

National Indigenous Heritage Centre

Northern Australia Priority: Our business, trade and investment gateway / Infrastructure to support growth / a Northern workforce for growth / Good governance for Northern Australia.

State Electorate: Cairns

Federal Electorate: Leichhardt

Council: Cairns Regional Council

Priority Recommendation

FNQROC seeks support for preliminary investigation (including scoping study and feasibility) into the establishment of a National Indigenous Heritage Centre in Cairns.

Priority Overview

A significant proportion of Cairns/Tropical North Queensland's population identifies as first Nations peoples. In fact, Cairns has the highest proportion of population that is indigenous of any city in Australia. Cairns is also the principle connection to indigenous communities throughout Cape York and the Torres Strait and is the only region with connectivity to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Not only is indigenous culture and heritage an essential part of our community's identity, but it also forms an important, and growing, part of the experience of domestic and international visitors eg. Tjapukai Cultural Park, Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair (CIAF), Laura Dance Festival and Mossman Gorge (and Tallaroo Station Ewamian Development).

One of the great gaps that exist within our national community has been an inability to reconcile our past and to unite, accept and embrace a 'many cultures one country' philosophy. This could be demonstrated by establishment of a national indigenous heritage centre (of art, history, research, dance, language, education, story-telling and more) which unites all Australians. Cairns/TNQ provides an authentic location for the establishment of such a National Indigenous Heritage Centre. Such a centre would become an iconic part of Australia's heritage and culture and ultimately achieve similar status to facilities such as the Australian War Memorial and Australia Stockman's Hall of Fame.

Vision & Key Objectives

To be a co-created centre of social history, economic participation and community pride for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The Centre would aim to:

- celebrate and preserve the unique cultural heritage of Australia's Indigenous peoples
- embrace a 'many cultures, one country, one world' philosophy
- create Indigenous business enterprise and employment opportunities
- be an engaging, 'must see' world-class attraction for locals and tourists

Key Strategic Economic Drivers

Social Enterprise	Strengthen & grow Indigenous enterprises through on-site facilities (i.e. café/retail) and operating activity (i.e exhibitions, tours, events, etc.)
Education	Foster reconciliation, preserve the legacies of Australian Indigenous peoples, bridge cultural divides and create better futures by sharing culture, knowledge and country.
Employment	Offer employment and training opportunities for Indigenous peoples through the facilities core operations, programming, business enterprises and research activity.
Tourism	Build connections to locals and visitors through the celebration and showcase of Australia's unique indigenous cultural heritage and tourism experiences. The Centre would also complement TTNQ's established brand ("Timeless Experiences") and tag line ("Sharing our Reef and Rainforest Stories").