



Gulf Savannah Development Inc.

Level 1, Ports North Building
16 Hartley Street, Cairns City QLD 4870
CEO Office - +61 (0) 408 051 358
After hours – 0421 995 205
ABN: 69 956 728 660

Email: nobrien@gulf-savannah.com.au

Website: www.gulf-savannah.com.au



MEMBERSHIP PROSPECTUS

About Gulf Savannah Development Inc

Gulf Savannah Development Inc. (GSD) is a registered not-for-profit charity that exists to serve members, regional stakeholders and the entire Gulf Savannah region.

GSD provides regional leadership as the facilitating organisation for the Gulf Savannah region driving economic development projects and initiatives for the benefit of stakeholders, including developing a Gulf tourism collective to drive and promote growth in the region's visitor economy. As the representative body actively advocating for Councils, businesses, organisations and community in the region, our primary goal is to bring together organisations/people, ideas and resources to deliver impactful projects that ensure the future sustainability of the Gulf Region.

Since 1974, GSD has worked in partnership with Councils, industry and community to drive and support economic growth across a range of sectors including agriculture and fisheries, tourism, aviation, resources, energy, renewables, infrastructure and all levels of community and business. GSD connects these sectors and the region with all levels of Government, securing funding, delivering projects, advocating change and influencing policy.

Our vision: To secure a fairer share of government and industry investment to unlock the Gulf Savannah region's potential and develop more sustainable and prosperous businesses and communities where people want to live, work, play and invest

Our purpose: Drive the Gulf Savannah's economic development through advocacy, facilitation and project delivery

Our success: Leveraging regional strengths and opportunities to achieve stronger, sustainable and resilient regional economies, strengthening business to create more jobs, improving liveability for residents and visitors

Map 1: The Gulf Savannah region



GSD works within the Gulf Savannah region and across Far North and North West Queensland to advocate, facilitate and deliver projects that achieve regional outcomes.

Map 2: The Savannah Way

We are part of the iconic Savannah Way, one of Australia's great outback travel routes. A key priority is sealing the Savannah Way, and facilitating economic and tourism product and experience development along the Way.



GSD's CEO is a director on the Savannah Way Limited Board, whose purpose is to promote the Savannah Way and lead a national approach to economic development and the many ways to utilise northern Australia's ultimate travel route.

GSD – focus, successes, opportunities and projects

Our key areas of focus are:

- Advocacy – a coordinated regional voice
- Facilitation – regional, all industries, community & across all three levels of government
- Project delivery - driving projects for regional benefit

Our recent project successes include:

- Securing more investment to the region than GSD has for the last 15 years combined
- *Gulf Savannah Regional Electricity and Energy Supply Proposal* (2023)
- *Gulf Savannah Cropping Development 'How to' Manual* (2023)
- *Indigenous and Regional Tourism Pipeline of Investment Opportunities* (2022)
- *Gulf Academy Business Case* (2021)
- *Greenhouse Feasibility Study* (2021)
- *Gulf Savannah Regional Branding Strategy* (2020)
- *Farm-Station Stay Manual* (2020)
- *Lower Gulf and Riverine Economic Development Strategy* (2018).

2024-2025-2026 priorities:

Delivering over \$2.4M in projects

- Delivering Stage 1 of the *Port of Karumba Sustainable Development* project and securing funding for Stage 2
 - Working across the region, with industry and across all levels of government to position the Port of Karumba as a second export pathway for North West Queensland
- Delivering a *Tourism Recovery/Resilience Program*, including employing a tourism officer and promoting the region
- Reviewing GSD's *Farm Stay Manual* and delivering workshops and mentoring to facilitate more Gulf agritourism
- Developing a *Regional Information and Cropping Hub* with a water trading mechanism, to support cropping growth
- Subject to final government approval, delivering a *Community Recovery and Resilience Program* including employing two community development officers
- Systemically improving GSD's website and digital presence, developing a tourism communications and engagement strategy, and new GSD website that showcases our region, our projects, tourism, farm stays, and regional resources
- Gulf visitor economy – working with Councils and industry to grow and develop Gulf Savannah tourism
 - Developing a Gulf tourism collective – support industry and develop regional collaborative approaches
 - Strengthening partnerships/collaboration with Tourism Tropical North Queensland & Outback Queensland

Advocacy

- Strategic importance of the Port of Karumba to North West Queensland economy, industry and communities
- Submissions for the Gulf gill net fishing closures, Gulf Water Plan, Regional Telecommunications and NAIF
- In the lead up to the state and federal government elections, meeting with government ministers to ensure they understand the challenges, opportunities and priorities within the Gulf Savannah and North West region
- Ensuring government understands the importance of REX Airlines to the Gulf and regional Queensland
- Advocating for the reopening of the Einasleigh to Forsyth rail line and continued Savannahlander services
- Sealing/improving the Savannah Way, including lifting key bridges over the Gilbert, Leichardt, Gregory and Nicholson Rivers

Facilitation

- Hosting a regional stakeholder summit
- Strengthening regional collaboration and partnership approaches to developing the region
- Strengthening partnerships with other regional advocacy bodies and Regional Tourism Organisations
- Developing a Gulf tourism collective

GSD organisational development – strengthen GSD organisational sustainability/resilience; delivering value to members

Our regional **opportunities** include:

- North West Minerals Province – access & exports; developing Port of Karumba
- Decarbonisation – industry development: diversification, biofuels, renewable energy
- Agriculture – cattle, cropping development, fishing and aquaculture production
- Sustainability – local food production, energy, growing local economies, remote and Indigenous communities
- Resilience – strengthening community and infrastructure; prepare, respond, recover
- Visitor economy – developing new products, Indigenous experiences

Our current **regional challenges and priorities** include:

- Connectivity & accessibility – bridges, roads, rail, air, sea & digital
 - everyday access to the region
 - improving commercial access and developing more exports through the Port of Karumba
 - all weather roads to reduce economic impacts of natural disasters
 - improving regional liveability & health services
- Common user infrastructure – economic development
- Water security – member of Gulf water plan review committees; facilitate water access for agriculture precincts
- Energy – affordable energy for residents & businesses
- Accommodation – housing & short-term visitor
- Workforce – attraction & retention
- Affordability – improving the liveability of residents and businesses
- Visitor economy – extending the season, attracting more visitors, developing new experiences

GSD governance arrangements

GSD is governed by a Management Committee that is elected by members at the Annual General Meeting. Current elected Management Committee members are:

Position	Name	Member
Chair	Cr Ernie Camp (Mayor, Burke Shire Council)	• Burke Shire Council (Council Partner)
Deputy Chair	Cr Jack Bawden (Mayor, Carpentaria Shire Council)	• Carpentaria Shire Council (Council Partner)
Treasurer	Kylie Camp	• Floraville Downs (Savannah Diamond)
Director	Cr Barry Hughes (Mayor, Etheridge Shire Council)	• Etheridge Shire Council (Council Partner)
Director	Cr Brad Hawkins (Deputy Mayor, Carpentaria Shire Council)	• Carpentaria Shire Council (Council Partner)
Secretary	Neil O'Brien	• CEO, GSD

To maximise regional representation and advice, the Management Committee operates as a Board involving members elected at the AGM as well as other members, including representatives from REX Airlines, Burke Shire Council, Carpentaria Shire Council, Etheridge Shire Council, Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council and Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning. The Board provides strategic oversight and direction to the Chief Executive Officer and GSD's operations to ensure it effectively delivers on behalf of its members, the region and stakeholders.

About our Chief Executive Officer

Neil O'Brien was appointed as GSD's Chief Executive Officer in September 2023, and is operating from bases in Cairns, the Gulf Savannah region and Brisbane. His appointment to this role continues six generations of family who have worked, lived and contributed to the development of the Gulf Savannah region.

Neil is results driven and has extensive executive experience leading tourism and major events, infrastructure and experience development, biosecurity, and corporate and business services.

With broad and extensive background in public sector leadership, Neil brings strong skills and abilities to the CEO role which have been built over 37 years in the Queensland public sector, across seven agencies in regional and South-East Queensland, in front line operational, corporate and strategic roles, including over 19 years in senior and executive leadership positions in tourism, major events, agriculture and fisheries.

Neil has a proven track record in leading change in difficult and complex environments, and has demonstrated strong performance in regional program delivery, project facilitation, grant and funding management, infrastructure development, investment attraction, aviation route development, commercial negotiations, emergency management, program administration and service delivery, stakeholder engagement and relationship management, intergovernmental relations, corporate services, business services, and governance.

As CEO, Neil will focus on making a real difference in growing and developing the region using his advocacy and negotiation skills, working with all stakeholders to identify gaps and opportunities, leveraging funding to deliver agreed priorities, and collaborating with others to deliver projects.

GSD membership

Any Council, organisation, business or individual based in the Gulf Savannah region or with an interest in developing the Gulf region is encouraged to join GSD.

As a member, you will have the opportunity to be more involved in GSD's vision to secure a fairer share of government and industry investment to unlock the Gulf Savannah region's potential and develop more sustainable and prosperous businesses and communities where people want to live, work, play and invest. You will influence GSD and the region's economic development by bringing your own ideas to the table to guide our strategy, operations and project delivery. You will also gain connections with other regional stakeholders across various sectors. GSD delivers value to all members by advocating for members interests, promoting members and facilitating access to opportunities within the region.

GSD is currently reviewing its Rules of Association, governance structure, membership levels and membership prospectus. While the review is undertaken, GSD will maintain the following levels of membership:

- Gulf Council or Savannah Partner - \$30,000 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Diamond - \$15,000 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Sapphire - \$7,500 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Platinum - \$4,500 (excl. GST)
- Small Business - \$2,000 (excl. GST)
- Savannah Gold - \$530 (excl. GST)
- Savannah tourism - \$275 (excl. GST) – a new membership category to support Gulf based tourism

Members of GSD are eligible for complimentary Ambassador of Tourism membership with TTNQ, while also enjoying the benefits of being a member of the Gulf Savannah's regional economic development agency.

Services and support delivered under the membership can be tailored to any prospective member's needs.

Benefits of being a member

- Your membership will directly support GSD's efforts to provide regional leadership and develop the region.

- GSD is the only organisation established with the sole purpose to advocate for the Gulf Savannah region, to work with stakeholders and members to deliver sustainable economic development projects in the Gulf Savannah region, and to advance the interests of Councils, business, industry, community and visitors within the Gulf Savannah region.
- Councils and members are direct beneficiaries of GSD's status as a not-for-profit and Remote Area Board. Members secure access to Remote Area Board funding to progress economic development, regional projects and priorities, and a not-for-profit status facilitates access to funding that Councils and other regional stakeholders cannot access.
- Our new CEO's significant government experience, and extensive leadership skills developing industry and infrastructure, attracting investment, managing programs, delivering projects and engaging stakeholders, is steering GSD through a new stage of its development. Members directly benefit from his expertise, contacts, commercial acumen and advocacy skills.
- Gulf Council and Savannah Diamond members may join all Management Committee meetings to govern GSD and set strategy and direction. All members are eligible to be elected to the Management Committee.
- The CEO of GSD is active in working in partnership with other economic development and representative organisations agencies in North Queensland, including Advance Cairns, Mount Isa-Townsville Economic Zone, several Regional Organisation of Councils/Alliance of Councils, Tropical Tourism North Queensland, Outback Queensland, Natural Resource Management groups and Regional Development Australia. Members will benefit from these partnerships.
- GSD and Members can negotiate services to be delivered under any membership package, including delivery of agreed projects that will benefit the Gulf Savannah region, and its members, stakeholders, and community. GSD also provides a fee for service consultancy service and is pre-qualified through Local Buy.
- Grant funding support – targeted grant and other funding opportunities will be discussed with members. Members may access GSD's expertise to prepare grant applications.
- Other benefits will include: invitation to all GSD events; notice of events; regular GSD communiques.

Membership enquiries

Our CEO would welcome the opportunity to further discuss what membership would mean for you and how GSD could further drive economic development and initiatives for the benefit of all of its stakeholders, including your organisation. To discuss membership opportunities and benefits of joining GSD, please contact our CEO:

Neil O'Brien

email nobrien@gulf-savannah.com.au

CEO office - 0408 051 358

Afterhours – 0421 995 205



GSD 2024-25 members – please support the organisations that support GSD



