



DOUGLAS  
SHIRE COUNCIL

# CORPORATE PLAN

2019 - 2024

# Acknowledgement

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**The Eastern Kuku Yalanji and Yirrganydji peoples are the Traditional Custodians and Owners of the land and sea country that encompass the Douglas Shire region.**

Douglas Shire Council acknowledges the 'Bama', the traditional rainforest Aboriginal coastal people of our region who hold the unique position of being the First Peoples of this country. We recognise and respect Bama cultural heritage, values, beliefs and continuing relationships and responsibility to their land and sea country. We honour and respect your Elders past, present and future.

We commit to maintaining and strengthening our partnerships and respectful relationships with Bama in the spirit of reconciliation so that together we can increase the opportunities for successful and positive outcomes to the advantage of everyone in our communities.

Council respectfully acknowledges other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who call our region 'home'.

# Message from the Mayor

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I am thrilled to present the second Douglas Shire Corporate Plan covering the period from 2019 to 2024. Since de-amalgamation, the Douglas Shire Council has made great strides and is now in the enviable position of financial sustainability. This Corporate Plan builds on the previous plan. Council has retained the strategic themes, but tailored them to better reflect community feedback obtained through consultation. Importantly, Council has introduced a vision statement and a set of values by which the delivery of the Plan will be guided.

We live in a very special place enjoyed by residents and visitors. Whether it be our World Heritage rainforest and reef, or our laid-back local neighbourhood, our community deeply values our natural environment and our diversity. While we face many challenges such as the impact of climate change, economic pressures, and technology disruption, we are a resilient community that sees many opportunities as well.

Council plays an important role in bringing the community together. The Corporate Plan seeks to meet these challenges head on and take advantage of the opportunities to the benefit of all.

We seek to be an inclusive and connected community where we celebrate our diversity. Council can only deliver on the goals set out in this Plan by engaging with the community and all of our partners. Our economy is critical to the well being of our community and environment. Council plays an essential role in working with industry and other levels of government to contribute to a thriving economic base from which the community can grow and prosper. Our environment is in jeopardy and Council must do all that it can by working with stakeholders to protect it. We understand the balance between these messages and the impact that it can have on our tourism sector; however, through robust management, proactive strategies and strong partnerships, we can demonstrate to the world why the Douglas Shire is the leading tropical sustainable destination.

Council's vision statement references its past. We acknowledge the contribution that all groups have made to the stewardship of this wonderful Shire. We also openly acknowledge the mistakes of the past and we dedicate ourselves to an honest and open reconciliation. I would therefore like to particularly acknowledge our traditional owners as the custodians of our land, the Eastern Kuku Yalanji and Yirrganydji peoples.

The structure of the Corporate Plan has been simplified. You will note five themes and a total of 19 goals that relate to each of these themes. We have noted a number of key initiatives that support each theme. This Plan is intended to be monitored and

updated on a regular basis so that Council is always meeting current challenges and taking advantage of opportunities. The Plan is to be read in conjunction with each year's Operational Plan to see how Council is delivering on its goals. We are always welcome to feedback.

Yours sincerely

**Mayor Julia Leu**

## VISION

*A unique, beautiful and sustainable Shire with a connected and inclusive community, thriving economy and deep commitment to protecting the environment for future generations, while honouring our past.*

Council's vision statement has three parts. First, we recognise the amazing place in which we live and that our visitors enjoy. From our World Heritage sites to our local neighbourhoods, we value the uniqueness of what we have.

The second part of the vision statement refers to the three interconnected domains in which Council operates: community, economy and environment. We envisage a community in which everyone feels a sense of belonging. We seek an economy that is thriving, growing and diverse. Council is deeply committed to the notion that we must confront the environmental challenges that we face to ensure that future generations can benefit from and enjoy it as we do today.

The third and final part of the vision highlights the need to protect what we have while acknowledging our past. In honouring its past Council values the contributions all groups have made and we recognise our traditional owners as the original custodians of the land. We acknowledge the wrongs done in the past and we seek to reconcile for the future. We believe that only through understanding and honouring our past can we move forward to protect and enjoy all that we have today for all people.

## MISSION/ROLE

Council's mission is to provide for the good rule of the local government area. In fulfilling this mission, Council plays many important roles within the community.

**Service Provider:** Council provides many services to the community from roads and waste services to libraries and recreational facilities. Services evolve over time and it is the Council's mission to ensure that these services are appropriate, delivered efficiently, and designed with the customer at the centre.

**Regulator:** Council has a number of statutory obligations detailed in numerous regulations and legislative Acts. Council also makes local laws to ensure that the Shire is well governed. In fulfilling its role as regulator, Council will utilise an outcomes based approach that balances the needs of the community with social and natural justice.

**Funder:** Council often partly funds services, events or community organisations through grants, donations, subsidies and in-kind support. Council will apply robust governance to ensure that such funding is fair and appropriate.

**Advocate:** Council makes representation on behalf of the community on important issues, funding opportunities, projects and programs. Council will use its influence to seek the best outcomes for the community.

**Facilitator:** Council often brings stakeholders together on important issues, projects or for service delivery. In this role, Council can act as a mediator, connector, collaborator or initiator.

**Information Provider:** Council provides the community with important information on services, events, policies, rules, strategies, and any other relevant data that helps the community to stay informed. In performing this role, Council seeks to be open and transparent.

**Agent:** On occasion, Council delivers services or builds infrastructure on behalf of other levels of government or organisations.

**Builder/Owner:** Council makes a significant investment every year in the infrastructure that underpins the Shire through its capital works program. Council will manage its assets with appropriate frameworks and deliver its projects through robust project management.

**Custodian:** Council owns and manages infrastructure, facilities, reserves, resources and natural areas. In fulfilling its role as custodian, Council will be mindful of the community, the economy, the environment, and good governance.

Our mission is to balance all of these roles while we deliver on the vision of this Council in an efficient and effective manner.

## VALUES

The values of Council underpin its delivery of its vision, mission, strategy, and service delivery. Council has articulated two sets of complimentary values. The first set includes those values that govern the way we interact with the community and the principles by which we will implement this plan. Importantly, our internal values highlight the way in which we interact with each other to ensure that we are delivering customer focussed and efficient services.

## Corporate/Community Values

### **Accountability**

Council will stand by the decisions it makes and accept responsibility for the actions it takes. Council will implement open and robust reporting.

### **Integrity**

Council will conduct its business with transparency and honesty. Council will be objective in its decision making and consider all relevant information.

### **Inclusive**

Council will respect the community and consider all viewpoints. Council will consult with the community. Council will seek to unify its constituents and create a sense of belonging for all of the community's diverse groups.

### **Ethical**

Council will consider and understand the impacts of its decisions on all stakeholders and be guided by the principle of social justice.

### **People Focussed**

Council will put people at the centre of decision making. Council will implement services from a customer perspective.

## The Way We Work Values

### **Teamwork**

We will work effectively and efficiently together to solve problems across the organisation and to achieve the Corporate Goals.

### **Honesty**

We will conduct ourselves in an open and transparent manner with the highest level of integrity.

### **Fairness**

We will uphold the Local Government Principles and provide consistency in all facets of Council's business.

### **Respect**

We will deliver services with due consideration to the needs of our diverse communities, people, environment and culture.

## Corporate Plan Framework

### Purpose of the Corporate Plan

The Douglas Shire Corporate Plan is a set of strategic themes and goals that will guide the Council's strategies, policies, programs, services and capital works for the next five years. It is a statutory requirement under Section 165 of the Queensland Local Government Regulation 2012 to formulate a plan every five years. It is also a fundamental principle of effective organisational leadership to develop, implement and review key strategies.

The Corporate Plan is Council's commitment to the community of its intent and direction. While it is primarily focussed on strategies and actions for the community, it also includes themes on organisational governance and management that underpin delivery. This is in recognition of the fact that many of Council's resources are involved in the day to day operations of Council on which the community relies.

The Corporate Plan is not a detailed business or action plan, but rather, it is a road map for the future based on key themes. Each year Council develops an Operational Plan that details the actions that Council will take during the year to deliver on its Strategic Themes and Goals.

### Development of the Corporate Plan

In order to develop the Corporate Plan, Council undertook the following activities:

#### Survey

To ensure that Council understood the concerns and priorities of the community, Council undertook a Shire wide survey. With a response rate of over 800 ratepayers, the results provided Council with a clear picture of community expectations. Some key insights from the survey are:

- Community members expect Council to deliver on the basics: roads, drains, footpaths and waste services.
- Open spaces and Shire beautification are important to residents for liveability and vital to our tourism brand.
- Our residents see a strong link between the economy and the environment. Key concerns include:
  - The lack of diversity in our economy which creates a sense of economic vulnerability.



- Intense competition within the tourism industry and the need to ensure the Shire's brand is distinct with the experience delivering on expectations.
- Protection of our natural environment.

### **Engagement**

Following the survey, Council conducted community engagement sessions to share the results and gather insights into the findings. These sessions confirmed and expanded on the survey results noted above.

### **Environmental Assessment**

Strategies must consider the environment in which they will operate. To ensure that the Corporate Plan incorporates external factors that may influence and impact on the strategic themes and actions, Council considered political, economic, social/demographic, technological, environmental, and legal/regulatory trends. While there are numerous influences at the international, national, state and local level, Council considered those issues that most directly impact on the Shire.

### **Current State Analysis**

Council's current Corporate Plan is coming to an end and it was important to consider the progress of the current plan, what worked, and what could be improved. Council also reviewed organisational strengths and weaknesses.

### **Workshop**

Using all of the information above, Council conducted a two day workshop with Councillors and the Management Team to develop a Vision Statement, set the values by which the Corporate Plan will be governed and determined strategic themes, goals, and initiatives.

The resulting Corporate Plan is presented in the next section.



The Douglas Shire Strategic Framework includes five strategic themes. The themes work together to deliver on the Council Vision Statement. At the heart of the themes are the three pillars of community, economy and environment. These three themes are interrelated and cannot be considered in isolation from one another. For example, a strong economy supports a healthy community while an engaged community helps to foster a strong economy. Similarly, our communities are essential to help protect our cherished environment while our beautiful and thriving environment drives economic opportunity and supports healthy communities.

In developing plans, initiatives and programs for the community, economy and the environment, Council will ensure that it openly engages with the community, implement sound planning strategies and frameworks, and partner with its stakeholders. The best outcomes are dependent on these strong relationships and will guide the way in which we implement the Corporate Plan.

The entire Corporate Plan is underpinned by robust governance and efficient management of Council business. Council understands that the community expects delivery of the basics and that customer service is paramount. Consistent with the Council Vision Statement, Council must make long term financial decisions so that Council is in a sound financial position for future generations.

Under each theme are goals and initiatives that support those goals. The goals and initiatives guide the development of the annual Operational Plan.

## Theme 1

### Celebrating Our Communities

Douglas Shire Council embraces the diversity of our communities and values the contribution that all people make to the Shire. We recognise that it is a core strength of the region. We acknowledge our past so that it may guide us in the future. We recognise the wrongs done to our Indigenous community and we actively seek to reconcile so that we may all benefit from and enjoy our Shire. We acknowledge early European settlers who forged an agricultural base for our economy and we welcome all new arrivals as part of our broader community.

#### Goal 1

We will celebrate the diversity of our community and ensure that all infrastructure, programs, and services are underpinned with inclusiveness and accessibility.

#### Initiatives

1. Develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan.
2. Continue Indigenous Signage program.
3. Work with the Mossman District Nursing Home Committee to deliver on the vision of the nursing home and advocate for additional aged care services, including the need for allied health facilities.
4. Develop a Disability Action Plan and ensure that all infrastructure and services are designed with accessibility in mind.
5. Ensure Library Services continue to develop literacy programs for young people, provide digital literacy, book clubs and school activity programs to improve reading and technology skills for young people.
6. Implement an Indigenous trainee program at Council.
7. Implement the community facilities revitalisation program.
8. Continue support for the expression of indigenous culture throughout Douglas.

#### Goal 2

We will deliver programs and services that protect and enhance the liveability of our beautiful Shire.

#### Initiatives

1. Implement a Shire wide beautification program to renew parks, gardens and open spaces.
2. Continue to upgrade and improve footpaths that connect neighbourhoods and people.
3. Develop open space principles and guidelines to ensure that landscapes and public spaces are developed and maintained with

appropriate reference to the natural environment that underpins the liveability and beauty of our Shire.

4. Consider an Adopt-a-Street and Adopt-a-Park program.
5. Develop a gravel road sealing program based on a multi criteria asset management and service level assessment.
6. Implement Butt it Bin it program to reduce cigarette discarding in the Shire.

### Goal 3

We will develop programs that promote health, well-being and safety in the community.

#### Initiatives

1. Build capacity of sporting and recreation clubs and committee members in the Shire to enhance access for the community to engage in sport, recreation and healthy activities.
2. Develop a Sport and Recreation Strategy.
3. Develop master plans for the Mossman Show Grounds and The Port Douglas Sports Precinct that align with the Sports and Recreation Strategy.
4. Promote and increase facilities, programs, and activities that enhance female participation.
5. Continue to advocate for a domestic and family violence shelter.
6. Develop and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan.
7. Redevelop the Mossman recreation precinct including the Mossman pool facilities.
8. Implement additional bike paths for recreation and connectivity.
9. Implement additional safe road crossing at schools and other key points of accessibility in the Shire.

### Goal 4

We will promote arts and cultural programs and events that bring vibrancy to the community and compliment the tourist experience.

#### Initiatives

1. Adopt an Events Policy that supports and attracts events to the Shire which focuses on arts and culture benefits.
2. Refresh Carnivale for the next 25 years.
3. Implement public art programs and develop place making opportunities.
4. Develop an annual sponsor prospectus for Council supported events and programs.
5. Enhance Council's Grants themes to support new initiatives and pursuits of excellence in the area of arts and culture to support individuals, businesses and community organisations.

6. Partner with community groups to implement a cultural festival for the Shire that celebrates art and culture.

## Theme 2

### Fostering Sustainable Economic Growth

A robust economy is at the heart of a thriving community and enables investment in environmental protection. While our remoteness is a key attribute, it also presents challenges for attracting new business and investment. We must also meet the challenges of fierce competition in the tourism sector. Council will partner with industry to build, diversify and promote the Douglas economy. Council will design and deliver infrastructure, strategies and services that support the local economy and businesses.

#### Goal 1

We will build appropriate infrastructure and deliver services that connect and support businesses.

#### Initiatives

1. Monitor opportunities for public transport to connect the Shire.
2. Develop a master plan for a water park precinct in Port Douglas. Seek State and Federal grant funding to deliver the outcomes from the plan.
3. Partner with State Government to deliver Phase 1 and 2 of the Wangetti Trail including assisting relevant Traditional Owners to realise employment and cultural ambitions supported by the Trail.
4. Implement the new Daintree ferry contract and required infrastructure improvements as well as enhanced amenity and service.
5. Advocate for and support the development of the Mossman Botanical Gardens.
6. Deliver Light Up Macrossan Street and Front Street projects.
7. Consider options for car parking in Port Douglas.
8. Analyse feasibility of free Wi-Fi on Macrossan Street and Front Street.

#### Goal 2

We will work with partners to promote the Shire as the World's leading sustainable tropical destination and encourage business investment.

#### Initiatives

1. Undertake actions to achieve Eco-Destination accreditation.
2. Develop a short term accommodation policy.
3. Work with Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and the wedding industry to promote the Shire.
4. Support and work in partnership with Tourism Port Douglas Daintree to develop an active media campaign to promote the healthiness of the environment and rebut adverse media.

5. Look for grant opportunities in Tourism and Events Queensland to improve tourism image and visitor numbers during quiet seasons.

### Goal 3

We will develop strategies that seek to diversify the Shire's economic base.

#### Initiatives

1. Explore strategies to enhance opportunities as a filming location.
2. Support agricultural diversification.
3. Develop plans for a health and well being precinct.
4. Partner with aged care and allied health businesses to provide wrap around services to the aged care nursing home in Mossman.

## Theme 3

### Leading Environmental Stewardship

Our visitors and residents deeply value the unparalleled environment in which we live. We recognise our responsibility in protecting and preserving our natural world for generations to come. We understand the strong link between the environment and the economy: they are interdependent. Douglas Shire will be at the forefront of environmental protection by developing strategies, setting policies, and working with all stakeholders to become the envy of and to inspire locations across Australia and the World.

#### Goal 1

We will protect our sensitive environment and plan for the impact of climate change.

#### Initiatives

1. Undertake actions recommended in the Resilient Coast Strategic Plan.
2. Find environmentally friendly alternatives to glyphosate products and implement along with additional steam weeders so that the Shire can be at the forefront of environmentally friendly open space practices.
3. Undertake actions recommended in the Biosecurity Management Plan 2017-2025.
4. Review and adopt an updated Biosecurity Management Plan 2021 – 2025 and ensure that it targets the Shire's flora and fauna invasive species problems.
5. Develop and implement a Plastic Free Douglas strategy.
6. Adopt an Events Policy that rewards events that have eco-friendly activities and environmentally sustainable practices.

#### Goal 2

We will implement programs that reduce and offset our environmental footprint.

#### Initiatives

1. Implement Reef Friendly carbon neutral strategy.
2. Undertake remaining actions in the 2017-2020 Corporate Sustainability Strategy and update it for the next five years.
3. Continue to develop renewable energy options for Council operations including a solar engineering study for Port Douglas Waste Water Treatment Plant.
4. Develop a Waste Strategy with the aim of moving towards a circular waste economy.
5. Implement a Cape Tribulation transfer station.



6. Investigate waste management options for waste streams in anticipation of the completion of the current Bedminster disposal contract in 2026.

### Goal 3

We will continue to build water infrastructure so that the Douglas Shire may enjoy water security and water quality.

#### Initiatives

1. Develop a Smart Water Network to enhance existing infrastructure, improve efficiency and reliability and reduce water loss.
2. Continue refurbishment and upgrades to sewer network infrastructure including main replacement, house connection branch relining and manhole raising in order to reduce stormwater entering network and improve the operating efficiency of wastewater treatment plants.
3. Continue to implement water intake resilience planning and upgrades to improve water security and quality for the community.
4. Continue to provide high quality water to the residents of Douglas Shire inline with DSC Drinking Water Quality Management Plan and regulatory requirements whilst implementing innovative solutions for process improvements.
5. Pursue opportunities to expand the use of recycled water from our wastewater treatment plants.
6. Establish a working group comprised of Council, State, primary producer representatives and natural resource groups to determine the best method to ensure effective, timely and affordable rehabilitation or preventative work is able to be delivered along waterways in the Douglas Shire.

### Goal 4

We will partner with the community to educate and monitor

#### Initiatives

1. Implement a recycling and waste education campaign to increase recycling rates, reduce contamination and reduce waste to landfill.
2. Promote government initiatives through sport and recreation activities such as Ride to School, Walk to School and Ride to Work days that has a direct affect on carbon emissions.
3. Implement a water sustainability education program to inform the community, particularly school children, of the water cycle and how everyone utilises water and the impacts on the Reef from our water choices.
4. Conduct education and enforcement programs to protect our beachfront vegetation.

5. Conduct education and enforcement programs relating to water quality entering waterways and the GBR lagoon including sediment from the urban environment.

#### Goal 5

We will recognise the contribution that Traditional Owners make to the protection of the environment.

#### Initiatives

1. Complete the transfer of Blue Pools to Traditional Owners.
2. Support the implementation of Traditional Owners Ranger Programs in the Shire.
3. In matters of significant importance regarding the environment, we will endeavour to engage, consult and share information with the traditional custodians.

## Theme 4

### Inclusive Engagement, Planning and Partnerships

In delivering for our communities, economy and environment, Douglas Shire will ensure open and transparent engagement and communication. We will develop robust strategic plans and we will partner with our community and key stakeholders.

#### Goal 1

We will implement transparent decision making through inclusive community engagement and communication.

#### Initiatives

1. Develop a five year Communications Strategy to improve communications and enhance our digital platform including the implementation of the MyDouglas program.
2. Update Community Engagement Policy to reflect IAP2 standards.

#### Goal 2

We will develop forward looking strategies for the future of our communities and we will ensure balanced and appropriate planning decisions.

#### Initiatives

1. Develop a 'Blueprint' master plan for Port Douglas.
2. Develop a 'Mossman 2025' plan with consideration of impacts of the Mossman Mill.
3. Develop a 30 year community plan for north of the Daintree River.
4. Enhance existing Planning Scheme to promote investment while protecting the environment.

#### Goal 3

We will recognise the critical role that our partners play in planning and delivering vital programs and services.

#### Initiatives

1. Partner with AusIndustry, Regional Development Australia, Australian and State Government departments to showcase the region and promote start-ups in the Shire.
2. Partner with businesses and Registered Training Organisations to promote entrepreneurship.
3. Nurture existing partnerships with Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and Tourism Queensland and Government(s) to implement programs, workshops and skill development in new initiatives and programs.
4. Support Community Group programs that benefit community outcomes.

5. Support and work in partnership with the Douglas Chamber of Commerce to grow its position as an economical driver with in the Shire.

## Theme 5

### Robust Governance and Efficient Service Delivery

Strong governance and financial management are the foundations of the way in which Council will conduct its business and implement the initiatives of the Corporate Plan.

#### Goal 1

We will conduct Council business in an open and transparent manner with strong oversight and open reporting.

#### Initiatives

1. Develop a Project Decision Framework Policy.
2. Introduce new grant themes and oversight.
3. Establish an Audit Committee.

#### Goal 2

We will put the customer at the centre of our service delivery and process improvement as we deliver efficient and appropriate services based on community expectations.

#### Initiatives

1. Survey community expectations.
2. Develop and implement a Customer Experience strategy.
3. Implement a continuous improvement program.
4. Develop an organisational culture strategy.
5. Implement Future IT transition project to improve digital experience for customers and efficiency of service delivery.
6. Develop a Rates Hardship Policy.

#### Goal 3

We will make sound financial decisions by ensuring robust strategic planning, financial management and reporting.

#### Initiatives

1. Prepare Asset Management Plans for all Council assets.
2. Deliver yearly budgets that minimise rates rises while balancing the need for service delivery.
3. Develop and monitor a long term financial plan that ensures the financial sustainability of Douglas Shire Council.
4. Implement a new Certified Agreement for Council.

#### Goal 4

We will work with our communities to ensure they are informed, empowered and supported so that they are resilient to the impacts of disaster events. Through our leadership and capabilities we will plan, prepare, respond and recover from events so as to minimise the impact on people, property, the environment, and our economic stability.

#### Initiatives

1. Install new infrastructure throughout the Shire to allow for increased intelligence on rainfall and transport impacts to improve preparation, response and resilience for Council's Incident Management Team and the Douglas communities.
2. Investigate potential to implement Resilient Benchmarking across the Shire to better equip communities in environmental, social and economic challenges and enhance planning in hazard preparedness.