



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN TOWNSVILLE

2021 Year in Review
Planning and Development

An aerial photograph of a city at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon to the right, casting a warm glow over the city and a large mountain in the background. The city features a river, a large stadium, and various residential and commercial buildings. A semi-transparent blue box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the table of contents.

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ALIGNMENT TO THE CORPORATE PLAN 2021-2026

Our Vision:

A globally
connected
community driven
by lifestyle and
nature.

Our Purpose:

Grow Townsville

Our Mission:

Add 6,400 new
jobs by 2026.

The underpinnings of a prosperous community where residents enjoy a sense of security and stability whilst embracing the lifestyle and nature the Townsville local government area affords, comes in part from the role of Planning and Development.

The role of Planning and Development is integral in supporting a strong local economy. The Townsville City Plan has been designed to be risk tolerant allowing development to proceed with an appropriate level of assessment or in some cases, without the need to gain planning approval.

A balance of ease of doing business in Townsville and responsible development is a key attribute of the planning scheme. This supports the Corporate Plan's key purpose of growing Townsville.

Reviews of the Townsville City Plan, Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) and the Development Manual will ensure we meet the needs of the current business environment.

Complimentary to these foundations is the role of Planning and Development to provide a customer focused service in responding to enquiries and assessing applications. Planning and Development is committed to striving to meet the promise of assessing applications in line with the promise given by the Customer service commitment.



INDUSTRY OVERVIEW AND MAJOR ECONOMIC DRIVERS FOR 2021

The City’s economy has shown positive signs of improvement from 2020 and through into 2021. This has been driven by both the increase in residential land development and an emergence of increased activity in the commercial sector.

Residential Economy

There has been an increased investment in new residential land and associated dwelling construction driven by residents taking advantage of the government incentives which were introduced in mid- 2020 to protect the economy from the adverse effects of Covid-19. The flow on effect of this activity benefits the broader economy and also creates an environment where employment opportunities can increase. Of note the investment in 2021 from residential building works injected \$386M into the local economy with an increase of 32.6% in comparison to 2020 and an increase of 104% from 2019.

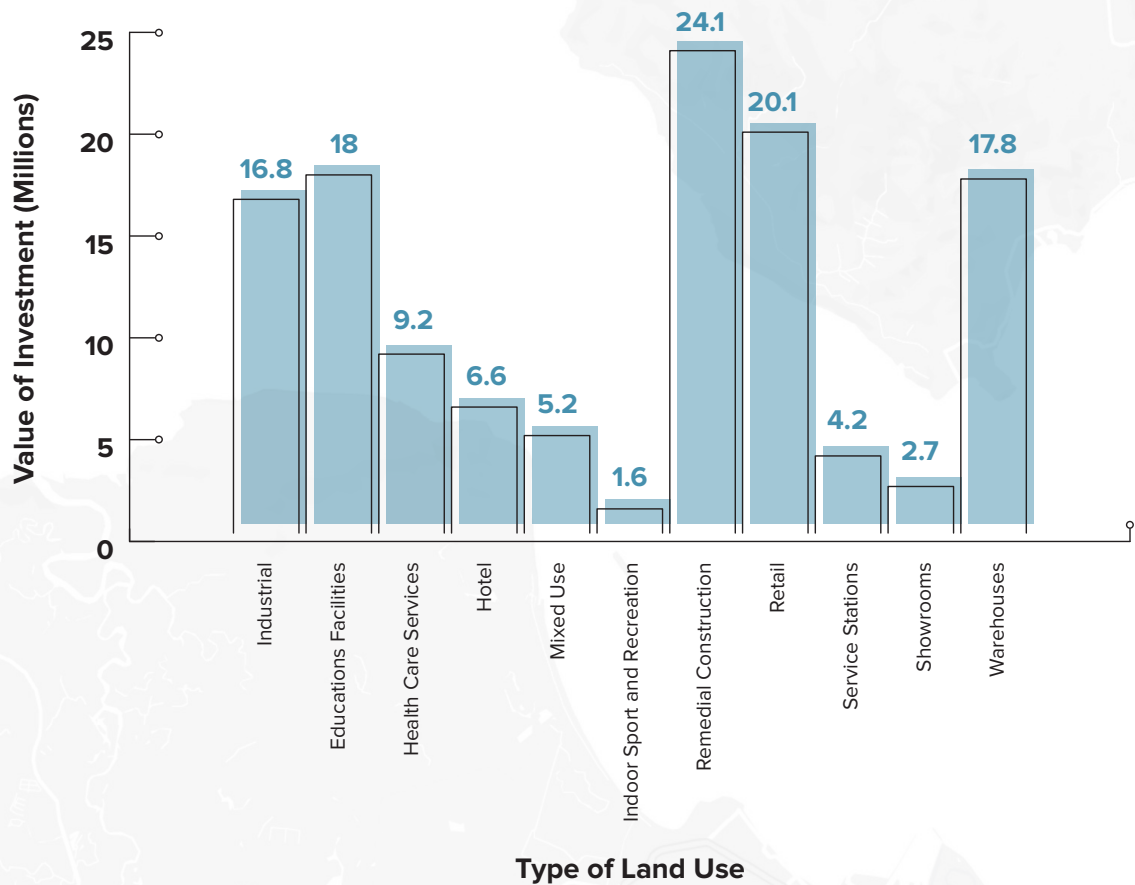
Whilst the government incentives have ceased, data shows the release of residential lots continues at a level well in excess of 2019 and pre-incentive 2020. This could be an indication of an improved confidence in the market.

Commercial Economy

Investment for the commercial economy from building works amounted to \$209M for 2021 with an increase of 30.6% from 2020 and 21.5% from 2019. This increase has been without any form of Government incentives.

These results are a clear indication the commercial sector of the local economy is showing an improved level of confidence and the flow on will result in increased employment opportunities and benefit the broader economy.

The following is a snapshot of investments into the commercial sector of the local economy via land use type.



APPROVAL OF RELEASE OF NEW RESIDENTIAL LOTS

This graph shows the historical land releases from 2019 to 2021.

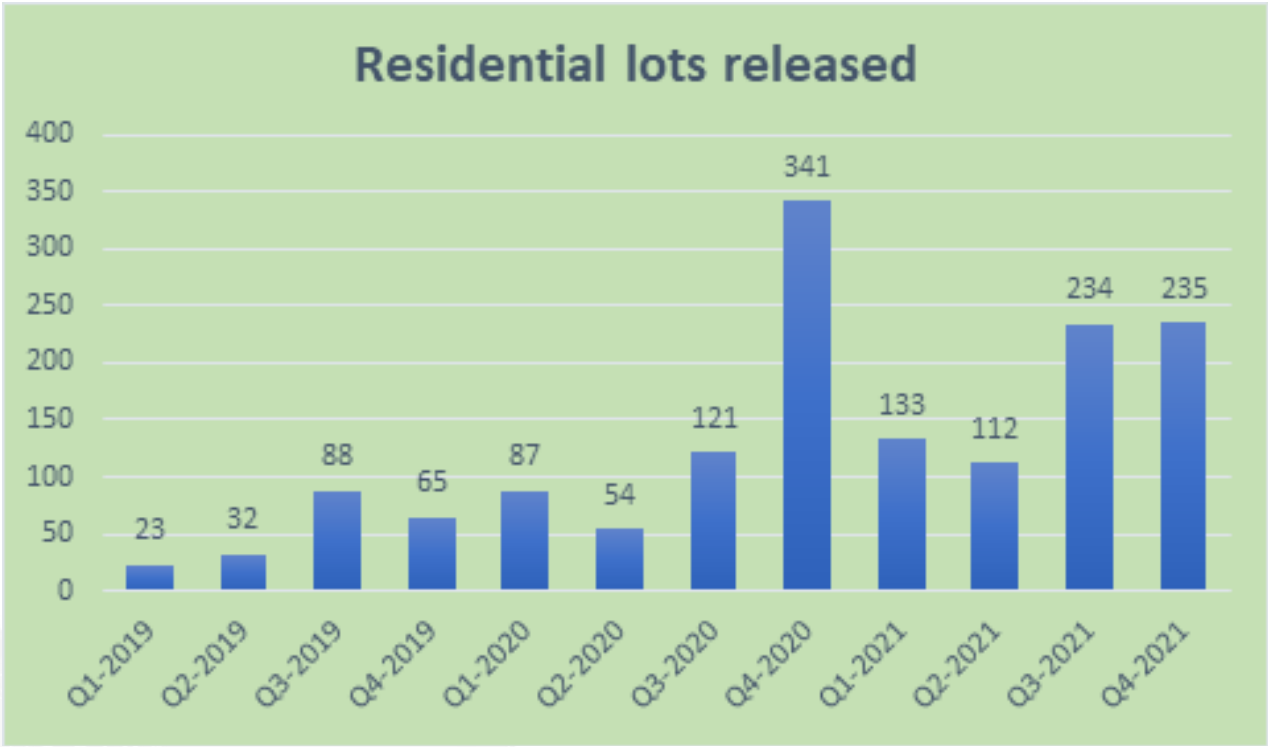
The data is showing 2019 experienced a depressed environment for residential lot releases with an average of 52 per quarter developed for sale. 2020 did see a marginal improvement in the earlier quarters of the year, however once the Federal Government Homebuilder grant was announced and funding available, lot releases greatly increased to meet the demand for residential land.

With the ending of the Home Builder grant (31 March 2021), we may have expected to see demand for residential land taper back to pre-grant levels. This has not entirely been the case. 2021 shows an average of 179 lots per quarter.

Whilst quarter 1 and 2 of 2021 did see the expected retraction of demand, quarters 3 & 4 of 2021 have bucked the trend.

Quarters 3 & 4 show a result greater than all previous quarters other than quarter 4 of 2020 which was at the peak of demand generated from the Homebuilder grant. In summary, whilst early 2020 showed a marginal recovery in the volume of land releases, the government stimulus packages changed the dynamics of the industry overnight. Both the development industry and council rapidly ramped up land approvals and subsequent supply to meet the demand. The resultant outcome has had a broad benefit to both the local economy and importantly it has given an opportunity for new home buyers to secure new homes.

Positive economic flow ons supported a broad range of local industries that were either directly related to land development or indirectly, the building industry and suppliers. Importantly local employment is also supported with an increase in the trades employment base.



2021 – 714 residential lots released
2020 – 603 residential lots released
2019 – 208 residential lots released

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS LODGED

This graph represents the lodgement of the following application types over the last 4 years.

- ◆ Material Change of Use (MCU);
- ◆ Reconfiguration of a Lot (RAL);
- ◆ Operational Works (OPW); and
- ◆ Development Building Works (DBW).

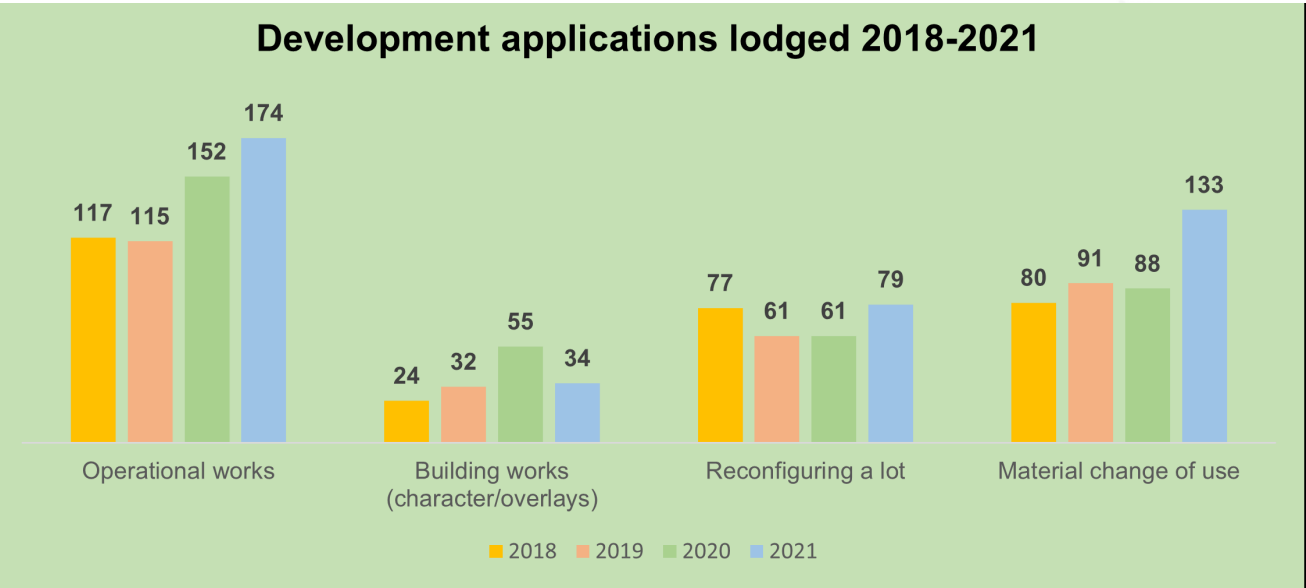
The data clearly shows 2021 overall to be a year of increased activity in the land development and commercial sectors.

Reconfiguration of a lot and the associated Operational Works applications reflect the development activity driven by the government grants available during the period.

The effect of the incentives saw the accelerated need to approve and develop more residential lots to meet demand. This included the undertaking of operational works to ensure the lots were ready for release and sale.

Interestingly, whilst residential land development was assisted with the government grants to promote growth, the commercial sector of the local economy showed a strong result despite no government incentives.

This is a welcome indication the commercial economy is showing an emergence of improved conditions and confidence.



2021 – 420 development applications lodged
2020 – 356 development applications lodged
2019 – 298 development applications lodged
2018 – 299 development applications lodged

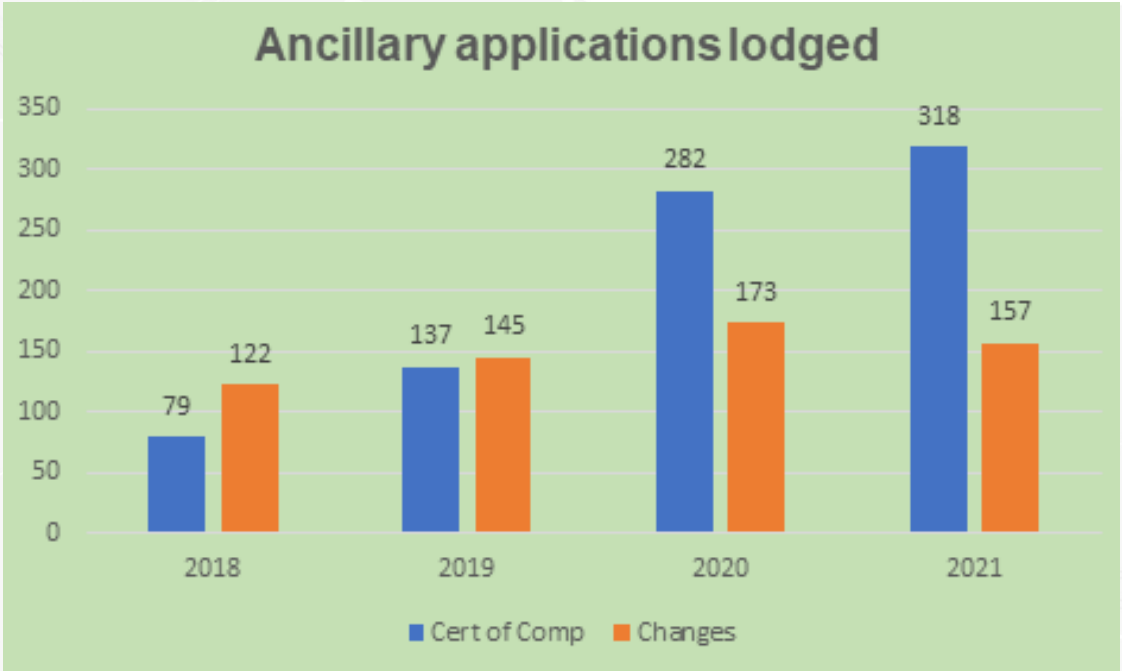
ANCILLARY APPLICATIONS (CHANGE AND COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE APPLICATIONS)

The graph represents ancillary applications lodged and showing trends over the past four calendar years.

Ancillary applications are those requests for changes to a development approval, extensions to the currency periods, and certificate of compliance confirming conditions of a development approval have been complied with.

The data shows both 2020 and 2021 reveals substantial increases in Certificate of Compliance requests. These increases have been driven by the activity associated with the approval and release of residential lots.

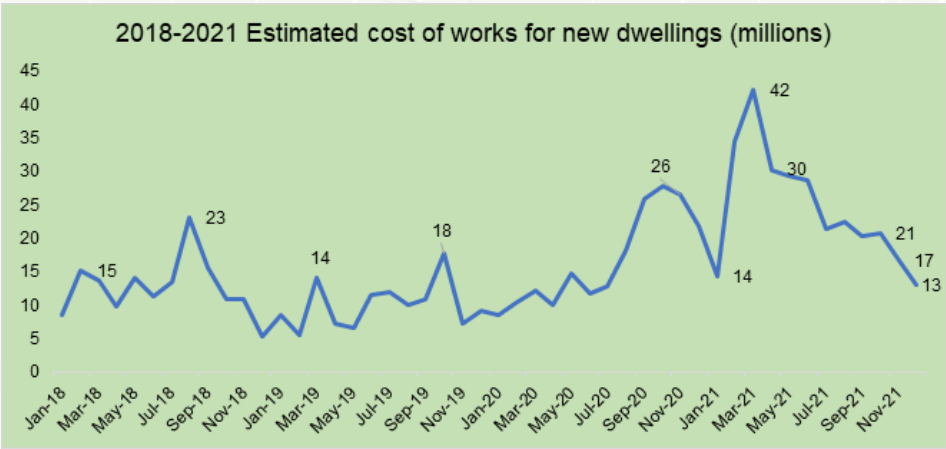
Both 2020 and 2021 show increases in changes to development approvals and extensions to currency periods.



2021 – 475 lodged
2020 – 455 lodged
2019 – 282 lodged
2018 – 201 lodged

BUILDING APPROVALS - DWELLING APPROVALS

These graphs in combination shows the history of the investment in new dwellings from 2018. In particular it shows the 2020 and 2021 markets subject to the government incentives with peaks in November 2020 and March 2021. Whilst the approvals of new dwellings has contracted after the peak of March 2021, the level of approvals remains higher than equivalent periods of the previous years.

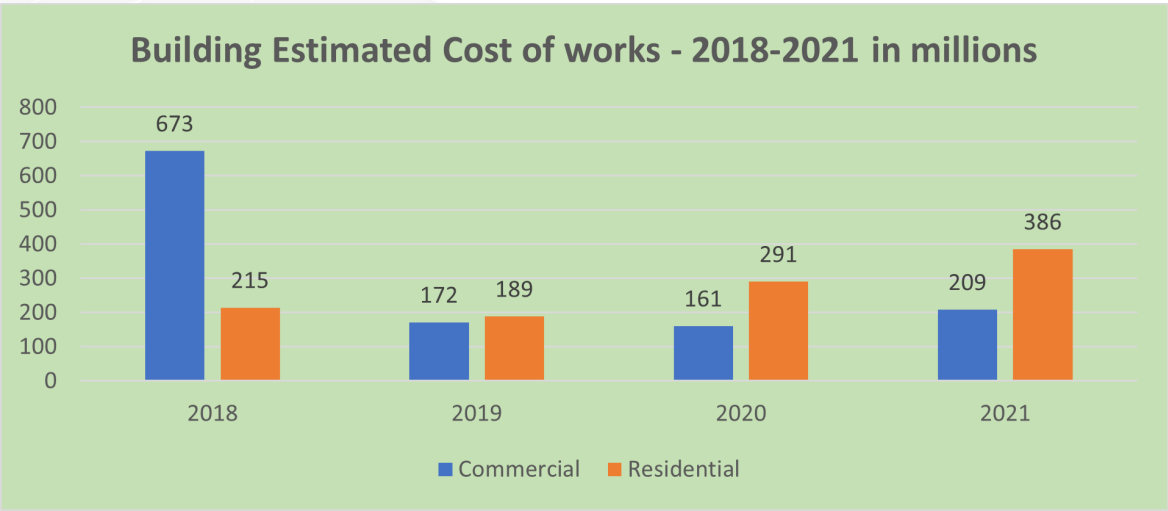


BUILDING APPROVALS - RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL COST OF WORKS

This graph shows the investment in combined residential and commercial building works for the period 2018 to 2021.

Residential data shows an expected increase in the investment in this sector of the development industry driven by the government incentives. With the introductions of the incentives in 2020, the residential investment increased 53% from the 2019 year.

Interestingly, commercial building investment showed encouraging increases - 22% from 2019 and 30% from 2020. Commercial investment indicates an improved confidence in this sector of the market and will have a positive effect on employment opportunities.



*2018 COMMERCIAL DATA INCLUDES SUN METAL REFINERY EXPANSION

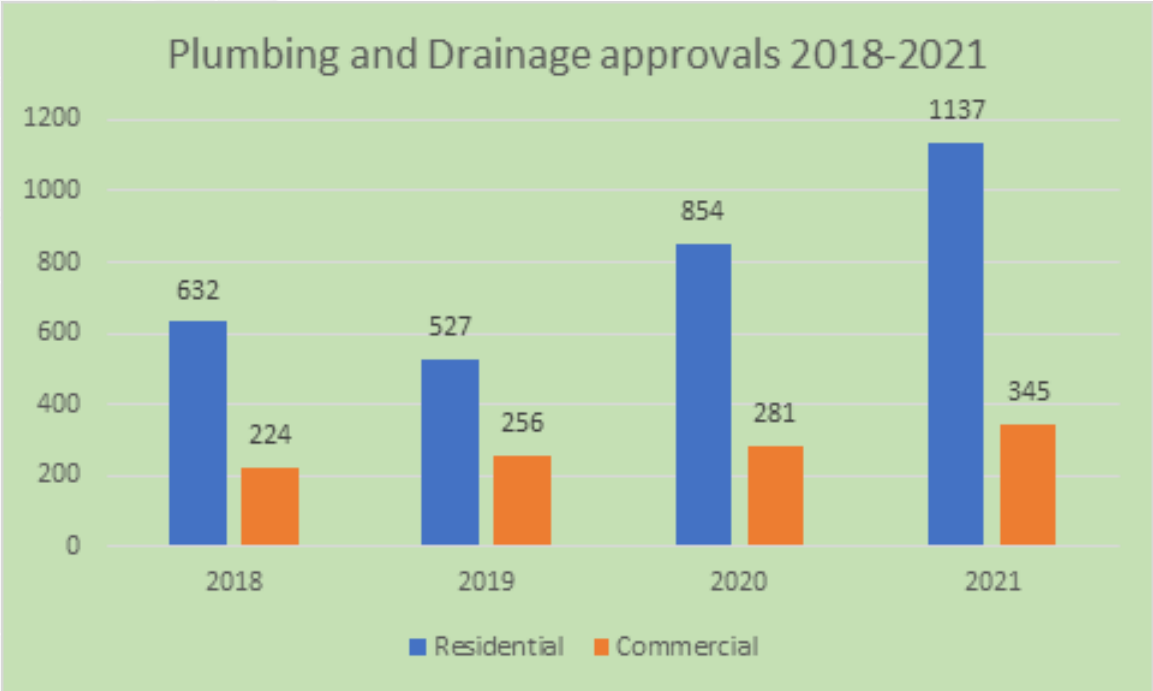
LODGEMENTS	EST. COST OF WORKS
2021 - 3824	\$595M
2020 - 3611	\$451M
2019 - 3171	\$361M
2018 - 2765	\$888M

PLUMBING PERMIT APPROVALS

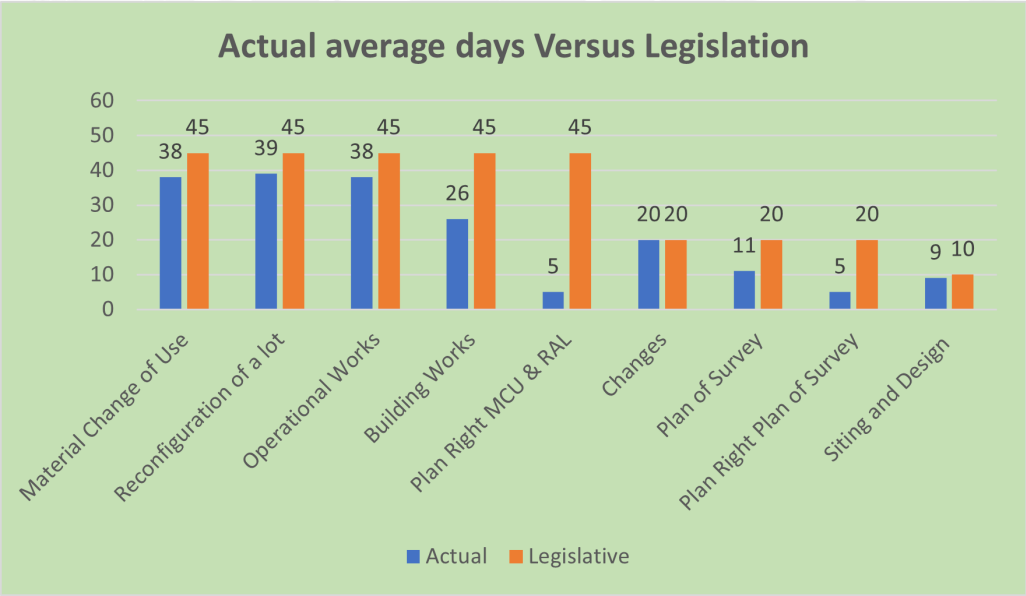
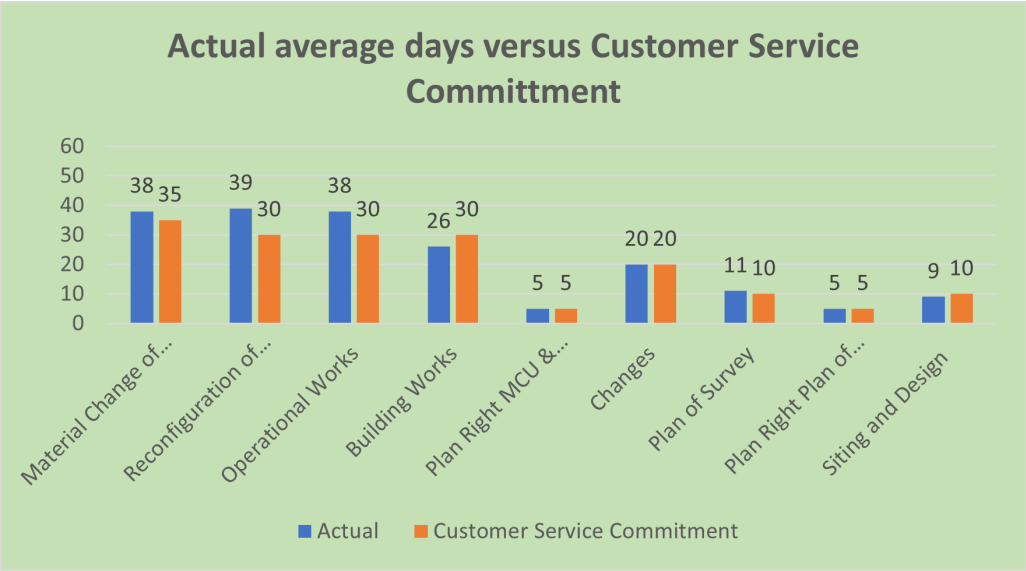
Plumbing and Drainage approval graph reflects both the residential and commercial markets over the past 2 years.

New dwelling approvals has driven the residential market with a 62% increase from 2020 and showing a 115% increase from 2019.

The commercial sector has also showed encouraging increases in approvals which shows the sector is showing strengthening economically.



DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITMENTS.



This graph provides information on the average assessment timeframes for a number of the planning applications associated with the Planning and Development Customer Service Commitment.

For applications, the average assessment times is calculated in business days from the lodgement of the application to the decision date, less any days waiting for responses from the applicant for action notices, requests for information, and responses from referral agencies.

The legislative timeframes show the maximum time allowed (orange shading), the Customer Service Commitment, which is our promise to the industry on timeframes that we strive to achieve (grey shading), and the actual average days is our performance (blue shading).

Application assessment timeframes for planning applications are below legislative requirements excluding minor changes which reflects the volume of requests to change planning approvals that have been lodged.

The increase in development activity in 2021 has placed added pressure on the team to assess applications in order to meet the Customer Service Commitment. The increased application volumes, being 17% in excess of the 2020 year and 41% in excess of the 2019, were on average assessed below legislative timeframes.

The accelerated Plan Right assessment initiative continues to attract lodgements from accredited consultants for the assessment of material change of use, reconfigurations of a lot, and plan of survey approvals.

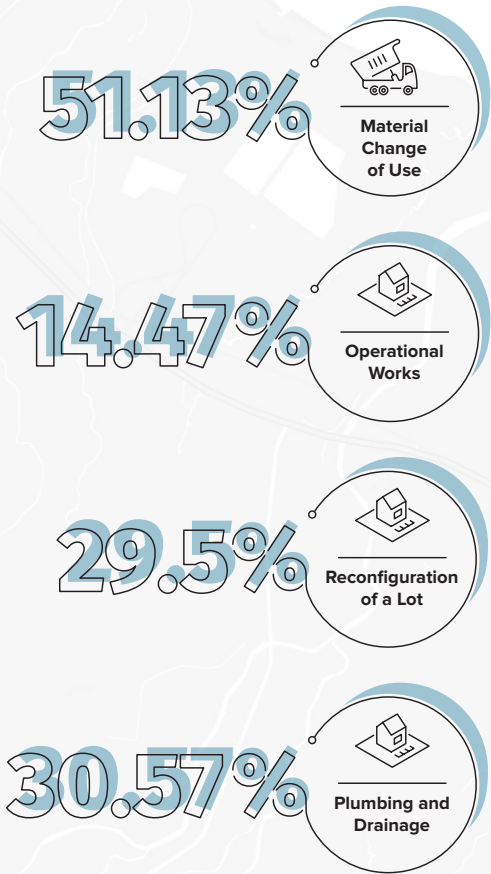
DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT AND ASSETS AND HYDRAULICS UNITS.

The Development Assessment, Infrastructure Assessment, and Assets and Hydraulic Units all saw an increase in the volume of applications assessed and enquiries received during 2021.

Not only is the data influenced by the residual effect of the government incentives, increasing applications and enquiries are being sourced from the commercial sector of the development industry.

Development Approvals

The snapshot below shows the Increased volume of applications lodged for assessment in comparison to 2020:



Whilst both Reconfiguration of a Lot and Operational Works applications have been influenced by the government incentives and mostly relate to the development of land, Material Change of Uses applications for commercial uses do not benefit from government incentives.

This shows that even without incentives to artificially stimulate development activity in this sector, Material change of Use application volumes have shown solid increases.

Whilst approvals do not necessarily translate to the development proceeding, when data for commercial building permits is taken into consideration, the trend is in the positive.

Plumbing and Drainage

The volume of Plumbing and Drainage applications have increased from 1135 to 1482 (30.57%) for 2020 to 2021. The bulk of these applications relate to the fast tracking of residential developments. Legislation prescribes these applications must be decided within 2 business days. As expected, the residential plumbing and drainage data trends similarly with the releases of residential lots and dwelling construction. There is some lag between the release and sale of a lot before the subsequent plumbing and drainage application related to the residential construction is lodged.

The commercial plumbing and drainage applications show a consistent increase. In 2019 and 2020, the average quarterly lodgements was 62 and 70 respectively. In 2021 the average quarterly lodgements increased to 90. Without the benefit of government incentives, the commercial sector is showing an increase in development activity which is welcome.

Prelodgement Meetings

Prelodgement meetings are a free service provided by Planning and Development where entities can discuss potential business projects and other queries with relevant Development Assessment and Infrastructure Assessment staff.

Encouraging a culture of prelodgement meetings is an integral promise under the Planning Service Customer Service Commitment.

Prelodgement meetings volumes can also provide a sense of the level of confidence in the residential and commercial sectors.

In 2021, Planning and Development hosted 292 prelodgement meetings. This is an increase from 253 in 2020 (15.4% increase) and 192 in 2019 (52% increase).

Customer Enquiry Requests

Development Assessment receives enquiries via “walk in”, phone or email. This is a popular choice of contact where an enquiry can be responded to without the need for a more formal prelodgement meeting.

During the 2021 year, Planning received a total of 1894 recorded enquiries. This was an increase of 12% from 2020 and 50% from 2019.

Customer Service Commitment

Planning and Development is committed to providing a high level of service to our customers and the community. The promises made by this commitment are a cornerstone on how we are striving to engage with our clients.

Since the Customer Service Commitment has been made, changes to how we engage with applicants have seen an increased to more direct engagement opposed to as example, issuing formal correspondence. Responses to calls and enquires are made within set timeframes and there is an encouragement of the use of prelodgement and walk in services.

The Customer Service Commitment additionally focuses on the timeframes to assess applications and issue a decision. Whilst legislation prescribes assessment timeframes, the Customer Service Commitment reduces these timeframes to an aspirational level in a bid to turnover the applications to further assist the development industry to proceed with the development earlier.

Due to the significant increase in application volumes during 2021, some timeframes, whilst remaining within legislation, have not achieved the reduction in days promised by the Customer Service Commitment.

In these cases, engagement with the applicant has been an important part where delays may occur.

PRIORITIES FOR 2022

2022 could be a year where the Covid-19 pandemic will pose further pressure on the business for Planning and Development. With predictions of increases of staff not being able to attend work, one of the priorities for 2022 is to meet this challenge. The Business Continuity Plan plays a role in putting into place mitigation strategies to relieve as much pressure as possible.

Despite this threat, Planning and Development will continue to:

- ◆ Focus on Business Improvements. As an example, reviewing the First Principles Assessment process for infrastructure charges;
- ◆ Introduction of Development.i software to provide broader information on development throughout the local government area;
- ◆ Focus on well-made applications in conjunction with the review of the Townsville Planning Scheme, Local Government Infrastructure Plan, and Development Manual

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN UNIT

The Land Use and Urban Design Unit plays an integral part of shaping the community and supporting the Corporate Plan vision, mission, and purpose. The following is a snapshot of activities undertaken by the unit:

- ◆ Undertaking statutory and land use planning (drafting of planning scheme and associated amendments;
- ◆ The preparation and maintenance of multiple statutory instruments in addition to the Townsville City Plan e.g., Townsville City Waterfront Priority Development Area;
- ◆ The integration and alignment of external instruments e.g., State Planning Policy 2017 and Priority Port of Townsville Port Overlay and providing input into the drafting or amendment of other statutory instruments;
- ◆ Provide strategic land use planning, heritage, landscaping, and urban design advice;
- ◆ Undertake strategic land use planning, heritage, landscape, and urban design projects; and
- ◆ Provide strategic land use planning, heritage, landscape, and urban design input into a range of internal and external projects/initiatives.

2021 ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Townsville City Plan Performance Indicators 2020-Summary and technical reports;
- ◆ Townsville City Plan Review state agency engagement;
- ◆ Bushfire Hazard Study;
- ◆ Music in the City: Four performances were held in the Flinders Lane;
- ◆ Adoption of the Townsville Integrated Transport Plan(a project undertaken in conjunction with the Strategic Infrastructure Planning Unit); and
- ◆ Establishment of a new Heritage Advisory Committee.

2022 PRIORITIES

- ◆ Townsville City Plan review;
- ◆ Development Manual Planning Scheme Policy review;
- ◆ Townsville City Plan Performance Indicators 2021 – Summary and technical report;
- ◆ Landslide hazard study;
- ◆ Magnetic Island Trails Implementation Plan;
- ◆ Townsville Urban Design Guideline;
- ◆ Music in the City: Perfume Gardens edition;
- ◆ Street Art Program – two new murals in the City; and
- ◆ Urban Heat Island Research Project (in association with Griffith and Sunshine Coast universities)

STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING UNIT

The Strategic Infrastructure Planning Unit has an important role in the forward planning of the city's major water supply, sewerage, transport, and public open space infrastructure. It also has a significant role in floodplain and disaster management.

These projects and studies help secure the future of the City by helping to ensure that infrastructure needs are sufficient for future demand and consider adaptation strategies to meet changing environmental influences. Of note, the Strategic Infrastructure Planning Unit has completed the following in 2021:

- ◆ A land supply and demand review that has confirmed the Townsville LGA has a land supply supporting residential growth well in excess of 15 years;
- ◆ The first draft of the Townsville Growth Model 2022 to be used to inform the next Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP 2022);
- ◆ The Townsville Integrated Water Resource Model (bulk water supply) was built and calibrated;
- ◆ Adoption of the Townsville Integrated Transport Plan;
- ◆ Review of flood classifications relevant to 23 flood gauges on waterways, creeks, and rivers. There are used to inform the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) of what stream levels are equivalent to minor, moderate, or major flooding; and
- ◆ Flood studies completed under Townsville Recalibrated Flood Modelling and Mapping Project for Black River to Bluewater Creek, Ross River and surrounds, Bohle River, and Magnetic Island.

2022 priorities

The Strategic Infrastructure Planning Unit continues into 2022 with a broad range of projects ongoing from 2021 or planned:

- ◆ Local Government Infrastructure Plan review (LGIP 2022);
- ◆ Townsville Floodplain Management Strategy;
- ◆ Townsville Floodplain Resilience Program;
- ◆ Regional Stormwater Quality Treatment Strategy;
- ◆ Coastal Change Adaptation Strategy;
- ◆ Water and Sewerage Supply Distribution Planning;
- ◆ Declared Service Area Review.



GLOSSARY

Plumbing and Drainage approval graph reflects both the residential and commercial markets over the past 2 years.

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Building approvals

Building approval data is not created or approved by council. Council is responsible under the *Building Act 1975* to act as a repository for building approval records. When planned work requires a building permit, the developer engages a provide building certifier, who then assesses the work as required. These private certifiers are required under the Building Act to provide copies of certain records to the local government, such as decision notices and final certificates.

DBW – Development building work

Assessment of proposed building works on lots that are located in zones such as Character Residential Zone.

MCU– Material Change of Use

Required when a material change of use of premises is proposed, e.g., starting a new use, re-establishing a use that has been abandoned or changing the intensity or scale of the use.

OPW– Operational Works

In the context of day-to-day business, operational works commonly includes infrastructure works associated with development being sewerage, water, roads, and stormwater. Operational works may also include excavating or filling, clearing vegetation, road works, advertising devices.

PlanRight applications

Plan Right applications are those identified application types that are assessed by approved external consultants. Once lodged, council issues the decision notice via an accelerated process.

Plumbing applications and approvals

Only permit work is approved by council (state government legislation also categorises notifiable work, minor work, and unregulated work). Permit work is a type of plumbing and drainage work that requires a licensed person to perform. The data shown in this report includes both sewerage and non-sewered properties.

POS – Plan of Survey

POS lodgements are associated with the approval of a plan of survey. This allows proposed lot/s to be registered and introduced to the market for sale.

RAL– Reconfiguration of a lot

Reconfiguration of a lot includes the subdivision, amalgamation, realignment/rearrangement of lot boundaries, creating an easement and agreements for community titles schemes (CMS)

Planning Service Customer Service Commitment

