



## STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

### VISION

**‘To work with partners and the community to sustainably manage waterways to protect people, livelihoods and property.’**

This entails the management of the Barron, Mulgrave and Russell Rivers, their tributaries, and creeks draining to Trinity Inlet and to the coast at the Northern Beaches to protect the community, State and local government transport and other infrastructure, and the extensive agricultural areas adjacent to those watercourses in the Cairns Local Government Area, (including the centres of Cairns, Edmonton, Gordonvale and Babinda), against flood damage, erosion and sediment transportation.

In maintaining this vision, the Cairns River Improvement Trust recognizes that these rivers and their tributaries will experience cyclone damage, major flood events and flood breakouts.

### PURPOSE

The Cairns River Improvement Trust is a statutory body and operates in accordance with powers and responsibilities of the River Improvement Trust Act 1940 and associated *Regulation* and operates under the powers and responsibilities of that legislation through:

- a) planning for and implementing measures that improve the protection, health and resilience of rivers and their catchments
- b) repairing, and preventing damage to, rivers and their catchments
- c) restoring natural resilience to flooding and cyclones in rivers and their catchments
- d) securing and maintaining stream integrity
- e) improving water quality and river system functions in rivers and their catchments.

As required under the Queensland Government Performance Management Framework, the CRIT’s strategic planning and performance is aligned with and contributes to the **Government’s Objectives** for the community, particularly:

- **Safety where you live**
- **A better lifestyle through a stronger economy:**
- **A plan for Queensland’s future.**

### ROLE

**The primary role of the Trust is to plan, design, assist in financing, undertake and maintain stream improvement works for the benefit of the community within the Trust area.**

## FUNCTIONS

The key functions of the Trust are to:

- operate within its statutory limits,
- maintain strong networks with key, state, regional and local organisations, and communities,
- improve the health of waterways and riparian areas within the Cairns Regional Council
- mitigate flooding, reduce flood damage, and protect State and local government transport and other infrastructure from effects of extreme weather events or cyclones,
- undertake works of stream improvement to help prevent changes in course of the rivers and creeks, and to address erosion and associated riverine problems that cause economic, social, and environmental problems for the State and the community.

## WORKING WITH OTHERS

The Trust works with the Cairns Regional Council, the local sugar industry, grower groups, landholders and others with like interests such as government departments and natural resource management groups concerned with water quality improvement for river flows to the Great Barrier Reef.

## FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Base funding for the Trust's annual works programs is an annual precept provided by the Cairns Regional Council. This funding is further supplemented by landholders contributing 50% towards works included in our Annual Works Program and completed on their behalf.

Since constituted in 1972, the Trust has also been successful in securing funding from:

- State and Commonwealth Grants
- Department of Natural Resources and Mines
- Commonwealth's Regional Flood Mitigation Program and
- Flood damage disaster recovery funding under the Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery and Community Resilience Arrangements
- Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and
- Queensland Reconstruction Authority under the 2016-17 and 2018-19 Grants and Subsidies Natural Disaster Resilience Programs
- Greening Australia.

## KEY CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### 1. Expectations of Stakeholders

#### Strategy

Actively engage with stakeholders to ensure that the role and functions of the Trust are understood, any concerns are addressed and agreed projects delivered, in partnership with stakeholders.

Actions	Due Date	Government Objective
<b>Environmental Outcomes</b> Develop and implement a community education program clarifying the Role, Functions and Financial Capacities of the Trust, exploring long-term funding options and improving the measurement of outcomes.	April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li></ul>

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Government Objective</b>
<b>Accountability and Transparency</b> Build social media profile to effectively utilise the State River Trusts Web Page (currently under final development) to broaden networks and communicate with stakeholders.	December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for Qld's future</li> </ul>
<b>Project Delivery</b> Work closely with the Cairns Regional Council, environmental groups and regional contractors improve planning, reporting, stakeholder consultation on planning (land use), flood mitigation works and associated flood management.	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for Qld's future</li> <li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li> </ul>
Encourage local property owners to report areas of riverine concern.	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Plan for Qld's future</li> </ul>

## **2. Impacts of Natural Disasters**

### **Strategy**

Work in partnership with stakeholders to encourage an understanding of the geomorphic history of natural disaster flooding events in the Barron, Mulgrave, and Russell River catchments.

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Government Objective</b>
Develop a database, using GIS systems, of current and historical assets and works in the Barron, Mulgrave, and Russell catchments.	Ongoing with initial setup by EFY 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for Qld's future</li> <li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li> </ul>
Interact and collaborate with the State Government to engage directly and participate in the funding of the investigation and construction of priority flood mitigation and river management works in the Barron, Mulgrave, and Russell River catchments.	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for Qld's future</li> <li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li> </ul>
Seek funding under available Commonwealth and State programs to advance priority projects under the forward works plan.	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for Qld's future</li> <li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li> </ul>
Water security: Inspection and removal of debris to enable clear flows where works are within the financial capacity of the Trust to deliver.	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for Qld's future</li> <li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li> </ul>
Water security and flood mitigation: Support flood studies	On going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A plan for Qld's future</li> <li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li> </ul>

### 3. Governance

#### Strategy

To operate within statutory limits and best practice corporate governance frameworks.

Actions	Due Date	Government Objective
Ongoing review and update of the CRIT 'Governance Manual'.	Standing Agenda item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety where you live</li><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li></ul>
Create a compliant 'Grievance Procedure' Policy.	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety where you live</li><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li></ul>
Develop a 'Local Benefits Procurement Policy'.	November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li></ul>
Develop and then regularly review a Risk Management Framework.	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li><li>• Safety where you live</li></ul>
Follow specific acts and policies.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li><li>• Safety where you live</li></ul>
Adopt and implement the RIT Review recommendations.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li><li>• Safety where you live</li></ul>

### 4. Physical integrity of watercourses

#### Strategy

Limit stream erosion, siltation, and channel migration.

Actions	Due Date	Government Objective
Maintain the extensive river management work assets (> 600) constructed by the Trust from Cairns to Babinda.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li></ul>
Prioritise watercourse works locations through bank stabilization, restoration, and riparian revegetation in the CRC area .	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li></ul>
Mitigate flood breakouts and inundation of urban and rural lands. Annual maintenance of stabilization works is a priority to continue to deliver those benefits.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li></ul>
Improve water quality by reducing the contribution of sediment from bank erosion to suspended sediment load moving out to the inner Great Barrier Reef lagoon.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A plan for Qld's future</li><li>• A better lifestyle through a stronger economy</li></ul>

**This strategic plan was reviewed in April 2025 and remains current. It will be supported with an Annual Works Plan and Operational Plan.**

**Cairns River Improvement Trust**

**April 2025**