

Cairns

Smart Green

Economy



CASE STUDY: BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON MARKETS

Biodiversity Plan Cairns Airport (NQA)

Cairns Airport has embarked on a pioneering biodiversity project. This initiative aims to protect and enhance the unique ecosystems and species within the airport's surrounding environment.

As part of its wider environmental strategy, the biodiversity project supports the overall purpose of growing Cairns Airport sustainably to benefit the region's communities. The airport is also on the pathway to being carbon-neutral by 2025 and is committed to reducing landfill waste and water consumption by 50% each.

MANGROVE ECOSYSTEMS

The Cairns Airport biodiversity project aims to protect the diverse plant and animal life in the mangrove ecosystems surrounding the airport. The initiative involves collaborating with traditional owners to restore damaged areas and create green spaces that can support the native flora and fauna.

The airport is also exploring the mangroves' potential as a "blue carbon" ecosystem. We are collaborating with Deakin University on groundbreaking work to quantify the volume of carbon captured by mangroves in their natural state. Once verified, this will not only contribute to the conservation efforts but also enable traditional owner groups to use funds from the sale of blue carbon credits to invest in the natural environment.



"Anybody who has visited Cairns Airport will recognise the incredible mangrove environment that surrounds it. We've been collaborating with the traditional owners who have great knowledge of land and sea country around the airport. Our goal is to protect and enhance these mangroves, with projects such as this one to help rehabilitate the endangered species that live there."

Richard Barker, Chief Executive Officer, Cairns Airport

HOW IT WORKS

The project employs a multi-faceted approach to biodiversity conservation:

Environmental audits: Conducting extensive audits of the airport's surrounding mangrove environment to identify key ecosystems and species. This includes the assessment of nine distinct ecosystems such as wetlands and drylands, along with several endangered species.

Collaborative engagement: Working closely with traditional owners to leverage their knowledge and expertise in managing the land and sea country around the airport.

Habitat restoration: Implementing restoration projects that rehabilitate degraded areas and create green spaces within the airport precinct. This includes implementing plans to regenerate three endangered species, planting native species, managing invasive species, and enhancing natural habitats.

Ongoing conservation: Developing and maintaining sustainable conservation practices to ensure the long-term health and resilience of the ecosystems. This includes monitoring biodiversity outcomes and adapting management practices as needed.

This comprehensive strategy addresses the immediate needs of biodiversity conservation and ensures sustainable management practices that benefit the environment and local communities.

WHY IT MATTERS

Cairns Airport's biodiversity initiative offers a multitude of critical benefits:

Ecosystem protection: The project helps preserve the region's ecological integrity by safeguarding and enhancing nine distinct ecosystems. This is crucial for several endangered species' survival and the local environment's overall health.

Community collaboration: The area has immense cultural value with the traditional landowners. Engaging with traditional landowners leverages local knowledge and expertise, strengthens community ties, and promotes environmental stewardship.

Sustainable development: The area forms a natural barrier to erosion and king tides and sequesters carbon efficiently. By integrating biodiversity conservation into its operations, the airport sets a benchmark for environmental responsibility in the aviation industry.

Climate resilience: Enhancing local biodiversity contributes to greater climate resilience. Healthy ecosystems are better able to withstand and recover from environmental stresses, such as extreme weather events and climate change impacts.

Cairns Airport's biodiversity project demonstrates how sustainable practices can be effectively integrated into large-scale operations, providing long-term benefits for both the environment and the community.

350 hectares

Of mangroves around
Cairns Airport

9

Distinct ecosystems
analysed

50x

More carbon stored
by mangroves compared
to forests

US \$479B

Yearly cost of the
degradation of the world's
natural ecosystems

SUPPORT THIS PROJECT

To learn more about how you can participate in the Cairns Airport Biodiversity Project or to learn more about their Statement of Intent, visit

[cairnsairport.com.au/
corporate/statement-of-
intent/](http://cairnsairport.com.au/corporate/statement-of-intent/)

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