



QUEENSLAND  
TOURISM INDUSTRY  
COUNCIL

# 2024 State Election PRIORITIES

What the tourism industry needs from the next  
Queensland Government



# Introduction

When Queensland's tourism industry thrives, Queensland thrives.

A strong tourism industry drives a prosperous state, helping to build vibrant communities, create employment, and showcase destinations, rich culture heritage, and unique natural assets. The next Queensland Government must commit to proactive investment and work with industry to empower businesses to thrive.

As Queensland tourism's peak industry body, and on behalf of our members and more than 64,000 tourism businesses, QTIC is dedicated to creating a successful future for tourism.

We are calling on the next Queensland Government to address six key priorities that our members say are critical for a prosperous tourism industry.

Together, we'll create a thriving Queensland tourism industry.



# Our priorities

## 1 Attract, nurture, and retain a skilled tourism workforce

To overcome acute workforce shortages and harness career potential, the next Queensland Government must prioritise and collaborate with industry to build the future workforce needed to meet visitor demand.

## 2 Elevate tourism to a central government portfolio

Tourism is vital to Queensland's economy. Elevating it to a central government portfolio will improve coordination, cut red tape, create jobs, and support regional development.

## 3 Enhance transportation and connectivity

As Queensland grows, no one should be left behind. To meet population demands and improve liveability and safety, regional transport and digital infrastructure must be developed in advance.

## 4 Drive investment attraction and supply-side infrastructure development

A strong infrastructure pipeline is crucial for tourism growth and enhancing current offerings. Effective leadership is needed to improve coordination between governments for better results. Ecotourism and new projects in Queensland require better government support.

## 5 Build a sustainable and climate-resilient Queensland tourism industry

Environmental and business sustainability requires proactive government investment in resilience and innovation to reduce post-recovery efforts, prevent infrastructure damage, and protect Queensland's future.

## 6 Improve business conditions through comprehensive support measures

Queensland's tourism industry needs resources and financial support to stay competitive. The government should proactively address rising insurance costs to protect the longevity of tourism businesses.

# 1 Attract, nurture, and retain a skilled tourism workforce

## Why this is important

- With over 4,000 tourism-related vacancies there is a critical need for skilled workers.
- As accommodation and food services are set to become the third fastest-growing industries by 2025-26, a strong talent pool is essential to maintain the quality and reputation of tourism destinations.
- Rising costs and housing availability further exacerbate shortages, displace local staff, compromise service quality and jeopardise destination reputation.

## What Government should do

- **Extend financial support for demand-driving skilling and training initiatives**, including Federal Government collaboration on incentives to boost employer apprenticeship program participation and reduce workforce pipeline leakages.
- Reduce the impact of staffing on-costs, including a **review of the payroll tax rate and thresholds**.
- **Provide annual funding for the [QTIC Regional Tourism Careers Roadshow](#)**, which connects secondary students with tourism businesses, demonstrating high demand with successful employment outcomes.
- **Facilitate and fund partnerships to create new workforce opportunities**, strengthening connections between industry stakeholders, social enterprises, education institutions, and Group Training Organisations.
- Work in collaboration with the Australian Government to **guarantee migration access for key tourism occupations, establish regional migration working groups, and implement recommendations from the joint Australian Tourism Industry Council and Tourism and Transport Forum [submission](#) to the Review of regional migration settings**.
- **Urgently resolve housing supply issues**, adopting a place-based approach to address regional needs:
  - **Incentivise government, private sector, and tourism and housing stakeholder partnerships on [Nightingale-inspired](#) cooperative housing projects in proximity to major tourism precincts.**
  - **Establish a tourism workforce accommodation fund matched by the Federal Government, similar to the Victorian \$150 million *Regional Worker Accommodation Fund*.**

## 2 Elevate tourism to a central government portfolio

### Why this is important

- Tourism creates a multiplier effect bolstering growth in other industries, with an additional 86 cents of every tourism dollar circulated elsewhere in the Queensland economy (YE June 2023).
- Strong leadership and a holistic approach to proactive industry investment are essential for all regions and sectors to be best prepared for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Prioritising the visitor economy in decision-making will enhance governmental coordination, driving sustainable economic growth, job creation, and regional development outcomes.

### What Government should do

- **Elevate tourism to a central government portfolio**, recognising its far-reaching environmental, cultural, and economic impacts.
- **Improved cross-departmental and intergovernmental coordination** to align priorities, project and program outcomes, ensure information sharing and transparency, and remove unnecessary red tape.



# 3 Enhance transportation and connectivity

## Why this is important

- With more people than ever calling Queensland home and Brisbane 2032 fast approaching, we need to be prepared.
- Improved transportation networks are essential to meeting population demands, ensuring seamless visitor experiences, and facilitating dispersal.
- Insufficient digital infrastructure and mobile blackspots leaves businesses and communities at risk, with regional, remote and lower socioeconomic areas bearing the brunt.

## What Government should do

- **Ensure transport planning considers population growth and prioritises regional linkages**, enhancing connectivity and reducing congestion and emissions through strategic investments in public transit, micromobility, and pedestrian infrastructure.
- **Adopt a long-term rather than piecemeal approach to Bruce Highway repairs and upgrades**, aligned with [RACQ recommendations](#).
- **Lobby the Australian Government to improve digital access and infrastructure**, equipping businesses and communities with vital tools and services.
- **Perpetual, renewable fund of \$200 million allocation to the [Attracting Aviation Investment Fund](#)** to continually boost market competition and stimulate international and domestic visitation in both major cities and regional areas.



# 4 Drive investment attraction and supply-side infrastructure development

## Why this is important

- An underemphasis on supply-side activities, and reactive assessments with minimal foresight has left Queensland ill-prepared to meet consumer demand and attract new visitor markets.
- This shortfall in not having a strategic approach has adversely affected project development across accommodation, agritourism, ecotourism, events and venue infrastructure, marine tourism, and paleotourism sectors.
- The difficulty in growing ecotourism projects has been highlighted in the [2023 Queensland Audit Office report](#) where the lack of a clear roadmap, coordination, and proponent support complicates government strategic assessment and approval of ecotourism opportunities.

## What Government should do

- Establish a **streamlined regulatory framework** for tourism businesses and investors, managed by a dedicated cross-government team, including:
  - **A centralised platform for processing licenses, permits, and approvals, with funding for electronic assessments** to reduce approval times.
  - Implement a function within government to **guide businesses through capital funding, licensing, approvals, and legislation**, including project facilitation support, liaisons with local councils or Federal Government (as appropriate), aiming to eliminate barriers and prevent cost overruns.
- **Drive stakeholder collaboration to grow ecotourism initiatives and environmental stewardship** as part of the commitment to expanding the Queensland protected area estate, including:
  - **Drive accountable coordination between environment and tourism departments and industry** to balance natural asset protection with economic benefit, to prevent counterproductive efforts, manage visitor dispersal, and support decision-making on facilities upgrades.
  - **Review and modernise Commercial Activity Permit terms (Recreation Act 2006) for eco-certified operators** to enable long-term planning, formalise their role in visitor management, address QPWS resource gaps and mitigate impact of Free and Independent travellers.
  - **Develop a 'working in and protecting parks' framework in consultation with the tourism industry**, where operators support government efforts to look after protected areas *in simpatico*.
- **Incorporate QTIC recommendations into Short-term rental accommodation review outcomes**, focusing on absorbing unengaged providers into the tourism industry, recognition of existing regulatory compliance and licensing requirements for management and letting rights businesses, incentivising accreditation for best practice, and limiting unnecessary additional financial burden.
- **Attract world-class, high yield events** and boost visitation by **increasing bid funding for business events and major regional events**, consulting with the Queensland events sector to ensure guidelines and timings align with forward planning standards.

# 5 Build a sustainable and climate-resilient Queensland tourism industry

## Why this is important

- Frequent and severe extreme weather events increasingly disrupt tourism operations and devastate communities. The [2023 Queensland Sustainability Report](#) warns that “degradation of natural assets and ecosystem services, which food, fibre and tourism industries are highly dependent upon” is a significant threat to the Queensland economy.
- While the tourism industry is eager to drive change through sustainable practices and risk mitigation efforts, high upfront costs of long-term investments can present barriers.
- Proactive government investment in business and environmental sustainability can reduce spending on post-recovery efforts, preventing infrastructure and asset damage.

## What Government should do

- **Make climate resilience and sustainable practices standard considerations in all Government initiatives, policies, and funding**, rather than an additional priority.
- **Prioritise resilience to strengthen industry ability to withstand adverse events**, while maintaining essential post-disaster recovery support:
  - **Commit to industry resilience through proactive funding for infrastructure upgrades, business training programs, and access to technology**, in addition to **promoting regular reviews and updates of business resilience mechanisms**, continuity plans, and emergency response plans.
  - **Develop, implement, and support adaptive planning frameworks** that allow for adjustments in response to emerging challenges.
  - **Allocate seats to destination management organisations on relevant Disaster Management Committees** to facilitate a system of lateral information-sharing in the planning phases.
- **Develop a tourism industry sustainability transition plan** and supportive framework with clear goals, strategies, and funding allocation, including:
  - **Targeted financial incentives or subsidies to facilitate industry Net Zero transition**, offsetting costs for sustainable suppliers, renewable energy, fleet renewal, waste reduction, and water management.
  - **Establish a funded program for local councils, destination management organisations, and business collectives to install and access community clean energy solutions.**



# 6 Improve business conditions through comprehensive support measures

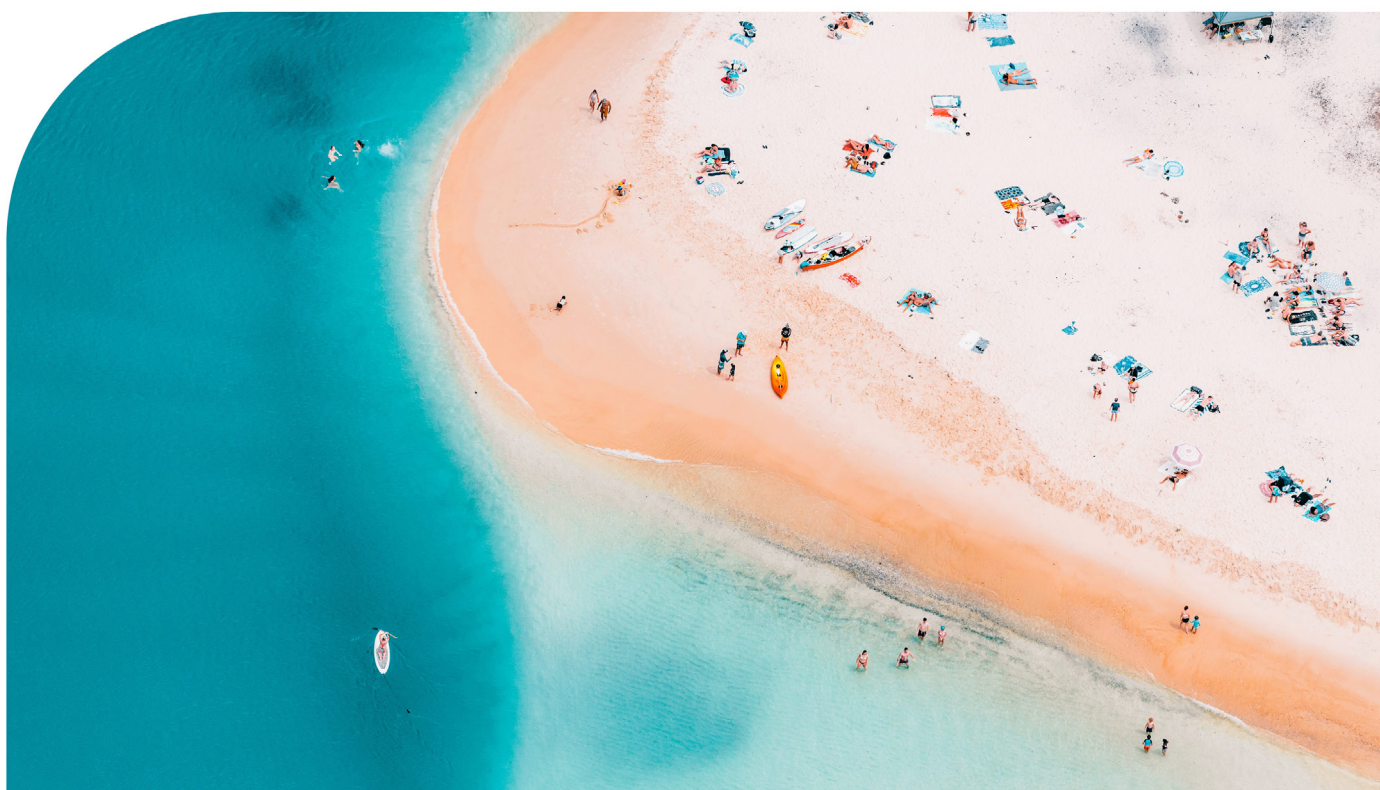
## Why this is important

- Rising costs, interest rates, and inflation are significantly impacting tourism business sustainability and capability.
- Approximately 95% of Queensland tourism businesses are classified as small, employing less than 20 staff (YE June 2024). These businesses already face challenges at both individual and industry levels, leaving little time for strategic planning alongside day-to-day operations.
- Queensland tourism operators struggle to secure affordable and comprehensive insurance coverage, as market failure and extreme weather drive premiums well above the national average, threatening business viability or forcing revenue diversion.

## What Government should do

- Introduce broad **support programs for small tourism businesses beyond specific project funding**, ensuring equitable growth through frameworks, networks, resources, and reduction in red tape:
  - Implement a **sliding scale for tourism funding applications and requirements** to ease burden of applications and acquittals for smaller grants (e.g., \$5,000 vs. \$500,000) and improving access to matched funding grants by considering tiered co-contribution based on business size.
  - **Fund a two-year tourism SME program in collaboration with mental health partners**, including subsidised mental health first aid training and an industry-wide Employee Assistance Program with three initial sessions and referrals thereafter.
  - **Continue to advance digital capability-building for tourism SMEs.**
- **Provide \$10 million into ongoing development of First Nations-owned tourism businesses** to grow authentic experiences, support staffing outcomes and community capability and drive visitation to underdeveloped, high-yield, remote locations like the Torres Strait.

- **Prioritise strategic initiatives to alleviate insurance pressures on industry, taking a long-term view:**
  - **Develop a coordinated State and Federal Government policy framework for public liability insurance, complemented by a no-fault/capped scheme for SMEs, similar to the New Zealand [Accident Compensation Corporation](#).**
  - **Collaborate with the Federal Government and insurance industry on a property insurance risk mitigation incentive program, tied to businesses (not individuals).** Tourism businesses facing 'uninsurable risks' would be required to invest in mitigation efforts equivalent to premiums, with premiums still due if work is not completed.
  - **Expand the function of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner to include dedicated business support for operators to liaise with insurers.**
  - **Queensland to remove state tax imposed on insurance policy premiums for tourism businesses.**
- **Ensure adherence to *Buy Queensland 2023*, with probity in governance, and transparency in tenders and reporting.**
  - **Ensuring that contracts are awarded to Queensland owned, operated and established businesses and not shingle sign businesses.** Leading up to Brisbane 2032, Queensland SMEs should have a clearly defined supply-chain opportunity pathway from government.
  - **Queensland Government-owned venues and stadiums should stock Queensland-only produced spirits, beers and non-alcoholic beverages and a local first approach for food services.**
  - **For greater impact, implement 75% local staffing requirements and linked skill-building initiatives.**





As the 2024 election approaches, we will **keep engaging with our members** and advocating for their key priorities to **drive meaningful change.**





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