

Mountain Bike Tourism in Tropical North Queensland

*A Significant Opportunity for Economic Growth
"Right here Right now"*

A major and immediate opportunity exists to achieve significant growth of the Tourism Industry in Tropical North Queensland through focussed effort and investment in the fast growing pursuit of Mountain Biking. The region has excellent tourism infrastructure, access and capacity year round and is primed to attract serious new levels of visitation. A strong global reputation for world class tracks, an established suite of events, a keen and enthusiastic grass roots network and a tourism industry seeking to diversify are the key drivers of this opportunity.



Why Tropical North Queensland?

The opportunity to position Tropical North Queensland as a world class mountain bike destination has already been identified. The TNQ Regional Economic plan, the TNQ Repositioning Report, the Tropical North Queensland Tourism Opportunity Plan and experience development workshops undertaken as part of the National Landscapes designation for the Wet Tropics have all identified the opportunity for the region.

Creating a world class mountain bike destination in Tropical North Queensland supports the growth, diversification and dispersal of the tourism dollar in the region and helps to build resilience and capture new high yielding markets from across the globe.

In short, Mountain Biking supports the active contemporary presentation of our extensive and unique natural areas and values, whilst securing meaningful economic and social outcomes for the tourism sector and our local communities.

Our Competitive Advantage

We have an amazing variety of trails and we are uniquely positioned as the **world's only rainforest** Mountain Bike destination. With some of the world's most highly regarded Mountain Bike trail designers, we have the potential to develop the world's **most sustainable** tracks and trails. Of course, mountain biking is not new to our region - we are "known" globally to the MTB tribe and have real trail 'heritage'. In fact, Cairns hosted the 1996 World Downhill Mountain Bike championship. Underpinning participation in mountain biking is a strong existing events calendar, with huge potential for further growth.

Where else on the planet can you mountain bike and.....

- Be immersed in pristine World Heritage Rainforests
- Go from ocean to rainforest to savannah in one day
- Experience unique flora and fauna in one of the world's most bio-diverse natural environments
- Be connected to an international airport, only a short distance from trails
- Enjoy a full range of international standard tourism facilities
- Add to your stay with a myriad of other visitor activities including the Great Barrier Reef, Kuranda Rail, hot air ballooning, white water rafting and much more
- Enjoy great weather almost all year round
- Discover the real Australia with people who are famous for being friendly, hospitable and experienced in taking care of visitors.



Where have we come from?

Grass route development of trails and the active participation and commitment of local clubs underpins the opportunity.

- **Cairns MTB Club:** Founded 1980's. Produced many elite riders on world circuit. Bought 1996 world champs to TNQ. Home base is the Smithfield MTB Park. 30-40km cross-country plus downhill tracks.
- **Tableland Cycle Sports:** Incorporated Club operating through Qld Cycling and Mountain Bike Australia. Integrated with TIMBa. 3 years of work developing integrated tracks and trails network across Tablelands. Some funding support already secured from State Govt.
- **Mareeba Mountain Goats:** 2 years history. Established excellent track at Davies creek 18km trails. Work with other clubs to deliver regional MTB events.

Cairns and the TNQ region has a critical mass of cycle sports and adventure trail orientated retail outlets who are currently servicing a strong local industry and expanding to service visitors. The region has excellent accommodation and transport networks for tourism looking at diversity opportunities.

The economic value of Mountain Biking

For Tropical North Queensland, mountain biking provides an opportunity for year round visitation and supports strong regional dispersal and expenditure. Mountain biking is the fastest growing participation sport globally and a significant travel motivator in high yielding markets. Mountain biking is a virtually "shock proof" tourism segment and a very resilient market, delivering excellent community benefits.

The value of mountain biking is not in doubt. Examples from Australia and around the world support the commitment to developing Tropical North Queensland as a world-class mountain bike destination.

Whistler, British Colombia Canada

- Attracts more than 100,000 mountain biking visitors per season
- Summer expenditure in 2006 totaled \$16.2 million
- Summer visitation now exceeds winter visitation with mountain biking the main summer activity



New Zealand Rotorua

- Population of 67,000, with annual visitors of 2.5 million
- 2006 Mountain Bike World Trials generated NZ \$12.2 million
- 2009 Whakarewarewa Forest Trails generated NZ \$40 million
www.riderotorua.com

7Stanes, Scotland

- Seven mountain biking centres spanning the south of Scotland
- over 400km purpose built mountain bike trails
- Attract over 400,000 mountain bikers per annum generating \$A20 million
www.7stanesmountainbiking.com

Wales

- 400 000 annual visiting mountain bikers generate £22 million
- Coed Y Brenin trails managed by the Forestry Commission makes £135 000 net annual profit
- Of the 158 000 annual visitors to Coed Y Brenin, 80% are mountain bikers
www.mbwales.com

ACT Mt Stromlo

- 2008 UCI Mountain Bike World Cup estimated 4000 visitors contributed \$867,560 to local economy
www.stromloforestpark.com.au

South Australia

- 2012 Tour Down Under added \$42.2 million to the state's economy and attracted 760,000 spectators
- Riesling Trail contributes \$1.08 million directly to the Clare Region from 12 000 annual visitors
www.southaustraliantrails.com



Partners behind the opportunity

The opportunity has significant regional support and commitment from all levels of Government, Tourism Industry, Regional Economic Development Organizations and local mountain bike clubs who are collaborating and working hard to deliver the opportunity.

- State Agencies: Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning, Department of Tourism, Small Business, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games, Department of National Parks, Sport, Recreation and Racing, Tourism Queensland, Events Queensland, QTIC.
- FNQ Regional Organisation of Councils and individual Councils.
- Mountain Biking Clubs including CMTB, TIMBA and Mareeba.
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland and the LTO representatives of Tablelands, Port Douglas and Mission Beach.
- Advance Cairns and Tablelands Futures Corporation.
- Regional Development Australia
- Industry and Associations. Choice, QR and KSR, Alliance for Sustainable Tourism, Skyrail, Down Under Tours

Unlocking the Potential across the region

The region has everything that the Mountain Bike Tourist could ever want, all contained in close proximity to the Cairns arrival hub. The vision for developing mountain biking in the region would be staged development and marketing of 4 key precincts as follows;

- **The Downhill Adrenalin Precinct:** Smithfield MTB Park, Kuranda trails and the Barron Gorge corridor. Existing world class tracks for all levels, huge growth potential for Skyrail and Kuranda Scenic Rail as access providers, world class rainforest environment and potential event HQ. Tourist ready precinct.
- **The Single Track Touring Precinct:** The Tablelands network of trails linking Kuranda, Atherton, Mareeba, Malanda, Herberton. Rural, Rainforest, rail trails and linked accommodation services. Mixture of existing and development trails, with future links to coastal areas. Single track touring is highly sought after and high yield visitor profile including family market.



- **The Accessible Family Precinct:** A new concept to significantly develop the Mt Whitfield area with variety of level trails in the heart of the Cairns hub. Surrounded on all sides by tourism and community infrastructure, the precinct offers immediate access to tracks and trails.
- **The Adventure Precinct:** Port Douglas and Daintree region, Mission Beach region and further afield into the Gulf Savannah and Cape regions. The entire Tropical North features more intrepid adventures such as the iconic bump track; Weatherby station, Mt Mulligan or scenic beach rides along the Coral Sea coastline.

Next steps

- Reinstate the "World Cup" Downhill track and precinct access, signage and facilities at Smithfield in sync with supporting a state bid to host Nationals, World Cup and eventually World Championships within the TNQ region. Strong interest exists from adjacent James Cook University with potential JV partnership at this facility. Develop this site as world class Bike Park.
- Develop integrated network of tracks and trails throughout the Tablelands Precinct in partnership with council, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and landowners. Support services and signage. Support the education and development of community and industry to be MTB friendly.
- Develop the entire Mt Whitfield precinct as a world best practice greenfield project for MTB, supplementing existing tracks and trails.
- Drive training and skilling outcomes in partnership with indigenous employment agencies. Signage. Site well service by existing community. Economic benefit creation opportunities for existing industry.
- Develop a detailed prospectus document outlining the MTB tourism opportunity, which would draw on existing work and would require further economic assessment.
- Integrate MTB tourism and events opportunity into core business of all related agencies.

The approach to ongoing development fits with a longer-term regional vision. The key opportunity that exists is to invest in the immediate term in trail development for those areas where detailed track identification and design has commenced these are 'shovel ready'.

