

Thriving Mount Isa Community

Pathways, strategies and actions for a thriving Mount Isa community

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Future ready development considerations

Future readiness dimension	Potential Actions
Strong and Resilient Economy	Implement community benefit sharing for new development with and for community.
	Develop the workforce needed for new development through fostering partnerships between government and business to co-design and deliver medium to long term training and employment programs into new industries and major projects.
	Support equitable access reliable, affordable decarbonised energy, including targeted support to vulnerable individuals and families in the community.
Decarbonisation	Incorporate low emissions and energy efficiency measures into new infrastructure.
Climate adaptation	Consider potential climate impacts in the business case for new developments.
	Consider climate resilience in the selection of new sites for development.
	Design and manage new facilities to be climate resilient by incorporating climate resilience into new building design to withstand predicted climate conditions of increased rainfall variability, increased periods of hot days and fire.
Circular design	Incorporate circular design into new facility design and construction for example use of recycled materials.
Environmental impact and regeneration	Work with Traditional Owners to understand the environmental value of new and potential development sites. This could occur as part of cultural heritage survey process.
	Work with Traditional Owners to incorporate their knowledge and experience into an environmental management plan for new sites - to protect biodiversity, minimise negative environmental impacts and implement regenerative practices.
	Avoid development of sites of significant environmental value, and prioritise already disturbed sites for locating infrastructure.
	Minimise land impacts from new development for example implement appropriate practices to control erosion and health of adjacent waterways in new industry development.
	Explore regenerative opportunities in conjunction with new developments.
Liveability and social wellbeing	Build the capacity of community organisations and community members to participate meaningfully in planning and the negotiation of beneficial outcomes from new projects, and resource community participation.
	Build the capacity of project developers to understand and implement leading practice in community consultation, participation in decision making and benefit sharing with Traditional Owners and the community.
	Strengthen relationships between Native Title holders and proponents to enable increased coordination and collaboration regarding new development and Traditional Owner aspirations for economic development and benefit sharing.
	Ensure free, prior and informed consent is obtained from Native Title holders, by new project developers, especially mining and minerals processing proponents.
	Protect cultural heritage items and sites of cultural significance. Avoid negative impacts from new development.
	Strengthen engagement with Traditional Owners and the engagement of cultural heritage survey services during the review of new development site options, to avoid impacting cultural sites.

Pathway 1: Strengthen workforce development, education and training

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Invest in a strategic, long-term approach to workforce development	Invest in the delivery of Mount Isa's RJC Annual Action Plan and the continuation of the RJC and Regional Jobs Coordinator position.
	Connect RJC Working Groups with the resources they need to successfully implement initiatives to address opportunities and barriers to workforce development.
	Build new capability and excellence in innovation, teaching and research to strengthen industry development in the resource, energy and manufacturing sectors, including the Critical Minerals and Rare Earth Elements Research Centre.
2. Strengthen initiatives to support people seeking new employment	Coordinate support for workers well in advance of planned closures or substantive changes to the workforce. Support may include redeployment and training schemes, income support, and early retirement schemes.
	Coordinate with companies implementing closure plans or managing contracting operations to understand and maximise worker and community outcomes in relation to closure timelines.
	Ensure companies effectively discharge their obligations to workers and communities, including through the provision of transition support, regional investment and community dialogues.
	Enhance the digital skills of job seekers to better connect to economic opportunities such as training, jobs and markets, such as Mount Isa Library's 1 on 1 Technology Help initiative.
	Deliver and expand targeted skills and training programs for under-employed cohorts, including but not limited to young people, mature-age job seekers, women, and people with a disability.
	Increase participation in training programs and apprenticeships for job seekers to access and retain new employment opportunities.
	Connect and support local businesses and community organisations to identify training and employment opportunities and deliver employment support initiatives.
3. Share the benefits of moving to Mount Isa with potential workers in sectors experiencing a workforce shortage	Advocate for and support initiatives that attract resident workers to Mount Isa for priority sectors, including training, education and professional development opportunities, higher salaries and benefits, sponsorship, and appropriate tax incentives.
	Work with the Queensland Government to review and increase skilled migration caps into remote areas like the North West region.
	Expand promotional activities that engage students and potential workers, such as offering remote work experience placements and participation in university open days in major cities.
	Address key barriers to workforce entry and retention, including investing in diverse childcare options and supporting flexible work hours to meet the needs of workers.
	Foster partnerships between government, businesses and unions to co-design and deliver medium to long-term training and employment programs into new industries. This could include on-the-job training and apprenticeship schemes.
	Improve planning and coordination of capital works projects to identify local economic development opportunities, increase local skill development and inclusive employment outcomes, and increase supplier diversity and readiness.

4. Strengthen education and career pathways for students in growing industries and service areas.	Support students to develop the skills and knowledge for employment in new and emerging industries in Mount Isa. This includes training, skills development and workforce planning strategies focused on specific programs for Youth and First Nations people, to ensure career pathways in Mount Isa and the North West Region are visible and achievable.
	Provide job readiness training, pre and post-employment support to improve student transitions to further education, training and employment.
	Invest in education, training programs and apprenticeships for priority workforce shortages.
	Increase investment in vocational education and training (VET) and tertiary education providers, including TAFE and the Country Universities Centre.
5. Strengthen coordination and collaboration in education	Expand existing initiatives, such as the education precinct model, that aim to improve coordination and collaboration to deliver stronger outcomes for students, families, educators and the broader school community.
	Invest in professional development and resources for leaders and staff within education institutions to strengthen their capacity for the delivery of strong and coordinated student outcomes.

Pathway 2: Strengthen the small and medium enterprise sector

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Strengthen existing SMEs	Increase participation in existing initiatives to build the capacity of businesses and deliver additional programs to fill capacity gaps.
	Establish a dedicated business hub to share resources with SMEs.
	Strengthen opportunities for SMEs to access to finance and investment.
	Address barriers to SME viability, including land access and affordable power.
	Invest in initiatives to support specific business led by specific cohorts including women, First Nations people and young people.
2. Attract and support new SMEs, including social enterprises	Stimulate new business establishment through improved access to innovation and entrepreneurship programs and early-stage business support, such as incubators.
	Connect new entrepreneurs with start-up resources to catalyse innovation and support the design and testing of new products and services, for example seed funding.
	Foster new social enterprises that address a specific area of social need and/or provide supported employment and career pathways for an under-employed cohort.
	Catalyse the establishment of new business/social enterprise that addresses market gaps and/or specific community needs including opportunities based on circular economy principles. Examples include tyre and glass recycling, furniture and whitegoods repair and resale, waste oil recycling, fresh produce sales.
3. Position and prepare SMEs for Mount Isa's economic transition	Invite the participation of SMEs in planning and progress updates regarding Mount Isa's economic diversification and transition, so they are well informed and can best position their business in a changing economic climate.
	Deliver targeted initiatives with SMEs regarding new and emerging industries so that they can innovate and realise new market opportunities.
	Work with industry to promote and support increased procurement through local SMEs.
4. Support future ready business practices	Provide SMEs with resources and guidance to understand and implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decarbonisation plans, energy efficiency measures, transition from diesel to renewable energy and options for solar energy systems. - Climate adaptation plans for their property, facilities and operations. - Sustainability plans and environmental practice improvements.
	Facilitate knowledge sharing regarding the implementation of new business practices and collaboration to identify solutions to common issues.
	Facilitate business networks and introductions so that SMEs can connect with circular economy opportunities in the region.
	Bring SMEs together to coordinate and collaborate on their investment into community programs to maximise outcomes against community priorities.

Pathway 3: Strengthen First Nations self-determination, health, wellbeing and economic development

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Support collective action for reconciliation	Strengthen recognition and understanding of Indigenous history, culture and knowledge. This could include support for collective and inclusive, place-based storytelling and reconciliation initiatives, and investment into projects that share and celebrate First Nations culture, language, history and contemporary experiences, such as the proposed Kalkadoon Cultural Centre.
	Build business and community capacity to contribute to reconciliation. This could include the adoption of plans, policies, tools and other resources for cultural capability development and reconciliation for example Reconciliation Action Plans.
	Strengthen connections to Country, culture and language. Possible actions to progress this strategy could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand support for Rangers Programs to strengthen Caring for Country work (and the associated training and employment opportunities). - Invest in on-country initiatives that provide children, young people, adults and the elderly to connect with country and sites of cultural significance. - Support two-way knowledge sharing practices and relationship building through projects for example tourism and environmental management.
2. Strengthen local capacity for agreement making and collaboration	Invest in the capacity of First Nations organisations to design and manage new partnerships (for example people, skills, business infrastructure).
	Invest in the capacity of First Nations organisations to lead the co-design and implementation of benefit sharing agreements, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness and education regarding benefit sharing models. - Support for processes that assist in the articulation of priority development areas. - Expert input and support for the negotiation of benefit sharing agreements.
	Invest in First Nations-led research that reflects the priority needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for example in health, education, housing.
	Support non-Indigenous businesses to access mentoring, training and expert advice in areas such as cultural safety and action plans to foster a culturally inclusive workplace.
	Encourage all levels of government to increase participation opportunities for First Nations stakeholders in decision making processes about relevant projects and programs.
3. Support First Nations-led economic development	Expand the business development, management and investment resources available to First Nations people, organisations and businesses.
	Increase opportunities and support for local First Nations procurement from business and government. This could be achieved through early engagement of First Nations businesses prior to tender process commencement, and capacity building support – to competitively tender and successfully deliver new projects.
	Foster the creation of new First Nations businesses by delivering incubator programs, networking opportunities, access to mentors, and targeting foundational business skills development.
	Improve access to seed funding and a pipeline of investment for First Nations entrepreneurs. This could include introductions to financial organisations (for example. First Australians Capital, Many Rivers, Indigenous Business Australia) and support for grant applications and pitch development.

	Deliver initiatives that work with First Nations women and young people to strengthen their economic security and empowerment.
	Position and prepare First Nations businesses to participate in and benefit from Mount Isa's economic transition and new industry development. This could be assisted through early access to industry information (trends, emerging opportunities, project pipeline) and networks to build relationships and industry knowledge.
4. Create and sustain new employment opportunities with First Nations people	Invest in strategic, long-term approaches to improve First Nations employment. The Regional Jobs Committee's new Aboriginal Empowerment Working Group could make an important contribution through improved coordination of opportunities and collaboration to address employment barriers.
	Strengthen initiatives that address employment barriers and provide pre-employment training including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital skills programs. - Continuing the Indigenous Driver Licensing Program. - Addressing housing challenges, which can be a barrier to employment. For example the Employment and Education Housing Program.
	Increase business capacity and capability to recruit and retain First Nations employees by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthening business understanding of worker needs. - Supporting business implementation of Cultural Capability Action Plans. - Fostering partnerships between businesses and First Nations service providers to deliver training and improve employment outcomes.
	Strengthening education and career pathways for First Nations students. This includes supporting First Nations students to develop the skills and knowledge for employment in established and emerging industries in Mount Isa.
5. Strengthen Community Service Outcomes	Pursue innovative, people-centred and prevention-focused initiatives and approaches that work upstream to improve health and wellbeing with and for First Nations people.
	Strengthen communication, coordination and collaboration for the effective delivery of services with First Nations clients. This could be assisted by facilitating an increase in the participation of First Nations people in governance structures for service delivery, strengthening communication mechanisms between organisations, and supporting knowledge sharing and data projects.
	Strengthen the delivery of services with and for First Nations clients, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investing in initiatives identified by the Closing the Gap Focus Group. - Increasing and providing long-term funding commitments to programs delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled organisations. - Addressing duplication in services. - Enabling more First Nations people to enter the community service sector through training, education and recruitment support. - Strengthening the leadership capacity of First Nations employees through professional development and mentoring programs.

Pathway 4: Strengthen essential community infrastructure

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Plan for the provision of affordable and reliable utilities and infrastructure	Provide local households and businesses with support to transition to renewable energy and implement energy efficiency measures.
	Plan for changing water supply and demand and strengthen the resilience of the public water supply system in the context of changing industry usage and climate patterns.
	Ensure maintenance and expansions to the Mount Isa sewerage system, including for new commercial and residential developments, are budgeted for and resilient to projected climate impacts.
	Advocate for broad access to affordable, high-quality telecommunication services, particularly for underserved neighbourhoods.
	Ensure vulnerable community members are not disadvantaged in their access to essential services or subject to unreasonable service agreements.
2. Ensure Mount Isa residents have affordable and safe access to transport	Investigate options for public transport within Mount Isa, such as a local bus and community shuttle services to enable public transport access to key locations including shops, health centres, the North West Hospital, schools, childcare and aged care.
	Investing in electric buses and supporting infrastructure, such as EV chargers, could further support Mount Isa's decarbonisation goals.
	Ensure all residents are aware of flight subsidies.
	Improve passenger services on the Inlander, including frequency, comfort and cost.
3. Accelerate investment to address housing challenges in Mount Isa	Measure and review progress against Mount Isa City Council's Local Housing Action Plan. Identify key outcomes to date, gaps in initiative delivery, outstanding actions and lessons learned.
	Work with key housing stakeholders to refresh the Local Housing Action Plan for the next five years, confirming or updating opportunities, actions and timeframes.
	Work with all levels of government and relevant industry, business and finance sector representatives to address barriers to the development of new housing stock, including the lack of builders, the high cost of construction, and a reluctance from lending institutions to support property investments.
	Develop the business case to establish and operate a Rapid Accommodation and Apprentice Centre (RAAC) in Mount Isa to accelerate the provision of accommodation using a modular design.
	Communicate progress towards the Local Housing Action Plan with the community, and especially key stakeholders identified in the Plan's response strategies.

Pathway 5: Strengthen health and social services

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Develop business cases to support investment in new facilities	<p>Specific needs that were highlighted include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential drug/alcohol rehabilitation centre. - Domestic and family violence accommodation, especially options that are appropriate for parents with children. - Public aged care accommodation that caters for complex needs. - Childcare facilities. - Medical centre with allied health services including a pharmacy.
2. Strengthen organisational capacity to deliver quality services	<p>Secure long-term funding for organisations that demonstrate positive outcomes in the delivery of healthcare and social services.</p> <p>Invest in sector coordination mechanisms to reduce duplication, address possible gaps in service delivery, and increase collaborative care provision.</p> <p>Establish and invest in new services and innovative initiatives that address the shared causes of health and social challenges in Mount Isa.</p> <p>Strengthen the organisational capacity of the community services workforce through targeted training, professional development opportunities, and increased resourcing.</p> <p>Develop the governance, program delivery and hiring/recruitment capacity of healthcare and social service providers to reduce dependency on external organisations.</p> <p>Deepen engagement with clients, families and community members in program and service design and decision-making to ensure a people-centred approach.</p> <p>Promote and support volunteer programs and events, and showcasing the value of volunteering, an important contributor to the community and economy.</p>
3. Continue to strengthen coordination and partnerships across the sector	<p>Improve communication between services providers and clients to better understand needs and emerging issues, strengthen relationships, reduce duplication, and strengthen client outcomes.</p> <p>Resource coordination structures and processes for knowledge sharing, improved prioritisation and strategic decision making, resolution of common issues and identification of collaboration opportunities.</p> <p>Strengthen collaboration for regional data collection, impact measurement and reporting to inform decision making and investment into community services, including coordination and collaboration with the Northern Territory on common social issues.</p> <p>Catalyse and invest in new collaborations and partnerships with local and regional stakeholders to build capacity, promote innovation and deliver new initiatives that deliver social outcomes for the Mount Isa community.</p> <p>Position Mount Isa as a centre for innovation in people-centred approaches, addressing key social issues through proactive engagement with leading practice providers within Mount Isa and outside of the region, attracting new expertise and offering seed funding for innovative approaches.</p>
4. Support service providers to adopt future ready practices	<p>Facilitate knowledge sharing within the healthcare and social service sector to promote improved understanding and implementation of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decarbonisation plans, including renewable energy and energy efficiency plans. - Sustainability plans and environmental performance improvements. - Changing climate patterns with a view to identifying and implementing adaptation plans for their facilities and operations (for example flood mitigation, facility cooling).

5. Support impact measurement and reporting to enhance health and care service outcomes	Facilitate connections between service providers and local businesses to identify and pursue circular economy opportunities.
	Support service providers to understand leading practice and negotiate benefit sharing arrangements, program funding and social impact investment opportunities.
	Review the aggregate or collective impact of health and care services and programs.
	Share outcomes from health and care services service and program delivery with key stakeholders and the community.
	Develop an integrated social impact strategy and measurement framework to inform prioritisation of public and private investment into Mount Isa health and care services and programs.

Pathway 6: Improve community safety and cohesion

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Increase investment into initiatives that engage youth at risk	Support on-country and outdoor initiatives that engage young people in culturally appropriate and safe activities focused on health and wellbeing, the development of life-skills, connections with safe adults and mentors.
	Design and pilot youth intervention and engagement models demonstrating effective outcomes in other regions, with a focus on re-engagement into education, training and employment.
	Review and improve access to services for mental health, drug and alcohol education and rehabilitation, respectful relationships.
	Review and expand the range and scope of initiatives available to engage young people of different backgrounds, at different times of the day and days of the week.
	Address housing and homelessness issues as a priority strategy to support youth at risk.
2. Invest in youth crime interventions	Invest in further collaboration and strengthen access to funding for community organisations addressing the root causes of youth offending and re-offending.
	Learn from the success of different approaches in other jurisdictions and contexts.
3. Criminal justice infrastructure	Explore what a locally appropriate model for a correctional precinct could be in Mount Isa, that prioritises the needs of offenders and sets people up for success post-release. Participants in Roadmap workshops highlighted that the development of a business case for this model could beneficially include locally led on-country programs.
	Explore leading practice models and lessons learned from evidence-based, youth crime prevention programs in other regions of Australia.
4. Improve neighbourhood safety	Increase investment in housing and services for people experiencing homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and mental health challenges.
	Strengthen support for school initiatives targeting student retention, and increase options for young people who are repeat school refusals.
	Establish a local bus to enable public transport access to key locations including shops, health centres, the North West Hospital, schools, childcare and aged care.
	Invest in community-led initiatives that engage young people during the day and evenings.
5. Strengthen community cohesion and connection	Design and implement placemaking initiatives, which are participatory processes that engage community members in designing and developing public spaces. This improves community connectivity and sense of ownership of the space.
	Repurpose disused and rundown spaces.
	Improve lighting in public spaces.
	Design new public spaces and adapt existing public spaces that are inclusive, vibrant, appeal to young people and adults, and encourage community socialising.
	Design for and promote mixed use of spaces and use at different times of the day.

Pathway 7: Improve the attractiveness of Mount Isa

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Enhance the physical environment in urban areas	Improve the visual amenity of public spaces of Mount Isa through cleaning, maintenance and build form improvements (for example street furniture, lighting, wayfinding, art, murals, pavement surface treatments).
	Implement greening initiatives in public spaces, thoroughfares and streets including tree planting and garden bed establishment, including food forests that utilise regionally appropriate crops and bush foods. This can create cooler and more pleasant environments, improving the visual and physical amenity of the city.
	Create new open spaces that celebrate the unique history and culture of Mount Isa. These spaces can also represent future opportunities for Mount Isa, including the city's aspiration to be a national enabler in the clean energy transition.
	Install entrance statements and other large-scale public art projects that reflect aspects of the region that locals are proud of.
2. Provide equitable access to public amenities across the city	Ensure equitable provision and maintenance of public facilities across all neighbourhoods.
	Improve street accessibility, maintenance, and visual appeal, for example, through street murals and installations, and verge food forests.
3. Improve the Mount Isa retail experience	Incentivise retail diversity especially new businesses addressing market gaps for example shoe shops.
	Review the opportunity to increase trading hours for example 7-day trading, late night trading initiatives.
	Create vibrant and inclusive spaces for pop-up shops, for example the Renew initiative.
	Support the revitalisation and renewal of the Mount Isa town centre through events and activations, streetscape improvements and business initiatives for example tied funding to encourage landlords to upgrade commercial premise frontages.
4. Set up young people in Mount Isa for success	Provide safe, age-appropriate places to gather and socialise after school.
	Invest in public sports facilities and diverse and accessible sports clubs.
	Provide information about the effects of alcohol and drug use, including vapes, and ensuring support services are accessible.
	Share the Mount Isa Future Ready Economy Roadmap with young people, including leaders of youth organisations and programs. Seek feedback on strategies and actions, and discuss engagement, priorities and actions.
	Work with the Mount Isa Youth Council and Mount Isa Youth Collaborative (MlyC) to measure and review implementation of the Mount Isa Youth Strategy 2023 to 2027, identifying key outcomes to date, gaps in delivery, outstanding actions and lessons learned.
	Support the Mount Isa Youth Council and MlyC to confirm and identify future outcomes and priority activities to support youth engagement and retention in Mount Isa.
	Communicate progress towards the Mount Isa Youth Strategy 2023 to 2027 with the Mount Isa community, and especially with young people.

5. Enhance the liveability of Mount Isa	Deliver a strong program of events and activations that draw people to Mount Isa from across the North West. For example festivals, youth events, street activations.
	Maintain existing recreation and sports infrastructure and invest in new facilities with a focus on equity and inclusion.
	Develop new entertainment and recreation precincts and invest in festivals and large events.
	Invest in operational expenses to fully activate sports and recreation infrastructure.
	Invest in local fresh food production.
	Improve air and water quality to safeguard community health and wellbeing.
	Improve access to trades, retail and community services.
	Advocate for fare caps for air travel between Mount Isa and major cities.

Pathway 8: Undertake coordinated strategic planning and investment for community development

Strategies	Potential Actions
1. Establish expectations for new development in the region	Identify emerging opportunities to establish community benefit sharing in conjunction with new development in Mount Isa.
	Build business and community understanding of leading practice benefit sharing models, as well as effective engagement models for the co-design and co-delivery of community outcomes.
	Develop principles to set expectations for new development in the region.
	Leverage the significant tax and royalty income that will be generated by new mining projects for the Australian and Queensland Governments to achieve greater investment back into regions generating the revenue.
	Advocate for policy, regulatory and financial settings that allow benefit sharing to be more creative and innovative.
	Build community capacity and positioning to hold equity in new or expanding business ventures.
2. Strengthen communication and collaboration between all levels of government and key community and industry stakeholders	Invest in roles, structures and tools to strengthen communication between all levels of government and the providers of community and social services.
	Develop and strengthen shared expectations regarding communication and engagement processes, including actions supporting transparency and accountability.
	Strengthen opportunities for collaborative decision making for new programs and projects.
3. Strengthen benefit sharing with and for the community	Assess emerging opportunities to establish community benefit sharing models and processes alongside new industry development in Mount Isa.
	Build business and community understanding of leading practice benefit sharing models, as well as effective engagement models for the co-design and co-delivery of community outcomes.
	Build community capacity and positioning to hold equity in new or expanding business ventures.