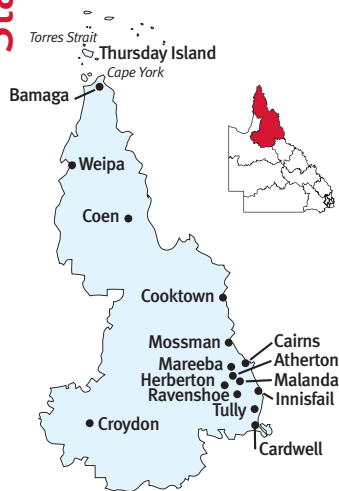


Regional Budget Statement

Far North Queensland

State Budget 2006-07



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.



The 2006-07 Budget re-affirms our Government's commitment to strengthening the Smart State's economy and investing in infrastructure and service delivery priorities.

This Regional Budget Statement outlines how we are meeting the needs of Far North Queensland residents.

Through the Health Action Plan, we are committing \$9.7 billion in just over five years to build Australia's best health system.

To meet the needs of our growing population, we are investing in State-wide infrastructure, especially in rural Queensland where the Blueprint for the Bush will deliver health, water and transport facilities.

Ensuring the Smart State's future, Prep Year will begin in 2007 to give our children the best education.

We are also continuing our response to residents affected by Cyclone Larry and working towards a brighter future for all Queenslanders.

Peter Beattie MP
Premier of Queensland

State Budget highlights for the Far North Queensland region in 2006-07 include:

- The Queensland Government's Cyclone Larry Employment Assistance Package, with funding of up to \$18.56 million, provides up to \$14 million to employ 1,000 local residents under the *Community Jobs Plan* to assist with the reconstruction of public infrastructure
- \$79.76 million in grants to construct, upgrade and maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing and \$5.42 million for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing rental program
- \$12.92 million to improve the Peninsula Developmental Road
- \$11.59 million for Edmonton West State School opening in 2007
- \$7 million to continue the development of the new primary health care centre at Yarrabah which will incorporate community health and ambulance services
- \$3.9 million to replace police vessels for the Thursday Island and Cairns Water Police.

Far North Queensland



Blueprint for the Bush

The Queensland Government has developed the Blueprint for the Bush in partnership with AgForce and the Local Government Association of Queensland to enhance the sustainability, liveability and prosperity of rural Queensland. Beginning in 2006-07, the Blueprint commits more than \$150 million over the next four years to a range of initiatives that will assist rural communities. An accompanying *Rural Economic Development and Infrastructure Plan* outlines a range of Government and private sector investment initiatives for rural and regional Queensland.

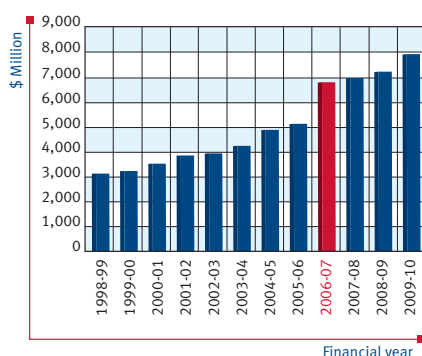
The Far North Queensland region will benefit from State-wide initiatives such as:

- \$47 million for natural resource management projects to support sustainable land management and environmental protection practices, tackle pests and weeds, and effectively manage water resources
- \$30 million to strengthen rural communities, which will include grants to non-Government organisations and local governments
- \$20 million to maintain and upgrade housing for Indigenous people
- \$5 million for rural airport upgrades
- \$4.5 million for new regional planning initiatives
- \$1.8 million for online access in public libraries
- \$1 million for local governments to assess rural infrastructure needs.

Building a better health system

Queensland health budget

1998-99 to 2009-10



Source: Queensland Treasury

The Government is reforming the Queensland health system. The 2005 Action Plan marked a new start with the biggest single injection of funding in the State's history. In 2006-07,

the health budget of \$6.65 billion represents a 24% increase over the 2005-06 Budget. Increased health expenditure within the Far North Queensland region includes:

- \$2.04 million, from a State-wide commitment of \$39 million, for enhanced cardiac services
- \$1.94 million, from a State-wide commitment of \$18 million, to support community mental health services by employing additional specialist mental health staff
- \$133,000, from over \$60 million State-wide, toward the treatment and care of cancer patients
- \$4.46 million for Indigenous health programs, including funding towards a whole-of-Government pilot Indigenous Alcohol Diversion program which will offer eligible offenders the opportunity to undertake alcohol and drug treatment prior to being sentenced.

As a result of funding increases for health services, the region will receive an increase of more than 130 staff and 25 beds in the Cairns, Cape York, Innisfail, Tablelands and Torres Strait health service districts.

Covering more than 15% of the State, the Far North Queensland region is home to 236,769 Queenslanders. Tourism, agriculture, fishing, mining, education and retail trade are important industries in the region.

As a Government, we recognise the valuable contribution of Far North Queensland to the Smart State's economy. With nearly 60% of the Government's 2006-07 capital expenditure allocated outside the Brisbane area, this Regional Budget Statement for Far North Queensland highlights the Government's commitment to the region and its people.

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:

- \$19.6 million to continue the redevelopment of Innisfail Hospital
- \$8.5 million to continue the upgrade of the primary health care centre in Hopevale
- \$5 million to continue the construction of a replacement primary health care centre at Erub (Darnley) Island
- \$5 million to continue the provision of facilities to support mental health rehabilitation, prevention and recovery care services in Cairns
- \$3.5 million to continue the redevelopment of the Weipa Hospital to integrate acute, primary health and community health services
- \$1.68 million to non-Government organisations for a range of community health services.

Festival Cairns



Photography by Reflex Photography

The Far North Queensland region will also benefit from a range of State-wide commitments including:

- \$70 million for new health technology equipment
- \$69.3 million to meet the increasing cost of providing existing health services
- \$25.4 million in increased funding for workforce training and recruitment initiatives for medical, nursing and allied health staff
- \$12.3 million to improve access and meet growing demand for renal services.

Expenditure on new and upgraded emergency facilities and staffing includes:

- \$9 million as part of a \$35.3 million three-year commitment to recruit 144 new ambulance officers across Queensland
- six new paramedics for the region, fulfilling the Government's \$35.9 million election commitment to recruit 240 extra paramedics State-wide over three years
- \$1.21 million to continue replacing ambulance stations at Weipa and Yarrabah
- \$550,000 to complete the replacement of the Atherton Ambulance Station
- \$335,000 to complete the replacement of the fire station at Yungaburra.

The Government is continuing its support for people with disabilities and their carers with a \$13.16 million commitment in Far North Queensland including:

- \$4.25 million for community organisations to support individuals with a disability and their families
- \$2.25 million to assist adults with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in the community
- \$1.57 million to provide short term and limited respite support for families, carers and people with a disability.

In 2006-07, the Government continues its support for services provided by community groups in Far North Queensland with funding of \$21.75 million.

This includes: \$2.53 million for child care facilities and services; \$2.1 million toward domestic and family violence prevention; \$2.04 million for early intervention and family support services; \$1.2 million to establish the Innisfail Community Centre; and \$826,000 to establish Youth Justice Services in Cooktown, Weipa and Cairns.

We are providing ongoing housing and housing-related services to support low-income families and individuals in Far North Queensland in 2006-07 including:

- \$79.76 million in grants to construct, upgrade and maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing and \$5.42 million for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing rental program
- \$10.06 million for new and upgraded public housing
- \$5.52 million for community housing programs and services to address crisis, transitional and long-term housing needs.

Realising the Smart State through education, skills and innovation

The Government continues to drive economic growth by utilising innovation and skills through its *Smart Queensland: Smart State Strategy 2005-2015*. In 2006-07, initiatives in Far North Queensland include:

- \$4 million to James Cook University to help establish the Australian Tropical Forest Institute in Cairns
- \$1.18 million to continue support for the sugar industry through the Sugar Industry Innovation Fund
- \$150,000 State-wide to continue the Science on Saturday program to encourage children to understand the importance of science and take an interest in science as a possible future career.

We are committed to providing high-quality education facilities to support Queensland's growing population. In 2006-07, \$34.9 million is allocated in Far North

Queensland for school capital works including:

- \$11.59 million for Edmonton West State School, opening in 2007
- \$11.06 million investment in Redlynch Middle School
- \$2.63 million to continue amalgamation of Kuranda State High School with Kuranda State School
- \$815,000 to continue the Cooler Schools air-conditioning project.

Protecting our children and enhancing community safety

The Government continues to implement significant reforms to improve the child protection system. A record \$503.1 million, up almost 28% since last year, will be spent in 2006-07 to protect our children.

The region will benefit from an additional \$1.33 million to enhance local child protection responses in a number of remote Indigenous communities in the Cape York and Torres Strait areas and a range of State-wide initiatives including:

- \$15.6 million to continue to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognised Entities
- \$10 million for non-Government partners to deliver extra alternative care places for children in care with complex and extreme needs
- \$7.6 million for an extra 50 front-line staff and to attract and retain child protection staff in regional, rural and remote areas.

We are also investing in major funding initiatives to boost our police service, with the number of police officers across Queensland reaching 9,728 by September 2007 through the creation of an extra 350 police officer positions. This will more than meet the Government's commitment to maintain police numbers at or above the national average police-to-population ratio.

The Government is providing funding for services and infrastructure to enhance community safety in Far North Queensland. Key projects for 2006-07 include:

- \$3.9 million to replace police vessels for the Thursday Island and Cairns Water Police
- \$800,000 to replace the police station and holding cell at Ravenshoe.

Managing urban growth and building Queensland's regions

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

- \$112.84 million towards developing and upgrading the domestic and international terminals at Cairns Airport



Get set for Prep

Preparatory Year will be available at all State schools from 2007 to help Queensland kids make a smooth transition to Year 1. Replacing preschool, it will lay the foundation for success at school by developing a positive approach to learning; independence and confidence; thinking, problem-solving and language skills; physical abilities; and early literacy and numeracy. To prepare for the intake of eager young students, the Queensland Government is undertaking one of the largest building programs in education history. Across the State, \$106 million will be spent on building and upgrading classrooms and other facilities, with 103 schools offering Prep Year in the Far North Queensland region.

Cyclone Larry emergency response



The Queensland Government responded quickly to the devastation caused by Cyclone Larry and will continue to support the people of Far North Queensland to rebuild their communities.

- \$13.42 million to upgrade sections of the Kennedy Highway
- \$12.92 million to improve the Peninsula Developmental Road
- \$7 million to improve sections of the Captain Cook Highway.

The Government continues to ensure a reliable energy supply through its investment in the electricity network. In 2006-07, key initiatives include \$28.3 million for developments and improvements to the Ergon Energy electricity distribution network, including undergrounding powerlines in cyclone-prone areas.

The Government is also managing the State’s water resources and ensuring a continuing water supply through a range of initiatives including \$12.83 million State-wide as part of the Water Reform — Continuity of Supply initiative.

Queenslanders enjoy a lifestyle with a high level of community participation in a range of sporting activities. In Far North Queensland, \$5.6 million is allocated to projects including: \$1.63 million to construct an amenities facility and kiosk and upgrade existing facilities at Barlow

Park, Cairns; \$1.47 million to redevelop the Weipa Swimming Pool, incorporating a 25-metre, eight-lane pool; \$592,500 to construct an aquatic centre, incorporating a 25-metre, eight-lane pool at Kuranda; and \$258,334 to develop a sports oval at Dauan Island.

Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

The natural and cultural heritage of Far North Queensland is valued by all Queenslanders. To reflect this, we are committing:

- \$17.35 million to enhance our national parks network and \$980,000 to help rehabilitate degraded lands at East Trinity
- \$12.8 million State-wide to complete the implementation of the new vegetation management framework
- \$7.1 million to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs

In April, we released the Queensland Government’s Cyclone Larry Employment Assistance Package, as part of the Government’s response to the cyclone, with funding of up to \$18.56 million. This package includes up to \$14 million to employ 1,000 local residents under the Community Jobs Plan to assist with the reconstruction of public infrastructure. The Government will also employ new Industry Development Officers and farm financial counsellors, and provide ongoing services to help farmers re-establish their enterprises.

Other Government initiatives include:

- approximately \$7.2 million to support primary industries as they rebuild
- \$1.38 million in the wet tropics and Atherton Tableland on research and

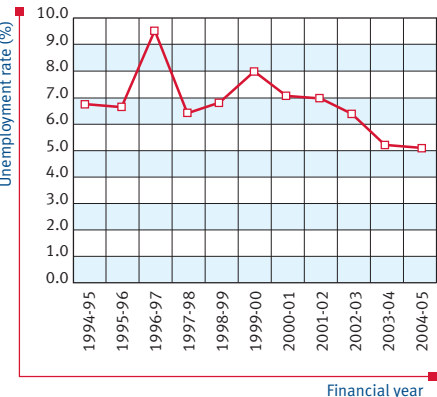
development for recovery of tropical fruit crops devastated by Cyclone Larry.

Launched in March 2006, the \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan is the Government’s strategy for responding to skills shortages across Queensland. This strategy aims to ensure the vocational education and training sector meets the skills challenges facing the Far North Queensland region. In 2006-07, the plan will deliver:

- \$701,000 for new trades apprenticeships as part of a \$5.32 million plan to provide 1,040 extra training places in the region by 2010
- \$784,000 for new Certificate IV and above training places as part of a \$5.49 million plan to provide 600 additional training places in the region by 2010
- a new Skilling Solutions Queensland centre in Cairns which will provide face-to-face advice to Queenslanders of all ages on training and career opportunities.

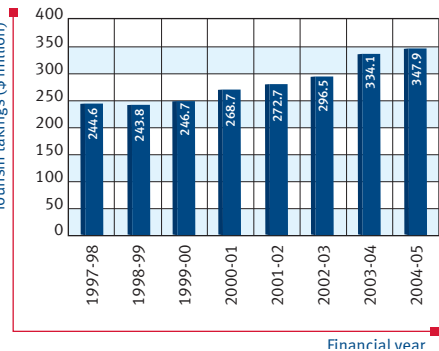
In 2006-07 the Government is continuing its commitment to supporting and promoting the Queensland Tourism Industry with \$6 million State-wide for the 14 Regional Tourism Offices and six Convention Bureaus. This includes an extra \$1 million to assist with destination marketing and development.

Unemployment rate^a
1994-95 to 2004-05



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

Tourism
takings (\$ million), 1997-98 to 2004-05



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

Delivering responsive government

The Government’s continuing commitment to restore public trust and accountability in the Queensland public health system includes \$7.7 million to establish a new Health Quality and Complaints Commission.

Through initiatives such as regular Ministerial Regional Community Forums and Community Cabinets, the Queensland Government engages with local communities, businesses and other government agencies to ensure better co-ordination of services and to respond to local needs.

Budget Highlights 2006-07

Budget summary

Stronger economic growth maintains low unemployment

- Queensland's economic growth is forecast to strengthen to 4¼% in 2006-07 and exceed growth in the rest of Australia for the 11th consecutive year.
- Employment growth is expected to exceed the rest of Australia in 2005-06 and 2006-07 at 3% and 2½% respectively.
- As a result, Queensland's year-average unemployment rate is forecast to remain at 5% – around the 30-year low, and slightly below the national rate (5¼%).

Strong finances

- The expected 2005-06 operating result of \$2.853 billion reflects the strength of the economy and investment markets.
- A General Government operating surplus of \$245 million is forecast in 2006-07.
- Moderating surpluses reflect significant capital investment, implementation of the Health Action Plan and commitments in other key service delivery areas, and the impact of a range of State tax abolition and relief measures.
- The State's net worth is budgeted to grow from around \$96 billion at 30 June 2006 to over \$107 billion by 30 June 2010.

Competitive taxes

- Queensland maintains its tax competitiveness, with Queenslanders to pay an average of 15% less State tax than taxpayers in other states and territories in 2006-07.
- Queensland's competitiveness has been enhanced through a range of tax measures in the 2006-07 Budget.

Delivering on our priorities

Improving health care and strengthening services to the community

- As part of the Queensland Government's commitment to the Health Action Plan, an investment of almost \$6.4 billion in just over five years was announced in 2005 to relieve pressure on health services delivered across the State. Through the 2006-07 State Budget, funding for Queensland Health will grow by \$9.7 billion over the five years.
- Increased recurrent funding of \$128 million and \$6 million in capital funding will be invested over four years to enhance disability services in Queensland.
- More than \$21 million is committed over the next three years to help fight obesity.

Protecting our children and enhancing community safety

- Additional funding of \$133.2 million will be invested over four years to enhance child protection services, including \$28.1 million in 2006-07.
- The Government is providing funding for an additional 350 sworn police officers across the State by September 2007, bringing the total number of sworn officers to 9,728 and meeting the Government's commitment to maintain police numbers at or above the national average police-to-population ratio.
- An additional \$35.3 million is provided over three years to recruit 144 additional ambulance officers and \$12.4 million over four years to improve ambulance call response times at communication centres.

Realising the Smart State through education, skills and innovation

- A record \$1 billion will be invested over five years in Queensland's education system, directed at planning, modernising and refurbishing school facilities across the State.
- The \$1 billion *Queensland Skills Plan* sets out initiatives to transform and modernise the State's vocational education and training system.
- Further funding of \$11.8 million is allocated over three years to develop a joint animal research facility with The University of Queensland.

Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

- As part of the Blueprint for the Bush, additional funding of \$11 million over three years is provided to improve the management of high-risk weeds and pest animals across Queensland.
- Additional funding of \$20 million is provided in 2006-07 to acquire properties within South East Queensland to increase green space. The land will be added to the protected estate.

Managing urban growth and building Queensland's regions

- Estimated capital spending is more than \$10 billion in 2006-07, an increase of 23% on estimated actual 2005-06 outlays. Almost 60% of this will be spent outside the Brisbane area. This spending will support around 73,700 full-time jobs in Queensland.
- More than \$150 million is provided for additional initiatives across rural and regional Queensland over the next four years as part of Blueprint for the Bush.



Government services in your region

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 4895
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 4887
Telephone 4096 2702
Facsimile 4096 2704
Opening hours:
Thursday – 9am to 1pm and
2pm to 4pm

Malanda

QGAP Office

21 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 4888
Telephone 4097 6660
Facsimile 4097 6830
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 9am to 1pm and
2pm to 4:30pm

Thursday Island

Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water

Douglas Street
Thursday Island QLD 4875
Telephone 4069 2672
Facsimile 4069 2673
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8am to 5pm

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

Ground Floor, Cairns Port
Authority Building
Cnr Grafton and Hartley Streets
Cairns QLD 4870
Telephone 4039 8476
Facsimile 4039 8096
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 5pm

Cairns

State Development Centre

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

Preparatory Year enquiries

Telephone 1300 650 220
Facsimile 3247 3988

13 HEALTH

Telephone 13 43 25 84

Smart Service Queensland

For information on all other
Government services call 13 13 04