

Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy  
**Engagement Summary Report**

**Phase 1**

May 2023

**Towards  
2050**

Shaping Cairns  
from the beaches  
to the boulders



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**Cairns Regional Council acknowledges and pays our respects to the Traditional Custodians of our region, the Djabugay; Yirrganydji; Buluwai, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji; Mandingalbay Yidinji; Gunggandji; Dulabed and Malanbara Yidinji; Bundabarra and Wadjanbarra Yidinji; Wanyurr Majay; Mamu and NgadjonJii peoples. We extend this respect to all elders past, present and future, and other First Peoples within our region.**

# About the project

Cairns Regional Council (Council) is developing the Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy.

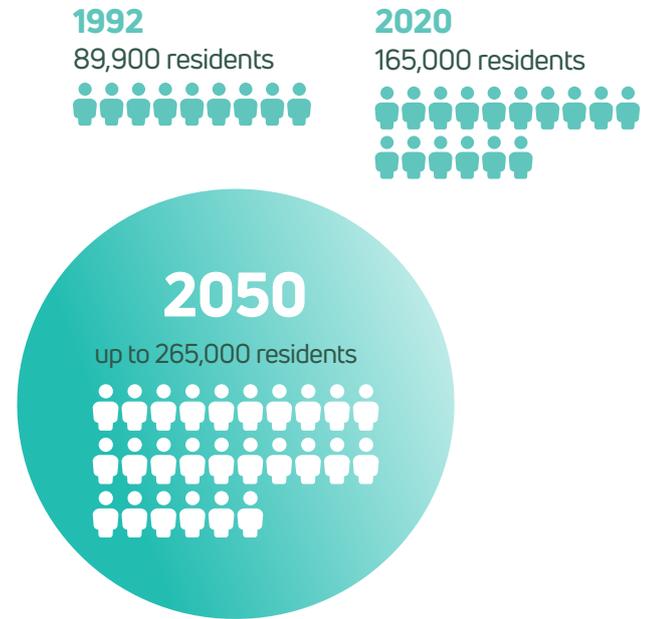
Cairns is a popular place to live and work. The Cairns local government area (LGA) currently has a population of over 170,000 and this is predicted to grow up to 265,000 residents by the year 2050.

Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns will provide a strategy to plan for this growth now, to make sure that everyone can live here and enjoy what we love about Cairns today.

Towards 2050 will help to shape a prosperous, resilient and sustainable future for Cairns. It will recognise the past and explore emerging and future trends. It will use best practice planning and growth management processes to help us respond to our unique environment, needs and challenges.

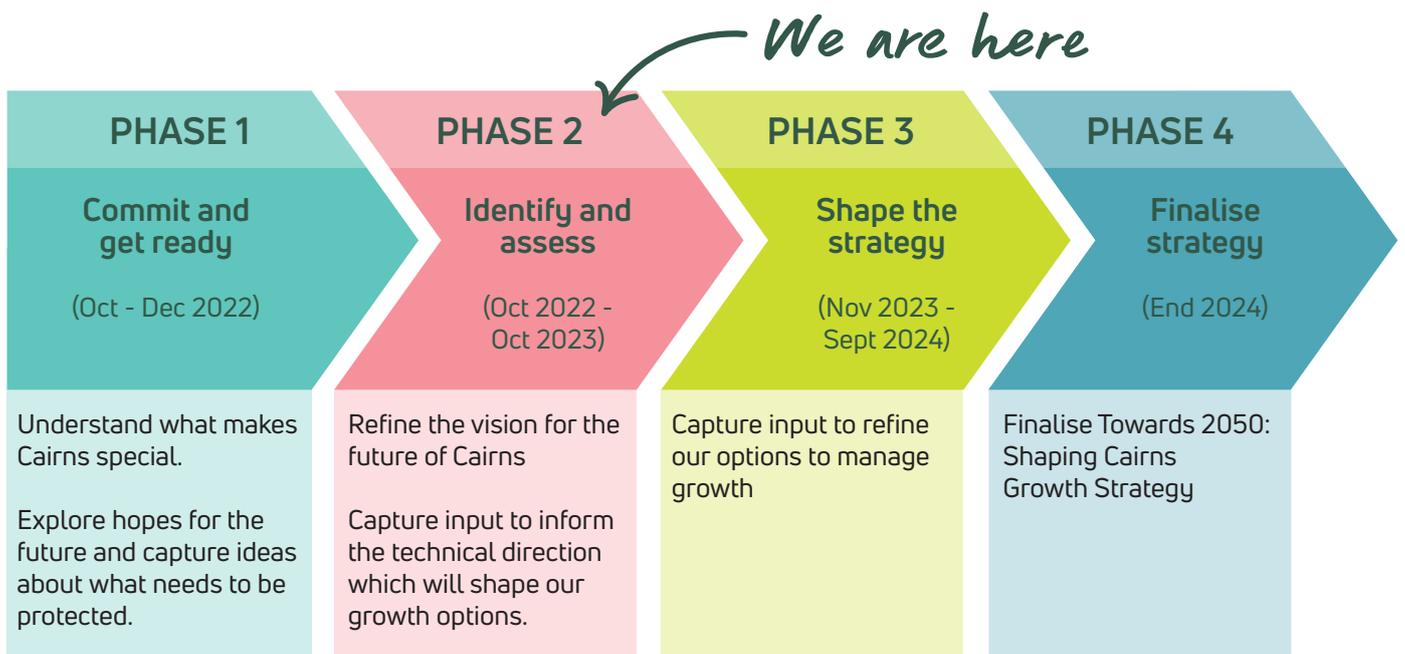
It will explore how we can:

- ◆ provide land for a diverse range of housing
- ◆ protect and enhance our natural environment and scenic amenity
- ◆ support employment opportunities and a thriving economy
- ◆ improve resilience to natural hazards and climate change
- ◆ support character and culture
- ◆ plan efficient, safe and sustainable infrastructure
- ◆ create great neighbourhoods.



Developed across four phases, Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns will be delivered by the end of 2024.

In October 2022, Council launched the conversation with the community to help shape the future of Cairns. This conversation, or community engagement, will continue to be at the centre of every step we take as we develop Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns.



# About the engagement process for the project

Over the life of the project, Council aims to have conversations that capture the interest and imagination of the people of Cairns as we look to the future.

We want the people of Cairns to:

- ◆ get involved
- ◆ understand the opportunities and challenges that growth could bring to Cairns
- ◆ share their aspirations and ideas about how to manage the challenges that growth brings while protecting what defines Cairns
- ◆ help to shape the Cairns of the future.

We are aiming to have these conversations with:

- ◆ the Traditional Custodians and First Peoples of Cairns
- ◆ young people
- ◆ local community groups
- ◆ residents
- ◆ business owners
- ◆ visitors
- ◆ neighbouring Councils
- ◆ State and Federal government agencies.

## Snapshot of Phase 1 engagement

Between October and December 2022 we delivered the Phase 1 engagement which focussed on defining what is important about Cairns now and what needs to be protected into the future.



This document summarises the engagement we have done so far (Phase 1) and what we have learnt from it. Council will continue to update the community about how they can get involved in each future phase of the engagement process and we will report on what we learn in each of those phases.

# How we engaged during Phase 1

Our engagement during Phase 1 included a blend of in-person and online activities that informed and captured input from community members and stakeholders.

These engagement activities allowed Council to capture responses from the community that related to their neighbourhoods as well as Cairns more broadly.

These activities included:

- ◆ Creating a project webpage and an online engagement hub, called Have Your Say Cairns, which provided background information about the project, listed the dates for pop-up events, and hosted the online survey.
- ◆ Distributing project collateral, including a postcard and road map, which promoted the project and directed people to the project's Have Your Say Cairns webpage. This collateral was distributed to community libraries and key community groups, and given out at pop-up events and movie nights.
- ◆ Publishing a project video which provided a short introduction to the project and the growth challenge. This video was posted on the project's Have Your Say Cairns webpage, shared on social media and screened at local events.
- ◆ Installing a promotional sign at 54 locations across the Cairns region which promoted the project, explained how community members could get involved in the engagement process and directed people to the project's Have Your Say Cairns webpage.
- ◆ Producing and publishing an online survey, which could be accessed online via the Have Your Say Cairns webpage from 7 October 2022 to 22 December 2022.
- ◆ Hosting 16 pop-up events across the Cairns region.
- ◆ Publishing sponsored social media posts on Council's Facebook and Instagram pages, which promoted the online survey.
- ◆ Publishing 11 articles and advertisements in print and online media outlets.



# Who we engaged during Phase 1

The map below shows the locations of the 16 pop-up events held across the region during this phase, with a small sample of community feedback received at the different events.



# How many people we reached in Phase 1

1731



The number of community members at pop-ups and community events.

1053



The number of online survey responses received.

185



The number of industry stakeholders engaged through local events and meetings.

4205



Page views of the project's Have Your Say webpage.

6445



Views of the project video.

208



Comments on Council social media posts

## What we asked during Phase 1

During the Phase 1 engagement process we aimed to understand:

- ◆ what people love about Cairns now
- ◆ what people think makes Cairns special or unique, or our Cairns-ness
- ◆ what people think about Cairns in 2050.

Our conversations explored:

- ◆ what people love about their home suburb
- ◆ what people love about Cairns as a region
- ◆ what people think is special about Cairns
- ◆ what people's hopes and concerns are for Cairns in 2050
- ◆ what people think are potential opportunities and challenges that might come as Cairns grows.

# What we heard during Phase 1

To make sense of everything you told us in the online survey, we:

- ◆ read all of the comments in 1,053 surveys
- ◆ determined the common themes
- ◆ allocated every comment to one or more of the common themes
- ◆ analysed the data according to these themes.



For example if someone told us 'I love the rainforest, the beach, the community and the bike paths' when we asked them what they love about Cairns, we allocated this comment to the following themes:

- ◆ environment
- ◆ community
- ◆ active transport infrastructure.

## What people love about their suburb

- ◆ its location
- ◆ its community
- ◆ its quiet and peaceful character
- ◆ its public spaces
- ◆ its environmental assets.

73%

of the feedback we received mentioned one or more of these themes.

*"I love the rainforest around me and it's still close to the city."*

*"Small, secluded with a friendly community feel."*

*"It's a quiet, friendly neighbourhood, an in-touch community that supports and helps each other."*



# What people love and think is special about Cairns

- ◆ our laidback and relaxed lifestyle
- ◆ our unique environmental assets
- ◆ our tropical climate
- ◆ our community networks
- ◆ our location as a gateway to FNQ

92%

of the feedback we received mentioned one or more of these themes.

*"Tropical weather, wonderful mother nature, multicultural community, festivals and tourist attractions."*

*"Being so close to nature, having beautiful rainforest, mountains and wildlife..."*

*"The slower pace of life."*



# What people told us about their hopes for Cairns in 2050

- ◆ expanded infrastructure
- ◆ relaxed, friendly and diverse population
- ◆ connected and safe neighbourhoods
- ◆ a built environment that reflects the Cairns climate
- ◆ a thriving and protected natural environment
- ◆ resilience to natural hazards.

*"Cairns is a place well-connected to the traditional owners and their stories."*

*"A city that looks after its citizens and its natural environment, retains its tropical character."*

# What people told us about their concerns for Cairns in 2050

- ◆ protecting the environment
- ◆ safety
- ◆ the impact of natural hazards
- ◆ planning, development and urban design matters
- ◆ managing increased traffic.

*"Reliance on tourism for our local economy. Cairns needs diversification."*

*"Limited opportunities for our ambitious and intelligent future generations."*



# How Phase 1 feedback will inform the strategy



The feedback Council received during Phase 1 of the engagement process has given us a first look at what the Cairns community values and how people would like to see Cairns grow.

This community input will help Council to refine the vision for the future of Cairns and inform ongoing work to develop the Towards 2050: Shaping Cairns Growth Strategy.

We have now mapped the feedback received during Phase 1 against the high-level planning principles outlined in Our Roadmap:



## Providing land for a diverse range of housing

When it comes to housing diversity, people told us:

- ◆ they hope affordable housing will be available in Cairns in 2050
- ◆ they are concerned about planning for the built environment towards 2050.



## Protecting and enhancing our natural environment and scenic amenity

When it comes to the natural environment and scenic amenity people told us:

- ◆ the natural environment is one of things that makes Cairns special
- ◆ they are concerned about the impact of growth on the unique natural environment
- ◆ they are excited about more connected and protected wildlife habitats and green open spaces.



## Supporting employment opportunities and a thriving economy

When it comes to employment opportunities and the economy, people told us:

- ◆ that growth in the local economy is an opportunity that could come with growth in Cairns.





### Improving resilience to natural hazards and climate change

When it comes to natural hazards and climate change, people told us:

- ◆ they are aware of the risk of natural hazards in Cairns now
- ◆ they are concerned about natural hazards and the impacts of climate change in Cairns in the future.



### Supporting character and culture

When it comes to the character and culture of Cairns, people told us:

- ◆ they love the relaxed and laidback lifestyle in Cairns
- ◆ they love our tropical climate.



### Planning efficient, safe and sustainable infrastructure

When it comes to infrastructure people told us:

- ◆ new sustainable infrastructure is an opportunity that could come with growth
- ◆ they hope that there is more infrastructure to support the population in Cairns in 2050
- ◆ they are excited about a better public transport system in 2050.



### Creating great neighbourhoods

When it comes to great neighbourhoods, people told us:

- ◆ there is an opportunity in 2050 for a built environment that reflects the Cairns climate and lifestyle
- ◆ there is an opportunity for improved and expanded community infrastructure and green open space in 2050
- ◆ they thought better-planned local neighbourhoods would improve liveability.

## Next steps

Now that we have finished analysing community input from Phase 1, the team is working on the technical direction that will inform how we manage growth towards 2050 and refining the vision for the future of Cairns.

Towards 2050 will continue to be shaped by the people of Cairns.

Phase 2 of the engagement process will provide even more opportunities for community members to participate. It is important that we hear from people from all walks of life.

The best way for you to find out about the project and any engagement activities appening during Phase 2, so you can help shape the future of Cairns, is to visit [haveyoursay.cairns.qld.gov.au](http://haveyoursay.cairns.qld.gov.au)

