

Growing the Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2025-2029

Our Community, Our Future



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Kabi Kabi, Wakka Wakka and Butchulla people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land upon which we stand, work and play. We recognise their continuing connection to the land, waters and country and that the Gympie region has always been a place of social, cultural and spiritual significance. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and future and extend that respect to all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within our region.



This report was prepared by SC Lennon & Associates Pty Ltd on behalf of Gympie Regional Council. It has been prepared on the understanding that users exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use and interpretation. Any representation, statement, opinion or advice expressed or implied in this publication is made in good faith. SC Lennon & Associates Pty Ltd and the individual authors of this report are not liable to any person or entity taking or not taking action in respect of any representation, statement, opinion or advice referred to above



Our Community, Our Future: Our Vision for a Strong and Diverse Economy

The Gympie region will be a progressive, diverse and robust economy, underpinned by vibrant communities, a skilled workforce and competitive businesses.

Executive Summary

Growing the Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2025-2029 is a blueprint for supporting the vibrancy, diversity and economic prosperity of the Gympie region and its constituent communities over the next five years and beyond.

Growing the Gympie Region is designed to fulfil Council's vision for the Gympie region as a **progressive, diverse and robust economy, underpinned by vibrant communities, a skilled workforce and competitive businesses**. It guides Gympie Regional Council, as its custodian, towards achieving the vision through the implementation of initiatives that are designed to help support business growth and development that builds on the region's strengths in a diversity of industries; develop a local workforce with the mix of skills required by businesses to grow and prosper, providing employment opportunities throughout the Gympie region; and encourage growth in the region's population and housing in line with Council's and the community's vision for a better future.

The strategy will capitalise on the Gympie region's comparative and competitive advantages, including its strategic location following the \$1bn investment in the Bruce Highway extension enhancing its proximity to national and international markets. The investment pipeline is strong with an average of 231 approved development applications over the past 4 financial years, in addition to the \$16bn of renewables projects in planning for the region.

Addressing challenges and opportunities for economic development in a strategic, informed and targeted manner, *Growing the Gympie Region* articulates Council's economic development role and the levers that it can use to promote positive regional economic development outcomes. Aspirational yet practical in nature, it presents a suite of recommended actions to support a strong economy into the future, within the scope of Council's available resources, and identifying where the resources of other stakeholders can be leveraged to good effect.

A suite of 44 individual actions are presented across four themed Strategy Pillars, with the initiatives designed to:

1. Attract investment and innovation in a diversity of established and emerging industries;
2. Encourage the Gympie region's diversity of businesses to prosper;
3. Promote a skilled and adaptable workforce to thrive in the Gympie region; and
4. Nurture the Gympie region's appeal as a place in which to live, learn and prosper.

Aligned with the directions and priorities as articulated in other key Council plans and strategies, *Growing the Gympie Region* informs operational planning for economic development within the context of Council's broader program of work and strategic objectives. Actions will be implemented in line with determined priorities as well as the availability of resources and the capacity of Council to progress the initiatives identified. Some of the recommended actions seek to build on or continue initiatives already in place, some are already resourced while others require additional resourcing.

Embracing a partnership approach to economic development, *Growing the Gympie Region* will be used by Council to inform advocacy initiatives and collaborations to secure support from Council's partners in economic development, including other levels of government. Strategy implementation progress will be monitored and evaluated using a combination of output measures related directly to the recommended actions and their implementation, as well as broader outcomes (metrics). The Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2025-2029 will be reviewed annually with an update anticipated in four years.

1. Economic Development Strategy Purpose

A Blueprint for Regional Economic Development

Growing the Gympie Region Economic Development Strategy 2025-2029 is a blueprint for supporting the vibrancy, diversity and economic prosperity of the Gympie region and its constituent communities over the next five years and beyond.

The Gympie region is on the cusp of unprecedented economic development. The strength, diversity and resilience of the region's economy underpins its appeal as a place in which to live, work and invest. Home to 56,000 residents and 22,000 jobs, the Gympie region's population is well-established and growing steadily, and is expected to reach 60,000 by 2036.

A \$2.8 billion economy, the industries that drive economic activity in the Gympie region are the forestry, horticulture and livestock industries, an evolving manufacturing sector, health and community services, construction, transport & logistics and retail trade. Emerging industries, which present opportunities to diversify and grow the region's economy, include energy, education and training, the arts and creative industries and tourism.

The region's lifestyle, liveability and relative affordability are its greatest attributes and when combined with its diverse industry base make the region an appealing prospect for workers seeking a lifestyle which offers the best of living combined with access to a diverse range of employment and careers.

The Bruce Highway extension has enhanced the region's positioning as a strategic location for businesses to access national and global markets and for 'knowledge workers' seeking a great lifestyle.

Addressing challenges and opportunities for economic development in a strategic, informed and targeted manner, this strategy articulates Council's economic development role and the levers that it can use to promote positive regional economic development outcomes. Aspirational yet practical in nature, it presents a suite of recommended actions to support a strong economy into the future, within the scope of Council's available resources, and identifying where the resources of other stakeholders can be leveraged to good effect.

Aligned with the directions and priorities as articulated in other key Council plans and strategies, *Growing the Gympie Region* informs operational planning for economic development within the context of Council's broader program of work and strategic objectives.

Our Vision for a Strong and Diverse Economy

The Gympie region will be a progressive, diverse and robust economy, underpinned by vibrant communities, a skilled workforce and competitive businesses.

Building a Better Future

Informed by extensive research, stakeholder consultation and data analysis, *Growing the Gympie Region* guides Council in its commitment to build a better future, through the realisation of the following outcomes:

- Business growth and development that builds on our strengths in a diversity of industries including advanced manufacturing, high-value food and agribusiness, forestry and timber products, renewables, health care and education, construction, as well as businesses operating in the visitor economy (the tourism sector).
- The development of a local workforce with the mix of skills required by businesses to grow and prosper, providing employment opportunities throughout the Gympie region for its growing population.
- Growth in population and housing in line with Council's and the community's vision for a better future.

These Economic Development Strategy outcomes will be realised through a suite of initiatives delivered across four Pillars, focussed on **Strategic Investment**; **Local Businesses**; **Local Workforce**; and **Prosperous Places**.

Growing the Gympie Region will be implemented in line with the availability of resources and the capacity of Council to progress the initiatives identified. Embracing a partnership approach to economic development, it will also be used to inform advocacy initiatives and collaborations to secure support from Council's partners in economic development, including other levels of government.

2. Our Region, Our People and Our Economy

Our Region

Located 170 kilometres north of Brisbane and just 45 kilometres from the Sunshine Coast, the Gympie region covers an area of 6,898 square kilometres. The region includes the coastal communities of Rainbow Beach, Tin Can Bay and Cooloola Cove, as well as the vibrant hinterland of the Mary Valley and access to stunning national parks and World Heritage-listed K'gari (Fraser Island). The region also features picturesque country towns, such as Kilkivan and Goomeri, growth areas such as Curra and the centrally-located urban precinct of Gympie, which is the region's commercial hub.



The Gympie region's attributes, which underpin opportunities for economic development, and the prosperity of the region, include:

- Its strategic location with direct access to enabling infrastructure and key markets;
- An enhanced transport network following the opening of the Bruce Highway extension;
- A well-established, diverse and evolving industry base;
- Access to quality education at training facilities including TAFE and University campuses;
- Competitively priced and well-located employment land;
- Enviable quality of lifestyle and comparatively affordable housing, enhanced with access to a diverse range of sporting, heritage and tourism amenities and a burgeoning events calendar.

The Gympie Region at a Glance

Selected key metrics highlighting the Gympie region's socio-economic profile are provided as follows, with additional demographic and economic data presented overleaf.



The Gympie region (Local Government Area) has 56,166 residents (2023 estimate), projected to grow to 60,000 by 2036.



There are 22,004 jobs located in the Gympie region and 23,534 employed residents.



The Gympie region has an unemployment rate of 4.1% compared to 3.7% for Regional Qld and 4.1% for Queensland.



There are approximately 4,965 businesses in the Gympie region (two-thirds of which are non-employing).



In 2023, the Gympie Region's Gross Regional Product (GRP) was \$2.83 billion (up 3.5% on the previous year).

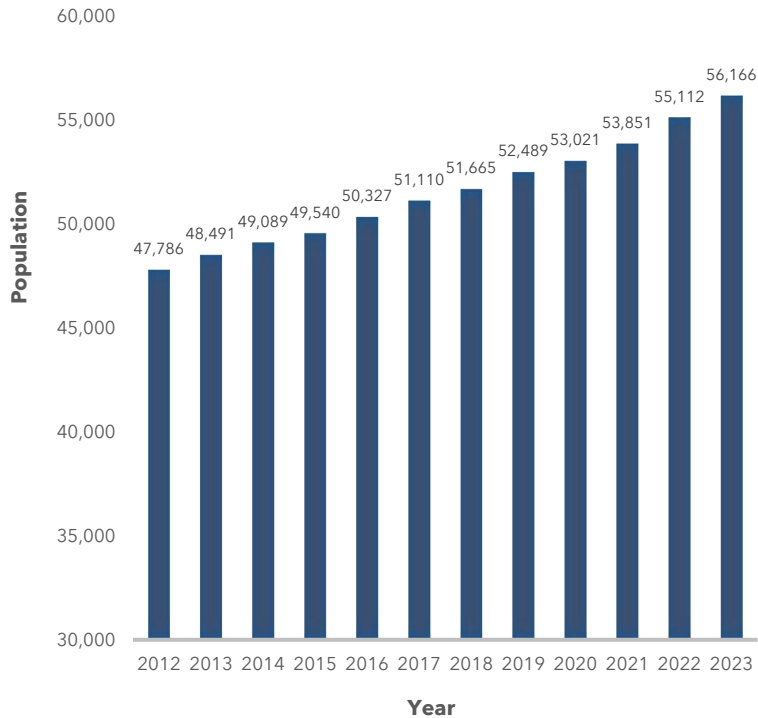


Key industries (in value and employment terms) include health, education, construction, manufacturing, timber and forestry, agriculture and retail trade.

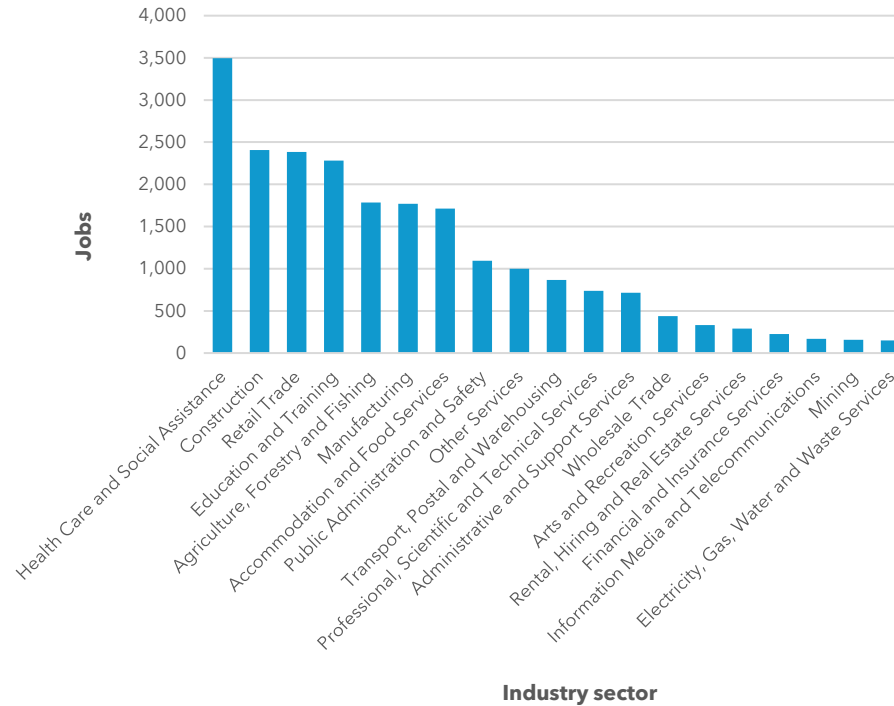
Sources: ABS Counts of Australian Businesses (June 2023), Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2024), Jobs and Skills Australia Small Area Labour Markets (June 2024), .id (Informed Decisions) and the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) (2024)

3. Socio-Economic Snapshot

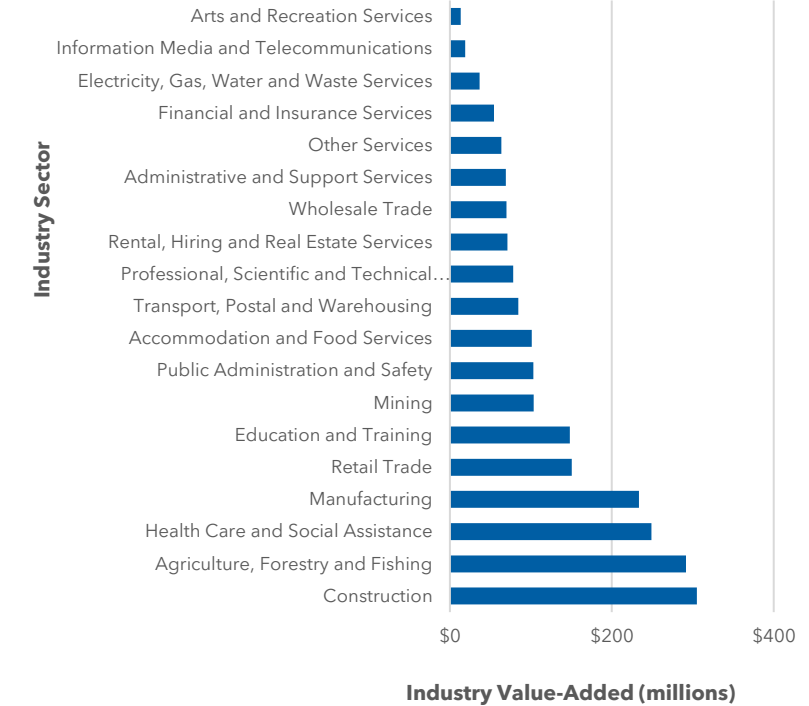
Population, Gympie Region, 2012-2023



Local Jobs by Industry Sector, Gympie Region, 2022/23



Value-Added (\$m) by Industry, Gympie Region, 2022/23



Population
56,166

Median Age
48
(compared to 39 for Queensland)

Av. Household Size
2.4 Persons
(compared to 2.5 for Queensland)

Local Jobs
22,004
(compared to 23,534 working residents)

Unemployment
4.1%
(compared to 3.7% for Regional Queensland)

Labour Force Participation
49%
(compared to 62% for Queensland)

Businesses
4,965
(two-thirds of which are non-employing)

Gross Regional Product (GRP)
\$2.83 billion
(up 3.5% over 12 months)

Gross Regional Product per Capita
\$51,318
(compared to \$76,410 for South East Queensland)

Sources: ABS Census (2021), ABS Counts of Australian Businesses (June 2023), Queensland Government Statistician's Office (2024), Jobs and Skills Australia (June 2024) and NIEIR and .id (2024)



4. Key Industries for Growth and Investment

Our Strategic Industries

With a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of \$2.83 billion, the Gympie region is home to approximately 4,965 businesses, 22,000 jobs and 23,500 employed residents. The major industries that drive and support economic activity in the Gympie region are the forestry, horticulture and livestock industries, an evolving manufacturing sector, health and community services, construction, transport & logistics and retail trade. Emerging industries, which present opportunities to diversify and grow the region's economy, include energy, the bioeconomy, the circular economy, education and training, the arts and creative industries and tourism.

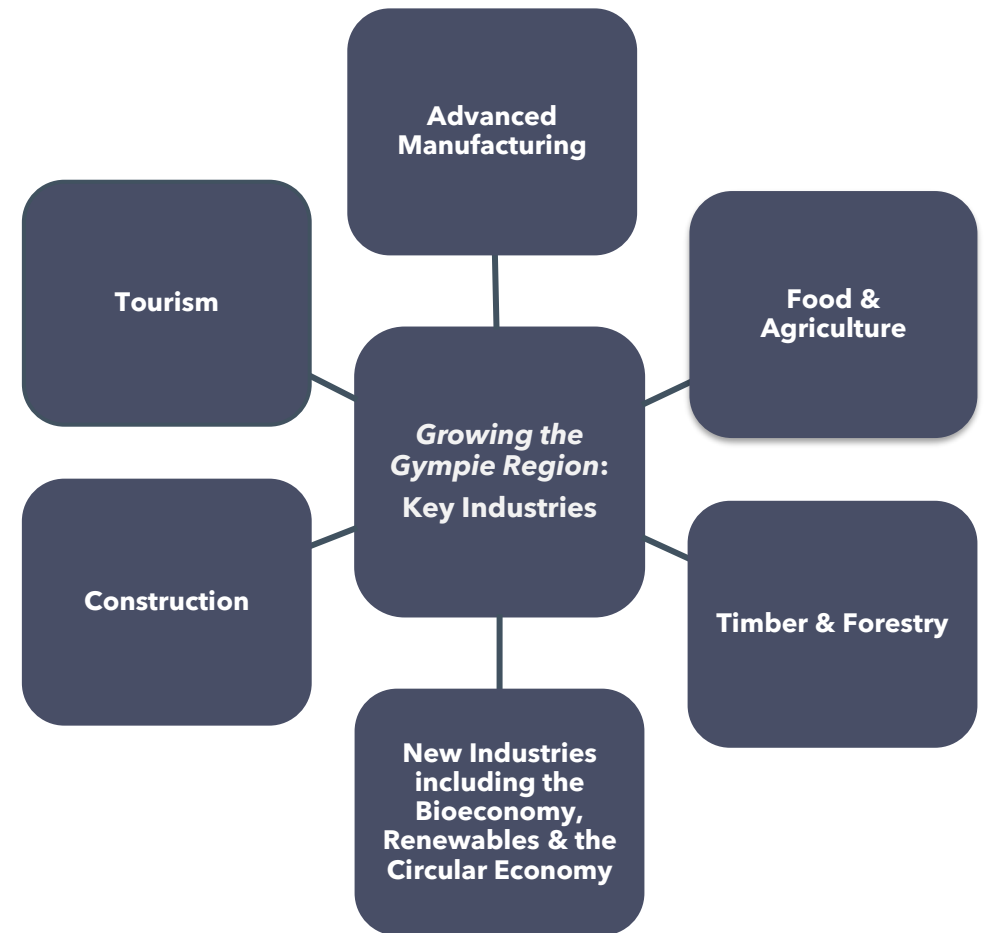
The Gympie region's education industry is growing and regional education and training providers such as the University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) and TAFE Queensland offer a diversity of career and business development opportunities. The region's health care and social assistance sector is the largest provider of local jobs and one of the Gympie region's strongest growth sectors, consistent with national trends.

The Gympie region's liveability is one of its greatest assets, providing a high level of amenity for both residents and visitors. The region's lifestyle appeal is underpinned by the strength and depth of its enabling infrastructure and services, including digital infrastructure, affordable and well-located commercial and industrial land, strong transport networks, quality education and training infrastructure and a diversity of arts and cultural infrastructure and services. These are attributes which act as key enablers of economic development.

Through a suite of themed actions designed to realise the vision for a progressive, diverse and robust economy, *Growing the Gympie Region* is focussed on initiatives that promote the growth of the region's strategic export-oriented industries in advanced manufacturing; food and agriculture; timber and forestry; renewables and the circular economy; construction; and tourism. When these industries flourish, demand for the goods and services of the region's other key industries including personal and professional services, retail, health, education and construction will also grow, building investor confidence in the Gympie region and reinforcing its lifestyle and liveability advantage.

Those key industries, which form the focus of the initiatives presented in this strategy, are discussed in the following pages.

Key Industries for Growth and Investment



Key Industries

An Advanced Manufacturing Hub

The Gympie region has a competitive, modern manufacturing industry, which is a significant contributor to industry output and exports, driven by specialisations in food product, wood product, non-metallic mineral product, fabricated metal product, furniture, machinery, and transport equipment manufacturing.

In 2023, the Gympie region's manufacturing sector generated \$1.05 billion in total sales and produced \$566 million in exports. The availability of a skilled workforce underpinned by a strong vocational training sector supports the region's approximately 240 manufacturing businesses and more than 2,200 jobs.

The Gympie region's manufacturing sector is well positioned to continue growing, providing a range of opportunities for investment, business growth and employment, including access to national and international markets and the future development of employment land, including opportunities presented by the proposed development of the Curra investigation area.

Advanced manufacturing is supported by a strong supply chain and collaboration of State and Federal Government agencies focused on growing the sector through investment, innovation, and international market development. This includes the exploration of new opportunities including resource recovery and 'green' industries such as bio-based product manufacturers.

Renewables and the Circular Economy

The Gympie region is the location for more than \$16 billion worth of proposed major renewable projects including the Borumba Pumped Hydro project, Forest Wind, the EQUIS Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and the Woolooga Energy Park Solar Farm. These projects will bring with them, significant local supply chain opportunities as well as challenges and opportunities for workforce capacity-building throughout the Gympie region.

Opportunities to grow the circular economy will flow from these major projects, transforming the traditional linear take-make-waste system into a circular economy, which reduces material use, applies innovation to redesign products and services to be less resource intensive and re-captures 'waste' as a valuable resource to manufacture new materials and products.

A Region Rich in Food and Agriculture

The Gympie region is one of Australia's most productive food-producing areas. During 2022/2023, the region's food sector generated 20% of export value (\$277 million) and industry value-added (\$202 million) and supported around 2,200 local jobs.

Naturally fertile-rich volcanic soils, a sub-tropical climate, sunshine, spring-fed river systems, and regular seasonal rainfall - coupled with a strong focus on sustainability - ensure only the highest quality food is produced in the Gympie region.

One of the most diverse farming regions in the country with a multitude of producers and processors, the Gympie region is home to recognised food manufacturers, including Nestle, Nolan Meats and Suncoast Gold Macadamias.

The Gympie region produces a wide variety of quality agricultural crops including:



Fruit and nuts - avocados, mangoes, strawberries, pineapples, orchard fruit, macadamias, oranges and mandarins.



Vegetables - mushrooms, beans, potatoes, broccoli, cabbages, carrots, cauliflowers, pumpkins, lettuces, sweet corn, onions, capsicum and melons.



Dairy - whole milk, eggs, artisan cheese, ice-cream, gelato, yoghurt, butter, cream and custard.



Meat and meat products - including beef, lamb, poultry and pork.



Broadacre crops - sugarcane, mung beans and cotton.

The Gympie region's agricultural and food processing capabilities mean it is well-placed to continue to develop, with scope for further diversification into new variants of organic high-value crops, food processing and packaged produce targeting local, national and international markets.

Key Industries

A Productive and Sustainable Timber and Forestry Sector

The logging and timber processing sectors are traditional economic mainstays and continue to be a strong contributor to the Gympie region's economy. According to NIEIR, during 2022/2023, the timber and forestry sector generated \$342 million in export sales, \$172 million in value-added and supported 744 local jobs.

The industry generates 9% of Queensland's wood product manufacturing value and 14% of Queensland's forestry and logging value. State forests managed for plantation timber production make up a significant proportion of the Gympie region land base at 84,000 hectares of Araucaria (Hoop Pine) and Southern Pine (Hybrid Pinus species) plantations. From this area, approximately 600,000m³ of plantation timber is harvested each year, enough to build around 9,000 houses.

The plantations are managed, with between 2,000 and 3,000 hectares of plantations re-established each year, planting approximately two to three million seedlings predominantly grown at a nursery located in the Gympie region.

Timber grown in the Gympie region is delivered to timber processors both within the region and in South East Queensland.

The Gympie region's forestry and timber industry strengths and capabilities present opportunities for ongoing investment in the sector, to meet growing national and global demand for Australia's forestry products for housing and other construction, for furniture and other timber product manufacturing and to meet increasing demand for bi-products (timber residue) for use as fuel in the production of energy and other higher value products.

This requires continued investment to drive innovation and sector development on a range of fronts including research and development, market research, workforce planning and development and infrastructure planning to serve the needs of this critical industry.

A Strong Construction Industry

According to NIEIR, in 2022/23 the Gympie region's construction sector generated \$305 million in industry value-added, focused broadly across building construction, heavy and civil engineering and construction services, supported by a workforce of around 2,400.

The construction sector supports both residential and commercial property development as well as major projects in the region and catalyst infrastructure investment such as the delivery of the \$1 billion Gympie Bypass.

Council data shows that in order to meet the Gympie region's projected population growth, 7,100 new dwellings will be required by 2046. Building approvals remain strong, driven by residential building activity currently exceeding 300 development applications per annum fuelled by domestic migration to the region.

Expanding businesses and major projects planned and underway in the region require residential accommodation for employees, including worker accommodation that could be converted to future legacy uses. Strong demand for industrial property means there are opportunities for commercial and industrial construction as well.

Addressing Housing Diversity to Support a Growing Workforce

Opportunities exist to diversify residential building typologies throughout the Gympie region to improve availability, affordability, and housing choice. Improved housing choice and affordability will support the region's growing population and address a fundamental enabler of local workforce planning and development.

Key Industries

A Vibrant Tourism Sector

The Gympie region's tourism sector is an established and developing industry with the potential to further diversify and grow the region's economy. The region's tourism sector is a significant contributor to the economy with \$112 million in total sales, 1.7 million visitor nights, and 1.4 million day-trip visitors to the region during 2022/2023.

Nature-based tourism, eco-tourism and cultural tourism are growth industries, and more travellers are searching for immersive, authentic, educational experiences that are unique to the places they visit. The Gympie region can combine the strength of its location, its history and heritage, its high-profile events such as the Gympie Show and Gympie Music Muster, its natural assets including the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve, as well as its food and beverage offerings, to enhance its tourism offer to address seasonality, improve tourist dispersal, increase average spend per visitor and foster a vibrant visitor economy.

The region's tourism attributes are key components of the enviable lifestyle enjoyed by residents and are increasingly attractive to new residents seeking both a great lifestyle and employment opportunities.

The Gympie region provides a range of signature visitor experiences including:

- Rainbow Beach, Tin Can Bay and direct access to the world-famous K'gari.
- Mary Valley Rattler heritage steam train.
- Hinterland villages - Imbil, Kandanga, Amamoor, Dagun, Kilkivan and Goomeri.
- Eco-tourism, adventure tourism, surfing and water sports, walking and cycling trails.
- Drive tourism.
- A growing agri-tourism sector.
- Iconic events, including the Gympie Music Muster.
- The 2032 Olympic Games and Paralympics, providing opportunities for visitation to the Gympie region.

Recognising that opportunities to develop the region's tourism offer will continue to emerge and evolve, Gympie Regional Council will continue to support the visitor economy through strong partnerships with the region's tourism industry operators and representative organisations.

The Gympie region's tourism attributes and attractions include:



Agri-tourism and paddock to plate experiences - The growing agri-tourism market and paddock-to-plate experiences provide unique and engaging experiences for visitors to the Gympie region.



Heritage / historical and innovative experiences - The Gympie region embraces and promotes its proud heritage while also embracing new ideas, creating a dynamic atmosphere that appeals to a wide range of tastes.



Authentic and nature-based experiences - The Gympie region values its natural beauty and seeks to provide genuine encounters that connect people with the environment.



Diverse and iconic events - The region hosts a diversity of events throughout the year, including fishing competitions, the Heart of Gold International Short Film Festival, Mary Street events and motor sport events such as Rally Gympie Region. Iconic events with national and even international recognition include the Gympie Show and Gympie Music Muster, which make significant contributions to the region's cultural and economic vitality.

Leveraging Our World-Renowned Ecological Assets

The Gympie region is part of the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve and is renowned for its cultural and ecological significance. The reserve contains the Great Sandy Strait, a Ramsar-listed wetland, and K'gari, a UNESCO World Heritage site and incorporates the largest sand island and coastal sand mass in the world. In supporting initiatives to grow the Gympie region's visitor economy, these unique assets will be celebrated and protected to ensure their enjoyment for generations to come.

5. Council's Key Focus Areas for Economic Development

Gympie Regional Council's Economic Development Activities

Gympie Regional Council is committed to providing the foundations for prosperity by working within its remit as a local government authority to strike a balance between lifestyle and economic opportunity for all communities of the region. Through the delivery of the actions presented in this strategy, Council works with its partners to build a better future through the following Key Focus Areas:

- **Investment Attraction** - Council facilitates private sector investment by promoting what the Gympie region has to offer prospective investors. It markets, promotes and facilitates investment opportunities and priority projects and supports the development of both existing and emerging new growth industries.
- **Business and Industry Facilitation** - Council encourages established and emerging enterprise development, innovation and capacity by connecting local businesses to a range of resources and support services to build capability and resilience and to encourage growth.
- **Tourism Promotion and Visitor Servicing** - Council promotes visitation and visitor spend in the region through branding, marketing & promotion and visitor servicing.
- **Workforce Planning and Development** - Council partners with key government agencies, education and training providers and business and industry to build workforce capacity and capabilities, to develop a future-focused, skilled workforce across the Gympie region.
- **Planning and Place Management** - Council maintains a regulatory and land use planning framework that supports population, industry and workforce growth while protecting and enhancing the region's built and natural assets, and it delivers infrastructure and services to facilitate economic activity of an appropriate scale and nature.
- **Advocacy and Partnership-building** - Council engages with its partners in industry, government and the non-government sector to provide a unifying voice for the region's communities and businesses when lobbying all levels of government and key decision-makers on economic and infrastructure issues and in promoting the Gympie region as a place in which to live, work, visit and invest.

Council's Economic Development Support Activities



6. Strategic Alignment and Partners

A Collaborative Approach to Economic Development

Gympie Regional Council's commitment to economic development does not occur in isolation, and key to supporting the development of the region's economy is strong connections across departments within Council.

Designed to support Council's commitment to build a better future for our region, *Growing the Gympie Region* is aligned with and supports Council's Corporate Plan and other key Council strategies.

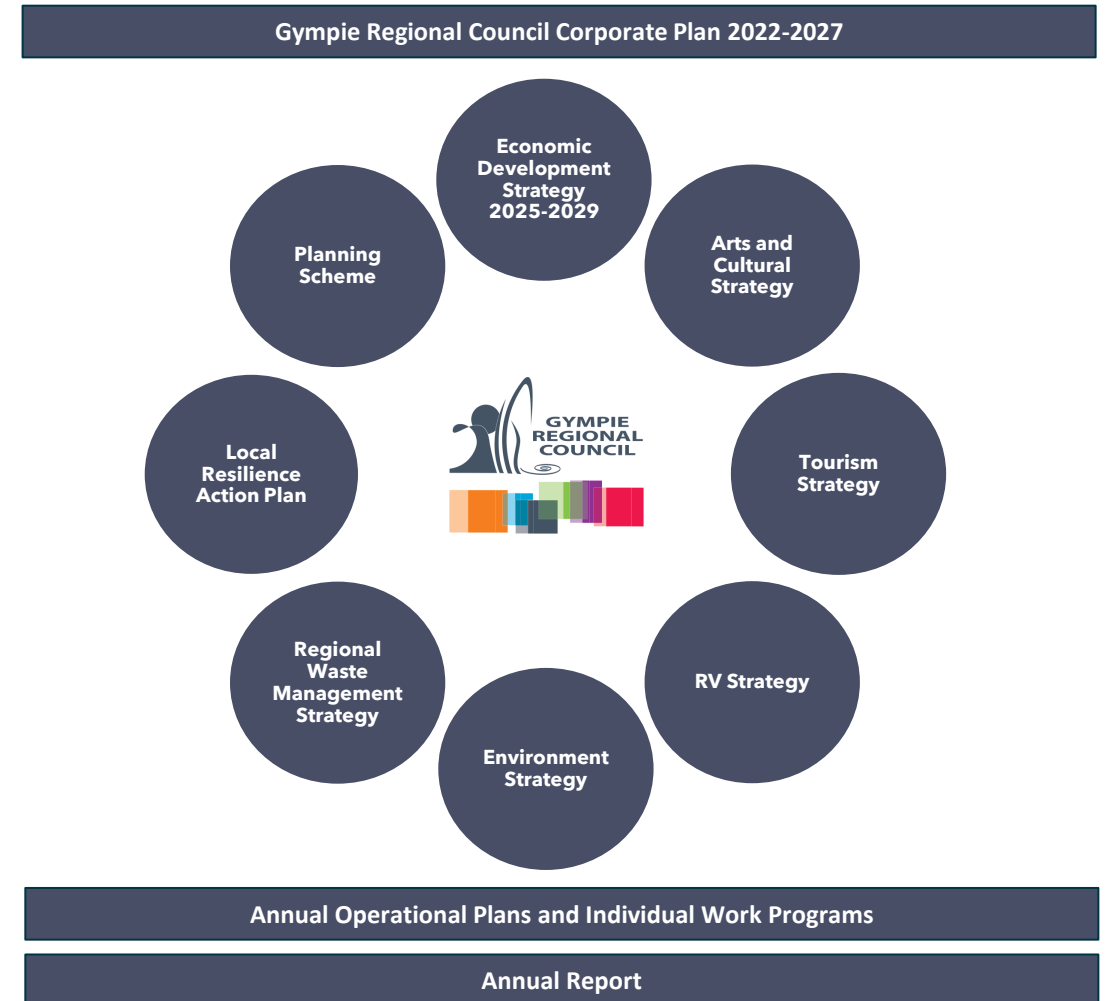
Equally important as connections across departments within Council is the development and maintenance of strong partnerships between Council and key State and Federal Government departments, neighbouring councils, regional development agencies, industry organisations and tourism bodies.

Gympie Regional Council's key strategy implementation partners include:

- Regional Leadership Network - Wide Bay Burnett;
- Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils and neighbouring councils;
- Key State and Federal Government Departments;
- RDA Wide Bay Burnett;
- Visit Sunshine Coast and local tourism networks;
- Business chambers, trader associations and industry groups; and
- Education and training providers.

In delivering *Growing the Gympie Region*, Council promotes a collaborative approach to regional economic development with its partners in government, as well as the region's other important contributors to economic development including education and training providers, key asset managers, major project proponents, industry bodies and local businesses.

Growing the Gympie Region - Strategic Alignment



7. Economic Development Action Plan

Economic Development Strategy Pillars

Growing the Gympie Region contains 44 actions across four Strategy Pillars. The initiatives are focussed on:

- 1. Attracting investment and innovation in a diversity of established and emerging industries;**
- 2. Encouraging the Gympie region's diversity of businesses to prosper;**
- 3. Promoting a skilled and adaptable workforce to thrive in the Gympie region; and**
- 4. Nurturing the Gympie region's appeal as a place in which to live, learn and prosper.**

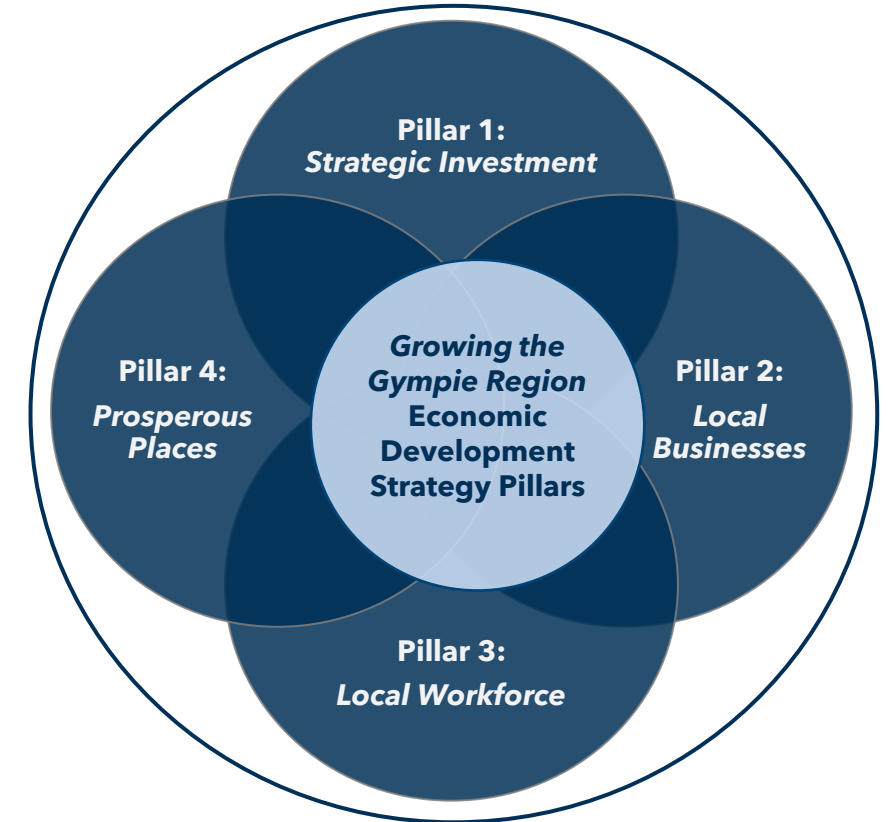
Strategy actions are presented in the following pages, under each of the four Pillars, including a statement of rationale for each. The actions reflect Gympie Regional Council's Key Focus Areas for economic development. The actions include 'Council-led' initiatives that involve specific tasks and an allocation of Council's human, physical and financial resources.

They also include 'Council-supported' activities, which are key advocacy or support initiatives, where delivery relies on a partnership approach with the lead implementation agent being an organisation or agency other than Gympie Regional Council.

The actions are designed to encourage economic activity that capitalises on the unique character and features of the Gympie region, to help fulfil the vision for a strong and diverse economy. For each action, implementation partners are identified and desired outcomes are highlighted. Each action is assigned a level of priority / timing according to whether it is a high (short-term) measure (to be implemented in Year 1), a medium-term initiative (Years 2 and 3) or a longer-term initiative (Year 4).

Each Strategy Pillar is profiled below, followed by a comprehensive Economic Development Action Plan.

Growing the Gympie Region - Strategy Pillars



Pillar 1: Strategic Investment



Pillar 1: Strategic Investment: attract investment and innovation in a diversity of established and emerging industries

Investment attraction is fundamental to a region's prosperity. As well as providing much needed dollars in a region, investment also stimulates innovation, the development of local value chains and employment. Direct investment provides access to international, national and regional markets and is a key determinant of long-term economic growth.

Gympie Regional Council, in its role as a promoter and facilitator of economic development, is committed to supporting growth in a diversity of established and emerging industries. This requires a focus on initiatives that capitalise on the Gympie region's strategic comparative and competitive advantages while being cognisant of emerging industry trends and prospects.

The Gympie region's future prosperity will lie in the continued growth and development of its large industries of employment, including health and social services, education, construction and retail trade as well as the continued development of its visitor economy. It will also require the realisation of opportunities to diversify and develop more knowledge-intensive, export-oriented activities that build on the area's traditional capabilities, including modern machinery and equipment manufacturing, food production and agri-business, as well as emerging opportunities in the bioeconomy, renewables and the circular economy. When these industries flourish, demand for the goods and services of the region's other key industries listed above will also grow.

The region's service sectors have strong prospects for growth on the back of forecast population growth. As the population grows and the Gympie region's demographic profile evolves, there will be increased demand for these service industries, which can also evolve to serve markets beyond the needs of the immediate community, generating new streams of export income for the Gympie region.

All of these industries will require a strategic focus to ensure that their needs around enabling infrastructure, commercial land and workforce development are met and that the opportunities for growth are captured for the benefit of the businesses and communities of the Gympie region.

Gympie Regional Council will embark on initiatives set out in this strategy to attract investment to the region. The action plan that follows addresses a suite of initiatives focussed on:

- Delivering the *Invest Gympie Region* investment attraction strategy and prospectus.
- Build on the strategic location attributes following the opening of the Bruce Highway extension to attract new investment to the region.
- Reviewing and prioritising the recommendations of the *Development Feasibility and Incentives in the Gympie Region* report, to help address housing supply and diversification needs.
- Collaborating with the Queensland Government to complete the business case and master planning for the Curra Industry Investigation Area identified in the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Plan to support its implementation as a State Development Area to attract new businesses to the region capitalising upon the available road and rail infrastructure.
- Encouraging investment and innovation in advanced manufacturing in the Gympie region.
- Investigating and quantifying the Gympie region's stock of quality agricultural land to be retained and protected for commercially viable agricultural activities.
- Promoting opportunities for agricultural industry investment to establish the Gympie region as a leader in food production.
- Advocating for continued investment in the Gympie region's forestry and timber sector.
- Investigating the business case for a forestry and agribusiness processing and distribution centre in the Gympie region.
- Engaging with the renewable energy sector, the Queensland Government and key agencies to promote the Gympie region's suitability as a location for renewables.
- Developing a strategy to encourage 'green' industries such as bio-based product manufacturers and resource recovery businesses to establish and grow in the region.
- Reviewing and updating the Gympie Region Tourism Strategy 2019-2024.
- Identifying suitable sites for new hotel, recreational vehicle (RV) and caravanning/camping across the Gympie region.

Pillar 1 contains 13 individual actions, each with the nominated lead implementation department or agency, partner organisations and indicative timing described as follows. Page 12

Pillar 1: Strategic Investment

Attract investment and innovation in a diversity of established and emerging industries

Action		Council Department(s)	Lead Agency/Dept	Partners	Timing
1.1	Secure resourcing to develop and deliver the <i>Invest Gympie Region</i> investment attraction strategy and prospectus to promote the region's key industries and investment priorities to prospective investors and key Government agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development o People and Culture o Finance o CEO's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. Trade, Employment & Training o Qld Treasury o Economic Development Qld o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning o RDA Wide Bay Burnett o Austrade 	Year 1
1.2	Review and prioritise the recommendations of the <i>Development Feasibility and Incentives in the Gympie Region</i> report, to facilitate investment and development which works towards addressing the region's housing supply and diversification needs as well as opportunities for new commercial and industrial development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Planning o Community Services o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning o RDA Wide Bay Burnett o Qld Govt. Dept. Housing and Public Works 	Year 1
1.3	Confirm strategic commercial/industrial land areas (including the Curra investigation area) for consideration and inclusion in Council's new Planning Scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Planning o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning o Qld Govt. Dept. Transport and Main Roads; o Economic Development Queensland 	Year 1
1.4	Review the Gympie Region Tourism Strategy 2019-2024 and update with prioritised and resourced initiatives for short to medium-term implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tourism and Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tourism and Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Visit Sunshine Coast o Tourism Events Qld 	Year 1
1.5	Seek support from the State Government to investigate and quantify the Gympie region's stock of quality agricultural land to be preserved and protected for commercially viable agricultural activities, including the future viability of block sizes and the types of crops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Planning o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Planning o Qld Govt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt Dept. Primary Industries 	Year 1 / 2
1.6	Engage with the renewable energy sector, the Queensland Government and key agencies to promote the Gympie region's suitability as a location for renewables and associated industry support services, including identifying suitable land / development sites, whilst preserving land for future agricultural use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development o Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt Dept. Treasury o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning o RDA Wide Bay Burnett o Australian Renewable Energy Agency 	Year 2

Pillar 1: Strategic Investment

Attract investment and innovation in a diversity of established and emerging industries

Action		Council Department(s)	Lead Agency/Dept	Partners	Timing
1.7	1.7.1 Strategic review of current regional Saleyards and Gympie Aerodrome. 1.7.2 Investment attraction subject to the outcomes of 1.7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development o Commercial Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commercial Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o RDA Wide Bay Burnett o Qld Govt. Dept. Primary Industries o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning 	Years 1-2
1.8	Advocate for continued investment and innovation in the Gympie region's forestry and timber sector by promoting the research programs, projects and priorities of the South and Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o South & Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub o Timber Queensland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. Primary Industries o RDA Wide Bay Burnett 	Year 2
1.9	Identify suitable sites (including those not owned by Council) for new hotel (4/5 star rating), recreational vehicle and caravanning / camping across the Gympie region as the basis to engage investors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tourism and Destination Development o Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tourism and Destination Development o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commercial Real Estate Agencies 	Year 2
1.10	Promote opportunities for agricultural and food industry investment that promotes sustainability, reduces environmental impacts, drives innovation and new product development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Food & Agribusiness Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Food and Agribusiness Network o Qld Govt. Dept. Primary Industries o RDA Wide Bay Burnett 	Year 2
1.11	Encourage investment and innovation in advanced manufacturing in the Gympie region by connecting manufacturers with the business investment and support services offered by the Queensland Government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development o Commonwealth Govt. Dept. AusIndustry 	Year 2
1.12	Collaborate with government and industry stakeholders to develop a strategy to encourage 'green' industries such as bio-based product manufacturers and resource recovery businesses to establish and grow in the Gympie region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development o Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning o RDA Wide Bay Burnett 	Year 3
1.13	In collaboration with the State Government, investigate the business case, including project concept and site options, for a forestry and agribusiness processing and distribution centre in the Gympie region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development o Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt o South & Central Queensland Regional Forestry Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. Primary Industries o Qld Govt. Dept. Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning 	Year 4

Pillar 2: Local Businesses



Pillar 2: Local Businesses: encourage the diversity of the Gympie region's businesses to prosper

A defining feature of the Gympie region is its diversity of small to medium sized enterprises. Of the region's 4,965 businesses, approximately two-thirds (63%) are non-employing businesses and another 25% have between 1 and 4 employees. This is indicative of a large number of micro and home-based businesses distributed throughout the region.

Equally, if not more important than attracting new business investment from outside the region, are initiatives to help build the Gympie region's business and employment base from within. Supporting small-to-medium sized enterprises to grow and prosper is key to ensuring that there are opportunities for the region's resident workforce to work close to home.

As a Small Business Friendly Council, Gympie Regional Council embraces an 'open-for-business' approach in its efforts to support local entrepreneurship and innovation, to facilitate new businesses investment and support business expansion, consistent with the vision for strong and competitive businesses underpinning a diverse and robust regional economy.

Recognising that it is often a first point of contact for prospective new businesses as well as existing businesses looking for information on enterprise support services or opportunities to expand, Council embraces the important role it has to play in facilitating the delivery of information to help promote business development throughout the Gympie region.

The desired outcomes and actions presented in this strategy provide Gympie Regional Council with a framework to instil and promote, both within the organisation and externally, a pro-active approach to helping local businesses to establish and grow. To this end, the business support commitments as articulated in the Small Business Friendly Charter, and the actions presented in this Economic Development Strategy, are designed to support the Gympie region's diversity of businesses to prosper.

Gympie Regional Council, through its economic development support functions, will embark on a number of key initiatives as set out in this strategy to encourage the region's diversity of businesses to prosper. The action plan that follows addresses a suite of initiatives focussed on:

- Engaging with business chambers and industry groups to promote and progress the work of Council as part of its Small Business Friendly Charter.
- Encouraging the region's residents and businesses to buy local.
- Build on the region's growing boutique retail sector to further new investment, visitation and spend including from outside of the region.
- Promoting information on business grant opportunities and support services that businesses can access via State and Federal Government programs.
- Promoting access to Council's demographic, economic and workforce data to support the information needs of the region's businesses.
- Exploring networking events and other opportunities to support the region's key industries and sub-sectors including the bioeconomy sector, the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector and others.
- Exploring emerging bioeconomy industry opportunities, including investigation of a biohub or other related projects.
- Connecting the region's First Nations businesses with government programs designed to build Indigenous business capacity and capabilities.
- Engaging with State Government, business chambers and major project proponents to identify local business supply chain opportunities.
- Facilitating local business connections with Queensland Government procurement opportunities leading up to the 2032 Olympic Games and Paralympics.
- Encouraging waste management and economic development by promoting circular economy principles and practices through business engagement and information provision.

Pillar 2 contains 12 individual actions, each with the nominated lead implementation department or agency, partner organisations and indicative timing described as follows.

Pillar 2: Local Businesses

Encourage the diversity of the Gympie Region's businesses to prosper

Action		Council Department(s)	Lead Agency/Dept	Partners	Timing
2.1	Secure additional resources to further support local businesses and to enhance the delivery of the Small Business Friendly program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Office of the Small Business Commissioner 	Year 1
2.2	As part of the Small Business Friendly program, engage with business chambers, government agencies and industry groups to promote a program of networking functions, events, manufacturing forums, workshops, business grant and support opportunities and information sessions that meet the needs of the Gympie region's businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development o People and Culture o Finance o CEO's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Office of the Small Business Commissioner o Chambers of Commerce and Industry Groups o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure and Planning o Food and Agribusiness Network 	Year 1
2.3	Prepare a new waste strategy that will encourage circular economy and sustainable waste management practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Environment & Resource Recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Environment & Resource Recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Government Departments o Chambers of Commerce o Regional Industry 	Year 1
2.4	Deliver the Gympie Bioeconomy Forum and explore opportunities to grow the region's bioeconomy sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development o Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning o RDA Wide Bay Burnett o Regional Industry 	Years 1-5
2.5	Deliver the Gympie Region Manufacturing and Engineering Forum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Qld Govt. Dept. Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development o Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning o RDA Wide Bay Burnett o Commonwealth Govt. Dept. AusIndustry o Regional Industry 	Years 1-5
2.6	Launch and promote the Gympie Region Business Capability Directory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Chambers of Commerce and Industry Groups 	Year 1
2.7	Promote information on business grant opportunities and support services that businesses, including Indigenous businesses, can access via State and Federal Government programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Chambers of Commerce and Industry Groups o RDA Wide Bay Burnett o Commonwealth and Qld. Govt. Depts. 	Years 1-5

Pillar 2: Local Businesses

Encourage the diversity of the Gympie Region's businesses to prosper

Action	Council Department(s)	Lead Agency/Dept	Partners	Timing
2.8 Promote access to Council's demographic, economic and workforce data available through the Gympie Region Economic Health Check to assist in meeting the information needs of the region's businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers of Commerce Industry Groups Commonwealth and Qld Govt. Depts 	Year 2
2.9 Engage with State Government, business chambers and major project proponents including Queensland Hydro, Equis and Forest Wind to identify local business supply chain opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qld Govt. Dept. Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning Chambers of Commerce 	Year 2
2.10 Facilitate local business connections with Queensland Government procurement opportunities leading up to the 2032 Olympic Games and Paralympics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qld Govt. Dept. Trade, Employment and Training Qld Govt. Dept. Customer Services, Open Data and Small and Family Business Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority 	Year 1-5
2.11 Secure resources to implement and promote the Gympie region's businesses and local spend through the design and delivery of a local purchasing gift card program in partnership with the <i>why leave town</i> initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers of Commerce Trader Associations 	Year 2/3
2.12 Encourage sustainable waste management and economic development by promoting circular economy principles and practices through business engagement and information provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment & Resource Recovery Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qld Govt. Dept. Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation Qld Govt. Dept. Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure & Planning RDA Wide Bay Burnett 	Year 4

Pillar 3: Local Workforce





Pillar 3: Local Workforce: promote a skilled and adaptable workforce to thrive in the Gympie region

Key to the development of competitive businesses and strong industries in the Gympie region is a capable workforce that is equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of businesses so that they can thrive in an evolving economic environment. The Gympie region, at present, has a 'tight' labour market and this will be compounded by the impact of planned and emerging major projects, in turn impacting small businesses, as workers potentially move to the more lucrative opportunities. Housing availability, affordability and diversity is also a barrier to retaining workers as well as attracting new workers to the region.

Access to skilled labour is influenced by the availability of education and training, levels of workforce participation and the mobility and flexibility of labour. The Gympie region's existing and emerging workforce requires access to education and training services and facilities with the programs and the infrastructure in place to support their employment aspirations and the requirements of business and industry.

With major project developments taking place in the Gympie region and surrounding areas, such as the Borumba Pumped Hydro, Woolooga Battery Energy Storage System and Forest Wind projects, workforce development is as much a housing and liveability issue as it is an education and training one, with a lack of housing diversity potentially constraining the region's capacity to attract workers that are needed to run businesses and grow the economy.

Gympie Regional Council is pro-active in its commitment to promoting local jobs for the resident workforce. It will continue to liaise with business and industry, representative organisations, business chambers, trader associations and peak industry bodies, as well as the region's education and training providers to network ideas and articulate workforce planning priorities that need to be addressed.

A collaborative approach will be pursued to determine the Gympie region's workforce planning and development priorities. Direct involvement from businesses will be encouraged so that the region's current and aspiring workforce can be provided with opportunities for learning and for on-the-job training that will translate into sustainable career pathways in a diversity of existing and emerging new industries.

Gympie Regional Council will embark on a number of key initiatives as set out in this strategy to support workforce planning and development. The action plan that follows addresses a suite of initiatives focussed on:

- Identifying the priority workforce needs across the Gympie region's strategic industries through the development of a *Gympie Region Jobs Plan*.
- Facilitating connections between the region's schools, tertiary education and training providers and major project proponents to prioritise workforce training needs and opportunities including work placements.
- Working with major project proponents to investigate housing needs, constraints, opportunities and options for key worker accommodation.
- Working with TAFE Queensland, UniSC and registered training organisations to identify and offer school-based apprenticeship placements and placements for university students across Gympie Regional Council's departments.
- Assisting industry, schools, education and training providers and key agencies in exploring the delivery of careers expos in the Gympie region.
- Identifying projects which qualify for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work pre-employment program, to develop local work-readiness skills for the Gympie region's youth and unemployed.
- Promoting the Gympie region as a work-life location for skilled trades, professionals and employees where skills gaps exist.

Pillar 3 contains 7 individual actions, each with the nominated lead implementation department or agency, partner organisations and indicative timing described as follows.

Pillar 3: Local Workforce

Promote a skilled and adaptable workforce to thrive in the Gympie Region

Action	Council's Department(s)	Lead Agency/Dept	Partners	Timing
3.1 Identify priority workforce needs across the Gympie region's strategic industries through the development of a <i>Gympie Region Jobs Plan</i> highlighting education and training priorities to be advocated for, including promoting the regions lifestyle and liveability to attract employees where skills gaps exist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce Australia ○ Qld Govt. Dept. Trade, Employment and Training ○ RDA Wide Bay Burnett 	Year 1
3.2 Facilitate connections between the region's schools, tertiary education and training providers and major project proponents such as Queensland Hydro (Borumba Pumped Hydro Project), Equis (Woolooga Battery Energy Storage System) and Forest Wind (Forest Wind Wind Farm), to prioritise workforce training needs and opportunities including work placements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce Australia ○ Industry Skills Bodies ○ Qld Govt. Dept. Trade, Employment and Training ○ Major project proponents 	Year 1
3.3 Work with TAFE Queensland Gympie Campus, UniSC and registered training organisations (RTOs) to identify and offer school-based apprenticeship placements and placements for university students across Gympie Regional Council's departments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People & Culture ○ Community Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ People and Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TAFE Queensland ○ UniSC ○ RTOs 	Year 1
3.4 Assist industry, schools, education and training providers and key agencies in exploring the delivery of careers expos in the Gympie region, to promote opportunities for employers to showcase their training and career opportunities to the region's youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce Australia ○ Gympie Chamber of Commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RDA Wide Bay Burnett ○ Schools ○ TAFE Queensland ○ UniSC 	Year 1+
3.5 Identify projects which qualify for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) pre-employment program, to develop local work-readiness skills for the Gympie region's youth and unemployed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development ○ Infrastructure Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Queensland Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Qld Govt. Dept. Trade, Employment and Training ○ Commonwealth Govt. 	Year 1+
3.6 Work with major project proponents to investigate housing needs, constraints, opportunities and options for worker accommodation in the Gympie region and develop an action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development ○ Community Services ○ Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Queensland Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Qld Govt. Dept. Housing and Public Works ○ Qld Govt. Dept. State Development, Infrastructure and Planning ○ Major project proponents 	Year 2
3.7 Promote the Gympie region as a work-life location for professionals including, for example, skilled health and aged care professionals (allied health care specialists, General Practitioners and support staff).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Queensland Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Qld Govt. Dept. Trade, Employment and Training ○ Qld Health 	Year 3

Pillar 4: Prosperous Places





Pillar 4: Prosperous Places: nurture the Gympie region's appeal as a place in which to live, learn and prosper

The Gympie region's population will underpin the region's continued economic development and community wellbeing. People (and investment) will be attracted to a region where the lifestyle offer is appealing.

Gympie Regional Council recognises the important role it has to play through its planning, regulatory, place-making and management functions to enhance the region's lifestyle appeal, and it encourages business and industry to play its part through re-investment back into the local community.

Council maintains and promotes a regulatory and land use planning framework that is framed to ensure that adequate land is available for commercial and industrial development as well as for other essential economic activity. It directly invests in a sense of place and the functioning of its urban centres and localities through master planning, development control, streetscape enhancement, place activation for all age and abilities demographics and various urban improvement programs.

Council's commitment to place-making recognises the importance of place, not only to the region's residents, but also to visitors who are seeking immersive, authentic, cultural and educational experiences that are unique to the places they visit.

Gympie Regional Council is committed to maintaining a standard of infrastructure and services that supports and enhances the liveability of all communities throughout the region. This includes advocating, planning for and investing in essential transport and communications infrastructure, recreation, leisure and entertainment facilities, arts and cultural facilities and community services and facilities.

By investing in and advocating for the region's critical enabling infrastructure and services, and through its direct investment in place, Gympie Regional Council is pro-actively working to enhance the region's appeal as a location in which to live, learn and prosper.

Gympie Regional Council will embark on a number of key initiatives as set out in this strategy to play its role in nurturing the Gympie region's appeal as a place in which to live, learn and prosper. The action plan that follows addresses a suite of initiatives focussed on:

- Assessing the Gympie region's priority infrastructure projects, to inform regularly updated, targeted and tailored advocacy documents.
- Resourcing and delivering events that stimulate economic outcomes and visitation throughout the Gympie region.
- Collaborating with Chambers of Commerce in the planning and delivery of an activation program to drive economic outcomes across the region.
- Promoting Council's regulatory and promotional support for mobile food vans and temporary events.
- Encouraging night-time activation in the Gympie CBD.
- Investigating and prioritising the Gympie region's State road infrastructure shortfalls, to lobby for improvements.
- Identifying funding opportunities to add more EV fast chargers in the Gympie region.
- Working with NBN Co. and telecommunications service providers in the delivery of digital capability awareness sessions for the region's businesses and communities.
- Progressing implementation of the Gympie Region Arts and Cultural Strategy 2023-2028.
- Progressing implementation of the priority initiatives of the Gympie Region RV Strategy.
- Progressing key feasibility studies and other planning work to inform advocacy priorities for recreational trails infrastructure funding support.
- Identifying opportunities for Gympie Region's role in the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics.

Pillar 4 contains 12 individual actions, each with the nominated lead implementation department or agency, partner organisations and indicative timing described as follows.

Pillar 4: Prosperous Places

Nurture the Gympie Region's appeal as a place in which to live, learn and prosper

Action	Council's Department(s)	Lead Agency/Dept	Partners	Timing	
4.1	Research, monitor and assess the Gympie region's priority infrastructure projects, to inform regularly updated, targeted and tailored advocacy documents for presentation to the State and Federal governments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office of the CEO ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office of the CEO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional Leadership Network - WBB ○ Wide Bay Burnett ROC ○ RDA Wide Bay Burnett 	Year 1
4.2	Resources are applied to beneficial events in terms of economic outcomes and visitation, in line with Council's Destination Events Guidelines and Events Framework (which is under development).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tourism and Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tourism and Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Festival and event organisers ○ Visit Sunshine Coast ○ Tourism and Events Queensland 	Year 1
4.3	Progress implementation of the Gympie Region Arts and Cultural Strategy 2023-2028, reviewing and prioritising strategic initiatives annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Services ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arts and creative industries stakeholders ○ Arts Queensland 	Years 1-5
4.4	Promote Council's regulatory and promotional support for temporary events and complimentary food vans which provide services not offered by existing businesses to help activate spaces and support prosperous places throughout the Gympie region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development ○ Compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chambers of Commerce ○ Trader Groups 	Year 1 / 2
4.5	Secure resources to capacity build and collaborate with Chambers of Commerce in the planning and delivery of an activation program to drive economic outcomes across the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Urban Design ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Urban Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chambers of Commerce 	Year 2
4.6	Progress and promote priority initiatives of the Gympie Region Recreational Vehicle Strategy to promote the Gympie region as an RV-friendly place to visit and explore.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning ○ Tourism and Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning ○ Tourism and Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visit Sunshine Coast ○ Chambers of Commerce ○ Caravanning Queensland 	Year 2
4.7	Collaborate with NBN Co. and telecommunications service providers in the delivery of digital capability awareness sessions for the region's businesses and communities, to ensure connectivity capabilities available throughout the Gympie region are fully understood and utilised.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development ○ Community Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NBN Co. ○ Telecommunications service providers 	Year 2

Pillar 4: Prosperous Places

Nurture the Gympie Region's appeal as a place in which to live, learn and prosper

Action		Council's Department(s)	Lead Agency/Dept	Partners	Timing
4.8	Secure resourcing to identify the opportunities and articulate the Gympie Region's role in the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the CEO Economic Development Tourism and Destination Development Infrastructure Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of the CEO Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qld Govt. Dept. Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority 	Year 1 / 2
4.9	Explore funding opportunities to improve the commercial viability of EV charging stations and to add more public EV fast chargers in the Gympie region as part of the State's Electric Super Highway charging network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development Tourism and Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Queensland Qld Govt. Dept. Transport and Main Roads 	Year 2 +
4.10	Investigate and prioritise the Gympie region's State road infrastructure shortfalls and lobby for improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Services Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qld Govt. Dept. Transport and Main Roads 	Year 3
4.11	Encourage night-time activation in the Gympie CBD through investment in art and cultural installations, events spaces and physically connected food and entertainment experiences including outdoor dining.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Design Arts, Community & Culture Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gympie Chamber of Commerce 	Year 3 / 4
4.12	Progress key feasibility studies and other planning work to inform advocacy priorities for recreational trails infrastructure funding support in the Gympie region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Sustainability Tourism & Destination Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qld Govt. Dept. Transport and Main Roads Queensland Tourism Industry Council Tourism Forum Group RDA Wide Bay Burnett Visit Sunshine Coast 	Year 3 / 4

8. Strategy Targets, Monitoring and Evaluation

Measuring and Monitoring Strategy Outcomes

The recommendations presented in this five-year strategy have been developed with reference to the overarching aspirations for the Gympie region economy, consideration of the region's economic status as well as broader economic trends, impacts and influences in an evolving economic landscape.

As a whole-of-Council strategy that has been prepared in the context of Gympie Regional Council's broader program of work and strategic objectives, *Growing the Gympie Region* will be implemented in line with determined priorities as well as the availability of resources and the capacity of Council to progress the initiatives identified.

Aligned with Council's Corporate Plan and the community's vision for the future, the strategy's implementation progress and identified priorities will be used to inform ongoing operational planning, budget allocation and delivery.

Some of the strategy actions seek to build on or continue initiatives already in place, some are already resourced while others require additional resourcing (depending on implementation priorities).

To ensure it is working effectively in collaboration with its partners towards addressing the Gympie region's economic development strategy objectives and the community's vision for the future, Council will continually monitor, assess and report on the implementation of the actions and the achievement of key milestones.

Means of monitoring and evaluating implementation progress will include the use of both 'output' measures related directly to the recommended actions and their implementation as well as some broader 'outcome' metrics.

Key Performance Measures

Strategic planning **outcome metrics**, which will be monitored and measured using authoritative data sources to track the Gympie region's economic development, include the following:

- Population growth (as measured by population and housing growth rates).
- Employment creation (an increase in local jobs).
- An increase in employment self-sufficiency (more local jobs for the Gympie region's resident workers).
- Higher levels of workforce participation and employment (as measured by labour force participation and employment / unemployment rates).
- New businesses (as measured by the net change in local business registrations).
- Increased construction activity (as measured by building approvals data).
- Greater economic diversity (as measured by industry diversity indices).
- Economic activity and productivity (as measured by increases in GRP value per capita).
- Tourism activity (as measured by growing visitor numbers, expenditure and yield/value).

Output measures that will be used to monitor progress on set tasks include:

- Tracking progress of actions contained in this strategy - implementation rates (ongoing).
- Success in attracting, retaining and assisting businesses as well as supporting business start-ups, captured through targeted business and industry engagement (ongoing).
- Business confidence and community satisfaction surveys on Council's approach to promoting and supporting economic development in line with this strategy.

Growing the Gympie Region will be reviewed annually to ensure that implementation priorities reflect the key challenges and opportunities of the day. The progress of the strategy's implementation will be used to inform ongoing operational planning, budget allocation and delivery. Progress in delivering the strategy will be reported to council six monthly from approval.



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