

DRAFT
DOUGLAS SHIRE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

2021-2024

CONTENTS

Douglas economic snapshot.....	4
Purpose of economic development.....	6
Brief history of economic development in Douglas.....	7
COVID-19 Economic Recovery	8
Local context & alignment.....	10
Implementation, monitoring & reporting.....	11
Priority drivers of economic growth	12
1. Tourism – Diversify & expand our tourism offering	12
2. Agriculture – Diversify & innovate in agriculture.....	14
3. Population diversification – Targeted growth of the Shire’s population.....	16
Supporting priorities	18
Provide infrastructure that connects people, enhances liveability & supports business.....	18
Develop an innovation culture across business & the community	19
Build direct links between our Indigenous community & the economy.....	21
Ensure environmental & social links to the economy are strengthened & maintained.....	22
Reduce red tape & improve business support.....	23

Images used throughout this document are courtesy of TTNQ and TEQ



DOUGLAS ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

The Douglas Shire covers an area of 2,445km² from Wangetti in the south to the Bloomfield River in the north.

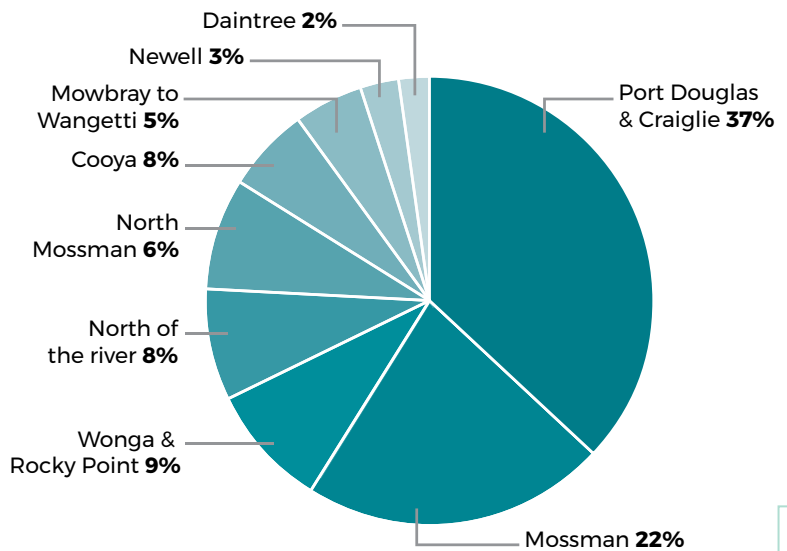
The economy of the shire depends mainly on tourism, with over 400,000 people visiting the region annually to explore the World Heritage Listed Wet Tropics Rainforest and Great Barrier Reef.

Douglas is home to over 12,000 residents, with almost 60% living in the two main population centres of Port Douglas and Mossman. Port Douglas is the tourist gateway to the region, while Mossman is the administrative, health, industrial and agricultural hub.

Other principal urban centres include the beachside communities of Wonga Beach, Newell Beach and Cooya Beach. The remaining residents live in small, decentralised communities scattered along the 100km stretch of coast road; tucked into the rainforest or in small rural townships in the valleys of the Shire's hinterland.



DOUGLAS SHIRE POPULATION BY SUBURB



AGE STRUCTURE - SERVICE AGE GROUPS

Douglas (S) - Total persons (usual residence)	2016		
	Number	%	Qld %
Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)	619	5.3	6.3
Primary schoolers (5 to 11)	951	8.1	9.4
Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)	720	6.1	7.5
Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24)	685	5.8	9.2
Young workforce (25 to 34)	1,520	13.0	13.8
Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)	2,422	20.6	20.2
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)	1,945	16.6	12.8
Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)	1,660	14.2	10.7
Seniors (70 to 84)	1,048	8.9	8.3
Elderly aged (85 and over)	159	1.4	1.8
Total	11,729	100.0	100.0



ECONOMIC DATA



GRP **\$730,000 M**
(Jun, 19)¹



443,000 overnight
visitors & **264,000**
day visitors⁹



Population
12,367
(Jun, 19)²

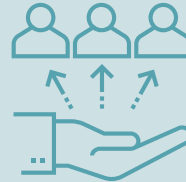


Visitor
nights
2,478,000⁹



Tourism generates
more than **\$611 million**
per year⁹

Aboriginal & Torres Strait
Islander population **7.7%**
(Jun, 19)²



Tourism supports
2,596 jobs
(Jun, 19)¹



Number of local
businesses **1,378**
(Jun, 19)⁴

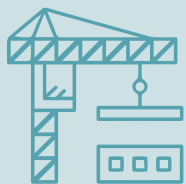


70% of residents
live in Port Douglas
& Mossman⁶

Unemployment
rate **5.5%** (Jun, 20)³



6,521 jobs located
in Douglas
(Jun, 19)¹



Most locally owned
businesses are in the
Construction Industry⁴

Median
age **44**²



SEIFA Index: **981**⁵



Largest employing industry:
Tourism and hospitality
(Jun, 19)¹

Source

1. NIEIR as at 30 June, 2019

2. ABS, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0) as at 30 June, 2020

3. ABS, Labour force survey (6202.0) as at 30 June, 2020

4. ABS, Counts of Australian Businesses, including Entries and Exit as at 30 June, 2020

5. SEIFA Index of disadvantage, 2016

6. 2016 Census Community Profiles

7. 2019-2020 TPDD Annual Report, 2019-2020 Snapshot

8. ABS, Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced (7503.0), as at 30 June, 2016

9. Data is based on a four-year average from 2016-2019. Douglas LGA Profile, Tourism Research Australia

PURPOSE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

At its core, economic development supports the sustainable increase in living standards, delivering higher incomes, better education, health and wellbeing, as well as environmental protection resulting from conscious and applied effort.

Economic development in the Douglas Shire is about improving the quality of life experienced in our community through:

- 1. Job creation** – Providing important support and advice for attracting job-creating industries and businesses.
- 2. Job security** – Ensuring the right mix of businesses builds stronger economies that are more resilient to changes in industry and economic downturns.
- 3. Prosperous businesses** – Delivering initiatives that support the local business community to connect, succeed and prosper.
- 4. Better environment** – Increasing the number of locally based, rate-paying companies supports Council's ability to deliver community projects and facilities.
- 5. Improved quality of life** – Safeguarding a strong economy, securing more jobs, better infrastructure development and a higher standard of living for residents.

Supporting Council's focus on economic development is the *Corporate Plan 2019-2024*, which is built around five strategic themes that work together to deliver on Council's Vision Statement:

“A unique, beautiful & sustainable Shire with a connected and inclusive community, thriving economy & deep commitment to protecting the environment for future generations, while honouring our past.”

At the heart of the themes are the three pillars of community, economy, and environment. These three themes are interrelated and cannot be considered in isolation from one another. For example, a strong economy supports a healthy community while an engaged community helps to foster a strong economy. Similarly, our communities are essential in helping to protect our cherished environment, while our beautiful and thriving environment drives economic opportunity and supports healthy communities.

This Economic Development Strategy (the Strategy) provides the overarching strategic direction for economic development in the Douglas Shire Council Local Government Area (LGA).

Achieving the desired outcomes outlined in the Strategy will require a commitment of financial resources and specialist skills from several groups and organisations within the community. Although Council will implement and monitor the strategy, delivery will be the result of a collaborative approach implemented over four years. The strategy:

- Will be an important part of Council's decision-making framework
- Recognises a whole of Council approach to economic development
- Sets a clear and measurable action plan to monitor Council's efforts and progress towards economic diversification and prosperity.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN DOUGLAS

Douglas Shire's unique positioning between the World Heritage Listed Wet Tropics Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef transformed the region into a world-class tourism destination in the 1980s with the arrival of visitors at the new Cairns International Airport.

The region was perfectly positioned to benefit from the influx of travellers with the region's first mooring platform anchoring at Agincourt Reef and the construction of the Sheraton Mirage Resort nearing completion.

An ideal tropical climate and rich fertile soils has positioned the Douglas Shire as a major contributor to the region's Agricultural industry, producing sugarcane and other tropical crops since the late 1800s. While rural land in the Shire is predominantly used for growing these crops, the presence of cattle grazing, and a healthy aquaculture industry has grown.

While economic downturns and disruptions have continued to influence the business landscape of the Douglas Shire, Tourism and Agriculture remain as the main economic drivers of the region today.

In 2017, Council acknowledged the importance of establishing long-term economic goals for the Shire by adopting an Economic Development Strategy, which is set to expire in 2021. While many of the actions in the Strategy were complete or on track, a review commenced in late 2019 to ensure it remained relevant.

To facilitate the review, Council established the Economic Strategic Review Committee; a group comprising twenty local business people from various industries across the Shire.

Over a series of workshops in early 2020, the committee assessed the existing Strategy alongside the region's strengths and weakness to identify new opportunities to build resilience and broaden the economic structure of the Douglas Shire.

This Strategy formalises the findings of the Economic Strategic Review Committee, market trends and considers the impact of COVID-19 on the Douglas economy.



COVID-19 ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting domestic and international border closures has had a substantial negative impact on economic activity in the Douglas Shire.

The region has emerged as one of the most affected regions in Queensland, with a loss of almost 1,000 jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars lost from the local economy. With international borders remaining closed until at least mid-2021, the path to a recovered state will be drawn out over years to come.

Throughout the pandemic, Council has continued to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and investigate ways to provide relief to businesses and residents in Douglas Shire.

Local recovery planning commenced in the early stages of the pandemic with the formation of an Economy Recovery Group, bringing together people from government agencies, tourism, small business, agriculture, events and Council's Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG).

A range of financial relief measures were provided and a buy local campaign called *"Buy Douglas: Build Douglas"* was launched to encourage people to spend their money in Douglas Shire and build the economy in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.



To establish a snapshot of event impacts and recovery actions, the Economic Recovery Group followed the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's (QRA) methodology for recovery planning. A workshop was held with key stakeholders from the group who identified, the following impacts (negative and positive) on the Douglas Shire Community:

- Pro-longed border closures and restricted aviation access has contributed to the loss of high-volume visitation from key domestic markets in Sydney and Melbourne, which is having the largest impact on the Douglas economy.
- Overall reef visits and rainforest-based tour numbers are down by 90%.
- 80% of tourism dependant businesses in the Douglas Shire were closed between March and July.
- In the months that followed the initial nationwide lockdown, visitation in the region has been bolstered by the intrastate drive market and high-value travellers accessing the destination via limited direct domestic routes. However, the volume and consistency from these markets is not sustainable.
- Loss or displacement of major events is limiting the Shire's appeal to regional visitation.
- Loss or postponement of weddings is having a major impact on creative industry professionals, who are unable to repurpose their skills into other industries.
- High levels of uncertainty around the viability of businesses in the Shire is acting as a deterrent to potential workers required for essential, service-based jobs in the tourism industry. Business models are subsequently shifting to outsourcing instead of employing.



- Late 2020 easing of restrictions and border re-openings coincides with harvesting across Regional Queensland's agricultural sector, placing further strain on the shared workforce.
- Caravan parks across Douglas have enjoyed high-occupancy rates as self-drive intrastate visitors want to explore the region.
- Distance from Brisbane, in comparison to other tropical destinations in Queensland, is limiting the region's market share for high-volume visitation out of South East Queensland.
- Social distancing compliance at the Port Douglas Markets requires Council to limit the number of stall holders, which in turn limited the potential economic impact of the market, which is an important point of sale for many small businesses. Buskers are also prohibited, impacting ambience and appeal of the markets.
- Agricultural industry has experienced minimal disruption throughout the year.
- Sugar price has dropped as a result of global pressures experienced during the pandemic.
- Value-adding projects within the Daintree Bio Precinct have been delayed due to international border closures.



Whilst a number of these impacts require direct action, in the short term, Council will continue to work with our key stakeholders and the tourism industry to facilitate solutions to the region's unstable workforce by:

- Facilitating discussions around the Shire's requirements to fill workforce gaps
- Identifying key sources of skilled and unskilled workforce
- Liaising with TPDD and the Douglas Chamber of Commerce to meet market needs
- Working closely with Jobs Queensland to develop initiatives to get more local residents working and attract suitable workforce candidates to the region.
- Identify and promote workforce development programs to support the up-skilling or/and re-skilling of the Shire's workforce to support ongoing recovery.

Council recognises that uncertainty around future domestic border closures will remain for the immediate future but that a recovered state can only be achieved when access to the region from key domestic markets in Sydney and Melbourne, is consistently achieved.

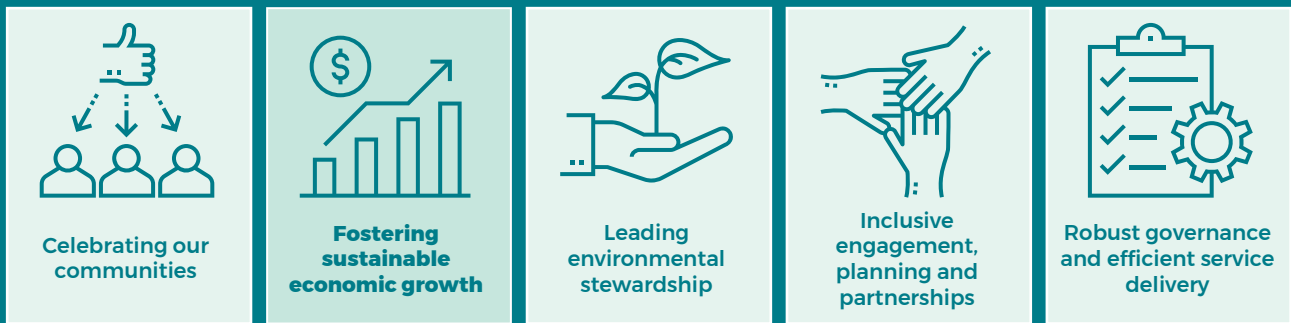
Douglas Shire Council's path to recovery focuses on addressing these impacts through the implementation of this Economic Development Strategy to achieve resilience against future disasters through a diversified economy.

LOCAL CONTEXT & ALIGNMENT

DOUGLAS SHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION

A unique, beautiful and sustainable Shire with a connected and inclusive community, **thriving economy** and deep commitment to protecting the environment for future generations, while honouring our past.

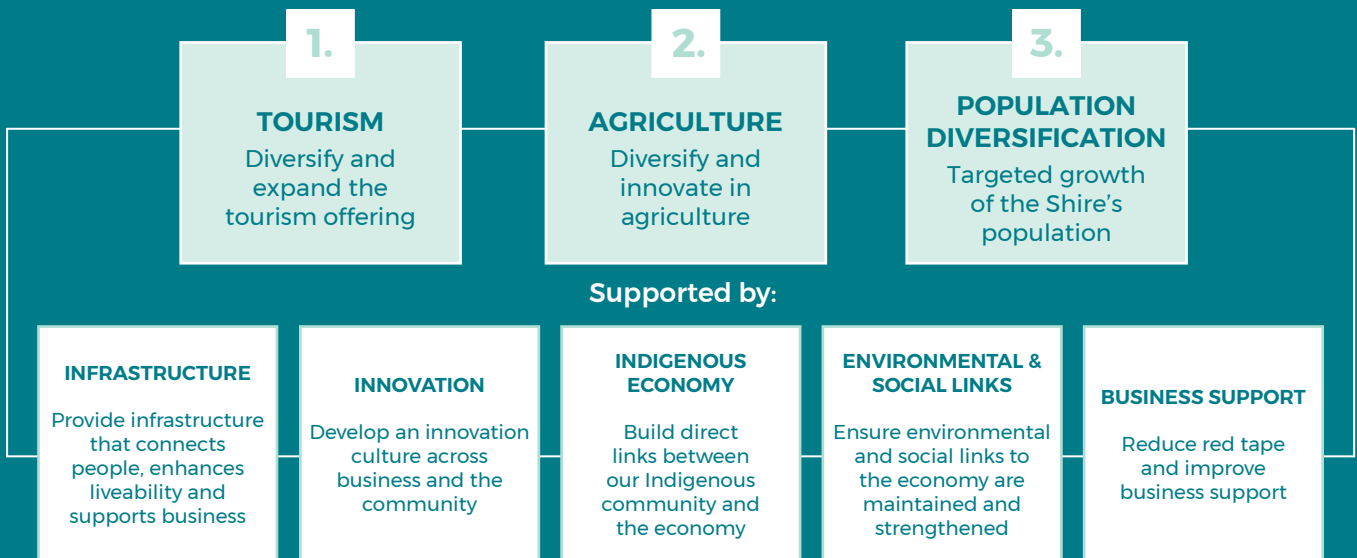
STRATEGIC THEMES



ECONOMIC STRATEGIC GOALS



Seeking an economy that is thriving, growing and diverse the following **three priority drivers** provide the overarching strategic direction for economic growth in the Douglas Shire:



IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & REPORTING

In adopting the Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy, Council recognises that achieving the desired outcomes will require a commitment of financial resources and specialist skills from several groups and organisations within the community.

Although Council will implement and monitor the strategy, delivery will be the result of a collaborative approach implemented over four years.

As part of Council's operational planning and budgeting process, an Economic Implementation Plan will be developed annually describing the actions to be delivered and the lead agencies and/or partners to deliver them along with financial resources required to do so.

Progress will be reviewed twice-yearly by Council's Tourism and Economic Development Team and reported to Council and the community on an annual basis.

A tiered approach to measuring the Strategy will determine to what extent the desired economic outcomes are being achieved:

1. Actions, initiatives and projects identified in the Economic Implementation Plan each year will be monitored for progress and/or completion.
2. Key economic data will be reviewed annually and monitored to determine the state of the local economy, informing future decisions and revisions of the Strategy.

PRIORITY DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Economic Recovery Group will continue to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 and provide findings to the LDMG.

The tourism and agricultural sectors have been and will continue to be major contributors to Douglas Shire's gross regional product, creating job opportunities for the 12,000 residents who call the region home and supporting the hundreds of thousands of people who visit each year.

It's the intention of this Strategy to recognise the contribution of these established industries, while building resilience and broadening the economic structure of the Douglas Shire.

Seeking an economy that is thriving, growing and diverse the following three priority areas provide the overarching strategic direction for economic growth in the region:

1. TOURISM - DIVERSIFY & EXPAND OUR TOURISM OFFERING

The Douglas Shire is an important part of a visitor's experience in Tropical North Queensland and on average welcomes 426,000 overnight visitors and 262,000 day visitors each year, generating \$611 million while supporting over 2,500 jobs.

Prolonged border closures and restricted aviation access, as a result of COVID-19, decimated visitation numbers to the destination causing the Shire's GRP to shrink by more than 5%, in the quarter ending 30 September, 2020.

Emerging from the pandemic, the destination will continue to appeal to a more conscious traveller, who values sustainable experiences and considers the wider social and economic impact of their travels. Council is committed to preserving the unique appeal of the Douglas Shire by strengthening the Shire's Eco Destination Certification with Eco Tourism Australia and providing a business environment that supports nature-based and sustainable enterprise.

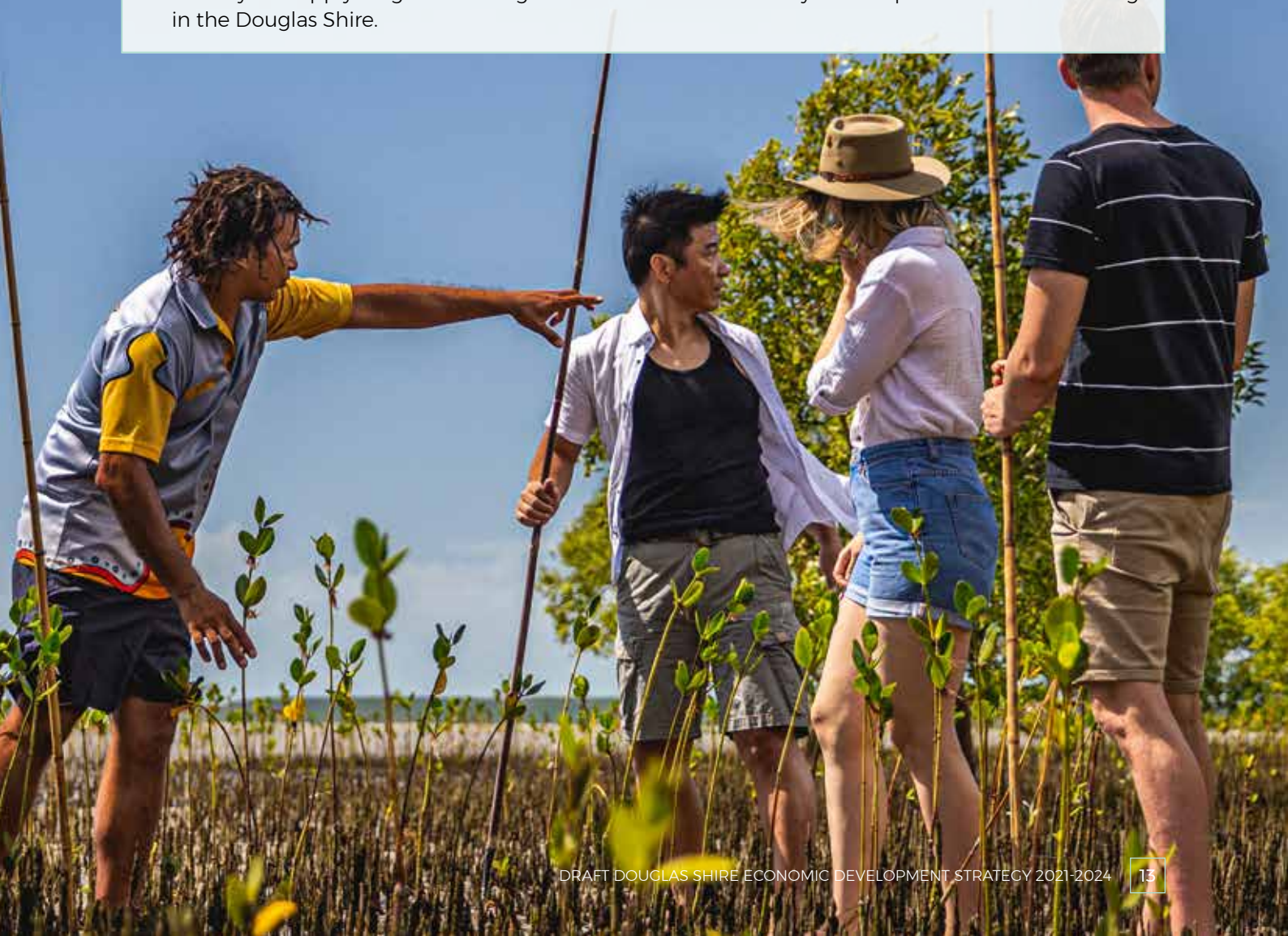
Additionally, Douglas is well-positioned to attract new markets through a diversified and expanded offering including sports, elevated food experiences, thoughtful events and adventure tourism.

In the wake of COVID-19, this Strategy aims to build resilience within the industry, ensuring long-term employment for residents and financial security for local businesses.



What we'll do:

- Through Council's Resource and Performance agreement with Tourism Port Douglas Daintree (TPDD), provide financial and in-kind support towards destination marketing activities to grow and support the tourism sector within the Shire.
- Collaborate with TPDD to produce and implement a Destination Tourism Plan, a business plan for building and managing the region's visitor economy.
- Collaborate with TPDD to develop and deliver an Events Strategy focusing on the attraction and development of events that encourage off-peak visitation, cross-shire dispersal, and contribute to the economy and liveability of the Douglas Shire.
- Grow the region's profile for hosting sporting events, as identified in the Sport and Recreation Strategy.
- Increase demand for the region's uniquely exotic fresh produce by establishing a Food Tourism Working Group. The group will be responsible for refining Douglas Shire's food story, designing a value proposition and providing recommendations to Council and TPDD to enhance the food and wine experience in the region.
- Leverage the development of the State-delivered Wangetti Trail and explore opportunities to expand the region's offering in adventure tourism, including mountain-biking, hiking, and cycling experiences.
- Build partnerships with other key industry bodies (TEQ, TTNQ, QTIC, WTMA, etc) to deliver economic outcomes that support diversification within tourism.
- Identify and apply for grant funding that will enable the delivery of an expanded tourism offering in the Douglas Shire.



2. AGRICULTURE - DIVERSIFY & INNOVATE IN AGRICULTURE

With an output of more than \$68 million a year¹, sugar cane production accounts for 87% of the total Agricultural output in Douglas. In addition to cane; tropical fruits, cattle grazing and aquaculture also make significant contributions to the local economy.

In 2019, Douglas Shire growers became the first grower group in the country to buy back a sugar mill, securing 150 factory jobs, 450 indirect jobs and the future prosperity of Mossman.

Under the subsidiary Daintree Bio Precinct, the Mossman Mill will transition away from its reliance on the volatile sugar market by investigating alternative uses for its mill feedstock to make value-adding products.

While the Mill works to increase the value of established crops through innovation, this Strategy aims to support diversification into new commodities and aquaculture, using a strong framework of proven and performing local farming businesses.



Source
1. NIEIR as at 30 June, 2019



What we'll do:

- Support Far Northern Milling to establish projects within the Daintree Bio Precinct, ensuring the long-term viability of the Mossman Mill.
- Lead, coordinate and participate in the development of an Agriculture Diversification Plan, a shared vision and clear pathway to support sustainable agricultural diversification and value-adding within the Shire.
- Work with peak industry bodies to identify the tools needed to support local farmers interested diversifying and value-adding in the sector.
- Facilitate informed discussions between Council's Food Tourism Working Group and the local Agriculture industry around the supply of paddock to plate experiences to cater to the increased demand from travellers.
- Increase economic development opportunities, resilience and value in the Shire's agricultural sector by working with local farming businesses and traditional owners to encourage new businesses in niche and/or new agricultural activities, such as bush tucker, traditional medicine crops, tropical and exotic fruits.
- Use the Buy Douglas: Build Douglas brand to promote the Shire's agriculture industry and local produce and drive a collective buying model.

3. POPULATION DIVERSIFICATION - TARGETED GROWTH OF THE SHIRE'S POPULATION

While the economy of the Douglas Shire will continue to rely on tourism and agriculture, additional sources that contribute to the gross regional product must be developed. Furthermore, the Shire has a small rates base that supports a very large tourist population.

Demographic statistics indicate that the population of the Shire exceeds the Australian average in the several age categories including older workers, pre-retirees, empty nesters and retirees. The Shire has traditionally attracted this cohort because of the lifestyle that it offers.

This segment is characterised by highly skilled, professional, and affluent individuals. Many are not job dependent as they work remotely and may also travel. They want the lifestyle that the Shire offers, and they seek environmentally sensitive outcomes, specifically, regarding development. Additionally, COVID-19 has demonstrated to the World that working remotely is not only possible, but also desirable and achievable.

The Shire is ideally positioned to attract an increase in this demographic. Many individuals in this target market are already regular visitors who may be looking to leave the larger cities and who have the means to do so.

Key challenges in this segment are ensuring robust internet connectivity, a high-standard of infrastructure to support a healthy lifestyle and access to activities and programs to help people feel better and live longer.

Residents in the demographic describe provides several economic stimuli:

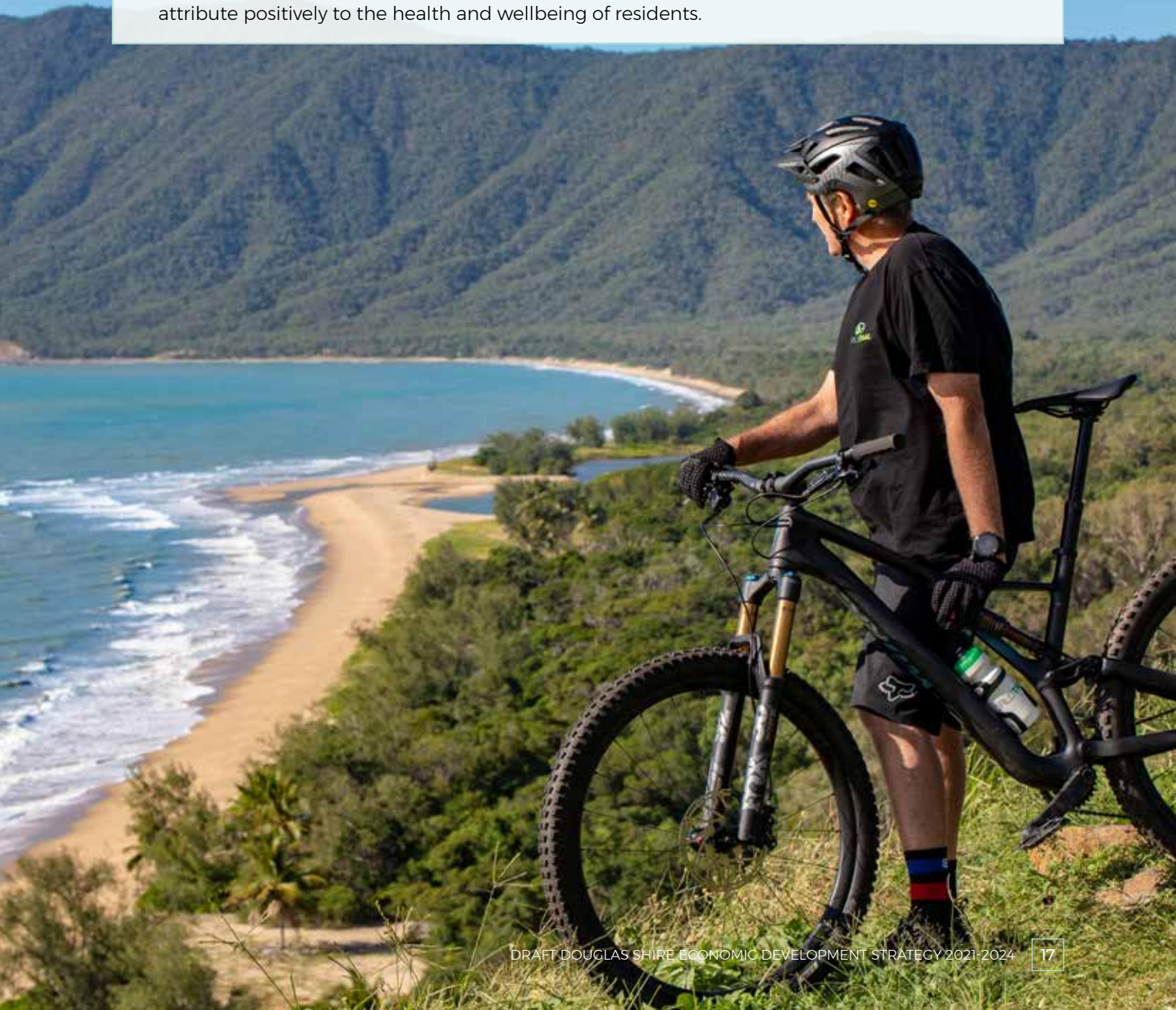
- They provide a consistent year-round spend that helps to counteract the cyclicity of tourism.
- They do not require jobs to already exist in the Shire as individuals bring their own work and tend to work remotely.
- As individuals in these categories age, they increase the demand for ancillary services. In the longer term, these services bring higher paying jobs which can eventually attract more families.

Whilst this strategic driver is based on population growth, it is important to note that it does not foresee a large population increase. A relatively small increase in the rate base through affluent job independent residents is the objective.



What we'll do:

- Profile the Health and Wellbeing sector to better understand the industry's potential economic impact locally, including the demand for services and facilities in the Douglas Shire.
- Identify new and emerging knowledge-based opportunities in the Health and Wellbeing sector and relevant skilled workforce needed to accommodate current supply and anticipated future demand.
- Analyse the planning scheme to identify potential sites and business development opportunities within the Douglas Shire to support lifestyle developments and actively promote these opportunities.
- Through the development of an investment prospectus, encourage investment in the health and wellbeing sector to support current supply and anticipated future demand.
- To attract high-yield visitors from key domestic markets, identify and actively pursue tourism investment opportunities with a strong focus on Health and Wellness.
- Consider options to improve our offering as an RV Friendly Shire and provide findings to Council.
- Leverage events that enhance a positive brand image and liveability of the Douglas Shire and attribute positively to the health and wellbeing of residents.



SUPPORTING PRIORITIES

Underpinning Council's priority drivers are five interconnected areas of focus, each playing an essential role in establishing a supported and thriving business environment.

PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE, ENHANCES LIVEABILITY & SUPPORTS BUSINESS

Council plays an essential role in providing and advocating for infrastructure that contributes to a healthy economic base from which the community and businesses can grow and prosper.

Provision of long-term water security for the Douglas Shire is critical in establishing private sector investment and social infrastructure, directly linked to new jobs and economic growth. Delivering a second water intake for the Mossman and Port Douglas catchment and progressing a feasibility study for long-term water storage options with a capacity of at least one billion litres (1GL) will be a significant driver of regional growth.

Increased liveability through better health and wellbeing, public art, activated open spaces and improved internet connectivity will ensure the destination remains competitive and attractive to new markets, ultimately supporting business prosperity.

Supporting crucial infrastructure projects will provide the stimulus needed to kick start the Douglas economy, following the devastating impacts of COVID-19.



What we'll do:

- Deliver a second water intake and progress a feasibility study for long-term water storage options with a capacity of at least one billion litres (1GL).
- Review current wastewater infrastructure, ensuring long-term requirements are considered in line with projected population and tourism numbers.
- Increase the Shire's tourism offering and improve the health and wellbeing of the community by supporting the development of high-quality sport and recreation facilities through the implementation of the Port Douglas Sports Complex & Coronation Park Master Plan, redevelopment of the Mossman Pool & Caravan Park and the delivery of a pool and splash park in Port Douglas.
- Continue to advocate for the development of new cycle routes to connect our communities and link the region's two main economic hubs of Mossman and Port Douglas.
- Investigate an inter-urban transport solution by identifying the community's transport needs and conducting a review of current and emerging environmentally friendly transport solutions.
- Work with the Douglas Access and Inclusion Group to improve accessibility within the Shire, especially within business centres, recreational areas and venues.
- We will actively pursue opportunities to increase the amount of public art across our Shire, giving it a competitive economic edge and creating a place worth caring about.
- Conduct a pre-feasibility study to consider options for a dedicated convention centre in Port Douglas and provide findings to Council.
- Advocate for access to affordable and improved, high-speed internet and mobile phone coverage to ensure the region remains competitive in both the national and international marketplace.
- Deliver and maintain Council's advocacy list of priority infrastructure projects.
- Build and maintain relationships with key State and Federal Government representatives with a view to securing commitment for Council's priority projects and accessing appropriate grant funding opportunities.

DEVELOP AN INNOVATION CULTURE ACROSS BUSINESS & THE COMMUNITY

Leading a culture of innovation through our business community starts by supporting projects that look to the future like the Living Coral Biobank, Mossman Botanical Gardens, Daintree Microgrid, State-delivered Wangetti Trail and the Daintree BioPrecinct.

It's also about fostering the entrepreneurial spirit of our community, imagining new ways of doing things and creating an environment where innovation can flourish and is supported.



What we'll do:

- Foster a culture of innovation in the community by enhancing economic development opportunities within world-leading projects like GBR Legacy's Living Coral Biobank, Mossman Botanical Gardens, Daintree Microgrid, State-delivered Wangetti Trail and the Daintree Bio Precinct
- Conduct a feasibility study to investigate demand for a Douglas-based incubator hub, accelerator programs and co-working space and deliver findings to Council
- In collaboration with business, industry, and the Chamber, establish a local network that identifies and strengthens a local start-up community/eco system.
- Establish a Digital Economy Reference group to provide expert advice to elected representatives on the critical infrastructure needed to support the use of technology, so that they advocate for improved services and infrastructure.
- Actively participate in regional entrepreneurship ecosystems in North Queensland.
- Work closely with Cairns-based and State entrepreneurship programs to build participation from Douglas Shire in regionally available courses, mentoring programs, and workshops.
- Support local entrepreneurs, start-up's, and small businesses across in the Douglas Shire by connecting them with the right opportunities, people, places, and spaces to help them grow, scale, and create jobs.
- Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce to develop and deliver a program of events that supports a culture of innovation within the business community of the Douglas Shire.
- Promote and encourage innovative projects and development that can demonstrate a 6-Star (Green) certification.
- Actively contribute to Local Government Association Queensland (LGAQ) reference groups and networks for emerging industries.



BUILD DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY & THE ECONOMY

In honouring its past, Council values the contributions all groups have made and we recognise our traditional owners as the original custodians of the land.

Douglas Shire Council embraces the diversity of our communities we recognise that as a core strength of the region. Of the 12,367 residents of Douglas, 7.7% identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, with most residents living in Mossman and surrounding suburbs.

Creating an empowered community requires Douglas Shire Council to adopt a strong supporting role in building economic prosperity with our Indigenous community, increasing education opportunities and stimulating meaningful employment.



What we'll do:

- Actively participate in the development and implementation of Douglas Shire Council's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
- Work closely with Jabalbina and other Aboriginal corporations and organisations, the Community Agency Network and relevant State and Federal Departments to develop and implement an Indigenous Employment Strategy – investigating a clear pathway that identifies and expands Indigenous employment opportunities in the Shire.
- In partnership with Indigenous Business Australia (IBA), Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations (ORIC) and relevant State Departments, conduct workshops aimed at supporting the needs of existing, new, and emerging Indigenous-owned businesses in the Shire by building knowledge, capacity, resilience, purpose, corporate governance and identity.
- With the goal of creating a deeper connection between tourists, residents and the Douglas Shire, conduct a pre-feasibility study to consider options for a First Nations Cultural Centre in Mossman town, offering local Eastern Kuku Yalanji artists and craftspeople a market-place to create, display and sell their art, crafts and cultural artefacts. The Cultural Centre can be adapted to include a museum, gallery, visitor information, destination marketing and a place for emerging indigenous-owned tourism businesses to base their tours from.
- Through the development of an investment prospectus, create opportunities for Douglas Shire's local Indigenous arts community to learn, collaborate and up-skill by pursuing a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) to conduct accredited training in Culture Arts for Indigenous residents in the Shire.
- Through Council's business network, encourage local businesses to participate in locally led, cultural awareness training.
- Conduct regular sessions with local, indigenous-owned businesses interested in working with Douglas Shire Council to learn more about grants, bidding for work, contracts, and tenders.

ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL LINKS TO THE ECONOMY ARE STRENGTHENED & MAINTAINED

With eighty-two per cent of the Shire included in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Council is deeply committed to the notion that we must confront the environmental challenges that we face to ensure that future generations can benefit from and enjoy the World as we do today.

Achieving Eco-Destination Certification demonstrates the region's leadership in implementing responsible environmental practices. Our communities play an essential in helping to maintain and protect this cherished environment, which contributes to the economic and social development of the Shire.

COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of the social framework of our community and its ability inspire innovation, create change and a sense of purpose while complementing government action. Through proactive strategies and strong partnerships, this Strategy aims to stimulate private sector investment, while advocating for the environment and increasing the liveability of the Shire.



What we'll do:

- Progress the region's commitment to its Eco-Destination Certification by exploring economic development opportunities that continue to support the preservation and conservation of the Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics Rainforest World Heritage Areas.
- Work in partnership with GBR Legacy to progress the development of the World's Largest Living Coral Biobank, expanding employment opportunities
- Advocate for a renewable energy solution that will bring economic confidence to communities North of the Daintree River.
- Advocate for the Mossman Botanical Gardens and assist the Board in long-term planning and advocacy for grant funding.
- Through the Douglas Arts and Culture Map, we will actively promote local artists, organisations, public art displays and historical places in the Shire, while working to increase the opportunities to use local artists and craftsmen in the design and construction of new art for the region.
- Establish a long-term vision for Buy Douglas: Build Douglas, a local brand created to encourage people to spend their money in Douglas Shire and build the economy in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

REDUCE RED TAPE & IMPROVE BUSINESS SUPPORT

Actively supporting businesses in the Douglas Shire means investing in the business community and providing the tools required to enable prosperity.

This Strategy recognises a commitment by Douglas Shire Council to be mindful of small businesses, their issues and priorities when making decisions for the local community.



What we'll do:

- Provide financial and in-kind support to the Chamber of Commerce, via Council's Resource and Performance agreement, to build the capacity of small businesses in the Shire while addressing skill shortages and knowledge gaps within the local workforce.
- Adopt the Queensland Small Business Friendly Charter within Council, an initiative of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner.
- Collaborate with the Douglas Chamber of Commerce to improve the resources, information, and data available on Council's website for businesses and investors.
- Act as a one-stop-shop for new business enquiries within Council, monitoring the progress of the enquiry and providing support where possible.
- Facilitate a unified approach between Council, TPDD and Douglas Chamber of Commerce for advocacy of priority infrastructure projects and investment opportunities through the development of an investment prospectus.
- In partnership with the Douglas Chamber of Commerce, deliver the Douglas Business Expo to connect key government and industry representatives with the local business community, promote knowledge sharing and generate ideas for regional business plans.
- Provide the community with key economic data and information via Council's Economic ID resource and facilitate internal training of the program and information sessions for the public. Respond to requests for economic data, as required.
- Work closely with Council's Grants Officer to publish communication on Council's website relating to local, state and government grant opportunities, assisting local applicants as required.
- Understand the limitations and opportunities that exist for potential investors and small businesses in Douglas and consider Council's ability to influence and take corrective action.
- Conduct regular sessions for local businesses, individuals and contractors interested in working with Douglas Shire Council to learn more about bidding for work, contracts and tenders.
- Create a platform on Council's website that actively promotes the Douglas Shire as a film-friendly destination and provide support to the film industry by working with necessary Council departments to streamline the permitting process.



07 4099 9444 | PO Box 723, Mossman Q 4873
enquiries@douglas.qld.gov.au | douglas.qld.gov.au

