

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2019-2024



Cloncurry
Shire Council



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Cloncurry Shire Council are proud to deliver our first ever Economic Development Strategy. Combined with our recently developed Tourism Strategy, this represents a big effort by the Team, supported by myself, fellow Councillors and our new Leadership Group to really look forward and do our best to guide Cloncurry forward by imagining and realising our future potential.

Our Shire was founded upon beef cattle and mining and they will always play a huge part of our lives and continue to have both positive and sometimes not so positive impacts on our prosperity, economy and importantly our jobs.

We will continue to embrace all of the possibilities these two core industries provide, and we will, as we always have, be resilient and ride the highs and lows, but more than that, we will take inspiration from our pioneering founders and seek new opportunities that support and grow our Community. The Curry is a great place to live and we want more people to know it and to call it home.

That is why we are reaching beyond and exploring new ideas such as the biofuel trials, trying to make best use of our assets like the airport and rail maintenance yard and chasing those things that will truly be game changing projects and ensure our future growth and prosperity such as the development of Cave Hill Dam, that will allow us to carry out irrigated agriculture.

We are a land of opportunity - of explorers, of pioneers, of innovators, of 'firsts' and most of all, of great people. Let's imagine, embrace and realise our future together.



Cr Greg Campbell
Mayor, Cloncurry Shire Council



CEO'S MESSAGE

Cloncurry was founded upon inspiration and innovation – from the very first Qantas passenger flight to the establishment of what was to become the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Following two of Australia's greatest innovations it is fitting for Cloncurry to be the first Council in Queensland to implement an Innovation Platform to capture internal and external innovative ideas. We believe that innovation is an inexhaustible engine for economic growth, and we do not see Cloncurry's remote location and limited resources as a hindrance, but rather a catalyst for innovation. The implementation of an Innovation Platform will inspire and bring ideas and stakeholders together to ensure continued improvement, development and future success to ensure sustainable economic growth for Cloncurry.

Cloncurry Shire, can, through the creation of an Innovation Platform, continue to find solutions, overcome challenges and realise opportunities through collaboration and action by Council, community and industry leaders and key stakeholders. In its simplest form the platform captures innovative ideas from a diverse group of individuals within council (internally) and the wider community (externally), with council facilitating, bringing new ideas / projects and stakeholders together, inspiring, seeking support and funding opportunities, developing and delivering the innovative ideas.

The benefits of the Innovation Platform can be realised internally through efficiencies made within Council in processes and the delivery of improved existing or new services. Externally, the benefits to the wider Community can range from success in grant applications that improve liveability through better amenities such as health, sporting and leisure facilities, or infrastructure development such as a new dam with irrigation opportunities.

Economic growth can be generated by creating an environment within which partners are able to identify opportunities, remove bottle necks that inhibit projects moving forward and prioritise actions that will enable and encourage positive outcomes. An effective Innovation Platform will allow Cloncurry Shire to be nimble, flexible and effective in seeking, securing and succeeding.



David Bezuidenhout
CEO, Cloncurry Shire Council



An aerial photograph of a town in a dry, open landscape. The town features a mix of residential houses, commercial buildings, and parking lots. The surrounding area is mostly flat, dry earth with some sparse vegetation. In the top right corner, there is a yellow geometric shape (a parallelogram) containing the word 'CONTENTS'. In the bottom left corner, there is a green geometric shape (a parallelogram) containing a list of topics.

CONTENTS

OUR VISION
OUR SHIRE
OUR ECONOMY
OUR STRENGTHS
OUR STRATEGY

OUR VISION IS TO
DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL
ECONOMY BY REALISING OUR POTENTIAL,
CAPTURING OUR OPPORTUNITIES AND BEING AS
BOLD, INNOVATIVE AND DETERMINED AS CLONCURRY'S
PIONEERING FORBEARS



QUEENSLAND AND NORTHERN TERRITORY AERIAL SERVICE

STRATEGIC THEMES & INNOVATION

Four core strategic themes have been identified upon which to build the basis of the Economic Development Strategy, each of which are intrinsic and aligned to the overall aims of creating resilience, broadening and strengthening the economy for the future.

1. **Addressing Our Challenges**
2. **Supporting Our Local Business**
3. **Delivering Our Strategic Opportunities**
4. **Attracting New Investment**

Each of the themes are supported by a set of strategic action items and an implementation plan to be delivered over the next five years, with yearly monitoring and adjustment where required.

Short Term Priorities linked to the strategic themes have been identified as necessary pre-cursors to assist in delivering later stage outcomes.

Critical to providing the necessary guidance and focus for delivery of the Strategy is the **Innovation Platform** that creates an enabling framework within which intended outcomes can be realised, whilst ensuring support exists to capture as yet unrealised opportunities.

The creation of an Innovation Platform is a key plank of the Strategy that can be directly implemented by Council and has the capability of facilitating greater change to directly impact and catalyse project identification and required actions to accelerate positive change.



OUR SHIRE



OUR HISTORY

In 1861 Burke and Wills, along with King and Gray, were the first Europeans to arrive in the area on their ill-fated expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Burke named the river 'Cloncurry' for his cousin, Lady Elizabeth Cloncurry of County Galway in Ireland.

In May 1867 Ernest Henry, honoured as the founder of the town and the vast mineral wealth of the district, came to the area searching for grazing land. Instead he discovered copper. He named this the 'Great Australia Mine'. The town of Cloncurry was surveyed in 1876 and named after the river.

Cloncurry has been the focal point for two of Australia's greatest innovations, featuring in the establishment of both Qantas and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The first scheduled aerial services for Qantas operated from Cloncurry and the original hangar is still in use at the airport, where 'Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services' is still proudly displayed above the door.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service was founded in Cloncurry in 1928, now recognised the world over. The airport was also enroute for early planes flying in from overseas and a stopping place for contestants in the Great Air Races of 1919 and 1934.

The Cloncurry region derives its main income from the mining and pastoral industries. The town itself is nestled on the banks of the Cloncurry River. The Cloncurry River catchment area begins in the Selwyn Ranges and flows into the Flinders River, where it continues on to empty into the Gulf of Carpentaria.



CLONCURRY TODAY

Nestled on the banks of the Cloncurry River, the Cloncurry township is located 783 kilometres west of Townsville, is 120 kilometres east of Mount Isa and 400 kilometres south of the Gulf of Carpentaria, with a population of just over 3,100 residents. Predominantly rural, with rich mining and pastoral industries, the Cloncurry Shire hold a strategic location within the North West Minerals Province.

Accessible by road, rail and air, Cloncurry provides a vital link in the Mount Isa Rail Corridor connecting mining, agricultural and broader regional activity in Queensland's North West to the Townsville Port. Cloncurry provides its residents and surrounding properties access to a wide range of essential and specialist health, hospital and medical facilities, education and family services and community facilities.

Cloncurry Shire's economy is built upon strengths in the transport, agriculture, tourism and mining industries, with diverse infrastructure strategically planned to attract and support development. With a strong business environment and land available for a wide variety of commercial and industrial uses Cloncurry harnesses room for growing business.

Future opportunities include a number of new mines (gold, copper, zinc, and rare earth elements) and processing facilities. Additional opportunities exist within the other key sectors, such as agriculture resulting from water infrastructure, that will contribute to the future prosperity of the region, transport infrastructure as well as longer term opportunities such as the development of major manufacturing plants to support the regions large demand for acid (mining supply chain), aquaculture and alternative food product (e.g. bush tucker, camel milk, goat milk & cheese).



OUR ECONOMY





ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Cloncurry is a significant contributor of mining royalties from the North West and both the population and in particular, the workforce have a tendency to ebb and flow in line with mining activity and commodity cycles.

The base population remains relatively constant and this is as attributable to the Shire's long pastoral heritage as it is to the community's resilience. Whilst not contributing to the resident workforce numbers, the relatively large mining FIFO component does allow fall-off in downturn cycles that can lessen direct impacts.

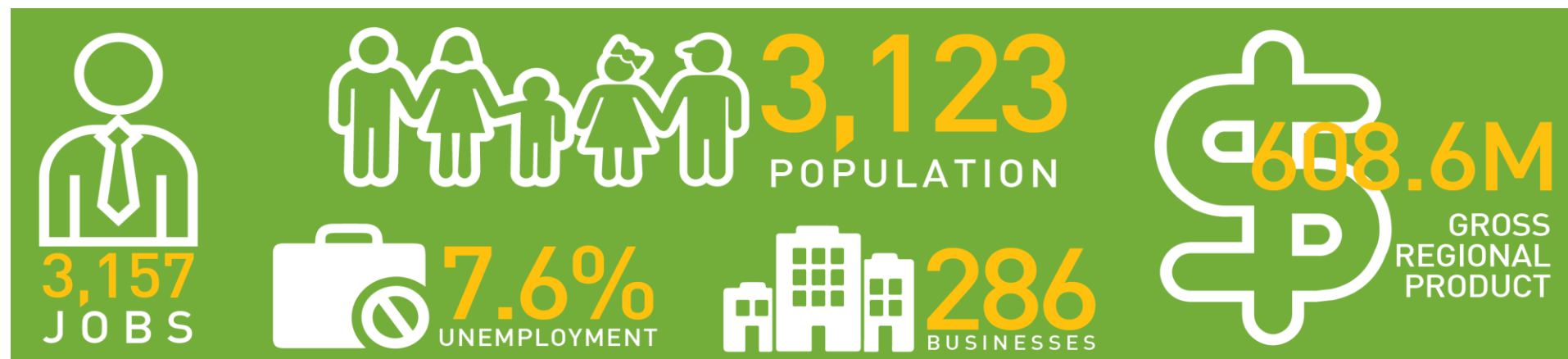
Despite rises and falls, economic growth shows moderate performance over the past ten years and is set to continue, with mineral mining expected to continue, if not increase over the coming decade and beyond.

Cloncurry Shire seeks opportunities to expand, grow and diversify the economy beyond the anticipated growth in mining in order to be less reliant or impacted upon through single sector activity.

The prosperity of the Shire will be determined not just by the amount of resource extraction, but supported growth of:

- the beef cattle industry,
- expansion of current services to the mining and transport sectors
- opportunities created through water capture and irrigated cropping
- growth in outback tourism.

Population retention and attraction driven through the creation of additional opportunities will be a key focus to ensure the continued prosperity of the Shire and the region.





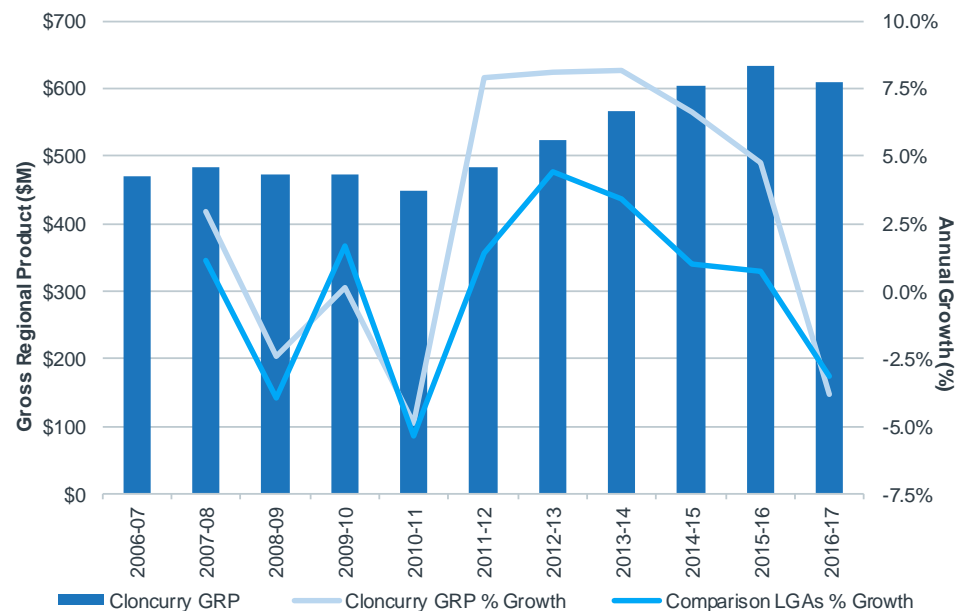
ECONOMIC TREND

Between 2006-07 and 2016-17, Cloncurry's economy expanded at an average annual rate of 2.6% to end 2016-17 at \$608.6 million. Most of this growth occurred between 2010-11 and 2015-16, when the economy grew at an average annual rate of 7.1%, with the majority of growth stemming from positive impacts from the mining sector. The comparison regions of Carpentaria, Charters Towers, Flinders, Longreach, Mount Isa and Richmond showed similar movements in GRP, albeit at lower rates overall.

Over 80% of the economy of Cloncurry is supported by just two sectors (mining and agriculture). The five most prominent sectors in Cloncurry in terms of contribution to gross value added in 2016-17 were:

- Mining - \$381.3 million (67.8%)
- Agriculture - \$69.3 million (12.3%)
- Manufacturing - \$43.7 million (7.8%)
- Construction – \$30.8 million (5.5%)
- Transport, postal and warehousing - \$8.5 million (1.5%).

Over ten years, Cloncurry has been the second best performer in terms of average annual growth in GRP (2.6%), behind only Richmond (3.6%). Against the combined comparison LGAs, which had an average marginal expansion of 0.1% on average per year, Cloncurry experienced significantly more growth than the region overall.



Source: AEC (unpublished a).

Comparison Region data is a composite of the LGA's of Carpentaria, Charters Towers, Flinders, Longreach, Mount Isa and Richmond.

OUR BUSINESSES AND JOBS

In 2017, there were 286 registered businesses operating in Cloncurry Shire, with the most common size of businesses being non-employing (i.e. owner operator) making up 57.4% of all businesses (ABS, 2018b). This is lower than all comparison regions except Mount Isa (53.6%). However, Cloncurry has the highest percentage of businesses employing 1-4 people out of the comparison regions at 26.8%.

The most prominent sectors representing the number of businesses registered in Cloncurry were:

- Agriculture (33.3%)
- Other Services (11.8%)
- Administrative and Support Services (9.2%)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (5.6%)
- Public Administration and Safety (5.2%).

There were a total of 3,157 persons working in Cloncurry in 2016 (by place of work) (ABS, 2017a) and the industries which provided the most jobs in 2016 were:

- Mining (43.8% of total jobs)
- Construction (7.9%)
- Manufacturing (7.8%)
- Agriculture (7.8%)
- Transport, postal and warehousing (6.9%).

Analysis of employment by industry by place of work and place of usual residence highlights Cloncurry does not have the necessary resident labour requirements to meet its employment needs, which is highlighted by the number of FIFO employees in the mining sector.

One of the key opportunities for growth of the economy is the potential conversion of FIFO workers to residents of Cloncurry Shire. There are limiting factors to convert substantial percentages, however, the benefits to the community and local economy of transitioning FIFO workers to local works cannot be understated.



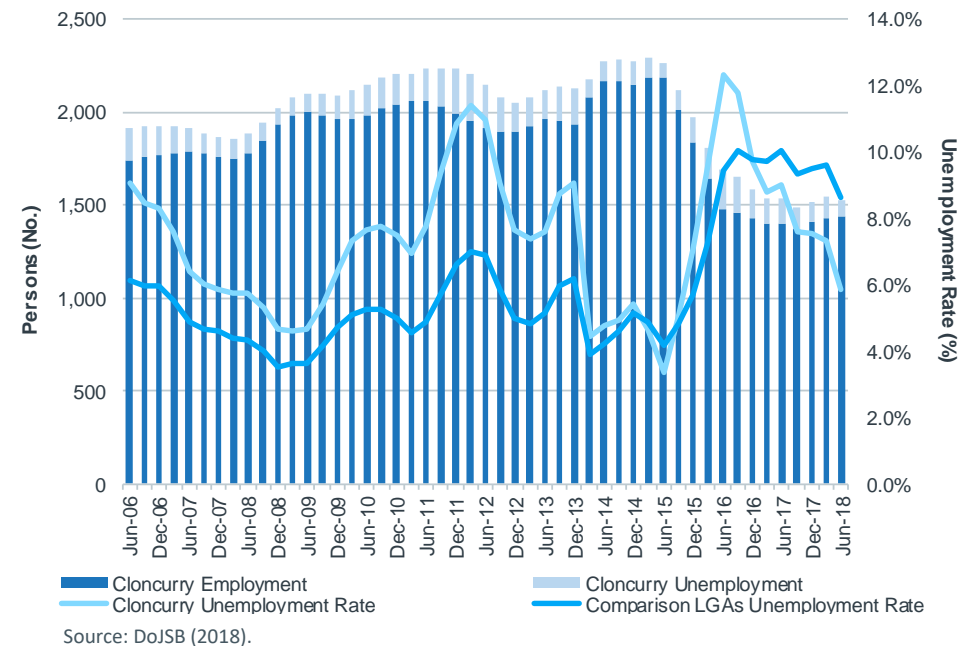
OUR WORKFORCE

The Cloncurry labour force contracted over the last five years between June 2013 and 2018, falling 27.8% as did unemployment, leaving the unemployment rate at 5.9% (DoJSB, 2018). The unemployment rate peaked in June 2016 at 12.3% but has since declined.

Historically, Cloncurry had a higher unemployment rate than the comparison regions as a whole, but since 2016, Cloncurry's unemployment rate has fallen below the average for the comparison LGAs.

There were 1,483 residents that were employed that live in Cloncurry in 2016 (by place of usual residence) (ABS, 2017a). The most prominent industries employing residents were:

- Mining (27.7%)
- Agriculture (12.0%)
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing (10.7%)
- Public Administration (10.2%)
- Construction (7.2%).



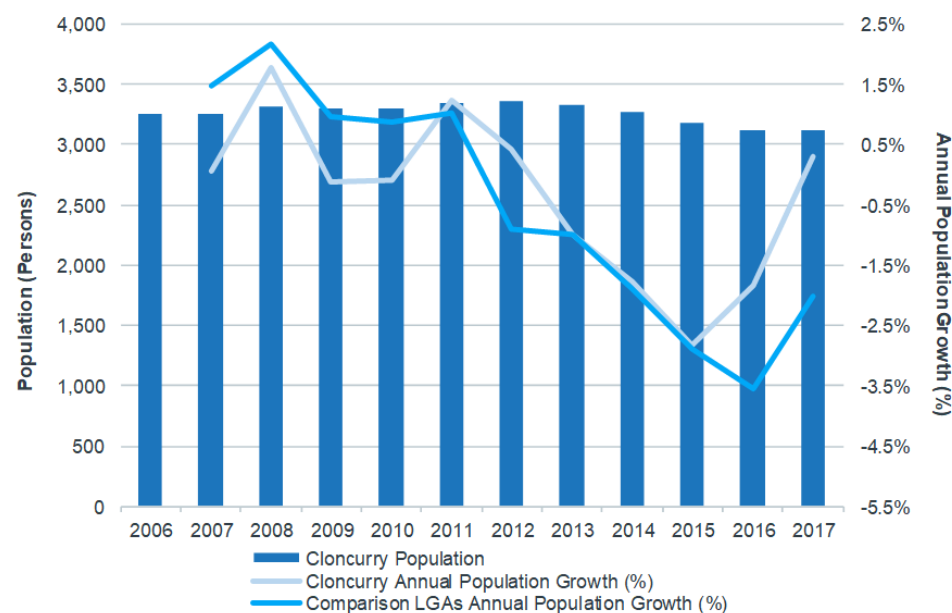
OUR POPULATION

Cloncurry's population increased modestly between 2007 and 2012 (increase from 3,250 to 3,359 persons), and then declined to 3,125 persons in 2016 before increasing in 2017 to 3,133 persons. Over the past ten years, average annual growth has stood at -0.4%. This aligns with the population contraction experienced in the majority of the comparison regions, all of which, with the exception of Charters Towers, were marginally negative.

Projections over the next 20 years indicate that Cloncurry's population will be stable, with a projected average annual growth rate of 0.2% between 2017 and 2036, and ensuring stability will be key for long run sustainability (QGSO, 2016). This is consistent with the comparison LGAs showing similar growth except for Richmond and Longreach who show declines of -0.9% and -0.6% respectively.

Cloncurry has a high proportion of those who identify as Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander, comprising a quarter of the population (ABS, 2017a). This is higher than all other comparison regions in the north west, except Carpentaria.

The most common household type in Cloncurry in 2016 was a one family household with only family members present, comprising 41% of total households, lower than all the comparison regions, except Carpentaria and McKinlay (ABS, 2017a). Cloncurry has had a reasonably high proportion of visitor only households, comprising 22.7% of all households, a higher proportion than all comparison regions except Carpentaria. This figure is indicative of FIFO component within the workforce.



Source: ABS (2018a).

THE ECONOMY AND COUNCIL

As an Employer

Outside of any administrative functions or responsibilities, the positive impact that Council has as a provider of employment cannot be understated. Of the almost 1,500 jobs held by Cloncurry residents, Council employs around 120 staff, providing financial security to individuals and families, as well as offering training, skills improvement and opportunity of progression.

As a Business

In simple terms, Council is a big business operator. With an operating budget of \$48m and a capital works budget of \$12m, this represents a significant contribution to the spend within the economy. Alongside providing secure employment, the 'business' aspect of Council also provides opportunities for other businesses and sub-contractors as a major procurer of goods and services

As an Advocate

Council engages the business community and other levels of government to develop commitment, energy and attitude towards identified priorities. For the EDS, Council plays a role in advocating for business needs, maintaining a future-focused agenda, and providing – either directly, or through advocacy and grant funding, the delivery of critical infrastructure that supports economic development.



Investment Attraction

Council has the capability to encourage and attract business and investment into the local economy through both financial and non-financial means.

Non-Financial Incentives are typically those that promote best practice within local government and provided through a combination of business support services and efficient planning approvals processes. Business support services may range from provision of relevant information to local business network introductions and supply chain contacts. Ensuring appropriate land zoning provisions are in place to attract the type of activity desired for the economy and community is essential – but this must be matched with an equally supportive, efficient and collaborative approvals process.

Financial Incentives are appropriate levers that Council can employ where the considered benefit to the local economy in terms of overall investment, jobs provision or other considered benefit outweighs the level of support or incentive provided.

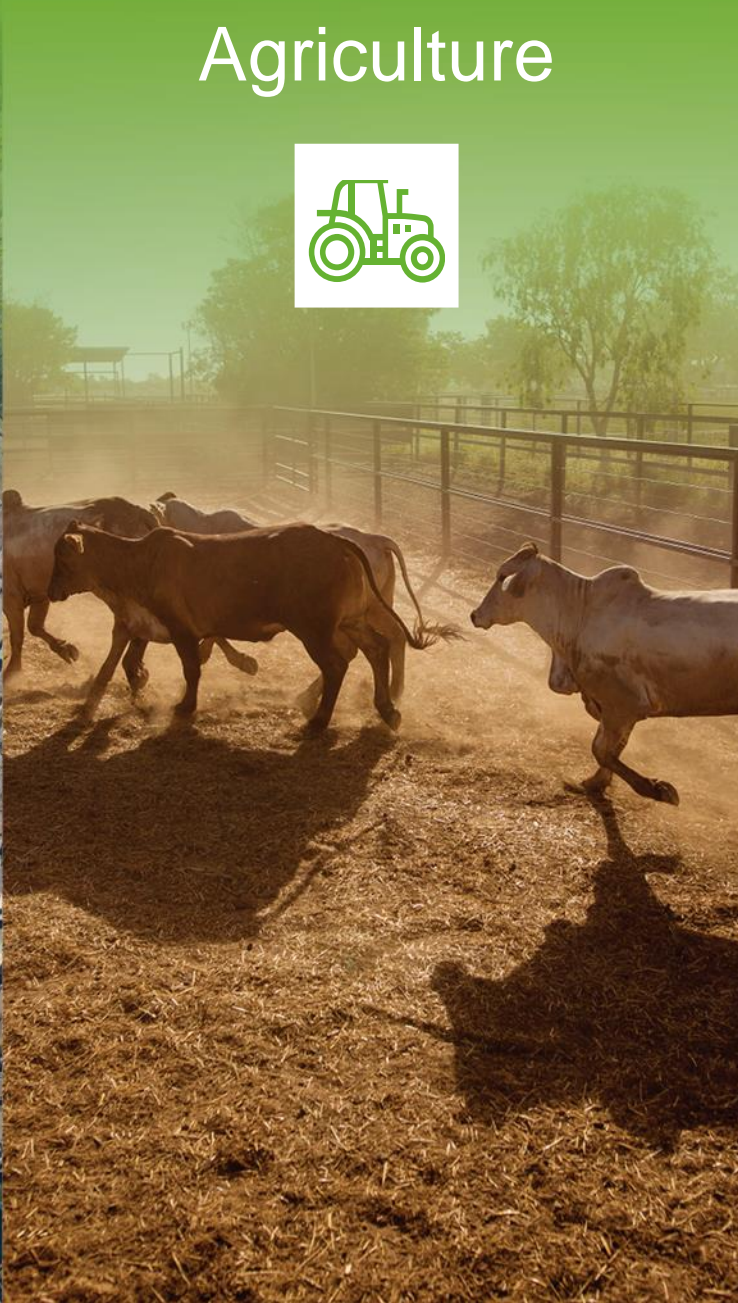
Financial incentives typically would take the form of offsets or deferrals for infrastructure costs, rate rebates or other discounts on related development assessment fees or financial grants for establishment costs. Where available and appropriately zoned, provision of land with deferred or reduced sale/lease costs may also be a consideration.

OUR STRENGTHS

Mining

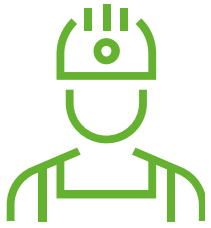


Agriculture



Strategic Assets





MINING

Mining has been one of the founding pillars and one of the economic strengths for Cloncurry for well over 100 years. Population within the community has ebbed and flowed to an extent in relation to the cyclical growth and contractions of the sector. The regional lodes are mineral rather than coal based which has provided some degree of continuity and within the current context, a positive outlook on the future.

Future opportunities include a number of new mines including gold, copper, zinc, and rare earth elements that will be mined, processed and transported to markets from Cloncurry. With an abundance of mineral resources, access to electricity generation and water supplies there is tremendous capacity for industries to grow and provide a secure future for the town.

The opportunities that exist for Cloncurry Shire come not only in the form of employment, but in supply chain opportunities, provision of goods and services, local population growth and upgrading of infrastructure.

Strategies are required to ensure as many potential opportunities and advantages are captured locally. For example, the rail maintenance yards are currently under utilised and present opportunities for the maintenance of the rolling stock and locomotives servicing the mining sector local, rather than having them travel large distances to be maintained outside of the region.





AGRICULTURE

The beef cattle industry is a significant contributor and integral component of both the Cloncurry and Queensland economy. As with mining, the cattle industry is supported and facilitated with Cloncurry Shire's third largest industry being freight and transport – predominantly in the delivery of cattle to the Port of Townsville.

Opportunities presented directly via the current cattle and the supporting infrastructure of the Cloncurry Saleyards are the potential for beef processing (abattoir) and feed lotting. The ability to finish and process cattle at a central location within the region would reduce transportation costs and reduce weight loss in transport. A conservative estimate of throughput is around 115,000 head per annum.

Earlier pre-feasibility studies have shown that sufficient cattle numbers exist within the north-western Queensland catchment for an abattoir with significant supply chain cost advantages to operate in the region.

An abattoir located in the Cloncurry area would offer a significant cost saving opportunity with an estimated catchment of approximately 100,000 slaughter ready cattle per year, based on existing Queensland regional turnoff rates. Additional culled breeders and older stock from adjacent shires, as well as cattle from the Northern Territory which currently pass through Cloncurry enroute to Central Queensland finishing properties would add to the potential throughput.

Particularly in light of recent capacity upgrades to the Cloncurry Saleyards, the location is well placed to offer opportunities for investors to view Cloncurry as a logical and attractive option for a substantial inland beef processing plant serving northern Australia.





STRATEGIC ASSETS

Cloncurry Airport

Currently operating five days per week servicing FIFO and regular passenger service, the recently upgraded airport facilities offer future expansion opportunities, as well as the potential of non-passenger aviation activities such as a drone test facility. The fast-growing drone technology sector is creating investment and jobs in research and development with drones used in crop and stock inspections, mining assessments, bushfire monitoring and natural disaster response. The site is suitable because of beneficial conditions for drone testing such as the existing infrastructure, uncongested airspace, low population, relatively flat topography, adequate road access, favourable and predictable climatic conditions and is currently under evaluation.

Industrial Land

Council's \$3.7m industrial estate was developed for the purpose of ensuring that suitably zoned and reticulated land was available for future requirements. The lots are fully serviced with reticulated water, sewer, stormwater drainage, telecommunications, mains power and road train accessible. The region also has rail maintenance facilities that currently have excess capacity that could be used to provide maintenance and repair services to locomotives used in the regional mines.



Saleyards

Cloncurry Saleyards are the second largest cattle handling facility in Queensland, with recent upgrades enabling a throughput capacity of up to 500,000 head per year. The saleyards play a critical role in the community through the ripple effect of employment and flow-on benefits. Livestock processed through the yards involves a local supply chain of producers, on-farm station hands, transport operators, fuel suppliers and saleyards workers, and other associated flow-on jobs and services.

Rail Load Out Facility

The Cloncurry Common User Rail Load Out Facility is recognised as a Strategic Asset that supports the supply chain productivity, efficiency and reliability within the North West Queensland Strategic Development Study.

The load out facility has been mooted since 2010 and despite receiving significant support from both government and industry, the development, initially intended to be operational by mid-2014 has yet to come to fruition.

Located 10km east of Cloncurry, the estimated \$30m facility would consist of a rail loop into grounds where trucks would deliver mining products or minerals to the dock and would allow local mining companies in the region access to a mine-to-port solution.

The proposed \$30 million, multi-user loading facility to continue the link between the north west and Townsville and consist of a rail loop into grounds where trucks would deliver mining products or minerals to the dock.

The facility would further cement Cloncurry's position as the centre of the north west minerals province and will develop the capacity to unlock further freight efficiency to the entire north west region.



OUR STRATEGY

Four strategic themes form the basis of the Economic Development Strategy. Each of the strategic themes are intrinsic and aligned to the creation of jobs and investment, building resilience into and strengthening the economy for the future.

1. Addressing Our Challenges
2. Supporting Our Local Business
3. Delivering Our Strategic Opportunities
4. Attracting New Investment

Each of the themes are supported by a set of strategic action items and an implementation plan to be delivered over the next five years, with yearly monitoring and adjustment where required.

Critical to providing the necessary guidance and focus for delivery of the Strategy is the **Innovation Platform** that creates an enabling framework within which intended outcomes can be realised, whilst ensuring support exists to capture as yet unrealised opportunities.





INNOVATION PLATFORM

To inspire and bring ideas and stakeholders together to ensure continued improvement, development and future success to ensure sustainable economic growth

Cloncurry was founded upon inspiration and innovation – from the very first Qantas passenger flight to the establishment of what was to become the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

Cloncurry Shire, can, through the creation of an Innovation Platform, continue to find solutions, overcome challenges and realise opportunities through collaboration and action by Council, community and industry leaders and key stakeholders. Establishing an Innovation Platform creates and encourages learning and change. In its simplest form it is a group of individuals with different backgrounds and interests that come together to diagnose problems, identify opportunities and discover ways to achieve goals.

The benefits of the Innovation Platform can be realised through efficiencies made within Council in processes, the delivery of existing or new and improved services.

Benefits to the wider Community can range from success in grant applications that improve liveability through better amenities such as health, sporting or leisure facilities.

Benefits to the economy can be generated through creating an environment within which partners are able to agree on prioritised actions that enable and encourages positive outcomes, identify bottle necks that inhibit projects moving forward, and allow early identification of opportunities.

An effective Innovation Platform will allow Cloncurry Shire to be nimble, flexible and effective in seeking, securing and succeeding.





ADDRESSING OUR CHALLENGES

Recognising factors that limit the ability of Cloncurry Shire to build momentum and grow the economy in order that strategies can be implemented to overcome or alleviate barriers to success. Our four core challenges to be addressed through the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan include:



Building Resilience and
sustainability of the local
economy



Attraction and retention
of population



Transport: road, rail
and airport



Secure funding for Service
Delivery & Infrastructure

OUR CHALLENGES



BUILDING RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

A successful and sustainable economy usually features a high resilience to change, a diverse industry mix, and a stable business environment that fosters collaboration and innovation.

Growth and productivity can be adversely affected by a heavy reliance on one or two industries, especially if those industries are exposed to volatile markets, as well as a business environment that does not encourage or is slow to adapt to change.

The dominance of mining within the North West Minerals Province plays a large part in driving the fortunes of local economies such as Cloncurry, with international demand and commodity pricing driving cycles and activity levels that impact workforce requirements, industry and business servicing opportunities, as well as population transience through FIFO.

Beef cattle production and Cloncurry's strategic location as an important transport hub have sustained the economy through mining downturns, however greater focus must now be placed upon realising and creating new opportunities that assist in diversifying and attract investment into new industries, whilst ensuring maximum leverage of current key industry opportunities.



ATTRACTION AND RETENTION OF POPULATION

Difficulties attracting or retaining population can lead to shortages in appropriately skilled labour, present gaps in social and economic capital and community cohesion, and constrain growth and prosperity for a region.

Population growth and attraction of new residents is typically driven through access to employment and a good level of liveability, where required services such as health, education and a reasonable level of leisure pursuits are available.

For Cloncurry, population levels have traditionally been impacted by mining activity and employment, which is at times volatile. With a relatively small population that cannot support all mine worker requirements, opportunities within the sector are often filled by FIFO workers.

Cloncurry requires a clear strategy based upon improvement in liveability, which includes the provision of new housing stock to encourage the conversion of workers from FIFO to local resident, as well as recognising existing service gaps not currently supported by local business, in addition to addressing existing and future education and skills requirements that grow the local workforce to support the key industries and those recognised as future opportunities.



OUR CHALLENGES



TRANSPORT: ROAD, RAIL AND AIRPORT

The access, availability and quality of transport infrastructure is a key enabler of economic growth and development and plays a crucial role in driving business investment and productivity.

Cloncurry holds a key position as an effective transport hub within the North West Minerals Province, as well as being home to the second largest cattle handling facility in Queensland.

Effective road and rail networks are crucial to support the role that Cloncurry plays within the region, therefore, ensuring appropriate policy and infrastructure investment facilitates best use of both road and rail, with road limited to time sensitive freight and heavy goods via rail is critical.

Despite having excellent airport facilities, the cost of air transport to and from Cloncurry is a prohibitive factor for both residents and businesses alike. This is a major inhibitor that impacts on liveability and restricts access required for the growth of existing business and the burgeoning tourism market, which is seen as a key potential growth sector. The issue requires a high level of advocacy and support at all levels.



SECURE FUNDING FOR SERVICE DELIVERY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Provision of appropriate and fit-for-purpose infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the community requires access to funds.

Funding this infrastructure and services is typically achieved through a combination of internal revenue generation or cash reserves, access to funding from financial institutions such as loans or from grants and other public or private funding sources.

Cloncurry requires key infrastructure that supports transport, education, health and community wellbeing, which is vital to protect and enhance liveability - a key component to ensuring population growth and attraction.

Funding for projects that help to expand opportunities for existing and new businesses to support current industries and create opportunities for diversification are essential to enhance the ability of the economy to be stable and prosperous.

Continuing to develop future project business cases to attract return of royalties & other funding, as well as seeking public and private investment for existing identified projects is essential to ensure continued investment flow.



SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL BUSINESS

Providing support, guidance and leadership to ensure the necessary environment is created and maintained to enable success and prosperity for business and community.

Council can support Local Business through both Policy and Action, for example:

- Local business are encouraged to grow and expand through the provision and awareness of opportunities
- Skills shortages are understood and actions taken to assist in addressing to grow the local workforce
- Ensuring mining service and other support opportunities are capitalised locally through providing capability support



SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESS



SUPPORTING THROUGH POLICY

Cloncurry Shire Council is passionate about local business support and success and whilst general economic conditions cannot be affected locally, there are ways in which Council can at the very least ensure that policy settings are both supportive and encouraging to existing and potential future business operators and investors.

From the provision of timely advice on issues such as licensing, development applications and the assurance of appropriate and adequate land zoning that supports business activity, to ensuring fit for purpose infrastructure, Council can and does have a positive impact upon local business operations.

Local procurement policy with regard to positive weighting for local business is another tool that can be used to support and encourage business to engage and compete in a preferential environment.

Additionally and importantly, Council have the ability to create policies that encourage and support development through fast tracking services, offering of incentives for preferred development types and those that represent positive contribution to the local economy through investment and job creation.



SUPPORTING THROUGH ACTION

Cloncurry Shire Council already takes an active approach within the local business community to assist and support the Local Business Network. Supportive networks are an important accessibility tool for businesses to engage, collaborate and resolve common issues.

Looking farther afield, Council can assist local business through their relationships with both State and Federal agencies engaged in industry development and developed toolkits that are designed to enhance business capability and readiness to take advantage of wider opportunities. Clear opportunities exist for further direct engagement within the mining sector to ensure local capture of as much potential business as possible. Assistance to navigate and complete sometimes complex procurement documentation and capability statements is available and can be facilitated by Council.

A general capability capture of products and services for Cloncurry Shire is an effective way to present the current offering available to prospective investors and equally to highlight service and skills gaps that can be filled locally, or used to attract new business operators and opportunities of fulfillment through localised workforce training.



DELIVERING OUR STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

The Strategic Opportunities represent the most significant potential impacts opportunities for large stepwise change in both jobs and population growth, as well as building resilience and diversity into the local community and economy.

Of the recognised opportunities that will support the delivery of jobs and investment for the Cloncurry Region, the two core strategic opportunities are:



Cave Hill Dam



Tourism Development





CAVE HILL DAM

Cave Hill is located some 18km south of Cloncurry. It is the only site within the Cloncurry River catchment shortlisted in a CSIRO report as a “promising site” for a dam, one of only three in the entire Flinders River catchment.

CSIRO specifications indicate Cave Hill Dam would be capable of storing 248GL of water. It had a projected height of spillway of 16m above the riverbed and would be over 700m in length. An additional saddle dam to the west, some 900m long and up to 5m high, would be required to contain flood rises in the reservoir. The dam would generate a lake area, when the reservoir is full, of approximately 50km.

Cave Hill Dam was considered by the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia in 2014 and put forward for further consideration on the basis that it provided a way of increasing the supply of town water to Cloncurry, thereby supporting potential development for a feed lot and abattoir, and expansion of mining and industry.

The main drivers for a major storage on the Cloncurry River is to provide sufficient, affordable water to develop an irrigated agriculture precinct, additional water for industry and water security for the community.

Investigations are moving to the next stage, with detailed functional design and costings and social, economic and environmental impact assessments. Additional work, such as the development of a demonstration farm to give potential irrigators more confidence in the suitability of different crops is still required to progress the claim.





TOURISM

Cloncurry, like other outback destinations spanning the central and north west of Queensland are experiencing increased interest and visitation by both domestic and international travelers who are seeking links to Australia's heritage locations and to gain a sense of 'the real Australia'.

Between 2007 and 2017, total visitors increased at an average annual rate of 6.1% to end 2017 at 159,000 visitors (TRA, 2018a,b). The average length of stay over since 2007 has remained around one night, with visitors being predominantly leisure (41.5%), whilst a significant amount attended for business purposes (34.0%).

Cloncurry has a distinct opportunity to leverage and expand visitation based upon the significant historical linkages to Qantas, the Royal Flying Doctor Service and Burke and Wills, as well as the rich (and current) history of mining and cattle farming – the latter already celebrated by the Cloncurry Stockman's Challenge and Campdraft.

Opportunities for expansion of existing activities and attractions, as well as development of new experiences that take advantage of Cloncurry's natural assets can positively impact the local economy through extended length of stay and increase in local spend. Production of local food and beverage offerings is also an opportunity for the region, but likely in boutique products leveraging a local/regional brand.

The Cloncurry Tourism Strategy further examines the opportunities and activities to assist in growing this important sector of the economy for Cloncurry Shire.



ATTRACTING NEW INVESTMENT

Understanding and prioritising opportunities to ensure that advantage is taken when presented, that effort is expended in the right areas and that a whole of community awareness creates a continued sense of opportunity and potential

Attracting new investment to the Cloncurry region will see a focus on:

- Agave – biofuel / products
- Aquaculture
- Camel / goat dairying
- Drone facility
- Industry attraction
- Housing Development





NEW INVESTMENT

AGAVE – BIOFUEL / PRODUCTS

The agave plant is selected for testing in Cloncurry Shire as part of the extended biofuels trial. Agaves have shown the ability to successfully grow in the region and can produce around 400 tonne per hectare of bio-mass in 5 years, requires no irrigation, and delivers a high amount of fermentable juice and fibre

Native to the arid highlands of Mexico, blue agave is a fleshy succulent that is grown commercially as the base ingredient for tequila and mezcal.

Whilst initial thinking has centred on the potential of Cloncurry plantings as biofuel (ethanol), there are other opportunities that could lend themselves to the creation of locally produced and branded products.

Agaves take four to five years to grow, but require very little water and generate very little waste. Upon harvesting the sugar can be used for candies and syrup, the fibres can be fed to cattle, the outer leaves can be used to make rope.

The crop is being considered in other regions of Australia and has significant potential in Cloncurry.

AQUACULTURE

A recent study (GHD Advisory 2017) commissioned by the Department of State Development on the considerations of viable aquaculture business models for North West Queensland Aquaculture highlighted Cloncurry Shire as a potentially suitable location for freshwater aquaculture.

Commercial viability was indicated at favourable levels particularly for small-medium sized farming of freshwater crayfish, with well located aquaculture ponds at relative low-risk of flooding during the monsoon season and good transport network connectivity provided east to Townsville, west to Mt Isa and north to Darwin, providing distribution nationally and internationally.

Barramundi farming also showed viability, albeit as a slightly lesser valued commodity. The seafood market in general is a growing sector with demand for sustainable product increasing.

CAMEL / GOAT DAIRYING

The Cloncurry region is home to one of Australia's oldest wild camel populations – the remnant legacy of more than 200 Afghan cameleers and 2,000 camels who lived and worked in Queensland during the late 19th and early 20th Century.

A growing number of wild camels are being utilised as dairy animals, as interest and demand in the camel milk industry builds. There are currently 10 dairies in operation across Australia, with products including fresh pasteurised camels' milk, cheese, ice-cream, yoghurt, camel milk powder and skincare.

With ready access to wild camel herds and market prices of up to \$25 per litre for fresh camel milk, there exists the opportunity for an investor/farmer to establish a farm and dairy facility in Cloncurry Shire to take advantage of the growing national and particularly international market.

Of lesser value, but equal in opportunity via accessibility is the potential conversion of feral goat herds in the region for dairying, or meat – with goat being the most consumed meat in the world and Australia as the largest exporter.



NEW INVESTMENT

DRONE FACILITY

The Queensland State Government is progressing opportunities within the fast-growing drone technology sector, seeking to create investment and jobs in research and development with drones used in crop and stock inspections, mining assessments, bushfire monitoring and natural disaster response.

Cloncurry Airport is one of two potential site locations under consideration due to its suitability for drone testing through adequate existing infrastructure, uncongested airspace, low population, relatively flat topography, adequate road access, favourable and predictable climatic conditions.

Investment in the form of new building infrastructure, additional access roads, job creation and attraction of additional industry partnerships are some of the potential benefits to be realised.

INDUSTRY ATTRACTION

Within Cloncurry's current context, the attraction of new business to the Shire would likely be limited to support and provision of services to the existing key industries, local infrastructure and support of the local community needs.

In understanding the capability of local business to supply products and services and the gap provided by imported goods and services, the opportunity for both local expansion and industry/investment attraction exists.

Expansion of provision of services to existing key industries and the recognition of wider opportunities as outlined in the Strategy are important factors in creating some diversity within the local economy, which, in turn provides future resilience and sustainability.

Marketing of desired opportunities as outlined, as well as the creation of investment attraction policies that encourage job creating investment activity are key tools to support the future growth of the Cloncurry Shire economy.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

New housing stock is required in Cloncurry to support the potential of residential growth. With a significant FIFO worker population, even a modest percentage conversion to local residency would provide positive growth and flow on benefits for the local community.

Existing housing stock, where available, is typically not satisfying the standard required, relative to price point compared to the home locations of FIFO workers.

There is a strong desire from within the mining sector operators, local Council and community to see a higher percentage of locally based workers, however a solution to the housing issue is required.

A combined strategy and partnership agreement between Council, mine operators and potentially State Government may provide a way forward to encourage joint investment into the provision of new housing stock, which would likely, in turn lead to further external investment and also the encouragement of upgrades to existing dwellings.



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