

# CARPENTARIA SHIRE

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## 2020-2025

Version 09 September 2020



## Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Carpentaria Shire I would like to thank the State Government and relevant departments for their assistance in developing an economic development strategy for our area.

I would like to thank our residents of Normanton and Karumba for their assistance also. Rumours of a river closure to nets made for an interesting meeting in Karumba but also led to some great input from those concerned.

As a remote area, Carpentaria has its fair share of disadvantages but it's far from being doom and gloom. The fact that we get rain every year is one of the reasons the gulf country makes such good breeding country for cattle. It's another reason we have such a productive fishery. The wetlands, open forest and rolling plains also make us a tourist destination worth visiting and exploring. There is far more to experience in the Gulf than just our great fishing.

Shrinking, and an ageing population is one of our biggest challenges which is due to losing our youth to the cities and the reluctance of financial institutions to recognise our area as a land of opportunity. For a person young or old wanting to start a business or build a home the required 40-60% deposit is totally prohibitive and unfair.

Connectivity as in internet, roads and air services are forever on Council's agenda when talking in government circles. We always get a fair hearing but the "postcode red flag" scenario with banks and insurance companies is an issue that is affecting resale of businesses and the development of new business in our region.

It is my belief that the answers aren't in funding and grants but just policy change from all sides of government. FBT and Payroll Tax are just 2 examples that are high on the list of being anti productive towards small business development. With some forward thinking from our politicians "developing northern Australia" can be a reality with Carpentaria as the hub of the Gulf.

## Carpentaria Shire Vision for Economic Development

*"A community that works together in a prosperous and connected region."*

Our vision is a statement that describes the community we want to live in in 2025 and this strategy will help us to achieve this.

## Our shires future

This strategy has been built by our community and has a level of flexibility that will allow us to be responsive to changes in economic circumstances and business and industry. Our community has agreed to focus on the following areas as they will guide and help us to become the community, we want in the future.

<b>Tourism</b> Our community embraces new and growing opportunities that promote the regions rich natural environment. <b>Initiatives to progress include:</b> Implement and link local and regional Tourism Strategies. Identify and grow natural attraction tourism opportunities. Extend shoulder tourism seasons.	<b>Agriculture</b> As a region, we recognise actions that promote growth in agricultural related activities. <b>Initiatives to progress include:</b> Look at how we can grow the agricultural potential of the region. Seek new possible ways for new business opportunities from our agricultural products.	<b>Fishing</b> We want to be recognised as having a sustainable, strong and balanced fishing industry. <b>Initiatives to progress include:</b> Look at ways of maintaining the viability of our commercial and recreational fishing. Explore the potential for artificial reefs to attract fishing and tourism activities.
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<p><b>Community</b></p> <p>We are a community where more people will want to live, visit and experience.</p> <p><b>Initiatives to progress include:</b></p> <p>We will work to maintain and grow our community services for locals and visitors.</p> <p>Explore how we can recognize and promote the attributes of living and working in the Shire.</p>	<p><b>Small business</b></p> <p>We support our small businesses and welcome new business opportunities.</p> <p><b>Initiatives to progress include:</b></p> <p>Encourage locals and visitors to spend and purchase more in the region.</p> <p>Introduce and actively encourage a “Buy Local” program.</p> <p>Increase the uptake of new technologies by the business community.</p>	<p><b>Working together</b></p> <p>We believe having productive partnerships between government, business, industry and community is important.</p> <p><b>Initiatives to progress include:</b></p> <p>Seek opportunities to share resources.</p> <p>Look for and develop projects that will grow our community and economy.</p> <p>Secure reliable digital connectivity that is used across the Shire and region.</p>
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## The driving forces

We gathered and analysed data and considered community views (including our local businesses) and all levels of government inputs, about our Shire to develop our Economic Development Strategy. The extensive input was the driving force to identify our key themes and what our community and partners could do to strengthen our Shire.

Our community acknowledges the Strategic Blueprint for Queensland’s North West Minerals Province (the Blueprint) and the North West Queensland Economic Diversification Strategy (NWQEDS) and Implementation Plan 2019-21 and the significance of economic development planning in growing economies. The NWQEDS outlines initiatives across the three themes of: enhanced investment environment, strong supply chain and sustainable communities. Our Economic Development Strategy aligns with the Blueprint and NWQEDS.

## Carpentaria Shire Snapshot

Our Shire covers an area of approximately 64,121 square kilometers and is the home of the traditional owners of the Gkuthaarn, Kukatj and Kurtijar people. The Savannah Way, a well-known adventure drive linking Cairns in tropical North Queensland to Broome in Western Australia transverses our Shire. The sleepy coastal town of Karumba is also at one end of the Matilda Way, an Australian touring road route from Bourke, New South Wales to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Our Shire shares boundaries with nine local governments and the Gulf of Carpentaria. The bountiful coastal areas of the Gulf provide commercial fishing and tourism opportunities and the vast inland plains support a strong pastoral industry. Normanton is the administrative centre while the port town of Karumba supports the strong fishing industry. Ore is also exported through the Karumba Port via an underground slurry pipeline that connects New Century Resources Mine to the port.

There are opportunities for us to build on our tourism profile and promote the wonderful tourism products that our visitors know and love. We can also explore new tourism product ideas along with further growth for our beef cattle and fishing industries. Growth in these industries will address some of our challenges such as retaining population, attracting much needed skills and support the provision of adequate housing. Greater support for the small businesses in our Shire to embrace new technologies has the potential to build the capacity of businesses and attract new opportunities. While our Shire is normally well connected via road, and air services, the seasonal monsoon events can impact on access to the region with extended high rainfall closing road access. Residents of our Shire enjoy a relaxed lifestyle which is a factor that attracts visitors to our shire.



## Economic snapshot



**Population at 30 June 2018**

1974 people



**Median Age 2018**

37.5 years



41.3% of population identify as Indigenous



**Population projection to 30 June 2041**

Decline by 2.8%



**Land sales in last 12 months**

1



**Largest employing industries**

Agriculture 19.71%,  
Administration 15.61%,

## Our key industries

To grow our local economy together we identified tourism, agriculture, fishing and small business as our key industries. We agreed that if we target growing these industries there would be flow on benefits across our Shire.

Fun facts of our existing industries	
<p><b>Tourism</b>            Tourist numbers continue to grow.            Unique and real experiences            Indigenous, outback &amp; historical experiences            Well established tourism experiences (Barramundi Discovery Centre, Indigenous Stock Workers Display.            Profession private tourism operators</p>	<p><b>Agriculture</b>            Sector with significant employment.            Organic products.            Beef cattle, and pastoral estates.</p>
<p><b>Fishing</b>            An abundance of commercial and recreational fishing.            Prawns, barramundi, Spanish mackerel, giant trevally, queenfish and mangrove jack.            Karumba is a popular destination for fishing / seafood enthusiasts.</p>	<p><b>Small business</b>            Strong reliance on small business.            Agriculture, fishing and tourism predominate as small businesses.            Strong hospitality and tourism.</p>

## Projects for now and the future

Having given thought to our Shire, our key industries and how we can build on our strengths, we have developed a list of projects which have not been prioritised, that we would like to progress. We know that this may change over time and we will continue to look for new ways of doing things to achieve our economic vision.

- Regional branding and marketing of local products including prawns and fish
- Further development of the Port of Karumba
- Development of the Normanton Monsoon Centre
- Establishment of an agricultural training academy
- Improved digital connectivity across the Shire
- Support local businesses to expand, grow and modernise
- Indigenous Tourism products from retail to wholesale
- Gulf Fresh – Local food production
- Gulf Savannah Regional Branding
- Gulf Savannah Farm Station Stay manual
- Lilyvale subdivision

- Development of the Mutton Hole Wetlands
- Karumba Foreshore Development
- Fishing habitat of Karumba to increase recreation fishing