

Summary of Regional Plan Expectations

There is a tome which could be written on the expectations of a new FNQ Regional Plan. In fact, we've started that tome which only further engagement with the community and industry will enable it to be holistic.

As a short summary, our overarching expectations are:

1. **It needs to be an integrated regional plan.** Unsurprisingly everything is inter-related i.e. water is related to urban and agricultural growth and vis versa, energy is related to urban, industry and agricultural growth and vis versa, Climate resilience impacts everything in our region. Housing impacts education, health, justice, employment.
2. **It enables our economy to grow and strengthens existing industries.** It needs to expand local manufacturing, world leading tourism; agricultural industries; research and best practice collaboration and cross industry partnerships. It must also enable us to capitalises on future economic trends i.e. carbon neutral processes and industries, regional population growth post COVID..
3. **It supports our region to be 'liveable'** i.e., those services expected by those living in SEQ can be found in region.
4. **It incorporates indigenous perspectives of county** into the plan.
5. **There is meaningful engagement** – based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, with the community who live here and industries who contribute to our GRP.
6. **The plan is as big as it needs to be** to fulfill its role as an integrated regional plan with a clear partnership-based action plan.
7. **It has a clear partnership-based action plan** which is actively monitored and reported upon half-yearly by all levels of government and has budget commitments in the State budget forward estimates.
8. **There needs to be clear indicators** to monitor the impact of the FNQ Regional Plan (built in not bolted on).
9. **The plan needs to be directly relevant to our current and emerging needs** not those of other regions adapted to Cairns i.e:
 - a. Hazard profile
 - b. Decentralised regional population
 - c. Gateway to South Pacific
 - d. Marine Opportunities
10. **It includes the local government** areas of Cairns, Cassowary, Cook, Douglas, Etheridge, Hope Vale, Mareeba, Tablelands, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah.

The Regional Plan needs to include (but is not limited to):

- **Starting with Country** – incorporating indigenous perspectives of country into the Regional Plan.
 - How can the Regional Plan embed Country, community and culture?
 - Songlines: how do we incorporate or acknowledge the routes through the landscape and the landmarks that relate to events?
 - Caring for Country - Given Aboriginal communities' long history of land management, learning from caring for Country principles can enhance environmental values and contribute to sustainable practices.
 - Meaningful engagement
 - Culturally responsive infrastructure and social infrastructure
 - How can the Regional Plan prioritise Country, including the environment, natural ecosystems, topography, fauna and spiritual connection?
- **Consultation**
 - Real Industry and community input into development of the plan
- The **principles right up front**, then the regional plan becomes a checklist that leads to much better focused work, better directed work, cross-industry / cross agency work that breaks down silos.
- If the **Cairns airport** reaches capacity, what do Mundoo + Mareeba airports need in order to accommodate some of this traffic.
- If the **Cairns seaport** reaches capacity, what do the ports at Cooktown, Mourilyan, Weipa need in order to accommodate some of this traffic.
- How does the Regional Plan relate to the opportunities that arise from the Olympics?
- **Transport linkages** are an important focus
 - **Transport** - how will workers get between Cairns / Tully/ Innisfail/Tablelands in this day and age where are the regional transport solutions – rail, light rail, mobility, Mobility as a Service (MaaS)
 - **Freight** – including regional distribution centres.
 - **Flood immunity** of for the major routes and road networks e.g. when people cannot get through due to flooding in Cardwell there is not enough capacity in the town (beds, food etc) people sleep in cairns, freight is stalled
 - **Kuranda Range** capacity and associated limitations for development west and north of the range.
- **Community engagement** will need to be consistent across State (Regional Plan); Local (CRC Regional Growth Strategy and other LGA strategies and Planning Scheme reviews) and Federal.
- Chamber of Commerces, RDA TN, Advance Cairns, FNQROC and industry groups all to be brought along – so they understand the messages
- Need to keep the discussion about planning **coherent** – ideally, we would invest well in the value of planning conversations and help the community participate meaningfully in this strategic planning exercise
- Economic development needs to include (not limited to):
 - renewables & energy security (i.e., transmission, supporting end of grid communities to grow, increased demand with growth of region etc).
 - Agriculture
 - Bioindustries

- Marine
- Defence
- Manufacturing
- Transport hubs
- Space
- Health/Medical (particularly tropical)
- Aviation – i.e., training hub, maintenance etc
- Grazing
- Dairy
- Tourism (inclusive of eco sports to which we are a mecca, tourism accommodation (RV to Hotel))
- Education and Training

Questions for the FNQ Regional Plan

1. What **lifestyle** do we want for our children and grandchildren?
2. What aspects of **our FNQ lifestyle** do we need to actively preserve and protected in this period of high growth and technological change?
3. Dealing with aging populations.
4. What are the **liveability** concerns, challenges, strengths and opportunities of each community?
5. Do we want to increase the rate of **population growth**? If so, is it the same expectation for each community? What are the growth blockers and enablers for each community? If we do it sustainably, what does it look like?
6. **Employment and skill shortages.** What are the employment opportunities in each community now and into the future? What are the shortages or oversupply of skills in each community? Is it possible to restructure our workforce? Are there ways to leverage the existing population (e.g. older people or long term unemployed) into casual or part time work? Are job-share and part time employment options that complements our lifestyle.
7. Inside and outside of regional Planning, what are the actions we can take to attract and retain **new industries and workforce**?
8. **Economy.** What are the things that are slowing our economic growth / potential (e.g. roads, ports, public transport, water, environment)? What do we need to unlock the economic potential of the Region.
9. **Climate change/Green economy.** This is a big topic, how much of it do we want to tackle - what elements can we focus on to achieve the greatest regional advantage. e.g.:

Environment - net zero. Do we want to reach net zero or even become carbon positive? What do we need to do? What are we already doing? How close are we? I suspect we are closer than other regions and this could be a great point of difference.
10. Certainty on **Urban Footprint**: Where can and should development go? Providing that certainty prevents leapfrogging and isolated residential pockets; Provides efficiency in council resources as the development discussion is focused in known areas rather than having to spend time and money arguing with developers about where / why other locations are inappropriate.
11. **Housing footprint on land parcels.** How do we manage/negotiate between density and the efficient use of infrastructure versus managing urban heat and flooding in the built form?

12. **Health** - mental health, cost of health, access to health. Are we doing this well? The Cairns (SA4) region has the second highest rate of suicide in Australia¹ – Tablelands east - Kuranda are noted as fourth in Australia on an SA3 level. That alone should be a place we start from.
13. **Community preparedness for change and growth.** How do Councils, State Agencies, Planners help the community to understand change and to understand basic planning, words, themes and visioning? What can we do to get them into the strategic mindset? Our communities run on a day-by-day reaction to planning. While we as planners think strategically, it is important that we flip the community mindset and prepare them for urban change. Does this require a change in how we communicate the 'strategic' with community. i.e NIMBY's re unit development – Create the WIIFM "Your Mum can downsize and live here"
14. **Transition Leadership** to support the communities moving forward. What are the skills needed by government and key stakeholders to support communities that are going through regional / urban change? What are the soft skills we need to develop? This is where the opportunity lies to improve the implementation of our strategic schemes.
15. **Health care** – Services, Infrastructure and training - how do people get to Cairns for treatment if there is no family or friends to drive them, people from the regions cannot get to the hospital (61 People in regional hospitals waiting for transport to Cairns on the weekend of 5/6 June 2022)
16. What are the implications for domestic **electricity** supply to FNQ? freight, refuelling networks, marine industry? (Will be exported & produced through Gladstone)
17. Rural zone – minimum lot size/options for non GQAL areas
18. How can the plan support disaster preparedness, resilience and response (i.e. smart planning and building practices)?

LG Supporting Strategies/Plans developed in the region:

1. Regional waste and recovery strategy (in development at FNQROC, funded by DES)
2. FNQROC Mobile Communications Audit
3. FNQ Regional Road Investments Strategy (focus is on heavy vehicles, productivity improvements and tourism routes)
4. TNQ Smart Green Economy (in development at CRC for TNQ)
5. QRA Resilience Plans (Wet Tropics and Hinterland recently adopted by FNQROC)
6. Informed decisions data sets... Community Profile, Economic Profile and Housing
7. The role of local government in the preservation and recovery of threatened species and ecological communities. (Regional and Local Natural asset management plans)
8. Long term economic benefits of Dams
9. Cairns Regional Council Growth Strategy (in development)
10. LG economic development strategies and community plans
11. LG Climate Risk Management strategies
12. LG Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategies

¹ [Suicide by local areas - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au)

What an integrated FNQ Regional Plan might look like.



Underpinning items which are important to be recognised.

Infrastructure - Underpins	Digital Connectivity - Underpins:	Social Housing - Underpins:	Managing a changing climate - underpins	Net Zero - Underpins	Our World Heritage Areas - Underpins:	First Nations perspective on Country
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Growth • Economic Growth • Export market growth • Health • Education • Protecting our environment • Employment • Livability • Protection of our shores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Growth (business) • Education (remote learning of all forms) • Health i.e telehealth • Social connectedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Education • Employment • Social Justice • Domestic Violence • Anti social behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat related risks which underpins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health • our built form • environment (flora and fauna) • Agriculture • Sea level Rise • Natural Disaster events such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooding • Drought • Cyclones • Our built form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing 'disrupters' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Employment • First Nations Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protecting culture • protecting the environment • Enabling an economic future for First Nations people • Their health • Their education (traditional and cultural) • Closing the gap (full stop)