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**Re: City of Gold Coast 'Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy'**

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) are pleased to support City of Gold Coast's *Coastal Hazard Adaptation 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 representing more than 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 \$28.3 billion to Queensland's Gross State Product (GSP), representing 7.7% of total GSP<sup>1</sup> and generated \$7.9 billion in exports in the year ending June 2018,<sup>2</sup> making it one of the state's largest export industries. The tourism industry consists of over 57,000 businesses across Queensland; nine out of ten of these businesses are small to medium enterprises. Tourism is a key economic driver in regional Queensland, supporting employment and community growth, employing more than 234,000 people directly and indirectly.<sup>3</sup> This is substantially more than mining or agriculture, forestry and fishing combined.

The Gold Coast has long been one of Australia's key tourism destinations and protection and preservation of its tourism assets against coastal hazards is of paramount importance. There were over 12.5 million domestic visitors to the Gold Coast region year ending June 2019.<sup>4</sup> A further 1.1 million international visitors arrived during the same period. Combined, these visitors spent an estimated \$5.9 billion in the region. Currently, we are in a critical time for the future of tourism on the Gold Coast, the COVID19 pandemic having devastated the tourism industry on a global and local scale.

<sup>1</sup> Tourism Research Australia - *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2018-2019*

<sup>2</sup> Tourism Research Australia - *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2018-2019*

<sup>3</sup> Tourism Research Australia - *State Tourism Satellite Accounts 2018-2019*

<sup>4</sup> Destination Gold Coast. 2018-19 Destination Snapshot. <https://www.destinationgoldcoast.com/corporate/research>

Globally, 2020 saw a 74% decline in international arrivals and estimated loss of USD 1.3 trillion in export revenues, with international tourism not expected to return to pre-COVID levels until 2024.<sup>5</sup> The pressure that the COVID19 pandemic has placed on the Gold Coast economy is significant. In the year ending September 2020, combined domestic and international visitation to the Gold Coast dropped by 39.8%, with the region experiencing a 42.7% decline in total visitor expenditure.<sup>6</sup> During the industry's recovery, the region will rely heavily on the natural assets that have reliably drawn domestic and international guests to the region, notably its world-class beaches and aquatic recreation. It is critical that in development of hazard mitigation infrastructure that tourism assets are optimised and protected in a sustainable fashion, and recreational access is minimised in the process.

Personal safety will factor significantly in destination choice moving forward and public perceptions will be influenced heavily by the media<sup>7</sup> as has been evident in Tropical North Queensland following significant and destructive weather events. The City of Gold *Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy* is timely and will help to maximise safety for locals and visitors, minimise damage from coastal hazards and severe weather events and subsequently minimise the risk of negative representations in the media.

QTIC are pleased to see adaptation strategies addressing risks identified as direct impacts of climate change. The Queensland Climate Change Adaptation Strategy<sup>8</sup> is Queensland's guiding strategy for managing the impacts of climate change and QTIC supports City of Gold Coast's alignment with State objectives. In addition to protecting the tourism value of the region, it is vital to guarantee the ongoing sustainability of the Gold Coast's delicate marine ecosystem and fragile waterways.

It is also important to acknowledge the opportunity for City of Gold Coast to actively work towards several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in development and effective implementation of the Plan for Coastal Hazard Adaptation. We see opportunity to contribute to Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 14 (Life Underwater).<sup>9</sup>

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



**Daniel Gschwind** Chief Executive

<sup>5</sup> United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, January 2021

<sup>6</sup> Tourism Research Australia – *International Tourism Snapshot – Year ending September 2020*

<sup>7</sup> Roselló, J., Becken, S. & Santana-Gallego, M. (2020). *The effects of natural disasters on international tourism: A global analysis*. Tourism Management. Vol.79.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Pathways to a climate resilient Queensland – Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy 2017-2030. [https://www.qld.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/67301/qld-climate-adaptation-strategy.pdf](https://www.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/67301/qld-climate-adaptation-strategy.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, Sustainable Goals for Development 2015. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

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