

Tropical North Queensland

**EVENT**

**PRIORITISATION**

**STRATEGY**

**2015-2020**



**TOURISM**  
**TROPICAL NORTH**  
**QUEENSLAND™**  
Where rainforest meets the reef

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Tourism drives the economy of Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) contributing \$4.7 billion a year including \$2.5 billion in direct expenditure, according to the Regional Tourism Satellite Account for 2013-14. It accounts for 16.5% of the Gross Regional Product and employs 18% of the population. Tourism Tropical North Queensland's (TTNQ) Strategic Plan 2015-2020 has a target of increasing direct expenditure to \$4.15 billion in 2020.

The region of Tropical North Queensland covers a geographical area of over 377,718 km<sup>2</sup> ranging from Cape York in the north to Mission Beach in the south and west to the Northern Territory border.



Cairns is a popular leisure destination that is easy to access with direct links to major Australian cities, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Manila, Auckland and Port Moresby plus seasonal flights to China. The links to Asia have been increasing in recent years giving the region the opportunity to tap into this growing market.

Leisure tourism is driven by holiday dates (eg school holidays) and weather patterns which tend to create peak holiday seasons making it challenging to grow low and shoulder seasons. Unlike leisure tourism, events provide a specific reason to travel to a destination regardless of the time of year thus assisting in filling low and shoulder seasons. Therefore, tourism is increasingly being driven by specific motivators such as participation in, or attendance at, sporting, cultural, business and community events. Events also promote their host destination and its surrounds to the rest of Australia and target countries by creating positive publicity. In addition, the hosting of events fosters community pride, drives cultural awareness and enriches the lives of local residents.



## Where we are

It is recognised that TNQ holds immense global appeal and is well placed to deliver a vibrant and sustainable events portfolio. The dual World Heritage areas of the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforest, combined with existing event venues, infrastructure and capacity to deliver world class events, provides the foundation for the region to build on its strong tourism image and establish a whole of region events reputation that will create positive economic and social returns.



The TNQ Destination Tourism Plan and TTNQ 2015 – 2020 Strategic Plan identify events as a priority driver to reach the 2020 visitation targets. It recommends investing in an enlarged TNQ events program to increase expenditure from domestic and international visitors. These events include leisure events, such as sporting and lifestyle events, and business events, which encompass meetings, incentives and conferences.

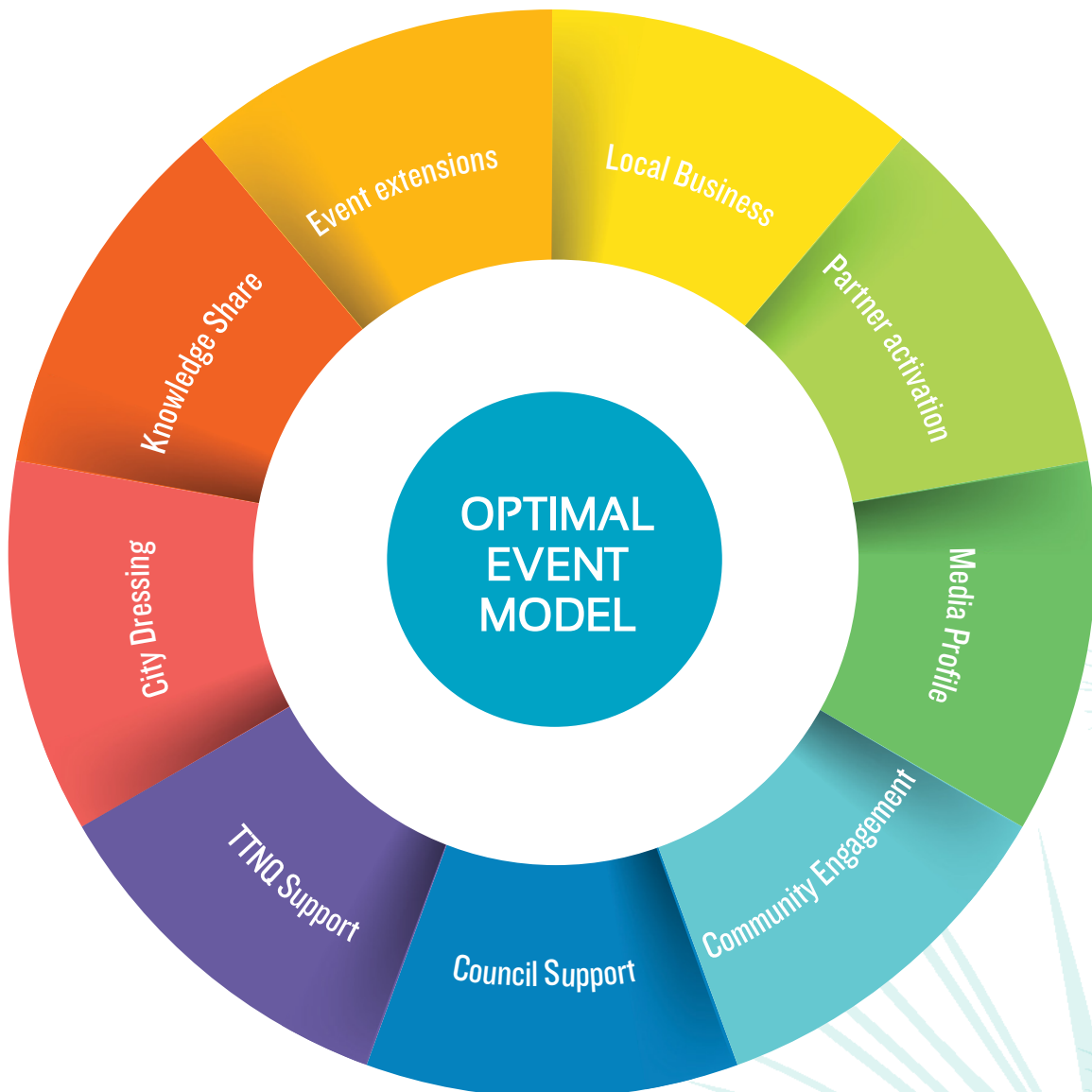
TTNQ and Cairns Regional Council (CRC) have event strategies developed through to 2015. Both organisations have differing structures, purposes and priorities, however, they recognise the efficiencies and advantages of working jointly to develop a regional event strategy that will guide the region to reach the 2020 targets. In addition, there is no formal documentation that assists other local government authorities (LGA's) to align with regional or state priorities.

# Where we want to be

**2020  
VISION**

TNQ will be internationally recognised as a unique, natural and vibrant major events destination.

The Optimal Event Model has been designed to ensure both economic and community outcomes are maximised from the staging of events within TNQ.



# How to get there

## TNQ Events Prioritisation Strategy Objectives

To optimise the community, cultural, environmental and economic outcomes associated with the event investment for Cairns and Tropical North Queensland.

To develop a framework for event-based decision making.

The TNQ Events Prioritisation Strategy will drive visitation through the identification and creation of new events, the development and growth of existing events and the assessment of all events against clearly defined and transparent criteria. This framework for a diversified events portfolio ensures state and local government funding is prioritised, events are integrated into existing marketing initiatives, required economic, cultural and environmental and community outcomes are met, and events can continue to drive growth. The framework identifies four types of events:

1. Sporting (professional and mass participation)
2. Cultural (arts, music, festivals and indigenous culture)
3. Community (local and civic ceremonies)
4. Business (conferences, meetings and incentives)

This strategy will focus on events that increase visitation from within Queensland, interstate and internationally with partnering with stakeholders, and alignment of priorities at a local, regional and state level underpinning the success of the strategy.

## PARTNERSHIPS

### Sporting, cultural & community events

**Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ)** – provide funding for business, hallmark, major and regional events on an application basis that achieves state outcomes. They also offer marketing opportunities under the “Its Live” brand and event optimisation activities for certain events.

**Other Government agencies** – events may be supported through other government programs such as Arts Qld, National Parks, Sport & Recreation or Gambling Community Benefit Funds.

**Local Government** – provide funding (both cash and in-kind support) on an application basis, often through competitive funding rounds. One off applications are accepted for hallmark and major events. They also offer an extensive range of venues and infrastructure, have a lead role in the facilitation of license and permit requirements, and can also assist with community engagement activities.

**Events owner** – responsible for event delivery and associated financial risks, with varied ownership and financial structures.

**TTNQ** – responsible for the attraction of events and provide support with marketing activities that increase attendance and length of stay.

### Business events

*Business events have long been a priority for the region as they offer a high yield and, like sporting and cultural events, are not critically affected by seasonality, holiday periods and leisure trends. A framework already exists to attract business events to TNQ and involves a number of stakeholders.*

**National stakeholders** - Australian Association of Convention Bureaux along with Business Events Australia have been working with the Australian Trade Commission (Austrade) to gain its support in bidding for events that align to priority industries in Australia.

**Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ)** - administer funds to the six Queensland Convention Bureau including Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef, along with managing the international bid fund, which supports the attraction of international business events to the State.

**Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef (BEC & GBR)** - responsible for marketing the destination as a premier tropical destination to hold conferences, meetings and incentives. Activities include providing assistance to event planners on venue selection and supplier services, supplying relevant destination marketing material and maximising delegate attendance at business events through delegate boosting activities. BECGBR operates as a department within TTNQ.

**Cairns Convention Centre** – though marketing partnerships with BEC & GBR lead the bidding activity for large national and international association conferences.

**Cairns Regional Council (CRC)** - plays a supporting role for major business events for example the Australian Tourism Exchange and G20 Finance Ministers Meeting, along with an event organiser role at times.

# Roadmap for success

The Five steps that will enable the Strategy to be successfully implemented are:



“ TNQ will be known as an enthusiastic region, where it is easy to stage events in a pristine natural environment, supported by the entire community ”



## Planning

### Event hierarchy

Events will be classified into a hierarchy to guide the level of support and investment provided to the type of event. The more an event grows and delivers against benchmarked outcomes, the more likely it is to move up the pyramid and attract more investment. Community events rarely have the desire or ability to move up the pyramid.



### Events reference group

A reference group will be established with representation from TTNQ, CRC, local councils, local business and independent local industry experts. This group will advise on the identification, attraction and acquisition of events which drive economic, community, environmental and cultural outcomes for TNQ. The focus of the Events Reference Group will be on Regional, Major and Hallmark events, with community events being managed by local councils and events organisers.

### Creating a balanced event portfolio

A balanced event portfolio that aligns with the destination branding, utilises existing infrastructure and increases visitation in the low and shoulder seasons will be required. The following principles will govern the portfolio:

#### GENRE

A mix of genres including sport, participation, culture, arts and lifestyle, community and business events.

#### HIERARCHY

All sizes of events in the hierarchy of community, regional tourism, major tourism and hallmark events will be included.

#### OWNERSHIP

Varied event ownership structures will include events created and owned by TTNQ and CRC, not-for-profit bodies and private operators with a mix of public and private sector investment.

#### TIMING

Dispersal across an annual calendar with an emphasis on shoulder and low seasons where possible.

#### LOCATION

Major events will be focused in Cairns with appropriate events dispersed throughout TNQ.

#### FREQUENCY

A balance between regular anchor events for stability and one-off events for freshness.

#### LIFECYCLE

Events will include newly created events right through to those which are well established.

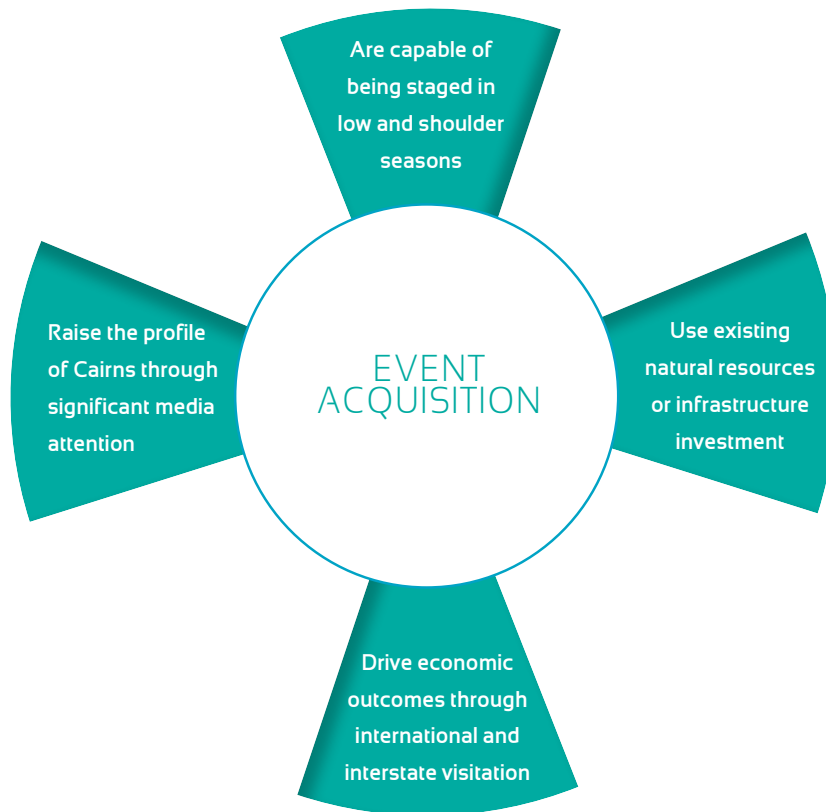
#### EXCLUSIVITY

The events portfolio must exhibit uniqueness and exclusivity to entice people to travel to the destination.

**QUALITY** Quality of experience will encourage visitors to positively promote their experience and the destination.

## Identification and attraction

Targeted Attraction Considerations	Events with the ability to drive the best economic outcomes for TNQ
	Events that appeal to key international leisure markets (such as China) and support international aviation routes



### Investment will be used to

- Acquire new events
- Create home-grown events
- Support existing events with growth opportunities



### PRIORITISED INVESTMENT

Applications for funding will be assessed against the desire for a balanced events portfolio and the event’s ability to meet evaluation criteria. Consideration will be given to balance the existing proportion of participation sporting events and the growing cultural sector. The assessment criteria will include social, environmental, community and economic benefits and media profile.



## Grow

“ The strategy will simplify and centralise processes, along with developing a central access point for event organisers ”

### Governance

Good governance will be essential to effectively manage and develop events. Good governance typically includes skills-based committees, business plans, comprehensive budgets, policies and procedures for risk identification and management, contingency planning, incident resolution, and compliance with key legal obligations including workplace, health and safety. All local councils should ensure their contractual agreements also take into account the appropriate level of benefits commensurate with support, including the tourism-required outcomes.

### Roles and Responsibilities

Given the relatively limited resources, it is imperative there is a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder, including TTNQ, the local council, and the event owner. The following table lists the party with primary (P) responsibility for each element of the event cycle and where a support (S) role is provided.

	TTNQ	COUNCIL	EVENT
Attraction	P	S	
Investment	P (TEQ)	P	
Tourism Support Services	P		
Community Engagement		S	P
Capacity Building	P	S	
Knowledge Sharing			P
Marketing	P (destination)		P (event)
Broadcast and Media	P (destination)		P (event)
Event Leveraging	S		P
City Dressing / Pride	S	S	P
City Beautification		P	
City Operations		P	

For major and hallmark events, TTNQ, local government authorities and the event organiser will establish an Event Delivery Committee to monitor the planning and progress of the event and to discuss any opportunities or issues that may arise. An effective event delivery committee will include the airport, traffic authorities, public transport operators, emergency services, police and security, immigration, quarantine and local businesses such as hotels and restaurants.



## Increasing expenditure

A tourism event needs the capacity to grow in order to play its role in increasing expenditure for the regional economy. Activation or event leveraging strategies that will be considered include:

### CRITICAL MASS

creation of a festival and the joining of a number of smaller events together

### EVENT EXTENSIONS

convert day-trippers to overnight visitors through supporting functions such as an opening night launch the evening before the event or a fashion parade at its conclusion

### PARTNER LEVERAGING

encourage event partners to leverage and promote their association with the event and target additional activities such as business meetings or networking opportunities

### PACKAGING

packaging of event tickets with accommodation or other attractions or visitor experiences within the TNQ region

### PRECINCT

establishment of an identifiable precinct to attract event goers to local traders and restaurants

## Community engagement

Each event must have a community engagement strategy to foster community pride and drive community advocacy.

Volunteers to facilitate the operation, staging and assessment of the event

Attendance at the event to create atmosphere and build excitement

Business for local hotels, restaurants, cafes and other traders

Bringing people together, providing enjoyment and a sense of identity and belonging

## Capacity building

The staging of events should build critical skills and the knowledge base of the local community, especially with events relying heavily on volunteers. TTNQ and major event stakeholders will play a role in mentoring and training. Capacity building may include:

### BOOT CAMPS

Boot camps, workshops and conferences staged by TTNQ and/or councils

### CAPACITY BUILDING

CRC, other LGA's and Department of Sport & Recreation consider developing capacity building programs for event organisers

### MENTORING

Mentoring of smaller events by larger events

### BEST PRACTICE

Knowledge retention and transfer by collating best practice event documentation and practices

### INFRASTRUCTURE

LGA's to develop strategic and sustainable infrastructure and facility plans

## Promote

Events are an excellent destination marketing tool if they are marketed correctly. Hallmark, major and regional events should be confirmed at least six months in advance to enable effective marketing and activation strategies.

<p><b>A coordinated approach is required to build an event marketing plan which:</b></p>	<p><b>Promotes the event with a view to maximise patronage (especially from interstate and overseas visitors)</b></p>
	<p><b>Profiles the destination to encourage visitors to stay longer, undertake other experiences and see other attractions</b></p>
	<p><b>Leverages the event and dresses and brands the destination to create atmosphere, local pride and exposure of the brand to new visitors</b></p>

The primary responsibility for event marketing remains with the event owner. TTNQ will provide supplementary marketing to address a gap in the market or maximise tourism yield and local government can assist with event promotion through their websites and e-newsletters.

Events must align with TNQ’s core positioning of “where rainforest meets the reef”. The TNQ destination logo should be used wherever possible to promote events in the domestic market. If the event is targeted at the international market it should use the Cairns & Great Barrier Reef logo. “It’s Live in Qld” is the marketing banner and online calendar for Queensland events and will also be incorporated where appropriate into event marketing.

It is essential that major event content and messaging is seamlessly integrated into all existing tourism marketing, promotional strategies and distribution channels. Events should be aligned with marketing or leisure tourism campaigns, and they should adopt the same hashtags to drive user generated content.

At the time of contracting, provision will be made for access to tickets for promotional purposes, access to talent for event launches and promotions, the creation of digital footage, city dressing initiatives and event branding.

“ City dressing or event branding creates a vibrant event atmosphere in the destination and positively contributes to both the visitor experience and local community pride. It is an effective tool for raising awareness of major events and provides a great first impression for visitors arriving into the region.





## Review

Events need to be reviewed to enable funding partners and stakeholders to determine whether they are providing a return on investment for the region and whether they are sustainable. Evaluation criteria will include:

1. Contribute to the TNQ economy
2. Attract visitors to TNQ
3. Enhance the profile of TNQ
4. Foster community pride
5. Demonstrate future growth and sustainability
6. Contribute to a balanced events portfolio
7. Demonstrate no adverse environmental impact

As a guide, the event hierarchy will determine how many of the above criteria will need to be achieved:



Measurement tools from the above criteria will be agreed to at the time of contracting an event and used in the evaluation process. Other criteria such as increased sports participation, trade relations or awareness of cultural customs will be used where appropriate.





# Regional Priorities to 2020

The framework will be used to drive the following areas of opportunity that have been identified for TNQ events:

- Take advantage of Cairns' proximity to Asia
- Better utilise the region's natural assets
- Generate significant yield with mass participation events
- Promote regional produce with a food festival
- Highlight the region's strong indigenous culture
- Drive events through the Commonwealth Games 2018



The following table will be used as a guide to build a sustainable and balanced event portfolio that will meet our 2020 objectives of being recognised internationally as a unique, natural and vibrant events destination.

Measurable benchmarks	2015 indicative events	2020 proposed events	Economic outcomes
<b>Hallmark</b>	0	1	> \$10m 50-90K visitor nights Global Media reach
<b>Major</b>	3	8	> \$3m - 10m 25-50K visitor nights National media reach
<b>Regional</b>	29	22	Visitors to the region Raised destination profile
<b>Community</b>	100s	100s	Cultural and community outcomes

In order to achieve the above targets, the initial focus will be on:

- Development of a list of short, medium and long term priorities which will be reviewed on an annual basis
- The strategic development of homegrown events during low and shoulder seasons to anchor the event portfolio on an annual basis
- The establishment of an event reference group to guide the investment, attraction, growth and review of regional, major and hallmark events

**Given business events are the highest yield of all event types specific focus by Business Event Cairns & Great Barrier Reef will be on the following three opportunities:**

**Closer integration with major events and their commercial partners. For example, targeting of key sponsors or participating teams of major events to host business meetings adjacent to their events and to promote regional events to conference delegates to encourage pre and post touring around the region.**

**Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef to develop a City Bid fund by combining funds from TEQ, TTNQ members, CRC, Cairns Convention Centre and local hotels and businesses.**

**Develop a co-operative relationship with Advance Cairns (the advocacy and economic development agency for TNQ, excluding tourism) to explore the attraction of events to the region that align with regional economic priorities.**

# Conclusion

The TNQ Events Prioritisation Strategy establishes the framework for the attraction, management, growth, promotion and review of events and can be used by all stakeholders to provide alignment to both regional and state priorities. To maximise outcomes, events will be fully integrated within existing destination marketing resources, initiatives and distribution channels.

TNQ must build on its strong tourism image to establish a whole of region events reputation that will translate into increased visitation, economic development and contribution to local business. Events can be a trigger to attract visitation.

As a destination, events promote TNQ to the rest of Australia and the world through positive publicity, and exposure. The hosting of major events also fosters community pride, drives cultural awareness and enriches the lives of local residents.

TNQ has the global appeal, existing infrastructure and related capacity to deliver and implement this Strategy to 2020. However, it is essential that financial and human resources are made available to implement the strategy.

