



Department of Transport and Main Roads  
PO Box 673  
Fortitude Valley Qld 4006

30 January 2019

**Re: Queensland Walking Strategy**

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department of Transport and Main Roads on the Queensland Walking Strategy.

QTIC is the state’s peak body for tourism in Queensland and represents the interests of the tourism industry. QTIC is an independent membership-based organisation with in excess of 3,000 members, operating in all sectors of the tourism industry, including business operators, Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs), sector associations and education providers.

The tourism industry in Queensland contributed \$25.0 billion to Queensland’s Gross State Product (GSP), representing 7.9% of total GSP<sup>1</sup> and generated \$7.1 billion in exports in the year ending June 2016<sup>2</sup>, making it one of the state’s largest export industries accounting for 14.8% of total Queensland exports. The tourism industry consists of over 53,000 businesses across Queensland; nine out of ten of these businesses are small to medium enterprises. In the development of the *Walking Strategy* it is not just the local residents that should be considered, also included should be the large flow of visitors to the state, seeking opportunities to explore Queensland.

Tourism in Queensland is split into thirteen distinct regions. Each of these regions has its own destination management plan. These plans were developed as a partnership between the Regional Tourism Organisations and State Government. The documents act as a sign post to key priority investment and development opportunities for each region. These priority investment areas are developed based on industry insight and trend analysis that indicates opportunities that will enhance destination competitiveness.

<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia, *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2015-2016*

<sup>2</sup> Tourism Research Australia - *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2015-16*, Queensland Government Office of Economic and Statistical Research - Overseas exports of goods by industry.

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An overview of key action and priority areas that should be considered when developing the Queensland Walking Strategy are outlined below:

**Brisbane** - Investment Priority: Regionally, Wivenhoe Hill Walking Trails.

**Bundaberg** – Priority activities include: walking tours, visiting national parks, bushwalking. Investment Priorities include: Further develop walking trails, access and interpretation of Indigenous experiences in National Parks.

**Capricorn** – Investment priority: Enact plans for Rockhampton River and coastal Foreshore redevelopments to increase opportunities for community events; development of open spaces and amenities; river walks, boardwalks, functioning wharfs, river cruises and commercial ventures.

**Fraser Coast** – Destination growth priority: Highlight the region's natural encounters - delivered via new and enhanced product and tours.

**Gladstone** – Destination goals: Attract new niche visitors coming for nature and adventure experiences, seeking 2% per annum growth in Gladstone region's market share (for the whole of Queensland). Pre-requisites for achieving the growth are a mix of new and enhanced product development and enhanced National Park and marine/diving/islands experiences, whilst also profile/ awareness raising in target markets via a major marketing campaign under the Southern GBR banner.

**Gold Coast** – Action plan: Identify opportunities to develop Council, State or private land for new sport and adventure tourism development and deliver new adventure trails (walking / mountain-biking). Deliver a dedicated program of place management across key tourism precincts which includes the maintenance of public spaces (parks, gardens, walkways, toilets), urban renewal, cultural and local activation. Investigate the development of a key tourism infrastructure product such as a skywalk and/or skyrail (subject to budgets). Deliver the Gold Coast Cultural Precinct as a cultural and tourism activity hub for the city including an Arts Museum, Artscape, Arts Centre and Art walk to Surfers Paradise.

**Mackay** – Product and experience development priorities: Continue to facilitate the development of dual use recreational areas for locals and tourism, including the Waterfront Priority Development Area.

**Outback** – Destination growth priorities: Position Outback Queensland as an active Outback experience. Include links to quirky events, hands-on experiences and once-in-a-lifetime moments.

**Southern Queensland Country** - Southern Queensland Country has exceptionally strong assets in terms of its national parks and World Heritage Listed areas. This provides opportunities to increase visitation, expenditure and employment in the Region. Southern Queensland Country needs to position and package its natural assets in order to stand out from the crowd.

**Sunshine Coast** – Product and infrastructure development: Coastal Green Trails including the Great Walks and the Coastal Pathway. Offer iconic experiences: Identify and seek agreement on new walking and multi-use trails through the Glass House Mountains (e.g. Trail running, mountain biking, horse riding).

**Townsville** – Top opportunities: Attract private and public investment to develop new, and improve existing tourism and events infrastructure, including the proposed Paluma to Wallaman trail. Develop and promote Magnetic Island as a sustainable tourism destination and a hero experience for the Townsville North Queensland region. Facilitate tourism investment into infrastructure and attractions in the region.

**Tropical North Queensland** – Opportunities: Product development – food trails, hiking and cycling trails, bird watching. To work with key partners to grow and develop eco-tourism opportunities in the region such as the Wangetti Trail.

**Whitsundays** - Destination growth priorities: Support the development of new product and experiences that encourage distribution of visitors and tourist dollars throughout the region including: Brandy Creek canopy walkway, Eco tour packages, Heritage trails (self-drive routes). Protect and Promote Whitsundays marine and natural environments.

Within this strategy, sustainability needs to be explicitly considered. Resilience of infrastructure needs to be embedded into the approach to ensure the longevity of infrastructure. Failure to take into consideration changing priorities, trends and climate will limit the on-going relevance and implementation of the plan.

One of the main barriers to walking in Queensland is weather. Hot and humid conditions and heavy downpours make walking a less attractive activity. As we see a changing climate, we are likely to see more extreme weather conditions which are likely to further inhibit people's desire to walk, particularly for longer, or multi-day walks. Creating natural shade as protection from harsh weather conditions should be a priority action item to develop more inviting walking conditions. Options to weatherproof walkways in city centres and tourism precincts will encourage walking throughout the year.

Walking is an increasingly popular visitor activity. Connectivity, signage and safety all play an integral role in developing destinations that are conducive to walking. Connectivity between precincts, with public transport and major attractions assists non-residents and residents in effectively managing journeys. Clear signage offering wayfinding and information can also further engage and educate non-residents and residents. Mobile coverage is a consideration that is relevant for both safety and information purposes. Finally, safety, good lighting and protection from the elements all encourage walking by creating a sense of security.

Information on regional history and culture along walking routes offers destination specific information and links visitors to the destination. This enhances the experience that people have with walking trails. There is also a strong opportunity to engage local Indigenous communities to providing local cultural knowledge along walking routes, creating a sense of connection to the place. Furthermore, local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people can

offer unique insight into the management and stewardship of walking trails. Their role in delivering and maintaining walking trails in National Parks should not be overlooked.

If developed effectively, this strategy offers the opportunity to directly contribute to a number of the Sustainable Development goals to which Australia is committed to. These include goals 11 (sustainable communities and cities), 15 (life on land) and 13 (climate action).

For all enquiries regarding the points raised in this letter, please contact me or the QTIC Policy Team on (07) 3236 1445 or email [policy@qtic.com.au](mailto:policy@qtic.com.au).

Kind regards



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Chief Executive