

Advancing Tourism in North Queensland

Castle Hill, Townsville, April 2016
Photo: Gareth McGuigan © TEQ

**ADVANCING TOURISM
2016–20**
GROWING QUEENSLAND JOBS



Advancing Tourism in North Queensland: building on strength and success

Tourism is a key driver of the North Queensland economy and region. Now, more than ever, North Queensland is positioned to build on its strengths and successes.

The region offers iconic and popular destinations such as the Great Barrier Reef and ancient World Heritage Area rainforests. These unique natural assets are complemented by a vibrant lifestyle and culture—there is truly something for everyone.

Millions of people visit North Queensland each year. Visitors to the Tropical North Queensland, Townsville, Mackay, Whitsunday and Capricorn regions spent in excess of \$4 billion in the year ending June 2016 supporting 220 000 jobs.

This dynamic region has an unprecedented opportunity to capitalise on its unique advantages and record visitation figures to grow market share and bolster sustainability.

North Queensland can attract more visitors and become a market leader by promoting its uniqueness and competitive advantages such as strong transport connections, close proximity to Asia and a safe, clean and green environment.

Advancing Tourism in North Queensland, in conjunction with *Advancing Tourism 2016–20: Growing Queensland jobs* and *Advancing North Queensland: Investing in the future of the north*, provides a suite of actions to support the continued growth of the tourism industry in this region.

We look forward to working together with industry to maximise North Queensland’s tourism potential—growing jobs, attracting investment and sustaining communities.



Hon. Kate Jones MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Tourism and Major Events



Hon. Coralee O'Rourke MP
Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and
Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland

Supporting tourism growth in North Queensland ...

- The Tourism Network Funding Program 2016–19 will support regional tourism organisations to promote their region, including the six regional tourism organisations operating across North Queensland.
- The \$180 million Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program and \$375 million Building our Regions Infrastructure Fund will help develop the:
 - new Great Barrier Reef moorings
 - nature tourism development at Mount Inkerman
 - new Mackay Visitor Information Centre
 - Mission Beach Aquatic Facility
 - Cooktown Airport Aviation Park
 - expansion of the Les Wilson Barramundi Discovery Centre.

Positioning North Queensland for growth

Advancing Tourism in North Queensland complements the government's Advance Queensland jobs and innovation agenda. A coordinated approach to industry, economic and regional development priorities will help position North Queensland to attract investment, infrastructure and jobs—now and into the future.

1. Grow quality products, events and experiences

The variety of North Queensland destinations and experiences has contributed to Queensland's reputation as a great tourism destination. By expanding the region's tourism offering to include more world-class, contemporary and unique products, and authentic local experiences, we can attract new and repeat visitors.

With industry we will:

- Continue to support major events in North Queensland.
- Explore and identify events for the new Townsville Stadium to increase visitors.
- Boost the tourism industry by committing \$100 million to improve water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.
- Leverage North Queensland's unique natural advantages to develop new ecotourism products.
- Work with North Queensland's premium tourism operators to undertake targeted marketing activity—matching products to identified market demand including Asia.
- Work with industry to improve tourism operators' digital capabilities.

2. Invest in infrastructure and access

Modern, high quality infrastructure is crucial to providing seamless travel to and around Queensland. Investing in new tourism assets, expanding access and improving infrastructure that supports North Queensland's unique requirements will drive growth in tourism jobs.

- Implement the Strategic Touring Route Signage Program across the five North Queensland touring routes.
- Leverage projects and opportunities arising from the proposed Townsville 'City Deal' to support and enhance tourism outcomes for North Queensland.
- Coordinate planning for tourism infrastructure and land uses through the development of the North Queensland regional plan and ongoing review of new local government planning schemes.
- Support the development of cruise and other tourism maritime infrastructure in North Queensland.
- Support the ongoing upgrade of key visitor infrastructure in protected areas on the Cape through the Cape York Visitor Strategy.
- Deliver a program of investor visitation to North Queensland in the lead-up to and during the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.



Undara, TNQ-Tropical North QLD
Photo: Peter Lik © TEQ

3. Build a skilled workforce and business capabilities

Given the important role that tourism plays in the North Queensland economy, it is vital that industry has the skills and experience to meet the growing demands of visitors who are seeking high quality services and experiences.

- Encourage North Queensland tourism businesses to employ trainees through the Queensland Government's \$100 million Back to Work program.
- Through Jobs Queensland, work with North Queensland industry and communities on a workforce plan for the tourism industry to ensure we have the skills needed in the local economy.
- Build Indigenous business capability development through the Tropical Indigenous Tourism Project.
- Encourage tourism employment opportunities for young Indigenous people in North Queensland through the Youth Employment Program.
- Identify key economic drivers that will support tourism business and other industry development through the Townsville and North Queensland Pathfinder project.
- Support new edu-tourism opportunities through the \$25 million International Education and Training Strategy to Advance Queensland 2016-2026.

4. Seize the opportunity in Asia

The Asian tourism market is emerging as a major driver of economic growth, with more Asian travellers visiting Queensland than ever before—spending money and creating jobs across the regions. Now is the time to take a focused approach to position North Queensland as a leader in the Asian tourism market.

- Build stronger relationships between North Queensland cities and regions with emerging cities in Asia based on strategic potential, including aviation, education and trade.
- Leverage the \$33.5 million Connecting with Asia funding package and \$10 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund to secure more direct flights between North Queensland and Asia.
- Work with key industry stakeholders to leverage opportunities for North Queensland arising from major events held in the region, such as the Cairns Ironman.
- Accelerate Asian market activity to maximise visitor numbers, expenditure, market share and aviation access, including facilitating greater regional dispersal within and to North Queensland.

Hook Island, April 2015
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