

DRAFT REGIONAL PLAN AND
INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

North Queensland

2026



DELIVERING
FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland
Government

The Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning connects industries, businesses, communities and government (at all levels) to leverage regions' strengths to generate sustainable and enduring economic growth that supports well-planned, inclusive and resilient communities.

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Contact us

T 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or +61 7 3022 6100

E info@dsdip.qld.gov.au

W www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au

M PO Box 15009, City East, Queensland 4002

A 1 William Street, Brisbane 4000

Minister's foreword

I am committed to delivering new Regional Plans, with supporting Infrastructure Plans, covering every corner of Queensland within this term of government. This is a significant program across the entire state, and no previous government has had the ambition or resolve to achieve this in a single term. It's work we need to do to give more Queenslanders a place to call home.

North Queensland is a powerhouse region that makes an outsized contribution to Queensland's economy. It drives major export activity, supports critical defence, healthcare, education and research capabilities, and underpins strong regional communities built on industry, mining and agriculture.

As the region continues to grow, planning must remain focused on what matters most: delivering more homes, creating secure local jobs, and supporting sustained economic growth. Achieving these outcomes requires clear direction and certainty for investment.

The Regional Plan provides a clear, land use focused framework to guide growth across the region. It strengthens regional planning to unlock housing supply, support economic development and give councils, industry and communities confidence about how and where growth will occur. The plan is practical and forward looking, taking account of local conditions to support better long-term land use planning outcomes.

Housing supply remains one of the region's most pressing challenges. This plan supports the delivery of more homes by identifying land that can be developed efficiently, close to jobs, services and transport. It focuses growth where infrastructure can be delivered cost effectively, while protecting the economic land and assets that underpin North Queensland's prosperity.

Jobs are central to North Queensland's future, and this plan is designed to harness both the region's existing economic strengths and the major investments reshaping its outlook. It supports strong traditional industries while backing growth in critical minerals value-adding and processing, new energy industries, advanced manufacturing and diversified agricultural production.

Tourism is a major contributor to North Queensland's economy, supporting around one in six jobs while showcasing the region's globally significant natural and cultural assets. This plan supports the growth of the visitor economy by enabling high-quality tourism experiences and strengthening connections across the region, while protecting the values that underpin its appeal.

The supporting Infrastructure Plan aligns land use planning with investment in transport, energy, water, ports and social infrastructure to support new housing and employment areas as they come online. By coordinating infrastructure sequencing and investment priorities across government, councils and industry, the plan reduces delays, provides greater certainty for development and ensures public investment is targeted where it delivers the greatest economic and community benefit.

This plan is a blueprint for action. It is focused on delivery, responsive to change, and grounded in the realities of the region so North Queensland can continue to grow, compete and succeed.

Let's get on with it.

Jarrold Bleijie MP.

Deputy Premier
Minister for State Development,
Infrastructure and Planning and
Minister for Industrial Relations.



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A plan prepared in partnership

This draft North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026 has been prepared in partnership with the North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils and the following local governments located within the North Queensland region:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council
- Townsville City Council



The plan for **North Queensland**



The Village, Oonoonba

THE PLAN FOR NORTH QUEENSLAND

Our region

North Queensland is a place of remarkable landscapes, strong communities and growing opportunity. The North Queensland Regional Plan brings together the people and places of Burdekin, Charters Towers, Hinchinbrook, Palm Island and Townsville (see **Map 1**), recognising the region's enduring importance to Queensland and Australia.

As the gateway between inland resource regions and national and global markets, North Queensland plays a vital role in keeping the state moving. The region supports freight, industry and essential services across northern Australia, strengthening supply chains and connecting communities. Its strategic location, underpinned by port access, defence presence and strong westward connections, positions North Queensland at the heart of the state's economic future.

Today, around 237,000 people call North Queensland home. By 2046, that number is expected to reach up to 297,000. This growth brings new opportunity and requires careful planning to ensure communities have access to well-located housing and services supported by infrastructure. The region has an established base of detached housing with emerging opportunities to support a mix of other housing options, supported by existing land supply in key centres and a growing momentum to respond to changing household need and workforce demands.

The region also relies on non-resident workers who support mining, energy, agriculture and major infrastructure projects. Providing well-planned and well-located worker accommodation helps these industries thrive while supporting local communities.

Townsville anchors the region as a vibrant centre for jobs, education, healthcare and culture. Surrounding towns, inland and island communities each bring their own strengths, from agriculture and minerals processing to tourism, local services and small business. Strengthening this connected network of unique places will require growth to be shared across the region and aligned with infrastructure, land use and industry needs.

North Queensland is recognised for its innovation and resilience. It is a hub for logistics, transport and processing, home to nationally significant defence and research facilities, located alongside some of the world's most treasured natural assets, including the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics.

Palm Island forms an important part of the North Queensland region, contributing to its cultural richness and coastal identity. With outstanding natural beauty and strong connections to the Great Barrier Reef, Palm Island has unique opportunities in tourism, cultural enterprise and community-led economic development.

A diverse and evolving economy underpins the region. Resources and minerals processing linked to the North West Minerals Province, defence industries and a strong agricultural base are key drivers of growth. These are complemented by expanding health, education, transport and logistics sectors, creating a wide range of jobs and pathways for local people.

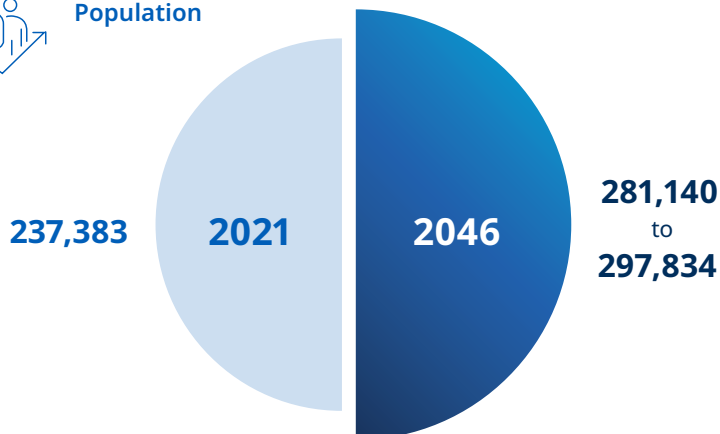
The region's strategic assets, including the Port of Townsville, major defence facilities, industrial precincts and leading health, education and research institutions, are central to its success. The Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Zone reinforces these connections, linking inland mining, energy and agriculture with coastal processing and export gateways.

Ongoing investment in enabling infrastructure, including transformative projects such as CopperString, is opening new doors for industry and communities. These investments are improving energy security, fostering emerging sectors and helping position North Queensland as a leader in economic development, innovation and regional growth.

North Queensland snapshot



Population



Source, Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) 2025 version – medium and high series



Current and projected new homes

2021	100,984
2046	121,635 to 127,711

Source, QGSO 2025 version – medium and high series



Gross Regional Product

\$20.8 billion in 2024
Increasing by **31.4%** between 2021 to 2024

Source, REMPLAN



Sugarcane production

North Queensland
12,155,100 tonnes
(41.5% of Sugarcane Production in Queensland)

Queensland
29,330,300 tonnes

Source, Australian Bureau of Statistics experimental regional estimates 2020-21



Tourism

Annual visitor numbers to region (2025) – 1.1 million

76.8% Intrastate
15.6% Interstate
7.6% International

Source, Tourism and Events Queensland

Key employers



- 1 Healthcare and social assistance
- 2 Public administration and safety
- 3 Education and training
- 4 Retail trade
- 5 Construction

Source, National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), 2026

Investment



CopperString

2026/27 state budget allocation of **\$3 billion**

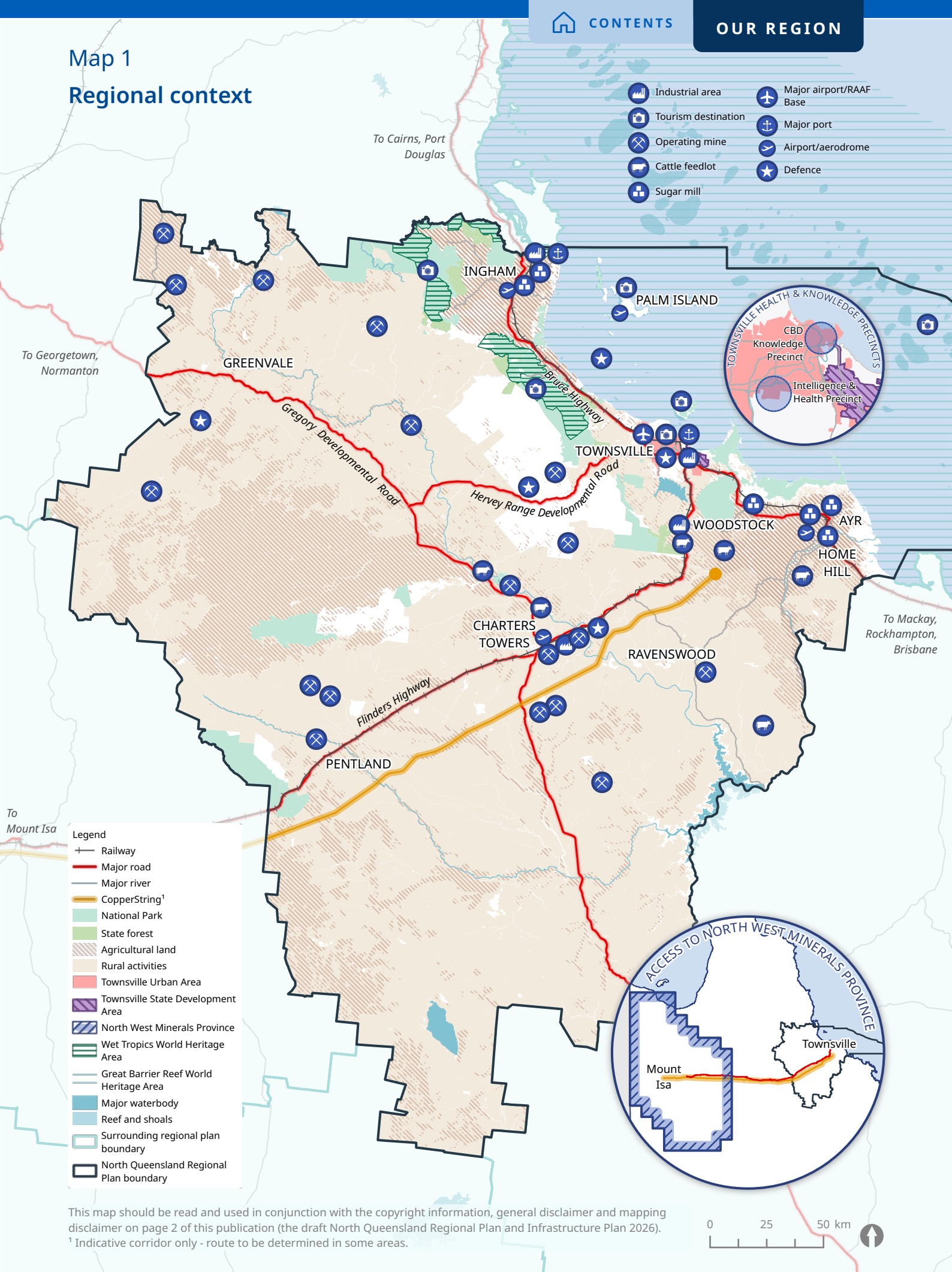
Source, 2026-27 Queensland Budget

Townsville Port Expansion

\$1.6 billion project, **\$251 million** invested in Stage 1 (completed Jan 2025)

Source, Port of Townsville website

Map 1 Regional context



This map should be read and used in conjunction with the copyright information, general disclaimer and mapping disclaimer on page 2 of this publication (the draft North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026).
¹ Indicative corridor only - route to be determined in some areas.

Our future

As the capital of northern Australia, North Queensland is shaping a bold future through global connection, regional leadership and enduring prosperity for communities and generations to come.

North Queensland is poised for a new era of growth, prosperity and possibility. This plan sets a bold, unified vision that positions the region as the capital of northern Australia, reinforcing its role as a nexus to Asia-Pacific. The region's strengths are celebrated, tomorrow's challenges are anticipated, and fresh opportunities for housing, jobs and economic diversification are unlocked.

Over the next two decades, North Queensland will offer a pipeline of well-located housing opportunities to support the timely delivery of new homes. Through a coordinated and flexible approach to housing delivery, the region will provide a supply of housing to support population growth, respond to an ageing community, and accommodate a dynamic and mobile workforce. By enabling access to housing that meets a range of needs and lifestyles, North Queensland will strengthen its capacity to attract new residents, retain existing communities, and support workers to settle and stay. This approach reinforces North Queensland's position as a connected, accessible and opportunity rich region where people can build long-term futures.

A stronger and more diverse economy will drive long-term prosperity across North Queensland, building on the region's unique natural assets, including the Great Barrier Reef, island, savanna and mountain landscapes, and its fertile agricultural land. By expanding employment opportunities and creating connected, attractive communities, the region will continue to draw and retain the skilled workforce needed to fuel its future.

Agriculture will continue to anchor the regional economy, with sugar, beef, horticulture and aquaculture strengthened by efficient freight networks, enhanced connectivity and new value-adding industries. At the same time, major infrastructure investments such as the Port of Townsville upgrades, the Haughton Pipeline, CopperString and key road improvements will accelerate development and construction and support the region as a critical logistics and supply chain hub. The Port of Townsville will play a critical role in supporting expanded fuel storage capacity, strengthening regional energy security and supply chains. These projects will underpin globally competitive agriculture, mineral extraction, defence, health and advanced manufacturing precincts, cementing North Queensland as a powerhouse of the North.

The region will continue to unlock the value of its mining and extractive industries, building on its critical

role in supporting operations across the North West Minerals Province. This sector will remain a cornerstone of North Queensland's economy, driving investment employment and export opportunities.

The tourism sector will continue to evolve to deliver richer and higher quality experiences that showcase North Queensland's distinctive character. By strengthening connections between coastal, island and inland destinations, and offering experiences ranging from adventure and ecotourism to agritourism and major sporting, cultural and recreational events in world class settings, the region will expand its appeal to a diverse and growing domestic and international visitor market.

Emerging industries including biofuels, biomedical innovation, minerals processing, health and marine science will play a pivotal role in shaping a more diverse and future-focused economy. These sectors will unlock new opportunities for investment, innovation and employment.

Continued investment in the Bruce Highway, including targeted safety and capacity upgrades, will reinforce its role as the spine of North Queensland. As a critical north-south corridor, the highway connects communities, supports efficient freight movement and links the region's industries to the Port of Townsville and national markets. These upgrades will improve travel reliability and productivity across the corridor, supporting regional growth.

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games present a significant opportunity to accelerate infrastructure investment and showcase North Queensland on a global stage as a host of sailing and football. As the northern Games gateway, the region will play an important role through tourism, training opportunities and supply chain connections.

Investments already underway across the region will help ensure North Queensland is well positioned to contribute to and benefit from the Games, delivering a lasting legacy of improved connectivity, economic opportunity and regional profile.

With strategic planning and coordinated action, North Queensland is set to thrive as a globally connected tropical region – one that delivers opportunity, economic strength and long-term security for its communities.

Local government narratives

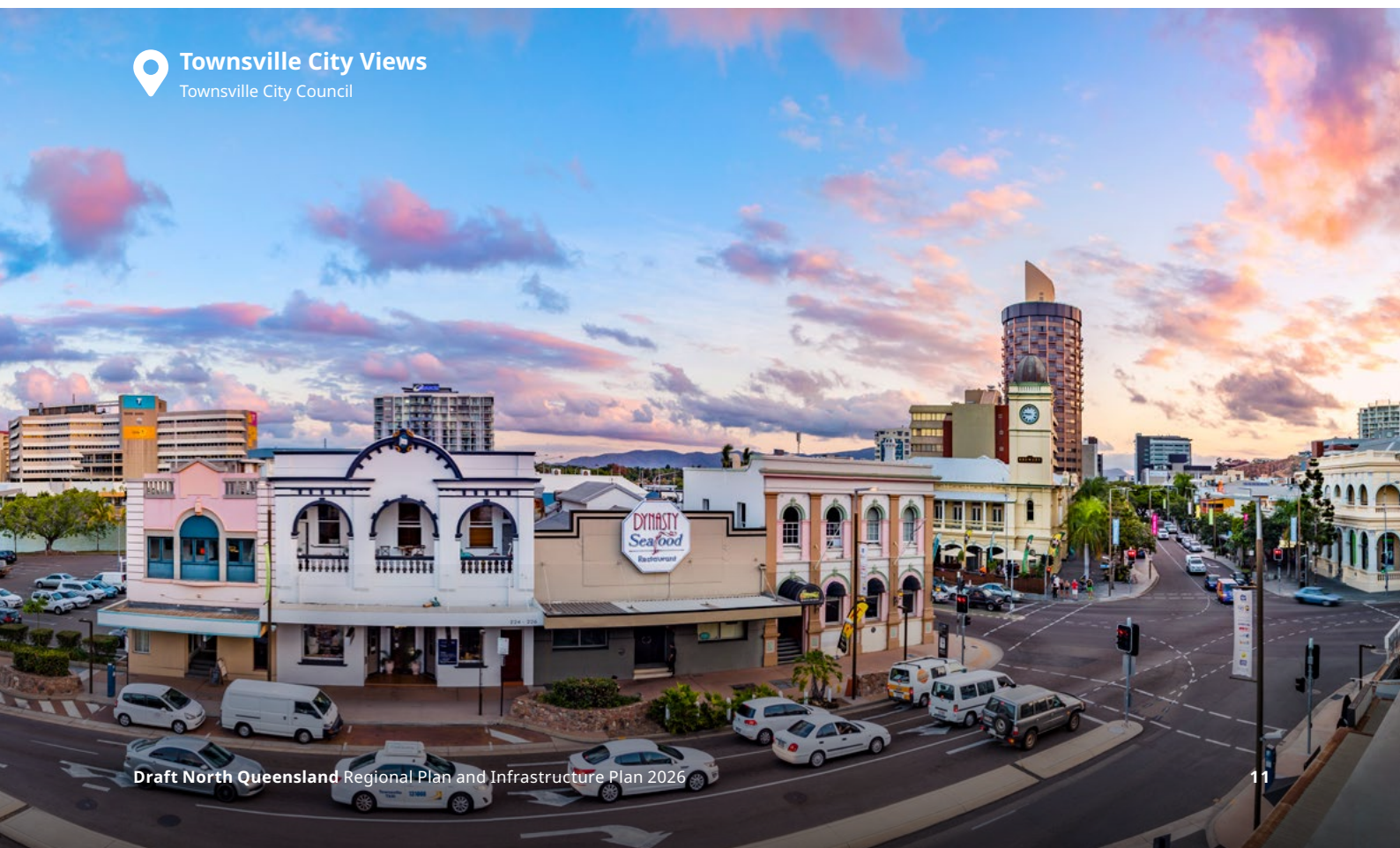
Local governments across the region play a crucial role in shaping community outcomes, land use patterns and economic development.

Together, they encompass a wide spectrum of communities, ranging from established urban centres to small rural towns and highly remote settlements embedded within distinctive natural landscapes.

While they operate within a shared regional context, each local government area varies in scale, settlement pattern and economic drivers.

The local government narratives which follow have been drafted by the respective local governments. They outline the role each local government plays within the broader region, highlighting key characteristics, strengths and challenges which inform land use and infrastructure planning, economic development and decision making.

 **Townsville City Views**
Townsville City Council

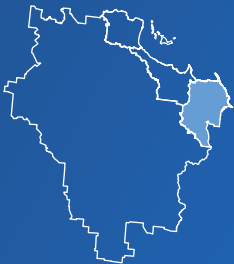


 **Cromarty Wetlands, Burdekin**
Tourism and Events Queensland



Burdekin Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION 	AREA SIZE 5,044 km ²	KEY CENTRES Ayr OTHER COMMUNITIES Home Hill, Giru, Clare and Brandon
	POPULATION 16,836	

Unique characteristics

The Burdekin is characterised by a strong sense of connection between its communities, anchored by the townships of Ayr and Home Hill, located just 12 kilometres apart. These towns are linked by the iconic Burdekin River Bridge, locally known as the Silverlink, which at 1,103 metres is one of the longest bridges in Australia and a defining feature of the Shire. In addition, several coastal fishing villages play an important role in local life, reinforcing the Burdekin's close relationship with the coast and its relaxed, outdoor-focused lifestyle.

The appeal of the Burdekin is further enhanced by its affordable cost of living, high-quality natural assets, and convenient location within one hour's drive of Townsville. This combination allows residents to enjoy the benefits of a regional, community-oriented lifestyle while maintaining access to higher-order services, employment opportunities and infrastructure. Together, these attributes make the Burdekin an attractive place to live and work, offering a balanced blend of rural, coastal and regional living.

Economic aspirations

The Burdekin's economy is strongly underpinned by agriculture, which remains the dominant economic base while continuing to evolve and diversify. Known as the sugar cane capital of Australia, farmers are increasingly adopting complementary crops and new technologies to improve productivity, enhance soil health and reduce environmental impacts, strengthening the long-term sustainability of the sector. This diversification is supported by a locally significant manufacturing sector, which plays a key role in value-adding, processing, equipment supply and servicing the agricultural industry, reinforcing the Shire's role as a regional production and processing hub.

Looking forward, the visitor economy presents a growing and important opportunity for economic diversification. Nature-based tourism is expanding, leveraging the Burdekin's exceptional environmental assets, including Bowling Green Bay, an internationally recognised Ramsar wetland. At the same time, destination and events tourism is gaining momentum, supported by unique attractions such as the SS Yongala Wreck dive site, the Sweet Days Hot Nights Festival celebrating the Burdekin's people, produce and culture, and the Burdekin Art Trail. Together, these growth areas provide opportunities to broaden the economic base, support local employment and enhance the Burdekin's profile as a distinctive destination aligned with its natural, cultural and agricultural strengths.

Housing aspirations

The Burdekin's housing aspirations are focused on supporting sustainable growth while reinforcing the role of existing townships as service centres. A key priority is the provision of additional residential land releases adjacent the existing Urban Footprint, ensuring new development has access to existing infrastructure, services, employment and community facilities. This approach seeks to make efficient use of land and infrastructure, support vibrant neighbourhoods and strengthen the vitality of town centres while accommodating future population and workforce needs.

Aspirations include facilitating a diverse range of housing options to meet changing demographic and economic demands. This includes promoting medium density housing such as units and townhouses suitable for downsizers, professionals and smaller households, as well as well-designed and well-managed worker accommodation options to support seasonal and agricultural labour needs. Importantly, new housing development will be planned and designed to integrate with surrounding neighbourhoods and preserve the character and liveability of Burdekin communities.

Key infrastructure

The Burdekin benefits from significant and well-established water infrastructure, which underpins its agricultural productivity and long-term sustainability. The Burdekin Falls Dam, located within the Charters Towers Regional Council area, together with extensive underground aquifers, provides a secure and reliable source of water for irrigation. These assets are supported by a range of established water supply schemes that are effectively managed to ensure consistency, resilience and efficient allocation, reinforcing the Shire's role as a major irrigated agricultural region of state and national importance.

Complementing this is the Burdekin's well-developed road and rail network, providing strong regional and national connectivity. These transport corridors link the Burdekin efficiently south to the Whitsundays and north to Townsville, including its major shipping port and airport. The Burdekin's proximity to the Port of Townsville, combined with the scale of available land and secure water resources, gives the Burdekin a unique capacity to service the region's heavy and resource related industries. Together, these infrastructure assets support economic diversification and position the Burdekin as a critical enabler of industrial growth within North Queensland while continuing to meet agricultural and community needs.



Charters Towers Regional Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

68,382 km²

POPULATION

11,920

KEY CENTRES

Charters Towers

OTHER COMMUNITIES

Balfes Creek, Greenvale, Hervey Range, Hidden Valley, Homestead, Mingela, Ravenswood, Selheim and Pentland.

Unique characteristics

The Charters Towers Region is defined by a strong and enduring sense of place shaped by its sweeping landscapes, productive agricultural country, rich cultural heritage and resilient communities.

The northern branch of the Burdekin River—Australia's largest river system by peak discharge—anchors the region's environmental values and underpins opportunities in agriculture, industry, tourism and emerging renewable energy. Key natural assets include Dalrymple National Park, the Burdekin River and its associated features such as Big Bend, Echo Hole and the Anabran, as well as inland waterbodies including Lake Buchanan.

Together with upland ranges and open grazing landscapes, these features contribute to a diverse environment that enhances environmental values and lifestyle appeal. These assets, alongside an estimated 70,000 hectares of land-based good quality agricultural land in the Upper Burdekin catchment and ready access to the largest saleyards in North Queensland, provide a strong foundation for sustainable land-based industries and long-term regional prosperity.

The population contributes to a dynamic, connected community that draws on deep heritage, strong civic leadership and a shared commitment to a vibrant and sustainable future. Long-established strengths in agriculture, mining, education and tourism continue to evolve through targeted investment, small business support and a focus on liveability, while strategic planning aligns infrastructure, services and environmental stewardship with community aspirations. Together, these qualities shape a region that values its landscapes, honours its past and embraces opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Economic aspirations

The Charters Towers economy is built on a stable base of mining, agriculture and essential services, with mining the largest economic driver and agriculture, particularly beef production—remaining a defining land use and export industry. The region records a Gross Regional Product of around \$1 billion, a population of roughly 12,000 people and employment of about 6,154 people, reflecting a resilient, service supported inland economy. Healthcare, education, retail, construction and professional services provide additional employment depth and reinforce Charters Towers' role as a regional service centre.

Future growth priorities focus on diversifying infrastructure investment and population attraction, as outlined in Charters Towers Regional Council's Economic Development Strategy 2025–2030. Key opportunities include expanding irrigated agriculture through improved water security, leveraging CopperString to unlock new mining, minerals processing and renewable energy industries, and strengthening Charters Towers' position as a hub for health, education, logistics, and defence. Tourism, particularly heritage, nature-based and agritourism experiences, is identified as a major growth sector, supported by improved accommodation, digital connectivity and visitor infrastructure.

Charters Towers is positioned to play a strategic inland role in North Queensland's regional forestry economy, supporting the development of emerging forestry value chains. Through its location, land availability and regional service capacity, the area can enable opportunities in bioenergy, carbon market participation and forestry related manufacturing and value-adding linked to domestic and export supply chains.

Townsville anchors the region as a vibrant centre for jobs, education, healthcare and culture. Complementing this role, centres such as Charters Towers contribute distinct strengths, including its function as a specialised inland education hub servicing rural and remote communities, alongside agriculture, mining and local enterprise. Surrounding towns, inland and island communities each bring their own capabilities, from agriculture and minerals processing to local services and small business. Strengthening this connected network of places will support a more balanced pattern of growth, ensuring development is shared across the region and aligned with infrastructure, land use and industry needs.

Housing supply, industrial land development, and workforce attraction are also central to enabling economic and population growth over the coming decade.

Housing aspirations

The Charters Towers region is shaped by a distinctive and well-established inland settlement pattern, with Charters Towers city serving as a strong and vibrant regional hub for health, education, retail, government and employment. Surrounding townships, including Greenvale, Ravenswood, Pentland, Homestead and Hervey Range, and smaller rural settlements contribute to a diverse network of communities connected by major transport routes and supported by the region's agricultural and mining heritage. This pattern provides a stable foundation for growth, lifestyle choice and regional identity.

Across this landscape, there are significant opportunities to strengthen residential land supply and broaden housing choice. Driven by renewed economic activity, emerging industries and lifestyle appeal, demand is growing for diverse and flexible housing options. With the key centre of Charters Towers an easy 1.5-hour drive from Townsville, the region provides an attractive balance of affordability, space and access to higher-order services and employment.

While ageing housing stock, limited rental availability, and constraints on serviced land currently shape the market, these factors also highlight clear areas where targeted planning, investment and infrastructure upgrades can unlock new residential opportunities and support sustainable population growth. Through targeted planning, coordinated investment and strategic infrastructure delivery, the region is well positioned to support a diverse, affordable and resilient housing market that enables sustainable population growth, strengthens communities and enhances liveability.

Charters Towers Regional Council's strategic direction emphasises the positive role that coordinated infrastructure delivery, improved water security, digital connectivity and transport upgrades can play in enabling both infill and greenfield development. With major projects such as CopperString and expanded agricultural and service sector activity on the horizon, the region is well-positioned to align housing supply with future economic opportunities, enhance liveability across townships and support a resilient and growing community.

Key infrastructure

The Charters Towers region is supported by a network of transport, water, energy and community infrastructure that underpins its role as a major inland service hub. Key existing assets include the Flinders Highway, which provides the primary east-west connection to Townsville and the Port of Townsville, and links into the Bruce Highway for broader state and national freight movement. The Mount Isa Line supports mining and agricultural exports, while essential community infrastructure, such as the Charters Towers Hospital, regional schools, emergency services and the Charters Towers Airport, supports health, education, emergency response and aviation activities (including training), with the airport also offering longer-term potential to support logistics and freight operations. Council's Operational and Delivery Plans also commit to ongoing upgrades across local roads, water and wastewater networks, saleyards, open spaces and community facilities.

Committed infrastructure investments will further strengthen the region's capacity for economic and residential growth. CopperString will connect the North West Minerals Province to the national electricity grid, unlocking opportunities in mining, minerals processing and renewable energy. Charters Towers Regional Council's Water for Growth program will deliver staged upgrades to ageing water infrastructure, improving system performance, reliability and future capacity. Together, these initiatives position the Charters Towers Region to accommodate population growth, support industry expansion and enhance its role in freight and supply chain networks across northern Queensland.



Ingham, Shire of Hinchinbrook



Hinchinbrook Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

2,807 km²

POPULATION

10,990

KEY CENTRES

Ingham

OTHER COMMUNITIES

Lucinda, Forrest Beach,
Halifax, Taylors Beach,
Trebonne, and Toobanna

Unique characteristics

The Hinchinbrook Shire is defined by a dramatic tropical landscape where rugged rainforest covered mountains descend to fertile river plains and a highly diverse coastline. Much of the shire lies within the World Heritage-listed Wet Tropics of Queensland, characterised by steep ranges, dense rainforest and high rainfall environments that shape prominent landforms such as Wallaman Falls, Australia's highest single-drop waterfall. The landscape transitions eastward into the extensive floodplain of the Herbert River, a significant river where fertile alluvial soils, wetlands and estuaries support both rich ecosystems and agricultural land uses. Offshore, the mountainous Hinchinbrook Island and the surrounding coastal environments form part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, featuring mangrove systems, seagrass meadows and diverse marine habitats. Together these interconnected mountain, riverine and coastal systems create a distinctive natural setting that underpins the scenic character, biodiversity and environmental significance of the shire.

The urban structure of Hinchinbrook Shire is characterised by a small network of rural townships dispersed across the coastal plain and along key transport corridors. The principal centre is Ingham, which functions as the administrative, commercial and service hub for the shire, with a traditional main street layout and a compact town centre supporting surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Forrest Beach is a valued coastal, residential asset for the Hinchinbrook Shire, offering abundant natural environment that supports local tourism, recreation, and important marine habitats such as turtle nesting areas. Its relaxed lifestyle, fishing opportunities and beachfront facilities make it a key destination that enhances the Shire's liveability and appeal for visitors and residents alike.

Smaller settlements such as Halifax, Taylors Beach and Lucinda provide local residential communities and coastal access points, often closely connected to agriculture, fishing and tourism. Urban development generally follows the flat floodplain and transport routes near the Herbert River, with townships separated by large areas of sugarcane farmland and natural landscapes, creating a distinctly low-density, rural settlement pattern with strong visual connections to surrounding mountains, waterways and the coast.

Economic aspirations

The economy of Hinchinbrook Shire has strong potential to expand beyond its established agricultural base through emerging renewable energy, bioenergy and marine industry opportunities. The region's extensive sugarcane industry across the Herbert River floodplain provides a significant source of biomass through cane residues such as bagasse and agricultural by-products, which can support bioenergy generation and other value-added bio-industries. These opportunities align with broader transitions toward renewable energy and regional decarbonisation, allowing existing agricultural infrastructure and processing facilities to play a role in clean energy production. In addition, the Shire's coastal location and established port infrastructure at Lucinda create opportunities for growth in marine industries, including commercial fishing, aquaculture, marine services and recreational boating support, building on the region's long-standing connection to the sea.

Tourism and events also represent important avenues for economic diversification in the Shire. The region's proximity to internationally significant natural attractions such as Hinchinbrook Island, Wallaman Falls and the Great Barrier Reef provides strong foundations for nature-based tourism, including hiking, fishing, boating and eco-experiences. Events and festivals centred on local culture, food and the region's natural environment also have the potential to attract visitors and support small businesses across the Shire's townships, particularly Ingham. With growing demand for authentic regional experiences and sustainable travel, expanding ecotourism infrastructure, outdoor recreation and community events can further enhance Hinchinbrook's profile as a distinctive tropical destination while supporting local employment and investment.

Housing aspirations

Housing growth in Hinchinbrook Shire is expected to occur through a combination of strategic land release and more efficient use of existing urban areas. In particular, the corridor between Ingham and Toobanna presents opportunities for future residential expansion due to its resilience to impacts of flood and coastal hazards, proximity to services, transport connections and employment areas. Planned land release in this corridor can support population growth while reinforcing Ingham's role as the region's primary service centre. At the same time, opportunities for infill development within established residential areas of Ingham and nearby townships provide a way to accommodate gradual growth while making better use of existing infrastructure and community facilities.

Maintaining housing affordability remains a key objective for the Shire and is widely recognised as one of the region's competitive advantages compared with larger regional centres and metropolitan areas. By managing land supply, encouraging a diversity of housing options and supporting incremental infill development, the Shire can continue to offer accessible home ownership and rental opportunities for residents. Preserving this affordability will be important for attracting new residents, supporting local workforce needs and ensuring that communities across the shire remain inclusive, sustainable and well-connected to employment and services.

Key infrastructure

Growth in Hinchinbrook Shire is supported by a network of transport and logistics infrastructure that connects the region to northern Queensland and national markets. The Bruce Highway runs through the shire and provides the primary north-south road corridor linking local communities with major regional centres such as Townsville and Cairns. This corridor supports the movement of agricultural produce, freight and visitors while also connecting residents to employment, services and regional airports. Complementing the highway network, the North Coast railway line passes through Ingham and provides freight connectivity for agricultural industries, particularly the transport of bulk commodities and goods to export facilities and regional markets. The presence of established transport and utility networks also supports opportunities for new infrastructure associated with renewable energy

generation, including the development of solar, bioenergy and other clean energy projects connected to regional energy networks. The proposed Bruce Highway, Ingham to Cardwell Range Deviation corridor has been preserved for the long-term to accommodate future traffic needs, improve flood immunity and enhance safety. Flood resilience to the Bruce Highway through the Hinchinbrook Shire is critical to the ongoing performance and function of both the transport and logistics network, and to the future prosperity of the Hinchinbrook community. Decisive action will enhance this prosperity.

Marine and local infrastructure networks also play a key role in supporting the shire's economy and future growth. The bulk sugar export facility and jetty at Lucinda provides an important logistics link for the region's agricultural sector and contributes to the shire's connection with global markets. Local road networks connect rural communities, agricultural land and coastal townships across the Lower Herbert landscape, supporting the efficient movement of goods and residents. In addition, essential services infrastructure—including water supply, wastewater systems, energy and telecommunications—supports existing communities and provides a foundation for future residential, tourism and industry development. These networks also provide the platform to support emerging renewable energy and bioenergy initiatives, particularly those linked to the region's agricultural industries and growing demand for sustainable energy production.

The planned expansion of the reticulated sewerage infrastructure network to the south of Ingham represents a strategic investment in the sustainable growth of the Hinchinbrook Shire. This initiative will enable development within land identified as more resilient to natural hazards, while efficiently extending services from the existing township to support a balanced mix of residential, recreational and employment opportunities for the community.



Coolgaree Bay, Palm Island

Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism



Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION 	AREA SIZE 72 km ²	KEY CENTRE Palm Island
	POPULATION 2,180	

Unique characteristics

Palm Island is one of Australia's largest discrete Aboriginal communities and occupies a unique position within the North Queensland region. The island covers approximately 72 square kilometres and is characterised by small bays, sandy beaches, fringing reefs, freshwater streams and steep forested mountains rising to the highest peak of 548 metres at Bentley Ridge.

While geographically close to Townsville and closely connected to the wider regional economy, Palm Island experiences many of the characteristics commonly associated with remote communities, including significantly higher construction costs, freight dependency, infrastructure delivery challenges and limited economies of scale.

Palm Island's cultural significance, strong First Nations identity, strategic location within the Great Barrier Reef region, outstanding natural environment and close economic relationship with Townsville position the community as an important contributor to North Queensland's cultural, social and economic future.

Palm Island operates predominantly on Deed of Grant in Trust land, creating a planning and development environment that differs considerably from neighbouring local government areas.

Economic aspirations

Palm Island's economic aspirations extend beyond traditional measures of economic growth and focus on increasing locally based economic infrastructure, strengthening local business opportunity, improving workforce participation, supporting Indigenous entrepreneurship and retaining wealth within the community through enterprise, tourism, industry and retail offerings.

Economic leakage will be reduced by creating opportunities for local enterprise development, apprenticeships, training pathways, business growth

and regional partnerships. Economic development on Palm Island should be viewed not only through the lens of conventional market activity but also through the essential service, infrastructure and community development functions required to support a thriving island community.

Significant opportunities exist in cultural tourism, ecotourism, marine industries, fisheries, construction, education and training, essential services and industrial, retail and enterprise development. Palm Island's natural environment, cultural heritage and position within the Great Barrier Reef region provide the foundation for a distinctive visitor economy that complements and enhances wider North Queensland tourism offerings.

The Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council, public sector, community services, education, and healthcare currently play significant roles in Palm Island's economy, providing important employment opportunities and essential services for residents. The presence of schools, TAFE and health facilities supports workforce development by building local skills and creating employment pathways.

Additional industrial and employment land opportunities may arise on Palm Island through the establishment of an industrial estate. This would not only support local enterprise and indigenous business growth but would also (in conjunction with marine infrastructure) help safeguard and improve delivery and logistics for essential services, reliability of access, housing and tourism, trades service industries and future employment growth.

Importantly, investment in Palm Island generates benefits across the broader region through freight, construction, professional services, training, transport, tourism and supply-chain activity. Future economic planning should recognise Palm Island as both a contributor to and beneficiary of a strong North Queensland economy.

Housing aspirations

Palm Island's housing aspirations are focused on reducing overcrowding, increasing housing availability, supporting aspirations for home ownership, improving housing quality and ensuring sufficient housing supply to support both current and future community needs. Expanding the supply of housing is essential to addressing overcrowding, meeting the needs of a growing population and improving living conditions for residents. Beyond increasing housing numbers, there is a strong focus on delivering safe, secure and appropriate homes that support healthy families, stable households and stronger community outcomes.

An important aspiration for the community is increasing access to home ownership and providing a broader range of housing options. Initiatives that support pathways to ownership can help families build long-term security, create intergenerational wealth and strengthen connections to place. Greater housing choice also allows residents to access homes that better meet their needs at different stages of life, contributing to a more robust and thriving Palm Island.

Looking ahead, Palm Island's housing aspirations centre on ensuring all residents have access to quality housing that supports healthy, prosperous and connected communities. Improved housing outcomes can contribute to workforce attraction and retention, better educational and health outcomes, greater community stability and enhanced quality of life.

Key infrastructure

Palm Island's infrastructure is concentrated around supporting a remote island community and enabling future growth. Key infrastructure includes housing, water supply and treatment facilities, sewerage networks, power generation and distribution infrastructure, road networks, waste and recycling facilities, health services, schools, the TAFE campus, community facilities and Council service centres.

Palm Island's economy and essential services are especially reliant upon marine and barge infrastructure and logistics. Their reliability and safety are particularly important to local aspirations for enhanced housing delivery and tourism activation.

Much of Palm Island's infrastructure is located within the main township area and strategic service precincts such as The Farm, Solomon and Wallaby Point. Looking ahead, priorities focus on delivering additional housing and investing in enabling infrastructure, including utilities, transport, community facilities and digital connectivity, to support population growth, and create greater economic opportunities for residents.



Townsville City Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

3,731 km²

POPULATION

195,457

KEY CENTRES

Townsville CBD

OTHER COMMUNITIES

Aitkenvale, Douglas, Hyde Park and Thuringowa

Unique characteristics

Townsville is the largest city in northern Australia and known as the unofficial capital of North Queensland. It offers a vibrant tropical lifestyle with the perks of a metropolitan city. The city combines natural beauty, affordable living, short commutes, and more than 300 days of sunshine a year.

The unique character of Townsville comes from the interplay between natural assets – such as Magnetic Island, Paluma Range, Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Bowling Green Bay National Park and RAMSAR wetlands, and the Cape Pallarenda Conservation Park and Townsville Town Common. Environmental values are central to community life, with the community placing high importance on protecting coastal areas, maintaining biodiversity and managing growth in a way that respects the area's natural settings.

Located at the base of the iconic Castle Hill, Townsville City has developed on the back of its strategic port facilities and role as an administrative and defence hub. The settlement pattern of Townsville has traditionally followed Ross River, with key centres including Aitkenvale and Thuringowa. Emerging communities are located on the northern and southern fringes of the city. Smaller coastal townships and rural communities are located along the Townsville coastline and hinterland, from Balgal Beach to the north, Cungulla to the south and Woodstock to the west.

Economic aspirations

Townsville is underpinned by a diverse economy, with no single sector greater than 20%. Significant industries include retail trade, health and education services, government administration and defence, construction, mining and manufacturing, and property and business services.

The Port of Townsville is a critical import and export hub for the broader region's mining and agricultural industries which are connected by an integrated rail and road network.

A pipeline of regionally and nationally significant projects including CopperString, NQSpark, Lavarack and Royal Australian Air Force base upgrades, Townsville Port expansion, and Queensland Resources Common User Facilities secures Townsville's economic prosperity into the future but also reinforces the importance of planning to accommodate the growing city. In addition to these committed projects, numerous industrial projects associated with the Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct and the Cleveland Bay Industrial Park are projected to contribute significantly to Townsville's growth.

There are opportunities to diversify and strengthen Townsville's economic base by leveraging its established health, education and tourism sectors. The Townsville University Hospital is home to the largest tertiary hospital outside of South East Queensland, providing health services to a catchment of over 700,000 people across North and Far North Queensland. The Townsville University Hospital and James Cook University precinct create opportunities for investment in specialist services, research partnership, workforce development, innovation and industry-aligned learning pathways.

The coastal setting, cultural experiences and gateway access to the Great Barrier Reef and Magnetic Island presents major opportunities that can be further capitalised on to support tourism growth for Townsville.

Housing aspirations

Townsville's settlement pattern is shaped by a network of urban, suburban, rural and coastal communities that extend outward from the city centre. Older, inner-city suburbs are characterised by a mix of traditional and character dwellings and medium density residential complexes. Modern residential estates have developed on the fringes of Townsville and are generally characterised by detached dwellings.

Townsville's housing sector remains relatively affordable in comparison to other cities across Australia. In more recent years, Townsville's housing affordability and availability have reduced due to a significant increase in housing demand and without a sufficient supply of new housing delivery. For Townsville to achieve its growth potential, there needs to be an increase in housing diversity and the supply of that diversity.

There is currently a sufficient supply of land designated for both greenfield and infill residential purposes in Townsville. Over the past decade though, the predominant form of housing being delivered are detached dwellings in greenfield development fronts, with the rate of attached and detached dwelling delivery being approximately 5 per cent and 95 per cent respectively. Much of Townsville's future housing growth will continue to be provided via greenfield development areas and there is a need to ensure that infrastructure planning and delivery is coordinated to ensure the servicing of these estates can be achieved. There is also a need to explore opportunities to support infill housing development in appropriate locations.

Core aims for housing delivery in Townsville over the next few years include:

- Increase the rate of housing delivery per annum by around 500 new dwellings to around 1,200 new dwellings per year.
- Increase the proportion of new housing being delivered as infill development from less than 5 per cent to around 10 per cent.
- Maintain Townsville's affordability advantage relative to capital city markets.

Key infrastructure

Townsville's infrastructure network is underpinned by nationally significant transport corridors, including the Bruce Highway, which forms the primary north-south freight and passenger spine and the Flinders Highway, which links the region westward to Mount Isa and the inland mining and agricultural supply chain. The Port of Townsville serves as a critical export gateway for minerals, defence logistics, agricultural products, and oversize overmass cargo. It is supported by integrated rail connections (Mount Isa Line) and the Townsville Port Access Road that streamline freight movements across the North Queensland region. Townsville Airport, a major regional aviation hub, further enhances connectivity for passenger travel, defence operations and air freight.

Ensuring long-term water security and access to affordable, reliable power remains essential to sustaining ongoing growth and expansion of Townsville. Access to competitively priced energy supported by the region's growing renewable energy generation and transmission capacity is increasingly important for attracting large-scale manufacturing, minerals processing and clean energy industries that underpin North Queensland's future economic resilience.

Complementing this transport network are key social and economic assets such as Townsville University Hospital and James Cook University, which act as regional centres for health, education, research and workforce development. Together, these facilities, alongside ongoing upgrades to highways, rail links and port capacity, form a resilient infrastructure system that supports population growth, industry development and long-term regional productivity.

PART 1

About the **Regional Plan**

 Cane fields, Burdekin

ABOUT THE REGIONAL PLAN

This part outlines the:

- region of which the draft North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026 applies
- overarching purpose of the Regional Plan with reference to the relevant section of the *Planning Act 2016* (Planning Act)
- planning horizon and when the Regional Plan commences
- overall structure of the Regional Plan, including the supporting Infrastructure Plan.

Introduction

The region

The Regional Plan applies in the following local government areas (LGAs) as shown in **Map 2**:

- Burdekin
- Charters Towers
- Townsville
- Hinchinbrook
- Palm Island.



Elliot Springs, Townsville

Map 2

Local government areas of North Queensland

FAR NORTH
QUEENSLAND
REGIONAL PLAN

NORTH WEST
REGIONAL PLAN

CENTRAL WEST
REGIONAL PLAN

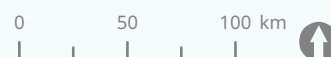
GREATER WHITSUNDAY
REGIONAL PLAN

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND
REGIONAL PLAN

Legend

-  Major road
-  Major river
-  Major waterbody
-  Reef and shoals
-  Local government boundary
-  Surrounding regional plan boundary
-  North Queensland Regional Plan boundary

This map should be read and used in conjunction with the copyright information, general disclaimer and mapping disclaimer on page 2 of this publication (the draft North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026).



ABOUT THE REGIONAL PLAN

Purpose of the Regional Plan

The Regional Plan, including its supporting Infrastructure Plan (Appendix 1), is a state planning instrument and has been prepared in accordance with section 10 of the Planning Act.

The Regional Plan has been prepared with a 20 year horizon, guiding planning towards 2046.

The purpose of the Regional Plan is to set out the Queensland Government's strategic land use planning framework for the region which advances the purpose of the Planning Act. In seeking to achieve this purpose the Regional Plan identifies:

- the strategic intent which is the state's regional planning vision and expresses the aspirations for managing future land use and development for the region
- regional outcomes for the region
- land use strategies for achieving the regional outcomes.

The purpose of the Infrastructure Plan is to advance state interests and support the Queensland Government's housing and economic growth priorities. The Infrastructure Plan focuses on transformative infrastructure relative to North Queensland. The Infrastructure Plan identifies infrastructure planning outcomes and strategies, region shaping infrastructure for transport and future planning considerations to guide how infrastructure supports long-term regional growth.

The Infrastructure Plan is also intended to inform the strategic planning of all levels of government, business and industry to support a more coordinated and sequenced approach to infrastructure investment.

Population, dwelling and employment projections

The Regional Plan is informed by the following baseline projections:

- Population projections – Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) Population Projections, 2025 edition (medium and high series)
- Dwelling projections – QGSO Dwelling Projections, 2025 edition (medium and high series)

- Employment projections – Regional Employment Projections, 2025.

These projections (provided in Schedule 1) represent a policy neutral trend over the plan period, based on historical economic data, industry structure and projected population to 2046.

The National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) planning projections are used to represent the anticipated employment outcomes associated with the implementation of the Regional Plan's land use and infrastructure policies. Detailed NIEIR data will be shared with local government in the region to assist local government planning and Local Government Infrastructure Plan development.

Structure of the Regional Plan

The Regional Plan is comprised of three parts, schedules including definitions, and a supporting Infrastructure Plan which is the sole appendix:

- Part 1 – About the Regional Plan
- Part 2 – Application and effect
- Part 3 – Regional strategic framework
- Appendix 1 – Infrastructure Plan
- Schedules.

Part 1 – About the Regional Plan

Outlines the Regional Plan's purpose, planning horizon and when the plan commences.

Part 2 – Application and effect

Describes the application of the Regional Plan in relation to local planning instruments, its effect under the Planning Act, the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014* (the RPI Act) and other related regulatory frameworks.

ABOUT THE REGIONAL PLAN

Part 3 – Regional strategic framework

Provides regional policy expression about matters of state interests and regional significance contained in the State Planning Policy 2017 (the SPP).

Appendix 1 – Infrastructure Plan

Provides policy outcomes and strategies for matters of state interests in transport, water, energy, digital connectivity and social and community infrastructure, and future planning considerations regarding infrastructure priorities for the region. Includes region shaping infrastructure and infrastructure enhancing strategies for transport.

Schedules

Support and give effect to the Regional Plan through supporting definitions, maps, guidance and information relevant to the operation of the Regional Plan.

Implementation of the Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan

The Regional Plan provides a solid foundation for enhancing planning and development across the region. Its effectiveness will largely depend on the extent to which its objectives are embraced and implemented by government, industry and the community.

The existing planning framework is the primary tool for the implementation of this plan. This includes local government plan-making and development assessment.

Delivery of this plan will also rely on other tools that sit outside of the planning framework including, for example:

- Legislation and statutory instruments such as the *Economic Development Act 2012* and *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*.
- Non-statutory instruments such as Regional Transport Plan.
- Funding mechanisms from federal and state governments under existing initiatives.

Ongoing monitoring of implementation will help determine the effectiveness of policies and, in turn, help shape future reviews of the plan. Regional planning is cyclical and involves plan-making, monitoring and reviewing being repeated over time.



Local grazier

Department of Primary Industries

PART 2

Application and effect

 Cosgrove, Townsville

APPLICATION AND EFFECT

The Queensland planning framework

The Regional Plan is part of a suite of policies and statutory instruments which guide land use planning and development throughout the state as illustrated in **Figure 1**.

The SPP sets out the state interests in planning and development and applies to:

- local government when making or amending a local planning instrument.

- state government when making or amending a Regional Plan.

The Regional Plan includes regional outcomes and land use strategies which assist in identifying the future regional land use pattern for local government to integrate in their planning scheme.

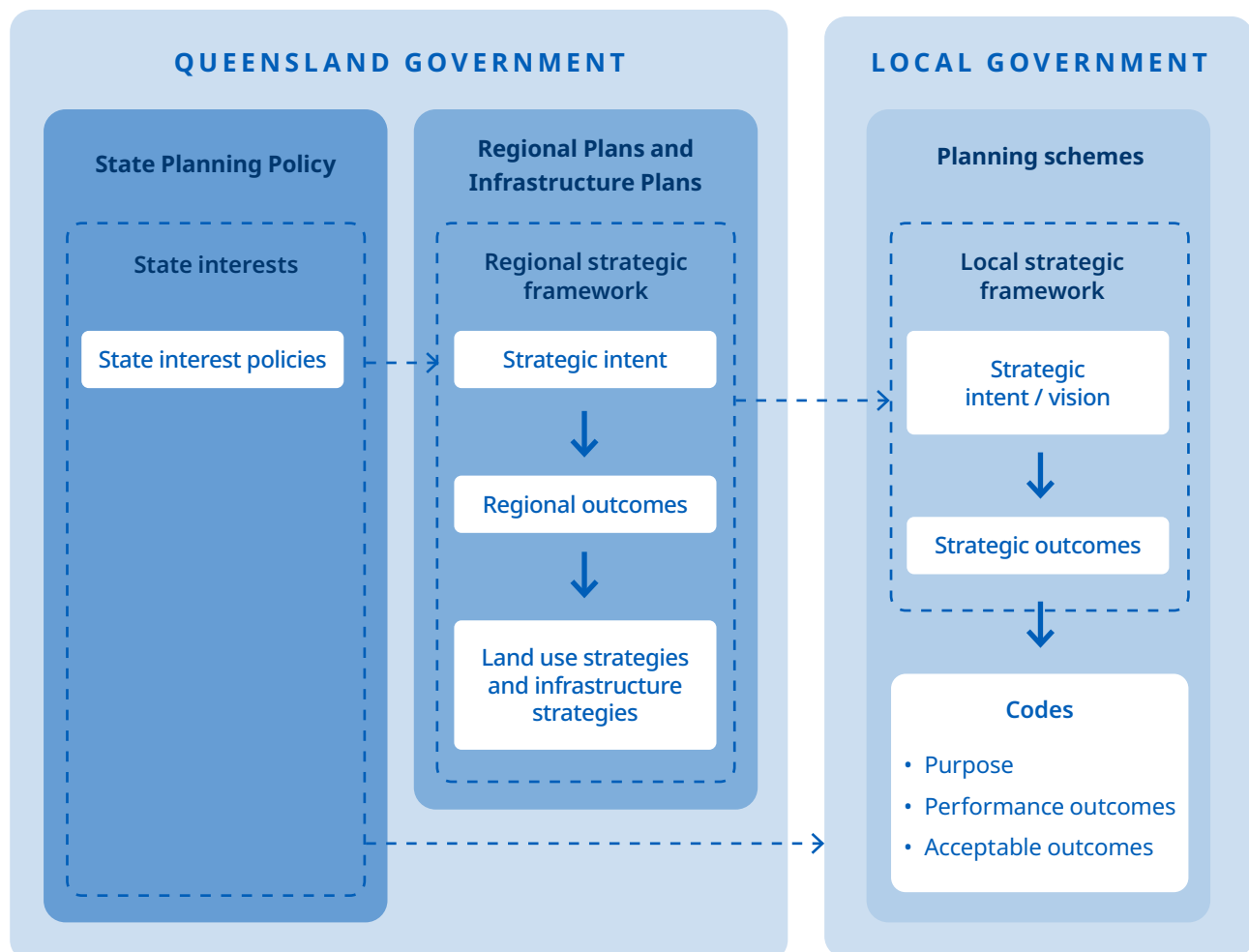


Figure 1 - Queensland plan making framework

Note: A Regional Plan is not required to address all of the state interests set down in the SPP. State interests not addressed in the Regional Plan still continue to apply in making and amending local planning instruments and development assessment where relevant.

APPLICATION AND EFFECT

State interests reflected in the North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan

Regional Plan

This Regional Plan reflects the following matters of state interests:

- Housing supply
- Agriculture
- Development and construction
- Mining and extractive resources
- Tourism

Infrastructure Plan

This Infrastructure Plan reflects the following matters of state interests:

- Transport
- Water
- Energy
- Digital connectivity
- Social and community infrastructure

Areas of regional interest identified in the Regional Plan

The Regional Plan identifies the following Areas of Regional Interest (ARI) as defined in the RPI Act for the region. They are:

- Priority Agricultural Areas (PAA)
- Priority Living Areas (PLA)

APPLICATION AND EFFECT

Application

Local government plan making

When making or amending a local planning instrument, local government must advance this Regional Plan, including the supporting Infrastructure Plan, by demonstrating how the local planning instrument integrates:

- the strategic intent
- the regional growth pattern
- regional outcomes to achieve the strategic intent
- land use strategies to deliver on the regional outcomes
- infrastructure outcomes and strategies, including Appendix 1 – Infrastructure Plan.

This Regional Plan also identifies ARI such as PAA and PLA with associated regional outcomes and land use strategies. While ARI is defined under the RPI Act to apply to resource activities and regulated activities, for the purposes of achieving consistent planning outcomes, local government must appropriately consider and integrate them into their planning schemes.

Development assessment under the Planning Act

Depending on the circumstances, the following sections of the Regional Plan may be relevant in the assessment of a development application:

- Part 3 – Regional strategic framework – Strategic intent (including regional growth pattern), regional outcomes, and land use strategies (other than land use strategies identified below).
- Appendix 1 - Infrastructure Plan.

To remove any doubt, the following aspects of this Regional Plan are not relevant to development assessment, whether as a ‘relevant matter’ or on any other basis:

- Minister’s foreword.
- Our region and our future
- Local government narratives
- The following land use strategies:
 - Housing supply land use strategy 1.1
 - Development and construction land use strategy 1.1.
- Future planning considerations within Appendix 1 - Infrastructure Plan.

For the purposes of the *Planning Regulation 2017*:

- the strategic intent in Part 3 – the regional strategic framework is the strategic intent stated in the Regional Plan;
- the regional outcomes in Part 3 – the regional strategic framework are the desired regional outcomes stated in this Regional Plan.

Development assessment under the RPI Act

This Regional Plan is relevant for the assessment of applications under the RPI Act for a regional interests development approval. A regional interests development approval may be required for resource activities or regulated activities proposed to occur within an area of regional interest.

Areas of regional interest as defined in this Regional Plan to which the RPI Act applies are:

- PAA
- PLA.

Note: Policy intent is taken to be the regional outcomes and land use strategies identified in Part 3 – Regional strategic framework, to the extent relevant.

APPLICATION AND EFFECT

Effect

The Regional Plan, including the supporting Infrastructure Plan, is a state planning instrument prepared in accordance with the Planning Act and is a statutory instrument under the *Statutory Instruments Act 1992*.

The Regional Plan, including the supporting Infrastructure Plan, apply to the area defined as the North Queensland region and establishes the regional policy expression about matters of state interest and regional significance which are used to inform the:

- making and amending of a planning scheme
- assessment of development made assessable under the Planning Act
- assessment of applications under the RPI Act.

Interpretation

Definitions

Terms used in the Regional Plan have the meaning assigned to the term by one of the following:

- the Planning Act
- the Planning Regulation
- the RPI Act
- the RPI Regulation
- the SPP
- the Glossary
- the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*
- the ordinary meaning where the term is not defined in any of the above.

Where a term has been assigned a meaning in more than one of the instruments listed above, the meaning contained in the instrument highest on the list will prevail.

Maps

Maps provide spatial information to support this Regional Plan. The department's interactive mapping system displays relevant spatial information for this Regional Plan.

Notes, editor's note and footnotes

Notes are identified by the title 'note' and are part of the Regional Plan.

Editor's notes and footnotes are extrinsic material, as per the *Acts Interpretation Act 1954*, and are identified by the title 'editor's note' and 'footnote' and may provide contextual information, explanatory material, references or guidance to support the understanding of the Regional Plan.

North Queensland Infrastructure Plan

The Infrastructure Plan forms part of the Regional Plan, it:

- is an appendix to the Regional Plan
- strengthens alignment between land use and infrastructure planning
- includes infrastructure policies and strategies to be integrated into planning schemes and given regard in development assessment processes to the extent relevant
- includes future planning considerations outlining future infrastructure priorities for the region that are as yet unfunded.

The delivery of the Infrastructure Plan relies on other tools that sit outside of the planning framework including, for example:

- Non-statutory instruments, such as Regional Transport Plans that define the intended development of transport systems across regions.
- Funding mechanisms from federal and state governments under existing initiatives.

Editor's note: The draft North Queensland Infrastructure Plan 2026 reflects the Queensland Government's commitment to coordinated infrastructure delivery and complements broader infrastructure planning by agencies to ensure infrastructure delivery meets the changing needs of Queensland's population and economy.



PART 3

Regional **strategic** **framework**



Ingham, Hinchinbrook

REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Preliminary

The regional strategic framework sets the regional policy direction for the North Queensland region.

For the purposes of describing the regional policy direction for the Regional Plan, the framework is structured as follows:

- the strategic intent
- the regional growth pattern
- two themes (housing and economy) which collectively represent the policy intent of the Regional Plan
- the regional outcomes for the region for each theme
- the land use strategies for achieving the regional outcomes.



Townsville Connection Road project

Transport and Main Roads

REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Strategic intent

A place to call home

The North Queensland region is home to approximately 237,000 people and is projected to grow to around 297,000 by 2046. Accommodating an additional 60,000 residents will require a responsive and well-planned housing supply that supports existing and future communities. To support this growth, the plan ensures there will be sufficient land available to meet projected demand to 2046, with capacity to accommodate a range of housing forms across different locations ensuring sufficient market flexibility to support timely housing delivery at scale.

Housing demand in the region is impacted by the needs of non-resident workers who support the region's key industries. Sectors such as mining, large-scale infrastructure, energy and seasonal agriculture rely on workers who may require temporary accommodation for extended periods. The provision of appropriately located purpose-built worker accommodation is essential to supporting these industries and unlocking economic opportunities, particularly in regional and remote areas.

An economic powerhouse

North Queensland's regional structure comprises a network of interconnected centres that collectively drive economic activity and regional productivity. Townsville, as the main centre of the region and the largest city in northern Australia, plays a central coordinating role within this network, providing specialised infrastructure and key connections to freight, logistics and global markets. Surrounding centres including Ayr, Charters Towers, Ingham and Palm Island perform distinct and complementary roles, supporting key industries and maintaining strong links to surrounding productive landscapes. Together, this network supports coordinated growth and the efficient movement of goods, services and people across the region.

The North Queensland economy is underpinned by a diverse range of established industries, including agriculture, health, education, defence, manufacturing, mining and tourism. These industries are supported by long-term investment in enabling infrastructure including world-class research and education

institutions, the Port of Townsville and major industrial assets. Townsville is also earmarked as a strategic hub for new fuel storage and refining projects aimed at bolstering state and national fuel security.

Supported by strategic port, aviation and logistics assets, North Queensland plays a key role in connecting regional industries with Asia-Pacific and global markets, facilitating trade, supply chain resilience and international investment.

Building on these strengths, economic growth and diversification across the region are driven by the expansion of established industries, alongside increased activity in emerging sectors linked to manufacturing and energy.

The regional economy is projected to expand significantly to 2046, with employment expected to increase by 19,000 additional jobs. This growth is underpinned by sustained investment across defence, accommodation and education, tourism and other major service sectors, which continue to anchor North Queensland's economic base. While Townsville will accommodate the majority of new job creation as the region's principal employment centre, emerging industries, including biofuels and critical minerals processing, present substantial opportunities for economic diversification and job growth across the broader region.

The employment projections (Schedule 4) for North Queensland highlight strong growth between 2021 and 2046, providing a strategic picture of how the regional workforce is expected to evolve in scale, composition and skills demand over the next two decades. Schedule 4 contains local government area specific projected employment by industry.

To ensure the region capitalises on its growth opportunities, this plan focuses on enabling economic growth through long-term planning for land use, infrastructure and economic development. This includes guiding development to appropriate locations and ensuring planning frameworks are responsive to emerging sectors, while protecting the viability and ongoing success of established industries.

REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Regional growth pattern

North Queensland is expected to accommodate 60,000 additional people by 2046, requiring the need to plan for over 20,000 new homes and 19,000 new jobs over the life of the plan. The regional growth pattern ensures adequate land for future housing, employment and economic opportunities. Regional Land Use Categories (RLUCs) provide the framework for this pattern, balancing growth opportunities whilst protecting the rural, natural and productive landscapes and their contribution to Queensland's economy.

The RLUCs that establish the regional growth pattern are:

- Urban Footprint
- Regional Township Footprint (RTF)
- Rural Living Area (RLA)
- Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (RLRPA).

The regional growth pattern reinforces Townsville's role as the primary regional centre across the region. It is supported by a network of regional, rural and remote communities, including the key townships of Charters Towers, Palm Island, Ingham and Ayr. Development is to occur in a manner which contributes to and reflects the intent and principles which underpin each RLUC.

A new RLUC has been introduced for the first time to address the unique growth patterns of Queensland's rural and remote townships. The RTF provides for a diverse range of land uses which allow regional towns to adapt to economic opportunities that fulfill both rural and urban roles.

The Urban Footprint, RTF, RLA and RLRPA within the region are shown on **Map 3**. The contents of this map are also published on the department's online interactive mapping system, which should be used to determine whether or not individual parcels are within the Urban Footprint, RTF, RLA or RLRPA.

The intent, description and the associated principles for each of the RLUCs is contained in Schedule 2.

The Regional Plan acknowledges that not all future circumstances can be anticipated. Where there is greater demand or unanticipated opportunities for land outside the Urban Footprint or RTF to meet housing or employment needs to 2046, local governments may propose to allocate land to a zone that is inconsistent with the intention of the RLUC. Any such proposals must be supported by an assessment against the relevant RLUC principles and justification for any inconsistency is to be provided to the state government for review and approval, as part of the state interests review process, when making or amending a local planning instrument.

Map 3 Regional growth pattern



THEME 1

Housing



Cosgrove, Townsville



Housing supply

Context

A strong and reliable housing supply pipeline is essential to support population growth and meet the housing needs of communities across the region.

Planning plays a central role in this by identifying suitable land for new communities and enabling opportunities for redevelopment, providing the timely capacity required to support the state's target of one million homes by 2044. While many factors influence the rate of housing delivery, planning frameworks must ensure adequate land capacity and aligned infrastructure delivery to enable homes to be delivered over time.

The North Queensland region is projected to experience continued population growth to 2046, driving demand for around 20,000 new dwellings across the region. While the majority of urban growth is expected to occur in Townsville (which accounts for approximately 96 per cent of projected growth) other regional towns and communities are also anticipated to experience meaningful increases over the next 20 years.

Population projections provide the foundation for estimating future dwelling requirements; however, housing demand is shaped by a range of additional factors, including demographic change, housing preferences, construction feasibility and the impacts of major infrastructure, energy and resource projects. Minimum dwelling supply targets have been established for each local government area to provide

a clear, measurable framework for monitoring housing capacity and delivery over the life of the plan.

To support the achievement of these targets, housing supply is integrated into the regional growth pattern. The RLUCs identify locations where housing can be appropriately accommodated through local planning schemes, including a mix of greenfield and infill development opportunities, to support market flexibility and housing choice.

Housing supply in the region also includes the needs of non-resident workers who support key industries such as mining, large-scale infrastructure, energy development and seasonal agriculture. These industries often rely on a temporary workforce requiring purpose-built accommodation for extended periods, particularly in remote areas or where local labour supply is constrained. Providing appropriately located worker accommodation is critical to enabling economic growth while ensuring development is planned in a way that respects the amenity and wellbeing of surrounding communities.

Planning for suitable worker accommodation also reduces pressure on the private housing market by limiting demand for rental and short-term housing, contributing to housing affordability and protecting access to housing for local residents.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Housing supply for local residents Sufficient capacity is available to accommodate projected dwelling demand to 2046.	1.1 Ensure planning schemes provide at least the capacity to achieve the dwelling supply targets identified in Table 1 . 1.2 Focus the majority of new dwellings within the Urban Footprint and the RTFs to support efficient infrastructure provision and access to services. 1.3 Encourage medium and higher density development in areas that are well-integrated with public transport, employment opportunities and services to help revitalise existing urban areas. 1.4 Prioritise new housing on land with access to existing or future planned services aligning with the policies identified in Appendix 1. 1.5 Support a variety of accommodation types to increase the supply of a range of housing within the region's Urban Footprint and RTF. 1.6 Focus rural residential and lifestyle development within identified Rural Living Areas (RLAs), ensuring these areas provide an appropriate transition between the region's other RLUCs.

Table 1 – Minimum dwelling supply targets

Local government area	2021 dwellings (existing)	Net additional homes to 2046	2046 dwelling supply target (existing + additional)
Burdekin	7,843	442	8,285
Charters Towers	5,368	196	5,564
Hinchinbrook	5,622	199	5,821
Palm Island	517	153	670
Townsville	81,634	19,661	101,295
North Queensland region	100,984	20,651	121,635

Editor's Note: Dwelling supply targets are projected dwellings by 2046. Dwelling supply targets include both occupied and unoccupied private permanent dwellings. Private permanent dwellings include structural dwellings (for example, houses, flats, townhouses) but exclude temporary dwellings (for example, tents, caravans, houseboats). Non-private dwellings (for example, hotels, hospitals, boarding schools, worker accommodation) are not included. Dwelling supply targets apply to land within the region's Urban Footprint, RTFs and RLAs. The target is a minimum. Local governments may wish to plan for housing demand which exceeds the targets. Refer to Schedule 1 for dwelling projection and targets methodology.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
2. Non-resident worker accommodation Non-resident workers are housed in purpose-built accommodation to ensure the permanent housing supply for local residents is maintained.	2.1 Facilitate purpose-built worker accommodation across the region where it: - maintains sufficient separation from the place of work to avoid adverse health, safety and amenity impacts; and - provides workers with an appropriate level of amenity, services and facilities to support their wellbeing and day-to-day needs; and - can demonstrate infrastructure solutions which do not rely on local government infrastructure, unless otherwise agreed.

THEME 2

Economy

 Cane field, Burdekin



Agriculture

Context

Agriculture is fundamental to Queensland's economic productivity, employment and food, fibre and fuel security, supporting both domestic supply and international exports.

Through the Prosper 2050 blueprint, there is a strong focus to ensure primary industries remain profitable and productive for future generations. This includes the need to safeguard prime agricultural land for sustainable primary production.

The agriculture state interest recognises the state and national significance of the sector and the need to protect high value agricultural areas from land uses that would compromise their long-term viability. Land use planning, supported by legislation such as the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*, plays a critical role in safeguarding these areas while enabling compatible allied and emerging industries within the RLRPA.

This Regional Plan includes PAAs which are strategic clusters of the most regionally significant agricultural production areas and contain Priority Agricultural Land Uses (PALUs). The PAAs within the region are shown in **Map 4**. The contents of this map are also published on the department's online interactive mapping system, which should be used to determine whether or not individual parcels are within the PAA. PAAs ensure:

- the region's agricultural sector continues to grow with certainty and investor confidence.
- PALUs are protected within PAAs.
- agricultural production is maintained and enhanced within PAAs.

At the same time, careful consideration is required to manage interactions between agriculture and other major land uses, particularly mining and energy development, which can result in unintended and potentially irreversible impacts. Effective planning is therefore essential to support the successful coexistence of agriculture, mining, energy and surrounding communities.

North Queensland is strongly positioned to benefit from continued growth and export opportunities in the agriculture sector. High quality agricultural land underpins a diverse farming base that delivers significant employment and export value, including the region's long established sugar, livestock, forestry and horticulture industries. Protecting this valuable land is critical not only to sustaining existing billion dollar exports, but also to securing reliable feedstock supplies for emerging industries and opportunities for a more diversified sector.

With established supply chains, supporting infrastructure and local expertise already in place, the region offers strong potential for biofuel production, particularly through the use of sugar and bagasse. This demonstrates the value of co-locating new and emerging industries with existing agricultural activities. While high value agricultural areas are generally located within the RLRPA, limited development directly associated with rural activities may be appropriate where it does not undermine agricultural productivity and regional economic outcomes.

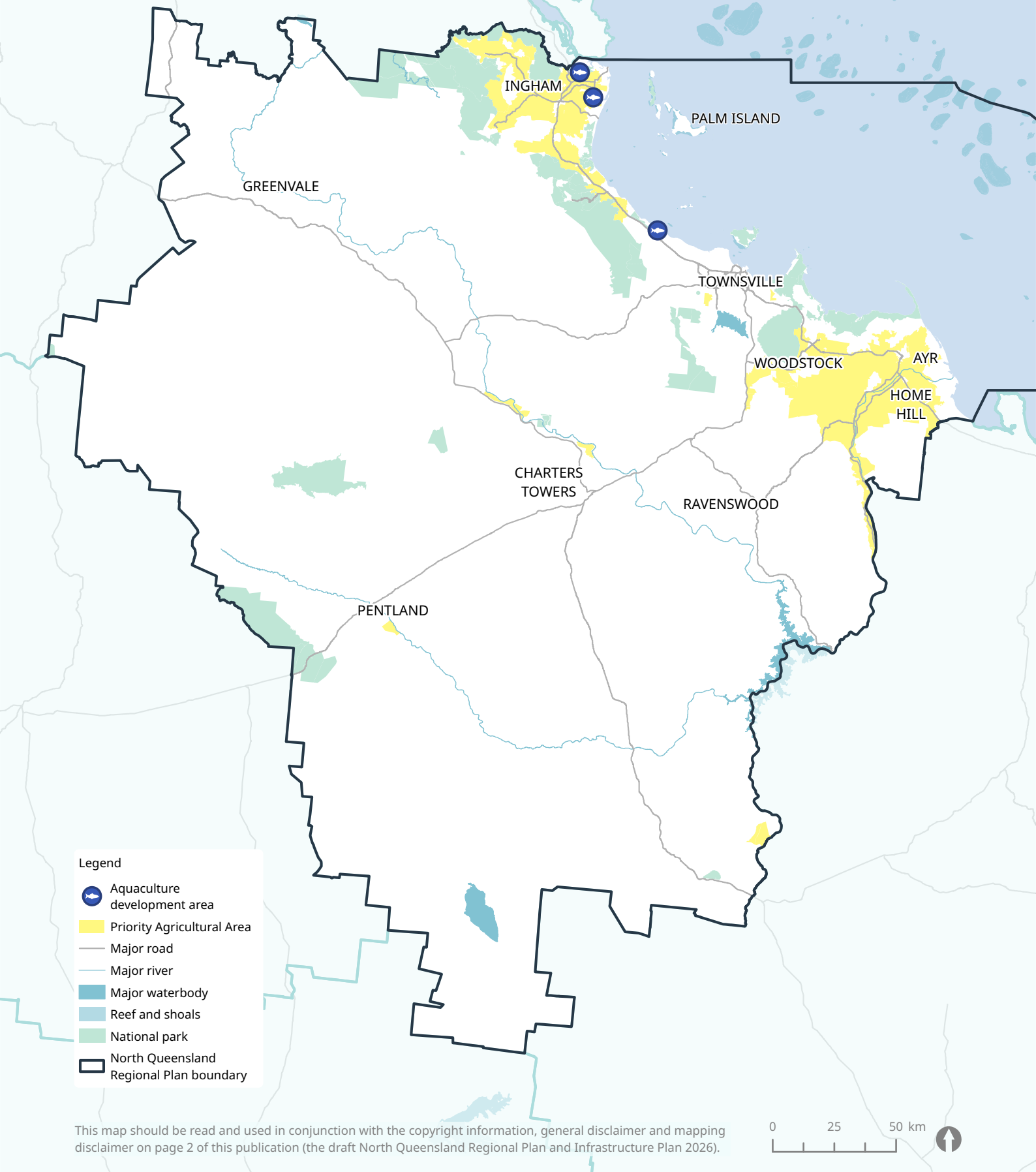
Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Agricultural areas Agricultural land is protected to support rural activities and related supply chains, ensuring its continued contribution to the regional economy while avoiding, managing or mitigating potential negative impacts.	1.1 Protect land within the RLRPA, identified as a PAA, from non-agricultural development which results in a widespread or irreversible impact to the region's agricultural sector. 1.2 Prioritise land within the RLRPA that is identified as a PAA for rural activities, including those supporting agricultural diversification as well as growth and agricultural value-adding opportunities. 1.3 Support rural activities within and adjoining the RTF, where they do not unreasonably impact existing or planned future development. 1.4 Encourage and facilitate new and expanded aquaculture development opportunities in aquacultural development areas (shown on Map 4), with provision for essential ancillary activities.
2. Coexistence of activities within the RLRPA A diverse range of land uses coexist in a compatible manner, enabling economic diversification and growth while managing potential impacts between uses.	2.1 Support opportunities for the co-existence of non-agricultural land uses provided impacts on rural activities are appropriately avoided, managed and mitigated. 2.2 Support opportunities for co-existence of mining and extractive resource activity with rural activities and agricultural uses in areas identified as PAA where impacts can be appropriately mitigated.

Editor's Note: Agricultural diversification may include compatible infrastructure purposes or rehabilitation purposes.

Editor's Note: Non-agricultural land uses include uses such as tourism, waste, infrastructure, industrial and processing activities, energy generation and rehabilitation purposes.

Editor's Note: Mining and resource projects that relate to 2.2 are regulated under the RPI Act

Map 4 Priority Agricultural Areas





Graphinex, Townsville



Development and construction

Context

The development and construction state interest ensures an adequate and appropriately located supply of land to support residential, commercial, industrial and mixed-use development.

This supports a productive construction sector and enables economic growth. Achieving this requires proactive land use planning that establishes a clear growth pattern while remaining responsive to emerging industries and changing economic conditions.

This aligns with the Queensland Government's strategic priorities outlined in the Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Strategy 2025-2030, Queensland Energy Roadmap 2025 and the Queensland Fuel Security Plan, which enable industrial growth, support emerging industries and ensure land and infrastructure are available to facilitate investment and innovation.

North Queensland is projected to accommodate 18,000 additional jobs over the next 20 years, driven by investment in health, defence, education and tourism. While most growth will occur in Townsville, emerging sectors such as biofuels and critical minerals processing will create opportunities across the broader region. The construction sector is also expected to contribute over 8,500 jobs to 2046. These jobs are critical to service the region's growth.

The region's industry base is structured around key precincts, strategic assets and a diverse mix of established and emerging sectors that support regional growth and connectivity. The Port of Townsville is the primary trade gateway, underpinning export industries and logistics networks. The Townsville health and knowledge precinct - anchored by James Cook University and Townsville University Hospital - supports research, education and specialised services, while a significant defence presence drives demand for logistics and advanced manufacturing. These functions are complemented by key regional industries, including agriculture, critical minerals, energy and manufacturing, which contribute to production, value-adding and export activity.

Together with the industrial land network, they reinforce North Queensland's role as a logistics, production and innovation hub for northern Australia.

Within this context, mixed-use development supports the function and growth of key precincts, particularly in Townsville. It enables efficient use of land and infrastructure by integrating residential, commercial, retail, community and employment activities at scales ranging from individual buildings to precincts. Strengthening mixed-use development in strategically located areas, including within and around centres, improves access to jobs and services and supports a more consolidated urban form. The Townsville City Waterfront Priority Development Area provides a contemporary example of successful mixed-use development and will continue to evolve as new development and attractions come online. Planning should support mixed-use development across the region, reflecting local context and the role and function of centres.

The region's industrial land forms an integrated system that supports key industries and connects them to regional and export supply chains, including critical minerals, energy, agriculture, defence and construction, while enabling local servicing industries. The Townsville State Development Area (SDA) and the Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct provide the region's strategically significant medium to high-impact industrial land, performing distinct and complementary roles. The SDA accommodates regionally and state-significant logistics, processing, manufacturing and storage, leveraging proximity to established port, rail and intermodal infrastructure. Lansdown provides capacity for land, extensive, high-impact and transformational industries, supported by medium impact uses and emerging opportunities.

These precincts are supported by a broader network of industrial land across Townsville and surrounding local government areas, accommodating low to medium impact uses and providing production, servicing and employment functions at local and sub-regional scales. The Port of Townsville is critical enabling infrastructure, facilitating the efficient import and export of minerals, defence materiel and agricultural commodities. Recent expansion increases capacity, improves supply chain efficiency and supports future trade growth.

North Queensland is well positioned for industrial expansion and economic diversification, leveraging

its available industrial land supply, strategic transport connections and proximity to resource and agricultural production areas. Future demand will be influenced by major industry investment and infrastructure-led growth across the region.

Additional industrial land supply in the region will be guided by strategic opportunities such as Bohle Plains, and additional areas (subject to evidence based investigations) in the Burdekin, Palm Island, and expansion opportunities to the west of Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Employment land Sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the region's projected employment demand.	1.1 Plan for sufficient land to meet projected employment demand set out in Schedule 4.
2. Commercial, retail and mixed-use development Development supports vibrant, well serviced centres and communities by accommodating complementary land uses in strategically located areas with access to infrastructure, services and amenity.	2.1 Provide for opportunities to grow or expand existing centres to respond to growth in the region's commercial and retail sectors. 2.2 Support mixed-use development, at an appropriate scale, in strategically located areas which benefit from proximity to centres, infrastructure, and amenity. 2.3 Support mixed-use infill development and consolidation in centres where this improves access to jobs, services, tourism assets and infrastructure efficiency. 2.4 Support the growth and expansion of health and knowledge precincts in Townsville, by enabling a mix of health, education, research, commercial, residential and complementary uses in appropriate locations.
3. Industrial land Industrial land is appropriately located to accommodate the region's current and future industrial land demand.	3.1 Ensure sufficient long-term supply of industrial land that meets the requirements of existing and emerging industries in the region. 3.2 Plan for functional and service driven industrial land demand where industrial land needs are shaped by service delivery and logistics requirements. 3.3 Ensure sufficient land and supporting network requirements to meet the need for waste and resource recovery activities. 3.4 Support planning for new industrial precincts where it: - complements existing precincts by filling a gap in demand or service - is unlikely to result in adverse impacts to existing or planned development - can be serviced efficiently by existing or planned infrastructure. 3.5 Protect existing industrial areas and transport corridors from development which would compromise existing industrial development or the ability for industrial development to establish.

Editor's note: Interim employment projections have been used to inform the draft plan. Further updates to employment projections are expected post statutory consultation.



Mining, Ravenswood
Charters Towers Regional Council



Mining and extractive resources

Context

The resources industry is a key driver of Queensland's economy and one of the state's largest export contributors, supplying essential commodities including minerals, coal, petroleum and gas. Continued exploration and development support employment, infrastructure investment, skills development and long-term regional prosperity, while also underpinning other industries and communities across the state.

In Queensland, resource and extractive activities are assessed through distinct legislative pathways. Mining, petroleum, gas and other resource activities are primarily regulated under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*, *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004* and the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*, while extractive resources such as quarry rock, sand, gravel and clay are assessed under the Planning Act. Together, these frameworks play a critical role in protecting existing and potential resource operations from incompatible development.

North Queensland contains a diverse and strategically significant resource base, including established extractive industries and emerging critical minerals opportunities. The sector operates as an integrated supply chain, linking extraction in the North West Minerals Province with processing, logistics and export functions across the region. Within this system, Charters Towers acts as an inland service and logistics centre, connecting resource areas to coastal infrastructure via the Flinders Highway and rail corridor. Townsville functions as the primary processing, manufacturing and export hub, with growing investment in critical minerals processing and downstream industries.

The North West Minerals Province remains one of Australia's most significant mineral regions, underpinning Queensland's position as a global supplier of critical resources. The strong connection between the North West Minerals Province and North Queensland's ports, processing facilities, workforce and transport networks reinforce the region's role as a strategic hub for resource development. Strategic land use planning is essential to protect access to critical

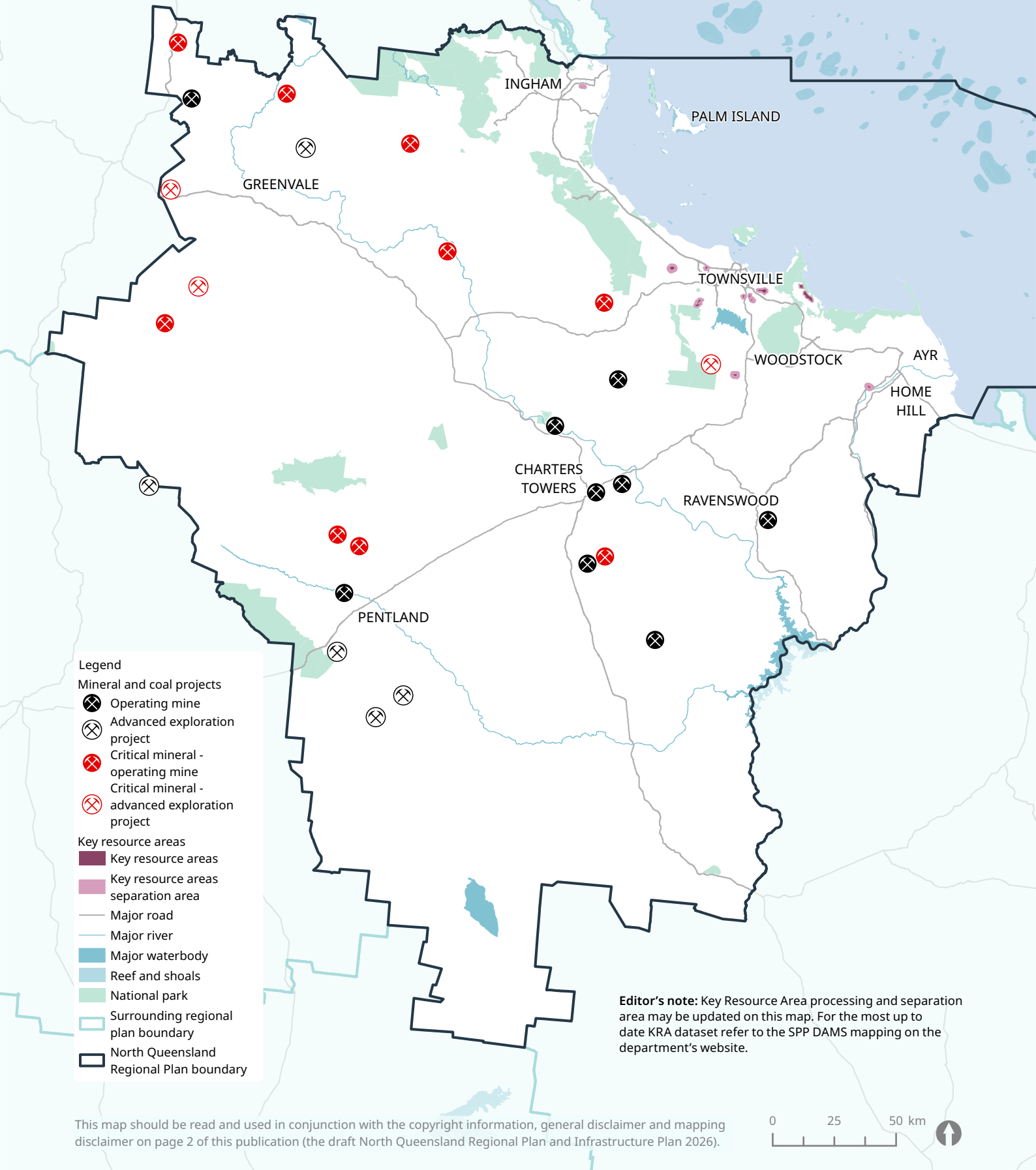
minerals, enable new investment and processing opportunities, and position North Queensland as a key contributor to national and global markets. Land use planning contributes to this state interest through the identification of Key Resource Areas (KRAs), the protection of mining and extractive activities, and the facilitation of coexistence between land uses. The supply of extractive resources, particularly sand, gravel, rock, clay and soil, is essential to support the construction industry and provision of new homes, essential infrastructure and economic development outcomes. The North Queensland region has a diverse resource base providing substantial opportunity. Safeguarding these opportunities through strategic land use planning supports both regional economic resilience and the state's broader resource supply needs.

The protection of KRAs from encroachment by sensitive and incompatible uses is essential to ensuring the economical supply of extractive resources across the region. Safeguarding nearby industrial land and key transport routes is also critical to the ongoing viability of these areas, supporting regional self-sufficiency and broader supply chains.

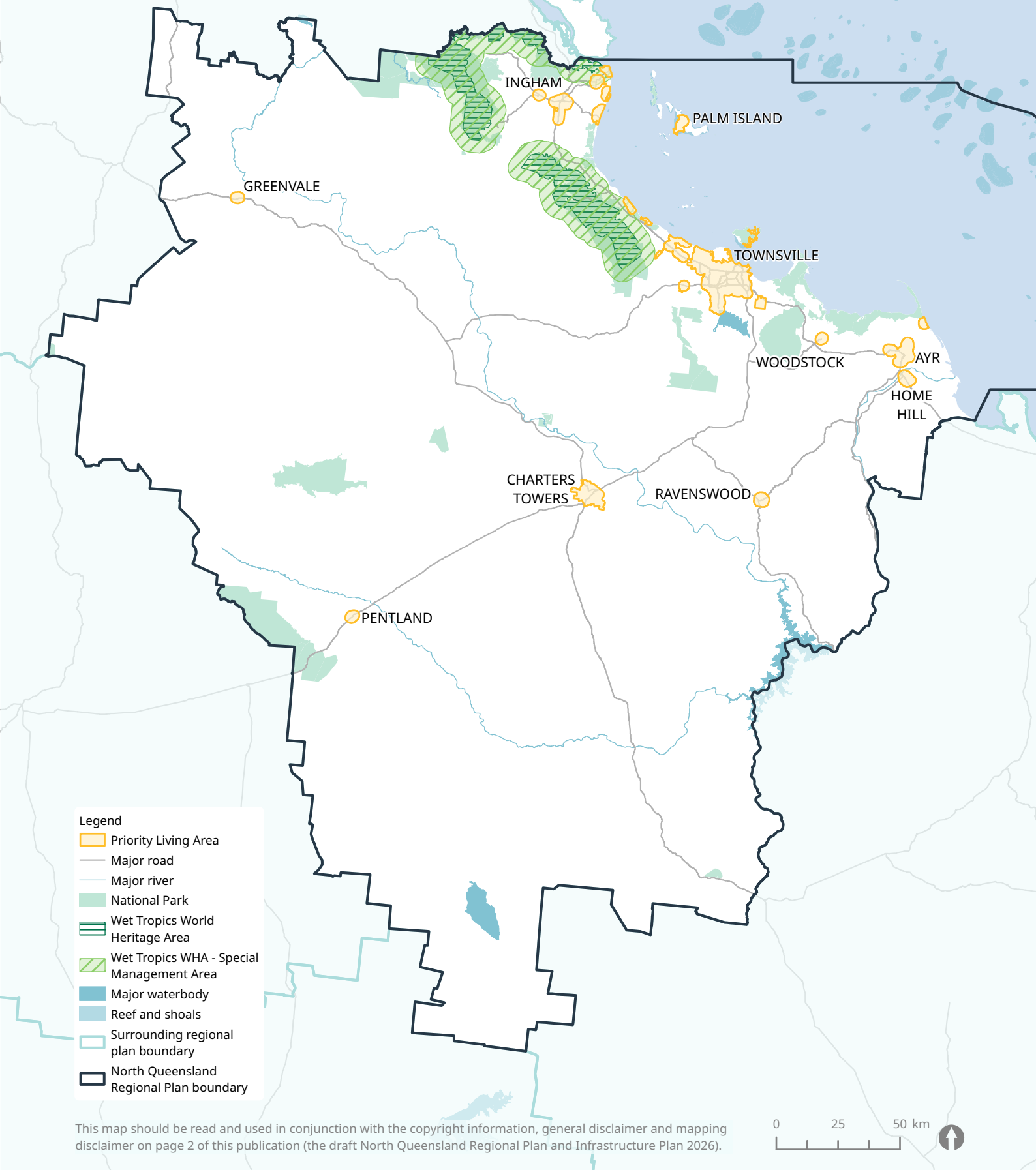
Effective planning also plays a central role in supporting coexistence—the ability for multiple land uses, industries and communities, including agriculture, mining and energy, to operate side by side. The Regional Plan provides the framework for managing interactions between these interests, guiding decision making and enabling appropriate flexibility where land uses intersect.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Extractive resources KRAAs identified for current and future use are supported and protected from inappropriate development.	1.1 Protect KRAAs from development which would compromise an existing KRA (as shown on Map 5) or the ability for a KRA to establish. 1.2 New land uses along KRA access routes do not undermine the function or access to the KRA. 1.3 Facilitate opportunities for KRAAs with access to existing or future planned services aligning with the policies identified in Appendix 1.
2. Mineral, coal, petroleum and gas resources Resource activities continue to support the region's economy, generating employment and contributing to growth and future opportunities.	2.1 Protect existing resource operations and associated infrastructure from incompatible land uses that could compromise ongoing or future operations. 2.2 Facilitate mutually beneficial opportunities for coexistence of resource activities, including KRAAs, and other land uses where impacts can be appropriately managed. 2.3 Maximise opportunities for the coexistence of resource activities, including KRAAs, and agricultural land uses within PAA 2.4 Provide for resource activities within a PLA only where: - the resource activities demonstrate consistency with the applicable land use planning framework; and - evidence of meaningful engagement with the relevant local government is provided.

Map 5 Mining and extractive resources



Map 6 Priority Living Area





 **Queensland Country Bank Stadium**
Townsville City Council



Tourism

Context

Tourism is a significant contributor to the North Queensland economy, supporting around one in six jobs across the region. The visitor economy is underpinned by the region's natural landscapes, rich cultural and heritage assets, and globally significant places, including the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WHA) and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Areas.

Tourism across North Queensland functions as a connected system, with different places performing complementary roles that support place-based travel, visitor movement and multi-destinational itineraries. Growth opportunities lie in events and with tourism operations that showcase the region's nature, culture and sense of place.

Coastal and island destinations including Palm Island, Magnetic Island and Hinchinbrook offer strong opportunities for cultural and marine-based tourism, leveraging proximity to the Great Barrier Reef and supporting fishing, diving, boating and nature-based experiences. In the Burdekin and Hinchinbrook, these are complemented by river, wetland and rainforest environments, as well as agricultural and coastal landscapes that support ecotourism, and agritourism. Inland destinations such as Charters Towers provide a contrasting outback and heritage experience, supporting drive tourism and encouraging broader regional visitation. Townsville anchors the region as a primary events and access hub, with major infrastructure including the stadium, port and airport supporting event-based, cruise and broader tourism activity and enabling access to surrounding destinations. Protecting the environmental, cultural, and scenic values of these tourism assets is essential to sustaining the region's appeal and long-term visitor economy.

Destination 2045 sets the state's vision for Queensland's tourism. By 2045, Queensland will be a global leader in tourism, showcasing our environment, lifestyle, cultures and regions. The plan establishes six priorities for to achieve this vision, focusing on ecotourism, events, connectivity, experiences, brand and the industry.

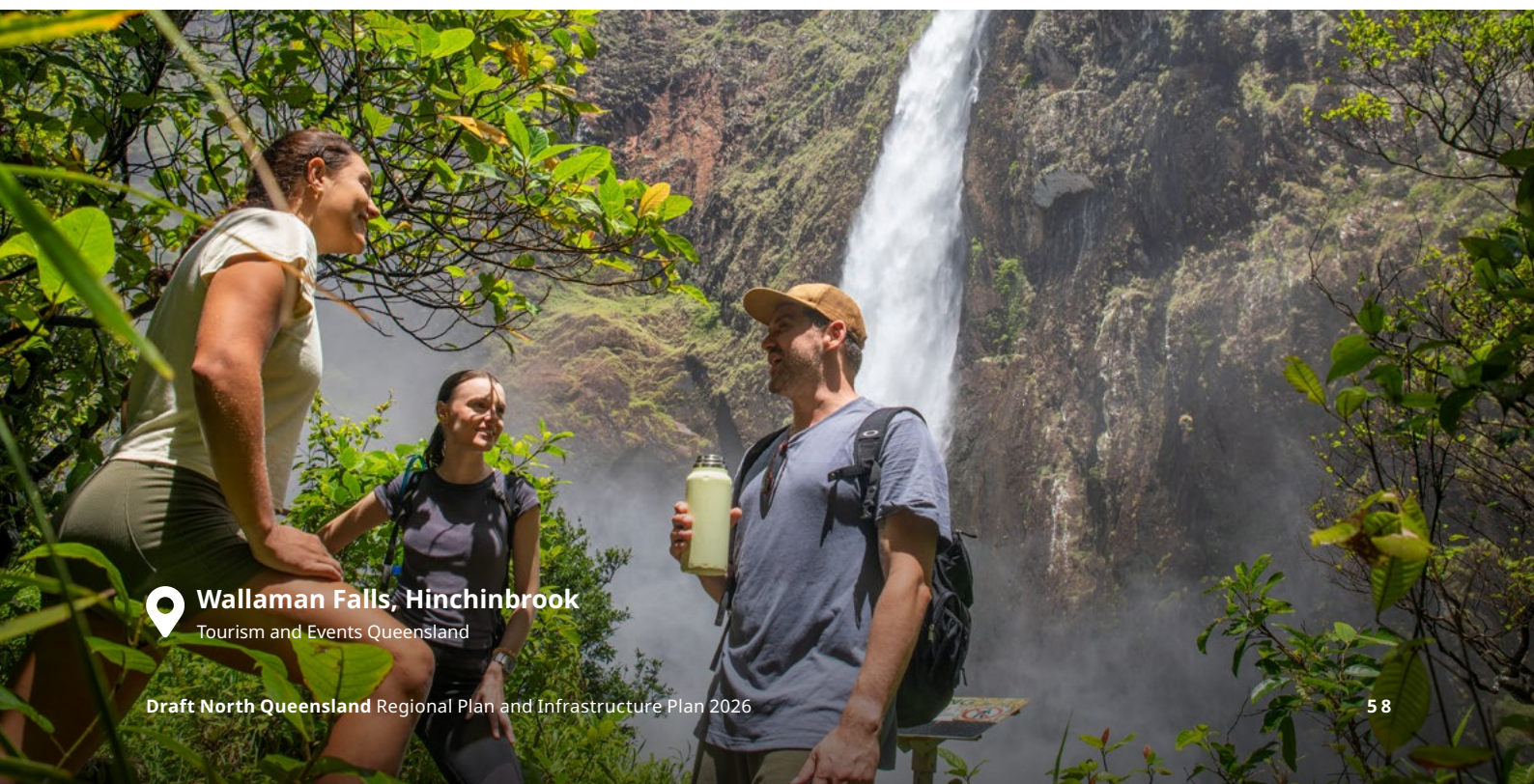
Land use planning plays a central role in supporting the growth, resilience and long-term prosperity of North Queensland's tourism sector by enabling well-designed tourism development in appropriate locations while protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural assets that underpin the visitor economy. It contributes to delivering the vision of Destination 2045 by fostering diverse tourism opportunities and maintaining the integrity of the region's defining environmental and cultural values.

The regional outcomes and land use strategies contributing to this state interest focus on strengthening and diversifying the tourism sector while protecting and enhancing the region's defining assets. This includes supporting the growth of tourism through the identification and development of Regionally Significant Tourism Assets (RSTAs) (a preliminary list of RSTAs is contained in Schedule 5), alongside the protection and enhancement of unique natural landscapes and cultural heritage that underpin the region's identity and visitor appeal.

RSTAs are places, landscapes, attractions, precincts, corridors or experience clusters which play a key role in the region's visitor economy. These assets make a substantial contribution to the region's economy and overall tourism offering. Land use planning will support RSTAs by protecting them from incompatible development while enabling them to grow and evolve in line with market and visitor expectations.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Promote tourism Tourism in North Queensland supports jobs and regional prosperity, underpinned by a diverse range of experiences and the protection of the region's unique natural and cultural assets.	1.1 Encourage tourism related land uses ensuring they are compatible with existing and planned land uses. 1.2 Protect the environmental, amenity, cultural, landscape and scenic values of tourism assets. 1.3 Encourage the expansion and enhancement of existing tourism assets through the intensification of existing land uses or establishment of complementary land uses within the Urban Footprint and RTF. 1.4 Support the provision of visitor accommodation where compatible with surrounding land uses and supported by adequate services within the Urban Footprint and RTF. 1.5 Encourage appropriate ecotourism and agritourism based land uses within the RLRPA. 1.6 Support small-scale, low-impact visitor accommodation and facilities in the RLRPA where the development is consistent with the conservation intent of those areas and relevant protected area management frameworks. 1.7 Recognise the Wet Tropics WHA – Special Management Area' on Map 6 as an area of high scenic amenity for the purposes of State Code 23: Wind farm development. In this area, development for wind farms is assessed against the scenic amenity performance outcomes of State Code 23.
2. Regionally Significant Tourism Assets RSTAs continue to support the region's tourist economy.	2.1 Identify RSTAs in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 5. 2.2 Protect identified RSTAs and associated connections that support access from incompatible development which would compromise their functionality or viability. 2.3 Support appropriate complementary land uses and tourism-related development that enhances the role, function, accessibility and viability of RSTAs, where consistent with infrastructure capacity and environmental constraints.

Editor's note: Further guidance on applying the criteria to identify RSTAs, and on protecting and enhancing these assets in accordance with land use strategies 2.1–2.3, is provided in Schedule 5. This schedule includes a preliminary list of RSTAs. Recognising that RSTAs may evolve over time or be associated with projects that have the potential to become regionally significant, local governments may identify additional RSTAs through the planning scheme making process. In doing so, local governments should apply the criteria set out in Schedule 5.



Wallaman Falls, Hinchinbrook
 Tourism and Events Queensland

APPENDIX 1

Draft North Queensland Infrastructure Plan



Elliot Springs, Townsville

Introduction

The draft Infrastructure Plan is an integral component of the draft Regional Plan, serving as a strategic infrastructure planning document. Encompassing both policy-driven and asset-based strategies, it aims to enhance alignment between long-term land use planning and infrastructure planning.

The draft Infrastructure Plan provides the infrastructure direction to support regional growth and adaptation to change by articulating integrated planning policies and strategies for matters of state interests. It also establishes a long-term, place-based framework for regionally significant infrastructure. Together, these will help facilitate housing supply and economic growth in the region.

The draft Infrastructure Plan reflects the Queensland Government's commitment to coordinated land use and infrastructure delivery and complements broader state initiatives such as the Queensland Government Infrastructure Pipeline.

The plan is structured around the following three key components:

- **Policy outcomes and strategies:** provide policy outcomes and strategies for matters of state interests in transport, water, energy, digital connectivity and social and community infrastructure.

- **Region shaping infrastructure / infrastructure enhancing strategies (transport):** region shaping infrastructure includes significant or strategic transport infrastructure investments that may drive changes in land use and stimulate housing supply and economic growth within a region. Infrastructure enhancing strategies are essential for maintaining or improving the existing infrastructure network.
- **Future planning considerations:** future infrastructure planning priorities for the region that are as yet unfunded, but where planning or investigation is warranted to inform the nature of the long-term infrastructure need.

The draft Infrastructure Plan is an appendix to the draft Regional Plan and plays a critical role in its implementation. Its scope includes both policy-led and asset-led approaches for better long-term alignment through land use and infrastructure planning.

The application and effect of the draft Infrastructure Plan is outlined in the draft Regional Plan (Part 2 Application and Effect).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure planning in Queensland

Regional Infrastructure Plans

Infrastructure Plans support a place-based approach to infrastructure planning by identifying and prioritising regionally significant long-term infrastructure needs. As part of the Regional Plan, the Infrastructure Plan is a statutory instrument under the Planning Act.

Infrastructure Plans are intended to inform the strategic planning of all levels of government, business and industry to support a more coordinated approach to further long-term planning or investigations and aligning, prioritising and sequencing infrastructure.

While state infrastructure agencies remain accountable for delivering their respective infrastructure projects and programs, Infrastructure Plans enable the Queensland Government to take a coordinated and strategic approach to the state's longer term infrastructure priorities in regional areas. This supports a more aligned Queensland Government response to future housing supply, construction productivity, supply chain and workforce challenges.

2032 Delivery Plan

Townsville will host sailing on its waterfront and football at its world-class stadium, supported by significant upgrades to the Bruce Highway north and south of the city.

Queensland Government Infrastructure Pipeline

The Queensland Government Infrastructure Pipeline (QGIP) demonstrates the government's commitment to statewide and regional priorities through a periodically updated pipeline of infrastructure in planning and delivery.

The QGIP provides industry with visibility of the Queensland Government's infrastructure pipelines across key infrastructure classes in the region to provide greater clarity and confidence and help inform industry preparedness, including supply chain and workforce planning. The draft Infrastructure Plan 2026 will inform future updates to the QGIP.

The QGIP is an interactive dashboard of state infrastructure opportunities across Queensland.

It contains the following two datasets:

- The delivery pipeline outlining state infrastructure commitments over the next four years.
- The planning pipeline, which includes proposals that are at a planning stage. These are proposals moving through different stages of assessment by the Queensland Government. All proposals in planning stage are subject to government consideration and final investment decisions.

The QGIP dashboard provides access to infrastructure project information in an interactive and user-friendly format. Information is accessible online and can be searched and filtered by information like region and infrastructure class.

QGIP dashboard

The QGIP dashboard is publicly available from the below website:

<https://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/infrastructure/projects-and-programs/queensland-government-infrastructure-pipeline>

INFRASTRUCTURE

Residential Activation Fund

The \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund is unlocking land supply for new housing across the region and the rest of the state. By investing in trunk water, sewer, stormwater and roads, and essential higher order power supply and telecommunications infrastructure, the fund enables locally approved residential developments to progress and new homes to be built.

Queensland Waste Strategy

The Queensland Government's Less Landfill, More Recycling 2035: Queensland Waste strategy sets a long-term framework to reduce landfill and boost recycling. The strategy includes working with local governments and industry to develop a statewide waste and recycling Infrastructure Plan to guide investment in the infrastructure needed to reduce waste to landfill.

Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct

The Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct is a regionally significant industrial hub for advanced manufacturing, processing, technology and emerging industries. Located at Woodstock, 40 kilometres south of Townsville, the 2,200 hectare site was acquired by Townsville City Council in 2001. It is primarily zoned for high-impact and large-scale industrial uses. Key enabling infrastructure is proposed to be upgraded, including:

- Approved road and rail access for direct connection to the Port of Townsville and the North West Minerals Province.
- Existing electricity infrastructure upgrades to meet production demand including the connection to a future CopperString transmission line.
- Complete the construction of raw water infrastructure from the existing Ross River Dam pipeline to service Lansdown.

The site includes land parcels of different sizes, which Council offers for lease through a rolling tender process. The precinct was declared a Prescribed Project by the Queensland Government in March 2023, supporting coordinated delivery of enabling infrastructure and development approvals.

State agencies and government owned corporations are working with Townsville City Council to align trunk and state infrastructure delivery with the planned establishment of industrial uses in Lansdown, Townsville State Development Area and Bohle Plains. The Infrastructure Plan supports the development of the precinct through policy outcomes and strategies and region shaping infrastructure and infrastructure enhancing strategies for transport.

Lansdown complements other industrial areas in the region, including the Townsville SDA. Together, these areas strengthen the region's industrial land supply and provide opportunities to support future investment, jobs and economic growth.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Enabling housing supply and economic growth through coordinated infrastructure planning and sequencing

The draft Regional Plan sets the 20-year direction for growth across North Queensland and identifies Townsville as the main focus for urban growth, with additional growth expected in other regional towns and communities. In Townsville, this includes the northern (northern beaches), western and southern growth fronts, each of which present distinct infrastructure servicing and access constraints that require coordinated resolution. Supporting this growth requires orderly infrastructure sequencing and planning that prioritises the optimisation of existing networks, prioritises developments with access to existing or planned services and supports greenfield expansion where infrastructure can be extended efficiently and at the appropriate time.

Coordinated infrastructure planning across key infrastructure types and collaboration between state agencies and local governments aims to support timely investment decisions for future growth areas in the region.

Cross government collaboration occurs through established planning processes. This includes alignment between Local Government Infrastructure Plans, Regional Transport Plans and state infrastructure programs to identify growth areas, priority corridors and potential infrastructure responses. These processes support the sequencing and staging of infrastructure to ensure networks are extended or upgraded in line with planned development.

In practice, this includes:

- aligning transport network planning with identified growth fronts to support housing and employment areas
- coordinating water supply planning to investigate and sequence bulk water infrastructure required to service future demand
- planning for energy infrastructure to support new residential areas and industrial expansion
- identifying priority infrastructure corridors and network upgrades required to unlock development.

This Infrastructure Plan builds on these processes through transport, water, energy and social and community strategies to support coordinated infrastructure planning in growth areas for housing and industrial expansion. It also includes an infrastructure enhancing strategy to continue planning for infrastructure upgrades at critical network congestion points, including the North Townsville Road corridor.



TRANSPORT

Regional infrastructure planning

Transport

The North Queensland region has a strategically important and resilient multi-modal transport network that supports place-making, community wellbeing and economic productivity across coastal, rural, inland and island communities. The network plays a critical role in connecting people, goods and services within the region and to the rest of Queensland, Australia and international markets. It underpins the economic functions of North Queensland's urban centres, agricultural production areas, defence activities, resource supply chains and tourism destinations. Transport infrastructure in the region includes roads, railways, ports and marine facilities, airports and aerodromes, supported by active transport and public transport.

Roads are the primary mode for the movement of people and freight throughout North Queensland. The Bruce Highway, part of the National Land Transport Network, is the principal north-south transport spine serving the region and directly supporting the communities of Townsville, Ingham, Ayr and Home Hill, as well as connections to surrounding rural localities. The Flinders Highway, also part of the Network, complements this spine by providing critical east-west connectivity linking Townsville to Charters Towers, Mount Isa and the North West Minerals Province. This corridor is essential for freight associated with mining, agriculture, manufacturing and supply chains supporting inland Queensland. The Inland Freight Route, from Charters Towers to the New South Wales border at Mungindi, provides an alternative route to the Bruce Highway, particularly during extreme weather events. Other key regional corridors provide access to coastal and hinterland areas, support agricultural production regions and connect rural communities and industrial precincts.

The road network is vulnerable to extreme weather events, including cyclones, flooding and riverine inundation, which can disrupt movements and

isolate communities for extended periods. Enhancing resilience, reliability and redundancy in major freight and passenger routes increases investment confidence in the region, reduces closure risks, ensures continuity of access to essential services and strengthens regional supply chains.

The rail network plays an important role in supporting both freight and passenger movements. The North Coast Line runs through the region, connecting Townsville to Brisbane and Cairns and provides freight services and long-distance rail passenger services. The Mount Isa Line is a nationally significant freight corridor, linking the North West Minerals Province through Charters Towers to the Port of Townsville (both rail lines form part of the National Land Transport Network). The line is vulnerable to flood damage and heat-related track buckling, leading to long recovery times. Passenger rail services also provide an important connection for regional communities. Efficient integration between road and rail infrastructure, including access to terminals and industrial areas, remains important for freight productivity and network efficiency.

Public transport services support resident mobility, particularly within Townsville and surrounding urban areas. Townsville urban bus services connect residential areas with employment precincts, education facilities, hospitals and the city centre. Regional coach services and school transport buses support smaller centres across the Burdekin, Hinchinbrook and Charters Towers local government areas. Palm Island is supported by a combination of ferry and air services that are critical for access to cultural events, health, education and employment opportunities. Low population density, dispersed settlements and long travel distances across much of the region present ongoing challenges for providing frequent and efficient public transport, increasing the importance of flexible,

TRANSPORT

community-based and demand-responsive transport solutions. However, opportunities exist for higher frequency public transport corridors between the Townsville CBD and major activity centres.

Ports and marine infrastructure are central to the region's economic function. The Port of Townsville is North Queensland's primary trading port and has been designated as one of the four Priority ports in Queensland under the *Sustainable Ports Development Act 2015*. It serves as a critical logistics hub, supporting imports, exports, defence operations, cruise tourism and supply chains linking northern Queensland to global markets. Port access relies on road and rail connections that traverse urban and industrial areas, creating potential land use and transport interface challenges as the region continues to grow. The Port of Lucinda also plays a strategic role, supporting bulk sugar exports and contributing to the region's agricultural supply chains. Protecting strategic freight corridors and ensuring compatible land use planning around port precincts is essential to maintaining port efficiency and supporting future trade growth. Marine facilities (via ferry services for passengers and vehicles) across the region also support inter-island connectivity, fishing, tourism, recreation and service access, particularly for Palm and Magnetic Island and coastal communities.

Aviation plays a vital role in North Queensland's transport network, supporting tourism, defence and workforce mobility. Townsville Airport is the region's primary aviation hub and a key defence facility. Co-located with Royal Australian Air Force Base Townsville, it provides passenger travel, freight services and national connections, with potential to accommodate future international services and strengthen global access. Smaller regional airports and aerodromes play complementary roles across the network, supporting general aviation, flight training, charter services, aeromedical retrieval, emergency response and access during adverse weather events. Inland facilities such as Charters Towers Airport support agriculture and mining-related operations, while island airports such as Palm Island provide essential access for isolated communities, including passenger movement, freight, health and community services, and tourism opportunities.

Active transport forms a key part of the transport network within Townsville and other urban centres. Its topography is conducive to walking and cycling contributing to community health, accessibility and local connectivity, although network coverage and quality vary across the region. Climatic conditions and urban form influence active transport requirements, with ongoing opportunities to improve network continuity, safety and connections to key destinations such as centres, schools, public transport hubs, waterfront precincts and the cruise ship terminal.

Key factors influencing transport demand in the North Queensland region include population growth and urban development, continued agricultural production and value-adding in the Burdekin and Hinchinbrook areas, minerals, resource supply chains and the cattle industry linked to Charters Towers and North West Queensland, defence operations, tourism growth and ongoing service delivery needs for regional and island communities. These drivers will place increasing pressure on strategic corridors, urban networks and ports and airport access. Responding to this demand will require a combination of infrastructure investment and non-infrastructure measures, including corridor protection, land use integration, network resilience planning and improved multi-modal connectivity. Maintaining reliable access during extreme weather events remains a fundamental requirement to support community wellbeing and economic continuity across the region.

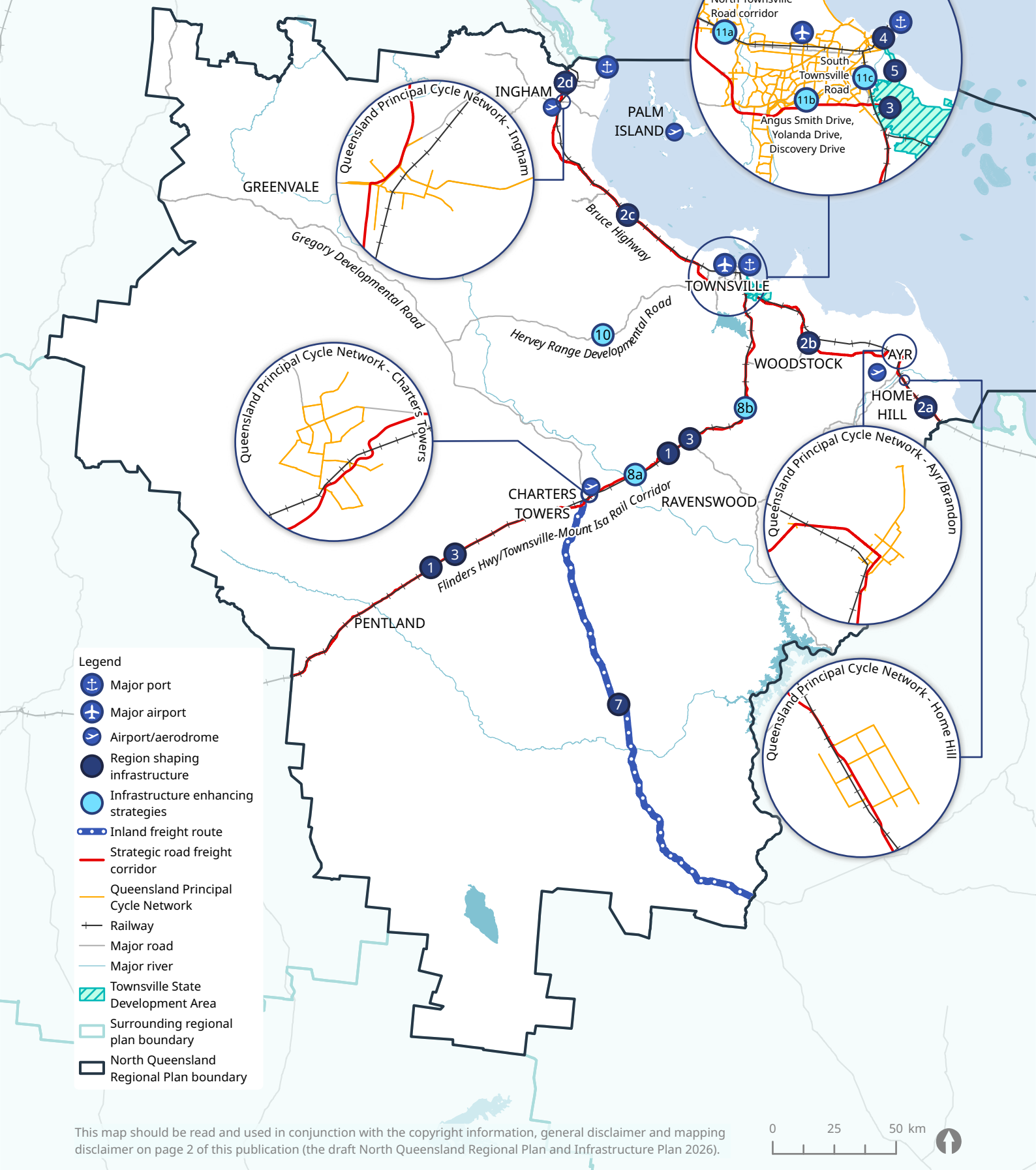
TRANSPORT

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 Transport networks and infrastructure Efficient transport infrastructure and services that supports safe, accessible and connected communities, access to new housing supply, enhances place, boosts economic growth, and resilient transport access.	1.1 Support transport infrastructure (including those identified on Appendix Map A, Table A and B) which facilitates housing and economic outcomes by coordinating land use, development sequencing and corridor protection with planned transport networks. 1.2 Support the provision of safe, convenient, accessible and legible cycle and pedestrian networks, including on and off-road routes that support transport, recreation and tourism trips. 1.3 Integrate land use and transport planning to accommodate multiple modes of travel, improve network safety and efficiency and safeguard key transport corridors from incompatible development. 1.4 Ensure state and local government transport infrastructure needs are considered early in the planning for growth fronts within the Urban Footprint and RTF to manage the interface between new communities and major transport and movement corridors. 1.5 Support active and public transport connectivity in and around centres and surrounding suburbs by integrating and aligning land use and transport networks and promoting development patterns that support accessibility and mode choice. 1.6 Coordinate and align infrastructure planning, sequencing and delivery across state agencies and local governments to support timely outcomes for residential and industrial growth.
Policy outcome 2 Strategic links and supply chains Strategic linkages to domestic and international markets via road, rail and sea are identified, protected and enhanced to ensure safety and resilience, with the co-location of allied industries and infrastructure promoted to support secure and robust transport networks which enable efficient and secure transport access from primary to tertiary production.	2.1 Support the connectivity, resilience and long-term viability of the Port of Townsville, Port of Lucinda, industrial precincts and regional transport terminals (including airports) and inter-regional accessibility by protecting strategic access routes, managing land use interfaces and avoiding incompatible development. 2.2 Locate future freight and logistics hubs and facilities along major regional freight corridors, including areas near the Port of Townsville. 2.3 Protect established and potential freight facilities and routes, including the Port of Townsville and the Townsville SDA, and airports by preventing encroachment by incompatible development and safeguarding ongoing operation, access and future expansion. 2.4 Support the appropriate location and co-location of industry and freight-orientated development near regional transport corridors by promoting efficient access, reducing transport demand and improving resilience to disasters.

Appendix Map A

Region shaping infrastructure and key freight routes and connections



This map should be read and used in conjunction with the copyright information, general disclaimer and mapping disclaimer on page 2 of this publication (the draft North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026).

TRANSPORT

Region shaping infrastructure

Region shaping infrastructure for transport includes future transformative investments with the potential to shape the planning of land use and economic development in the region. Region shaping infrastructure typically requires significant funding across multiple levels of government, delivers benefits to multiple local government areas and has regional economic and social significance.

Region shaping infrastructure for transport enhances multi-modal statewide and key regional connectivity, particularly among regional activity centres, precincts, industrial areas and economic assets in order to foster economic growth and improve access to essential services. Region shaping infrastructure also ensures the resilient, efficient and secure movement of people and transportation of goods through and throughout the region.

Region shaping infrastructure aligns with the region's preferred settlement pattern through to 2046 by

supporting residential growth, increased density in strategic areas, more efficient use of existing infrastructure and promoting an efficient and responsive transport system. It also identifies strategic transport investments to benefit key sectors such as agriculture, energy, tourism and health.

Region shaping infrastructure for transport includes new or major upgrades to:

- rail, strategic road network or strategic freight network
- aviation or marine facilities
- active transport and public transport.

The region shaping infrastructure listed below do not constitute an exhaustive inventory of all transport infrastructure needed to accommodate growth through to 2046. Rather, they identify initiatives that warrant consideration within land use and infrastructure planning.

Appendix Table A - Region shaping infrastructure

Map reference	Region shaping infrastructure	Relationship to policy outcome
1	Plan upgrades to the Flinders Highway, including bridges, overtaking lanes and intersections, to support the delivery of CopperString, critical minerals development and efficient freight movement.	The Flinders Highway is a vital transport route in northern Queensland, connecting Townsville to Mount Isa. It plays a key role in moving freight and construction materials. The highway is critical to support growing activity in critical mineral extraction, CopperString, energy projects and defence logistics.
2	Bruce Highway improvements: a) Bowen to Ayr b) Ayr to Townsville c) Townsville to Ingham d) Ingham to Innisfail.	The Bruce Highway Upgrade Program is delivering targeted improvements and corridor preservation to support efficient movement of freight and people by improving safety, enhancing flood resilience and increasing long-term capacity. Building on the existing program, the \$9 billion Bruce Highway Targeted Safety Program will deliver key safety treatments including priority sections in North Queensland.

TRANSPORT

3	Undertake planning for the Mount Isa–Townsville rail corridor to strengthen resilience and reliability. The corridor includes the Townsville Eastern Access Rail Corridor, which proposes an improved freight route to the Port of Townsville.	The Mount Isa–Townsville rail corridor delivers regional economic and productivity benefits by enabling efficient, high volume freight movement between the North West Minerals Province and the Port of Townsville. It improves freight resilience and safety by reducing reliance on longhaul road transport, while supporting opportunities for mineral processing and value-adding activities along the corridor and in proximity to the Port of Townsville. The corridor also underpins critical minerals development, supports enabling energy infrastructure projects such as CopperString and reinforces the long-term role of Townsville as a northern logistics hub. Preserving the Townsville Eastern Access Rail Corridor will support future consideration of an improved rail freight connection to the Port of Townsville.
4	Support and leverage the Port of Townsville’s Port Expansion Project to strengthen Northern Queensland’s role as a nationally significant freight, trade and logistics gateway.	The project will enhance port capacity and efficiency through channel widening, 152 hectares of land reclamation and construction of six new berths, enabling access for larger vessels and supporting a substantial increase in trade volumes. The expansion underpins regional economic growth by improving export competitiveness for mining, agriculture and emerging industries, enabling supply chain resilience and attracting private sector investment. Increased port capacity supports job creation, greater industry diversification and stronger integration with regional road, rail and industrial precincts, contributing to a more productive, connected and globally engaged North Queensland economy.
5	Enhance safe and efficient access for freight, including oversize overmass, and general traffic to both the Port of Townsville and the Townsville SDA.	Strengthen the economic sustainability of both the Port and the Townsville SDA, supporting significant regional employment, oversize overmass freight requirements, and contributing to broader economic development.
6	Support active and public transport accessibility and connectivity through the delivery of the Queensland Principal Cycle Network Plans, Priority Route Maps and Walking Network Plans, integrated with land use planning and transport networks in and around centres, key destinations and surrounding suburbs.	Improved active and public transport accessibility and connectivity, including micro-mobility, enhances access to employment, services, education and other key destinations while supporting healthier communities. Integrated walking and cycling networks also reduce congestion and transport costs, contributing to more efficient centres and supporting long-term growth.
7	Continue planning and early works to support the development of the Inland Freight Route as a strategic north–south alternative to the Bruce Highway.	The 1,185 kilometre route from Mungindi (New South Wales border) to Charters Towers would establish a critical freight corridor, supported by upgrades to key feeder roads, to improve network resilience and reliability. The Inland Freight Route provides a reliable north–south alternative to maintain freight movements given frequent disruptions on coastal transport networks, particularly the Bruce Highway. It reduces reliance on a single corridor and strengthens connections between inland production areas, northern markets and key export gateways.

TRANSPORT

Infrastructure enhancing strategies

Infrastructure enhancing strategies for transport focus on initiatives that, while not transformative in the same way as region shaping infrastructure, are essential for maintaining or improving the existing infrastructure network. Infrastructure enhancing strategies play a crucial role in the region's development, connectivity, resilience and accessibility. Infrastructure enhancing strategies include:

- planning for more efficient movement of people and goods, including corridor upgrades and safety enhancements

- initiatives that enable better transport choices (including active and public transport, and micro-mobility)
- initiatives that strengthen network resilience.

Infrastructure enhancing strategies align with the preferred settlement pattern in the region through to 2046, ensuring the transport system remains efficient, safe and capable of supporting the region's growth.

Appendix Table B - Infrastructure enhancing strategies

Map reference	Infrastructure enhancing strategies	Relationship to policy outcome
8	Undertake future planning to investigate capacity, safety and resilience improvements of the Flinders Highway, including at the Macrossan (a) and Reid River Bridges (b), to support the ongoing operation as a critical east-west freight corridor.	Safety, capacity and resilience improvements to the Flinders Highway corridor, including upgrades to the Macrossan and Reid River bridges, would strengthen regional freight reliability by reducing constraints on heavy vehicle movements. This would support economic activity across North Queensland by improving east-west connectivity between inland production areas, Charters Towers and the Port of Townsville, while enhancing network resilience during peak freight and extreme weather events.
9	Continue planning to improve the resilience of regionally significant roads supporting the freight network, tourism, mining and community access.	Improving the resilience of regionally significant roads supports regional economic productivity by strengthening freight reliability and reducing disruptions to supply chains. Enhanced road resilience also improves access to employment, services and essential goods for communities, supporting social wellbeing and long-term regional growth.
10	Undertake future planning for upgrades to Hervey Range Road to support oversize overmass vehicle movements associated with defence operations and the construction of energy projects.	Hervey Range Road provides critical access to the Townsville Field Training Area and associated defence infrastructure. Targeted safety, capacity and reliability upgrades would improve network access for defence movements. The road also provides access for the construction of energy projects involving large-scale generation, storage and associated transmission infrastructure, which require the movement of major components to inland and regional sites.
11	Continue planning for infrastructure upgrades at critical network congestion pinch points such as: a) North Townsville Road corridor b) Angus Smith Drive, Yolanda Drive/Discovery Drive c) South Townsville Rd.	As the regional centre, Townsville accommodates a concentration of employment, health and education services for the wider region. Growth in population and urban development has increased transport demand, with upgrades to key network pinch points forming part of broader network improvement considerations.

TRANSPORT

Future planning considerations

Region shaping infrastructure and infrastructure enhancing strategies list initiatives and strategies that align with policies to support regional development. Medium and long-term transport planning should consider new opportunities and proposals beyond current initiatives to improve connectivity, resilience, and prosperity. This strategic approach will enable governments at all levels to explore innovative and coordinated transport solutions while remaining responsive to evolving community needs and economic opportunities.

Key considerations for future transport infrastructure in the region include:

- Continue to plan with the Commonwealth Department of Defence on the following:
 - Key freight and oversize overmass movements, ensuring the transport network supports defence operational requirements while maintaining safety, resilience and efficiency on key defence freight corridors such as the Bruce Highway, Flinders Highway and strategic access routes servicing Lavarack Barracks. This includes early coordination on base access, corridor capacity and infrastructure constraints to align defence logistics needs with regional transport and land use planning.
 - Infrastructure at Townsville Airport and the Port of Townsville to support defence operational requirements. This includes aligning future upgrades and access arrangements with defence logistics, aviation and maritime needs, while ensuring infrastructure planning supports shared civilian, freight and emergency response functions.
- Continue integrated planning for higher productivity vehicles and rail access to and from the Port of Townsville to support freight growth, energy projects and the associated oversize overmass movement on the road network, improve landside efficiency and enhance integration with adjacent industrial precincts.
- Continue to undertake public transport service planning in Townsville to improve connectivity and expand coverage in a way that aligns with preferred future land use changes and to support growing travel demands.
- In the longer term, undertake planning with a whole of rail network focus, to guide investment decisions and priorities for the North Coast Line. This work will support passenger and freight efficiency improvements on the North Coast Line, including improving reliability, flood resilience and major capacity constraints.
- Investigate opportunities to improve social equity and enhance economic outcomes for island communities by strengthening transport connections between Palm Island, Magnetic Island and Townsville's mainland. This includes considering improvements to ferry infrastructure and services, such as terminal facilities, service frequency and reliability, to support access to employment, services and economic participation.
- Investigate opportunities to support the growth of the cruise ship industry by improving access to the Port of Townsville to meet future capacity needs and enhance operational efficiency. This includes upgrades to cruise-related facilities and improvements to surrounding areas to strengthen the visitor experience and maximise economic benefits for the region.
- Consider supporting infrastructure and supply chain requirements for potential new liquid fuel refining and storage opportunities (including within the Port of Townsville and Townsville SDA) that will support and strengthen Queensland's fuel capability and long-term supply resilience.

TRANSPORT

Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan

Transport infrastructure planning for North Queensland is directed by the Northern Queensland Regional Transport Plan developed by Department of Transport and Main Roads.

The Regional Transport Plan is a public planning document that defines the intended development of the transport system across North Queensland over a 15-year horizon in a way that supports regional goals for the community, the economy and the environment. It considers all modes of transport, regional demographic and industry changes, local government land use and transport planning.

Queensland Freight Delivery Plan

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is developing the Queensland Freight Delivery Plan to improve the productivity, reliability and safety of Queensland's freight system. The plan will drive innovation and deliver real-change in the short-term, while laying the foundation for longer term goals such as resilience and regional economic development.

Queensland's Fuel Security Plan

The Queensland Government's Fuel Security Plan establishes a coordinated, long-term approach to strengthen the state's fuel resilience by increasing local production, refining and storage capacity. The plan responds to vulnerabilities in global supply chains by prioritising "sovereign capability". This plan supports domestic fuel supply by unlocking oil reserves, expanding refining capacity and boosting fuel storage across key locations. Collectively, these measures are intended to deliver immediate price relief, improve supply reliability and provide long-term certainty for Queensland's economy and regional communities.

Accelerating Fuel Infrastructure Program

The Accelerating Fuel Infrastructure Program provides a coordinated, whole-of-government framework to fast-track investment in fuel infrastructure. The program invites industry to propose new refining and storage projects, including consideration of strategically located state-owned land near key ports. These projects are supported by streamlined approvals and targeted facilitation. Through market-led proposals, land audits and expedited delivery pathways, the program aims to unlock private sector investment, expand infrastructure capacity and enhance Queensland's ability to respond to future fuel supply disruptions.



Burdekin Weir, Charters Towers

Charters Towers Regional Council

WATER

Water

The North Queensland region is supported by a diverse and strategically important water system that underpins community wellbeing, economic productivity, environmental values and resilience to weather variability. Water demand is geographically dispersed across urban centres, irrigated agriculture and industry and is driven by population growth, economic activity and highly variable climatic conditions. Water infrastructure includes major storages, urban and rural water supply systems, groundwater sources, wastewater treatment facilities and flood and drainage infrastructure.

Surface water resources are central to water supply in North Queensland. Major catchments, particularly the Burdekin and Herbert systems, support some of Australia's most productive agricultural areas and provide water for irrigation, urban supply and industrial uses. Sunwater, as the state-owned bulk water infrastructure operator, plays a central role in planning, operating and maintaining major storages and distribution schemes that support regional water security, agricultural productivity and industrial development across North Queensland. Large storages, such as Sunwater's Burdekin Falls Dam, play a critical role in supporting water security for consumptive use while maintaining environmental flows. These systems are essential to the ongoing productivity of the Burdekin and Hinchinbrook areas and to meeting the needs of Townsville and surrounding communities. Sunwater's Burdekin Haughton Water Supply Scheme provides water for irrigation and supports customers in the lower Burdekin River region, while also meeting part of the urban and industrial demands in Townsville. The scheme draws most of its water supply from the Burdekin Falls Dam, with the remainder coming from the Haughton River. The Burdekin Regional Water Assessment identified opportunities to modernise existing bulk water infrastructure and operations, investigate upgrades to key supply schemes and explore additional offstream storage options to improve reliability, efficiency and long-term water security for the region.

Urban water supply and wastewater services are delivered through a combination of council-operated and regionally significant infrastructure. Townsville City Council Water, as the city's water and wastewater

service provider, is responsible for planning and delivering secure, efficient and weather-resilient water, wastewater and recycled water services that support population growth, industry, defence and community wellbeing outcomes. Townsville's water supply system draws on Ross River and Paluma dams, supplemented by groundwater, recycled water and climate-independent sources, with additional resilience provided through the Haughton Pipeline connecting the Lower Burdekin water supply network to the Townsville system. Regional towns, including Charters Towers, Ayr, Home Hill and Ingham, rely on a mix of surface water and groundwater sources, with varying system capacity and reliability. Ensuring long-term resilience to drought and population growth remains a key consideration.

Groundwater is an important source of supply for towns, agriculture and industry across the region and is critical in areas where surface water access is limited. Sustainable groundwater management is essential to protect long-term water security, water quality and environmental outcomes, particularly given the impacts of land use change and weather variability.

Palm Island experiences additional water and wastewater challenges due to its geographic isolation, infrastructure constraints and exposure to extreme weather events. Reliable and culturally appropriate water services are essential to supporting health, community wellbeing and development outcomes.

Population growth, agriculture, industry and climate resilience will drive future water demand. Integrated planning with both infrastructure and non-infrastructure strategies is necessary to foster economic growth, safeguard environmental values like Great Barrier Reef catchments and guarantee long-term regional water security. Measures include increasing water efficiency, managing demand and reforming operations to optimise asset value and boost system resilience.

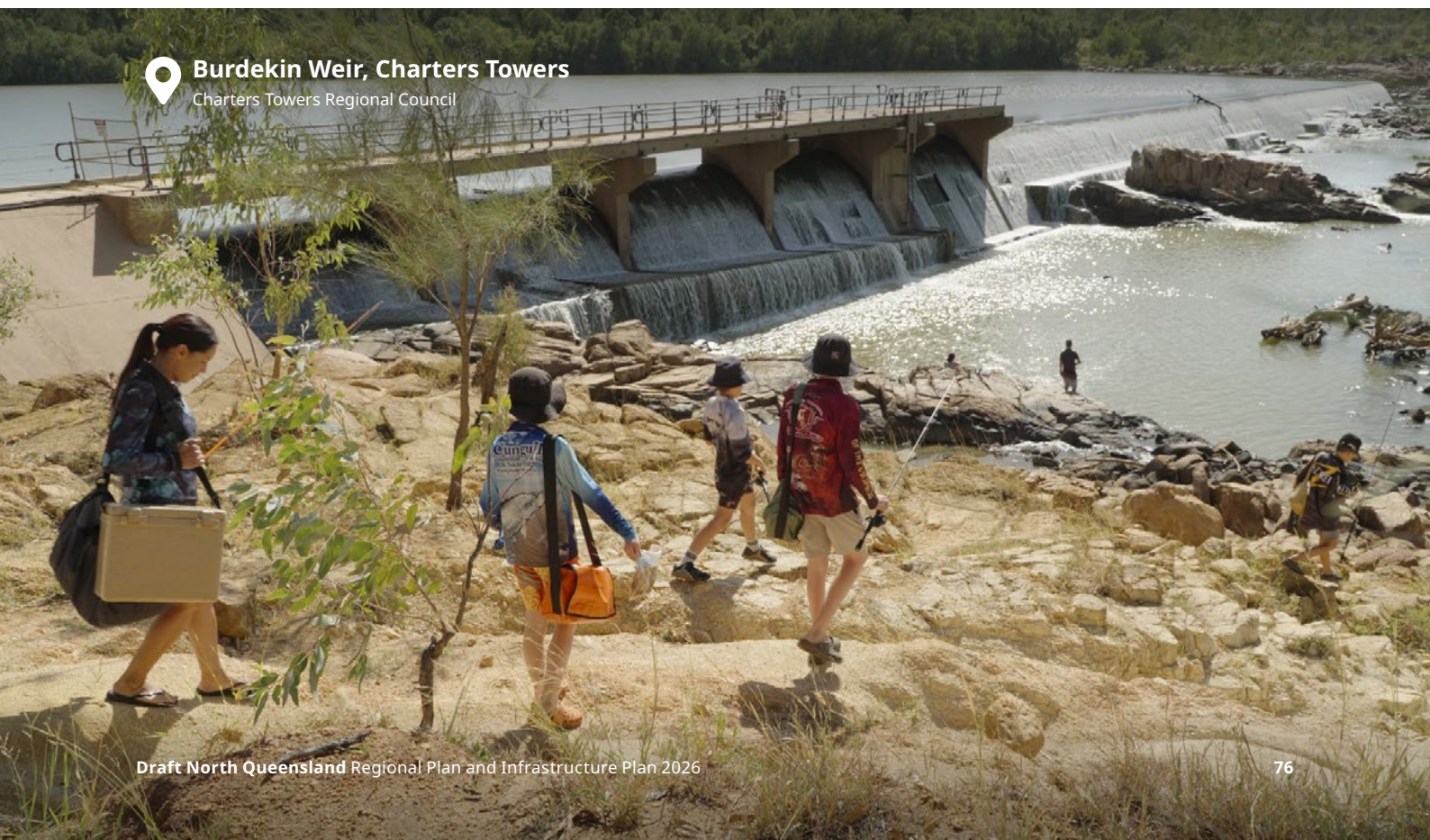
Water supply providers must ensure that infrastructure can support future development and align with overall land use and economic strategies. The region also faces growing challenges from rising maintenance costs for ageing systems, alongside the need to upgrade and expand infrastructure to support growth, new industries and resilience.

WATER

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 Future focused water management The region's water supply is supported by innovative management, suitable infrastructure and forward planning to ensure future industrial and residential development can be sustainably serviced.	1.1 Coordinate and align infrastructure planning, sequencing and delivery across state agencies and local governments to support timely outcomes for residential and industrial growth. 1.2 Align land use and water planning by considering relevant Regional Water Assessments and benefit-cost analysis to support regional water security. 1.3 Protect water supply and wastewater assets, including land required for future water infrastructure and corridors, by preventing encroachment from incompatible development and safeguarding ongoing operation and expansion to support urban and agricultural needs. 1.4 Adopt water sensitive measures in new developments to reduce water demand and limit pressure on regional water and wastewater infrastructure.

 **Burdekin Weir, Charters Towers**
Charters Towers Regional Council



WATER

Future planning considerations

Water infrastructure planning within the region is driven by a focus on long-term security and resilience in response to population growth, expanding agricultural and industry needs and weather variability. Strategic initiatives should prioritise sustainable methods such as managing demand and exploring alternative supply sources including non-infrastructure solutions after cost-benefit analysis.

Future planning aims to address both current requirements and anticipated growth in demand by identifying when and where additional water supply capacity might be needed. The feasibility of future initiatives is dependent on factors including water availability, impacts on existing users, technical and engineering feasibility and economic and financial considerations. In addition, developing supportive infrastructure may be necessary to fully realise the key benefits offered by enhanced or newly established water systems.

Key considerations for future water infrastructure in the region include:

- Water security planning, including planning for urban growth fronts within the Urban Footprint and RTF, is conducted with comprehensive evaluation of demands, ensuring that all options—including non-infrastructure solutions—are thoroughly assessed for their full range of costs and benefits.

- Bulk water supply initiatives are evaluated through robust data, such as population growth projections, agricultural output forecasts and industrial development plans, to identify future projects that most effectively balance benefits and costs.
- Maintaining and enhancing water infrastructure to ensure it remains robust and resilient against environmental hazards, emergencies and potential disaster scenarios.
- Enhancing urban water supply drought resilience and response planning.
- The primary responsibility for upgrading and maintaining sustainable drinking water supply and wastewater infrastructure assets rests with water service providers, often operated by local governments.
- Where feasible, support adaptive reuse and recycling capabilities in major wastewater treatment investments and encourage water efficiency to reduce the demand on potable water supplies.

Regional water assessment - Burdekin

The regional water assessment program is taking a comprehensive view of future regional water needs. Potential sources of water supply are being considered across boundaries of local government areas and catchments to maximise benefits and increase the effective use of existing infrastructure. They set out how existing infrastructure, new infrastructure or non-infrastructure solutions can be used to maximise water supply to drive economic growth.

The Burdekin assessment, fully funded by the Australian Government under the National Water Grid Fund, takes a detailed look at how water can best support regional economic growth.

WATER

Statewide Water Security Plan

The Queensland Government has committed to developing a new Water Security Plan which will set key actions and strategic directions to improve water security and support economic growth. The Water Security Plan is being developed by the Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers and will guide future investments into water infrastructure and regional development, including within North Queensland.

Several key considerations will inform the development of the new Water Security Plan including:

- Delivering long-term water infrastructure to support regional supply and economic growth.
- Planning for population growth and water use to support housing, health, industry and community needs.
- Identifying opportunities to build dams and weirs.
- Improving access to clean drinking water and infrastructure.
- Affordability for water users and unlocking water to support agricultural development.
- Strengthening the disaster resiliency of communities.
- Helping water users to reduce input costs, including water for food and fibre production.

The Water Security Plan will be completed alongside the review of all 23 of the state's Water Plans (including the Burdekin Basin and the Wet Tropics water plans), which set out how water resources are sustainably managed and allocated.

Roles and responsibilities

Queensland Government

Sets Queensland's water policy, legislation and long-term planning frameworks. Regulates water allocations and environmental requirements, oversees bulk water providers and funds major regional water infrastructure.

Local government

Manages town water supply and wastewater services, including treatment plants, pipes and reservoirs. Plans and maintains local networks to support growth and manages stormwater systems.

Sunwater (government owned corporation)

Owns and operates bulk water infrastructure across regional Queensland, including dams, weirs, pipelines and irrigation schemes. It supplies water to agriculture, industry and some towns, and delivers upgrades and modernisation of regional water assets.



Power lines in Kirwan, Townsville

ENERGY

Energy

The Queensland Energy Roadmap 2025 presents a whole of system outlook, with a focus on attracting private sector capital to meet the new infrastructure needs of the state and help grow the Queensland economy. Energy developments will be built in a responsible manner with the pace and scale of investment determined by market dynamics and the ability of proponents to secure social licence with host communities.

The Queensland Government and government owned corporations have an important role in underpinning investor and market confidence to deliver affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. Energy Queensland's headquarters is based in Townsville which reinforces the city's role as a key energy administration and operational hub. Energy in the North Queensland region is supplied through the following:

- Powerlink Queensland's high-voltage transmission network and Ergon Energy Network's electricity distribution network
- major thermal generation assets, including the Mount Stuart Power Station (kerosene/gas) and the Townsville Power Station (gas), which play a critical system strength and peaking role in the region
- supported by social impact assessments, a growing portfolio of renewable energy assets, including multiple large-scale solar farms and smaller bioenergy and battery storage facilities, contributing to regional supply diversity and system resilience.

The North Queensland Gas Pipeline supplies gas from the Moranbah gas processing plant to major industrial users in Townsville, including the Yabulu gas-fired power station and Sun Metal's zinc and Glenore's copper refining facilities.

Queensland's maximum transmission-delivered electricity demand is forecast to grow at approximately 2.2 per cent per annum over the next decade.

Electricity demand across the state is distributed in line with population and major industrial activity and is driven by weather variability, population growth, industrial load and economic conditions. North Queensland region accounts for approximately 6–8 per cent of Queensland's transmission-delivered electricity demand. This is significant, considering that the population represents approximately 4–5 per cent of Queensland's total.

In North Queensland, the Queensland Energy Roadmap 2025 presents significant opportunities linked to the region's high renewable energy potential, strategic transmission corridors and proximity to major industrial, defence and export precincts. This positions the region to play a critical role in facilitating the development of new energy-intensive industries. Northern Queensland offers some of Australia's highest quality renewable energy resources, and in combination with CopperString, can enable supply to major load centres along the east coast and to regional and remote mining and industrial users.

A reliable energy supply is vital to supporting population growth, ongoing agricultural productivity, port related and industrial activity, defence operations and service delivery to regional and island communities like Palm Island. Integrated planning across energy, transport, water and land use systems will help ensure that infrastructure is appropriately situated, resilient and aligned with existing and future development throughout the region.

Local governments are empowered, through amendments to the Queensland planning framework, to ensure new energy developments deliver tangible benefits to local communities, manage social impacts effectively and meet land use planning objectives.

ENERGY

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 Energy Achieving an affordable and reliable system by supporting the delivery of energy projects in a responsible manner and in appropriate locations.	1.1 Avoid or minimise impacts on existing and planned land uses and consider strategic land use priorities outlined in the Regional Plan when planning and locating energy infrastructure. 1.2 Protect high-pressure gas pipelines, energy transmission corridors and substations to safeguard their current and future operation, safety and expansion. 1.3 Adopt an approach for planning and coordinating new energy infrastructure in a way that is responsive to market and industry development, minimises impacts on communities and optimises associated benefits.
Policy outcome 2 Timely delivery Support future residential growth and industrial expansion by enabling the timely delivery of energy projects.	2.1 Coordinate and align infrastructure planning, sequencing and delivery across state agencies and local governments to support timely outcomes for residential and industrial growth.

Key energy infrastructure initiatives have the potential to support agricultural, industrial or residential growth in the region.

Key energy infrastructure initiative	Relationship to policy outcomes
CopperString The Eastern Link is set to be complete by 2032 (subject to approvals) and involves building a 330 kilovolt transmission line from Townsville to Hughenden. This section of the project also includes the identification and construction of substation sites and worker accommodation facilities near the project alignment. The Flinders Substation will be the gateway to connecting new generation assets across the Flinders Shire into the Eastern Link of CopperString.	Queensland is focused on targeted, high-priority transmission investments that address immediate energy needs and support system reliability. The Queensland Government has commissioned the Queensland Investment Corporation to oversee the delivery of CopperString. This critical infrastructure will catalyse new generation, firming and storage solutions, supporting North and North West Queensland by connecting these regions to the National Energy Market and delivering affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. CopperString will enable industrial and mining development and stimulate economic growth along the Townsville–Mount Isa corridor through construction activity, long-term investment confidence and expanded workforce opportunities. The \$200 million North West Energy Fund will support local generation and storage solutions across Mt Isa, Cloncurry, Julia Creek and Richmond to deliver improved reliability and lower energy prices by increasing supply across those regions. Along the corridor, a \$50 million Community Benefits Fund will deliver locally identified projects, including community infrastructure, housing and accommodation, providing direct and lasting benefits to regional and remote communities.

ENERGY

Future planning considerations

Queensland's energy system will require additional generation, storage and firming capacity to balance supply and demand, presenting opportunities for North Queensland communities and local governments to capitalise on new investment, jobs and economic activity. New and upgraded transmission and distribution infrastructure will be required to respond to the location and scale of emerging energy developments, ensuring the system remains reliable, secure and capable of meeting the state's evolving energy needs.

The energy project pipeline is influenced by a range of factors and market dynamics including the outcomes of community engagement. Development will occur in an environment of growing regional community sensitivity to significant infrastructure development. Social licence will remain an important consideration for all investment across the energy supply chain.

Key considerations for future energy infrastructure in the region include:

- Adopting a coordinated planning and development approach to Regional Energy Hubs to minimise impacts on communities and optimise associated economic, environmental and social benefits.
- Delivering legacy benefits to local communities, including community infrastructure, housing and accommodation, as well as economic and workforce development.
- Supporting the investigation and development of natural gas and other firming facilities, where appropriate, to strengthen energy supply for households, agriculture and industry.
- Leveraging energy infrastructure and service improvements to support the productivity, diversification and resilience of agricultural activity.
- Supporting the provision of affordable and reliable energy by enabling effective integration with the national energy grid and associated transmission infrastructure.
- Where demonstrated need exists, investigate energy supply solutions for existing and new industrial areas to ensure capacity and suitability for advanced manufacturing and emerging technologies, recognising that standard supply solutions may constrain investment and development.

Energy Roadmap

The Queensland Government has released an Energy Roadmap which includes:

- \$400 million Queensland Energy Investment Fund and Queensland Investment Corporation's new Investor Gateway to drive private sector investment in new energy generation and firming projects.
- \$1.6 billion Electricity Maintenance Guarantee to improve our current energy assets.
- Clear decision-making framework for the operation of state-owned coal assets, balancing system needs, asset integrity, and economic viability.
- Consolidated management of future pumped hydro proposals by Queensland Investment Corporation to provide a consistent approach to assessment and investment.
- \$10 million to catalyse further investment into community batteries across the distribution network to help manage minimum system load.
- Establishment of Regional Energy Hubs to put downward pressure on development costs.
- Development of a new code of conduct for renewable energy developers to guide responsible behaviour and set community expectations.

 Digital connectivity

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Digital connectivity

In North Queensland, digital connectivity is a foundational enabler of economic resilience, service delivery and community participation. The region's large geographic footprint, dispersed settlement patterns and island communities such as Magnetic and Palm Islands, make reliable connectivity particularly critical. Connectivity underpins regional industries and supply chains and enables access to essential services including health, education, emergency response and government services. It's also crucial for port and airport operations in Townsville, defence activities linked to Lavarack Barracks, logistics and freight movements, advanced manufacturing and agricultural technologies. For key community infrastructure such as health facilities and schools, reliable and fit-for-purpose internet and WiFi access is essential to support service delivery, workforce capability and participation across metropolitan, regional and remote communities.

Connectivity outcomes reflect the interaction between geography (population density and distance) and commercial viability. In North Queensland, low population densities, long distances between centres and high deployment and maintenance costs can constrain telecommunications investment and contribute to gaps in coverage, capacity and resilience in some locations. These factors are most evident in remote mainland communities, island settlements and along east-west transport corridors linking inland centres to the coast.

Over the next 20 years, demand in North Queensland is expected to continue to shift toward high bandwidth, reliable connectivity to enable data intensive and emerging digital applications across industry,

logistics, defence, health and education. Meeting this demand will require hybrid delivery models that combine terrestrial infrastructure, wireless and mobile solutions, space based services and decentralised data processing to respond to distance, terrain and climatic exposure.

Reliable mobile connectivity along key transport hubs (e.g. ports and airports) and corridors (freight) in North Queensland, including the Bruce Highway and east-west links (such as the Mount Isa-Townsville rail corridor and Flinders Highway) connecting inland centres, will be increasingly important to support freight efficiency, smart (real-time) logistics and transport operations as these industries evolve. As road upgrades, new corridors or supporting infrastructure such as substations are planned, opportunities to coordinate the concurrent installation of digital infrastructure should be considered to improve delivery efficiency and network coverage.

The Queensland Government supports improved telecommunications and digital connectivity across Queensland through advocacy, coordination and targeted co-investment. It works with local governments, telecommunications carriers, infrastructure providers, NBN Co and the Australian Government to address connectivity gaps and progress priority infrastructure opportunities. Primary responsibility for telecommunications infrastructure planning, investment and delivery rests with telecommunications providers, operating within the national policy and regulatory framework set by the Australian Government.

DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 Digital connectivity Enhance regional connectivity and resilience by facilitating access to reliable, high-speed telecommunications infrastructure.	1.1 Ensure coordinated identification and protection of corridors and strategic sites and avoid incompatible development that may constrain existing and planned infrastructure. 1.2 Facilitate the provision of high-speed, reliable and affordable telecommunications infrastructure through coordination across all levels of government, developers and carriers. 1.3 Promote the colocation of telecommunications infrastructure with other utilities and within established infrastructure corridors to optimise land use efficiency, reduce landuse conflict and improve service reach. 1.4 Support the inclusion of connectivity infrastructure in new residential and industrial development consistent with relevant Commonwealth policy including the Telecommunications in New Developments policy.

Future planning considerations

Future planning considers uncommitted and emerging infrastructure initiatives that may help address regional disparities in digital access across North Queensland. These initiatives include extending mobile coverage in underserved areas, expanding access to high-speed broadband services and embedding digital infrastructure considerations within land use planning frameworks and delivery processes.

Key considerations for future digital infrastructure in the region include:

- Deploying mobile network solutions to improve telecommunications and internet performance in remote and high-risk environments, including during disasters.
- Improving digital connectivity and internet access for regional businesses, including through expanded telecommunications coverage and reduction of mobile black spots.
- Strengthening digital connectivity to support access to remote education and healthcare services, including the delivery of e-health and telehealth services.



 Weir State School, Townsville

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Social and community infrastructure

In North Queensland, social and community infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting wellbeing, inclusion and resilience across a diverse region which includes regional cities and towns, rural and agricultural communities and geographically isolated populations such as Palm Island. Access to health, education, recreation and community services is essential to supporting community wellbeing and reducing disadvantage associated with distance, service gaps and extreme weather events.

The region is supported by a network of state and private primary, secondary, combined and special schools within the five council areas. The region has TAFE campuses located at Townsville, Burdekin, Charters Towers, Ingham and Palm Island. Educational infrastructure in Townsville also plays a broader regional role, supporting secondary, boarding and post-school pathways that serve surrounding local government areas. The boarding school network throughout the region is vital, reinforcing its role in specialised education and providing access to face to face schooling for rural and remote students.

James Cook University has a well-established focus on tropical health and medicine, supported by teaching, research and clinical partnerships in North Queensland. Together with the Townsville Hospital and Health Service and Central Queensland University in the Townsville CBD, these assets present an opportunity to strengthen North Queensland's role in tropical health research, training and service delivery. Future planning may include expansion of health-related training facilities, such as medical education and specialist workforce training to support skill development and integrated service models across the region.

Major hospital services are located in Townsville, which functions as the regional health hub for North Queensland. Townsville University Hospital operates

as a major tertiary and teaching hospital, providing a broad range of specialist and highly specialised services and supporting clinical training, research and education as part of the broader Townsville Hospital and Health Service network. The hospital plays a central role in servicing surrounding communities through referral pathways and outreach services. Hospitals and multipurpose health services are located in Ayr, Home Hill, Ingham, Charters Towers, Magnetic Island and Palm Island, complemented by a network of community health facilities distributed across the region. Together, these facilities support a networked model of care across North Queensland.

The Joint Regional Needs Assessment (2024) identifies that the Townsville Hospital and Health Service population experiences higher levels of disadvantage, increased health risks and disease burden, greater hospital utilisation and lower life expectancy when compared with the Queensland average. The Townsville Hospital and Health Service catchment is broader than the region and extends west to Richmond and Hughenden, north to Cardwell, south to Home Hill and east to Magnetic and Palm Islands.

Population growth in Townsville, ongoing service demands from surrounding localities and changing demographic profiles will continue to place pressure on social and community infrastructure. Coordinated planning across state, local and community providers will be required to ensure infrastructure is appropriately located, scalable and resilient, and that services align with community needs, urban growth and transport accessibility. Adaptive reuse, renewal and effective management of existing social infrastructure will be increasingly important to optimise service delivery, respond to changing needs and support efficient use of public assets across North Queensland.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 Social and community infrastructure Social infrastructure is planned and delivered to support the diverse needs of local communities and enhance quality of life for residents and visitors.	1.1 Plan for accessible social infrastructure and meet the diverse needs of the community to an appropriate standard in urban, regional and remote locations. 1.2 Support coordinated, place-based infrastructure planning in growth fronts within the Urban Footprint and RTF to inform LGIPs and state infrastructure planning outcomes. 1.3 Structure planning for growth fronts within the Urban Footprint and RTF provides sufficient and appropriately located urban land for future school provision. 1.4 Facilitate the integration and co-location of social infrastructure and community facilities through coordinated, precinct-based planning and delivery to improve access to services, support efficient service delivery and optimise parking.

Future planning considerations

Future planning considerations outline unfunded priorities and proposals to inform strategic infrastructure planning. Social and community infrastructure plays a key role in supporting inclusive and resilient community outcomes across North Queensland. Future planning responds to emerging needs, projected demographic shifts and identified service gaps, with consideration given to co-located, multipurpose community facilities that improve service accessibility and delivery efficiency.

Health

Queensland Government priorities for healthcare infrastructure are articulated through the Hospital Rescue Plan, which sets out key initiatives to strengthen Queensland's healthcare system. The plan forms part of Queensland Health's capital program, delivering built infrastructure and digital capability to support safe and high-quality care. Investment decisions are guided by clinical services planning, models of care and capital maintenance requirements. As demand on the public health system continues to grow, Queensland Health is positioning its infrastructure program to respond to these pressures, supporting delivery across hospitals, community health facilities, mental health facilities and staff accommodation.

Key considerations for future healthcare infrastructure in the region include:

- The Hospital Rescue Plan acknowledges that Queensland's population is growing and ageing. Services will continue to evolve over time and additional infrastructure planning will be required to respond to future needs. This could include:
 - future stages of the Townsville University Hospital Master Plan
 - refurbishment/expansion of regional hospital infrastructure, including facilities such as Charters Towers Hospital, which provides important services for inland communities and supports surrounding rural areas.
- A coordinated, networked approach to health facilities across the Townsville Hospital and Health Service should be supported, strengthening connections between Townsville and services in Ayr, Charters Towers and Ingham. Improved linkages can enable appropriate care to be delivered closer to home for communities, easing demand on the tertiary hospital and improving system efficiency across the health network.
- When undertaking a masterplan for the expansion of a hospital campus or new campus, consider prospective public and private partners, critical infrastructure (including digital and staff housing) and dependencies with other health facilities.
- The provision of worker accommodation for the construction of health infrastructure.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Education and training

When planning for new schools, the Queensland Government considers a range of factors including the capacity of the existing network, the ability to expand existing schools, population growth, high priority needs for student and staff safety, and land availability. These reviews inform the decision to establish new schools at the appropriate time and in the correct location. This planning work undertaken by the Department of Education is an important step in prioritising future investments in new school infrastructure.

The Department of Education conducts ongoing strategic planning for new schools throughout Queensland in areas experiencing significant population growth. This approach includes consultation with stakeholders from state and local government, non-government education representatives and the Queensland Government Statistician's Office.

TAFE Queensland is Queensland's primary public training provider and works in collaboration with government, industry and communities to deliver training that supports economic growth and regional prosperity. The Department of Trade, Employment

and Training provides fit-for-purpose facilities and infrastructure that supports TAFE Queensland in delivering contemporary and flexible training aligned to regional skills needs. These include skills and trades associated with housing construction and the delivery and maintenance of infrastructure.

Key considerations for future education and training infrastructure in the region include:

- Following the publication of updated population projections the Department of Education will review student population growth and determine whether strategic planning for new schools is required within the local government areas.
- The skills needs of the region will continue to be assessed to inform future infrastructure investment at state-owned TAFE campuses.

Elliot Springs, Townsville



Schedule 1 – North Queensland Regional Plan baseline data

Population projections – QGSO 2025

Table 2 - North Queensland's current and projected population – 2021 – 2046

Statistical area	2021 population (existing)	2046 population projection (existing + projected) medium series	2046 population projection (existing + projected) high series
Burdekin	16,836	17,679	17,750
Charters Towers	11,920	12,147	12,868
Hinchinbrook	10,990	11,257	11,925
Palm Island	2,180	2,490	2,638
Townsville	195,457	237,567	252,653
North Queensland region	237,383	281,140	297,834

Source: Queensland Government Population Projections, 2025 edition, medium and high series.

Dwelling projections – QGSO 2025

Table 3 - Dwelling demand projections 2021-2046

Local government area	2021 Dwellings (Existing)	2046 Dwellings (Existing + Projected) medium series	2046 Dwellings (Existing + Projected) high series
Burdekin	7,843	8,285	8,335
Charters Towers	5,368	5,564	5,577
Hinchinbrook	5,622	5,821	5,833
Palm Island	517	670	689
Townsville	81,634	101,295	107,277
North Queensland region	100,984	121,635	127,711

Source: Queensland Government Dwelling Projections, 2025 edition, medium and high series.

Employment projections

Table 4 - Employment projections

Statistical area	2026	2046
Burdekin	8,957	10,935
Charters Towers	6,154	7,076
Hinchinbrook	5,356	6,188
Palm Island	471	497
Townsville	112,517	127,046
North Queensland region	133,455	151,743

Source: Queensland Treasury, developed for the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning for the purpose of the draft North Queensland Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026.

Schedule 2 – Regional Land Use Category principles and criteria

Urban Footprint

Intent

The Urban Footprint promotes a compact regional growth pattern by consolidating land for urban purposes within and around established communities. Opportunities to increase capacity within the Urban Footprint, such as through infill and consolidation take priority over urban development occurring outside of the Urban Footprint.

Description

The Urban Footprint generally corresponds to the former Townsville Urban Area and reflects the City's established urban areas and growth fronts. It applies to land extending from Mount Low in the east to Stuart in the west, and south to Kelso.

The priority for land within the Urban Footprint is for urban purposes, accommodating a significant portion of the region's future urban growth. Development within the Urban Footprint can include housing, industry, commercial business, retail, tourist facilities and community facilities.

The Urban Footprint is a regional scale expression of land for urban purposes. The Urban Footprint is not an urban zone and does not imply land is suitable or intended for urban purposes.

The Urban Footprint includes areas which have been underutilised, or which have been designated for rural and rural residential purposes. These areas may present as development opportunities after further detailed planning.

The Urban Footprint may include land which is unsuitable for urban purposes or further development due to constraints.

Principles

The principles which define the region's Urban Footprint include:

1. The Urban Footprint includes land for urban purposes.
2. The Urban Footprint includes land for strategic airports and strategic ports.
3. The Urban Footprint can include land not suitable for urban purposes.
4. The Urban Footprint can include land for infrastructure, rural activities, and defence related activities or development.
5. The Urban Footprint consists of land predominantly within a local government's priority infrastructure area.
6. The boundary of the Urban Footprint is cadastral-based or otherwise clearly defined, preferably using a major feature such as a road or stream to provide a clear boundary.
7. Land within the Urban Footprint represents land which is consistent with the above principles, existing local planning instruments and state interests.

Regional Township Footprint

Intent

The RTF provides for a diverse range of land uses which allow regional towns to adapt to economic opportunities that fulfil both rural and urban roles, while maintaining a defined town limit to safeguard the integrity of the region's RLRPA. It is not intended to operate at the same scale and intensity as the Urban Footprint.

Description

The RTF predominantly applies to the region's rural centres and townships identified in the strategic framework of local planning schemes, including key settlements such as Ayr, Ingham and Charters Towers. It supports each Council's growth intentions

CATEGORY PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

for their rural centres and townships while remaining sympathetic to the character of these areas.

The priority for land within the RTF is for urban purposes. The RTF can include housing, industry, commercial business, retail, tourist facilities and community facilities. It may also include areas which are currently designated for rural and rural residential purposes. These areas may present as development opportunities after further detailed planning is undertaken.

The RTF is a regional scale expression of land for urban purposes that considers the unique attributes of rural centres and towns. The RTF is not an urban zone and does not imply land is suitable or intended for urban purposes.

The RTF may include land which is unsuitable for urban purposes or further development due to constraints.

Principles

The principles which define the region's RTF include:

1. The RTF provides for a diverse range of land uses that allow regional towns to adapt to economic opportunities and fulfil both rural and urban roles, while maintaining a defined town limit to safeguard the integrity of the region's RLRPA.
2. The RTF can include land not suitable for urban purposes.
3. The RTF can include land for infrastructure, rural activities, and defence related activities or development.
4. The RTF includes both areas serviced by infrastructure and non-serviced areas. Inclusion of non-serviced areas in the RTF does not commit governments to transition this area to more formal reticulated infrastructure.
5. The boundary of the RTF is cadastral-based or otherwise clearly defined, preferably using a major feature such as a road or stream to provide a clear boundary.
6. Land within the RTF represents land which is consistent with the above principles, existing planning schemes and state interests.

7. Land within the RTF may include opportunity for investigating the future expansion of an existing settled area within the boundary.

8. The inclusion of rural areas and other constrained land within the RTF is not a commitment to development or infrastructure provision.

Rural Living Area

Intent

The RLA is to provide areas of rural residential or lifestyle type lots within the region. It is not intended to provide urban purposes, but can provide rural purposes, particularly in rural areas that are transitioning to rural residential housing typologies.

Description

The RLA can adjoin areas of Urban Footprint and RTF or exist in isolation of these areas.

The RLA only provides areas of rural residential zoned land, and in some instances may also include areas of rural zoned land that still provide rural purposes. It is not intended to provide urban purposes; therefore, suburban housing or economic uses are not to be located within the RLA.

The RLA largely remains un-serviced, with housing located within the RLA to remain self-sufficient with regards to water and sewerage services.

The RLA may include land which is unsuitable for rural residential uses or further development due to constraints.

Principles

The principles which define the region's RLA include:

1. The RLA manages rural residential development to avoid constraining long-term potential future urban growth and infrastructure needs.
2. The RLA supports existing and/or new rural residential development in consolidated and well-defined communities that have good access to employment and services.

CATEGORY PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

3. The RLA can include land for infrastructure.
4. The RLA consists of land predominantly outside of a local government's priority infrastructure area, where a LGIP exists.
5. The boundary of the RLA is cadastral-based or otherwise clearly defined, preferably using a major feature such as a road or stream to provide a clear boundary.
6. Land within the RLA represents land which is consistent with the above principles, existing planning schemes and state interests.

Criteria for inconsistent development

Areas may be appropriate for being reclassified to Urban Footprint or RTF, or used for an urban purpose, where they:

- a) do not result in conflicts which would adversely impact the continued or future operation of:
 - (i) established centres;
 - (ii) rural activities;
 - (iii) industry activities;
 - (iv) key resource areas (includes transport route separation areas, transport routes, resource / processing areas and separation areas);
 - (v) utility installations;
 - (vi) major electricity infrastructure;
 - (vii) strategic airports;
 - (viii) strategic ports;
 - (ix) dams;
 - (x) defence estates;
 - (xi) environmental authorities; and
 - (xii) mining tenements;
- b) do not result in an intolerable risk to property or life;
- c) do not adversely impact Matters of State Environmental Significance or Matters of Local Environmental Significance;

- d) can be serviced by necessary infrastructure;
- e) are not constrained by topography;
- f) are a logical expansion of an existing Urban Footprint or RTF;
- g) have ready access to services and employment; and
- h) address a demonstrated need or realise an economic or community benefit.

Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area

Intent

The RLRPA is an important contributor to the regional economy and surrounds the Urban Footprint, RTF and RLA. The RLRPA is to remain protected from urban purposes and rural residential development so that it can continue to provide important economic uses associated with resource activities and rural purposes. It also contains the regions environmental and conservation areas.

Description

The RLRPA contains a diversity of land uses for economic and environmental purposes. It can accommodate resource activities, such as mines or KRAs, as well productive and agricultural land uses. It also provides hard to locate heavy industrial uses associated with the mining and agricultural sectors.

The RLRPA contains environmental areas important to the tourism sector, including; national parks, conservation parks, resource reserves, native forests, wetlands, marshes and other conservation areas. It also contains water catchments, water storage and groundwater areas.

To ensure the ongoing operation of the economic uses within the RLRPA suburban or rural residential housing should not be located within this RLUC. Land within the RLRPA is largely un-serviced.

CATEGORY PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

Principles

The principles which define the region's RLRPA include:

1. The RLRPA supports the use of land for rural activities, protection of economic and environmental state interests, mining and extractive industries and energy generation.
2. The RLRPA can include land for industry activities (including high-impact industry), infrastructure, defence related activities or development.
3. The RLRPA can include land for community facilities and open space and recreation where not contiguous with areas of Urban Footprint or RTF.
4. The RLRPA consists of land predominantly outside of a local government's priority infrastructure area, where a LGIP exists.
5. The boundary of the RLRPA is cadastral-based or otherwise clearly defined, preferably using a major feature such as a road or stream to provide a clear boundary.
6. Land within the RLRPA represents land which is consistent with the above principles, existing planning schemes and state interests.

Criteria for inconsistent development

Areas may be appropriate for being reclassified to Urban Footprint, RTF or RLA, or accommodate development which is supported by Urban Footprint, RTF or RLA where they:

- a) do not result in conflicts which would adversely impact the continued or future operation of:
 - (i) established centres;
 - (ii) rural activities;
 - (iii) industry activities;
 - (iv) key resource areas (includes transport route separation areas, transport routes, resource / processing areas and separation areas);
 - (v) utility installations;
 - (vi) major electricity infrastructure;

(vii) strategic airports;

(viii) strategic ports;

(ix) dams;

(x) defence estates;

(xi) environmental authorities; and

(xii) mining tenements;

- b) do not result in widespread or irreversible impact to the agriculture sector;
- c) do not result in an intolerable risk to property or life;
- d) do not adversely impact Matters of State Environmental Significance or Matters of Local Environmental Significance;
- e) can be serviced by necessary infrastructure;
- f) are responding to a community's preference for rural residential development;
- g) are a logical expansion to the existing Urban Footprint or RTF; and
- h) address a demonstrated need or realise an economic or community benefit.

Development inconsistent with a RLUC

While demand for urban development within the region's RLRPA or RLA may increase over the planning horizon, inconsistencies with RLUC intentions may be appropriate where justified. This means aligning with the purpose of the *Planning Act 2016*, meeting relevant state interests, and satisfying the relevant criteria for each RLUC.

Schedule 3 – Approach to determine dwelling supply targets

Aligning with the government’s broader election commitment to deliver one million new homes by 2044, the new Regional Plans establish dwelling supply targets that provide clear, measurable benchmarks. These targets are designed to ensure land use planning can effectively accommodate housing demand over the next 20 years. The dwelling supply targets are for the preparation of planning schemes and will support the monitoring of housing delivery across each region. This paper outlines the key concepts and steps taken to determine this plan’s dwelling supply targets and how they have informed the regional growth pattern.

The following concepts relate to the approach taken in determining the region’s dwelling supply targets:

1. Population projections – Inform long-term planning, ensure consistency across government and guide investment. The Queensland Government Statistician’s Office (QGSO) prepares population projections based on trends and assumptions relating to fertility, mortality, migration and dwelling stock. Projections are used to inform employment, household and dwelling projections across different geographies within the state.

Refer to Schedule 1 for the region’s population projections.

2. Household and dwelling projections – As per population projections, support planning and decision making. The QGSO prepares household and dwelling projections based on population projections, household structures and living arrangements. For the purposes of all Regional Plans, the medium series of the QGSO’s household and dwelling projections is the baseline scenario for consideration.

Refer to Schedule 1 for the region’s dwelling projections

3. Planning scheme capacity – Theoretical development potential of a planning scheme, having regard to components of a planning scheme which influence development yield e.g. zoning, built form outcomes, density, minimum lot sizes and constrained land vs least constrained land.
4. Policy scenarios – Testing housing demand which factors in other variables, including as major employment generating projects and local preferences in living arrangements.
5. Engagement – Engagement is undertaken with local government stakeholder to verify the technical work listed above
6. Dwelling supply targets – Policy expression which states the total number of residential dwellings to be enabled through appropriate zoning over the plan period. The target is a minimum and local governments may wish to plan over and above the dwelling supply target.

Schedule 4 – Draft National Institute of Economic and Industry Research employment projections

Table 5 - North Queensland regional employment planning projections by local government area

Local government area	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	Total projection (new jobs) 2021-46
Burdekin	8,048	8,106	8,410	8,520	8,972	9,517	1,469
Charters Towers	5,514	5,748	6,160	6,450	6,746	7,061	1,547
Hinchinbrook	4,763	5,048	5,284	5,389	5,714	5,937	1,174
Palm Island	378	550	602	619	676	778	400
Townsville	93,911	107,927	116,745	123,535	134,435	149,561	55,650
North Queensland total	112,614	127,379	137,201	144,513	156,543	172,854	60,240

Editor's note: the NIEIR Regional Employment Planning Projections presented are preliminary and subject to review and refinement as further analysis, data and stakeholder input become available.

Projected employment change by industry

Table 6 - North Queensland region projected employment change by industry

Industry	Total employment - 2021	Total projected employment - 2046	Employment change (2021-2046)
Healthcare and social assistance	19,264	33,223	13,959
Public administration and safety	13,215	23,932	10,717
Accommodation and food services	8,324	14,473	6,149
Education and training	11,225	17,025	5,800
Professional, scientific and technical services	5,007	9,415	4,408
Construction	8,955	12,477	3,522
Administrative and support services	2,886	6,090	3,204
Other services	4,661	7,298	2,637
Manufacturing	6,560	8,537	1,977
Transport, postal and warehousing	5,119	7,085	1,966
Retail trade	10,794	12,311	1,517
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	1,506	2,801	1,295
Arts and recreation services	1,692	2,562	870
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1,478	2,034	556
Mining	2,300	2,820	520
Financial and insurance services	1,623	2,132	509
Wholesale trade	2,445	2,923	478
Information media and telecommunications	1,055	1,502	447
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	4,505	4,214	-291
Total	112,614	172,854	60,240

Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research, 2026

Editor's note: the NIEIR Regional Employment Planning Projections presented are preliminary and subject to review and refinement as further analysis, data and stakeholder input become available.

Schedule 5 – Regionally Significant Tourism Assets

Regionally Significant Tourism Assets (RSTAs) are places, landscapes, attractions, precincts, corridors or experience clusters which make, or have the potential to make a significant contribution to the region's visitor economy and perform a defined role within the regional tourism system.

These assets are strategically identified with the potential for tourism growth based on alignment with tourism strategies, infrastructure, and proximity to natural or coastal environments, or cultural assets.

Regionally significant tourism assets may be:

- natural, cultural, urban, rural or experiential in nature; and
- individual destinations, environmental features, infrastructure assets, or broad interconnected systems.

RSTAs are consistent with the government's tourism strategy, *Destination 2045*, and provide a spatial reference for regional policy, to ultimately protect and enhance these assets.

Recognising RSTAs may evolve over time or are linked to projects which have the potential to become regionally significant. Local governments may identify additional RSTAs outside of this plan as part of the local planning scheme making process. Local governments should adopt the criteria prescribed below in determining RSTAs outside of those identified by this plan.

RSTA criteria

The table below sets out the criteria to identify and assess locations that may be suitable for recognition as a RSTA. The five themes reflect characteristics that were developed to identify sites that are performing or have the potential to perform a regional tourism role and are suitable for future growth and protection.

Each asset must be assessed against all five themes. While assets may demonstrate varying strengths across themes depending on their characteristics, all criteria must be satisfied for an asset to be identified as a RSTA. The criteria are performance-based and are to be applied as threshold tests, supported by evidence and planning judgement.

REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT TOURISM ASSETS

Table 7 - Criteria for assessing RSTAs

Theme	Criteria
Regional significance	1. The location or asset identified in or aligns with an initiative in Destination 2045 or other state government tourism strategy. 2. The asset attracts or has the potential to attract visitors from outside the local government area.
Accessibility and connectivity	3. The asset is, or is planned to be connected and accessible to key regional gateways, touring routes or towns.
Environmental, coastal, landscape and/or cultural values	4. The location or asset offer environmental, coastal, landscape or cultural values, or host large-scale events/entertainment.
Infrastructure access and servicing capability	5. If in the Urban Footprint or RTF, the location or asset can support intensification of uses or establishment of complementary land uses. 6. If in the RLRPA, the location or asset can support appropriate small-scale and low-impact development.
Environmental suitability, hazard and risk avoidance	7. Potential hazard risks to people and property can be avoided or managed.

Preliminary list of RSTAs for North Queensland

- North Queensland Stadium
- The Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area
- The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and Paluma Range National Park
- Magnetic Island
- Palm Island – Walking Trails
- Port of Townsville – Cruise Ship Terminal

Glossary

This glossary provides the meaning of some terms used in the draft Regional Plan. Terms not included in the glossary should be given their ordinary meaning unless they are defined in the *Planning Act 2016* or *Planning Regulation 2017*.

Term	Definition
Accommodation activity	As defined in the <i>Planning Regulation 2017</i> .
Agriculture	As defined in the SPP.
Agritourism	A form of tourism which connects people with agricultural products, produce and practices.
Amenity	The quality of a location or landscape which makes it pleasant or agreeable or which contributes to a comfortable and pleasant life.
Aquaculture Development Area	Sites identified by the Queensland Government as suitable for land-based marine aquaculture development.
Areas of regional interest (ARI)	As defined in the <i>Regional Planning Interests Act 2014</i> .
Centres	Centres are locations that accommodate a concentration of retail, commercial, community and service activities, supporting employment and providing access to goods and services. Centres may vary in scale and function across the region and are typically arranged in a hierarchy.
Dwelling supply targets	The dwelling supply targets indicate the supply to 2046 which needs to be planned for by the draft North Queensland Regional Plan 2026 and local government planning schemes. Actual construction of dwellings will depend on changing population growth and economic circumstances over time.
Ecotourism	As defined in the <i>Nature Conservation Act 1992</i> .
Employment land	Employment land is a general term which relates to land which supports economic activity and employment. It typically includes industrial areas and centres, along with other areas of the region's Urban Footprint and RTF which have an economic function.
Expansion (form of development)	Development on land outside existing urban areas or townships. Also known as 'greenfield development'.
Extractive resources	Extractive resources means natural deposits of sand, gravel, quarry rock, clay and soil extracted from the earth's crust and processed for use in construction. The term does not include a mineral under the <i>Mineral Resources Act 1989</i> , section 6.
Greenfield development	Development over undeveloped land.
Infill development	Redevelopment of developed areas, typically to increase the intensity and scale of development.
Infrastructure	As defined by the <i>Planning Regulation 2017</i> .

Term	Definition
Key Resource Areas (KRAs)	As defined by the SPP.
Mining tenement	As defined in the <i>Mineral Resources Act 1989</i> .
Nature-based tourism	As defined in the <i>Planning Regulation 2017</i> .
Non-private dwellings	Non-private dwellings can include hotels, hospitals, boarding schools and worker accommodation. It is recognised that non-private dwellings account for a proportion of current and future projected dwellings in North Queensland, particularly in key tourist and seasonal worker destinations across the region.
Priority Agricultural Area (PAA)	As defined in the <i>Regional Planning Interests Act 2014</i> .
Priority Agricultural Land Use (PALU)	A land use included in the following classes under the Australian Land use and management Classification (Version 8, October 2016) published by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Australian Government: • 3.1 – Plantation forestry • 3.3 – Cropping • 3.4 – Perennial horticulture • 3.5 – Seasonal horticulture • 4 – Production from irrigated agriculture and plantations • 5.1 – Intensive horticulture • 5.2 – Intensive animal production
Priority Living Area (PLA)	As defined in the <i>Regional Planning Interests Act 2014</i> .
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (RLRPA)	Land identified as Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area on Map 3 and as described in Schedule 2.
Regionally Significant Tourism Assets (RSTA)	Regionally Significant Tourism Assets (RSTAs) are places, landscapes, attractions, precincts, corridors or experience clusters that make, or have the potential to make a significant contribution to the region's visitor economy and perform a defined role within the regional tourism system. These assets are strategically identified with the potential for tourism growth based on alignment with tourism strategies, infrastructure, and proximity to natural or coastal environments, or cultural assets. Regionally significant tourism assets may be: • natural, cultural, urban, rural or experiential in nature; and • individual destinations, environmental features, infrastructure assets, or broad interconnected systems.
Regional Land Use Category (RLUC)	Regional Land Use Categories include Urban Footprint, RTF, RLAs and RLRPA.
Regional Township Footprint (RTF)	Land identified as RTF on Map 3 and as described in Schedule 2.

Term	Definition
Rehabilitation Purposes	A purpose that involves rehabilitation or restoration of native forestry, wetlands and mangroves on disturbed, modified and cleared lands, including environmental markets or carbon offsets projects. These activities must enhance agricultural productivity by improving land condition, ecosystem services, or soil health.
Rural activity	As defined in the <i>Planning Regulation 2017</i> .
Rural Living Area (RLA)	Land identified as Rural Living Area on Map 3 and as described in Schedule 2.
Rural residential development	Large-lot residential development, generally without reticulated sewerage and typically in a rural, semi-rural or conservation setting.
State Planning Policy (SPP)	The State Planning Policy.
Trunk infrastructure	As defined in the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> .
Urban Footprint	Land identified as Urban Footprint on Map 3 and as described in Schedule 2.
Urban purpose	As defined in the <i>Planning Regulation 2017</i> .
Widespread or irreversible impact	A widespread or irreversible impact on the future use of a PAA may occur if: • Development will cause a significant reduction in the raw product supplied to, for example, a mill or processing facility in the region, to such an extent that the mill or processing facility may become unviable, leading to flow-on effects for other agricultural activities and/or associated land uses • Development significantly alters resources that are necessary to maintain the function of existing and future expected agriculture activities within the region. This may include negative irreversible impacts to soil health, water quality and/or availability and landscape features (such as drainage) applicable to agricultural activities • Development will constrain, restrict or prevent the ongoing conduct of PALUs or other agricultural land uses on the property or adjacent properties. This includes, for example, everyday farm practices or infrastructure essential to the operation of a PALU or other agricultural land uses.
Wet Tropics World Heritage Area - Special Management Area	The area depicted as 'Wet Tropics WHA - Special Management Area' on Map 6 .

Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ARI	Areas of Regional Interest
KRA	Key Resource Areas
LGIP	Local Government Infrastructure Plan
NBN Co	National Broadband Network Co
PAA	Priority Agricultural Areas
PALU	Priority Agricultural Land Use
PLA	Priority Living Areas
QGIP	Queensland Government Infrastructure Pipeline
QGSO	Queensland Government Statistician's Office
RLA	Rural Living Area
RLUC	Regional Land Use Categories
RLRPA	Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
RPI Act	<i>Regional Planning Interests Act 2014</i>
RTF	Regional Township Footprint
RSTA	Regionally Significant Tourism Asset
SDA	State Development Area
SPP	State Planning Policy 2017
WHA	World Heritage Area



NORTH QUEENSLAND

*Draft Regional Plan and
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