

Queensland State Budget 2008–09

Far North Queensland

Regional Budget Statement



Image courtesy of Tourism Queensland

Cape York

Queensland is experiencing the most sustained period of economic and population growth in its history.

In shaping the 2008-09 Budget, the Government has chosen to build tomorrow's Queensland today.

The State's prosperity is generating unprecedented demand for housing, healthcare, schools, transport, other essential services and vital infrastructure throughout Queensland's regions.

The Budget delivers massive injections of funding to our public hospitals and healthcare system. It funds the biggest capital works program in the State's history.



Anna Bligh MP
Premier

It increases services to the regions and delivers vital long-term social and economic infrastructure for the benefit of all Queenslanders.



A centrepiece of this Budget is tax cuts to help Queenslanders purchase their first home.

Queensland's success is built on the success of our regions, from the fast-paced expansion of the south-east corner to the agricultural heartlands, the booming hubs of mining activity and the vibrant growth of coastal areas.

This document sets out the Government's investment commitment to address the changing needs of the Far North Queensland region.

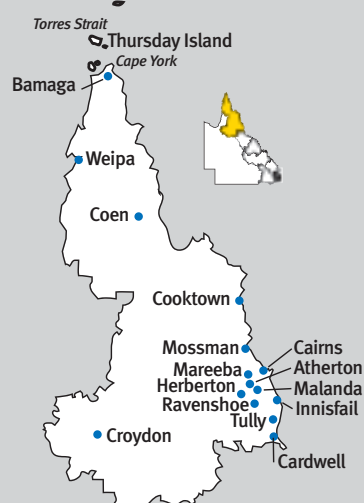
Andrew Fraser MP
Treasurer

State-wide Highlights

Key priorities of the 2008-09 Budget are congestion management, housing affordability, delivering on the Health Action Plan and strengthened community services.

- Tax savings of up to \$9,500 for first homebuyers
- Full abolition of mortgage duty from 1 July 2008
- Record 17% increase in health spending
- Increased rebates and tax breaks for older Queenslanders
- 200 new police officers
- 250 new ambulance officers and 145 new vehicles
- 270 new teachers
- \$100 million boost for school maintenance over two years through the Tomorrow's Schools initiative
- \$20 million for ClimateSmart Home Services
- \$20 million increase to develop community sport and recreation facilities
- \$5.9 million boost to support front-line child protection workers

Far North Queensland



Every five years the Census provides a snapshot of Australian society. It measures many characteristics including our age and



birthplace, language spoken and religion, if we need



assistance to perform everyday activities or to participate in community life and the work we do (paid or unpaid) and how we get there.

What did the 2006 Census reveal about **your** community? Take a look below for a snapshot of life in the Far North Queensland region.

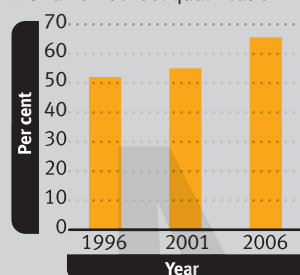
The work we do

Policy advisers, sales representatives, administrative officers, food and beverage supervisors, machine operators, project managers, nurses, teachers, carers – Far North Queensland residents work in a diverse range of jobs. Census data shows 11.6% of people living in the Far North Queensland region are employed in the retail trade industry, while public administration and safety accounts for 10.7% of employment. Accommodation and food services (9.7%) healthcare and social assistance (9.3%) and construction (8.9%) are the other major employment industries in this rapidly growing region.

Our qualifications

Far North Queensland's strong population growth has brought with it an increase in the number of skilled workers. Almost 66%¹ of people living in our region now hold 'beyond'² school qualifications – an increase of 13.5 percentage points compared to 1996 Census results (see graph). Of these qualifications, 19.4% are degree or higher, 11.9% are advanced diploma or diploma and 38.1% are certificate level. Over 30% of Far North Queensland residents who identified with having a 'beyond' school qualification did not indicate the level of education received.

Beyond school qualifications
% of persons 15 years and over with a non-school qualification



How much we earn

We've certainly noticed an increase in the cost of living over the years, and as it rises so too does our income. At the time of the 1996 Census, the median weekly household income for the Far North Queensland region was \$576. In 2006 the median weekly income for households in our region was \$842 – that's 46% more than we earned 10 years earlier³.

¹ Aged 15 years and over with a usual residence in the Far North Queensland region at the time of the 2006 Census.

² 'Beyond' school qualification referred to as non-school qualifications in Census data.

³ Based on 2006 Census data.

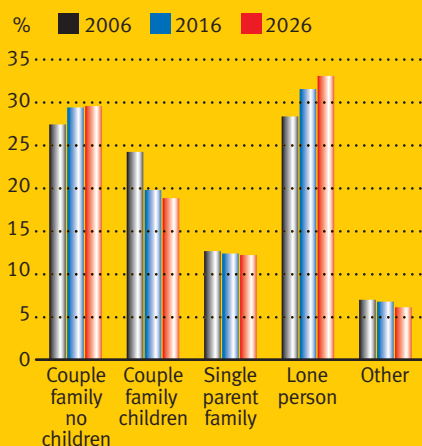
Household projections

Families come in all shapes and sizes and between now and 2026 we can expect to see a lot more of them. But what type of family will occupy most Queensland homes? For the last decade most Queensland households have consisted of couples with children. However household projections forecast that, over the next decade and beyond, the make-up of homes throughout our State will dramatically change.

Throughout our State an ageing population, declining fertility rates among younger couples, and baby boomers becoming 'empty nesters' will result in the number of couples without children and lone person households taking over as the most common types.

Take a look to the right to see how households in the Far North Queensland region are likely to change between now and 2026.

Far North Queensland
Household composition



Source: Data are based on medium series projections and are sourced from Department of Infrastructure and Planning, Population, Information and Forecasting Unit, Household projections Queensland Local Government Areas 2007.

Covering an area of 273,160 square kilometres or around 16% of the State, Far North Queensland is home to just over 6% of Queensland's total population. Over 253,700¹ Queenslanders now call the Far North Queensland home – that's 2.5% more than the year before².

Coastal towns, secluded beaches, untouched rainforests, and of course expansive areas of reef make this region sought after for its quality and unique environment. Add to this an international airport, the economic hub of Cairns, worldclass educational facilities and a vibrant and diverse economy consisting of tourism, agriculture, fishing and mining and it's easy to see why more and more people are choosing this region in which to work, live and play.

The Queensland Government recognises the role Far North Queensland has played in increasing our State's prosperity and sustaining its economic and social growth.

This Regional Budget Statement highlights the Government's commitment to the region and its people.

¹ Population data as at 30 June 2007, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population Growth* (cat no 3218.0).

² Population data as at 30 June 2006, Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population Growth* (cat no 3218.0).

The national Census telling it like it is



Reef and Rainforest Carnival

Go troppo! Food, wine, arts, music, a street parade, fireworks, and much more – there's fun for everyone at the 10-day tropical spectacular. The fifteenth annual Reef and Rainforest Carnival was held from 23 May - 1 June 2008 and brought together locals and visitors from around the globe as they celebrated our unique tropical far north.

Photograph supplied courtesy of MAF North Queensland

Healthy individuals and communities

We are committed to improving and sustaining the health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders by investing in infrastructure and services that will strengthen our public health system, promote healthier lifestyles and enhance confidence and safety in our communities.

As part of the Government's continued commitment to meet the growing needs of the community, in 2008-09, spending on health infrastructure and initiatives in Far North Queensland will include:

- \$24.2 million to commence the Cairns Hospital redevelopment estimated to cost around \$450 million
- \$18.6 million to complete the Weipa Hospital redevelopment
- \$8 million to continue the \$15.8 million new primary health care centre at Yarrabah, due for completion in 2009
- \$7.6 million to continue the Cairns Hospital's Emergency Department expansion
- \$5.4 million to continue building the \$39 million Chronic Disease and Prevention Management Centre on Thursday Island.

Initiatives in Far North Queensland to enhance community safety through investments in police and emergency services infrastructure projects include:

- \$7.5 million for a new 24-hour police station and watchhouse at Mareeba
- \$4 million to replace the ambulance stations at Yarrabah, Tully and Weipa

- \$3 million for improvements to helipads at Innisfail, Cooktown, Wujal Wujal and Thursday Island
- \$2.6 million to operationalise the new Cairns-based helicopter
- \$2.4 million for a replacement police station at Port Douglas
- \$900,000 to extend the current Thursday Island Police Station
- \$300,000 to replace the police station and residential accommodation at Ravenshoe.

The Government will continue its support for those in our community who are most vulnerable, with commitments for the Far North Region including:

- \$11.5 million for the Home and Community Care initiative
- \$6.4 million to support people with a disability through a range of programs
- \$3.6 million over four years to establish new residential care and therapeutic facilities to accommodate young people with complex and extreme behaviours
- \$2 million for short-term and time-limited respite support for families of people with a disability
- \$2 million to complete the Marlin Coast Neighbourhood Centre in Cairns
- \$1.8 million over four years to establish additional out-of-home care placements for children in care.

Building infrastructure

Planning and delivering the infrastructure needed to provide essential and efficient services to our rapidly growing communities – now and in the future – is one of our key priorities. The Government's commitments to Far North Queensland in 2008-09 include:

- \$118 million to commence the 300-cell expansion and upgrade to the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre
- \$40.5 million to construct a government office building in Cairns to deliver a range of government services

- \$6.1 million to complete the new high-tech Mareeba courthouse
- \$1.8 million of the \$13.5 million for the new government office building on Thursday Island.

For many regions, growing populations have resulted in higher demand for energy. The Government's commitment to the Far North Queensland region to secure and enhance the reliability of energy supply in 2008-09 includes:

- \$6.8 million to finish replacing the ageing Kareeya to Innisfail transmission line
- \$4.9 million for powerlines and substations and upgrades to existing infrastructure in some of Queensland's remotest areas including placing powerlines underground in cyclone-prone areas
- \$3.6 million to upgrade and maintain the hydroelectric power stations at Barron Gorge and Kareeya.

Regional development

Regional development is at the heart of Queensland's economic future and the Government is laying the foundation for future economic growth and prosperity for all Queenslanders by responding to the growth needs of the region.

In 2008-09 we will deliver the following key infrastructure and regional development initiatives in Far North Queensland:

- \$36.7 million to upgrade the Innisfail TAFE to deliver a high-tech integrated education precinct
- \$7.2 million to seal a 15.7-kilometre section of the Peninsula Developmental Road between Lily Creek and Carols Crossing (south of Laura)
- \$5.7 million to seal two sections (a total of 9.5 kilometres) of the Peninsula Developmental Road between Carols Crossing and Crocodile Gap (south of Laura)
- \$1.5 million to extend the boardwalk and foreshore promenade to the south of the Cityport area of Cairns.

In addition the region will also benefit from \$18.2 million for 25 accommodation units for government employees in Weipa.

Far North Queensland will also be in the spotlight when the Regional Sitting of Parliament is held in Cairns from 28-30 October 2008.

Economic growth

Queensland's economic growth is supported by rising productivity and increasing labour force participation. The Government remains committed to expanding the productive capacity of the Queensland economy through initiatives that develop infrastructure, promote education and training and facilitate research and innovation. Commitments to Far North Queensland in 2008-09 include:

- \$58.7 million to provide over 3.5 million hours of vocational education and training including \$1 million to provide additional trades training places as part of the Queensland Skills Plan. This is expected to create an additional 1,040 training places in Far North Queensland by 2010
- \$50 million to improve flood immunity on the Bruce Highway between Corduroy Creek and Tully High School, with Australian Government funding
- \$24.4 million to continue construction of a bridge and approaches at Mulgrave River, south of Cairns, with Australian Government funding



The Cairns Hospital redevelopment

The Queensland Government is committed to improving the health of all Queenslanders and to meeting the growing needs of the community. In 2008-09, \$24.2 million will begin construction of the \$450 million Cairns Hospital redevelopment. Above: bird's-eye view of the proposed hospital.

Illustration supplied courtesy of Queensland Health



Helping Queenslanders under financial pressure

With household budgets under increasing stress from rising interest rates, higher rents and mounting grocery and fuel prices, the Government is committed to taking the pressure off Queensland families.

Each year the Government offers relief to many Queenslanders through discounts, rebates and subsidies to help improve their access to, and meet the cost of, a range of services including discounted rail and taxi fares, reduced car registration costs, exemption from the community ambulance levy and cheaper electricity bills. In 2008-09 these concessions are estimated to have a total value of around \$1 billion.

However the Queensland Government recognises more and more families are 'doing it tough' and is acting on its commitment to help Queenslanders make ends meet.

On top of the existing concessions, the 2008-09 State Budget sees the implementation of a major housing affordability strategy that will provide relief for Queenslanders who are buying or renting their homes.

The Government will also spend \$570 million in 2008-09 in further relief as it tackles the rising cost of fuel by ensuring all Queenslanders receive the full 8.354 cents per litre fuel subsidy.

- \$13.5 million to improve the reliability and supply of water services including \$4.6 million to upgrade the Tinaroo Falls dam spillway
- \$6.5 million to redevelop Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE's Cairns campus
- \$5.1 million for employment and training assistance for 402 people.

Closing the gap with Indigenous communities

The Queensland Government, in partnership with the Australian Government, is committed to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians through innovative programs such as:

- \$40 million over five years to trial the Cape York Welfare Reform Initiative, a partnership between four Cape York Aboriginal communities, the Australian Government, the Queensland Government and the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership
- \$10.7 million over four years through the Backing Indigenous Arts initiative to provide:
 - \$4.4 million for Indigenous Art Centres;
 - \$3.4 million for Building Skills and Opportunities projects;
 - \$1.6 million to develop the Cairns Printmaking Centre;
 - \$1 million for the Cairns Indigenous Art Marketplace; and

- \$250,000 over two years for the development of an Arts Hub in Weipa.
- employing nine Indigenous Employment and Training Support Officers to support trainees and maximise employment opportunities for Indigenous job seekers.

The Government is also investing in the health, safety and wellbeing of Indigenous communities through a range of measures including:

- \$63.5 million in grants to build, upgrade and maintain homes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This will include completing 79 homes and commencing a further seven homes
- \$22.7 million over four years to strengthen child protection services in Indigenous communities, including establishing safe houses in Eastern Cape York, Thursday Island, Northern Peninsula Area, Pormpuraaw, Kowanyama, Aurukun and Weipa/Napranum
- \$10.9 million to build, purchase and upgrade homes and purchase land for future homes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing rental program
- \$10.4 million under the Indigenous Environmental Health Infrastructure Program for initiatives including the new Moa and Mabuag Sewerage Schemes
- \$600,000 for the Safe Haven initiative in Coen to protect children and young people affected by family and domestic violence in Indigenous communities.

Housing affordability

The Queensland Government is committed to improving housing affordability for those Queenslanders hardest hit by the current economic environment.

In addition to the substantial tax relief to be introduced by the Government in 2008-09 for first home buyers, low-income families and individuals in Far North Queensland will receive housing services and support including:

- \$13.8 million to construct, purchase and upgrade public housing dwellings involving purchasing or completing 28 homes and commencing a further 13 homes
- \$400,000 for community housing programs and services to address crisis and long-term housing needs.

Education and early childhood development

Giving every child every chance to learn in the best possible environment is a priority for the Government. This is reflected in our 2008-09 commitment to the Far North Queensland region of an additional \$5.1 million for school maintenance programs and further capital works investment in schools, including:

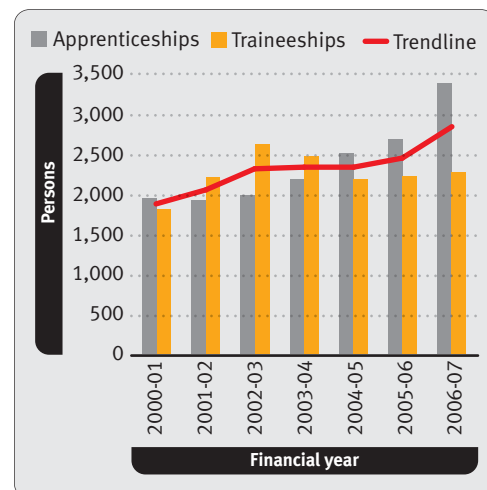
- \$16.6 million to complete stage three of Redlynch State College
- \$7.7 million to complete stage three of Isabella State School
- \$5 million to start stage three of Western Cape College, Weipa
- \$3.4 million over two years to complete the Cairns Early Years Centre
- \$2.7 million to subsidise construction of the \$6 million multipurpose facility at Kowanyama State School.

Prevention and early intervention

The Queensland Government is focused on developing and supporting prevention and early intervention strategies or initiatives

Participation in post-secondary education, apprenticeships and traineeships

2000-01 to 2006-07



Source: DETA, Apprenticeships and traineeships, (unpublished data).

that are targeted to disadvantaged areas, individuals and/or population groups.

In 2008-09 the Government will commit:

- \$3.5 million to support Far North Queensland families, including early intervention programs to improve the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and their families
- \$1 million over four years for a Family Intervention Service which will strengthen child protection services by providing direct support to families in their own home.

Managing climate change and protecting the environment

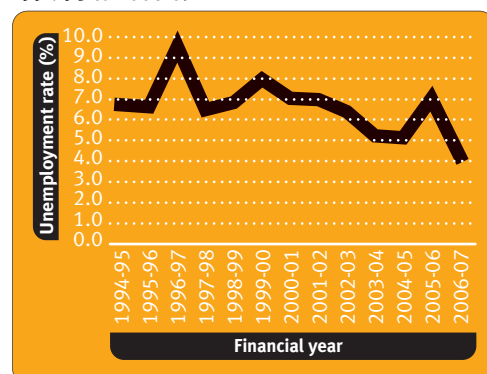
In 2008-09 the Government will allocate \$30 million for new climate change initiatives from the proceeds of the Queensland Climate Change Fund. The fund's first major initiative will be the ClimateSmart Home Service which will provide Queenslanders with tools to monitor and reduce their energy use to deliver savings in household electricity costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In Far North Queensland, the Government's environmental commitments include:

- \$8.4 million for the day-to-day management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park
- \$500,000 to complete the MaMu Canopy walkway at Wooroonooran National Park
- \$450,000 to implement the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan to halt and reverse the decline in the quality of water entering the Great Barrier Reef
- \$341,000 to redevelop the new Laura Ranger Base at Lakefield National Park.

Unemployment rate^(a)

1994-95 to 2006-07



(a) Data based on un-smoothed series.

Source: DEEW, Small Area Labour Markets - Australia.

Queensland State Budget Highlights 2008–09

Budget summary

Strong economic growth maintains record low unemployment

- Economic growth in Queensland is forecast to strengthen to 4¼% in 2008-09, outstripping the nation for the 13th year in a row.
- With jobs growth again outpacing the nation, the unemployment rate is estimated to fall to a 34-year low of 3¾% in 2007-08 and remain there in 2008-09, taking it below the national rate for the fifth consecutive year.

Strong finances

- A General Government operating surplus of \$809 million is forecast in 2008-09.
- The State's net worth is budgeted to grow from \$123 billion at 30 June 2008 to over \$140 billion by 30 June 2012 – reflecting Queensland's position of holding the strongest balance sheet in the nation.
- Interest expenses in the General Government sector is budgeted at just 1.5% of revenue in 2008-09.

Competitive taxes

- Queensland maintains its competitive tax status, with taxpayers in other states and territories to pay an average of \$274 more state tax each than Queenslanders in 2008-09.
- The 2008-09 Budget provides tax relief to make housing more affordable. From 1 July 2008, the home and first home transfer duty concession thresholds will be increased from \$320,000 to \$350,000. The first home concession threshold will be further increased from 1 September so that no transfer duty will be payable on a first home valued up to \$500,000.
- Mortgage duty will be abolished in full from 1 July 2008 – another saving to those taking out home loans.
- There are also land tax cuts, including specific measures to benefit Queensland's elderly such as exempting aged-care facilities.
- While already having the nation's lowest pay-roll tax rate, further relief will benefit 6,800 businesses in Queensland.

Delivering for Queensland

The 2008-09 State Budget delivers a massive boost to health, with a record Budget allocation of \$8.352 billion.

The Budget funds new hospitals and upgrades at locations across the State. Areas of increasing demand such as emergency departments and birthing services are a key focus.

There is a \$100 million boost to school maintenance to deliver a record program for the next two years – part of the \$6 billion Budget allocation to the Department of Education and Training. This funding includes 270 new teachers and teacher aides to meet enrolment growth and 4,250 additional trade training places to help address skills shortages.

To boost front-line services, 200 new police and 250 new ambulance officers are funded. The Budget also provides for 145 new ambulance vehicles as part of a record emergency services allocation.

A new \$20 million ClimateSmart Home Service will assist Queensland households to meet the challenges of climate change.

An increase in the electricity rebate and other tax breaks will assist older Queenslanders.

With tax cuts to assist Queenslanders break into home ownership, this is a Budget focussed on the future and delivering the front-line services a growing state needs.

Government services in Far North Queensland

Babinda

QGAP

91 Munro Street
Babinda QLD 4861
E-Mail babinda.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4067 2021
Facsimile 4067 2027
Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday – 10am to 3pm

Cairns

Department of Natural Resources and Water

William McCormack Place
3rd Floor 5 b Sheridan Street
Cairns QLD 4870
Telephone 4039 8431
Facsimile 4039 8145
Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 4.30pm

Cairns

Department of Communities

Far North Queensland Regional Office
Cairns Port Authority Building
Cnr Grafton and Harley Streets
Cairns QLD 4870
Telephone 4039 8476
Facsimile 4039 8096
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 5pm

Cairns

Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry

Ground Floor
Cairns Port Authority Building
Cnr Grafton and Harley Streets
Cairns QLD 4870
Telephone 4048 1111
Facsimile 4048 1122
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 5pm

Cairns

Office of Economic and Statistical Research

Level 9
15 Lake Street
Cairns QLD 4870
Telephone 4039 8804
Facsimile 4039 8828
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.30pm

Cooktown

QGAP

172 Charlotte Street
Cooktown QLD 4895
E-Mail courthouse.cooktown@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4069 5333
Facsimile 4069 5864
Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.30pm

Croydon

QGAP

Samwell Street
Croydon QLD 4871
E-Mail croydon.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4745 6185
Facsimile 4745 6147
Opening Hours:
Monday and Thursday – 9am to 4pm

Georgetown

QGAP

High Street
Georgetown QLD 4871
Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 4.30pm

Herberton

QGAP

56 Grace Street
Herberton QLD 4887
Telephone 4096 2702
Facsimile 4096 2704
Opening Hours:
Thursday – 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 4pm

Malanda

QGAP (DPIF)

21 James Street
Malanda QLD 4885
E-Mail qgapmalanda@dpi.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4096 5277
Facsimile 4096 5008
Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday – 8.30am to 4pm

Mt Garnet

QGAP

Police Station, Garnet Street
Mt Garnet QLD 4872
Telephone 4097 9005
Facsimile 4097 9036
Opening Hours: Wednesday – 9.30pm to 3.30pm

Ravenshoe

QGAP

27-29 Grigg Street
Ravenshoe QLD 4888
Telephone 4097 6660
Facsimile 4097 6830
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 4.30pm

Weipa

QGAP

Central Avenue
Weipa QLD 4874
E-Mail courthouse.weipa@justice.qld.gov.au
Telephone 4069 9999
Facsimile 4069 9160
Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday – 9am to 4.30pm

Yarrabah

QGAP

5 Noble Drive
Yarrabah QLD 4871
E-Mail yarrabah.qgap@qld.gov.au
Telephone 4056 0727
Facsimile 4056 9380
Opening Hours: Monday to Friday – 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm

Other services

Smart Service Queensland

For information on all other Government services call 13 13 04 www.qld.gov.au

State Emergency Service

Telephone 132 500

13 HEALTH

Telephone 13 43 25 84