

# Far North Queensland

Mossman Gorge, Daintree National Park, Mossman



## Premier's Message

The Queensland Government is firmly committed to strengthening and building the regions which are the foundation of this State. As a Government we are forging a strong, prosperous future and a better quality of life for all Queenslanders.

This second Regional Budget Statement for Far North Queensland highlights capital works and services in the State Budget 2003-04 that specifically meet the needs of people within the region. This Statement demonstrates a significant investment in the Far North Queensland region.

This Budget delivers improved and integrated services in the areas of health, families, education, housing and law and order to achieve better outcomes for people in Far North Queensland.

A highly skilled and educated workforce is integral to our Smart State initiatives in employment creation and economic growth. In 2003-04 the Government will spend more than \$11 million on initiatives that will provide further training and employment opportunities.

Far North Queensland will benefit from the following funding in the State Budget 2003-04:

- \$26.75 million to continue the \$57.71 million rail track upgrade from Rockhampton - Townsville - Cairns and \$2.4 million on infrastructure associated with the Cairns Tilt Train
- \$4.5 million to establish an Australian Tropical Forest Institute at James Cook University in Cairns
- \$2.71 million toward the \$16 million Innisfail Hospital redevelopment
- \$40.22 million for capital grants to discrete Indigenous communities for housing
- \$5.69 million to replace Torres Strait Primary Health Care Centres at Yam (Iama) Island, Mabuig Island and Mua (Kubin Community) Island
- \$2.34 million to continue the positive outcomes of the Drug Court Trial in Far North Queensland
- \$0.5 million for a dedicated rehabilitation unit at the Cairns Base Hospital.

The initiatives contained in this Statement reinforce my Government's commitment to working in partnership with the people of Far North Queensland to maximise the social, economic and environmental capacity of the Smart State.



**Queensland Government**

Peter Beattie  
Premier and Minister for Trade



**This Regional Budget Statement outlines key Government spending in the State Budget 2003-04 designed exclusively for the needs of the Far North Queensland region and its people. As a Government, we recognise the uniqueness and diversity of the regions as the building blocks of this State. In fact, in this Budget we have allocated 62.5% of capital works funding to regions outside the Brisbane Statistical Division.**

Six percent of Queenslanders, including a quarter of the State's Indigenous population, live in the Far North Queensland region. Covering more than 15% of the State, the region includes Cairns City and the shires of Atherton, Aurukun, Cardwell, Cook, Croydon, Douglas, Eacham, Etheridge, Herberton, Johnstone, Mareeba and Torres. In addition, Far North Queensland includes 11 Aboriginal councils and 17 Island councils.

The regional economy is diverse, underpinned by tourism, agriculture (including dairy, beef cattle, sugar and horticulture), fishing, a growing aquaculture industry, mining and retail trade.

### Building Queensland's regions

The Queensland Government will continue its partnership with the Far North Queensland region in 2003-04 to promote regional growth and economic development.

In support of this priority, the Government has allocated a further \$50 million over four years to extend the Regional Centres Program across the State.

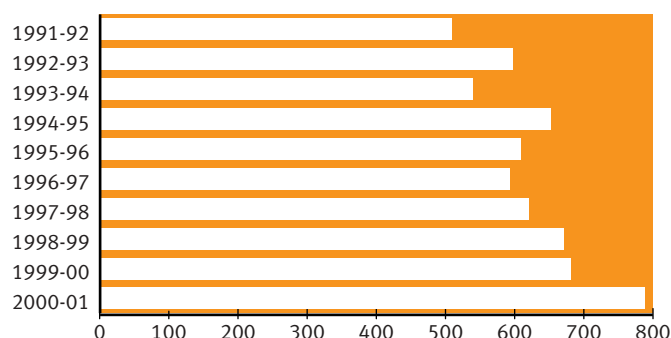
Far North Queensland's benefits include:

- \$1.95 million to Cairns City Council for Botanic Gardens and Tanks Precinct redevelopment
- \$530,000 to Johnstone Shire Council for the Town Beautification Project at Innisfail
- \$650,000 to Mareeba Shire Council for the Developing Mareeba Shire Libraries project
- \$500,000 to upgrade the Coconut Island airstrip.

A safe and efficient transport network underpins regional development in the Smart State. In Far North Queensland major transport projects include:

- \$5.96 million to construct a section of the Cooktown Developmental Road to a sealed standard between the West Normanby River and Boggy Creek
- \$2.74 million to construct a section of the Peninsula Developmental Road to a sealed standard between Coalseam and Laura River, jointly funded with the Commonwealth.

**Gross Value of Agricultural Production (\$ million)**  
**Far North Queensland, 1991-92 to 2000-01**



Source: ABS, Agriculture, Queensland (unpublished data)

**Cairns Esplanade** (photo courtesy of Cairns City Council)





The Cairns Port Authority has allocated \$49 million, including \$5.8 million for the Cairns CityPort project to provide a waterfront tourism precinct next to the Cairns Business District (CBD). The Cairns Esplanade and CBD Redevelopment will be completed with an allocation of \$1 million.

An efficient power supply is vital to economic development within the Far North Queensland region. Significant projects include:

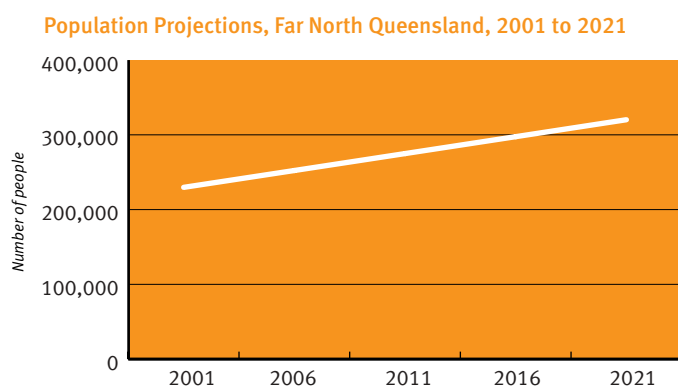
- Ergon Energy has allocated funds for new power stations at Bamaga (\$3.1 million) and Lockhart River (\$245,000) and the Yakula Distribution Switching Station (\$227,000)
- Stanwell Corporation has allocated funds for ongoing capital works and modifications at Hydro Power Stations at Barron Gorge (\$7 million) and Kareeya (\$9.2 million), including a major upgrade at Kareeya
- Ergon Energy has allocated \$1.5 million to improve the reliability of electricity assets in cyclone prone areas, especially Cairns and Port Douglas.

Regional tourism will be assisted by funding of \$331,000 to Tourism Tropical North Queensland to continue marketing the region as a destination for holiday-makers.

Water is vital for primary industries in Far North Queensland. In 2003-04, \$1.13 million is provided for water infrastructure in the Murray Valley Riversdale project, near South Johnstone, to support the sugar cane industry. In addition, SunWater has allocated \$2.63 million to renewals and refurbishments in the Mareeba Water Supply Scheme. In 2003-04, \$1.2 million is allocated to provide reliable water supply and sewerage services, in partnership with Croydon Shire Council.

Other major funding introduced in the Far North Queensland region includes:

- \$141,000 to complete the Biodiversity Centre on the Atherton Tablelands, which will build on the unique natural flora and tropical crops in the region



Source: Department of Local Government & Planning, Population Trends and Prospects, 2001

## Tilt Train set to roll.



In 2003-04, \$2.4 million is allocated for works associated with the Cairns Tilt Train.

- \$145,000 to assist Golden Circle develop a feasibility plan for a major new fruit and vegetable processing facility in Far North Queensland.

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

High standards of training and education are the foundation of our efforts to position Queensland as the Smart State.

Through the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative, the Government will continue to support the region's young job seekers, the long-term unemployed and disadvantaged job seekers, with \$6.8 million allocated to help create 840 jobs across the region.

In addition, Far North Queensland will benefit from \$2.8 million for the Cape York Training and Employment Strategy, which delivers demand-driven training linked to employment opportunities in Cape York communities. A further \$440,000 is allocated for customised training and employment programs for Indigenous people in remote locations in Far North Queensland.

School facilities ensure we have the infrastructure in place to deliver a high standard of education to our young people. In 2003-04, \$5.23 million is allocated to construct stage four of Bentley Park College. To maintain existing educational facilities within the region, we will provide \$1.21 million for the Triple R program, which provides repainting, reticulation and re-roofing enhancements to local schools.

In the Smart State, we provide an environment that encourages skills, innovation and new industries. In 2003-04, \$391,000 is approved for Aviation Australia, the nominated registered training organisation for the Cairns Aviation Skills Centre. The Centre will address critical aviation industry skills shortages in the region, which is developing as a major aviation hub.



## Safer and more supportive communities

The Government is committed to working in partnership with the Far North Queensland region to achieve a safe and supportive community environment.

Community safety in Far North Queensland will be enhanced by spending on policing and the justice system:

- \$450,000 for a new police station and police residences at Hopevale
- \$600,000 towards the \$2.4 million construction of a new Thursday Island Courthouse
- \$855,000 to complete the upgrade of the Cooktown Courthouse.

In 2003-04, \$685,000 is allocated for the Diversion from Custody Program to provide alternative accommodation to police watchhouses for people who have been detained for public drunkenness.

Emergency services in the region will be supported by funding to develop the following facilities:

- \$926,000 to replace the Mount Garnet, Innisfail and Atherton Ambulance Stations
- \$80,000 to upgrade the Dimbulah Fire Station.

## Community engagement and a better quality of life

As a Government, we are working to provide equitable access to housing, health and family services.

The following funding maintains the Government's focus on working jointly with Indigenous communities to achieve a better quality of life:

- \$12.99 million to Aboriginal and Island councils toward the cost of providing local government services
- \$2.63 million to continue the Cape York Justice Study Program to coordinate service delivery and support community action plans
- \$250,000 for the Indigenous Regional Arts Development Fund.

In addition, \$173,000 is provided for a regional arts development partnership program with local governments.

Health services are vital to forging a better quality of life and a bright future for all Queenslanders. Key health funding in 2003-04 includes \$793,000 for refurbishment at Atherton Hospital and \$244,000 for a new respite and family support service in Mareeba.



Australian Airlines

We are providing \$633,000 for Liquor Licensing Officers to work with Indigenous communities in remote areas of the State including Far North Queensland and provide advice on alcohol-related harm minimisation strategies.

Other initiatives conducted in partnership with local government and community organisations that will improve wellbeing and lifestyles within the region include:

- \$2.4 million to develop a Centre of Contemporary Arts to house established Cairns art groups
- \$672,000 to construct an earth mound for seating at Barlow Park in Cairns
- \$474,000 to construct a multipurpose one court recreation facility at Mapoon
- \$75,000 to construct a multipurpose field at Injinoo - Injinoo Community Council
- \$59,000 to install lighting in support of tennis at Freshwater.

## Valuing the environment

Queensland's natural and cultural heritage will be protected for the benefit of all Queenslanders. Highlights in environmental funding in the Far North Queensland region include:

- \$846,000 for property management and remediation of nearly 1000 hectares of land at East Trinity
- \$1.4 million for a range of capital works on parks and forests
- \$500,000 to construct and upgrade infrastructure in Cape York national parks
- \$100,000 to the Association of Marine Park Operators to eradicate crown-of-thorns starfish infestations from important Great Barrier Reef tourist locations, jointly funded with the Commonwealth.

As part of the Great Walks of Queensland Initiative, \$302,000 is allocated to develop the world-class Wet Tropics Great Walk in Lumholtz National Park. The walk will offer a new and exciting way to explore the region's valuable assets.

# State Budget Highlights

## Budget summary

### Creating new jobs

- In 2002-03, an estimated 55,000 new jobs were created in Queensland, accounting for almost a quarter of all new jobs in Australia.
- Queensland's year-average unemployment rate is expected to fall to 7% in 2002-03, its lowest level for 13 years.

### Growing the economy

- Queensland's economic outlook is strong. Solid growth of 4% is forecast for 2003-04, exceeding the 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>% forecast nationally.
- Growth in household consumption and business investment is forecast to exceed national performance in 2003-04.

### Strong finances

- A General Government net operating surplus of \$153 million and a cash surplus of \$152 million are forecast in 2003-04.
- The State's net worth is budgeted to grow from \$58.7 billion at 30 June 2003, to \$60.3 billion by 30 June 2004 and to \$67 billion by 30 June 2007.

### Competitive taxes

- Taxpayers in other States and Territories will pay on average 28% more tax than Queenslanders.
- As a result of the land tax relief in this Budget, more than 13,500 land holders will not be liable for land tax in 2003-04.

## Delivering on our priorities

### Building Queensland's regions

- Capital spending will be boosted to \$5.3 billion in 2003-04, supporting some 44,500 full-time jobs with a total of 62.5% of capital works funding spent outside the Brisbane Statistical Division.
- The Regional Centres Program will receive \$50 million over four years to help local governments deliver infrastructure and community facilities.

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

- The Budget includes \$100 million over 4 years for a package of measures to increase the effectiveness of public and private research and development.
- The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative will be extended with an extra \$255 million over 3 years from 2004-05, plus an additional \$3.8 million to employ 300 public sector apprentices.
- Funding is provided for an extra 636 teachers in schools from 2004.

### Safer and more supportive communities

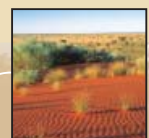
- As the second year of a \$188 million four-year initiatives package, \$32 million will help generate better outcomes for families and children.
- The Queensland Ambulance Service will employ an extra 110 officers statewide, and will commence or complete 17 replacement and four new stations.
- The number of police officers will increase by approximately 300 in 2003-04 as the Police Service progresses towards the achievement of 9,100 officers by 2005.

### Community engagement and a better quality of life

- There is an additional \$2.6 billion over 4 years for Health (including Commonwealth and State funding), compared to the 2002-03 Health Budget, including additional investment and service enhancements in acute hospital care, elective surgery, home and community care and mental health.
- An additional \$290.5 million in State funding is provided over four years to Disability Services Queensland including \$200 million to implement Funding Reform Project initiatives.

### Valuing the environment

- As part of a \$150 million Commonwealth-State tree clearing reduction package, the State will provide an additional \$75 million over five years.



# Government services in your region

For information on Government services in your region, contact the following offices of the Queensland Government Agent Program (QGAP), Department of State Development or Regional Communities.

## Babinda

### QGAP

91 Munro Street  
Babinda QLD 4861  
Phone: 4067 2021  
Monday–Friday 9.30am–5.00pm

## Cooktown

### QGAP

172 Charlotte Street  
Cooktown QLD 4871  
Phone: 4069 5333  
Monday–Friday 9.00am–4.30pm

## Croydon

### QGAP

Samwell Street  
Croydon QLD 4871  
Phone: 4745 6185  
Monday–Friday 8.30am–5.00pm

## Cairns

### Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Far North Queensland Regional Office

Cairns Port Authority Building  
Cnr Grafton and Hartley Streets  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: 4039 8926  
Monday–Friday 8.30am–5.00pm

### Office of Economic and Statistical Research

Level 9, 15 Lake Street  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: 4039 8804  
Monday–Friday 9.00am–5.00pm

## State Development Centre

Ground Floor  
Cairns Port Authority Building  
Cnr Hartley and Grafton Streets  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: 4048 1111  
Monday–Friday 8:30am–5.00pm

## Georgetown

### QGAP

High Street  
Georgetown QLD 4871  
Phone: 4062 1204  
Monday–Friday 8.30am–4.30pm

## Herberton

### QGAP

Electricity Credit Union Building  
56 Grace Street  
Herberton QLD 4872  
Phone: 4096 2702  
Thursday 9.00am–1.00pm and  
2.00pm–4.00pm

## Malanda

### QGAP

31 James Street  
Malanda QLD 4885  
Phone: 4096 7609  
Monday–Friday 8.15am–4.15pm

## Mt Garnet

### QGAP

Police Station  
Garnet Street  
Mt Garnet QLD 4872  
Phone: 4097 9005  
Wednesday 9.30am–3.30pm

## Ravenshoe

### QGAP

Grigg Street  
Ravenshoe QLD 4872  
Phone: 4097 6660  
Monday–Friday 9.00am–1.00pm and  
2.00pm–4.30pm

## Weipa

### QGAP

Central Avenue  
Weipa QLD 4874  
Phone: 4069 9999  
Monday–Friday, 9.00am–4.30pm

## Yarrabah

### QGAP

56 Sawmill Road  
Yarrabah QLD 4871  
Phone: 4056 0727  
Monday–Friday 9.00am–1.00pm and  
2.00pm–3.00pm  
(closed every second Friday)

