DRAFT REGIONAL PLAN AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Cape York and Torres Strait

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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COVER PAGE IMAGE
Laura, Cook Shire
Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Minister's foreword

I am committed to delivering new Regional Plans, supported by infrastructure planning, for 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.

The draft Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026 forms an important part of this commitment, helping to ensure all communities in Queensland have a strong foundation for future prosperity and a place to call home.

The Cape York and Torres Strait region is one of Queensland's most distinctive places, defined by vast landscapes and seascapes, rich cultures and communities with a strong sense of identity and connection to place.

For the first time, the Torres Strait Islands have been incorporated into a statutory Regional Plan, expanding the region covered by this plan to include both Cape York and the Torres Strait. This reflects the social, economic and cultural connections across Queensland's northernmost region while recognising the unique critical contributions of these island communities to Queensland.

Across remote mainland and island communities and regional centres, people have long adapted to the region's unique environmental, economic and geographic conditions. Their resilience, knowledge and stewardship continue to shape the region's future.

The draft plan provides a framework for managing growth, guiding investment and supporting communities over the coming decades. It seeks to ensure that housing, infrastructure, services and employment opportunities respond to local needs while protecting the natural and cultural values that make the region unique.

Enhancing prosperity and opportunity across the region will depend on stronger connectivity, more self-sufficient communities and coordinated planning. It supports new development that will strengthen local economies, improve access to services and create opportunities for current and future generations.

The draft Regional Plan acknowledges the importance of planning for long-term economic and community resilience and provides a framework to inform future land use and infrastructure planning as the region navigates change and new opportunities.

Importantly, this draft plan is focused on delivery. It provides clear direction to guide land use, infrastructure planning and investment decisions across all levels of government.

By establishing a shared vision and coordinated regional priorities, this draft plan provides a solid foundation for growth, economic opportunity and prosperous communities, ensuring the Cape York and Torres Strait region continues to thrive well into the future.

Let's get on with it.

Jarrod Bleijie MP.

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



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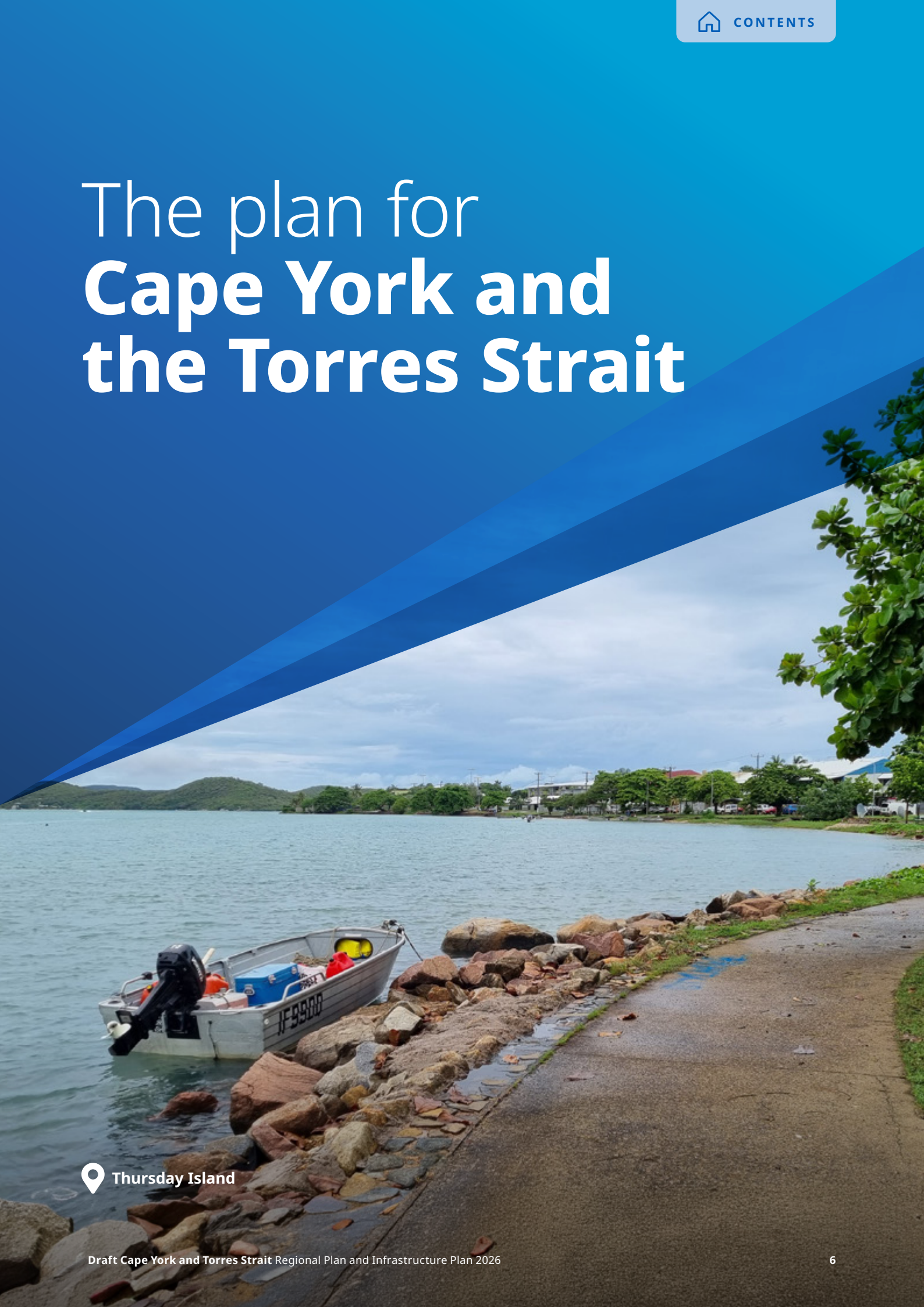
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The plan for **Cape York and the Torres Strait**



Thursday Island

Our region

The Cape York and Torres Strait region occupies the northernmost part of Queensland and spans approximately 130,000km^2, making it one of the state's largest regions as shown in **Map 1**. Home to approximately 25,000 people, the region is distinguished by its remarkable diversity of landscapes, seascapes and cultures. The Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan (Regional Plan) and Infrastructure Plan (Infrastructure Plan) 2026 brings together the people and places of:

- Cape York Peninsula, including the communities of Aurukun, Cook, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Napranum, Northern Peninsula Area, Pormpuraaw and Weipa
- the Torres Strait, including the island communities of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council and the island and mainland communities of Torres Shire Council.

The region supports an economy underpinned by its rich natural assets, connected communities and strategic location. Mining and extractive industries play a significant role, with Cape York hosting Australia's largest bauxite mining operations and supporting major export activities through Weipa and associated port infrastructure.

Agriculture, tourism, fisheries and aquaculture, construction and government and community services also provide important employment and economic opportunities across the region. Major land transport, marine and aviation infrastructure connects communities, facilitates trade and investment and supports long-term regional prosperity across this remote and strategically important part of Queensland. Together, these transport networks support connectivity between mainland, island and remote communities, providing access to essential services, employment opportunities and supply chains across the region to support reliable wet-season access to remote communities.

As Australia's northernmost region, Cape York and the Torres Strait play an important role in supporting border security, maritime enforcement and emergency management activities.

Across the region, local governments play an important role in supporting communities and managing places of significant environmental, cultural and economic value. The majority of local governments within the region are Indigenous local governments under the *Local Government Act 2009*, reflecting the large population of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. In many communities, local governments also undertake responsibilities as trustees of land within local government boundaries.

Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and stewardship are integral to the identity of Cape York and the Torres Strait. Recognising and celebrating this connection provides important context for the region's history, communities and aspirations, while reinforcing the Regional Plan's commitment to inclusion, partnership and representing the interests of all regional stakeholders.

The region comprises exceptional terrestrial, freshwater and marine natural assets such as the remnant rainforests of Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) National Park, KULLA (McIlwraith Range) National Park and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. These environmental assets support important habitat for threatened and culturally significant species including marine turtles, dugongs, sawfish, palm cockatoos, southern cassowaries and green pythons.

Cape York and Torres Strait region is exposed to a range of natural hazards, including tropical cyclones, severe winds, flooding, heatwaves, bushfires and coastal hazards. The region's remoteness, dispersed growth pattern and reliance on critical infrastructure can influence how these hazards affect communities and economic activity. Environmental trends may influence the nature and extent of some natural hazard risks over time, particularly for coastal communities as well as regional, remote and Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander communities.

While Cape York and the Torres Strait are distinct in geography, economies and settlement patterns, they share many common characteristics – including strong cultural connections, rich cultural heritage and unique natural environments, while also facing challenges associated with remoteness, service delivery, infrastructure provision and weather events. These shared characteristics create common planning opportunities and challenges. Supporting housing, infrastructure, economic development and community services in ways that respond to local conditions will be critical to securing positive long-term outcomes across the region.

The Regional Plan provides a coordinated framework to guide land use, development and infrastructure planning across the region, ensuring that future growth reflects local conditions while supporting state interests and regional aspirations.

Cape York

Cape York is characterised by expansive tropical landscapes, nationally significant wetlands, rainforests, river systems, extensive coastlines and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. The region is recognised for its outstanding natural and Aboriginal cultural heritage values. The region is home to many Aboriginal communities, rich cultural traditions and a network of towns that provide important services, employment and economic opportunities across the northern peninsula.

Cooktown functions as a key regional service centre, providing health, education, retail, tourism and government services to communities across the Cape York peninsula. Weipa plays a significant economic role as one of northern Australia's most important mining and export hubs, supporting Australia's largest bauxite mining operation and providing critical port, aviation and logistics infrastructure that underpins economic activity across western Cape York. Agriculture, mining and extractive industries, tourism, government services and emerging industries also collectively contributes to a regional economy and supports local livelihoods and regional prosperity.

Tourism plays an important role in the regional economy, drawing on the area's unique natural landscapes and a range of nature-based, recreational and culturally significant experiences. The region is renowned for its remote wilderness, rugged four-wheel drive adventures and iconic destinations. A journey to Cape York offers a rare opportunity to connect with some of Australia's most remote cultural environments, contributing to its appeal as an iconic visitor destination.

Communities such as Aurukun, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Napranum, Northern Peninsula Area (including Bamaga, Seisia, Injinoo, Umagico, New Mapoon), and Pormpuraaw continue to play an important role in shaping the history, culture and identity of Cape York. These communities remain places of strong cultural authority and knowledge, with enduring connections that continue to influence community life, land management, governance and the future development of the region.

Development across Cape York is influenced by its remote geography, seasonal weather patterns, environmental values and complex land tenure arrangements. The settlement pattern is characterised by small and geographically dispersed communities, with housing, infrastructure and access to services remaining important considerations across the region. Aboriginal freehold land, native title interests, conservation estates, pastoral leases and mining tenures collectively shape settlement patterns, infrastructure delivery and economic development opportunities. While these land tenure arrangements reflect the region's unique history, they also create challenges in identifying and servicing land for housing, infrastructure and economic development.

The Torres Strait

The Torres Strait comprises a network of island communities situated between mainland Australia and Papua New Guinea. The Torres Strait is home to islander communities whose enduring connection to Sea Country, Island Custom (Ailan Kastom) and maritime traditions continue to shape the identity of the region. A network of inhabited islands, each with its own history, language and cultural practices, contribute to the richness, diversity and resilience of the Torres Strait.

Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) functions as the Torres Strait's primary service, governance and commercial centre, providing health, education, retail and government services to surrounding island communities. Horn Island (Narupai) plays a complementary role through its strategic aviation, logistics and transport functions, supporting connectivity between the Torres Strait, Cape York and the Queensland mainland. Fisheries, tourism, government services and local enterprise remain important contributors to the regional economy, supporting employment opportunities and community wellbeing across the islands.

Communities such as Badu Island (Mulgrave Island), Boigu Island, Kubin and St Pauls (on Moa Island / Banks Island), Coconut Island (Poruma), Darnley Island (Erub), Dauan (Cornwallis Island), Hammond Island (Keriri), Horn Island (Narupai), Mabuiag Island (Mabuyag Island), Masig Island (Yorke Island), Meer Island (Mer Island), Prince of Wales Island (Muralug Island), Saibai Island, Stephens Island (Ugar), Sue Islet (Warraber), Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), and Yam Island (Iama), play an important role in maintaining Ailan Kastom, cultural knowledge and community leadership across the region. These communities retain strong connections to land and sea and continue to support the cultural, social and economic fabric of the Torres Strait.

Development across the Torres Strait is influenced by its island geography, reliance on marine and aviation transport networks, exposure to coastal storm surge and erosion. Land tenure and native title arrangements reflect traditional ownership and community-based land administration systems and play an important role in shaping growth patterns, infrastructure delivery and future development opportunities. Geographic isolation, high service delivery costs and the need for resilient infrastructure present ongoing planning challenges, while also highlighting the importance of coordinated approaches to housing, infrastructure and economic development.

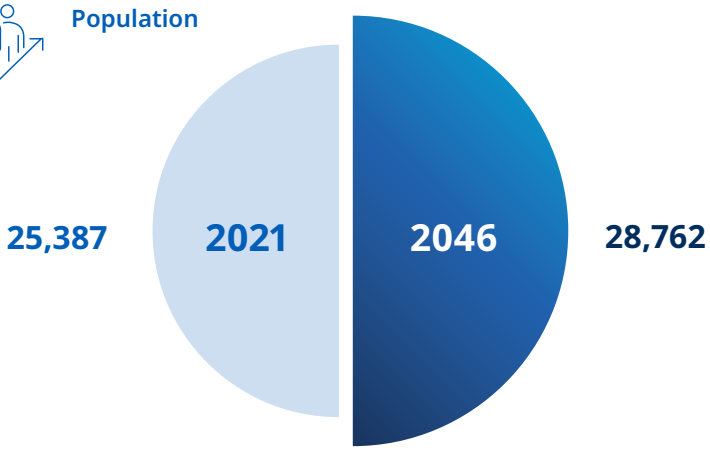
The Torres Strait occupies a strategically important position at Australia's northern boundary, where governments, Traditional Owners and communities work together to support border protection and biosecurity functions.



Community event, Torres Strait
Torres Strait Island Regional Council

Cape York and the Torres Strait snapshot

Population



Source, Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) final 2025 edition – high series

Current and projected new homes

2021 **8712**

2046 **10,636**

Source, QGSO final 2025 edition – high series

Land

Total land area

129,434 km²

Approx 25,000km²
of the region is designated national park, equating to approximately 20% of the region's land area

Approx 85%
of land in the region is subject to determined native title rights and interests

Approx 3%
is mining lease

Approx 30%
of the land in the region is pastoral lease (various pastoral holdings)

Approx 4%
of the land in the region is held in Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT)

Tourism

Annual visitor numbers to region (2025) – 520,000

77.9% 2025 Domestic

22.1% 2025 International

Source, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, February 2026

Gross Regional Product

$2.176 billion

in 2025

Source, REMPLAN

Key employers

Cape York

1. Mining
2. Healthcare and social assistance
3. Public administration and safety
4. Education and training
5. Accommodation and food services

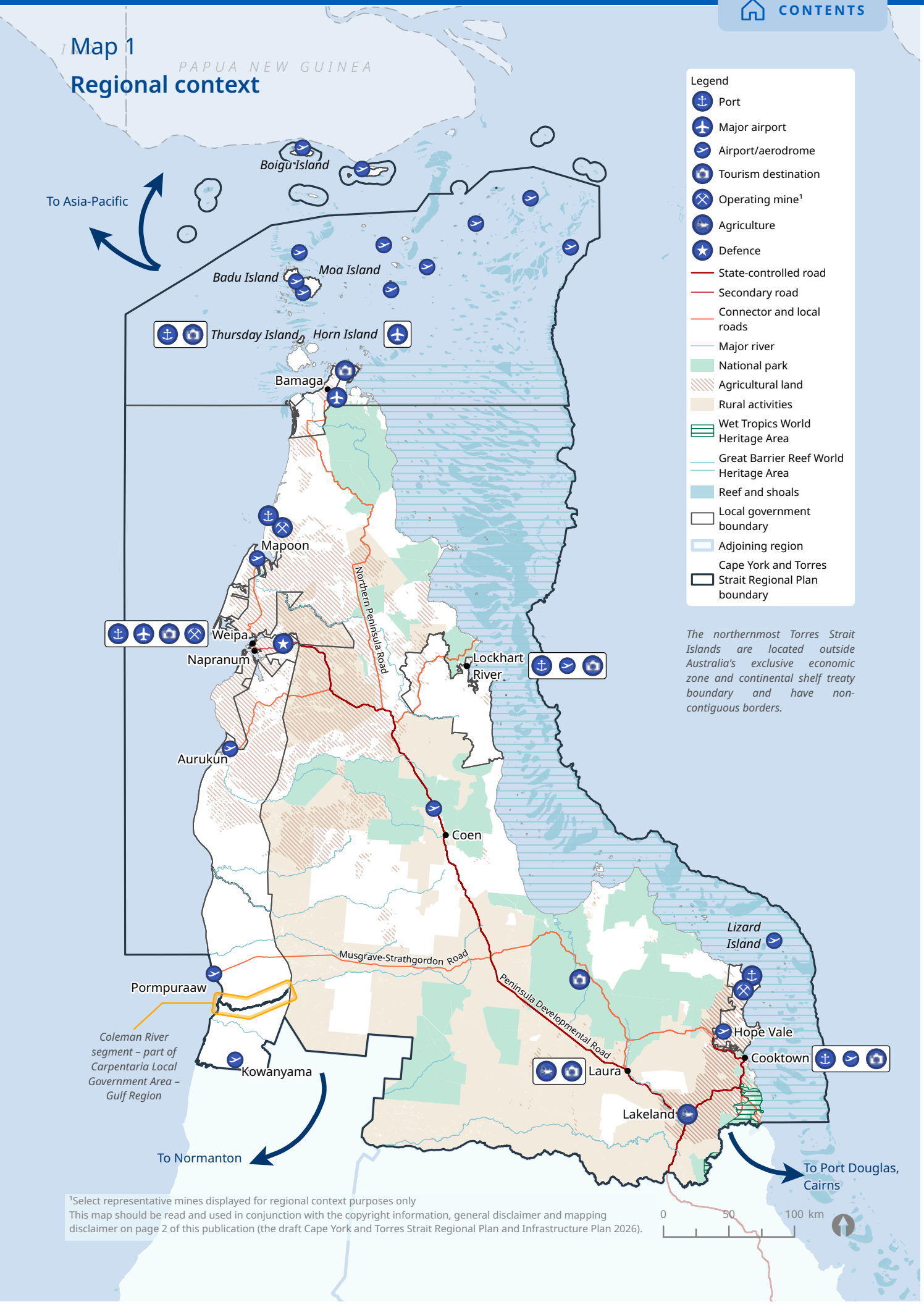
Torres Strait

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

Agriculture and mining

Economic Output (Gross Revenue)	Cape York	Torres Strait	Cape York and Torres Strait
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	$96.1 million	$19 million	$115.2 million
Mining	$2.45 billion	$11.7 million	$2.46 billion

Map 1
Regional context



[1]Select representative mines displayed for regional context purposes only

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 Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026).

Our future

Cape York and the Torres Strait are positioned for opportunity, building on unique natural and cultural values, strategic location and strong economic foundations to support industry transition, attract investment and create lasting prosperity for communities and generations to come.

By 2046, Cape York and the Torres Strait will be more recognised as a connected, prosperous and resilient region where communities are empowered to shape the future, economic opportunities are diversified and growth is well-managed to deliver long-term social, environmental and economic outcomes.

The region will build on its strategic location at Australia's northernmost point and strengthen its role as a gateway between Queensland, neighbouring nations and the broader Asia-Pacific. New investment, innovation and partnerships will support a stronger economy while creating opportunities for local communities and future generations.

Communities across the region will have access to safe, appropriate and well-located housing that reflects the needs of those on island and mainland. Coordinated planning, local industry participation and investment in the infrastructure needed to sustain thriving communities will support housing growth. Land use and infrastructure planning will continue to recognise the region's exposure to natural hazards and the importance of maintaining community connectivity and access to essential services.

The region will leverage its established economic strengths to drive investment, support jobs and create new opportunities across Cape York and the Torres Strait. Mining, agriculture, fisheries, grazing and tourism will continue to provide the foundation of the regional economy, while growth in aquaculture, advanced construction methods and other emerging industries will contribute to a stronger and competitive economic future.

Mining and resources will continue to underpin economic growth across Cape York and the Torres Strait, supporting regional jobs, export earnings and investment. As home to Australia's largest bauxite mining operations and significant mineral resources, the region will continue to make a significant contribution to Queensland's economy and global resource supply chains. Planning will support the continued operation and growth of the sector, while also enabling economic diversification and future opportunities associated with mine rehabilitation and industry transition.

Tourism will continue to grow through authentic cultural experiences, nature-based activities and adventure tourism that showcase the region's unique landscapes, cultures and histories. The region will continue to attract national and international recognition as a destination offering world-class experiences grounded in environmental stewardship and cultural heritage.

Coordinated investment in infrastructure, including trunk infrastructure, will help unlock housing, employment and economic development opportunities across Cape York and the Torres Strait. Improved transport and digital connectivity will strengthen access to jobs, services and markets. Strategic investments, including the progressive upgrade of the Peninsula Developmental Road, will enhance year-round access, improve supply chain resilience and support economic development across Cape York and the Torres Strait.

By 2046, Cape York and the Torres Strait will be a region where strong communities, diverse economies, healthy environments and modern infrastructure work together to support a high quality of life and lasting prosperity for future generations.

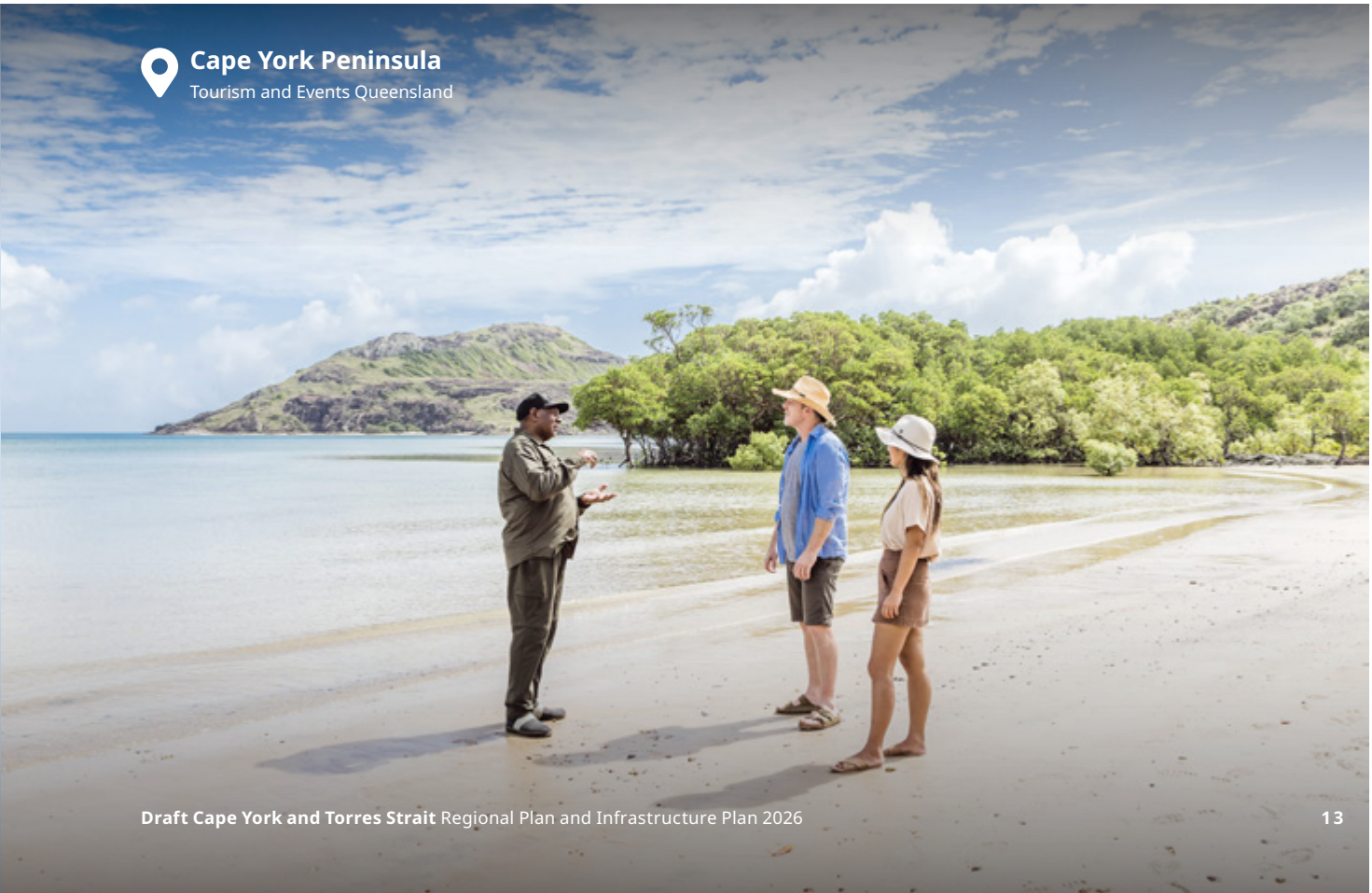
Local government narratives

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

Together, they encompass a wide spectrum of places, from established regional centres and small rural towns to highly remote communities 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 prepared with the assistance and guidance of 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.



Cape York Peninsula
Tourism and Events Queensland



Mipwun Barge Ramp, Aurukun

Aurukun Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION	AREA SIZE	KEY CENTRE
	7329 km^2	Aurukun
	POPULATION	
	1103	

Unique characteristics

Aurukun is a remote Aboriginal community on the western Cape York Peninsula, located at the mouth of the Archer, Watson and Ward rivers on the Gulf of Carpentaria. It features distinctive wetlands, among the largest in Australia, embedded among river systems, floodplains and savannah landscapes. The township serves as the administrative, service and community hub for the shire where more than 90 per cent of the population identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Aurukun is nationally recognised for its vibrant arts sector through the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre, which showcases and sells locally produced artworks including carvings, prints and paintings.

Most of the land within the shire is Aboriginal freehold. Its remote location presents ongoing challenges for transport, service delivery and economic participation, requiring continued investment in infrastructure and local capacity to support long-term prosperity.

Economic aspirations

Local business development, employment and training, and partnerships with mining and commercial stakeholders are economic development priorities for Aurukun's future. Mining is important to the region, and working closely with mining companies can help develop local employment, contracting and business opportunities.

Partnering with Traditional Owners and the local community presents tourism opportunities, that leverage the internationally significant wetlands, recreational fishing opportunities, cultural experiences and strong arts centre across the shire. Further opportunities could include accommodation and visitor services.

Aurukun's forests have potential to support forestry and timber production. Building on the region's natural assets, forestry has the potential to contribute to local employment, economic diversification and Indigenous economic development while supporting the long-term stewardship of forest resources.

The continued success of the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre provides opportunities to increase the sale and promotion of Aurukun art to national and international markets, generating local income while strengthening the community's profile.

Improving self-sufficiency and supporting local employment can strengthen local industries, which includes increasing locally supplied fresh food from seafood production and vegetable growing. Further opportunities come from expanding mechanical repair and maintenance services.

Aurukun's vision for economic resilience includes supporting community members to establish and operate businesses, increasing local employment and enhancing local service provision.

Housing aspirations

Overcrowding remains a significant challenge, placing pressure on the community. By improving housing outcomes, critical shortages can be addressed, and future housing can reflect local community needs.

Additional housing needs to be well-designed, durable and suited to Aurukun's tropical climate and remote location. Consistent with council's focus on innovative construction methods, explore opportunities for modular and prefabricated housing that reduce costs and improve delivery timeframes. The long-term objective is to provide safe, adaptable and appropriate housing that supports community wellbeing, workforce attraction and retention.

Key infrastructure

Aurukun's remote location and regional characteristics create significant challenges in transport, utilities, and service delivery. A community access road connects Aurukun to the Peninsula Developmental Road, however unsealed sections of the Peninsula Developmental Road and seasonal flooding during the wet season frequently isolate Aurukun from other communities within Cape York, disrupting freight, construction and essential services.

Aurukun Airport is essential for regional connectivity, providing passenger, freight and emergency service access to Cairns and Weipa, however high passenger and freight costs remain a constraint. Digital infrastructure is improving, but has reliability and affordability challenges which limit access to education, telehealth and economic opportunities.

Together, priorities for infrastructure investment include improving transport resilience, enhancing digital connectivity, upgrading water supply and wastewater services, strengthening preparedness for weather events and supporting transport solutions that improve the separation of freight and heavy vehicle movements from local community traffic.



Mipwun Barge Ramp, Aurukun



James Cook Museum, Cooktown
Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Cook Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

105,618 km^2

POPULATION

4631

KEY CENTRES

Cooktown

OTHER COMMUNITIES

Ayton, Bloomfield, Coen, Helenvale, Lakeland, Laura, Lizard Island, Marton, Portland Roads, Rossville

Unique characteristics

Cook Shire is Queensland's largest local government area and covers 80 per cent of the Cape York Peninsula, sharing its boundary with all of the region's mainland councils.

It has a vast scale, dispersed communities and distinctive regional identity shaped by both coastal and inland landscapes. Extending across much of Cape York Peninsula, the shire encompasses a mix of rugged ranges, savannah plains, river systems and coastal landscapes along the Coral Sea. Cooktown, located near the mouth of the Endeavour River, serves as the administrative and primary service centre, supported by a network of small townships and remote communities distributed across the region. The shire's identity reflects a combination of historic settlement patterns, strong local traditions and connections to place that continue to influence community life and regional character. Cooktown is recognised for its historic significance while smaller communities maintain local industries, arts activity and place-based enterprises.

The region faces challenges associated with distance, access and service provision. These characteristics shape a unique lifestyle offering space, regional character and connection to place, balanced by the need for continued investment in infrastructure and services to support long-term prosperity.

Economic aspirations

Cook Shire's economy is supported by a mix of agriculture, commercial fishing, tourism, public administration, education, extractive industries, health services and construction. Cattle grazing, horticulture and fishing underpin the rural and primary production economy, while Cooktown and coastal areas support an expanding visitor economy driven by the region's history, coastal identity, distinctive landscapes and national parks. Public sector employment provides stability, complemented by small business activity and seasonal tourism-related industries.

Economic priorities focus on emerging opportunities and strengthening existing sectors. Tourism is expected to continue expanding, supported by opportunities to enhance visitor experiences, improve accommodation supply and build on the region's history, arts and access to remarkable landscapes such as the Wet Tropics and the Great Barrier Reef. Agricultural growth and a range of industry opportunities are expected to remain important drivers of economic development, particularly in the Lakeland area where opportunities exist to increase agricultural productivity and employment, support new and expanded primary industries and strengthen regional supply chains. The shire's extensive forests also provide opportunities to support sustainable forestry and timber-related industries, contributing to employment, economic diversification and the sustainable management of forest resources.

Emerging opportunities include energy generation, aviation, value-added agriculture niche tourism products, and locally driven enterprise development. Realising these opportunities will require improved infrastructure, workforce development and stronger connections to regional and external markets, enabling a more robust and adaptable economic base across the shire.

Housing aspirations

Settlement across Cook Shire is characterised by a dispersed pattern of small townships, rural properties and remote communities, with Cooktown functioning as the primary residential and service hub. Housing demand varies across the region, with pressure most evident in Cooktown and key service centres, as well as seasonal demand associated with tourism, construction, and farming activity.

The shire faces a range of housing challenges, including high construction costs driven by distance and freight logistics, limited serviced land in some locations and ageing housing stock in smaller communities. Seasonal access constraints during the wet season further impact construction timeframes and supply availability, limiting the pace of new development.

Housing aspirations focus on increasing supply, improving the quality of existing dwellings and enabling a broader mix of housing options to meet changing needs. This includes supporting affordable housing outcomes, senior living and aged care facilities, facilitating new land release where infrastructure allows and encouraging innovative building approaches suited to remote conditions. Coordinated investment and streamlined delivery processes will be essential to improving housing availability and supporting ongoing growth across the Shire.

Key infrastructure

Cook Shire's infrastructure network supports a vast and remote region, with key transport routes including the Mulligan Highway, Peninsula Developmental Road and Bloomfield Road providing critical connections to Cairns, Daintree, inland communities and northern Cape York. Sections of these routes remain unsealed and are more prone to disruption during the wet season, affecting freight, travel and service access. Cooktown Airport provides essential air connectivity for passengers, freight and emergency services with opportunities to expand its role in regional access. Cooktown Port supports the commercial fishing industry and maritime tourism.

Significant investment is underway across the shire including upgrades to health facilities such as the Cooktown Hospital redevelopment, new reticulated water and sewer infrastructure in Lakeland and Cooktown to support housing delivery, and projects supporting arts and community infrastructure. Economic-enabling infrastructure further strengthens agricultural capacity. Ongoing priorities include improving infrastructure to support an increase in housing supply and affordability, transport reliability, further development and access to tertiary facilities and services, enhancing digital connectivity and upgrading essential utilities to support growth, improve amenity and strengthen resilience to severe natural hazard events.



Laura, Cook Shire
Tourism Tropical North Queensland



Everlina Plaza, Hope Vale
Adllins Media

Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

1110 km^2

POPULATION

998

KEY CENTRE

Hope Vale

Unique characteristics

Hope Vale is a remote Aboriginal community on the eastern Cape York Peninsula, approximately 46 kilometres north-west of Cooktown and the single service centre for the local government area. Set within a valley framed by coastal ranges and rivers, the community has a strong identity, connection to place and history of resilience, leadership and self-determination. Hope Vale is home to 13 clan groups, with Guugu Yimithirr widely spoken alongside English. Established as the Cape Bedford Mission in 1886 and re-established at its present inland site from 1950, Hope Vale was the first community to receive an Aboriginal Deed of Grant in Trust in 1986, and the native title rights of the Warra peoples were recognised in 1997. Hope Vale is recognised for its strong community networks, active local organisations, and commitment to supporting future generations through education, health, community services, arts and cultural initiatives.

The area's beaches, forests and waterways underpin its identity. Local tourism assets include Elim Beach and the Cape Bedford Campground. Hope Vale sits within a region featuring globally significant silica sand resources, which contribute to the shire's distinctive natural and geological landscape.

Hope Vale has three distinct landholding agreements. Council is the trustee for the DOGIT that includes the township, while most of the surrounding DOGIT area comprises Aboriginal freehold land held by the Hopevale Congress Aboriginal Corporation Registered Native Title Body Corporate under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*. Council also owns approximately 380 hectares of freehold land, which it is developing to provide freehold housing and an industrial estate. Housing and economic development opportunities should be available across all three landholding arrangements.

Economic aspirations

Hope Vale aspires to build a strong and locally driven economy that creates employment, business ownership opportunities and greater economic self-sufficiency. While local government, health, education and community services currently provide the foundation of the local economy, council aspires to expand participation across a broader range of industries.

Tourism is identified as an opportunity, particularly through locally-owned accommodation, cultural experiences including businesses owned by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, visitor education and nature-based tourism ventures that build on Hope Vale's unique cultural heritage and natural assets. Council seeks to promote Hope Vale as a gateway to Cape York and a destination for learning about Country and culture, including a museum and gallery space so that artefacts can be returned to community.

Relocating the industrial estate from the town centre, provides opportunities for a wider range of industrial activities and frees up land in the town for additional housing, including short-term accommodation.

The Cape Flattery Silica Mine located approximately 42 kilometres north-east of Hope Vale and one of the world's largest silica sand operations, presents opportunities for ongoing investment, employment and partnerships.

Council also seeks stronger relationships with government, mining, tourism and agricultural sectors to support local business development, workforce participation and economic diversification. Additional aspirations include strengthening land management activities and building workforce capability through training and skills development.

Together, these initiatives aim to create more jobs, more businesses and greater economic benefits that remain within the community while supporting long-term prosperity. Council supports Indigenous enterprise through mentoring, business planning, access to markets and training in digital and business skills, and seeks partnerships with government and industry that co-invest in Hope Vale's future economy. Council also advocates for access to the long-term funding and revenue streams available to other Councils, supported by a secure long-term financial plan.

A priority for the community is to relocate industrial activity from within the township to land to the west, including the old farm, and to establish a serviced industrial estate. This will release land within the township for urban purposes and improve amenity for residents. Commercial growth is planned to the south-west of the township along Endeavour Valley Road, the main road into town, supported by master-planning and place-based initiatives that improve streetscaping, visual amenity and establish an attractive town centre.

Housing aspirations

Hope Vale's settlement pattern is focused on a single township where housing is predominantly community-managed and social housing. Existing housing supports larger households which reflects local living arrangements. Ongoing challenges include overcrowding, ageing housing stock and limited housing supply options. Council also owns freehold land at Millers Block, approximately one kilometre west of the township, where Stage 1 of the Hope Valley Estate (40 lots) is complete and Stage 2 (61 lots) is planned. Resolving tenure over land adjoining the township, particularly to the west, is a priority that will enable the community's planned growth.

Providing safe, appropriate and resilient housing is a central aspiration for the community. Future priorities include reducing overcrowding, increasing housing supply, upgrading existing dwellings and facilitating development within identified expansion areas, including Hope Valley Estate (Millers Block).

Council's preferred direction for township expansion is to the west, toward and beyond Hope Valley Estate, on land that is generally elevated, largely cleared, serviceable and a logical extension of the township. Delivering these outcomes will require coordinated responses to land tenure constraints, infrastructure provision, construction costs and the logistical challenges associated with building in a remote location.

Housing aspirations focus on increasing the supply of well-designed, durable housing that responds to local conditions and community needs. This includes supporting innovative construction approaches suited to remote environments. Land surrounding Council's freehold Hope Valley Estate is intended for further freehold housing rather than social housing, supporting home ownership, greater housing choice and resident needs. Realising this growth depends on resolving tenure over land west of the township and on preparing a local plan or master plan to guide layout, connectivity and servicing. A central objective is to improve housing availability and functionality while supporting long-term community growth and amenity.

Additional drainage infrastructure is required to ensure that land for housing is appropriately drained and achieves a satisfactory level of flood immunity.

Key infrastructure

The Endeavour Valley Road is fully sealed and is Hope Vale's primary connection to Cooktown, serving as a transport corridor for residents, freight services, and economic activity. Maintaining reliable regional access remains important, particularly during the wet season when flooding and road closures can affect connectivity and supply chains. The Port of Cape Flattery, located on the eastern Cape York Peninsula, is a strategic port facility supporting silica sand mining and international trade. Access to the coastal areas of Elim Beach and Cape Bedford is via unsealed roads with low creek crossings, and upgrading these routes would support year-round tourism and community access. Council advocates for upgrades to access routes and regional freight links, and for road and drainage improvements that support emergency access and economic activity.

The community is supported by essential infrastructure including water, sewerage, waste management, community facilities and local service hubs. Consistent with council's long-term vision, future infrastructure priorities include improving transport and freight connections, strengthening digital connectivity, enhancing community facilities and ensuring infrastructure is resilient to severe weather. Priorities also include a master plan for the staged release of serviced industrial, commercial and residential land, and delivery of the Hope Vale industrial estate west of the township, flood-proofing and upgrading water and sewer infrastructure, securing a second high-voltage power connection to provide energy security and enable growth, a digital innovation hub with improved internet and mobile coverage. Land should be set aside to allow for the extension to the existing runway – for emergency services as well as future proofing.

Hope Vale is interested in working collaboratively to strengthen investment, grow industries and invest in its people.

Kowanyama



Kowanyama
Aboriginal Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

2523 km^2

POPULATION

1107

KEY CENTRE

Kowanyama

Unique characteristics

Kowanyama is a remote Aboriginal community located on the south-western Cape York Peninsula, approximately 25 kilometres inland from the Gulf of Carpentaria. It is known as the 'Place of Many Waters' in the Yir Yoront language.. The community is closely connected to the Mitchell and Alice river systems, extensive wetlands, floodplains and coastal environments that define the region's landscape and identity.

The community has a strong tradition of environmental stewardship and local leadership. Kowanyama pioneered one of Australia's first Indigenous ranger programs and continues to play an important role in land and natural resource management through locally led environmental initiatives. Community pride, cultural knowledge, intergenerational connections and collective decision-making remain central to local identity and aspirations for the future. Special places and features within the township are protected for cultural purposes, strengthening connection to culture and Country while shaping the location and extent of land available for housing and economic development.

Kowanyama seeks to translate its long-recognised environmental stewardship, traditional ownership and cultural rights into practical pathways for people to live on, reconnect with and care for Country, fulfilling cultural aspirations while creating local jobs, enterprises and economic opportunities grounded in cultural knowledge and land management.

Kowanyama is flat and low-lying and flooding is a significant consideration in land use and disaster management.

Kowanyama experiences challenges associated with remoteness including seasonal isolation during the wet season, infrastructure constraints and higher costs of service delivery. These factors reinforce the importance of continued investment in connectivity, housing, essential services and community infrastructure to support a thriving and prosperous future.

Economic aspirations

Kowanyama's economy is underpinned by local government, education, health, community services, land and natural resource management and other public sector activities. The community has identified employment, training and economic participation as key priorities, with aspirations to create meaningful local jobs, strengthen workforce pathways for young people and build a strong economy.

Council seeks to expand opportunities in industries such as cattle and agriculture, environmental management, aviation, mechanical trades, community and administrative services, while supporting local entrepreneurship and attracting investment that builds on local knowledge and capabilities. Achieving these outcomes will require strong partnerships with government, industry and service providers, alongside ongoing investment in skills development, leadership and workforce training.

Housing aspirations

Housing remains a critical priority for Kowanyama and is recognised as fundamental to community wellbeing, education and economic participation. The community seeks a greater supply of affordable, appropriate and renewed housing that meets current and future needs including larger and multi-generational households. Land tenure remains a key barrier to housing delivery, with unresolved succession and ownership of 70 Katter leases (perpetual leases) preventing their extinguishment and the lawful development of housing on the affected land.

Other key challenges include housing shortages, overcrowding, ageing housing stock, lack of appropriately zoned land and the high costs associated with remote construction. Future housing is likely to be delivered on DOGIT land and on land owned by the ABM Elgoring Ambung Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC (Registered Native Title Body Corporate) south of the township towards Topsy Road. Future housing outcomes will be informed by detailed housing needs assessments and will require continued advocacy for investment, infrastructure upgrades and planning that responds to changing community needs including pathways to home ownership.

Key infrastructure

Kowanyama's infrastructure network is shaped by its remote location and limited transport connections. Access is primarily via unsealed roads linking to the Burke Developmental Road, which are prone to disruption during periodic weather events, limiting freight movements and travel. Air connectivity via the local airstrip provides important year-round access for passengers, freight and essential services, particularly during the wet season when road access is limited.

Core infrastructure includes local road networks, drainage networks, utilities and community facilities each requiring upgrades to meet current and future demand. Infrastructure priorities include strengthening transport resilience, enhancing digital connectivity and improving drainage, water, wastewater and energy systems to support growth.



Magnificent Creek, Kowanyama



Lockhart River housing, Lockhart River
Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council

Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE
3600 km^2

POPULATION
653

KEY CENTRE
Lockhart River

Unique characteristics

Lockhart River is a remote coastal community on the eastern Cape York Peninsula, centred on the township of Lockhart River and surrounded by significant natural assets including rainforest, river systems, coastal environments and the rugged landscapes of the Iron Range region. The community serves as a gateway to the Iron Range area and its nationally significant natural environments, which contribute to the shire's distinctive character and support opportunities for tourism, conservation and cultural connection. Consistent with Council's vision of 'Strong Puuya, Strong Culture, Strong Future', the community is characterised by a strong local identity, deep connections to place and a shared commitment to community wellbeing, environmental stewardship and future prosperity.

The community's history, local leadership and collective aspirations continue to shape its development. Social wellbeing, natural environment and resource management, infrastructure development, economic development and leadership and governance are recognised as the foundations for a resilient future. The Mangkuma Land Trust, which manages approximately 354,000 hectares of Aboriginal freehold land, is a significant feature of local governance, land management and connection to Country. Emphasis is placed on education, community participation, local leadership and supporting opportunities for residents to live, work and thrive in the community.

Economic aspirations

Lockhart River's economy is supported by local government, health, education, community services and land and sea management activities. Council's vision for economic development focuses on building a strong economy that creates employment opportunities, strengthens local businesses and improves workforce participation.

A key priority is supporting local enterprise development through the Ngaachi Nyi'ilama (One Place) Business Hub, which provides opportunities for business mentoring, training, employment services and workforce development. Council also identifies tourism and cultural development as important future opportunities.

Economic aspirations include expanding community-led businesses, supporting tourism opportunities, strengthening 'working on Country' and 'getting back on Country' initiatives and increasing local involvement in service delivery and infrastructure projects. Improved digital connectivity, training pathways and business support services will be critical to enabling long-term economic growth and employment outcomes.

Council has a long-standing investment in broadening the economic base of the township actively investing in the professional development of its people to the point there are now 21 locally owned and operated Indigenous small businesses delivering contract services to Council negating the need for external contractors in most instances.

Housing aspirations

Providing adequate, safe and appropriate housing is a key priority for Lockhart River. There is a need to improve housing quality, increase supply and expand housing choice through the delivery of new community housing, additional worker accommodation and opportunities for home ownership.

Housing delivery continues to be influenced by remoteness, construction costs, workforce availability and logistical constraints. To support future development, council is focused on delivering new subdivisions and the timely provision of supporting infrastructure, including water, sewerage and stormwater services.

The long-term aspiration is to improve living conditions while ensuring housing capacity can meet the needs of residents and the local workforce. Achieving this outcome will support community wellbeing, strengthen service delivery and contribute to sustainable economic development.

Key infrastructure

Reliable infrastructure is essential to maintaining community connectivity, service delivery and economic participation in Lockhart River. Roads, bridges, airport infrastructure, boat ramps, housing, water supply, sewerage and stormwater systems are strategic assets supporting community wellbeing, resilience and future growth.

Council's priorities include improving the reliability of the access road, maintaining and upgrading essential services, supporting infrastructure for new housing development and ensuring the ongoing operation of the Lockhart River Airport, which provides a vital link for passengers, freight, emergency services and government service delivery.



Mapoon Cultural Centre, Mapoon
State Library of Queensland

Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE
487 km^2

POPULATION
442

KEY CENTRE
Mapoon

Unique characteristics

Mapoon is a remote coastal community located at Cullen Point on the western coast of Cape York Peninsula, approximately 85 kilometres north of Weipa. The local government area extends from the Skardon River in the north to the Pennefather River in the south and includes the lower reaches of the Wenlock and Ducie river systems. Characterised by extensive riverine environments, wetlands, coastal dunes and Gulf of Carpentaria beaches, Mapoon has significant environmental, cultural and recreational values.

Mapoon's identity is shaped by a unique history of mission settlement, forced removals, the destruction of the original township in 1963 and the subsequent return and rebuilding of the community. This resilience continues to inform the community's vision of 'rising from the ashes' and its commitment to strengthening culture, self-determination and opportunities for future generations.

The township is located on DOGIT land, while much of the surrounding area is Aboriginal freehold land held by the Old Mapoon Aboriginal Corporation. The community maintains strong connections with both Mapoon and New Mapoon, supported by the Mapoon Cultural Centre, Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger programs and a focus on cultural preservation and land stewardship.

A defining characteristic of Mapoon is its close relationship with Weipa. The Mission River Bridge provides the community's primary road connection to the regional centre, enabling access to employment, secondary education, healthcare, government services, retail, freight and other essential services. This critical link strengthens social and economic connections between the two communities while allowing Mapoon to retain its distinct identity and lifestyle.

Economic aspirations

Mapoon's economy is centred on local government services, public administration, construction, community services, environmental management and tourism-related activities with council serving as the largest employer. While these sectors provide an important employment base, there is a desire to broaden the economic opportunities and strengthen private sector activity.

Economic aspirations focus on developing a strong economy that supports local employment and economic self-determination. Priorities include expanding tourism and visitor accommodation, supporting small businesses, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-owned businesses, increasing local participation in construction and infrastructure projects and encouraging investment in new enterprises. Potential opportunities identified by council include tourism development, barge operations, a caravan park, townscape improvements, water bottling and other local initiatives that leverage Mapoon's natural assets and proximity to Weipa.

Realising these opportunities requires improved transport and communications infrastructure, stronger market access and ongoing collaboration between government, industry and the community to support long-term economic resilience and growth.

Housing aspirations

Housing remains a significant priority for Mapoon, with demand continuing to exceed supply. The community's housing stock is predominantly social and community housing located within the township and ongoing pressures associated with overcrowding, ageing dwellings, high construction costs, remoteness and land tenure constraints affect housing delivery.

Council's housing aspirations focus on increasing housing supply, reducing overcrowding and improving housing quality through continued advocacy for additional social housing, implementation of the community housing master plan and delivery of new housing projects. Supporting pathways to home ownership and ensuring housing development aligns with community character and future growth needs are also important priorities. Achieving these outcomes will depend on continued investment in supporting infrastructure, including water, sewerage and transport networks.

Key infrastructure

Mapoon's infrastructure network is essential to community wellbeing, economic development and resilience. Community access road connectivity is provided via the Mapoon Access Road and the Mission River Bridge, which forms the critical transport link to Weipa and the broader Peninsula Developmental Road network. The privately owned and operated bridge provides access to employment, education, healthcare, freight and supply chains and is fundamental to maintaining connectivity between Mapoon and the regional centre.

Council owns and operates the Mapoon Aerodrome and is seeking to attract regular commercial air services to reduce reliance on Weipa Airport. Marine infrastructure at Cullen Point, camping facilities and recreational assets support tourism and community activities, while council-owned accommodation assists with housing visiting workers and service providers.

Future infrastructure priorities include upgrades to water and wastewater systems, sewerage infrastructure, flood resilience, community housing infrastructure, active transport networks, digital connectivity and community facilities.



Mapoon Cultural Centre, Mapoon
State Library of Queensland



Napranum foreshore, Napranum

Napranum
Aboriginal Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

1983 km^2

POPULATION

906

KEY CENTRE

Napranum

Unique characteristics

Napranum is a remote Aboriginal community on the western coast of Cape York Peninsula, located on the banks of the Mission River approximately 11 kilometres south of Weipa. The community has a strong local identity and a unique history linked to the former Weipa Mission, with Napranum deriving its name from local languages meaning 'meeting place of the people'. Today, Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council is the trustee of extensive DOGIT lands covering more than 200,000 hectares, giving the community an important role in land stewardship, planning and future development.

Napranum forms part of the broader western Cape York region and shares close economic, social and service connections with Weipa. Many residents access employment, education, health services, retail facilities, transport infrastructure and regional opportunities through Weipa, while maintaining strong community ties and local governance within Napranum. This relationship provides significant advantages through access to regional infrastructure and employment but also means the community is influenced by broader economic and policy changes occurring across western Cape York.

The community is characterised by strong local leadership, a commitment to local decision-making and aspirations for greater community control over land, services and future development. Community facilities such as the Indigenous Knowledge Centre, aged care services, sporting facilities and community events support social wellbeing, while the Mission River, coastal environments and surrounding landscapes contribute to the area's distinctive character and lifestyle.

Economic aspirations

Napranum's economy is supported by local government, health, education, community services and construction activities, together with strong employment connections to Weipa's mining, contracting and service sectors. The community's proximity to Weipa provides access to a broader regional labour market and supply chain network, creating employment opportunities that would otherwise be difficult to sustain in a remote location.

A key aspiration is to increase participation of local people in skilled employment, training and business ownership while reducing dependence on external contractors and creating more locally generated economic activity. Council has identified workforce development, local Indigenous procurement, business mentoring and the establishment of support mechanisms for local enterprises as important priorities for strengthening economic self-determination. The community also sees opportunities to diversify the local economy through tourism, cultural enterprises, agriculture, land and sea management, renewable energy initiatives and recycling industries. Potential tourism opportunities include experiences associated with the Mission River, coastal environments, local arts, history and community-led visitor experiences. Napranum recognises the importance of understanding and responding to potential opportunities arising from the long-term future of mining operations in western Cape York.

Housing aspirations

Napranum's settlement pattern is centred on a single township, with most housing located on DOGIT land and delivered through community-managed and social housing programs. While recent investment has improved housing outcomes, overcrowding, ageing housing stock and growing demand continue to place pressure on households and community services. Housing quality and supply remain critical factors in supporting community wellbeing, workforce participation and future population growth.

Housing delivery is influenced by high construction and maintenance costs, remote supply chains, seasonal weather constraints and the complexities associated with land tenure and future township planning. Council has identified the progression of land use planning initiatives, including future township planning and Indigenous Land Use Agreement processes, as important enablers for long-term housing outcomes.

Future aspirations focus on increasing housing supply, reducing overcrowding, improving housing standards and delivering homes that are durable, energy efficient and suited to local conditions. Continued collaboration with government agencies will be important to implement long-term housing plans, improve servicing infrastructure and ensure housing supports a growing and skilled local workforce.

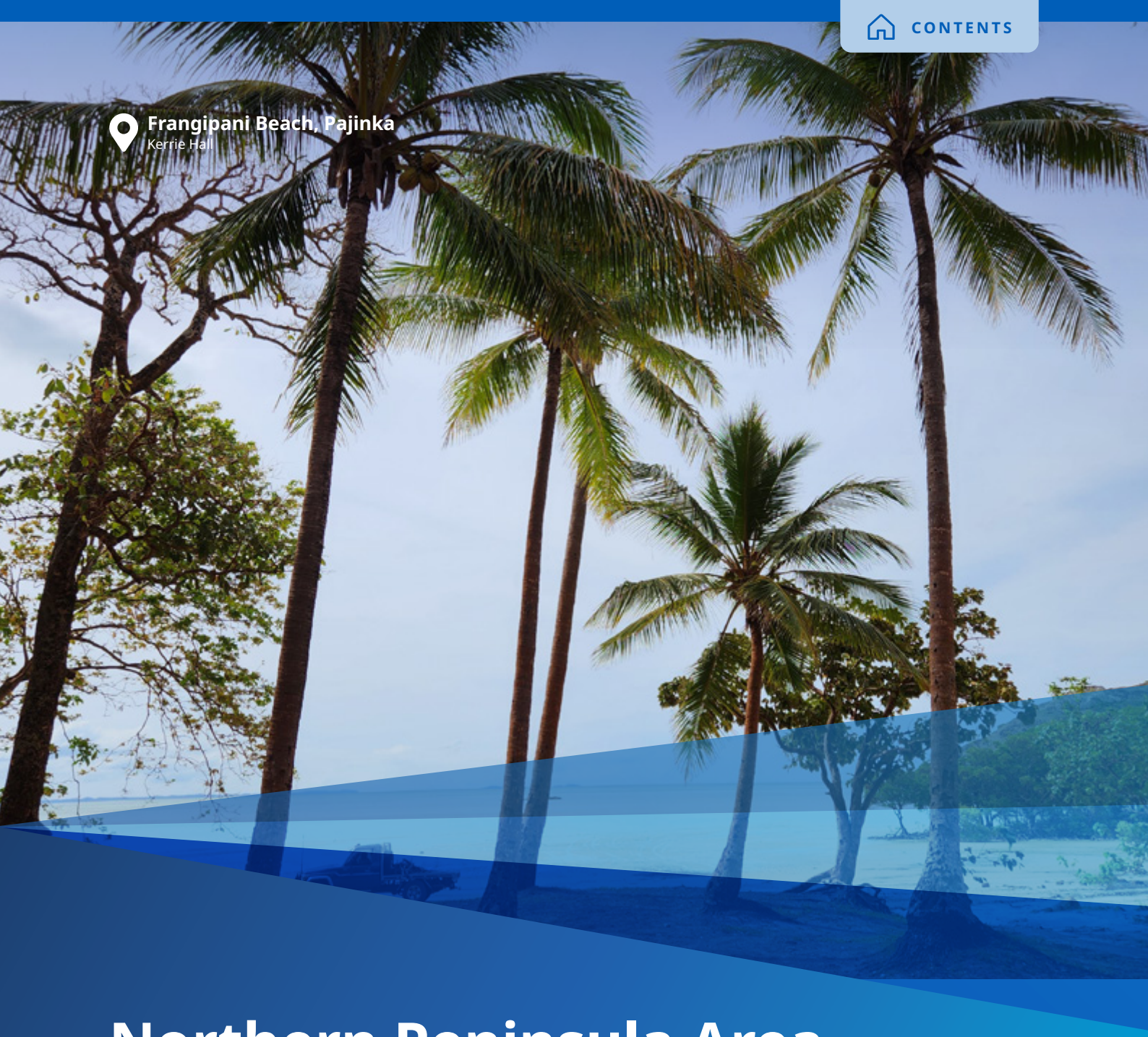
Key infrastructure

Napranum benefits from strong regional connectivity through its sealed road link to Weipa, providing access to regional health, education, freight, commercial and transport services. The community relies heavily on Weipa's airport, port, retail and service infrastructure, making the relationship between the two communities critical to economic participation, service access and regional resilience.

Council has identified ongoing investment in community infrastructure, transport networks, housing, digital connectivity and public facilities as important priorities. Key projects and priorities include maintaining community facilities, upgrading roads, enhancing telecommunications and ensuring infrastructure remains fit-for-purpose as community needs evolve.

Infrastructure planning will need to consider opportunities and risks associated with the future of Weipa, including township normalisation, mine closure planning and changing regional service arrangements. Continued collaboration between the Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council, Weipa Town Authority, Queensland Government and other regional stakeholders will be important to ensure infrastructure investment supports long-term economic development, community resilience and sustainable growth across western Cape York.


Napranum



Frangipani Beach, Pajinka
Kerrie Hall

Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

1018 km^2

POPULATION

2885

KEY CENTRES

Bamaga (Ichuru/Ichiru), Injinoo, Umagico, New Mapoon, Seisia

Unique characteristics

The Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) is Australia's northernmost mainland region and occupies a strategically important position as the gateway to Cape York, Pajinka (the Tip) and the Torres Strait. The region's five communities – Bamaga, Injinoo, Umagico, New Mapoon and Seisia – reflect a unique blend of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities, making the NPA an important cultural, service and transport gateway between mainland Australia and the Torres Strait.

The region's coastal landscapes, marine environments and proximity to nationally recognised destinations support a distinctive lifestyle and contribute to the area's social, economic and environmental values. Strong community connections, local leadership and partnerships continue to shape the region's future, reinforcing a shared commitment to improving quality of life and creating opportunities for current and future generations.

The area's remote location presents both opportunities and challenges. Its strategic position provides access to tourism, marine industries and regional services however its remoteness, seasonal weather conditions and infrastructure constraints influence the delivery of essential services and economic development. Ongoing investment in resilient infrastructure, community facilities and service delivery remains critical to supporting sustainable growth and community wellbeing.

Economic aspirations

The NPA's economy is centred on public administration, healthcare, education, transport services, local government operations and community services which together provide significant employment opportunities. Tourism, marine industries, aviation services, small business and local enterprises also play an important role in supporting economic activity and regional service delivery.

A key aspiration is to build a strong and self-sustaining economy that increases local employment and participation in private sector opportunities. The area's strategic location as the gateway to Cape York and the Torres Strait, together with its natural and cultural assets, provides opportunities to grow tourism, marine services, recreational fishing and locally led enterprise.

Achieving this vision will require continued investment in workforce development, education and training, digital connectivity, transport infrastructure and business support. Strengthening local skills, entrepreneurship and access to markets will help support long-term economic prosperity and community self-sufficiency.

Housing aspirations

The NPA's five communities require ongoing investment in housing and essential services to meet the needs of a growing and relatively young population. Housing demand continues to increase due to population growth, household formation and the need for worker accommodation, while delivery is challenged by remoteness, high construction costs and seasonal access constraints.

A key aspiration is to increase the availability, options and standard of housing across the region through the provision of serviced residential land, reduced overcrowding, expanded home ownership opportunities and suitable accommodation for essential workers. Delivering durable housing and supporting infrastructure will improve liveability, strengthen communities and contribute to better health, education and economic outcomes.

Key infrastructure

Infrastructure is a key enabler of the region's communities and economy. The Jardine River Ferry connects the Northern Bypass Road, a community access road providing the primary road connection to southern Cape York. Northern Peninsula Airport (Bamaga) is a key transport hub for passengers, freight and essential services and Seisia's jetty and marine facilities support regional connectivity, tourism and supply chains. Together, these assets facilitate the function as the gateway to the Torres Strait.

The region's schools, health facilities, utilities, community infrastructure and council assets support everyday life, community wellbeing and future growth across the NPA. Potable water is sourced from the Archer River and ongoing investment in water infrastructure, including water supply, treatment, storage, and distribution networks will be important to support community needs and future growth.

Key infrastructure priorities include improving road reliability and all-weather access, upgrading water supply infrastructure, water, wastewater and energy services, strengthening digital connectivity, enhancing disaster resilience and expanding community facilities.



Aerial of Pormpuraaw
Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council

Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE
4382 km^2

POPULATION
632

KEY CENTRE
Pormpuraaw

Unique characteristics

Pormpuraaw is a remote Aboriginal community on the Gulf of Carpentaria in western Cape York Peninsula, located south of the Edward River and bordered by the Chapman and Moonkan rivers. The Thaayorre, Mungkan, Wik, Bakanh and Yir Yoront Peoples are the Traditional Owners of the area and the name Pormpuraaw comes from a Kuuk Thaayorre story about a burnt hut, or 'pormpur', reflecting the enduring connection to place.

Pormpuraaw is characterised by its coastal setting, extensive river and wetland systems, seasonal isolation and the continuing connection of Traditional Owners to Country. Council's vision is of a strong, engaged community creating a dynamic future, supported by local leadership and strong community participation.

Established as the Edward River Mission in 1938 and self-governing since land was transferred to council under a DOGIT in 1987. The township comprises two neighbourhoods known locally as the Mungkan side and the Thaayorre side, united by shared schools, shops and community facilities. Around 650 people live in Pormpuraaw and the population has an average age of 32, compared to the Queensland average of 38 years. Sport, recreation and youth activity have a central place in community life.

Pormpuraaw's growth pattern is set by its landform. The township sits on a plain of low shell and sand ridges standing one to three metres above the swales between them. The ridges are the elevated, free-draining ground on which the town has always been built; the swales carry seasonal overland flow and are underlain by estuarine muds. Pormpuraaw therefore expands linearly along ridgelines rather than concentrically and its urban extent is best recognised as a set of connected ridge corridors. Mapped this way, the footprint identifies a real supply of developable land, allows roads, water, sewerage and community facilities to extend along a predictable alignment and keeps development clear of the flood, storm tide, coastal hazard and acid sulfate constraints affecting the low ground.

Infill on serviced ridges comes first, with ridge-aligned expansion released as cultural heritage, flood and geotechnical investigations are completed. There are opportunities for the township to expand north and south providing additional areas for housing, as well as east of the township providing opportunities for expansion for uses such as industry and government facilities.

Pormpuraaw is recognised for its established arts sector, community events and environmental management programs which play an important role in supporting skills development and local employment. Ranger programs undertake significant environmental initiatives including turtle conservation, ghost net recovery, natural resource management and savannah burning, demonstrate the community's commitment to environmental stewardship while creating employment opportunities. Pormpuraaw continues to strengthen community wellbeing through investment in housing, infrastructure, facilities and local capability.

Economic aspirations

Pormpuraaw's economic aspirations focus on building a strong and self-sustaining local economy while reducing long-term reliance on external funding. While public administration, education, health services and community programs remain the foundation of employment, council and other service providers seek to expand workforce participation, support local businesses and create opportunities for young people to live, work and raise a family within the community.

A key priority is strengthening education, training and skills development through initiatives such as a proposed multi-purpose training centre, tourism infrastructure and improved secondary education opportunities. Tourism is also identified as a potential growth sector, leveraging the area's coastal setting, recreational fishing, natural environment and cultural attractions.

The Pormpuraaw Art and Cultural Centre and the Baas Yard cattle station are established local employers with capacity to grow and land and sea management work offers further employment linked to culture and Country.

Housing aspirations

Providing safe, functional and appropriate housing is a key priority for Pormpuraaw. Council's aspirations focus on increasing housing supply, improving dwelling quantity and quality and ensuring sufficient residential land is available to meet demand.

A proposed new residential subdivision is the first stage of a ridge-aligned expansion. Council's near-term priorities are to deliver 40 houses and more than 35 additional dwellings north and south of the town by 2029. This includes community housing and accommodation for essential service workers and to maintain the existing stock of ridges already serviced. A mix of dwelling types is sought including smaller dwellings, alongside the larger family homes that make up most of the existing stock. This will also help ease household crowding.

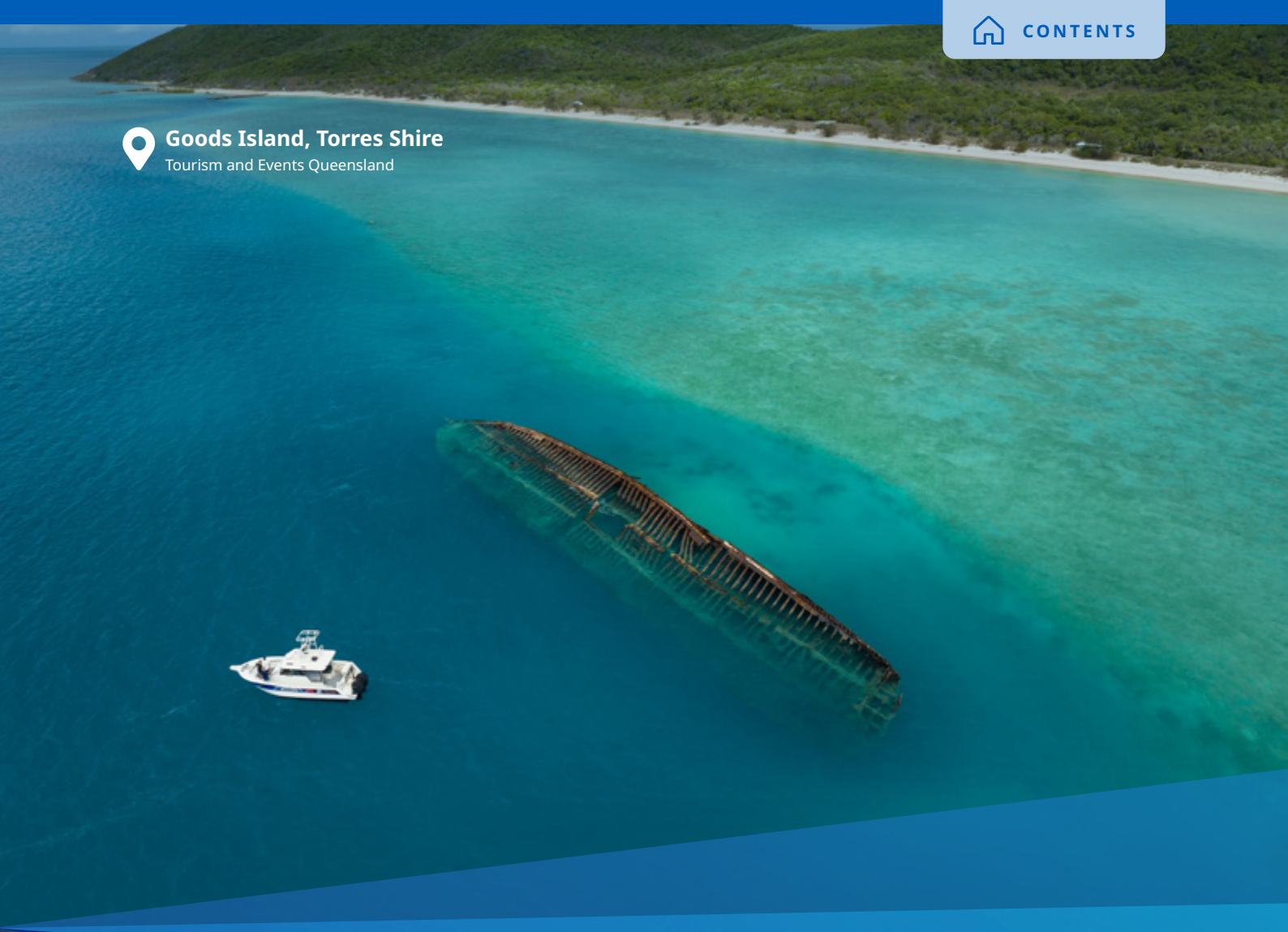
As each ridge development extends water, sewerage and road networks along its length, releasing land in step with servicing capacity will help keep supply steady and predictable. Dwelling design will respond to the same low-lying, cyclone-exposed coastal setting that shapes the settlement pattern itself.

Key infrastructure

Infrastructure underpins Pormpuraaw's future development, community wellbeing and economic resilience. Water is drawn from borefields with sewerage treatment ponds, stormwater swales, a standalone Ergon Energy generation plant and a 4G mobile network completing essential services.

Improving the council-managed Strathgordon Road, Pormpuraaw and the Peninsula Developmental Road is a major priority, reflecting the importance of this community access road providing reliable year-round connectivity for residents, freight movement, emergency response and economic activity. Council continues to advocate for ongoing investment in this link, alongside maintaining the sealed airstrip and barge landing that provide essential access during the wet season and improving the reliability and affordability of air services.

Planned infrastructure investment includes a new council administration centre, upgraded community facilities and ongoing improvements to water, sewerage and transport infrastructure. A sport and recreation precinct masterplan (2025) has been prepared for council-managed reserve land adjoining the school, guiding future investment in sporting fields, rodeo ground, indoor sports hall and youth facilities. Other identified priorities include a cyclone shelter, seniors' units, teacher housing and improved footpaths, shade and public seating. Council is also focused on maintaining disaster preparedness, with particular focus on flood, cyclones, urban heat, storm surge and coast erosion, strengthening infrastructure resilience and ensuring community facilities continue to meet resident needs.

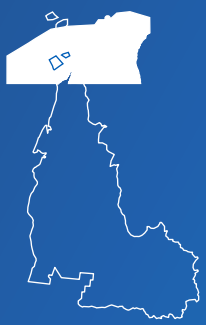


Goods Island, Torres Shire
Tourism and Events Queensland

Torres Shire Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE
885 km^2

POPULATION
3532

KEY CENTRES
Thursday Island (Wai-Ben)

OTHER COMMUNITIES
Wasaga, Muralug

Unique characteristics

Located in the northernmost part of Queensland, Torres Shire Council sits between Cape York and Papua New Guinea. Council delivers services across interconnected communities on Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), Horn Island (Narupai) and Prince of Wales Island (Muralug Island), the homelands of the Kaurareg Nation.

The shire's iconic turquoise waters are a 'blue highway' shaping movement, access and daily life. Limited land and complex tenure conditions concentrate population on Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) and Horn Island (Narupai). The built form is low-rise and with a strong focus on walkability and access to the waterfront. The streets are shaded by mango trees and beach almonds. Outdoor communal gathering and cooking spaces are highly valued by local residents.

A multicultural community is present in the region due to historic beche-de-mer fishing, mother-of-pearl and trochus shell industries. A population of predominantly Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people, the community is young, mobile and multilingual, with strong family networks and cultural practices. Regional cultural and sporting events shape how the shire's housing, services and infrastructure operates including seasonal fluctuations.

Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) is a regional administration and economic hub. Horn Island (Narupai) is the regional transport gateway with international and regional aviation and port services. Together these centres form the core of the shire's community and service network with the strategic location and infrastructure of these centres making them essential to the functioning and development of the Torres Strait and northern Cape York.

Economic aspirations

The shire's economic activity focuses on essential service delivery, marine and aviation transport and logistics and construction, anchored by public sector employment. Tourism focuses on small scale visitor experiences exploring cultural heritage, military history and natural environments.

Activating Horn Island (Narupai)'s Airport Road industrial corridor will enable future growth to strengthen and broaden this existing economic base to increase local jobs and training, reduce costs and improve self-sufficiency. There is capacity to grow local supply chains through local mineral resources, energy generation and circular economy initiatives. Protecting strategic port operations and aligning infrastructure investment with economic priorities will support local enterprise, improving long-term regional resilience and productivity.

Housing aspirations

Housing is concentrated on Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) and Horn Island (Narupai), while smaller islands have off-grid communities, limited in scale. The existing housing is government-developed housing, with a limited high-cost private market. Larger households, smaller dwellings and limited housing options contribute to overcrowding and constrain workforce attraction and retention, affecting regional service delivery and community wellbeing.

Future housing must deliver a range of dwelling typologies responding to the tropical weather and enable ageing in place. On Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), limited land will be managed through redevelopment and mixed-use outcomes. On Horn Island (Narupai), growth will occur through staged greenfield development. Other islands are not expected to accommodate significant growth due to infrastructure constraints.

Key infrastructure

Horn Island Airport links Cairns to the wider Torres Strait region, supporting passengers, freight, emergency response and border operations. It also offers international flights to Papua New Guinea. Port of Thursday Island supports marine logistics, freight movement and regional access including customs and quarantine functions. Public boat ramps and pontoons are critical links for all marine traffic, enabling access to the outer islands with an additional jetty under construction at Quarantine.

Potable water is supplied from Loggy Creek Dam by submarine line connecting Horn Island (Narupai), Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), and Hammond Island (Keriri). Power is supplied through diesel generators. Wastewater systems operate on both inner islands. Health and education infrastructure are concentrated on Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) and Horn Island (Narupai), reinforcing the shire's role as a regional service centre.

Long-term infrastructure planning and investment will account for demands of a growing population including intra-regional migration, focused on essential services, marine, aviation and trunk infrastructure expansion. Investment will strengthen the shire's role in supporting regional connectivity, essential services and border operations, contributing to the security and economic prosperity of the Torres Strait, northern



Coconut Island (Poruma)
Torres Strait Island Regional Council

Torres Strait Island Regional Council

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

489 km^2

POPULATION

4294

KEY CENTRE

Badu

OTHER COMMUNITIES

Boigu, Dauan Island, Saibai, Mabuiag Island, Kubin, St Pauls, Keriri Island, Yam Island, Warraber, Poruma, Masig Island, Ugar Island, Erub Island, Mer Island

Unique characteristics

The Torres Strait Islands, or Zenadth Kes, is an archipelago of more than 270 islands between Australia and Papua New Guinea. It is home to over 4000 people who are predominantly Melanesian. They are the First Peoples of this region and have lived here for about 10,000 years. Torres Strait Island communities are divided into clusters known as the Top Western, Near Western, Central, Eastern and Inner Island groups.

At present, there is no administrative centre for the delivery of council services across the 14 islands that make up TSIRC's jurisdiction. Council have had initial talks around establishing a 'hub and spoke' model for delivering services. This would be useful for more efficient and cost effective delivering of waste management or engineering services, for example. However, further discussion and planning would be needed.

Key industries of TSIRC's 14 island communities include commercial and traditional fishing, public service and administration, and retail services. There are also emerging businesses in experiential tourism, including the arts, culture and ecotourism.

Economic aspirations

Council aims to grow the local economies and employment opportunities of its 15 communities across all 14 islands. It sees a pathway to growth and development by collaborating with peak bodies and representative groups. From its current corporate plan, TSIRC plans to establish and drive joint initiatives that support business and investment opportunities. This is one avenue TSIRC could use to offer Indigenous businesses the chance to tender for contracts through a specially designed procurement process.

TSIRC identifies skills development, workforce participation and job creation, as necessary for growing local economies. It hopes to build a greater local presence by employing more staff in the region over the coming years.

It recognises the challenges that a limited base for revenue generation provides them compared to non-Indigenous councils in Queensland. TSIRC is exploring possible revenue generating streams that can support their economic aspirations while still meeting their legislative obligations. New and ongoing revenue streams can support existing Council works programs as well as initiating new programs that support development within the constraints of island life.



Freight Delivery in the Torres Strait
Torres Strait Island Regional Council

Housing aspirations

Council takes a holistic view of housing and its role in community life. From TSIRC's 2025-2030 corporate plan, housing falls under the focus area of 'Strengthening our communities'. Providing suitable public housing is one of four pillars under this focus area. The other three pillars cover access and support for elderly and vulnerable residents, creating healthy and happy environments, and celebrating and promoting art, culture, and heritage. Altogether, these pillars will work to create safer, more socially cohesive communities.

Council has clearly stated goals around providing safe, secure, and culturally appropriate housing. It is a TSIRC aspiration to make sure housing helps address pressing social needs in its island communities. These include homelessness, health and disability, child safety, and domestic and family violence.

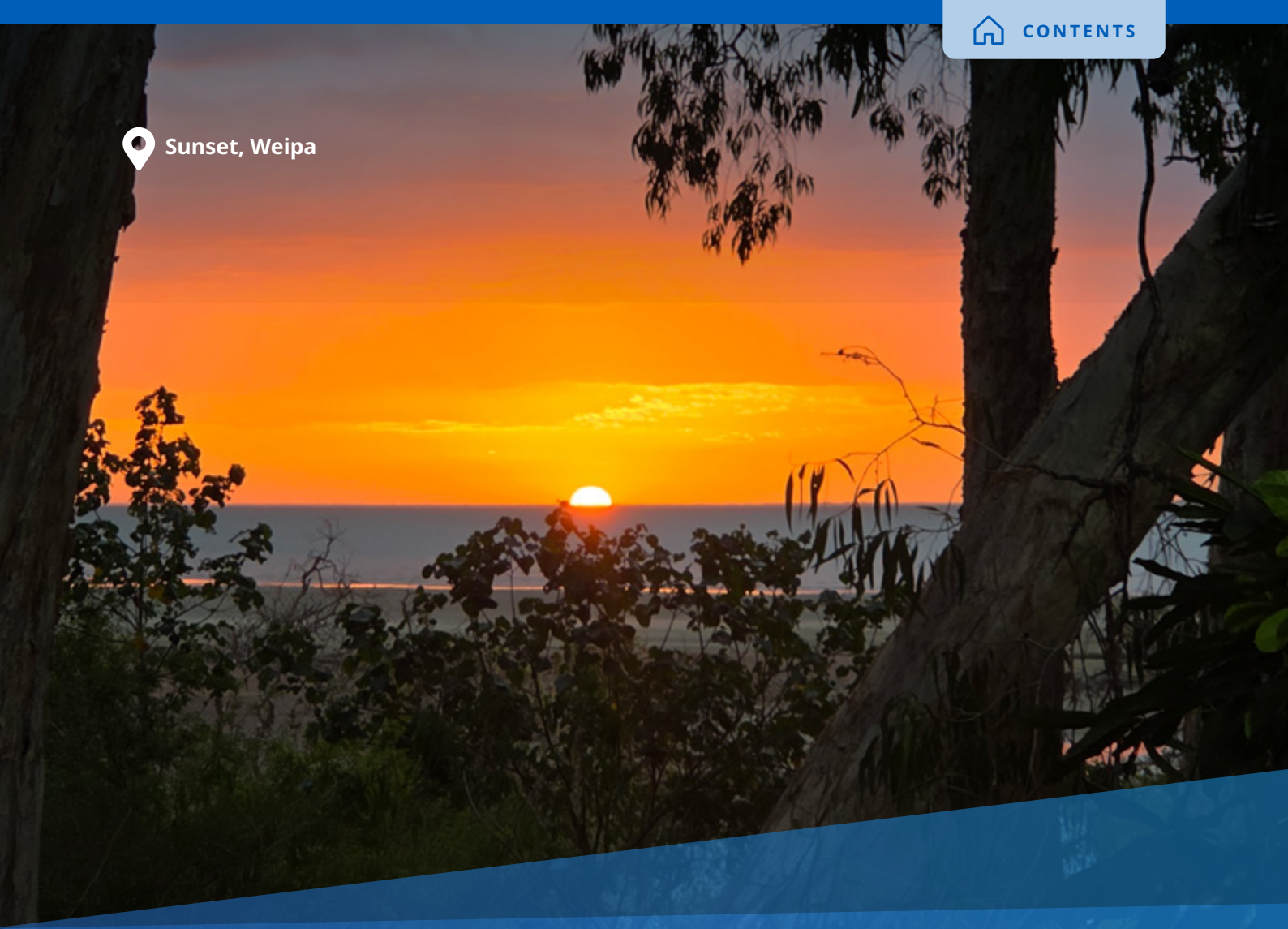
TSIRC plans to work with stakeholders to secure more land for housing development. This is in response to Council recognising land is a limiting factor and that land tenure arrangements in the Torres Strait are complex.

Key infrastructure

TSIRC views environmental health and safety as a foundation for its focus on maintaining and renewing infrastructure. For example, securing safe and reliable drinking water across all communities is an environmental health priority. Council is focused on building reliable and sustainable infrastructure and assets across its communities.

Reliable air, sea and road transport is also key for communities. Council recognises the need to advocate for more funding so that there is suitable and adequate transport for island communities. Such advocacy would explore options for cost-effective and reliable marine and air transport and infrastructure. Road transport and infrastructure also remain important.





Sunset, Weipa

Weipa Town Authority

Local government area statistics

LOCATION



AREA SIZE

10 km^2

POPULATION

4177

KEY CENTRES

Weipa

OTHER COMMUNITIES

Rocky Point, Trunding, Nanum, Evans Landing

Unique characteristics

Weipa is the largest urban centre on the western Cape York Peninsula and functions as a key regional service, industrial and logistics hub for western Cape York. Located on the shores of Albatross Bay within the Gulf of Carpentaria, the township combines significant industrial infrastructure with coastal landscapes, waterways and access to Cape York's remote landscapes.

Originally established as a purpose-built town to support bauxite mining operations, Weipa has expanded over time into a well-serviced regional centre with established residential neighbourhoods, education facilities, health services and industrial areas. Weipa now serves as the primary service, transport and logistics centre for western Cape York and is one of Australia's most significant bauxite export locations, supporting both regional industry and surrounding communities.

The township reflects a distinctive mix of industry, regional lifestyle and local identity, shaped by connections to and agreements with surrounding Traditional Owner groups and role as a regional centre serving surrounding remote communities across western Cape York. Community life is supported by local festivals, arts initiatives, outdoor recreation and access to waterways and coastal environments that contribute to the region's relaxed lifestyle and strong sense of place. Fishing, boating, camping and recreational tourism remain important features of local life and visitor appeal.

In comparison to many communities across Cape York, Weipa has well-developed infrastructure and is relatively accessible. Weipa still faces challenges associated with remoteness, seasonal accessibility and economic dependence on mining activity. These factors reinforce the importance of long-term planning to support prosperity, economic diversification and continued growth as a regional centre.

Economic aspirations

Weipa's economy is dominated by bauxite mining, which remains the primary driver of employment, infrastructure investment and regional economic activity. The township also functions as a regional service centre, supporting employment in healthcare, education, public administration, retail, transport and construction. Port operations, logistics services, aviation, and government services including strategic northern defence and border security activities also contribute to the local economy and reinforce Weipa's strategic role as a service and transport hub for western Cape York.

Economic aspirations focus on growing the economy while building on the strengths of the mining sector and strengthening long-term economic resilience. This includes supporting opportunities associated with mine rehabilitation, post-mining land uses and the productive reuse of land and infrastructure, helping to create new economic opportunities over time.

Emerging opportunities include tourism, marine industries, aquaculture, energy generation, defence support services, forestry and timber-related industries, and industrial activity. The region's native forest resources provide opportunities to support sustainable forestry and timber-related industries that contribute to employment and economic diversification while supporting the ongoing management of forest resources. Weipa's deep-water port, airport, established infrastructure base and proximity to northern trade and logistics routes provide strategic advantages for future investment and industry growth.

Tourism also presents increasing opportunities, particularly through recreational fishing, boating, eco-tourism, coastal experiences and access to Cape York's remote natural and cultural attractions. Continued investment in workforce development, business support and enabling infrastructure will be important to supporting a strong, accessible and robust regional economy over time.

Housing aspirations

Weipa's settlement pattern reflects its origins as a purpose-built mining town, with residential areas extending across established suburbs including Rocky Point, Trunding, Nanum and Evans Landing. Housing stock comprises a mix of private home ownership, rental accommodation and housing associated with major employers, creating a more diverse housing market than many other communities across Cape York.

Housing demand is influenced by workforce requirements, regional service functions and changing economic conditions placing pressure on housing availability, affordability and worker accommodation. High construction costs, worker accommodation needs, limited land supply and infrastructure servicing requirements present ongoing challenges for future residential development. Seasonal access disruptions along the Peninsula Developmental Road can also affect building supply chains and construction delivery timeframes.

Housing aspirations focus on supporting housing delivery, increasing housing diversity and facilitating additional serviced land supply. Priorities include affordable housing outcomes, worker accommodation and housing designed to respond to tropical conditions and severe weather exposure, while supporting workforce attraction and economic growth.

Continued investment in infrastructure, services and community facilities will be essential to maintaining amenity and supporting Weipa's role as the principal regional hub for western Cape York.

Key infrastructure

Weipa contains some of the most significant enabling infrastructure in remote northern Australia, including the Port of Weipa, a strategic port with deep-water and export capability. Other enabling infrastructure includes Weipa Airport, mining and logistics infrastructure, industrial facilities and regional road connections. The township serves as the primary transport, logistics and service hub for western Cape York. The Peninsula Developmental Road provides the primary land transport connection to Cairns and southern Cape York, with ongoing sealing and upgrade programs improving year-round reliability and freight access. Barge services and port operations also support regional supply chains and connectivity across western Cape York communities.

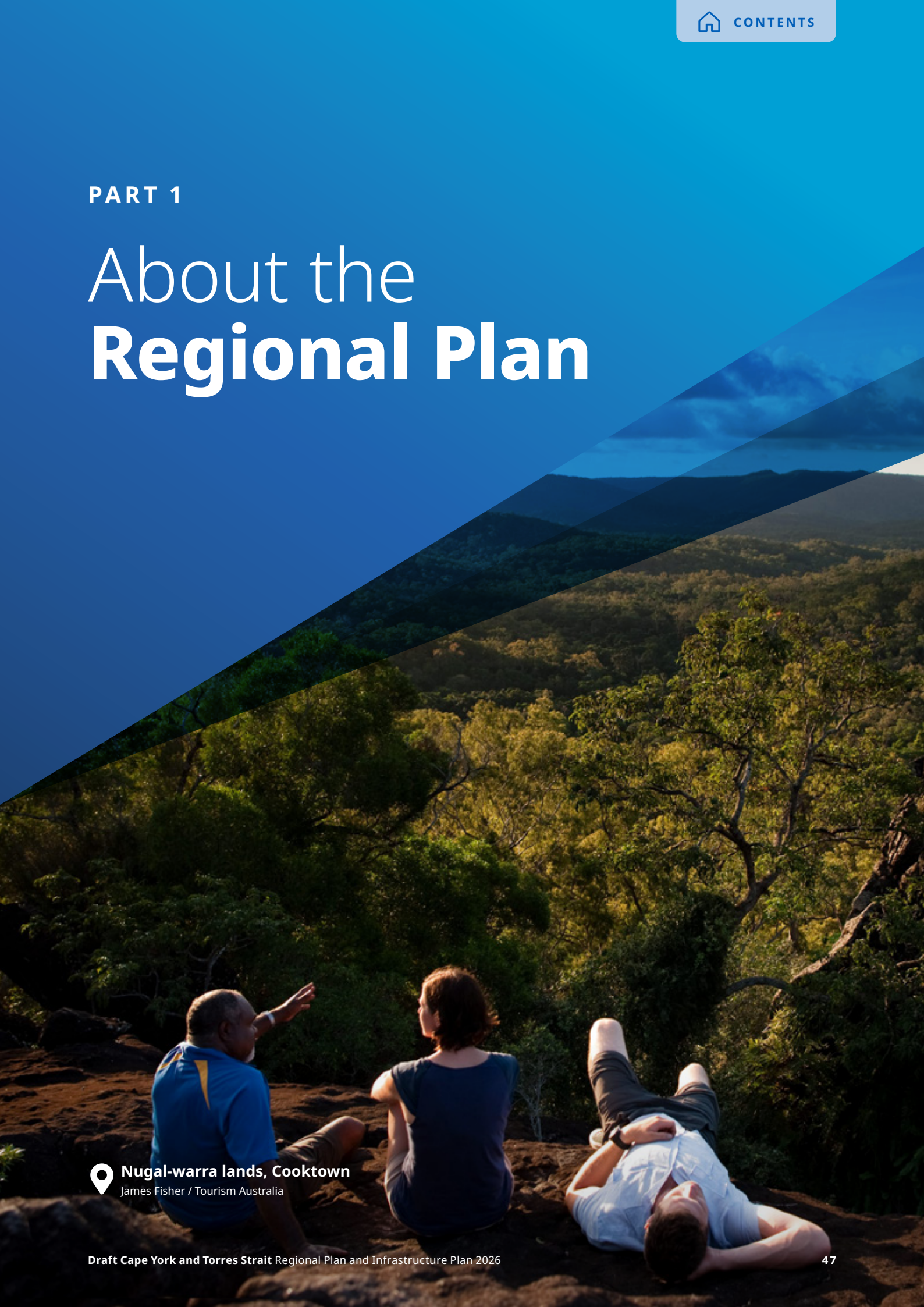
Core infrastructure includes a regional hospital, Western Cape College with boarding facilities, retail and commercial services, utilities and access to strategic defence infrastructure at nearby Royal Australian Air Force Base Scherger. Future priorities include strengthening transport reliability, expanding industrial and utility infrastructure, improving housing and community services and supporting new industries that build on Weipa's existing economic strengths and infrastructure assets. Continued investment will be critical to supporting economic diversification, regional growth and long-term community prosperity.



Mining operations
Office of the Coordinator-General

PART 1

About the **Regional Plan**



Nugal-warra lands, Cooktown
James Fisher / Tourism Australia

ABOUT THE REGIONAL PLAN

This part outlines the:

- region to which the draft Cape York and Torres Strait 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

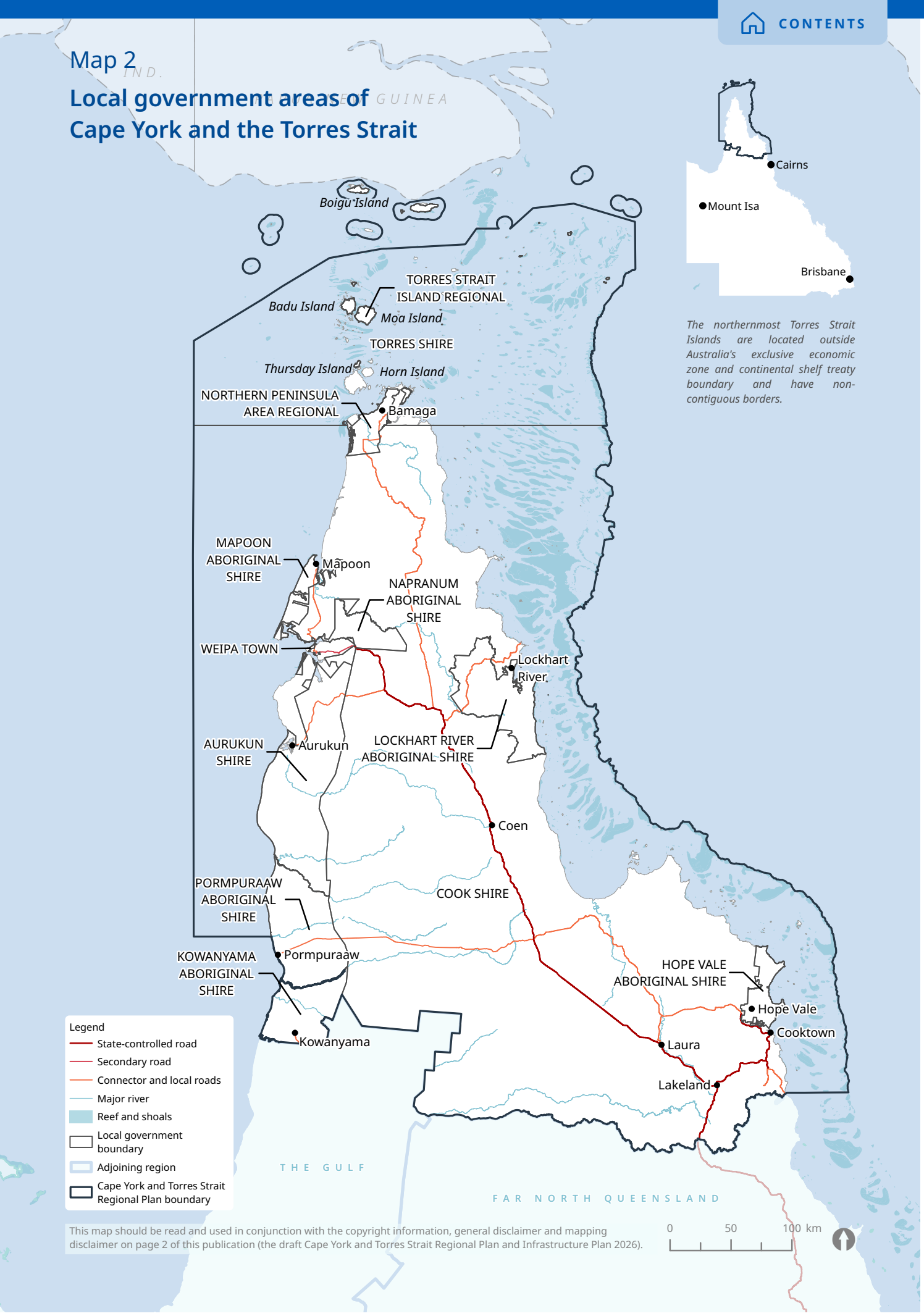
The Regional Plan applies in the following local government areas as shown in **Map 2**:

- Aurukun Shire Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council
- Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council
- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council
- Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council
- Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council
- Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council
- Torres Shire Council
- Torres Strait Island Regional Council
- Weipa Town Authority



Charlotte Street, Cooktown
Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Map 2
Local government areas of Cape York and the Torres Strait



The northernmost Torres Strait Islands are located outside Australia's exclusive economic zone and continental shelf treaty boundary and have non-contiguous borders.

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 Cape York and Torres Strait 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 State 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:

1. 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
2. regional outcomes for the region
3. 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 Cape York and the Torres Strait. 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.

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.

Part 3 – Regional strategic framework

Provides regional policy expression about matters of state interest and regional significance contained in the State Planning Policy (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 glossary, maps, guidance and information relevant to the operation of the Regional Plan.

Population, dwelling and employment projections

The Regional Plan is informed by the following baseline projections:

- Population projections – Queensland Government Statistician's Office (QGSO) (2026). Queensland Government population projections, 2025 edition, medium and high series.
- Dwelling projections – Queensland Government Statisticians' Office (2026). Queensland Government dwelling projections, 2025 edition, medium and high series.
- Employment projections 2026 – Queensland Treasury, developed for DSDIP.

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.

Editor's note: The Regional Plan includes two sets of employment projections: Queensland Treasury (QT) Regional Employment Projections (baseline) and National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) Employment Planning Projections (planning). Importantly, the two sets of employment projections should not be compared.

Further information on the employment planning projections, including their purpose and application, is provided in Schedule 2.

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.

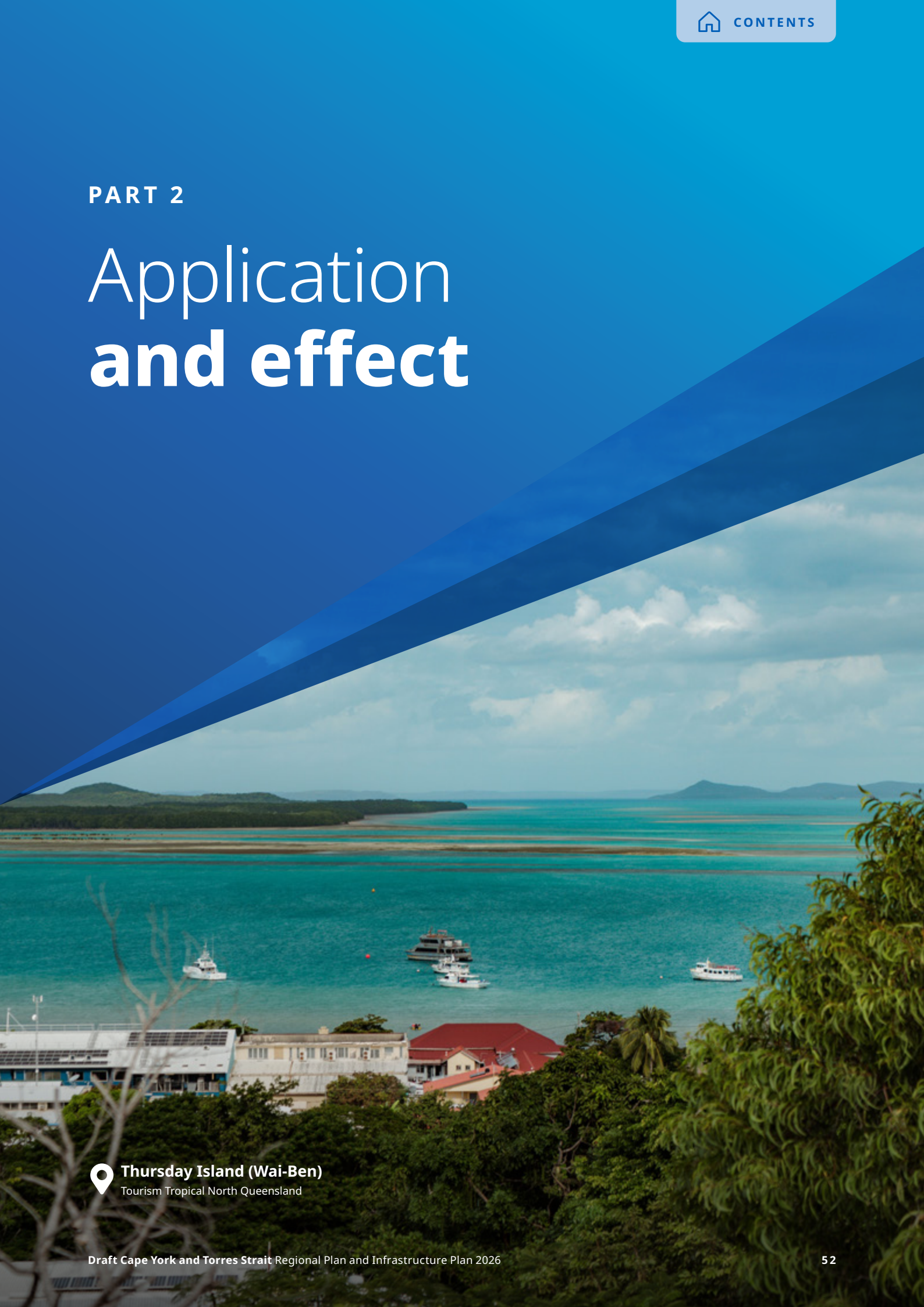
Delivery of this plan will also rely on other tools that sit outside of the planning framework including, for example:

- 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 the 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.

PART 2

Application **and effect**



Thursday Island (Wai-Ben)
Tourism Tropical North Queensland

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:

1. local government when making or amending a local planning instrument
2. 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 governments to integrate into planning schemes.

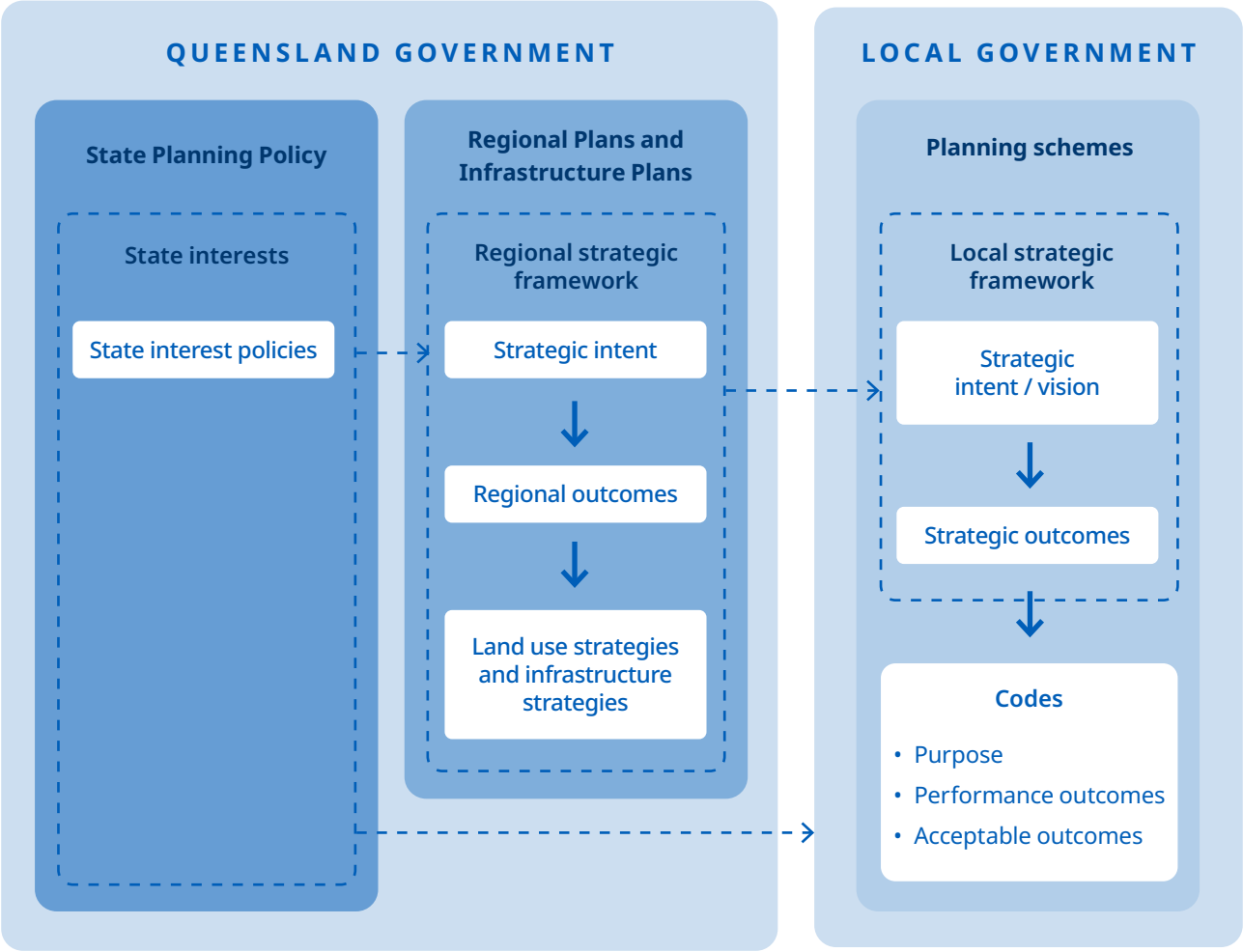


***Figure 1** - Queensland plan making framework*

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 Cape York and Torres Strait 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)
- Strategic Environmental Area (SEA).

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

Note: A regional interests development approval must satisfy the requirements of the RPI Act, the Regional Planning Interests Regulation 2014 and the policy intent of the Regional Plan. The 'policy intent' is taken to be the regional outcomes and land use strategies identified in Part 3 – regional strategic framework, to the extent relevant.

Effect

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

The Regional Plan, including the supporting Infrastructure Plan, applies to the area defined as the Cape York and Torres Strait region and it 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 2017
- the RPI Act
- the Regional Planning Interests Regulation 2014
- 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. However, if a definition in the Glossary states expressly it is intended to prevail over any definitions in other documents in the hierarchy, then the definition in the Glossary prevails.

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.

Cape York and Torres Strait Infrastructure Plan

The Infrastructure Plan forms part of the Regional Plan and:

- is an appendix to the Regional Plan
- includes policy-led approaches to guiding planning decisions and asset-based approaches to align, prioritise and sequence long-term infrastructure planning and investment
- strengthens alignment through land use and infrastructure planning
- includes infrastructure policy outcomes 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 Cape York and Torres Strait 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**



Weipa sunset, Weipa
Weipa Town Authority

REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Preliminary

The regional strategic framework sets the regional policy direction for the Cape York and Torres Strait 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.



Strategic intent

A place to call home

Housing needs and delivery models vary significantly across the region. Many communities experience housing shortages, overcrowding and limited housing choice while other locations face constraints associated with ageing stock, worker accommodation and population mobility. Housing is delivered through a range of governance, tenure and development arrangements including government-led housing programs, the unique mining lease and land administration arrangements in Weipa, as well as more conventional housing markets in Cook Shire. These differing arrangements influence how housing is planned, funded and delivered across the region.

The Cape York and Torres Strait region is home to 25,387 people and continues to require additional housing to meet current and future needs. Population growth, large and multi-generational households, worker accommodation requirements, an ageing population and need for a broader range of housing options are contributing to housing demand across the region. The population is projected to grow to 28,762 people by 2046, requiring additional dwellings to accommodate 3375 new residents, while also helping address housing renewal, existing housing shortages and overcrowding in some communities.

Meeting current and future housing needs is further influenced by the region's geographic and operational characteristics. Extreme remoteness, high construction and freight costs, seasonal weather conditions, infrastructure constraints and limited local construction industry capacity increase housing delivery costs and timeframes. In many communities, complex land tenure arrangements, land administration processes and limited availability of serviced and development-ready land constrain opportunities for new housing and community expansion. Severe and seasonal weather and infrastructure servicing requirements will also influence the location and form of future residential development.

Planning for housing must consider the location, design and long-term function of communities having regard to natural hazard risks. These considerations are particularly important in remote and island communities where access constraints and infrastructure disruption can extend emergency response and recovery periods.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach to housing delivery that responds to the needs and circumstances of communities across the region. Planning for future housing growth, supporting the supply of serviced land and aligning infrastructure and investment will help create opportunities for additional housing and support strong, prosperous communities.

A region of opportunity

Cape York and the Torres Strait are well positioned to capitalise on the region's rich natural resources, nationally significant environmental and cultural assets, strategic location and strong communities to support economic growth, investment and long-term prosperity. Supported by a network of ports, airports and transport connections, the region can capitalise on opportunities across both established and emerging industries that contribute to regional employment, investment and long-term prosperity.

These competitive advantages support a strong regional economy underpinned by a combination of established industries and emerging opportunities that drive employment, investment and economic growth across Cape York and the Torres Strait. Cape York hosts Australia's largest bauxite mining operations, centred on western Cape York, and significant silica and sand resources around Cape Flattery and Hope Vale, with the resources sector making a substantial contribution to regional employment, export earnings and Queensland's economy.

REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Tourism also represents one of the region's strongest opportunities for long-term economic growth, supported by nationally significant natural environments, rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, extensive coastlines, recreational fishing opportunities and unique visitor experiences. Building on these strengths, future growth is expected to be driven by ongoing investment in established industries together with opportunities associated with economic diversification, value-adding agriculture, marine industries, defence-related activities and other future focused sectors. Cultural tourism led by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people provides a unique opportunity for economic diversification and local employment while protecting the cultural, environmental and landscape values.

Agriculture remains a significant economic opportunity, particularly through cattle production, horticulture, aquaculture and forestry. Emerging opportunities associated with tropical agriculture, biofuel feedstocks and other value-adding agricultural industries may support regional investment, economic diversification and employment outcomes while contributing to Queensland's biofuels industry.

Continued investment in transport networks, water infrastructure and supply chains can improve access to markets and increase the value of agricultural production. Increasing the production of food within the region can improve the reliability of local food supplies, strengthen regional supply chains and support communities during periods when transport access is constrained by weather or other disruptions.

The Regional Plan supports a strong and resilient regional economy by providing a flexible framework that enables investment, supports established industries and allows new opportunities to emerge over time. Employment across the region is projected to grow from approximately 9414 jobs in 2021 to 12,213 jobs in 2046, representing an increase of around 2798 jobs over the 25-year period (refer to Schedule 2). Growth is expected to be concentrated in the larger employment centres and service hubs of Torres, Cook, Weipa and the Northern Peninsula Area, which together account for most of the region's projected employment growth. Overall, the projections indicate steady long-term employment expansion across the region, supporting ongoing demand for housing, infrastructure and services.



Mining workforce, Hope Vale
Office of the Coordinator General

Regional growth pattern

The Cape York and Torres Strait region is expected to experience steady, locally driven population growth over the life of the Regional Plan, supported by ongoing investment in housing, essential services and community infrastructure.

The region is expected to accommodate 3375 additional people by 2046, requiring the need to plan for approximately 2000 new homes and 3000 new jobs over the life of the plan. Growth will be concentrated within established communities, with development focused on improving community prosperity, boosting economic participation and strengthening regional connectivity. The regional growth pattern ensures there is sufficient land for housing, employment and economic development while respecting social fabric and the environmental sensitivities that define the region. Weipa, Cooktown and Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) will continue to serve as the region's principal service, employment and economic centres, supporting surrounding communities through access to housing, infrastructure, health, education and commercial services. Economic development will be concentrated around established activity areas including bauxite mining and logistics in the west, sand mining in the east and agriculture, tourism destinations and maritime, fisheries and government services across Cape York and the Torres Strait.

Regional Land Use Categories

Regional Land Use Categories (RLUC) provide the framework for the regional growth 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:

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

The RTF includes the various existing communities across the region. The RTF accommodates a diverse range of urban purposes including housing, commercial, industrial, tourism and community uses while recognising the unique character, scale and function of these communities. The RTF includes but is not limited to regional service centres such as Cooktown, Weipa and Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), and smaller and remote towns across the region.

The RLA provides for rural residential and lifestyle living in existing communities. The RLA supports rural residential living with limited servicing without compromising future growth opportunities, agricultural activities or infrastructure planning. Rural living areas include Rossville, Cape Weymouth, Ayton, Portland Roads and Prince of Wales Island (Muralug Island).

The RLRPA supports the region's agriculture activities which include extensive cattle grazing supported by emerging horticulture, irrigated cropping, aquaculture and fisheries industries. Lakeland is the region's primary intensive agricultural area, supporting horticultural and broadacre cropping production, while large cattle enterprises across the peninsula contribute significantly to Queensland's beef supply chain. The RLRPA also encompasses the mining and extractive mineral areas and supports the economic activities associated with these uses. The RLRPA also contains environmental areas including world heritage areas, national parks, conservation parks, wetlands and other conservation areas. As these include assets important to the tourism sector, small-scale tourism activities may be accommodated in the RLRPA.

Map 3 contains the envisaged regional growth pattern for the Cape York and Torres Strait region. The intent, description and the associated principles for each RLUC is contained in Schedule 3.

The Regional Plan acknowledges that not all future circumstances can be anticipated. Where there is greater demand or unanticipated opportunities for land outside the 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 interest review process, when making or amending a local planning instrument.

Regional Centres Network

In addition to the RLUC, the regional growth pattern recognises a regional centres network that supports Cape York and the Torres Strait's dispersed settlement pattern. This network does not establish a hierarchy of centres. Instead it recognises the roles that different hubs play in providing access to housing, employment, health, education, government, commercial, cultural, transport, logistics and community services across mainland, island and remote communities.

Regional centres have been identified because they support broad regional catchments and provide concentrations of employment, services, infrastructure and economic activity that are not generally available in surrounding communities. Weipa provides a major economic, freight and service role for the region, while Cooktown performs important gateway, service and employment functions for eastern Cape York. Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) and Horn Island (Narupai) perform critical and complementary governance, transport, service delivery and connectivity functions for communities across the Torres Strait.

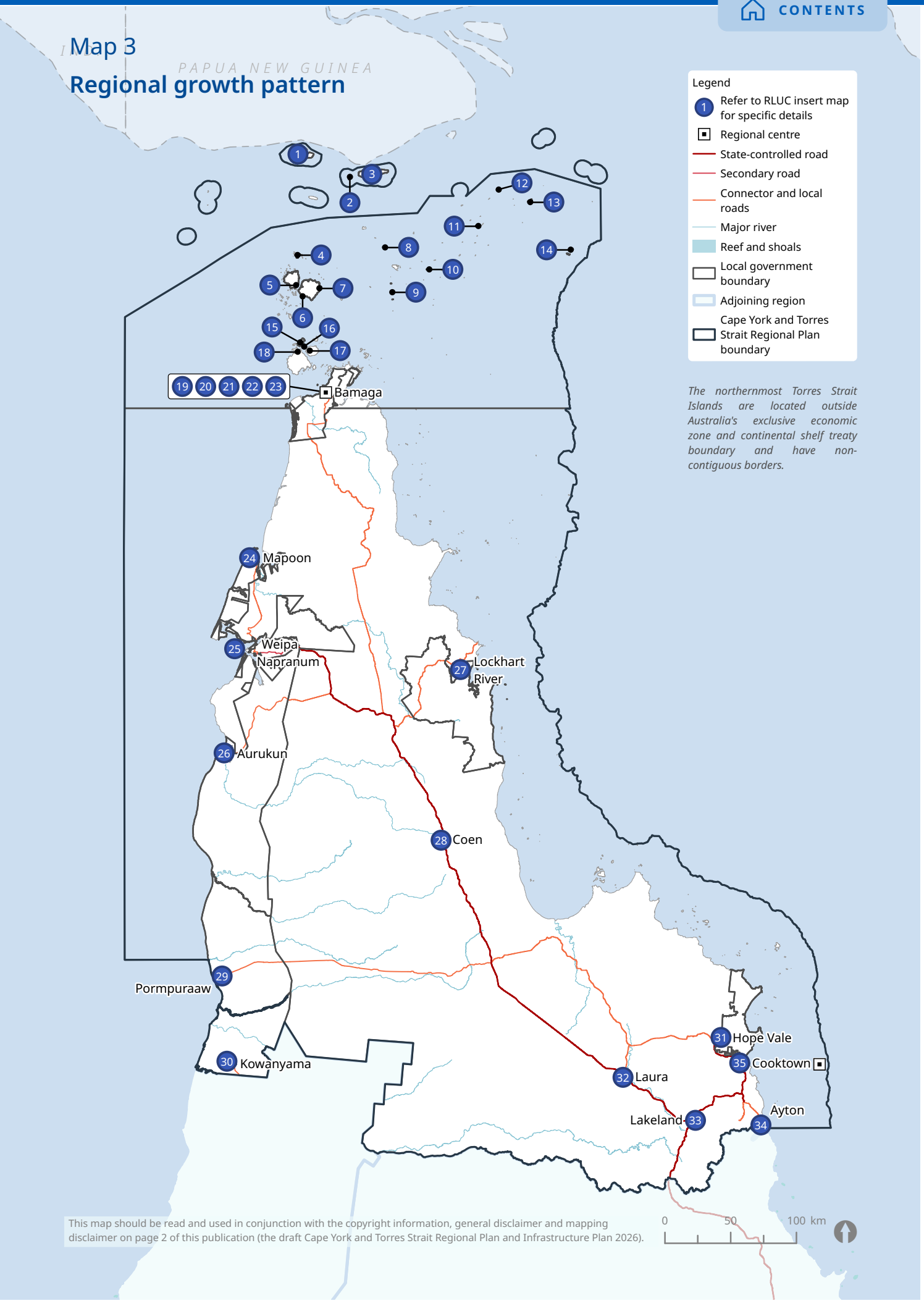
Strategic service centres have also been identified because they perform important local or sub-regional functions and provide services, facilities, infrastructure, employment opportunities or access connections that support surrounding communities. Other towns and communities remain integral to the regional growth network through local housing, cultural, governance, community, enterprise and service functions, whether or not they are identified within one of the two centre categories.

Recognising the network through the regional growth pattern provides a spatial basis for land use strategies relating to employment land, commercial and mixed-use development, industrial land, construction capability and regional supply chains. The centre categories describe functional roles within the growth network and complement the RLUC, which identify the broad land use framework for growth and development. The centres network categories and communities are defined in **Table 1**.

Table 1 – Description of centres network categories and communities

Centres network	Communities
Regional centres Support the broader region and contain concentrations of employment, services and economic activity. They are characterised as communities which: • support the needs of people across the region • contain concentrations of health, education, government and commercial services • function as important employment locations • act as key freight, transport or logistics hubs • provide services and facilities not generally available in surrounding communities • support regional economic activity.	• Bamaga • Cooktown • Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) and Horn Island (Narupai) • Weipa
Strategic service centres Perform important local and support access to essential services, employment opportunities and economic activity. They are characterised as communities which: • support local communities • provide important community, government, health, education or transport services • support local employment and enterprise • function as important service or access points for surrounding communities • contribute to regional resilience and liveability.	• Aurukun • Badu • Coen • Hope Vale • Kowanyama • Lakeland • Laura • Lockhart River • Napranum • Mapoon • Pormpuraaw • Seisia

Map 3
Regional growth pattern



The northernmost Torres Strait Islands are located outside Australia's exclusive economic zone and continental shelf treaty boundary and have non-contiguous borders.

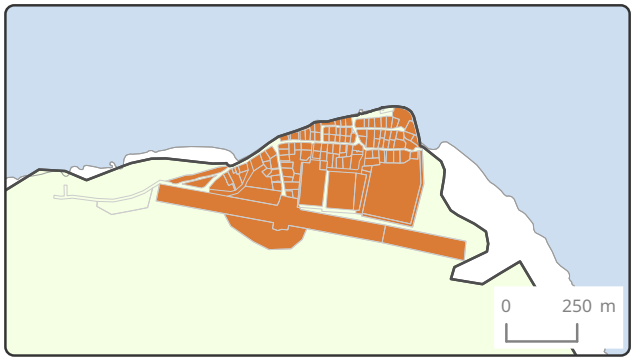
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Map 3A

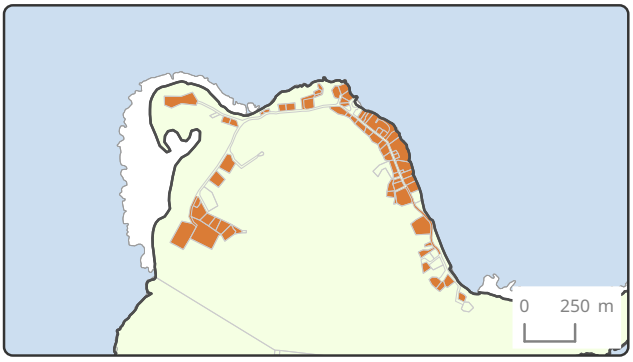
Regional growth pattern

Regional centre
Strategic service centre
Regional Township Footprint
Rural Living Area
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
Local government boundary
Lot boundary

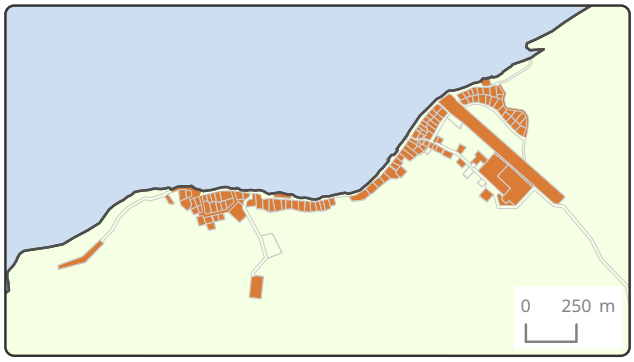
1 Boigu Island



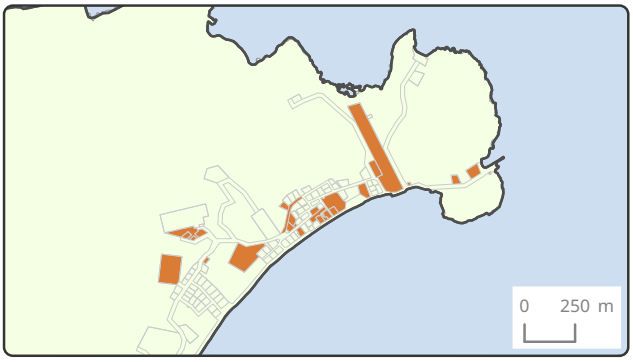
2 Dauan Island



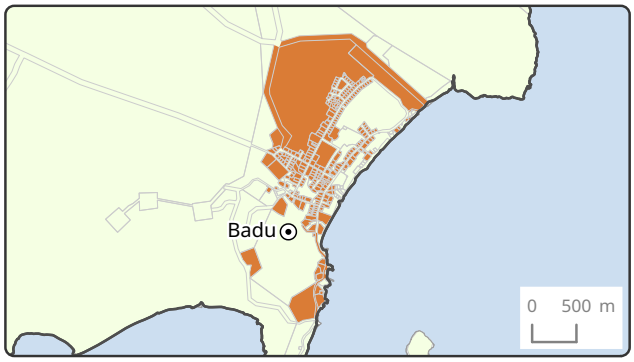
3 Saibai Island



4 Mabuiag Island



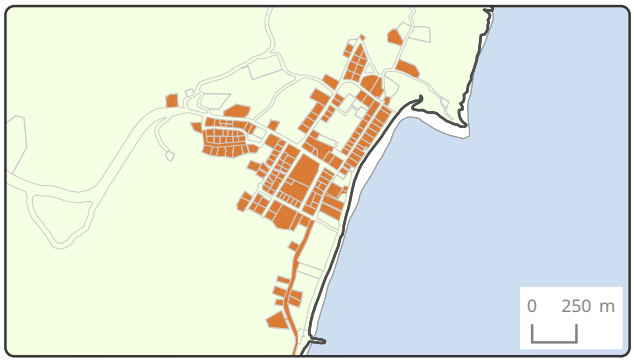
5 Badu Island



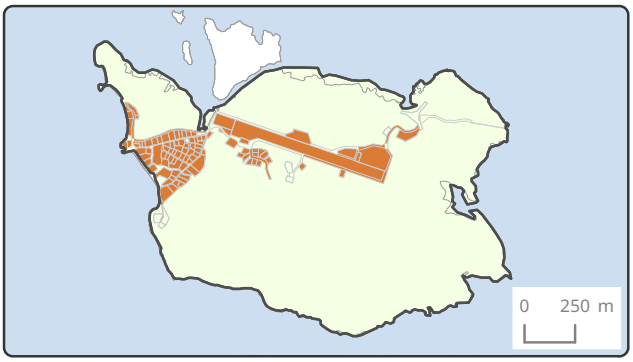
6 Kubin, Moa Island



7 St Pauls, Moa Island



8 Yam Island (Iama)



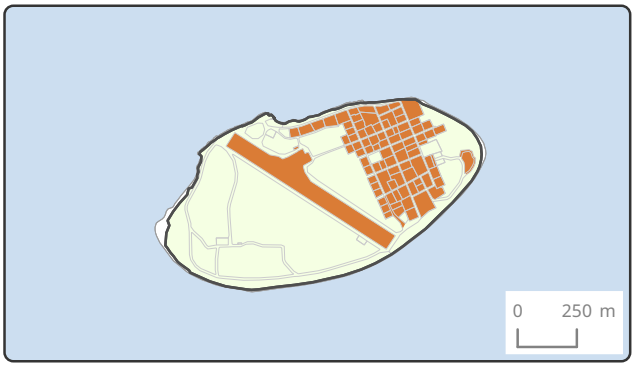
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Map 3B

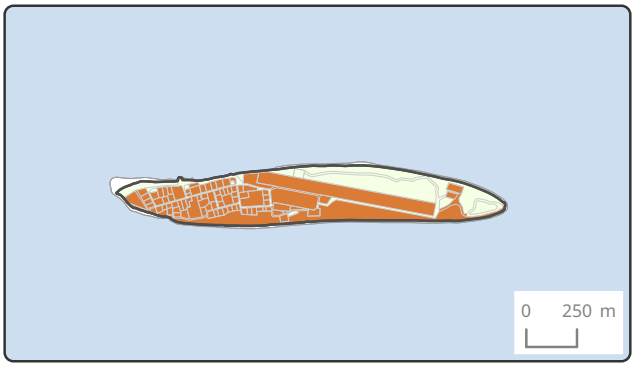
Regional growth pattern

Regional centre
Strategic service centre
Regional Township Footprint
Rural Living Area
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
Local government boundary
Lot boundary

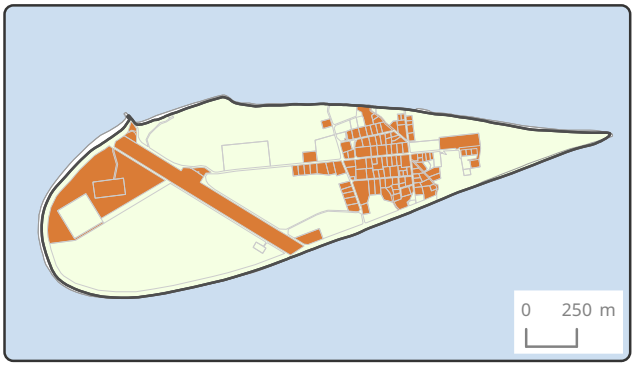
9 Sue Islet (Warraber)



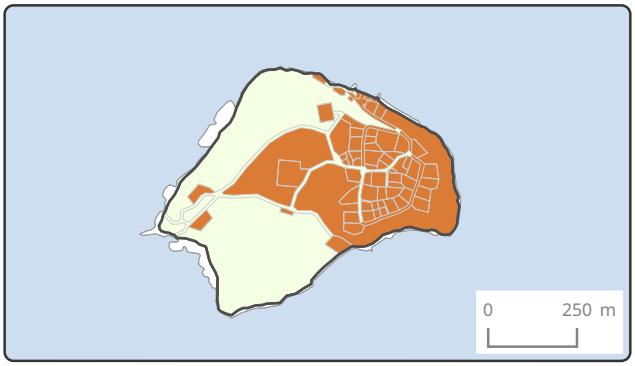
10 Coconut Island (Poruma)



11 Masig Island



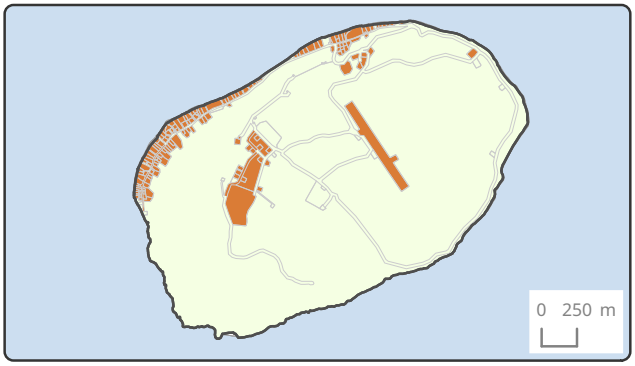
12 Stephens Island (Ugar)



13 Darnley Island (Erub)



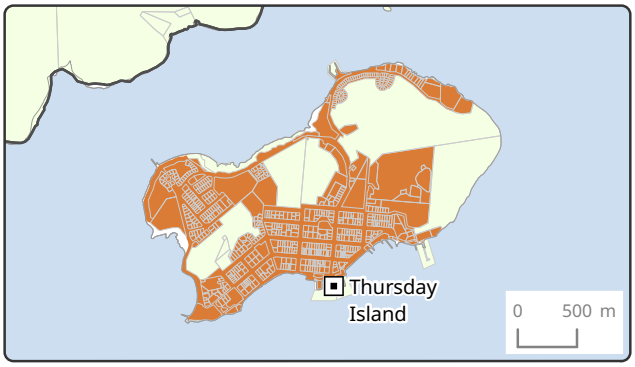
14 Meer Island (Mer)



15 Hammond Island (Keriri)



16 Thursday Island (Wai-Ben)



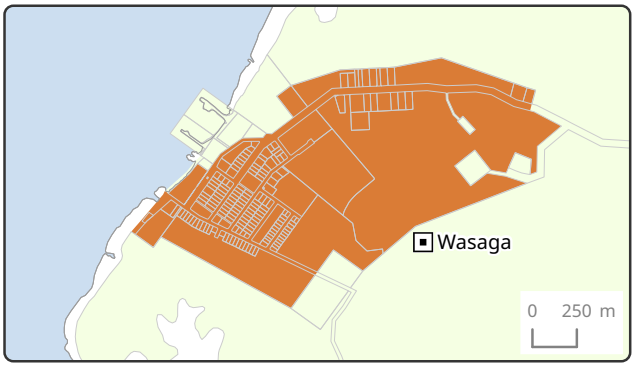
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Map 3C

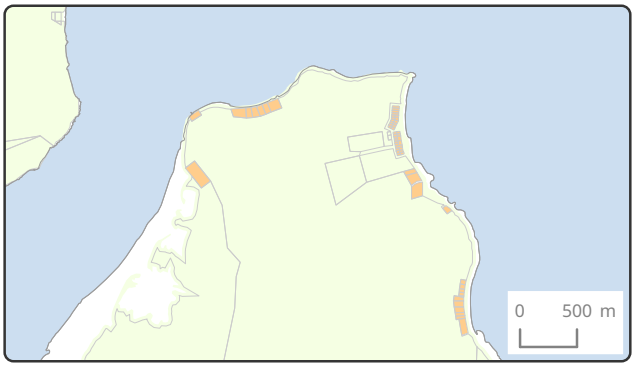
Regional growth pattern

Regional centre
Strategic service centre
Regional Township Footprint
Rural Living Area
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
Local government boundary
Lot boundary

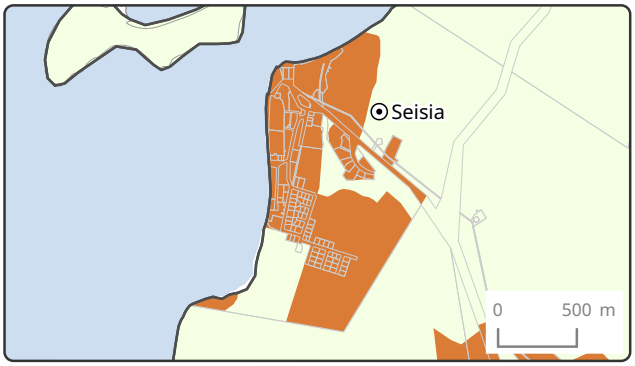
17 Horn Island (Narupai)



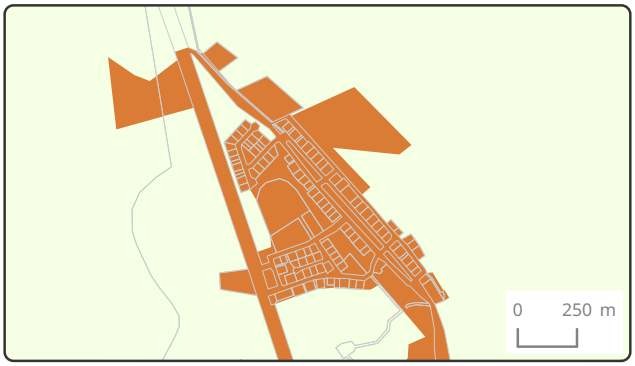
18 Prince of Wales Island (Muralug)



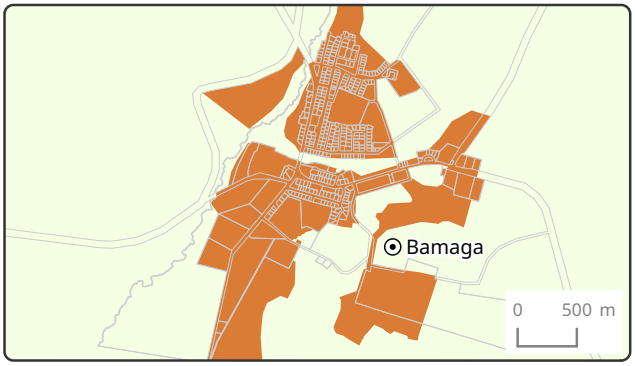
19 Seisia



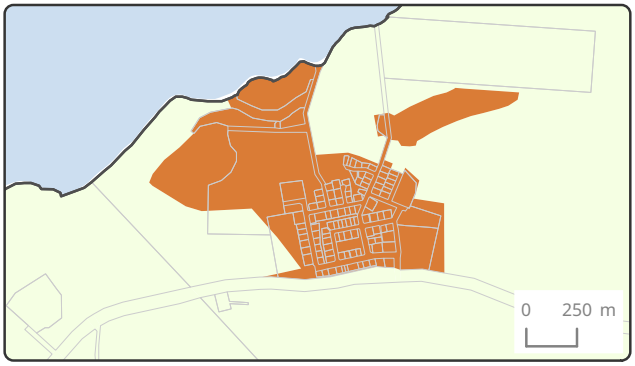
20 New Mapoon



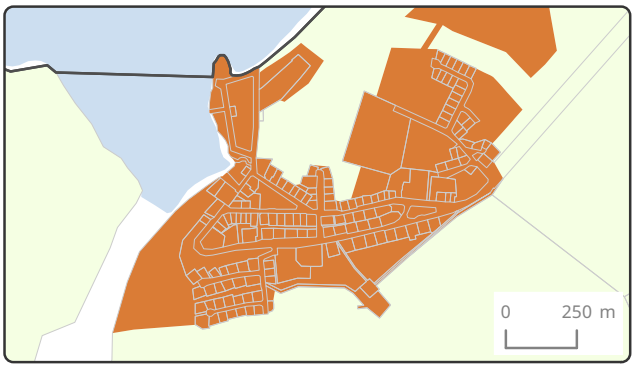
21 Bamaga



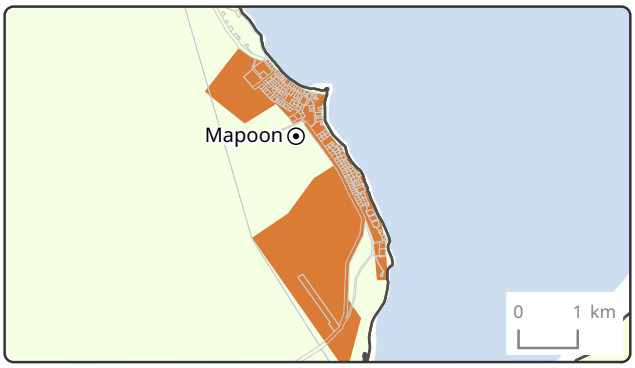
22 Umagico



23 Injinoo



24 Mapoon



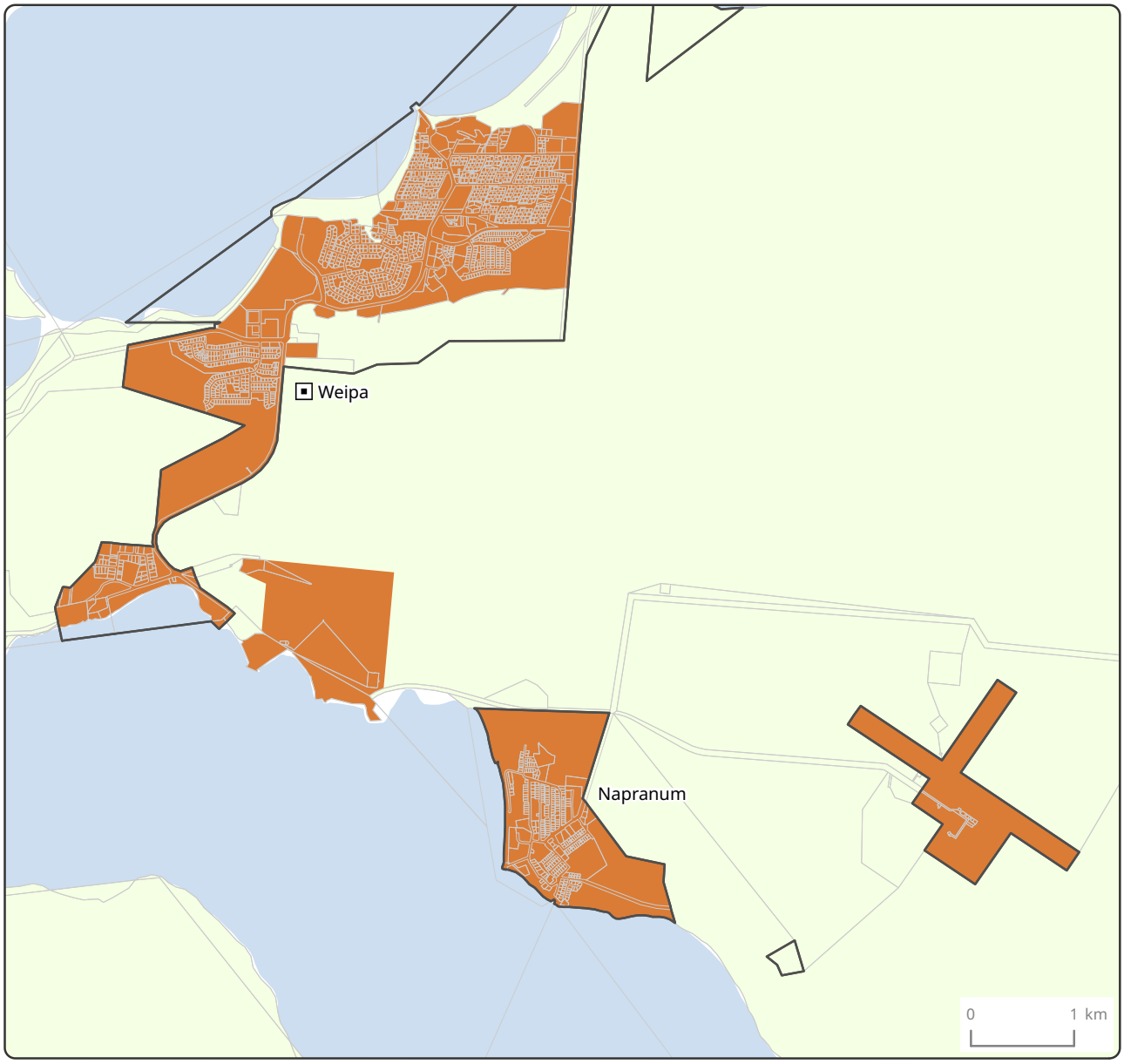
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Map 3D

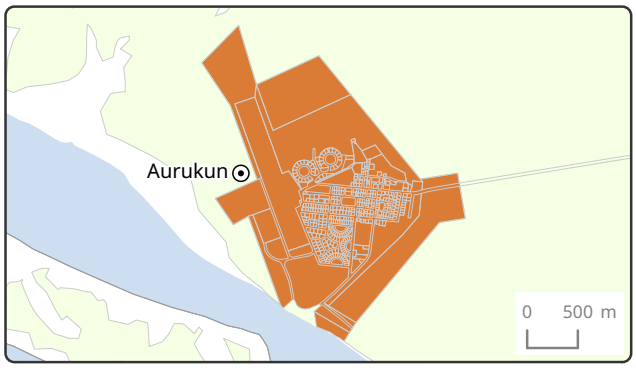
Regional growth pattern

Regional centre
Strategic service centre
Regional Township Footprint
Rural Living Area
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
Local government boundary
Lot boundary

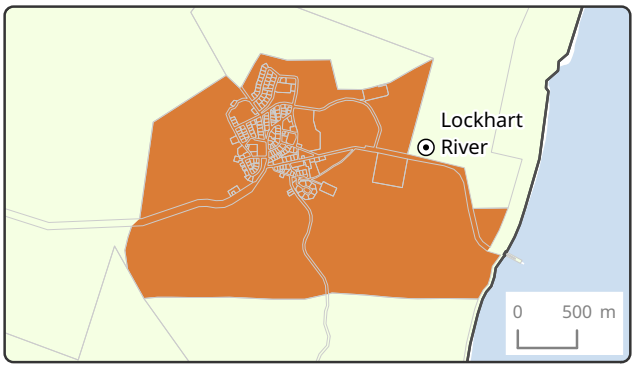
25 Weipa and Napranum



26 Aurukun



27 Lockhart River



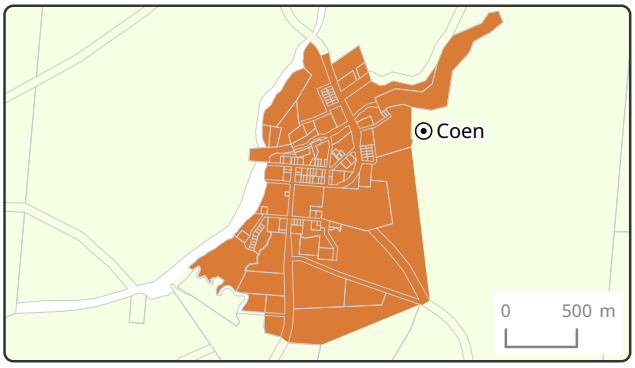
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Map 3E

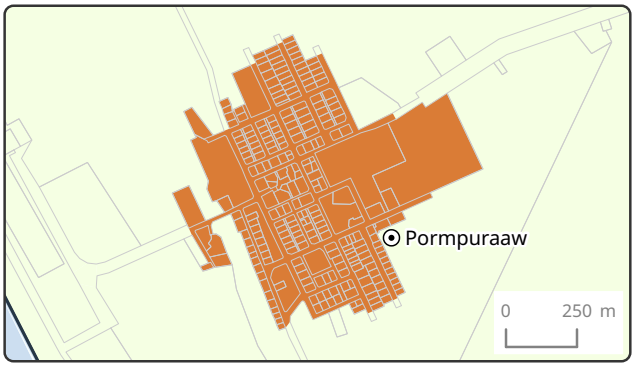
Regional growth pattern

Regional centre
Strategic service centre
Regional Township Footprint
Rural Living Area
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
Local government boundary
Lot boundary

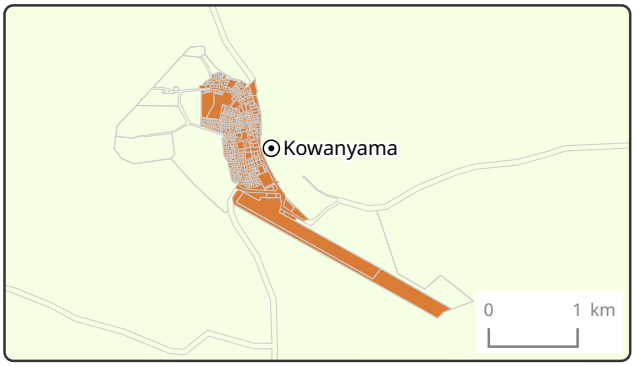
28 Coen



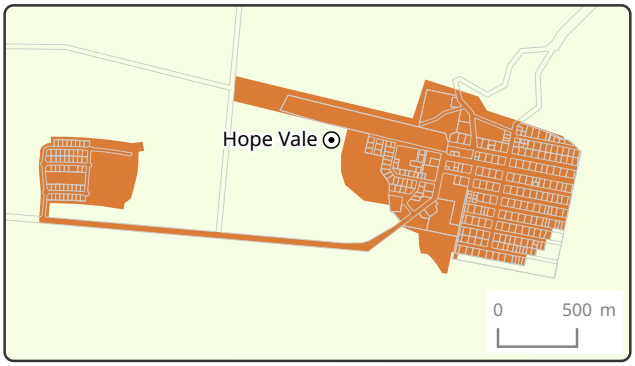
29 Pormpuraaw



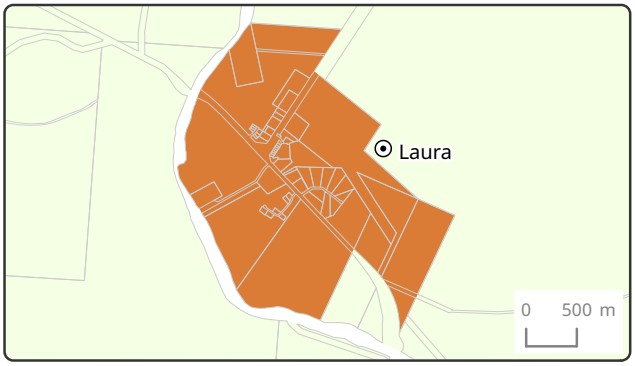
30 Kowanyama



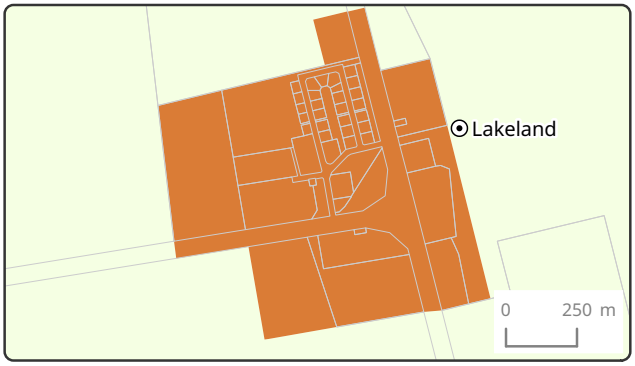
31 Hope Vale



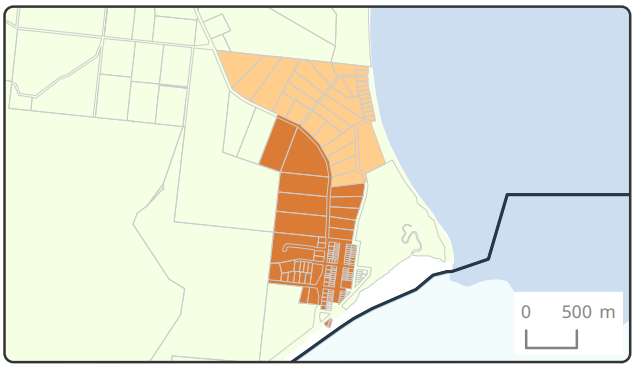
32 Laura



33 Lakeland



34 Ayton



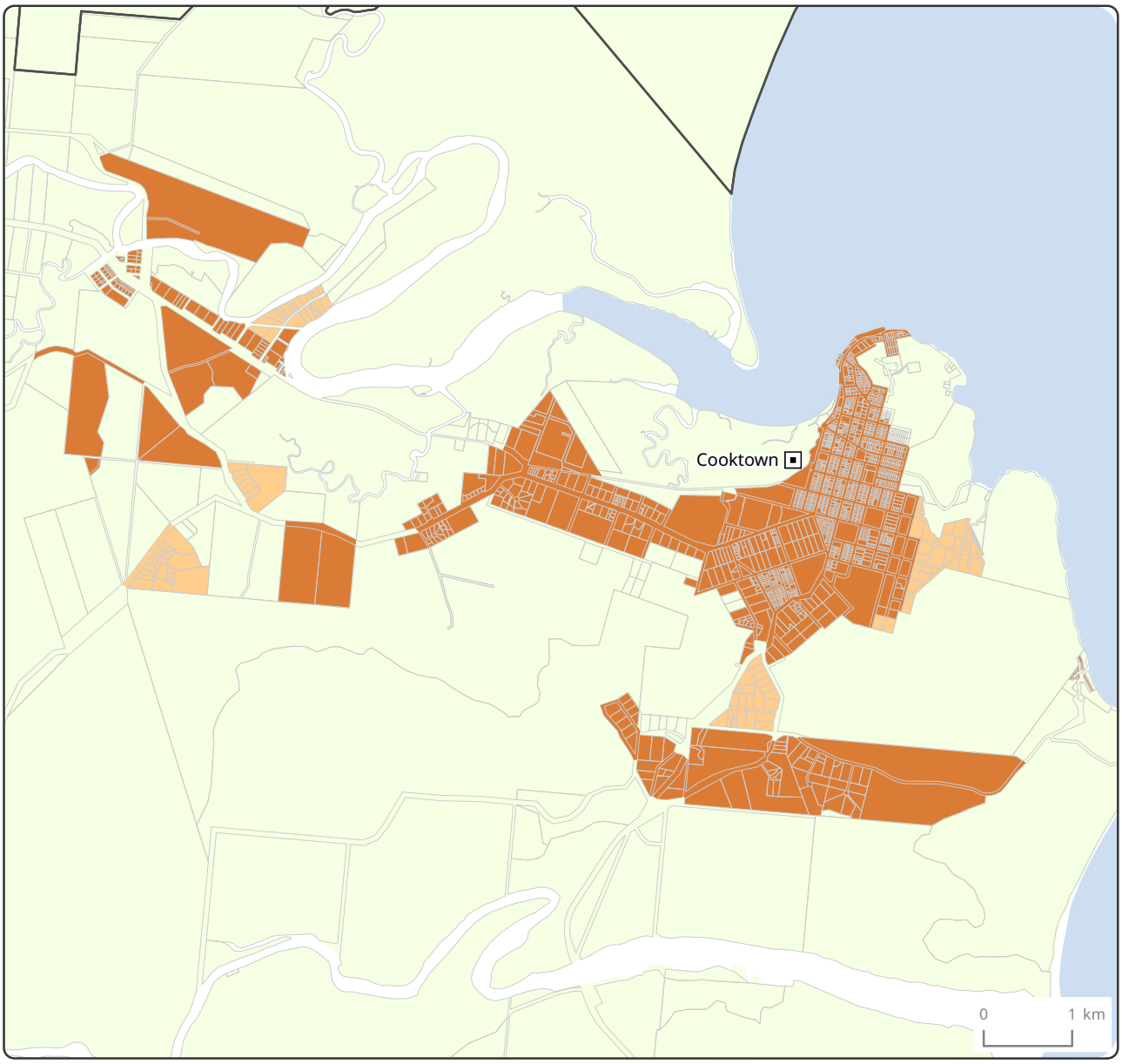
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Map 3F

Regional growth pattern

Regional centre
Strategic service centre
Regional Township Footprint
Rural Living Area
Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
Local government boundary
Lot boundary

35 Cooktown



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THEME 1

Housing



Housing, Hope Vale
Adllins Media



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 supports the state's target of one million new homes by 2044 by identifying the housing capacity needed to accommodate growth. Together with investment through the $2 billion Residential Activation Fund government is focused on unlocking land and infrastructure for new housing.

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, cultural values, landscape features and conditions, 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.

The Queensland Government works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local governments to unlock land, invest in essential infrastructure and support new housing delivery as part of the State's commitment to 53,500 social and community homes by 2044. Through this partnership, Department of Housing and Public Works collaborates with First Nations councils to develop ten-year strategic capital plans that identify local housing needs and inform investment under state and Commonwealth-funded housing and infrastructure programs.

In addition, planning should support a variety of housing types and tenures that respond to the distinct and varied needs, cultural values and environmental conditions of Cape York and Torres Strait communities. New housing should be designed and located in a manner that is resilient to natural hazards and reflects local cultural practices and community aspirations.

Adequate housing for essential workers will also support access to services and community wellbeing across the remote and regional communities of Cape York and the Torres Strait.

The RTF provides the primary location for accommodating growth and development across Cape York and the Torres Strait. The RTF includes existing residential, commercial, industrial and community areas, and land for future housing and urban development. There is sufficient land within the RTF to accommodate the dwelling supply targets. While sufficient land capacity exists to accommodate future housing demand, consideration must also be given to the long-term suitability of land for residential development. Future housing growth should seek to minimise exposure to natural hazards and support resilient communities. By providing clear direction on where growth is intended to occur, the RTF supports the efficient planning and delivery of housing, services and infrastructure, and facilitates orderly and coordinated community expansion.

Housing supply must also support the accommodation needs of non-resident workers while safeguarding housing availability for permanent residents. Workforce demand associated with mining, construction, essential services, tourism and other industries can place additional pressure on local housing markets. Purpose-built worker accommodation can help meet these needs while protecting community housing supply, provided it is appropriately located, offers suitable services and amenities, and does not create an unreasonable burden on local infrastructure.

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 2**. **1.2** Planning for future housing supply should give appropriate consideration to long-term housing needs, recognising that existing land tenure arrangements may require further investigation or alternative approaches to facilitate future housing growth. **1.3** Focus the majority of new dwellings within the RTFs to support efficient infrastructure provision and access to services. **1.4** Ensure new development is located in areas that minimise exposure to natural hazard risks. **1.5** Focus rural residential and lifestyle development within identified RLAs, ensuring these areas provide an appropriate transition between the RTF and/or RLRPA. **1.6** Planning schemes should support housing delivery through clear and proportionate planning provisions that enable appropriate new housing development. **1.7** Prioritise new housing on land with access to existing or future planned services that align with the policies identified in Appendix 1.

Table 2 – Minimum dwelling supply targets

Local government area	2021 existing homes	Additional homes to 2046	2046 dwelling supply target (existing + net additional)
Aurukun	331	62	393
Cook	2,003	538	2,541
Hope Vale	332	114	446
Kowanyama	294	66	360
Lockhart River	214	103	317
Mapoon	105	92	197
Napranum	261	96	357
Northern Peninsula Area	806	227	1,033
Pormpuraaw	229	27	256
Torres	1,188	136	1,324
Torres Strait Island	1,279	65	1,344
Weipa	1,670	398	2,068
Total	**8,712**	**1,924**	**10,636**

Editors note: 2021 existing dwellings are sourced from QGSO. Dwelling supply targets inform planning for zoned capacity across the region. The target is a minimum. Refer to Schedule 4 for the methodology. Local governments may plan for housing in excess of the target.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
2. Non-resident worker accommodation Non-resident housing options support the remote workforce needs while safeguarding housing supply for residents.	**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 • provides workers with an appropriate level of amenity, services and facilities to support wellbeing and day-to-day needs and • can demonstrate infrastructure solutions which do not rely on local government infrastructure, unless otherwise agreed.



Housing, Weipa

THEME 2

Economy



Agriculture, Cape York

Agriculture

Context

Agriculture is a cornerstone of Queensland's economy, contributing significantly to economic output, employment and food security while supporting both domestic markets 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 primary production. The Queensland Future Timber Plan allows environmentally responsible selective harvesting of native hardwood to continue in state-owned and privately owned native forests.

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 RPI Act, 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 PAA 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, together with the farming practices and supporting infrastructure essential to their operation, are protected within PAAs
- agricultural production is maintained and enhanced within PAAs.

In addition, this Regional Plan identifies Potential Agricultural Expansion Areas (PAEAs) to enable new and expanded primary industries developments. PAEAs provide a forward-looking framework for recognising opportunities in high-value agriculture, including horticulture, cropping, animal husbandry and associated value-adding industries.

Careful planning is needed to manage interactions between priority agriculture uses and other major land uses, particularly mining, which can have unintended and potentially irreversible impacts on agricultural productivity and rural communities. Effective planning frameworks are therefore essential to support the long-term coexistence of agriculture, resource development and regional communities.

In Cape York, agriculture is a long-established and economically significant industry. Key strengths include cattle grazing, horticulture, broadacre cropping and commercial and recreational fishing. The region is an important cattle breeding region, with many properties specialising in breeding cattle that are then transported to other parts of Queensland and northern Australia for backgrounding and fattening on improved pastures, before being sold through saleyards or processed at abattoirs.

Early-season cropping in Cape York provides a competitive advantage by enabling produce to reach markets ahead of southern growing regions. The region also has significant potential for high-value aquaculture industries including prawn farming, supported by suitable coastal and estuarine environments. Large pastoral leasehold properties provide opportunities for long-term investment in grazing enterprises and associated agricultural industries. Protecting agricultural land is important to support regional food security, feedstock supply and a successful agricultural sector.

Cape York's state-owned and privately owned native forests represent a significant natural, cultural and economic asset. Consistent with the Queensland Future Timber Plan 2050, the region has opportunities to support timber production and forestry enterprises while maintaining biodiversity, cultural values and the long-term stewardship of forest resources. Forestry can contribute to regional employment, economic diversification and emerging biofuel opportunities.

Agricultural production in the Torres Strait has a strong marine focus. Commercial fisheries, including prawns, tropical rock lobster, Spanish mackerel and reef fish are an important part of the regional economy and cultural identity. Community gardens, small-scale horticulture and emerging hydroponic systems contribute to local food production and food security, while aquaculture opportunities including seaweed, finfish and pearl farming, have potential to support employment, business development and economic diversification.

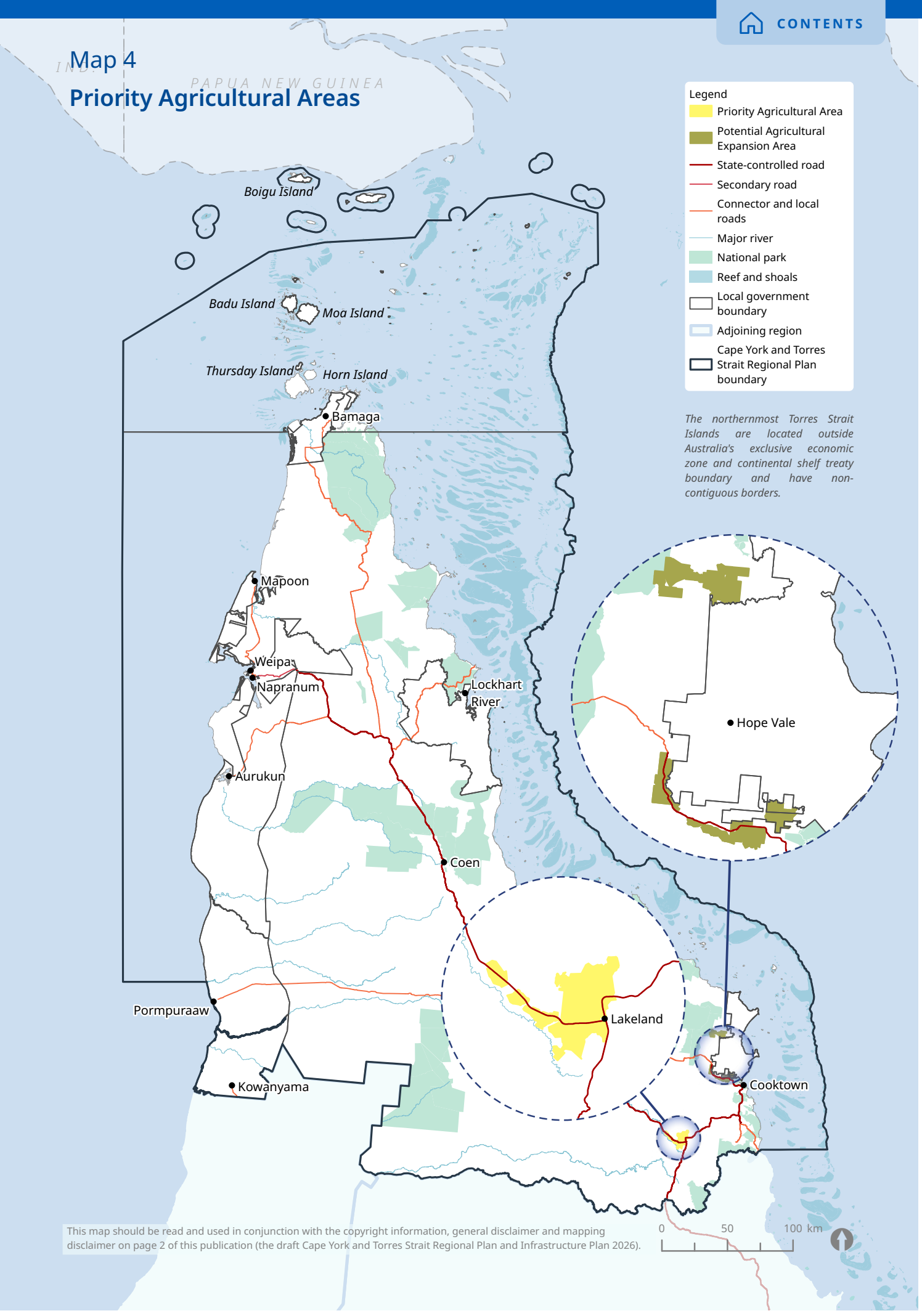
Expanding primary production, agricultural processing, and value-add industries presents opportunities to increase local food production, strengthen food security and reduce reliance on imported produce. Recognising agricultural supply chain infrastructure, processing facilities and value-add industries as critical components of the agricultural sector will help improve productivity, competitiveness and market access. The region's agricultural base, pastoral landscapes and natural attractions also support agritourism opportunities that can supplement farm income, attract visitors and strengthen the region's reputation as a food and tourism destination.

Cape York and the Torres Strait also play a critical role as Australia's northern biosecurity gateway, helping protect agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, biodiversity, cultural heritage, human health and regional economies. Ongoing investment in biosecurity infrastructure including the Cape York Biosecurity Centre at Coen will support these functions and strengthen the region's capacity to respond to future biosecurity risks.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Protection of agricultural areas Agricultural land is protected to support rural activities and related supply chains, ensuring its continued contribution to the regional economy.	**1.1** Protect land within the PAA, from non-agricultural development which would result in a widespread or irreversible impact to the region's agricultural sector. **1.2** Local planning must ensure that land use planning provisions are proportionate to the quality of agricultural land and the scarcity of productive agricultural land within the local region. **1.3** Support retention and expansion of forestry including the protection of forestry product, allied industry and haulage routes.
2. Growth and diversification of agriculture Agriculture, aquaculture and associated value-adding industries expand and diversify in suitable locations, supported by appropriate infrastructure and investment, strengthening the region's economy and resilience.	**2.1** New and expanding agricultural operations are: • prioritised within PAEAs • supported in rural areas outside PAEAs. **2.2** Encourage and facilitate new and expanded aquaculture development opportunities in suitable locations, with provision for essential ancillary activities, where impacts can be avoided or appropriately managed and mitigated.
3. 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.	**3.1** Support opportunities for the coexistence of non-agricultural land uses with rural activities where impacts can be avoided or appropriately managed and mitigated. **3.2** Support opportunities for coexistence of resource activity with rural activities and agricultural uses in areas identified as PAA where impacts can be appropriately mitigated and managed.

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

Map 4
Priority Agricultural Areas



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Everlina Retail Precinct Joint Building Upgrade, Hope Vale
Adllins Media

Development and construction

Context

The development and construction state interest seeks to ensure there is sufficient land available to accommodate future growth. In Cape York and the Torres Strait, protecting industrial and employment land and supporting access to construction materials, logistics infrastructure and supply chains is particularly important given the region's dispersed settlement pattern, remoteness and high development costs.

This approach aligns with the Queensland Government's strategic priorities outlined in the Transforming Queensland Manufacturing Strategy 2025-30 and the Queensland Energy Roadmap 2025, which support industry development, investment and economic diversification across Queensland. Ensuring sufficient land is available for industrial development, logistics, manufacturing and emerging industries will support regional self-sufficiency, economic growth and investment.

Schedule 2 contains employment planning projections that provide an evidence base for preparing, implementing and monitoring the Regional Plan. They help show how much employment growth may occur, where it may occur and which industries may contribute to that growth.

The development and construction industry is a critical enabler of housing delivery, infrastructure investment and economic development. Extreme remoteness, seasonal weather conditions, high freight costs, infrastructure constraints and limited local construction capacity increase project costs and delivery timeframes. Many communities rely on centres such as Cooktown, Weipa, Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) and Horn Island (Narupai) for access to construction materials, equipment, contractors and services, while Cairns continues to function as the principal supply and logistics hub for much of the region. The region's road, marine and aviation networks operate together to support the movement of people, goods and services between communities across Cape York and the Torres Strait.

There is an opportunity to strengthen the existing network of regional supply, service and economic centres that support communities, businesses and industry across Cape York and the Torres Strait. Cooktown, Weipa, Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) and Horn Island (Narupai) are strategically positioned to provide a range of commercial, government, community, transport and logistics functions, supporting employment opportunities, access to services, economic development and regional connectivity across remote and island communities.

Arts and cultural enterprises also provide important opportunities for economic development, employment and community activation. Facilities such as the Wik and Kugu Arts Centre, Gab Titui Cultural Centre and Lockhart River Art Centre demonstrate how arts and cultural hubs can support local businesses, create jobs, attract visitors and contribute to thriving communities.

Industrial land plays a vital role in supporting construction, freight, logistics, marine industries and essential services across Cape York and the Torres Strait. Ensuring sufficient industrial land is available in appropriate locations, including waterfront industrial land in the Torres Strait, will strengthen supply chains, support housing and infrastructure delivery and enable future industry growth. Planning for industrial land should recognise that demand may be influenced by strategic service, infrastructure, logistics, community and economic development needs, particularly in communities of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

Strengthening local construction capability presents a significant opportunity to improve project delivery, reduce costs and support long-term employment. This includes supporting concrete batching, warehousing, maintenance depots, construction laydown areas and other industrial activities that underpin housing and infrastructure delivery. Protecting industrial and employment areas from incompatible development will also be important to support ongoing operations and future expansion.

In Weipa and surrounds, economic transition beyond mining presents opportunities for logistics, marine servicing, manufacturing, export-related industries and potential future uses of the Port of Weipa. The region's strategic location also creates opportunities in defence, border security, biosecurity, marine industries and emerging space-related activities. Existing assets, including Royal Australian Air Force Base Scherger, regional ports, airports and the Torres Strait border security network, provide a strong foundation for future investment in logistics, defence industries, border and biosecurity.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Employment land Sufficient capacity is available to accommodate the region's projected employment demand and support economic opportunities across Cape York and the Torres Strait.	**1.1** Plan for sufficient land to at least meet projected employment demand set out in Schedule 2. **1.2** Provide for a supply of employment land that supports local enterprise, essential services, infrastructure, employment opportunities and economic development, recognising that future employment land needs may be driven by service, operational and strategic development requirements as well as market demand.
2. Centres and communities A network of centres supports housing, employment, services, cultural activities and economic opportunities across Cape York and the Torres Strait.	**2.1** Promote regional centres (as shown on **Maps 3A-3F**) as locations for commercial, retail, government, health, education and service activities that serve broad regional catchments and support mainland and island communities. **2.2** Support strategic service centres (as shown on **Maps 3A-3F**) as locations for community and government services, cultural activities, employment opportunities and infrastructure that contribute to the ongoing prosperity, connectivity and liveability of surrounding communities. **2.3** Facilitate a mix of uses within centres that strengthen local economies, create employment opportunities and reinforce centres as locations for social, cultural and economic activity.
3. Industrial land, supply chains and self-sufficiency Industrial land, construction-supporting activities and supply chains support economic diversification, regional self-sufficiency, housing delivery and improve the resilience of mainland and island communities.	**3.1** Protect and support industrial land that enables housing delivery, essential services, economic activity and community resilience, including in locations where market demand may be limited. **3.2** Support land uses that strengthen regional supply chains including activities and land associated with ports, airports and freight routes which facilitate the efficient movement, storage and distribution of goods, materials and services across mainland and island communities. **3.3** Promote land uses that strengthen local construction capability, local production and processing of materials, improve regional self-sufficiency and reduce reliance on services and facilities outside of the region. **3.4** Encourage emerging and future industries in appropriate locations and minimise land use conflicts.



Mining, Weipa



Mining and extractive resources

Context

The resources sector plays a significant role in Queensland's economic performance, contributing strongly to export earnings and supporting jobs, infrastructure investment and regional development across the state. Activities within the sector supply essential materials that underpin a wide range of industries and sustain both regional communities and broader supply chains. Ongoing exploration and development continue to drive productivity, skills growth and long-term economic opportunities.

In Queensland, resource activities are assessed under different legislative pathways to extractive industry activities. 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 used for construction and infrastructure are assessed under the Planning Act. Collectively, these frameworks support the orderly development of resources, protect existing operations, safeguard future resource availability and manage potential land use conflicts.

In the Cape York and Torres Strait region, the resources sector is a cornerstone of the regional economy and remains a primary driver of regional gross value added, employment and export activity. Mining is the region's largest economic contributor, generating approximately $703 million in gross value added and $2.461 billion in economic output (gross revenues). This contribution helps support communities, infrastructure networks and service provision across Cape York. The mining sector supports an extensive supply chain that extends beyond resource extraction to include engineering, logistics, fabrication, maintenance and rehabilitation services. This aligns with the Queensland Government's Delivering Queensland's Critical Minerals Future 2026–30 strategy, which seeks to unlock investment, strengthen regional value chains, expand processing and manufacturing opportunities and create jobs in regional Queensland. Expanding these associated industries can help create new employment opportunities, support economic growth and maximise the long-term benefits of the region's resource wealth.

Cape York contains strategically significant mineral resources, including bauxite operations at Weipa and Amrun, as well as silica, kaolin, gold and emerging critical minerals including lithium and rare earth elements. Growing demand for bauxite, silica and critical minerals used in alternative energy technologies and advanced manufacturing is driving further exploration and expansion. These include the existing Amrun bauxite mine and expansion through the proposed Kangwinan project and large-scale silica developments near Cape Flattery. In addition, the region has other extractive industries that are regionally significant, including at Archer River Butcher's Hill, Horn Island, Badu Island (Mulgrave Island), and Mt Amos. These resources present opportunities beyond extraction, including value-added processing, manufacturing and downstream supply chain development. Supporting these opportunities can help grow the regional economy, strengthen regional supply chains, create skilled employment and maximise the long-term benefits derived from the region's natural resources. Given Cape York's remoteness and high transport costs, maintaining access to suitable local material sources remains critical to supporting regional self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on imported materials.

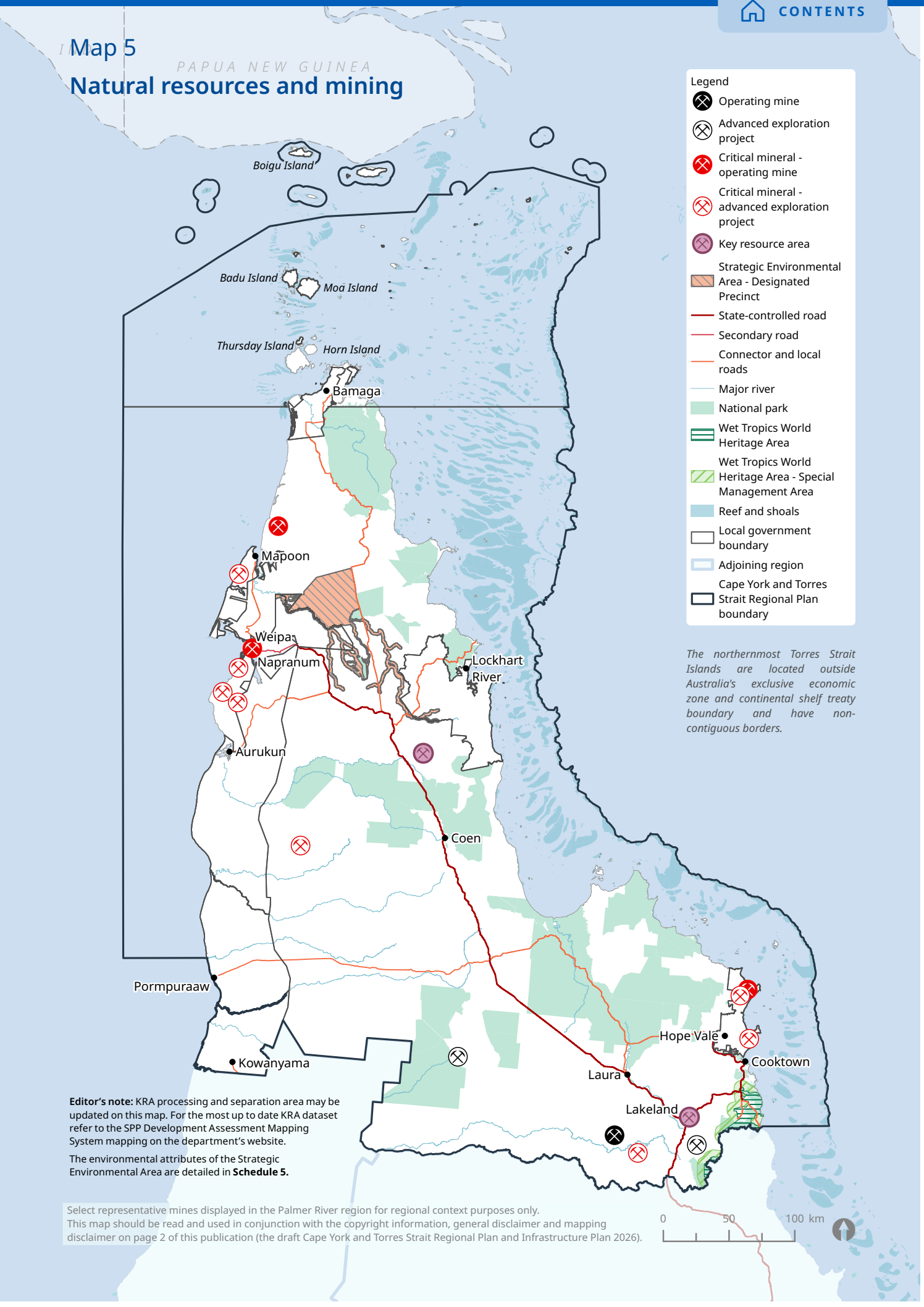
At the same time, the closure of legacy operations such as East Weipa (2024) and the expected closure of Andoom later this decade highlight the importance of proactive planning for transition, rehabilitation and post-mining land use outcomes. Effective planning must support a more diverse and competitive regional economy that builds on the region's established mining strengths while creating new opportunities for investment, employment and industry development. Progressive rehabilitation and collaboratively planned post-mining land uses will be important to supporting long-term economic opportunities and community outcomes in western Cape York.

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 An economical supply of extractive resources for use in development and construction is available to meet regional demand in Cape York and the Torres Strait.	**1.1** Protect extractive resource areas 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.
2. Mineral, coal, petroleum and gas resources Resource activities continue to support the region's economy and social prosperity, generating employment and contributing to growth, value-added processing and associated manufacturing activities and future opportunities, while enabling coexistence with other land uses.	**2.1** Protect resource development and production activities and associated infrastructure from incompatible land uses that could compromise ongoing or future operations. **2.2** Prioritise mutually beneficial opportunities for the coexistence between resource activities and other land uses where impacts can be appropriately managed. **2.3** Facilitate coexistence between mining and resource activities and agricultural land uses within a PAA where agricultural productivity and resource development outcomes can both be maintained. **2.4** Provide for resource activities within a PLA (**Map 6**) only where: • the resource activities demonstrate consistency with the applicable land use and planning framework and • evidence of meaningful engagement with the relevant local government is provided.
3. Post-mining futures Mine closure and resource transition is coordinated at a regional scale to support successful post-mining futures.	**3.1** Facilitate post-mining land uses which: • foster economic and community development opportunities and • promote adaptive re-use of mining infrastructure.
4. Strategic environmental areas The ecological integrity and function of the strategic environmental area is maintained.	**4.1** Protect strategic environmental areas (as shown on **Map 5**) from development and other activities that have the potential to result in widespread or irreversible impacts on the environmental attributes of the SEA (Schedule 5).

Editor's note: The planning and delivery of post-mining land uses should be considered in conjunction with applicable rehabilitation, closure and environmental regulatory frameworks, including Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans (PRCPs) under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

Map 5
Natural resources and mining

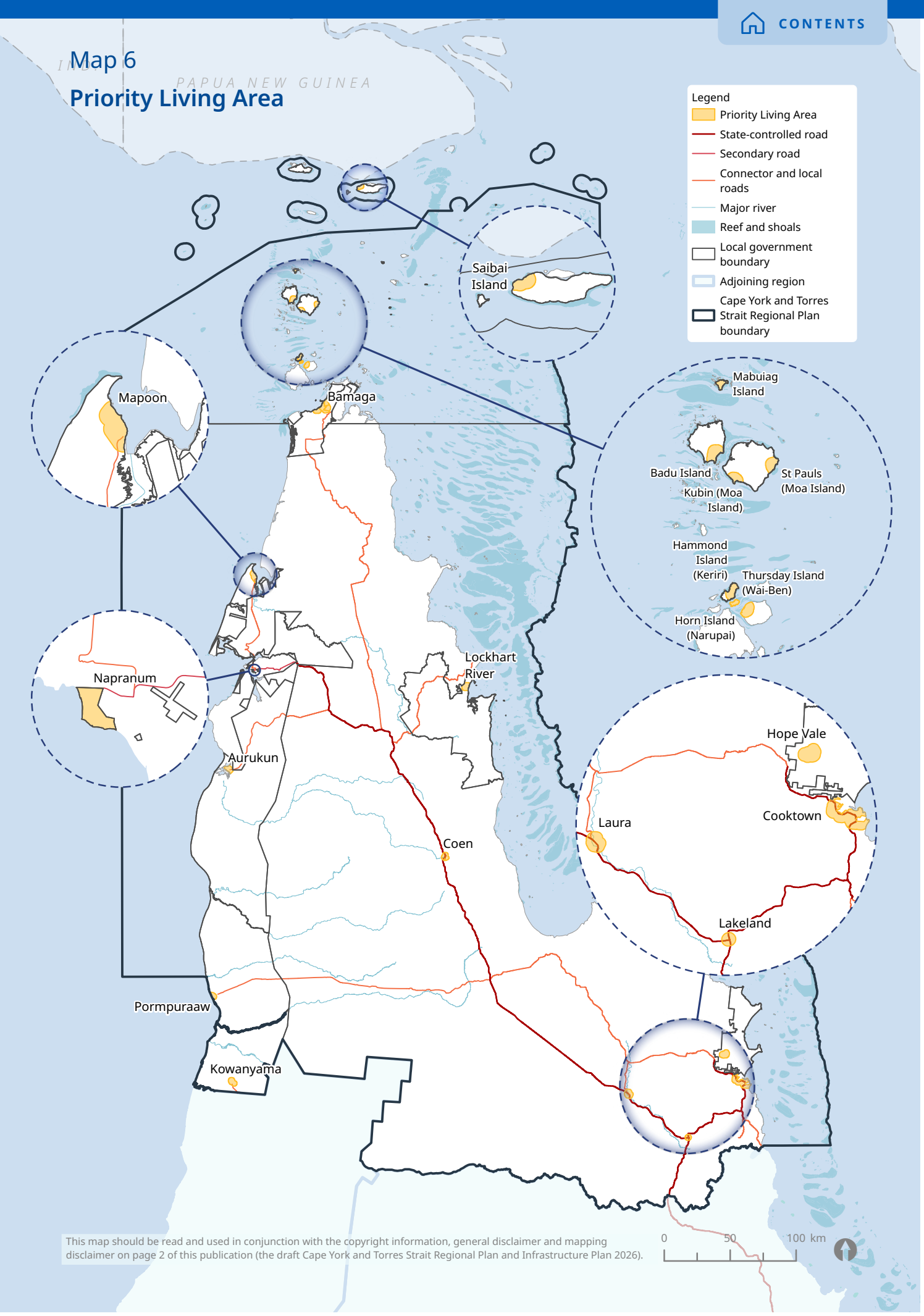


Editor's note: KRA processing and separation area may be updated on this map. For the most up to date KRA dataset refer to the SPP Development Assessment Mapping System mapping on the department's website.

The environmental attributes of the Strategic Environmental Area are detailed in **Schedule 5.**

Select representative mines displayed in the Palmer River region for regional context purposes only.
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 Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026).

Map 6
Priority Living Area



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 Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026).



Twin Falls, Jardine River National Park
Tourism Australia

Tourism

Context

Tourism is a key contributor to the Cape York and Torres Strait regional economy, supporting jobs, local businesses and community livelihoods across the region. The visitor economy is underpinned by the region's undisturbed natural environments, rich cultural heritage and globally significant landscapes and seascapes.

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

The Ecotourism Plan for Queensland's Protected Areas 2025-2030 provides the framework for planning and delivering ecotourism experiences in Queensland's national and marine parks and other protected areas. This is particularly relevant given protected areas make up approximately 20 per cent of the Cape York and Torres Strait region, with key tourist attractions including Apudthama National Park, Rinyirru National Park and Kutini-Payamu National Park.

Tourism across Cape York and the Torres Strait operates as a network of destinations and experiences, with different places performing complementary roles that support visitor movement, regional touring and multi-destination itineraries. Many of the destinations across the region are isolated and remote, attracting four-wheel drive enthusiasts and more adventurous tourists. Growth opportunities exist in ecotourism, cultural tourism, heritage tourism, drive tourism, marine tourism, adventure tourism and nature-based experiences. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural tourism presents a particular opportunity, building on the region's traditions and connections. Key tourism destinations and experience hubs include Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), Horn Island (Narupai), Northern Peninsula Area, Cooktown, Weipa, Laura, Pajinka and the Cape York Peninsula and the nationally and internationally recognised reef, island and wilderness environments that define the region.

Land use planning plays a central role in supporting the growth and long-term prosperity of the region 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 tourism opportunities and maintaining the integrity of the region's distinctive environmental and cultural values.

The regional outcomes and land use strategies contributing to this state interest focus on strengthening the tourism sector while protecting and enhancing the region's defining assets. This includes supporting the growth of tourism through the identification and support for Regionally Significant Tourism Assets (RSTAs), alongside the protection and enhancement of the unique landscapes, coastlines, islands, waterways and cultural heritage that contribute to the region's identity and visitor appeal.

RSTAs are places, landscapes, attractions, precincts, corridors or experience clusters that play a key role in the region's visitor economy. These assets make a substantial contribution to regional employment, economic activity and the 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 demand and visitor expectations. In Cape York and the Torres Strait, RSTAs may include significant cultural landscapes, nature-based tourism destinations, island tourism precincts, ecotourism hubs, heritage attractions and iconic visitor routes that showcase the region's unique environmental and cultural values.

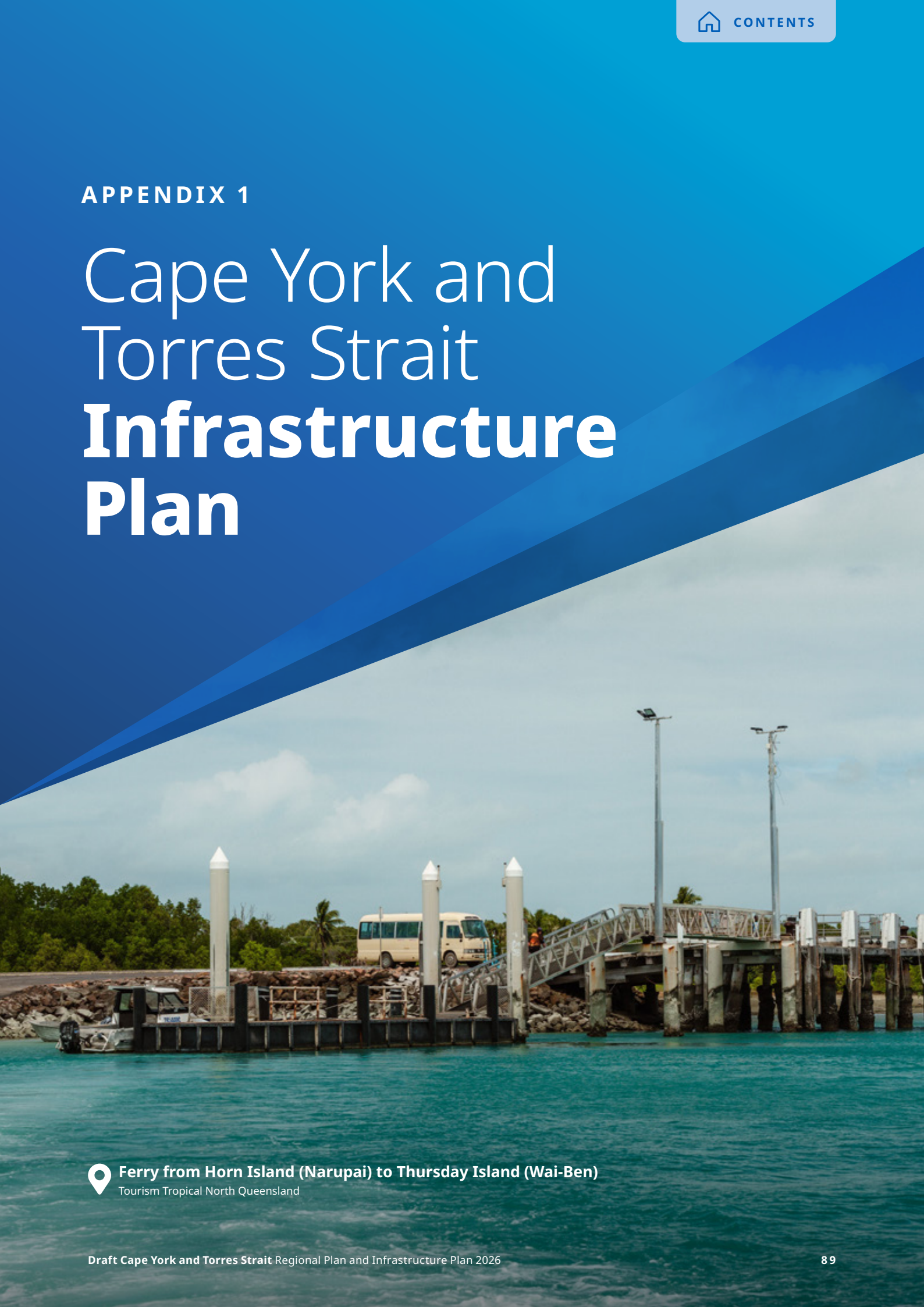
Key transport infrastructure such as the Peninsula Developmental Road, the Port of Cooktown and wharf facilities at Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), Horn Island (Narupai) and Seisia serve as key enablers to tourism in Cape York and the Torres Strait, as identified through the policies outlined in Appendix 1.

Regional outcome	Land use strategies
1. Promote tourism Tourism in Cape York and the Torres Strait supports jobs and regional prosperity, underpinned by a range of experiences and the protection of the region's unique natural and cultural assets.	**1.1** Support the establishment of a range of new tourist activities and assets and encourage expansion and enhancement of existing tourism assets through the intensification of existing land uses or establishment of complementary land uses within the RTF. **1.2** Support the provision of visitor accommodation, including accommodation for workers, where compatible with surrounding land uses and supported by adequate services within the RTF. **1.3** Encourage ecotourism, cultural tourism and agritourism based land uses within the RLRPA. **1.4** Support small scale, low impact visitor accommodation, including accommodation for workers, and facilities in the RLRPA where the development is consistent with the conservation intent of those areas and relevant protected area management frameworks. **1.5** Protect the environmental, amenity, cultural, landscape and scenic values of tourism assets. **1.6** Enable tourism-related development adjacent to protected areas, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, through local planning instruments which strike a balance between conservation, natural hazards and low-impact tourism. **1.7** Recognise the 'Wet Tropics World Heritage Area – Special Management Area' on **Map 5** as an area of high scenic amenity for the purposes of State code 23: Wind farm. In this area, development for wind farms is assessed against the scenic amenity performance outcomes of State code 23. **1.8** Identify and enable opportunities for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and cultural-based tourism, including in protected areas.
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 6. **2.2** Protect identified RSTAs and associated connections that support access from incompatible development which would compromise functionality or viability of these assets. **2.3** Support 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 6. 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 6.

APPENDIX 1

Cape York and Torres Strait **Infrastructure Plan**



Ferry from Horn Island (Narupai) to Thursday Island (Wai-Ben)
Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Introduction

The Infrastructure Plan is an integral component of the 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 Infrastructure Plan provides the infrastructure direction to improve living standards and adaptation to change by articulating integrated planning policies and strategies for matters of state interest. 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 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 interest in transport, water, energy, digital connectivity and social and community infrastructure.
- **Region shaping infrastructure and infrastructure enhancing strategies (transport):** region shaping infrastructure includes significant or future 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 Infrastructure Plan is an appendix to the 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 Infrastructure Plan is outlined in the Regional Plan (Part 2 Application and Effect).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure planning in Queensland

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 long-term planning or investigations and for aligning, prioritising and sequencing infrastructure.

While state infrastructure agencies remain accountable for 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.

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 Infrastructure Plan will inform future updates to the QGIP.

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

Queensland Betterment Funds

Betterment allows local governments and state agencies to rebuild essential public assets to a more resilient standard to help them withstand the impacts of future disasters. Queensland Betterment Funds are jointly funded (50:50) by the Australian and Queensland governments. Examples include improvements to vital infrastructure such as roads, bridges and floodways with Aurukun, Cook, Hope Vale and the Torres Strait among the communities that have received support.

Improvements can vary from stabilisation of low-lying roads to reduce erosion and scouring, upgrades to drainage structures to increase capacity or replacing gravel with reinforced concrete to improve resilience.

Queensland leads the nation in building resilience in its communities through betterment programs. Queensland's experience with betterment funds shows that an upfront investment in rebuilding impacted assets to be more resilient saves money for all levels of government in future disasters.



Grassy Hill, Cooktown
Tourism Tropical North Queensland

TRANSPORT

Regional infrastructure planning

Transport

The state transport network has a significant role in providing connectivity and access to Cape York and the Torres Strait's dispersed settlement pattern and unlocking agricultural, mining and tourism economic development opportunities. Bauxite mining operations and export opportunities will continue to be dependent on the Port of Weipa and dedicated Amrun export facilities.

The state-controlled Peninsula Developmental Road is the region's principal transport spine extending from Lakeland to the mining lease boundary south-east of Weipa where it connects to local and mine-controlled roads. It connects the communities of Aurukun, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Pormpuraaw along with several others at the tip of Cape York via community access roads.

Several sections of the Peninsula Developmental Road remain unsealed, leaving the region heavily dependent on maritime freight and regional aviation during the wet season. The Royal Australian Air Force Base Scherger is also dependent on the Peninsula Developmental Road to provide fuel and other critical logistics to enable military operations across the region. In addition, the Mulligan Highway is a key state-controlled road, linking Lakeland to Cooktown and providing connectivity to Cairns in the south.

Transport infrastructure is heavily impacted by the wet season with seasonal road access restrictions meaning many Cape York and Torres Strait communities rely on air and sea transport to provide vital access during these road closures. Continuing to improve the resilience and reliability of the road network will reduce vulnerability to closures and provide opportunities for tourism and industry development.

In the Torres Strait, marine transport is the primary passenger transport mode with multiple operators providing inter-island ferry services for local communities.

Marine infrastructure is vital for freight and fuel supply and underpins wet season access when roads and airstrips are compromised. The Port of Weipa, operated by North Queensland Bulk Ports, handles bulk goods and high mass freight. Additional ports managed by Ports North are located at Cape Flattery, Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), Cooktown, Skardon River and Quintell Beach. Most local government areas have community wharves or marine facilities integral to marine transport with the Torres Strait Island Regional Council alone responsible for 15 barge ramps and 13 finger jetties.

Weipa Airport, Horn Island Airport and Northern Peninsula Airport (Bamaga) are designated strategic airports and offer regular passenger flights. Horn Island Airport provides international services to Papua New Guinea. A further 19 airports and aerodromes mainly serve small passenger flights, freight and emergency services. Upgraded infrastructure will help to keep communities connected during the wet season and contribute to economic development.

Active transport assets such as footpaths and cycleways are small in scale compared to more urbanised areas of Queensland.

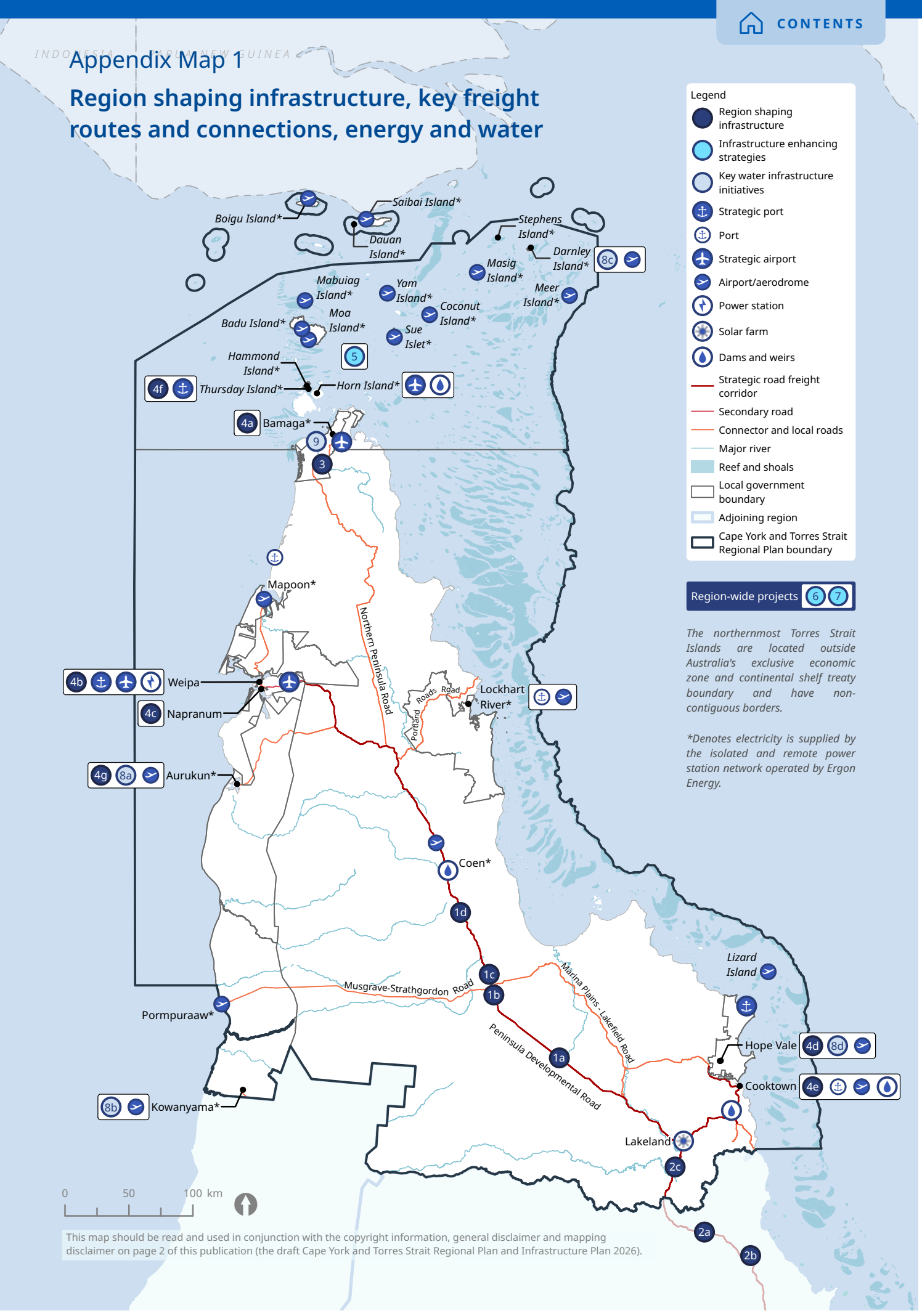
TRANSPORT

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 **Transport networks and infrastructure** A safe, efficient and resilient transport network is provided that connects communities and supports access to employment, education, healthcare, essential services and regional centres.	**1.1** Protect and enhance the function of the region's primary strategic transport corridors including the Peninsula Developmental Road and Mulligan Highway. **1.2** Improve connectivity to communities by progressively sealing the Peninsula Developmental Road and priority sections of community access roads. **1.3** Enhance marine infrastructure and facilities (barge ramps, jetties and protected pontoons) that support connectivity and access to essential services and supplies for remote communities, improve resilience and support future economic development opportunities. **1.4** Improve accessibility, safety and operational reliability of community jetties, barge landings and passenger facilities in coastal and remote communities. **1.5** Support integrated planning between marine, road and aviation infrastructure to strengthen regional connectivity and improve transport network redundancy. **1.6** Protect strategic airports including associated defence operations from encroachment and incompatible development. Improve resilience of strategic airport infrastructure and associated access routes. **1.7** Support the provision of safe, convenient, accessible and legible cycle and pedestrian networks, including on-road and off-road routes that support transport, recreation and tourism trips. **1.8** Support active and public transport connectivity in and around centres and surrounding suburbs by integrating and aligning land use and transport networks.
Policy outcome 2 **Strategic links and supply chains** A productive, reliable and safe freight system that supports the transportation of goods and resources within and through the region.	**2.1** Strengthen disaster resilience and productivity on priority transport corridors including the Peninsula Developmental Road, Mulligan Highway, community access roads and strategic bridge crossings to reduce seasonal isolation and improve year-round accessibility. **2.2** Improve marine freight networks and operational capability of marine facilities that support the efficient transportation of goods and resources between regional centres, ports and remote communities. **2.3** Enhance the operational capability, resilience and long-term viability of strategic ports including the Port of Weipa, the Port of Thursday Island and the Port of Cape Flattery and protect from incompatible development.

Appendix Map 1

Region shaping infrastructure, key freight routes and connections, energy and water



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 Cape York and Torres Strait 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 regional growth pattern 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 throughout the region.

Region shaping infrastructure aligns with the need to increase the resilience of the transport network to facilitate the improved connectivity of people, goods and services between communities. It supports a more efficient use of existing infrastructure and promotes an efficient and responsive transport system. It also identifies future strategic transport investments to benefit key sectors such as resources, agriculture, and tourism.

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

- strategic road network or strategic freight network
- aviation or marine facilities.

The region shaping infrastructure listed below does 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	Peninsula Developmental Road – Cape York Region Package 2 and subsequent stages • 1a - Koolburra to south of Hann Part A • 1b - Musgrave to Red Blanket Part B • 1c - Musgrave to Red Blanket Part C • 1d - Yarraden to Three Sisters Part A Portion 2	The Peninsula Developmental Road is a crucial commuter and freight transport route in Cape York, connecting communities (and tourists) between Lakeland and Weipa. These improvements help improve safety, flood resilience and capacity in the long-term. Better connecting communities to the Peninsula Developmental Road improves access to services for both remote and Indigenous communities. The current Cape York Region Package Stage 2 has been important in improving the resilience and reliability of access to remote communities across the region.
2	Mulligan Highway bridge renewal projects • 2a - McLeod River Bridge • 2b - Rifle Creek Bridge • 2c - Spear Creek Bridge	Community road access to Cape York is via the Mulligan Highway corridor. Resilience and reliability of access on the Mulligan Highway is constrained by the low flood immunity, load limited, single lane bridge structures at Spear Creek, McLeod River and Rifle Creek. While the bridges at McLeod River and Rifle Creek are located just outside the Regional Plan boundary, renewal of these three Mulligan Highway bridge structures is an important component to improving connectivity and access for all Cape York and Torres Strait communities.

TRANSPORT

3	Community Access Road Program • 3 – Northern Peninsula Road sealing	Continuing to improve the resilience of access roads and the Peninsula Developmental Road to connect communities facilitates freight and food security as well as improving access to essential services for communities, particularly for Kowanyama, Aurukun, Pormpuraaw and Mapoon.
4	Support active and public transport accessibility and connectivity through the delivery of the Queensland Principal Cycle Network, Priority Route Maps and Walking Network Plans, integrated with land use planning and transport networks in and around centres, key destinations and residential areas. • 4a - Bamaga • 4b - Weipa/Mission River • 4c - Napranum • 4d - Hope Vale • 4e - Cooktown • 4f - Thursday Island (Wai-Ben) • 4g - Aurukun	Improved active, public transport and micro-mobility accessibility and connectivity enhances access to employment, services, education and other key destinations while supporting healthier communities.

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 maritime and aviation infrastructure)
- 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
5	The Torres Strait Islands Marine Infrastructure Program	The Torres Strait Islands Marine Infrastructure Program is delivered by Maritime Safety Queensland through the Maritime Infrastructure and Investment Program to improve safety and access between communities in the Torres Strait and the Northern Peninsula Area.
6	Regional distribution hubs	Evaluate opportunities for establishing regional distribution hubs to support remote areas challenged by seasonal supply chain disruptions.
7	Heavy vehicle management facilities	The investigation and planning of roadside facilities to assist with the management of heavy vehicle driver fatigue along the Peninsula Developmental Road and Mulligan Highway would provide long-term road safety benefits and strengthen the freight supply chains.

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 all levels of government 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:

- Improving all-weather road access to address wet season isolation and freight disruption.
- Improving the reliability of the Jardine River crossing. The Jardine River crossing is an important link connecting communities of Cape York and the Torres Strait, providing economic opportunities for the communities of the Northern Peninsula Area.
- Investigating opportunities for bridge replacements and flood immunity upgrades (rather than causeways).
- New and upgraded marine infrastructure (barge ramps, jetties, protected pontoons) to provide resilience and meet long-term service needs in remote coastal and island communities including consideration of future accessibility, freight access, infrastructure condition and network resilience requirements, subject to future Queensland Government consideration.
- Evaluating opportunities for establishing regional distribution hubs to support remote areas challenged by seasonal supply chain disruptions.
- Considering opportunities to repurpose Weipa Port infrastructure while sustaining Evans Landing Wharf and Hamburg Wharf for general cargo, fuel and other freight.
- Continuing to invest in new and upgraded air and marine infrastructure including seaport and airport facilities and runways to enable the efficient movement of freight and enhance connectivity between Cairns and communities in Cape York and the Torres Strait.
- Fit-for-purpose marine tourism infrastructure in Cooktown.
- Reviewing the Northern Peninsula Area Marine Hub Master Plan to validate current assumptions, costs, stakeholder requirements and future infrastructure priorities for the Seisia marine precinct.
- Consideration of asset ownership, operational responsibility, maintenance funding and long-term stewardship arrangements as part of future project planning and prioritisation.

TRANSPORT

Far North Queensland Regional Transport Plan

Transport infrastructure planning for Cape York and the Torres Strait is directed by the Far North Queensland Regional Transport Plan developed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

The plan is a public planning document that defines the intended development of the transport system across Cape York and the Torres Strait 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, and local government land use and transport planning.

Queensland Freight Delivery Plan

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has released 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.



Archer River Bridge, Coen

WATER

Water

Water management is fundamental to Cape York and the Torres Strait community wellbeing, industry productivity and long-term economic resilience. Water supply in the region relies on local surface water, groundwater, council or community managed infrastructure, or private (industrial) systems. Water supply for the Weipa Town Authority is managed through a separate arrangement.

The agriculture sector primarily utilises groundwater bores with rainfall harvesting (dams and turkey nests) supplementing bore water in the wet season. Irrigated broadacre agriculture is largely absent outside Lakeland.

Many communities across Cape York and the Torres Strait experience water and wastewater challenges due to geographic isolation, infrastructure constraints and exposure to extreme weather events. Reliable and appropriate water services are essential to supporting health, community wellbeing and economic development outcomes.

Water security in the region is constrained less by water availability and more by infrastructure, remoteness and system resilience, while raw water availability will continue to be a constraint for Torres Strait Island communities. Key constraints include a reliance on small, isolated water supply systems with no interconnection or redundancy. The region also faces growing challenges from ageing treatment plants, reservoirs and bore infrastructure. There is also limited potable water storage (often one day or less) creating vulnerability during outages.

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 **Secure and reliable water supply for future growth** The region's water supply infrastructure is planned, protected and delivered in a timely and coordinated manner to support future residential growth, industrial development, resource sector development and regional economic development while maintaining long-term water security and enabling innovative management of water resources.	**1.1** Prioritise upgrades to ageing water infrastructure that presents risks to service reliability and future growth opportunities in the region. **1.2** Coordinate and align water planning, land use planning and infrastructure sequencing and delivery across state agencies, local governments and infrastructure providers to support timely outcomes for residential growth and industrial development. **1.3** Protect, maintain and enhance water supply infrastructure (where there is a demonstrated demand and net benefit to the region) to support existing communities and future residential, industrial and agricultural growth opportunities. **1.4** Protect the ongoing operation and future expansion of water supply and wastewater assets from encroachment and incompatible development including by identifying and protecting land for future water treatment plants, pipelines and associated infrastructure. **1.5** Adopt water sensitive measures in new developments to reduce water demand and limit pressure on regional water and wastewater infrastructure. **1.6** Strengthen coordination and collaboration between state agencies, local governments and water service providers in identifying, assessing and developing options for enhancing future water system resilience.

WATER

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

Map reference	Key water infrastructure initiatives[1]	Relationship to regional outcomes
8	Closing the Gap Priorities Fund Round 1: • 8a - Aurukun Water Supply Improvement Project • 8b - Kowanyama Water Supply Improvement Project Round 2 • 8c - Erub Island Water Security (Torres Strait Island Regional Council) • 8d - Hope Vale Water and Sewerage System Improvements	The Closing the Gap Priorities Fund provides a pathway for Queensland Government investment in Indigenous community water and wastewater infrastructure. By prioritising infrastructure and essential services, the fund provides long-term benefits for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, supporting better living conditions, employment and education outcomes and health services.
9	National Water Grid Fund • 9 - Northern Peninsula Area Water Supply Project	Co-funding investment by the Australian Government through the National Water Grid First Nations Water initiative and the Queensland Government. Safe and reliable drinking water is fundamental to the health, wellbeing and overall life outcomes for all people. However, many regional and remote communities experience ongoing challenges with water security. Water security means having water available when it is needed and being able to rely on it being fit for use, including being safe to drink.

Future planning considerations

Water infrastructure planning within the region is driven by a focus on long-term security and resilience in response to the needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities, key industries and recovery from disasters. Strategic initiatives should prioritise sustainable methods such as managing demand, recycling water for productive industries and exploring alternative supply sources including non-infrastructure solutions after cost-benefit analysis.

Future planning aims to address both current requirements and accommodate potential 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.

[1] The initiatives are in different stages of assessment, design and pre-construction. While funding allocations have been established for each initiative, overall costs are yet to be finalised. As a result, there may be future considerations regarding supplementary funding needs or adjustments to project scope.

WATER

Key considerations for future water infrastructure in the region include:

- Water security planning 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.
- Maintaining and enhancing water infrastructure to ensure it remains robust and resilient against natural hazards, emergencies and potential disaster scenarios.
- Upgrading and securing reliable drinking water supply, wastewater treatment plants and associated infrastructure assets, including local government assets for regional townships and Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their communities.
- Ensuring water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is sufficient to meet the needs of current and future residents, as well as tourists and local communities in peak tourism periods.
- Continue to assess options to increase water supply in the region to meet demand from economic growth opportunities and to meet the challenges of droughts and extreme events.
- Bulk water supply initiatives are evaluated to identify projects that most effectively balance benefits and costs using robust data on matters including construction and operation costs, engineering and environmental factors, population projections, agricultural output forecasts and industry development plans.
- Developing water resources and infrastructure in alignment with the requirements of water plans to enable industry development, particularly for agriculture.
- Infrastructure proposals recognise the availability of water in the relevant catchments, as defined and considered through the Cape York Water Plan and the Mitchell Water Plan.



Water infrastructure, Torres Strait Island

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 Cape York and the Torres Strait.

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.
- Improving affordability for water users and unlocking water to support agricultural development.
- Strengthening the disaster resilience of communities.
- Helping water users to reduce input costs, including water for food and fibre production.

The Water Security Plan will be completed in conjunction with the review of all 23 of the state's Regional Water Plans including the Cape York Water Plan and Mitchell Water Plan, 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.



Night time rodeo, Weipa
Weipa Town Authority

Energy

The Queensland Energy Roadmap 2025 sets out the government's approach to delivering affordable, reliable and sustainable energy, including through the effective management of existing energy assets and planning for future infrastructure needs. Energy plays an important role in supporting housing, economic development, agricultural productivity and future growth, industrial activity, defence operations and service delivery throughout Cape York and the Torres Strait.

The region relies predominantly on diesel generation to provide safe and reliable electricity supply. Queensland Government-owned corporation Ergon Energy owns and operates 33 isolated power stations with stand-alone electricity networks that supply 39 communities not connected to the national grid.

Weipa Town Authority's electricity supply is managed through separate arrangements. The remoteness of these communities creates unique challenges for electricity supply, including reliance on transported fuel, exposure to weather related risks, infrastructure and maintenance costs, and limitations in terms of accessing alternative supply during outages.

Ergon Energy continues to explore opportunities to modernise its power systems. This includes assessing technologies and solutions that may reduce reliance on diesel generation while maintaining safe, reliable and secure electricity supply. Integrated planning across energy, transport, water and land use systems can help ensure infrastructure is appropriately located, resilient and aligned with current and future regional needs.

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 **Energy** A safe, reliable, affordable and resilient energy system that supports existing communities (including remote and isolated communities) and enables future residential growth and economic development through coordinated infrastructure planning and investment.	**1.1** Support long-term planning and investment in energy infrastructure to meet the future needs of the region. **1.2** Maintain and enhance the reliability, security and resilience of electricity generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure servicing the region. **1.3** Support the planning and continued provision of safe and reliable electricity supply in isolated communities recognising the unique geographic, logistical and other challenges associated with servicing remote areas, through early and ongoing engagement with communities.

ENERGY

Future planning considerations

Future energy planning for Cape York and the Torres Strait needs to consider the supply arrangements that operate across the region, in line with the Queensland Energy Roadmap objectives of delivering affordable, reliable and sustainable energy through the effective management of existing assets and consideration of future infrastructure needs.

For isolated communities, this may include opportunities to modernise existing electricity infrastructure to improve system resilience and reliability. More broadly, this may include planning for growth in electricity demand, maintaining the capability and security of electricity infrastructure, and coordinating energy infrastructure with housing, transport, water and economic development initiatives.

Ongoing engagement between government, local governments, communities, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders will also be important to ensure future energy investments reflect local circumstances and community needs.

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 current energy assets.
- A 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 to help manage minimum system load.
- Establishment of Regional Energy Hubs to put downward pressure on development costs.
- Implementation of a new code of conduct for renewable energy developers to guide responsible behaviour and set community expectations.



Western Cape College - Weipa campus
Department of Education

Digital connectivity

In Cape York and the Torres Strait, digital connectivity is essential for economic resilience, service delivery and community participation. The region's large geographic footprint, dispersed settlement patterns and the Torres Strait Island communities make reliable connectivity particularly challenging. Region-wide, high-quality digital connectivity enables innovation and uptake of technology to support regionally significant mining and agriculture enterprises.

Connectivity also 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 throughout the region, defence activities linked to the Royal Australian Air Force Scherger Base, logistics and freight movements and agricultural technologies. For key community infrastructure such as health facilities and schools, reliable and fit-for-purpose internet and Wi-Fi access is essential to support service delivery, workforce capability and participation across remote townships. Digital connectivity also supports remote learning and work.

Connectivity outcomes reflect the interaction between geography (population density and distance) and commercial viability. Low population densities in the region, along with long distances between remote townships 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 and island communities.

Over the next 20 years, demand in the region is expected to continue to shift toward high-bandwidth, reliable connectivity to enable data-intensive and emerging digital applications across mining, logistics, defence, health and education. Meeting this demand will require hybrid delivery models that combine terrestrial infrastructure, wireless and mobile solutions, low-Earth orbit satellite connectivity, space-based services and decentralised data processing to respond to distance, terrain and climatic exposure.

Reliable mobile connectivity along key transport hubs and corridors in Cape York, including the Peninsula Developmental Road will be increasingly important to support freight efficiency, smart (real-time) logistics and transport operations as these industries evolve. As road upgrades and 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, strengthen disaster resilience, enable regional economic development and support equitable access to education, healthcare and government services by facilitating access to reliable, high-speed telecommunications and digital infrastructure.	**1.1** Ensure coordinated identification and protection of strategic telecommunications corridors, sites and facilities 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** Coordinate infrastructure planning across telecommunications, energy and transport sectors including promoting co-location and shared use with telecommunications infrastructure to optimise land use efficiency, reduce land use conflict and improve service reach.

Future planning considerations

Future planning considers uncommitted and emerging infrastructure initiatives that may help address regional disparities in digital access across the region. These initiatives include extending mobile coverage in underserved areas, expanding access to highspeed 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 remote 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.
- Deploying satellite communications for emergency services, to ensure reliable and efficient communication during disasters.
- Working with the Australian Government, NBN Co, telecommunications carriers and local governments to prioritise and advocate for telecommunications infrastructure that will reduce mobile and broadband blackspots along strategic transport corridors such as the Peninsula Developmental Road, Mulligan Highway and community access roads.

Social and community infrastructure

Social and community infrastructure refers to facilities, services and networks that provide social benefit and allow people to participate in community life, form social connections and access necessary social supports. This includes facilities and services related to health, education and recreation. To promote wellbeing and quality of life in the region, social and community infrastructure needs to be coordinated across all levels of government and cater to all people.

Social and community infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting wellbeing, inclusion and resilience across Cape York and the Torres Strait much of which is geographically isolated, particularly during the wet season. The region is supported by a network of state and private primary, secondary, combined and special schools within the 12 local government areas. The region has two TAFE campuses located at Bamaga and Thursday Island (Wai-Ben).

The key health facilities in the region include the Weipa Integrated Health Service, Cooktown Multipurpose Health Service, Thursday Island Hospital and Bamaga Hospital. These facilities are complemented by 31 primary healthcare centres throughout the region.

Together, these facilities support a networked model of care across the region. Small population sizes in communities such as Mapoon, Pormpuraaw, Lockhart River and the Torres Strait outer islands often fail traditional cost benefit thresholds for permanent facilities, resulting in reliance on visiting services, modular or demountable clinics and aeromedical dependency rather than local expansion.

Coordinated planning across state, local and community providers will be required to ensure social and community infrastructure is appropriately located, scalable and resilient and that services align with community needs 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 the region. Health infrastructure planning in the region must respond to the challenges of remoteness, dispersed communities and seasonal isolation, which influence accessibility, infrastructure resilience, supply chains, emergency response and workforce support needs.

Policy outcomes and strategies

Policy outcomes	Strategies
Policy outcome 1 **Social and community infrastructure** Social and community infrastructure is planned and delivered to support the diverse needs of local communities and enhance quality of life for residents and visitors.	**1.1** Align health, education and training and public safety infrastructure planning with long-term service planning, regional growth pattern and future population changes, considering service accessibility, workforce requirements and the needs of communities. **1.2** Where practical, facilitate precinct-based planning for social and community infrastructure through coordinated planning and delivery to improve access to services and support efficient service delivery. **1.3** Plan and sequence emergency services infrastructure, including ambulance, police and disaster management facilities, to respond to population growth outlined in the Regional Plan, regional risks and service demand.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

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 the region. 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:

- Maintaining and enhancing existing regional, rural, and remote health facilities to strengthen service delivery and ensure equitable access to healthcare that meets the future healthcare needs of its communities. This includes staff accommodation, essential service reliability and infrastructure upgrades that improve operational resilience, safety and service continuity in remote locations.
- Accessing resilient and reliable telecommunications and digital connectivity infrastructure to support telehealth, virtual care, clinical support systems and more accessible, equitable and connected healthcare.
- Improving the resilience and self-sufficiency of health infrastructure to severe weather events through measures such as backup power, water security, flood resilience, emergency access and supply chain continuity.

Education and training

When planning for 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.

Teacher housing is a key enabling component of education infrastructure in remote and very remote communities across the region. The availability, condition, resilience and suitability of staff housing directly affects the attraction, retention and wellbeing of teachers and school leaders and therefore the continuity and quality of education service delivery.

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.
- Future planning to consider the renewal, expansion and nature-resilient design of teacher housing including flexible accommodation options for permanent, temporary and visiting staff, informed by local service needs.

Public safety

A range of Queensland Government agencies are responsible for infrastructure delivery for public safety assets. This infrastructure includes:

- police facilities (stations and watchhouses) and aviation assets
- fire and rescue stations and rural fire service infrastructure.

Key considerations for public safety infrastructure in the region include:

- Delivering new and upgraded infrastructure for emergency services including police stations and fire and rescue stations, to strengthen community safety and enhance emergency response capabilities.
- Considering the regional growth pattern to ensure public safety infrastructure planning responds to current and future population distribution and service demand across the region.



Western Cape College student, Mapoon Campus
Department of Education

Schedule 1 – Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan baseline data

Population projections – QGSO 2025

Table 3 - Cape York and the Torres Strait current and projected population – 2021–2046

Local government area	2021 population (existing)	2046 population projection (existing + projected) medium series	2046 population projection (existing + projected) high series
Aurukun	1130	1208	1259
Cook	4631	5344	5570
Hope Vale	998	1143	1192
Kowanyama	1107	1195	1246
Lockhart River	653	774	807
Mapoon	442	552	576
Napranum	906	1020	1064
Northern Peninsula Area	2885	3136	3269
Pormpuraaw	632	669	697
Torres	3532	3508	3656
Torres Strait Island	4294	4319	4502
Weipa	4177	4724	4924
Cape York and Torres Strait region	**25,387**	**27,592**	**28,762**

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

Dwelling projections – QGSO 2025

Table 4 - Dwelling demand projections 2021-2046

Local government area	2021 Dwellings (existing)	2046 Dwellings (existing + projected) medium series	2046 Dwellings (existing + projected) high series
Aurukun	331	371	393
Cook	2003	2375	2541
Hope Vale	332	414	446
Kowanyama	294	343	360
Lockhart River	214	277	317
Mapoon	105	161	197
Napranum	261	324	357
Northern Peninsula Area	806	978	1033
Pormpuraaw	229	250	256
Torres	1188	1289	1324
Torres Strait Island	1279	1304	1344
Weipa	1670	1975	2068
Cape York and Torres Strait region	**8,712**	**10,061**	**10,636**

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

The Queensland Treasury regional employment projections provide a policy-neutral baseline or reference case for understanding how employment may change based on broader economic, demographic and industry trends. They provide contextual information for the regional plan but are not intended to represent the employment outcomes sought through implementation of the plan or to establish employment land requirements.

Employment projections – Queensland Treasury 2026

Table 5 - Regional employment projections

Local government area	2026	2046
Aurukun	268	253
Cook	2859	3408
Hope Vale	362	416
Kowanyama	232	229
Lockhart River	260	250
Mapoon	106	109
Napranum	117	117
Northern Peninsula Area	1031	1047
Pormpuraaw	288	286
Torres	2057	2074
Torres Strait Island	1347	1358
Weipa	2420	2957
Cape York and Torres Strait region	**11,347**	**12,504**

Source: Queensland Treasury, developed for the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning for the purpose of the Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026.

Schedule 2 – Employment planning projections

These employment planning projections have been developed specifically to support regional and local planning. They represent a land use planning scenario for future employment growth and distribution, informed by regional economic conditions, industry structure and relevant planning and investment considerations. These projections are intended to inform the implementation of the regional plan, including consideration of future employment land requirements, local planning schemes, Local Government Infrastructure Plans and relevant infrastructure planning.

Table 6 - Regional employment planning projections, Cape York and Torres Strait region

Local government area	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	Total projection (new jobs) 2021-46	Per cent change (new jobs) 2021-46
Aurukun	152	216	245	271	295	307	**155**	102.0
Cook	2707	2870	2903	3049	3186	3275	**568**	21.0
Hope Vale	272	364	370	381	392	389	**117**	43.0
Kowanyama	161	190	193	216	230	223	**62**	38.5
Lockhart River	155	187	186	194	198	193	**38**	24.5
Mapoon	81	86	83	83	83	81	**0**	0.0
Napranum	96	108	109	112	115	113	**17**	17.7
Northern Peninsula Area	917	1183	1181	1264	1334	1357	**440**	48.0
Pormpuraaw	197	219	223	230	234	230	**33**	16.8
Torres	1649	1866	1909	2072	2240	2368	**719**	43.6
Torres Strait Island	1020	1094	1102	1168	1227	1250	**230**	22.5
Weipa	2007	2231	2186	2284	2371	2427	**420**	20.9
Cape York and Torres Strait region	**9414**	**10,614**	**10,690**	**11,324**	**11,905**	**12,213**	**2798**	**29.7**

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. Data has been rounded.

Table 7 - Cape York and Torres Strait region projected employment change by industry

Sector	2021	2046	Per cent increase
Accommodation and food services	585	1150	96.6
Administrative and support services	251	357	42.2
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	400	453	13.3
Arts and recreation services	146	231	58.2
Construction	683	1126	64.9
Education and training	1094	1281	17.1
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	69	111	60.9
Financial and insurance services	25	20	-20.0
Healthcare and social assistance	1324	2330	76.0
Information media and telecommunications	8	8	0.0
Manufacturing	188	267	42.0
Mining	1460	1245	-14.7
Other services	277	449	62.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	115	146	27.0
Public administration and safety	1767	1717	-2.8
Rental, hiring and real estate services	52	57	9.6
Retail trade	577	770	33.4
Transport, postal and warehousing	336	440	31.0
Wholesale trade	55	57	3.6
Total	**9412**	**12,215**	**29.7**

Source: NIEIR, 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. Data has been rounded.

Schedule 3 – Regional Land Use Category principles and criteria

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.

Description

The RTF predominantly applies to the region's townships, identified in planning schemes as land zoned for urban purposes. It supports the growth of rural, regional and island 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 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 such as areas of environmental significance or natural hazards.

Principles

The following principles define the region's RTF.

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 Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) or Matters of Local Environmental Significance (MLES), 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 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 such as areas of environmental significance or natural hazards.

Principles

The following principles define the region's RLA.

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.
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 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) resource authority;
b) do not result in an intolerable risk to property or life; do not adversely impact MNES, MSES or MLES;
c) can be serviced by necessary infrastructure;
d) are not constrained by topography;
e) are a logical expansion of an existing RTF;
f) have ready access to services and employment; and
g) address a demonstrated need or realise an economic or community benefit.

CATEGORY PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area

Intent

The RLRPA is an important contributor to the regional economy and surrounds the 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, and protect the region's environmental and conservation areas.

Description

The RLRPA contains a variety of land uses for economic and environmental purposes. It can accommodate resource activities, such as mines or KRAs, as well as 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, state-owned and privately owned 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 urban or rural residential housing should not be located within this RLUC. Land within the RLRPA is largely un-serviced.

Principles

The following principles define the region's RLRPA.

1. The RLRPA supports the use of land for rural activities, protection of economic and matters of environmental significance, 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 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.

CATEGORY PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

Criteria for inconsistent development

Areas may be appropriate for, or accommodate development which is more aligned to the 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) resource authority;
b) do not result in widespread irreversible impact to the agriculture sector;
c) do not result in an intolerable risk to property or life;
d) do not adversely impact MNES, MSES or MLES;
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 RTF; and
h) address a demonstrated need or realise an economic or community benefit.

Development inconsistent with a RLUC

Where 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, meeting relevant state interests and satisfying the relevant criteria for each RLUC.

Schedule 4 – Dwelling demand and supply background

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.

Key concepts

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 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 **Table 3** (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 the Regional Plan, the high series of the QGSO's household and dwelling projections is the baseline scenario for consideration.

   Refer to **Table 4** (Schedule 1) for the region's dwelling projections (Part 3 – Theme 1 – Housing).

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 versus least constrained land.
4. Policy scenarios – testing housing demand which factors in other variables, outside of the scope of QGSO projections, which factor in additional variables such as major employment generating projects and local preferences in living arrangements.
5. Engagement – engagement is undertaken with local government stakeholders to verify the technical work listed above.
6. Dwelling supply targets – policy expression which states the total number of dwellings through appropriate zoning over the plan period. The target is a minimum. Local governments may wish to plan for housing demand which exceeds the targets, where justified by other appropriate sources.

Schedule 5 – Environmental attributes of the Strategic Environmental Area

The following are the environmental attributes associated with the SEAs identified on **Map 5**.

- The natural hydrologic processes of the area characterised by:
  - natural, unrestricted flows in and along watercourses and estuaries
  - overflow from watercourses onto the flood plains of the area, or the other way
  - natural flow paths of water across flood plains connecting waterholes, lakes and wetlands in the area
  - natural flow in and from groundwater and springs.
- The natural geomorphic processes of the area characterised by:
  - natural erosion
  - the transport and deposit of sediment by water throughout the catchments and along the watercourse systems and estuaries.
- The functioning riparian processes of the area characterised by native riparian vegetation associated with watercourses, estuaries, lakes, flood plains and wetlands.
- The functioning wildlife corridors of the area characterised by:
  - natural habitat in the watercourse systems
  - permanent waterholes and springs.
- The natural water quality in the watercourse channels and aquifers and on flood plains in the area characterised by physical, chemical and biological attributes that support and maintain natural aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Schedule 6 – 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
- 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

Table 8 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 individual 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.

Table 8 - Criteria for assessing RSTAs

Theme	Criteria
Regional significance	1. The location or asset is 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 offers environmental, coastal, landscape or cultural values, or host large-scale events/entertainment.
Infrastructure access and servicing capability	5. If in the 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 Cape York and the Torres Strait

Noting that visitors typically experience Cape York and the Torres Strait as destination precincts rather than single attractions, a preliminary list of RSTAs in the region is presented in **Table 9**.

Table 9 - Regionally Significant Tourism Assets and their key attractions

RSTA	Key attractions
Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area	Coral reefs, islands, diving, fishing and marine tourism experiences.
Inner Torres Strait Islands	Thursday Island (Wai-Ben), Horn Island (Narupai), island culture, heritage, cultural tourism and military history.
Pajinka and northern Cape York including Apudthama National Park	The tip of Australia, Bamaga, Injinoo, Jardine River, Fruit Bat Falls and Eliot Falls.
Wet Tropics World Heritage Area	Rainforest landscapes, Bloomfield Track, biodiversity and Indigenous cultural tourism. Kalkajaka (Black Mountain) National Park - distinctive granite landform, cultural significance and geological attraction.
Cooktown	Cooktown Heritage Precinct - Captain Cook history, museums, Grassy Hill, waterfront and cultural attractions.
Kutini-Payamu (Iron Range) National Park	Chilli Beach, birdwatching, tropical rainforest and wilderness tourism.
Quinkan Country (Laura) and Rinyirru (Lakefield) National Park	World-renowned Aboriginal rock art galleries and cultural landscapes. Queensland's second-largest national park, fishing, birdwatching and camping.
Weipa Coast and western Cape York	Fishing, wildlife cruises, wetlands and mining tours.

Glossary

This list provides the meaning of some terms used in the draft Cape York and Torres Strait Regional Plan and Infrastructure Plan 2026. 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
Agriculture	As defined in the State Planning Policy.
Agritourism	A form of immersive tourism that connects people to agricultural products or produce, delivered on farming land through a direct 'hands on' experience.
Agricultural Land Classification (Classes A and B)	As defined in the State Planning Policy.
Areas of Regional Interest (ARI)	As defined in the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*.
Biosecurity	The protection of the economy, environment and public health from negative impacts associated with contamination, pests, diseases and weeds, and involves coordinated efforts to: • prevent, respond to, and recover from pests and diseases that threaten the economy and environment • reduce risks that chemical contaminants pose to agricultural food production systems and the environment to ensure continued market access for agricultural products • maintain high standards of animal care and keeping • know the boundaries of Queensland's biosecurity zones and comply with restrictions for moving regulated materials within or out of the zones • take all reasonable and practical measures to minimise biosecurity risks posed by your activities. This is known as a general biosecurity obligation (GBO) under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.
Deed of grant in trust (DOGIT)	A deed of grant in trust (or DOGIT) is the land tenure under the Land Act 1994 supporting a community-level land trust established over former reserves and missions.
Ecotourism	As defined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.
Extractive resources	Natural deposits of sand, gravel, quarry rock, clay or soil extracted from the earth's crust and processed for use in construction. The term does not include a mineral under the *Mineral Resources Act 1989*, section 6.
Hydrologic processes	The natural flow of water along a river system to the sea, wetlands and floodplains. This natural flow is in acknowledgement that water flow patterns may include periods of little or no flow and unrestricted flooding of floodplains, assisting in creating and maintaining healthy wetlands and groundwater systems.

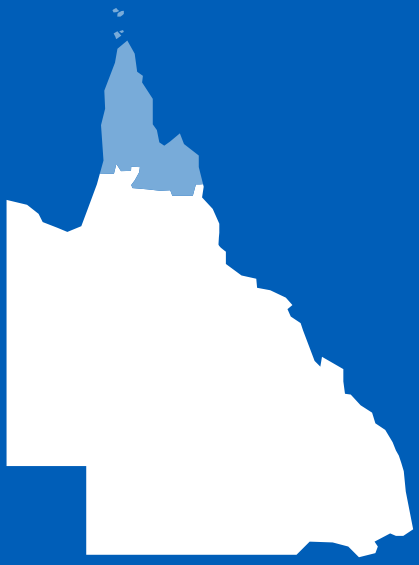
Term	Definition
Indigenous Land Use Agreements	Indigenous Land Use Agreements are voluntary agreements between Native Title parties and other people or bodies about the use and management of areas of land and/or waters. Indigenous Land Use Agreements are established under the *Native Title Act 1993*. Some of the outcomes of Indigenous Land Use Agreements include the development of cultural centres, education trust funds, co-management of national parks, commitments to Indigenous employment and the creation of parks and reserves.
Infrastructure	As defined by the Planning Regulation 2017.
Infrastructure networks	Major infrastructure networks in the region including water supply, wastewater, energy, telecommunications and transport.
Intensive horticulture	See the standard planning scheme provisions.
Key Resource Areas (KRAs)	As defined by the State Planning Policy.
Local Government Area	The geographical area under the responsibility of an incorporated local government council or an incorporated Indigenous government council.
Market housing	Housing that is purchased or rented at market price.
Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES)	Environmental values of state significance as defined in the State Planning Policy. MSES relevant to development assessment and environmental offsets are separately prescribed through the State Development Assessment Provisions and Schedule 2 of the Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014.
National heritage place	A national heritage place under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)* (EPBC Act).
National park	An area either partly or in full located within the designated region and prescribed under regulation as a national park or national park (Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land).
Natural economic resources	A variety of natural resources that sustain economic development and provide value or benefit to society.
Nature-based tourism	As defined in the Planning Regulation 2017.
Non-private dwellings	Non-private dwellings can include hotels, hospitals, boarding schools and workers accommodation. It is recognised that non-private dwellings account for a proportion of current and future projected dwellings, particularly in key tourist and seasonal worker destinations across the region.
Priority Agricultural Area (PAA)	As defined in the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*. An area identified as a priority agricultural area in **Map 4**.

Term	Definition
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 husbandry
Priority Living Area (PLA)	As defined in the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*. An area identified as a priority living area in **Map 6**.
Protected Area	As defined in the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.
Regional Land Use Categories (RLUC)	RLUCs include RTF, RLAs and RLRPAs.
Regionally Significant Tourism Assets (RSTA)	RSTAs are places, landscapes, attractions, precincts, corridors or experience clusters that 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.
Resource acts	*Geothermal Energy Act 2010* (GE Act) *Geothermal Exploration Act 2009* *Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009* (GHG Act) *Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014* *Mineral Resources Act 1989* (MRA) *Petroleum Act 1923* (PA1923) *The Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004* (P&G Act)
Resource activity	As defined in the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*.
Resource authority	Resource authority means a resource authority as defined by the *Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014*.
Rural activity	As defined in the Planning Regulation 2017.

Term	Definition
Rural residential development	Large-lot residential development, generally without reticulated sewerage and typically in a rural, semi-rural or conservation setting. Development of lots generally between 1–5 hectares used for private residence and not primarily associated with agriculture.
Strategic airports	As defined by the State Planning Policy.
Strategic ports	As defined by the State Planning Policy.
Strategic Environmental Area (SEAs)	As defined in the *Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*. An area identified as a SEA in **Map 5** and may include a designated precinct.
Transport network	The series of connected routes, corridors and transport facilities required to move goods and passengers and includes roads, railways, public transport routes (for example, bus routes), active transport routes (for example, cycleways), freight routes and local, state and privately-owned infrastructure.
Trunk infrastructure	As defined in the *Planning Act 2016*.
Waterways	As defined in the *Fisheries Act 1994*.
Water quality	As defined in the Reef 2050 Catchment Water Quality Strategy.
Wet Tropics World Heritage Area	Refers to the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area regulated under the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993*.
Wet Tropics World Heritage Area - Special Management Area	An area of high scenic amenity for the purpose of State code 23: Wind farm development. In this area, development for a wind farm is avoided where possible and must otherwise be sited and designed to protect the character, scenic amenity, ecological and landscape values of the locality and region.
Widespread irreversible impact	A widespread 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 PALU 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.

Abbreviations

Term	Definition
ARI	Areas of Regional Interest
CYTS	Cape York and the Torres Strait
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
DSDIP	Department of State Development Infrastructure and Planning
LGIP	Local Government Infrastructure Plan
MLES	Matters of Local Environmental Significance
MSES	Matters of State Environmental Significance
PAA	Priority Agricultural Area
PALU	Priority Agricultural Land Uses
PLA	Priority Living Area
Planning Act	*Planning Act 2016*
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RLA	Rural Living Area
RLUC	Regional Land Use Categories
RLRPA	Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area
RPI Act	*Regional Planning Interests Act 2014*
SEA	Strategic Environmental Area
SPP	State Planning Policy
TMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads



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