



Cook Shire
COUNCIL

T E N Y E A R

Community

P L A N

2021-2031





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MESSAGE from the MAYOR



CR PETER SCOTT, MAYOR
Cook Shire Council

The Cook Shire Council 10 Year Community Plan (the Community Plan) outlines aspirations, priorities and vision for the future of the Shire's communities and sets out the key strategies required to achieve these aspirations.

We live in a very special region of Queensland, one that offers a unique lifestyle strengthened by a blend of beautiful natural areas, an ethos of "two cultures, one people" and the opportunity to experience lived history.

The Community Plan captures the aspirations of the many individual communities in the region for the social, environmental and economic future of the whole Shire. A key challenge is to ensure that any local development and growth complements the region's distinctive character and enhances the already strong sense of place. Difficult decisions will need to be made to choose between competing priorities, managing limited resources and maintaining a focus on the 'big picture'. To achieve these complex tasks, the Shire must have a clear direction. This is why the Community Plan is so important. As an overarching community planning document, it helps to ensure every step we take is a step towards achieving the communities' vision for the future.

In developing the Plan, Council placed great value on the importance of engaging as widely as possible with the Shire's many communities. A variety of engagement activities and techniques were used including a road trip across the Cape to meet with stakeholders face-to-face, community meetings, surveys – both handwritten and on-line – and attendance at local markets by Councillors and staff.

The process helped us to understand what matters most to our various communities and will guide the way we collectively plan for the future and deliver services. Shared decision-making and effective working partnerships with government agencies, non-government organisations, business and our communities will be critical to the Plan's success.

The feedback has been collated and analysed and refined into key themes. Given the vastness of the Shire, Council is using a place-based approach to deliver the outcomes to ensure that all communities benefit. In developing the Plan, Council has focused on distilling the communities' feedback into an accessible, realistic and achievable plan – one that will guide our work and that of our partners over the next ten years from 2021 to 2031.

I commend the Plan to you.

The purpose of the Ten Year Community Plan

A Community Plan is a long term, overarching strategy and planning document that outlines the communities' aspirations and priorities for the future and sets out the key strategies required to achieve these.

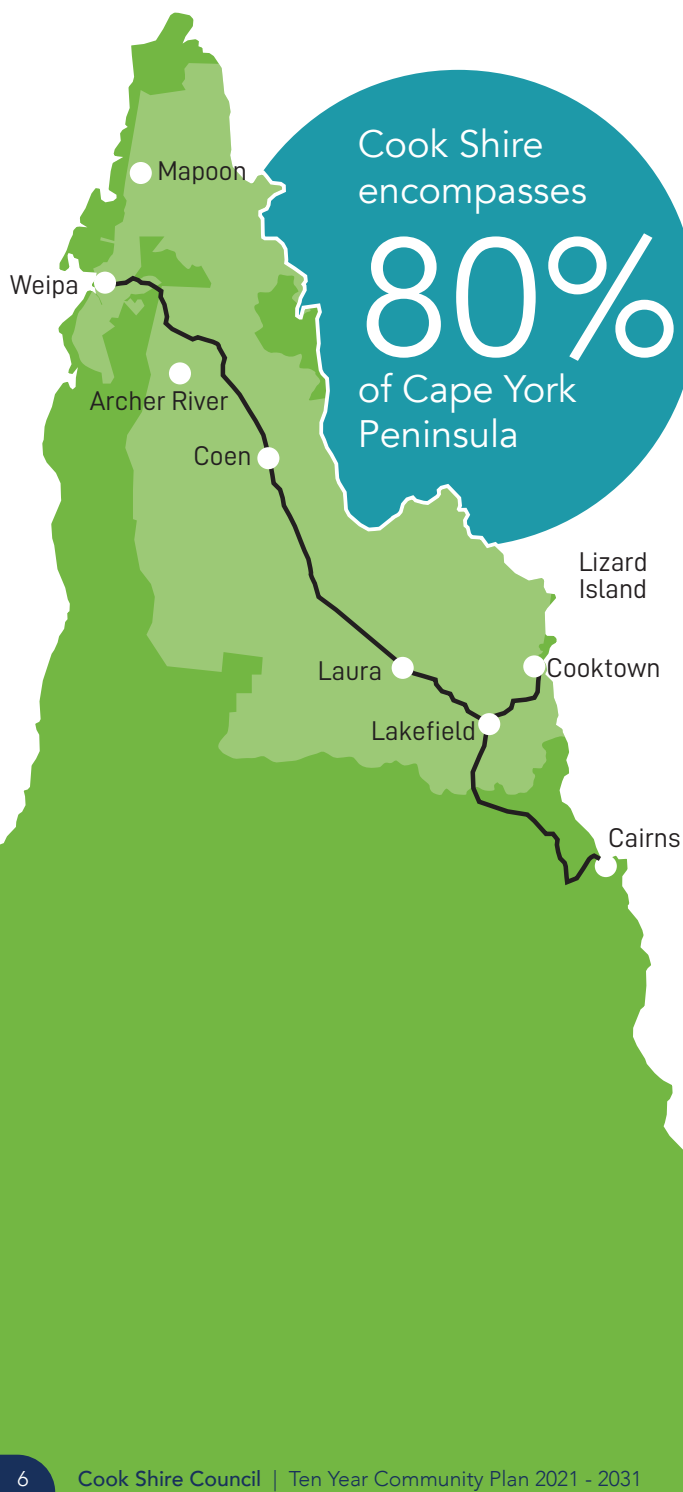
The intent of the Plan is to:

- Present the results of the engagement with the various communities to convey their aspirations and priorities;
- With a clear understanding of aspirations and priorities, translate these into service, asset and land use planning requirements; and
- Guide Council's priority setting within the Corporate Plan.



Who we are: Understanding Cook Shire

Cook Shire is the
largest shire in Queensland
in terms of land area.



From the Bloomfield River in the south to just north of the Jardine River, it covers over

106,000 sq km

It is the largest Local Government Area in Queensland by land area and is 1.5 times larger than the state of Tasmania, yet Council's rate base relies on around 2,600 properties.

The Shire's major settlement is Cooktown with smaller population centres at Lakeland, Laura, Coen, Rossville, Ayton and Portland Roads and offshore islands including Lizard Island, with significant numbers of people living throughout the Bloomfield and Endeavour valleys.

Cooktown is 331kms from Cairns (3.5 hours by car) and 266kms from Mareeba via the fully sealed Mulligan Highway. Flights are provided by Hinterland Aviation from Cairns, with this 45-minute flight giving a bird's eye view of the Great Barrier Reef and stunning landscapes. Hinterland Aviation also services other communities on the Peninsula.

To adequately plan for the future, the Shire must understand its current state and anticipated population growth. The Community Plan takes into consideration population growth, economic fluctuations and environmental trends, as well as social and community needs, now and into the future.

OUR PEOPLE



The Estimated Residential Population (ERP) of Cook Shire in 2019 was

4,557



The Shire's population is currently growing at rate of

1.3% pa.

The estimated populations of townships across the Shire were as follows:

Township	Estimated Residential Population
Bloomfield	202
Coen	369
Cooktown	2,631
Laura	233
Lakeland	295
Portland Roads	13
Rossville/Ayton	203

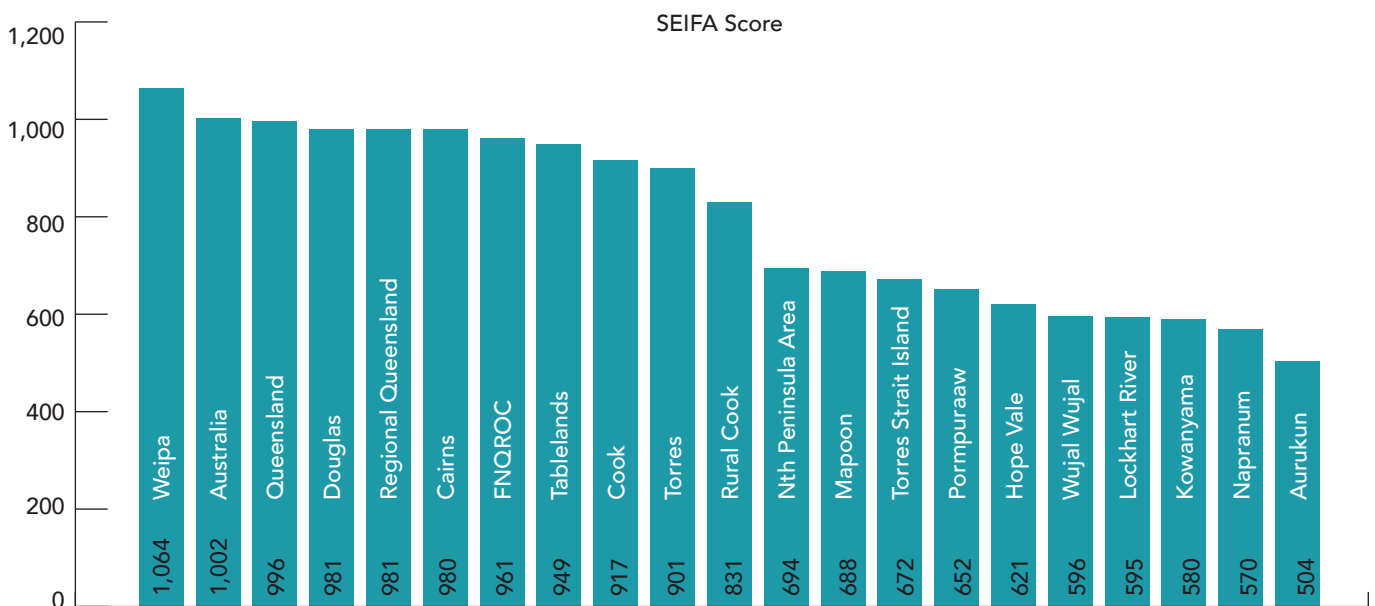
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016

A key challenge is the region has an ageing population, with an older population on average than Queensland. The median age is 41 years and 17.4% of the population is over 65 years of age.

The Cook Shire community is ethnically diverse, with 21.9% of people identifying as Indigenous and 13.6% of the population born overseas. The proportion of people born overseas grew by 2.5% between 2006 and 2016.

In terms of workforce skills, the percentage of people in the Shire who hold a Bachelor's degree or higher, or an advanced diploma or higher, was less than for the State of Queensland in each of the census years between 2006 and 2016. Similarly, the percentage of people in the Shire who have completed Year 10, 11 or 12 or equivalent was less than regional Queensland in the 2016 Census.

INDEX OF RELATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016

The Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics. This index contains disadvantage indicators such as unemployment, low incomes or education levels, lack of internet access, etc.

The Shire has a comparatively low Index of Disadvantage when measured for the whole Shire, with the rural areas of the Shire showing a considerably lower result. This means Cook Shire has significantly higher levels of disadvantage when compared with Australia, the state of Queensland and regional Queensland.

Economy

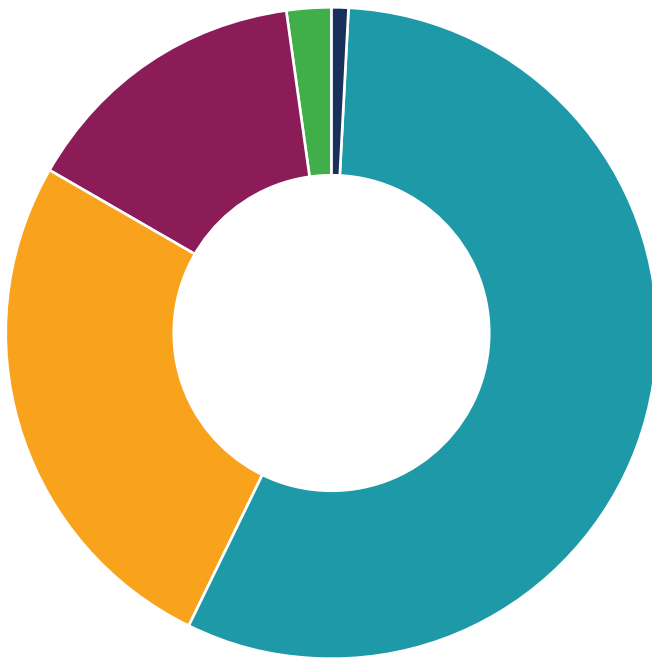
The competitive strengths of the Cook Shire are in tourism, agriculture and commercial fishing, aviation and renewable energy. Cooktown is positioned as a government, education and health service hub for the Cape York Peninsula. The business sector is challenged by the region's remoteness, workforce skill shortages and harsh weather patterns.

In spite of these challenges, the Shire's annual Gross Regional Product is \$0.7 billion, generated by 319 local businesses located in the region. The unemployment rate is less than the Queensland average, with more people employed in the Shire in 2020 than the average in the State. There is a strong pipeline of externally-funded projects, which will move the Shire forward positively into the future.

The Top 5 industries are:

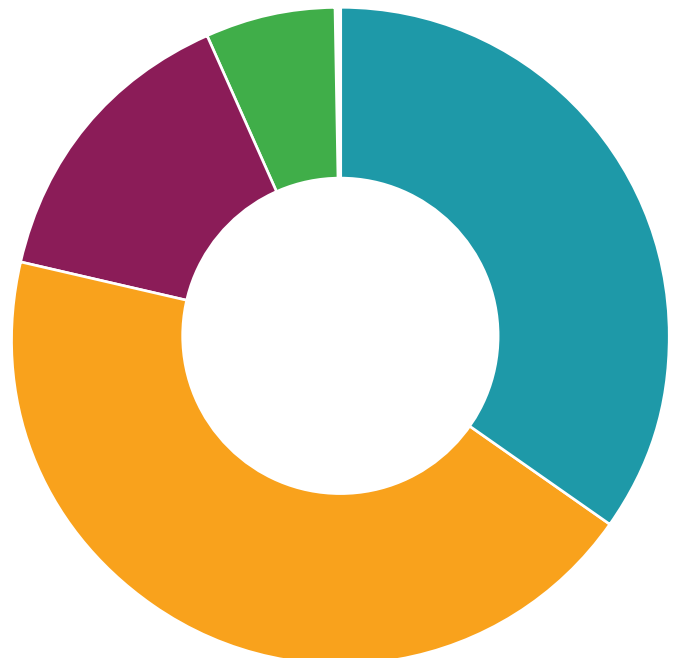
1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing
2. Accommodation and food services
3. Health care and social assistance
4. Construction
5. Public administration and safety

Business Employment Size



Non-employing	55.8%
1-4 employees	25.9%
5-19 employees	14.2%
20-199 employees	2.2%
200+ employees	0.9%

Business Turnover as at 30 June 2019



\$0 to less than \$100k	34.1%
\$100k to less than \$500k	43.2%
\$500k to less than \$2m	14.5%
\$2m or more	6.3%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Business Register (2020)

In terms of tourism numbers, between 2014-15 and 2018-19, 11,969 people visited the Shire, spending 136,364 nights in the region. Of those, 3,344 were international visitors, spending 44,010 nights in the Shire.

Environment and Place

Cook Shire Council is located in the tropics, with an average daily temperature range of the Shire is 20.6°C to 31.4°C and an average annual rainfall of 1,339 mm. January to March is the typical wet season period and also hottest time of the year. April to December brings a drier period with cooler weather and temperatures averaging around 27 degrees Celsius. In summer, Cooktown can be cooler in temperature than Cairns.

A significant portion of the Shire's land tenure is in National Parks (14%), nature reserves (23%) and mining, state lands and reserves (53%). Significantly, the Shire includes two world renowned World Heritage Areas, being the Wet Tropics of Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef.



Opportunities and Challenges for Cook Shire Council

AGEING POPULATION

As highlighted earlier, Census data shows that Cook Shire's population is ageing. Whilst society benefits from the skills and knowledge of the older generation, the widening retirement savings gap, coupled with rising health care costs, will alter people's lifestyles, the services that are needed and the structure of the labour force.

Council will need to respond creatively to manage these pressures to sustain it in the future. With the ageing population, there will be a shift in demand for health services and social care, creating new opportunities for active retirement and volunteering.

GLOBAL POLITICAL VOLATILITY

Global forces are reshaping government, organisations and employment. The increasing volatility of the world could adversely impact the Shire, given its economy is relatively narrowly focused on a few key industries. Cook Shire will need to adapt to these changes and expand its economic base to build resiliency to mitigate the risks shaping economies around the globe.

DEVELOPING TRADE MARKETS

The rise of countries in South East Asia as global powerhouses is creating a shift in wealth. Developing trade markets and a rapidly growing middle class in this region is seeing a transition from industrial-based manufacturing economies to advanced service economies that require education, tourism and healthcare. Cook Shire's proximity to South East Asia presents significant and as yet untapped opportunities.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

A relatively narrow base of economic activity means that the Shire is vulnerable to declines in those sectors, which magnifies the impact on GRP.

The Shire needs to pursue economic diversification by fostering a varied, flexible and adaptable economy through the development of an appropriate guiding framework.

Areas of overconcentration should be identified and mitigated to enable more robust and resilient growth over the longer term.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Changes in earth systems are creating significant challenges for humanity, affecting the ecosystems we plan for and live in. Globally, greenhouse emissions are altering the climate to create less predictable local weather systems. Council will need to make smart decisions to deliver local responses, including addressing severe flooding events, rising sea/river levels and rising temperatures.

COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

Communities want to be more involved with government in making decisions about what, where and how services are delivered and have increasing service delivery expectations. Across the nation, new technologies are transforming how people work, shop and socialise. The Shire will need to continue advocate for improved telecommunications infrastructure to ensure that these new technologies are accessible by more residents. Into the future, Council will need to integrate new technology into its operations to meet customer expectations.

LAND TENURE AND USE

The land tenure of the Cape York Peninsula is extraordinarily complex, with around 90% of the Shire's lands designated for purposes other than freehold.

The designation of large tracts of land as National Parks and Nature Reserves has had unintended consequences, which are slowing economic growth and development.

Strong leadership, advocacy and innovation will be required to resolve these land tenure challenges to assure the Shire's future.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Peninsula's remoteness from the rest of Queensland and Australia adds a layer of complexity and cost to its operations. The relatively small population base and, by extension, small rate base challenges the Shire's financial sustainability.

Council will need to focus on diversifying its own-source revenue base, reducing costs and pursuing an innovation agenda to secure its future over the next decade.

Managed responsibly, the major projects pipeline presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to sustainably grow the population base of the Shire, provide on-going employment and shore up the financial position of Council.

Ten-Year Vision

A workshop was held with the Mayor and Councillors to develop a 10-Year Vision for the Shire. The Vision encapsulates the important sense of history, place and people and is an endorsement of the community's desire to ensure that the Shire continues to evolve into the future. In developing the Vision Statement, Council also wanted it to be easy-to-remember:

Respecting
people, place
and progress

COMMUNITY PLAN THEMES

Detailed feedback from the Community Plan consultation process has been carefully analysed and six key themes emerged from the results of the analysis:

- 1 Places for People
- 2 Wellbeing and Empowerment
- 3 Accessibility and Connectivity
- 4 Economic Development
- 5 Environmental Responsibility
- 6 Organisational Capability

The Community Plan is structured around these key themes. Together they provide the foundation for the residents' aspirations for healthy and happy communities across the Shire.

For each of the themes, an overarching Outcome Statement or aspirational statement has been developed, supported by a set of Strategic Objectives and ways in which community members can help to achieve these aspirations.



Places for People

Outcome: *Creation of relaxed, welcoming and liveable places and spaces for all*

- Adopt a place-based approach to development in our town centres and gathering places to increase activation, improve wayfinding and create inviting and attractive destinations for all members of the community
- Create thriving and sustainable cultural, tourism and heritage activities and events that encourage locals and visitors to celebrate and enjoy
- Provide community, sport, recreational, and cultural facilities and infrastructure to meet identified needs across the Shire
- Provide the growing residential population with access to diverse, affordable and accessible lifestyle housing options
- Facilitate the development of neighbourhood hubs in townships and places across the Shire that offer a diverse, viable and attractive mix of uses, designed for the public realm
- Improve the amenity value and sustainable uses of our streetscapes and public open spaces
- Increase native planting and urban canopy in the public realm including tree planting in road reserves, verge gardens and strategic greening of the Shire's assets
- Ensure our town centres and gathering spaces are safe, easy to use and attractive places where pedestrians have priority
- Advocate with the State and Federal Governments for a resolution of the land tenure constraints impacting on Cape York Peninsula.

Community members can help by...

- Using our existing facilities
- Looking after our community infrastructure and reporting maintenance requirements to the Shire

Wellbeing and Empowerment

Outcome: *Development of a resilient, healthy and compassionate Shire, united in community pride*

- Support communities across the Shire to become more resilient, self-sufficient and sustainable, with a continued focus on genuine regional collaboration
- Foster local community identity and connection through social inclusion, community development and volunteering opportunities
- Support, acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous cultural heritage and history and foster the development of productive partnerships with Indigenous people and groups across the Shire
- Encourage healthy and active lifestyles, with a focus on helping others through the development of a culture of volunteerism
- Provide a diverse range of accessible, inclusive and equitable services, recreation programs, events and cultural activities that enrich communities and ensure the many cultures are celebrated
- Advocate for a full-range of regional health services providing our communities with 'whole of life' care
- Implement the Arts and Culture Strategy to foster creative arts in the Shire and continue to deliver public art, inclusion of art in built form, and provide opportunities for local artists in creative spaces
- Facilitate and advocate for the provision of regional education facilities delivering a wide range of tertiary and vocational study and training opportunities
- Develop community participation programs that engage and inspire our local youth

Community members can help by...

- Being physically active
- Accessing Shire services and facilities
- Participating in youth programs
- Volunteering with local community organisations
- Looking after neighbours, neighbourhoods and friends

Accessibility and Connectivity

Outcome: A growing Shire that supports active, connected and mobile communities

- Position the Shire as a region without boundaries and encourage our community members to be the loudest advocates for what's great about our region, fostering regional collaboration and participation
- Embed contemporary community engagement practices and systems that are widely accessible and harness the capabilities of digital technologies
- Encourage the development of partnerships to promote investment in state-of-the-art and efficient telecommunications services that meet the growing needs of our region
- Advocate to better connect the Shire through support for the digital economy, investigating options for enhanced telecommunications infrastructure and services such as free public wi-fi
- Advocate for efficient, effective and sustainable freight links across the Shire to provide flexible and cost effective solutions for industry
- Support active transport to enhance walking and cycling in Cook Shire and ensure our pedestrian and cyclist networks are well-designed, safe, accessible and encourage increased use
- Apply good design to enable our region's diverse public spaces to be equally accessible to all community members regardless of age and ability
- Preserve access to the range of natural areas throughout our region and balance the conservation of natural values with our lifestyle expectations
- Actively promote our parks, open spaces, and community facilities to ensure full utilisation and to connect people regionally

Community members can help by...

- Actively using our walkways and cycle paths
- Positively promoting our region to family and friends and encouraging visitation
- Supporting social, cultural and sporting events
- Using parks, open spaces and community facilities

Economic Development

Outcome: A sustainable, diverse and innovative economy that attracts investment and provides local employment all year round

- Promote Cook Shire as a recognisable, unique and inviting place to live and work and promote confidence in our economy
- Improve investor confidence and foster a "can do" attitude that encourages investment and assists businesses to develop, with a focus on emerging industries
- Facilitate the development of diverse, innovative and sustainable industries across the Shire
- Build local business capacity through partnerships, networks and skill development
- Work with industry to develop an appropriately skilled workforce for the future
- Adopt land use, transport and infrastructure planning methodologies which encourage and facilitate public and private sector investment and development
- Facilitate a safe, efficient and reliable transport network
- Advocate for a sustainable, viable and active waterfront in Cooktown
- Increase the proportion of sustainable, intensive and higher value land uses
- Recognise the importance of agriculture in our local economy and protect prime agricultural land
- Provide enhanced opportunities for primary producers through support for research and development to build adaptability and capacity
- Support the improvement of agricultural productivity through future-proofing innovation, new technologies and practices

Community members can help by...

- Shopping locally for goods and services
- Attending local events and festivals
- Encouraging family and friends to visit our region
- Enrolling in local schools





Environmental Responsibility

Outcome: *To be recognised as a leader in environmental management, enhancing and sustainably managing our local natural areas and resources*

- Promote and implement sustainable water, waste, land and energy management practices
- Reduce adverse outcomes arising from climate change through planning, adaptation, mitigation, infrastructure and ecological management
- Focus on a per capita reduction in consumption of water, waste and energy
- Encourage residents to reduce, reuse, re-purpose, re-gift and recycle waste
- Foster the use of environmentally sustainable design principles
- Encourage investment in and the delivery of renewable energies
- Manage proactively invasive plants and animals to protect the Shire's natural environment
- Promote biodiversity and encourage residents to take a leadership role in caring for the Shire's natural environment
- Deliver a contemporary and sustainable waste service that minimises waste generation and increases recovery, reuse and recycling
- Encourage investment in alternative energy and water efficiency initiatives, including consideration of emerging technologies

Community members can help by...

- Reducing, reusing and recycling
- Installing energy and water saving features
- Considering environmentally efficient designs when building new homes
- Volunteering with local community groups that care for our environment
- Protecting and planting local native vegetation on properties

Organisational capability

Outcome: *An organisation characterised by strong leadership, good governance, effective community engagement and excellence in delivery*

- Manage Council's activities and decision-making with strategic oversight, transparency and accountability
- Adopt a financially intelligent approach to financial business management which is underpinned by a culture of cost management, best value and strategic financial analyses
- Enshrine asset management principles to ensure that Council's only owns and maintains assets that are utilised by the community
- Focus on genuine collaboration between Council and its stakeholders on projects that add value to the Shire's economic, social and environmental outcomes
- Embed a high performance culture in the organisation which encourages the exploration of ideas and opportunities, and where innovation is valued
- Plan and manage the Shire's resources and assets in an efficient and sustainable manner
- Enable the Shire to be 'easy to do business with' through by continuously improving customer-facing processes
- Respond to stakeholder, community and customer needs by listening to, communicating, consulting and engaging with residents, businesses and community members in a timely, open and collaborative manner
- Involve the various communities in setting our strategic directions through ongoing participation

Community members can help by...

- Participating in community engagement activities and attending information sessions
- Providing feedback on services and staff interactions
- Attending Council Meetings

How Progress Will Be Reported and Evaluated

Progress will be monitored through the achievement of goals and outcomes captured in the 5-Year Corporate Plan, which is detailed in Council's Annual Report, and the yearly Operational Plan. These documents report on the delivery of approved projects on time and within budget, coupled with regular progress reporting through Council.

A periodic Community Satisfaction Survey may be used to explore other aspects of Council's performance against the Community Plan.

Partnerships

Council recognises that the outcomes of the Community Plan cannot be delivered in isolation. Council places strategic importance on advocacy, the formation of partnerships and facilitation to encourage a collaborative approach to delivering the communities' aspirations.

Key partners in the delivery of this Plan include:

- Local communities
- Indigenous corporations
- Local community groups, sporting clubs and not-for-profits
- Progress associations
- Local businesses
- Chambers of commerce
- Neighbouring councils
- Developers and investors
- State government agencies
- Federal government agencies



Council's Strategic Planning Framework

A Community Plan is part of a strategic governance framework which guides the operations of local governments in Queensland. Although there is no longer a statutory requirement to develop a Community Plan, it is considered best practice to develop such a Plan.

The Community Plan informs the development of Council's Corporate Plan, which sets out Council's strategic direction for the Shire over a 5-Year period.

Council also prepares an annual Operational Plan which sets out the significant initiatives that Council will undertake during that year to progress the achievement of its Corporate Plan strategies.

Council further produces an Annual Budget, a Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plan to guide and fund its on-going operations.



A Pause for Reflection – Some of Council’s Achievements Over the Past 10 Years

In preparing the Community Plan, we have taken the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of Council against the communities’ Top Ten Priority Issues identified in the 2011 – 2021 Community Plan.

Notable achievements over that period include:

ROADS

- Advocacy for the progressive sealing of the Peninsula Development Road to support the economic and social development of Cape York
- Roll-out of a road betterment program across the Shire to improve road conditions and safety
- Completion of the detailed designs for a comprehensive upgrade of Charlotte Street, incorporating shared bike and pedestrian pathways
- Realignment and upgrade of the historic Maytown Road
- Development of the *Cooktown Cycle Route Strategy*, which resulted in the installation of a shared pathway between Cooktown Cemetery and Racecourse Road and a new bridge over Two Mile Creek.

SHORTAGE OF JOBS

- Current jobs data shows that the region is doing well in keeping people employed
- A major project pipeline has been developed as a result of sustained advocacy, funded by both government and the private sector, including the Lakeland Dam, Lakeland Solar Farm and Windlab Wind Farm
- Support for the grazing industry on Cape York, including delivery of a *Community Drought Support Program* and development of a *Community Drought Resilience Plan* for drought-affected stations. Additionally, Council has delivered an annual vertebrate pest baiting program to protect remote Cook Shire grazing enterprises.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- Council staged the *Cooktown and Cape York Business Conference* during 2015, focusing on regional marketing and promotion, as well as business and professional development
- Council has supported the operations of the Cooktown Visitor Information Centre, and maintained membership of Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ), as well as forming a productive working relationship with the organisation. This has resulted in steady growth in visitation to the region and has seen the tourism season extended beyond its traditional boundaries
- On-going support has been provided to the Cooktown Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, which led to the development of a successful Buy Local Campaign, as well as the establishment of the Cape York Business Connect FaceBook page
- Data shows that there was steady growth in the number of small businesses in the Shire over the past 5 years
- Businesses within the Shire have largely been able to maintain employment levels during the 2020 – 2021 COVID-19 pandemic.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Indigenous youth from various communities around the region regularly come together to participate in a succession of Warrmas (dance ceremonies), which are an integral part of the Discovery Festival
- The Cooktown Events Centre was constructed, which is currently operated by the Police and Citizens Youth Club (PCYC)
- A graffiti art mural painting project was delivered at the Cooktown Skate Park as a way to engage with Cooktown youth
- Advocacy and support for the establishment for the Holy Spirit College to support disengaged students and Endeavor Christian College to broaden the range of education choices in Cooktown
- Development of the Waterfront Masterplan which enabled the revitalisation of the Endeavour Foreshore to form the family-friendly William Daku Park

- Library-based initiatives at Cooktown and Ayton libraries, including a focus on Science, Technology, English and Maths (STEM), delivery of a coding and robotics program, and the creation of incubation hubs to provide space for study and learning and to encourage entrepreneurship
- Inflatable play equipment was acquired for the Cooktown Swimming Pool
- Delivery of a Green Army program in conjunction with South Cape York Catchments, which allowed several local 17 – 24 year-old students to participate in the program to rehabilitate and restore the Cooktown Scenic Rim Walk (including installation of new signage), Botanic Gardens and Alligator Creek, providing skills to help the students enter the workforce.

NEED FOR A DIVERSE ECONOMY

- Council has undertaken on-going regional advocacy through its membership of the Torres and Cape Indigenous Council Alliance (TCICA), the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQ ROC) and with State and Federal politicians and agencies
- Upgrade of Cooktown airport, including development of the Airport Development Masterplan and construction of a new taxiway to the Cooktown Airport Aviation Park. This allowed Daintree Air to take up a lease, becoming the first commercial enterprise as part of the Aviation Park. The current realignment of Airport Drive will allow further leases to be created.
- Development of *Making Water Work*, *Dynamic Business Ventures* and *Food Futures* Business Cases under the Clean Growth Choices – Communities in Transition project. The project is a joint initiative involving 6 councils in regional Queensland, James Cook University, CSIRO, University of Southern Queensland and the EcoEfficiency Group.

MAINTAIN HISTORICAL ASPECTS

- On-going support provided to the Re-enactment Association and the Shire's Historical Centres
- Upgrade works were carried out at Coen Historical Centre under the Regional Art Development Fund program
- Supporting an ANZAC walk between the historic Lion's Den and Cooktown and installation of a flag pole and cenotaph in Coen
- Support for the Five-Year Aboriginal Rock Art and Cultural Heritage Management project in the Sandstone Country of Southeast Cape York Peninsula around Laura, which encompasses one of the richest bodies of rock art in Australia and the world.

COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

- Participation in the Federal Government's *Black Spot Program* enabled the installation of telecommunications towers in Ayton, Rossville, Coen, Archer River and Keating's Lagoon
- Installation of a Coastguard UHF receiver at Ayton to reduce a blackspot in marine communications. The project included installation of solar power and generator backup to provide constant land and sea radio communications.

HEALTH ISSUES

- Advocacy for an upgrade to Cooktown Hospital, including the reinstatement of the Cooktown Hospital maternity and birthing services
- Advocacy for a palliative care facility in Coen
- Rollout of the Coen *Healthy Dog Program* improving human health and educating dog owners about the benefits of having healthy dogs in sustainable numbers
- Development of master plans for sporting fields including Lakeland Sports Field and John Street Oval to encourage sport and recreation activities. This has enabled further development of these facilities, including the establishment of the Lakeland Sports Field and new clubrooms at John Street Oval
- Delivery of new pool programs including aqua aerobics, swimming lessons, installation of shade to protect users from sun exposure, and development of underwater hockey.

LIVEABILITY OF TOWNSHIPS

- Community Blitz programs were delivered in Coen, Laura, Lakeland, Ayton and Cooktown Cemetery, with the aim of refreshing, revitalising and making the community and its infrastructure more resilient
- Council played a key role in securing investment in and support for local employment during the development of the Lakeland Solar Farm
- Libraries have been re-established in Coen, Laura and Lakeland
- Creation of the Queensland-wide Cash for Containers program following sustained advocacy by Council
- Upgrades to the town hall and installation of picnic tables in Portland Roads
- Construction of Coen Sports Field amenities block to provide players and spectators with facilities.

LIMITED AGED CARE

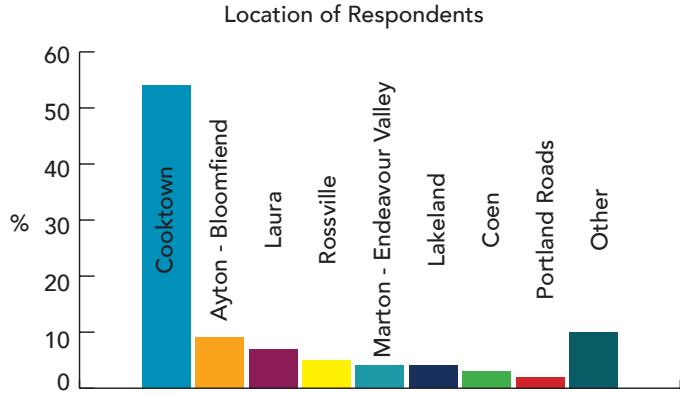
- On-going advocacy at all levels of government for adequate aged care facilities to meet the needs of an aging population
- Coen Palliative Care Project – development of a plan to provide palliative care services to service central Cape York.

Community Consultation Feedback

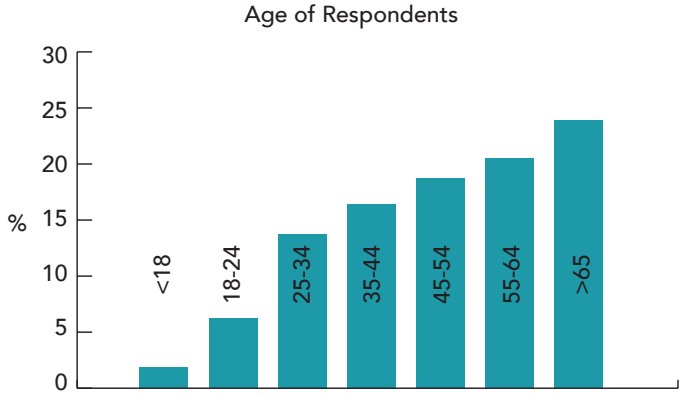
Communities across the Shire were involved in the development of the Community Plan.

Key demographic data regarding the engagement is presented below:

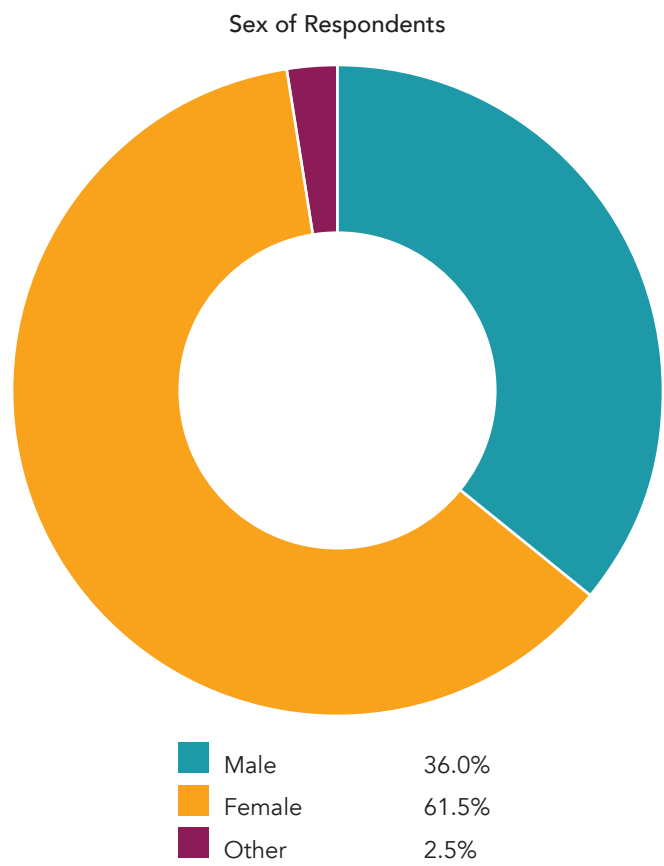
LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS



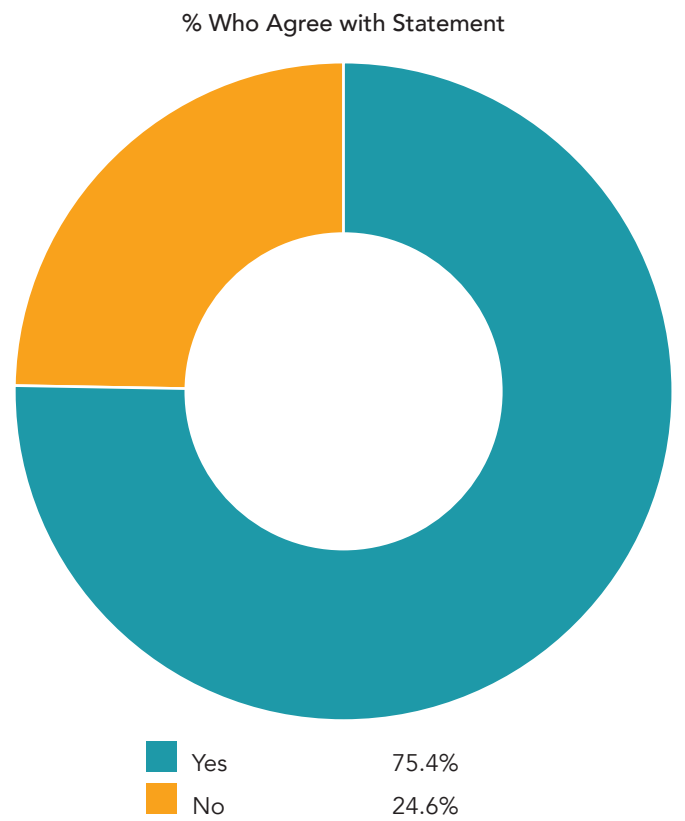
AGE OF RESPONDENTS



SEX OF RESPONDENTS



PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THE TOP TEN PRIORITIES IN 2011 – 2021 ARE STILL RELEVANT



Residents were asked if the Top 10 priorities identified in the 2011 – 2021 Community Plan were still relevant and a majority of residents agreed that this was the case:



RANKING OF THOSE PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS – 2021 - 2031

Top Ten Priorities	Ranking – Most Important to Least Important
Limited Aged Care	1
Maintain History	2
Telecommunications Infrastructure	3
Need for a Diverse Economy	4
Liveability	5
Youth Issues	6
Small Business Development	7
Roads Infrastructure	8
Health Issues	9
Shortage of Jobs	10

The following quotes have been extracted from the consultation process, which encapsulate the core sentiments of the Shire's communities:

REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE COMMENTS

- *A well-thought out and achievable overall vision for the Shire, to create an inclusive community spirit*
- *For residents to take more ownership of their community, events and cohesion. Stop with the expectations and hand-outs that local government is the answer to everything*
- *Better care for our environment through education on sustainability, waste management and community self-sufficiency*
- *Becoming a zero carbon community, generating our own power through community owned and operated renewable energy sources (solar, wind, hydro)*
- *Livability (economy, jobs, healthcare, education, lifestyle)*
- *Kids' wellbeing and future – more opportunities for high school kids*
- *Tourism attractions – will create local jobs*
- *We need to show-off Cape York across Australia to drive repeat business*
- *New marina to encourage sailing fleet and fishing/dive tourism and cruise boats*
- *Stronger Chamber of Commerce representation that is supported by all industry types and has a voice in the Cape for State and Federal issues. Could help with small business development and drive investment into our region. Agricultural development and industry support*



Final Thoughts

Cook Shire Council aspires to cement its reputation as a high performing council focused on innovation and continuous improvement and is committed to engaging, changing, adapting and working with its communities to meet their aspirations and expectations.

The focus of Cook Shire for the next decade is best summed up by these comments gleaned from a respondent to the community engagement which underpinned the development of this Plan:

“Encourage innovative thinking and the involvement of the community, celebrate its diversity and support and encourage change and progressive ideas.”

Document Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Status Change
1.0	Feb 2021	Lawrence Booth	First Major Draft Version
2.0	Mar 2021	Lawrence Booth	Major Updates/Corrections



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