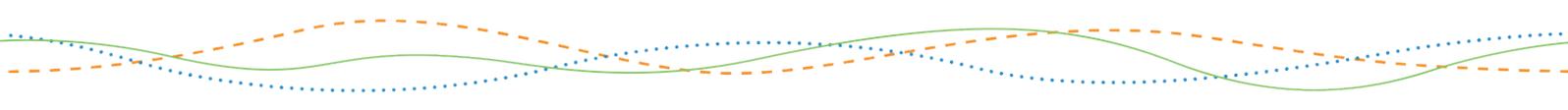




# WHITSUNDAY REGION PRIORITIES 2020



## MAYORS FOREWORD



We are inviting government and commercial proponents to make the Whitsundays your global region of choice for investment in our agricultural, resource and tourism industries. This regional priorities document highlights our agenda to lift the Whitsunday region out of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Major infrastructure developments, commercial, industrial and tourism investment, expanded community facilities as well as highlighting our key policy positions will provide business opportunities in the Whitsundays ensuring future economic growth and sustainability.

This has always been at the core of my agenda as Mayor and will continue to be in these difficult times.

The future for the Whitsundays is exciting with strong business and industry investment opportunities and I invite you to be a part of it.

**Mayor Andrew Willcox**  
**Whitsunday Regional Council**

As Mayor of Whitsunday Regional Council I am committed to attracting investment and encouraging development and growth of our region's economic and social infrastructure.

Council's vision is to create a region that is strong, resilient, sustainable and universally recognised as a great place to live, visit, work and invest.

The Whitsundays is about lifestyle, opportunity and prosperity. Despite the devastating effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on our world renowned tourism industry, the Whitsunday region is determined to bounce back as we have always done following cyclones, floods and bush fires.

## THE WHITSUNDAY RECOVERY

COVID-19 has impacted all nations across the globe. Whilst the impact of Coronavirus is broad, it is local communities that have had to deal with the effects. When the Mayor put the call out to local industry bodies and community leaders to join *The Whitsunday Recovery Taskforce*, our community did not let us down. **Whitsunday Region Priorities 2020** is our united vision for the Whitsunday region to recover and prosper. As one voice, the Whitsunday region will come out of this disaster with a stronger and more resilient economy.

COVID-19 is a constantly changing situation which means traditional 'clean up' disaster recovery approaches are not the most effective methods to deploy. Whitsunday Regional Council have therefore adopted a model of React, Adapt & Build Back Better. This methodology allows us to be agile in our response and to deliver outcomes for our community as the situation changes. Our recovery strategy has the right mix of support for today as well as catalytic projects and programs to help us take advantage of tomorrow.



# THE WHITSUNDAY REGION

The region of choice to Live, Visit, Work & Invest

The Whitsunday Region encompasses the major townships of Airlie Beach, Bowen, Collinsville and Proserpine as well as the magnificent 74 Whitsunday Islands including Hamilton Island, Daydream Island and Hayman Island.

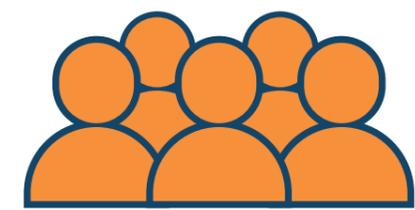
Boasting a strong and diverse economy driven by the agriculture, mining, tourism, construction, manufacturing and transport industries; the Whitsunday Region is a well-connected region that has the right mix of opportunity and liveability.



*The Whitsundays*  
QUEENSLAND

## POPULATION

**35,500**



**55,000**  
Population by 2036

## PRE COVID-19 ECONOMY

**\$3B**  
Gross Regional Product 2019

**4.8%**  
GRP growth (past 5 years) QLD: 2.4%

**\$5.9B**  
Industry Output 2019

**15,800**  
Jobs 2019

## MAJOR CENTRES

- AIRLIE BEACH
- BOWEN
- COLLINSVILLE
- PROSERPINE



### COVID-19 IMPACTS

<b>\$</b>	<b>🔧</b>	<b>🛏️</b>	<b>🚤</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>\$118M</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>29,400</b>	<b>23,800</b>	<b>36%</b>
Lost Output in May 2020	Jobs Lost in May 2020	Room nights Cancelled	Turist & Activities Cancelled	Businesses registered for Jobkeeper

CATALYTIC INFRASTRUCTURE



CATALYTIC  
INFRASTRUCTURE

CATALYTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

## WHITSUNDAY MARINE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

**Sector**  
Marine Industry

**Time Frame**  
0 - 10 Years

**Proponents**  
Private & All Levels of Government

**Project Status**  
Investment needed

Utilising up to 100,000m2 of land adjacent to the existing Bowen Marina, the Whitsunday Marine Centre of Excellence will establish a world class marina and shipyard to service a range of vessels from the smallest cruisers up to the largest superyachts.

Currently a high-level concept, and with stakeholders across the private sector and all levels of government, this project has the ability to affect transformational change for the Whitsundays.



### WHATS NEEDED

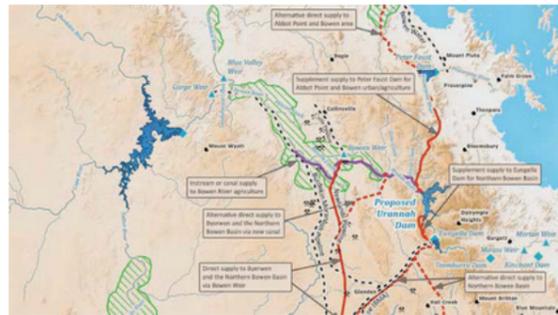
\$5M to complete business case, feasibility and predesign works such as environmental, geological investigations, planning and other early works required to attract further project investment.



*Catalytic infrastructure is the foundational base of the economy that creates jobs today and delivers long term private investment in the future*

CATALYTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

# URANNAH WATER SCHEME



**Sector**  
Infrastructure & Agricultural

**Time Frame**  
0 - 5 Years

**Proponents**  
Private & Public Investment

**Project Status**  
Financial Investment Case & Environmental Impact Statement Progressing

The Urannah Water Scheme is a new large-scale, irrigation precinct and renewable energy (Hydro power) generation scheme located approximately 90km west of Mackay in North Queensland.

## WHAT'S NEEDED

Support to progress the project as a state and national priority with Nation building water management benefits. Regulatory support and prioritisation of approvals with consideration of benefits and inclusion in long term water security planning position by all levels of government.

<b>1,200</b> CONSTRUCTION JOBS	<b>650</b> OPERATIONAL JOBS
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# KEY ROAD UPGRADES

**Sector**  
Vital Infrastructure

**Time Frame**  
0 - 5 Years

**Proponents**  
State & Federal Governments

**Project Status**  
Critically needing investment

Roads are the critical lifeblood of regional Queensland. In Whitsunday, our roads connect our \$1B mining industry, \$900M Tourism industry and \$600M Agriculture industry with the world. Despite this, our roads remain some of the worst in Queensland. We need immediate support to address the critical upgrades required.

## WHAT'S NEEDED

Accelerated project delivery of Hamilton Plains and Goorganga plains works schedule into 2020-2022. Allocation of at least \$250m over the next five years from the \$12.6B Bruce Highway Upgrade Program to deliver a consistent safety standard that applies to the whole length of the road, prioritised fixes for potholes and surface damage, as well as the installation of median strips, wider verges, more overtaking lanes and barriers along the road between Gumlu and Bloomsbury. The appointment of a North Queensland representative on the Bruce Highway Trust Advisory Council is also required. Further funding support for improvements to Shute Harbour road, Bowen Development road and the Collinsville Missing link connection.

<b>340</b> CONSTRUCTION JOBS	<b>230</b> INDIRECT JOBS
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GROWING TOURISM



GROWING TOURISM

# WHITSUNDAY TRAILS

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Time Frame**  
0 - 3 Years

**Proponents**  
WRC & State Government

**Project Status**  
Detailed Design & Construction Required

WRC engaged Dirt Art Pty Ltd in May 2020 to develop a mountain bike trail concept plan for the region.

The Whitsundays has strong potential for the establishment of a mountain bike destination of national-level significance. Excellent topography and terrain characteristics, a coastal location and appealing climate, along with proximity to popular tourist towns contribute strongly to the appeal of the destination for mountain bike riding.



## WHATS NEEDED

\$1.8M to finalise regional master planning and deliver stage one of the project. State Government support is required for delivery of the strategy and coordination through the approvals process with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.



CATALYTIC INFRASTRUCTURE

# WHITSUNDAY SKYWAY

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Time Frame**  
0 - 2 Years

**Proponents**  
Private

**Project Status**  
Approvals needed

Whitsunday Skyway is a mainland cable car tourism facility to the top of the peak west of and overlooking the Airlie Beach.

The peak is 430 metres above sea level and within the State controlled Conway National Park with spectacular views overlooking the Coral Sea and nearby islands.

The project is a catalyst tourism asset that has the potential to transform the mainland Whitsunday tourism offering.



## WHATS NEEDED

Priority project status for government development applications, approvals and recognition as a nationally significant tourism project.



# LAKE PROSERPINE MASTER PLAN

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Time Frame**  
0 - 2 Years

**Proponents**  
WRC & State Government

**Project Status**  
Master Plan stage 1 of 5 delivered

With untapped potential as an international drawcard for anglers, Lake Proserpine has a growing reputation as one of Australia's best Barramundi fishing destinations. With fishing the largest driver of domestic leisure tourism in Australia, the development of Lake Proserpine will help capture a greater share of this market.

This project will deliver an iconic experience with a diverse range of recreational opportunities, both on land and on water, to attract a wide range of sporting and recreational enthusiasts.



## WHATS NEEDED

Priority project status for government development applications, approvals and recognition as a nationally significant tourism project.



GROWING AGRICULTURE

# FOOD AND CROP WASTE PROCESSING FACILITY

**Sector**  
Agriculture

**Time Frame**  
0 - 2 Years

**Proponents**  
Private, WRC & State Government

**Project Status**  
Feasibility Assessment Required

Bowen is the largest winter vegetable growing region in Australia, sending fruit and vegetables to domestic and international markets. Its horticultural sector accounts for about 6% of Australia's horticultural production, producing \$450M or 300,000t of fresh edible product annually. The main crops comprise tomatoes, capsicums, beans and mangoes.



## WHATS NEEDED

\$250K for feasibility assessment and business case to develop facility to fight food waste as approximately 25% of product (100,000t) rots due to it not meeting fresh market standards.



**GROWING  
AGRICULTURE**

GROWING & DIVERSIFYING INDUSTRY

# AGRICULTURAL HUB

**Sector**  
Agriculture

**Time Frame**  
0 - 5 Years

**Proponents**  
WRC & State Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Needed



Currently only 8,000ha of approximately 100,000ha of farmable land is utilised for horticulture in the Bowen region. There is enormous potential for Bowen to exponentially increase output through targeted research and investment. This project aims to transform the Bowen outdated research facility into a hub for agricultural innovation and research, Agribusiness training and technology adoption.



## WHATS NEEDED

\$200K to undertake project planning and business case development.

\$1M over five years to support coordination, research and implementation of agricultural technologies by local industry organisations.

# GROWING REGION FARM GATE AREA UPGRADES

**Sector**  
Agriculture

**Time Frame**  
0 - 3 Years

**Proponents**  
Private, WRC & State Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Needed



Key enabling infrastructure upgrades are desperately needed in the Bowen Gumlu region to support first/last mile road infrastructure around farm regions, transport and processing areas including biosecurity measures, technologies and other industry improvement infrastructure around farms.



## WHATS NEEDED

\$100K for project planning and delivery schedule.

\$5M over three years to implement delivery of capital works.

GROWING & DIVERSIFYING INDUSTRY

# LAUNCH WHITSUNDAYS

**Sector**  
Space Technology & Future Industry

**Time Frame**  
0 - 5 Years

**Proponents**  
Private & All levels of Government

**Project Status**  
Feasibility Assessment Required

**OUR VISION**

By 2025, The Whitsunday Region will be recognised as the home of Queensland's premier small satellite launch facility



## WHATS NEEDED

Progression of feasibility toward launch pad infrastructure investment, support from federal government to consider usage and partnership investment by Department of Defence in the delivery of the \$7B Space program.



# GROWING & DIVERSIFYING INDUSTRY

GROWING & DIVERSIFYING INDUSTRY

# IMPROVING DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Sector**  
All sectors

**Time Frame**  
0 - 5 Years

**Proponents**  
Private & All levels of Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Needed



Digital infrastructure impacts every sector. Growing regional digital connectivity provides capacity for industry to expand, employ, sell and connect in the digital economy.

Whitsunday Regional Council is leading this conversation through the recently established Digital Infrastructure Working Group.



## WHATS NEEDED

Accelerated investment to address blackspots in the region over the next 5 years.

Prioritisation of new projects on key transport and tourism travel corridors such as the Bruce Highway, Collinsville to Mt Coolon, Dingo Beach and Whitsunday Island.

Plan to invest in fibre and wireless digital infrastructure to support key industries in agricultural, mining and tourism intensive areas.

# DEVELOP ABBOT POINT SDA MASTER PLAN

**Sector**  
Industry and Ports

**Time Frame**  
12 Months

**Proponents**  
NQ Bulk Ports & All levels of Government

**Project Status**  
Master Plan Critically Required



Declared in 2008, the 16,885-hectare Abbot Point State Development Area (SDA) is located approximately 20 kilometres north-west of Bowen, in North Queensland.

The Abbot Point SDA offers the ideal location for industrial and port-related development that requires a large footprint, proximity to a port and separation from sensitive receptors.



## WHATS NEEDED

The Abbot Point SDA was established to facilitate large-scale industrial and port-related development of regional, state and national significance.

Investment in a 20 year master plan and the establishment of a development committee comprising of 3 levels of government and key stakeholders is required to activate this key site.

DEVELOPING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

## REEF RESTORATION WORKERS PROGRAM

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Time Frame**  
0 - 5 Years

**Proponents**  
Private & State Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Needed

The Reef Restoration project will be a key regional activity in the process of assisting the recovery and building the resilience of the Great Barrier Reef in the Whitsunday region.

### WHAT'S NEEDED

\$2.8M is required to assist the Whitsunday tourism industry to build on existing underwater art and reef restoration projects and scale up collaborations, knowledge and actions in a challenging climate of COVID-19.

<p><b>20</b> DIRECT JOBS</p> 	<p><b>7</b> INDIRECT JOBS</p> 
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## REGIONAL SIGNAGE & BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

**Sector**  
Tourism & Small Business

**Time Frame**  
0 - 2 Years

**Proponents**  
WRC & State Government

**Project Status**  
Approvals Needed

These projects are important additions to each town's social, economic and cultural fabric and will ensure greater opportunities for small businesses to prosper and employ.

### WHAT'S NEEDED

Additional \$5M over three years to assist the delivery of projects to improve regional towns, precincts and facilities such as the Choose Collinsville project, Bowen Harbour surrounds and signage to town entrances and Whitsunday Coast Airport.

<p><b>10</b> CONSTRUCTION JOBS</p> 	<p><b>13</b> INDIRECT JOBS</p> 
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# DEVELOPING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

DEVELOPING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

## BOWEN ALLIED HEALTH SERVICES

**Sector**  
Community Health

**Time Frame**  
0 - 5 Years

**Proponents**  
Private & State Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Ready



Bowen has shortages of key health professionals such as doctors, dentists and nurses and these shortages are expected to worsen. There are also issues with the attraction of permanent workforce due to the smaller patient load compared to larger centres.

### WHAT'S NEEDED

\$700K to zone and repurpose existing available commercial premises near Bowen hospital to facilitate accommodation of specialist medical services in Bowen on a regular service basis.

\$300K incentive program for Medical professionals to establish business in Bowen delivering regular specialist services.

## COLLINSVILLE CHILDCARE CENTRE

**Sector**  
Mining & Community Support

**Time Frame**  
12 Months

**Proponents**  
Private, WRC & State Government

**Project Status**  
Regulatory Approvals Needed



The Collinsville childcare centre project is an important capacity improving project for the community in Collinsville.

A childcare facility would add to the liveability of the region and support a strong economic base as new workers and their families are attracted to the region.

Glencore, QCoal and Whitsunday Regional Council have committed funding and the project is ready to be completed with regulatory approval needed for the site on Education Queensland property.

### WHAT'S NEEDED

State government approvals and regulatory support to accelerate development.



*Collinsville is home to the Mining industry in The Whitsundays, which has an annual output of \$1.05B*

## JOBKEEPER EXTENSION

**Sector**  
All sectors

**Time Frame**  
Until Normal Business  
Conditions Resume

**Proponents**  
Federal Government

**Project Status**  
Continued Funding Critical



The Federal Government's JobKeeper Payment Scheme has provided a vital lifeline to businesses across the country.

REMPLAN reports that 38% of businesses in Whitsunday LGA were registered for JobKeeper in May 2020. Airlie-Whitsunday SA2 is the worst affected area in the region with over 50% of businesses registered.

It is essential to regional communities and businesses that this lifeline is extended until normal business returns.

### WHATS NEEDED

Further extension of the JobKeeper payment considered to regional businesses most effected by the loss of International tourism and events until return to normal business resumption.



## BOOKING AGENT INQUIRY

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Time Frame**  
12 Months

**Proponents**  
Federal Government

**Project Status**  
Action Critically Required



COVID-19 has had a profound effect on tourism businesses across the globe. Whilst travel bans have been the main cause of the industry coming to a halt, operators were also dealt a cruel blow when they were not paid for tours conducted in February and March prior to COVID-19.

Widespread reports of high commissions, late as well as nil payment and price gouging are rife in the Travel Booking Agent industry.

Tourism operators need a fair to get back on their feet.

### WHATS NEEDED

Government led inquiry into issues within the Tourism booking industry including guarantee of payment issues, commission models and unethical and collusive business practices with the intent to establish legislated measures or payment guarantee mechanisms to improve the sectors access to fair payment for services provided.

POLICY PRIORITIES

## GBRMP PERMIT MORATORIUM

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Time Frame**  
0 -2 Years

**Proponents**  
State & Federal Governments

**Project Status**  
Action critically required



Permits are granted by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the Queensland Department of Environment and Science through a joint permission system.

Widespread reports of permit 'rorting' is occurring and honest tourism operators are being let down by the system.

### WHATS NEEDED

Suspension of additional new permit allocations and review of the marine park permit system involving input from local stakeholders.

Consideration provided to the value of permits for existing tourism business and how permit numbers can be regulated to improve the recovery of existing marine businesses post COVID-19 and allow for future sustainable growth of the marine tourism industry.



## UNDERWRITTEN INSURANCE PROGRAM

**Sector**  
All Industries & Households

**Time Frame**  
12 Months

**Proponents**  
Federal Government

**Project Status**  
Action critically required



The ACCC's second report into the Northern Australia Insurance Inquiry states:

*'Destructive extreme weather events are not a rare occurrence in northern Australia. Governments have committed to developing northern Australia, and laying the right foundations for economic growth, liveability and prosperity. If governments want people to live and thrive in these regions, this provides an additional reason to make insurance more affordable and to stem the growing rate of non-insurance.'*

### WHATS NEEDED

Establishment of a government fund and regulation measures to mitigate the onus of insurance risk being passed onto business and consumers in insurance policies due to catastrophes and natural disasters.

*According to the ACCC, home and contents insurance premiums in northern Australia are on average almost double those in the rest of Australia.*

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## FURTHER COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUNDING

**Proponents**  
Federal Government

The Australian Institute of Family Studies states that *'rates of domestic and family violence are higher in regional, rural and remote areas. Geographical and social structures in these communities, as well as unique social values and norms, result in specific experiences of domestic and family violence.'*

Regional Australia needs more support to help educate and support communities change the conversation.

### WHATS NEEDED

Further extension of the JobKeeper payment considered to regional businesses most effected by the loss of International tourism and events until return to normal business resumption.

## JOBSEEKER TO INDUSTRY PROGRAM

**Proponents**  
Federal Government

The Agriculture and Tourism industry have been facing challenging workforce issues for many years. Whilst it was hoped that COVID-19 would renew interest in these industries for jobseekers, the local uptake has been minimal.

Jobseekers are also facing initial barriers to accessing work in these industries such as transportation and entry level skill and licensing requirements.

### WHATS NEEDED

Government led inquiry into issues within the Tourism booking industry including guarantee of payment issues, commission models and unethical and collusive business practices with the intent to establish legislated measures or payment guarantee mechanisms to improve the sectors access to fair payment for services provided.



## COMMONWEALTH SUPPORTED SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY ADVISERS

**Sector**  
Small Business

**Time Frame**  
0 - 2 Years

**Proponents**  
Federal Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Required



Regional businesses need targeted on the ground support to help them navigate through the impacts of COVID-19.

The slow uptake of the QLD Government's Regional Queensland small business COVID-19 adaptation grant compared to South East Queensland signifies the difficulties that regional businesses face in accessing support measures.



### WHATS NEEDED

**\$700K over two years to assist local business, chambers of commerce and industry groups develop business planning strategies, access stimulus, funding and pivot business direction for a post COVID-19 Economy.**



KEY BUSINESS SUPPORTS

## KEY BUSINESS SUPPORTS

## MAIN STREET BUSINESS REVITALISATION INCENTIVE

**Sector**  
Small Business

**Time Frame**  
0 - 3 Years

**Proponents**  
Private & State Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Needed



A vibrant main street is vital to regional towns by providing a sense of place, pride and prosperity. A targeted incentive program will encourage business owners to improve their street appeal and lift the aesthetics of the region's town centres.



### WHATS NEEDED

**\$200K per annum over three years to support incentive program to support local small business refurbish and enhance shop fronts, minor building aesthetics and facades including new businesses that wish to establish on a previously vacant premises.**

## EXPANDED AVIATION AND DESTINATION MARKETING SUBSIDY PROGRAM

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Time Frame**  
0 - 3 Years

**Proponents**  
State Government & Federal Government

**Project Status**  
Investment Required



Aviation links are critical to the Whitsunday economy. Not only does the aviation sector transport many of the visitors who access the \$900M Whitsunday tourism industry, it is also a vital link for business travellers accessing the coal fields.



### WHATS NEEDED

**\$3M over the next three years to market and subsidise the re-establishment of visitation to the region. Funds to be used to assist underwriting of regular air service schedules, attractive flights and accommodation packaging arrangements and further targeted marketing activities.**



## THE WHITSUNDAY RECOVERY TASKFORCE

Whitsunday Region Priorities 2020 is proudly produced with the input and support of the following active members of the Whitsunday Region Economic Response and Recovery Sub-Committee: 'The Whitsunday Recovery Taskforce'



### Disclaimer

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