



Interim Queensland Government Response

Towards 2032: Reshaping Queensland's visitor economy to welcome the world

TOURISM INDUSTRY REFERENCE PANEL

JUNE 2022



Queensland
Government

Message from the Minister

Underpinned by a strong and effective public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic, enabling eased restrictions, Queensland's tourism industry is now rapidly emerging from the impacts of COVID-19, with strong growth and rising demand for the state's stunning tourism destinations and experiences.

The Queensland Government welcomes the independent Tourism Industry Reference Panel's report *Towards 2032: Reshaping Queensland's visitor economy to welcome the world* – a plan to deliver uniquely Queensland experiences in step with the needs of visitors, communities and the environment and their wide-ranging recommendations about how to shape the industry's long-term success.

I thank the panel members – tourism industry leaders Ms Liz Savage (Chair), Mr Brett Godfrey and Mr John O'Neill – for their work, passion and commitment to help position Queensland as a tourism destination like no other.

When the Panel was first formed, the notion of recovery felt very distant. It was a time when Australia was shut off from the world, a time before the vaccine roll-out and when many had their shifts cut overnight.

The Panel engaged widely, including a state-wide consultation process, and commissioned research to understand the opportunities available to Queensland.

The Queensland tourism industry has embraced the opportunity to participate and I commend those individuals, businesses, industry groups, local governments and organisations with an interest in the future of tourism in Queensland.

The report summarises the Panel's findings and recommends actions for industry and government to implement together while looking at recovery through the lens of rebuilding after natural disasters, skills shortages and supply chain setbacks. It sets an ambitious vision for Queensland's visitor economy in 2032, with Queensland being the destination of choice for domestic and global visitors seeking the world's best experiences.

I welcome the Panel's advice and targets for the sector's recovery and growth – these targets set an aspirational goal for all stakeholders to focus their efforts. Some recommendations will need further consideration to determine a Queensland Government position that balances competing interests and to assess whether practical and successful solutions can be implemented which align and progress government's objectives for the community, built around Unite and Recover – Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan.

On behalf of the Queensland Government, I commit to commence work immediately, together with industry to create a shared long-term tourism industry strategy that responds to these recommendations.

This is just the start in a new way of us all working together to make a stronger visitor economy for Queensland.



The Honourable Stirling Hinchliffe MP

Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement



Accelerating Queensland's tourism recovery

The Tourism Industry Reference Panel was established in March 2021 to identify actions and opportunities to accelerate Queensland's tourism recovery. The Panel's Terms of Reference is available online at www.dtis.qld.gov.au/tourism/tourism-industry-reference-panel

The Queensland Government's efforts to sustain and strengthen the tourism sector have seen unprecedented investment during COVID-19. Over \$1.1 billion has been provided in specific economic and recovery support funding for the tourism, hospitality and events sectors over the past two years alone.

Following the release of the Panel's Interim Action Plan for Tourism Recovery in October 2021, the Queensland Government, working with industry partners, have progressed several recovery actions, including:

- › \$200 million co-investment with the state's four international airports to supercharge international aviation (already securing one of the most significant aviation deals to land in Queensland with direct flights from San Francisco to Brisbane International Airport)
- › \$74 million Rebuilding Queensland Tourism Program, and
- › initiatives that respond to areas of opportunity identified by the Panel, like business events, a pathway to net zero emissions, and enabling future growth.

Opportunities for long-term success

The Panel has provided recommendations about a broad range of issues relevant to the future success of the state's visitor economy. Recommendations, such as those related to future statutory bodies, planning and regulatory reforms, and funding model proposals will provide valuable guidance on how all levels of government and industry could further support tourism businesses into the future.

Some of the Panel's recommendations seek additional resources or changes to existing funding allocations such as the proposed Experience Development Fund, an extended Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund and enhancing destination marketing and events support. Government will consider these as part of the full response to the Action Plan, taking into consideration the government's fiscal position and budget process.

Positioning Queensland as a tourism destination like no other is something that governments cannot do alone. It will therefore be essential that implementation of actions for the future strategic approach for Queensland tourism has strong industry support, leadership and resourcing.



A leading COVID-19 health response and unprecedented COVID-19 recovery and support for tourism

Public health measures were a key pillar of Queensland's successful pandemic response, easing restrictions on movement earlier than other jurisdictions. Coupled with targeted business support, this helped many tourism businesses to limit long-term implications of the Pandemic's peak challenges.

The Queensland Government has acted throughout the pandemic to support the tourism industry with more than \$1.1 billion committed to support the tourism, events and hospitality sectors. Significant examples include:

- › More than **\$188 million** in hardship and support grants specific to tourism including the Tourism and Hospitality Hardship Grants, Growing Tourism Infrastructure Grants, Marine Tourism Support and International Tourism Adaptation Grants
- › Tourism, events and hospitality businesses also received more than **\$115.9 million** in funding from the COVID-19 Business Support Package and Small Business Adaption Grant Program
- › More than **\$120.8 million** in relief from fees and charges, including state land rent, marine berthing fees, inbound tour operator and whale watching fees, as well as liquor and gaming licensing fees
- › Over **\$144 million** to support Queensland's tourism and hospitality workforce including the COVID-19 Jobs Support Loan Scheme helping businesses retain employees and maintain their operations during the height of the pandemic, and the **\$7.5 million** Work in Paradise initiative to help overcome chronic labour and skills shortages exacerbated by COVID-19
- › Recovery initiatives to address immediate needs, drive demand, and support rapid recovery including voucher programs, including the Holiday Dollars Program, contributions to Gold Coasters Play Money – border zone boost, the Great Queensland Getaway and the **\$15 million** Domestic Aviation Route Restart Program
- › Free financial counselling assistance to help tourism operators financially impacted as a result of COVID-19 or a natural disaster, including 14 Tourism and Small Business Financial Counsellors
- › The **\$74 million** Rebuilding Queensland Tourism election commitment continues to support industry through: funding for tourism activation, events, marketing, regional tourism and future proofing the industry.



Interim Action Plan for Tourism Recovery: 100 Day Achievements

The Interim Action Plan for Tourism Recovery released by the Tourism Industry Reference Panel in October 2021 focused heavily on the immediate needs of the sector in anticipation of rapid recovery. The Queensland Government has progressed all 27 immediate actions as recommended by the Panel, including:

- › the border opened to quarantine-free arrivals of domestic and international visitors and students
- › **\$133 million** paid to tourism and hospitality businesses impacted by past border closures through grants including the Tourism and Hospitality Hardship Grant Program
- › rebuilding visitor confidence and stimulate direct bookings to industry, trade and aviation partners, through the *Days like This*, *Good to Go*, *Great Queensland Getaway* and the *Adventure Series* campaigns
- › **\$100 million** (matched by industry) to re-build aviation capacity into Queensland
- › protocols for the resumption of cruising in Queensland are in place, developed in consultation with industry, with the first cruise ship returning to Queensland in June 2022
- › establishing the **\$7 million** Queensland Government Convention and Exhibition Centre Economic Recovery Bid Support Program
- › delivering the **\$7.5 million** Work in Paradise initiative which included a tourism and hospitality jobs website and incentivising 3,500 people to take a tourism job in regional Queensland
- › tourism development opportunities adjacent to or within protected areas identified, with potential ecotourism projects under consideration
- › engaging Get Skilled Access to undertake an accessible tourism audit in targeted Queensland tourism regions and recommend areas for improvement
- › Our Country Advisory Service extended to July 2024 to support the development of Indigenous-owned tourism businesses and experiences
- › establishing a government-industry reference group on Indigenous tourism to inform implementation of future Indigenous tourism initiatives, including the next steps in implementing the First Nations Tourism Plan
- › developing tourism investment attraction collateral to promote the case for investing in Queensland's visitor economy, including the Queensland Tourism Investment Prospectus, a series of regional snapshots, and refreshed Tourism Investment website to offer a 'front door' for potential investors
- › hosted a Queensland Investment Forum, with a focus on tourism investment
- › a new cohort of 28 Young Tourism Leaders appointed to promote tourism as a career to young people
- › funding the Queensland Tourism Industry Council to deliver Career Roadshow events across Queensland
- › the Queensland Small Business Commissioner legislated as a permanent office, adjustments made to liquor licensing and takeaway rules, and tourism sector representation on the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council
- › advocating to the Australian Government for insurance reform and encouraging accessible and affordable insurance.



Next steps

Just as the Panel has suggested, there is still a way to go to achieving sustained COVID-19 recovery of the tourism sector, particularly the international segment and the weight of the recovery task ahead considering the gap required to be made up from the loss of some key markets. Importantly, ongoing challenges and emerging opportunities over the next decade need to be addressed and harnessed to grow and position Queensland's tourism industry to seize the future.

Immediate response

Some areas of the Panel's recommendations require deeper analysis, consideration, and engagement to determine what's required in practice, and what will work given the constrained financial environment. This will inform Government's position and next steps, however subject to final operational arrangements, the Government will move immediately to progress action in areas of clear opportunity within and linked to the Panel's recommendations, for example:

- › partner with industry to deliver new and compelling **tourism experiences**
- › support a **Regional Tourism Recovery Program** facilitating priority tourism projects
- › **\$20 million** to support the Queensland Music Festival to deliver a **schedule of Music Trails** across Queensland
- › **\$4 million First Nations Tourism Package** will go towards the growth of Queensland's Indigenous tourism sector with support to Indigenous-owned businesses and Traditional Owner groups with training, mentoring, guidance
- › revise Tourism and Events Queensland's **Events Strategy** to prioritise home-grown events and maximise community benefits
- › develop a **business events strategy** to better align Queensland's unique offerings and partners with business event opportunities
- › deliver **\$5 million** to activate ecotourism opportunities adjacent to Queensland's National Parks and protected areas
- › pilot the **eco-certification** of Queensland destinations in partnership with industry
- › launch a **concierge service** for potential investors, building on the recent Tourism Investor Forum and new Queensland Investor Prospectus
- › host a **Tourism Tech Event** with members of Queensland's innovation community.

The Panel's report is about evolving the way tourism is delivered in Queensland, thinking outside the box and with greater appreciation for the communities and environment in which it operates. The Panel's insight will help to shape a range of activities and emerging priorities currently in focus for the Queensland Government, such as:

- › rebuilding our key international aviation routes, and ongoing enhancement of the state's broader domestic access network
- › driving demand and effectively positioning Queensland in response to changing consumer expectations
- › establishing Queensland as a priority event destination globally in the lead up to 2032
- › rebuilding our high-value international student market
- › the importance and enormous potential of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage as a genuine major tourism drawcard
- › encouraging and supporting our young people to consider careers in tourism
- › promoting the importance of accessible tourism and facilitating positive change
- › understanding the rising importance of sustainability, climate change and the transition to NetZero for the future of tourism
- › acknowledging the positive community benefits associated with tourism and engaging local communities in the visitor economy.

Partnership for long-term action

Ongoing recovery and growth of the tourism industry will need substantial leadership and investment by Government and industry – the recent \$200 million co-investment with the state's four international airports sets a good partnership example of this approach.

Given the collective goals and outcomes being targeted, we need to act collectively to drive compelling progress.

In a final response to the full suite of recommendations provided by the Panel, the Queensland Government will develop a Tourism 2032 strategy in consultation with industry – aiming to be delivered later this year.

As we look ahead, Queensland must commit to rebuilding traveller confidence, and position our state as the first choice for domestic and global visitors.

This is a task for governments and industry, working together to act on the Panel's recommendations, and capitalise on the momentum post-COVID-19.

