



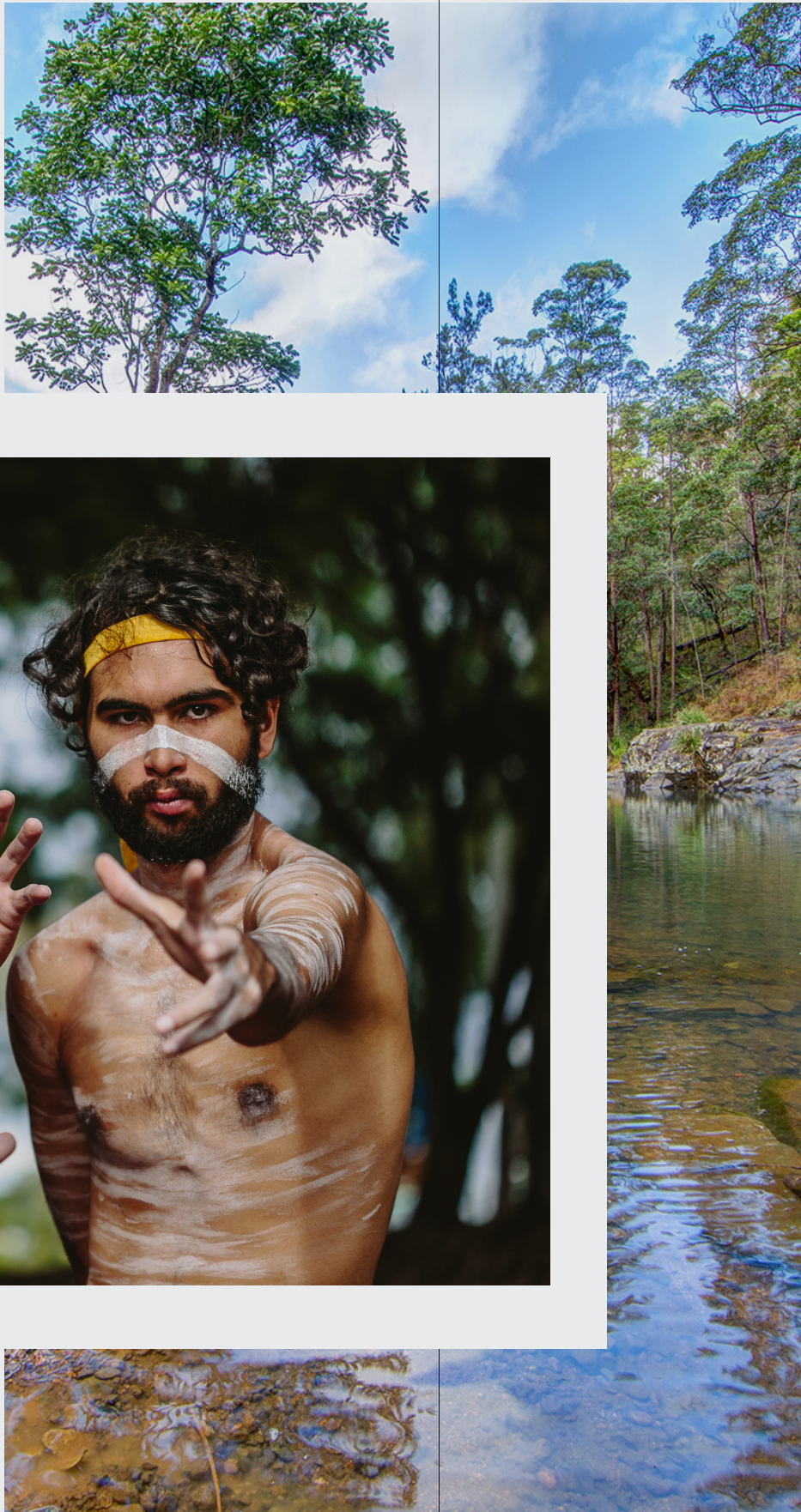
REIMAGINING OUR MORETON BAY:

A city of amazing
places & natural spaces

| A discussion paper

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Moreton Bay Regional Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Country across our region. We also acknowledge and pay our respects to the Kabi Kabi, Jinibara and Turrbal Traditional Custodians, and their elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the important role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the Moreton Bay community.



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“The future depends on what you do today.”

- Mahatma Gandhi



INTRODUCTION

If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.

As the elected leaders of Moreton Bay, it is incumbent upon us to have big ambitions. Those are best encapsulated in a vision that informs planning the future we want for our beautiful part of the world.

We value the trust placed in us by residents from Bellthorpe to Arana Hills, out to the Mountains, and down to the shores of our namesake Bay. It is our responsibility to chart a course that enriches our communities as we evolve.

Creating a vision is about reimagining what Moreton Bay can become to ensure it reflects how we want to mature as a major part of South East Queensland (SEQ). The future of our communities needs to be in our hands, not at the mercy of others' decisions.

The best way to ensure we create our own destiny is through outlining a vision. This should be a plausible expectation of how we might evolve and what Moreton Bay might look like in the future. It will help light the path forward and inform council's actions over the coming decades and how we prioritise our efforts.

At first these long-term plans might seem ambitious or too far into the future. But if we don't come up with a vision that aligns with our values, we risk waking up a decade from now dissatisfied with the outcomes.

This is a chance to plan better, and consciously, for infrastructure to service the needs we identify now, that will create a future we want. From the many conversations we've had with residents, and the feedback in Moreton Says, it is clear locals want better connectivity, greater affordability, and an emphasis on taking care of our environment as well as making sustainable choices.

The ideas within this paper are intended to start a conversation in our communities about the possibility of becoming a city. It aims to spark contemplation of a future that harnesses our assets as a region that is home to many unique centres and distinct communities.

There is an opportunity in front of us to set a clear direction for the future of Moreton Bay. We invite you to consider what becoming a city could mean for you and your families. We can't stop the growth happening in our beautiful part of the world but we can take charge and actively shape our future together.



PFL
PETER FLANNERY
Mayor



JSH
JODIE SHIPWAY
Deputy Mayor



OUR CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Moreton Bay is one of Australia's fastest growing regions. We enjoy an enviable lifestyle with unique places and plentiful green spaces. It's little wonder more people want to call Moreton Bay home. The pandemic has accelerated South East Queensland's population growth as interstate migrants vote with their feet.

**More than 10,000 people are moving
to our region every year¹.**

Through our large-scale community survey, Moreton Says, residents told us what they love about our region and want protected. The natural beauty of the region and the affordability of the lifestyle were cited as the most important factors when choosing a place to live.

It is possible to balance our region's much-loved amazing places and natural spaces with the needs of a growing population. To do that we need to accommodate new residents in every suburb across the region. This will enable us to live in balance with our environment and provide better housing and work options for everyone.

With great schools and our own university, the growing Moreton Bay economy has the potential to create 100,000 new jobs over the next two decades. By building new infrastructure, as well as using existing roads more efficiently, to manage growth, we can keep Moreton Bay strong. It will also mean we can connect with the natural, social, and lifestyle amenities we need to rest and recharge.

By working together, and having a vision, we can maintain and enrich our lifestyles. We can preserve and strengthen the fabric of our suburbs, keep our economy strong, and ensure that everyone benefits as Moreton Bay evolves.

OUR MORETON BAY: A NEW KIND OF CITY

Our region can become a city that South East Queensland has not seen before. We could be a city of the future that celebrates its natural assets and offers unique, local places for residents and visitors to enjoy.

We are fortunate to already have many bustling centres like Caboolture, North Lakes, Redcliffe and Strathpine as well as a growing knowledge and business precinct at Petrie. These centres have been serving our communities for a long time. In planning terms, we are “polycentric”, which means we have more than one urban centre.

By creating stronger ties between the existing centres of our communities, through green corridors and other connections, we can develop a new kind of city.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to set a path forward to deliberately evolve into a city that enriches its residents and protects the surrounding environment. Through highly connected centres we create more equitable access to housing, employment, and lifestyle. That's a fairer city for everyone and shares opportunity across the region.

Having many centres also means we can spread jobs across our communities, so we don't create congestion by funnelling residents into a single CBD to work, unlike traditional cities. Living and working close to home means reduced traffic on the roads and less time wasted commuting every day.

The word city comes from the Latin word *civitas* originally meaning 'citizenship' or 'community member'.

The pandemic has proven that not everyone needs to be in the office or commute to the nearest capital city. Before the pandemic, almost 47% of working residents left Moreton Bay every day to work somewhere else, predominantly Brisbane². This is a reality that is already changing and we want that trend to continue. That's why council has invested so heavily in the business and knowledge precinct at Petrie.

Creating jobs locally is a key priority and becoming a city will draw attention to our region as a place for developing new businesses. Working near home has many benefits. It can improve residents' quality of life with less time spent commuting, which provides more time for recreation and to spend with family. This keeps money in our region with increased resident spending and income generated locally.

Reduced commutes mean less greenhouse gas emitted, with cars responsible for roughly half of all Australia's transport emissions³. This represents a massive opportunity to reduce our impact on the local environment just by keeping residents working near their homes.



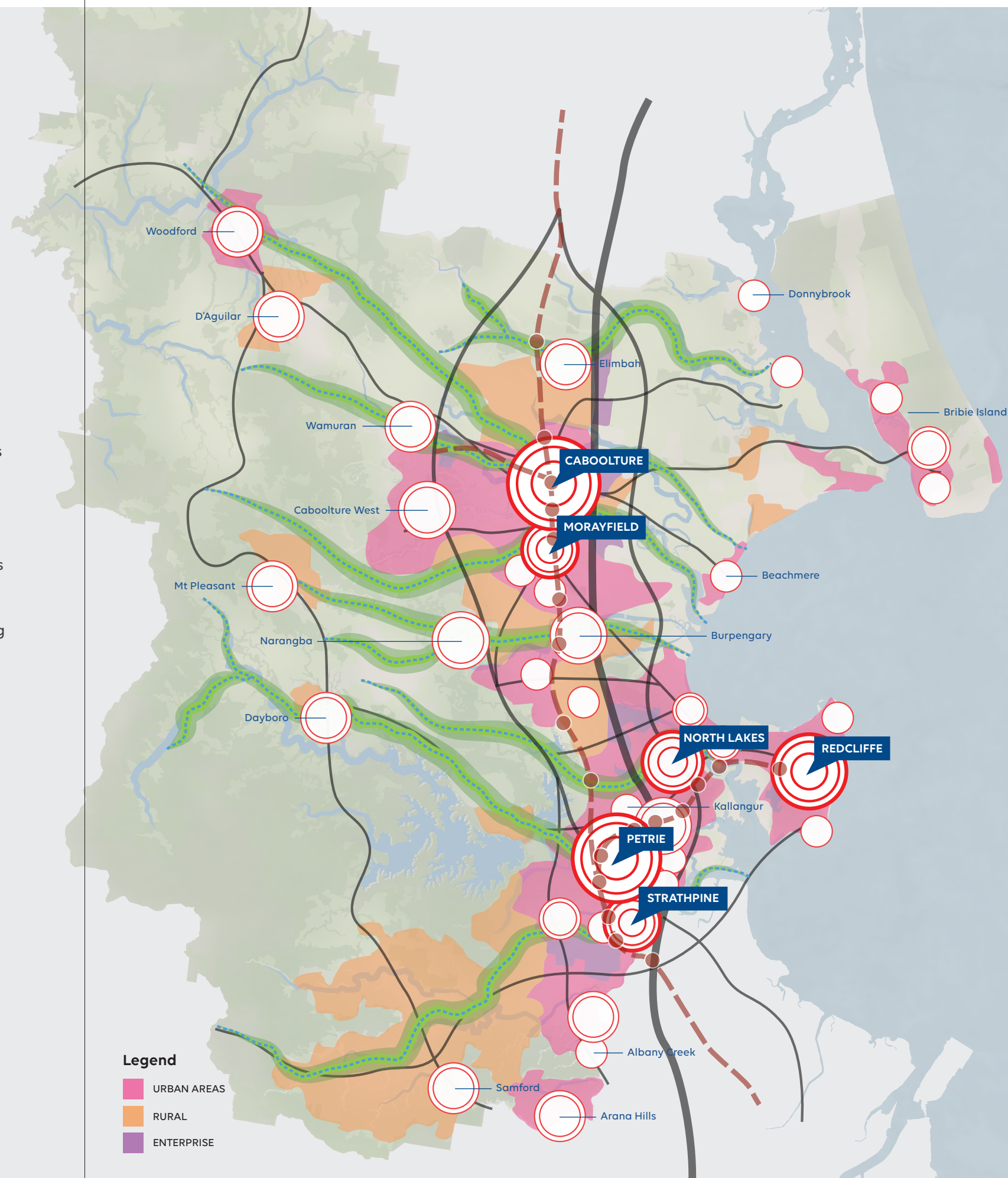
REDUCE
TRAVEL DEMAND



SHORTEN
JOURNEYS



IMPROVE
EFFICIENCY



² Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016.

³ Climate Council Fact Sheet, Transport Emissions: Driving Down Car Pollution in Cities.

FIVE BIG IDEAS FOR OUR FUTURE

1

Connect our centres to the bay using the space adjacent to our waterways as movement corridors

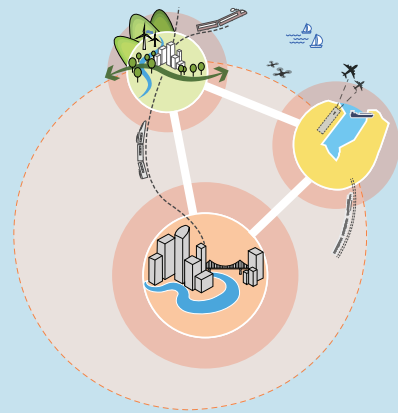
These vital east/west links would allow us to move across the city on foot, bike or scooter and join our existing centres to each other and the Bay. Increased connectivity will further strengthen our unique centres as vital places in our communities.



2

Anoint Petrie, on the banks of the Pine River, as South East Queensland's northern business hub

As the only satellite precinct 30 minutes north of the Brisbane CBD, Petrie is well positioned with a train station, university, businesses, and a planned Olympic venue. The Mill is also within striking distance of the Australian Trade Coast. With green spaces, and the river connecting into the Bay, this is an unparalleled opportunity for a bustling business precinct in harmony with its surrounds.



3

Embrace our bayside villages and make them coastal sanctuaries easy to explore

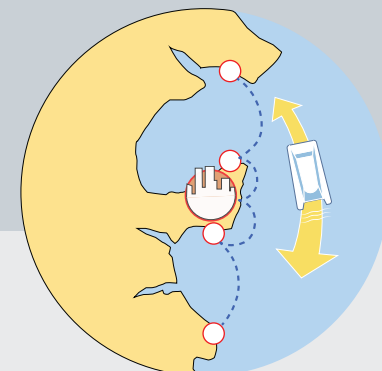
Interlink our coastal suburbs with new paths and connections that encourage car-free movement from Woorim to Woody Point.



4

Activate the Bay for travel and re-discover our region from the water

Bring back a Bay ferry from the Pumicestone Passage, near Bribie Island, to Redcliffe igniting a new appreciation for our waters for visitors and locals alike.



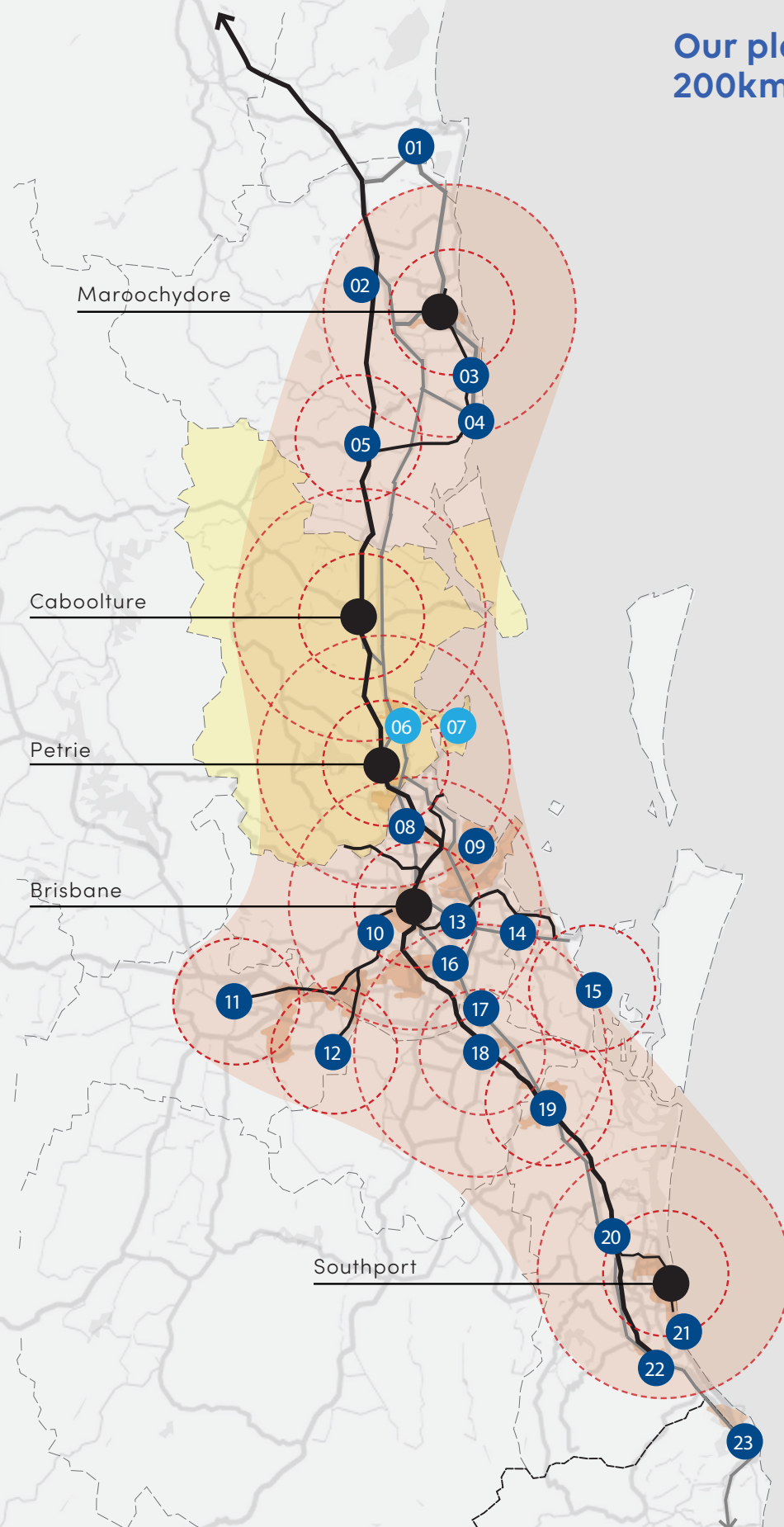
5

Unlock our hilltop villages for tourism

Our hills could become places for more visitors to unwind in picturesque accommodation. We need to find ways to bring the mountains closer and increase their accessibility for visitors. This would provide opportunities for tourism experiences that create local jobs and showcase our region's natural beauty.



Our place within SEQ's 200km of communities



Legend

Economic Centres

- 01 Noosa
- 02 Nambour
- 03 Kawana REC
- 04 Caloundra
- 05 Beerwah
- 06 North Lakes
- 07 Redcliffe
- 08 Chermside
- 09 Brisbane Airport
- 10 Indooroopilly
- 11 Ipswich
- 12 Springfield
- 13 Carindale
- 14 Capalaba
- 15 Cleveland
- 16 Upper Mt Gravatt
- 17 Springwood
- 18 Logan
- 19 Beenleigh
- 20 Helensvale
- 21 Broadbeach
- 22 Robina
- 23 Coolangatta

WHAT BECOMING A CITY MEANS

Moreton Bay is already a "city" in terms of its population and its many bustling urban centres. Within 10 years we will have more residents than the state of Tasmania. Approximately 30 people will move here every day over the next 20 years⁴.

What are the possible benefits of becoming a city?

- Greater status to help advocate for more State and Federal Government investment
- Deliver greater housing and social equity through supporting existing centres
- Proactively shape our destiny through outlining an ambitious vision for our evolution
- Build an identity to increase awareness so we can attract more investment and jobs
- Create a unified identity for existing businesses to market
- Reflect our strategic importance by taking our place as one of South East Queensland's pre-eminent cities.

The growth we've already experienced is creating challenges for us. Housing, jobs, roads, and transport are all common city issues we are facing. The forces of change are already at work and often the response is reactive and uncoordinated.

Rather than making the mistakes of other cities, we can capitalise on the change that is happening to propel our region toward a vision of our choosing. To do this we need to be clear on who we are, what we stand for, and what changes we desire.

Officially becoming a city is the first step towards changing our identity locally, nationally, and internationally. With greater status it will make it easier to advocate to the State and Federal Governments for investment in our region.

We need to make sure we reap benefits from the taxes our residents pay through funding from all levels of government directed back into Moreton Bay. It will also support our ambitious economic development strategy.

Each year the average Australian pays almost \$20,000⁵ in income tax. It is critical we see our fair share of Federal Government investment back into our communities.

Changing our classification to city will also bring us into line with the other councils adjoining Brisbane, including Redland City, Ipswich City, and Logan City. The Moreton Bay council is larger than all these neighbours in terms of geographic area, population, and number of local businesses. It's time we were recognised for our regional importance and the heavy lifting we are doing as South East Queensland evolves.

⁴ Based on additional 210,000 residents over the next 20 years until 2041.

⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Individuals – median and average key items, by sex, 2017–18 and 2018–19 income years.

What evidence we have that becoming a city matters

Case studies from overseas and in Australia demonstrate that becoming a city can be a catalyst for economic growth, improved social outcomes, and increased government investment.

The immediate potential impacts associated with becoming a city include:

- More investment and major projects directed here by State and Federal governments
- Increased civic pride and business confidence
- Improved perception and awareness of community potential
- A catalyst for regeneration and future success
- Attraction of more visitors, which brings money into the local economy.

Moreton Bay gets less spent on transport and roads per person than the Sunshine Coast, Logan, and Gold Coast⁶ despite being SEQ's third largest council in terms of population⁷.

Why there won't be a CBD in our city

Many Australian and international cities are moving away from concentrating jobs and infrastructure in a single place like a CBD so people can live closer to work. This decreases the congestion caused by tides of "commuter" traffic moving toward a single CBD.

Currently 71% of our residents drive to work, which puts around 340,000 cars on the road every weekday⁸. Most of these people are heading into Brisbane, so there is an opportunity to get tens of thousands of cars off the Bruce Highway and many of our local roads each day if we can create local jobs.



The Bruce Highway during peak commute times is not used efficiently.

Changing where people work, and keeping them close to home, will make better use of key infrastructure by reducing demand and using the capacity travelling away from the capital city at peak commute times.

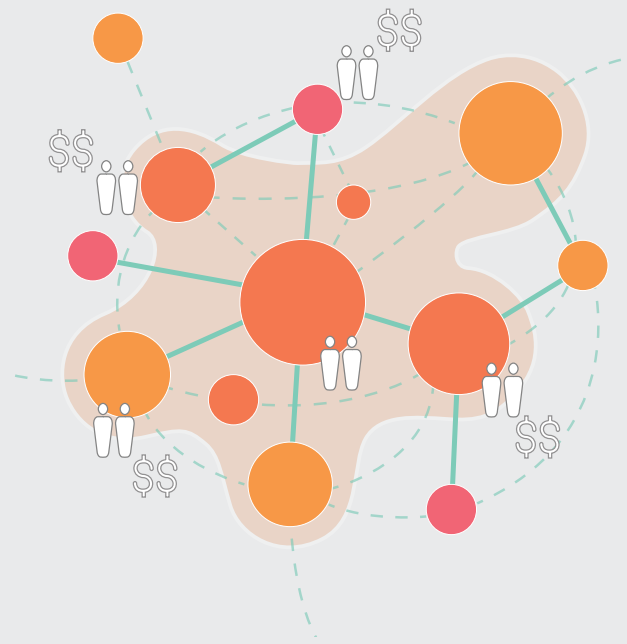
We already meet all the requirements to be classified a city without a CBD of skyscrapers.

Being a multi-centre region means we don't need to concentrate buildings in a single location like a CBD. Even existing CBDs outside of Brisbane, like Logan Central, Ipswich, and Cleveland - are not home to skyscrapers.

A deliberate multi-centre approach creates more equitable access to work and housing, which translates to a higher quality of life. The pandemic has proven some residents can work from home. If more people stay home that means less traffic on the roads for those people who need to work away from home.

Some businesses are moving out of Brisbane to other parts of the south east, which creates opportunities for Moreton Bay. This gets us closer to our goal to deliver 100,000 local jobs, so people don't have to travel outside Moreton Bay for work.

If we support and develop our existing centres, we can also better manage the impact on the natural spaces that make Moreton Bay a beautiful place to live. Strengthening our existing urban centres, and their unique features, will preserve our rural communities, natural assets, and environmental corridors.



What are the possible downsides of becoming a city?

- Our population might grow faster as more people choose to live and work in our city
- Increased visitors could result in busier centres and more amenities like cafes
- The plans for taller buildings around our centres might be realised sooner
- The concern that Council would invest ratepayers' money in a new brand, logo, and signage.

Current population projections show that we are going to experience an increase in our population even if we don't become a city.

The pandemic has resulted in increased interstate migration, so it is likely growth has already accelerated beyond existing projections. We can't stop people moving here, but we can proactively plan for how and where we want people to live and work.

More residents naturally leads to new cafes, restaurants, hotels, activities, and many other businesses popping up to service the community. These will make Moreton Bay a more exciting place to live, work, and play. Changes like this are likely to occur regardless of our council classification because people will move here anyway.

By choosing not to nominate or create a CBD we are making a conscious decision to stick to our diverse centres plan, which has already been widely consulted on with the community. Our planning scheme already seeks to concentrate taller buildings around our existing centres.

If the name of the council changed, money would be spent on re-branding. Traditionally the most expensive elements of re-branding are usually the physical assets (e.g. signage and printed materials), which would not be updated at once. This will limit the costs associated with a potential name change. Most of the printed materials are limited to merchandise, which again would not be replaced until supplies were exhausted. The cost of replacing the logo for digital assets (e.g. website, social media, corporate documents) would be nominal.

⁶Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) 2021-22 to 2024-25.

⁷Moreton Bay City Classification Economic and Social Benefits Presentation, KPMG, March 2022.

⁸70.8% of all Moreton Bay residents travel by private car and 88,414 Moreton Bay LGA residents work outside the LGA (Source: ABS 2016).

Key questions about becoming a city

Why are we considering becoming a city now?

Several big milestones are on the horizon, like the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the SEQ City Deal, and the State Government's review of the South East Queensland Regional Plan. They are critical opportunities to influence how Moreton Bay is perceived by decision-makers and give us the best chance of harnessing benefits for our communities.

The Olympic and Paralympic Games will draw visitors to South East Queensland and provide a platform to introduce Moreton Bay to the world. This is a once in a lifetime chance to showcase our natural beauty and attract visitors from our shores and beyond.

Developing a recognised regional identity is an important part of our economic development strategy, which has set the course for us to become a \$40 billion economy by 2041. Achieving that goal relies, in part, on attracting more visitors to our region, who will spend money in our centres. That spending translates to increased economic activity, which opens the door to more local jobs to service tourist demand.

The recently signed SEQ City Deal will unlock increased investment in our region, and it is critical we secure our fair share. Our chances of success will be bolstered by Federal parliamentarians knowing who we are and where we are.

The Mayor has encountered a common misconception on his visits to Canberra about our location, with many mistakenly believing we are a rural or remote council. This needs to change if we are to compete for investment to manage the growth we are experiencing as the closest northern neighbour of Brisbane.

The State Government's upcoming renewal of the South East Queensland Regional Plan is also a major opportunity to shape local growth. This plan sets out how many residents council will have to accommodate through the delivery of new homes in communities like Caboolture West as well in existing suburbs. We need to be actively participating in the review to ensure the State's plans reflect our objectives and how we want to evolve.

Why did we become a regional council in the first place?

During the State Government's amalgamation of Queensland councils in 2008, it was decided if three or more councils amalgamated the new council would be classified as "regional". That means if we had been an amalgamation of two councils, we would likely already be classified a city⁹.

Our council was formed through the amalgamation of three councils: Caboolture Shire, Pine Rivers Shire, and the City of Redcliffe.

How would we change our classification from a regional to a city council?

Becoming a city involves changing our local government area classification from "regional" to "city" under the Local Government Act.

To change this classification, we must write to the Minister for Local Government. The Minister will then refer our request to the Change Commission, which is part of the independent Electoral Commission of Queensland, for assessment.

When would we become a city?

Council is in the process of considering the benefits changing our classification might bring and the effort pursuing a change might entail.

A social and economic impact assessment was requested by council at the end of 2021 and this was delivered in March 2022. Early engagement is also happening with the community before an open survey if council decides to continue exploring reclassification.

How much would it cost to become a city?

The preliminary exploration of the re-classification and associated costs will be covered under existing department budgets. That means council won't be adding to any budgets to undertake this work.

If council chooses to continue exploring city classification, further investment will be made in large scale community engagement before making a submission to the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ). If the ECQ approved the change in classification, then the name of the council would change.

The most expensive elements of re-branding are usually the physical assets (e.g. signage and printed materials), which would not be updated at once. As has been council's policy since amalgamation, signage will only be updated as it becomes necessary. This will limit the costs associated with a potential name change.

Most of the printed materials are limited to merchandise, which again would not be replaced until supplies had been exhausted. The cost of replacing the logo for digital assets (e.g. website, social media, corporate documents) would be nominal and updating would be at minimal expense other than staff time.

To find out more visit:
www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au

⁹ Local Government Regulation 2012 Part 2, Division 2, 13 (5): *The criterion for a local government area to be declared a region is that the area be created as a result of the amalgamation of 2 or more local government areas of any class.*

