

EXPLORE THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

# PIONEER VALLEY

Mountain Bike Trails



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## Mayor's Message

**The Mackay region is on a journey to make the most of our striking natural environment. Top of the list for us is an epic mountain bike trail network throughout the Pioneer Valley.**

Hiking through the subtropical rainforest of Finch Hatton and Eungella, it's easy to be overawed by its sheer beauty and magnificent sights. Imagine pedaling through this amazing landscape, exploring different trails, challenging your skills and then taking a break to truly let it all sink in – it is the perfect backdrop to appeal to any mountain biker.

From a business perspective, the mountain biking market is highly lucrative, as evidenced by international trail hotspots. Mountain bike enthusiasts travel regularly to explore new trails, providing a significant boost to local businesses and the economy at their destination. It is also one of the fastest-growing sports in the world so the time to capitalise on this opportunity for us, is now.

As we navigate the twists and turns towards realising our vision of completing the Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails, opportunities for investment abound. We invite you to get involved and share in the benefits of our developing mountain bike trails.



**Mayor Greg Williamson,**  
Mackay Regional Council

Mackay Regional Council proudly acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which this project is being realised, the Yuwi and Widi people.

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's first people and recognise the rich culture and ongoing contribution they make to our region. Through the sharing of stories that connect us to place we will build strong long-term relationships based on honesty and mutual respect.

As we work together to deliver a nature tourism product for the Pioneer Valley and the broader Mackay region, Mackay Regional Council is committed to genuine partnerships and meaningful engagement with Traditional Custodians.

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### Disclaimer

Information contained in this document is based on available data at the time of production (April, 2023). Although care has been taken to ensure the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information provided, Mackay Regional Council assumes no responsibility nor shall be liable for any direct, indirect, special or incidental damage resulting from, arising out of or in connection with the use of this information. Subject to the above conditions, this document may be transmitted, reproduced or disseminated only in its entirety.

# What are the opportunities?

## Overview

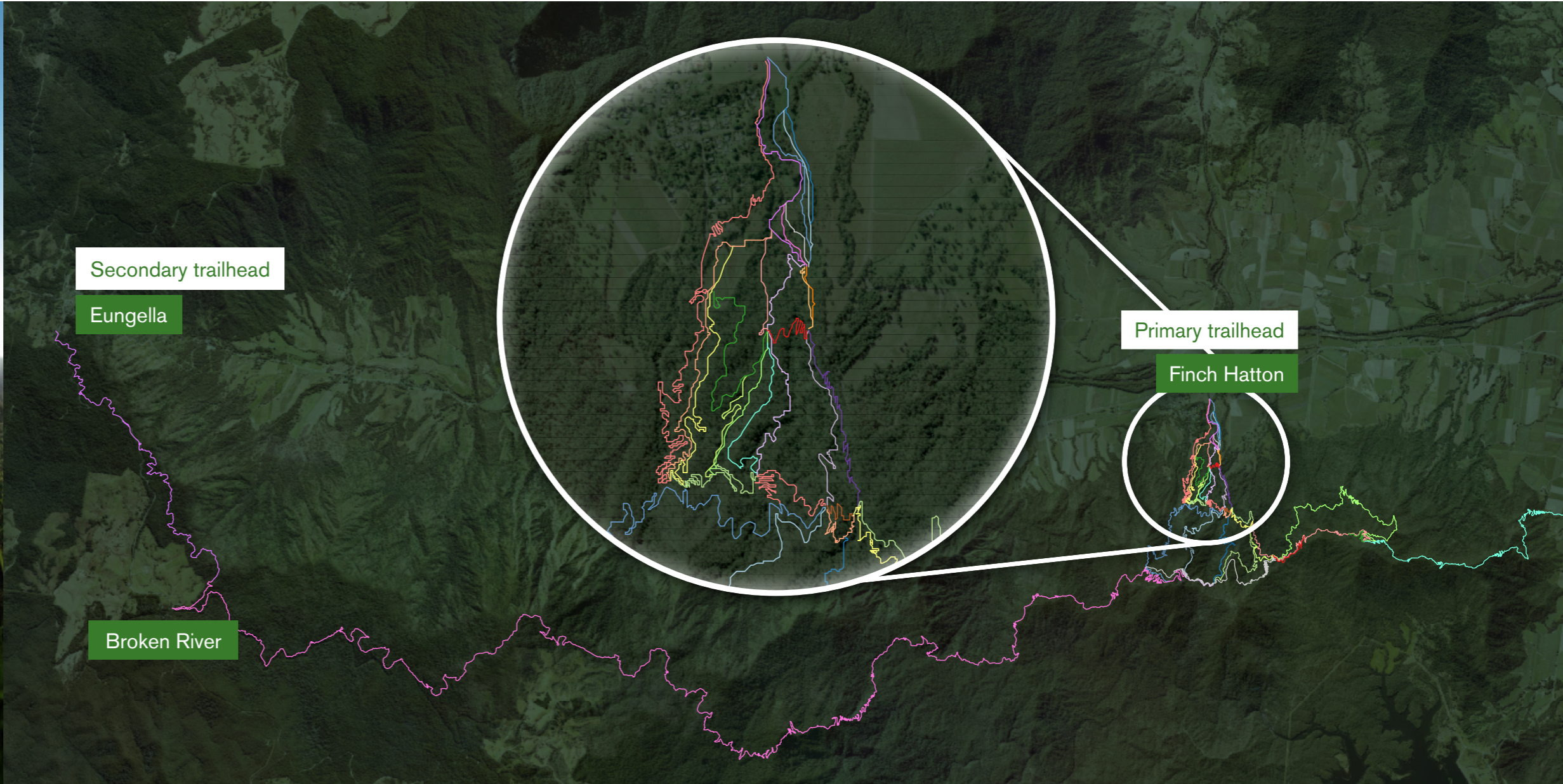
What mountain biker doesn't want to wind their way through Australia's longest stretch of lush subtropical rainforest? Not one we've met so far! The Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails Project is a unique opportunity to provide mountain bikers with a world class biking experience – that will lead to significant economic benefits to the Mackay region, Queensland tourism and local businesses.



### The proposed trail network

Stretching across Eungella and Finch Hatton, the proposed Mountain Bike Park will be 95km of single-direction bike trails suitable for all types of riders.

Construction of Stage 1, including 13km of trails, a pump track and the primary trailhead, is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2023.



**40**  
Mountain bike trails

**11**  
“Easy” rated trails

**21**  
“Intermediate” rated trails

**8**  
“Difficult” rated trails

**1**  
Asphalt pump track

# The economic impact

After 10 years of operation, the mountain bike trails are estimated to generate:

**31,000**

**Total annual riders**

**5,000**

International riders

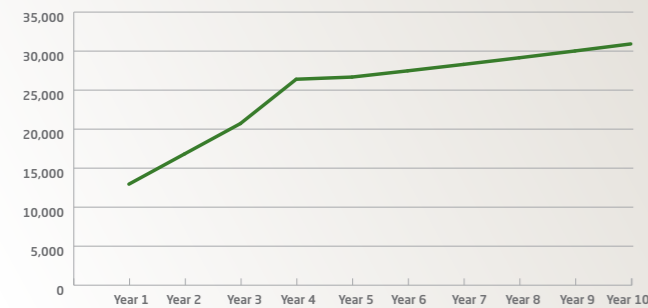
**22,000**

Domestic riders

**4,000**

Local riders

Total annual riders



Source: MCA modelling and estimates, July 2019.

Total annual spending



Source: MCA modelling and estimates, February 2020.

**65,200** Total annual rides

**15,600** International visitor rides

**33,000** Domestic rides

**16,600** Local rides

**\$18M** Total annual spending

**\$2.9M** Spending day visitors

**\$13.4M** Spending overnight visitors

**\$1.7M** Event spending

**\$6.6M** Additional regional annual income

**\$1.2M** Income through day visitors

**\$4.8M** Income through overnight visitors

**\$0.6M** Income through events



Greater tourism interest for the region, both nationally and internationally



## New jobs for our region

**110** Full time equivalent jobs

**93** Direct jobs

**17** Indirect jobs

Just to give an example – this could include accommodation, food and beverage, recreational services, retail, health, transportation, communication and education.



Significant construction and ongoing job opportunities

During the construction phase, the mountain bike trails are estimated to generate:

**38**

**Full time equivalent jobs**

**33**

Construction jobs

**5**

Materials jobs

## EVAN CORRY

MEMBER, MACKAY REGION MOUNTAIN BIKE ALLIANCE

“Growing up in Mackay, the Pioneer Valley has always been my favourite backyard. I look forward to sharing this beautiful Valley with the rest of the world through the addition of this world class mountain bike facility.

I believe the positive economic ripples will be felt across all sectors of the Valley, Mackay and beyond.”

# Project timeline

The Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails Project was identified in 2018 as a key priority for the region and has since progressed through to the staged delivery of the trails. The current focus is on construction of stage 1, while establishing project investment from both the public and private sectors. Stage 1 comprises of 16 trails stretched over 13km, the primary trailhead and a pump track in Finch Hatton.

## 2019

- Mackay Region Mountain Bike Strategy completed

## 2020

- Mackay Region Mountain Bike Alliance established
- Feasibility study completed
- Preliminary investigations and community consultation commenced (Finch Hatton and Eungella planning frameworks)

## 2021

- \$500,000 funding from Queensland State Government secured
- Trailhead master plan workshops and concepts completed
- Round 1 of Small Business Mentoring Program completed
- Land at Finch Hatton trailhead site acquired
- Dedicated Project Engagement Officer appointed
- Cattle Creek Mill Administration Building restored

## 2022

- Finch Hatton and Eungella planning frameworks completed
- Major amendment 3 state interest review commenced
- Environmental assessments for stage 1 finalised
- Cultural assessments for stage 1 commenced
- Environmental and cultural assessments for stage 2 commenced
- Concepts for Finch Hatton Streetscape Project drafted
- Trail network ground truthing completed
- Detailed design of Finch Hatton trailhead completed
- Development application for stage 1 approved
- Round 2 of Small Business Mentoring Program completed

## Work in progress

- Construction of stage 1
- Local community and stakeholder engagement
- Finalising Finch Hatton Streetscape concepts
- Finalising cultural management plan for stage 1 & 2
- Finalising environmental management plan for stage 2
- Concept design for signage and wayfinding
- Developing the mountain bike trail destination brand
- Building the mountain biking tourism product
- Mobilising mountain biking stakeholders

## Up next

- Seek approvals from relevant agencies for stage 2
- Secure project funding
- Detailed design of stage 2

## ELLEN EVERETT,

CO-OWNER, FLAME TREE ECO STAYS

"The Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails creates new opportunities for tourism, food and accommodation businesses to start up in the Valley, to encourage visitors to stay and explore our region. Flame Tree Eco Stays will provide quality and luxury accommodation for guests seeking an Eco-positive experience. We're excited to share with guests as much local produce and products as we can get our hands on. The natural beauty, the people; there is so much to explore!"

## Point of difference

Mountain biking is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world, and this tourist market segment is highly lucrative. But what can our region offer that others can't?



The unique setting of Australia's longest tract of subtropical rainforest

- Stunning natural environment
- Perfect riding conditions year-round
- Excellent elevation
- Substantial trail land availability
- Connectivity of township to trailhead
- Trail diversity providing for all disciplines and levels
- Proximity to a major regional city and airport
- Supporting infrastructure
- Diverse range of complementing tourism product opportunities
- Supportive community
- Strategic alignment with the state's and region's tourism and economic development goals

95km

of international-standard trails

36km

adventure trail

3+ days'

worth of world-class riding experiences

40

mountain bike trails

## GRACE MCDONALD

ARTIST AND OWNER, AZURE GLASS

"A unique experience awaits for all who will visit the Pioneer Valley to play, eat, stay and create memories.

When they're not riding the trails, visitors can enjoy hands-on art experiences to create handcrafted, recycled glass keepsakes that they can take home.

We have a huge diverse range of artistic people in the Valley; people who create art with food, produce and tours that visitors can experience. This is what will bring visitors back to our region year-after-year."

## Supporting infrastructure and services

Through a committed network of local stakeholders and additional investment and support, this one-of-a-kind biking experience is aimed to be supplemented with:

**Critical rider services** – including accommodation, eateries and equipment services

**Tourism hotspots** – highlights along the trails to enhance the rider's stay

**Globally recognised events** – supported by car parking and amenities to suit

# Commercial opportunities

With the right location, a solid market and unwavering support – anything is possible in business! These are examples of just some of the commercial enterprises that could benefit from being involved.



## Short stay accommodation

Mountain bikers will often travel with their own equipment, and this type of holiday tends to be a family affair or with a group of like-minded friends. Therefore, accommodation that allows for short stays, but offers spacious living would be high on their priority list.



## Retail and recreation

After a long day of riding the trails, what sounds better than a deep tissue massage followed by a sauna to relax and unwind? Or heading to the local brewery for a craft beer tasting? Outside of the essentials like accommodation and food, there are a wealth of opportunities for businesses who can enhance the holiday experience for travellers.



## Business expansion and relocation

Destination tourism is an enviable product for any region. Growing a new tourism destination in the Pioneer Valley will provide a variety of opportunities for businesses in other sectors to expand or relocate to the region. With more business activity in the Pioneer Valley, support services will be in greater demand.



## Food and beverage

From family-friendly eateries to a good, strong coffee at a locally-loved café – these visitors are looking to fully experience all that the local area has to offer in dining options. Local produce is often a sought-after highlight.



## Nature tourism

Alongside the trails, there are plenty of other opportunities for businesses who offer complementary adventure experiences – such as equipment hire and tours for water sports, hiking, offroading and more. Unique camping options, birdwatching tours, photography classes – adventure can come in many forms!



## Government support

Alongside Mackay Regional Council's commitment to this specific project, commercial investors may also find additional support from the [Facilitating Development in the Mackay Region Policy](#). This policy looks to support private investment that will generate employment, diversify our economy and value-add to existing businesses and industry.



## Timely transport

Travelling with a bike can be tricky! From airport transfers to hire cars to shuttle providers, these visitors will need transport just like any other tourist – however they will need additional support to ensure the preservation of their bike.



## Mountain bike essentials

While a seasoned mountain biker will bring their own equipment, someone new to the sport will be looking to hire – and this type of rider is often attracted to regional trails. No matter what their equipment source, all riders could make use of bike-essential services – such as maintenance and parts, trail information and tours, and destination merchandise.

## JUANITA BOSEL

### CO-OWNER, BUSH LEMON FARM

"The Pioneer Valley will become a real outdoors, adventure tourism destination, attracting visitors seeking an experience that is beneficial to their health, happiness and wellbeing. We are excited to grow an agritourism business which connects locals and visitors alike to local, ethically farmed produce. In partnering with like-minded businesses, we are proud to add to the diverse experiences offered to visitors, which will entice them to return time-after-time."

# Who are mountain bikers?

## Data profile

Mountain bikers will travel with the primary purpose of getting out on the trails – seeking unique settings that also offer convenience and accessibility.

### The average mountain bike rider is:

Predominantly male, with female participation rapidly increasing

25-44 years

Rides 2-3 times per week

\$100,000-\$180,000+ annual household income

Owns one or two bikes, valued between \$3,000-\$7,000

Well educated

**Mountain bike riders also tend to be a big help in maintaining mountain bike trails – voluntarily pitching in to preserve trails whether at home or away. This is because of their genuine passion for the sport, and the community feeling that it fosters.**

## Economic profile

Existing mountain biking destinations are seeing hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, and it is becoming an increasingly competitive market.

### Here's why:

1-3 trips per year

2-5 nights length of stay, depending on trail volume and quality

2-6 travel group size

\$1,700 average spend per trip

### But what is it that they're looking for?

- Product that is bookable online (booking on average 6-12 months in advance)
- Ability to travel with their bike
- Convenient facilities that make the experience complete
- Connection with nature – an escape from society
- Fun and the opportunity to feel the flow of a trail
- Challenges that test their technical skill
- Exercise that strengthens the body and mind
- Variety of trails that have their own personalities
- Connections to other trails and routes that create a range of possibilities
- Camaraderie between friends and new acquaintances
- A sense of belonging from trails that welcome mountain bikers



# Case studies

## Destination spotlight: Blue Derby, Tasmania

When the local mine closed in 1948, the town of Derby went into a steady decline – with their average annual household income dwindling and their median age skyrocketing. In 2015, they were down to a population of just 173 – and then their council opened up a network of high-quality mountain bike trails throughout their hills. A number of investments have been made since for upgrades to both the trails and the supporting businesses that surround it – and the results are outstanding.

### Fast-forward six years to 2021, when Derby recorded:

**30,000+**

**Mountain biking visitors**

**4-5**

**Nights average stay**

**\$15-\$18 million**

**Economic impact**

Property values have increased significantly with homes that once sold for \$30,000, now worth \$300,000. As mountain biking popularity continues to grow, the Blue Derby experience is expected to attract more than 138,000 visitors, create 51 full time jobs and add a further \$6.88 million to the economy. Not only has their local economy and community flourished, but they have also become a beacon of tourism for Tasmania.<sup>1</sup>



Watch this clip from ABC News on how mountain biking helped to save the town of Derby.

## Destination snapshots:

### Smithfield, Cairns

When Smithfield hosted their first UCI Mountain Bike Cross Country and Downhill World Cup in 2014, it resulted in an estimated \$3.5 million boost to the local economy.<sup>2</sup>

### Queenstown, New Zealand

The mountain bike trail network in Queenstown is not only highly rated, as of 2017 it was bringing in an annual \$64.95 million from trail users and generating 297.2 direct and 38.1 indirect jobs.<sup>3</sup>

### Munda Biddi Trail, Western Australia

The Munda Biddi Trail is definitely on the bucket list for many cross-country mountain bikers. Operational for over 10 years, the destination continues to grow in length, quality and reputation. With more than 1,000km of wilderness trail, annual visitation is around 88,000 people. 47,000 of those choose to stay overnight.<sup>4</sup>

Source materials  
1. Tourism Recreation Conservation / www.trctourism.com 2. Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy 2018. 3. Review of Economic Impact of Queenstown Mountain Bike Trails. Tourism Recreation Conservation. 4. Mackay Region Mountain Bike Strategy.

# Where is it all happening?

The Mackay region delivers \$11.4 billion in Gross Regional Product annually. Our economic landscape is innovative, forward thinking and embraces transformation to capture future opportunities.

## Regional Economy

**Mackay GRP**  
**\$11.4B**

Mackay Output \$22.925B  
Source: REMPLAN

**MINE** \$3B - 28%  
**CONSTRUCTION** \$839M - 7.8%  
**MFG** \$624M - 5.8%

Source: GVA 2021-2022

**GRP PER CAPITA** 2021

**MACKAY**  
**\$93,859**  
**MACKAY - ISAAC - WHITSUNDAY**  
**\$183,024**

**QUEENSLAND**  
**\$86,787**

Source: REMPLAN

## TOP 5 SECTORS 2021

### INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTION

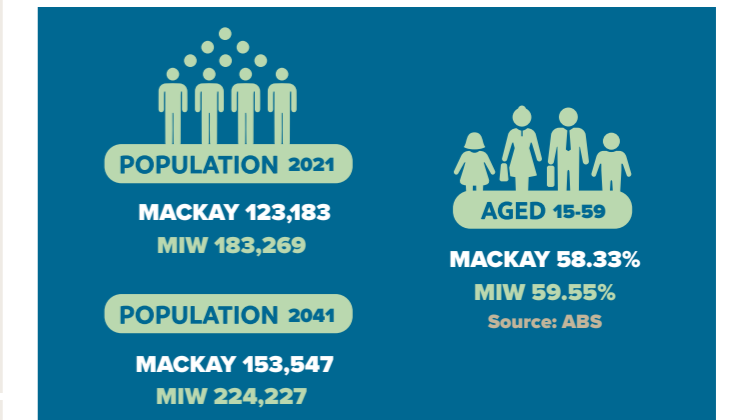
- MINING** \$3B - 28%
- RENTAL, HIRING & REAL ESTATE SERVICES** \$1.2B - 11.4%
- CONSTRUCTION** \$839M - 7.8%
- HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE** \$826M - 7.6%
- TRANSPORT, POSTAL & WAREHOUSING** \$673M - 6.2%

Source: REMPLAN

### JOB

- HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE** 8,342 - 15.3%
- RETAIL TRADE** 5,662 - 10.4%
- CONSTRUCTION** 5,006 - 9.2%
- EDUCATION AND TRAINING** 4,471 - 8.2%
- MANUFACTURING** 3,737 - 6.8%

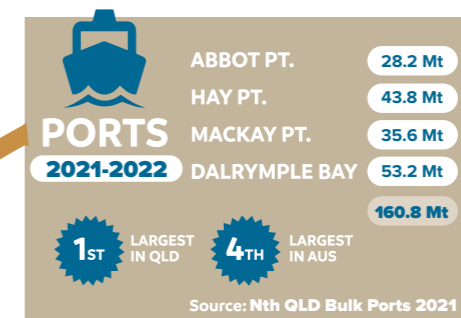
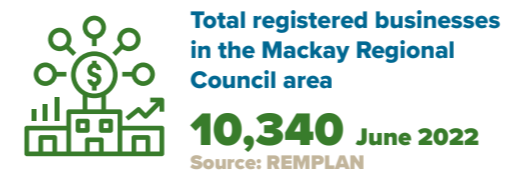
Source: REMPLAN



## UNEMPLOYMENT September quarter 2022

**MACKAY** 2.7%  
**MACKAY - ISAAC - WHITSUNDAY** 2.2%  
**QUEENSLAND** 3.7%

Source: SALM



# Tourism snapshot

The Queensland Mountain Bike Strategy undertook a multi-criteria analysis and identified Mackay as a high priority location for the development of mountain bike tourism. The Mackay region offers a unique point of difference to the mountain biking community and brings all the elements of nature and wildlife together.

## Domestic overnight visitation

For the year ending September 2022, international visitor data may not be representative of changing travel behaviour during lockdown periods and is therefore not represented. Domestic holiday visitation in the Mackay Isaac region increased by 13.3% on average over the three years ending September 2022.



**4.9M**

**Total number of visitor nights**

**1.2M**

**Total visitors**

**\$584M**

**Total visitor expenditure**



## Why visit Mackay?

In keeping with the interests of our typical mountain bike traveller, the region's tourism hero experiences are perfectly suited to this market segment:

**Cape Hillsborough** – waking up with the wallabies

**Eungella** – the trick in finding a platypus or two

**Fishing and boating** – adventures available all year round

**Islands and reef** – the gateway to the Whitsundays and our Great Barrier Reef

**Culinary experiences** – local produce is celebrated in our region

**Events** – cultural, arts, entertainment, family-friendly, and so much more

**AL GRUNDY**

**CEO, MACKAY ISAAC TOURISM**

“The Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails will help build our leisure tourism offer, attract visitors to stay longer and spend more. This investment is the catalyst to future investments in accommodation, cafes, bars, restaurants, and other tourism products all leading to employment opportunity and local prosperity. The trails will help to place our region on the leisure tourism map and attract international visitation.”

## Support network

The passion for mountain biking is alive and well in the Mackay region! Not only that, but the focus on growing tourism and investment is a high priority – amongst local government, private enterprise and the local community.

**The current support network available for interested investors to tap into includes:**

### Mackay Regional Council

As the major project lead, Mackay Regional Council is wholly committed to realising the vision for the Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails. Council has already provided a substantial amount of funding and resources, and will continue to do so as interest for the project grows. Construction of stage 1 is approved and fully funded by Mackay Regional Council. In addition to overall business support through the Facilitating Development in the Mackay Region Policy, council's Economic Development team is dedicated to continue to drive this project.

### Mackay Region Mountain Bike Alliance

Established in 2020, the primary purpose of the Alliance is to engage with stakeholders and advocate for the completion of this project. This key reference and coordination group consists of relevant local and state government departments, Mackay Isaac Tourism, Mackay and District Mountain Bike Club, commercial operators, community and industry representatives.

### Business support

The local tourism body, Mackay Isaac Tourism, works hand-in-hand with many other business support organisations in our region – such as the Mackay Region Chamber of Commerce, Split Spaces, Greater Whitsunday Alliance and more.



# Next steps



For more information on how to be involved with the Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails Project, please contact Mackay Regional Council's Economic Development team.

**Phone** 1300 MACKAY (622 529)

**Email** [business@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:business@mackay.qld.gov.au)

[www.investmackay.com](http://www.investmackay.com)

For any other questions relating to the Pioneer Valley Mountain Bike Trails Project, please contact our Community Engagement team.

**Phone** 1300 MACKAY (622 529)

**Email** [engagement@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:engagement@mackay.qld.gov.au)



To find out more about recent developments, access available resources and receive project updates straight to your email inbox, register at [www.connectingmackay.com.au/mountain-bike-trails](http://www.connectingmackay.com.au/mountain-bike-trails).



Keep up-to-date with all investment opportunities and business happenings in the Mackay region by subscribing to the Invested in Mackay newsletter at <https://bit.ly/investedinmackay>.



## Other key contacts include:



### Mackay Isaac Tourism

[ceo@mackayregion.com](mailto:ceo@mackayregion.com)

[mackayregion.com](http://mackayregion.com)



### Mackay Region Chamber of Commerce

[admin@mackayregionchamber.com.au](mailto:admin@mackayregionchamber.com.au)

[mackayregionchamber.com.au](http://mackayregionchamber.com.au)



### Greater Whitsunday Alliance

[admin@gw3.com.au](mailto:admin@gw3.com.au)

[gw3.com.au](http://gw3.com.au)



### Mackay and District Mountain Bike Club

[president@madmtbc.net](mailto:president@madmtbc.net)

[facebook.com/madmtbc](https://facebook.com/madmtbc)



### Split Spaces

[manager@splitspaces.com.au](mailto:manager@splitspaces.com.au)

[splitspaces.com.au](http://splitspaces.com.au)