

Our Coast. Our Future.

OUR VALUES | What are our shared values?

The Bailai (Byellee), Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang and Taribelang Bunda people are the Traditional Owners of the Gladstone coastal region. They have a long and deep connection to all the freshwaters, tidal and coastal waters, and the plants and animals that live there. The Gladstone Regional Council would like to acknowledge and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This factsheet shares what the Gladstone community value most about the coast, their memories of the events and factors that can shape the coastline, as well as issues of concern. This information was collected as part of the development of the Gladstone Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy during a number of discussions and engagement activities in 2020.



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OUR CHANGING COASTLINE | What has shaped our coast?

All coasts are dynamic and ever changing. Coastal change is caused by both natural processes and human activity. Some of these forces (described below) have shaped the Gladstone region's coastline of the past and present, and will continue to shape the coastline in the future.

Pre - 1800's

1800

1850

1



Infrastructure - ports and harbour

The port was initially used to export wool and livestock, as well as for import purposes. By the 1860s, cattle, sheep, minerals and timber were being exported. In 1885, the first wharf was built in Gladstone, which was followed by significant dredging and blasting of the area to improve access to the harbour. Today, import and exports are mainly coal, bauxite, alumina, aluminium, cement and LNG.




Culture and heritage

The colonial history of the region began with the landing of Lieutenant James Cook at Bustard Bay in 1770. The region was later settled by Europeans during 1847 and became a municipality in 1863. Initially known as Port Curtis, the region was established as a pastoral district with sheep and cattle grazing. However, since 1964, Gladstone has continued to develop as a major industrial centre.



Agriculture

Coastal land use includes significant rural areas, historically dominated by livestock and timber. Smaller agricultural sectors include dairy, fruit and crops.



Population

Home to the Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Bailai, Bunda People and Taribelang Bunda People the Gladstone region has experienced significant population expansion along the coast. This has impacted the coastline through new land development and increased usage of foreshore areas by residents. In 2020, the Gladstone Region is home to over 63,000 residents with a predicted annual growth of 0.7 % per year over the next 25 years.



Traditional Owners

The Traditional Owners comprise of four groups, Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Bailai and Taribelang Bunda. These groups make up the Native Title claim group, the Port Curtis Coral Coast Trust Limited (PCCC) which has a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA). The Gidarjil Development Corporation was established in 2000 and have since expanded their program to undertake marine management activities throughout the region.

1900

1950

2000

2020



Governance

In 1863 the burgeoning town became a municipality with Richard Hetherington elected Gladstone's first Mayor. In 1914, the Gladstone Harbour Board was established. Much later, in 2001, the Port Curtis Monitoring Plan released. The Gladstone Regional Council was formed following the amalgamation of Gladstone, Calliope and Miriam Vale local government areas in 2008.



Tourism

The region offers a wide range of attractions for the local community and its visitors. These include unique and significant natural assets and access to recreation opportunities. Nearby beaches, reserves, parks, islands, national parks, reefs and associated channels and creeks provide an assortment of options for tourists. In 2016, cruise ship visitation commenced.



Climate

The coastline has been impacted by major climate events like Tropical Cyclones Dina (1967), David (1979), Marcia (2015) and Debbie (2017). Over the years, storm and king tides have resulted in significant flooding and coastal erosion.



Mining and resources

Resource industries play a very significant role through the mining, manufacturing and export of a range of natural resources, including coal, alumina and aluminium. Curtis Island also contains three liquid natural gas facilities and a large port. The Boyne Island Smelter, located behind Lilley's Beach, is the largest aluminium smelter in Australia.



Planning and protection

The coastline and coastal environment are within the World Heritage Area of the Great Barrier Reef, which includes national parks, wetlands of national importance, conservation parks, and is part of the Discovery Coast. The region is home to over 60 rare or threatened species. The Gladstone Healthy Harbour Partnership was formed to coordinate the Healthy Gladstone Harbour Report Card.



Infrastructure - water

In 1915 the Tondoon Creek Dam was built, and in 1966 construction of the Boyne River-Awoonga Weir commenced. Today, built on the Boyne River, the Awoonga Dam is the fourth largest surface water storage in Queensland. In 2018, the Agnes Waters desalination plant commenced operation.

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HOW OUR COAST HAS CHANGED

By documenting and understanding how the coast has changed and what impacts have been experienced over time, we can plan to better manage and mitigate future risks to our Gladstone coast and communities.



Natural beauty

Changes to the coastline due to erosion and aging or unsuitable infrastructure may take away from the natural beauty of our coastline.

“ I have many photos from over the years documenting the degradation that happens in 1770. ”

“ There is more of a danger and risk to the community around Wild Cattle creek it has eroded and has changed the appearance of our coast. ”



Coastal access

“ We now have beach access issues in many places along this stretch with timber stairs and walkways too unsafe to use. ”

“ Unable to make full use of 1770 foreshore for walking. On some high tides you have to walk on the road to connect to the butterfly walk near monument. There is no footpath on that section, so care needs to be taken. ”

Sand movement periodically prevents safe access to local recreational infrastructure and favourite beach spots.

“ The erosion to the south on wreck rock beach makes turtle monitoring very difficult and the beach becomes impassable. ”

“ Extended closure of Wild Cattle end of Esplanade. This has been our family's preferred swimming/picnic location my whole life. ”



Property and infrastructure

“ Heavy rains and a significant high tide resulted in our entire boundary fencing being washed away. ”

“ Erosion continually affects/damages property and council infrastructure along the Boyne River, Boyne Island following decent rainfall or TC. ”

Parts of the Gladstone region, including houses and businesses, are vulnerable to temporary storm tide inundation during extreme climate events.

“ Over the time our rescue facility has been impacted with water we are lucky to have the assistance of Council at times to assist with sandbagging the doors. ”

“ Houses at Tannum Sands are at risk during storm tides. ”

“ Flooding of the Baffle Creek waterways inundated homes and property in the area. ”



Dunes and coastal habitats

“ Loss of entire front of dune system on Main beach Southend during 2013 turtle nesting season. ”

“ I have seen the dunes along the main beach to surf club stretch of coast erode back by approximately 3 to 4 metres. ”

Erosion and loss of vegetation could compromise the stability of important dune systems that provide a natural buffer from coastal hazards and support diverse flora and fauna species.

“ This erosion takes out Casuarinas trees which are used to protect all vegetation throughout the dunes. ”

“ The vegetation line on the beach at Tannum has been marched back over the years. ”