

Aurukun key points

This report provides information about Aurukun's strengths, challenges confronting the community, as well as government and non-government services. The information was largely collected during 2009, but often relates to earlier points in time (in particular, census data is from 2006).

This section of the report provides a summary of key topics identified about Aurukun. It begins by providing background information about the community. This is followed by strengths in the community. Next are the challenges confronting the community, and consideration of issues with service provision in the community. Finally, a list of recent investments in the community is provided.

Background community information

People

- The population of Aurukun in 2006 was estimated to be 1,130 people, of whom 1,059 were Indigenous (94%).
- In 2006, 43 per cent of Aurukun's Indigenous population were younger than 20 years of age.

Population projections

- The Indigenous population of Aurukun is projected to increase from 1,059 people in 2006 to 1,300 in 2026, an increase of 23 per cent.
- The number of Indigenous people aged 15 to 64 (the working-age population) is projected to increase by 22 per cent, from 669 to 881, over this period.
- The number of Indigenous people aged 65 years and above (the post-working age population) is projected to increase by 174 per cent, from 33 to 91 people, over the same period.
- The changing size and age composition of the Indigenous population of Aurukun will increase the need for housing and employment opportunities, as well as aged care and health services.

Geography

- Aurukun is located on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula.
- Aurukun has a humid tropical climate and 80 per cent of annual rain falls during the wet season.

Community strengths

Language, culture and tradition

- The people of Aurukun are members of the Wik nation and maintain strong links to traditional Aboriginal languages, culture, art and practices.
- There is a robust attachment to culture and art, which is evidenced by the achievements of Aurukun's Wik and Kugu Arts and Crafts Centre.
- Around 90 per cent of people in Aurukun speak the traditional language of Wik-Mungkan (for many this is their first language), rather than a creole or Aboriginal English.

Community leadership and Cape York Welfare Reform

- Community leaders in Aurukun have been supportive of initiatives such as Cape York Welfare Reform, to advance the wellbeing of the people of Aurukun.

- Local commissioners associated with Cape York Welfare Reform's Family Responsibilities Commission have demonstrated a commitment to leading and supporting community members to restore positive social norms in the community.
- Other projects established under Cape York Welfare Reform include a parenting program and a wellbeing centre that promotes a community-based approach to addiction and addiction-related health issues.
- Aurukun has a strong, committed and active community justice group. The group meets for two full days each week.

Land, country and natural resources

- Aurukun is bounded by the sea to the west and by the Archer River to the south. The land and sea offers an abundant variety of wildlife and opportunities.
- Caring for Country is a big part of life at Aurukun. The people of Aurukun have maintained strong connections with the land, sea and rivers. Fishing and the management of flora and fauna are particular strengths.

Education initiatives

- Aurukun's school community has identified several programs that they feel have improved attendance, behaviour and performance at the school.
- These programs include support for students transitioning to high school, modified curriculum, focusing on positive behaviour and building respect and identity.
- In 2010, the Aurukun school transitioned to a new education model known as the 'Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy'—based on the principles of direct instruction teaching.

Challenges facing the community

Employment

- In 2006, the proportion of Aurukun's Indigenous working-age (15–64 years) population who were employed (the employment rate) was 42 per cent.
- However, the overwhelming majority of employment in the community was in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).
- If the figure is adjusted so that CDEP positions are not considered as employment, Aurukun's Indigenous employment rate (8%) was approximately one-fifth of the national Indigenous non-CDEP employment rate (42%).

School attendance

- School attendance is relatively low in Aurukun, with attendance rates between 56 and 66 per cent in 2009.
- However, school attendance is improving in Aurukun. Since the beginning of 2008, school attendance has steadily risen—increasing from 33 per cent in the second half of 2007.

Education

- In 2006, Aurukun's Indigenous population had a very low rate of educational attainment—less than 5 per cent of Indigenous 20- to 64-year-olds attained at least Year 12 or equivalent qualifications.

- This is less than half the Indigenous educational attainment rate for Cape York, and approximately one-tenth of the Indigenous attainment rates for Queensland and Australia.

NAPLAN test results

- In each domain and each year level of the 2009 NAPLAN tests, only a minority (between 0 and 38%) of students at Western Cape College were at or above the national minimum standards.

Disengaged youth

- In 2006, the age profile of the Aurukun population was relatively young, with nearly one-fifth of the Aurukun Indigenous population being aged between 15 and 24 years.
- Three per cent of this large group (Aurukun's Indigenous 15- to 24-year-olds) were engaged in full-time study or employment during 2006.
- In Aurukun, 15- to 24-year-olds are substantially over represented in the crime figures—approximately 44 per cent of offenders were in this age group between 2004–05 and 2008–09.

Community safety

- In 2008–09, there were around 650 offences per 1,000 people in Aurukun. However, this is the lowest rate in five years.
- Nearly 40 per cent of the offences in this period were public order offences.
- In the five-year period from 2004–05 to 2008–09, approximately half of all offences were recorded as alcohol or drug related.
- Over the same period, 50 per cent of offenders were under 20 years of age.
- Over 2003–04 to 2007–08, the hospital separation rate for assault for Indigenous Australians in the Aurukun statistical local area (SLA) was 21 times higher than the rate for other Australians nationally, after controlling for age differences.

Healthy homes

- In 2006, over 60 per cent of Indigenous households in Aurukun experienced overcrowding.
- This is nearly twice the rate for Indigenous households in the Cape York region, and more than four times the rate for Indigenous Queensland and Indigenous Australia.
- Over 2003–04 to 2007–08, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in Aurukun SLA for diseases associated with poor environmental health were four times the national average rate (after adjusting for age differences).

Health

- Between 2003–04 and 2007–08, the most common principal diagnosis for hospital separations for Indigenous residents of Aurukun SLA was dialysis. This was followed by injury and poisoning.
- Over the same period, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in Aurukun SLA for diabetes were seven times the national average, for dialysis five times the national average, and for injury and poisoning three times the national average (after adjusting for age differences).

Early childhood

- According to the 2009 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), the proportion of Indigenous children in the Cook AEDI region (which incorporates Aurukun) considered developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills domain (46%) is greater than for all Queensland Indigenous children (36%) and all Australian Indigenous children (29%).
- Over 2003–2007, the age-specific fertility rate for mothers aged 15–19 in Aurukun SLA (147.8 live births per 1,000 women) is nearly nine times the total national rate (16.4 live births per 1,000 women).

Potential issues with service delivery

Accessibility

- Most forms of service provision are affected by accessibility.
- The main access road to Aurukun is mostly unsealed and can be closed for months during the wet season, making accessibility an issue.
- The community is, however, regularly serviced by barge and air. These alternative forms of transport are not without issue, for example, the cost of air travel is prohibitive.

Water supply system

- Although the majority of Aurukun's municipal services meet the base level standards, the water supply in Aurukun does not meet either the pressure or water quality standards.
- The water supply system operates at a lower pressure to mitigate leaks in the system.
- Aurukun experiences poor water quality due to high alkalinity in the water supply.

English as a second language teachers

- Around 90 per cent of students speak Wik-Mungkan and will be learning English for the first time at school.
- Of 28 teaching staff, the school has only one teacher with a background in English as a second language (ESL) and five teachers who have had training in the use of ESL bandscales.

Support for students with disabilities

- Hearing loss is the most common disability among students at Aurukun. Support services are limited.

Victim support and community safety services

- In Aurukun, there are no social workers or victim support services beyond health services.
- There is currently no operating women's safe house in Aurukun. The previous safe house closed due to staffing and funding issues.
- There are no 'cooling off' or sobering-up facilities in Aurukun, although drug and alcohol support services are available through the wellbeing centre.

Significant new investments

Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy

- In 2010, the Aurukun campus of Western Cape College transitioned to a new intensive education model, known as the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy. The Queensland Government has committed \$10 million to the academy (this amount is shared across Aurukun and Coen).

Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership

- Aurukun's Western Cape College is to benefit from the Smarter Schools—Literacy and Numeracy National Partnership.

Building the Education Revolution

- Several projects are being funded in Aurukun's Western Cape College under the Building the Education Revolution initiative, through the National School Pride Program and Primary Schools for the 21st Century.
- The National School Pride Program has provided funding for building refurbishment in the school including an internal repaint, floor coverings and window replacement.
- Primary Schools for the 21st Century has provided funding for construction of a multipurpose hall.

Community infrastructure

- Under the Local Community Infrastructure Program (a part of the Economic Stimulus Plan), Aurukun's water treatment plant will be upgraded.
- A new safe house for children is being established in Aurukun. It was incomplete as of February 2010.

National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

- Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, 10 new dwellings and 18 refurbishments have been proposed for construction in Aurukun during 2009–2010.
- Over the coming years, the National Partnership Agreement will provide funding for further housing in remote Indigenous communities through a process of competitive bids. From 1 July 2010, state governments will submit proposals for new dwellings, refurbishment activity and employment-related accommodation for their communities.

Coen key points

This report provides information about Coen's strengths, challenges confronting the community, as well as government and non-government services. The information was largely collected during 2009, but often relates to earlier points in time (in particular, census data is from 2006).

This section of the report provides a summary of key topics identified about Coen. It begins by providing background information about the community. This is followed by strengths in the community. Next are the challenges confronting the community, and consideration of issues with service provision in the community. Finally, a list of recent investments in the community is provided.

Background community information

People

- The population of Coen in 2006 was estimated to be 270 people, of whom 239 were Indigenous (89%).
- In 2006, 41 per cent of Coen's Indigenous population were under 20 years of age.

Population projections

- The Indigenous population of Coen is projected to increase from 239 people in 2006 to 297 in 2026, an increase of 24 per cent.
- The number of Indigenous people aged 15 to 64 (the working-age population) is projected to increase by 22 per cent, from 151 to 184, over this period.
- The number of Indigenous people aged 65 years and above (the post-working age population), is projected to increase by 148 per cent, from 8 to 19 people, over the same period.
- The changing size and age composition of the Indigenous population of Coen will increase the need for housing and employment opportunities, as well as aged care and health services.

Geography

- Coen is situated inland on the Cape York Peninsula.
- It is approximately halfway between Cairns and the tip of the Cape and is around 557 km from Cairns by road.

Community strengths

Cape York Welfare Reform

- Coen is a Cape York Welfare Reform community.
- Cape York Welfare Reform is designed to provide opportunities and change behaviours in the Reform communities.
- As part of Welfare Reform, a wellbeing centre (a community-based approach to treating addictions and related health issues) has been established in Coen.
- Furthermore, 95 per cent of targeted families in Coen have established Student Education Trusts to support their children's education.

School attendance

- School attendance is high at Coen State School. Over the last four years, attendance rates have averaged over 90 per cent. Attendance was also consistent—in seven out of the eight terms of 2008 and 2009, attendance rates were above 90 per cent.

NAPLAN test results

- In Coen, students had a high level of participation in the 2009 NAPLAN tests.
- For most domains in 2009, the majority of students in Coen State School were at or above the national minimum standard. In comparable schools, the majority of students fail to meet the national minimum standards.

Municipal services

- Coen generally had more reliable municipal services than its comparison community (Georgetown).
- Both Coen's and Georgetown's municipal services are adequately managed and face similar problems of attracting skilled staff to reside in a remote area, which leads to minor disruptions in the reliability of services from time to time.

Emergency services

- Despite Coen's small size there are a large number of volunteer firefighters and SES members.
- Coen's SES has enough competent members to undertake a range of operations including car accident rescues, and search and rescue.

Education

- Direct teaching has been positively received by the Coen school community.
- Students are responding well to, and engaging with, the Spelling Mastery Program, participating for 20 minutes a day.
- The school has also implemented a phonics awareness program for Prep school students called 'Language for Thinking'. The school is planning to introduce a direct teaching mathematics program.
- The direct teaching approach has been extended in Coen, with the community school becoming part of the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy.

Challenges facing the community

Health

- Between 2003–04 and 2007–08, the most common principal diagnoses for residents of the Cook statistical local area (SLA), where Coen is located, for hospital separations of the Indigenous population were injury and poisoning.
- Over the same period, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in the Cook SLA for assault were 38 times, for diabetes eight times, for injury and poisoning five times, and for alcohol-related conditions five times, the national average rates (after adjusting for age differences).

Early childhood

- According to the 2009 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), the proportion of Indigenous children in the Cook AEDI region (which incorporates Coen) considered developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills domain (46%) is greater than for all Queensland Indigenous children (36%) and all Australian Indigenous children (29%).
- Over 2003–2007, the age-specific fertility rate for mothers aged 15 to 19 in the Cook SLA (189.0 live births per 1,000 women) was nearly 12 times the total national rate for the age group (16.4 live births per 1,000 women).

Healthy homes

- Forty-five per cent of Indigenous households in Coen experienced overcrowding in 2006, triple the Queensland and national Indigenous rates (both 14%).
- Between 2003–04 and 2007–08, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in the Cook SLA for diseases associated with poor environmental health were four times the national average rate (after adjusting for age differences).

Employment

- In 2006, the proportion of Coen's Indigenous working-age (15–64 years) population who were employed (the employment rate) was 72 per cent.
- However, employment in the community was often in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP).
- If the figure is adjusted so that CDEP positions are not considered as employment, Coen's Indigenous employment rate (22%) is approximately half of the national Indigenous non-CDEP employment rate (42%).

Crime and justice

- There was a substantial increase in recorded offences in Coen between 2004–05 and 2008–09.
- This primarily consisted of increases in the number of public order offences and acts intended to cause injury, as well as traffic and vehicle regulatory offences.
- This may not necessarily reflect an actual increase in the level of crime—it could reflect improvements in the reporting and detection of crime.
- Over 2004–05 to 2008–09, a large proportion (71%) of recorded offences in Coen were alcohol or substance related.

Accessibility

- Accessibility is a major issue that can affect service provision.
- Coen is on the Peninsula Developmental Road, which can be closed for weeks or months during the wet season.
- The lack of road access during the wet season is a major issue, as is the cost of air travel.

Potential issues with service delivery

English as a second language teachers

- Although a greater proportion of students in Coen State School were at or above the national minimum standard than in comparable schools in the NAPLAN tests, it is important to note that the school performs substantially worse than the national rate.
- Students in Coen speak a local creole which is distinctive.
- None of the teachers at the school has any training in English as a second language (ESL). There are also no ESL programs or external ESL support.

Water supply

- There has been a concern about water supply sustainability in Coen since the dam spillway was lowered.
- There is a risk that in a year of low rainfall, the dam will not be able to supply enough water when other sources are exhausted.

Crime and justice

- The Coen safe house for women is currently unused. This is reportedly because community members feel the location was an inappropriate choice.
- There appears to be a need for more victim supports services—in particular an operating safe house and a 'cooling off' place for perpetrators of violence.

Significant new investments

Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy

- In 2010, Coen State School transitioned to a new intensive education model, known as the Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy. The Queensland Government has committed \$10 million to the academy (this amount is shared across Coen and Aurukun). To support these changes, Coen State School has become a campus of Western Cape College.

Building the Education Revolution

- The National School Pride Program, part of the Building the Education Revolution program, has provided funding for the construction of a covered learning area, sound field systems for all classrooms (to support hearing-impaired children) and building refurbishment (carpeting, cabling and doors in A and B blocks) at Coen State School.
- Primary Schools for the 21st Century, also part of the Building the Education Revolution program, has provided funding for the construction of a new library at Coen State School.

Hope Vale key points

This report provides information about Hope Vale's strengths, challenges confronting the community, as well as government and non-government services. The information was largely collected during 2009, but often relates to earlier points in time (in particular, the census data is from 2006).

This section of the report provides a summary of key topics identified about Hope Vale. It begins by providing background information about the community. This is followed by strengths in the community. Next are the challenges confronting the community, and consideration of issues with service provision in the community. Finally, a list of recent investments in the community is provided.

Background community information

People

- The population of Hope Vale in 2006 was estimated to be 842 people, of whom 797 were Indigenous (95%).
- Forty per cent of the Hope Vale population were aged under 20 in 2006.

Population projections

- The Indigenous population of Hope Vale is projected to increase from 797 people in 2006 to 957 in 2026, an increase of 20 per cent.
- The number of Indigenous people aged 15 to 64 (the working-age population) is projected to increase by 19 per cent, from 503 to 599, over this period.
- The number of Indigenous people aged 65 years and above (the post-working age population), is projected to increase by 161 per cent, from 25 to 65 people, over the same period.
- The changing size and age composition of the Indigenous population of Hope Vale will increase the need for housing and employment opportunities, as well as aged care and health services.

Geography

- Hope Vale is located on Cape York Peninsula, 46 km north of Cooktown and 367 km north of Cairns by road.

Community strengths

Cape York Welfare Reform

- Hope Vale is a Cape York Welfare Reform community.
- Cape York Welfare Reform is designed to provide opportunities and change behaviours in the participating communities.
- As part of Cape York Welfare Reform, an intensive literacy program (MULTILIT) and a wellbeing centre have been established in Hope Vale. A wellbeing centre is a community-based approach to treating addictions and related health issues.

School staffing

- The school community in Hope Vale have felt that changes to staffing have positively affected the school.

- An additional deputy principal has meant the school has additional teacher support and capacity for professional development.
- The employment of extra teaching staff has allowed for the reduction in class sizes.

Educational attainment

- In 2006, 44 per cent of Indigenous 20- to 24-year-olds in Hope Vale had attained Year 12 or post-school qualifications. This is comparable to the national Indigenous rate (47%). It is, however, substantially better than the rate in many other remote Indigenous communities.

Road accessibility

- Significant improvements have been made to road accessibility in Hope Vale.
- The access road to Hope Vale (from the Cooktown McIvor River Road) has been fully sealed.
- Despite these substantial improvements, parts of the road to Cooktown can become cut during the wet season.

Challenges facing the community

NAPLAN test results

- In 2009 for most domains, the majority of students in Hope Vale State School were below the national minimum standard (NMS). In statistically similar schools, however, a far larger proportion of students were below the NMS.

Employment

- In 2006, the proportion of Hope Vale's Indigenous working-age (15–64 years) population who were employed (the employment rate) was 71 per cent.
- However, the overwhelming majority of employment in the community was in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). CDEP positions are traditionally low-skilled and low-wage.
- If the figure is adjusted so that CDEP positions are not considered as employment, Hope Vale's Indigenous employment rate (15%) is approximately one-third of the national Indigenous non-CDEP employment rate (42%).

Health

- Ambulatory care sensitive are those that could be addressed by better access to primary health care and conditions that relate to avoidable chronic diseases. Over the period 2003–04 to 2007–08, the Indigenous rate of hospital separations for ambulatory care sensitive conditions in the Hope Vale statistical local area (SLA) was approximately two times the national Indigenous rate, and approximately five times the total national rate.
- Over the same period, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in Hope Vale SLA were 34 times higher for assault, 20 times higher for diabetes, and six times higher for alcohol-related conditions, than the national average rate (after adjusting for age differences).

Healthy homes

- In 2006, overcrowding rates for Indigenous dwellings in Hope Vale (28%) were double the Queensland and national Indigenous rates (both 14%).

- Over 2003–04 to 2007–08, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in Hope Vale SLA were eight times higher for diseases associated with poor environmental health than the national average rate (after adjusting for age differences).

Early childhood

- According to the 2009 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), the proportion of Indigenous children in the Cook AEDI region (which incorporates Hope Vale) considered developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills domain (46%) is greater than for all Queensland Indigenous children (36%) and all Australian Indigenous children (29%).
- Over 2003–2007, the Indigenous age-specific fertility rate for mothers aged 15–19 in the Hope Vale SLA (79.7 live births per 1,000 women) is nearly five times the total national rate (16.4 live births per 1,000 women).
- Over the same period, the Indigenous rate of low-birthweight babies in Hope Vale SLA, 182.9 per 1,000 live births, was more than three times higher than the total national rate of low-birthweight babies (47.8 per 1,000 live births).

Community safety

- The number of reported offences in Hope Vale increased from 253 offences in 2007–08 to 519 offences in 2008–09.
- This increase largely consists of increases in public order offences and traffic and vehicle regulatory offences. Public order offences doubled in number.
- Over 2004–05 to 2008–09, 54 per cent of offences were alcohol or substance related. Sixty-five per cent of the public order offences were alcohol related.

School attendance

- The attendance at Hope Vale State School has varied between 76.6 and 88.2 per cent over 2009. Over the past three years, attendance has been fairly stable.
- Although school attendance in Hope Vale is lower than the Queensland average, it is substantially higher than many remote Indigenous Queensland schools.

Potential issues with service delivery

English as a second language teachers

- Students at Hope Vale State School speak a distinctive local creole. None of the 14 teachers at the school has any formal English as a second language (ESL) training. However, three of the teachers have had training in the use of ESL bandscales.

Support for students with disabilities

- There are 10 verified special needs students at Hope Vale State School. There is one full-time special needs teacher at Hope Vale State School. Each student has an Individual Learning Plan to meet their specific needs. However, some unmet need remains.

Municipal infrastructure and services

- In general, Hope Vale's municipal services and infrastructure meet the base level standards and are reliable.
- A major issue with municipal infrastructure and services in Hope Vale is the shortage of adequate staff to fill critical management roles.

- The council is understaffed, especially in the key areas of environmental health and staff accommodation.

Airport

- The airstrip at Hope Vale is unsealed, unregistered and uncertified.
- It appears to be used only in emergencies, and by the Royal Flying Doctor Service.
- However, there is an airport in Cooktown which can be accessed by the community.

Waste disposal

- The landfill is in poor condition. The covering of waste happens on an irregular basis.
- There are no controls on access to the landfill. Despite the landfill being within 5 km of the community, there are numerous informal dumping sites along the road to the landfill.

Lighting

- Street and public lighting are provided in Hope Vale. However, there is insufficient lighting along the streets and in public places.
- Most of the lighting infrastructure is old and poorly maintained.
- Control units are not operating properly and some streetlights are on during the day.
- Streetlights were placed sporadically, with distances between lights varying from 20 m to 150 m.

Significant new investments

Investments in education

- Hope Vale State School is expected to benefit under the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership.
- Several projects are being funded in Hope Vale State School under the Building the Education Revolution program, through the National School Pride Program and Primary Schools for the 21st Century.
- The National School Pride Program has provided funding for building refurbishment in the school including electrical connections, phonic ear systems, safe and operational divider doors, safe furniture and carpeting. The program also provides a permanent all-weather cover for the play fort and a safe fall surface.
- Primary Schools for the 21st Century has provided funding for construction of a library.

Local community infrastructure program

- Hope Vale has received funding under the Local Community Infrastructure Program.
- The funding was for the Elim Beach and Coloured Sands Access Project.
- This project aims to improve access to Elim Beach and Coloured Sands, and includes the installation of drainage and a timber bridge.

National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

- Under the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, five new dwellings and 12 refurbishments have been proposed for construction in Hope Vale during 2009–10.

- Over the coming years, the National Partnership Agreement will provide funding for further housing in remote Indigenous communities through a process of competitive bids. From 1 July 2010, state governments will submit proposals for new dwellings, refurbishment activity and employment-related accommodation for their communities.

Mossman Gorge key points

This report provides information about Mossman Gorge's strengths, challenges confronting the community, as well as government and non-government services. The information was largely collected during 2009, but often relates to earlier points in time (in particular, the census data is from 2006).

This section of the report provides a summary of key topics identified about Mossman Gorge. It begins by providing background information about the community. This is followed by strengths in the community. Next are the challenges confronting the community, and consideration of issues with service provision in the community. Finally, a list of recent investments in the community is provided.

Background community information

People

- The population of Mossman Gorge in 2006 was estimated to be 144 people.
- Thirty-four per cent of Mossman Gorge's Indigenous population were younger than 20 years of age.
- Two-thirds reported they normally spoke English at home. One-quarter reported they spoke the traditional language of Kuku Yalanji at home.

Location

- Mossman Gorge is classified as outer regional rather than remote or very remote.
- Mossman Gorge community is 5 km from Mossman by road, approximately 20 km from Port Douglas and 80 km north of Cairns, adjacent to Daintree National Park.
- Mossman Gorge consists of a freehold and reserve land parcel.

Community strengths

Access and accessibility

- The community has access to numerous services from Mossman, including kindergarten, primary and high school, child care, Mossman Hospital, a licensed post office with a full range of services and a full Centrelink Customer Service Centre.
- The road between Mossman and Mossman Gorge is sealed and is accessible during the wet season, except in the most extreme weather.
- The Daintree Shuttle provides regular transport (approximately twice weekly) between the community and Mossman.
- Bus services to Cairns are also available; however, cost is prohibitive.

Cape York Welfare Reform

- Mossman Gorge is a Cape York Welfare Reform community.

- Cape York Welfare Reform is designed to provide opportunities and change behaviours in the participating communities.
- As part of Welfare Reform, a wellbeing centre has been established in Mossman Gorge, and is providing a community-based approach to treating addictions and related health issues.
- Furthermore, large numbers of families in Mossman Gorge have established Student Education Trusts to support their children's education.

Early childhood

- According to the 2009 Australian Early Development Index (AEDI), the proportion of Indigenous children in the Douglas AEDI region (which incorporates Mossman Gorge) considered developmentally vulnerable in the language and cognitive skills domain (21%) is less than for all Queensland Indigenous children (36%) and all Australian Indigenous children (29%).
- However, the proportion of Indigenous children in the Douglas AEDI region who were assessed as developmentally vulnerable in this domain was substantially higher than the proportion of all Australian non-Indigenous children assessed as developmentally vulnerable in this domain (8%).

Challenges facing the community

Crime and justice

- In 2008–09, there were 98 reported offences in Mossman Gorge. This is a high number considering the population is less than 200 people.
- Eighty-four per cent of offences in Mossman Gorge were alcohol related. Ninety-three per cent of public order offences in Mossman Gorge were also alcohol related. Sixteen out of 20 serious assaults resulting in injury were also alcohol related.
- For the same period, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in Douglas (S) statistical local area (SLA) (where Mossman Gorge is located) were 27 times higher for assault than the national average rate (after adjusting for age).

Community health

- Over 2003–04 to 2007–08, the hospital separation rate for Douglas (S) SLA was higher than that for the Australian Indigenous population in general.
- For the same period, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in Douglas (S) SLA were 55 times higher for dialysis, 14 times higher for diabetes and six times higher for alcohol-related conditions than the national average rate (after adjusting for age differences).
- The very high rate of hospitalisations for dialysis can be explained in part by the presence of dialysis treatment in Mossman Hospital.

Healthy homes

- In 2006, the overcrowding rate for Indigenous dwellings in Mossman Gorge (42%) was three times the Queensland and national Indigenous rates (both 14%).
- Over 2003–04 to 2007–08, hospital separation rates for Indigenous Australians in Douglas (S) SLA for conditions associated with poor environmental health were five times higher than the national average rate (after adjusting for age differences).

Youth motherhood

- Over 2003–2007, the age-specific fertility rate for mothers aged 15 to 19 in Douglas (S) SLA (121.0 live births per 1,000 women) is seven times the total national rate (16.4 live births per 1,000 women).

School attendance

- In 2009, the student attendance rate for Mossman Gorge students at Mossman State School and Mossman State High School varied between 78 per cent (Term 3) and 81.6 per cent (Term 2).

Disengaged youth

- The Mossman Gorge population has a young age profile, with 23 per cent of the Indigenous population aged between 15 and 24 years. Thirty-four per cent of the Indigenous population is aged under 20.
- According to the 2006 Census, none of the community's Indigenous 15- to 24-year-olds were engaged in full-time study or employment in 2006.
- In Mossman Gorge in 2008-09, approximately 50 per cent of offenders were 15- to 24-year-olds.

Employment

- In 2006, the proportion of Mossman Gorge's Indigenous working-age (15–64 years) population who were employed (the employment rate) was 45 per cent.
- However, nearly all employment in the community was in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP). CDEP positions are traditionally low-skilled and low-wage. Furthermore, due to recent reforms, CDEP ceased in Mossman Gorge on 30 June 2009.
- If the figure is adjusted so that CDEP positions are not considered as employment, Mossman Gorge's Indigenous employment rate (3%) was less than one-tenth of the national Indigenous non-CDEP employment rate (42%) in 2006.

Potential issues with service delivery

Municipal infrastructure management

- Mossman Gorge consists of a freehold and reserve land parcel.

- The freehold land is administered by Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku (BBN), an Indigenous corporation.
- The inability of BBN or the reserve to resource regular maintenance of infrastructure causes deficiencies in municipal and essential services.
- Maintenance is not a key activity of either body and is done in a responsive rather than planned fashion.
- Service levels also vary between BBN and state reserve properties due to the different management structures.

Non-domestic waste

- Cairns Regional Council undertakes domestic waste collection and disposal, but not non-domestic waste. This is undertaken by BBN.
- The BBN collection vehicle requires the manual handling of bins, and is therefore not suitable for rubbish collection.
- There are also inadequate public bins in the community around playgrounds, ovals, community facilities, etc.

Victim support and community safety

- There is no safe house or crisis accommodation in either Mossman Gorge or the neighbouring town of Mossman. The closest shelter is in Cairns.
- A support service for victims of sexual violence was operating in Mossman but ceased some time ago.
- Yarrabah, Townsville and Brisbane are the closest sobering-up facilities.

Significant new investments

Investments in education

- A large proportion of the students at Mossman Gorge attend Mossman State School or Mossman State High School.
- Several projects are being funded in Mossman State School and Mossman State High School under the Building the Education Revolution program, through the National School Pride Program and Primary Schools for the 21st Century.
- The National School Pride Program has provided funding for refurbishments at Mossman State School, including teaching spaces and toilets, and improving access for people with special needs.
- The program has also provided funding for improving infrastructure at Mossman State High School for people with special needs, the provision of a shade structure and a covered outdoor learning area.
- At Mossman State School, Primary Schools for the 21st Century has provided funding for the construction of a new library.

Gateway Centre

- The Indigenous Land Corporation, an independent Commonwealth Government statutory authority, has committed to a new \$16 million ecotourism facility, the Gateway Centre, at Mossman Gorge.
- The project is expected to generate up to 40 new local jobs when the centre opens and up to 70 new jobs in the peak tourism season.
- The project is still in the design phase.