Far North Queensland Regional Plan 2009–2031

*planning for a stronger, more liveable and sustainable community*



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**Cassowary Coast Regional Council**

**Resident population in 2006:** 29 642

**Estimated resident population in 2031:** 32 923 **Major regional activity centres:** Innisfail **District regional activity centres:** Tully

**Village activity centres:** Cardwell, Mission Beach

### Innisfail

Innisfail is the largest town in the Cassowary Coast and southern part of the region. It contains a major regional activity centre that bustles with economic and social activity set amongst the lively art deco heritage and attractive hilly streetscapes. The activity centre contains a diverse range of commercial, retail and administrative functions and provides a wide range of urban services to the local urban and rural communities. Innisfail is currently the only regional town in FNQ serviced by public transport.

Population growth has been slow in Innisfail over the past decade, particularly after Cyclone Larry in 2006. Flooding constraints associated with the Johnstone River also limit future growth opportunities. A significant area of broadhectare land has been included in the urban footprint near Reynolds Road to stimulate future growth and economic activity. This is a key regional growth area that will need to be master planned to ensure an appropriate local road network, dwelling mix and density, and achievement of appropriate environmental outcomes.

An increasing proportion of future growth in Innisfail will need to be accommodated by infill and consolidation, particularly within the regional activity centre. Additional infrastructure may be required to achieve higher densities. Urban development will need to protect and reflect the unique character, form and feel of the town.

Innisfail has the potential to become a multi-modal transport hub in the future. It is well connected in terms of road, rail and port infrastructure and provides a strategic linkage between Cairns and Mourilyan Port, the Atherton Tablelands and Mourilyan Port, and Cairns to Townsville south. Additional, suitable industrial land will be identified near Innisfail to create new employment generators. There may be opportunities to

link the transport and industrial functions. Potential sites will be investigated in the vicinity of Mundoo and Wangan.

### Tully

Tully is a small sugar town south of Innisfail centred on the Tully mill. It contains a district regional activity centre with a large concentration of business, employment and administrative functions. Primary industry activities including agriculture, horticulture, beef cattle, fishing, quarrying and forestry make an important contribution to the local economy.

A significant area of broadhectare land has been included in the urban footprint north of Tully to accommodate future growth. This is a key regional growth area that will need to be master planned to ensure an appropriate local road network, dwelling mix and density and achievement of appropriate environmental outcomes. Opportunities to protect and revegetate strategic rehabilitation areas, encourage

cycling and walking and provide alternative housing options in these areas are to

be investigated prior to the area being developed.

### Other centres

**Mission Beach** is located near Tully and consists of North Mission, Wongaling and South Mission Beaches. It occupies a narrow strip of land between the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage areas and contains significant areas of ecological significance including essential habitat of the endangered southern cassowary. The survival of this ecologically important species is critically

threatened by continuing habitat loss and car strikes.

The urban footprint at Mission Beach will be constrained to minimise future impacts on ecological values, coastal hazard risks and loss of the village character. Densities are to be kept low and building heights

limited to avoid increasing traffic generation and urban impacts. Future development should occur around village nodes and avoid linear form, maintain and restore cassowary habitat, and ensure good corridor connectivity.

Much higher levels of self-containment will need to be achieved in Mission Beach to avoid travel to Tully and Innisfail. Additional local employment generators will need to be developed based on protection and enjoyment of the natural environment,

and appropriate development of a district regional activity centre at Wongaling Beach. Car travel will need to be managed and traffic impacts on cassowaries mitigated.

Further south is the town of Cardwell. Growth in this small coastal settlement should be constrained to the existing urban area given land and infrastructure constraints. This will also help protect important ecological values including essential habitat of the mahogany glider and marine species and further risks from coastal hazards. The state land west of Cardwell is currently being used for forestry and its future use will depend on allocation under the *Land Act 1994*.

There are a number of small coastal and rural settlements in Cassowary Coast where the natural or rural surrounds contribute to valued lifestyle choices. These include Bingil Bay, El Arish, Etty Bay, Flying Fish Point, Kurrimine Beach, Mena Creek, Mourilyan and South Johnstone. These settlements generally have limited infrastructure and urban services and are not intended to grow significantly.

The small Aboriginal settlement at Jumbun south-west of Tully has also been included within the urban footprint. The regional plan seeks to facilitate the subdivision for existing houses to individual allotments

in this locality with subsequent planning scheme amendments to change the current zoning to a more appropriate urban or village zoning.