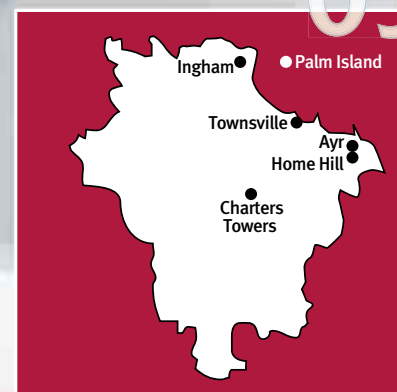




# North Queensland



Casey Hill Lookout, Townsville



## 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 North Queensland region and its delivery on key election commitments for 2004-05.

The Government is meeting the needs of the people of 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 North Queensland region.

My Government will work with the people of 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 North Queensland region, the 2004-05 State Budget highlights include:

- \$11.5 million for a new 70 bed residential aged care facility at Kirwan
- \$1 million to establish an Acute Stroke Unit at the Townsville Hospital
- \$1 million as part of total Government funding of \$4.5 million to upgrade or replace ambulance stations at Townsville, Black River and Kirwan
- \$1.3 million to construct a replacement ambulance station at Ayr
- \$7.07 million to construct the Hervey's Range Developmental Road between Ella Creek and the Gregory Developmental Road to new sealed two-lane standard
- \$834,000 to establish Neighbourhood Police Beats at The Strand and Heatley/Vincent
- \$700,000 of total funding of \$11 million to redevelop the Ingham Hospital
- \$500,000 as part of total Government funding of \$8 million to construct a bypass between the Bruce and Flinders Highways at Stuart in Townsville
- \$250,000 for various road and drainage works on Palm Island
- \$1.04 million, including \$72,000 for fit out, for additional toilets and a library upgrade for The Willows State School.



**Queensland**  
Government

# North Queensland

**This Regional Budget Statement for 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.**

The North Queensland region covers 4.6% of the State. It is home to 194,162 Queenslanders and is growing at the rate of 1.4% per year. Some areas within the region are growing at rates as high as 2.7% per year. The commercial and industrial hub of Townsville and Thuringowa, and the international port, are part of a diverse regional economy. Agricultural produce and mining are important contributors to the region's economic wellbeing, and tourism is becoming increasingly significant, especially in coastal areas.

## 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 improving the North Queensland region's standard and accessibility of hospital, health and emergency services includes spending in 2004-05 on key initiatives such as:

- \$3.55 million to improve the provision of emergency services, including approximately \$1.55 million to replace the ambulance station and upgrade the fire station at Ayr, \$1 million for replacement facilities on Palm Island and a further \$1 million as part of total Government funding of \$4.5 million for upgrades to ambulance stations in Townsville, Black River and Kirwan

- \$2.6 million for the expansion of oncology services through the provision of new equipment for the Townsville Hospital
- \$1 million of total funding of \$3 million to establish an Acute Stroke Unit at the Townsville Hospital, providing specialist stroke treatment and early rehabilitation.

In addition, \$10.43 million will be spent on consolidating community health and community-based mental health services by upgrading facilities at Kirwan.

We have committed \$35.9 million over the next three years to recruit an extra 240 paramedics across Queensland. In 2004-05, \$328,000 will provide eight new life saving ambulance paramedics in North Queensland.

People with disabilities and their carers in North Queensland are supported with \$20.5 million of funding. This includes \$3.74 million to assist adults with a disability maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in their community.

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

- \$23.4 million for public housing construction, upgrades and maintenance projects including \$5.5 million for the renewal of 120 existing houses
- \$6.3 million for community housing projects and services including \$2.5 million for long-term housing needs and \$1.4 million for transitional housing
- \$3.37 million for the Palm Island, Rasmussen (part of Upper Ross) and Vincent Community Renewal areas
- approximately \$1.5 million for the refurbishment of Aitkenvale Hostel which provides accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### Nelly Bay Ferry Terminal



Nelly Bay Ferry Terminal opens up more economic opportunities for Magnetic Island and the greater Townsville region. Commercial ferry services into Nelly Bay began in September 2003.

Above: Maritime Safety Queensland officers

Below: Nelly Bay Harbour



### Residential building approvals

North Queensland, 1999 to 2003



Source: ABS Building approvals, Queensland (8731.3)

and North Queensland includes the cities of Townsville, Thuringowa and of Burdekin, Dalrymple and Hinchinbrook and the Palm Island Ab

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

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.

We are investing in school infrastructure across North Queensland for the benefit of the region's young people and their education. In 2004-05 overall funding includes:

- \$1.5 million, including \$135,000 for fit out, for an additional four-classroom building and extra covered area at Annandale State School
- \$698,000, including \$63,000 for fit out, to complete a \$2.27 million project for additional classrooms and amenities at William Ross State High School.

This is in addition to the \$1.02 million provided for the Triple R program, which will provide repainting, reticulation and re-roofing for 26 local schools, including repainting at Maidavale State School and reticulation at Charters Towers School of Distance Education.

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 \$47 million will be invested in creating around 19,000 training places in the region.

Funding of \$300,000 is provided to support for key industry and economic development initiatives through the Queensland Regional Business Advisory Service and Regional Economic Development Corporation.

### Yabulu Nickel Refinery

Below: Yabulu Nickel Refinery currently processes over 3.6 million tonnes of imported nickel laterite ore every year into high value nickel and cobalt products for world.



BHP Billiton announced a \$450 million expansion of the Yabulu Nickel Refinery near Townsville in March 2004. The expansion is expected to take more than two years to complete, creating excellent job-creating flow-ons for North Queensland.

Below: Ball Mill, Yabulu - Ore is crushed in the ball mill to a consistency of talc powder in preparation for roasting.



### Protecting our children and enhancing community safety

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 North Queensland region will benefit from new funding for State-wide initiatives that include:

- an additional 518 service delivery and support staff who will be employed over the next three years with 318 of these to start in 2004-05 and \$11.74 million for additional frontline staff in 2004-05
- 23 new or expanded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child care agencies by 2006-07 and the

establishment of a new Indigenous Support Branch

- therapeutic services such as counselling and support for children with a disability
- 134 new alternative care places in 2004-05 for young people who are not suited to conventional foster care
- \$4.17 million in 2004-05 to further support our foster carers
- \$4.19 million for new places and improvements to residential care.

Implementing strategies that contribute to safe communities is a priority. In North Queensland key initiatives include \$3.15 million for police facilities including \$2 million for replacement facilities at Ingham.

Approximately \$350,000 will be provided to improve facilities and establish a community patrol in Townsville as part of a broader strategy to manage disorderly people in public places.

### Building Queensland's regions

Efficient and integrated transport networks are important for the ongoing development of regional Queensland. In the North Queensland region major initiatives for 2004-05 include:

- \$19.87 million in partnership with the Australian Government for the Ayr to Townsville section of the Bruce Highway, including completion of the construction of the Douglas Arterial in Townsville
- \$6.89 million for the Flinders Highway between Charters Towers and Hughenden, including construction in the Burra Range area
- \$859,000 to complete works associated with the Townsville railway station
- \$67.5 million over five years to modernise the Ross River Dam.

Power supply and infrastructure will also be improved through initiatives including:

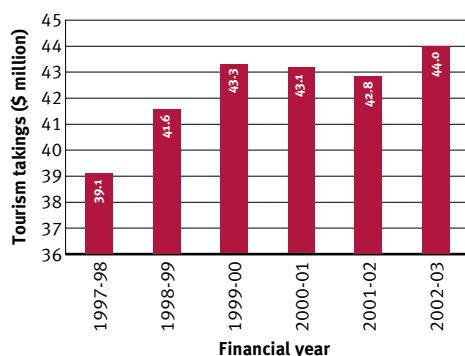
- \$33.15 million for capital works associated with Enertrade's completion of the North Queensland Gas Pipeline Project

d Charters Towers, the shires  
original Council.



#### Tourism takings (\$ million)

North Queensland, 1997-98 to 2002-03



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

- \$10.21 million by Ergon Energy to connect CSR Pioneer Mill and Burdekin Dam co-generation plant to substations
- \$3.7 million by Powerlink to rebuild the Ingham substation.

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.

Funding of \$1.3 million is allocated for sport facilities in the North Queensland region, including:

- \$703,000 to Thuringowa City Council to construct a rowing clubhouse at Loam Island
- \$158,000 to Ayr Bowling Club for two bowling greens and shade
- up to \$75,000 each to: Tennis Townsville to upgrade six courts; Charters Towers and Surrounding

Districts Netball Association to construct six courts; and Townsville Hockey Association for ground improvements.

#### Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

An estimated \$659,000 has been allocated in 2004-05 for research to protect, conserve and restore our coral reefs by ensuring industries and management are sustainable and that ecosystem quality is maintained.

In addition, work to upgrade the Oonoonba Veterinary Laboratory will continue at a cost of approximately \$540,000 to enhance high level biosecurity containment.

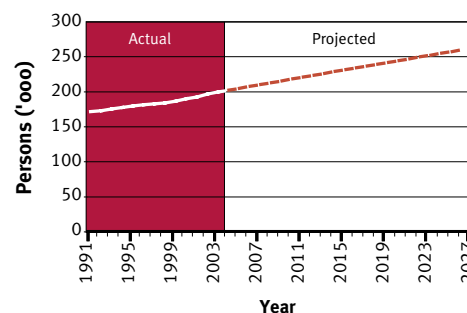
Ongoing impacts on North Queensland's natural and cultural heritage will be managed through an additional \$94,500 for weed and feral animal management and improved fire management.

#### Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs

The Government continues to work in partnership with the people of North Queensland to build its social and economic strengths. The North Queensland region will receive around \$5.22 million to create an estimated 681 jobs in 2004-05 through the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. This includes \$2.31 million allocated to community employment programs and \$2.91 million for apprenticeship and

#### Population projections

North Queensland, 1991 to 2027



Source: Department of Local Government and Planning, Queensland's Future Population, 2003 edition

traineeship incentives to provide jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector.

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 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.

#### 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. Over \$1.38 million is allocated to support regional government offices working with the North Queensland community to develop opportunities and address issues.



Hellenic Dancers bring the culture alive with dances from all parts of Greece at the annual GreekFest in Townsville.

# 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](http://www.qld.gov.au)

## Townsville

### State Development and Innovation Centre

Floor 1  
Enterprise House  
Cnr The Strand and Sir Leslie Thiess Drive  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Telephone 4799 7068  
Facsimile 4799 7069  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 5pm

### Office of Economic and Statistical Research – North Regional Office

State Government Building  
Cnr Walker and Stanley Streets  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Telephone 4760 7650  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

### Department of Local Government and Planning – Women's InfoLink

Ground Floor  
State Government Building  
Cnr Walker and Stanley Streets  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Telephone 4799 7815  
Toll Free 1800 177 577  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

### Department of Communities – Regional Communities Engagement

Level 10  
Suncorp Metway Building  
61 Sturt Street  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Telephone 4760 7330  
Facsimile 4760 7305  
Opening hours:  
Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5pm