

# Far North Queensland

State Budget

05-06



Premier's Message

My Government is continuing our investment in public infrastructure and services to meet the current and future needs of all Queenslanders.

We are also committed to working to ensure we create opportunities for Queensland's future prosperity and to continue building on the Smart State's strong and stable foundations by supporting the leading edge research technologies.

This Regional Budget Statement outlines the Government's ongoing investment in Far North Queensland's regional infrastructure and details important regional initiatives in 2005-06.

My Government is meeting the needs of the people in Far North Queensland through infrastructure initiatives and services, especially in the areas of transport, training, education, health and housing.

In 2005-06, our infrastructure initiatives will enable the Far North Queensland region to use the opportunities the region has to offer. This Statement demonstrates a significant commitment to the long-term viability of the region.

My Government will continue to work with the people of Far North Queensland to create employment and lifestyle opportunities for all Queenslanders.

## State Budget highlights for Far North Queensland in 2005-06 include:

- \$57.02 million for major improvements to Cairns Airport including:
  - taxiway and runway works;
  - improvements to the International Terminal Building;
  - building a concourse and aerobridge;
  - constructing a Central Services building;
  - expanding the International Terminal's baggage handling system; and
  - electrical work, carparks, drainage, and fire systems in public areas.
- \$20.29 million to redevelop Innisfail Hospital and improve health care infrastructure
- \$12.08 million to redevelop the Weipa Hospital with replacement facilities to integrate acute, primary health and community health services
- \$6.34 million to provide a new primary health care centre at Yarrabah
- \$1.21 million, including \$97,000 for fit out, to upgrade classrooms to support sports science initiatives at Smithfield State High School
- \$6.48 million, including \$518,000 for fit out, to provide additional student accommodation at Weipa's Western Cape College.



→ Far North Queensland includes Cairns City and the shires of Atherton, Aurukun, Cardwell, Cook, Croydon, Douglas, Eacham, Etheridge, Herberton, Hope Vale, Injinoo, Johnstone, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mapoon, Mareeba, Napranum, New Mapoon, Pormpuraaw, Torres, Umagico, Wujal Wujal, and Yarrabah.



Queensland Government

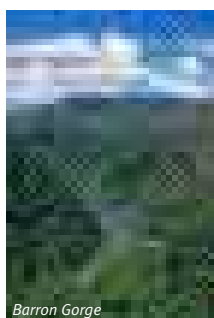
Smart State

Peter Beattie MP  
Premier and Minister for Trade

The Queensland Government's increased capital outlays in the 2005-06 Budget reflect our commitment to broadening our infrastructure base in order to better meet the social and economic needs of our growing population. Capital expenditure across the State in 2005-06 will be \$8 billion, an increase of 32% or \$1.9 billion, on estimated actual 2004-05 capital outlays. This allocation reflects the Government's ongoing commitment to regional and rural Queensland, with almost 60% of capital expenditure occurring outside the Brisbane Statistical Division.

## Far North Queensland

➔ \$104.9 million investment in the energy supply system in the region, including \$27.3 million to upgrade Barron Gorge and Kareeya hydro power stations by Stanwell Corporation and \$70.67 million to establish new substations and remote generation assets and undergrounding powerlines in cyclone-prone areas by Ergon Energy



Barron Gorge

Image courtesy Stanwell Corporation

➔ \$20.29 million to redevelop Innisfail Hospital, including the replacement of four buildings



Image courtesy Stanwell Corporation



➔ \$12.08 million to redevelop the Weipa Hospital with replacement facilities to integrate acute, primary health and community health services

➔ \$31.42 million to complete sealing the Cooktown development road.

This Regional Budget Statement for Far North Queensland highlights the Government's 2005-06 spending commitment to this region and its people. As a Government, we recognise the regions' valuable contributions to making Queensland the Smart State and providing services to over 3.9 million people. In this Budget we have allocated nearly 60% of capital expenditure outside the Brisbane Statistical Division.

The Far North Queensland region covers more than 15% of the State. The region is home to 241,300 Queenslanders and 25.5% of the State's Indigenous population. The region's unemployment rate is 3.6%. The region encompasses remote Torres Strait islands, Cape York wilderness, Gulf Savannah, Atherton Tableland farmlands, Great Barrier Reef islands, and the Great Green Way linking Cardwell to Cairns. With its proximity to two of the world's greatest natural assets – the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforests - the region's single largest industry is tourism. Other key economic drivers are agriculture, fishing, mining, education and retail trade. Exciting new niche industries are developing in the region, including aviation, super yachts, tropical foods, biotechnology and cultural tourism.

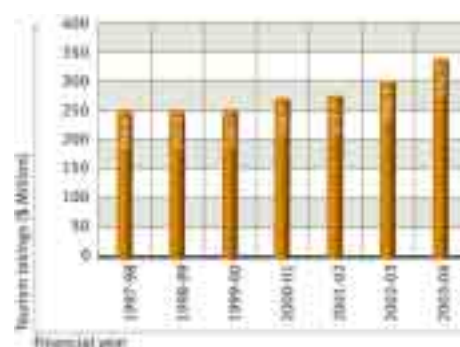
### Improving health care and strengthening services to the community

We are committed to providing better hospitals, services and health care for all Queenslanders. Within Far North Queensland, this commitment includes spending on initiatives such as:

- \$3.96 million to replace the primary health care centre and to build visiting staff accommodation and a residence on Erub (Darnley) Island
- \$4.74 million to construct a 20 bed facility in Cairns that will provide rehabilitation, prevention and recovery care services and integrate with other locally based mental health services
- \$2.36 million to construct a replacement primary health care centre

### Tourism

Takings (\$ million), 1997-98 to 2003-04



Source: ABS, Tourist Accommodation, Queensland (8635.3.40.001 and 8635.3)

together with visiting staff accommodation on Warraber Island

- \$1.68 million to provide a four chair haemodialysis service based at Cooktown Hospital linked to Cairns, which will also service Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal communities
- \$1.25 million for a four chair haemodialysis service based on Thursday Island with links to Cairns
- \$5.12 million to construct a new facility to integrate community based health services within Cairns central business district
- \$5.08 million to construct a replacement primary health care centre in Hope Vale.

Expenditure on additional staff and upgraded emergency service facilities in the region includes:

- \$900,000 to relocate the Yarrabah Ambulance Station
- \$500,000 for a new field office for the Cooktown Ambulance Service and State Emergency Service.

We have committed \$11.73 million to support people with disabilities and their carers in the region including:

- \$1 million for short term and limited respite care
- \$267,000 to assist young adults with a disability who are leaving the State's care to maintain their choice of living arrangements and to participate in their community.

Additional support of \$248,000 for community organisations will enable them to increase their capacity to continue to support people with a disability and their families.

Community groups will receive \$15.27 million to provide services in the region, including \$2.47 million for child care, \$1.72 million for community support, \$1.96 million for domestic violence prevention, \$1.31 million for prevention and early intervention services to support vulnerable children, young people and their families, \$5.88 million to support people at risk of homelessness, \$100,000 to link older people with their community, and \$1.83 million for youth development and justice.

We are working to support low-income families and individuals through housing and housing related services. Spending in this region in 2005-06 includes:

- \$61.06 million to construct, upgrade or purchase dwellings, and purchase

## Kuranda Scenic Rail, Atherton Tableland



Image courtesy Queensland Tourism

land for future construction of housing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

- \$14.56 million for new and upgraded public housing
- \$4.42 million, including \$100,000 of community renewal funding for community housing.

In 2005-06 the Government has funded organisations across the State to build or upgrade sport and recreation facilities. \$5.73 million for projects in Far North Queensland includes:

- \$1.5 million to the Kowanyama Aboriginal Council to construct a multi-purpose indoor facility
- \$413,000 to the Cairns City Council to upgrade the existing swimming pool at Gordonvale.

## Realising the Smart State through education, skills and innovation

The Premier launched the latest Smart State Strategy on 18 April 2005. *Smart Queensland: Smart State Strategy 2005-2015* establishes the strategic framework for using innovation and skills to drive economic growth to improve prosperity and quality of life for all Queenslanders.

As part of the Smart State Research Facilities Fund, James Cook University will receive \$4 million towards the construction of an Australian Tropical Forest Institute in Cairns to research and manage tropical forest biodiversity and tropical forest ecology.

We are investing in school infrastructure across Far North Queensland for the benefit of young people and their education. In 2005-06, funding includes:

- \$2.3 million, including \$230,000 for fit out, to construct a student services centre at the Cairns School of Distance Education
- \$6.48 million, including \$518,000 for fit out, to provide additional student accommodation at Weipa's Western Cape College

## Unemployment rate <sup>a</sup>

Quarterly



Source: DEWRSB - Small Area Labour Markets. (QRSIS database maintained by the Office of Economic and Statistical Research (OESR)).

(a) Data based on un-smoothed series.

- \$966,000, including \$77,000 for fit out, to upgrade classrooms at Atherton State High School
- \$1.45 million, including \$116,000 for fit out, to upgrade an education area and outdoor learning environment at Thursday Island State School.

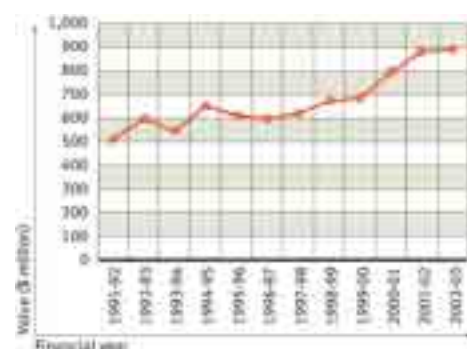
## Protecting our children and enhancing community safety

The Government is continuing to build a radically improved child protection system. A record \$394.8 million operating budget, up 45% since last year, will be spent this year to safeguard the welfare of Queensland's children. The Far North Queensland region will benefit from the unprecedented increase of \$123 million for State-wide initiatives such as:

- \$28.8 million for additional permanent frontline and support staff
- \$19.6 million for extra alternative care places, extended family reunification services, foster care by non-government agencies and for sexual abuse counselling services
- \$13 million on foster care allowances and a further \$9 million for child related costs
- \$9.4 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander "recognised agencies"
- \$22.6 million for therapeutic services including, child psychology and speech pathology to children in care with complex needs.

## Agricultural production

Value (\$ million), 1991-92 to 2002-03



Source: ABS, Agriculture, Queensland (unpublished data)

Augmenting this is a capital program of \$58.8 million which includes:

- \$25 million in additional funding over two years (\$19.2 million in 2005-06) to expand the number of Child Safety offices across the State
- \$25.3 million for the roll-out of a new IT system to better manage client files and departmental business.

Investment in services and infrastructure to enhance community safety in Far North Queensland includes \$1.93 million to construct a new watchhouse at Hope Vale, a twin unit dwelling in Cooktown and two residences at Wujal Wujal.

## Building Queensland's regions

Efficient and integrated transport networks are important for the ongoing development of regional Queensland. In Far North Queensland, major transport infrastructure initiatives include:

- improvements to Cairns Airport totalling \$57.02 million
- \$3.25 million to construct a fruit disinfection facility at Cairns Seaport
- \$3.09 million to construct a land-based dredged material disposal facility at Port Douglas Boat Harbour
- \$2.9 million for cargo wharf improvements and other developments at the Port of Thursday Island
- \$2.11 million for stormwater drainage works and other developments at the Port of Mourilyan
- \$31.42 million to complete the sealing of the remaining sections of the Cooktown Development Road between Scrubby Creek and West Normanby River
- \$8.48 million to complete the upgrading of bridges at East Normanby River, West Normanby River and Whitehouse Gully along the Cooktown Developmental Road
- \$4.57 million for various upgrading projects on the Kennedy Highway.

Investment in the electricity system in 2005-06 includes:

- \$27.3 million to upgrade Barron Gorge and Kareeya hydro power stations by Stanwell Corporation
- \$70.67 million to establish new substations and remote generation assets and undergrounding powerlines in cyclone-prone areas by Ergon Energy.

The region's long term viability is being enhanced by projects including:

- \$2.21 million to local governments in the region for road and drainage works
- \$5.4 million to upgrade water supply and environmental health infrastructure in the Torres Strait
- \$250,000 to complete stage two of the Cairns Centre of Contemporary Arts
- \$500,000 to establish tourism priorities, including infrastructure development, visitor management plans and market development.

### Port Douglas Markets



The Government, in partnership with AgForce and rural Queenslanders, is also developing a Blueprint for the Bush. The Blueprint will be a long term plan which will include practical strategies to support sustainable rural communities.

## Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

The natural and cultural heritage of Far North Queensland is valued by all Queenslanders. This is reflected in our commitment of:

- \$2.79 million to construct or enhance visitor facilities including:
  - the Ramsay Bay Boardwalk in Hinchinbrook Island National Park;
  - operations infrastructure at Cape Tribulation in Daintree National Park;
  - campground recreational facilities at the dam in Koombooloomba Forest Reserve;
  - upgrading the day use area at Lake Eacham in Crater Lakes National Park; and
  - upgrading Skyrail in Barron Gorge National Park.
- \$3.52 million for a modern office complex at the Mareeba Research Facility to provide services to support primary industries and manage natural resources

- \$1 million to meet growth in demand for fisheries research and development
- \$650,000 to replace fisheries vessels and equipment in Far North Queensland.

## Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs

The unemployment rate in Far North Queensland was 3.6% during the December quarter 2004, and has fallen by 3.1 percentage points since the December quarter 1996. The Government continues to work in partnership with the people of Far North Queensland to build on the region's economic potential.

The Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative provides training and job opportunities to Queenslanders. Far North Queensland will receive around \$7.41 million to create an estimated 868 jobs through the initiative during 2005-06. \$1.99 million is allocated to community employment programs and \$5.42 million for apprenticeship and trainee incentives to provide jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector.

## Delivering responsive government

The Queensland Government continues to engage with local communities, businesses and other government agencies to better coordinate services and identify strategies to meet local needs, including through regular Ministerial Regional Community Forums and Community Cabinets.

\$44.56 million will be spent State-wide in 2005-06 (\$125.5 million over the project life) to provide technology to improve business processes across government agencies. This project will generate long term savings and improve service delivery throughout the State.

### Torres Strait Cultural Festival



The Torres Strait Cultural Festival, held on Thursday Island, offers a wide range of events, including a lively street parade, markets, traditional dance and music performances, and an arts and artefacts display in the Gab Titui Cultural Centre.

## Budget summary

### Achieving strong economic growth and historic low unemployment rates

- Queensland's year-average unemployment rate is expected to fall to a 30-year low of 5% in 2004-05 and to remain at this historically low level in 2005-06.
- Queensland's employment continues to grow and, at 5¾% and 2½%, is expected to exceed the rest of Australia in 2004-05 and 2005-06, respectively.
- The State is expected to continue to grow more rapidly than the rest of Australia in 2005-06, representing the 10th consecutive year of performance above that of the other states.

### Strong finances

- A General Government net operating surplus of \$934 million is forecast in 2005-06.
- The expected 2004-05 operating result of \$2.725 billion reflects the strength of the economy and investment markets.
- Beyond 2005-06, smaller operating and cash surpluses are forecast, primarily reflecting costs associated with significant investment in new infrastructure, the abolition of a number of State taxes, and the assumption of investment returns in line with long run averages.
- The State's net worth is budgeted to grow from \$85 billion at 30 June 2005 to in excess of \$93 billion by 30 June 2009.

### Competitive taxes

- Queensland's competitive tax status has been maintained, with taxpayers in other states and territories paying on average 25% more state tax than Queenslanders in 2005-06.
- A land tax relief package will significantly reduce the number of Queenslanders paying land tax and provide rate reductions for all land tax payers, at a cost of \$847 million over four years.
- Debits tax and six stamp duties will be progressively abolished, beginning 1 July 2005. Queenslanders will save \$3.5 billion over seven years from the abolition of these State taxes.

## Delivering on our priorities

### Improving health care and strengthening services to the community

- The health budget increases by \$413 million or 8.4%, including service enhancements across the State.
- \$115.1 million in capital funding and \$120.4 million in recurrent funding has been allocated over four years to further develop responses to homelessness.
- An additional \$180 million over four years is provided to enhance disability services, including respite, emergency and crisis care.

### Realising the Smart State through education, skills and innovation

- \$80.1 million will improve the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) environment in schools and improve ICT access and the skills of students and teachers.
- \$291.9 million in recurrent and \$62.7 million in capital funding in 2005-06 will support training initiatives under the \$1 billion SmartVET strategy, including additional traineeship places in new and emerging industries, and further funding for the Mining Centre of Excellence to reduce skills shortages affecting the Queensland mining industry.

### Protecting our children and enhancing community safety

- An overall funding increase of \$123.1 million will enhance child protection services.
- Police staffing and resources will be enhanced and \$231 million is allocated over three years to upgrade and extend various correctional facilities.

### Managing urban growth and building Queensland's regions

- Capital spending will be boosted to \$8 billion, \$1.9 billion more than last year's record program.
- The South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program identifies capital projects amounting to around \$55 billion. Over the next four years, approximately \$2 billion is allocated over current Budget commitments.

### Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

- \$58 million in recurrent funding and \$25 million in capital funding has been allocated over four years to manage an estimated additional 3.46 million hectares of Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service estate.
- \$10 million over four years will support Queensland organisations to adopt resource efficient practices to improve the way they do business.

### Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs

- More than \$470 million is provided over four years to support the Government's 10-year Smart State Strategy. This includes \$136 million in recurrent and \$64 million in capital funding over four years for three new Smart State grants programs to build research centres and support innovation in fields including health and medicine, agriculture and mining.
- The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative will continue to provide employment programs for Queenslanders aimed at reducing skills shortages and improving the employability of job seekers.

# Government services in your region

For information on government services and activities in Far North Queensland, please contact the offices listed below. Additional contacts are available on the Government gateway at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au) or by ringing Smart Service Queensland on 13 13 04.

## Babinda

### QGAP Office

91 Munro Street  
Babinda QLD 4861  
Telephone 4067 2021  
Facsimile 4067 2027  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 10am to 3pm

## Cooktown

### QGAP Office

172 Charlotte Street  
Cooktown QLD 4871  
Telephone 4069 5333  
Facsimile 4069 5864  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 9am to 4:30pm

## Croydon

### QGAP Office

Samwell Street  
Croydon QLD 4871  
Telephone 4745 6185  
Facsimile 4745 6147  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 9am to 4pm

## Georgetown

### QGAP Office

High Street  
Georgetown QLD 4871  
Telephone 4062 1204  
Facsimile 4062 1260  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 8:30am to 4:30pm

## Herberton

### QGAP Office

56 Grace Street  
Herberton QLD 4872  
Telephone 4096 2702  
Facsimile 4096 2704  
Opening hours: Thursday - 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm

## Malanda

### QGAP Office

31 James Street  
Malanda QLD 4885  
Telephone 4096 7609  
Facsimile 4096 6428  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 8:30am to 1pm and 1:30pm to 4pm

## Mt Garnet

### QGAP Office

Mt Garnet Police Station  
Garnet Street  
Mt Garnet QLD 4872  
Telephone 4097 9005  
Facsimile 4097 9036  
Opening hours:  
Wednesday - 9:30am to 3:30pm

## Ravenshoe

### QGAP Office

Grigg Street  
Ravenshoe QLD 4872  
Telephone 4097 6660  
Facsimile 4097 6830  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 9am to 4:30pm

## Weipa

### QGAP Office

Central Avenue  
Weipa QLD 4874  
Telephone 4069 9999  
Facsimile 4069 9160  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 9am to 4:30pm

## Yarrabah

### QGAP Office

c/- Yarrabah Post Office  
56 Sawmill Road  
Yarrabah QLD 4871  
Telephone 4056 0727  
Facsimile 4056 9380  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 3pm  
(closed every second Friday)

## Cairns

### Department of Communities - Far North Queensland Regional Office

Level 3, 36 Shields Street  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Telephone 4039 8354  
Facsimile 4039 8561  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 8:30am to 5pm

## Cairns

### State Development and Innovation Centre

Ground Floor, Cairns Port Authority Building  
Cnr Hartley and Grafton Streets  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Telephone 4048 1111  
Facsimile 4048 1122  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday - 8:30am to 5pm

