

State Budget Highlights

Budget summary

Growing the economy

- Queensland's economy is forecast to strengthen in 2002-03 to $4\frac{1}{4}\%$, again exceeding national growth of $3\frac{3}{4}\%$.
- Business investment is forecast to reach an historical peak of almost \$13 billion in real terms.

Creating new jobs

- Queensland is creating jobs much faster than the national average. Over the 12 months to May 2002, Queensland created more than 30% of all jobs created in Australia and almost 80% of national full-time jobs.
- This strong performance is forecast to continue in 2002-03, with year-average growth in employment of $2\frac{1}{2}\%$, or about 43,000 new jobs.
- The unemployment rate is forecast to fall to a year-average $7\frac{1}{2}\%$, the lowest in a decade.

Sound finances

- A net operating surplus of \$23 million and a cash surplus of \$354 million are budgeted for the General Government sector in 2002-03, with surpluses over the forward estimates period.
- The State's net worth is expected to continue to grow, reaching \$58.5 billion by 30 June 2003.

Building Queensland's infrastructure

- A capital works program of \$4.8 billion will support some 45,100 full-time jobs.

Competitive taxes

- Payroll tax will be reduced to 4.75% from 1 July 2002.
- Queenslanders will be taxed on average \$1,321 in 2002-03, significantly lower than the average tax burden in other States and Territories of \$1,757 per capita.

Delivering on our priorities

More jobs for Queensland – skills and innovation – the Smart State

- The new Education and Training Reforms for the Future package provides \$158.3 million over four years to provide our young people with more opportunities to access high quality education and training.
- The new Queensland BioCapital Fund will invest \$100 million in venture capital in biotechnology projects that have potential for high commercial returns for the Smart State.
- The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative has been funded an additional \$10 million over two years.

Safer and more supportive communities

- New funding of \$148 million is provided over four years for the delivery of a range of initiatives aimed at achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families. This funding is in addition to the final instalment of funding (\$40 million over four years) committed as a result of the Forde Inquiry and brings the Government's additional funding commitment in this area to \$188 million over four years (\$42 million in 2002-03).
- An additional 307 police will be appointed across the State.

Community engagement and better quality of life

- The health budget will be allocated approximately \$13.3 million for acute inpatient services and up to \$7.3 million for improvements to Home and Community Care services.
- More than \$150 million is provided for public rental housing and \$6.5 million for crisis accommodation.

Valuing the environment

- A further 60 rangers will be employed, as part of the Protecting Our Natural Assets election commitment of \$10 million per annum to fund up to 140 new park rangers and improve facilities.

Building Queensland's regions

- 55.8% of the capital works budget is allocated for outside the Brisbane Statistical Division, reflecting the Government's strong commitment to the regions.



Babinda

Cooktown

Croydon

Cairns

Georgetown

Herberton

Malanda

Mount Garnet

Ravenshoe

Weipa

**Queensland
Government**



Far North Queensland Regional Budget Statement 2002-03

• Premier's Message

The importance of Queensland's regions to the economic and social life of our State is evident in the Government's 2002-03 Budget.

In capital works alone, 55.8% of spending is allocated for regions outside the Brisbane Statistical Division. In Far North Queensland in 2002-03, the Government will spend \$416.7 million on capital works, including:

- \$135.5 million for transport and main roads projects, such as the Cairns seaport and Cityport development;
- the completion of the \$28.5 million Cairns Convention Centre; and
- \$25.5 million for Ergon Energy's Yalkula to Lakeland line, undergrounding of power lines and construction of new remote power stations.

In the Smart State, the focus on regions is about more than infrastructure. This Budget will boost services in the areas of families, education and law and order. For example, we will establish a Drug Court in Cairns to get people off drugs and reduce crime. We will also provide \$4.6 million in 2002-03 in response to the Cape York Justice Study to co-ordinate service delivery, improve responses on alcohol and crime issues and support the implementation of community action plans.

This statement highlights initiatives within your region that have been developed in response to individual community concerns. It shows the Government is passionate about listening to the community. In fact, we spend more time than any other Government listening to thousands of people at community engagement events such as Community Cabinet and Ministerial Regional Community Forums. We have responded to your call for individual solutions for each community – not a 'one size fits all' approach.

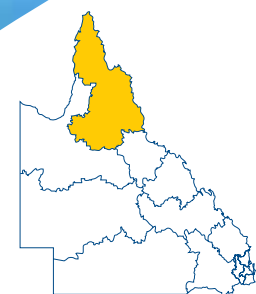
The Government is working with you and for you, to build employment and lifestyle opportunities. We are committed to expanding export markets, encouraging value-adding industries and building the regions' competitive advantages.

This means focusing on a workforce that is more highly skilled, educated and in demand. It also means improving social infrastructure, so community life flourishes.

The Queensland Government is committed to building partnerships with the regions because active communities are central to us achieving the Smart State vision. Together, we can forge a better future for our communities.



Peter Beattie MP
Premier and Minister for Trade



Thursday Island





• Introduction

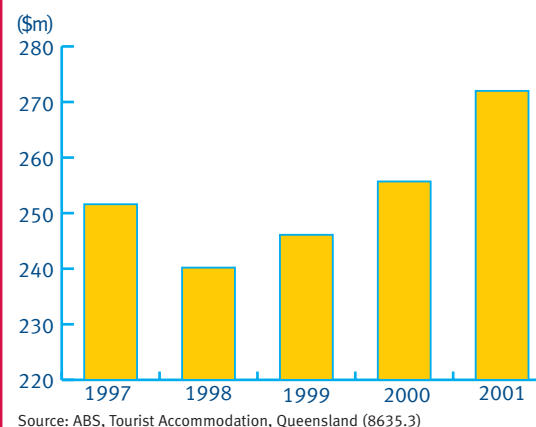
The infrastructure and services funded in the 2002-03 State Budget and outlined in this statement demonstrate the Queensland Government's commitment to working with the Far North Queensland region to promote economic development and job creation, stronger community networks and a prosperous future.

Far North Queensland covers almost 269,224 square kilometres, or more than 15% of the State. It includes Cairns city and the shires of Atherton, Aurukun, Cardwell, Cook, Croydon, Douglas, Eacham, Etheridge, Herberton, Johnstone, Mareeba and Torres. The region also includes 11 Aboriginal councils and 17 Island councils.

The Far North is home to 6.3% of Queenslanders, including a quarter of the State's Indigenous community. The region's population is growing faster than the rest of Queensland and in the next 15 years is projected to grow by almost 30% to 297,548 people.

Far North Queensland's economy is diverse, underpinned by tourism, construction, agriculture, transport and storage, and retail trade. Tourists spent \$272 million on accommodation during their stays in the region in 2001, up more than 8% since before the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

**Takings from accommodation,
Far North Queensland, 1997 to 2001**



• Building Queensland's regions

The Government is working with Queenslanders in the Far North to drive economic development and ensure that the region prospers. A key outcome of this partnership is the Far North Queensland 2010 Regional Plan, which provides a framework for managing growth in the region. Other key regional development strategies include Cape York Peninsula to 2010 and the Gulf Regional Development Plan.

We are supporting the region's primary industries through:

- \$2 million to support the development of the aquaculture industry;
- \$420,000 to develop export quality sweet corn that can be produced on the Atherton Tableland; and
- \$2.5 million to establish an Indigenous commercial fishing industry on Cape York and a further \$492,000 for the Cape York Communities Forest Project.

A safe and efficient transport network promotes industry competitiveness and economic development. Major transport projects in Far North Queensland in 2002-03 include:

- \$52.2 million for the Cairns Port Authority, including almost \$42 million for the Cityport project;
- \$18 million to continue upgrading rail track on the Rockhampton-Townsville-Cairns line;
- \$1.5 million towards the new \$10 million South Johnstone Bridge on the Innisfail-Japoon Road; and
- \$650,000 towards upgrading Boigu Island airstrip.

The \$28.5 million Cairns Convention Centre will be completed in 2003, while a further \$3.1 million is provided to continue construction of the \$17.6 million Government office building in Cairns.



Other major funding in 2002-03 includes:

- \$25.5 million for Ergon Energy's Yalkula to Lakeland line, undergrounding of power lines and construction of new remote power stations;
- \$6.9 million to upgrade Stanwell's Barron Gorge and Kareeya hydro-electricity plants;
- \$4 million to continue Stages 2 and 3 of Powerlink's project to ensure reliable supply to Cairns;
- \$2.7 million towards the Cairns Esplanade development and the CBD revitalisation project;
- \$2.9 million to continue repairing damage caused by the 2000 floods and Tropical Cyclone Abigail;
- \$2.3 million for water and sewerage infrastructure in Douglas and Cook shires; and
- \$750,000 for streetscaping Innisfail's main street.

• More jobs for Queensland – skills and innovation – the Smart State

The Government is positioning Queensland as the Smart State with a strategy that supports a diversified economy through investment in traditional and new industries.

The Queensland Biodiscovery Fund will provide \$7.8 million over two years towards establishing an Australian Tropical Forest Institute at James Cook University's Cairns campus to discover new herbicides and fungicides.

Tourism in Far North Queensland will be boosted by Australian Airlines' decision to set up operations in Cairns, with flights starting in October 2002. We have developed an Airline Action Plan to ensure Cairns businesses and workers get maximum benefit from this opportunity to access new tourism markets in Asia. The operation is expected to create 350 jobs over four years.

Through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives, it's anticipated that approximately \$8.6 million will be spent in Far North Queensland in 2002-03 for employment programs targeted at the long-term unemployed, mature age job seekers, trainees and apprentices, young people and Indigenous people.

Investing in the Smart State means investing in training and education.

We will provide \$2.7 million in 2002-03 for the Cape York Training Strategy to encourage employment outcomes for people in Cape York through economic development projects and training.

This Budget provides \$158.3 million over four years state-wide to fund an innovative package of education and training reforms for the future. In 2002-03, Far North Queensland will share in:

- an additional \$22.7 million for information and communication technologies (ICT) in classrooms and ICT training for teachers; and
- 382 additional teachers to provide for growth and other needs, including 158 teachers as part of the Government's election commitment to employ 800 additional teachers over four years.

Highlights in education funding for the region include:

- \$7.5 million for Bentley Park College;
- \$1.4 million to modernise Trinity Bay State High School and complete the new art block;
- \$1.1 million to complete the redevelopment of Bamaga State School;
- \$340,000 for two new classrooms at Mission Beach State School and \$344,000 for an amenities block at Lockhart State School;
- more than \$370,000 for Learning and Development Centres at Woree and Atherton State Schools;
- \$310,000 for the New Basics initiative at Hopevale, Cairns West, Edge Hill, Parramatta, Woree, and Thursday Island State Schools, Woree State High School and Western Cape College; and
- \$200,000 for Smithfield and Tully State High Schools, which together are the site for a Technology, Maths and Science Centre of Excellence.

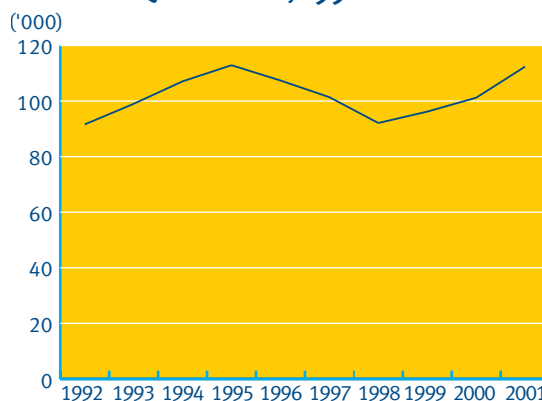
• Safer and more supportive communities

Families are the foundation of our communities and to support them, we are this year funding a package of \$188 million over four years (\$42 million in 2002-03) for delivery of a range of initiatives aimed at achieving better outcomes for children, young people and families. This comprises new funding of \$148 million over four years, in addition to the final instalment of funding (\$40 million over four years) committed as a result of the Forde Inquiry. This funding will be allocated across all regions of the State.

Smarter policing and crime prevention are vital for ensuring our communities are safe. We have allocated \$5.8 million in 2002-03 to expand the trial of Drug Courts to Cairns and Townsville. The Drug Courts enable drug-addicted offenders who commit non-violent crimes to be diverted out of the jail system and into intensive rehabilitation programs. An additional Magistrate will be appointed in Cairns.

The Far North will share in \$3.5 million for the Diversion from Custody Program to accommodate people who are intoxicated in public places, helping to improve quality of life for residents, businesses and tourists.

Number of employed people, Far North Queensland, 1992 to 2001



Source: ABS, Labour Force Survey (unpublished data)

oys picking water lilies,
Cape York Peninsula

(far right)
Cairns tilt train

In an innovative response to crime in Manoora, the East/West Road Connection Project will link four cul de sacs to improve community safety. Under the Urban Renewal Program, \$3 million will be spent in Manoora to upgrade 75 dwellings, in partnership with the Commonwealth.

Other initiatives include:

- \$1 million to improve the reliability of electricity assets in cyclone prone areas, especially in Cairns and Port Douglas;
- \$550,000 to extend and refurbish Cooktown's heritage-listed courthouse and \$400,000 for a new courthouse at Thursday Island; and
- \$600,000 to complete new ambulance stations at Millaa Millaa and Mt Garnet and \$250,000 towards the new \$550,000 Innisfail ambulance station.

• Community engagement and a better quality of life

All Queenslanders are encouraged to take part in the rich cultural, social and economic life of the State. The Queensland Government is working to ensure equality of opportunity and equitable access to high standards of health, housing and family services through greater participation in the choices made by Government.

Spending on health in the region includes:

- \$2.5 million to improve health facilities at Darnley, Yam, Warraber, Mabuiag and Moa Islands;
- \$1.7 million to implement the Better Health Outcomes Project in remote communities; and
- \$600,000 towards the \$14.4 million redevelopment of Innisfail Hospital.

The Government is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous Queenslanders to improve their quality of life. Key initiatives in Far North Queensland include:

- \$4.6 million in response to the Cape York Justice Study to co-ordinate service delivery, improve responses on alcohol and crime issues and support the implementation of community action plans;
- \$1.9 million for financial accountability and management training for Aboriginal and Island councils; and
- \$1 million for Community Development Program grants to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve their physical, social, cultural and economic well-being.

Aboriginal and Island councils will also share in \$19 million state-wide to assist them to deliver local government services.

We have allocated \$57.5 million for housing services and projects in Far North Queensland in 2002-03. This includes \$37.8 million in capital grants to Aboriginal and Island councils. We will also provide \$683,000 under the Home Assist Secure Scheme to assist elderly people to remain in their own homes longer, with improved safety.



Services for people with a disability and their families will be boosted through:

- approximately \$250,000 for new and enhanced family support and respite services; and
- \$450,000 to improve disabled access to rail services.

Local shows bring communities together, so \$94,000 is provided for showground improvements in Atherton, Cairns, Cardwell, Croydon and Johnstone.

We are preserving and promoting Queensland's rich cultural heritage through the Queensland Heritage Trails Network and the Millennium Arts Regional Program.

Projects in the Far North in 2002-03 include:

- \$1.7 million to complete the Quinkan Interpretation Centre at Laura and a further \$134,000 for facilities for the Laura Aboriginal Dance and Cultural Festival;
- \$1 million for the Cairns Centre of Contemporary Arts;
- \$900,000 for the FNQ Network Gateway, to inform about cultural and heritage projects in the Wet Tropics;
- \$846,000 for the Torres Strait Cultural Centre;
- \$615,000 to complete the preservation of Atherton Chinatown and the Hou Wang Temple; and
- \$400,000 to complete the \$2 million FNQ Historic Mining Precinct.

To enable regional Queenslanders to have greater participation in Government decision-making, a Community Engagement Division has been formed in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The Division maintains the Regional Communities program comprising a network of regional offices, including one in Cairns.

• Valuing the environment

The Government is committed to protecting Queensland's environment and its biodiversity for current and future generations. Initiatives in Far North Queensland include:

- \$1.7 million for 19 new park rangers;
- \$1.6 million to acquire former pastoral holdings on Cape York to protect high conservation value areas;
- \$714,000 to continue remediation of acid sulphate affected soil at East Trinity Inlet at Cairns; and
- \$182,000 for a Great Walk of Queensland at Misty Mountains in the Wet tropics.

The Far North will also share in a further \$350,000 to eradicate the Crown of Thorns starfish from important tourism sites on the Great Barrier Reef.

