

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

# 2024/25 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Proudly Growing the Gladstone Region



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Gladstone Regional Council would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Bailai, the Gurang, the Gooreng Gooreng and the Taribelang Bunda people.

We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Gladstone Regional Council is committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion and connectedness, acknowledging that our communities are richer when diversity is embraced.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF A WELCOMING CITY

Gladstone Regional Council is actively aligning with best practice multiculturalism as identified in the National Welcoming Cities Standards and declares itself a welcoming community. We embrace diversity, foster social cohesion and are focused on building economic success.

Council endeavours to use a whole of community approach to not only embrace diversity, but also harness its strength and identify opportunities to enhance our multicultural focus. As a Council, we will benchmark cultural diversity and inclusion policies and practices across the organisation and continue to identify how further efforts can be directed.

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country .....	2
Acknowledgement of a Welcoming City .....	2
Message from the Mayor .....	4
Proudly Growing the Gladstone Region .....	4
Competitive Advantages and Economic Assets .....	5
Economic Profile .....	5

## Enabling Prosperity

Renewable Energy and the Transitioning Economy .....	6-7
Health .....	8
Housing .....	9
Skills Development and Retention .....	10
Regional Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure .....	11
Establishing the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base North - Port of Gladstone.....	12
Establishing a Central Queensland Material Recovery Facility and Recycling Enterprise Precinct.....	13

## Enabling Infrastructure

Gladstone Heavy Vehicle and Oversize Overmass Load Transport Corridor .....	14
Inland Rail Extension to the Port of Gladstone .....	15
Boyne Tannum Aquatic Recreation Centre (BTARC) .....	16
Harvey Road Sports and Events Precinct.....	17
Harbour Arbour .....	18



To valued stakeholders,

I am excited to introduce you to Gladstone Regional Council's Strategic Priorities for 2024/25.

As you would be aware, we are at the dawn of a new age with the

emergence of hydrogen and renewable energy projects, with Gladstone Regional Council positioning itself and the Gladstone Region to adapt to this once-in-a-generation change to our energy sector.

This is an ever-changing space, and the 2024/25 Strategic Priorities publication identifies strategic infrastructure and policy initiatives that are critical for our region to continue to be the industrial powerhouse and emerging renewables epicentre that supports the State and National economy.

This publication is the culmination of wide-ranging consultation and collaboration resulting in a clear and concise set of priorities that allows for focused and meaningful advocacy and enhances regional prosperity.

The priorities are grouped under 'Enabling Prosperity' or 'Enabling Infrastructure' and complement and/or enable the investment priorities highlighted in the Gladstone Region Investment Prospectus.

Council's role in influencing decision makers is crucial to future-proofing our region.

We are calling on the State and Federal Government, including the Opposition, key stakeholders, industry and investors to invest in the Gladstone Region and the priorities identified.

Together with industry and community, we strive to achieve a shared vision for our communities, protect our assets and encourage robust investment and development goals to build a stronger future.

With a diverse regional economy, a natural deep-water port, highly skilled workforce, strong local supply chain, a significant amount of available land within the Gladstone State Development Area and a range of leisure, lifestyle and living opportunities, the Gladstone Region is well positioned for continued growth in a transitioning economy and represents an attractive investment destination.

I hope you find Gladstone Regional Council's 2024/25 Strategic Priorities publication informative and I look forward to working with my fellow Councillors, Council officers and the community as we advocate for a brighter future for the entire Gladstone Region.

Matt Burnett  
Mayor Gladstone Regional Council

## PROUDLY GROWING

## 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 residents who call it home.

Covering 10,489km<sup>2</sup>, the region encompasses a vast landscape, from coastline to country, rural townships to major industry.

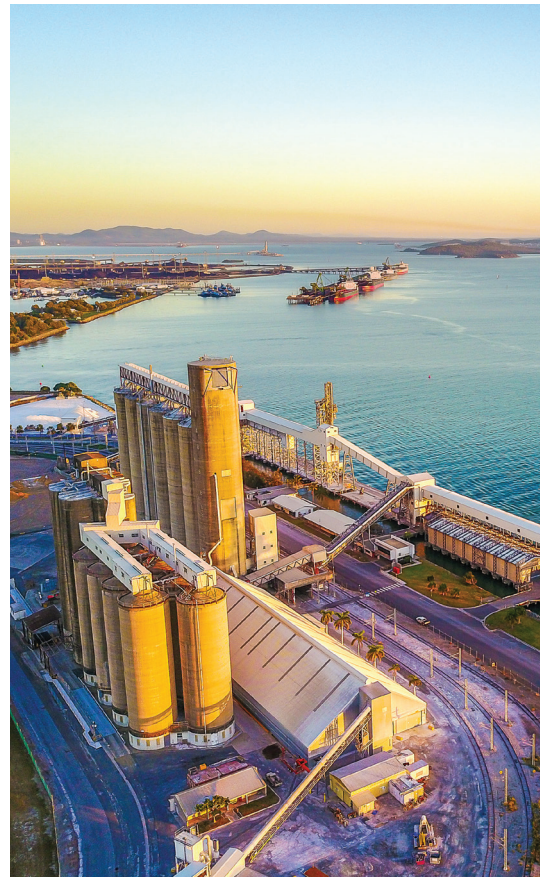
Council aims to make real connections with the community and our environment which are safe, ethical, responsive, visionary, inclusive, community centric and efficient.

We are 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.

# 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
- Pivotal to the Central Queensland Renewable Energy Zone
- 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
- World class tourism destinations on the Southern Great Barrier Reef.



## ECONOMIC PROFILE

**\$6.773B**

in Gross Regional Product (GRP)

**27,958**

Regional jobs

Approximately

**65,500**

residents

**38 years**

is the median age compared to 38.9 years for regional Queensland

**78,486**

is the expected population of the Gladstone Region by 2046

**566,000**

average visitors to the region per annum



**4,002**

Local businesses, with the top employers being;



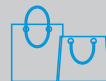
**4,200**

Manufacturing jobs



**3,363**

Construction jobs



**2,668**

Retail jobs



**2,416**

Transport and Logistics jobs



**2,441**

Education and Training jobs



**2,863**

Health Care and Social Assistance jobs

## Enabling Prosperity

# STRATEGIC POLICY



## Renewable Energy and the Transitioning Economy

Federal and State Governments' renewable energy targets and policies present 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 Hydrogen Hub. The \$140M CQH2 Hydrogen Hub capitalises on Gladstone's skilled workforce, industrial heritage, abundant renewable energy resources, one of the world's largest multi-commodity deep-water ports and a group of renowned international and Australian companies. The Hub brings together three levels of government, industry, research, education and community to collaborate and accelerate Australia's journey to net zero emissions and to support our traditional international energy customers on the decarbonisation journey. 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.

The successful implementation of coordinated Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) will be critical, with Calliope identified as a potential Central Queensland REZ.

Three priority areas Council is advocating for, and will be key to the successful transition of the energy sector and economy are:

### Climate Change

Council is advocating for funding support to be provided to local governments to lead the way in their communities for climate adaptation, mitigation and carbon offset and minimisation to:

- Move towards net zero emissions
- Minimise the impacts of climate change in our communities
- Minimise and offset emissions across Council operations.

The Australian Government's introduction of the Climate Change Bill in 2022 legislates the nation's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 43 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and net zero by 2050.

### Dedicated Transition Fund

It is important that communities are supported to proactively manage the energy transition to a less carbon intensive and more renewable based

economy, and the associated impacts on the community, economy, environment and region as a whole. Regional communities are home to many large-scale industrial facilities and resource infrastructure.

The introduction of a dedicated transition fund has the power to support resource dependent communities and regions to transition, strengthen and diversify their economy, invest in future workforces, support liveability and offset the impacts of transitioning to a net zero economy.

Council is advocating for the establishment of a dedicated fund to:

- Provide support for communities and regions to transition to renewable energy and a net zero carbon economy
- Support other regional economic and community development opportunities as part of the great energy transition
- Provide fiscal stability and long-term sustainability to support inter-generational equity in regions.

### **Regional Transition Authority**

There is a significant need for planning and coordination at a national level to manage the rapid pace of change across the energy and mining sectors.

Detailed and transparent planning at a national level is needed to ensure better coordination and consistent regulations across the National Energy Market as it adapts to high levels of renewable energy generation.

Transitioning regions need a voice in the National Transition Authority to ensure that regional specific aspects are considered by the Authority to enhance broader social, economic and environmental benefits while minimising negative impacts.

## **THE NEED**

A dedicated transition fund established to support resource dependent regions to transition, strengthen and diversify their economy, workforce and liveability.

Regional communities represented in the National Transition Authority, ensuring sound economic and environmental impacts are considered.

Continued funding to local governments to lead the way in climate adaptation for their communities.

Regional research and strategic planning to identify the energy transition impacts on regional industries, jobs and skills requirements, future opportunities and transition training pathways.

Additional infrastructure and Government support to repurpose, retrofit and reuse existing infrastructure to meet the needs of new industries and economic opportunities.



# Enabling Prosperity



## Health

### *Advocating for equitable, fit for purpose, affordable health care solutions for the Gladstone Region.*

Gladstone Regional Council acknowledges the challenges faced by the region due to the current health landscape:

- Workforce shortages across health professions
- High wait times and costs
- Imposed travel outside of the region
- Poor continuity of care
- Lack of availability to General Practitioners (GP's), specialists, mental health services and allied health clinicians
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of bulk-billed providers
- Insufficient Medicare rebates and financial incentives for medical professionals
- Prevalence of disease
- Limited pathways for medical professionals.

Council takes our role in the health landscape seriously and continues to advocate for improved provision of, and access to, health care services in the Gladstone Region. We are committed to working with various agencies and stakeholders locally and across the state, to advocate for an equitable model of fit for purpose health care for all Australians.

Our key stakeholders are Queensland Health's Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service

(CQHHS), who provide our communities with public health services and the Gladstone Hospital.

Council is advocating to both the State and Federal Governments to:

- Increase student placements to develop pathways to grow the local workforce
- Facilitate skills development opportunities for health professionals
- Adopt innovative and sustainable quality improvement measures in healthcare settings to deliver greater, accessible care to the community.

### THE NEED

An empowered region, in control of health related decisions which best serve the community's interests.

Greater financial support, increasing service delivery and health professional attraction and development opportunities.



# Enabling Prosperity

## Housing

### *Advocating for immediate solutions to the housing crisis in the Gladstone Region.*

The region is facing housing availability, affordability and accessibility challenges, including:

- Extremely limited access to temporary, emergency or crisis accommodation
- Limited options of housing product
- Lack of affordable housing options
- Increase in cost-of-living pressures.

Having appropriate housing options has been identified in Gladstone Regional Council's Gladstone Region Economic Transition Roadmap 2022-32, Central Queensland Rural Health's Gladstone Health Plan, Queensland Government's Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-32 and in the Gladstone Region Local Housing Action Plan.

Council is advocating to both the State and Federal Governments to:

- Reinstate or replace the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) funding to ensure residents living in these homes are not displaced
- Unlock empty, unused or abandoned properties to increase existing supply
- Ensure rental subsidy programs are accessible and meeting needs

- Adequately incentivise critical workers to live in regional areas by supporting housing e.g., providing housing or housing subsidies, bonus or uplift payments for regional service/ placement.

### THE NEED

Immediate access to emergency, crisis and temporary accommodation when it is needed.

Access to affordable housing options locally.

Reduced hardship and homelessness in the region.

Stability for residents on subsidised housing schemes.

Greater availability, diversity, and quality of housing in the region to support liveability, resilience and social and economic growth and prosperity.



## Enabling Prosperity



## Skills Development and Retention

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

Manufacturing accounts for the largest share of employment in the Gladstone Region (4,200 jobs or 15 per cent of the total). It represents 13 per cent (\$647M) of local industry value-adding and contributes 38 per cent of the region's export value.

The 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.

Skills shortages and employee retention has been a long-term point of focus across a number of sectors. To develop and retain skills in the region, a collaborative cross-sector approach is needed. This will further quantify the issues and identify actions to support improved outcomes for all stakeholders experiencing skills shortages and detrimental employee retention rates. Leveraging existing assets and the appeal and liveability of the region is key to attract and retain skilled workers. Cross sector collaboration allows increased effectiveness of existing efforts and energy invested by multiple stakeholders for a more aligned and efficient approach. This provides a positive experience for a potential new recruit to the region, including access to information that will make relocating to the region smoother for the whole family.

Central Queensland University (CQU) is unable to meet local demand due to the current caps on federally supported places. Removing the caps will enable CQU to provide more courses in the region, which builds the region's skill base, slows youth migration to the capital cities and supports local population growth.

### THE NEED

Policy driven by industrial diversification and investment initiatives which promote advanced manufacturing of renewable energy generation components, green chemicals and general manufacturing.

Caps on federally supported University places removed.



## Enabling Prosperity

# Regional Water Supply and Wastewater Infrastructure

New and expanded water storage and distribution systems and infrastructure are required to expand irrigated agriculture across the region, provide water for industrial uses and support a larger population in the Central Queensland region.

The emerging hydrogen and bio futures sectors require secure access to significant volumes of water and delivery systems to the proposed Renewable Energy Zones and Renewable Energy Industrial Precincts.

The 115km Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline, operated by Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB), enables the transfer of 30,000 megalitres of water per annum from the lower Fitzroy River to Gladstone. However, more sources are required to meet the demand of the renewables sector and supply water to industry in a socially acceptable manner. These new economy industries and precincts will also require significant common user wastewater treatment facilities and trade waste facilities.

### THE NEED

A minimum of \$170M funding is required over the next three years to maintain current service levels of the Gladstone Region's water and sewerage infrastructure.

Provide dedicated ongoing funding for new and existing water and wastewater infrastructure to support population and economic growth, and address ageing water and sewage infrastructure.



## Enabling Prosperity

# Establishing the Royal Australian Navy Fleet Base North - Port of Gladstone

Australia is facing a rapidly changing strategic environment emphasising a need to adapt the nation's defence posture. To generate and sustain the next generation of military advantage, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) needs new defence facilities geographically positioned to meet emerging strategic and security challenges in the South Pacific region.

The planned growth in Australia's Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Fleet poses challenges in physically accommodating new armaments. Central Queensland (CQ) offers force posturing opportunities that can enable the ADF to better shape, deter and respond to emerging security threats.

Gladstone is the ideal location for a new east-coast RAN base due to its proximity to the South Pacific, deep, dual shipping lanes, available development land and ability to leverage civilian industrial capacity.

The Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC) is a Queensland Government Owned Corporation that manages the Port of Gladstone. The Port of Gladstone is the most expandable port in Australia covering 4,449 hectares of land, with eight main wharf centres, four of which are owned and operated by GPC.

Our region's formal submission to the Defence Strategic Review (DSR) invited Defence to consider CQ's unique geographic location, existing assets and regional capabilities, and explore the positive contribution these characteristics could make to securing Australia's future.



### THE NEED

A permanent Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Base in Gladstone (Fleet Base North), as the primary home of the RAN's east-coast fleet.



## Enabling Prosperity



# Establishing a Central Queensland Material Recovery Facility and Recycling Enterprise Precinct

Most Local Government Areas (LGAs) within Central Queensland have set targets to reduce waste to landfill and work towards a circular economy.

The Central Queensland waste recovery rate is reported in the Queensland Waste and Resource Recovery Infrastructure Report as approximately 39 per cent for all waste streams - this is lower than the state average of 45 per cent.

Without a fundamental shift in policy or investment in infrastructure, the Central Queensland region is unable to meet State and Federal waste targets.

Councils are considered price-takers for waste management services meaning they are vulnerable to policy changes and external influences such as inflation pressures and flattening commodity prices. These impacts, and other global disruptions have become increasingly prevalent, resulting in increasing costs at Material Recovery Facilities (MRF).

Currently, there is no MRF in the Central Queensland region and there are significant barriers for Local Governments, business and industry to collecting and transporting waste.

Gladstone Regional Council and the broader Central Queensland area is impacted by:

- Prohibitive transport costs to transport waste out of region and associated high carbon emissions
- Low population density
- Lack of scale of waste generated, impacting viability for private proponents
- Lack of local processing solutions or markets for commodities
- Lack of scale of waste generation, resulting in no market interest or competition and impacting viability for private proponents.

Due to its central location, current and future transport network, availability of appropriately zoned land and the evolving industrial landscape, the Gladstone Region is a logical location for long-term, sustainable recovery and recycling solutions, capable of processing a variety of waste types and supporting future investment in large scale alternative waste processing technology and circular economy infrastructure.

With capital expenditure for a new regional scale MRF estimated at \$18M, high ongoing operational costs, long distances to existing processing infrastructure and end markets and a lack of scale of waste generated in regional communities, establishing waste processing facilities in regional areas is not viable for private operators.

Support is urgently required to establish a financially sustainable waste processing and recycling solution in Central Queensland, as a crucial step in developing circular economy infrastructure.

## THE NEED

Investment in long-term, sustainable, recovery and recycling solutions to service the Central Queensland region.



## Enabling Infrastructure

## REGIONALLY ESSENTIAL

## SUPPLY CHAIN INFRASTRUCTURE



# \$125M - \$454M

## Gladstone Heavy Vehicle

## and Oversize Overmass Load

## Transport Corridor

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. It is imperative that the Port Access Road Stage 2 be completed immediately with other stages to follow quickly to complete a dedicated corridor.

A dedicated heavy vehicle corridor is a crucial connector to the 1,200 kilometers of Queensland Beef Corridor feeder roads in Central Queensland (CQ). These roads are supply chains for more than 2,000 beef businesses reaching three processing plants, nine sale yards and two major ports in the region alone. CQ is home to 25 per cent of Australia's cattle herd which contributes \$1.7B to our national economy each year.

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.

The Port of Gladstone is forecast to be the gateway to CQ for over 7,000 wind towers and other renewable energy componentry. The only oversize overmass (OSOM) corridor out of the Port of Gladstone relies on marginally fit for purpose ancillary roads. This poses a significant project risk to the State Government's CQ Renewable Energy Zone and the Queensland Jobs and Energy Plan.

### BENEFITS

Improves road safety.

Unlocks regional economic benefits.

Freight cost savings for regional communities with Type 1 Road Train access.

Reduces cost of fuel, cement, fertiliser and ammonium nitrate to the farmers, rural citizens and industry.

Reduces cost to producers to transport their product to port.

Potential to achieve significant savings in shipping freight costs, creating new industry and expanding on existing opportunities.

Reduces the number of truck movements and CO2 emissions per tonne of cargo by using Type 1 Road Trains.

Crucial connector to the Queensland Beef Corridor feeder roads.

## Enabling Infrastructure

# 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 for the state and national economies. Connecting the inland rail to Australia's most expandable port in Gladstone will be more cost effective and achieved faster.

## BENEFITS

Delivers the inland rail vision quicker.

Reduces the cost of inland rail.

Enables 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.



## Enabling Infrastructure



# \$30M

## Boyne Tannum

## Aquatic Recreation Centre

### (BTARC)

Boyne Island and Tannum Sands are thriving coastal communities with over 10,000 residents. These urban centres are located 26km south-east of Gladstone and 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 destination, providing access to the Great Barrier Reef, Lake Awoonga and the Boyne River.

The proposed facility would be a year-round multi-functional aquatic centre purposefully designed to be a central hub for families, schools, clubs and visitors to connect, recreate and learn, enhancing the health, fitness, social and psychological wellbeing of the community.

While Council has entered a funding agreement with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communication and the Arts for the \$15M Australian Government's 2022 election campaign commitment, further avenues for external funding are being pursued.

### THE PROPOSED AQUATIC CENTRE INCLUDES:

50m outdoor heated pool.

Distinct recreational zone.

Kiosk and general amenities, green space with shaded turf seating areas and spectator embankment.

All abilities access (pool ramp) and pool shading for sun safety and comfort.

Carparking and landscaping.





## Enabling Infrastructure

# \$50.5M

## Harvey Road

## Sports and Events Precinct

Council has adopted the Technical Feasibility Assessment Report and Business Case for the potential redevelopment of the Harvey Road Sports and Events Precinct. The redevelopment aims to deliver the Gladstone Region and greater Central Queensland with a year-round, multi-sports and events precinct (with broadcasting capabilities). The precinct would be suitable for national, state and regional games, carnivals and large outdoor events with a total crowd capacity of up to 10,000 people.

This large-scale social infrastructure project would improve the liveability and attractiveness of the Gladstone Region and enhance Central Queensland's rugby league heartland status. The precinct would also continue to support grassroots local and regional sports participation and accommodate local day-to-day use.



### BENEFITS

Increase sport, recreation and cultural participation.

Attract economic development opportunities.

Economic stimulus through major construction.

Ongoing operational employment.

Host premier sporting games, fixtures and events.

Increase multiple club viability and sustainability.

Improve liveability, social capital and community wellbeing.

Increase revenue from a new and diverse mix of major outdoor events and entertainment markets.

Present cultural and artistic opportunities for the region through new events and festivals.



## Enabling Infrastructure



# \$11.3M

## Harbour Arbour

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-establish Goondoon Street as Gladstone's main street by improving economic and development opportunities within the CBD.

Create a unique identity for the CBD achieving a sense of arrival.

Recognise the city's heritage as an important asset and improve the quality of public spaces and streets.

Create a CBD destination that provides entertainment for the entire Gladstone Region.

Investigate alternative transport options for ease of access into and throughout the CBD.

Convert grey space to green space and improve connectivity to activate open spaces.

# THE GLADSTONE REGION



**513.9KM**  
North of Brisbane

**10,489KM<sup>2</sup>**  
Gladstone Regional  
Council Local  
Government Area



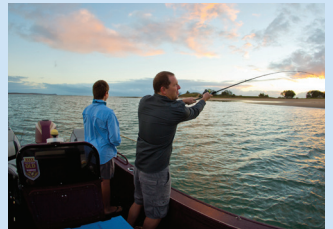
Southernmost coral cay of the Great Barrier Reef



Pristine coasts and islands



Beautiful parklands and forests



Diverse habitats ready to explore



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