

Fraser Coast Economic Roadmap

Building Better
Communities
Beyond 2030



Fraser Coast
REGIONAL COUNCIL

BUSINESS
AND INVESTMENT



PROUDLY CREATED BY:



MARKETING GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Developed following extensive community consultation over five months, the Fraser Coast Economic Roadmap charts a course towards long-term, sustainable economic growth and future prosperity for the Fraser Coast.

The Roadmap identifies priority areas of focus for Council's current and future economic development efforts. Council's economic development activities typically include attracting new businesses to our region, forging strong economic partnerships across the community and providing an advisory function to the Council.

The Implementation Plan prepared alongside the Roadmap sets out a range of projects and priorities that Council will deliver in partnership with the community and the Queensland and Australian Governments.

PURPOSE

Council has an active role in long-term planning, to ensure infrastructure and services are delivered as they are needed in our community. It is equally important for Council to collaborate with the community, businesses, Queensland and Australian Governments and other stakeholders to identify long-term economic opportunities.

The Roadmap will inform future Council-led economic development projects, guide investment attraction activities and inform a range of future Council policies and programs. The Roadmap aligns with Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023, which sets out five key themes that influence Council's operational and strategic objectives:

- ✓ Governance - An effective organisation providing excellent service delivery through strong leadership, democratic principles and effective management of people, assets and finances.
- ✓ Lifestyle - A safe and vibrant community that promotes a preferred place to live.
- ✓ Prosperity - A strong, diversified and resilient economy that supports growth and long term employment.
- ✓ Natural environment - Minimise our environmental impact by preserving the unique natural environment the Fraser Coast has to offer.
- ✓ Built Environment - Resilient regional infrastructure that will support and cater for future growth.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fraser Coast Economic Roadmap is about promoting long-term sustainable economic growth across our region. The key premise of this report – and the accompanying Implementation Plan – is uniting around a future economic vision for our region in 2030 and beyond and the short-medium term enabling strategies required to reach this vision.

Extensive research and consultation across our community has identified four central activity pillars. These pillars, and their underlying enabling actions, are intended to grow our region's economy by building on our natural assets and competitive advantages.

 Education and Job Readiness	 Business Investment	 Community Connections	 Enabling Infrastructure
Improving education, training and skills opportunities to promote economic resilience and sustainable growth.	Delivering a suite of economic development projects to drive long-term economic growth, with a particular focus on investment attraction and business expansion.	Forging even stronger local connections to advocate and collaborate to foster capability and growth.	To unlock economic growth, ensuring regional infrastructure is delivered when needed.

Recognising Council is not alone in this journey, the Implementation Plan presented alongside this Roadmap sets out a range of projects and priorities that Council can deliver in partnership with key regional business groups and the Queensland and Australian Governments.







VISION

In 2030 and beyond, the Fraser Coast will have a diversified economy with a dynamic and innovative business ecosystem. There will be strong skills and education pathways, unlocking lucrative and secure career opportunities for our young people.





Our communities will be inclusive and connected- united by a shared belief in our region's natural beauty, as well as a self-belief in our ability to compete on the national and global stage.

Geographically, we will become even more connected to our neighbouring regions. These economic, education and social connections will continue to yield significant economic benefit for our community.

LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

 Education and Job Readiness	Improve education and training outcomes on the Fraser Coast through targeted programs, advocacy and partnerships with key groups.
 Business Investment	Foster sustainable economic growth through investment attraction and facilitation efforts and targeted economic projects.
 Community Connections	Strengthen connections across the community to build capacity and resilience among key groups and continue to forge strategic business relationships and enhanced collaboration.
 Enabling Infrastructure	In partnership with local groups, advocate for infrastructure investment from the Queensland and Australian Governments that is critical to unlocking economic growth. Council to also invest in critical infrastructure where needed.

ENABLING STRATEGIES

ECONOMIC PILLAR	ENABLING STRATEGIES
 <p>Education and Job Readiness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enhanced school-to-work pathways to enhance job-readiness. ✓ Nurture partnerships among Fraser Coast educators. ✓ Increase local tertiary education options. ✓ Place-based employment and training solutions.
 <p>Business Investment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Economic development priority projects delivered. ✓ Deliver strategic investment attraction initiatives. ✓ Foster economy-wide innovation. ✓ Ensure local business support programs are available.
 <p>Community Connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enhance the Fraser Coast's status as an inclusive community. ✓ Foster regional confidence, connectedness and pride. ✓ Promote local business, drive local outcomes. ✓ Nurture local industry advocacy capabilities.
 <p>Enabling Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Long-term infrastructure projects planned and delivered. ✓ Major transport and tourism gateway projects planned and delivered to meet current and future needs. ✓ Telecommunications meet business and community needs. ✓ Key strategic planning frameworks delivered.

The Implementation Plan attached to the Economic Roadmap sets out a range of projects and initiatives to achieve outcomes under these four pillars.

OUR GROWING COMMUNITY

The Fraser Coast now has a population of 105,463 people, making our community the largest in the Wide Bay Burnett Region. Since 2010, our population has increased, on average, by around 1,100 people each year.

This growing population fuels new housing developments, retailers, restaurants, leisure activities and other services. Put simply, this population growth promotes further economic growth. At the same time, however, an increasing population inevitably increases demand on regional infrastructure, schools and health care facilities.

The nature of this population growth and changes to our region's demographic composition provide insights into our region's future economic opportunities.



Figure 1 Students pictured attending classes at the University of the Sunshine Coast in Hervey Bay. Education and training are crucial to realising the full potential of our growing community.

THE FRASER COAST CONTINUES TO BE A POPULAR 'SEA AND TREE CHANGE' DESTINATION

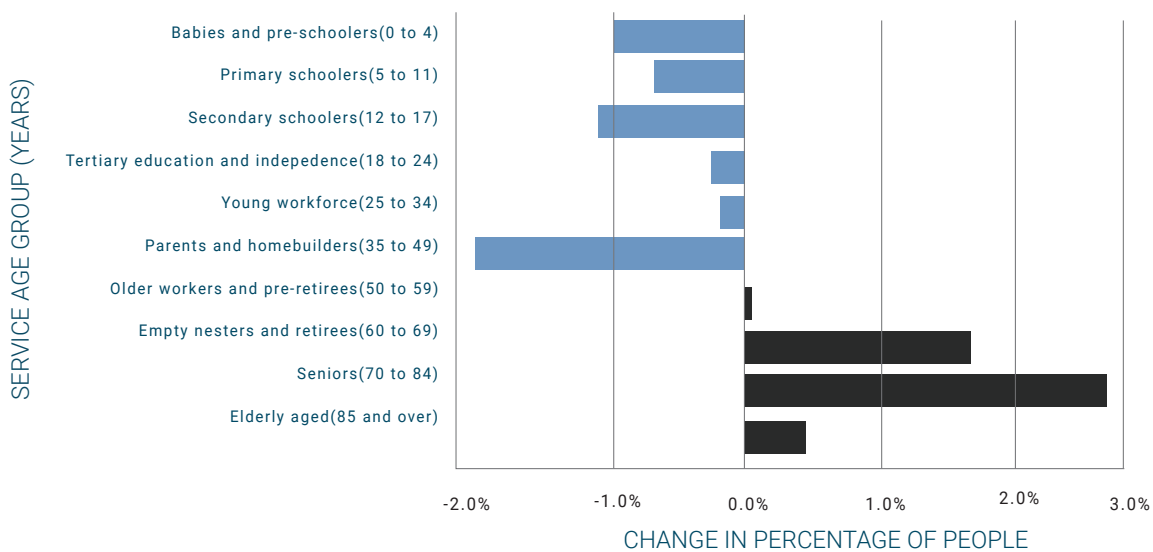
Population data shows a marked increase in older residents since 2011. This cohort have typically chosen to retire in our region after moving up from southern Australia or inland Queensland. This comes as no surprise to most of us. Our region is naturally beautiful, we have a pleasant climate and a friendly, welcoming community. These characteristics, combined with accessible property and the services of a big centre in a regional community, provide a compelling proposition for people enduring a southern winter to settle on the Fraser Coast.

People aged 60 and over is the fastest growing population group in percentage terms. This creates growth opportunities in the Health Care and Social Assistance sector, as these people typically require additional health and assistance services. At the same time, they are typically self-funded retirees, creating opportunities for new commercial and residential developments. While there is evidence young, working-age families are moving into our region, it is at a much slower rate than people aged over 60. Meanwhile, community feedback identified significant numbers of young people leaving the region once they completed High School.



CHANGE IN AGE STRUCTURE - SERVICE AGE GROUPS, 2011 TO 2016

Fraser Coast Regional Council area - Total persons



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 and 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Figure 2 The Graph above shows changes to the population by age groups, from 2011 to 2016. Source: ABS Census 2016.

"Our young people are our greatest export. They finish High School here- then our best and brightest go to University in Brisbane or they get a job on the Gold Coast once they've finished their trade. We need to do all we can to keep them here- as they're our future entrepreneurs, property owners, parents and community leaders. But they need jobs and a reason to stay here"

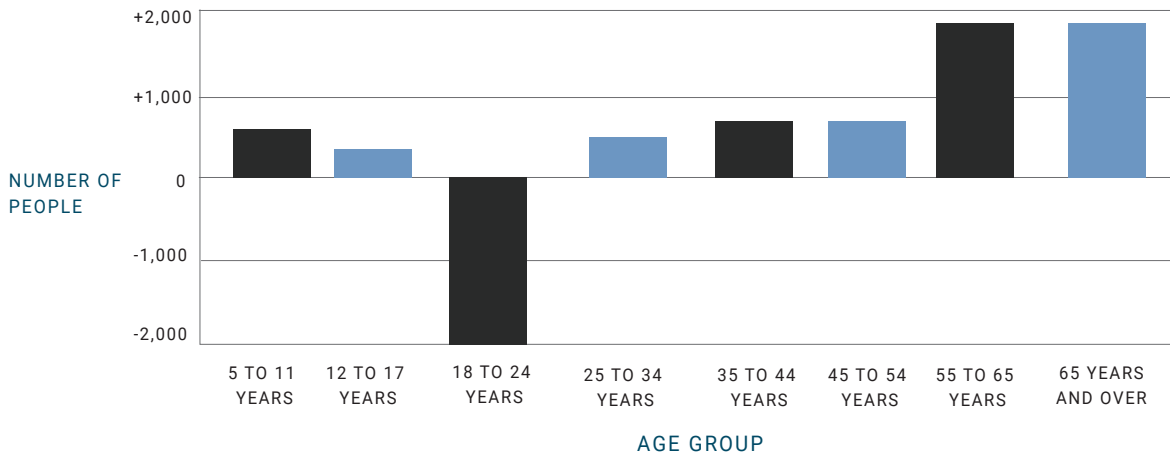


Community Leader, response to Economic Roadmap Consultation, December 2018.

Population data confirms this trend. Based on 2016 Census information, there is a significant migration of 18 to 24 year olds out of the Fraser Coast. In actual terms, the region lost 1,941 18 to 24 year olds in 2016, the only age segment where the region lost residents. As the above quote notes, this outflow can impact the viability of post-school training opportunities on the Fraser Coast and can create challenges to attract and retain staff across the workforce. It also influences the range of hospitality and leisure businesses and services, as there are fewer young people to frequent these and related businesses.

NET MIGRATION BY AGE GROUP 2016

Fraser Coast Regional Council Area




Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Figure 3 The Graph above shows migration patterns among different age groups in 2016. Source: ABS Census 2016.

However, there are also many positives. Feedback from business owners and young and mid-career professionals suggests there is a 'boomerang' effect of people returning to the region, having moved elsewhere temporarily for additional study or career opportunities.

"Yeah I'm definitely a 'boomerang'. I went to University in South-East Queensland. I was nervous I couldn't get a job back here in my chosen field, but it worked out perfectly. I'm so excited about settling down in my home town. All my childhood friendships are helpful professionally too."



Young Professional, response to Economic Roadmap Consultation, November 2018.

AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Australia has one of the most culturally diverse populations in the world. Estimates suggest about 40 per cent of our national population comprises immigrants and their children, with about 15 per cent of people speaking a language other than English at home.²

This cultural diversity benefits our national and regional economies in different ways. Diversity can address skill shortages, particularly in occupations with high global demand, such as medicine. Diversity can also bring new cultural experiences to regional communities. Fostering greater global links can also attract foreign direct investment, driving further economic growth.

²Queensland Council of Social Service (2018). *Cultural Diversity in Australia*. Extract from *Cultural Awareness Training Manual*, <https://etraining.communitydoor.org.au/mod/page/view.php?id=283>

The Fraser Coast continues to increase its cultural diversity. Since 2011, the region welcomed 796 new residents who were not born in Australia. Similar figures also highlight a growing diversity for languages spoken at home.

FRASER COAST RESIDENTS' PLACE OF BIRTH-LARGEST INCREASES FROM 2011 TO 2016

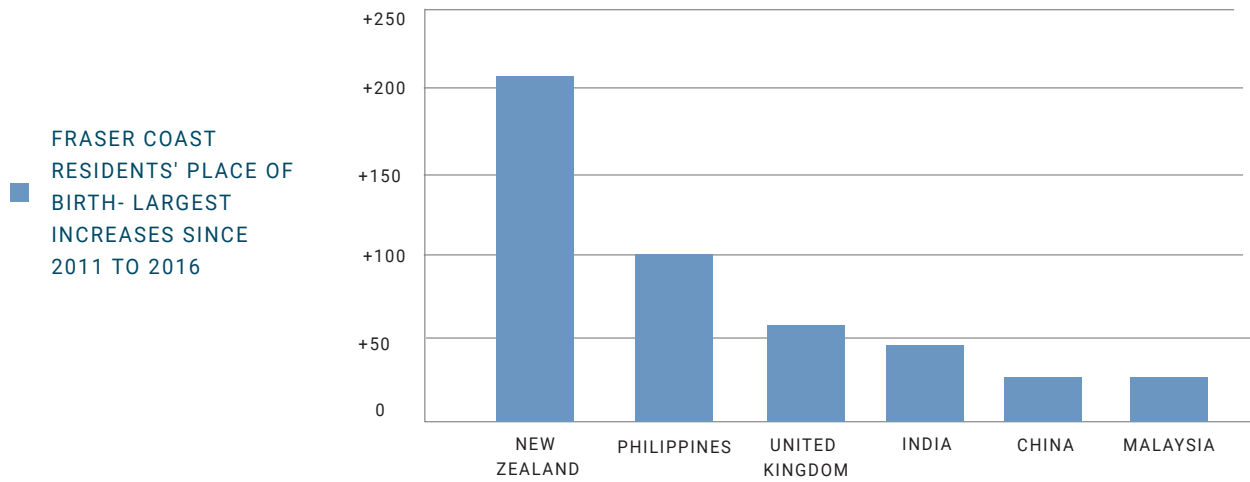


Figure 4 The Graph above shows new Fraser Coast residents who were born overseas by the largest countries of birth. This is a good indicator of the increasing cultural diversity in our region. Source: ABS Census 2016.

THE FRASER COAST IS AN INCLUSIVE REGION

Feedback from new residents often confirms the Fraser Coast's status as a friendly and inclusive community. Besides building a strong community, this reputation can also enhance our ability to attract and retain new residents.

Figure 5 Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre representatives and partners pictured with an Australia Day Awards Nomination, January 2019. Image Courtesy Hervey Bay Neighbourhood Centre.



This reputation for being an inclusive, friendly community speaks volumes. In addition, our friendly nature is often cited as a reason for choosing to live on the Fraser Coast.

Analysis of other regional Councils suggests there may be opportunities to improve coordination and information sharing for new residents. This could include Council delivering regular functions to welcome new residents, providing information to front-line businesses that may interact with new residents, or delivering targeted presentations to key groups, such as medical professionals and student teachers on internship placements. There may also be opportunities to examine barriers to internal migration into the Fraser Coast.

Data prepared by Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) highlights our inclusive and friendly demeanour. In the annual Social Indicators 2017 publication, responses suggest the community is very supportive of tourism and has a high perception of our region as a great place to live.

47 per cent of people “really like the Fraser Coast- and can’t think of anywhere else I would rather live”	Queensland average – 37 per cent
63 per cent of people “really like tourists”	Queensland average – 46 per cent
16 per cent have “made friends with tourists”	Queensland average – 9 per cent

Figure 6 Tourism and Events Queensland data (2019) confirms Fraser Coast residents like our region and are typically welcoming of tourists and new residents.



STRONG FOUNDATIONS BUILT ON A PROUD ECONOMIC HERITAGE

The Fraser Coast's economy has strong foundations built on a proud history over the past 130 years. Despite increased globalisation affecting so-called 'older' industries in Australia, the Fraser Coast is continuing to build on this proud heritage.

This industrial legacy continues to forge ahead today and into the future, through iconic names like MSF, Downer, Hyne and others. Our region's economic heritage provides the building blocks to position the region towards a diverse, modern economy into the future.



Figure 7 Maryborough's Downer Rail facility continues the city's manufacturing tradition.

RESILIENCE AND DIVERSITY CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF VIBRANT REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Over the past 100 years, regional Queensland's history has been punctuated by cycles of economic boom and bust. Be it the dramatic disruption to our agricultural industry through drought, poor years in the mining sector due to global pressures or the acute impacts of the Asian Financial Crisis to our tourism industry.

The Fraser Coast is not immune to these global forces. During the Global Financial Crisis, for example, property prices dived, unemployment soared and people left our region to find work. Drought and the mechanics of global supply and demand have demonstrated the volatility of agricultural commodity prices. The increase in the interdependency of world economies means that we cannot rest on our laurels and we must seek to capitalise on our natural strengths and assets.





FRASER COAST AND STATE GRP/GSP CHANGES

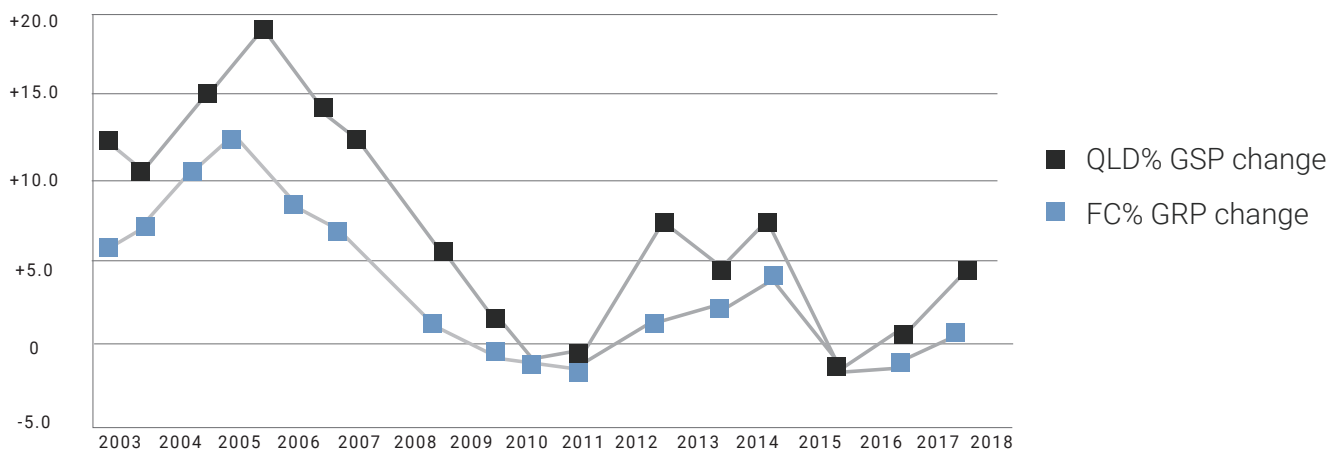


Figure 8 Gross State Product/ Gross Regional Product: annual percentage change- 2002 to 2017

All three levels of government have a responsibility to gear expenditure towards maximising positive economic and social outcomes. This includes all tiers of government promoting economic diversification and working together through times of uncertainty. A diversified economy will inevitably offer the region a greater ability to withstand shocks and global pressures.

“There are many people who feel economically vulnerable and insecure because of economic and social change...We’re all on the same field and we’re all playing according to the same rules. And we [all politicians and governments] all have responsibilities to address issues, to analyse the reasons why problems have arisen and to try and put forward solutions.”



Former Prime Minister John Howard, address at Maryborough Anglican Parish Hall, 26 June 1998.

International research confirms strong regional economies are typically diverse economies- economies where a region is not dependent on one major employer or activity.³ Unlike mining regions elsewhere across Australia, evidence suggests the Fraser Coast is transitioning to a diversified economy, no longer being dependent on manufacturing or agriculture. While these industries continue to be pillars of our local economy with opportunities for growth, our Health Care and Social Assistance and Construction sectors, among others, continue to increase in economic significance.

³ OECD (2014), *Innovation and Modernising the Rural Economy*, <https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/>.



NEW JOBS BY INDUSTRY: 2015-16 TO 2017-18

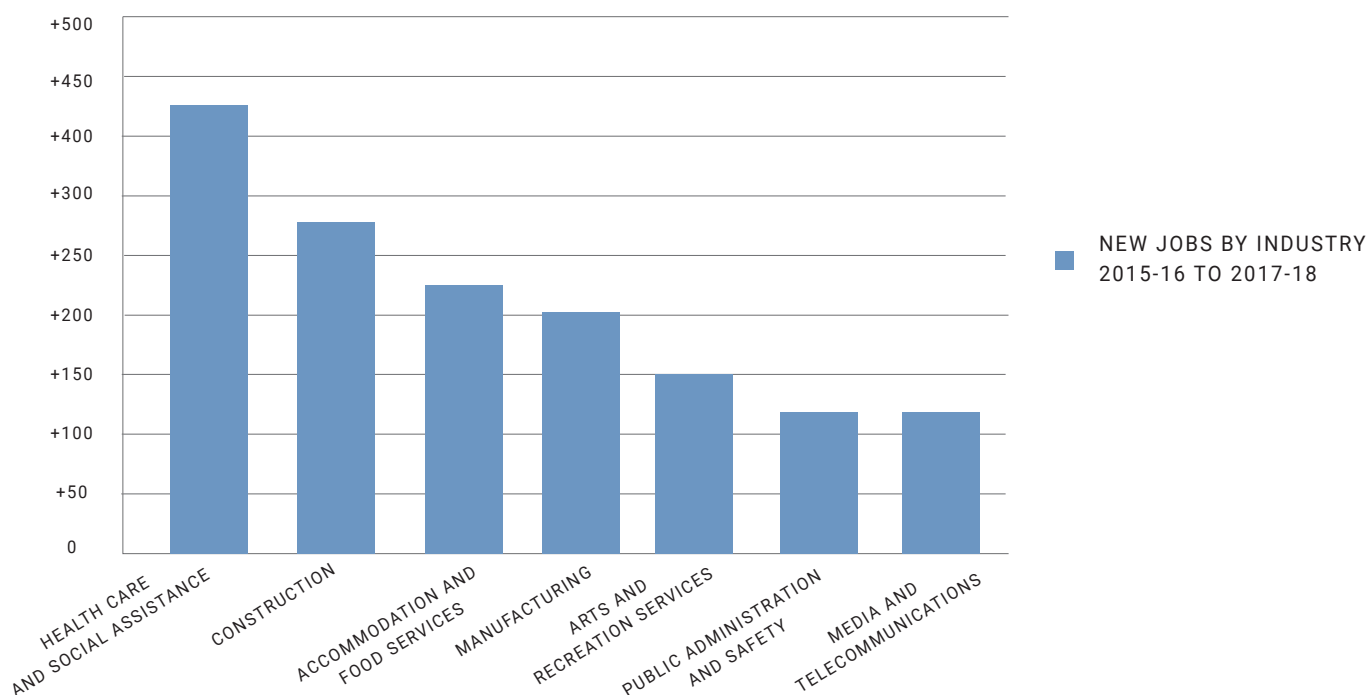


Figure 9 This diagram shows the industries with the most number of new jobs (on a Full Time Equivalent basis) between 2015-16 and 2017-18 on the Fraser Coast.

Within existing industries, there are opportunities for businesses to continue to diversify. In the agricultural sector, for example, agricultural tourism offers lucrative possibilities to diversify off-farm income across the year, while also giving tourists a unique visitor experience. Food manufacturing and agricultural technology also offer exciting possibilities across the Fraser Coast.

Between 2010 and 2016, for example, the number of domestic tourists who visited a farm on their trip increased by nine per cent per annum on average, representing an additional 1.8 million tourists visiting farms every year.⁴ Food and wine experiences are being increasingly sought after as consumers seek to better understand where their food originates. The Fraser Coast is uniquely positioned in an area with the potential to become a major food destination.

FOUNDATION INDUSTRIES ARE RISING AGAIN

The Fraser Coast has always been an area of great economic opportunity. Manufacturing and agriculture have played a key role in the growth and development of the Fraser Coast. As global factors continue to shape and influence our economy, tremendous opportunities exist to build on the region's capabilities in these and other sectors.

According to the CSIRO, Australia's manufacturing industry is evolving into a highly integrated, collaborative and export-focused ecosystem. Iconic local businesses such as Hyne Timber best encapsulate this evolution. Through its innovative structural timber products, the business is leading the way in contemporary timber buildings across Australia. There are exciting possibilities for other local businesses to increase their domestic and international markets through innovation.

⁴ Deloitte (2017). Agritourism. Extract from the Agribusiness Bulletin, <https://www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/consumer-industrial-products/articles/agritourism.html>.

Advanced manufacturing technologies, systems and processes will help ensure manufacturing continues to be a thriving component of Australia, and the Fraser Coast's, economy. In the coming years, our local manufacturing industry has opportunities to explore new markets, particularly in the defence and aerospace sectors.

TOURISM SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS THE REGION'S GROWING MATURITY AND CONFIDENCE

The Fraser Coast tourism sector has continued to grow over recent years. New private and Council funded developments in Hervey Bay, Maryborough and across the region have helped nurture this growth.

Traditionally a 'self-drive' market for families from rural and South-East Queensland, the proportion of international visitors and interstate tourists continues to increase as the range of accommodation, food and drink options and experiences grows.



Figure 10 Hyne Timber is an iconic Maryborough company and continues to innovate.

615,000 domestic overnight visitors

692,000 domestic day visitors

138,000 international visitors

Domestic visitors typically travel as a couple (35%), family group (23%) or friends/relatives travelling together (23%)

Main international visitor markets are the UK (34%) and Germany (27%).

Source: Tourism Research Australia (2017)



Domestic and interstate tourism are competitive industries. It is therefore important all sector participants are cohesive and proactive in growing opportunities. By uniting with a cohesive brand, marketing body and key personnel, the sector will continue to thrive on the Fraser Coast.

Events tourism presents a lucrative area for future growth, particularly with the opening of Stage One of the Fraser Coast Sports and Recreation Precinct. The success of the A-Class Catamarans World Titles in November 2018 highlights the domestic and international potential for the region. Cultural and food events including the annual Mary Poppins, Open House and Relish festivals not only celebrate the region's attractions to tourists, they also bring the community together.

"There's lots happening in Maryborough. But we need to think about how we attract more tourism and hospo [hospitality] business to Wharf St. There's an untapped goldmine here but we need to get the Council on board with marketing the opportunities and getting the incentives right. We really need a quality hotel in the Maryborough CBD for tourists- but the right developer just hasn't found us yet!"



Maryborough resident, response to Economic Roadmap Consultation, November 2018.

Bookended by headline attractions like the Gallipoli to Armistice memorial and the iconic Military History and Colonial Museum, military and heritage tourism are exciting tourism segments for then Fraser Coast. Feedback suggests there are opportunities to increase ancillary businesses in these areas, including hospitality, interpretation and packaged tours.

As the feedback below attests, there is significant competition in the development industry for capital expenditure decisions. Investment decisions are typically influenced by the level of acceptable risk, relative to the forecast expected returns.

"Tourism is of key importance to the Australian economy and tourism investment offers significant benefits. Leaving tourism investment to the market will not achieve optimal investment outcomes. The level of investment will be inadequate and the investment that does occur will not be directed to the areas of best use and greatest overall benefit. Government at all levels has a role but it needs to be the right role, focussed on facilitating private investment, albeit with government as a partner and sometimes as a direct investor. Government facilitation needs to be based on sound guiding principles so as to achieve an overall benefit compared to what would have occurred without the facilitation."



Australian Trade Commission, 2011.

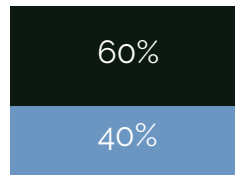
It is critical Council works with Fraser Coast Tourism and Events, the local business community and the tourism development sector to attract additional investment into our region's tourism sector. The Urangan Harbour precinct is a pertinent example of a local marine and tourism asset that would benefit from significant investment to realise the site's potential.



ACCOMMODATION
STAND-ALONE

3,550
ROOMS
\$1.6bn
PROJECT VALUE

15 PROJECTS



● Capital ● Regional

Figure 11 The diagram above shows the pipeline of accommodation developments across Queensland. The Fraser Coast has an opportunity to unlock further tourism growth by attracting new investment into the sector. Source: Tourism Research Australia, 2018.

The tourism sector is also very sensitive to economic disruption, natural disasters and unforeseen emergencies, which all increase investment risk. The severe acute respiratory syndrome crisis and cyclones are unfortunate examples of this. A multifaceted approach to marketing to a range of market segments, strategic priorities and advocacy is critical to balancing risk and maximising growth objectives.

The sector is interspersed at one end towards family-owned small businesses and, at the other, large domestic and international entities. At the latter end, investment and hospitality groups, and online travel agencies, dominate tour packages, bookings and accommodation. It is therefore important that local efforts are geared towards increasing local employment and local economic development outcomes- which do not always align with the priorities of large international entities.

Access to reliable flights is a regular topic of discussion among Fraser Coast residents. It is critical that Council, Fraser Coast Tourism and Events and the community work together to support existing air services to attract more and better-timed services. A multifaceted approach here is vital as additional accommodation and tourism developments, a growing business sector and increasing population growth will all be influential in increasing the likelihood of additional services.



INNOVATION IS A BEACON FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

Just like businesses, growing regions are typically innovative regions. Examples abound across Australia of communities embracing innovation to promote economic resilience and business growth. Strong linkages between research and training institutions, modern technologies and the workforce are common themes.

According to the Regional Australia Institute's [In]Sight publication, the Fraser Coast is ranked 390 out of 563 Local Government Areas for innovation capability. This ranking takes into account a variety of metrics, including research and development investment, the business environment, education levels, and internet connectivity.

Working closely with Queensland and Australian Government agencies, Council is committed to seeing the Fraser Coast increase its focus on innovation. Initiatives delivered by local business incubators as part of the Queensland Government's Advancing Regional Innovation Program highlight the lucrative growth opportunities. At the same time, it is imperative local businesses are equipped to embrace innovation to chase new markets, promote efficiency and increase local employment opportunities.



Figure 12 Council is committed to promoting innovation across the Fraser Coast.

Council is determined to be a leader in welcoming new industries to the Fraser Coast through long-term planning and advocacy. Endorsed in July 2018, the Drones Strategy 2018-2023 is a case in point. The wide-ranging report presented a blueprint for promoting drones and aerial technologies to existing Fraser Coast businesses, while also evaluating long-term economic opportunities. In particular, the region's proximity to Brisbane and land availability are ideal for a range of drone businesses including manufacturers, research entities and training organisations.

With the National Broadband Network now readily available on the Fraser Coast, there are increasing opportunities to market the region to relocating professionals from southern cities. Feedback suggests frequent flights to Brisbane and Sydney, coupled with an accessible and diverse property market, are attractive features for a wide range of non-desk-bound professionals.

Across regional Australia there is an emergence of start-ups, business accelerators, co-working spaces and entrepreneurial hubs. Council has committed to delivering an innovation space at Maryborough, and is working with a number of parties to see a similar facility be set up in Hervey Bay.

Workshops delivered by the Fraser Coast Libraries and not-for-profit groups are continuing to grow in prominence. These initiatives bring students, businesspeople and young innovators together to explore new opportunities and promote innovation across the community.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR FUTURE

Education and training are crucial to realising our community's potential, particularly for our young people. While education itself is a community enabler, it is also a vital economic activity for the region. For example, 2,282 people are directly employed in the education and training sector.

The Fraser Coast is home to many outstanding educational institutions, from primary and secondary schools to tertiary institutions. As our population continues to grow and an awareness of the importance of post-school education increases, it is likely education facilities and offerings will also increase. Council will continue to work with schools, community organisations and government agencies to support disadvantaged youth and improve school completion rates across the Fraser Coast.

"We've got to make sure we increase the courses and options our kids can study in 'The Bay'. We want to keep them here- and not have them leaving the region."



Hervey Bay resident, response to Economic Roadmap Consultation, November 2018.

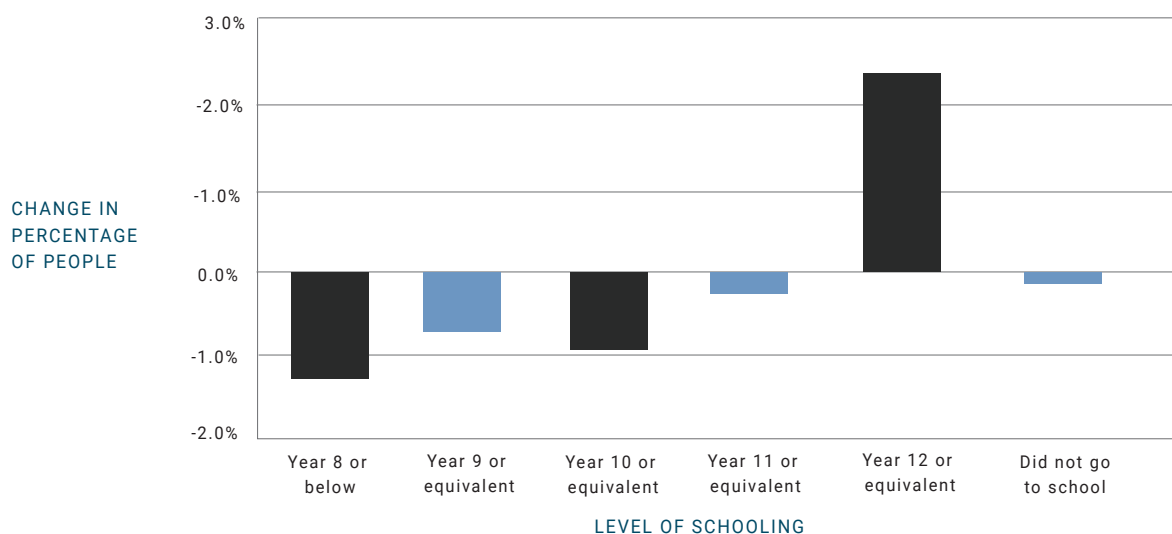
EDUCATION: THE KEY TO UPWARD MOBILITY

Education is critical to transitioning to a high-skilled, modern workforce. But more fundamentally, education provides a path to future prosperity, flexible career options and job security.

Data shows a lower proportion of Fraser Coast residents complete year 12, 32.7 per cent, compared to the Queensland Average, 44.6 per cent. Despite this, there are positive signs. For example, between 2011 to 2016 there was a significant increase in the portion of people who had completed year 12.

CHANGE IN HIGHEST LEVEL OF SCHOOLING COMPLETED, 2011 TO 2016

FRASER COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA - TOTAL PERSONS



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

Figure 13 The graph above shows the percentage change in the highest level of schooling completed between from 2011 and 2016.

Source: ABS Census 2016.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING IS IMPORTANT FOR FUTURE INDUSTRY GROWTH

Vocational Education and Training (VET) is crucial to the Fraser Coast's future prosperity. As vocational-based training, VET provides student training that is directly relevant to workforce needs. In a changing workforce, it is vital employees are equipped with the skills to use new technology, innovate and manage modern work processes.

"Our industry has a low-rate of VET qualifications but that's starting to improve. We're now operating in a global environment, with more technology and innovative manufacturing processes. I get it- we need our people trained up and equipped with modern production skills."



Manufacturer, response to Economic Roadmap Consultation, December 2018.

Unlike metropolitan areas, access to VET course offerings is typically limited in regional areas due to smaller demand for more specialised courses. Feedback suggests Fraser Coast residents are still disappointed by the 2014 closure of the large Maryborough TAFE campus and the inconvenience of needing to travel to Hervey Bay for similar course offerings.

Across Australia, there is an increasing focus on delivering VET into schools. Locally, the increase in school-based traineeships is a positive development. The Maryborough Trade Training Centre is a pleasing case in point. The Centre is intended to bridge the gap between formal education and vocational skill requirements. Purpose-built next to the Maryborough State High School, the Centre is a partnership between TAFE Queensland and four local high schools.

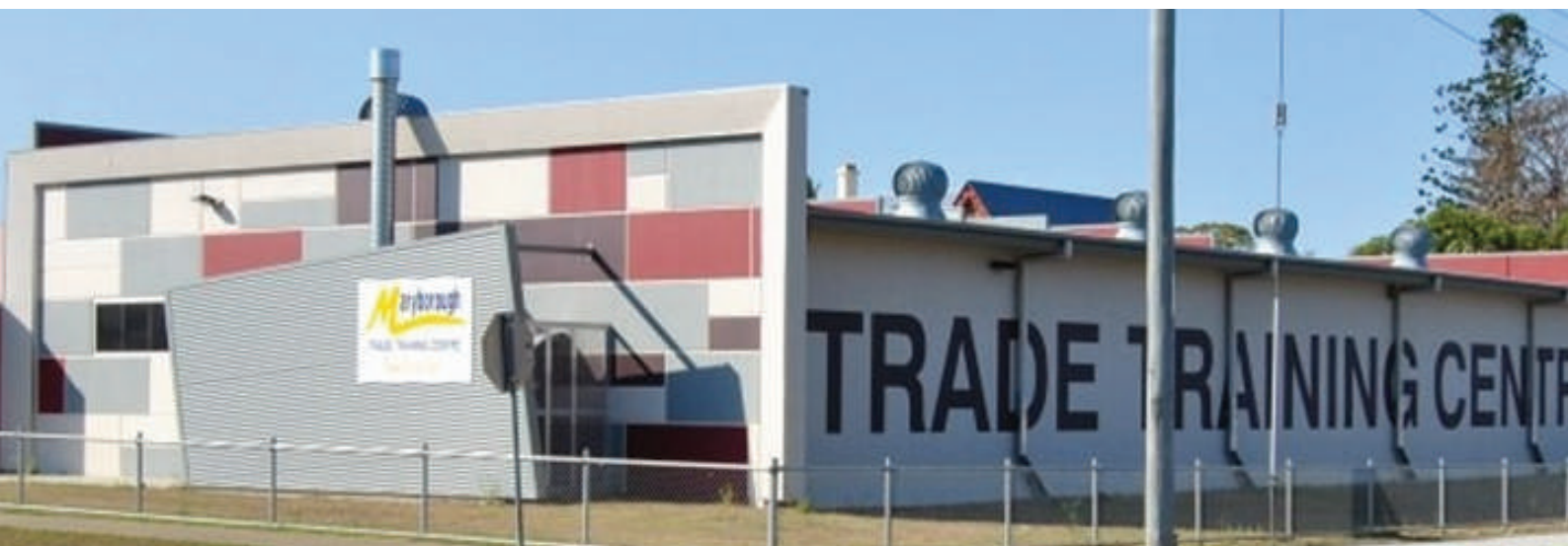


Figure 14 The Maryborough Trade Training Centre is a partnership between four local schools and TAFE Queensland.

Students complete Certificate-level courses by attending lessons at the centre one day per week throughout year 11 and 12. The Trade Training Centre brings together industry partners to deliver school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, work experience, mentoring and training.



COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO INCREASING SKILLS AND EDUCATION OUTCOMES IN OUR REGION

With around 800 staff (at May 2019), Council is one of the region's largest employers. Council, therefore, recognises it has a responsibility to increase regional skills through professional development and structured training programs, such as traineeships and apprenticeships.

Since 2016, Council has supported 19 traineeships and apprenticeships under the Queensland Government's Skilling Queenslanders for Work First Start program. The program gives young people and disadvantaged job seekers opportunities to gain nationally recognised qualifications and 12 months employment by undertaking through traineeships.



"We've got a large workforce of indoor and outdoor staff. We have a community responsibility to train and grow our people to improve region-wide training and skills outcomes. It's great that the Skilling Queenslanders for Work Program funds us to put more people on than we'd otherwise be able to."



**Council Spokesperson,
November 2018.**

Figure 15 Mayor George Seymour pictured with Council apprentice Simon Czerwonka at the Pulgul Street Water Treatment Plant, November 2018.

Council is also partnering with the Queensland Government to improve VET training outcomes across the Fraser Coast, through the \$9 million state-wide Regional Skills Investment Strategy (RSIS). The RSIS is a positive case study in the benefits of brokering solutions locally- and the program supports selected regional communities to identify current and emerging jobs in key industries, as well as ensure there is a supply of skilled local people to meet this demand.

Under the Fraser Coast's RSIS program, a Queensland Government funded coordinator works with industry and training providers in three key sectors, Manufacturing, Health Care and Social Assistance and Agriculture, to bridge the gap between training opportunities and skills needs in the region.

A PIPELINE OF JOB-READY PERSONNEL IS A COMPELLING INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PROPOSITION

The skills needs of Fraser Coast employers will continue to evolve in response to changes to the local, national and international economies. Although the region experiences higher than average unemployment and a proportionally lower workforce participation rate, employers across all sectors report challenges recruiting and retaining suitable staff.

Businesses looking to establish on the Fraser Coast report access to a skilled workforce is crucial in determining their relocation decisions. This creates a dilemma for the region- new businesses bring additional jobs and increased economic activity but employers may reconsider relocating here if there is not a pipeline of skilled workers.

Existing service levels and businesses can be compromised if employers cannot fill key positions. The Health Care and Social Assistance sector is a case in point. Encompassing hospitals, aged care providers, disability support and community occupations, the sector has grown substantially in recent years. The sector now employs 7,160 - our region's biggest employer. However, stakeholders report acute difficulty recruiting key personnel, be it community workers, health professionals or service staff.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



"There's so much competition for staff. With a growing population- we're always looking for specialists. In times of peak demand we're really stretched. Senior health professionals are well remunerated- they can live wherever they want. We need to be doing more, together, to spruik our region to attract them and keep them."



Senior Health Sector Manager, February 2019.

Council is just one partner in addressing these and related challenges. Groups such as Jobs Fraser Coast are ideal forums to broker solutions to the region's labour market challenges. Bringing together tertiary education providers, the business community, Council, regional leaders and Queensland Government Agencies, Jobs Fraser Coast was set up to drive strategic labour market outcomes.

The Jobs Fraser Coast group has a pivotal role in brokering solutions to the challenges identified in the Jobs Queensland Fraser Coast Workforce Blueprint document. In particular, the Workforce Blueprint advocated for regional, place-based initiatives to equip local industry with the right capacities to develop innovative employment and job creation strategies.

Analysis of other regional economic development strategies highlights the important linkages between education and workforce supply and demand. Put simply, fostering a pipeline of skilled labour is critical to the Fraser Coast reaching its economic potential.

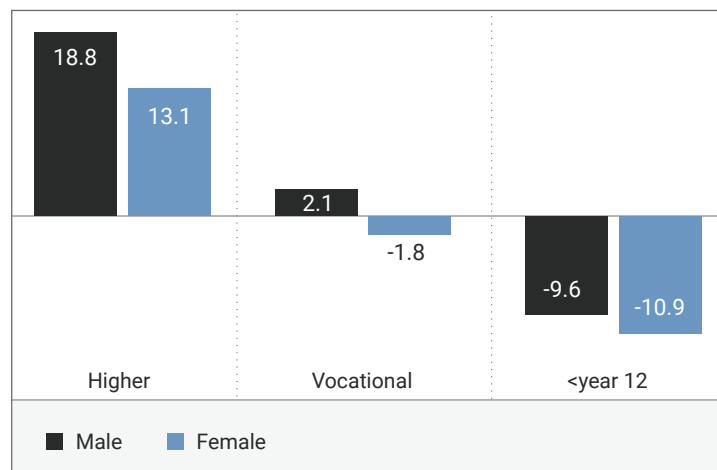


HIGHER EDUCATION WILL DRIVE FUTURE PROSPERITY

Higher education equips people with the knowledge, skills and attributes to participate in an ever-changing world. This is particularly important in regional communities, where there are typically lower rates of post-school education and communities, arguably, more acutely impacted by global trends. Indeed, research suggests the economic and social benefits of universities are proportionally greater in regional communities.⁵

A University education provides substantial earning potential over high school graduates. According to research from KPMG, University graduates throughout their careers typically earn 18.8 per cent (males) and 13.1 (females) more than they would if they had just completed year 12.

EARNINGS PREMIUMS
RELATIVE TO YEAR
12 GRADUATES (%)



The USC Fraser Coast campus continues to train the next generation of nurses, teachers, animal ecologists and businesspeople. As the campus continues to grow, it is likely even more course options will become available. This will benefit the region in two key ways. It will increase education levels in our community, improving workforce supply, particularly in high-skilled positions. It will also grow our economy as more people are living and studying locally. More study options will help keep an increasing number of local school-leavers in our region, instead of those students leaving for Brisbane or interstate universities.

Council has long-held ambitions to see the USC campus increase its range of degrees offered. The proposed Hervey Bay CBD revitalisation, and Hinkler Regional Deal funding, offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to begin to realise this ambition. Cities such as Cairns, Armidale and Canberra showcase the possibilities for Higher Education in our region, not just to benefit local students but to explore lucrative opportunities associated with international students.

International education has enlivened Cairns and has been a key catalyst for the city's economic diversification. Given our location and arguably better climate, Council will continue to work with USC to market and advocate the possibilities for the Fraser Coast campus.

⁵ Regional Universities Network (2018), Measuring the economic impact of regional Universities, <http://www.run.edu.au/resources/>.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT KEY TO UNLOCKING OUR REGION'S ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

It is essential that our infrastructure adapts to meet the challenges of population growth and economic and social change. Strategic investment in key infrastructure projects will be a critical foundation for ongoing economic growth.

THE BRUCE HIGHWAY IS OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ARTERY

The Bruce Highway provides a vital link to the Fraser Coast. As Queensland's major north-south freight and commuter corridor, the highway connects the Fraser Coast to population centres from Cairns to Brisbane and beyond. Safer roads, reduced travel times and improved freight efficiency could significantly improve the quality of life for residents of the Fraser Coast and drive further business growth.

"In addition to supportive industry policy across the Wide Bay Burnett, realising the region's full economic potential will require a number of strategic infrastructure investments to ensure the region's industries can grow and compete in national and global markets."



Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils, October 2018.

Council is supportive of further safety and capacity improvements to enhance economic opportunities. The proposed 'Section D' between Cooroy to Curra promises substantial economic and social benefits to the Fraser Coast. Council will continue to advocate further investment in conjunction with the Australian and Queensland Governments, with the end-goal of full duplication from Maryborough all the way through to Brisbane.

"We're seeing more and more industrial growth around Gympie- businesses spilling over from the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane. Full dual carriageway between Brisbane and Gympie, I know it's a long-term prospect- but it will be so beneficial to our local economy."



Hervey Bay businessperson, February 2019.

Council's 10-year capital works plan has identified key road network improvements required to ease congestion on the back of population growth. Projects such as the extension of Boundary Road, and the upgrade of Urraween Road in Hervey Bay, as well as the upgrades of Walker Street and Lennox Streets in Maryborough, are vital regional projects.



HERVEY BAY AIRPORT A VITAL LINK TO DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

Access to air transport provides substantial economic and social benefits, playing a vital role in facilitating economic growth. The Hervey Bay Airport upgrade in 2005 was the catalyst for substantial property development and tourism expansion on the Fraser Coast. Increased flights will further improve the Fraser Coast's domestic and global connectivity, and will see the local economy continue to take off. In order to support this vision, continued investment in infrastructure and development of the airport will drive the viability of this significant regional asset.



Figure 16 Hervey Bay Airport, 2019.

The Avion Industrial Precinct highlights Council's commitment to infrastructure investment to enable economic development. Set on a 12 hectare site, Avion is an aviation manufacturing precinct adjacent to Hervey Bay Airport. Funding through the Australian Government's Building Better Regions fund was critical to financing this project and unlocking the site's potential.

The Avion Precinct has the potential to grow aviation employment opportunities and drive innovative industrial uses in the region. The aviation industry has lucrative potential for the Fraser Coast to provide long-term technical positions and drive further business investment into the region.

TOURISM AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE: BRINGING TOURISTS, IMPROVING LOCAL AMENITY

The Queensland Government has a long-term commitment to grow the state's \$25 billion tourism industry and cement Queensland's position as a world-leading tourism destination. Infrastructure investment is critical to realising this vision, not only on the Fraser Coast but across Queensland. The Fraser Coast Tourism and Events (FCTE) Destination Tourism Plan 2017 recognises infrastructure is a key tourism growth enabler.

The Urangan Marina precinct and the Hervey Bay Esplanade are our region's key tourism assets. In partnership with FCTE and the community, Council is committed to ensuring these assets are looking their best and are working to sell our region in the best possible manner.

As the departure point for whale watching and other marine activities, the Urangan precinct is the maker and breaker of first impressions for a large number of domestic and international visitors. Council will continue to advocate to the Queensland Government to seek a resolution to ongoing land tenure issues, as well as considering further incentives to promote investment into contemporary tourism assets.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE: DRIVING TOURISM GROWTH, EVENTS, RECREATION AND LIVEABILITY

The Fraser Coast Sports and Recreation Precinct highlights Council's commitment to delivering quality community sporting and recreation facilities. In addition to being an important community sport and recreation asset, the precinct also presents lucrative future opportunities for hosting major sporting events, carnivals and community activities.

Strong interest from sporting codes and national sporting competitions will likely yield significant future benefits and bring major competitions to the Fraser Coast. Owing to the Fraser Coast's strategic location, the precinct is an ideal future sports and recreation venue.

"The Joeys Mini World Cup and Touch Football Carnivals highlight what's possible with sporting events on the Fraser Coast. Families and teams come up here with a packed car- or in buses. They fill up our hotels; they spend money in our restaurants. They go to Fraser [Island] for a day trip. A fully operational Sports Precinct at Nikenbah will not only be a resource for sporting clubs and our community- it will be great for jobs and businesses in our region."



Tinana resident, response to Economic Roadmap Consultation, December 2018.

Figure 17 The Fraser Coast Sports and Recreation Precinct promises to attract even more sporting events to the region and offer substantial economic opportunities.



According to TripAdvisor, the Wetside Water Park is the Fraser Coast's most popular attraction. The Park is a strong demonstration of Council's commitment to our tourism industry- and acts as a beacon for visitor spending in cafes, restaurants and across the hospitality sector. Strategic land use planning around the Esplanade will be critical to realising the area's long-term potential, driving tourism growth and enhancing our region's high liveability.



Figure 18 Located on the Hervey Bay Esplanade at Pialba, the Wetside Water Park is a popular tourist attraction.

CBD REVITALISATIONS WILL DRIVE POSITIVE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Maryborough boasts a rich history. Building on substantial Queensland Government improvements through the Works for Queensland Program, Council is exploring further revitalisation activities. New administration and library buildings in Maryborough have the potential to be key catalytic developments to stimulate further private investment

In Hervey Bay, the CBD revitalisation is continuing apace. As the Master Plan sets out, by 2035 the CBD will be an attractive and vibrant centre that will celebrate our region's growing stature. The CBD will accommodate a diversity of uses and activities, including a new Council Administration centre, retail streets and vibrant laneways, student accommodation and hotel and conference facilities. The opportunity exists for Council to work together with private developers and investors, and the local community to play a key role in defining the future identity of the region.



Figure 19 Artists impression of the proposed 'eat street' from the 2016 Hervey Bay CBD Master Plan.

"When I first arrived in 2017, I was surprised there wasn't really a CBD in Hervey Bay. Our region is now home to 100,000 plus people. We need a civic centre and a commercial hub of activity that celebrates our region's growing maturity and domestic economic importance."



Senior Community Leader, February 2019.



CONCLUSION: WE ALL HAVE A ROLE IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY

We can all influence positive economic development outcomes on the Fraser Coast. A coordinated and cohesive approach to growing our economy will help drive positive outcomes and help market our region in the best possible way.

"Economic development is about creating places where people want to invest, work and live. It's about making connections between people, companies, institutions and communities."



Jeff Finkle, International Economic Development Council (2017).

Council has a direct role in infrastructure and service delivery in our community, as well as a plethora of other functions. In an economic development setting, Council has a multifaceted role in attracting investment into our region, working with the other levels of government and fostering coordination and connections across the community.

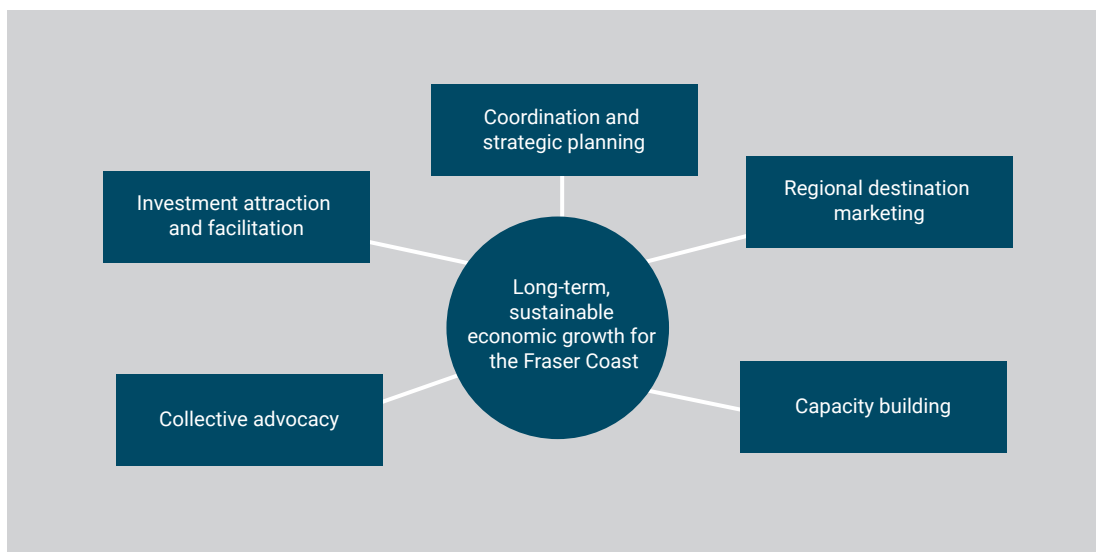


Figure 20 There are various collective actions involved in fostering sustainable economic growth on the Fraser Coast.



WORKING TOGETHER TO SELL OUR REGION MAKES SENSE

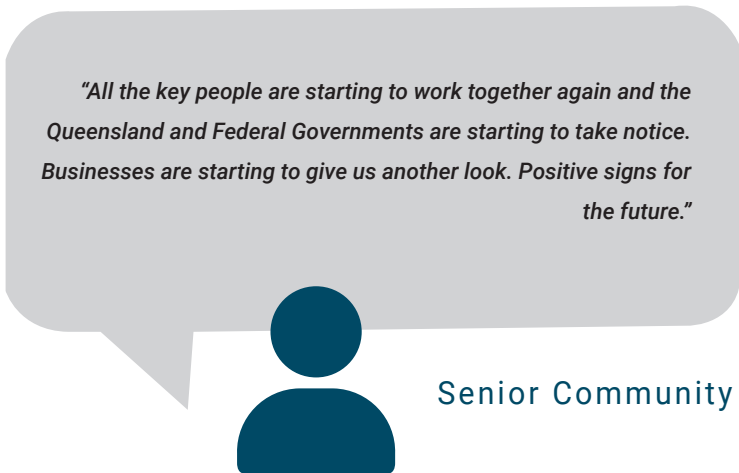
A united approach to promoting our region can extend our market reach and help ensure our region's story best reaches our target audiences- whether to attract new employers, investment or residents to our region.

Collaboration between Council, key business groups and individual firms, where appropriate, will leverage resources and promote our region in a cohesive manner.

We are fortunate to live in a region with a great climate, stunning natural attractions and have close proximity to major markets and a progressive business culture. By showing pride in our region, we can attract hard working and innovative thinkers to join us on our journey to prosperity.

COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY IS VITAL IN A CROWDED POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

As a region the Fraser Coast must continue to advocate for a positive future by leveraging our fair share from the Queensland and Australian Governments. Council is unwavering in its commitment in providing a strong voice for the Fraser Coast. One voice- a collective voice- will continue to help drive positive outcomes.



"All the key people are starting to work together again and the Queensland and Federal Governments are starting to take notice. Businesses are starting to give us another look. Positive signs for the future."

Senior Community Leader, February 2019.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS MORE THAN JUST COUNCIL

Regional economic development is a partnership between communities, businesses and all three levels of government.

A collective approach to economic development is the optimal way to attract investment, drive local outcomes and broker solutions together.

All levels of government have a role to play in cultivating a positive economic environment conducive to private investment. At the same time, though, it is businesses that employ people and invest in our region. Working closely with our government, business and community partners, Council is determined to foster productive connections and drive positive economic outcomes for the Fraser Coast.

