GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

Proudly Growing the Gladstone Region

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

This document sets out key focus areas to guide targeted social investment for developing industries in the Gladstone Region.

In our transition to a decarbonised future economy, our region is becoming a hub of expanding and developing industries. As our population grows amidst this transition, the social infrastructure and service needs of our local communities are facing increasing pressure.

To support developing industries and project proponents to make informed decisions to meaningfully invest in the social needs of our region, this evidence-backed resource was developed.

Matt Burnett
Mayor Gladstone Regional Council

" This resource has been designed to enable, inform and guide future planning and investment decisions as we transition to the future economy. "

Mayor Matt Burnett

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Gladstone Regional Council would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Bailai, the Gurang, the Gooreng Gooreng and the Taribelang Bunda people.

We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Gladstone Regional Council is committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion and connectedness, acknowledging that our communities are richer when diversity is embraced.

INTRODUCTION

The Social Infrastructure Investment Priorities (SIIP) supports Council's drive to ensure communities are well understood; with programs, resources, social infrastructure and services in place to strengthen our region during the major economic transition.

For project proponents, industry and investors, this document will work in conjunction with Council's New Project Guidelines, designed to support and guide new industries to operate in alignment with Local Government and community expectations. Together these resources enable investment into a prosperous and connected community where industry and local communities can thrive.

Targeting investment in the identified key focus areas strategically supports community development that is focussed on accessibility and inclusion, planning, capacity building and place making.

Furthermore, the SIIP, formerly the Social Infrastructure Strategic Plan (SISP), improves the approach to social impact mitigation across social services and infrastructure, making it clearer for investors and more meaningful for the community, both now and into the future.

METHODOLOGY

In 2023, Gladstone Regional Council identified the need for an updated SISP, to enable prioritisation of the region's needs and social investment opportunities. A project team was formed to undertake this work, including stakeholders at Gladstone Regional Council as well as Economic and Demographic Specialists at REMPLAN.

Council conducted a workforce modelling exercise using data from over 30 new industry projects which are expected to be developed in the region over the next two decades. The review of data included analysing the number of construction and operational workers required throughout the life of each project and the likelihood of the project coming to fruition. An extensive review of all relevant plans, strategies, studies and surveys was completed to understand how previous plans were developed. Results of this review and analysis strengthened our position to develop meaningful key focus areas.

The workforce modelling data informed the 20 year Population and Growth Forecasts and the Infrastructure Services and Impact Model (ISIM) for the Gladstone Region. The ISIM provided comprehensive data to support the review, including the impacts of natural population growth, the impacts of major projects on population growth and the impacts of both scenarios on the demand for dwellings, professional service provision and road infrastructure.

We incorporated learnings from our previous approach and understanding of current state to identify the gaps between where we are now and the future we want to reach. This analysis informed the development of our key focus areas and will guide future planning activities and investment decisions to support the prosperity of our region.

THE GLADSTONE REGION

Balaclava Island
Curtis Island National park
Wilson Island
Curtis Island
Heron Island
Raglan Creek
Rundle Range National Park
Heron Reef
The Narrows
Raglan
South End
Ambrose
Targinnie
Facing Island
Mount Larcom
Yarwun
Port Curtis
Gladstone
Lady Musgrave Reef
Boyne Island
Lady Musgrave Island
Tannum Sands
Wild Cattle Island National Park
Calliope
Benaraby
Hummock Hill Island
Lake Awoonga
Turkey Beach
Eurimbula National Park
Lady Elliot Island
Castle Tower National Park
Seventeen Seventy
Agnes Water
Bororen
Deepwater National Park
Kroombit Tops National Park
Miriam Vale
Nagoorin
Mount Colosseum National Park
Broadwater Conservation Park
Ubobo
Baffle Creek
Rules Beach
Lowmead
Baffle Creek
Builyan
Many Peaks
Rosedale

DAWSON HIGHWAY

From Kroombit Tops in the west to the coral lagoons of the Southern Great Barrier Reef, the Gladstone Region's landscape is as varied as it is beautiful. The Gladstone Region is situated on the traditional lands of the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, and Taribelang Bunda peoples. Around 500km, or six and a half hours' drive north of Brisbane City, the Gladstone Region has a population of approximately 65,500 people and a total land area of almost 10,500km^2.

The city of Gladstone, the areas of Boyne Island and Tannum Sands and the town of Calliope are the main population centres in the region with approximately 57,500 people living in these localities. Nearly 8,000 people live in smaller communities in the region such as Miriam Vale, Baffle Creek, Deepwater, Mount Larcom and surrounding communities in the north as well as the beachside localities of Seventeen Seventy and Agnes Water, according to the 2021 Census.

The Gladstone Region has a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of $6.773B with just over 4,000 local businesses and nearly 28,000 regional jobs, with about 15 per cent of these coming from manufacturing. 20.9 per cent of the Gladstone Region workforce are technicians or trades workers.
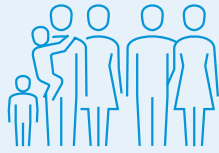
The region has a strong record of job creation and investment opportunities, with relaxed living, recreational and tourism options enhancing its liveability and potential for future growth. In recent decades, the economy has been built around heavy industry with access to a deep water harbour for import and export trade.

Several renewable energy projects, hydrogen, biofuels, solar energy and new waste management practices have been proposed for the Gladstone State Development Area (GSDA), positioning the city of Gladstone as a renewable energy hub and taking the economy in an exciting new direction.
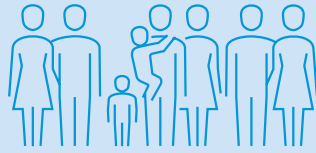
The Gladstone Region features plenty of green open spaces, including the nationally-recognised Gladstone Tondoon Botanic Gardens, award-winning playgrounds and coastal locations where sailing and boating activities are popular. Residents and visitors can see historical sites, go bush walking, mountain climbing or snorkel the reef to experience the outdoor environment. The region's strength is a great sense of community, with a 'can-do' attitude.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The population growth is forecast to be much steadier than what has previously been experienced in the region, particularly during the major project developments in 2011 to 2013. It is anticipated that the annual growth rate will be at its largest in 2032, before commencing a steady and natural decline, commensurate with the conclusion of major developments' construction phases.
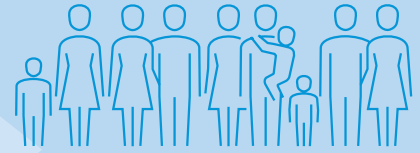
approximately
65,500

78,486
+14,182
Population Base
Scenario (2046)

82,006
+17,702
Major Projects Growth
Scenario (2046)

23,181
Current Dwellings
as at 2021

Dwellings
36,449
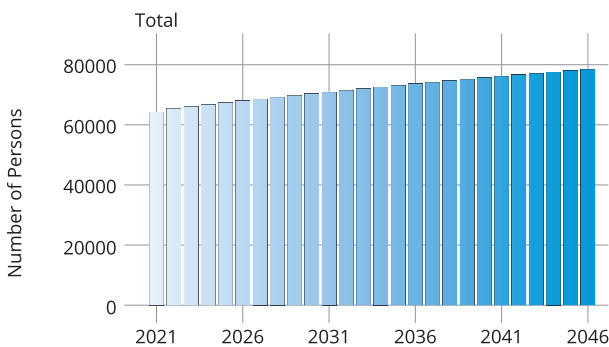**+6,669**
Population Base
Scenario (2046)

Dwellings
37,819
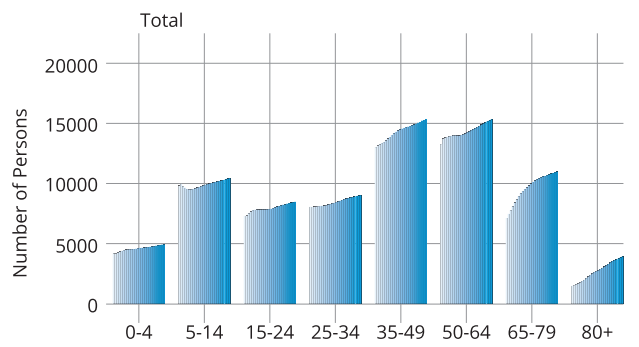**+8,039**
Major Projects Growth
Scenario (2046)

Source: REMPLAN ISIM - Infrastructure Services and Impact Model

Total Base Population Growth

Total

Number of Persons

80000 —
60000 —
40000 —
20000 —
0 —

2021   2026   2031   2036   2041   2046

Population growth by age cohort

Total

Number of Persons

20000 —
15000 —
10000 —
5000 —
0 —

0-4   5-14   15-24   25-34   35-49   50-64   65-79   80+

Source: REMPLAN Major Projects Population Forecasts

KEY FOCUS AREAS

In no particular order, these are the key focus areas for future social investment based on the identified shortfalls and future impacts on the level of service provisions as a result of regional growth and major project development.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Redefining Health and Improving Access

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
Building a Bright Future

EARLY CHILDHOOD
Championing the Early Years

SAFETY AND SECURITY
Securing Community Comfort

AGEING IN PLACE
Supporting our Seniors

HOUSING
Removing Barriers and Improving Outcomes

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES
Optimising Opportunity

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE
A Strong Path Ahead

OUR ROLE

Gladstone Regional Council is advocating for investment into these key focus areas and priorities. Through extensive analysis and evaluation, these specific areas were determined to have the highest potential for community benefit through investment. Council's role is to enable, inform and support project proponents and other key stakeholders to make meaningful contributions, optimising social impact throughout the region as we transition to our future economy.

Council's current priorities are documented throughout a suite of strategic documents and can provide context for 'what success looks like' when targeted investment is made in each focus area. The priorities in this document align with those in Council's strategy and action plans and will best place the region to prosper as it grows and transitions.

Council will act as the concierge, connecting industry and investors with the right stakeholders and channelling investments into current priorities. Council encourages all interested parties to engage with us, to not only enable understanding of current Council priorities and asset planning activities, but to share the intentions, goals and culture of the investor to maximise mutual benefit of investments.

Health and Wellbeing

Education, Employment and Training

Early Childhood

Safety and Security

Predicted shortfalls for provision of essential professions in the Health and Wellbeing, Education, Employment and Training, Early Childhood and Safety and Security sectors provided in the ISIM indicated a crucial need for targeted investment in these key focus areas. To manage the impact on community and social wellbeing of residents in the region as a result of population growth and major project activity, social services and infrastructure investment for these areas is essential.

Ageing in Place

By 2046, the retirement age cohort (65 – 79) is forecast to experience the largest increase in population growth. This evidence indicates the need for Council to strongly advocate for investment in this priority area. Targeted investment in this area will support our ageing population to remain in the community, close to their homes, regular routines and loved ones. When people can age in place, they are able to maintain independence, freedom, social connections and social services.

Housing

In the midst of a nationwide housing crisis, the growing population from natural growth and major projects in our region will vastly intensify pressure on the demand for dwellings. Investment into housing solutions is paramount in ensuring that equitable housing options in the region are commensurate with the growth of the community.

Community Facilities and Services

Seven community centred themes from the previous SISP were consolidated to form a general Community Facilities and Services key focus area. The need for investment into community facilities and services was identified due to the number of items listed under these themes in the previous SISP, that were found to still be relevant and impactful.

Within this focus area, Council continues to advocate for:

- ☑ Indigenous Facilities and Services
- ☑ Children and Family Facilities and Services
- ☑ Cultural Facilities and Services
- ☑ Aged Persons' Facilities and Services
- ☑ Disability Facilities and Services
- ☑ Community Facilities and Services
- ☑ Multicultural Facilities and Services
- ☑ Accessibility and inclusion in Facilities and Services.

Enabling Infrastructure

The ISIM provided data on how the region's road infrastructure will be impacted as a result of population growth, major projects and new dwellings. This provided the evidence needed to identify Enabling Infrastructure as a key focus area for investment. In addition to the established regulations for new industries to contribute to the region's road infrastructure during the development of their projects, this focus area is included to support continued investment in keeping the region's roads safe, maintained and up to standard.

Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing includes the physical, mental and emotional health of the community and is a key aspect of social wellbeing.

Priorities identified within this key focus include, but are not limited to:

Healthcare Accessibility

Enhancing access to healthcare services to meet the needs of a growing population associated with the industrial transition and regional migration. This may involve expanding healthcare facilities as well as recruiting and retaining additional medical professionals and specialists.

Mental Health Support

Implementing initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing, recognising the potential stress and uncertainty associated with changing community dynamics and circumstances. This could involve establishing counselling services, community support groups and mental health awareness campaigns to address the psychosocial impacts of the transition and reduce barriers for people of all ages seeking mental health support.

Community Recreation Facilities

Investing in recreational infrastructure to promote physical activity and community cohesion. Developing parks, sports facilities and recreational programs can improve residents' physical and mental health and provide opportunities for social interaction, fostering a sense of belonging.

Environmental Health Measures

Implementing measures to mitigate environmental impacts associated with the transition of industry to renewables. This includes monitoring air and water quality, promoting sustainable practices and addressing any potential adverse impacts on health arising from the construction and operation.

Education, Employment and Training

Council continues to advocate for the cultural diversity and equity in education, employment and training as we transition existing workers from fossil fuel industries into new careers in green energy.

Priorities identified within this key focus include, but are not limited to:

Inclusion

Council reinforces the importance of engaging and building relationships with Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bailai, the Gurang, the Gooreng Gooreng and Taribelang Bunda people when focusing on all priority areas. Indigenous economic growth is vital, with knowledge, education and employment policies and pathways a critical lever for enhancement of First Nations people in this region. The sustainable education and employment opportunities for First Nations students and workers is an essential component of each priority. For specific examples of successful implementation and further information, refer to Council's New Projects Guidelines and Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Education and Skills Development

To facilitate the workforce transition and ensure a skilled workforce for the future, establishing training programs, partnerships with educational institutions and vocational training centres is a key enabler. Through prioritisation of education and skills development and workforce transition initiatives, the existing workforce can be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for employment in the emerging energy sector. This includes exploring alternative routes of connecting with the future workforce, specifically disengaged or disadvantaged youth, aligned with the Gladstone Region Youth Council Action Plan. Successful engagement of this demographic may enable the same workforce opportunities for those that may not be reached through traditional vocational and tertiary avenues.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Programs

Establishing and expanding TVET programs that cater to the specific skills needed in the renewable energy industry. This includes fostering Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in training across the renewable energy ecosystem, sustainable resource management and environmental conservation.

Higher Education Partnerships

Collaborating with universities and higher education institutions to develop specialised degree programs relevant to the renewable energy sector. This could involve creating research centres focused on renewable energy innovation and offering scholarships or incentives to students pursuing studies in related fields.

Community Outreach and Education

Implementing community outreach programs to raise awareness about the opportunities and benefits of transitioning to renewable energy. This could involve organising workshops, seminars and educational campaigns targeting both students and the broader community to foster understanding and support for the new industry.

Job Placement and Transition Support Services

Establishing job placement and transition support services to facilitate the re-employment of workers transitioning from the carbon-based resource industry to the renewable energy sector. This may include career counselling, skills assessment, retraining programs and assistance with job placement and entrepreneurship opportunities in the emerging renewable energy market.

Early Childhood

The foundation for all future learning, behaviour and health is built in early childhood. A strong foundation helps children develop the skills they need to become well-functioning adults.

Priorities identified within this key focus include, but are not limited to:

Accessible and Quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

Developing partnerships between industry stakeholders, not-for-profit organisations and childcare providers is a key opportunity to enhance affordability and availability of ECEC services. This work could assist in ensuring availability of ECEC facilities that are easily accessible and affordable to families, including those working in the resource industry. Quality early childhood education programs to support children's cognitive, social and emotional development is crucial in providing children with a strong foundation to grow.

Healthcare Services and Family Support Programs

Healthcare services tailored to the needs of young children and their families, including child assessment services, paediatric care, maternal health and mental health support is critical. There may be opportunities to create or enhance family support programs that offer parenting education, counselling and resources to promote healthy family dynamics and child development. This work could be a collaborative effort with local healthcare providers and community organisations to ensure comprehensive support for families with young children.

Early Intervention and Support Services

Implementing early intervention programs to identify and address developmental delays or disabilities in young children promptly. This could involve providing access to speech therapy,

occupational therapy and other specialised services to support children's individual needs. Collaboration between early childhood educators, healthcare professionals and social service providers to create a coordinated system of support for children and families is vital.

Safety and Security

Safety and security in local communities are crucial for development, as they contribute to stability, social cohesion and the overall well-being of residents. These themes are paramount for development as they create an environment conducive to economic and social activities.

Priorities identified within this key focus include but are not limited to:

Community Safety Programs

Implementing community safety programs tailored to the needs of the transitioning community. This could involve initiatives such as safety education campaigns to mitigate antisocial behaviours that may come with an influx of a transient workforce engaging in the general community. These programs would aim to enhance overall safety and security for residents during the transition period.

Community Resilience Planning

Developing community resilience plans that address potential risks and vulnerabilities associated with the transition process. This could involve engaging with stakeholders, including residents, businesses and local government, to identify and mitigate risks related to the decarbonisation of the economy and the development of renewable energy infrastructure. By proactively planning for potential challenges, the community can enhance its ability to adapt to changes while maintaining safety and security for all residents.

Ageing in Place

 Implementing measures to allow our senior community to age in place is crucial in supporting their ability to exercise their independence, as well as enjoying the other benefits that come from living in an established space, close to home and their loved ones.

Priorities identified within this key focus include but are not limited to the below:

Community Centres and Senior Facilities

Establishing community centres and senior facilities that offer a range of services and activities tailored to seniors' needs can foster social interaction, provide access to health and wellness programs, and offer educational opportunities. These centres can serve as hubs for socialising, recreational activities and access to support services, promoting a sense of belonging and reducing isolation among seniors.

Affordable Housing and Home Modification Programs

Ensuring suitable supply of appropriate and affordable housing options and implementing home modification programs can enable seniors to age in place, comfortably and safely. Affordable housing initiatives targeted at seniors, such as subsidised housing or rent control policies, can alleviate financial burdens. Additionally, home modification programs that provide assistance with retrofitting homes for accessibility and safety can enable seniors to maintain independence and continue living in their own homes as they age.

Transportation Services and Mobility Support

Enhancing transportation services and mobility options for seniors is essential for maintaining their independence and quality of life. This includes improving public transportation accessibility, implementing senior-friendly transportation options such as shuttle services or door-to-door transport and promoting alternative transportation modes like cycling and walking. Accessible transportation enables seniors to access essential services, participate in social activities and remain engaged in their community, even if they no longer drive.

Housing

Affordable, suitable and sustainable housing options are paramount as the Gladstone Region population grows amidst the major economic transition. Investing in housing is investing in stable, secure places that provide a sense of mental well-being, self-esteem and self-worth. Sustainable construction and liveability as the world transitions to net zero emissions will be critical.
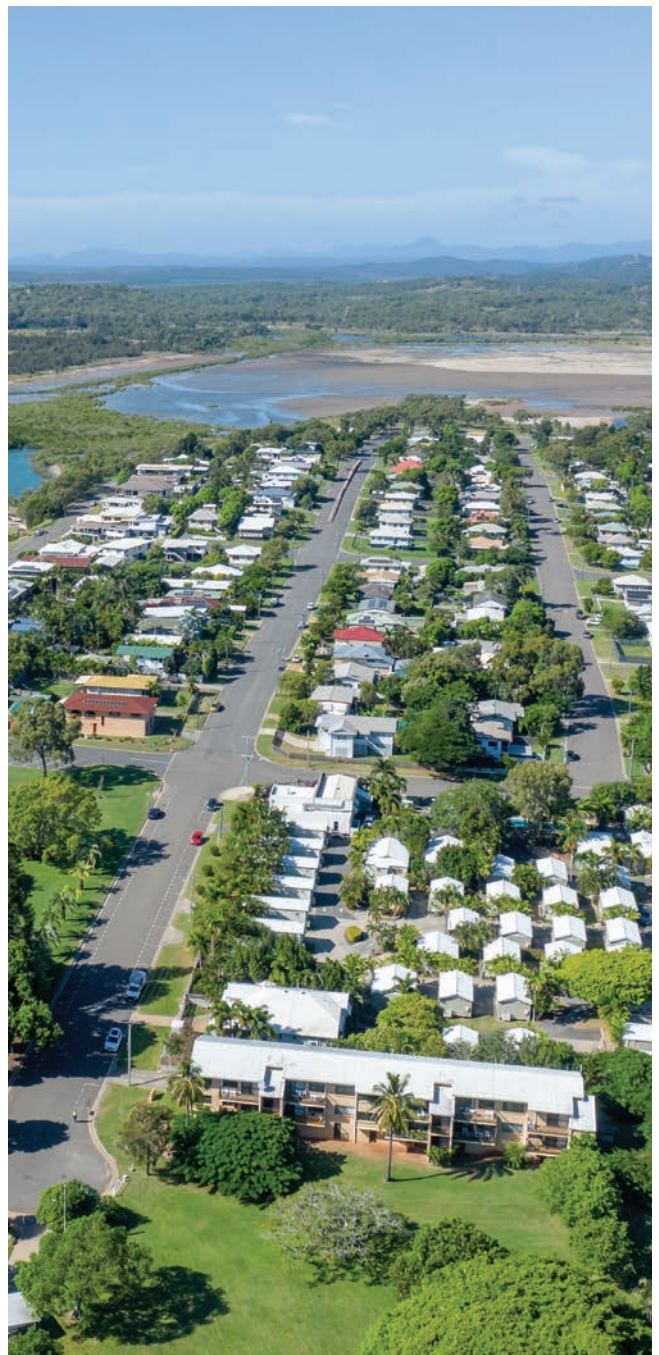
Priorities identified within this key focus include but are not limited to:

Affordable Housing Development

With the influx of workers and professionals associated with renewable energy projects, ensuring the availability of appropriate and affordable housing is essential. This includes developing new housing units, refurbishing existing ones and ensuring affordable social-housing options are available to accommodate the growing population, the diverse workforce and residents of lower socioeconomic status. Prioritising affordable housing initiatives can help maintain social equity and support the economic sustainability of the transition.

Environmental Sustainability Initiatives

Given the focus on renewable energy, integrating environmental sustainability into housing infrastructure is paramount. This involves implementing green building practices, promoting energy-efficient housing designs and incorporating renewable energy technologies such as solar panels and energy-efficient appliances. These initiatives not only reduce the carbon footprint of housing developments but also contribute to the overall environmental goals of the community.

Community Facilities and Services

Investing in Community Facilities and Services supports the quality of life within the community, local pride and attractivity of the region.

Priorities identified within this key focus include, but are not limited to:

Education and Training Centres

Investing in education and training facilities tailored to renewable energy technologies will be crucial. This includes vocational training centres, technical schools and partnerships with universities to provide courses in renewable energy engineering, sustainable development and related fields. Such centres will equip residents with the skills needed to participate in the renewable energy industry, fostering local expertise and employment opportunities.

Community Health and Wellbeing Services

Transitioning industries can bring about changes in the local community's health and wellbeing needs. Establishing or enhancing healthcare facilities, mental health services and recreational spaces can support residents through this transition. Community health centres can provide resources for physical and mental health support, while recreational facilities such as parks and sports complexes contribute to overall wellbeing and community cohesion.

Infrastructure for Sustainable Living

Building infrastructure that promotes sustainable living practices aligns with the transition to renewable energy. This can include the development of cycling and walking paths, public transportation systems and eco-friendly housing options. Investing in renewable energy infrastructure such as solar panels on public buildings and electric vehicle charging stations can also demonstrate the community's commitment to sustainability while reducing carbon emissions.

Community Infrastructure for Recreation and Social Interaction

Develop accessible community infrastructure such as playgrounds, parks and recreational facilities that are safe, inclusive and conducive to children's play and social interaction. Encourage community engagement and involvement in the planning and maintenance of these spaces to foster a sense of ownership and belonging. Explore partnerships with local businesses and industry stakeholders to invest in community infrastructure that benefits families with young children.

Community Facilities and Services

As the population grows, investing in community facilities and services becomes imperative. This includes building or expanding schools, healthcare centres, youth centres, recreational facilities and transportation infrastructure to meet the needs of the growing population. These investments not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also attract and retain talent crucial for the success of renewable energy projects.

Enabling Infrastructure

As the Gladstone Region's carbon-based industry transitions to renewable energy and large hydrogen projects commence construction, there are key transport and road infrastructure priorities that enable social infrastructure in the community.

Priorities identified within this key focus include, but are not limited to:

Gladstone Heavy Vehicle and Oversize Overmass Load Transport Corridor

Road infrastructure and asset integrity, along with ongoing freight access is an important consideration to support improved heavy vehicle access between Central and Western Queensland and the Port of Gladstone. Focus in this area will improve efficiencies, benefits from a safety perspective, reduce transport costs and will unlock regional economic benefits for Central Queensland communities, as well as many industries and associated supply chain in the region.

Public Transport Expansion

Investing in the expansion of public transport services to provide accessible, convenient and affordable transportation options for residents commuting to and from work sites. This could involve engaging with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to increase the frequency of bus services, establishing new routes and integrating alternative transportation modes such as cycling and walking paths. This could also look like cycling tracks for longer distance commuters, encouraging safe and active transport to work.

Investment in Alternative Transportation

Encouraging the adoption of alternative transportation modes such as electric vehicles (EV's) and hydrogen-powered vehicles to reduce carbon emissions and dependence on fossil fuels. This could involve installing EV charging stations, incentivising the purchase of EV's through subsidies or tax incentives and promoting the development of hydrogen refuelling infrastructure.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We encourage project proponents and relevant stakeholders to use this document to identify key focus areas for investments prior to engaging with Council. This optimises the approach to social impact mitigation across social services and infrastructure by making it clearer for investors and consequently more meaningful for the impacted communities.

Through effective collaboration, we can provide meaningful investment to maximise community benefit, support the region's role as a driver of economic growth and enable the success of future social infrastructure planning and coordination to contribute to building a resilient economy.

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