



OUTLOOK 2025

BURDEKIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2020-25

A Framework for Promoting Prosperity

an overview



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



Burdekin
Shire Council



Business Council
of Australia



OUTLOOK 2025: A FRAMEWORK FOR PROSPERITY

Outlook 2025: Burdekin Economic Development Strategy 2020-25 provides Burdekin Shire Council with a framework to support the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the Burdekin Shire Council area. It delivers a five-year plan of action, which builds on and strengthens partnerships between Burdekin Shire Council, government, industry and the community.

The Burdekin's rich supply of water, combined with about 300 days of sunshine a year and fertile, well-drained rich soils, supports both current activities and emerging opportunities for local farmers, businesses and investors. While sugar production and processing dominates local economic activity, the Burdekin also boasts strong fruit, vegetable, beef and aquaculture industries.

BUILDING ON THE BURDEKIN ADVANTAGE

Located on the Pacific coastline one hour south of Townsville, The Burdekin district is one of Australia's richest agricultural regions. With a population of 17,077 and gross regional product of \$1.26 billion, the district is home to 2,127 registered businesses and around 8,650 local jobs.

The Burdekin's economic prosperity will also follow new investments in industries including health care, education, tourism and related industries including retail and accommodation and food services.

Building on the District's comparative advantages, the Burdekin's future prosperity will be underpinned by innovation and value-creation in the region's traditional industry driver of sugar production and processing and the continued development of other key sectors in manufacturing, engineering and transport and logistics.

It will also stem from the realisation of current and emerging opportunities to diversify and develop more knowledge-intensive business growth and employment in horticulture, fishing, biofutures and complementary professional services activities.





THE VISION AND CHARTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Outlook 2025 is informed by socio-economic research and analysis and targeted stakeholder consultation with a diversity of stakeholders in industry, government, the non-government sector and the community.

The economic development strategy themes and actions reflect stakeholder views regarding the Burdekin's key issues, challenges and opportunities, which combined, inform the vision for economic development.

BURDEKIN SHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VISION

Burdekin Shire is a vibrant and connected community and a location of choice in which to live, work, play, visit and invest.

The vision for economic development is supported by Burdekin Shire Council's Economic Development Charter.

The charter describes Council's commitment to promoting, facilitating and co-ordinating economic development activities.

BURDEKIN SHIRE COUNCIL'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

Burdekin Shire Council supports economic prosperity through sound planning, information-sharing, infrastructure provision and service delivery, to promote investment, encourage local businesses to flourish, attract visitors and cultivate the Burdekin's appeal as a place to live, play, grow and prosper.

Outlook 2025 articulates opportunities for action which are presented across three strategy themes. These are opportunities that Council and its partners can focus on to help activate and grow the

Burdekin Shire economy. They are informed by the economic development vision and Council's economic development charter.



OUTLOOK 2025: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY THEMES

Outlook 2025 identifies a total of 38 opportunities for action. The opportunities are informed by the research, consultation and analysis undertaken to inform the strategy and they align with the Burdekin’s economic development vision and Council’s charter.

Prioritising where Burdekin Shire Council’s resources can best be directed for the purpose of facilitating and promoting economic development is a key consideration of Outlook 2025. To this end, from the long list of opportunities presented in the strategy, ten have been prioritised for implementation over the first 12 to 24 months. Each action theme and its strategic intent is described as follows:

Theme 1- A Smart and Innovative Agricultural District:

Promote the Burdekin’s continued diversification into high-value, knowledge-intensive export-oriented agricultural processes, products and services, to build on the district’s comparative and competitive strengths and deliver sustained economic growth and development.

Theme 2- A Location of Choice for Business Investment, Learning and Living:

Consolidate the Burdekin’s appeal as a location of choice for businesses and for residents who value the district’s profile as a relaxed coastal community in the dry tropics underpinned by a vibrant retail sector, arts and culture, sport and recreation, health care and education and access to quality employment and a diversity of housing.

Theme 3- A Dynamic Regional Visitor Economy:

Reposition the Burdekin as a vibrant destination for visitors offering a diversity of cultural, natural, leisure based and sporting experiences with new investment creating quality jobs and visitation growth equivalent to at least the State average.



PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Outlook 2025 identifies ten priority initiatives, to be progressed over the first 12 to 24 months of the strategy's implementation. Some opportunities are focused on catalyst project planning and development initiatives which require action combined with a well-planned course of project implementation for the desired outcomes to be realised over time.

Others are focussed on strategic program implementation and are initiatives that can be addressed as part of Council's day-to-day economic development planning and facilitation functions. In a number of cases, these actions seek to build on or continue initiatives already in place.

Catalyst Project Planning and Development:

- Working in collaboration with representatives of local industry, peak bodies, government and the education and training sector, investigate interest in the establishment of a working group to explore the concept of a *Burdekin Food Product Innovation Cluster*.
- Support the preparation of a *Burdekin Food Product Innovation Cluster Strategy* and three-year roadmap to guide the cluster's planning and development. The strategy should focus on fostering business research, innovation and diversification, market research and development, new agribusiness start-ups, opportunities for the commercialisation of R&D, business retention and expansion, investment attraction and workforce planning and development.
- Following completion of the strategy, support the working group in seeking program funding to identify and appoint a cluster coordinator to lead and oversee the development of the *Burdekin Food Product Innovation Cluster*.
- Continue to support Growcom, the CSIRO and the CRC for Developing Northern Australia in exploring the business case for establishing a food processing hub in the Burdekin. On the basis that the business case is proven, provide support for project implementation.

Strategic Program Implementation:

- Continue to deliver the *Burdekin Business Breakfast Series* on a regular basis with a program of subjects designed to address topical business interests and local priorities.
- Collaborate with relevant agencies to facilitate information on and access to State and Federal Government programs which are designed to grow the capacity of new and developing micro and small businesses. Provide information and referrals to existing business development and/or mentoring services available through various government programs.
- Continue to investigate, plan for and deliver new industrial land in the Burdekin in line with future requirements as articulated in the 2018 Burdekin Shire Industrial Land Analysis and the North Queensland Regional Plan.
- Investigate, through the Burdekin's chambers of commerce, interest from retail traders to participate in facilitated 'retail inspiration' workshops and similar events with leading experts / guest speakers to promote best-practice visual merchandising, branding and customer service to support the vitality and growth of the Burdekin's retail centres.
- Complete the four priority projects from the 2018 Burdekin Tourism Strategy by mid-2020.
- Initiate a process to set four more priorities drawing on the supplementary recommendations of the Tourism Strategy and ideas identified through the preparation of this Economic Development Strategy.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS DRIVING STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Outlook 2025 will be implemented by Burdekin Shire Council in partnership with the region's key government, non-government and industry stakeholders.

This includes the Queensland Government, the Australian Government, regional development bodies including Townsville Enterprise and RDA Townsville and North West Queensland, peak industry bodies, the Ayr and Home Hill Chambers of Commerce, the district's and wider region's education and training providers and other supporting partners across the wider region.

The Burdekin's businesses and residents will continue to be engaged at a partnership level to ensure effective communication on the progress of strategy implementation and commitment to realising Council's and the community's economic development agenda.

Burdekin Shire Council will monitor the progress of the Economic Development Strategy in order to achieve the actions set out. Outlook 2025 will be reviewed annually with an update anticipated in five years.



OUTLOOK

BURDEKIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2020-25

This project is co-funded by the Australian Government through the Building Better Regions Fund and the Business Council of Australia.



For more information contact Council's
Economic Development Unit

 (07) 4783 9800  www.burdekin.qld.gov.au
 @BurdekinShireCouncil  @Burdekinshire