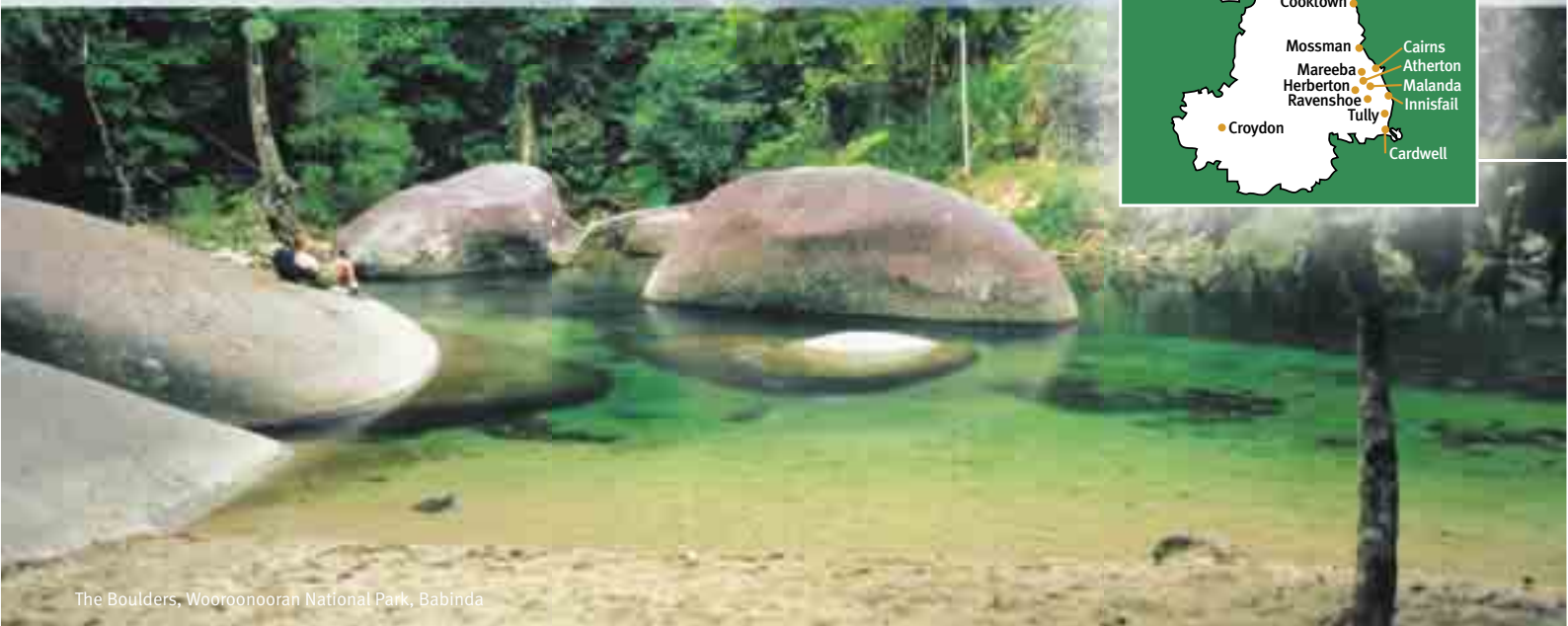
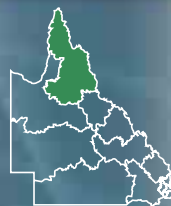




Far North Queensland



The Boulders, Wooroonooran National Park, Babinda



Premier's Message

My Government is continuing our investment to ensure a positive future for all Queenslanders.

We are committed to work with all to ensure we create opportunities for our regions and to continue building on the Smart State's strong and stable foundations.

This Regional Budget Statement outlines the Government's ongoing investment in the Far North Queensland region and its delivery on key election commitments for 2004-05.

The Government is meeting the needs of the people of Far North Queensland through these initiatives and by improving services, especially in the areas of health, employment, education and child safety.

In 2004-05, our Smart State initiatives in education and training will enable the region to harness the creativity and talent within the community. This Statement demonstrates a significant commitment to a strong and prosperous Far North Queensland region.

My Government will work with the people of Far North Queensland to continue creating opportunities for all Queenslanders to grow and enjoy a better quality of life.

Delivering on our election commitments for the Far North Queensland region, the 2004-05 State Budget highlights include:

- \$3.2 million provided as part of \$33 million over three years for the Queensland Government's State Sugar Industry Reform Package
- \$6.16 million for construction of two sections of the Cooktown Developmental Road
- \$749,000 for sealing of the Hopevale Community Access Road
- \$500,000 to employ extra nurses in the Cairns Hospital Emergency Department
- \$1.5 million to improve ear, nose and throat procedures at Cairns Hospital
- \$734,000 to establish Neighbourhood Police Beats at Mooroolool and Yorkey's Knob
- \$1 million for a replacement ambulance station and redeveloped fire station in Innisfail
- \$2.9 million for the Rice's Gully Bridge on the Redlynch Intake Road
- upgrades for schools including:
 - \$850,000, which includes \$81,000 for fit out, at Redlynch State School;
 - \$700,000, which includes \$63,000 for fit out, at Balaclava State School; and
 - \$360,000 which includes \$22,000 for fit out, at Atherton State School.



**Queensland
Government**

Far North Quee

This Regional Budget Statement for Far North Queensland outlines the Government's State Budget 2004-05 spending commitment to this region and its people. As a Government, we recognise the regions' valuable contributions to making Queensland the Smart State and home for over 3.8 million people. In this Budget we have allocated 60% of capital works funding for regions outside Brisbane.

Far North Queensland covers more than 15% of the State. It encompasses the remote Torres Strait islands, the wilderness of Cape York and the Gulf Savannah, the farmlands of the Atherton Tablelands, the islands of the Great Barrier Reef, and the Great Green Way linking Cardwell to Cairns. This vast, diverse region is home to more than 227,000 people, including a quarter of the State's Indigenous population, and is growing at 1.6% per year.

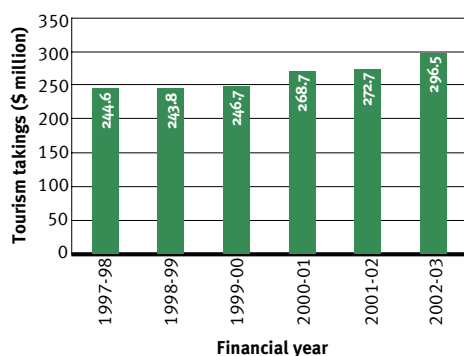
With its proximity to two of the world's greatest natural assets – the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforests – the region's single largest industry is tourism. Other key economic drivers are agriculture, fishing, mining, education and retail trade. Exciting new niche industries are developing 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. Our commitment to

Tourism takings (\$ million)

Far North Queensland, 1997-98 to 2002-03



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



The award winning Cairns Esplanade Lagoon and Boardwalk.

improving the standard and accessibility of hospital and health services in Far North Queensland includes spending in 2004-05 on key initiatives such as:

- \$7.85 million for the redevelopment of the Innisfail Hospital
- \$3.4 million over three years for a new satellite renal service at Cooktown and servicing Hopevale and Wujal Wujal
- \$4.01 million to improve the provision of paramedic and emergency services, including around \$2 million for the ambulance stations at Innisfail and Atherton
- \$3 million for a Cairns Mental Health Residential Community Care Centre
- \$16.2 million over three years for the Torres Strait Major Infrastructure Program.

We have committed \$35.9 million over the next three years to recruit an extra 240 paramedics across Queensland. In 2004-05, \$164,000 will provide four new life saving ambulance paramedics in Far North Queensland.

We have committed \$10.51 million to support people with disabilities and their carers in Far North Queensland. This includes \$132,000 to assist young adults with a disability and \$761,000 for respite care.

We are working to support low-income families and individuals through providing housing and housing related services. Spending in this region in 2004-05 includes:

- \$56 million for public housing construction, upgrades and maintenance programs, including \$34.7 million for the construction of 131 new houses and upgrades to existing dwellings
- \$7.1 million for community housing programs and services to address crisis, transitional and long-term housing need
- \$755,000 for renewal activities in Manoora commenced under the Government's previous allocations for renewal programs in these areas.

Far North Queensland, 1992-93 to 2002-03



Participation in the Smart State means we encourage and reward ideas, innovation, entrepreneurship and hard work across all sectors of the Queensland community, industry and Government.

- \$1.5 million, including \$150,000 for fit out, for the multi-purpose centre at Mareeba State High School
- \$304,000 to complete funding of \$1.32 million under the Cooler Schools program for airconditioning in 13 schools.

We are promoting lifelong learning and skilling the workforce to meet the needs of industries central to the Smart State vision and Queensland's economic growth. In 2004-05 approximately \$65 million will be invested in creating around 21,000 training places in the region. A component of this is approximately \$3 million for the Cape York Training and Employment

The Government is intent on reforming the child protection system. We are increasing the recurrent funding for child protection to at least \$109 million in 2004-05 and at least \$214 million by 2006-07 to build a new, radically improved system for safeguarding the welfare of Queensland children. The Far North Queensland region will benefit from new funding for State-wide initiatives that include:

-

Atherton, Aurukun, Cardwell,
 Caststone, Mareeba and Torres.
 councils.



- \$3.9 million in partnership with the Australian Government for sealing improvements on the Peninsula Developmental Road between Coalseam and the Laura River.

Power infrastructure will benefit from 2004-05 funding, including \$3.74 million being spent by Ergon Energy on two new remote area power stations at Bamaga and Pormpuraaw. An additional \$21.6 million is being allocated by Powerlink to reinforce the electricity transmission network in Far North Queensland.

The Government is also funding initiatives to build the Far North Queensland region in 2004-05 including:

- \$8.5 million for the refurbishment of the Cairns Convention Centre
- \$750,000 of the \$1 million stage two extensions to the Cairns Centre of Contemporary Arts including rehearsal and multi-purpose spaces.

The Queensland Events Regional Events Program will be bolstered with an extra \$1.4 million a year, expanding the program to \$2.4 million a year for the next two years and including two new innovative schemes.

Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

The natural and cultural heritage of the Far North is of immense value to the State. We will ensure its ongoing protection through approximately \$423,000 of funding for

The Suncorp Games



Ranked as the largest regional multi-event sporting games in Australia, the Suncorp Games attracts thousands of competitors in over 30 sports, including athletics events as pictured – held at Barlow Park, Cairns in 2004.

weed and feral animal management and \$136,000 for improved fire management. Also, \$1 million is allocated to enhance pest and disease surveillance and response capability in far northern remote areas with a high biosecurity threat.

We are also working on longer-term environmental concerns including \$210,000 for remediation works in the Trinity Bay area and \$500,000 for mitigation of the Crown of Thorns starfish threat.

We are also spending \$5 million in 2004-05 for voluntary acquisitions of land of high conservation value, with a view to gaining matching funding from the Australian Government.

We recognise the value of ecotourism to the region and are improving visitor facilities by spending \$4 million over the next two years on the construction of the canopy walk at MaMu and around \$441,000 for the Wet Tropics Great Walk within Lumholtz National Park.

In addition, \$1.73 million will be spent on maintenance and upgrades of access and facilities, including \$367,000 for parks within Cape York and \$500,000 for those within the Wet Tropics.

Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs

The Government continues to work in partnership with the people of Far North Queensland to build the region's social and economic strengths. The Far North Queensland region will receive around \$7 million to create an estimated 731 jobs in 2004-05 through the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative.

This includes \$1.74 million allocated to community employment programs and \$5.25 million for apprenticeship and traineeship incentives to provide jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector.

Initiatives that will foster economic diversification and create jobs in Far North Queensland include:

- approximately \$1.9 million for the development of the 26 hectare Woree Business and Industry Park
- \$905,000 to develop culture methods for the high value tropical rock lobsters and reef fish industries.

Far North Queensland is also experiencing change in key industries, one of which is the sugar industry. Producers will benefit from:

- \$33 million over three years for the Queensland Government's State Sugar Industry Reform Package, which will result in more profitable and sustainable farms
- transfer duty relief of up to \$7 million over three years for intergenerational gifting of cane farms
- transfer duty relief of up to \$5 million over two years to assist cane farmers to purchase adjoining farms to improve efficiency and productivity in the industry.

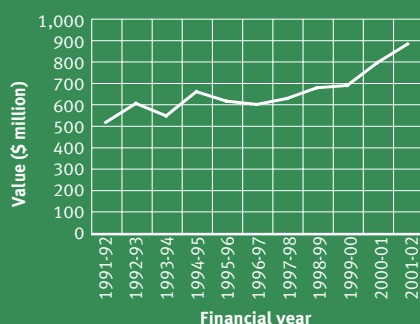
New industries being supported in the region include aviation. The Government is supporting the development of an operational hub for Australian Airlines which is expected to create 294 new jobs in association with this investment.

Delivering responsive government

The Government continues to engage with local communities and businesses to better coordinate service delivery and identify solutions to local issues, including through the regular Ministerial Regional Community Forums and Community Cabinets. In addition to economic development funding, over \$1.05 million is allocated to support regional Government offices in working with the Far North Queensland community to develop opportunities and address issues.

Agricultural production (\$ million)

Far North Queensland, 1991-92 to 2001-02



Source: ABS, Agriculture, Queensland (unpublished data)

Budget

Highlights

2004-05

Budget summary

Sustained economic growth and strong employment conditions

- Queensland is expected to continue to outperform the rest of Australia in both 2003-04 and 2004-05 with economic growth of 4% and 4¼%.
- Employment growth remains substantially higher than the rest of Australia, with growth of 2¼% forecast for 2004-05.
- The State's year-average unemployment rate is 6¼%, the lowest level in more than two decades.

Strong finances

- A General Government net operating surplus of \$646 million and a cash surplus of \$1.059 billion are forecast in 2004-05, following a record estimated actual net operating surplus of \$2.374 billion for 2003-04.
- The State's net worth is budgeted to grow from \$69.4 billion at 30 June 2004, to in excess of \$80 billion by 30 June 2008.

Competitive taxes

- Queensland's competitive tax status has been maintained, with taxpayers in other States and Territories paying on average 27% more state tax than Queenslanders in 2004-05.
- From 1 August 2004, credit card duty will be abolished and the general insurance duty rate will be reduced from 8.5% to 7.5%. In addition, debits tax will be abolished from 1 July 2005.
- From 1 August 2004, the threshold for the principal place of residence transfer duty concession will be increased from \$250,000 to \$300,000, providing home buyers with a saving of up to \$1,250.

Delivering on our priorities

Improving health care and strengthening services to the community

- The Budget includes \$90 million over three years to cut elective surgery waiting lists.
- An additional \$220 million over four years is provided to support people with a disability, their families and carers.

Realising the Smart State through education, skills and innovation

- The three year, \$1 billion, SmartVET strategy will introduce a number of new training initiatives and the expansion of high priority programs.
- Funding is provided for the Education and Training Reforms for the Future package including more than \$135 million in 2004-05 and rising to more than \$307 million in 2006-07.

Protecting our children and enhancing community safety

- Full implementation of child safety reforms will involve additional funding of at least \$214 million per annum by 2006-07.
- Funding of \$35.9 million over three years will employ 240 additional paramedics to address growth in demand, maintain emergency response times and improve services.

Managing urban growth and building Queensland's regions

- Capital spending will be boosted to over \$6 billion, the first time the capital works program has exceeded that benchmark.
- An additional \$200 million is allocated over four years for the Busway network and \$571 million over four years for a new Arterial Roads Infrastructure Package.

Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

- An additional \$75 million is allocated over four years, beyond the existing \$75 million commitment, to end the broadscale clearing of remnant native vegetation in Queensland by 2006.
- Funding of \$12.5 million is provided over three years for the acquisition of the strategic parcels of land of high conservation value to add to the protected estate in Cape York and the Daintree.

Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs

- The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative will be extended for another three years at a cost of up to \$278 million.
- A \$20 million State contribution is provided towards construction of the \$60 million Queensland Brain Research facility, located at the University.

Government services in your region

For information on government services and activities in your region contact the primary contact offices listed below or visit the Government gateway at www.qld.gov.au

Babinda

QGAP

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

Cooktown

QGAP

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

Croydon

QGAP

Samwell Street
Croydon QLD 4871
Telephone 4745 6185
Facsimile 4745 6147
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm

Georgetown

QGAP

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

Herberton

QGAP

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

Malanda

QGAP

31 James Street
Malanda QLD 4885
Telephone 4096 7609
Facsimile 4096 6428
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday - 8:15am to 4:15pm

Mt Garnet

QGAP

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

Grigg Street
Ravenshoe QLD 4872
Telephone 4097 6660
Facsimile 4097 6830
Opening hours:
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
- 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 4:30pm

Weipa

QGAP

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

Yarrabah

QGAP

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

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

Department of Communities – Regional Communities Engagement

Cairns Port Authority Building
Cnr Hartley and Grafton Streets
Cairns QLD 4870
Telephone 4048 1178
Facsimile 4048 1159
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm