



# 2021-22 Strategic Priorities

# 10,489KM<sup>2</sup>

Gladstone Regional Council  
Boundary Area



## About Gladstone Regional Council and the Gladstone Region

With a vision to Connect. Innovate. Diversify. Gladstone Regional Council's culture is proudly defined by community connectedness, a drive for innovation and the celebration of diversity.

Council is committed to working with the community to balance the region's lifestyle and opportunity for the 63,861 residents who call it home.

Covering 10,489 square kilometres, the region encompasses a vast landscape, from coastline to country, rural townships to major industry.

Council aims to make real connections with the community and our environment which are safe, ethical, responsive, visionary, inclusive, community centric and efficient.

It is continually seeking innovative opportunities that support smart infrastructure decisions and operational excellence. A focus on diversification is helping to grow the region and expand opportunities.

# 513.9KM

North of Brisbane



# Economic Profile

**\$5,349.450M** in Gross Regional Product (GRP)

Supported an estimated **29,072 regional jobs**

Representing **3.1 per cent of regional Queensland's economy** in terms of GRP and **2.4 per cent in terms of local jobs**

The economy in terms of GRP has been expanding over the past two years with an annual average GRP **growth rate of 2.9 per cent**

 **63,861 residents**, 2.5 per cent of regional Queensland's total population

**Median age 35 years** compared to 39 years for regional Queensland

In 2041, the population of the Gladstone Region is expected to reach **75,327**

Average of **566,000 visitors** to the region per annum.

**3,701** local businesses

Top **four** employers;

 Manufacturing **4,513 jobs** (15.5 per cent)

Construction **3,251 jobs** (11.2 per cent) 

 Retail **2,821 jobs** (9.7 per cent)

Transport & Logistics **2,510 jobs** (8.6 per cent) 



# Competitive Advantages and Economic Assets:

The Gladstone Region has many natural and economic assets which provide a competitive advantage:

- Natural deep-water port which is one of the largest, multi-commodity ports in the world.
- Strategic location in proximity to considerable natural resources across Central Queensland and the Surat Basin
- Industrial land in the Gladstone State Development Area and Strategic Port Land adjacent to existing enabling infrastructure
- Existing heavy industry and supporting infrastructure
- Strong supply chains to support industry and a highly skilled workforce
- Locally based construction capacity to deliver major projects.



# Enabling Infrastructure

## Regionally Significant Supply Chain Infrastructure

### Gladstone Heavy Vehicle Transport Corridor:

# \$125M - \$454M

The development of a dedicated Gladstone Heavy Vehicle Transport Corridor will provide improved heavy vehicle freight access from Central and Western Queensland to the Port of Gladstone.

Road network improvements will allow Type 1 Road Train access via the corridor to reduce logistics' costs and time.

The current method of decoupling road trains on the Dawson and Capricorn Highway network hampers the productivity and efficiency of transport supply chains. The corridor will create a safe and efficient route for heavy vehicles accessing the Port of Gladstone.

#### BENEFITS

- Improved road safety
- Unlock regional economic benefits
- Freight cost savings for regional communities with Type 1 Road Train access.
- Reduced cost of fuel, cement, fertiliser and ammonium nitrate to the farmers, rural citizens and industry
- Reduced cost to farmers to transport their grain to port
- Potential to achieve significant savings in shipping container freight costs, creating new industry and expanding on existing opportunities
- Reducing the number of truck movements and CO2 emissions per tonne of cargo by using Type 1 Road Trains.



### Inland rail extension to the Port of Gladstone

Linking the inland rail to the Port of Gladstone will unlock long-term regional economic benefits and improve road safety while reducing land and sea transport congestion in south east Queensland.

Freight linkages provided by the inland rail project will drive regional economic development and regional supply chain development along the future Inland Rail Corridor through to the Port of Gladstone, linking regional Queensland to the world.

A fully integrated, efficient and cost-effective east coast supply chain would improve not only the regional economies along the rail network, but would also be a strategic asset in the state and national economies. Connecting the inland rail to Brisbane (Acacia Ridge) represents 50 per cent of the cost of inland rail (Melbourne to Brisbane) for just 10 per cent of the distance but still doesn't connect directly to a northern port. Connecting the inland rail to Australia's most expandable port in Gladstone can be achieved faster and cost effectively.

#### BENEFITS

- Delivers the inland rail vision up to three years quicker
- Reduces the cost of inland rail by \$4.8B
- Enables \$15.6B resource investment in regional Queensland
- Provides up to 18,300 extra jobs in regional Queensland
- Develops the Port of Gladstone as the fourth major container port for eastern Australia
- Reduces freight times to Asia lowering supply chain costs ex Gladstone
- Could remove coal trains from Brisbane suburban network



# Gladstone Coal Exporters Sports Complex (Marley Brown Oval) Upgrade

## \$31.25M

Council has established a master plan for the Gladstone Coal Exporters Sports Complex. To attract broader economic opportunities, further investigations are underway to diversify the use and capabilities of the site by expanding development to include the Harvey Road Sports Precinct.

The long-term vision is the development of a year-round multi-sport and events complex capable of hosting major events and sporting matches at national, state and local level.

The development's regional benefits would include a premier stadium field suited for national broadcasting, flexible field configurations for hosting multi-sporting code carnivals with crowd capacity of up to 10,000 people.

Development of the expanded site includes:

- New modern stadium grandstand with flexible use and functionality
- Premier field national broadcast capable
- Fit for purpose/integrated multi-sport/club facilities
- Diversified spectator options for maximum seating/viewing
- Retention and minimal remediation of existing sporting fields.

### BENEFITS

- Attract a diverse mix of major outdoor events and entertainment
- Host premier sporting games, fixtures and events
- Attract economic development opportunities.



# Boyne Tannum Aquatic Recreation Centre (BTARC)

## \$22M

Boyne Island and Tannum Sands are thriving coastal communities with nearly 10,000 residents. They are located 26km south east of Gladstone and are home to nearly 3,000 working families. The median age of residents is 36 years. This area is primarily a residential centre for the nearby Boyne Island Aluminium Smelter and Gladstone industries. The two localities are separated only by the Boyne River. It is also a tourist hub with a patrolled beach and is a well-known fishing venue providing access to the Great Barrier Reef, Lake Awoonga and the Boyne River.

Analysis of aquatic recreation services in the region and beyond, identified significant gaps in facilities available. This supported the long held and strong community desire for an aquatic recreation centre in the area. Further demographic analysis and population projections highlighted the importance of these facilities that support key groups, including younger and older community members. This points towards the importance for hydrotherapy and rehabilitation facilities to support the variety of demographics and learn to swim opportunities for community safety and wellbeing.

A site selection process has been undertaken and concept design and costings developed to determine the benefits of building an Aquatic Recreational Centre in the Boyne Tannum area.

The master plan for the Boyne Tannum Aquatic Recreation Centre is focused on providing a facility which delivers on the aquatic needs of the local community.

Preliminary master plan facilities included:

- A 25 metre pool
- A 50 metre pool
- Kids splash pool
- Hydrotherapy/warm water exercise pool waterslide
- Swim club/meeting room
- Café
- Staff/management/first aid
- Supporting infrastructure including car parking, pedestrian paths and landscaping.

### BENEFITS

- Delivers an important piece of social infrastructure for a regional community and economic development
- Improves community health and wellbeing outcomes
- Improves community water safety outcomes.



## Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail (BBIRT)

# \$21M

A rail trail is a multi-use recreation trail running on a disused rail corridor (public land) for nonmotorized recreation. There are over 100 established rail trails in Australia.

The proposed Boyne Burnett Inland Rail Trail would be developed effectively on two disused railway corridors between Taragoona (Calliope) and Reids Creek (Gayndah). These railway corridors are between Gladstone and Monto, and combined, cover some 270.75 kms across two regional council areas. Conversion to a rail trail would make this the longest rail trail in Australia. The case has been made that developing a series of shorter trails provides a better experience for a wider range of users. The development of three shorter trails – the Awoonga Lake Rail Trail (\$10.7M), the Kalpowar Tunnels Rail Trail (\$6.5M), the Burnett River Bridges Rail Trail (\$3.3M) – should be pursued.

Gladstone Regional Council is seeking funding from the Queensland Government for the construction of the identified trails including the detailed design development plans for the rail trails being prepared. This will involve a thorough examination of each proposed trail; the preparation of detailed works lists and cost estimates for the construction and maintenance of the proposed trail; and the detailed trail development plan that will lead to the ultimate construction and operation of the trails.

### BENEFITS

- The development of a regionally significant attraction establishing a highly recognised rail trail destination fit for cycling, walking and horse-riding, as part of the Queensland Inland Rail Trail Network
- Taking trail users through towns will provide new business opportunities for service providers and improve the regional economy
- Improvements to community connectivity. The trail will make an actual connection between the towns and villages en route – one that reinforces historic connections and drives economic development
- Increasing recreational options and improved health and economic outcomes for local people
- Possible \$6M injection into the local economies per annum in operation.



## Jumpstart City Heart - Harbour Arbour

# \$11.3M

The Jumpstart our City Heart Urban Renewal Strategy was created to guide future development and new social, economic and environmental opportunities for Gladstone's Central Business District (CBD). Its vision is to make the Gladstone CBD a vibrant City Heart destination, showcasing the unique heritage of the street while providing opportunities for residential living, active business use, engaging entertainment and cultural activity.

The project will redevelop the streetscape of Goondoon Street between Lord and Yarroon Streets. It will provide an innovative, unique and sustainable Harbour Arbour that considers a safe and shady pedestrian linkage from the waterfront to the CBD. The redevelopment will also stimulate urban renewal and help to revitalise the city centre.

### BENEFITS

- Re-establishing Goondoon Street as Gladstone's main street by improving economic and development opportunities within the CBD
- Creating a unique identity for the CBD and achieving a sense of arrival
- Recognising the city's heritage as an important asset and improving the quality of public spaces and streets
- Creating a CBD destination that provides entertainment for the entire Gladstone Region
- Investigating alternative transport options for ease of access into and throughout the CBD
- Converting grey space to green space and improving connectivity to active open spaces.



# Strategic Policy

## Enabling Prosperity

### Ageing in Place Strategy

From 2016 to 2036, Gladstone's population is expected to grow by 0.7 per cent per annum. As at 2041, it is expected to reach 75,327, an increase of 12,039 people from 2016.

During the same period, the population of Seniors (70 to 84), empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69) is forecast to have the largest increases of 4,460 and 1,712 people respectively. This is likely to drive demand for health, aged care, related care and support services.

Gladstone Regional Council acknowledges the opportunities and challenges presented by the ageing of our population. With high numbers of retirees and Baby Boomers choosing to make a sea change to the state's south-east corner, the Gladstone Region is facing a drain of an important element of our community and the loss of volunteers, care givers and other dedicated residents. This will require Council to work with the various key agencies across the region to encourage our seniors to age here.

Our older community members are looking for supportive lifestyle opportunities; from accessible and connected transport options to maintaining their health and fitness; improved attitudes about older people in the community, aged-care options at a range of price points, home care programs to support independent living, respite care and support for carers.

Council is already working collaboratively with its partners to address the needs of our current and future older residents. It is seeking expressions of interest from qualified retirement and aged care accommodation providers to enter into an agreement with GRC to build, operate and maintain an aged care facility on land adjacent to the Philip Street Communities and Families Precinct at Philip Street, Gladstone.

#### OUTCOME

Our older people play a vital role in our communities and it is important to recognise and respect the significant contribution they make to our vibrant region. Council is committed to help achieve the aspirations our seniors have for our region and the responsibility for addressing these impacts needs to be shared between all key Government agencies.



### Federal Assistance Grants

The Financial Assistance Grant is a tool to ensure an average level of service is maintained across local governments throughout Australia, however it has not kept pace with the cost of providing these services.

Over the past five years, Council has managed its cost base and, despite infrastructure pressures, has maintained operational expenditure growth to under CPI - at an average growth rate of 2.06 per cent. Unfortunately, the Financial Assistance Grant has grown at an average of only 0.34 per cent over the same period. Funding as a proportion of our share of Commonwealth taxes has declined from 1 per cent in 1996 to 0.55 per cent in 2018, and in real terms has reduced by 43 per cent over the past 20 years. Local Government, in general, collects 3.55 per cent of total national tax yet manages 33 per cent of public assets.

#### OUTCOME

Restore Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) to one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue to support direct and indirect local government jobs, in staged increments that reflect Federal Government priorities. Increased council capacity via FAGs would target development and implementation of local economic strategies, project planning to underpin a pipeline of works, delivery of community infrastructure, reduced approval times for investment projects and reduced construction delays.

### Drought Communities Program (DCP) Extension

The majority of Queensland regional councils have been existing in drought conditions for a significant period of time. Some have been drought declared since 2013.

Supporting these communities is not just important for those who live with the daily effect of drought; it is vitally important for the Australian economy. Queensland's drought-prone communities produce a diverse range of high-quality food and fibre products, supporting thousands of regional jobs through the various supply chains. There is an ongoing need to also support rural and remote communities, both economically and socially, as they battle the ongoing conditions.

Funding under the DCP provides short-term support for local economies, including boosting local employment and procurement, and addressing social and community needs. The social and economic benefits of the DCP have had significant impact in Queensland. A DCP extension review found the program's impacts were increased by working directly with councils to provide rapid and targeted economic stimulus for communities affected by drought.

#### OUTCOME

Support economic and community recovery from drought by continuing to provide funding to drought declared councils, up to and including two years following the lifting of a drought declaration.



## Renewable Energy & the Transitioning Economy

Governments' renewable energy targets and policy presents an innovative opportunity to invest in renewable energy in the Gladstone Region. The region has a significant industrial energy demand both now and into the future. There are several renewable energy projects under development and or consideration that will support and diversify the Gladstone Region's future industrial development.

Aligning with the global transition to a low-carbon future, the Federal Government has identified the Gladstone Region as a future Hydrogen Hub. The region has the potential to become a green chemicals' hub replacing imported ammonia, caustic soda and sulphuric acid and exporting green chemicals and liquid hydrogen.

Hydrogen is a clean, renewable fuel that can be used in transport, power supply and a range of industrial processes. It is key for a range of industries that provide vital inputs to various manufacturing processes and our regional mining and agricultural sectors.

Regional research and strategic planning are urgently needed to identify the energy transition impacts on regional industries, jobs and skills requirements, future opportunities and transition training pathways. Additional infrastructure is needed, along with Government support to repurpose, retrofit and reuse existing infrastructure to meet the needs of new industries and economic opportunities.

### OUTCOME

Supporting investments and policy initiatives will be needed in developing an advanced and sustainable hydrogen industry in the Gladstone Region. Government and political leadership and support is crucial, alongside consistent policy frameworks and investment to enable a just transition in regional Queensland.



## Manufacturing & Skills Development

The Gladstone Region is a manufacturing powerhouse. There is significant opportunity for it to leverage the skills and capabilities developed from its extensive industrial past, to create future opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

Manufacturing accounts for the largest share of employment in the Gladstone Region (4,513 jobs or 16 per cent of the total) It represents 13 per cent (\$647 million) of local industry value-added and contributes 38 per cent of the region's export value.

This sector, however, is at risk due to global disruption from technological and environmental transitions. The Gladstone Region is uniquely positioned to spearhead a campaign to lead the way in identifying areas where the region can leverage existing expertise and capability to discover new market opportunities.

### OUTCOME

Policy to support regional manufacturing and investment initiatives are needed to support advanced manufacturing of renewable energy generation components, green chemicals and general manufacturing driven by regional industrial diversification. Funding for skills development in modern technology areas will be required to support the evolving renewable energy economy.





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