

Queensland tourism industry priorities for the 2022 Federal Election

May 2022



**QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL**

The Voice of Tourism

Acknowledgement of Country

QTIC acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future; and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples.

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INTRODUCTION

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) offers its policy priorities for the 2022 Federal Election, based on the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) platform.¹ For further discussion regarding points raised in this submission, please contact QTIC on (07) 3236 1445 or email policy@qtic.com.au.

QUEENSLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL

QTIC is a not-for-profit, private sector, membership-based organisation, and peak advocacy body, representing the interests of the Queensland tourism industry. QTIC works alongside government agencies and industry bodies at a local, state, and national level, to strengthen the voice of tourism in all relevant policy forums. Membership comprises more than 800 tourism businesses throughout Queensland, in addition to working closely alongside 13 Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs) and 10 industry sector associations, representing more than 3,000 regional businesses. QTIC is closely connected to its members and very supportive of the work they do to provide exceptional visitor experiences.

QTIC's efforts are aimed squarely at helping the tourism industry drive business and product development, stimulate business attraction and investment, develop workforce skills, and support tourism jobs and business. QTIC advocacy is also underpinned by a dedication to environmental sustainability, including contributions to meaningful policy change and key roles representing the tourism industry in various advisory groups. QTIC provides an independent conduit to bring key stakeholders (including investors, employers, employees, and all levels of government) together to clearly identify challenges and opportunities and provide recommendations for consideration.

FEDERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES

Ongoing COVID-19 support

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry requires urgent rebuilding of its markets, trade, and cash flow to retain businesses and destinations.

The ongoing challenges faced by the tourism, hospitality, and events sectors over the past two years, ranging from natural disasters, COVID-19, and associated international and national border closures have been complex. They have overshadowed some of the longer-standing issues experienced by the tourism industry. As the world emerges from COVID-19 restrictions and Australia looks to re-build its economy, these challenges need to be addressed swiftly and effectively to enable recovery, develop resilience, and facilitate sustainable growth.

The cumulative losses for tourism since the beginning of the pandemic have amounted to a staggering \$146.6 billion nationally.² Queensland has fared less badly than most other states, but in the year ending December 2021, domestic tourism in Queensland was still down 14% compared to an already difficult year before. Domestic tourism helped to mitigate losses in some regions, to a degree, but many businesses were unable to successfully pivot operations.

Policy recommendations:

- Match funding to secure major and business events — activating critical venues in each state.
- Provide Fringe Benefits Tax waivers for domestic interstate business travel in 2022–23.
- Fund domestic, interstate holiday vouchers.
- Provide income support for small businesses affected by interstate or international border restrictions.

¹ Quality Tourism Australia (2022) [Policy priorities](#), ATIC (Australian Tourism Industry Council, accessed 30 March 2022).

² Austrade (Australian Trade and Investment Commission) (2022) [National Visitor Survey results December 2021](#), Tourism Research Australia, accessed 30 March 2022.



Workforce and skills

The Australian tourism industry lacks available workers and requires greater business competency. This issue continues to cause numerous challenges and impact the economic recovery of the sector in all destinations. International travel sentiment for visiting Australia is growing stronger³. While confidence is down for domestic travel due to global uncertainty and fuel costs, intention to book has continued to lift⁴. Alleviating current shortages and planning for long-term industry needs is critical.

- There were 628,900 jobs in the Australian tourism sector by December 2021 quarter, compared to 744,500 at the end of 2019⁵.
- National tourism GDP fell from \$51.2 billion in 2019-20 to \$32.4 billion in 2020-21 (36.7%). 2020-21 GDP represents a 46.4% reduction compared to pre-COVID-19 levels⁷.

QTIC delivers several projects relating to workforce and industry development that have the capacity for upscaling at a national level:

- [Micro-credentialling program](#) providing focused skills training to better support employees and businesses to adopt innovations and improve productivity. More than 12,000 individual training lessons were delivered to staff during the year-long pilot program. The [Tourism Business Capability Program](#) (funded by the Queensland Government, delivered by QTIC over 2018-21) was designed to help businesses become more competitive, adaptive, and resilient, ensuring visitors could enjoy a consistently high standard of experiences across the state.
- The [Quality Tourism Framework](#) (QTF), owned and operated by the Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC), is a national business development program that provides businesses with the necessary tools and resources to ensure best practice management, customer confidence and the ongoing sustainability. The Quality Tourism Accreditation and Star Ratings system are also encompassed within the broader QTF structure.
- The [QTIC Careers Guide](#) (2022 publication forthcoming) and [Careers Roadshow and Virtual Jobs Platform](#) are designed to promote the many and varied career possibilities in the tourism and hospitality industry. A regional roadshow focus directly connects employers to the next generation of workers and offers a strategic and responsive approach to local needs. Adoption and promotion of these resources and programs at a national level could help address existing workforce challenges and plan for the future needs of industry.

Policy recommendations:

- **Fund nonaccredited training to build business capability and micro credentials to small businesses in each state via ATIC.** The tourism industry needs a genuine national commitment from the Australian Government to an industry-driven program to develop quality tourism. A strong quality tourism approach assists businesses become more sustainable from a community, commercial and environmental perspective, driving competitiveness and building resilience via effective management practices. A funding package to train, mentor and support tourism operators as the industry continues to grow would demonstrate a partnership with an industry that is driving jobs and growth across the country.
- Provide \$8 million to expand small business capacity and skills via the Quality Tourism Framework — including programs for micro credentialling. Pre-existing ATIC short-skilling programs comprises training specifically for lower-level jobs, including housekeeping, cleaning, front-of-house and building programs to assist with business development (including yield management). QTIC recommends building on the micro-credentialling program with a capacity for upscaling to support national vocational recognition programs.

³ Tourism Australia (March 2022) [International Travel Sentiment Tracker](#), Tourism Australia, accessed 31 March 2022.

⁴ Tourism Australia (March 2022) [Domestic Travel Sentiment Tracker](#), Tourism Australia, accessed 31 March 2022.

⁵ ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) (2022) [Tourism Satellite Accounts: quarterly tourism labour statistics, Australia, experimental estimates, December 2021](#), ABS, accessed 4 April 2022.

⁶ Austrade (Australian Trade and Investment Commission) (2021) [Australian Tourism in 2020 \[PDF 1.9MB\]](#), Tourism Research Australia, accessed 4 August 2021.

⁷ Austrade (December 2021) [National Tourism Satellite Account 2020-21 summary](#), Tourism Research Australia, accessed 4 April 2022.



There are few future funding opportunities and consideration should be given to such a tried-and-proven skill delivery model for all states and territories.

- In the longer term, it is essential that marketing programs and reduced fees, taxes, and charges ensure Australia is an attractive destination for international working visitors, international students, skilled migrants and backpackers.
- **Reinstatement of the Austrade Tourism Labour Force Survey** would also provide crucial data on labour and skills and enable the tourism and hospitality industry to respond to future challenges.

Climate change

The current and future impacts of climate change are of great concern to the tourism industry, as increasingly common extreme weather events and other forms of related business disruption demonstrate. In addition, the domestic and international impacts on consumer perceptions on our destinations in relation to climate change are already being felt.

The time for action is now – the sixth assessment report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) indicated that immediate policy change is necessary to reduce emissions and avoid irreparable environmental damage and global heating.⁸ The World Economic Forum also notes that solutions and technologies to mitigate climate impacts already exist, and would be highly cost effective, costing “29-times less than what’s needed to stabilise the climate”.⁹

Policy responses must reflect and commit to the delivery of plans and strategies that assist in meeting Australia’s commitment as signatory to multiple international reports and goals relating to the protection of environmental and cultural heritage. Boldness is also required, with a clear government climate change strategy and carbon measurement tools.

- QTIC and EarthCheck have jointly delivered the [CrisisReady](#) program since 2020, which helps Queensland tourism operators to respond to and manage recovery from crisis events by capacity building and planning¹⁰.

Policy recommendations:

- Enhance Australian tourism’s destination appeal and sustainability through climate change adaption and mitigation.
- Commit to a net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and a 50% reduction by 2030 legislated target for Australia.
- In line with Infrastructure Australia’s plan, commit to linking the national Electric Vehicle network for self-drive and caravanning road trips.
- Provide grants or tax rebates, for aviation, marine and land transport to move to low emission electric battery fleets and vehicles, particularly for small businesses.

Developing demand driving attractions and visitor experiences

Australia needs ongoing investment in new demand driving visitor experiences and appropriate catalytic infrastructure. It is critical to assess the most impactful potential tourism developments that can drive further investment and visitor demand. A location-specific approach to such assessment is necessary and a clear understanding of what other supportive elements, such as visitor experiences, will be required for any project to succeed.

Policy recommendations:

- **Continue matched funding for the next generation of iconic attractions in each state and territory.** Instructive government co-investments in catalytic tourism infrastructure (such as the Australian Stockman’s Hall of Fame, QANTAS Founders Museum,

⁸ Working Group II, IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) (2022) [Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability – summary for policymakers](#), IPCC, accessed 11 April 2022.

⁹ B Griscom, Conservation International for WEF (World Economic Forum) (2022) [5 takeaways from the latest IPCC report](#), WEF, accessed 11 April 2022.

¹⁰ QTIC (2020) [CrisisReady program helps tourism operators prepare for the unexpected](#), QTIC, accessed 11 April 2022.



Waltzing Matilda Centre, and the Australian Age of Dinosaurs) continue to demonstrate the catalytic benefits and returns from such investments. The returns manifest not just in increased tourism expenditure but also result in jobs growth, community revitalisation and additional investment and activity in other sectors of the economy.

- Provide a \$70 million competitive grants scheme for Small and Medium Enterprise tourism businesses to develop new or renewed products including digital capability, equipment, infrastructure or new services. Renewed infrastructure not only facilitates accessibility of iconic attractions and boosts tourism, but also benefits local communities.
- **Develop new First Nations-owned and operated tourism businesses, including attractions, tours and events.** The [Queensland First Nations Tourism Plan](#), developed by QTIC following extensive consultation with First Nations peoples, tourism industry stakeholders, and key government departments offers a considered guide for future action in relation to the tourism sector¹¹. The plan sets a framework to leverage our First Nations cultural heritage and stewardship of country, together with regions' distinctive mix of tourism product offerings, to inspire the development of a thriving First Nations' tourism sector that offers diverse, authentic and engaging, sustainable tourism experiences and promotes greater engagement of First Nations peoples in tourism.
- **Extend the Export Market Development Grants (EMDG) scheme** to businesses that were previously deemed ineligible due to reaching the maximum eight grant limit as well as specifically for tourism businesses that will need to rebuild trust and confidence in key as well as new and emerging markets.

Internet access and digital connectivity

Digital disruption and innovation have created both new challenges but also enormous opportunities for tourism. The relationship between consumers, service providers, the distribution system and marketing bodies has fundamentally changed. It is no longer just technology experts who need to be skilled. Instead, most staff need to have some understanding and capacity to adopt digital tools across almost every aspect of business operations.

In 2019, QTIC collaborated with Griffith University, industry stakeholders and government to develop a [Queensland Tourism Digital Workforce Development and Training Plan](#) that provides some insight on related issues that are applicable nationally.

Connectivity remains a key issue for many Queensland destinations, particularly in regional Queensland. A number of areas still suffer from intermittent, slow or unreliable internet service. This impedes businesses' ability to connect with consumers and complete daily operational requirements. Investment must be prioritised for regional Queensland to ensure rural and remote economies that are transitioning into tourism to diversify are supported and accessible.

Policy recommendations:

- Continue to upgrade the NBN nationwide and work constructively with State and Territory Governments to reduce internet and telecommunications blackspot areas in our regional communities.
- As close as possible to real time data overlaid with spend data to be utilised at a national, state and destination level.

Insurance

The tourism industry, associated stakeholders, and consultants agree that the evidence strongly indicates market failure in terms of the affordability and accessibility of insurance. No particular party is responsible for the current state of the market failure, which is complicated by global factors, state and federal regulation, natural disasters and increased litigation. International markets, federal and state government policies and legislation, the insurance industry and the business community as well

¹¹ QTIC (2020) [Queensland First Nations Tourism Plan](#), QTIC.



as consumers, all have a part to play in change towards a more viable state-of-play for tourism-orientated insurance.

Insurance companies are increasingly not covering a variety of tourism experiences such as horse riding and zip lines, and rising premiums for tourism businesses are making a variety of products uncompetitive. This is one of the most crucial issues facing tourism operators at present, with many being underinsured, not insured at all, or being forced to close.

In 2021 QTIC (in collaboration with ATIC) developed and released the [Insurance Cover for the Tourism Industry](#) report on how to best respond to the difficulties faced by tourism operators in securing appropriate insurance, including three key recommendations for policymakers:

- **Key recommendation 1:** Address affordability and availability
- **Key recommendation 2:** Introduce legislative change to assist with public liability
- **Key recommendation 3:** Increase knowledge and understanding of risk, insurance requirements, and related areas.

Policy recommendations:

- Develop a policy framework to cap public liability insurance risks for Small and Medium Enterprises; and develop a policy framework to ensure affordable insurance for businesses and customers, building on recommendations in the ACCC report¹² and ASBFEO report¹³.

Aviation attraction and recovery fund

The aviation sector in Australia, including airlines and airports, represent essential infrastructure not just for tourism but for the entire community. Domestic and international aviation capacity will continue to be critical in the post-COVID-19 world.

An efficient, comprehensive, and competitive market for air services to both capital and regional destinations must be a high priority for both government and industry. A strategic and collaborative approach between service providers, the broader industry, regulators, and other government agencies must be encouraged and appropriately supported to grow domestic and international markets.

Policy recommendations:

- Restore pre-pandemic international and domestic aviation capacity – including national funding similar to the \$200m Queensland State Government and Airports funding.
- Develop new international air routes to diverse markets.
- The development of new domestic air routes, particularly to ensure greater regional connectivity.

Governance

Tourism is a complex industry with a supply chain that involves many sectors of the economy, including accommodation and food services, transport, agriculture, retail, arts and recreation, education, communication, construction and more. The industry is relevant to many, if not all, government portfolios and involves all three levels of government. Tourism is also deeply connected to the lives of communities and Queensland residents through the services and commercial opportunities it provides. A well-coordinated approach from government(s), in collaboration with industry is critical to achieve the best outcomes Tourism is beyond the scope of a single portfolio or department, with relevance to many aspects of day-to-day life for Queensland residents.

Policy recommendations:

¹² ACCC (Australian Competition & Consumer Commission) (2020) [Northern Australia insurance inquiry – final report](#), ACCC, accessed 10 June 2021.

¹³ ASBFEO (Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman) (2020) [Insurance inquiry – final report](#), ASBFEO, accessed 10 June 2021.



- The re-establishment of a designated Tourism Cabinet Committee (TCC) would help to set a consistent direction and improve coordination. Such a body would provide oversight and recognise that tourism covers multiple areas of policy and legislation. The TCC could be constituted with Ministers representing relevant portfolios.
- In addition, we consider that the adoption of a Co-ordinator General or a similar model, with a practical approach to help business navigate legislation and policy, could create an environment to assist in minimising red tape and legislative barriers between the numerous state government departments and local government regulations.

World Heritage Areas

The continued protection and maintenance of World Heritage Areas in Queensland is needed to protect biodiversity, recognise cultural significance to Traditional Custodians, and facilitate economic development of communities and industry.

Collaborative stewardship¹⁴ is key – we point towards the tourism industry as chiefly concerned with operators' own livelihoods and the long-term health of World Heritage Areas, able to contribute to 'future proofing' both economy and environment. Peer education is also critical and will assist with the long-term implementation of any regulatory measures.

QTIC points towards the Great Barrier Reef as a unique part of the natural environment that greatly contributes to the state and national economy. Prior to the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Great Barrier Reef boasted "economic, social, and icon asset value of \$56 billion, supports [approximately] 64,000 jobs, and contributes \$6.4 billion to the Australian economy"¹⁵. This historic success can be largely attributed to the effective tourism planning and management processes in place, which have resulted in a relative balance between reasonable human use and the preservation of this world-class natural asset.

The *Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2019* indicates that visitation levels are sensitive and closely linked to the public perception about the reef¹⁶. Notable declines in visitation have previously occurred following cyclone seasons, back-to-back bleaching events, and related media coverage¹⁷.

QTIC has contributed to the following initiatives and will continue to advocate for the protection and maintenance of World Heritage Areas:

- 2022 formation of the Queensland Tourism and Conservation Alliance (QTIC, Queensland Conservation Council, Queensland First Nations Tourism Council, Pew Charitable Trusts, Ecotourism Australia, National Parks Association of Queensland) to advocate for expansion and better management of protected areas and boosting ecotourism.
- In 2018, QTIC contributed to the [Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan](#). This strategy is an invaluable document that should be used to guide all future reef-related legislation.

Policy recommendations:

- Prioritisation should be given to provide for matched operational funding for World Heritage listings and sites.
- We also emphasise that Australia is now a signatory to multiple international reports and goals which directly relate to the protection of environmental and cultural heritage, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the World Heritage Committee report¹⁸.

¹⁴ Dyer M, Newlands M, Bradshaw E, and Hernandez, S (2020) [Stewardship in the Great Barrier Reef: A review of concepts and definitions of stewardship in the Great Barrier Reef applied to Reef health](#), GBRMPA (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority), accessed 16 June 2021.

¹⁵ Deloitte Access Economics (2017) [At what price? The economic, social and icon value of the Great Barrier Reef](#), accessed 10 June 2021.

¹⁶ GBRMPA (2019) [Great Barrier Reef Outlook Report 2019](#), GBRMPA, accessed 16 June 2021.

¹⁷ GBRMPA [Tourism on the Great Barrier Reef](#), GBRMPA, accessed 16 June 2021.

¹⁸ Relevant pages tabled by outgoing QTIC CEO Daniel Gschwind as part of 11 June 2021 public hearing for Queensland Government Health and Environment Committee – [Report No. 14 Environment and Other Legislation \(Reversal of Great Barrier Reef Protection Measures\) Amendment Bill 2021](#).

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