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Executive Summary

The aim of the project is to develop an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for Clermont that helps the Community focus on a strategic future for the town by increasing tourism and economic development, attracting new residents and improving the quality of life for the local community. This framework will ultimately provide a vision and urban design direction for Clermont for the next 10-20 years.

The main objectives of the project include:

- Develop a framework that reflects community aspirations, the capacity of the local environment and the principals of good urban design (to guide the development of Clermont over the next decade and beyond)
- Facilitate the development of a more attractive, enriching and vibrant public realm
- Create a sustainable environment capable of supporting enterprise and providing valuable community facilities and infrastructure for the long term

An intensive consultative approach was key to developing a strong understanding of community needs and aspirations. The *Planning For Real* Process, which involved a 5 day in-town studio, provided the Project Team with an opportunity to work with a diverse range of community groups and conduct a detailed analysis of the town. The intensive nature of this consultation allowed the Project Team to develop the core direction of the Clermont UDF during this period, so that the community were able to provide their feedback and influence the report from its earliest stages of development.

From this consultation and analysis, six Strategic Directions were developed, as overarching principles for the development of Clermont's urban realm. These included:

- Consolidation: Building a strong & vibrant town through the interconnection of communities & business. The physical demonstration of cooperation & collaboration. Multifunction facilities which create spatial and built form efficiencies (buffering for the hard times / preparing for growth). Strengthening and focusing identity. The creation of a resilient urban realm that is adaptive to change.
- Connections: Creating & connecting the community with strong social links that are reinforced by the physical connections of the town – its streets, parks, paths and trails. The development of social infrastructure- seats, shade and designed congregation spaces.
- Consistency: The development of consistent quality and presentation across all aspects of the town, its urban realm, landscapes, connections, retail centre, hospitality and social infrastructure.
- Capacity: Ensuring Clermont has the capacity to meet the future demands and needs, provisions of industrial land, housing, aged care, youth.
- Presences: Increasing the towns catchment and its ability to encourage people to stop and stay considering the impact and the importance of entry statements & signage strategies. Development of a comprehensive strategy that promotes Clermont as a local and national destination.

 History: Expressing Clermont's rich history – indigenous, pioneer, settler, 1916 flood, gold / copper, Chinese connection, cattle, pastoral, mining. Ensuring that the culture of the town is visible and clearly understood. The development of a living history, that informs the present and the future.

Using these principles as a basis, the development of a structure plan for Clermont provides a framework for strategic policy and urban design initiatives over the next 10-20 years. This forward thinking approach is supported by plans that illustrate future land use, transport and pedestrian connections, open space provisions, visual character and culture within Clermont. The primary aims of the structure plan include:

- Establish a spatial framework for Clermont that promotes connectivity and consolidation to achieve a township more resilient to economic, social and environmental changes.
- Achieve sustainable development in relation to the existing character of the town and future needs of the community
- Establish priorities for development and land use changes
- Establish priorities for environmental protection and enhancement
- Identify critical transport corridors and improved connections
- Identify opportunities for community infrastructure in terms of open space, public gathering spaces, pedestrian pathways, cycle networks and community facilities
- Identify opportunities for cultural infrastructure and tourism within the township

The Precinct Plans provide a further level of detail to key projects within the structure plan, illustrating the potential of Clermont's existing community spaces and places.

These concept plans show how the structure plan objectives and principles of the UDF can be delivered in a physical sense, with corresponding descriptions explaining the intent behind each design, as well as 'before and after' imagery to illustrate the opportunities for revitalisation within these precincts.

The four precincts covered in detail include:

- The Entrance Precinct
- Hoods Lagoon & Clermont Bush Gardens
- Town Centre Precinct
- Youth Recreation Precinct

Finally, the implementation plan identifies key actions that will be required over the next 10-15 years and the probable opinion of costs. This information will provide the community and Council with both a budget and a programme for the works.

Divided into eight project areas, the implementation plan has a level of flexibility, allowing actions to be prioritised for projects according to funding and community need.

These eight areas (relating to the Precinct Plans) include:

- Rose Harris Reserve
- Town Entrance (Clermont Connector Road)
- Footpath Upgrades
- Extension of Hoods Lagoon
- Skate Park Upgrade

- Capella & Lime Street Intersection
- Bush Garden
- Other works (associated with Hoods Lagoon)

While the implemention plan focuses on the realisation of the Precinct Plans, it is anticipated that other actions relating to the Urban Design Framework will be undertaken at the same time, creating a cohesive approach to the revilatisation of Clermont.

The recommendations of the Clermont Urban Design Framework will require the continued commitment of the local community, Isaac Regional Council and Rio Tinto, as key stakeholders in the development of Clermont's future.

Through further collaboration and by fostering the relationship between the Clermont Community, Council, public and private sectors, a new vision for Clermont can be achieved.



Project Appreciation

Planning for communities in regional parts of Australia presents a unique range of challenges and opportunities which need to be understood in order to best achieve outcomes that meet the needs of the community.

Located on the slopes above Sandy Creek in Central Northern Queensland, approximately 274km drive inland from Mackay along the Peak Downs Highway, Clermont is a town with a rich and diverse history.

As the first inland Australian settlement north of the Tropic of Capricorn, Clermont was initially established to support cattle grazing in the region an industry which remains prominent today, in both the 'backbone' of the town's economy, as well as an 'ingrained' element of the township's character.

In 1861 the discovery of gold near Hoods Lagoon achieved the town sudden prominence. Further expansion of the town's economy occurred in 1862 with the discovery of copper south of the town, leading to the establishment of Copperfield and growth of the population in the area to 3500 people by 1865.

In the time since then, further mining activities in the region have resulted in fluctuations in the town's economy, population and social fabric. Historic events such as the riots against Chinese working on the gold and copper fields during the 1880's (which led to their removal from the fields in 1888), as well as the Shearers Strike in 1891 have highlighted the challenges of retaining a strong community fabric during times of economic change and the respective ebb and flow of the town's population, which today stands at approximately 1850 people

It is particularly important to recognise the effects of mining (both benefits and challenges) on Clermont's social fabric in respect to the impending closure of the Blair Athol mine, which has been a large reason for the Town's prosperity since the 1980's, and the current establishment of the Clermont mine. Challenges such as income inequity, the distribution of skilled labour across mining and agricultural industry sectors and the impact of a fly-in/fly-out employment model will all play a role in determining the community and social fabric of the town moving forward.

Clermont's local geography and environment has also played a large role in its history, and remains a key character of the town and its physical form to date. In particular, the 1916 flood stands as one of the most devastating and influential events in the Town's history, after which the entire township was literally moved from its former location north of Hoods Lagoon to the higher ground of its present day location.

The rural bush land and agricultural outlook and surrounds, as well as the nearby attractions of the Peak Ranges and Theresa Creek Dam can be considered as the primary environmental assets for the town, and are a large part of Clermont's appeal for its current residents as well as tourists to the region.

This unique mix of history and physical character provide a strong context for the Urban Design Framework, which through setting a vision for the physical form and structure of the town, aims to have a positive influence on Clermont's ongoing social fabric, economic resilience and environmental



Analysis

Extensive analysis of the town was undertaken by the project team to form a strong understanding of the issues and opportunities pertinent to Clermont. This analysis involved a diverse approach including:

- Urban Geography: A detailed physical site analysis of the town and exploration of key surrounding sites and townships including Emerald, Capella, Copperfield and Theresa Creek Dam.
- Community Consultation: Workshops, surveys and open 'drop in' sessions with key stakeholders and the Clermont Community.

The details and results of each of these analysis areas are expanded upon over the following section of this report.



Urban Geography

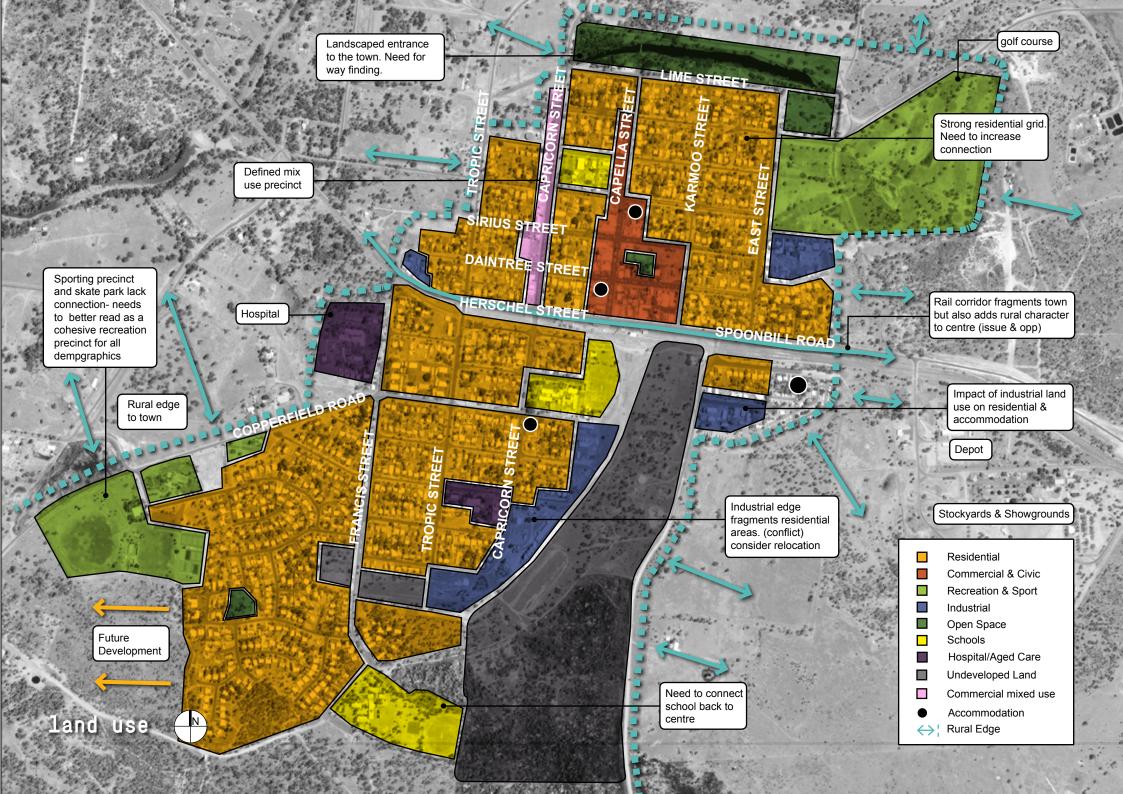
An urban planning analysis of the township was also conducted by the project consultant team during the 'Planning for Real' process.

This analysis aims to articulate the current and potential urban framework of Clermont and has been expressed in mappings covering:

- Land Use
- Connections & Wayfinding
- Open Space Function & Character
- Visual Character
- Destinations & Places
- Culture

Visits to neighbouring places of interest, including Theresa Creek Dam, historical Copperfield sites (the cemetery, chimney and store) and the towns of Emerald and Capella were also undertaken by the project consultant team as part of a broader contextual analysis of Clermont's place, identity and history in the region.

3.1 urban geography



Land Use

Clermont's physical layout reflects both the fluctuations of the town's economy over time (sporadic development without a holistic approach), and the constraints of the landform upon which the town is built (the need to keep built form away from the lower lying flood plains). This has resulted in a fragmented and elongated town form.

The commercial and civic precincts form a solid core for the town, while Hoods Lagoon, the golf course and the Sports Grounds precinct and swimming pool act to 'bookend' the township. The distance from the town centre and schools to these key recreational facilities reinforces the need for improved connections throughout the town- particularly considering the potential of future residential expansion to the south-west.

The residential areas consist of the original town on the northern side of the railway, set out in a grid on land gently sloping down to Hoods Lagoon, and the residential expansion of the town (c. 1980's) in the town's south western extent, which is situated on more undulating terrain and has adopted a cul-desac layout.

Sections of industrial land on the fringes of both the north and south residential areas of town conflict with these residential areas, their amenity and potential to accommodate future population growth without expanding the town further south-west.

Issues

- Elongated town- needs greater connection
- Fragmented land use- reduces strength of town structure and resilience
- Segmentation of town by rail reserve
- · Showgrounds under-utilised
- Seasonal flooding (restricted access, flood plains and drainage issues)
- Hoods Lagoon formal tree planting (dense & obscures views on entry to town)
- Large under utilised land areas within town centre contributing to disconnection of town elements
- Limited scope for residential expansion with current land use

Opportunities

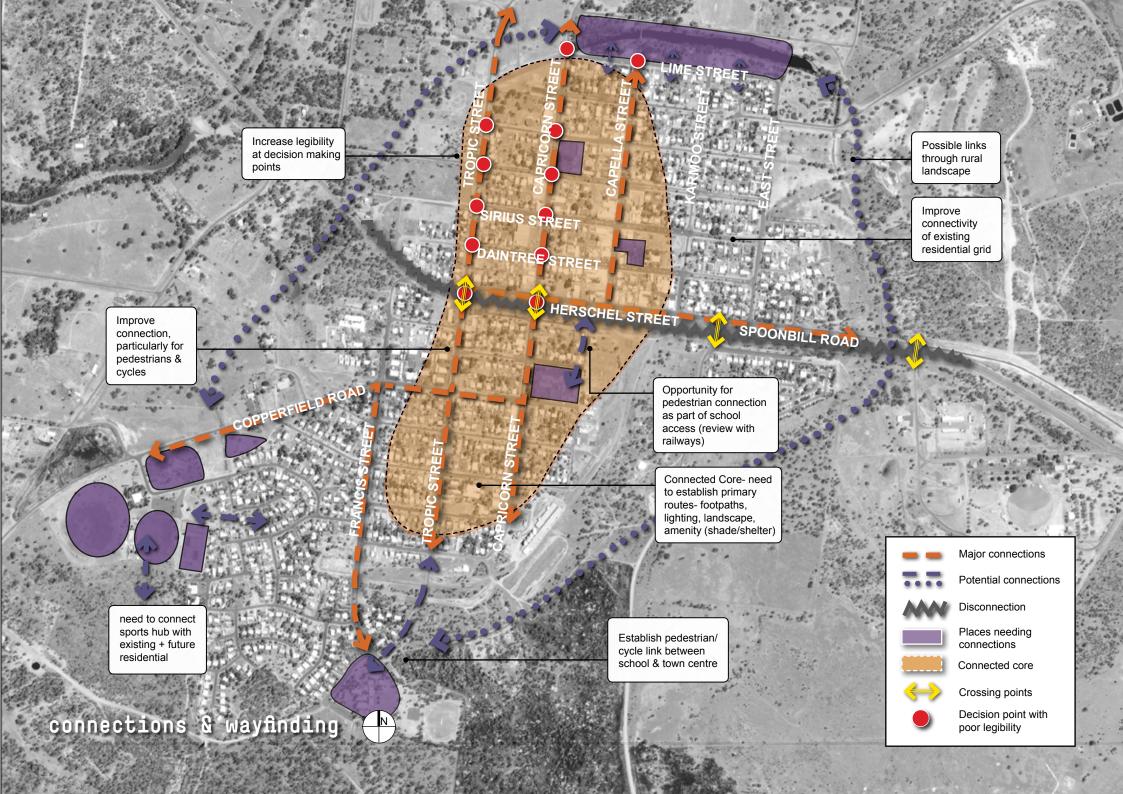
- Retain and strengthen rural edge as special town character by promoting consolidation of town rather than further expansion outwards
- Improve rail reserve function to reinforce the rural character it promotes while increasing its connectivity and cultural meaning (potential future cultural centre site?)
- Longer term review of zoning, in particular looking at the extent of the commercial zone along Capella Street and the relocation/ rezoning of industrial land to existing industrial precinct along Gregory Highway (entrance to town) and potentially the eastern end of the Alpha Road to provide additional residential land within the town.
- While respecting its unique character, explore the potential of removing several rows of Ivan Bettridge Park to allow views through to Hoods Lagoon to create a landscape entry to the town
- Review of under utilised land within town centre







land use



Connections & Wayfinding

Clermont is linked to the roundabout intersection of the Peak Downs and Gregory Highways by the Clermont Connection Road, providing a 2.4km long scenic route into the township.

The effective grid layout of Clermonts streets allows for efficient vehicular connections with multiple access routes across both the northern and southern extent of the township.

The topography of the town and poorly situated signage (including the directional signage at the roundabout intersection of the highways), however, impacts on the legibility of this street grid, making it possible to continue along the Connection road onto Tropic Street and miss the Town Centre all together, as the raised topography of the town centre prevents any visual access to this area from the lower lying access roads.

The railway line also acts as a strong disconnector between the north and south of the town, with only several crossing points (Capricorn and Tropic street) being shared by both vehicular, pedestrian and cycle traffic.

The distance between key places and destinations in the township as well as poor continuity/ provision of high quality pedestrian links (eg. shaded footpaths) makes Clermont less accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. There exists an opportunity to improve this infrastructure to reduce the high dependence on vehicles within Clermont.

Issues

- Impact of rail reserve on town connections
- Narrow paths and limited crossing points over the rail corridor create issues for users and limit access
- Strong street grid, but topography and poor signage impact on legibility & way finding
- Multiple decision points along the town entry route reduces legibility for visitors to town
- Distance and lack of connections between key destinations/places
- Elongation and fragmentation of the town requires greater emphasis to be placed on the quality of streets

Opportunities

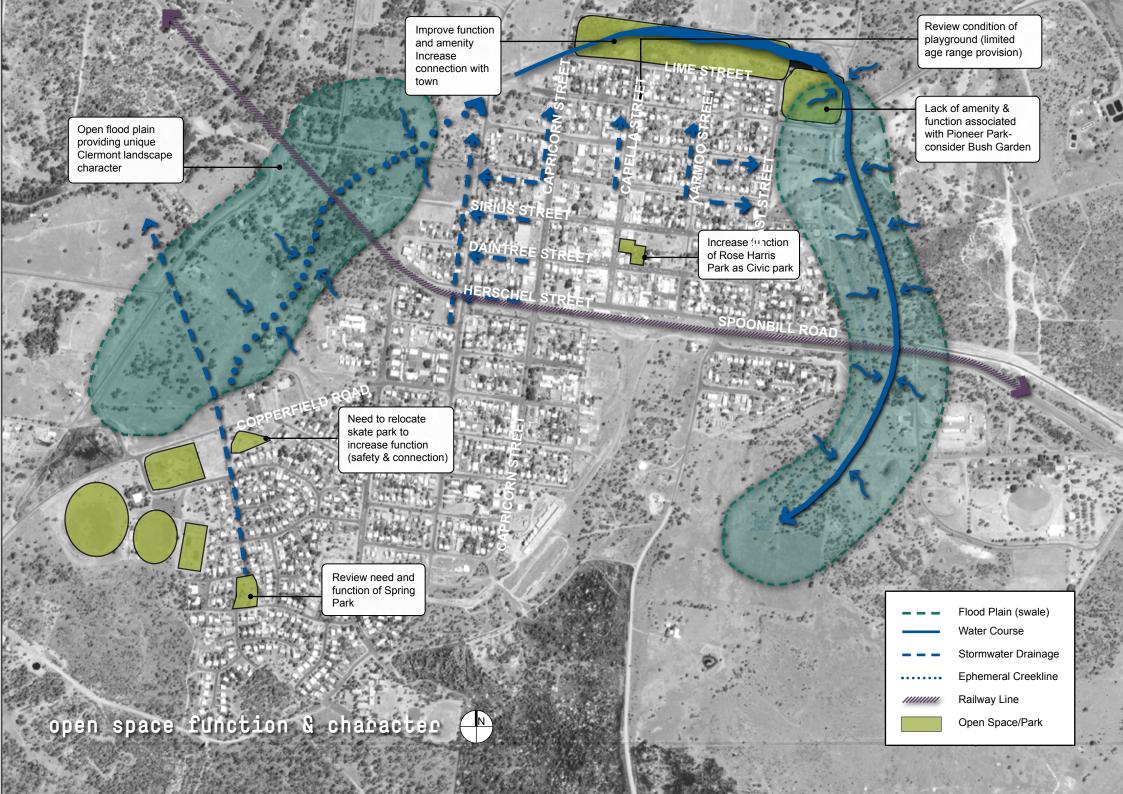
- Need to provide sustainable links (footpath and cycle trails) through grid and particularly between schools, open spaces and the town centre
- Reinforce links across the grid and to key destinations through integrated signage and landscape treatments
- Improve crossing points over the rail corridor.
 Develop designated pedestrian and cycle paths as part of the road corridor
- Develop a hierarchy of entry points into the town that provide a legible sense of arrival for visitors, while allowing flexibility for local residents
- Possible links (pedestrian/cycle) through rural landscape







connections & wayfinding



Open Space Function & Character

While there are several quality open space/ recreational facilities at the southern and northern edges of the township (namely Hoods Lagoon and the Sporting/Pool Precinct), there is a significant lack of functional open space centrally within the township, as well as issues with 'cluttering' of open spaces with dated or non-functional infrastructure.

There exists an opportunity to improve the function and appeal of Hoods Lagoon through improved programming of space and improved facilities to allow for public use and community events. The historic connections between Hoods Lagoon and the flood event and former town site could also be represented more effectively (and innovatively), to promote Hoods Lagoon as a key tourist destination.

The open flood plain landscape surrounding Clermont provides the town with a unique natural edge and rural outlook, which should be maintained.

Issues

- Lack of function and community value within existing open space (lack of play equipment, limited pathways, quality of facilities)
- Lack of connection between Town Centre, Rose Harris Park & surrounding residential areas
- Poor drainage and water quality associated with Hoods Lagoon which results in odour, weed and algal problems
- Reduced function of open space use during flood season, particularly in relation to Hoods Lagoon and Pioneer Park
- Poor connections to open space
- Pioneer Park lacks function and is difficult to maintain as quality open space for community/ visitors

Opportunities

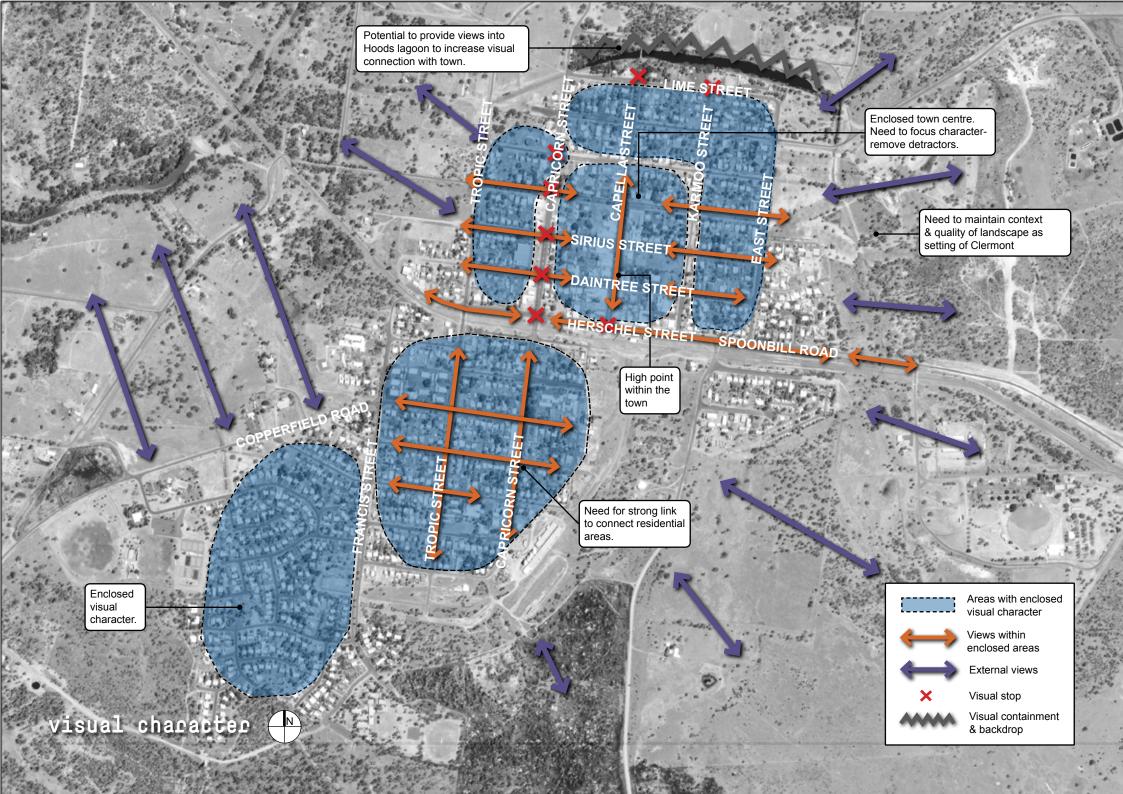
- Upgrade and increase of play equipment in key open spaces including Hoods Lagoon and Rose Harris Park to include function, value and appeal to a broad range of users (and demographics)
- Upgrade of skate park to include scooter trail and shade
- Improve aeration and flow of Hoods Lagoon.
 Opportunity to expand lagoon west of the entrance roadway, both as a strong entry statement and to increase opportunity for water management
- Increase provision of boardwalks, crossing points and paths to Hoods Lagoon, above potential flooding levels to ensure year-round access
- Review future use of Pioneer Park- and potentially develop as a 'Bush Garden' with connection back to Hoods Lagoon







open space function & character



Visual Character

Being elevated in its position, the edges of Clermont give way to impressive vistas to the surrounding agricultural and natural landscapes, forming a strong part of the township's visual character.

At the same time, however, there is a lack of visual legibility within the town itself, which makes way-finding challenging, particularly for visitors.

This also applies to the town entrance, whereby visual clutter of landscape buffers (landform, signs and vegetation) reduce the visibility of the town.

Issues

- Lack of visual connection between the Gregory Highway and Clermont reinforcing a sense of disconnection and separation
- Rubbish dump detracts from visual character along the Clermont Connector road.
- Topography of town creates enclosed and screened views reinforcing separated town centre form
- Lack of visual character and consistancy along Herschel Street to Spoonbill Road
- Visual stops (landform) reducing visual access to the town
- Visual detractors impacting on the sense of arrival into the town

Opportunities

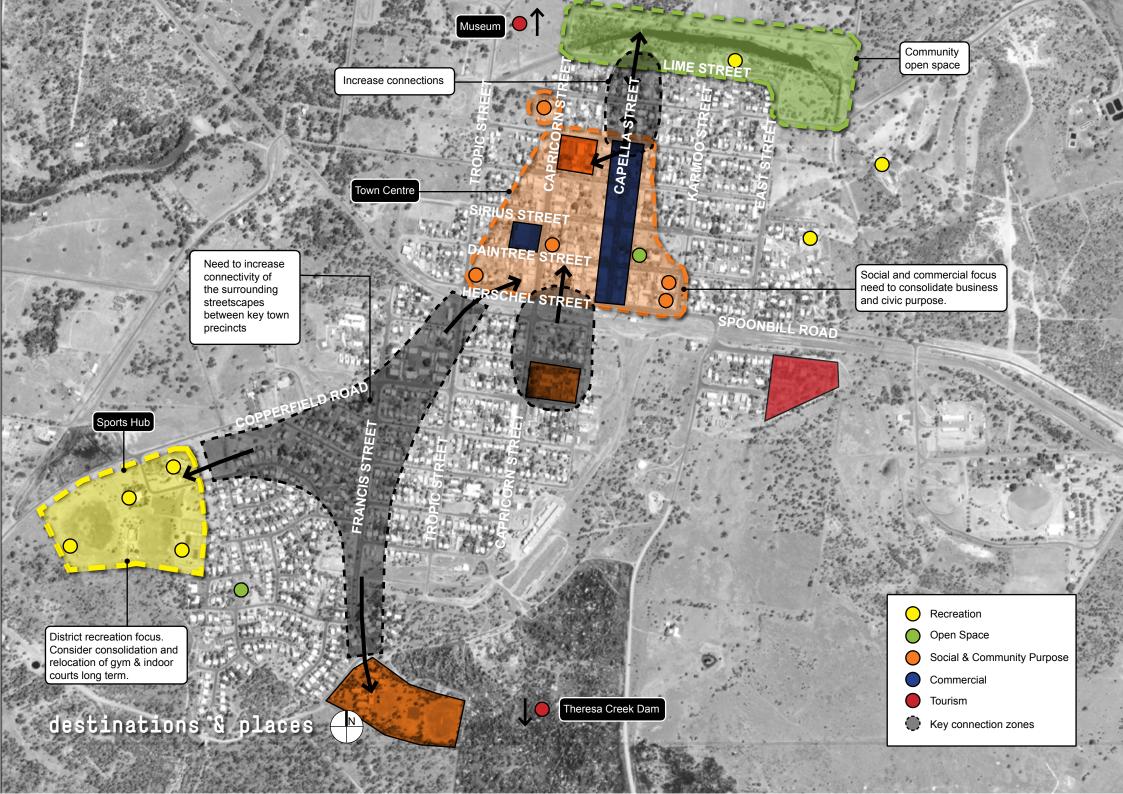
- Improve wayfinding signage to Clermont town centre from the main highway, and remove dated or unnecessary business signage from the entrance route to town.
- Improved visual connection to Hoods Lagoon could be established to create a new sense of arrival
- Earth mounding and planting along road corridor and dump boundary to close views to the dump on the way into Clermont
- Progress visual character along Herschel Stexplore opportunities for railway reserve to act as a connecting visual and landscape element between the north and south sides of town







visual character



Destinations & Places

For a town of its size and population, Clermont is well provided for in terms of community recreational facilities, due both to the earlier capital investment by Rio Tinto in community facilities for Clermont (associated with the Blair Athol mine in the 1980's), and the proximity of the town to key natural assets such as Hoods Lagoon and Theresa Creek Dam. It should be noted, however, that the infrastructure and facilities in the town's landscape open spaces are in need of review, to increase the function and value of these spaces for the community.

Other community facilities such as the library are well utilised by the community, while the town hall (part of the Civic Centre) has potential for greater utilisation.

Clermont's town centre, focused along the southern end of Capella Street provides a relatively central, though elongated commercial centre for the town, with a popular secondary commercial hub focused around the IGA supermarket on the corner of Daintree/Capricorn streets.

The challenge for the town lies in the disbursement of these key destinations in relation to communities within the town, including the 3 schools (two primary, one secondary), aged care, tourist accommodation facilities and residential areas. Improved connections would increase the community accessibility to these facilities.

Despite its rich history, historic/cultural tourism attractions are notably absent from the town, with the museum acting as the primary isolated link between Clermont's past and present.

Issues

- Disconnection of destinations and precincts
- Need to increase function and value of landscape open space
- Isolation/separation of museum limits the tourism potential for the town
- Capacity of caravan park reached
- Lack of or few visible historic destinations

Opportunities

- Improve connections between destinations, considering their use by the distinct communities of Clermont
- Increase of historical representation/ interpretation within the township
- Relocation of museum/cultural centre to town centre as high quality tourism and community link with Clermont.
- Improvements to facilities and programming associated with open space areas (age tailored playgrounds, shelters, BBQs etc)
- Increase size of Caravan Park (south of existing site)







destinations & places



Culture

From a tourism perspective, the layers and stories of Clermont's past are one of the greatest points of interest for the town. There stands a great opportunity to better represent this history throughout Clermont, for both the benefit of visitors to town as well as the local community.

While the town lacks many visible historical sites, there exists an opportunity to creatively represent the town's history through interactive and innovative means.

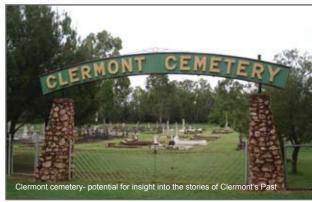
Issues

- Museum separated from main township
- Museum collection in poor housing, at risk of its integrity
- Historically representative monuments/objects are dated and lack a cohesive narrative
- Historic/character buildings within the township poorly represented
- Historic sites in or directly around the town, such as the town's old location, are poorly presented, or aren't visible at all

Opportunities

- Relocate the museum within the town centre as a cultural centre with stronger links to the community
- Given the lack of historic items of interest in the town, explore creative ways of representing Clermont's history and its stories within key community/cultural sites (eg- night time light displays projected onto Hoods Lagoon) as 'events' to activate these areas, strengthen community awareness and attract visitors to Clermont
- Improve the interpretative signage associated with historic sites such as the Copperfield chimney, Clermont Cemetery and Copperfield Cemetery







Consultation

To develop an understanding of the town from the perspective of the community, the project team undertook an initial five day consultation process 'Planning For Real' in Clermont (17-21 February 2010).

This process included meetings with key stakeholders, a workshop with community leaders & business owners, school workshops and drop-in sessions, where members of the community were able to speak to members of the project consultant team about what they saw as the issues and opportunities for Clermont. A community survey and online blog were also key tools for the collection of ideas and feedback from the community.

During the consultation period, the project team interviewed approximately 150 members of the Clermont community, and received written feedback (by way of the Clermont 2020 Town Plan Community Survey) from over 40 members of the community.

Additionally, the project team met with Shelley Pisani from Creative Regions regarding the strategy for Clermont Museum and Phil Currey (facilitator of the Clermont Community & Business Group) to ensure that the direction of the UDF linked in with the work currently being carried out by these groups.

A presentation of initial findings and feedback was provided by the project team at the end of the in-town consultation phase.

This community feedback, illustrated in chart form (Refer Appendix A), has assisted the consultant team in developing a direction for the Urban Design Framework

Following the development of the draft UDF report, the Project Team sought further community feedback by way of Public Exhibition. Coinciding with (and taking place in) the Clermont Annual Show, this exhibition allowed the community to see how their initial feedback had been reflected in the development of the report.

A second survey (completed by over 50 members of the community) supported the one-on-one discussions conducted by members of the Project Team during the show. Refer to Appendix B for a detailed summary of feedback from this stage of consultation.

Analysis Outcomes

The physical analysis of Clermont, supported and in most cases affirmed by feedback from the community, highlights the following key issues and challenges for Clermont, from an urban design perspective:

- Strong community desire for improved facilities and infrastructure, reflecting the physical analysis, which highlighted a lack of quality connections (pedestrian & cycle) between key destinations and places, as well as a lack of amenity, function and programming to open space.
- Disbursed and fragmented nature of town, due both to topography and 'unplanned' evolution of built form, open spaces and land use has reduced Clermont's legibility and resilience against future economic fluctuations, as well as the town's ability to accommodate the expansion of residential and industrial land use
- Lack of identity and quality representation of history, despite the strong community sentiment and value in Clermont's unique past.
- The desire to improve the town's appeal to the tourism market, using history and the surrounding environmental assets (Theresa Creek Dam, Hoods Lagoon, Peak Ranges) as key attractors, which in turn suggests an increased role and presence for the museum within the town and community.

- The need for a more resilient and diverse economy, less dependent on the mining industry, and in a physical sense, the need to improve the presentation and identity of the town centre to foster its appeal to new businesses and its use by the community.
- Community pride in the 'small town feel' and rural character of the town, but issues regarding its consistancy (views to dump along the entry road and poor presentation of the town centre are two physical examples of this issue).

These issues and challenges form a strong urban design context for the Urban Design Framework, sitting within the broader context of the township of Clermont and its community.

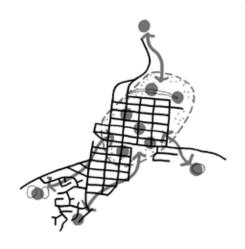
To reinforce an underlying theme of the consultation- Within a time of uncertainty for Clermont and its economy, it is evident that the community of Clermont is awakening to the need for proactive, rather than reactive change, to ensure that the town diversifies its economy while increasing its presence and identity as a unique and quality place to live, work and visit.



Strategic Directions

In order to address the analysis and consultation findings, a series of strategic directions for Clermont have been developed. These strategic directions set town wide urban frameworks which consider consolidation, connections, presences, capacity, consistency and history, and form a theoretical basis for the structure plans and precinct plans that follow later in this report.

Ultimately, working together, the intent of these strategic directions is to reinforce a culture of community throughout Clermont.





Building a strong & vibrant town through the interconnection of communities & business. The physical demonstration of cooperation & collaboration. Multifunction facilities which create spatial and built form efficiencies (buffering for the hard times / preparing for growth). Strengthening and focusing identity. The creation of a resilient urban realm that is adaptive to change.



Connections

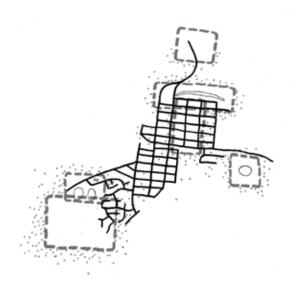
Creating & connecting the community with strong social links that are reinforced by the physical connections of the town – its streets, parks, paths and trails. The development of social infrastructure- seats, shade and designed congregation spaces.



Presences

Increasing the towns catchment and its ability to encourage people to stop and stay—considering the impact and the importance of entry statements & signage strategies.

Development of a comprehensive strategy that promotes Clermont as a local and national destination.



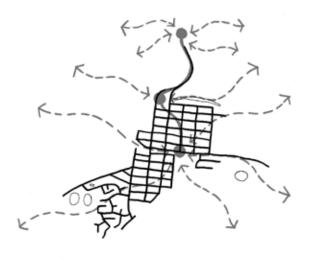
Capacity

Ensuring Clermont has the capacity to meet the future demands and needs, provisions of industrial land, housing, aged care, youth.



Consistency

The development of consistent quality and presentation across all aspects of the town, its urban realm, landscapes, connections, retail centre, hospitality and social infrastructure.



History

Expressing Clermont's rich history – indigenous, pioneer, settler, 1916 flood, gold / copper, Chinese connection, cattle, pastoral, mining. Ensuring that the culture of the town is visible and clearly understood. The development of a living history, that informs the present and the future. A history on the move¹.

¹Reference to Clermont Museum Discussion paper, by Shelley Pisani, Creative Regions



Structure Plan

The development of a structure plan for Clermont provides a framework for strategic policy and urban design initiatives over the next 10-20 years. This forward thinking approach is supported by plans that illustrate future land use, transport, pedestrian connections, open space provisions, visual character and culture within Clermont.

These plans respond to the issues and challenges identified in the analysis section of this report and are guided by the underlying strategic directions for Clermont.

Aims of the Structure Plan

- Establish a spatial vision for Clermont that promotes connectivity and consolidation to achieve a township more resilient to economic, social and environmental changes.
- Achieve sustainable development in relation to the existing character of the town and future needs of the community
- Establish priorities for development and land use changes
- Establish priorities for environmental protection and enhancement
- Identify critical transport corridors and improvements
- Identify opportunities for community infrastructure in terms of open space, public gathering spaces, pedestrian pathways, cycle networks and community facilities
- Identify opportunities for cultural infrastructure and tourism within the township

