

## 5.11. DOUGLAS SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council resolves to adopt the Economic Development Strategy 2017 - 2021**

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy is designed to achieve the long term economic goals of the Shire. Council acknowledges the importance of having an overarching strategic document and has shown leadership in the development of a strategic plan that has been informed through collaboration and engagement with business groups and leaders both within and from outside the Shire.

The adopted 2014-2019 Douglas Shire Corporate Plan identifies "*Building a Sustainable Economic Base*" as a key theme. The actions and outcomes identified throughout the Economic Development Strategy, prioritised by the recommended taskforces and implemented through the collaborative involvement of key stakeholders will ensure a solid and practical platform for achieving economic growth over the next four years. Where appropriate, priority projects will be submitted for funding through Council's Operational and Capital Works Planning on an annual basis.

Council has a vision to be a '*world leading sustainable tropical shire*'; and a mission to '*capitalise on our lifestyle, tropical location, unique environment and culture by creating innovative business development, investment, sustainable economic growth and prosperity*'. This mission and vision will allow the Douglas region to develop, mature and diversify the economy based upon competitive business practices, a highly skilled and dynamic workforce and infrastructure which meets the needs of a wide-ranging and growing population.

Council plays a significant role individually and in partnership with other relevant stakeholders in economic development. Economic resilience, diversification and development of existing and emerging key industries is critical to providing a buoyant economy for local Douglas communities.

The proposed Economic Development Strategy key focus areas and actions identified within the document have been developed based on community engagement with key stakeholders which involved face to face interviews and meetings; as well as broader community feedback via surveys. The framework and detail of the strategy has been further consolidated by stakeholders who attended an Economic Development Strategy Workshop in October 2016.

### BACKGROUND

As part of the 2015 – 2016 and 2016 –2017 Operational Plan the CEO Unit was to complete and have adopted by Council an Economic Development Strategy. To help facilitate the strategy development Council engaged the consultancy services of Possible People.

The process undertaken to inform the document was a desktop review of strategic documents provided by both local and regional groups and organisations. A number of interviews with business groups and individuals, a community survey, a stakeholder workshop and a number of Councillor workshops.

The desktop review and various stakeholder engagement revealed that the key priorities for the Shire are;

- To reduce the high youth and Indigenous unemployment and maintain a balanced workforce and sustainable population through:
  - aligning and providing quality education and training with industry needs;
  - addressing seasonality of the key industries;
  - providing access to affordable, reliable and convenient integrated public transport system that connects the major hubs within the shire; and
  - providing affordable housing;
- Sustainable Development of existing industries and increased diversification whilst regenerating the natural environmental and cultural assets and further developing the premium brand of the Shire;
- Access to reliable and affordable high speed digital connection and mobile phone reception;
- Improved collaborative leadership to break down silos to increase innovation and development of new businesses and industries;
- A planning scheme that encourages innovation and investment that aligns with the Douglas brand; and
- Quality, affordable and reliable essential services.

Council hosted an Economic Development Strategy Workshop on 7 October 2016 which was attended by representatives involved in the key stakeholder consultations and other influential representatives from throughout the region.

The following five key priority focus areas were confirmed and the Strategy was developed utilising a targeted approach to address the below key challenges.:

- Creating a Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre;
- Further developing an Allied Health Hub and Health Tourism;
- Increasing the resilience of the Sugar Industry;
- Developing Douglas Shire as Australia's Leader in Sustainable Development; and
- Attracting and Facilitating Investment.

Concerted efforts were made to engage with relevant and appropriate key regional economic organisations, industry sectors such as tourism and sugar, Douglas Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and Daintree Marketing Cooperative.

## COMMENT

The process of developing an Economic Development Strategy commenced in April 2016 with the engagement of Possible People to assist Council with the development of a Strategy that was reflective of the Shire.

With such a diverse range of needs in the Shire it was important to ensure the key challenges identified and opportunities for tangible actions recommended could be addressed. To assist with this a number of the key challenges were condensed and taken to a higher level rather than being specific in identifying actions.

The Strategy also provides opportunity for various key stakeholders to play an important role in the development and implementation of the Strategy and actions. While Council plays a lead role in economic development throughout the Shire, the establishment of a number of taskforces to address the identified themes will create business, industry and community ownership of actions and opportunities.

The role of the taskforces is to review the opportunities identified in the Strategy, supplement with other opportunities where relevant, establish goals, priorities and secure resources where required.

When engaging with the Shire's diverse communities it was imperative that representatives of various organisations shared the opportunity for input with their members.

While the Strategy does not address everyone's needs directly, it will be the responsibility of each taskforce to prioritise the actions and introduce amendments to actions where required. Commitment and collaboration from the stakeholders is required to ensure the success of the Strategy and the implementation of actions that are of benefit to the entire Shire.

## **PROPOSAL**

That Council resolves to adopt the Economic Development Strategy 2017 – 2021 for the period of 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2021.

## **FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

It is anticipated the actions identified as a Council responsibility will be implemented through Operational Planning and the Capital Works Program. Other actions and opportunities, where relevant, will be resourced as appropriate.

There is an expectation that the key stakeholders identified as the lead of taskforces will incorporate the actions and opportunities into their resource and financial planning for the future.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

While every effort will be taken to implement the Council lead initiatives through Operational and Capital Works Planning, it will be difficult to ensure that the industry lead initiatives are prioritised, resourced and implemented.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Economic:</b>      | It is anticipated that the introduction of actions identified in the Strategy will create opportunities for additional economic benefit throughout the Shire. |
| <b>Environmental:</b> | The Strategy includes a strong environmental theme with the preservation of our natural assets key to the sustainability of the Shire.                        |
| <b>Social:</b>        | With a focus on education, training and job creation the actions in the Strategy are expected to achieve an increase in employment                            |

opportunities.

## **CORPORATE/OPERATIONAL PLAN, POLICY REFERENCE**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following:

### **Corporate Plan 2014-2019 Initiatives:**

#### **Theme 1 - Celebrating Our Communities**

*1.2.1 - Advocate for state and federally funded services in identified areas of need.*

*1.2.4 - Network, advocate and partner with stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes.*

#### **Theme 2 - Building a Sustainable Economic Base**

*2.2.1 - Develop business initiatives to support commercial development and investment within the Shire.*

*2.2.5 - Expand tourism and agricultural business opportunities and benefits through collaborative planning and promotion.*

*2.3.2 - Investigate opportunities for sports and cultural tourism.*

*2.3.4 - Develop positive partnerships with economic development organisations and work proactively towards achieving mutually agreed goals and objectives.*

*2.4.2 - Collaborate with communities in the north of the Shire to identify and pursue opportunities for increased tourism market share.*

### **Operational Plan 2015-2016 Actions:**

2.4.1 - Economic Development Strategy.

## **COUNCIL'S ROLE**

Economic development does not happen in isolation but rather through concerted efforts of many individuals, both in the public and private sector, working collaboratively. Council will play a lead role in economic development, supported by the important contributions from a wide variety of partners from within the region and beyond.

## **CONSULTATION**

**Internal:** Mayor and Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, General Manager Corporate Services, General Manager Operations, Managers and the CEO Unit.

**External:** Consultation took place on three occasions with a number of identified key stakeholders along with the opportunity for wider community input via a survey.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community engagement commenced with identified key stakeholders in early August 2016, this was followed by a second meeting in mid-September.

The priorities identified during the early stakeholder engagement were developed into a survey that was available to the entire community and was advertised via electronic networks and social media.

This was then followed up with a final workshop on 7 October 2016, where over forty representatives from businesses, organisations and government departments participated in the final identification of actions and opportunities.

The final draft of the document was emailed to identified key stakeholders on 5 December 2016 for their commitment to identified actions as identified at the October workshop.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021 **[5.11.1]**



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2017-2021







# Executive Summary

**Douglas Shire lies within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in Tropical North Queensland, alongside the Great Barrier Reef – the only place on the planet where two World Heritage listed sites meet. The amazing natural beauty, climate and lifestyle are drawcards for domestic and international tourists and increasingly world-class research and development. The Shire also has an innovative sugar industry, which has been operating for more than 120 years.**

Both the tourism and sugar production and processing industries have faced significant challenges resulting from a high Australian dollar and other factors, but have bounced back in recent years and are again operating successfully.

The leaders of this community have recognised that now is the time to identify opportunities that can be realised to increase the resilience, prosperity and sustainability of the Shire.

The stakeholders involved in developing this economic development strategy identified the following key challenges that are currently having an impact upon the Shire's prosperity:

- Sustainable development of existing industries and increased diversification whilst regenerating the natural, cultural and premium brand assets of the Shire;
- Reducing high youth and Indigenous unemployment whilst maintaining a balanced workforce and sustainable population;
- Encouraging leadership that breaks down silos to increase collaboration, innovation and develop new businesses and industries; and
- Quality, appropriate, affordable and reliable essential services.

Another major challenge is the inability to currently access reliable and affordable high-speed broadband connection and mobile phone coverage. This matter is not covered in this strategy as it is being addressed separately by the Douglas Chamber of Commerce.

This Economic Development Strategy provides a targeted approach to address the above key challenges and tangible benefits within the life of this strategy (2016-2020) through the following five key priority focus areas:

- Creating a Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre;
- Further developing an Allied Health Hub and Health Tourism;
- Increasing the resilience of the Sugar Industry;
- Developing Douglas Shire as Australia's Leader in Sustainable Development; and
- Attracting and Facilitating Investment.

Council will work with stakeholders to help facilitate and create environments that support a willingness to collaborate, establish clear goals and priorities, and adopt innovative approaches to securing resources. These actions will be required to ensure that the opportunities identified in this Economic Development Strategy are realised for the benefit of the Douglas Shire community, visitors and everyone else who values the natural and cultural assets that exist within this Shire.





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## DOUGLAS SHIRE

home to approximately

**11,600 residents**

precincts:

**PORT DOUGLAS** a premium tropical seaside village destination nestled beside the spectacular Four Mile Beach;

**MOSSMAN** established over 120 years ago as an agricultural township and based around Mossman Central Sugar Mill;

**MOSSMAN GORGE** showcase location for World Heritage listed rainforest, Indigenous culture and crystal clear freshwater swimming holes;

**DAINTREE VILLAGE** quaint rural village that is the base for river cruises of the Daintree River; and

### NORTH OF THE DAINTREE RIVER

including Cow Bay, Thornton Beach and Cape Tribulation, Buru – China Camp and beyond - which is a centre for eco-tourism and tropical produce.

# Introduction

## DOUGLAS SHIRE OVERVIEW

Douglas Shire is one of the most beautiful and liveable locations in Australia and is a highly sought after travel destination due to its natural environment and relaxed and healthy tropical lifestyle. It lies within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, which adjoins the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area - the only place in the world where two World Heritage listed sites meet. The Daintree Rainforest is the oldest continuously living rainforest, which contains some of the highest levels of biodiversity on the planet and is the site of one of the longest continuous Indigenous connections to country in Australia.

Domestic and international tourism is the predominant driver of the local economy. Sugar cane production and processing is the second major industry with other key industries including transport, health care, education construction, commercial fishing, tropical horticulture, cattle farming, the creative arts and professional services.

Douglas Shire Council formed in 1903, amalgamated with Cairns Regional Council in 2008 and then re-established in 2014 as an independent council following strong support from the community. This major organisational change stymied formation of a cohesive and united, longer-term economic development strategy during this period.

In recent years, the economy has rebounded strongly in both tourism and sugar as a result of visitation figures reaching levels last experienced in the mid 2000's and the commodity price of sugar recovering strongly. This resurgence in economic activity has led to increased investment and planned investment in the Shire. It includes the refurbishment of the Sheraton Mirage Hotel (\$50M+), the purchase and planned \$100M investment in the redevelopment of the existing Reef Marina, the \$12M Salvation Army Residential aged care facility in Mossman and the planned Mossman Botanic Gardens development (\$50M).

Douglas Shire Council, with support and collaboration from Douglas Chamber of Commerce (DCC), Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree (TPDD), Canegrowers Mossman, Daintree Marketing Cooperative (DMC), Mackay Sugar (owners of the Mossman Central Sugar Mill) and other business and community leaders, wants to capitalise on this period of growth and confidence and identify key economic priorities that will support the continued prosperity, resilience and sustainability of the Shire.

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## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

This Economic Development Strategy has addressed the following three questions:

- **Where is Douglas Shire now?** – This has been assessed by identifying the key challenges facing the Shire as well as considering the key strengths;
- **Where does Douglas want to be?** – A vision has been defined, which outlines the direction for this Economic Development Strategy based on the Shire's attributes that are highly valued and key opportunities; and
- **How do we get there?** – A focussed set of key economic priorities that will have the largest impact in addressing the key challenges facing the Shire and support the realisation of the Shire's vision.

This is not an exhaustive economic development strategy, but has been targeted to identify the key emerging opportunities that can be realised and provide maximum benefit between 2016-2020.

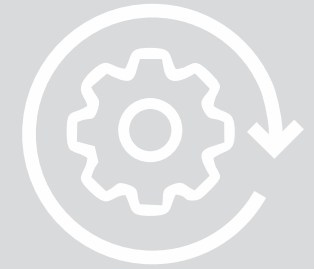
### This strategy does not include the following:

- Creative arts, film and TV as this is being addressed by a Creative Arts Strategy that is being undertaken in parallel to this Economic Development Strategy by Kickarts and the 20/20 Group;
- High speed digital connectivity and mobile phone coverage, which is being addressed separately by the Douglas Chamber of Commerce;
- Marketing and promotion of the tourism industry, which is being addressed separately by Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree;
- Public Transport – changes in legislation to personalised transport regulation announced in September 2016, will provide opportunities for small start-up businesses to provide ride-booking services to commence meeting a need for more affordable transport options in Douglas; and
- Affordable housing is a regional concern that is being addressed through the Douglas Community Housing Group and the Cairns Homelessness Taskforce.

## REPORT STRUCTURE

### This Economic Development Strategy is structured as follows:

- Key Challenges facing Douglas Shire;
- Vision for Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy;
- Key Focus Areas and Priority Actions;
- Implementation; and
- Conclusion.



### WHERE ARE WE?

(Key Strengths & Challenges)

### WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

(Vision)

### HOW DO WE GET THERE?

(Key Priority Areas & Opportunities)

Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy Format

The information used to develop the Economic Development Strategy was gathered using the following staged approach:

1. REVIEW OF KEY BACKGROUND DOCS
2. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
3. COMMUNITY SURVEY
4. STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP
5. PRODUCE EDSP

Approach adopted to develop the Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy



# Key Challenges

The Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy identifies and addresses the key challenges to Douglas Shire's current and future prosperity. The challenges were identified through a review of background documents, outlined in Appendix A. Interviews with 39 stakeholders and the community also provided input through an on-line community survey publicised on social media (42 respondents). The interviews and surveys were used to test, further develop and refine the key challenges, key strengths and potential opportunities. These have been captured and summarised in the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis in Appendix B.

The majority of stakeholder interviews were face to face, with a limited number undertaken through telephone and email. The interviewees cover a range of industry sectors, business and community groups. Based on the interviews and surveys, the key challenges facing Douglas Shire were condensed and collated in the following order of priority:

- **Sustainable development** of existing industries and increased diversification whilst regenerating the natural, cultural and premium brand assets of the Shire;
- **Reduction of high youth and Indigenous unemployment** whilst maintaining a balanced workforce and sustainable population through:
  - **providing quality education** and training and aligning with industry needs;
  - **addressing seasonality of the major industries**, which are both simultaneously buoyant from May to November;
  - **providing access to an affordable, reliable and convenient integrated public transport** system that connects the major hubs within the Shire; and
  - **providing affordable housing**;
- **Access to reliable and affordable high speed digital connection** and mobile phone reception;
- **Leadership that breaks down silos** to increase collaboration, innovation and develop new businesses and industries;
- **Planning scheme which supports increased levels of innovation and investment** that aligns with the Douglas brand; and
- **Quality, affordable and reliable essential services**, including appropriate electricity supply to north of the Daintree River.

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# Vision & Mission

It was clear from the literature reviews, stakeholder interviews and community surveys that the Shire is strongly aware of the value and importance of its natural and cultural assets and that these need to be managed sustainably for the prosperity and benefit of current and future generations. Sustainable development as defined by the Brundtland Commission, which is one of the most frequently quoted definitions for sustainable development, is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

## VISION

The vision and mission for this Economic Development Strategy was developed to reflect the above values and to establish the direction and intent of the strategy. The vision is to be:

*“The world’s leading sustainable tropical shire”*

## MISSION:

The mission that outlines how the vision will be achieved is to:

*“Capitalise on our lifestyle, tropical location, unique environment and culture by creating innovative business development, investment, sustainable economic growth and prosperity.”*



# Key Focus Areas

In developing the Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy, the key 2016 economic priorities for Tourism Port Douglas & Daintree, Douglas Chamber of Commerce, and the Daintree Marketing Cooperative (DMC) as well as the key outcomes from the 2015 Douglas Business Forum were reviewed. These are included in Appendix C.

**There were approximately 24 different Economic Priorities identified for the Douglas Shire in 2016** by the different organisations, with significantly more priorities identified from the stakeholder interviews and community surveys. **These priorities have been distilled down to five key priority focus areas:**

## 1.

**CREATING A STUDY, TRAINING  
AND ENTREPRENEUR INCUBATOR CENTRE;**



## 2.

**FURTHER DEVELOPING  
AN ALLIED HEALTH HUB AND  
HEALTH TOURISM;**

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### 3. INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY;



### 4. DEVELOPING DOUGLAS SHIRE AS AUSTRALIA'S LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT;



### 5. ATTRACTING AND FACILITATING INVESTMENT.



Each of the above priority focus areas are outlined in further detail in the following sections of this strategy and each Key Focus Area also includes a series of key opportunities identified from the stakeholder consultation. It is anticipated the actual opportunities to be pursued will be prioritised and confirmed during the implementation phase by the relevant Taskforces established to implement the Economic Development Strategy. The key opportunities will be prioritised based upon the market conditions at the time, available resources and impact that each opportunity will likely have on progressing each Key Focus Area.

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# Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre

Education and training is a growing market and is vitally important in developing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to create and maintain a thriving economy. There is also growing interest and need for an entrepreneurial incubator centre in Douglas Shire to support and help local entrepreneurs develop new business opportunities, and to attract entrepreneurs from outside the Shire.

## KEY ISSUES:

- There are high levels of youth and Indigenous unemployment in Douglas Shire;
- A high proportion of youth leave the Shire to pursue opportunities elsewhere;
- Apprentice, trainee and tertiary education needs to be accessed from Cairns, further afield or on-line;
- Start-up entrepreneurs do not have access to a locally based pro-active support network;
- High speed broadband is not currently available in the area;
- Lack of affordable, accessible and reliable public transport to allow young people, unemployed or low income earners access to work opportunities; and
- Government-funded training programs offered locally do not necessarily provide the skills that local employers are seeking.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- The Salvation Army is constructing a new residential aged-care facility at Mossman, which will be operational in 2018 and will require trained staff. This could be a catalyst to enable the creation of a local Study and Training Centre;
- Mossman Hospital, Allied Health Service Providers, Douglas Shire Council and Mossman Sugar Mill need local, trained staff, and have an on-going need for professional staff development;
- The health sector requires employees with a strong understanding and appreciation of culturally appropriate Indigenous health care, which could be included within programs offered by the Study and Training Centre;
- Provide training locally for school- based and trade apprentices e.g. plumbers, carpenters, electricians, tree loppers etc. , rather than in Cairns;

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- Engage with the Mossman Gorge Centre and other successful employment programs e.g. the Myuma Group in Camooweal, western Queensland, to identify lessons learnt in successfully engaging Indigenous youth and unemployed in meaningful long-term work opportunities;
- Provide Indigenous cultural heritage and traditional knowledge transfer programs, e.g. plants (food & medicine), through the Study and Training Centre;
- Increase Edu-tourism and research programs e.g. tourism training programs and tertiary opportunities as envisioned by the GBR Legacy program and through the Queensland Government's Advancing Tourism Strategy 2016-2020 to "Leverage the tourism potential of the international education network";
- Under-utilised assets in the Shire could be used for training, education and research purposes - e.g. Mossman Gorge Training and Accommodation Centre, Mossman Sugar Mill workshops, JCU's Daintree Rainforest Observatory and other community facilities;
- Provide mentoring programs that showcase the breadth of career opportunities available within the Shire and support the development of youth, unemployed and mid-career professionals;
- Establish a collaborative and dynamic workspace for entrepreneurs to develop and operate successful start-up businesses from within and outside of the Shire. Partner with existing providers, such as The Space in Cairns and learn lessons from other best practice operations e.g. the Ubud Collaborative Workspace (Hubud - <http://www.hubud.org/>), which is a mecca for attracting talented, creative, innovative and wealthy individuals to Ubud;
- Introduce emerging entrepreneur programs within the local high school to encourage a culture of entrepreneurship;
- Support the training, development and growth of the Creative Arts sector;
- Locally based businesses are interested and have the capacity to establish and manage the study centre and business incubator;
- If the centre is primarily sponsored by a university, high speed broadband could potentially be provided through the AARNet high speed broadband system, if access to the National Broadband Network is not available;
- Council and business groups could work with TAFE North Queensland to promote programs like Back to Work , which provides a \$15,000 subsidy for recruitment and training of new staff members;
- Provide innovative, affordable and reliable transport solutions through ride sharing platforms such as Uber, Port Douglas Buy, Swap and Sell etc. to enable students to access training and development opportunities.

### **SOLUTION:**

Develop a flexible Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre that responds to the needs of local industries, students and entrepreneurs by providing training, courses and support. This would be provided via a coordinated network of Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), English Language Schools, High School, Vocational and Tertiary Education Providers, Business Incubators and existing under-used infrastructure within the Shire. Ideally, the facility would be in one location but is most likely to be spread across a number of different sites. However, coordination, collaboration and the use of shared resources should be encouraged as much as possible. This could

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involve a locally employed business development manager that has relationships with, and is funded by, local RTOs, TAFE Queensland North, Central Queensland University and James Cook University to generate demand from industry and provide locally delivered content that matches industry needs. Additionally, a business start-up incubator could be co-located with the Study and Training Centre to support entrepreneurs in developing new businesses.

### **BENEFITS:**

This centre will provide and create business and job opportunities while using existing assets to support the:

- Sustainable development of existing industries and increase diversification whilst also building the premium brand of the Shire;
- Reduction of high youth and Indigenous unemployment whilst maintaining a balanced workforce and sustainable population;
- Provision of quality education and training to meet industry needs; and
- Increase the number of non-seasonal jobs and business opportunities.

### **KEY ACTIONS & OUTCOMES**

1. Establish a Taskforce of representatives from Vocational Education and Training (VET), Tertiary and locally based Regional Training Organisations, Mossman High School and entrepreneurs who wish to collaboratively develop a Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre. Douglas Chamber of Commerce and Douglas Shire Council have each indicated a willingness to initially lead the Taskforce;
2. Taskforce to identify training needs for the Salvation Army 's residential aged-care centre as a matter of urgency;
3. Taskforce to identify training needs for Mossman Hospital, Douglas Shire Council, Mossman Central Mill, Cane Growers' members, Tourism and Construction industries and the Creative Arts sector;
4. Taskforce to consider and undertake lessons learnt from The Space in Cairns and other best practice operations such as the Ubud Digital Hub - which is a mecca for attracting talented, creative, innovative and wealthy individuals to Bali;
5. Taskforce to understand and incorporate the needs of the Creative Arts, Film & TV sectors being identified in the Douglas Arts Strategy;
6. Taskforce to identify potential student and entrepreneur needs;
7. Taskforce to identify and assess existing infrastructure suitable for supporting a flexible Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre within Douglas Shire;
8. Cluster and prioritise opportunities to develop and implement a business model and staging plan to establish the Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre;
9. Secure resources and implement a business case to establish the centre to increase the number of jobs and businesses created in Douglas.

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# Allied Health Services Hub and Health Tourism

The Mossman Hospital, which was built around 1930, is operated by Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. A 'well-being' industry is emerging in Port Douglas, Daintree and Cape Tribulation through the tourism industry. The health sector is a rapidly growing market and there is increasing demand for allied health services within Douglas Shire, both for the local community and to also broaden the appeal of the shire to new visitor markets. The demand and opportunities should be explored to attract increased health services to support its current and future needs and to support the resilience and diversification of the tourism industry.

## KEY ISSUES:

- Douglas Shire's demographic profile is ageing and service provision may not be keeping pace with demand;
- Maternity Services, Stroke Rehabilitation, Child/Youth Mental Health, Geriatric Mental Health and CT Scan and other services are currently provided from Cairns;
- The Shire's health services have not yet considered the likely demand and opportunities from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS); and
- Long-term strategic planning has not yet been undertaken to provide health services that will respond to the Shire's changing demographics and market conditions.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Maximise the opportunities to create additional local businesses and services from the Salvation Army Residential Aged -care Centre, scheduled to open in 2018;
- Maximise local business and job opportunities in allied health services, construction and specialised equipment manufacture and supply associated with the anticipated June 2018 rollout of the NDIS in Cairns and Far North Queensland;
- Ageing demographics will create demand for new and additional health services from residents and tourism visitors;
- Provision of affordable, locally produced and delivered healthy food services for people living with a disability and for aged residents in the community;
- Consider animal therapy as a service - the use of dogs and other animals for psychological support ( e.g. opportunity for Paws and Claws as a provider);
- Available and affordable commercial shop fronts and community spaces that could be used to house health service businesses;

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- Explore feasibility of increasing laboratory testing services for the health sector through using the expertise and infrastructure provided by the Sugar Mill and Council laboratories;
- Develop innovative business models to retain, attract and encourage allied health workers and health support services to establish and operate a business within the Shire;
- The established tourism industry is located in one of the cleanest and healthiest regions in Australia and could provide products and services to the people with disability, seniors and/or their partners in a safe and relaxing environment;
- Promote the benefits of being able to recuperate in a healthy environment and be provided with locally produced, nutritious food and natural medicines;
- Further promote the "Access Douglas Directory", a tool to assist residents or visitors, who may be elderly or frail, or have disabilities and mobility issues, in finding services and businesses to best meet their requirements;
- Planned Mossman Botanic Gardens adjacent to a developing health precinct could be a catalyst to attract private sector investment in health care and research services;
- Research, develop and manufacture health and well-being products from nature or through mimicking nature as the capacity and capability of laboratory services and the Mossman Botanic Gardens project develops.

## SOLUTION

Further develop and grow a cluster of allied health and medical support service businesses through pro-actively anticipating the emerging health service opportunities, analysing changing demographics, health care service delivery models, technology and customer needs both locally and from a tourism perspective.

## BENEFITS

This will provide and create job and business opportunities and create increased value from existing services and under-utilised assets that will support the:

- Sustainable development of existing industries and increase diversification whilst also building the premium brand of the Shire;
- Reduction of high youth and Indigenous unemployment whilst maintaining a balanced workforce and sustainable population;
- Increase the number of non-seasonal jobs and business opportunities.

## KEY ACTIONS & OUTCOMES

1. Relevant industry organisations to establish a Taskforce of health service providers and associated organisations to develop and implement opportunities and actions as appropriate. JCU and the Cairns and Hinterland Health Services have indicated that each would be prepared to initially lead the Taskforce;
2. Identify health services provided outside the Shire that could be provided within the Shire;
3. Identify emerging health service opportunities through analysing changing demographics, health care service delivery models, technology and customer needs (both local and tourism);
4. Audit existing infrastructure;
5. Cluster and prioritise opportunities to develop and implement a business model and staging plan; and
6. Secure resources and implement a business case to increase Allied Health Services and Health Tourism jobs and businesses in Douglas Shire.

# Increasing the Resilience of the Sugar Industry

The sugar industry has been an important component of the Douglas Shire community for more than 120 years. The industry has faced a number of challenges in recent times due to low sugar commodity prices and as a result is re-assessing its key strengths and evaluating potential opportunities to create a profitable, viable and sustainable future for the industry in Douglas Shire.

## KEY ISSUES:

- Sugar prices can be volatile and fluctuate as a result of competing with high volumes from more nimble nations with lower cost labour e.g. Brazil, Thailand, China and India;
- The per capita consumption of processed sugar is declining due to its perceived negative health impact, which is also driving lower cost competing nations to diversify into producing commodities such as bio-plastics and ethanol products;
- Local cane growers can supply cane to only one mill;
- There is insufficient locally grown cane to maintain the volume required to sustain the mill and, therefore, additional supply is required from the Atherton Tablelands;
- Future land-use planning needs to ensure sufficient agricultural land is maintained to sustain the sugar industry in Douglas Shire;
- A sustained period of low sugar prices has seen under-investment in the industry. This has led to fewer of the younger generation entering the industry and constrained innovation, diversification and development of value-added products;
- The industry has been internally rather than externally focused ,e.g. the Mill laboratory and workshops provide services to the mill only;
- Channels for the local industry to access research and innovation to identify opportunities for customer, crop and product diversification is limited.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Sugar prices are currently reasonably high, which provides the opportunity to consider investing and developing alternative markets and products;
- Potential development of new revenue streams, complementary businesses or additional community benefit from the mill's under-utilised assets - e.g. laboratory, workshops, waste hot water (+50oC), low pressure steam, tramway systems, excess land etc.;

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- Sugar mill to investigate reducing water quality impact and water costs by becoming a zero emitter of waste water by partnering with Council to treat water for reuse;
- Link the Mossman Sugar Mill and cane growers more strongly with the tourism industry through re-launching mill tours and exploring other opportunities e.g. farm stays, health tourism, Botanic Gardens (researching new potential products) and Mossman Gorge (full-day tour products from Cairns) etc.;
- Invest in a clean emissions co-generation plant to convert waste product into electricity to create additional revenue streams and potentially supply lower cost energy to complementary businesses, e.g. food production, construction materials, pharmaceuticals, health products, cosmetics; alcohol, chocolate, etc.;
- Focus on customer development and needs and local strengths to identify and create new value-added products that will allow the industry to become increasingly a 'price maker' rather than a 'price taker';
- Re-focus existing industry groups to increase collaboration and interest in industry development, diversification and encouraging succession planning;
- Explore opportunities to secure funding for projects from the Queensland Government's Bio-futures 10 Year Roadmap and concessional loans through the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund;
- Building stronger relationships with the local community through reduced emissions from the mill and increased collaboration with Council.

## SOLUTION

Re-focus existing industry groups and identify viable opportunities to create additional revenue streams, complementary businesses or community benefit from under-utilised Mossman Sugar Mill assets and to focus the industry on identifying new markets and customers to provide high value and profitable products.

## BENEFITS

Investing in, and improving the resilience of the sugar industry, will provide and create business and job opportunities and draw increased value from under-utilised assets that will support the:

- Sustainable development of a key existing industry and increase diversification whilst also building the premium brand of the Shire;
- Reduction of high youth and Indigenous unemployment whilst maintaining a balanced workforce and sustainable population;
- Increased provision of quality education and training to meet industry needs through providing the workshops and laboratories for training;
- Increase the number of non-seasonal business and job opportunities.







## KEY ACTIONS & OUTCOMES

1. Mackay Sugar (Mossman Central Mill) and Canegrowers Mossman to re-engineer existing industry groups and focus on collaboration and industry development with support from the State Development and Agriculture and Fisheries departments, Treasury and Douglas Shire Council. Mackay Sugar and Canegrowers Mossman have indicated both organisations would be prepared to lead this Taskforce;
2. Ensure the new Town Planning scheme maintains sufficient agricultural land for local food and sugar production and approvals are maintained to allow sugar cane to be imported from the Atherton Tablelands to maintain the viability of the Mossman Central Mill;
3. Mackay Sugar to assess feasibility of re-opening Mossman Central Mill Tours in 2017 to coincide with the 120th anniversary of the original mill opening;
4. Industry group to investigate and assess market needs and opportunities for industry to provide high value and profitable products, which includes engaging with Traditional Owners and Mossman Botanic Gardens Board. This could include identifying the potential for commercialising benefits from traditional knowledge and locally grown plants e.g. soap, traditional foods and other health products;
5. Identify and evaluate emerging relevant trends and opportunities within and outside the sugar industry;
6. Identify and assess existing infrastructure relating to the Mossman Sugar Mill which can support new income streams to the sugar industry, support and create complementary businesses and/ or provide community benefit;
7. Cluster and prioritise opportunities to develop and implement a business model and staging plan; and
8. Secure resources and implement business case to boost the resilience of the sugar industry and increase the number of jobs and businesses created in Douglas.



# Make Douglas Shire Australia's Leader in Sustainable Development

Douglas Shire's brand is highly sought after. Its identity is inextricably linked to the sensitive and unique, unspoiled natural environment, Indigenous cultural assets and the community's embracing of the principles of sustainability to manage these assets. Douglas Shire Council will continue to ensure sustainability is used as a decision-making framework across the community and to authentically become the leader in sustainable development within Australia.

## KEY ISSUES:

- Negative media related to the condition of the Great Barrier Reef;
- Preserving the natural and cultural assets that exist within the Shire whilst also adapting and being resilient to climate change and other environmental threats;
- Changing population demographics, tourism growth and inappropriate development;
- High levels of disadvantage within sectors of the community;
- No power supply provided to the communities north of the Daintree River;
- Limited exposure of sustainable development business models to local businesses; and
- Business groups have limited resources to invest in economic development.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Continue to develop and adopt world class sustainability planning approaches, e.g. a planning scheme that restricts the urban footprint, ensuring sufficient high quality land is available for agricultural production, the sustainability values and vision of the shire are clearly articulated, places are planned around people to encourage connectivity, engagement and community development, developers are encouraged and rewarded for innovative tropical sustainable development, population and visitor growth is pro-actively managed, climate change is planned for, and natural resources are managed sustainably and regenerated;

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- Further develop community involvement and social inclusion within the planning and decision making of the Shire through stronger understanding of cultural requirements, respecting and celebrating cultural differences and creating greater equality;
- Establish sustainability goals and targets and pro-actively measure and report progress and benchmark the sustainability performance of the Shire against global best practice through a Sustainability Dashboard;
- Develop a clear vision and roadmap with the communities north of the Daintree River to authentically become a world leader in eco-cultural tourism and sustainable development, which includes a:
  - power solution that meets customer needs whilst also being environmentally, technically, community, culturally and politically appropriate;
  - philanthropic funding model that supports and enables the local community to actively preserve and regenerate the rainforest, reef and cultural assets.
- Businesses and budding entrepreneurs across all industries need to be exposed to world's best practice in sustainable development business models e.g. Circular and Blue Economy Business Models etc. The businesses that are demonstrating leadership, collaboration and innovation in this area should be promoted and encouraged to share experiences;
- Innovation that is aligned with the local environment and place is encouraged e.g. sustainable tropical buildings and agriculture, coral reef and rainforest restoration, energy, waste, water etc. and tested and showcased on demonstrator sites using existing assets e.g. Daintree Rainforest Observatory, Mossman Botanic Gardens, and Mossman Central Mill etc.
- Council, Douglas Chamber of Commerce, Canegrowers Mossman, Daintree Marketing Cooperative, Tourism Port Douglas and Daintree and other industry organisations identify the big sustainability challenges faced by each industry sector and work with research institutes e.g. JCU, CQU and others to address these challenges e.g. sediment run-off, sustainable agriculture, sustainable tourism, planning, built environment, infrastructure maintenance etc.
- Develop sustainability branding and marketing collateral, including local Indigenous cultural heritage values, which can be adopted and used by all businesses within the Shire that meet and surpass minimum sustainability standards, to ensure the Shire's sustainability values are marketed consistently;
- Key assets that support the Douglas Shire brand need to be identified and prioritised for investment through Council's capital works and maintenance budgets to support rejuvenating the Douglas brand;
- Consider looking at alternative models, for example social enterprise and co-op models that have been adopted elsewhere to build community - e.g. Ashoka Support Network, the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) Australia and Yackandandah community in regional Victoria etc.

- Develop a collaborative leadership model that aligns and integrates key industry sectors and local government within the Shire to:
  - Agree to priorities, secure resources and oversee the implementation of this Economic Development Strategy;
  - Engage and communicate with the community on the priorities and progress of the implementation of this Economic Development Strategy; and
  - Provide leadership programs to develop future community leaders.
- Douglas Shire Council needs to continue to adopt the principles of world's best practice in sustainable development business models within the operations of its business and showcase the outcomes and share lessons learnt.

## SOLUTION

Douglas Shire Council will continue to develop the world-class planning, engagement and reporting frameworks and tools that are required for the Shire, and included within its own operations, to demonstrate leadership in sustainable development. Council must also collaborate and work closely with the key industry groups to develop a model that will provide the resources needed to fully implement this Economic Development Strategy.

## BENEFITS

This will provide and create job and business opportunities while increasing the value of existing services and under-utilised assets that will support the:

- Sustainable development of existing industries and increase diversification whilst also building the premium brand of the Shire;
- Further development of community leadership that is needed across industry sectors to break down silos and increase collaboration and innovation to create new businesses and industries;
- Increased investment in infrastructure and new businesses that aligns with the Douglas brand; and
- Provision of quality, appropriate, affordable and reliable power solutions to communities north of the Daintree River.

## KEY ACTIONS & OUTCOMES

1. Council to prioritise key opportunities that can be included and addressed within the development of Council's sustainability strategy;
2. Council will establish a Taskforce of organisations and skills-based representatives who wish to collaboratively develop Douglas Shire as Australia's Leader in Sustainable Development;
3. Cluster and prioritise opportunities to develop and implement a business model and staging plan with a strong focus on the following priorities:
  - sustainability branding, positioning and collateral that can be used by all industry sectors; and
  - developing an appropriate model to create collaborative leadership, sustainable economic development and to adequately resource the implementation of this Economic Development Strategy.
4. Secure resources and implement a business case to develop Douglas Shire as Australia's Leader in Sustainable Development.





# Attracting and Facilitating Investment

Securing and facilitating investment and encouraging innovative approaches that align with the sustainability values of the Shire will be critical to developing a more prosperous, resilient and sustainable Douglas Shire.

## KEY ISSUES:

- A revised Town Planning Scheme is being developed and the planning approval processes and culture for assessing and approving new developments is maturing;
- There is no dedicated role or resources allocated to promoting opportunities and attracting investment to the Shire (which is not unusual for a small community);
- There are limited case studies and considerable perceived risks associated with the successful development of sustainable projects in sensitive natural environments;
- Indigenous organisations within the Shire are asset rich, but these assets are typically located in areas of high environmental value and, as a result, are subject to significant regulatory constraints. Furthermore, these organisations do not necessarily have the resources and capacity to develop and deliver projects to create sustainable outcomes.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES:

- Council could allocate a single point of contact through a unit or project control group for all new major projects to work pro-actively with the proponent and Council and reduce the uncertainty and risks associated with obtaining development approvals;
- Technological innovation is progressing at a rapid pace. The Town Planning Scheme and Council's approvals process needs to include performance criteria that will allow innovative concepts to be considered even when the scheme is unable to fully anticipate the increasing impact of disruptive ideas and technology. The culture within Council is supportive of considering innovative new development concepts and working pro-actively to develop 'win-win' outcomes for the proponent and the community;
- Council and private retail and commercial facility owners could embrace the concept that provides vacant private facilities for micro or start-up businesses at heavily discounted rates for a limited period of time to regenerate village centres and support development of new businesses;

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- Council has a framework that allows innovative use of natural assets for social and commercial events that 'wow' visitors, e.g. beach drinks/functions/weddings and festivals etc. This can be further promoted so businesses are more aware of the opportunities to use this framework;
- The new Town Planning scheme will accommodate 'Return to Country' aspirations of Indigenous people, based on their native title rights. This will allow tourism and cultural enterprises that create appropriate economic development opportunities, for example:
  - Establishment of tourism infrastructure including a trail network and related infrastructure; and
  - Return to Country precinct plans to enable housing and business development on Aboriginal freehold land;
- Increase Indigenous business enterprise and employment through a review of Douglas Shire Council procurement processes and amending where necessary to encourage and enable more Indigenous-owned businesses to be engaged in the delivery of products and services to Council;
- Council will investigate opportunities to modify procurement processes to encourage and consider innovative, market-led proposals from local businesses that demonstrate broader benefits to the Shire;
- Create brand ambassadors from wealthy individuals, who live or holiday in the Shire and who have established networks within the investment sector, to help secure additional investment to the Shire;
- Increase the Shire's resilience through creating innovative opportunities that build on and connect the existing nodes of activity, e.g. Wangetti Valley, Mowbray, Mossman Gorge, Whyanbeel Valley, Daintree Village, Upper Daintree, Cape Tribulation, Buru - China Camp, Degarra etc.; and
- Business groups and Council to consider working more pro-actively with Trade and Invest Queensland and the Tourism Investment Attraction Unit (TIAU), part of the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games to attract and secure increased investment to this Shire.

## SOLUTION

There are many synergies between the Key Focus Areas of Attracting and Facilitating Investment and Leadership in Sustainability. It is recommended that during the implementation phase that these Key Focus Areas are merged and considered together and the opportunities are jointly prioritised and actioned by the same Taskforce.

## BENEFITS

This will provide job and business opportunities and create increased value from existing services and under-utilised assets that will support the:

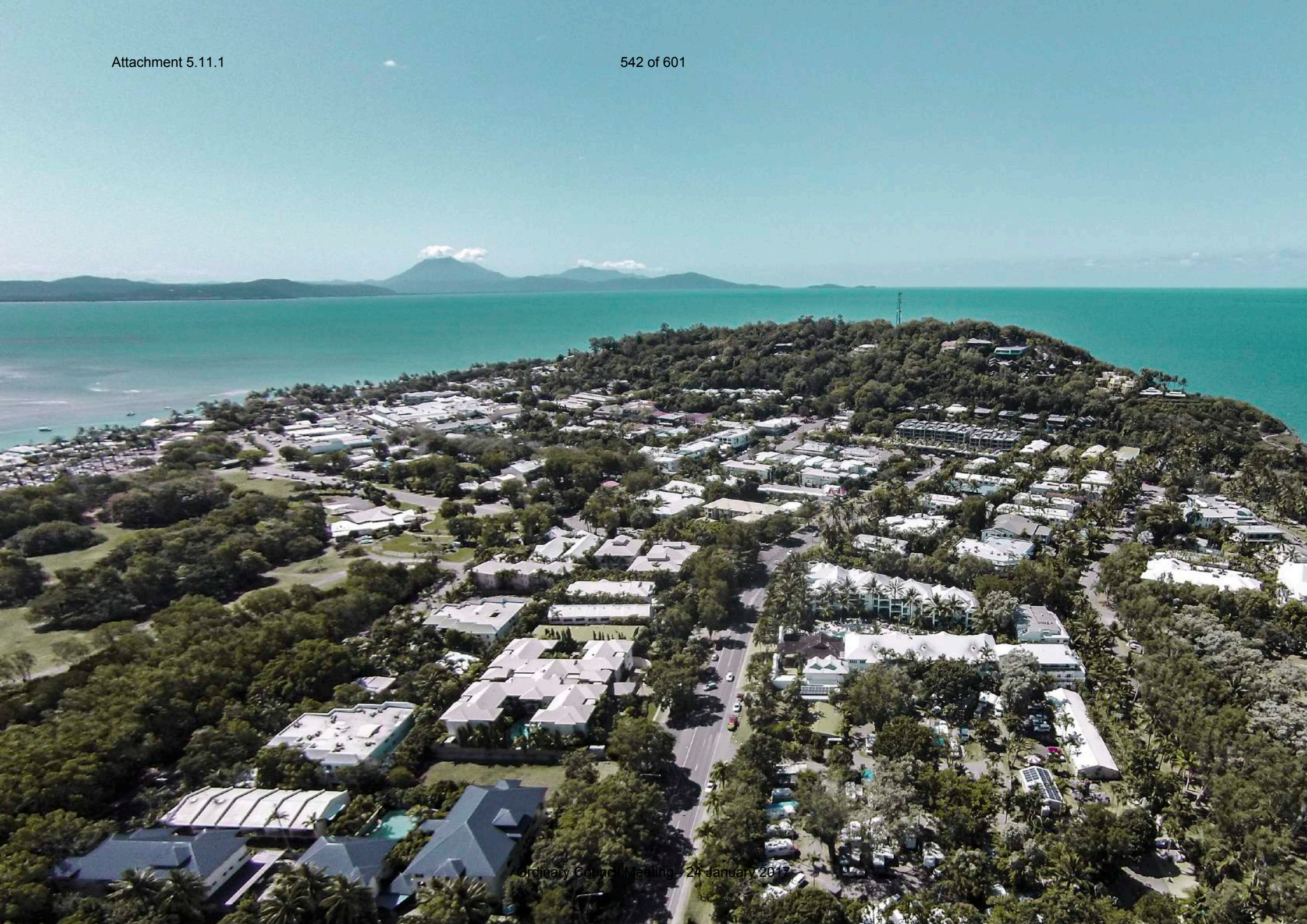
- Sustainable development of existing industries and increase diversification whilst also building the premium brand of the Shire;
- Reduction of high youth and Indigenous unemployment whilst maintaining a balanced workforce and sustainable population;

- Increase the number of non-seasonal jobs and business opportunities;
- Increased investment that aligns with the Douglas brand; and
- Provision of quality, affordable and reliable essential services.

#### KEY ACTIONS & OUTCOMES

1. Council to review and consider key opportunities identified above within the revision of the Town Planning and approvals processes.
2. Identify priority initiatives that need to be undertaken from the key opportunities highlighted above, and develop and implement a business model and staging plan.







# Implementation

## OVERVIEW

Governance is the management framework within which decisions are made. An effective governance framework is required to implement this Economic Development Strategy and to provide assurance to the Douglas Shire community and key stakeholders that resources are being allocated wisely, and the required goals and outcomes are being achieved in a structured and efficient manner. This will involve defining the structure, roles, systems, policies, processes, resources, delegations and controls to enable proficient decision making and rapid progress.

The successful delivery of the Douglas Shire Economic Development Strategy will require involvement and resources from multiple organisations within and outside the Shire, and will be dependent upon flexibility, speed of decision making, collaboration and trust.

## COUNCIL ROLE

Economic development does not happen in isolation but rather through the concerted efforts of many individuals and organisations, both in the public and private sector, working collaboratively. Douglas Shire Council will play a lead role in economic development, supported by the important contributions from a wide variety of partners from within the region and beyond, including (but not limited to):

- Douglas Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Port Douglas Daintree
- Daintree Marketing Cooperative
- Canegrowers Mossman
- Mackay Sugar
- Queensland Health
- Education Providers (JCU, CQU, TAFE North Queensland, Registered Training Organisations, English Language Schools, Mossman State High School)
- Existing businesses and emerging entrepreneurs
- Queensland Department of State Development
- Queensland Treasury

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- Tropical Tourism North Queensland
- Regional Development Australia Far North Queensland & Torres Strait
- Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC)

## IMPLEMENTATION TASKFORCES

The roles and involvement of the above organisations will be clarified as the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy gains momentum. To catalyse the momentum, it is proposed that Taskforces are established initially, three of them will be industry lead (key focus area 1,2 and 3) and the other will be lead by Council (key focus area 4 and 5 merged). The role of the Taskforces will be to review the opportunities identified in this strategy, supplement with other opportunities where relevant, establish goals and priorities and secure resources to achieve the required outcomes and benefits outlined in this strategy.

## LESSONS LEARNT FROM OTHER KEY REGIONAL PLANS

**Over the past 10 years, a number of major regional development planning initiatives have been undertaken, including the:**

- FNQ 2031 Regional Plan, produced by the Queensland Government;
- Regional Road Map, produced by Regional Development Australia Far North Queensland and Torres Strait (RDA FNQ & TS);
- Tropical North Queensland Regional Economic Plan (TNQREP), coordinated and developed by Advance Cairns; and the
- Tropical North Queensland Destination Tourism Plan, developed by Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Tourism Events Queensland.

**The key lessons learnt from the implementation of these strategies include:**

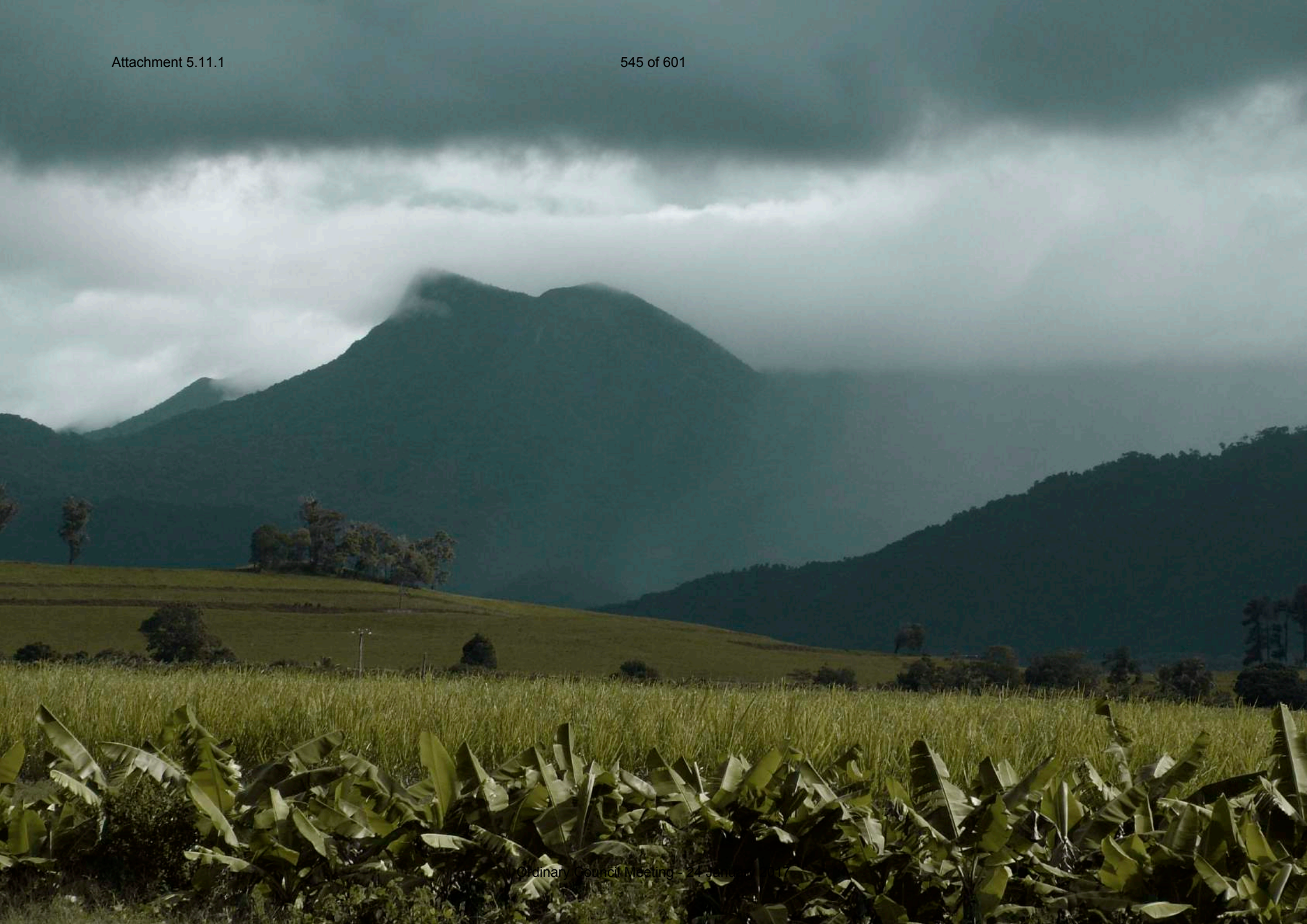
- Roles and expectations need to be clarified with all parties prior to project implementation;
- Deep organisational buy-in is required from key stakeholders, not just individual buy-in to ensure long-term momentum;
- Obtaining and holding government departments accountable for commitments can be challenging due to political cycles, changing policies and budget processes;
- Developing a focussed agenda with tangible achievable goals and celebrating successes is vitally important;
- Commitment to collaboration, transparency and building trust;
- Reduce the amount and need for cumbersome paper reporting; and
- Provide for succession planning within the implementation team.

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## REPORTING

As a number of the actions identified in this Economic Development Strategy will be lead by business groups and / or individuals, there will be an expectation that regular progress reports will be provided to enable Council to give support and coordination as needed. The frequency of these reports will be negotiated with relevant key stakeholders.

A detailed report, prepared by Council Officers with the support of each Taskforce, will be presented to Council every 12 months with the Economic Development Strategy to be reviewed annually to ensure continued relevance.





# Conclusion

The Douglas Shire is blessed with an abundance of sensitive and unique natural and cultural assets. Its current vibrant economy owes much to the decrease in the value of the Australian dollar and an increase in the sugar commodity price as well as the appeal of its natural assets, which has rejuvenated the Shire's key industries of tourism and sugar cane production and processing.

This resurgence in economic activity has increased confidence and the leaders in the community want to capitalise on this opportunity to identify key economic priorities that will support the continued prosperity, resilience and sustainability of the Shire.

This Economic Development Strategy has identified five key priority focus areas that build on emerging opportunities that can be realised over the next four years:

- Creating a Study, Training and Entrepreneur Incubator Centre;
- Further developing an Allied Health Hub and Health Tourism;
- Increasing the resilience of the Sugar Industry;
- Developing Douglas Shire as Australia's Leader in Sustainable Development; and
- Attracting and Facilitating Investment.

The Key Priority Focus Areas and opportunities identified in this strategy provide a place to start addressing the key challenges facing the Shire and to capitalise on emerging opportunities. It is anticipated that this initiative will continue to evolve with the identification of additional opportunities as they materialise. However, there are limited existing resources available to undertake and implement this Economic Development Strategy. It is therefore vital that in the initial stages of implementation key stakeholders are prepared to collaborate and become actively involved in the Taskforces, that key opportunities are prioritised and resources are allocated and focussed on implementing tangible and achievable outcomes, whilst a longer-term model is developed.

The residents of Douglas Shire live in one of the most beautiful places on Earth, which provides many economic and lifestyle benefits. However, living in this location also places responsibilities on the community to protect and look after this legacy for current and future generations. Douglas Shire has a motivated and united Council working for the common good of the community and is committed to sustainable development. Council looks forward to working collaboratively with its key partners, the community and other stakeholders to implement this economic development strategy to create a resilient, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable place for current and future generations.

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INTERNAL

# Appendix B – SWOT Analysis

## STRENGTHS



Two adjacent world heritage sites – unique & Daintree Rainforest contains highest levels of bio-diversity on the planet

Continuous Indigenous connection & knowledge to country and rich cultural heritage of the Traditional Owners

Established Clean, Green & exclusive Brand within the Tourism and Tropical Produce Sector

Established Tourism & Agricultural Industries

Established 120 year old Sugar Mill

Established Marine Services & Commercial Fishing Industries

Established retail and commercial assets built for high tourism visitation in the early 2000's

Demonstrated innovation within the Shire

Established business groups with widespread desire to plan for our economic prosperity

High nett worth & influential temporary residents reside in the Shire

High levels of community pride

Motivated and united Council with coherent purpose working for the common good of the community and committed to sustainable development

## WEAKNESSES



Natural assets facing environmental impacts and are being preserved through various measures, which can create unintended environmental, social and economic impacts

High levels of Indigenous unemployment  
Shortage of affordable and emergency housing  
Integrated, reliable and affordable public transport is not available

Brand is not clearly articulated for use across all the industry sectors

Highly reliant on tourism and sugar growing industry. Both key industries are seasonal, operate at the same time and are reliant on a low Australian Dollar and fuel prices

Sugar Mill is operational from approx. June – December each year and cane growers would prefer a shorter season to increase profitability

Uncertain future due to proposed Reef Marina upgrade plans

Retail tenancy vacancies

Lack of access to reliable and affordable high speed broadband and mobile phone connection  
Businesses operate in silos  
High levels of youth unemployment

Business Groups have limited resources to invest in economic development and relationships are maturing

Residents value privacy and therefore difficult to engage

Aging workforce and increasing levels of obesity & chronic disease

Council is still relatively young after deamalgamation in 2014 and is developing relationships with key stakeholders  
Council's culture, process and systems with regard to planning and development approval are maturing to become more 'investment friendly'

## CHARACTERISTICS



Tension between conservation paradigm and sustainable development

Proportion of community reliant on welfare system and caught in poverty trap

Brand positioning and supporting collateral needs to be clearly defined and articulated for use across all industry sectors

Perception is that there are limited opportunities to increase economic activity from Jan-May each year

Mill needs downtime for maintenance and repair and workforce reduces by 30% out with milling season. Large assets are under-utilised for approx. 30% of the year

Uncertainty

Many retail outlets are not viable based on seasonality of two key industries

Frustrated business owners and visitors that impacts business viability

Lack of collaboration and innovation

Under-utilised asset and youth leaving the Shire

Operate in silos, broad range of priorities and need for a coherent vision

Under-utilised asset

Community demographics are not balanced

Confusion over roles and expectations amongst key stakeholders related to resourcing Economic Development

Balancing the needs of community and business



EXTERNAL



## OPPORTUNITIES



Strengthen and diversify the Shire's economy and position the Shire as a leader in sustainable development through adopting a best practice planning and investment framework that supports development of existing industries and increased diversification in developing sectors whilst:

- increasing collaboration between mature and developing sectors;
- regenerating the natural environment and cultural assets; and
- aligning with the premium brand of the Shire.

The proposed \$12M Mossman residential aged care centre by the Salvation Army has the potential to be a catalyst for creating new local jobs and business opportunities as well as being a catalyst for a:

- Study/Training/Innovation Centre that will also benefit other industry sectors in the Shire – refer to 3.5 above
- Health, Well Being & Research Precinct that has a focus on plant-based pharmaceutical research, indigenous knowledge and commercialisation and is a catalyst/integrates with the Mossman Botanic Gardens project.

\$100M redevelopment of the Port Douglas Reef Marina has the potential to start revitalising the fabric of Port Douglas, create construction jobs, attract more super yachts and support the growth of the marine services sector.

Grow Creative Arts Sector by channelling products through local tourism and other outlets through establishing a Creative Arts cooperative or other appropriate business model

Identify opportunities to value add to existing products or to grow and produce new products, co-locate complementary businesses adjacent to the Mossman Sugar Mill using the underutilised assets e.g. reinstate Mill Tours, explore rail links to Mossman Gorge and support the development of

complementary locally produced food, beverage and other businesses adjacent to the Mill.

Leverage Mossman Mill Laboratory as a catalyst for Health, Well Being & Research Precinct

Extend tourism shoulder seasons by focussing on customer segments that don't need to be in peak tourism seasons e.g. Business Events, Education, Science and Research Tourism, Chinese New Year, Indigenous, Adventure, Nature and Traditional Culture, Health & Well Being etc.

Proposed Mossman Botanic Gardens Project could potentially attract private sector contribution funding by adding value to the health/research precinct

Attract increased investment to the Shire to support local business and enterprise development that is focussed on regeneration of the Shire's natural & cultural assets through various funding programs e.g. Citizens of the Great Barrier Reef global social purpose movement and other Reef Funding programs.

Provide access to affordable, reliable and convenient integrated public transport system that connects the major hubs within the Shire using innovative approaches and technology e.g. a collaborative approach involving using existing not for profit organisations transport vehicles - HACC, Mossman Gateway, cane rail infrastructure, ride sharing platforms such as Uber and driverless technology etc.

Basic needs of the Shire's residents are met through the provision of quality, affordable housing and reliable essential services and enabling infrastructure

Create mature collaborative leadership within the Shire to break down silos, focus on common agreed priorities to attract investment and increase innovation and development of new businesses and industries.

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Being able to assess and deal with increasing complexity will be critical in developing successful businesses and communities.

Increasing the number of new business models that can simultaneously create jobs and profit, regenerate the local environment and strengthen communities

Delivery and funding models for the provision of training and education are changing rapidly. New models have to be considered for smaller regional communities that are constantly evolving and responsive to industry needs.

Health Sector is growing and awareness and investment in the medicinal properties of rainforest plants and traditional knowledge is increasing.

Council, Developer, Key Stakeholders and Qld Govt. to negotiate win-win outcomes that also provides a DA in a timely manner.

Tourists are increasingly seeking authentic and unique local produce and goods.

Increasing awareness of Circular and Blue Economy business models that seek to maximise value and opportunities from multiple resources to increase the resilience of businesses and communities.

Increasing need to proactively forecast and respond to market trends and provide products and experiences that align with market needs.

Need for business continuity and resilience planning

Climate change & sediment run-off is impacting the quality of the region's natural assets.

Government funding is reducing for major projects and increasingly needs private sector investment.

Increasing awareness of the need for increased investment to protect and regenerate the reef and rainforest from out with the region.

Increasing awareness and changing legislation that enables different social enterprise models and different technology platforms that could be adopted to provide appropriate cost effective solutions for the Shire.

Planning models, processes and tools are becoming more sophisticated and able to forecast and accommodate diverse needs required to facilitate sustainable communities.

Increasing awareness of the need for collaborative leadership approaches and to develop a pool of talented community leaders to ensure a community is resilient and future focussed e.g. Geelong Program (<http://www.committeeforgeelong.com.au/leadership-programs/>) & Melbourne Program <http://melbourne.org.au/programmes-events/future-focus-group>.

## THREATS



Both of the two key foundation industries for the Shire are reliant on a low Australia dollar, low fossil fuel prices and consistent weather patterns. If either of these criterion are impacted whilst diversification is occurring this could have a major impact on the ability to focus on increasing the resilience and diversity of the Shire's economy.

The Salvation Army does not use the construction period to recruit and train local people for the opening and operation of the new aged care centre.

Community leadership is not provided to engage with key education providers in a timely manner to assess the viability and gain agreement to create a new Study/Training Centre.

Breadth of opportunities are not fully considered for a new health, well-being and research precinct that aligns with the Botanic Gardens Master Plan and Mossman Mill diversification and community does not respond quickly enough to promote and capture opportunities.

Development Approval (DA) is:

- Not provided
- Provided with conditions that makes the project unviable
- Provided over an extended timeframe that drains Developer's resources and prevents project proceeding.

Market conditions change resulting in the project becoming unviable

Offshore based low cost high volume tourism merchandise providers.

Resources are not available to consider and market test innovative opportunities

Mill viability is impacted by short-term shock, noted above, or operational issues that impact the viability of adjacent businesses

Investment does not occur within the products and experiences needed to attract visitation during the tourism shoulder seasons

Increasing Australian Dollar, fossil fuel prices, major natural disaster, health epidemic, strike or other event that impacts tourism visitation

Natural and cultural assets are perceived to have deteriorated

Business Model and staging plan is not viable

Perception that the reef and rainforest have been irretrievably damaged.

Existing bus and tour companies and government legislation.

Planning process does not consider and accommodate future growth needs of the Shire to ensure basic services are provided that are affordable and meet the needs of the community.

Entrenched behaviours and historical relationships.

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# Appendix C – Douglas Shire Business Groups – Key 2016

# ECONOMIC PRIORITIES



Douglas Chamber of Commerce	Douglas Business Forum Nov 2015 – Key Outcomes	Tourism Port Douglas & Daintree	Daintree Marketing Coop
<b>Sheraton</b> – Next Phase/s Development	<b>Understand our uniqueness</b> – protect our natural assets: Climate change, 'Eco credentials', Clean/green image even with fruit and barramundi farming	<b>Primary:</b> 1. High speed internet throughout the Douglas region 2. Ongoing development of biking and hiking trails and coastal walking paths as attractions in their own right and to provide connectivity throughout the region 3. Supporting Increased convention facilities 4. Upgrading of regional visitor facilities within National Parks 5. Daintree Gateway – improved infrastructure and visitor facilities at the gateway to the Daintree Rainforest 6. Sustainable water and utilities throughout the Douglas Shire 7. Sustainable power solutions for north of the Daintree River – a benchmark model to lead the world 8. Port Douglas Waterfront & Year Round Access to Freshwater Swimming	<b>Telecommunications:</b> • Copper • Mobile • Satellite • No redundancy capacity  <b>Roads</b> • Connectivity & Resilience  <b>Tourism</b> • Extend season – events & promotions  <b>Employment</b> • Lack of alternative permanent/part-time work in tourism off-season • Diversity of industry • Training – not just at school level – skills that meet need of local industry
<b>The Reef Marina</b> - \$100 million Next Phase Prospect	<b>Understand nature of global economy</b> – be adaptive to outside influences, trends, be at the forefront not reactive		
<b>Botanic Garden Mossman</b> - \$50 million Multi Phase Prospect	<b>Digital world</b>		
<b>Retirement Village Future demand</b> – downstream multiplier ↑ Medicinal/Hospital Needs etc.	<b>Stretch the tourist season</b> – Council's Events Strategy plays an important role in this		
<b>Higher Educational Opportunities</b> – University Campus Prospect/s	<b>Diversification</b> • Service econ can be built around base industries (tourism, agriculture) – flow on industries • Tourism = very low wages		
<b>Emerging Industries</b> e.g. Coconut Processing ↑ Coconut Oil; Green Energy – Waste Treatment, Killaloe and Cocoa Farming, Film & TV	<b>Waste from sugar mill</b> can be used to make electricity		
<b>New Douglas Shire Planning Scheme</b> to include provisions for growth and new/growing industries	<b>Collaboration:</b> • Destination marketing • Authenticity in local produce – value add for restaurants • Lobbying		
<b>Macrossan St Upgrade:</b> Lighting, roads, garden, music & overall atmosphere from day to night CCTV and security			
<b>Training &amp; Education programs</b> for workforce			
<b>Funding for workshops</b> from Australian Retailers Association, Trade Apprenticeships, Customer Service Programs, Apps & Initiatives			
<b>NBN Upgrade</b> to Fibre to Premises due to nature of demand & expectation in tourism-dependant region			
<b>Diversify</b> existing industry e.g. Mossman Mill			
<b>Seasonality</b> – Extend Season		<b>Secondary:</b> 1. Botanic Gardens Mossman 2. Noise restrictions + an entertainment precinct 3. Experience development including the GBR Drive 4. Boat ramp in Cape Tribulation	



