



CAIRNS & GREAT BARRIER REEF MAJOR EVENTS STRATEGY

2026 – 2035

TOURISM
TROPICAL NORTH
QUEENSLAND



Cairns
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL AND
TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND
ACKNOWLEDGES WE WORK, LIVE AND PLAY ON
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LAND.
WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST,
PRESENT AND FUTURE.**

SHINE ON GIMUY



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Linked to this strategy is an internal document capturing the consultation and operational actions to support the strategy.

Cover Image: BE Social Fest

MESSAGE

FROM THE MAYOR OF CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

The Cairns region is on the brink of an extraordinary new chapter. As we look toward 2032 and beyond, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to share our tropical home with the world. Showcasing the landscapes that awe us, the culture that grounds us, and the spirit that brings our community together.

This Major Events Strategy is more than a plan; it is our shared story about who we are and who we aspire to be. It imagines a future where world-class events don't just entertain, but drive economic growth, strengthen our identity, and shine a global spotlight on our region.

With the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games on the horizon, and Cairns proudly stepping forward as an official Co-Host City, we are preparing for an unprecedented moment in time. But our ambitions go further; our festivals, sporting events, and cultural celebrations will continue to fill our streets, venues, and hearts year-round, cementing Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef as Australia's premier tropical events destination.

Our partnership with Tourism Tropical North Queensland shows what is possible when we unite behind a bold vision. By harnessing our collective talent, passion, and resources, we will deliver benefits that reach well beyond visiting crowds. This is about building a thriving, confident region that every resident is proud to call home.

The investments we make today will shape the legacy of tomorrow: stronger infrastructure, more jobs, global recognition, and a deeper sense of community. I invite you to join us as we write the next chapter in the Cairns story, one where major events leave lasting memories, economic value, and benefits for our people.



Amy Eden

Mayor of Cairns Regional Council



IRONMAN CAIRNS



FROM THE CEO OF TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND

Major events celebrating Tropical North Queensland's natural environment, rich culture and modern infrastructure play a crucial role in our region's visitor economy.

These sporting, music and cultural events extend the visitor season beyond the peak times and diversify the region's appeal, playing a pivotal role in introducing new audiences to Tropical North Queensland.

They also encourage visitors who have not considered the region before to return with family and friends, developing a loyal repeat guest market.

In 2024-2025, major events contributed an estimated \$66.7 million to the Tropical North Queensland economy. Within the Cairns Local Government Area, these events attracted nearly 25,000 visitors and generated more than 119,000 visitor nights.

The extensive media coverage that comes with these events is another significant advantage. More than \$12.7 million in publicity was recorded in 2024-2025, further elevating the profile of Tropical North Queensland on the national and international stage.

Beyond the visitor economy, major events generate long-term benefits by driving year-round employment in tourism and by securing investment in facilities that our community continues to enjoy well after the events conclude.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland is proud to partner with Cairns Regional Council on the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Events Strategy 2026-2035 to position Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef as Australia's premier tropical event destination.

Mark Olsen

Chief Executive Officer of
Tourism Tropical North Queensland





THIS STRATEGY OUTLINES THE FUTURE OF MAJOR EVENTS IN CAIRNS

"Major Events in the context of destination and tourism strategy refer to significant, organised occasions that attract substantial visitation, generate economic impact, and enhance a region's profile. These events typically have high production values, attract national media coverage, and possess the scale to influence travel behaviour".

INTRODUCTION

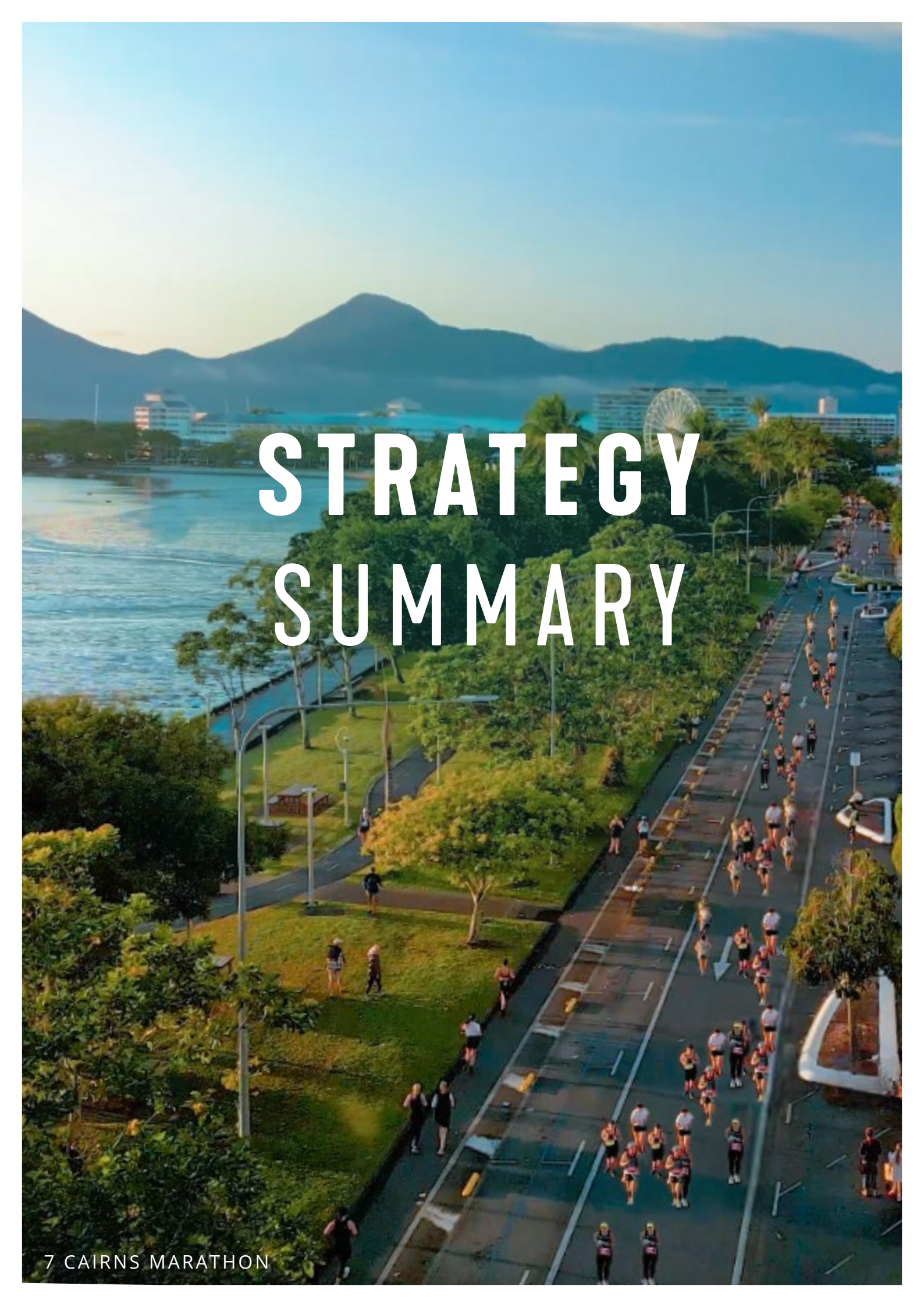
The Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Major Events Strategy 2026-2035 represents the collaboration between Cairns Regional Council (CRC) and Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) and is designed to position our region as Australia's leading tropical events destination. This strategy serves as both an aspirational vision and a practical roadmap that will guide public investment, industry development, and destination marketing efforts across our diverse region.

Building upon the foundations established in the TNQ Events Prioritisation Strategy (2015-2020) and the C&GBR Event Strategy (2025), this document reflects both our achievements to date and our ambitious vision for the future. The previous strategy delivered remarkable outcomes, including an 18% increase in event-driven visitation, the successful attraction of signature events such as IRONMAN Cairns, and the development of world-class event infrastructure.

What sets this strategy apart is its genuinely regional perspective, embracing not only the city of Cairns, but the broader tropical region. This holistic approach recognises that visitors experience our destination as a unified region and that events hosted throughout Tropical North Queensland deliver benefits across municipal boundaries.

The development of this strategy has been underpinned by significant consultation, with input from many tourism organisations and community groups. This comprehensive engagement process included targeted workshops with event owners, venue operators, and service providers, as well as detailed interviews with event industry leaders.





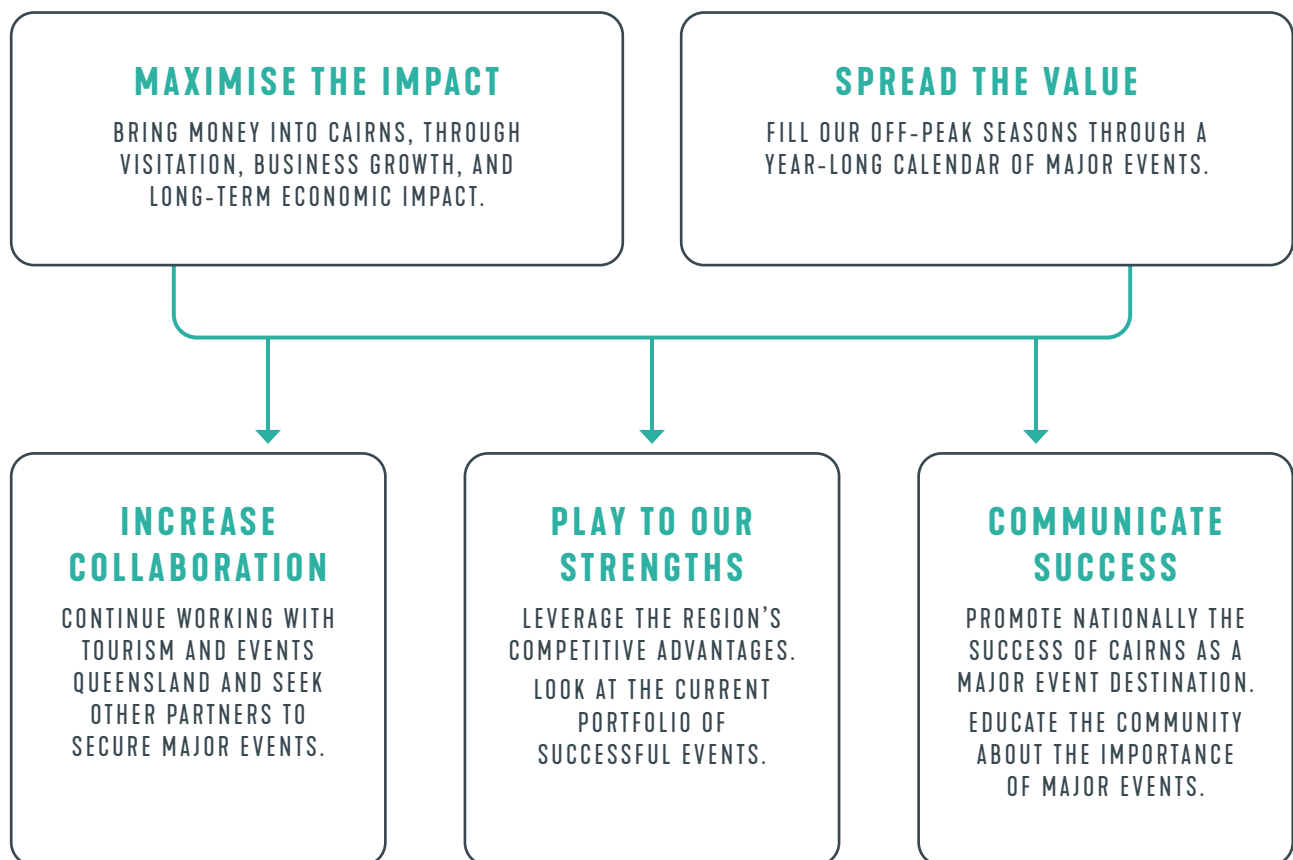
STRATEGY SUMMARY

7 CAIRNS MARATHON

OUR VISION

Maximise the economic impact of Major Events through a nationally recognised calendar that benefits the region year-round.

OUR MAJOR EVENTS IN CAIRNS WILL ACHIEVE THESE GOALS



NOT INCLUDED IN THE GOALS AND ACTIONS OF THIS STRATEGY:

Community Events: are local celebrations, festivals, and gatherings that primarily serve residents and build social cohesion. These events are managed by various community organisations and the Council's Community Partnerships team. Grants are available outside of this strategy to support these events and community activities.

Business Events: include conferences, meetings, incentive programs, and corporate gatherings that attract professional delegates. These events are coordinated by the Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef Convention Bureau within TTNQ's team in collaboration with the Cairns Convention Centre and the regional business events sector.



STRATEGIC FOUNDATION

This strategy positions Cairns to leverage events as powerful catalysts for economic diversification, community vibrancy, and global connectivity. By building upon our proven infrastructure, strategic partnerships, and unique natural assets, we will establish Tropical North Queensland as an internationally renowned destination for events that showcase our natural wonders, cultural heritage and tropical environment.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Major Events currently generate \$38.6 million in annual direct and incremental visitor expenditure for the Cairns Local government area, and over \$66.7 million to the wider Tropical North Queensland region. Strategic event positioning will maximise the impact by targeting seasonal fluctuations in visitation, creating year-round economic sustainability and supporting local jobs.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

We will deliver clear benefits to residents of the Cairns region, tangible returns on their investment in supporting events, continued industry growth that creates local jobs, and more stable visitor numbers throughout the year. Strategic hosting of events during off-peak seasons will help smooth out the ups and downs of the tourism cycle, providing local businesses with more consistent revenue and year-round sustainability.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Our five core goals focus on maximising impact, spreading value across the year, increasing collaboration, playing to our competitive strengths and communicating success. This approach ensures that every event investment delivers maximum benefit for both the community and the broader regional economy.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games present an unprecedented opportunity for Cairns as an official Co-Host City, providing a platform to showcase our capabilities to a global audience while creating lasting infrastructure.



WELCOME TO CAIRNS

SKYRAIL RAINFOREST CABLEWAY

CAIRNS & GREAT BARRIER REEF: A PREMIER DESTINATION FOR MAJOR AND REGIONAL EVENTS

Cairns & Great Barrier Reef is uniquely positioned to host major and regional events, offering a compelling blend of world-class natural assets, cultural depth and established visitor infrastructure. Framed by two World Heritage-listed areas — the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforest — the region offers a distinctive and memorable backdrop for a diverse range of events, from arts and culture to sporting and tropical lifestyle festivals.

As a destination, Cairns offers strong air connectivity, high-quality accommodation stock and purpose-built venues, including a centrally located convention centre and a growing portfolio of flexible event spaces. The compact, walkable city layout enhances event travellers' experience, with key facilities, dining, entertainment, and waterfront areas all within easy reach.

The region's appeal is enhanced by its tropical climate, relaxed atmosphere, and a lifestyle that reflects the diversity and vibrancy of Tropical North Queensland. Visitors can access authentic experiences that range from Indigenous-led cultural programs to adventure-based activities, enriching the event offering.

Visitors attending events in the region have the opportunity to engage in activities such as snorkelling or diving on the Great Barrier Reef, relaxing on idyllic islands, or exploring the rainforest with Indigenous guides who share knowledge of bush medicine and native foods. Aerial experiences, including gondola rides above the rainforest canopy and hot air ballooning over the Atherton Tablelands, complement high-adrenaline options such as skydiving, bungee jumping, jet boating and white-water rafting.

Tropical North Queensland is home to 60% of Queensland's 'Best of Queensland' Indigenous tourism experiences, providing a rich cultural backdrop to event programs and the touring experience.

The region also offers strong pre- and post-event appeal through its vibrant dining and entertainment precincts. In Cairns, the Esplanade precinct, rooftop bars, laneway cocktail venues and night markets create an energetic yet laid-back evening atmosphere. Meanwhile, daytime activities can be spent exploring local breweries, distilleries, and tropical produce markets.

Nature-based wellness and outdoor fitness are readily accessible through rainforest trails, including the Arrow Track, Bump Track and the Cairns Esplanade precinct, which offer waterfront views. Wildlife experiences, such as koala interactions, kangaroo feeding, reptile encounters and crocodile feeding demonstrations, further enhance the destination's family-friendly and immersive credentials.

The destination's natural beauty is complemented by a high level of visitor infrastructure, making it well-suited to hosting major events while encouraging extended stays. The positioning of Cairns & Great Barrier Reef creates a strong foundation for encouraging delegates and event attendees to arrive early or stay on after their event to explore the region.



Cairns & Great Barrier Reef also supports sustainable and eco-certified tourism, aligning well with the growing demand for responsible event hosting. The region's tourism operators and suppliers have demonstrated strong capabilities in delivering environmentally conscious, culturally respectful and high-quality visitor experiences, providing added value for event organisers and attendees alike.

The presence of unique natural landmarks not only enhances the destination's brand appeal but also offers significant media value and marketing leverage for event promotion.

Iconic imagery and storytelling opportunities associated with the reef, rainforest and tropical lifestyle contribute to the region's standout positioning within the national and international event landscape.

Cairns & Great Barrier Reef deliver a diverse range of visitor experiences, underpinned by eco-certified tours, rich cultural heritage and a relaxed tropical lifestyle. The destination's appeal lies in its ability to combine world-class natural attractions with accessible adventure, unique wildlife encounters and quality local food and beverage offerings.

TOURISM & VISITOR ECONOMY

Cairns and Tropical North Queensland welcome 2.8 million visitors annually, contributing \$4.5 billion to the regional economy and establishing the destination as one of Australia's premier tropical gateways. The international market, which drew over 900,000 visitors prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily comes from Japan, the USA, Europe, the UK, and China, attracted by our unique combination of World Heritage natural wonders and sophisticated tourism infrastructure.

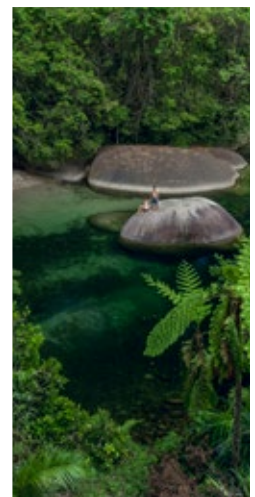
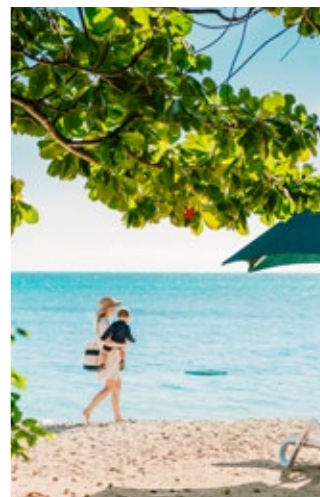
The domestic market of 2 million overnight visitors demonstrates strong growth from southern capitals, with travellers seeking authentic experiences and year-round tropical weather. Visitors stay an average of 4.2 nights (domestic) and 9.1 nights (international).

Each event has a Net Promoter Score exceeding 75, and more than 90% of residents agree or strongly agree that these activities are beneficial to the community.

REGIONAL PROFILE

The Cairns Local Government Area has over 178,000 residents across 1,687 km² of diverse geography, spanning coastal plains, rainforest and tablelands. This substantial population base provides both a ready workforce for event delivery and a local audience for events, while the broader Far North Queensland catchment encompasses over 300,000 residents. Cairns Local Government Area's Gross Regional Product is estimated to be \$12.23 billion, which has grown at an average of 4.6% in the past four years since COVID-19, demonstrating the stability that event organisers value when making long-term commitments.

Cultural diversity defines the region's character, with over 70 nationalities represented and 22% of residents born overseas, creating a cosmopolitan environment that resonates with international visitors and event participants. The 10% Indigenous population maintains strong connections to their traditional culture, offering authentic experiences that are unavailable elsewhere.



CAIRNS AS AN EVENT DESTINATION



MUNRO MARTIN PARKLANDS

OUTDOOR EVENT SPACES

The **Esplanade Lagoon and Parklands** offer 2.5 kilometres of premium waterfront space along the Coral Sea, providing exceptional venues for major festivals, public events, and outdoor celebrations with stunning ocean backdrops. **Cazaly's Stadium** hosts numerous high-profile sporting events, boasting a capacity of 13,500 spectators and featuring an international-level sporting field. The Major Events Precinct, encompassing the **Cairns Showgrounds** and **Barlow Park**, regularly hosts large-scale events. A comprehensive master plan to enhance the entire precinct is set to commence soon. Barlow Park, a premier multi-purpose sports facility with capacity for up to 15,000 spectators, is also scheduled for significant upgrades in preparation for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. For performance

events, **Munro Martin Parklands'** natural amphitheatre design and staging areas make it ideal for mid-sized live performances with excellent audience viewing. The region offers a diverse range of outdoor event options, spanning various scales and settings. **Smithfield Mountain Bike Park** features 40 kilometres of Australia's finest mountain bike trails for outdoor recreation events, while the **Great Barrier Reef Drive** provides 140 kilometres of spectacular coastal scenery perfect for scenic road events. **Palm Cove Beach** delivers an iconic coconut palm-lined setting for exclusive gatherings, and Cairns Regional Council manages **over 20 additional parks and public spaces** throughout the region, providing flexible venue options across diverse landscapes and capacities to suit different event types and sizes.

SIGNATURE VENUES

The recently expanded **Cairns Convention Centre** anchors our event infrastructure with a capacity of over 5,000, multi-use spaces, state-of-the-art technology and panoramic views of the Trinity Inlet. This world-class facility provides the foundation for concerts, conventions and sporting events, while offering the flexibility to accommodate a diverse range of event formats and sizes.

The **Cairns Performing Arts Centre** features a 940-seat main auditorium with exceptional acoustics and technical capabilities, making it ideal for performances, presentations, and award ceremonies. The unique **Tanks Arts Centre**, featuring repurposed World War II fuel tanks, provides atmospheric spaces for cultural events, exhibitions and intimate performances that create memorable experiences impossible to replicate elsewhere.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Tourism Tropical North Queensland provides comprehensive destination marketing and event support, leveraging extensive networks and expertise to position events for maximum success.

Cairns Airport maintains direct connections to major domestic and international markets, with 4.9 million annual passenger movements and modern terminal facilities including premium lounges.

ACCESSIBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

Cairns International Airport serves as a gateway with direct flights from major Australian cities, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand, Fiji, Hong Kong, and connections from Europe, Central Asia, and the USA.

The compact, walkable CBD is positioned near major venues, supported by comprehensive public transport networks and specialised event transport solutions, including shuttle services and a dedicated cruise terminal for marine arrivals.

WHY DOES CAIRNS HOST EVENTS?



PRIMARY BENEFITS: ECONOMIC IMPACT

DIRECT ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

Major Events are a pillar of Cairns' Economic Development Strategy, generating an impressive \$66.7 million in annual direct and incremental visitor expenditure.

Major events drive accommodation occupancy rates above 85%, resulting in significant revenue surges across the hospitality sector. Strategic event scheduling addresses seasonal visitation patterns, with targeted programming helping to boost occupancy outside of peak season. This smoothing effect creates greater stability for the 1,800+ full-time equivalent jobs directly supported by the events sector, strengthening year-round employment rather than seasonal work, and more broadly for the 7,500+ employed in tourism.

INDIRECT ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Events create substantial economic ripple effects that extend well beyond initial visitor spending, with every dollar spent in events generating \$2.20 in broader regional economic activity. This multiplier effect demonstrates how events stimulate local businesses, employment and supply chains throughout the community. Major events also drive strategic infrastructure investment that benefits the region long after the events conclude. Examples include the mountain bike infrastructure developed for Crankworx at Smithfield Mountain Bike Park and lighting upgrades at Barlow Park to support National Rugby League (NRL) games, creating lasting improvements that enhance both visitor experiences and the quality of life for residents.

Events also deliver significant marketing value through earned media coverage worth \$12.7 million annually, achieving promotional outcomes that would be prohibitively expensive through traditional advertising channels. This media exposure generates a reach of over 449 million impressions annually, showcasing Cairns to global audiences and introducing the destination to potential visitors and investors who might not have considered the region otherwise. These indirect benefits create lasting value that continues to drive economic activity and destination awareness long after each event concludes.

SECONDARY BENEFITS: COMMUNITY & REGIONAL POSITIONING

COMMUNITY PRIDE & SOCIAL COHESION

Events play a crucial role in defining Cairns' identity, fostering community pride and creating shared experiences that transcend social and cultural boundaries. From small community celebrations to major international festivals, these gatherings strengthen the social fabric, building connections between diverse community members and creating inclusive spaces where all residents can participate and contribute.

The vibrant events sector engages our community members as volunteers, creating opportunities for meaningful contribution that enhance personal wellbeing while delivering economic value.

Indigenous and multicultural events celebrate and preserve the region's rich traditions, ensuring cultural practices continue to thrive and evolve while educating visitors about the deep heritage that makes Cairns unique.

WHAT FACTORS DRIVE US?



TIME OF YEAR

Cairns' tropical climate creates natural visitation patterns that present both opportunities and challenges for the regional economy. While the winter season (June-September) attracts strong visitation from southern domestic markets seeking winter warmth, the summer season (October-May) offers lush, vibrant landscapes and exceptional value opportunities.

This seasonal fluctuation drives our strategic approach to event development and acquisition, with a deliberate focus on scheduling major events during shoulder and low seasons to flatten demand curves. Analysis reveals that well-positioned events during the February-May and October-November periods can increase regional occupancy, creating critical business sustainability during otherwise quieter shoulder periods.

The region has experienced considerable success with this approach through signature events like Crankworx Cairns in May 2025, which generated over 28,000 room nights during what was historically a softer visitation period. For the accommodation sector, these strategic event placements transform marginal operating months into profitable periods, enabling businesses to maintain year-round employment and service quality, while providing event organisers with competitive pricing and premium venue availability.

LEVERAGING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Cairns' Major Events Strategy relies upon powerful partnerships that amplify resources, extend reach, and create competitive advantage in the national and international event landscape. The close alignment between Cairns Regional Council and Tourism Tropical North Queensland creates a unified approach to event attraction and delivery, streamlining decision-making and resource allocation while presenting a coordinated face to event organisers.

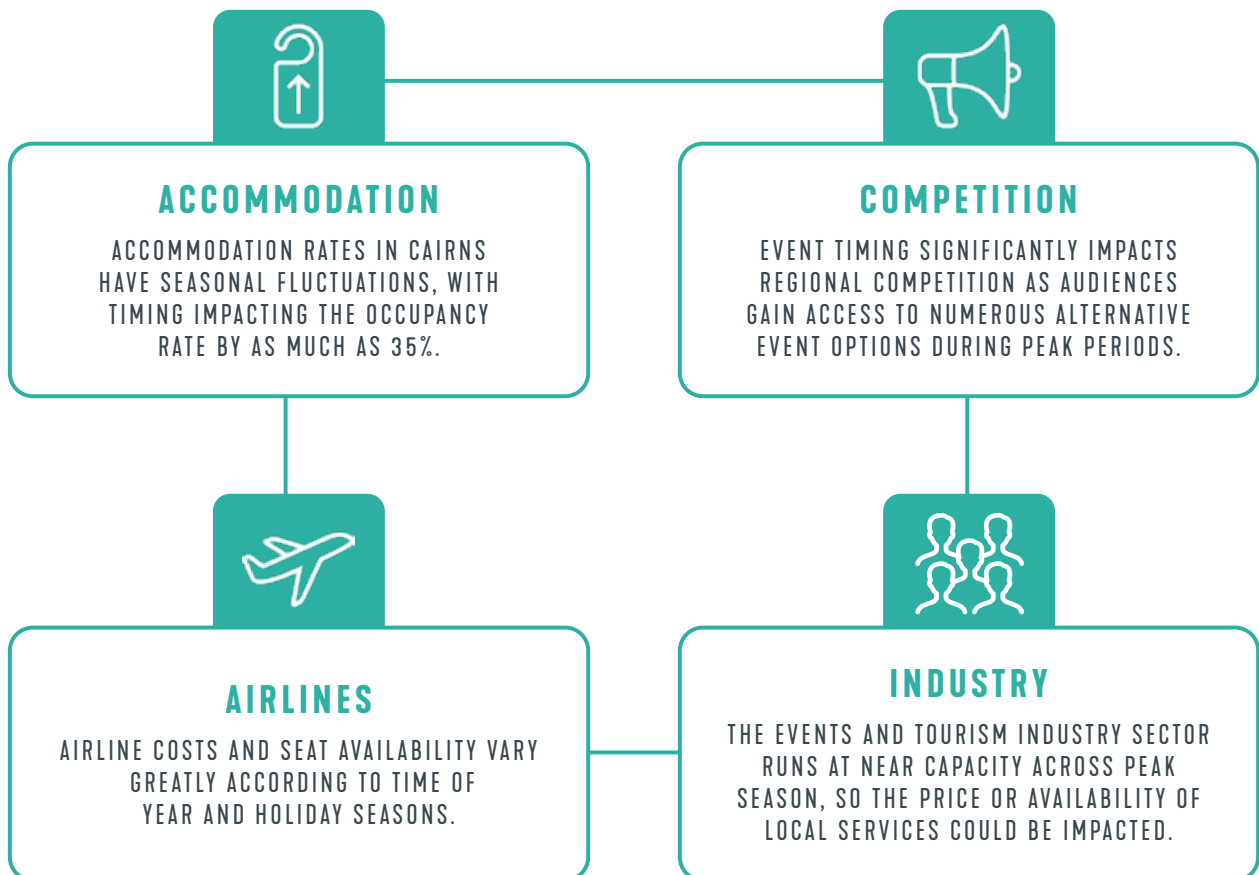
This partnership model extends to state and federal bodies, with strategic relationships with Tourism and Events Queensland and Tourism Australia providing access to international market intelligence and sponsorship support that would be unattainable for the region alone.

Industry partnerships with Cairns Airport, major accommodation providers and venue operators create compelling value propositions for event organisers, with coordinated offerings that reduce complexity and enhance financial viability.

The region has developed a distinctive collaborative "Team Cairns" approach where competing businesses unite to secure major events, recognising the shared economic benefits that flow from successful event acquisition.

HOLDING YOUR EVENT IN THE OFF-PEAK SEASON HAS MANY ADVANTAGES

THIS STRATEGY OUTLINES PLANS FOR PARTNERSHIPS TO THRIVE FOR EVENTS HELD BETWEEN OCTOBER AND MAY EACH YEAR.



An off-peak event can reduce your event delivery costs, increase the choices for service delivery through local suppliers and reduce competition from other events and activities.

If you have an event that is not affected by seasonal weather, can be held indoors, or celebrates the Tropical summer season, we want to hear from you!





STORIES OF SUCCESS WHY THEY CHOSE CAIRNS



IRONMAN CAIRNS

‘Set in the heart of Tropical North Queensland, there’s nothing quite like racing in paradise at IRONMAN Cairns. Against the backdrop of palm-fringed beaches, lush rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef, Cairns offers a destination that appeals to athletes and supporters alike. It’s a bucket-list race that blends a stunning IRONMAN course with holiday-worthy beauty.

From the moment athletes and their supporters arrive, Cairns delivers. With strong air connections across Australia and Asia-Pacific, plus a wide range of quality accommodation, competitors and spectators can settle into the local hospitality, where the industry has embraced the event with open arms... offering tailored packages, athlete-friendly dining and wellness services that cater to recovery and relaxation.

Behind the scenes, the support from Cairns Regional Council and Tourism Tropical North Queensland has been exceptional.

Michelle Pepper

Managing Director Oceania
The IRONMAN Group

Their commitment to elevating IRONMAN Cairns into a globally recognised event shines through in every detail, from logistics and community engagement to marketing and sustainability. Local businesses are active stakeholders, benefitting from the influx of visitors and participating in everything from volunteer coordination to celebratory activations.

Now entering its 15th year, IRONMAN Cairns is an asset for the tropical north that not only enhances the international profile of Cairns but also reinforces community pride and engagement. Its continued success is a testament to strategic collaboration, outstanding logistical execution and the enduring appeal of Tropical North Queensland as a premier destination for athletes and visitors alike.’

VIDEO TESTIMONIAL





PORT DOUGLAS GRAN FONDO

'Cairns Regional Council have supported the Port Douglas Gran Fondo Festival since 2023. The Great Barrier Reef Drive, one of the most spectacular roads in Australia, is fully closed to traffic between Palm Cove to Port Douglas. It allows everyday people the opportunity to enjoy riding along this amazing road without the worry of traffic.

This event not only attracts visitors from across Australia and around the world but also provides locals with an opportunity to enjoy riding on their local roads while taking in the views out across the Coral Sea.

Bade Stapleton

Managing Director
Connect Sport Australia

The teams at Cairns Regional Council and Tourism Tropical North Queensland were amazing to work with and so professional. Their passion and enthusiasm for the region is contagious and they go the extra mile to ensure we have everything we need to deliver a great event for their community.'



A netball match in progress. A player in a yellow and green Australian kit is in the center, holding a white netball with both hands. She is surrounded by players in green and gold South African kits. The background shows a large, crowded arena. The text "OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPIC GAMES 2032" is overlaid in large white letters.

OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPIC GAMES 2032

INTERNATIONAL NETBALL, CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE

TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITY

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games present a transformative opportunity for Cairns to strengthen its position as Queensland's premier regional events destination. As an official Co-Host City with preliminary football matches planned for a

renovated Barlow Park, Cairns is positioned to leverage the Games to create significant strategic advantages and lasting legacies that will benefit the region for generations.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AND LEGACY PLANNING

Cairns has distinct advantages that should guide Olympic planning efforts. The tropical climate provides an ideal training environment for teams preparing for Queensland's conditions, while the region's established tourism infrastructure can create unique experiences that combine Olympic events with adventures in the Great Barrier Reef and rainforest. This integration showcases Australia's natural heritage to international visitors in ways few other destinations can match.

The Olympics present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to position Cairns on the global stage, but this requires strategic planning with clear long-term goals that benefit the

entire region for decades to come. Success should be measured not only by how well Olympic events are delivered, but by the permanent improvements to Cairns' facilities, infrastructure, and international reputation as a top destination for major events.

Cairns Regional Council will develop a Brisbane 2032 Opportunities Paper and Action Plan to identify, prioritise, and capitalise on Olympic-related opportunities (including infrastructure, events and legacy) for the Cairns region over the next seven years, as we progress along the 'green and gold runway' to the Games.



A female Australian Rules Football (AFLW) player is captured in action, running with the ball. She is wearing a yellow Hawthorn jersey with black accents and a black skirt. The jersey features the Hawthorn logo and the text 'NATURE VALLEY'. She is holding a yellow and black football. The background is a blurred stadium with spectators.

WOMEN IN SPORT

HAWTHORN V SAINT KILDA AFLW, CAZALYS STADIUM

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL POLICY 2024

On the 10th July 2024, Cairns Regional Council endorsed a vision to establish Cairns as the pre-eminent destination for women's sport in Australia.

The strategic positioning aligns with national and global trends, and policy shifts towards greater inclusivity in sports. The initiative leverages Cairns' proven capabilities to host significant sporting events and capitalises on the growing emphasis on gender parity and equality in sports.

It is setting the standard in women's sport, fostering community spirit, driving economic growth and promoting equality.

To achieve this, partnerships must be created between the leadership teams within the Council, as well as the wider community. It is a bold target, in which Major Events in the region play a significant role, attracting events that demonstrate the growing national and community power of women's sport, while still achieving the overall goals of this strategy.

The existing event measurement tool, which outlines the value of major events to the region, will be updated to reflect the Cairns Regional Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030 - placing greater value on partnerships that help achieve this goal.



VISION STATEMENT

IRONMAN CAIRNS

MAXIMISE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MAJOR EVENTS THROUGH A NATIONALLY RECOGNISED CALENDAR THAT BENEFITS THE REGION YEAR-ROUND.

STRATEGIC FOUNDATION

This vision reflects our commitment to leveraging events as powerful catalysts for economic growth and global positioning. Building on our current success, we will drive maximum immediate economic return from events by attracting visitors, maximising local spend, and promoting local businesses. We will utilise events as stimulus for longer-term economic impact, driving return visitation, business growth, infrastructure development and opportunities for future investment and partnership.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

We will continue to deliver a calendar of national and international-scale events that make the Cairns community proud to host, while providing genuine opportunities for local involvement and benefit.

This recognition will position Cairns as a destination of choice for event organisers seeking reliable infrastructure, professional service delivery and unique experiences that combine world-class events with access to World Heritage natural wonders.

ENSURING EVENTS ARE SPREAD ACROSS THE YEAR

By delivering on this vision, we will provide residents in the Cairns region with tangible returns on investment from event support, continued industry growth that creates employment opportunities, and more consistent annual visitation through strategic off-peak season hosting that smooths economic cycles and provides year-round business sustainability.

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Our vision recognises that successful event destinations must balance immediate economic benefits with long-term sustainability considerations, ensuring that event development enhances rather than compromises the natural assets that make Cairns unique. By focusing on events that align with our values and capabilities, we create a sustainable foundation for continued growth and community benefit that will serve the region well beyond 2032.

GOALS



AUSTRALIAN FESTIVAL OF CHAMBER MUSIC

GOAL 1 MAXIMISE IMPACT

- Support events that bring the maximum economic benefit and return on investment to Cairns.
- Implement selection criteria that prioritise visitor spend, accommodation nights and long-term destination positioning.
- Increase the capacity of the local industry to maximise local spend and provide opportunities for expansion.

GOAL 2 SPREAD THE VALUE

- Ensure events are strategically distributed throughout the year, with a particular emphasis on maximising off-peak season hosting to drive year-round economic sustainability.

GOAL 3 INCREASE CONNECTION & COLLABORATION

- Continue working with Tourism and Events Queensland and seek other partners to secure major events.

GOAL 4 PLAY TO OUR STRENGTHS

- Promote and leverage the region's competitive advantages.
- Look at the current portfolio of successful events.

GOAL 5 COMMUNICATE SUCCESS

- Promote nationally the success of Cairns as a major event destination.
- Educate the community about the importance of major events, demonstrating what they achieve for the region.

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF EVENTS

7 CAIRNS MARATHON

ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cairns employs a comprehensive economic measurement tool that captures both direct and indirect benefits from major events. Direct economic impact measurement includes visitor spending on all elements of participation or attending the event itself, while indirect impact assessment evaluates incremental spending and other longer-term economic impacts.

Key performance indicators include visitation to the region, overnight visitor expenditure, direct and incremental expenditure, accommodation room nights generated, local business participation rates, and employment creation, both temporary and permanent. Post-event analysis measures visitor satisfaction and intention to return, demonstrating long-term benefits for the destination.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

Beyond economic measurement, Cairns considers community engagement activities, local business involvement, program participation, and resident sentiment in relation to the impacts of events.

MEDIA AND MARKETING VALUE

Events generate significant media coverage, providing marketing value equivalent to millions of dollars in traditional advertising. Measurement includes earned media coverage value, social media engagement metrics, broadcast audience figures, and digital content reach that extends destination awareness to target markets globally.

Brand enhancement measurement evaluates destination positioning improvements, changes in market perception, and the development of competitive advantage that, in part, result from successful event delivery. These indicators demonstrate the long-term marketing benefits that extend far beyond immediate event periods, contributing to sustained destination growth.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

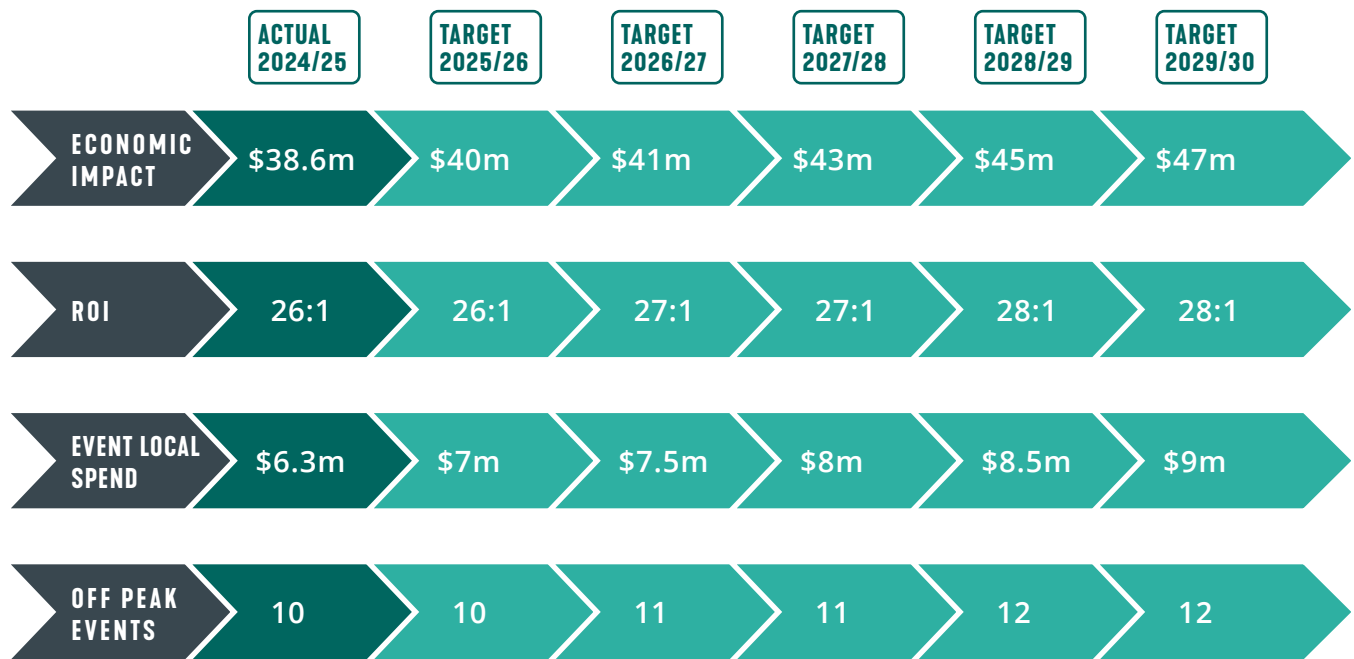
Regular performance monitoring ensures that event investments deliver promised outcomes while identifying opportunities for improvement and strategic adjustment. Annual reviews assess progress toward strategic goals, evaluate return on investment and guide future event selection and support decisions.

Stakeholder feedback collection from event organisers, participants, local businesses, and community members provides comprehensive perspectives on event success and areas for enhancement. This continuous improvement approach ensures that Cairns' event strategy remains responsive to changing market conditions and community needs while maintaining high standards of delivery and satisfaction.

MAJOR EVENTS TARGETS 2026-2030



ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL (ODI) CRICKET, CAZALYS STADIUM



ECONOMIC IMPACT

THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF ECONOMIC IMPACT BROUGHT INTO CAIRNS THROUGH THE HOSTING OF MAJOR EVENTS (MEASURED THROUGH DIRECT AND INCREMENTAL EXPENDITURE).



ROI

THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR THE CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL INVESTMENT (ECONOMIC IMPACT CREATED/SPONSORSHIP AMOUNT).



EVENT LOCAL SPEND

THE AMOUNT SPENT BY MAJOR EVENTS ORGANISERS ON LOCAL BUSINESSES OR PERMANENT INFRASTRUCTURE TO DELIVER THE EVENT.

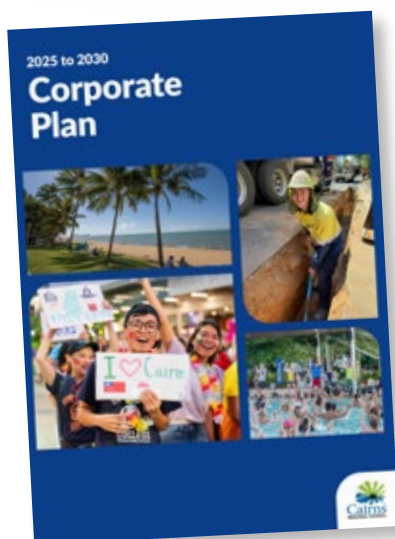


OFF PEAK EVENTS

THE NUMBER OF COUNCIL-SPONSORED MAJOR EVENTS THAT OCCUR BETWEEN OCTOBER AND MAY EACH YEAR.

LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES & PLANS

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL - CORPORATE PLAN



The Cairns Regional Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030 sets out a clear path towards a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable future. The plan focuses on five key areas: building a strong economy that supports diverse and growing businesses, protecting and enhancing the natural environment for current and future generations, creating liveable places that reflect the community's character, nurturing a vibrant and inclusive community culture, and making informed decisions that deliver positive outcomes for residents. This Major Events Strategy directly supports these objectives by focusing on economic impact and promoting the region's liveability.

TOURISM AND EVENTS QUEENSLAND – DESTINATION 2045

The newly released strategy focuses on six priorities: ecotourism, events, connectivity, experiences, brand, and industry. It outlines TEQ's strategic positioning and approach to creating unique value for the state's tourism and events industry. TEQ plays a vital role in event acquisition, partnerships, and funding across Queensland. The Cairns Major Events Strategy aligns its goals with TEQ's broader strategic focus.



CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Cairns Regional Council Economic Development Strategy 2021-2026 follows the Corporate Plan's direction, seeking to create economic growth and regional value through various projects. Major events represent one key component of this strategy, and this Events Strategy targets the same desired outcomes of economic development and regional prosperity.



TOURISM TROPICAL NORTH QUEENSLAND - DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN



Strong alignment with the TTNQ Destination Management Plan ensures a coordinated approach to attracting visitors, developing experiences, and positioning the region in the market. The Events Strategy specifically supports destination branding goals while addressing product gaps and seasonal challenges identified in broader tourism planning. Collaborative marketing initiatives combine resources and expertise to maximise impact while avoiding duplication of effort, ensuring that event development complements broader tourism infrastructure and visitor experience improvements.

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL - LIVE MUSIC FRAMEWORK & STRATEGY FOR CULTURE & THE ARTS

This plan is under construction at the time of writing this strategy. We will support music events that can meet the criteria outlined in this Major Events Strategy, which is in alignment with Council's Live Music Framework and Strategy for Culture & the Arts.





TOURISM
TROPICAL NORTH
QUEENSLAND



Cairns
REGIONAL COUNCIL

CRANKWORX CAIRNS