

Daintree Gateway Master Plan Strategic Framework Summary

January 2011



ARUP



Cairns Regional
COUNCIL

Daintree Gateway Master Plan

Strategic Framework Summary

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Notes:

This document (#3031287) is the Strategic Framework Summary for the Daintree Gateway Master Plan Project.

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Introduction

The Daintree Gateway Master Plan is an initiative of the Cairns Regional Council.

This document is a summary of the Strategic Framework developed for the Daintree Gateway Master Plan. The content is an extract of the *Daintree Gateway Master Plan Vision and Context* paper, which contains considerable background detail and understanding of the project's focus area.

This summary is intended for general use for community, Council and government alike. It provides an overview of the project framework and the principles for developing a master plan for the Daintree Gateway.

For further information and documentation relating to the Daintree Gateway Master Plan, please visit Cairns Regional Council's webpage at www.cairns.qld.gov.au.



Part One: Developing a Master Plan

A Master Plan for the Daintree Gateway

The Daintree Gateway Master Plan project is an initiative of Cairns Regional Council to create an iconic experience in the Daintree Gateway precinct, befitting of the World Heritage values of the Daintree-Cape Tribulation area. The Daintree is one of the star attractions in Tropical North Queensland and an important part of the traditional lands of the Kuku Yalanji people.

Currently the supporting infrastructure at the entry to the Daintree-Cape Tribulation area undersells, and even detracts from, the potential of the region. It is characterised by degraded infrastructure, poor visual amenity, inadequate interpretation and information and confusing way-finding. As a result many visitors do not fully understand the cultural and natural values of the area they are visiting, have a limited awareness of appropriate behaviour to conserve and respect these values. This presents an opportunity to maximise the many experiences available to visitors.

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Council has initiated this project to develop a comprehensive master plan to address these issues and guide development of a world class gateway facility.

A gateway is not the main attraction, but offers an arrival experience. It can add to the sense of anticipation and excitement of the experiences to come.

A gateway can improve outcomes through building a greater understanding of the experiences and opportunities available, assisting visitors to seek out the personal experiences they particularly desire.

The Gateway should, therefore, have a physical appearance that pays homage to and builds expectations of the experience within.



Photo courtesy of Tourism Queensland

The 'Daintree' and its Gateway

A number of places and destinations are associated with the Daintree identity. Defining which 'Daintree' this project relates to is critical in understanding the purpose of the Gateway and best location(s) for infrastructure.

This project focuses on establishing a defined gateway to the Daintree rainforest/Daintree Coast region - the area north of the Daintree River and leading to Cape Tribulation.

This area is the largest remaining area of contiguous rainforest from mountain to coast. It includes the communities of Cape Kimberley, Forest Creek, Cow Bay, Diwan, Alexander Bay, Thornton Beach and Cape Tribulation. The Daintree is contained within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and includes areas of the Daintree National Park.



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Defining the Gateway

The “Daintree Gateway” is the entry point for travellers heading north of the river to the Cape Tribulation section of the National Park and as far as the Bloomfield River. There are three predominant areas of focus within the Gateway:

- The intersection of Mossman-Daintree Road and Cape Tribulation Road
- The Western Precinct
- Ferry Crossing and North Bank.

Journeys also define the Gateway. Two journeys are notable in this project;

- Journey from Mossman
- Journey along Cape Tribulation Road.

The shortcomings and opportunities for each respective area is explored in greater detail in the *Vision and Context* paper (available online at Cairns Regional Council’s website).

Intersection of Mossman-Daintree Road and Cape Tribulation Road

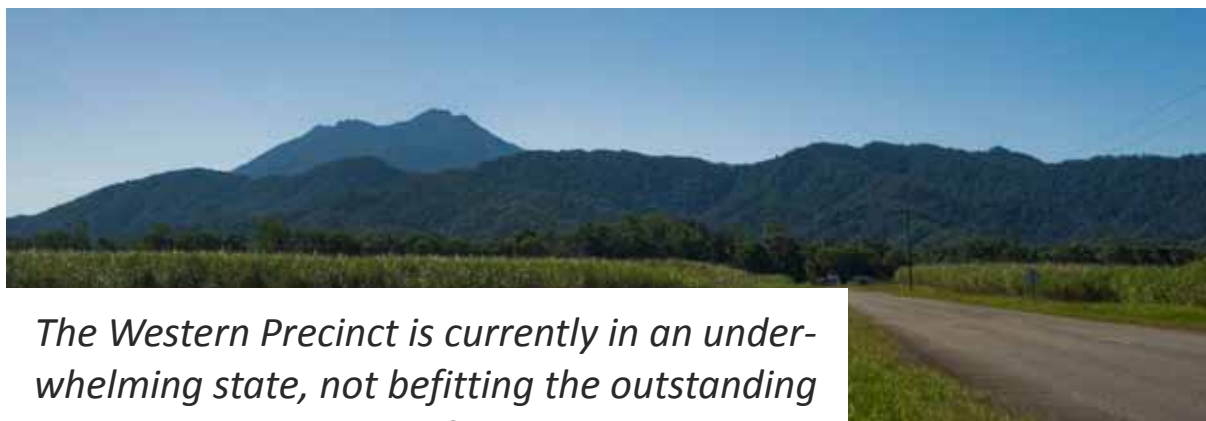
The intersection of the Mossman-Daintree Road and Cape Tribulation Road is the location for visitors leaving the Mossman-Daintree Road and heading to the ferry and crossing the Daintree River.

Western Precinct

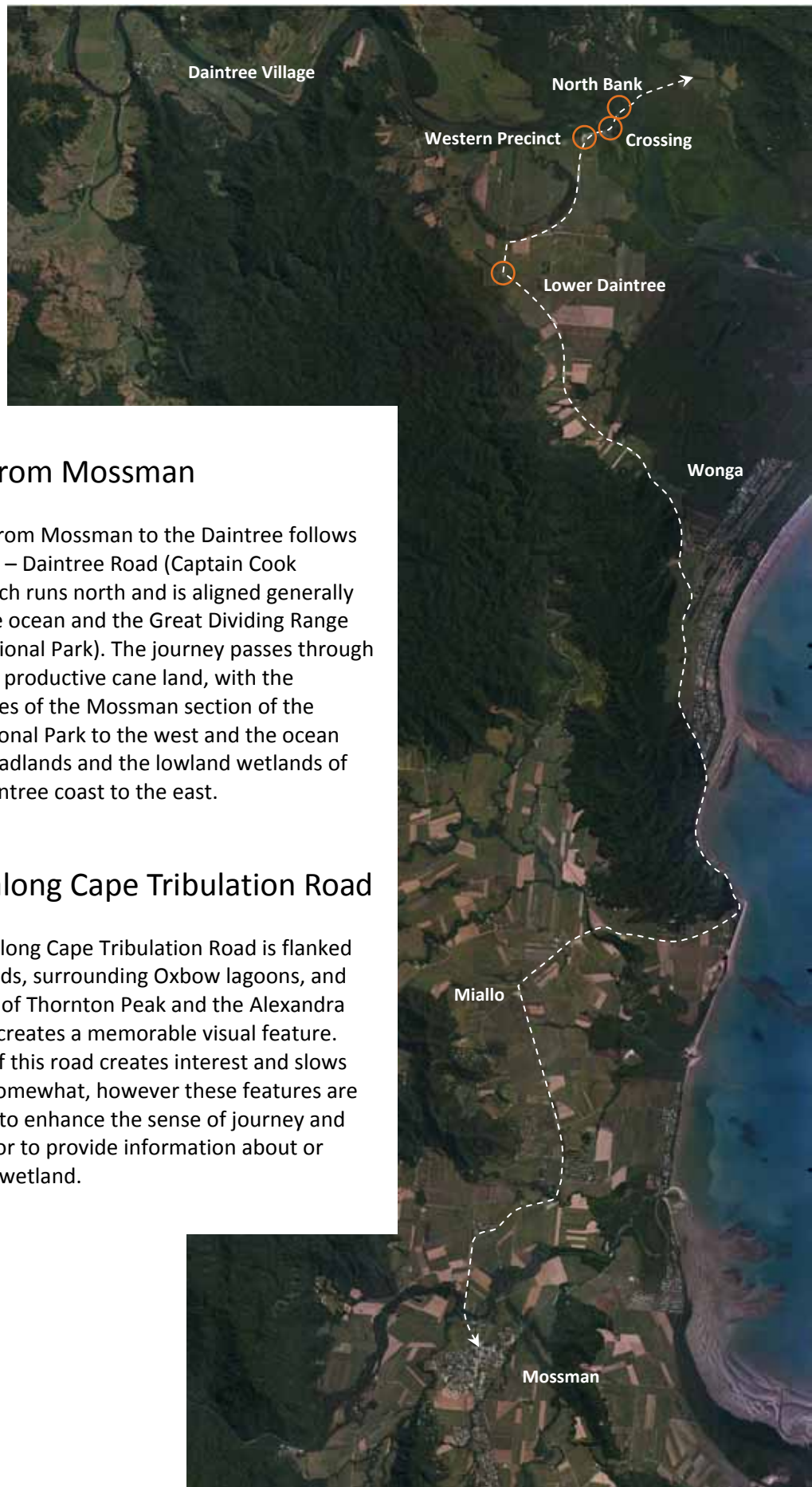
The Western Precinct is the first point of arrival at the Daintree River. It is located directly adjacent to the entry road. The Western Precinct is currently in an underwhelming state, not befitting the outstanding natural values of the Daintree.

Ferry Crossing and North Bank

The Daintree Ferry is an essential piece of infrastructure providing access to communities and businesses north of the Daintree River. The North Bank is currently an area of transit where vehicles queue perpendicular to the river with no amenities afforded to visitors on their return trips.



*The Western Precinct is currently in an under-
whelming state, not befitting the outstanding
natural values of the Daintree.*



Journey from Mossman

The journey from Mossman to the Daintree follows the Mossman – Daintree Road (Captain Cook Highway) which runs north and is aligned generally parallel to the ocean and the Great Dividing Range (Daintree National Park). The journey passes through large areas of productive cane land, with the forested ranges of the Mossman section of the Daintree National Park to the west and the ocean with rocky headlands and the lowland wetlands of the lower Daintree coast to the east.

Journey along Cape Tribulation Road

The journey along Cape Tribulation Road is flanked by the wetlands, surrounding Oxbow lagoons, and the backdrop of Thornton Peak and the Alexandra Range which creates a memorable visual feature. The curving of this road creates interest and slows the journey somewhat, however these features are not captured to enhance the sense of journey and anticipation, or to provide information about or access to the wetland.

Part Two: Framework for a Master Plan

The Strategic Framework

A strategic framework has been developed to guide the outcomes of the master plan. It incorporates a **purpose**, a **vision** and **guiding principles**.

The strategic framework was informed by consultation with the project Stakeholder Reference Group, undertaken by Council and Arup, and a review of background documents.

Purpose of the Daintree Gateway

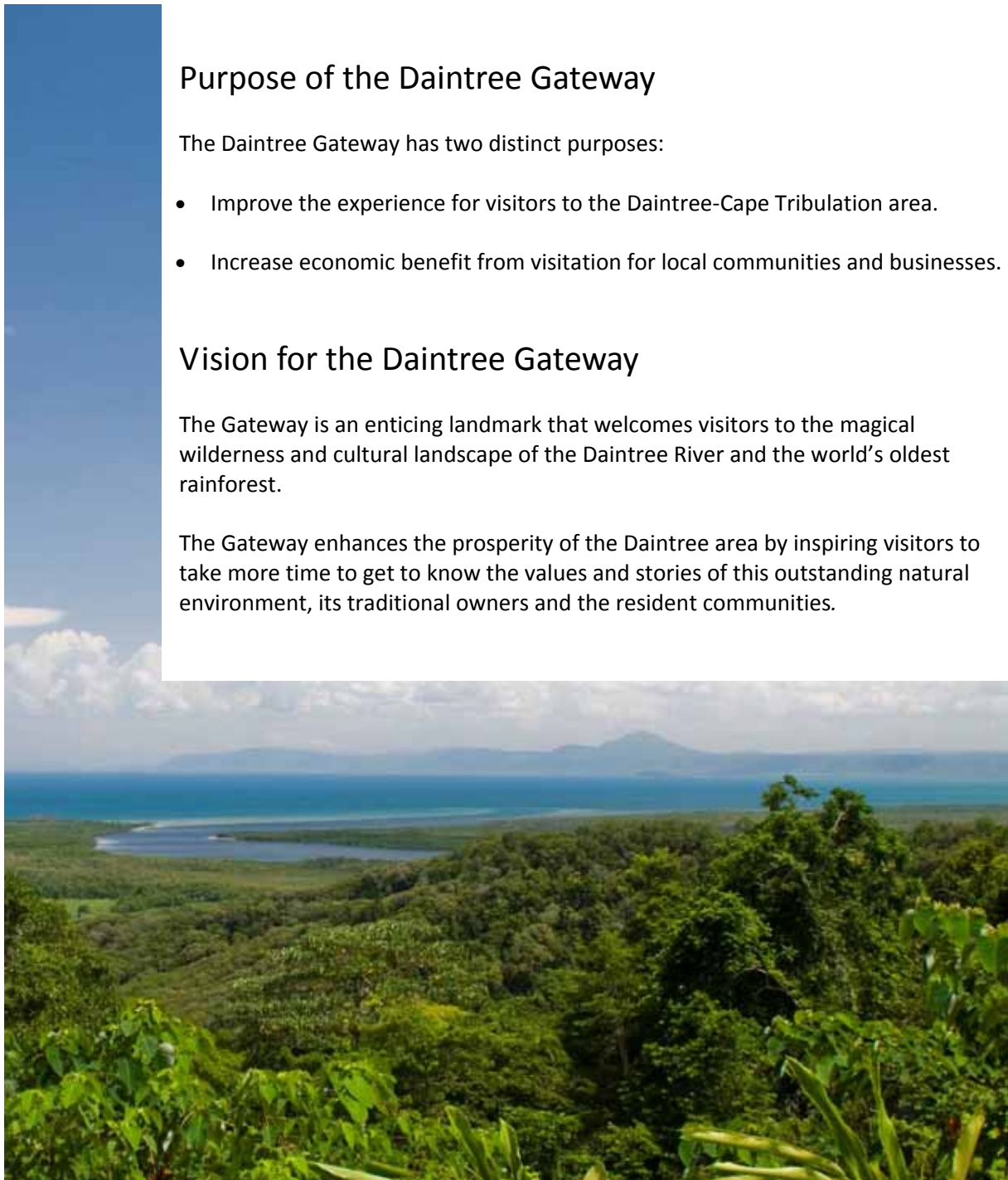
The Daintree Gateway has two distinct purposes:

- Improve the experience for visitors to the Daintree-Cape Tribulation area.
- Increase economic benefit from visitation for local communities and businesses.

Vision for the Daintree Gateway

The Gateway is an enticing landmark that welcomes visitors to the magical wilderness and cultural landscape of the Daintree River and the world's oldest rainforest.

The Gateway enhances the prosperity of the Daintree area by inspiring visitors to take more time to get to know the values and stories of this outstanding natural environment, its traditional owners and the resident communities.



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Guiding Principles

A set of Guiding Principles has been established for the Master Plan following consultation with the project Stakeholder Reference Group. These principles outline the basis for decision making and outcomes sought from the master planning. The guiding principles include:

- Sustainability
- Cultural Association
- Environmental Protection
- Local Economy
- Sense of Place
- Character
- Access and Mobility
- Planning

Sustainability

Sustainability will be a fundamental consideration in the development of the Daintree Gateway, clearly expressed in the design of built and natural environments. Project outcomes will demonstrate a balance between community needs, economic growth, cultural practices, environmental protection and efficient use of resources.

Cultural Association

The Daintree Gateway will celebrate the rich cultural fabric of the Daintree-Cape Tribulation area and provide opportunities for visitors to learn and interact with cultural history and contemporary practices through interpretive displays, materials, design and art. The precinct will honour the Eastern Kuku Yalanji as the traditional owners of the land and will also acknowledge the non-Indigenous history and association with the Daintree area.

Environmental Protection

The Daintree Gateway will be a celebration of the significance and natural wonder of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and Daintree National Park. Development and land uses associated with the Gateway will improve degraded area, enhance vistas and scenic amenity and do no harm to the coastal and riverine processes of the Daintree River, endemic habitats and eco systems, or the cultural landscape.



An aerial photograph of a tropical landscape. In the foreground, there are green fields and a river. In the background, there are mountains under a blue sky with some clouds.

Local Economy

The Daintree Gateway will enhance the prosperity of local businesses and communities. It will contribute to greater awareness of the experiences available in the region and will promote and complement existing businesses and attractions.

Sense of Place

The Daintree Gateway will clearly mark the journey from rural landscape to wilderness environment and pay homage to the natural and cultural character of the Daintree-Cape Tribulation area. The Gateway will create a strong sense of arrival, welcome and anticipation and provide a visitor experience befitting the world class values of the area.

Character

The Gateway will reflect the tropical and natural character of the Daintree-Cape Tribulation area. The built form will be a high quality design that reflects and respects the natural areas and character of the local area. Planning of the project will enhance vistas and degraded areas and retain and increase vegetation.

Access and Mobility

The Daintree Gateway will transform the way in which people move through the entire Daintree region and the choices they make about journeys and destinations. In the immediate development area, the Gateway will rationalise the road network, parking areas and river access, creating a safe, legible and accessible environment that meets the needs of all users.

Part Three: Contextual Framework

An Understanding of the Daintree Gateway

The *Daintree Gateway Master Plan Vision and Context* paper explores the contextual framework of the Daintree Gateway in detail. It provides an understanding of the history, physical characteristics, economic characteristics, regulatory frameworks and stakeholder needs and aspirations that will inform the various aspects of a master plan for the Daintree Gateway. The following provides an explanation of what each section of the document contains.

A Historical Perspective

Before European settlement, the Daintree was the province of the Kuku Yalanji, who created a network of walking tracks throughout the area. The evolution of the Daintree as a rural community and more recently a visitor destination has been shaped by a number of key events and conflicts between development and environmental protection. Overall the history evokes turbulence, strong characters, adventure, ancient mystery and untouched timeless nature.

Physical Site Conditions

The Daintree Gateway comprises a number of sites which in combination create the experience of travelling to the Daintree. This section describes the nature of the journey and the specific sites which play a role in the formation of a Gateway. The journeys, sites and land uses and activities in the Daintree Gateway are described and depicted visually in the Vision and Context paper. The physical sites described include:

- journey from Mossman
- intersection of Mossman-Daintree Road / Cape Tribulation Road
- journey along Cape Tribulation Road
- Western Precinct
- ferry crossing
- North Bank

There are a diverse a range of land uses and activities in and around the study areas, including rural land (cane farms), National Park, Crown land/reserves and private land uses. In planning any works the needs and interests of land holders and requirements of different land uses must be considered.

Overall the history evokes turbulence, strong characters, adventure, ancient mystery and untouched timeless nature.

Economic Context

Whilst the Gateway is not a destination in itself, it has an important role to play in creating awareness and anticipation of the experiences on offer. Exciting and informing, then delivering on the promised experiences will deliver economic outcomes through increasing willingness to pay, participate in more activities, repeat visitation and word of mouth referral.

The *Vision and Context* paper outlines characteristics and conditions that contribute to an awareness of the beneficial outcomes that can be sought from the Daintree Gateway Master Plan. Topics of discussion include the following:

- visitor numbers
- regional population
- TNQ Tourism market outlook
- changing consumer preferences
- regional marketing emphasis
- market competition

Stakeholder Needs and Aspirations

Community and tourism stakeholders have a key interest in this project. A Stakeholder Reference Group has been established to provide input into key decision points during the development of the master plan. The three key common interests amongst stakeholders include the following:

- Protect, enhance and better promote the natural values of the area
- Increase local benefit from tourism
- Maintain quality of life for residents

The Gateway project is an opportunity to meet these common interests and create a sense of common purpose amongst stakeholders in the area.

Regulatory Framework

A large number of local, state and federal legislation, policy and regulations are in place to maintain the environmental, cultural, and public amenity values of the Daintree region, and to protect the public against potential hazards. These regulatory instruments will govern the assessment of all future development in the region, and so an understanding of the opportunities and constraints they pose is fundamental to the Daintree Gateway Master Plan.



Further Information and Contact Details

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