

# MIPP2

## Expansion of Tourism Within the Shire

### General Information



**CARPENTARIA SHIRE**  
*Outback by the Sea®*

PREPARED BY



# 1 Background

## 1.1 General

Carpentaria Shire, an area of 64,381km<sup>2</sup>, adjoins the south-east shoreline of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Cook Shire (Cape York Peninsula) is on its northern boundary and several shires, mainly Croydon, are on its southern boundary.



Named after the Gulf, itself named in 1623 after the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, Pieter de Carpentier, the shire was proclaimed in 1903. Prior to then the Carpentaria divisional board (1883) had been the regional local authority.

The report of William Landsborough's expedition (1861) in search of the failed Burke and Wills exploration brought an influx of pastoralists to the Gulf region. Burketown on the Albert River tended to be fever-ridden, and Normanton on the Norman River became populated in the late 1860s. It was later a freight center for Etheridge, Cloncurry and Croydon mine areas. The Queenslander-style shire offices in Normanton were built in 1890, and a railway from Normanton to Croydon was opened in 1891.

The vast pastoral estates throughout the shire often form chains through which livestock can be fattened or moved, depending on seasonal conditions.

The shire's other main town is Karumba at the mouth of the Norman River, Karumba's port was enlarged in the 1990s for the export of zinc-lead concentrates piped from the Century mine at Lawn Hill.

Karumba enjoys the distinction of being the only town along the southern Gulf of Carpentaria that is within sight of the Gulf itself (the Gulf's extensive tidal flats prohibits settlement elsewhere along its shore), and is also home to the rare Morning Glory cloud that roll through Karumba in the early hours of some mornings in September and October.

The Morning Glory cloud is a rare meteorological phenomenon consisting of a low-level atmospheric solitary wave and associated cloud, occasionally observed in different locations around the world. The wave often occurs as an amplitude-ordered series of waves forming bands of roll clouds. The southern part of the Gulf of Carpentaria in Northern Australia is the only known location where it can be predicted and observed regularly due to the configuration of land and sea in the area.

Both Normanton and the shire lost population in the years after World War II; some people who had been evacuated because of the risk of Japanese invasion had no reason to return. A slight upturn came when basic tour and fishing facilities were installed at Karumba, and prawn fishing (1960s) and improved road access for tourism brought Karumba's population from 359 to 1043 between 1971 and 1996. The Matilda Highway brings tourists from as far south as Cunnamulla, passing through numerous outback towns.

In the early years there was a large Aboriginal population as well. Some Aboriginal people were moved to Mornington Island and Doomadgee in the early 20th century but the Carpentaria shire is still home to the Gkuthaam, Kukati and Kurtijar people.

## 1.2 Climate

Normanton has a tropical savanna climate with two distinct seasons. There is a hot, humid and extremely uncomfortable wet season from December to March and a hot and generally rainless dry season usually extending from April to November. During the wet season most roads in the area are usually closed by heavy rainfall, which on several occasions has exceeded 650 mm in a month or 250 mm in a day from tropical cyclones. On occasions, as with all of Queensland, the wet season may fail and deliver as little as 240 mm between December 1934 and March 1935

Temperatures are uniformly hot, ranging from 36.8 °C in November just before the wet season begins to 29 °C at the height of the dry season in July. In the wet season, temperatures are marginally lower, but extremely high humidity means conditions are very uncomfortable and wet bulb temperatures averages 25 °C and can reach 28 °C. In the dry season, lower humidity, cloudless days and cool nights provides for more pleasant conditions.

Climate data for Normanton Post Office, Queensland													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C	43.1	41.0	40.1	39.5	37.2	35.6	35.6	38.3	40.1	41.8	43.3	43.3	43.3
Average high °C	34.7	33.9	34.2	34.0	31.7	29.2	29.1	31.1	33.9	35.9	36.8	36.1	33.4
Average low °C	25.1	24.9	24.4	22.4	19.1	16.1	15.2	16.5	19.5	22.6	24.7	25.3	21.3
Record low °C	18.3	17.3	16.7	14.4	7.2	6.7	7.0	6.6	11.1	13.7	15.5	18.9	6.6
Average rainfall mm	260.2	249.2	157.	30.9	7.5	9.2	3.2	1.7	3.0	10.5	45.1	144.4	922.6
Average rainy days (≥ 0.2 mm)	13.9	13.9	9.4	2.4	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.4	1.3	4.4	9.0	57.1

Source: Wikipedia

## 1.3 Heritage listings

Normanton has a number of heritage-listed sites, including:

- Burke and Wills Access Road (Private Road): Burke and Wills Camp B/CXIX
- Burke Developmental Road: Normanton Cemetery
- 27 Haigh Street: Normanton Gaol
- Cnr Landsborough Street and Caroline Street: Burns Philp Building
- Landsborough Street: Westpac Bank Building
- Matilda Street: Normanton railway station
- Normanton to Croydon: Normanton to Croydon railway line

## 1.4 Buildings (Source: Queensland travel Guide)

There are a number of interesting buildings in the town, including the distinctive 'Purple Pub', the 'Albion Hotel' where Captain Percy Tresize drew a series of humorous paintings on the barroom walls, and the Bank of New South Wales which is now a listed National Trust Building. It is an unusual building which looks more like a house than a bank. Designed by Richard Gailey in 1896 it is an extraordinarily beautiful timber building with cross bracing on the verandah and a fashionable exposed frame.

### **1.5 Mutton Hole Wetlands** (Source: Dept of National Parks Management Statement, 2015)

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Mutton Hole Wetlands Regional Park is part of the largest continuous estuarine wetland aggregation of its type in northern Queensland. It offers significant wildlife observation opportunities. Mutton Hole Wetlands Regional Park has both diverse and complex habitats from fresh to hypersaline while also being a crocodile breeding habitat.

The primary purpose for conserving Mutton Hole Wetlands Regional Park is its varied and complicated system of estuarine and freshwater wetlands that supports an outstanding number of water birds. It is a significant breeding, feeding, resting, and moulting water bird site while also being an important dry season refuge for water birds and water fowl.

Mutton Hole Wetlands Regional Park lies within the Southern Gulf Aggregation which is listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia (DIWA). It is included in and surrounded by the Gulf Plains Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) due to its significance as a bird habitat. Eleven species of internationally conservation significant bird species have been recorded in the area.

There are currently no registered native title claims or indigenous land use agreements (ILUA) that cover the park. The Kukatj and Gkuthaarn tribes both have documented linkages to the area. QPWS is building relationships with Indigenous people in the area and attempting to identify the correct people to represent the Traditional Owners.

### **1.6 The Gulflander and the Railway Station** (Source: Queensland travel Guide)

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The town's greatest tourist attraction is undoubtedly 'The Gulflander'. The railway line was originally planned to service the beef industry by running from Normanton to Cloncurry but the discovery of gold at Croydon redirected it.

The rail is a masterpiece of adaptive design. George Philips, the supervising engineer, designed special steel sleepers which proved so successful that they are still in use today. They can be seen at the railway station which is listed by the National Trust. It is an unusual building which has distinctive decorative patterns on the cross-braces which hold up the corrugated-iron roof. It has become one of Normanton's most distinctive landmarks. The railway line was only a brief success. When it opened it was planned that it would become a major line and that Normanton would grow to become a major port. In its first year of operation there were 55 railway employees and the train were carrying 10 000 passengers each year.

As a result of the Croydon goldfield's demise in 1906 the Gulflander has not made a profit since 1907. Today it runs a once weekly service leaving Normanton at 8.30 am on Wednesday and returning from Croydon at 8.30 am the next morning. It is occasionally booked to make the tour at other times.

### **1.7 Historical Development** (Source: Cummings 2019)

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The vast flat plains surrounding the south-eastern Gulf of Carpentaria are primarily old seabed. Predominant vegetation is either open Flinders or Mitchell grass plains or tropical savannah woodland. The area is subject to a wet season that comes in heavy rain periods associated with tropical lows (that can develop into cyclones), over the period December to April. Intense tropical lows and cyclones can result in major flooding episodes in some years when large areas can be inundated. The wet season is followed by a winter and early summer period of very low rainfall and annual drought conditions.

Normanton was first established as a port at the head of navigation in the Norman River in 1867 to service pastoral industry settlement expanding into the area and to service mining of newly discovered copper deposits around Cloncurry to the south and gold to the east at Croydon. Normanton was serviced by shipping services mainly out of Cairns up until the 1960s. Improved road links have led to road transport being used more recently for import and export of goods into and out of the region.

A railway line was commenced to Cloncurry but diverted east to Croydon. The goldfields around Croydon faded by the 1920s and today the railway line is used only for tourist experience (the Gulflander Railmotor), and some supply of goods during wet season flooding episodes.

During the 1930s/40s, Karumba at the mouth of the Norman River became a stopover on the Imperial Flying Boat route from Australia to England with a lodge established.

With mining fading and the railway from Townsville reaching Cloncurry, Normanton tended to decline during the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

The 1960s saw a major new phase of economic growth commence. The Beef Roads programme saw the road from Cloncurry sealed and the Gulf Developmental Road sealed in from the east to the Gilbert River crossing and improved (although not sealed), from the Gilbert across to Normanton. The Burke Developmental Road from Normanton north to Dunbar Station on the Mitchell and thence east into the Mungana railhead near Chillagoe was improved although not sealed.

During the 1960s, extensive prawn resources were discovered in the Gulf and Karumba developed as a fishing industry base.

Road improvements into the area saw visitor numbers increasing (mainly touring “grey nomads”), and recreation fishermen especially visiting Karumba.

The development in the 1990s of the substantial Century Zinc deposits to the south west saw a slurry pipeline developed to Karumba with barge shipments to bulk carriers standing offshore.

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Tourism has developed in recent decades, especially following the completion of sealing of the Gulf Developmental Road about 2000, and the development of Karumba as a seaside recreation and fishing area. Separate figures are not readily available for the Shire. However, based on data for the Carpentaria SA2 region (including Burke Shire, Doomadgee and Mornington), estimated income from overnight visitors is probably of the order of \$30m per annum.

These days, much of the prawn fishery is operated by fishing vessels based in Cairns or other east coast ports and supplied at sea by motherships out of Cairns, which also take on catches for transport back to Cairns. There is however, locally based vessels catching prawns and other species including mackerel and barramundi based in Karumba with catch value estimated at about \$20m per annum.

## **2 VISITORS TO THE GULF** (Source: Gulf Savannah Tourism Report, 2018)

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The total number of visitors to the gulf in 2012 was approximately 58,000 leisure visitors as compared to 2017 where there were approximately 53,150 leisure visitors to the Gulf Savannah region.

The average length of stay in 2012 was 11.5 days as compared with the 2017 where there was a total of 13.98 days. The survey data suggests the lengths of stay were 12.3 nights in Croydon-Etheridge and 13.18 in Carpentaria in 2012 and 14.21 in Croydon-Etheridge and 15.32 in Carpentaria in 2017.

The average expenditure in 2012 was 79.11 per person per day and increased to \$94.02 in 2017. This expenditure created a total value of \$65 m to the gulf in 2012 with an increase to \$69.8m for 2017.

### **2.1 STATE OF ORIGIN**

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In 2012 and 2017 the majority of visitors to the region were from Queensland, however, the number and proportion of visitors from Queensland in 2017 (63%) was far higher than in 2012 (36%). The National Visitor Survey data for 2012-2017 suggests between 60-80% of domestic visitors to the region were from Queensland.

### **2.2 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

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Between 2012-2017, German and New Zealand tourists remained by far the most well represented nationalities among those visiting the Gulf for leisure.

### **2.3 AGE GROUP OF VISITORS**

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The 60+ age group remained the dominant age group represented in the Gulf with 2012 at 66% but in 2017 the 60+ age group dropped to 59% with the 40-49 age group doubling from 2012 at 6% to 2017 at 12%.

### **2.4 TYPE OF TRAVEL PARTY**

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Couples were the dominant travel party type with 2012 at 59% and 2017 increasing slightly to 60.1%. There was an increase from 2012 at 16% to 2017 24.24% for friends travelling together.

### **2.5 FIRST OR RETURN VISIT**

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In 2012 64% were first time visitors with 36% returning to the gulf with the opposite for 2017 at 36% first time and 56% return.

### **2.6 MOST VISITED TOWN**

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In 2017, 88% of visitors stopped at Georgetown, 80% stopped in Karumba and Normanton, while 66% stopped in Mount Surprise. Burketown registered a significant increase in visitations between 2012 (22%) and 2017 (54%).

### **2.7 ACCOMMODATION TYPE**

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In 2017 69% of visitors stayed in commercial caravan parks and 24% stayed at free-camp sites compared to 57% in commercial caravan parks and 33% free-camp in 2012.

## **2.8 VISITOR SATISFACTION**

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Overall visitor satisfaction declined very slightly between 2012 (94%) and 2017 (96%). However, there was a significant decline in the proportion who were Very Satisfied in 2012 (74%) to the proportion who were Very Satisfied in 2017 (56%).

The highest “Overall Satisfied” ratings were with the ‘friendliness of locals’ (89.06%), with feelings of ‘personal security and safety’ (86.16%) and the ‘variety of things to see and do’ (85.94%).

Only 25.81% were “Overall Satisfied” with telecoms/internet/Wi-Fi in the region, which was down from 42.40% in 2012 despite significant investment into digital infrastructure in the Gulf Savannah region. This is likely due to continued connectivity/capability issues in key tourism sites such as Karumba, Undara Experience, Boodjamulla National Park, Adels Grove and so on.

There was also a significant decline in the overall satisfaction rating for Charters and Tours, with 94.2% in the Overall Satisfied group in 2012 versus 54.9% in 2017.

### **ENTRY & EXIT POINTS:**

In 2017, 38% of visitors to the Gulf entered via Cairns/Mt Garnet/Mt Surprise along the Gulf Developmental Road, followed by 34% at Burke & Wills Roadhouse.

In 2017, 38% departed through Mt Surprise/Mt Garnet/Cairns and 15% through Burke & Wills.

An estimated 20% lift in visitation through the widening of the narrow sections of the Gulf Developmental Road and the Cloncurry Road with a Present Value of addition to Gross Regional Product of the order of \$86m.

- a) Upgrading of the Burketown Road leading to more efficient access to Lawn Hill attraction and Savannah Way traffic with most benefits in Burke Shire but some in Carpentaria Shire (Cummings, 2019).
- b) Upgrading the Dunbar and Koolatah/ Dixie roads providing an alternative route to and from the Peninsula that would result in avoidance of backtracking with an estimated Present Value of addition to Gross Regional Product of the order of \$62m (Cummings, 2019).

## **2.9 High visitor population winter months**

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On top of residential population, 2016 Census data indicates a very high level of visitors during the winter months totaling 1,375 (Queensland 547, interstate 806, overseas 22), taking on-the-ground population at the time of the Census from 1,700 to over 3,000.

**3 EXISTING ROAD NETWORK** (Source: Cummings 2019).

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The road network in the area serves three major functions.

Internal connection – Links Normanton as the major service centre with the rest of the Shire – all the subject roads.

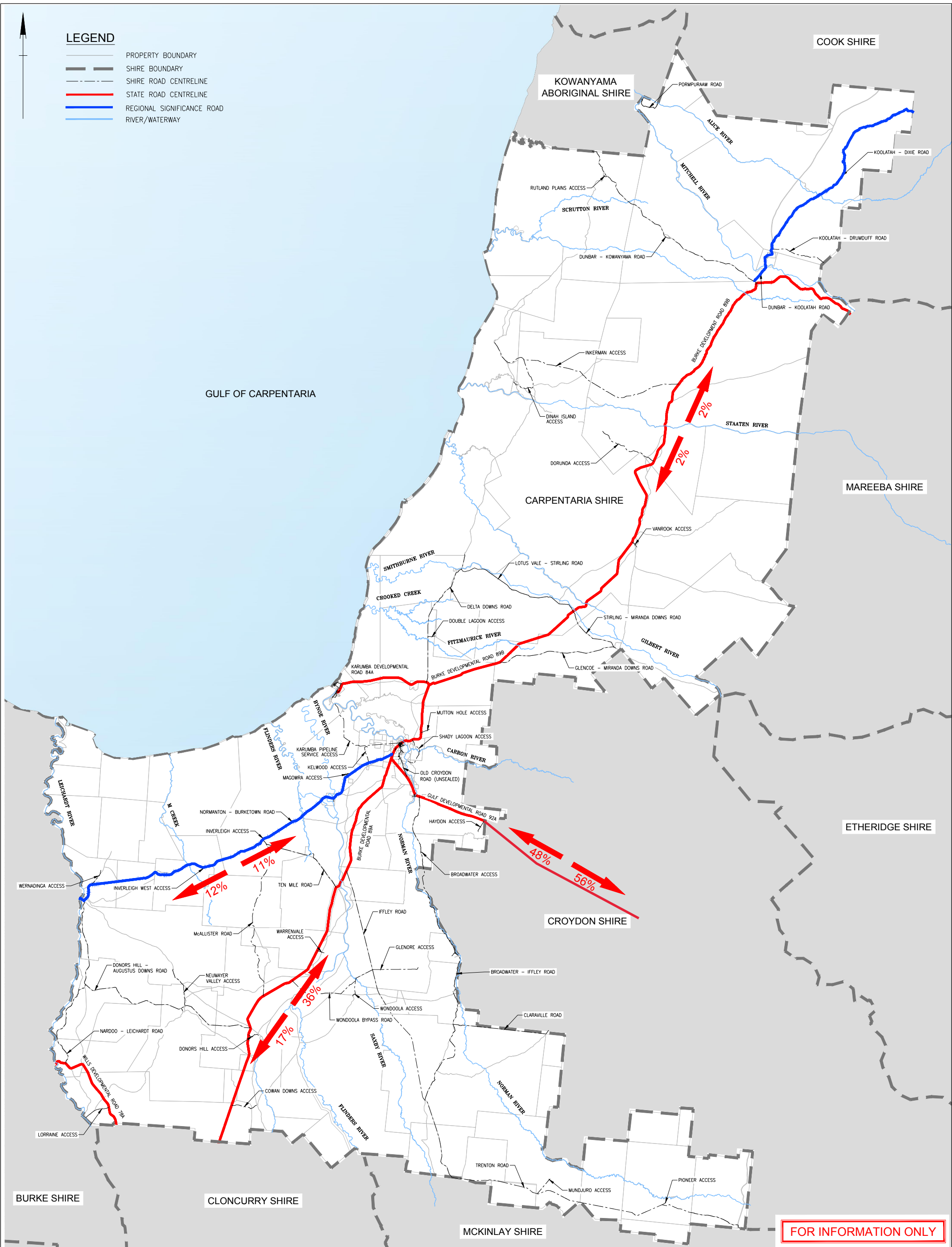
External connection – Links the Shire with the rest of Australia for import and export of goods and inward and outward transport of people.

- Gulf Developmental Road 92A ..... Cairns and Townsville regions
- Cloncurry Road 89A..... Mt Isa and Townsville regions
- Dunbar Road 89B ..... Peninsula and Mareeba regions
- Normanton to Burketown Road..... Northern Territory
- Koolatah - Dixie Road ..... Peninsula region

Through connection – Provides through routes between other major regions.

- Especially Gulf Developmental Road/ Cloncurry Road - Cairns region with Mt Isa and Central West
- Gulf Developmental Road/ Burketown Road – Savannah Way link across the North
- Potentially – Koolatah/ Dixie/ Dunbar Road and Cloncurry Road – Tourism linking North West/ Central West with Peninsula region





**LEGEND**

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- SHIRE BOUNDARY
- SHIRE ROAD CENTRELINE
- STATE ROAD CENTRELINE
- REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE ROAD
- RIVER/WATERWAY

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DESIGN	APPROVED
1	12/08/20	INITIAL ISSUE		



CLIENT	MG	APPROVED
DESIGN	MG	APPROVED
CIVIL SIGNOFF APPROVAL		
DATE:	RPED:	

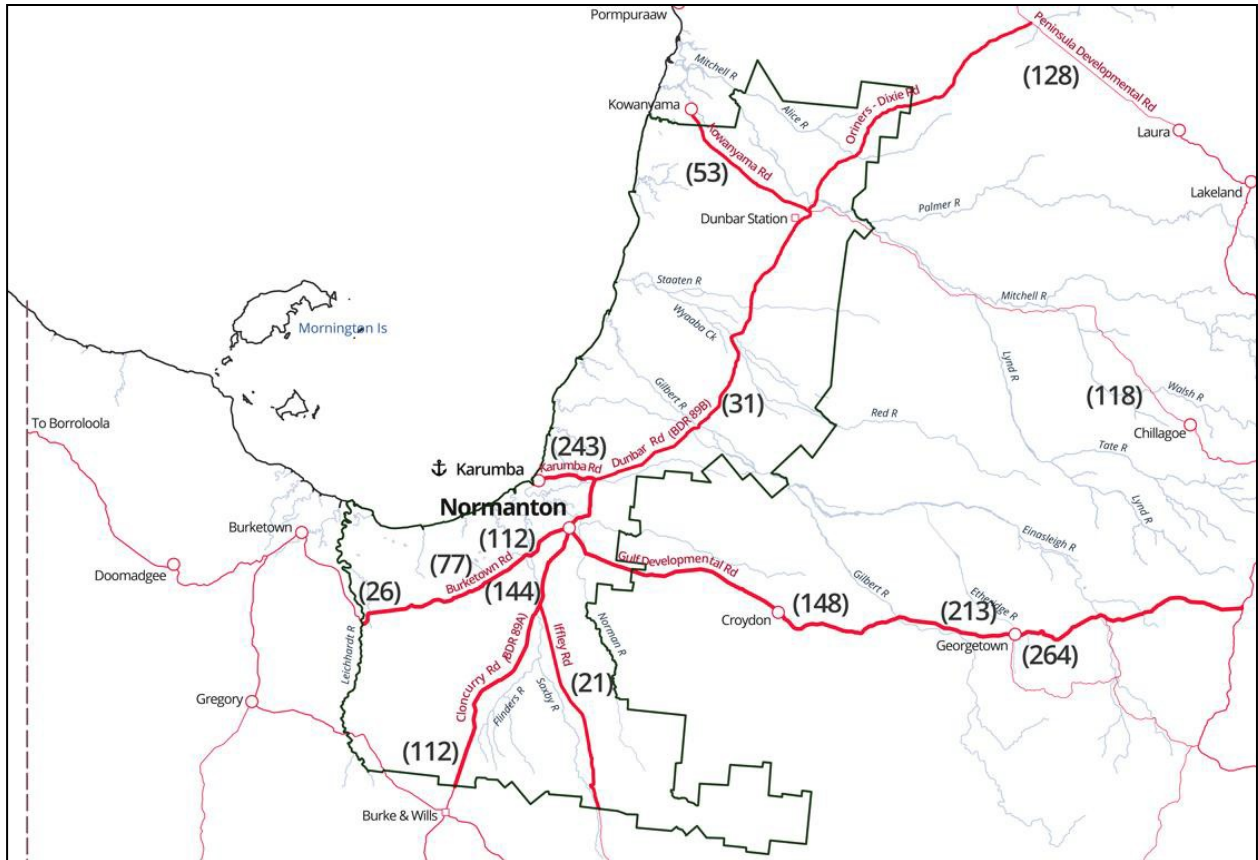
PROJECT REF	MIPP2 - CARPENTARIA ROAD NETWORK	
DRAWING REF	SHIRE ROADS TRAFFIC CENSUS	
DRAWING NO	101-135-821-SK03	
SIZE	A1	REVISION 1

PLOT DATE  
FILE LOCATION

### 3.1 EXISTING ROAD TRAFFIC PATTERNS

Traffic counts from Transport and Main Roads or Carpentaria Shire are shown below.

#### Road Traffic Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)



(Source: Pg 25 Cummings, 2019)

The map indicates roads in order of traffic flows.

Karumba Road .....	242
Gulf Developmental Road & narrow sections .....	148 to 213 to 264
Cloncurry Road .....	144 to 112
Burketown Road .....	112 to 77 to 26
Kowanyama Road .....	52
Dunbar Road .....	31
Iffley Road .....	21
Koolatah/ Dixie Road .....	Not recorded

It can be seen that most traffic is on the sealed Karumba Road followed by the sealed Gulf Developmental Road and the Cloncurry Road. Of the unsealed roads, the Burketown Road is followed by the Kowanyama Road with Dunbar Road lower and the Iffley and Koolatah/ Dixie very low.

## 4 Tourism

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### 4.1 General

Tourism has become a significant part of the area's economy. Statistical data currently or potentially relevant to the Carpentaria road system is collected in a number of areas.

#### Average Domestic Visitors Last 3 Years <sup>(1)</sup>

	Average domestic visitors last 3 years
Carpentaria SA2 – (Carpentaria, Burke, Doomadgee, Normanton)	72,000
Croydon Etheridge SA2 – (Croydon and Etheridge Shires)	51,000
Cape York SA2 – (Cook Shire and relevant communities)	123,000
Weipa – (Weipa township)	35,000
Northern Peninsula Area – (NPA Council Area)/ Torres <sup>(2)</sup>	40,000
Mt Isa – LGA	150,000

Note <sup>(1)</sup>: The tourism data at this level is subject to statistical variance due to low sample numbers making year to year variations unreliable.

Note <sup>(2)</sup>: Of this, it is estimated that about 20,000 are in road vehicles reaching the Northern Peninsula Area.

Source: Cummings Economics from Tourism Research Australia – National Visitor Survey.

The data indicates that about 100,000 visitors a year are moving along the Flinders Highway and about 60,000 a year along the Gulf Developmental Road. Over 100,000 are moving north into the Cooktown district but only about 20,000 travelling through to the tip of Cape York.

### 4.2 Type of visitor (Source: Gulf Savannah Tourism Report, 2018)

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Interviewing in the industry indicates as follows.

Work Purposes – There is a significant level of FIFO/DIDO to Normanton and Karumba including teachers, hospital staff, for construction and road work purposes that come mainly out of Cairns and Townsville. Some will use the bus from Cairns to Normanton/Karumba.

Leisure – Most arrive in their own vehicle and tend to be in five categories.

1. Locals from within the North with a high proportion from Mt Isa after the wet season and for get-away weekends. They are in their own vehicles and especially visit Karumba for recreation/ fishing. This group will include family traffic and non- 4WD vehicles.
2. Regular annual visitors from southern Queensland and interstate mainly to Karumba and mainly for fishing. This group will often stay in units/lodges.
3. Round-Australia travelers, mainly “grey nomads”, who will stay in caravan parks including Normanton. They will mainly be in 4WD vehicles and mainly tow caravans not suited to travel on unsealed roads. Most of this group are from interstate.
4. Round-Australia adventure travelers with 4WD vehicles, with camper or with trailers suited to off-road travel. Most will be from interstate.
5. Dedicated fishers and shooters, mainly locals in 4WD who will go to suitable spots throughout the Shire including remote locations.

Hunters and Fishers – This group use all roads and go into remote locations.

Operators in Normanton indicated that 80% of vehicles were 4W

During the tourist season, about 7 – 9 vehicles a day come through Hells Gate (ie. about 1500 a year), but this is increased by 4WD rallies each year when up to 250 vehicles can come through. If the road was made suitable for round-Australia tourists, there would be a major increase that would also add to the traffic on the Normanton – Burke Shire section. The following analysis provides for towed visitor traffic to rise about 5-fold from 4 to 20 and for non-towed to rise from 6 to 30. It should be noted however, that much of this rise would be at the expense of the Cloncurry Road traffic.

1. Karumba Road – The current road is efficient for its purpose. However, if traffic rose on the main spine route, this route would increase.
2. Dunbar Road – Sealing would allow the round-Australia visitors to travel up the road but unless there was sealing through to the Peninsula Developmental Road or into Chillagoe, substantial numbers would still not travel the road. In the following analysis, the current number towing of 2 is quadrupled to 8 and non- towing increased from 10 to 16. If the Koolatah/ Dixie Road was upgraded also, there would be a further substantial increase. If the road Dunbar/ Chillagoe was sealed, there would be a further leap.
3. Koolatah/ Dixie Road – There is already some 4WD adventuress also visiting the Cape coming through this road and some of these going on to travel the Savannah Way to the Northern Territory. It is estimated that of the order of 30,000 per annum 4WD adventurers visit Weipa/ Cape York, ie. about 80 vehicle movements a day.

If the Koolatah/ Dixie Road was upgraded to sealed standard, it is estimated that a substantial diversion of vehicles would take place to take advantage of the alternative route to and from the Peninsula and avoid travelling over the eastern route to Cairns twice. In the analysis, we have allowed for the current estimated traffic of 4 visitor vehicles to increase 4-fold to 16. This would represent about 40% of the Peninsula traffic diverting one way to use the western route. Given the progressive sealing of the Peninsula Developmental Road over the next 10 years, future growth is estimated at an average of 4% per annum.

Tourism in the area is heavily affected by the standard of the road network and tourism flows in the surrounding regions. Data available for the Carpentaria SA2 area that includes Carpentaria Shire but also Burke Shire and Mornington Island has been showing an upward trend.

#### **Tourism Visitors, Carpentaria SA2 Area**

	<b>Domestic</b>	<b>International</b>	<b>Total</b>
Average 3 years to 2018	72,000	4,000	<b>76,000</b>
Average 4 years to 2015	52,000	3,000	<b>55,000</b>
Average 4 years to 2012	51,000	4,000	<b>55,000</b>

*Source: Cummings Economics from TRA.*

*Note: The data is collected through a sample survey and for low volume areas subject to statistical variance. The last three years were 76,000, 50,000, 96,000. The above table averages provide an estimate.*

It is likely that almost all those who visit Burke Shire also visit Carpentaria Shire and that visitation to Carpentaria Shire is up around the 70,000 a year level. However, a number of those would have been for work purposes and visiting friends and relatives.

Most of these visitors come by motor vehicle and it is thus estimated, at average two persons per vehicle, that of the order of 30,000 tourism vehicles enter and leave the region each year. Census 2016 data indicated the following Australian visitor numbers.

#### Visitor Numbers, Census 2016

	Queensland	Interstate	Domestic	International	Total
Normanton	214	192	406	na	na
Karumba	254	555	809	na	na
Remainder Carpentaria	79	59	138	na	na
<b>Total Carpentaria LGA</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>1353</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1,375</b>

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Census 2016.

The Census was held at close to peak tourism season that is estimated to last from early May (Mother's Day) to early September (Father's Day), ie. about 5 months. Outside that period, visitor numbers drop off sharply to very low levels. However, at peak, it can be seen that visitors swell on-the-ground population as follows.

#### Population Count, Census 2016

	Residents at home	Visitors	% Visitor Increase to Population
Normanton	1,137	406	+36%
Karumba	470	809	+172%
Remainder Carpentaria	154	138	+90%
<b>Total Carpentaria LGA</b>	<b>1,761</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>+77%</b>

Source: Cummings Economics from ABS Census 2016.

Thus, during the tourism season, there will be approaching twice as many visitors in Karumba as residents and in Normanton, add a further third to the population and, overall in the Shire, add some 77%. A notable feature is that at peak times, interstate visitors (especially to Karumba), exceed Queensland visitors, some of whom will be for non-leisure purposes. International visitation is low.

## 5 FISHING INDUSTRY (Source: Cummings Economics, 2019)

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- The fishing industry based on Karumba is an important generator of traffic movements in the Carpentaria Shire area including:
- Outward product movements;
- Inward industry supplies;
- Supplies to population located in the area because of the fishing industry.

The fishing fleet operating from Karumba is estimated at about 40, consisting of prawn trawlers, mackerel, barramundi and crabbing vessels.

In addition, there are calls by fishing boats that operate in the Gulf but are based in other ports, especially Cairns.

Prawn trawlers are mainly those operated by Raptis with a fleet of 15. Today, much of the prawn trawler fleet operating in the Gulf come out of Cairns and other ports and are resupplied at sea with fuel and stores by motherships out of Cairns which also take on catch. There are only occasional visits by these vessels to Karumba.

Raptis' catch is mainly transported to Brisbane via the Cloncurry Road.

Most of the other catch is either delivered to Cairns and Townsville via the Gulf Developmental Road or Brisbane via the Burke Developmental Road. Mackerel is delivered mainly to Cairns or Townsville for local consumption.

Fuel for the fleet is mainly supplied out of Townsville by Carpentaria Transport, 3 a week but 1 – 2 trucks a fortnight by Mobil out of Cairns, both via the Gulf Developmental Road.

Other supplies mainly come out of Cairns via the Gulf Developmental Road but some from Townville via the Gulf Developmental Road and some out of Brisbane via the Cloncurry Road.

Catches vary from year to year depending on seasonal conditions; however, it is estimated the annual value is about \$20m.

General consensus is that this industry has probably stabilised and that no major further resource development would occur. However, it is noted that price of wild caught fish has been rising. Wild barramundi is facing competition from farm-bred output.

It is thus our expectation that the current level of activity will continue but not grow substantially. Although the upgrading (especially of the Gulf Developmental Road and the Cloncurry Road), will assist the industry's viability, it is not likely to cause any substantial additional traffic to be generated.