

## Engaging Beyond the Usual Suspects

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Articulous Communications worked with the Cairns Regional Council to engage their community in developing a long term plan for the region. *Our Cairns* aimed to engage beyond the small number of loud and consistent voices in the community.

From a base of 300 randomly selected community members, the engagement activities led to a record number of more than 6,000 responses. Previously the most responses received of any community survey in the region was 600. The aim of *Our Cairns* was to actively engage the community to provide insights into the Cairns five-year plan incorporating:

- City planning
- Cultural planning
- Environmental planning; and
- Corporate planning

This engagement project had three phases with each a critical element that helped to build data to feed into other components to provide richer data and more detailed decision making ability:

1. The initial survey tested values and provided a rich and data-driven insight into the community and produced an avatar (character) for sharing.
2. The full survey gave an insight into community preferences from Council, the community's willingness to pay additional fees for service and insights into topical issues never before asked.
3. Comparing the two surveys showed differences / similarities between values and behaviours / opinions.

Our Cairns was the result of an engagement project, via the Queensland Government's Smart Cities program, which involved a number of events across the state also facilitated by Articulous. Smart Cities' events were designed to identify and priorities opportunities and gain a genuine understanding of issues impacting on regional Queensland communities.