

Queensland Tourism and Conservation Alliance backs plan to double State's protected areas

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Queensland's peak tourism bodies and conservation organisations have today released an Alliance statement calling for a significant increase in management funding and the acceleration of growth in Queensland's protected areas.

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council, Ecotourism Australia, Queensland First Nations Tourism Council, Queensland Conservation Council, Pew Charitable Trusts, and the National Parks Association Queensland have formed an Alliance to advocate for the expansion and better management of Queensland's protected areas to protect nature and boost ecotourism.

Daniel Gschwind, CEO of Queensland Tourism Industry Council said the Queensland Government has an opportunity to increase government investment to expand and better manage Queensland's protected area network by the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"We welcome the Queensland Government's Protected Area Strategy and the ambition to protect 17%, but we must also allocate the resources to effectively manage current and future protected areas," said Gschwind.

"Such an investment yields many returns for the community. Protecting and presenting new national parks will provide new opportunities for tourism, recreation, and regional development across the state.

"What better time to put more natural attractions on the map than in the lead up to one of the biggest events in the world, the 2032 Olympics."

Dave Copeman, Director of Queensland Conservation Council said he was excited to be working across sectors to ensure protecting and managing nature in Queensland was high on the budget priority list.

"Well managed protected areas safeguard species threatened by habitat destruction, feral animals, noxious weeds and the impacts of climate change" said Copeman.

"Unfortunately, much of Queensland's nature is at risk. Only 8.2 percent of the state is protected as national park or private protected area. We should be aiming to double this by 2032."

"If the Palaszczuk Government is going to reach the 17% target, we need to see this reflected in the 2022 state budget with funding to grow our national parks and nature refuges.

Media Release



Elissa Keenan, CEO of Ecotourism Australia, increasing government investment in Queensland's protected areas meant more opportunities for nature-based tourism experiences.

"Queensland is a hub for ecotourism. From the Great Barrier Reef to our Outback national parks - both international and domestic tourism relies on healthy rainforests, coastlines, and bushlands," said Ms Keenan.

"We know that natural beauty and wildlife are key factors when it comes to choosing a destination for our key international markets and domestic travellers. Increasingly we are seeing people seek out nature-based, sustainably managed tourism destinations."

Cameron Costello, Interim Chair, Queensland First Nations Tourism Council said, expansion of protected areas across Queensland enables connection to country, protects cultural heritage sites, and delivers land, jobs, and economic opportunity to First Nations people.

"The growth in Queensland's national parks needs to be matched with the growth in joint management opportunities and traditional knowledge to enhance park management."

"Many First Nations groups provide essential management services for Queensland's national parks and offer culturally appropriate, unique tourism opportunities found nowhere else."

Susanne Cooper, President of National Parks Association of Queensland said, Queensland's national parks are one of the state's biggest tourism drawcards and key to the prosperity of the regions.

"We're asking the Queensland Government to commit to doubling protected areas by 2030 and ensuring they are well managed," said Cooper.

Andrew Picone, Queensland Manager, Pew Charitable Trusts said, new national parks in regional Queensland will drive a growth in jobs across tourism and land management.

"Our state's national parks and nature refuges support highly valued nature-based tourism while protecting exceptional wildlife and natural places."

"National parks contribute billions to Queensland's economy and their growth and management is central to our wellbeing and economic recovery, particularly from the impacts of COVID-19," said Picone.

The Alliance calls on the Queensland Government to fulfill the promise of the Protected Areas Strategy by committing substantial additional funding in the 2022 budget to support:

1. Establishment of new national parks and private protected areas
2. New opportunities for Indigenous-led conservation and cultural tourism
3. Effective management of the natural and cultural values within protected areas; and
4. Exceptional visitor experiences, including nature-based and cultural tourism activities.

Media Release



Tourism in Queensland is worth \$23 billion per year, 1 with a significant share of this directly attributable to nature, including the \$6.4 billion value attributed to the Great Barrier Reef 2 and the \$3.7 billion associated with national park visitation.

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**QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL**

Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is the peak industry body for tourism in Queensland representing more than 3,000 members. QTIC is a private sector, membership-based organisation which, since 2001, has worked to influence and shape the state's tourism business environment that directly contributes \$27.2 billion to the Queensland's economy and employs more than 237,000 Queenslanders.

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