

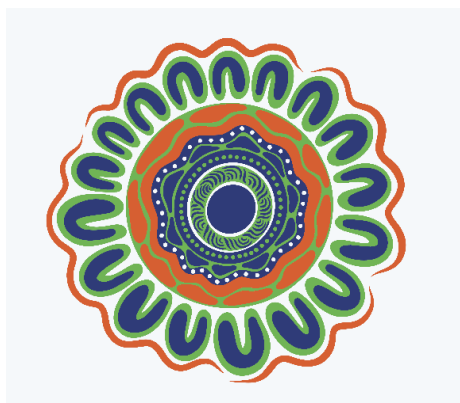
Queensland Government Budget Bid
Tourism Priorities

February 2025



**QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL**

The Voice of Tourism



QTIC acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Queensland. We recognise those who shared stories, welcomed guests on Country, and were stewards of the earth for millennia before us, and their continued connection to land, waterways, and culture.

1. QUEENSLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL

QTIC is the peak industry body and leading advocate for the tourism, hospitality, and events sectors in Queensland, committed to the growth and sustainability of the state visitor economy. Our efforts focus on powerful lobbying, policy development, and collaboration with key industry stakeholders to create a favourable business environment for operators.

As a not-for-profit, membership-based organisation, we take pride in ensuring that the concerns and needs of our members and the broader tourism industry inform all relevant policy debates and that businesses have strong representation in decision-making processes. By promoting the value and importance of tourism in government forums and to the wider community, we help to create a vibrant, diverse industry that benefits all.

Through delivery of workforce and skilling programs, advocating for attraction and infrastructure investment, and working with the private sector to develop innovative solutions to tourism priorities, QTIC continues to serve members and industry. We also provide expert advice and support, including workforce and business development opportunities and access to vital industry insights.

2. STRONG COMMITMENT NEEDED FOR A THRIVING VISITOR ECONOMY

Tourism is an economic powerhouse for Australia, contributing significantly to the state's prosperity and standing as one of Queensland's greatest exports. It is one of the state's largest employers, acting as a key driver of job creation, particularly in regional Queensland, where tourism sustains entire communities. Across the state, the sector provides one in every twelve Queenslanders with a job, supporting local businesses, generating opportunities in remote and rural areas, and building pathways for young people and diverse workforces.

With Queensland set to host the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there is an unprecedented opportunity to enhance global visibility and solidify the state's tourism appeal for decades to come. Strategic investment in tourism infrastructure, digital innovation, and workforce development will be critical to ensuring the visitor economy meets future demand and remains globally competitive.

The Queensland Government is already laying the groundwork with the development of a 20-year tourism strategy, aiming to drive sustainable growth, diversify tourism offerings, and attract high-value visitors. The tourism sector's contribution to economic recovery, regional employment, and national prosperity cannot be overstated. State budget support is crucial to ensuring that Queensland, and Australia, remains at the forefront of the global tourism landscape, capitalising on future opportunities such as the Brisbane 2032 Games while also building resilience against potential economic and environmental challenges.

Queensland's tourism industry is a key economic driver, contributing \$33.2 billion in Overnight Visitor Expenditure (OVE) and supporting 206,200 direct and indirect jobs. However, despite record growth, Queensland's market share has declined compared to other states. With increasing risks from climate change, rising insurance costs, workforce shortages, and regulatory barriers, targeted government investment is needed to secure the industry's long-term competitiveness.

3. QTIC'S BUDGET PRIORITIES

QTIC calls for the Queensland Government to allocate funding to critical tourism priorities, including:

1. Continue the Strategic and Contestable Grants Program with \$15 million over the next three years, building on the results generated from the past three years. This program has delivered strong results over the past three years, and continued funding will enhance its impact. A

review of eligibility criteria should be undertaken to ensure funding is directed towards the strongest partnerships, maximising benefits for tourism.

2. Increase investment in major and regional events and international marketing for TEQ by \$15 million to ensure Queensland's competitiveness in attracting visitors and high-profile events.
3. Establish a new \$6 million Product and Industry Development Fund delivered by QTIC in partnership with Regional Tourism Organisations to support the growth needed to meet the Tourism 2032 targets.
4. Provide \$10 million in funding for a contestable grant program for key ecotourism projects identified through the 2045 consultation.
5. A dedicated \$100 million fund for Aviation Expansion and Route Optimisation (AERO) to support new and existing routes, freight optimisation, and domestic connectivity to and from international gateways for international transit passengers.
6. Increase funding for the State's Tourism and Events Industry Conference to ensure adequate resourcing and deliverables. Enhanced funding will support the inclusion of high-profile speakers, expanded program offerings, and improved accessibility for regional stakeholders, fostering stronger industry collaboration and innovation.
7. Increase base funding to Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO) from \$7 million to \$10 million through the Tourism Network Fund over three years (\$9M), which has not seen an increase in over a decade, to ensure effectiveness. This funding boost will align with the increased contributions from Local Government to deliver critical outcomes.
8. Seek increased support for the 40th anniversary of the Queensland Tourism Awards to be held on 14th November 2025, with a request for a \$100,000 special sponsorship to enhance the event's prestige, industry recognition, and overall impact.

4. LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

QTIC urges the Queensland Government to commit to a long-term funding pool of at least \$500 million over ten years to support the Destination 2045 Strategy, ensuring its successful implementation. A dedicated \$50 million initial investment is needed in the 2025-26 budget to kickstart key initiatives that will underpin the first year of Destination 2045.

Queensland's tourism industry is at a critical juncture. Without strategic investment, the state risks further market share decline, lack of new product development, workforce shortages, and underutilisation of natural assets. QTIC urges the government to actively seek opportunities to fund infrastructure feasibility assessments and seed fund new product development.

Additionally, investment is needed to build back better following natural disasters, ensuring that each recovery is an opportunity to build a sustainable future. By securing at least \$50 million in aligned funding for Destination 2045, the Queensland Government can support a sustainable, competitive, and high-growth tourism sector in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond.