



Mareeba Splash Park



Water tank murals, Bibohra



Jum Rum Creek walkway, Kuranda

# Community Outcomes Report

**2019-2023**



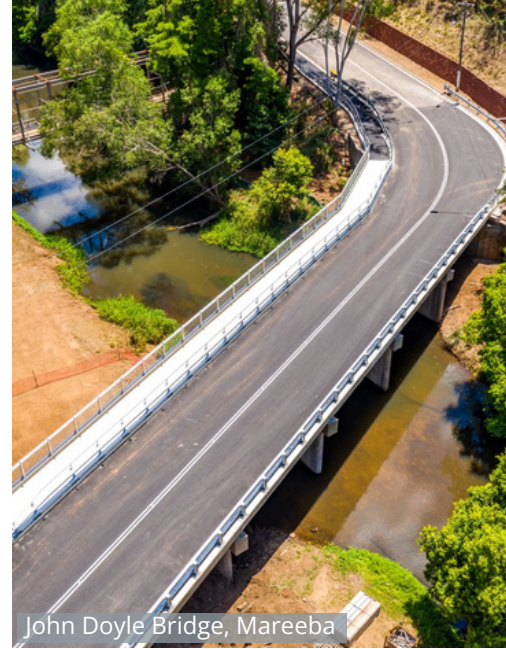
**Mareeba**  
SHIRE COUNCIL



Tennis court lighting, Koah



Anzac Park, Mareeba



John Doyle Bridge, Mareeba



Solar panel installation, Kuranda Aquatic Centre



Great Wheelbarrow Race



Tennis court mural, Speewah



Wolfram Road, Dimbulah



Water reservoir, Chillagoe

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Mareeba Library Mural 2022

## FROM THE MAYOR



As Mayor of Mareeba Shire since March 2020, it gives me great pleasure to present the Community Outcomes report from July 2019 to June 2023.

This report outlines how Council has been guided by the strategic priorities of financial sustainability, community, transport and Council infrastructure, economy and environment and governance, to achieve Council's mission to "provide cost-effective services, foster collaborative partnerships and maintain accountable governance to promote the prosperity and liveability of the Shire".

This period was a challenging time with the impacts of COVID-19 effecting Council's operations with interruptions to the supply chain, rising costs of goods and services, as well as new rules for social distancing and community events. Council adapted to deliver essential services to the community during the pandemic.

Despite these challenges, Mareeba Shire has achieved significant outcomes for the community. Some of the highlights include delivering balanced budgets, the opening of the Cedric Davies Community Hub and the Tom Gilmore Aviation Precinct, the implementation of the Parks and Open Spaces strategy and action plan and advocacy for issues important to the Shire around safety, roads and health.

Council also initiated the Mareeba Shire Water Strategy to upgrade and repair ageing water infrastructure to cater for current and future needs.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Councillors who have worked hard to help deliver our successful endeavours, with a special thank you to our previous Mayor, Tom Gilmore, whose dedication and insights helped shape some of the projects that were achieved in this period. I would also like to recognise Council's Chief Executive Officer Peter Franks, who has guided Council throughout this period.

The staff at Council have shown dedication and diligence at every level of this organisation which has been a major contribution to delivering the positive outcomes in this report.



**2016-19:** Cr Mary Graham, Cr Lenore Wyatt, Cr Alan Pedersen (Deputy Mayor), Cr Tom Gilmore (Mayor), Cr Nipper Brown, Cr Kevin Davies and Cr Angela Toppin



**2020-current:** Cr Danny Bird, Cr Lenore Wyatt, Cr Locky Bensted, Cr Angela Toppin (Mayor), Cr Kevin Davies (Deputy Mayor), Cr Mario Mlikota and Cr Mary Graham

# A GROWING, CONFIDENT AND SUSTAINABLE SHIRE

## Mareeba Shire's economic position is strong.

This has been reinforced by its diverse industry base, growth in the agriculture sector and increased employment in the public administration and safety industries.

Gross Regional Product has remained stable since 2019 at between **\$1.16 million** and **\$1.18m**.

Outside the Shire's cornerstone industries, there have been increases in businesses across the construction and professional, scientific and technical services industries over the past four years.

Mareeba Shire, as of June 2022, has an estimated resident population of 23,367 – an additional 686 new residents since 2019.

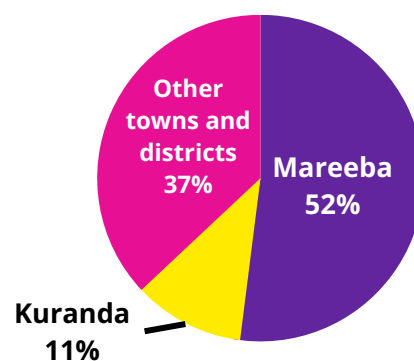
Fifty-two per cent of the Shire's population reside in Mareeba, 11 per cent in Kuranda and just over 8,500 people live in the many small, rural and remote communities across the Shire.

More than 14 per cent of residents identify as either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

In 2021, 50.8 per cent of Mareeba Shire residents were participating in the workforce and the unemployment rate in June 2019 was 7.6 per cent, decreasing to 6.2 per cent in March 2023.

Local workers employment by industry (in %):

- 18.2 - Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- 11.4 - Health care and social assistance
- 10.1 - Public administration and safety



Population distribution in Mareeba Shire

More than 51 per cent of the local workers in the Mareeba Shire (all industries) are male and 48.9 per cent are female.

Mareeba Shire's population structure has changed over the period with a lower number of children (under 18) and a higher proportion of persons aged 60 or older.

## Affordable Land and Housing

There is a good supply of land in the Mareeba Shire zoned for residential, commercial and industrial uses.

The average house price in Mareeba, in the period to December 2022, increased by 14.5 per cent - well above the 6.8 per cent increase to the average house price for Regional Queensland.

The average cost to rent a house in Mareeba over the same period was **\$385** per week and **\$315** per week to rent a unit.

This is significantly lower than the Regional Queensland average rent of **\$500** per week for a house and **\$420** per week for a unit.

Source: PropTrack (REA group housing listings, updated twice annually). Calculated and presented by .id (informed decisions).

**1 July 2019 to 30 June 2023**

**1,520**

Number of building approvals

**2.93%**

Growth of rateable properties

**\$220,739,519**

Total value of building approvals

## Mareeba Shire Population Change

| Age Group                                      | 2016          |                 | 2021          |                 | Change 2016 to 2021 |
|--|---------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
|  | Number        | % of total pop. | Number        | % of total pop. |                     |
| Babies and pre-schoolers (0 to 4)              | 1,064         | 4.9             | 1,116         | 4.9             | +52                 |
| Primary schoolers (5 to 11)                    | 1,951         | 9.0             | 1,864         | 8.2             | -87                 |
| Secondary schoolers (12 to 17)                 | 1,685         | 7.8             | 1,691         | 7.4             | +6                  |
| Tertiary education and independence (18 to 24) | 1,525         | 7.1             | 1,532         | 6.7             | +7                  |
| Young workforce (25 to 34)                     | 2,339         | 10.8            | 2,853         | 12.5            | +514                |
| Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49)            | 4,202         | 19.5            | 4,199         | 18.4            | -3                  |
| Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59)      | 3,139         | 14.6            | 3,277         | 14.3            | +138                |
| Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69)          | 2,856         | 13.2            | 3,093         | 13.5            | +237                |
| Seniors (70 to 84)                             | 2,421         | 11.2            | 2,767         | 12.1            | +346                |
| Elderly aged (85 and over)                     | 379           | 1.8             | 470           | 2.1             | +91                 |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>21,561</b> | <b>100</b>      | <b>22,862</b> | <b>100</b>      | <b>+1,301</b>       |

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021, Labour force survey catalogue number 6202.0 and Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021 (Enumerated). National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2022. ©2023. Department of Employment, Small Area Labour Markets. Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id (informed decisions).

# CORPORATE PLAN 2021-2025

## Our Vision

A growing, confident and sustainable Shire.

## Our Mission

Provide cost-effective services, foster collaborative partnerships and maintain accountable governance to promote the prosperity and liveability of the Shire.

## Our Strategic Priorities

### Financial Sustainability

Provide cost-effective services, foster collaborative partnerships and maintain accountable governance to promote the prosperity and liveability of the Shire.

### Community

An informed and engaged community which supports and encourages effective partnerships to enhance the liveability of the Shire.

### Transport and Council Infrastructure

The provision of quality services and infrastructure for our growing community that is planned and managed using sound asset management principles.

### Economy and Environment

A resilient economy that promotes and supports the Shire's natural assets and local industry and encourages investment while preserving and future proofing for generations to come.

### Governance

Sound decision making based on effective frameworks and clear strategic direction to achieve regulatory compliance while delivering affordable levels of identified services within the Shire.

## Our Values

**Sustainable**

**United Team**

**Customer Focused**

**Community Partnerships**

**Ethical Conduct**

**Striving to be better**

**Skilled Workforce**

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

## Cultural

For more than two decades the Mareeba Multicultural Festival has celebrated the Shire's rich multiculturalism and features non-stop entertainment and incredible food.

The annual one-day event each August includes dance and music by hundreds of performers from different ethnic groups and more than 20 food stalls that provide opportunities to experience many different cuisines.

The festival, with support from local businesses, Council and the Queensland Government, continues to grow and attracts thousands of visitors to the Shire each year.

The Mareeba Multicultural Festival committee comprises of ten community members and is chaired by Councillor Mary Graham. This event is truly community supported and led.



Mareeba Multicultural Festival 2022

## Heritage

Mareeba Shire Council hosts the annual Great Wheelbarrow Race each May - a tribute to those early pioneers, honouring their amazing trail-blazing feats.

It is one of the region's most iconic events and in 2023 the race celebrated its twentieth anniversary.

In 2022, after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the race again pounded the roads between Mareeba and Chillagoe. Since 2007 the race has fundraised more than **\$2.5 million**.



Great Wheelbarrow Race 2022



## **Innovation**

Council proudly sponsors the biennial FNQ Rotary Field Days - the largest field days event in Northern Australia.

Exhibitors from across Queensland and interstate descend onto the Mareeba Rodeo Grounds to showcase their products ranging from tractors, farming equipment, cattle and everything in between.

The three-day event is a significant driver for the local economy and a social gathering opportunity for many.

The money raised from this event goes back into the local communities and is distributed to many charities and organisations across the region.

## **Festival + Music + Camping**

The annual Savannah in the Round is Mareeba's own one-of-a-kind music festival.

The destination music and camping festival features acclaimed Australian and International music acts and attracts thousands of visitors to Mareeba Shire each year.

Local retailers have compared the week of Savannah in the Round to the week of Christmas in terms of trade.

In fact, several Mareeba businesses experienced their largest ever single day of trade during the 2022 festival period.

## **Winter Festivals**

The Shire's townships come alive with music, markets and art during the winter months.

The Irvinebank Festival (formerly John Moffat Weekend) sees an influx of visitors for two fun-filled days of music and family activities.

The funds raised during the festival support the restoration of the town's historic buildings.

The Chillagoe Festival is a celebration of the town's outback culture and heritage.

The day-long festival features local and national musicians, a street parade and markets.

Local artists also display their talents in a photography and artwork exhibition in the Chillagoe Town Hall.

The Kuranda Roots Festival is Australia's longest running reggae, roots and culture event.

Held at the base of the breathtaking Emerald Creek Falls, the 2023 festival saw Australia's number one reggae crew The Strides headline the main stage.

# FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

**A financially sustainable Council delivering affordable services and maintaining and renewing the community's assets, all of which contribute to the liveability and economic growth of the Shire.**

Mareeba Shire Council focusses on achieving financial sustainability and balancing what can be afforded with delivering what is most important to the community.

Mareeba Shire Exceeds Queensland Government Targets for Financial Sustainability.

All Councils report on three measures to assess financial sustainability. Council's ratios are assessed annually by the independent Queensland Audit Office.

|  | 30 June 2019 | 30 June 2020 | 30 June 2021 | 30 June 2022 | 30 June 2023 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Operating Surplus Ratio *<br>Target between 0% - 10%           | 15%          | 12%          | 14%          | 15%          | 17%          |
| Asset Sustainability Ratio **<br>Target greater than 90%       | 129%         | 129%         | 161%         | 176%         | 111%         |
| Net Financial Liability Ratio #<br>Target not greater than 60% | -72%         | -79%         | -89%         | -102%        | -107%        |

\* Indicates the extent to which revenue raised covers operational expenses only or are available for capital funding. The higher the ratio the better.

\*\*Indicates the extent to which the assets are being replaced as they reach end of useful life. The higher the ratio the better.

# Indicates the extent to which the net financial liabilities of a Council can be serviced by its operating revenues. A ratio < zero (negative) indicates the current assets exceed total liabilities. A lower or negative percentage demonstrates a stronger position.

## Balanced Budgets

Council has delivered balanced budgets and a very modest surplus in the General Fund (which covers the vast majority of Council's operations other than the utilities) after **fully funding depreciation**.

Funding depreciation, in local government terms, is critical as it provides the necessary money to rehabilitate community assets such as roads, bridges, swimming pools and footpaths.

## Asset Management

Council has in place an asset management plan whereby Council is spending an average of **\$15.3 million** each year on renewing capital assets.

This investment is fully funded by state and federal government grants and/or Council's own money, ensuring assets are managed well to avoid costly future replacements and unforeseen expenses.

## Government Assistance

Council takes a strategic approach to applying for state and federal government grants for infrastructure and community projects.

More than **\$62 million** in operating grants, subsidies and contributions have been injected into the Shire between 2019 and 2023 which has allowed capital projects, community festivals and other activities to go ahead.

Many of these would not have been possible without government grants from the Australian and Queensland Governments.

Examples of grants secured:

- **\$3.2 million** from the Queensland Government - Works for Queensland - Multiple projects.
- **\$2.5 million** from the Queensland Government - COVID-19 Works for Queensland - Multiple projects.
- **\$2.29 million** from the Australian Government - Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program - Asbestos cement (AC) water main replacement program.
- **\$2 million** jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments - Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund - Bicentennial Lakes trunk sewer main upgrade.
- **\$2 million** from the Queensland Government - Building our Regions Program - Mareeba Water Treatment Plant filtration system upgrade.

## Financial Performance

Council has received successive unqualified audits by the Queensland Audit Office.



# COMMUNITY

**Improving the Shire's liveability is a strategic priority for Council. This is achieved by promoting an informed and engaged community and encouraging effective partnerships.**

## Community Partnerships

Council understands that communities are best placed to lead local initiatives.

Council continues to develop existing and new partnerships with community groups and organisations.

This has resulted in significant positive benefits exceeding what may have been possible working alone.

Council's support for community events, festivals, sport and recreational activities, as well as arts and cultural and heritage projects totalled more than \$1.3 million during the reporting period.

In addition, through its Community Partnerships Program, Council has delivered rates rebates and remissions savings of more than **\$526,000** to more than 105 volunteer and not-for-profit community groups and clubs during the reporting period.

## Community Management

Agreements have been entered into for the management of Mount Molloy Memorial Hall, Geraghty Park Hall and the Dimbulah tennis courts.

These facilities join Mutchilba and Koah halls and the Mareeba Heritage Museum and Visitor Information Centre which are under successful community management.

Local community groups managing these facilities do so in a nimble way that responds to community needs and has seen an increase in their use.



Mt Molloy Memorial Hall Mural



Cedric Davies Community Hall

## Cedric Davies Community Hub

The development of the Cedric Davies Community Hub at the Mareeba Bowls Club precinct resulted in a number of positive outcomes. Not only was a new fit for purpose library established for the Mareeba community, it was at nil cost to ratepayers.

A large function space is now available for hire for a range of community functions and activities. In addition, the Mareeba Bowls Club now has a facility that is within their capacity to operate well into the future.

This project was funded by Queensland and Australian Government through a number of grants.

## Library Services

Council spends **\$8.15** on library services for every **\$100** in general rates.

The growth of the library's digital programming has seen an increase in a variety of services delivered at the Shire's most remote branches in Chillagoe and Dimbulah.

Digital workshops that were offered virtually throughout the library service include the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Reef Guardian Program and a series of digital skills building tutorials.

The demand for such services has increased significantly with ever-growing need for access to digital and online information, including e-government, continuing education and employment opportunities.



Mareeba Library



Bicentennial Lakes Community Engagement

## Engaged Communities

Council has engaged with the community on several major projects, plans and issues including:

- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Action Plan
- Bicentennial Lakes Revitalisation Project
- Dimbulah Playground and Pump Track Project
- Mareeba East Catchment Park Playground
- Mareeba Rail Trail Stage 1
- Anzac Park Mareeba Revitalisation
- Kuranda Walking Trails
- Byrnes Street Beautification
- Mareeba Water Splash Park
- Anzac Avenue Local Traffic Management Plan
- Mareeba and Kuranda Walking Network Plans
- Kuranda Infrastructure Master Plan 2022-2031

Other engagement activities include Mareeba Field Days, Mareeba Community Taskforce, Collaborating for Community Safety and Get Ready Week. Comprehensive community engagement plans were implemented for two significant projects - Anzac Avenue Precinct Local Traffic Management Plan and Bicentennial Lakes Revitalisation Project.

Council undertook a novel local area traffic management engagement process with residents living in Mareeba's Anzac Avenue precinct. The engagement included a resident survey, neighbourhood meetings and the formation of a resident working group.

This process involved residents identifying issues and developing solutions to traffic management issues in the precinct.

A robust community engagement plan was also implemented for Mareeba's Bicentennial Lakes Revitalisation Project.

This plan focussed on informing the community and identified stakeholders about the project.

It also focused on obtaining feedback from community on what facilities were important for the new active recreational space being developed.

### **Resilient Communities**

Community safety has been an issue of community concern throughout the reporting period resulting in Council establishing a Collaborating for Community Safety Working Group.

Working group meetings brought together stakeholders and responsible agencies to identify community safety issues, service gaps and collaborative community solutions and actions.

Advocacy actions undertaken by Council include:

- Submission to Queensland Government's Strengthening Community Safety Bill 2023.
- Motion at the Local Government Association of Queensland annual conference outlining Council's concern regarding levels and frequency of youth crime.
- Meeting with government ministers to discuss important community issues including housing, youth crime and domestic violence.

Council's Local Disaster Management Group also activated the Community Support Sub-Group in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This group met regularly throughout 2020, identifying issues, needs, gaps, vulnerable groups and supporting local agencies to respond.

### **Mareeba Community Taskforce**

Council and the Mareeba Chamber of Commerce established the Mareeba Community Taskforce in 2021.

The express aim of the taskforce was to continue to promote Mareeba's prosperity and wellbeing and unite the community in tackling the big issues of growing the economy, overcoming disadvantage and creating healthy, active communities.

A three-year action plan was prepared with community input which highlighted five big priorities requiring action for improvements:

1. Health services;
2. Transport connectivity;
3. Workforce attraction and retention;
4. Housing affordability; and
5. Community safety.

This meant a coordinated approach in tackling the big issues by bringing business, government and community together to identify solutions and to coordinate and implement local actions.



Mareeba Community Taskforce workshop 2022

It also ensured consistency when undertaking advocacy at all levels of government and industry.

A progress report was published May 2023 outlining more than 70 targeted actions and outcomes achieved by multiple agencies to grow the economy and overcome disadvantage.

## Vibrant, Healthy and Active Communities

Vibrant, healthy, and active communities are essential to the liveability of the Shire.

Council supports sporting, recreational, arts, cultural and heritage activities, as well as establishing, maintaining, and upgrading community assets.

### Arts and Culture

Council provided more than **\$186,000** for arts, cultural, history and heritage projects during the reporting period.

Council adopted the 2022-2025 Regional Arts Development Fund Program, contributing an average of **\$14,500** annually to arts, culture and heritage projects across the Shire.

Six new community members were appointed in 2022 to Council's Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) advisory committee.

Council's Public Art Mural Action Plan, also adopted in 2022, guides the creation of public art throughout the Shire.

It will deliver eleven mural projects over four years.

To date murals have been delivered in Biboohra, Kuranda, Mount Molloy and Mareeba that will contribute to a public art trail throughout the Shire.

Twenty-seven not-for-profit groups and 14 artists were supported with RADF grant funding delivering a wonderful variety of art, cultural and heritage outcomes for the community.

### Sport and Recreation

More than **\$13.6 million** has been spent maintaining and upgrading sport and recreational facilities and halls across the Shire.

This includes, but not limited to: Barron Falls, Jum Rum and Jungle Walk walking track, Amaroo Park Playground, Mareeba Aquatic Centre, Centenary Park Mareeba, Centenary Park Playground Kuranda, Mareeba Rail Trail, Mary Andrews Park, Anzac Park Mareeba, Kuranda Rec Centre, Chillagoe 10 Acre Park, Dimbulah Aquatic Centre, Geraghty Park Precinct, Kuranda Aquatic Centre, Speewah Roscommons and Mount Molloy Memorial Hall.

Significant rate rebates and service charge remissions have been provided to local clubs run by volunteers, increasing the capacity of groups to provide sporting and recreational activities for residents.

### Community Housing

Council, in partnership with the Queensland Government, is the largest local government provider of community housing in the region and the second largest community housing provider in Far North Queensland.

One hundred and eight units are located in Mareeba, Mount Molloy, Dimbulah and Kuranda that provide long term social housing for eligible seniors.

Council entered into a three-year subcontracting arrangement with Mareeba Community Housing Company for the tenancy and property management of the Community Housing Service on 1 July 2022.

The transition was seamless and well received and has resulted in additional support for tenants. Council continues to be involved in the long-term asset management of the properties.

### Letters of Support

More than 100 letters of support were written for community service organisations and community groups to accompany grant funding applications and other advocacy matters.

### Mareeba Library Mural

The library mural reflects the evolution of library services and role in promoting literacy, creativity and contribution to community connectedness.

### Community Halls Usage

The Cedric Davies Community Hub function space has been hired for 277 different events and functions since opening in August 2021.

Geraghty Park Hall hire usage has increased 70 per cent since being managed by the community.

### Incoming Phone Calls

Council's Customer Service team handled more than 63,000 calls during the reporting period.

### Anzac Ave Local Area Traffic Management

More than 450 letters and surveys sent to properties in the precinct.

More than 100 survey responses received.

Fifty-eight people attended two neighbourhood meetings.

Five residents participated in the Local Resident Traffic Working Group, attending three meetings. Fourteen actions were identified for Council's consideration.

### Arnold Park Skate Bowl Mural

Artist Daniel Wallwork worked with young people to design and paint this vibrant mural that celebrates our natural environment.

### Mt Molloy Memorial Hall

The Mt Molloy RSL Subbranch unveiled this striking mural that recognises the military service of soldiers from the Mt Molloy area and creates an avenue of remembrance down to the cenotaph located behind the hall.

### Proud to be Local

Residents across the Shire shared their stories and why they are "Proud to be Local" in the Shire's innovative 2023 video campaign.

The six-part series, a first of its kind for Council, includes more than 35 residents and showcases the diversity in the Shire while promoting the local economy and tourism opportunities.



Proud to be Local Campaign: Irvinebank and Watsonville 2023



Mareeba Skatepark Mural 2023



# TRANSPORT AND COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Council is committed to the provision of quality services and infrastructure for the growing community that is planned and managed using sound asset management principles.**

## Transport and Drainage

Council is responsible for more than 2,300km out of a total 2,980km of roads across the Shire of which 1,639 km are unsealed.

Council, since 2019, has spent **\$54 million** maintaining, renewing and upgrading its road, drainage and footpath networks, including grading an average of 1,400 km each year.

## Mareeba Shire Water Strategy

The Mareeba Shire Water Strategy, initiated in December 2020, serves as a comprehensive roadmap for addressing the critical challenge of ageing water infrastructure within our Shire.

This strategic plan outlines Council's commitment to ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of safe and sustainable water services to our community through renewal and upgrade of water infrastructure to cater for current and future needs.

Council has, as of June 2023, undertaken the following projects:

- Successfully replaced approximately 20km of water mains, surpassing the halfway point of our 10-year asbestos cement (AC) water main replacement program.
- Installed solar photovoltaic system to high-energy use Council assets, including water treatment plants and pump stations.
- Upgraded Barang Street Kuranda Water Main.
- Installed a new bore and reservoir at Chillagoe.
- Commenced approximately \$16 million in upgrades of Mareeba Water Treatment Plant.

These achievements are a testament to Council's commitment to planning excellence and proactive infrastructure renewal.

## Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Action Plan

Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and Action Plan, adopted February 2022, is the culmination of significant engagement, planning, investigations and discussion across a two-year period. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure public spaces are planned and managed for a growing community in a financially sustainable way, using sound asset management principles.

In the first 16 months of the action plan:

- 8km of rail trail between Mareeba and the airport opened to walkers, horse riders and cyclists.
- A playground was installed in Kuranda Centenary Park to replace the existing facility.
- A revitalisation project at Anzac Park in Mareeba commenced.
- Work commenced on a \$1 million project that will transform and revitalise the Bicentennial Lakes precinct in Mareeba.
- The new Mareeba East (Amaroo) Park and playground was established and master planning of future stages commenced.
- A new Splash Park was opened at the Mareeba Aquatic Centre through funding from the Queensland Government.
- Planning for park upgrades in Dimbulah and Irvinebank commenced.

These projects represent a record spend by Council on parks and open spaces, all at no extra cost to ratepayers.



Mareeba East Playground (Amaroo) 2022



Kuranda Centenary Park 2022

## Disaster Recovery

Council was impacted by several natural disasters during the reporting period:

- North and Far North Queensland Monsoon Trough between 25 January - 14 February 2019.
- Queensland Bushfires between September - December 2019.
- Tropical Cyclone Imogen and Associated Low Pressure System between 2 - 12 January 2021.
- Tropical Cyclone Niran and Associated Low Pressure System between 25 February - 3 March 2021.
- Far North Queensland Low Pressure System between 15 - 26 April 2021.
- Far North Queensland Low Pressure Trough between 1-7 February 2022.
- Northern and Central Queensland Monsoon and Flooding between 20 December 2022 - 30 April 2023.

The Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) is a jointly funded program between the Australian and Queensland Governments, which provides financial assistance to support communities with the cost of recovering from natural disasters.

The low and subsequent rain event between 20 December 2022 and 30 April 2023 had a major impact on the community, with roads and bridge infrastructure severely impacted by this event.

A total of 261 roads were inspected as part of the 2023 Reconstruction Works program.

The final value of the 2023 reconstruction program is estimated to be between \$20 - \$30 million.

The Queensland Government Betterment Funds Program allows local governments to rebuild essential public assets to a more resilient standard to help them withstand the impacts of future natural disasters, reducing the future costs of natural disasters on infrastructure restoration.

Council has undertaken a number of projects to improve resilience of critical assets through the betterment program since 2019:

- Clacherty Road, Julatten: causeway upgrade
- Fossilbrook Road, Fossilbrook: Lynd River causeway upgrade
- Shanty Creek Road, Mareeba: causeway upgrade

Council is currently working with Queensland Reconstruction Authority on a pilot program where a range of creek and gully crossings damaged in the 2022 event will receive betterment upgrades.

### **New Mareeba Animal Management Facility**

The new facility was opened in August 2021 as the former one was no longer fit for purpose.

The project was funded by the Queensland Government and Mareeba Shire Council.

The upgrade of the facility is a significant investment in the future of animal management and welfare in the Shire and a win/win for the community and ratepayers.

Friends of the Animals Inc (FOTA) lease the facility from Council and operate the not-for-profit Mareeba Animal Refuge at the facility.

FOTA operate independently of Mareeba Shire Council and conduct a boarding and rehoming business from this location.

Council also impounds and holds animals in this facility and they are cared for in the facility by Friends of the Animals Inc.

A local building contractor constructed the new facility creating local jobs and economic development.

### **John Doyle Bridge**

John Doyle Bridge was officially opened in November 2020 after a significant construction project to improve the lifespan and restore the original design capacity of the bridge.

The project was jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments and Mareeba Shire Council.

### **Wolfram Road upgrades, Dimbulah**

Council commenced progressive widening of single-lane sections of Wolfram Road in 2021 to cater for increasing commercial traffic.

The upgrades have improved road safety, provided transport efficiencies and catered for increased traffic volumes, particularly for the agricultural sector.

### **Euluma Creek Road upgrades, Julatten**

Council completed its program of progressive widening of Euluma Creek Road in 2023 with all road sections now widened to two lanes.



Opening of the Animal Management Facility, Mareeba 2021



Wolfram Road, Dimbulah 2023

## Granite Creek Sewer Pump Station Upgrade

Council farewelled the 1965 built Granite Creek Sewage Pump Station in 2022.

The new pump station has the capacity to meet the needs of Mareeba now and meet the demands of the growing community, improves safety for maintenance, plus a significant reduction in operational costs.

## Chillagoe Water

The completion of a new 500 kilolitre water reservoir in 2021, 4km pipeline and commissioning of a new bore water supply, delivered essential water security to the Chillagoe community. This resulted in level three water restrictions being lifted.

The higher capacity reservoir replaced two 190KL steel reservoirs.

The **\$1.1 million** project was predominantly funded through the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Funding Program and the Queensland Government's Building our Regions Program.

## Walking Network Plans

New walking network plans in Mareeba and Kuranda have been adopted by Council.

The plans will guide how to create primary and secondary walking routes connecting key destinations such as schools, parks, shopping, health, and recreational facilities.

The plans, developed in conjunction with the Department of Transport and Main Roads, supported the preparation of a comprehensive staged footpath improvement program.

## Cemeteries

Council accommodates a range of interments at cemeteries in Almaden, Chillagoe, Dimbulah, Irvinebank, Kuranda, Mareeba, Mr Carbine, Mt Molloy and Watsonville.

More than 430 community members have been laid to rest in the Shire over the past four years.



Granite Creek Pump Station upgrade, 2022



Chillagoe water reservoir, 2021

# ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

**A resilient economy that promotes and supports the Shire's natural assets and local industry and encourages investment while preserving and future proofing for generations to come.**

## **Supporting economic growth is paramount**

Key industries drive the Mareeba Shire economy, including agriculture, retail, industry and tourism with new opportunities emerging for aviation support services and regional transport logistics and services.

## **Mareeba Industrial Park**

The thriving Mareeba Industrial Park is the region's largest agricultural and logistics hub.

Land is very competitively priced and the park has attracted national companies in packaging and logistics who have invested more than **\$23 million**.

To keep up with demand, Council is continuing to invest in the expansion of the park.

"Every 10,000m<sup>2</sup> at the Mareeba Industrial Park contributes **\$5.6 million** to the Mareeba economy and 17 jobs." (Source: Cummings Economics).

With 63, 867m<sup>2</sup> of land sold since 2019, this equates to approximately **\$35.7 million** and 108 jobs. Currently, there remain 14 lots available for sale at the Industrial Park.

Work on a new Master Plan for the future development of the industrial park precinct commenced in 2023.

## **Mareeba Airport Upgrade**

Mareeba Airport is a CASA certified public aerodrome. The facility supports approximately 1,000 aircraft movements a month and training accounts for approximately 50 per cent of all landings.

A major **\$25 million** infrastructure upgrade was completed in 2019 which directly enhanced airport infrastructure such as runways, taxiways, aprons and other facilities.

Growing aviation capacity will enhance Mareeba's existing position as a regional supply and service hub for the mining, cattle, agricultural and tourism industries as well as strengthen its role as a sub-regional industrial hub in Northern Australia.

The newly developed 52-lot (Stage 1) western precinct has lease sites that are available for development with opportunities for both commercial and recreational uses.

Former Mareeba Shire Council Mayor Tom Gilmore was instrumental in securing funding and providing the vision to ensure successful completion of the upgrade to the Mareeba Airport.

Council recognised Mr Gilmore's commitment in mid-2022 by naming the Mareeba Airport Aviation Park as the Tom Gilmore Mareeba Aviation Industrial Precinct.



Sally and Tom Gilmore at the Tom Gilmore Mareeba Aviation Industrial Precinct, 2023

## Supporting Tourism

While agricultural production drives the Mareeba Shire economy, tourism is having an increasingly positive impact on the local economy.

The total tourism and hospitality sales in the Shire was **\$75.8 million** and the total value added was **\$35.1 million** in 2021/22, benefiting many businesses, not only those directly involved in the tourism industry.

While the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on tourism, since 2019 there were still more than 482,388 visitors to the Shire's Information Centres in Mareeba and Kuranda.

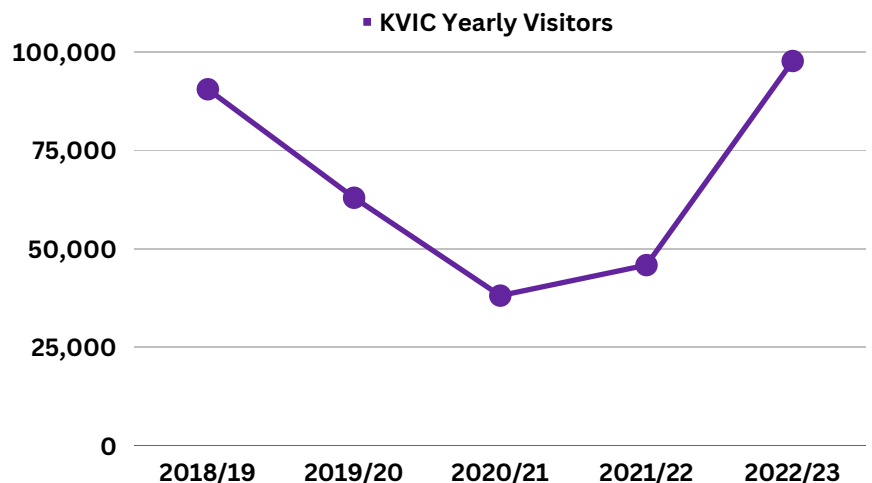
Kuranda is a well-developed destination that pre-COVID relied on international day trippers from Cairns and Port Douglas, inextricably linking it to the ebb and flow of the Cairns destination.

During the COVID-19 international border closures, Kuranda pivoted to attract the domestic visitor market and is benefitting from the return of international visitors along with continuing strong domestic visitation.

Visitors to the Kuranda Visitor Information Centre have returned and the centre is now seeing more visitors than before the COVID-19 pandemic.



Signage in Kuranda, 2022



## Local Tourism Organisation

Feedback from tourism operators that a dedicated Local Tourism Organisation (LTO) model focusing on the Mareeba Shire's tourism industry was required resulted in Mareeba Shire Council and the Mareeba Chamber of Commerce establishing a LTO in 2022.

The LTO held a launch event, followed by a tourism think tank. The feedback gathered by industry stakeholders at these events was used to develop a strategic plan for the organisation.

The purpose of the LTO is to promote the visitor experiences of Mareeba Shire through industry strategic partnerships, collaboration, capacity building and advocacy.



LTO Think Tank, 2022

**Protecting the Shire's natural assets with a planning scheme that strikes a balance between fostering development and environmental protection, effective pest and weed eradication programs, planned burns and responsible waste management is paramount.**

### **Community Partnerships**

More than **\$55,480** has been provided through Council's Community Partnerships Program (CPP) for cash, in-kind and rebates to community groups for environmental activities including tree plantings, preservation projects and improving the sustainable use of river catchments.

### **Bright prospects for energy savings**

Council installed solar photovoltaic systems across nine Council-owned facilities in the Shire including swimming pools, treatment plants, pump stations and the Cedric Davies Community Hub in 2021 through funding from the Queensland Government.

These installations, combined with the solar photovoltaic systems previously installed on each of the Council administration buildings at Kowa and Rankin Streets in Mareeba have generated more than 226,250kWh of solar power per annum, of which 205,857kWh was exported to the grid in 2022.

Alternative energy initiatives in the Shire include a new wind farm and solar farms.



Solar installation Mareeba water treatment plant

### **Land Management**

Mareeba Shire Council's land protection team, as well as the control of pest plants within the Shire, also assists landowners in the control of vertebrate pests such as feral pigs, rabbits and dogs.

Land Protection Officers coordinate and implement feral dog baiting programs each year across the Shire totaling many hundreds of thousands of hectares in area.

Calicivirus is used to target specific areas for the control of rabbits and Council regularly lends traps to residents to assist in the control of feral pigs.

### **A Reef Guardian Council**

Council has been an active Reef Guardian Council adopting Reef Action Plans each year.

These plans contribute to Reef health and delivered initiatives focused on auditing energy consumption, investing on solar energy at nine council-owned facilities, implementing cool burns to reduce fuel loads across the Shire and educating community members on a range of environmental and sustainable topics.

## Waste Management

Resource recovery rates have increased considerably throughout Mareeba Shire.

Various waste recovery options are offered at Council transfer stations and allow easy and accessible options to turn waste into resource.

Council transfer stations offer recycling of batteries, commingled recyclables, DrumMuster chemical containers, e-waste, fertiliser bags, metal, tyres and oil.

More than 6,750 tonnes of waste were disposed during the 2019-2020 financial year directly to landfill.

This has decreased to 1,975 tonnes in the most recent financial year.

### Buy Back Shop

Council's opening of a Buy Back Shop at the Mareeba Transfer Station in August 2022 has been well received.

The shop represents a major step towards embedding the circular economy in Mareeba.

Income generated from sales at the Buy Back Shop will offset the cost increases associated with the State Waste Levy.

Council will also use the income generated to support recycling initiatives.

## 2019-2023 Summary of Waste

| Waste Type                     | Tonnes     |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Total Waste to Landfill        | 140,668.56 |
| Domestic Waste to Landfill     | 15,021.67  |
| Kerbside Waste                 | 22,515.17  |
| Green Waste                    | 6,743.28   |
| Scrap Metal Recycled           | 2,961.19   |
| Comingled Recycling            | 1,128.78   |
| DrumMuster eligible containers | 453.19     |
| Fertiliser Bags Recycled       | 111.63     |
| E-waste Recycled               | 259.41     |
| Tyres Recycled                 | 281.70     |
| Batteries Recycled             | 223.10     |
| Oil Recycled                   | 277.25     |



Opening the Buy Back Shop, 2022



Mareeba Transfer Station Redevelopment, 2021



# GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY

**Sound decision making based on effective frameworks and clear strategic direction enable Council to achieve regulatory compliance and affordable levels of service delivered to the community.**

## **Regulatory Compliance**

Policy reviews and internal compliance audits are undertaken to ensure systems and practices cover the full range of Council's activities and are compliant with statutory requirements.

Council has had a number of audits, both internal and external, which have all been complimentary.

## **Enterprise Risk Management**

The Enterprise Risk Register and Management Framework was reviewed in 2022 and updated to ensure it continues to be a valuable tool for decision-making.

Enterprise Risk Management processes are integrated into Council's operations to ensure the organisation manages risk identification and control effectively and efficiently.

## **Corporate Plan**

Council adopted a new Corporate Plan in 2021.

The new plan has a focus of ensuring long term sustainability by developing detailed long-term strategic plans, covering Council's key activities to provide a platform for future decision making.

Council has established and continues to develop and maintain close and productive working relationships with relevant stakeholders, including the state and federal governments to advocate for the growing community.

## **External Safety Audit**

An independent audit of the Mareeba Shire Council Work Health and Safety Management System was conducted in October 2022.

Council achieved an overall score of 70.6 per cent, exceeding the criteria set by the Queensland Office of Industrial Relations. The auditor noted Council has well implemented work health and safety management systems.

## **Improved Transport Connectivity**

Council continues to strongly advocate for:

- Road improvements from Cairns to Mareeba access, including Kuranda Range improvements and/or an alternative route.
- Inclusion of the Kennedy Highway between Cairns and Mareeba, including the Kuranda Range Road, in the National Highway.
- Untethered funding to Council for progressive sealing of the entire length of Ootann Road and recognition of Ootann Road as a Road of Strategic Importance.
- The Mareeba Bypass Road to reduce heavy-vehicle traffic through the main street and improve agricultural sector productivity.

## Improved Community Safety

Council is doing all it can to improve community safety through advocacy and collaborative action with local stakeholders and agencies.

Council's advocacy efforts have resulted in:

- Queensland Police announcing a further seven positions in the Tablelands region as well as an extra two police officers deployed to Kuranda and another four to Mareeba over the next three years; and
- **\$260k** funding for Mareeba PCYC to resource its youth Pulse Café program and **\$5 million** contribution towards the establishment of a new PCYC facility.
- Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs announcing a new office would be opened in Mareeba to respond to child safety and youth justice matters.
- Mareeba Community Centre securing **\$785k** Federal Government funding to recruit two youth workers and deliver additional services to young people at risk.

## Improved Health Services

Council advocates for an equitable share of health services that are adequately funded to meet the shire's demographic characteristics, population growth and ageing community:

- Expand current health services and facilities and visiting medical specialists, dental, counselling and allied health professionals to service the Mareeba Shire
- Bring the health services to the people with expanded outreach and visiting services
- Review funding models for rural and remote general practitioner and specialist medical services
- Expand mental health care and alcohol and other drugs services
- Improved technology, support and training for telehealth service delivery

## Regional Affairs

Council has adopted a strategic view of its role in regional affairs with high level involvement in the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (FNQROC) and the Inland Queensland Roads Action Project (IQ-RAP).

These organisations are actively involved in regular contact with members of Parliament in Brisbane and Canberra in pursuit of higher levels of funding for roads, water and other strategic infrastructure.



Mayor Angela Toppin, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Cynthia Lui MP, Member for Cook 2023