



COFFS HARBOUR GREENS

PATHWAY TO A REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 2021 // PREPARED BY JONATHAN CASSELL





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Coffs Harbour Greens pay our respect to Gumbaynggirr Country and acknowledge the Gumbaynggirr people as the Traditional Custonians of the land and waters.



Introduction

CREATING JOBS AND PROTECTING THE PLANET

Coffs Harbour is a great place to live with a favourable climate and beautiful environment. As a result of increasing population, we now have our fair share of problems associated with housing affordability, job security, land clearing and pollution.

Our population is increasing and Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) reported that by 2040 close to 100 000 people will call Coffs Harbour home. This is a jump of 20, 000 in 20 years and why we need to make sure we have a plan that will grow jobs but also will preserve and protect the Coffs Coast.

The Coffs Harbour Greens are calling on Council to deliver on a Regional Employment and Investment Strategy (REIS) that we believe will provide Council and the wider community with many benefits from job investment, carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity and better mental health.

This document is designed to provide a pathway for the development of a REIS. The key driver of which is to make our stretch of the world as sustainable and healthy as possible while also benefiting from financial investments.

We believe we all have a role to play in making our world better. The time for action is now!

Jonathan Cassell
Greens Mayoral Candidate 2021

WHAT IS OUR PLAN

Coffs Harbour Greens *will* propose during the next term of Council that the Coffs Harbour City Council join in global efforts to strategically sequestor carbon emission in vegetation and soils.

The Greens see this goal as having a range of benefits from reducing atmospheric CO₂, improving biodiversity and water quality, and creating a new source of economic revenue for Council and private landowners.

The Australian Government's Clean Energy Regulator is responsible for managing Australia's carbon markets under the Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011.

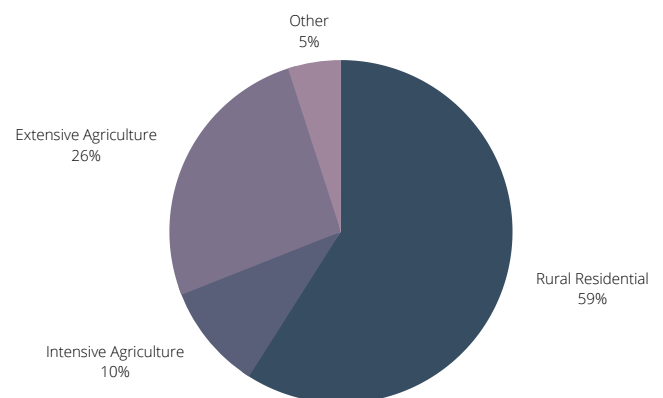
Our research finds local councils can manage a Climate Solutions Fund project that can earn Australian carbon credit units (ACCUs) for emissions avoidance or storage of carbon dioxide in vegetation and soil.

Each carbon credit represents one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions stored or avoided. Climate Solution Fund emission avoidance projects can earn carbon credits for up to seven years. Projects that store carbon dioxide are able to earn carbon credits for up to 25 years (CER, 2021).

Internal carbon pricing is increasingly used as an important tool to help companies manage climate risks and identify opportunities in the transition to a net-zero future by 2050.

CMI Survey Report 2021

Area of Land Use Type



<https://haveyoursay.coffsharbour.nsw.gov.au/coffs-harbour-rural-lands-chapter>



OUR AIMS

Coffs Harbour Greens would like to see Council develop a Regional Employment and Investment Strategy (REIS) that reduces carbon emissions, creates jobs and grows investment in our region. This plan would aim to:

- protect CHCC water supply
- make Coffs Harbour valued for its carbon-offset program
- reduce youth unemployment
- reduce long term unemployment
- foster mental and physical health outcomes
- provide meaningful and positive jobs
- provide pathways to further education
- increase ecotourism
- increase income opportunities for farmers
- achieve the offset aims of the Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan (REERP)
- see council be a leader in carbon offsetting to help guide other councils

The primary aim of this plan is to create financial wealth in our community while also preserving the natural environment.

We believe this REIS would strengthen Coffs Harbour Council's following plans:

- Local Growth Management Strategy
 - esp. Chapter 5 on Rural Lands
- MyCoffs Community Strategy
- Coffs Coast Tourism Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Coffs Harbour Coastal Management Plan
- Coffs Harbour Biodiversity Action Plan
- Orara River Rehabilitation Project

The Local Government Act 1993 directs councils to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

-IGNSW, 2021



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

ECOTOURISM

- Increased council investment in Mountain Biking tourism
- Council endorsement for the Great Koala National Park
- Eco-tourism destination
- Increase business operators
- Reduce red tape by Council and NPWS
- Federal and State grants and subsidies managed by council

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

- Linked to ACCU and international markets
- Business support in managing credits
- CHCC facilitates/manages ACCU with private landholders
- Small holding landshare agreement
- CHCC manage Voluntary Conservation Agreements (Linked to Landcare; Jalligirr Biodiversity Alliance)

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Youth Conservation Corps

- Build outdoor infrastructure
- Ecological Restoration jobs
- Based on US Youth Corps model
- Paid seasonal work
- Environmental education
- Rubbish collection

Apprenticeships/trainees

- Long term initiatives
- Small business management
- Regeneration agriculture employment
- NPWS employment
- Eco-adventure traineeships
- Career education pathway

FLOW MOUNTAIN BIKE

A photograph of a mountain biker riding a trail through a forest. The biker is wearing a blue helmet and is in the middle of a jump or a steep descent. The forest is dense with tall, thin trees and green foliage. The ground is a dirt path.

Is Woolgoolga the next big thing for mountain bikers in New South Wales?



Local koala
Coffs Harbour Creek Walk 2021

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INDUSTRY GROWTH

- Conservation and Land Management
- Eco-Adventure Tourism
- Outdoor Education
- VET and University Education (e.g. TAFE)
- Regenerative Agriculture
- Indirect industries (e.g. Hospitality, Retail)

EMPLOYMENT

- Ecotourism in existing and yet to be gazetted Nature Reserves
- Management of Nature Reserves and Regional Parks
- Planting a tree target for achieving REERP
- Review and update Priority Habitat and Corridors Strategy (PHACS)
- Management of PHACS
- Trail creation and maintenance
- Rubbish collection
- Indirect employment sectors

EDUCATION

- TAFE Conservation and Land Management Cert.
- Tourism and Outdoor Education
- Small Business Cert. IV
- High School Pathways
- University Pathways
- Peer-to-peer nature-based learning and adventure (Youth led and local)



FUNDING MODEL

\$5M PLAN OVER 5 YEARS

Council Works Program***

- 2 FTE Staff - \$200k/yr
- 5-member Teams - \$60k/yr (\$12k/pp @ \$20.33/hr + 25% casual loading*)
- 5-member Team Leaders - \$150/yr (Part-time @\$30k/pp**)

Total internal program costs = \$650-700k/yr

Private Contractors

- External grant program - \$300k/yr

*Casual @ 25.41/hr (\$12k / \$25.41 = 472.25hrs)

Casual staff employed 3 days/wk during cooler months (67 days or 5.5 months @7hrs/day)

**Youth Leaders \$750/wk (40 weeks or 10 months)

***Council Works Program delivered to maximise the financial return for private landholders and increase council revenue whilst employing internal staff and external contractors to regenerate and rehabilitate degraded lands and catchments. Council's program goes beyond achieving net-zero carbon emissions and would be considered climate positive.

AVAILABLE FUNDING

- Coffs Harbour Airport Lease Proceeds
- Environmental Levy
- Biodiversity Conservation Trust Grants
- Emissions Reduction Fund
- Future Drought Fund (\$5B Pool)
- Agriculture Biodiversity Stewardship – Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot Program (\$23M Pool)
- Building Better Regions Fund (\$250M Pool)
- COVID-19 Creative Economy Support Package – Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund (\$200M Pool)
- Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) – Million Minds Mental Health Research Mission (\$125M Pool)
- More grants at grantguru.com.au

Future Drought Fund (Overview)

This program aims to help farmers and regional communities become more prepared for, and resilient to, the impacts of drought.

National 2 D.I.Y.

Max Pool: \$5B

Status: Open

COVID-19 Creative Economy Support Package – Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund

This program seeks to provide finance to assist in the presentation of cultural and creative projects, activities and events, and to rebuild confidence amongst investors, producers and consumers.

National 4 D.I.Y. 34 days

Max Pool: \$2M

Status: Open

Date: Close 31 May 2022



STRATEGY PATHWAY

The Regional Employment and Investment Strategy complements the following CHCC strategies:

- MyCoffs Community Strategy
- Local Growth Management Strategy 2020
- North Coast Regional Plan 2036
- Regional City Action Plan 2036
- Biodiversity Action Plan 2012 - 2030
- Coffs Harbour Economic Development Strategy 2017 - 2022
- Public Realm Guidelines 2020
- Tourism Plan 2020
- Landscape Corridors Report 2015 (offline)
- Priority Habitats and Corridors Strategy 2010 - 2030
- Orara River Rehabilitation Project

SOCIAL GAINS

- Wealth equity
- Youth empowerment
- Improved mental and physical health
- Employment
- Reduced substance addiction
- Reduced crime

ENVIRONMENTAL GAINS

ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS:

- Existing reserves
- Rainforest
- Wetlands
- Endangered Ecological Communities
- Old Growth Forest
- Over-cleared vegetation types
- Estuaries (incl. 100m buffer)
- Primary and Secondary koala habitat
- 7A Environmental Protection LEP zones
- All native vegetated lands within mapped corridors

HUMAN BENEFITS:

- Clean waterways
- Clean air
- Carbon sequestration
- Drought prevention
- Improved fish stocks
- Weed eradication



REFERENCES

CER, 2021 - <http://www.cleanenergyregulator.gov.au/csf/how-you-can-benefit/Pages/how-you-can-benefit.aspx>

CMI 2021 - https://carbonmarketinstitute.org/app/uploads/2021/10/CMI-Survey-Report-2021_final.pdf

FLOW MOUNTAIN BIKE - <https://flowmountainbike.com/features/is-woolgoolga-the-next-big-thing-for-mountain-bikers-in-new-south-wales/>

IGNSW, 2021 - <https://ignsw.org.au/Public/Policy/Environment.aspx>

www.grantguru.com.au

www.wwf.org.au/what-we-do/regenerate-australia#gs.g53p1d

