



TNQ

Experience Development Workshop

Wednesday, August 8, 2012



Kuranda Hotel
Cnr Arara & Coondoo Streets,
Kuranda, Queensland, 4881

Introduction

Attendees:

John Courtenay (Probe Consulting)	Darlene Irvine (FNQROC)
David Barker (Cook Shire Council)	Paul Chantrill (WTMA)
James Dixon (Advance Cairns, Down Under Tours)	Sue Carroll (TTNQ)
Rosie Douglas (TTNQ)	Jeff Gillies (TQ)
Andrew Millard (QPWS)	Bruce Rampton (QPWS)
Brett Stallbaum (QPWS)	Paul Fagg (Dept State Development, Infrastructure and Planning)
Dean Davidson (Tablelands Regional Council)	Joe Paronella (Transnorth bus and coach)
Rhonda Sorensen	Bram Collins (Undara Experience, TTT)
Michael Lawrence (TFC and TIMBA)	Melanie Wickes (20/20 group and Tourism Kuranda)
Michael Trout (MP Barron River and Chair TTT)	Stephanie Wilson (Cairns Regional Council)
Kylie Richardson (Cairns Regional Council)	Stacey Maisel (Tablelands Regional Council)
Max Shepherd (Skyrail/Alliance for Sustainable Tourism)	Gwyneth Nevard (Tablelands Regional Council)
Amanda Riches (TRC)	Mayor Rosa Lee Long (Tablelands Regional Council)
Hon Tony Burke MP (Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities)	

Introduction

James Dixon

Key Message: Tropical North Queensland could be the no.1 trails destination. We have trails that traverse some of the best rainforest and savannahs in the world and we are a 12 month destination.

The development of mountain biking is staggering, Whistler, for example, now raises more income from mountain biking than snow skiing. It has the single largest participation in tourism sport in the world, and is an exciting prospect for TNQ.

The work that has been done by volunteer groups, like TIMBA is amazing, we need to build on this. The time is right; Tourism is one of the four pillars of the State Government's mandate with an emphasis on cutting red tape and opening up access to national parks,

Fragmentation is a problem in the region. We need to have one shared vision with all parties having some serious targets and responsibilities. It's never been harder to get funding, therefore we need to sing from the same hymnbook.

Key Actions and Outputs

Communication

A ten page summary is required that can be handed out to government agencies and stakeholders to ensure consistent communication of the vision.

Coordination

Advance Cairns are prepared to take a regional coordination role, however there is no budget to support this. A cross agency task force is required to drive this forwards.

Vision

There was general agreement to the following shared vision for the destination:

"Establish TNQ as the leading touring and trails destination in the Asia-Pacific Region".

Immediate Opportunities

The initiative will take many years to fully develop, and will require significant funding, however the following areas can be progressed immediately.

1. Submission to RDA when it is announced should be based on the previous TIMBA application but massaged to ensure that cross-agency, cross regional collaboration is demonstrated;
2. A vision document should be developed to ensure consistent communication by all parties. This document should include: immediate opportunities and one or two costed priorities;
3. A lot of work has been done in the past. In particular audits of various trails. An inventory/audit of existing documents and infrastructure should be performed on the ground;
4. Market the region through events: For example the World Title Mountain Biking events at Smithfield, the Croc Trophy in October, NQ Cycling Classic (Tour de Tropics);
5. Consider immediate opportunities eg Development of Wairuna Station as a one stop destination, reopen the Douglas Track;
6. Support TIMBA with track construction eg Centrelink, QITE, Choice, prison labour, CVA and other volunteer opportunities;
7. Coordination of not for profits – is there a need for an overarching organisation to assist with fund raising and volunteer management etc. This would take a similar structure to TORA.
8. National Parks Recreation Forum;
9. As no organisation has physical resources to drive this forwards, priority should be given to funding a resource on the ground - is there an opportunity to share the cost between all agencies?
10. Industry engagement is critical to the success of this initiative. An engagement program should be developed and rolled out. TIMBA has developed an initial briefing pack for this and this should be built on.

Key Actions and Outputs

Funding and Promotion

1. Federal Government will be the primary source of financial funding this year. Possible sources grants include: infrastructure development and cultural/indigenous grants;
2. State Government can help with access to land and maintenance of assets and investment attraction;
3. Local Government – consolidate existing data/strategies into a vision/implementation strategy. Creation of development incentives for potential investors;
4. Need to develop the landscape for private investors to develop infrastructure and products.
5. Agencies: TA/TQ,TTNQ and TTT can support with marketing, communication and industry famils to promote the region.

Events Qld can support strategic events that align with the vision, they can also provide support through event attraction/facilitation;
6. Consider setting up a Trust/Foundation – special purpose funding that encourages donations and allows membership ;
7. Consumers – to ensure that the trails are sustainable a user pays model should be considered.

The Task Force - Making it Happen

1. Develop a Charter/Terms of Reference for the task force to drive the overarching vision;
2. Identify the key stakeholders that should be involved;
3. Identify where collaboration will maximise opportunities over a range of areas;
4. Define the role of the task force;
5. Advocate on behalf of stakeholders – need to review relevant acts (e.g of Nature Conservation Act);
6. Drive development of the prospectus (strategy document);
7. Support funding opportunities;
8. Collaboration, coordination, communication

Taskforce members:

1. Local government
2. State government – Regional development, QPWS
3. Commonwealth government
4. Tourism bodies
5. Economic development bodies
6. NGOs

Key Actions and Outputs

Agreed actions:

Action	Responsible	Date
Identify task force representative	All	17/08/2012
Circulate Minutes	Amanda Riches	ASAP
Coordinate initial meeting of task force	Darlene Irvine	24/08/2012
Draft a ten page prospectus for circulation	Paul Fagg	



News from the Front Line

National Landscapes Project

Paul Chantrill

Tourism Australia and Parks Australia have formed a partnership between tourism and conservation to identify Australia's iconic landscapes, which capture and promote areas of outstanding natural beauty and cultural significance. This partnership has seen the creation of Australia's National Landscapes, an initiative that aims to achieve conservation, social and economic outcomes for Australia and its regions via the promotion of superlative nature based tourism experiences. The Wet Tropics National Landscapes was launched on 8 August 2012. Paul presented this initiative to the group. Presentation is attached to these minutes. A supporting video is available online at: http://www.tourism.australia.com/en-au/marketing/5651_5544.aspx

Tropical North Queensland Tourism Trails

Paul Fagg

There is an amazing variety of trails in TNQ. The Trails opportunity is identified in various reports and strategies, including:

- TNQ Tourism Opportunity Plan 2010
- TNQ Events Strategy 2010-2015
- TNQ Regional Economic Plan (TNQREP)
- TNQ "Future Proofing" report 2009
- TNQ Repositioning Report
- TNQ Experience Development Plan

The Trails concept supports the growth, diversification and dispersal of the tourism dollar in the region and will help to build resilience and capture new high yielding markets. It supports the active contemporary presentation of our World Heritage values, whilst securing meaningful economic and social outcomes. Paul presented an overview of the opportunity and the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Tablelands Futures Corp

Michael Lawrence

TFC is the Regional Development Body for the Tablelands. Tablelands Integrated Mountain Biking Association (TiMBA) is a sub committee of TFC. Michael provided an overview of the TiMBA initiative and stressed that the group have sought the opinion of some of the world's most experienced trail developers. Dafydd Davies, a leading trail designer, came out in 2011 and reported that the Tablelands was one of best regions in Australia if not the world for trail development.

TiMBA have developed a strategic and operational framework and have 65km of track mapped around the Atherton area. Funding to complete the development of this is expected to be in the region \$2m; the plan is to target this in small chunks if we are unable to raise the funds necessary to complete the track in one go. A Business Development Pack has just been launched within the community, providing advice to organisations on how to become 'Bike Friendly'.



News from the Front Line

Tourism Queensland

Jeff Gillies

With new governments at both State and Local level the time to build the Landscape of Tourism is now. It was made very clear at the DestinationQ that there is an appetite to make natural assets more accessible. The State Government's target to double the number of visitors to Queensland by 2020 is likely to be driven by regional and rural areas rather than big cities.

TNQ needs to capture visitor expenditure. Statistics show that numbers are variable, but there is a real opportunity to increase length of stay by promoting TNQ as a mono-destination; Stop, slow down, and take a journey through the region. It is a tough time to raise money from government, to succeed, projects need to be broken down into different fundable elements.

There is a shift in markets and the way marketing is being undertaken. The SE Asia rim and China are developing opportunities and tracks and trails are of interest to these markets. There is now global competition for tracks and trails so as we embark down this path we need to rethink the way we can do it to make it competitive.

Tourism Australia does have some new money available, it is likely that much of this will be targeted at Asian markets, but National Landscapes will also be a focus - the best Australia has to offer, Showing the "Best of the Best" in front of global audiences.

There is a real opportunity to focus on developing experiences. Consider what experiences will be game changers for the region. Market them and support them through different bodies including councils and all levels of government. Natural assets are our strong point. Build on the "Adventurous by Nature" brand.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland

Rosie Douglas

TTNQ is working towards the 2020 target. Main focus is to extend the season by focusing on the shoulder seasons. A key component of the TNQ regional economic plan is diversification through events, especially in shoulder seasons. TTNQ is already working with Cairns Mountain biking.

TTNQ is a marketing organisation, it is not focused on product development but is there once product and experiences are ready. From a marketing perspective is about getting the experience, terminology and branding right to take to the world.

Tropical Tablelands Tourism

Michael Trout

Tablelands has some of the greatest natural attractions in the world. For 15 years we have been talking about trails, but there has never been a plan for the whole region. TTT has been able to leverage funds through DEEDI, for regional phone apps.

The biggest issue we face on the Tablelands is infrastructure. Operators and local councils need to play a large part in driving this forwards. Roadblocks, for example land use planning, need to be identified and removed. Another barrier to success on the Tablelands is the readiness of operators. There is an urgent need to educate operators on Tablelands.



News from the Front Line

Wet Tropics Management Authority

Paul Chantrill

The future for WTMA is on presentation and education of the Wet Tropics. There has been a focus on developing new communication products including brochures and a new website to help people to discover and enjoy this World Heritage area.

The new website is a celebration of our environment. It has been designed to be visitor friendly, enabling people to discover and enjoy area.

WTMA is working with the tourism industry and has developed new training programme for tour guides using . QTIC funding. Graduates of this programme obtain a Cert III qualification. WTMA will continue to provide the course working with the Savannah Guides to extend concept of Guide School.

As the self drive market is a growth sector for TNQ, WTMA is working with the industry to develop quality information resources. For example, new touch screen technologies are to roll out in all Visitor information Centres.

As part of the Australian Government's National Long-term Tourism Strategy a partnership between the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (DRET), Tourism Queensland, Townsville Enterprise Limited, Tourism Tropical North Queensland and the Wet Tropics Management Authority has developed a pilot Experience Development Strategy (EDS) for the Cairns-Townsville Tourism Hubs. The Strategy identifies existing and potential world class visitor experiences for Cairns and Townsville that function as tourism hubs providing a combination of urban tourism experiences and a base for a range of day trip experiences into the surrounding Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef. It aims to outline how the region can innovate, improve and renew the experience for Experience Seeker tourists in order to remain a competitive destination.

WTMA is not losing its conservation focus, but is encouraging everyone to take personal responsibility for it.

DSDIP

Paul Fagg

The days of governments providing financial support for individual operators are gone. The new State Government is committed to freeing up processes that it has control over to open up tourism opportunities. It is moving away from the business welfare mentality, but is providing an opportunity to free up bureaucratic controls. A cultural change is needed; in particular a change in the mind of regulators and policy makers. Industry needs to identify the problems and State Government will seek to remove hurdles.

Local councils can be part of the solution if they take a lead.



Building the Vision

John Courtenay: Need to work together and breakdown the Mareeba - Atherton perceived conflict. Tablelands needs to be part of the Cairns precinct, but this requires a coordinated approach. Who will drive it?

Rhonda Sorensen: Advance Cairns have the regional development remit. Need to look at bigger region not just Cairns and Tablelands. The conflict between the tourism industry and planning needs to be resolved. What is the role of government Vs role of tourism industry? We must have a driving body to make the vision happen. Others need to participate and support.

James Dixon: The structure has changed within Advance Cairns. Focus is now on longer term plans and vision. Business people invest in the organisations and pay to be part of the Board. \$20K per person to drive forward the greater community. Advance Cairns can see the potential of trails, and can play a role, but can't throw money at it.

Michael Laurence: Groups are already working together. But all have limited resources. There is a lot of collaboration. But we need to work under one banner.

Amanda Riches: We need to have a taskforce, and someone who can coordinate it.

James Dixon: Agreed, a taskforce is needed to pull it together.

Paul Fagg: Consumers will determine the size of our region. Cairns the gateway because of the airport and the region might be 2 -3 hour drive from there. Key stakeholders and businesses must take a collaborative approach.

Paul Chantrill: There are opportunities to develop immersive experiences. Feedback from the Daintree is that the consumer needs more than a few boardwalks. Indigenous interpretation, experience of country.

Dean Davidson: TRC is waiting to hear from State government on funding for the Rail Trails project from Mareeba to Atherton. This targets a different user to mountain bike trails as the terrain is generally flat. We need to address planning components to ensure supporting services are available along the trail.

Michael Laurence: need to agree vision and then focus on detail.

Michael Trout: The stakeholders need to establish clarity.

Paul Chantrill: We have two National Landscapes in our region, Reef and Wet Tropics. However this is seen by the consumer as one destination.

Agreed vision: "Establish TNQ as the leading touring and trails destination in the Asia-Pacific Region".

James Dixon: Trails introduce a new demographic. Regional dispersal has no barriers. Cairns is the gateway, regional dispersal will take care of itself if marketed correctly.

Michael Laurence: Industry will change and become more sophisticated if the demand is there.



Building the Vision

Rosie Douglas: We need to establish priorities and timeframes. Develop a summary document that can be presented to all levels of government and used to consistently communicate the plan. We need all stakeholders to prioritise Tracks and Trails so that we avoid bidding against each other for funding opportunities. Product and infrastructure is not yet in place.

Max Shepherd" Plan, vision, then put the steps in place. Fair bit of product is on the ground. Can target the market fairly easily. Build and grow steadily.

Bram Collins: There are perception issues for NQ in the domestic market. These need to be addressed.

Paul Fagg: Strategy documents are already done. TIMBA funding application to the RDA covers much already.

Rhonda Sorensen: New technologies also important, don't want to be too narrow. Conservation values are important.

Darlene Irvine: We should aim for one application over several LG areas for RDA to avoid fragmentation.

Dean Davidson: TIMBA have already identified trails. Same principles can be applied for this group, need to prioritise.

Paul Chantrill: We need to tick many boxes including indigenous employment for example. National Landscapes is a potential for funding although there is none currently identified.

Michael Laurence: TIMBA is getting on and doing it, building more tracks.

Andrew Millard: - Tracks and trails have historical, legal and tenure issues. Walking opportunities, Misty Mountains, accommodation huts. Taskforce should be a central point whether walking biking or riding.

David Barker: - Land tenure is a huge blockage to development.