

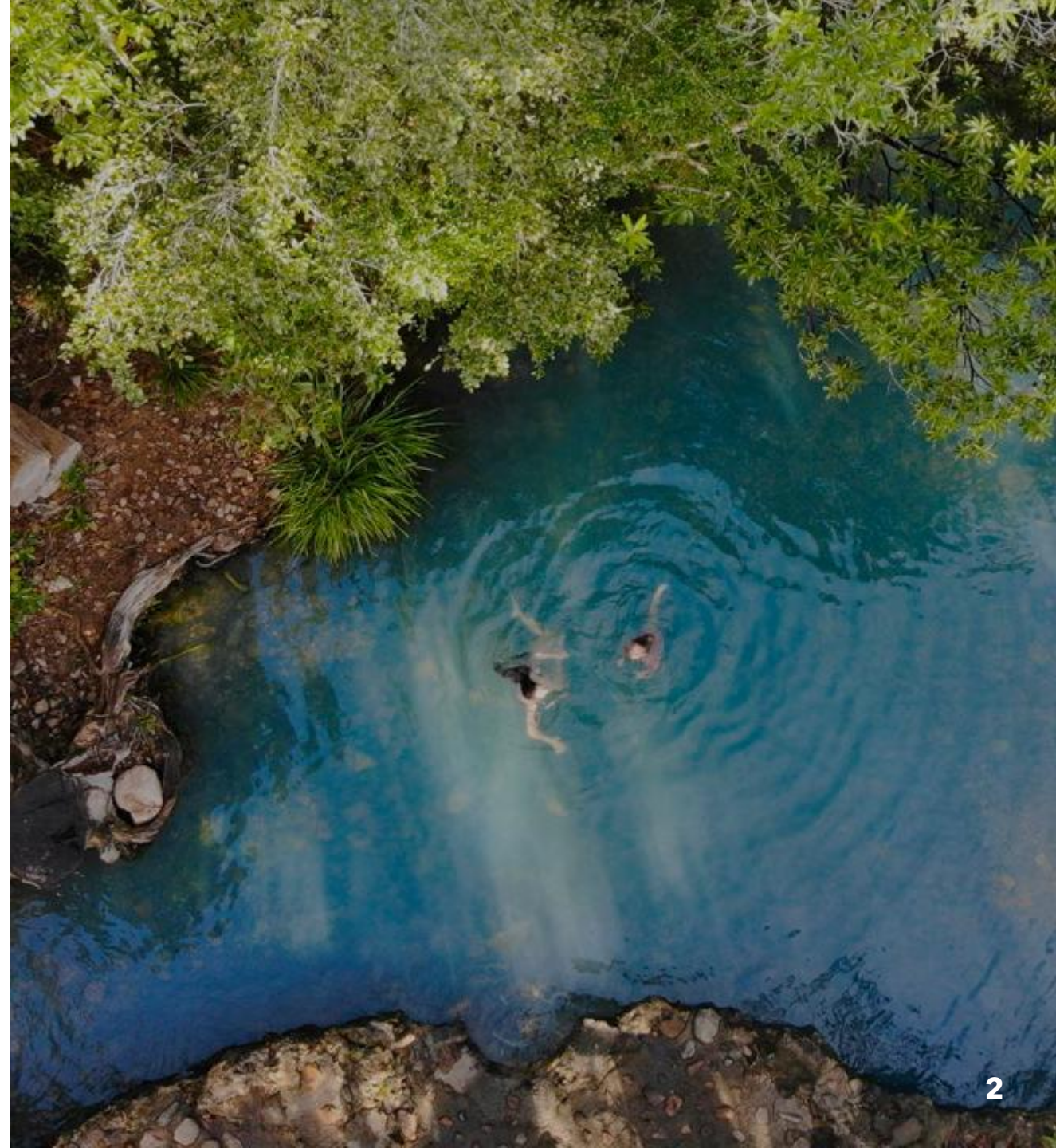


CASSOWARY COAST GATEWAY PRECINCT

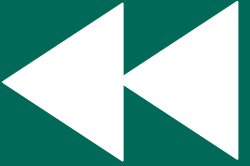
CASSOWARY COAST GATEWAY PRECINCT

Disclaimer:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Cassowary Coast Gateway Precinct (**the Precinct**) involves the proposed transformation of the Cardwell Sportsground into an integrated tourism and visitor gateway, offering new facilities and experiences that will strengthen Cardwell's position as a leading eco-tourism destination in Tropical North Queensland (**TNQ**).

Strategically located between the Wet Tropics Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef, and fronting the Bruce Highway, Cardwell offers unparalleled natural assets and connectivity. These advantages, combined with renewed investor confidence following the declaration of the Port Hinchinbrook Provisional Priority Development Area (**PPDA**), create a compelling case for prompt action toward reinvigorating Cardwell.

PROJECT VISION AND CONCEPT

The Precinct is designed to be an integrated development that will bring together commercial developments and community infrastructure and facilities. Combined with complementary accommodation, retail, hospitality, and event spaces, the Precinct is also intended to serve as the base for a diverse range of eco-tourism offerings and activities.

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

An opportunity exists to embed the knowledge and cultural storytelling of the Girramay People into the Precinct's design, presenting the platform for new authentic tourism experiences while enabling complementary, Traditional Owner led development that advances the aspirations and economic participation of their community.



STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Precinct is supported by, and aligns with, major regional and State priorities and initiatives, including:



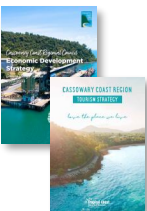
DESTINATION 2045
doubling visitor expenditure and delivering 45 new eco-tourism experiences by 2045.



PPDA INVESTMENT PIPELINE complementing State-led revitalisation at Port Hinchinbrook.



ELEVATE 2042
BRISBANE 2032
LEGACY creating infrastructure to support increased visitation and events beyond the 2032 Olympics.



CASSOWARY COAST ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT supporting the delivery of a stronger and more resilient economy.

INVESTOR APPEAL

The Precinct offers a compelling investment proposition that is underpinned by strong market demand and strategic advantages, including:

- ▶ **COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES:** Scalable options for boutique accommodation, eco-lodging, retail and hospitality.
- ▶ **TOURISM DRAWCARDS:** Significant potential for enhanced mountain bike, hiking, fishing, and cultural experiences.
- ▶ **STRATEGIC LOCATION:** Bruce Highway frontage and proximity to two World Heritage areas.
- ▶ **DE-RISKED PLANNING AND DELIVERY:** Priority for grant funded planning and design to create an investment ready project.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The Precinct is recommended to be advanced through a structured grant funded planning and design process, that de-risks future investment, and positions Cardwell as an investment-ready destination for eco-tourism and commercial development. This approach ensures technical, environmental, and cultural due diligence is completed upfront, creating confidence for both public and private sector investors. The following implementation steps are proposed.

1 Precinct Masterplan

Complete detailed masterplan site investigations and design, and establish a commercial activation strategy for the Precinct.



2 Trails and Trailhead Design

Complete environmental and cultural assessments, tenure agreements, and for-construction designs for the Cardwell Trails and Trailhead.



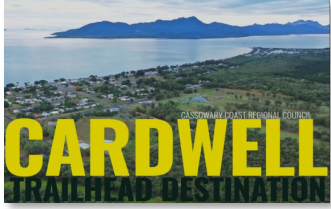
3 Advocacy and Investment

Develop an advocacy roadmap and initiate formal engagement with public and private sector investors and regional advocacy agencies.



COUNCIL'S ROLE

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council (**Council or CCRC**) has already advanced the design and assessment of key components of the Precinct through the following reports:



Moving forward, it is proposed that the Council will operate as an enabler, securing grant funding that will support planning and design, due diligence, and advocacy to attract public and private investment. While Council will not provide direct capital funding for the Precinct, it will play a critical role in positioning the project as shovel and investment ready, to attract outside investment into the region.

FUNDING PATHWAYS AND PARTNERSHIPS

COMMONWEALTH

Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (RPPP).



PRIVATE SECTOR

Accommodation, retail, and hospitality developments.



STATE

Destination 2045 eco-tourism initiatives and PPDA-linked investment.



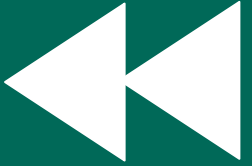
PARTNERSHIPS

Tourism and economic development and advocacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- 1 Endorse the Precinct concept and the three supporting reports.
- 2 Support grant submissions for implementation steps 1 and 2.
- 3 Initiate advocacy and investor engagement activities.
- 4 Support partnership with the Girramay People to integrate cultural tourism and eco-accommodation opportunities into the Precinct.





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1 INTRODUCTION

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

Cardwell is uniquely located between two World Heritage areas, the Wet Tropics Rainforest and the Great Barrier Reef, making it one of Queensland's most naturally significant destinations. This positioning provides an exceptional platform for eco-tourism development.

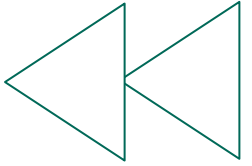
Cardwell also sits alongside the Bruce Highway, the major transport corridor connecting Cairns and Townsville, which makes it a convenient and highly visible stopover for visitors and residents travelling between these centres. These advantages position Cardwell as a potential hub for new tourism experiences in the region.

POTENTIAL FOR REINVIGORATION

While the town has a strong sense of identity, shaped by its natural environment, legacy industries and cultural heritage, the town remains underdeveloped, and existing facilities, such as the Cardwell sportsground, remain underutilised. The sportsground's central location and scale, coupled with Cardwell's strategic location, present an ideal opportunity to transform the site into a vibrant tourism and community precinct that serves both residents and visitors.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

The recent declaration of the Port Hinchinbrook PPDA has triggered State-led revitalisation efforts in Cardwell and has seen renewed investor confidence in the region. Additionally, the State's Destination 2045 strategy, that proposes significant investment in new eco tourism products, and the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games are collectively expected to generate significant demand for new regional tourism offerings and visitor experiences.



CASSOWARY COAST GATEWAY PRECINCT VISION

The unique natural environment and connectivity of Cardwell, coupled with the potential future visitor demand, presents a platform for the region to become the natural gateway to the Cassowary Coast and broader TNQ.

The Precinct is envisioned as a catalyst for economic growth and community development in Cardwell. The Precinct is designed to be an integrated development that will bring together eco-tourism accommodation, services and experiences with community infrastructure and facilities.

Combined with complementary retail, hospitality, and flexible commercial spaces, the Precinct is intended to serve as the base for a diverse range of activities, including hiking, mountain biking, fishing, and cultural interpretation.



CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Adjacent to the Precinct is a freehold landholding owned by the Girramay People that presents an opportunity to integrate cultural interpretation, Indigenous led enterprise, and complementary visitor services.

Embedding Girramay culture and storytelling within the Precinct's design will strengthen cultural connections, support authentic tourism experiences, and reflect the values and aspirations of Traditional Owners.



2 STRATEGIC RATIONALE

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Precinct aligns with major regional and State priorities:



DESTINATION 2045

committing to doubling visitor expenditure and delivering 45 new eco-tourism experiences by 2045.



ELEVATE 2042 creating infrastructure to support increased visitation and events beyond the Brisbane 2032 Olympics for all of Queensland.



PPDA INVESTMENT PIPELINE

complementing State-led revitalisation at Port Hinchinbrook.



CASSOWARY COAST ECONOMIC STRATEGY

supporting the delivery of a stronger and more resilient economy.



CASSOWARY COAST TOURISM STRATEGY

strengthening the region's position as a thriving, tourism hub.

WHY THIS MATTERS?

Cardwell has the natural assets, strategic location, and connectivity to become a flagship eco-tourism destination for Queensland. The Precinct will catalyse economic growth, enhance community amenity, and deliver a destination that celebrates nature, recreation, and regional identity. By advancing this project now, Council can leverage current policy priorities, funding programs, and market trends to secure long-term benefits for Cardwell and the broader Cassowary Coast region.

WHY THIS PROJECT?

The Precinct provides a platform for a diverse range of eco tourism experiences and commercial developments that will attract visitors and enhance the amenity of the Cardwell community. The Precinct concept encompasses:



Commercial activation opportunities such as accommodation, visitor services and food and beverage offerings.



Community infrastructure upgrades including shaded spaces, walking loops, and event facilities that improve liveability and support regional events.



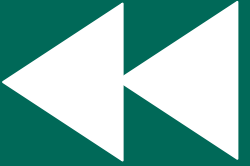
Nature-based recreation such as hiking, fishing, and family-friendly outdoor activities.



Adventure tourism anchored by the multi purpose Cardwell Trails project - a trail network designed to complement other outdoor experiences such as fishing and hiking.

This integrated approach ensures the precinct is not reliant on a single attraction but instead offers a broad, compelling experience for visitors and residents alike.

3 PRECINCT CONCEPT



The Precinct is a commercially-focused development opportunity designed to transform the Cardwell Sportsground and the surrounding areas into a high value tourism destination, while enhancing the facilities and community amenity of the location. The Precinct offers prime opportunities for private investment, with accommodation as the anchor, and complementary retail, hospitality, and commercial offerings creating a vibrant hub.



ACCOMMODATION OPPORTUNITIES

Located in proximity to the Port Hinchinbrook PPDA area, and with linkages into several eco-tourism attractions, certain accommodation opportunities exist, including:

- ▶ Eco-accommodation and glamping that immerse visitors in Cardwell's natural setting.
- ▶ Boutique and higher end accommodation catering to premium markets seeking comfort and exclusivity.
- ▶ Family friendly and group lodging options to support events and adventure tourism.

Together, these accommodation opportunities position Cardwell to capture growing demand across eco, premium and family markets, reinforcing the site's role as a high-value, destination-led complement to the Port Hinchinbrook PPDA.



COMMERCIAL ACTIVATION

Aligned with the accommodation potential, are several complementary commercial activations that may be delivered within the Precinct:

- ▶ Retail spaces for adventure gear, local products, and visitor essentials.
- ▶ Hospitality offerings such as cafés, restaurants, and food kiosks to service both tourists and locals.
- ▶ Flexible commercial spaces for operators delivering eco-tourism experiences, cultural interpretation, and event services.

Collectively, these commercial activations strengthen the Precinct's role as a vibrant, mixed-use destination, enhancing visitor experience, supporting local enterprise, and maximising the economic potential of increased visitation.



ECO-TOURISM EXPERIENCES

The Precinct is expected to serve as a base for a diverse range of nature-based activities that showcase Cardwell's unique environment, including:

- ▶ Mountain biking through the Cardwell Trails.
- ▶ Hiking and walking trails connecting to the Wet Tropics and coastal landscapes.
- ▶ Fishing and water-based recreation leveraging Cardwell's proximity to the Coral Sea and Hinchinbrook Channel.
- ▶ Wildlife and nature tours offering immersive experiences in World Heritage rainforest and marine environments.

These eco-tourism experiences anchor the Precinct as a gateway to Cardwell's exceptional natural assets, driving longer stays, repeat visitation, and a strong destination identity built around authentic nature-based adventure.



CARDWELL TRAILHEAD AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Precinct will incorporate a purpose-built trailhead as the central hub for adventure activities and visitor services. This hub will include:

- ▶ Rider amenities (bike wash, maintenance stations, shuttle coordination).
- ▶ Visitor information and wayfinding signage.
- ▶ Flexible spaces for events, markets, and community gatherings.
- ▶ Opportunities for small-scale commercial offerings such as cafés and retail.

Collectively, the Cardwell Trailhead and community facilities establish the Precinct as a highly functional and welcoming focal point, supporting visitors, activating community use, and underpinning the Precinct's role as the gateway to Cardwell's adventure and eco-tourism offering.

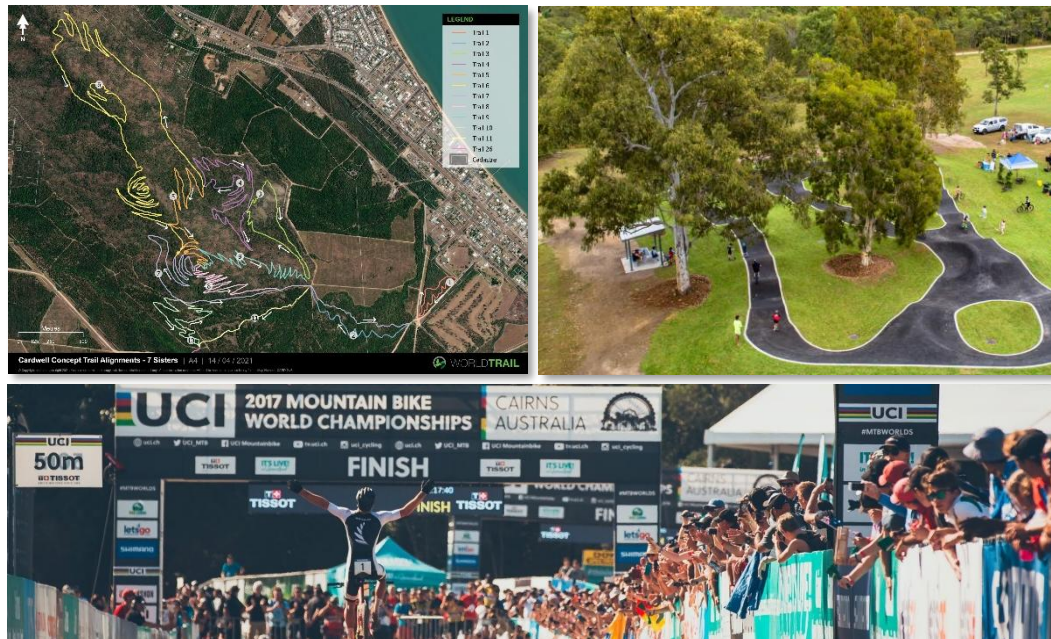


CARDWELL MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS - A READY-MADE CATALYST

The Cardwell Trails project is a fully scoped initiative that will deliver a 94km of multi purpose trails across the Cardwell Range and surrounding rainforest. This project responds to the growing demand for mountain biking as one of Australia's fastest growing adventure tourism sectors. Key features of the Trails include:

- ▶ Ride-in, ride-out access from the Precinct and town centre.
- ▶ Designed for all skill levels, from beginner to advanced riders.
- ▶ Connection into existing and proposed elements of the Precinct including the Cardwell pump track, Trailhead, event areas and associated community facilities.
- ▶ Integrate cultural interpretation, natural attractions with adventure pursuits.

The project represents a significant opportunity to attract early investment and activate the Precinct.



GIRRAMAY LAND - ADVANCING CULTURE, COUNTRY AND COMMUNITY

Adjacent to the Precinct is freehold land owned by the Girramay People, the Traditional Custodian of the lands and waters surrounding Cardwell. While separate from the Precinct, the land presents a strong opportunity to support Girramay led development that is grounded in cultural authority, connection to Country, and self-determination.

Girramay's vision for the land includes culturally led tourism experiences, a bespoke cultural and tourism centre, and eco-accommodation that complements the Precinct.

Supporting these ambitions enables economic participation and employment for the Girramay community while enhancing the destination's authenticity, strengthening the overall tourism offering, and aligning commercial opportunity with First Nations leadership and aspiration.

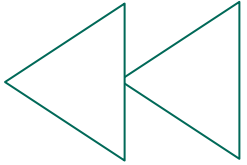


4 DESIGN AND GOVERNANCE

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The Precinct will be guided by design principles that ensure the final development is economically viable, well connected and able to achieve the desired outcomes. Key design principles for consideration include:

- ▶ **COMMERCIAL RESILIENCE** – a diverse mix of accommodation, visitor services, hospitality, and experiences that collectively underpin long term financial sustainability and local employment.
- ▶ **CLEAR AND CONNECTED MOVEMENT** – safe and seamless connections within the Precinct and between the highway, town centre, foreshore and Port Hinchinbrook.
- ▶ **ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE** – minimal impact, weather appropriate and low maintenance design that protects and enhances Cardwell's coastal and natural environments.
- ▶ **FLEXIBLE AND STAGED USE** – infrastructure and public spaces that support everyday community needs, tourism activation, events, and future adaptation over time.
- ▶ **AUTHENTIC SENSE OF PLACE** – a gateway that reflects Cardwell's relationship with Country, sea, and history, informed by Traditional Owners and the local community.



COUNCIL'S ROLE

The Council is committed to supporting the development and growth of the Cassowary Coast and the communities within it. The Precinct aligns with that intent and presents a platform to create new economic, social and community opportunities.

It is envisaged that the Council's role will primarily be to secure grant funding to complete the necessary planning, design and due diligence work required to refine the Precinct concept.

By leading the planning process, and advocating for investment, the Council will de-risk future development and create a multi faceted, investment ready project that appeals to investors and funding bodies, and that may be delivered as a single project or individual elements.

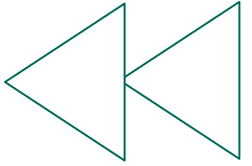
DE-RISKING FUTURE INVESTMENT

Private investors and funding bodies rarely commit to projects without detailed planning and design. By securing grant funding for master planning and due diligence, Council can deliver a project that reduces tenure, environmental, and approval risks. This proactive approach will:

- ▶ Provide certainty on costs, staging, and delivery timelines.
- ▶ Address environmental and cultural considerations early.
- ▶ Position the Precinct as an attractive investment opportunity for both public and private sectors.

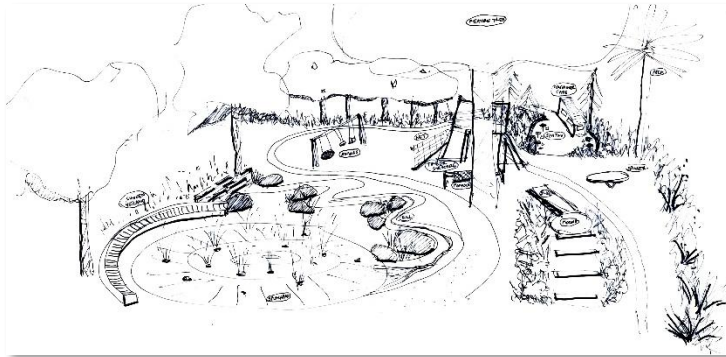
Importantly, by adopting this approach, Council is not committed to any capital investment beyond that which is sourced through grants or external funding, however, positions the Precinct attractively for future market interest.

5 IMPLEMENTATION



A STAGED DELIVERY MODEL

The Precinct is recommended to be advanced through a structured, grant funded planning and design process, that de-risks future investment, and positions Cardwell as an investment-ready destination for eco-tourism and commercial development. This approach ensures technical, environmental, and cultural due diligence is completed upfront, creating confidence for both public and private sector investors. The following implementation steps are proposed.



STAGE 1 - PRECINCT MASTERPLAN

FOCUS: Transform the Cardwell Sportsground and surrounds into an investment-ready site for accommodation and commercial development.

SCOPE:

- ▶ Site surveys and investigations, including environmental, geological, and geotechnical assessments.
- ▶ Cultural heritage assessment and stakeholder consultation.
- ▶ Infrastructure requirements analysis.
- ▶ Precinct design and development strategy, including staging and delivery sequencing.
- ▶ Commercial activation strategy and operational considerations.



STAGE 2 - TRAILS AND TRAILHEAD DESIGN

FOCUS: Advance the Cardwell Trails and the Trailhead initiatives to an investment and construction ready state and position them for early investment opportunities.

SCOPE:

- ▶ Environmental and cultural heritage assessments for trail alignments and trailhead site.
- ▶ Tenure agreements and planning approvals across relevant land parcels.
- ▶ Refined trail alignments and technical design.
- ▶ Detailed trailhead design, including signage, wayfinding, and emergency management plans.
- ▶ Commercial activation plan for trailhead services and supporting amenities.



STAGE 3 - ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

FOCUS: Drive investor confidence and secure funding partnerships to deliver the Precinct and associated eco-tourism infrastructure.

SCOPE:

- ▶ Formal engagement with Economic Development Queensland (**EDQ**) to leverage PPDA opportunities and State-led investment priorities.
- ▶ Strategic collaboration with advocacy organisations to position Cardwell within regional tourism strategies.
- ▶ Investor briefings to activate commercial opportunities within the Precinct.
- ▶ Investment attraction strategy, including marketing collateral, funding submissions, and an activation roadmap.

ADVANCED INITIATIVES

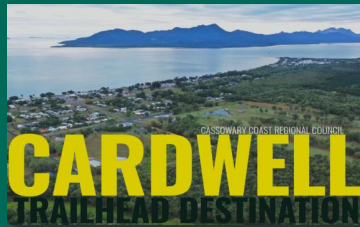
Early investigations in relation to the Precinct, and several elements proposed to be incorporated within it, have already been completed. Preliminary community engagement has returned positive sentiment towards a reinvigoration of Cardwell, the Sportsground and surrounds. Coupled with renewed interest in Port Hinchinbrook, and the priority for new eco-tourism products across Queensland, the time is right to investigate the opportunities that exist.

Through grant funding obtained to date, the Council has developed the following reports that investigate key elements of the Precinct (with detailed reports attached as appendices):



CARDWELL COMMUNITY PARK CONCEPT PLAN

Preliminary concept plan for the Cardwell Sportsground and surrounding areas, outlining key commercial and community focused opportunities through redevelopment.



CARDWELL TRAILHEAD CONCEPT PLAN

Preliminary concept plan for the Cardwell Trails and Trailhead, including opportunities for commercial activation, and integration and enhancement of existing facilities and amenities.



CARDWELL TRAILS PRELIMINARY BUSINESS PLAN

Assessment of the Cardwell Trails business model and requirements for advancing the project to detailed design and approvals.

FUNDING PATHWAYS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The staged delivery approach is designed to manage risk, enable early catalyst projects, and align investment with demonstrated demand over time. This approach supports delivery through a range of funding and partnership opportunities across government and private sector stakeholders, including:

COMMONWEALTH

Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (RPPP).



PRIVATE SECTOR

Accommodation, retail, eco-tourism and hospitality developments.



STATE

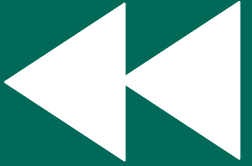
Destination 2045 eco tourism initiatives and PPDA linked investment.



PARTNERSHIPS

Tourism and economic development and advocacy.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS



To advance the Precinct and position Cardwell as a flagship eco-tourism destination, it is recommended that Council:

1 **ENDORSE THE PRECINCT CONCEPT AND SUPPORTING REPORTS:**

- ▶ Confirm the integrated approach combining commercial activation, eco-tourism experiences, and community infrastructure.
- ▶ Endorse the supporting Cardwell Community Park and Cardwell Trailhead concept reports and the Cardwell Trails business plan.

2 **PROGRESS GRANT-FUNDED PLANNING AND DESIGN:**

- ▶ Support grant funding submissions for Stage 1 (Precinct Masterplan) and Stage 2 (Cardwell Trails and Trailhead Design), ensuring that planning incorporates environmental, cultural, and tenure considerations to de-risk future investment.

ACTIVATE ADVOCACY AND INVESTMENT ENGAGEMENT:

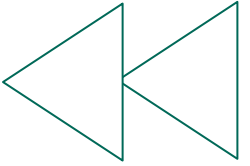
- ## 3
- ▶ Initiate formal engagement with EDQ regarding PPDA opportunities.
 - ▶ Collaborate with peak tourism and economic development partners to align tourism strategies and development initiatives.
 - ▶ Develop investor collateral and commence briefings targeting accommodation, retail, and hospitality operators.

4 **SUPPORT GIRRAMAY PARTNERSHIP**

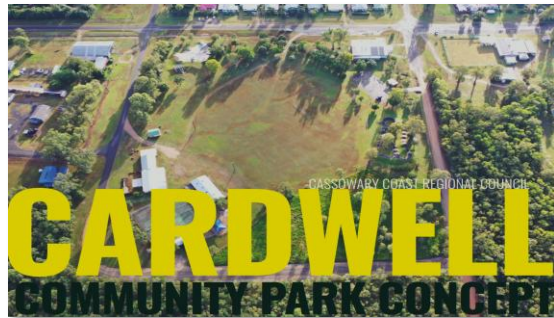
- ▶ Engage with representatives of the Girramay People to explore integration opportunities for cultural tourism and eco accommodation.



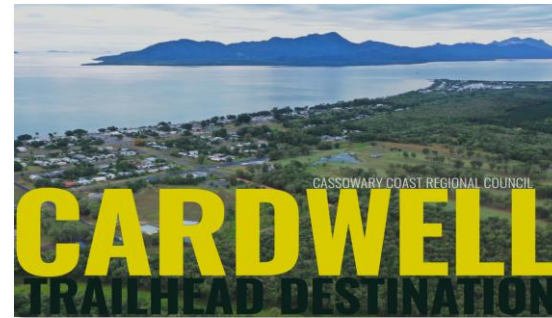
7 APPENDICES



APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C

