



Byron Shire Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy

Consultation Summary
September 2023

Introduction

Lucid Economics has been engaged by the Byron Shire Council to deliver the Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy.

The process to develop the strategy involved consultation and engagement with the local business community.

This report provides a summary of this engagement.

Purpose of Engagement

The purpose of the engagement phase is multi-faceted:

- Gain deeper insights into the local economy and its industry sectors
- Ground truth data and evidence base from the research and analysis phase
- Clearly identify key local competitive advantages and barriers/challenges (from a business perspective)
- Clearly articulate opportunities for future growth
- Identify catalytic infrastructure that can leverage advantages or address specific barriers
- Build consensus and buy-in from local business and industry for the future strategy (and actions/initiatives)
- Develop an evidence base from local business and industry (to support the strategy and future initiatives)

Engagement Process

Together with the Shire, a consultation plan was devised that provided an overview of the engagement process as well as key stakeholders.

The engagement process included a number of activities:

- Nine industry focused workshops (May 2023)
- Two virtual workshops (July 2023)
- Dozen internal and external stakeholder interviews (July/August 2023)
- Have your say page (20 August – 3 September, 2023)

Additionally, workshops have been held with the Business Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) and Council at each stage of the project.

Finally, informal engagement with local businesses also took place, including attending the Byron Tourism Symposium as well as participating in the bike tour of the Arts and Industry Precinct with the Chamber of Commerce.

In total, over 100 stakeholders participated in the engagement process.

Discussion Points

All workshops and individual interviews had similar key discussion points:

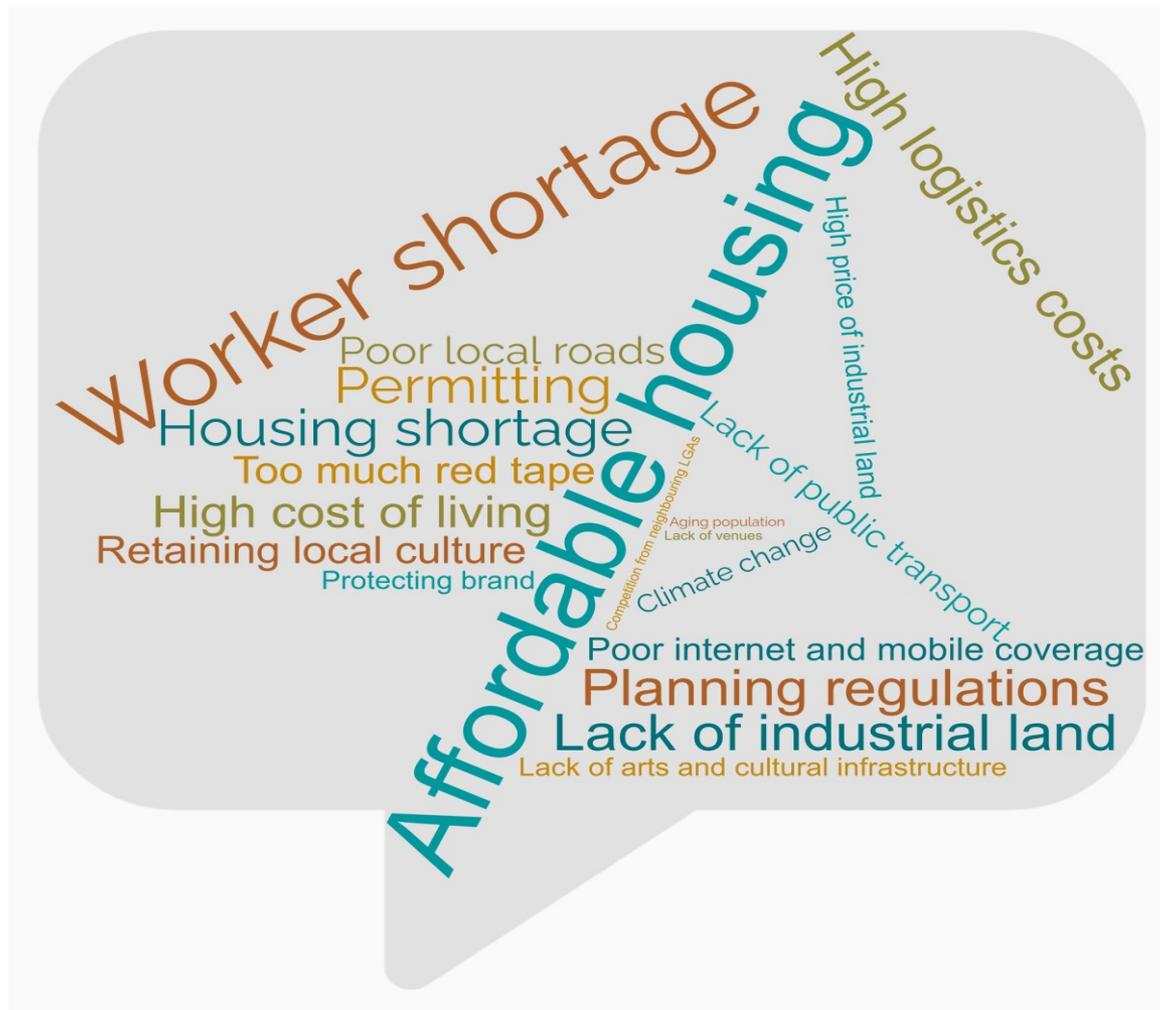
- Advantages that the local region provides for business/visitor economy
- Barriers or challenges that face the economy/visitor economy
- Opportunities to grow the future economy/visitor economy
- Role that Council can play in economic development/visitor economy

No set questionnaire or agenda was used, but rather stakeholders were asked to comment on these discussion points and a broader discussion was facilitated.

Advantage / Competitive Strengths



Barriers / Challenges



Opportunities



Role of Council

Collaboration
Supporting the arts
Planning
Support local businesses
Facilitating connections
Supporting Indigenous businesses
Marketing and promotion
Engaging with businesses
Providing infrastructure
Leadership

Summary

The engagement process has provided valuable insights from businesses into the local environment, Council's role in economic development and the visitor economy as well as input into the goal and purpose of the strategy.

The concept of balance across the economy, environment and community was often cited during the engagement. Additionally, local business stakeholders also pointed out the important role that the economy has to play locally in terms of providing jobs and access to financial resources for residents. Stakeholders mentioned that the importance of local businesses is often overlooked and underappreciated.

All stakeholders felt that Council has an important role to play in economic development and the visitor economy. Many stakeholders are seeking leadership from the Council to help define and determine what the future economy should look like.

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