forge a sustainable and eco-friendly path ahead.... Our region is well-positioned to reap the long-term benefits offered by the sugarcane industry.



Tourism

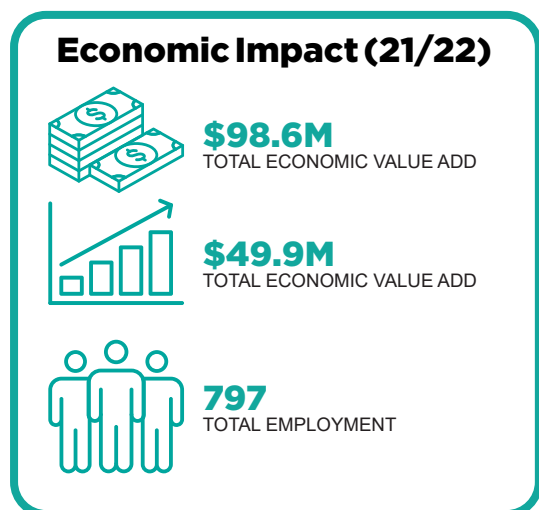
The Cassowary Coast is home to pristine natural wonders, spectacular islands, reefs and beaches, ancient rainforests and rich Indigenous art and culture. With over 120 kilometres of coastline, the Cassowary Coast is one of the few places in the world where two spectacular World Heritage Areas meet –the Wet Tropics rainforest and the GBR Marine Park. The region also offers one of the greatest ranges of nature and adventure based activities in Australia, and is one of the world’s most biodiverse and unexplored destinations.

Despite the natural appeal of the region, tourism has had a fluctuating history in terms of contribution to the economy. Economic data has revealed a gradual decline in the performance of the industry since the mid 2000s, largely arising due to the impacts of natural disaster events and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tourism in the region has historically been aligned to attractions and precincts such as Dunk Island and Mission Beach. However, growing demand trends have signified an expanding interest in nature based, adventure and cultural tourism experiences. Furthermore, as the world moves on from the pandemic, domestic and international visitor numbers are starting to recover and capacity on airlines is being restored.

The opportunities for the Cassowary Coast in a recovering and future looking tourism market are significant. However, it is critical that action is taken to clearly define and promote the identity of the region, incentivise investment and revitalisation of existing attractions and identify and nurture new opportunities within the nature based, cultural and eco-tourism space. Positioning tourism as a central part of the economic growth for the Cassowary Coast is a critical step towards achieving a sustainable and vibrant economy.

Sources: NIEIR (2023). CCRC | Economic Profile; Tropical Coast Tourism (2019). Cassowary Coast Region Tourism Strategy.



Paronella Park - A Local Success Story

Paronella Park is a multi-award winning tourist attraction located at Mena Creek, in the heart of the Cassowary Coast. Paronella Park immerses tourists in the unique story of Spanish Immigrant Jose Paronella, who originally built the attraction in the early 1900s.

Recognised as one of the leading tourist destinations in FNQ, Paronella Park represents a true local success story of residents Judy and Mark Evans, who purchased Paronella Park in 1993 with a vision to bring Jose Paronella's dream back to life. Judy and Mark and their young family persevered through cyclones, floods and ailments, and brought Paronella Park back into the stand out attraction that it is today.

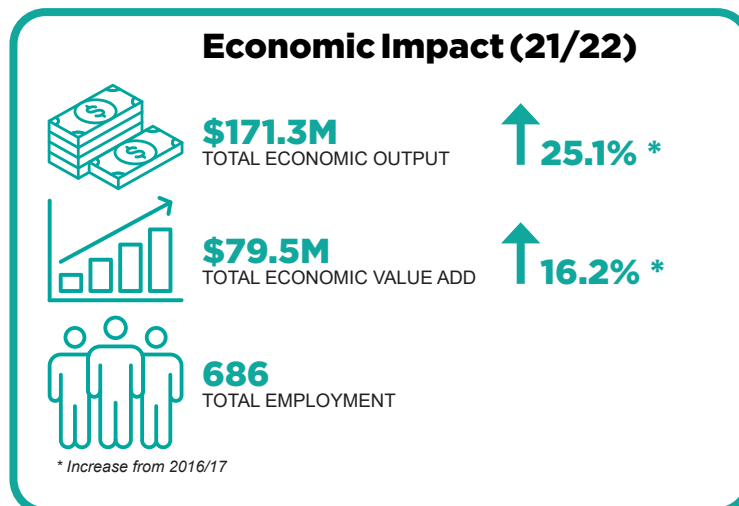
Paronella Park is now one of the most successful tourism businesses and attractions in FNQ, attracting over 10,000 visitors annually and providing employment opportunities to a number of local residents. The Paronella Park that exists today is a testament to the ambition and resilience of the community that exists within the Cassowary Coast.

Sources: Queensland Government (2023). Paronella Park - image courtesy of Tourism Tropical North Queensland.



Transport and Logistics

The Cassowary Coast is supported by a well-established transport infrastructure network that includes the Port of Mourilyan, Mundoo Airport, the Bruce and Palmerston Highways and the North Coast rail line. Located strategically between Cairns and Townsville, the region is connected to major domestic trade routes and has direct access to South East Asian markets via Cairns International Airport and the Port of Townsville.



The Bruce and Palmerston Highways currently play a vital role in the transportation of goods from the tip of Cape York all the way along the eastern seaboard of Australia. Critically, this road network ensures that much of the produce grown on the Atherton Tablelands is able to be distributed to southern markets. The Port of Mourilyan is a crucial economic hub for North Queensland, facilitating the export of raw sugar and molasses from the region’s sugar-growing districts. Amongst other things, these two infrastructure assets are vital to the longevity of the agricultural industry in FNQ.

While transportation and logistics has often been considered as an enabling industry for the region, the network of strategic infrastructure and assets and the proximity to major centres, presents a significant opportunity for the industry to be regarded as a major economic driver for the Cassowary Coast into the future. By investing in the planning, design and delivery of infrastructure enhancements, improving service connectivity through road, rail, and maritime channels, and facilitating collaboration between Government and industry stakeholders, the Cassowary Coast is well positioned to achieve this outcome.

Image caption: Courtesy of Blenners Transport.



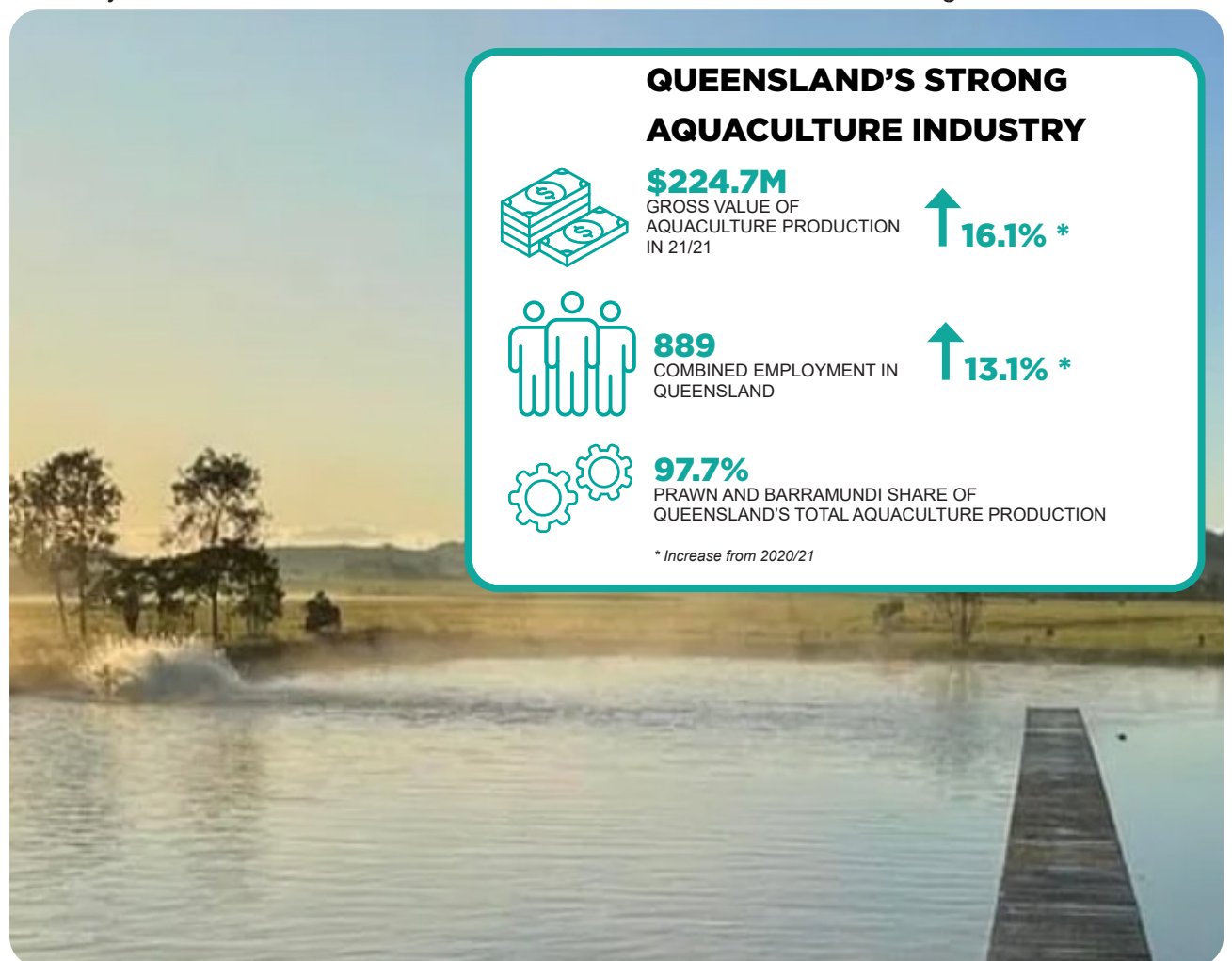
Aquaculture

Aquaculture is well established in the Cassowary Coast and yields a significant potential to grow into the future. The region benefits from favourable climatic conditions, ready access to fresh and salt water reservoirs and waterways and established large scale operators that are supported by a skilled workforce. While barramundi and prawn farming have dominated the industry to date, the opportunities for species diversification and for the development and operation of seafood processing facilities and infrastructure are largely untapped.

In recent years, the global demand for premium seafood products from Australia has experienced significant growth. Additionally, due to growing restrictions on commercial fishing, particularly in and around the GBR, it is anticipated that much of the seafood supply across North Queensland will be shifted to onshore production. These changes, coupled with the Cassowary Coast's advantageous location and climate, provides a unique opportunity for the region to become a thriving hub for aquaculture.

However, to fully unlock the potential of aquaculture for the region's economic prosperity, there is a need for careful planning, management of regulations and environmental impacts and adoption of innovative technologies, to ensure the growth in the industry is able to occur sustainably.

By capitalising on its natural advantages, implementing sustainable practices, and maintaining high-quality standards, the Cassowary Coast can establish itself as a reliable and environmentally-conscious supplier of premium seafood products to domestic and international markets. This will not only create more employment and training opportunities but will also support to diversify the region's economy and attract investment and reinvestment from both new and existing businesses.



TomKat KoolPak –Environmentally Responsible Innovation

TomKat Global Solutions is a local Cassowary Coast business that manufactures a patented and environmentally responsible cold chain packaging system specifically designed for perishable products destined for domestic and international markets. Utilising the latest technologies, the packaging system is designed to provide a cost effective solution for businesses that will optimise product condition and quality during long distance transport. The packaging system utilises environmentally responsible materials, and focuses on the reduction of single use wastes that currently plague the cold chain transport industry.

The strong demand for their packaging products has led founders, Tom and Kath Long, to pursue the construction of a dedicated manufacturing facility in Kurrimine Beach in the heart of the Cassowary Coast. Once constructed the facility is expected to have the capacity to produce over two million units per year. The proposed facility will create new employment opportunities and will contribute to the diversification of the region’s economy, whilst also upholding an unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship.

Having lived in Kurrimine Beach since 2005, Tom and Kath are a clear demonstration of success that may be achieved through innovation and adoption of technological advancements, without comprising on the sustainment of the surrounding environment.

Image caption: TomKat Global team, picture below.



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Why is it important to support Queensland businesses, innovators and entrepreneurs? Put simply, local innovation = local growth.

Sources: Advance Queensland (2023). That's cool: Queensland innovators create sustainable fish boxes.

Key Projects

Certain priority projects have been identified that have the potential to play a transformational role in facilitating future economic expansion in the region. These projects are explained below, and on the following page.



Innisfail CBD Revitalisation Project

The Council recently released a Master Plan for the revitalisation of the Innisfail CBD, supported by an implementation plan to deliver short-term priority initiatives and achieve long-term opportunities. Through physical improvements, events and activity, there is an opportunity to revitalise the township, encouraging people to visit Innisfail and support the local economy.



Port of Mourilyan Master Plan

The Port of Mourilyan is a deep-water port that is suitable for larger bulk trade commodities. There is a major opportunity for the Port to support growth in bulk commodity trade by leveraging existing infrastructure and the forecast growth across several industries. The development of a Master Plan, in collaboration with Ports North and industry representatives, will identify the priority infrastructure and service development required to meet the future demand growth.



Tully CBD Revitalisation Project

The Council is investigating the revitalisation of the Tully CBD with an objective to encourage increased visitation to the town centre and to support the enhancement of the local business district and surrounding economy.

Key Projects cont.



Port Hinchinbrook Sewerage Treatment Plant and Normalisation Project

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council is committed to realising the normalisation of Port Hinchinbrook. What this means for residents and the wider community, is the privately owned assets within Port Hinchinbrook, such as roads, bridges, culverts and sewerage, will be under the control of Council. The normalisation project will see the construction of a new sewerage treatment plant and the renewal of a pump station and effluent infrastructure, culverts and road assets.



Mission Beach Town Centre Revitalisation Project

The Mission Beach Town Centre Revitalisation Project will create a vibrant town centre, breathing life back into Mission Beach and surrounds for the enjoyment of the community and visitors.



Cardwell Tropical Mountain Bike Trails

The Council is currently investigating the potential development of a new 94km, 26-trail mountain bike network in picturesque national park and World Heritage rainforest in Cardwell. The Project is focused on establishing the region as a 'Ride Destination', integrating the unique cultural heritage of the local Traditional Owners, the Girramay Peoples, and generating on-bike and off-bike expenditure in the township and nearby areas.

Key Projects cont.



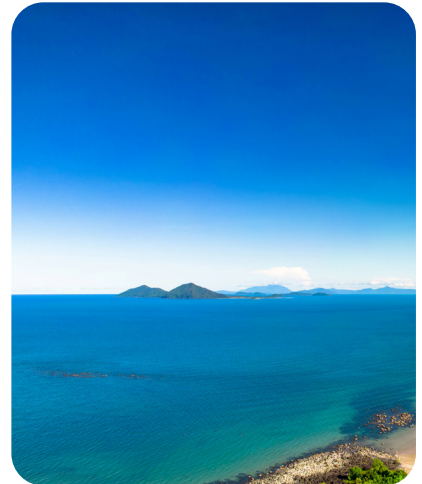
Innisfail Freight and Logistics Hub

The Innisfail Freight and Logistics Hub concept considers the opportunity to capitalise on, and integrate existing high value infrastructure assets, such as Mundoo Airport and the Bruce and Palmerston Highways, to enhance the management and flow of freight across FNQ. As an early stage concept, feasibility investigations and design concepts will be required to progress the project.



Mourilyan Silica Sands Project

Silica Resources Australia is planning to invest in high purity silica extraction, processing and multi-user infrastructure to grow the critical minerals value chain in the region. This will enable the exportation of ethically sourced, high-purity silica via the port and generate



Dunk Island Rejuvenation

Dunk Island was purchased in 2022. The new owners have confirmed plans to rejuvenate the resort and preserve the natural beauty of the island. The project has the potential to secure new and return visitors and to generate flow-on economic benefits for Mission Beach and the broader region.

Key Projects cont.



Tully Transport Precinct

As an established transport hub, with mature operators in place, opportunities exist to further enhance the infrastructure and services supporting the Tully Transport Precinct to enable growth arising from the expansion of the agricultural and aquaculture industries.

Port Hinchinbrook Dredging Project

The Council is committed to progressing the Port Hinchinbrook (One Mile Creek) Dredging Project, having commenced sediment testing in August 2023 to inform the dredging process moving forward. This project is proposed to provide all tide access conditions, allowing safe boating launching and retrievals as well as the safe transfer of passengers and goods.

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Achieving the Vision and Objectives

To successfully achieve the vision and objectives of the Strategy, an Implementation Plan has been developed, providing immediate, short, medium and long term actions with defined and measurable targets and timeframes. The Implementation Plan will be revisited, updated and reported against by Council on an annual basis to track the region’s progress towards the 2033 Vision and Goals.

Delivering the EDS

The Council, in collaboration with the EDAC, will lead the implementation of the Strategy. Importantly, the Council’s role in delivering the Strategy will include collaboration with industry representatives, Queensland and Australian Government agencies and departments and the broader community.

The immediate and short-term governance structure to implement the Strategy is summarised below. This structure is expected to evolve over time, to meet the changing needs and maturity of the region’s economy and key industries.



The Implementation Plan will be revisited, updated and reported against by Council on an annual basis to track the region’s progress towards the 2033 Vision and Goals, which are aspirational objectives that are designed to realise step change economic growth and development in the region.

This annual review and reporting process will build upon the achievements and progress towards developing the region’s economy. Outcomes will be shared with industry representatives, local businesses and the community, ensuring that together, we grow a strong, sustainable and resilient economy that positions our region for a prosperous future.

Measuring Outcomes and Success

The key **immediate** and **short-term actions**, proposed to be implemented in the first three years of the Strategy, are summarised across the following pages. These actions will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, with corresponding amendments reflected for medium and long term actions, to cater for progression of key economic initiatives and projects.

Pillar 1 – Advocacy and Collaboration

No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
1	Strong Economic Leadership			
1.1	Define and establish the economic leadership structure and governance framework to implement the EDS.	Governance structure adoption	Establish and adopt the economic governance structure by the end of 2024.	Immediate
1.2	Continue to develop internal capability and capacity within the Council to enable ongoing support of economic leadership within the region.	CCRC economic development resourcing	Receive endorsement of additional funding and/or resourcing for the Council's Economic Development Team in FY24 Council budget.	Immediate
1.3	Facilitate an annual 'Economic and Project Pipeline Forum' for community, industry and Government stakeholders and develop an accompanying publication to present project pipeline and priorities.	Forum and publication completion	Facilitate an annual 'Economic and Project Pipeline Forum' and develop an 'Economic and Project Pipeline Publication' on an annual basis by 2025.	Short term
2	Industry, Government and Community Engagement			
2.1	Facilitate greater engagement between Council, industry and community to enhance collaboration and to progress initiatives outlined in the EDS.	Meeting facilitation	Facilitate four regional economic leadership meetings per year from 2024.	Immediate
2.2	Maintain Council's ongoing commitment to small businesses by retaining the Small Business Friendly Charter.	Approved annual report	Complete and receive approval of annual SBFC Reports.	Immediate
2.3	Establish a Cassowary Coast business digital database and conduct quarterly reviews/refreshes.	Database development and management	Develop the Cassowary Coast business database by the end of 2024 and complete quarterly updates thereon.	Immediate
2.4	Engage with key Queensland and Australian Government departments and agencies (e.g. Queensland Health, North Queensland Primary Health Network [NQPHN]) to advocate for and establish service and infrastructure commitments in relation to health, education and aged care.	Funding for service and infrastructure commitments	Secure two service and infrastructure commitments in health, education and aged care in the CCRC LGA by 2026.	Immediate

Pillar 1 continues overleaf.

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Pillar 1 – Advocacy and Collaboration

No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
Industry, Government and Community Engagement (cont.)				
2.5	Enhance advocacy with Queensland and Australian Government ministers, agencies and departments to raise awareness of the region and secure funding commitments for priority projects and catalytic infrastructure.	Funding commitments	Secure funding commitments for, at least, two economic projects in the local government area (LGA) with a combined value exceeding \$2M by 2026.	Short term
2.6	Develop a quarterly 'Business and Economic Update' publication to provide quarterly economic information relevant to the quantitative objectives of the EDS.	Quarterly publications development	Develop quarterly 'Business and Economic Update' publications by 2025.	Short term
2.7	Facilitate greater engagement between the local Chambers of Commerce through combined chamber meeting/s to enhance information and knowledge sharing, support business development activities and promote a collective 'Cassowary Coast' vision.	Meeting facilitation	Facilitate quarterly meetings with all Chambers of Commerce by 2025.	Short term
2.8	Facilitate an annual local business awards event, with support from the local Chambers of Commerce, to recognise local businesses for excellence and contribution to the economy.	Business excellence awards event facilitation	Facilitate an annual business excellence awards event by 2026.	Short term
2.9	Establish an 'Invest in the Cassowary Coast' landing page on the Council's website to act as the centralised point of contact within Council for economic development or investor related enquiries.	Landing page establishment and visits	Establish landing page on CCRC website by end of 2024, with over 150 visits by the end of 2025.	Short term
2.10	Establish an administration support function for the EDAC and local Chambers of Commerce to improve effectiveness and efficiency of engagement and forums and to enhance participation of local businesses and industry.	Administration support resource/s	Secure funding for, and appoint, an administration resource by 2025.	Short term
2.11	Coordinate a business mentoring program with the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training (DYJESBT) to support the development of emerging and local businesses.	Participation numbers	Participation of, at least, 20 businesses in the program by 2026.	Short term

Pillar 1 continues overleaf.

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Pillar 1 – Advocacy and Collaboration

No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
3	Tropical North Queensland Collaboration			
3.1	Provide input to support the development of the FNQ Regional Plan and FNQ Infrastructure Plan, as well as ongoing delivery/implementation initiatives and actions.	Communication of priorities to FNQ Regional Plan and FNQ Infrastructure Plan Project Teams	Priorities of the Cassowary Coast are reflected FNQ Regional Plan and FNQ Infrastructure Plan, due for release in 2024.	Immediate
3.2	Assess the value of obtaining membership with Advance Cairns to support the advancement of initiatives of the Cassowary Coast.	Investigation and recommendation completion	Complete investigations and provide a recommendation to Council by end of 2024.	Immediate
3.3	Engage with other local governments in Far North and North Queensland and with FNQROC to progress and deliver complementary initiatives, offerings and projects, and to avoid the duplication of comparable infrastructure.	Meetings and number of new joint initiatives / activities	Facilitate one meeting per year with neighbouring local Councils from 2024; and Facilitate two new joint initiatives/activities with one or multiple neighbouring Councils, and/or FNQROC, per annum by 2026.	Short term
3.4	CCT to engage with regional tourism advocacy organisations (e.g. Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Tourism and Events Queensland etc.) to raise awareness of the region and advance the promotion of the Cassowary Coast in FNQ marketing campaigns.	Visitor Nights in the CCRC LGA	Achieve over 1 million total visitor nights in the region by 30 June 2026.	Short term



Image caption: FNQROC meeting - Elandra Resort.

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Pillar 2 – Sustainability and Innovation

No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
4	Leading Environmental Stewardship			
4.1	Develop a framework that establishes a common definition of 'sustainability', outlines sustainability principles and initiatives for the region, and enables the region to assess and monitor performance against key initiatives.	Framework development and implementation	Develop and receive endorsement of the Sustainability Framework by Council and the Regional Economic Leadership team by 2026.	Short term
4.2	Continue to progress towards the attainment of the ECO Destination Certification from Ecotourism Australia.	ECO Destination certification attainment	Attain the ECO Destination Certification from Ecotourism Australia by 2025.	Short term
4.3	Investigate opportunities to leverage available natural reserves to contribute to the emission offset requirements for the 'climate positive' 2032 South East Queensland Olympic and Paralympic Games (e.g. identifying specific funding programs, such as the Land Restoration Fund, to support the delivery of improved environmental outcomes).	Land Restoration Fund applications	Identify two eligible projects aligned to the carbon offsetting objectives of the 2032 South East Queensland Olympic and Paralympic Games; and Submit application/s for the Land Restoration Fund by the end of 2026.	Short term
5	Business and Industry Sustainability			
5.1	Facilitate information sessions to educate businesses and industry on sustainability initiatives and economic opportunities arising from sustainable practices.	Sustainability information and education sessions	Facilitate two sustainability information and education sessions per year by 2026.	Short term
6	Innovation and Entrepreneurship			
6.1	Engage with NBNCo and other telecommunications providers to define the region's digital infrastructure requirements and plan for the NBN's implementation across the Cassowary Coast.	NBN Business Fibre Zone achievement	Establish the Cassowary Coast as an NBN Business Fibre Zone by 2026.	Short term
6.2	Investigate the establishment of an 'Innovation Hub' in the Cassowary Coast to provide business support services, working spaces and accelerator programs.	Feasibility study assessment completion	Complete Innovation Hub feasibility study and present the recommendation to Council by end of 2026.	Short term
6.3	Support and promote industry leaders through a recognition program targeted at excellence in innovation and sustainability, as part of the region's annual local business event awards.	Program implementation	Implement an Industry Leader Recognition Program by end of 2026.	Short term

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Pillar 3 – Workforce Development

No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
7	Workforce Definition and Strategy			
7.1	Engage across Far North and North Queensland regions to provide input into workforce planning and development initiatives, such as region-wide workforce and skills development plans and strategies.	Regional workforce and skills development strategy	Complete and receive endorsement of regional workforce and skills development strategy by 2025.	Short term
7.2	Undertake a workforce skills gap analysis and establish a workforce and skills development plan for the Cassowary Coast to support the workforce requirements now and into the future.	Analysis and plan development	Complete a Cassowary Coast Workforce Gap Analysis and Skills Development Plan by 2025.	Short term
7.3	Assess the feasibility of establishing a Cassowary Coast regional workforce taskforce (as sub committee of the Regional Economic Leadership team), that maintains a charter to progress workforce development initiatives through collaboration with industry, Council, Government and community.	Cassowary Coast regional workforce assessment	Complete the feasibility analysis of Cassowary Coast regional workforce taskforce by 2025.	Short term
8	Worker Attraction and Retention			
8.1	Support banana industry representatives to advocate for greater workforce sustainability in relation to the Seasonal Worker Program.	Seasonal Worker Program conditions	Seasonal Worker Program aligns with industry needs by 2026.	Short term
8.2	Establish an ongoing commitment to the Council's annual 'Careers Day' to support youth navigate career and training pathways in the region.	Funding and resource commitments	Allocated funding and resource commitments to the Council's annual Careers Day for 2024, 2025 and 2026.	Short term
8.3	Assess the potential expansion of Council's annual 'Careers Day' for non-school aged youth and mature-aged students.	Investigations completion	Complete investigations into the potential expansion of Careers Day by the end of 2024.	Short term

Pillar 3 continues overleaf.

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Pillar 3 – Workforce Development

No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
9	Workforce Skills and Training			
9.1	Complete an application and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a Regional University Study Hub (RUSH) in the Cassowary Coast.	Application and MoU completion	Complete the application and establish an MoU by 2024.	Immediate
9.2	Establish an MoU with Central Queensland University (CQU) in relation to the Cardwell STP Project, once the Department of Environment and Science (DES) has provided the necessary environmental approvals.	MoU establishment	Establish an MoU with CQU in relation to the Cardwell STP by end of 2024.	Immediate
9.3	Maintain CCRC's commitment to supporting local businesses by increasing the 'local spend' on procured services.	'Local spend' on procured services	Increase the value of Council's local spend by 5% (equating to \$2.3m direct economic expenditure) by 2026.	Short term
9.4	Facilitate an annual planning session with CQU and James Cook University (JCU) to identify priority skills and training requirements in the region.	Annual planning session completion	Schedule and attend an annual planning session with confirmed representative attendance from CQU and JCU by 2025.	Short term
9.5	Partner with DYJESBT to facilitate targeted training and workforce development programs for priority industries.	Training program delivery and attendance	Facilitate one or more training and workforce development programs for priority industries by 2025; and Attendance of 100+ CCRC LGA residents at the training and workforce development programs by 2026.	Short term



Image caption: Careers Day 2022

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Pillar 4 – Industry Planning and Prioritisation

No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
10	Strategic Industry Planning			
10.1	Undertake planning scheme updates to align with the FNQ Regional Plan and FNQ Infrastructure Plan.	Planning scheme update completion	Complete strategic town planning and zoning updates for the CCRC LGA by 2025.	Short term
10.2	Develop a Strategic Masterplan for the Port of Mourilyan, building upon Ports North's 30-year masterplan, to establish a broader development approach.	Port of Mourilyan Masterplan completion	Complete a Port of Mourilyan Strategic Masterplan by 2026.	Short term
10.3	Complete an assessment for the Mundoo and Tully Airports and surrounding precinct to assess potential opportunities in aircraft maintenance and general aviation, charter services and tourism-related travel, integrating the key findings from FNQROC's Regional Aerodrome Operational Business Plan.	Mundoo and Tully airports strategic assessment completion	Complete a strategic assessment of the Mundoo and Tully Airports by 2026.	Short term
10.4	Refresh the 2019 'Innisfail Integrated Freight and Logistics Hub Strategy' and consider the feasibility of establishing transport hubs in Innisfail and Tully.	Cassowary Coast transport and logistics feasibility study completion	Complete the Cassowary Coast transport and logistics feasibility study by 2026.	Short term
10.5	Review and refresh the Cassowary Coast Tourism Strategy in 2024/25.	Cassowary Coast Tourism Strategy refresh completion	Deliver a refreshed Cassowary Coast Tourism Strategy by 2025.	Short term
10.6	Undertake an assessment of the aquaculture industry to identify opportunities and considerations associated with the industry's expansion in the region.	Aquaculture industry assessment completion	Complete an assessment of the aquaculture industry by 2026.	Short term
10.7	Engage with key sugar industry stakeholders to advocate for the development of a long term viability plan for the industry.	Sugar industry development plan completion	Stakeholders complete a sugar industry development plan by 2026.	Short term
10.8	Engage with key banana industry stakeholders to advocate for the development of a long term viability plan for the industry.	Banana industry development plan completion	Stakeholders complete a banana industry development plan by 2026.	Short term

Pillar 4 continues overleaf.

Measuring Outcomes and Success

Pillar 4 – Industry Planning and Prioritisation


No.	Action	Measure	Target	Timeframe
11 Infrastructure and Project Prioritisation				
11.1	Establish a 'Project Prioritisation Framework' to enable the ongoing identification, assessment, prioritisation and progression of catalytic projects.	Project prioritisation framework development and implementation	Develop and implement a Project Prioritisation Framework by end of 2024.	Immediate
11.2	Assess potential adjustments to rating categories to align with the agreed economic development and industry priorities by considering the outcomes from the Rating Advisory Committee and completing a review of the current rating categories for the region.	Rating category change recommendation submission to Council	Complete the ratings report and provide a recommendation to Council for consideration in the 2024/25 Council budget.	Short term
11.3	Conduct an 'event venue and capacity audit' to identify opportunities for the Cassowary Coast region in the lead up to the 2032 South East Queensland Olympic and Paralympic Games (e.g. hosting teams for training purposes).	Audit completion	Complete event venue and capacity audit by 2025.	Short term
11.4	Engage with relevant stakeholders to identify and deliver infrastructure upgrades / changes required at the Clump Point Boating Facility to meet market demand and users' requirements.	Clump Point Boating Facility upgrade completion	Establish the current and future demand from boating operators for the Clump Point Boating Facility; and Deliver infrastructure upgrades by end of 2026.	Short term
12 Investment Attraction				
12.1	Complete an investment attraction marketing campaign to highlight the project opportunities and initiatives within the Cassowary Coast.	Investment attraction marketing campaign completion	Commence the investment attraction campaign by the end of 2024.	Immediate
12.2	Review Council's existing investment incentives program and, as necessary, consider alternative approaches to attract private sector investment to the region.	Incentive attraction program review completion	Complete the review and provide recommendations to Council by the end of 2024.	Immediate
12.3	Complete a targeted engagement campaign to meet with desirable businesses and project proponents to attract new investment to the region.	Number of businesses engaged through investment attraction program	Engage 30 new businesses through the investment attraction program by 2025.	Short term
12.4	Conduct a review of Council-owned land within the LGA and determine whether any allotments may be suitable for redevelopment to address commercial land requirements or for use in progressing short to medium term accommodation solutions.	Council land assessment completion	Complete the land assessment and provide a report to Council with recommendations by 2025.	Short term



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