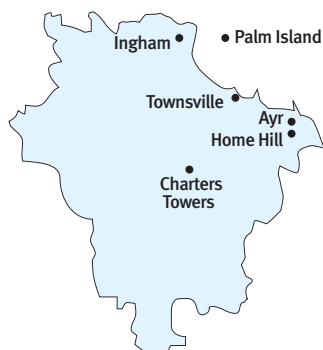


Regional Budget Statement

North Queensland

State Budget 2006-07



North Queensland includes the cities of Townsville, Thuringowa and Charters Towers, the shires of Burdekin, Dalrymple, Hinchinbrook and Palm Island.



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 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

Anna Bligh MP
Deputy Premier and Treasurer

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

- \$129.35 million across North Queensland and Mackay-Whitsunday regions to complete the Burdekin-Moranbah pipeline
- \$117.43 million to replace the Women's Correctional Centre in Townsville and expand the Townsville Correctional Centre for male inmates
- \$12.11 million for new and upgraded public housing
- \$10.6 million towards acquiring infrastructure and improving the Townsville Port
- \$5 million over two years to replace the police station at Stuart
- \$2.5 million in the region to address water quality and salinity issues specific to the region under the *National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality*
- \$1.1 million to upgrade classrooms and the administration area of Ayr State High School.

North Queensland



Blueprint for the Bush

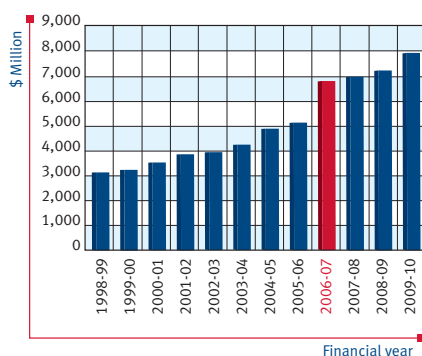
The Queensland Government has developed the Blueprint for the Bush in partnership with AgForce and the Local Government Association of Queensland to enhance the sustainability, liveability and prosperity of rural Queensland. Beginning in 2006-07, the Blueprint commits more than \$150 million over the 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 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 North Queensland region includes:

- \$6.14 million, from over \$60 million State-wide, toward the treatment and care of cancer patients
- \$2.39 million, from a State-wide commitment of \$39 million, for enhanced cardiac services
- \$1.39 million, from a State-wide commitment of \$18 million, to support community mental health services by employing additional specialist mental health staff
- \$2.75 million for Indigenous health programs, including funding towards a 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 145 staff in the Townsville, Bowen and Charters Towers health service districts.

Covering 4.6% of the State, the North Queensland region is home to 205,630 Queenslanders. Agricultural and minerals exports are important contributors to the regional economy, with coastal areas attracting visitors all year-round. Tourism in western areas of the region is becoming increasingly important, particularly during the winter months.

As a Government, we recognise the valuable contribution of 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 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 North Queensland, this commitment includes:

- \$2.2 million for a new ward at Townsville Hospital
- \$1.5 million to continue to redevelop Ingham Hospital
- almost \$1.35 million to non-Government organisations for a range of community health services
- \$400,000 to begin the upgrade of the Residential Aged Care facility in Charters Towers.

The 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

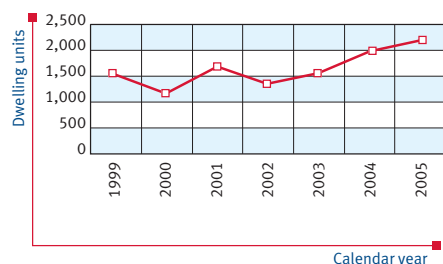
Australian Italian Festival



Photography by Avar Photography

Building approvals

residential dwelling units, 1999 to 2005



Source: ABS Building Approvals, Queensland, (8731.3)

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
- seven new paramedics for the region, fulfilling the Government's \$35.9 million election commitment to recruit 240 extra paramedics State-wide over three years.

The Government is continuing its support for people with disabilities and their carers with a \$24.56 million commitment in North Queensland including:

- \$11.58 million for community organisations to support individuals with a disability and their families
- \$5.09 million to assist adults with a disability to maintain the living arrangements of their choice and participate in the community
- \$1.83 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 North Queensland with funding of \$13.55 million.

This includes: \$1.26 million to finalise development of the Bohlevalle District Community Centre; \$1.11 million for early intervention and family support services; \$962,000 toward domestic and family

violence prevention; and \$378,000 for child care facilities and services.

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

- \$12.11 million for new and upgraded public housing
- \$6.02 million for community housing programs and services to address crisis, transitional and long-term housing needs
- \$4.31 million for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing rental program and \$5.38 million in grants to construct, upgrade and maintain dwellings in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

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 North Queensland include:

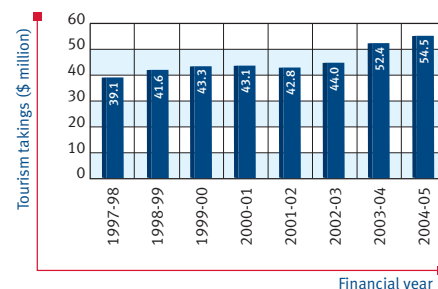
- \$1.01 million to continue support for the sugar industry from the Sugar Industry Innovation Fund
- \$250,000 to develop the next stage of the Bohle Industrial Park
- \$150,000 State-wide to continue the Science on Saturday program to encourage children to understand the importance of science and take 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, \$3.27 million is allocated in North Queensland for school capital works including:

- \$1.1 million to upgrade classrooms and the administration area of Ayr State High School
- \$354,000 investment in Ingham State High School for classroom upgrades
- \$241,000 to continue the Cooler Schools air-conditioning project at a number of North Queensland schools.

Tourism

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



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

In 2006-07, we will provide \$6.06 million, out of a total project cost of \$26.11 million, to begin developing a specialist trade campus at the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE.

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 \$380,000 recurrent funding to enhance local child protection responses on Palm Island 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 North Queensland. Key projects for 2006-07 include:

- \$117.43 million to replace the Women's Correctional Centre in Townsville and expand the Townsville Correctional Centre for male inmates
- \$5 million over two years to replace the police station at Stuart
- funds to establish a Police Beat on The Strand in Townsville.



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 61 schools offering Prep Year in the North Queensland region.

Dairy Farmers Stadium



Local legends the North Queensland Cowboys at the Dairy Farmers Stadium.

Managing urban growth and building Queensland's regions

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

- \$10.6 million towards acquiring infrastructure and improving the Townsville Port
- \$5.51 million to widen and improve sections of the Gregory Developmental Road
- \$3.84 million towards duplicating North Ward Road in Townsville between William Street and Ingham Road, and between Walker Street and Heatleys Parade.

The Government continues to ensure a reliable energy supply through its investment in the electricity network in 2006-07, including:

- \$25.2 million by Ergon Energy to expand and upgrade its distribution network
- \$13 million by Powerlink for work on the Townsville East Substation and new transmission line to Townsville South.

The Government is also managing the State's water resources and ensuring a continuing water supply through a range of initiatives including:

- \$129.35 million across the North Queensland and Mackay-Whitsunday regions to complete the Burdekin-Moranbah pipeline
- \$47.47 million to continue to modernise the Ross River Dam
- \$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 the North Queensland region, \$10 million is allocated to projects including: \$7.8 million for the Thuringowa Riverway Project; \$2.77 million to redevelop the Aitkenvale Police Citizens Youth Club; and \$82,410 to construct a shade structure for a bowling green at Charters Towers.

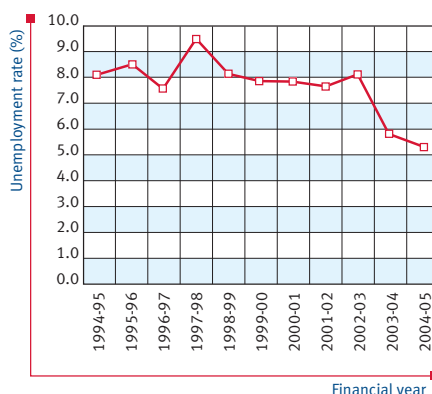
Protecting the environment for a sustainable future

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

- \$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

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

- \$2.5 million in the region to address water quality and salinity issues specific to the region under the *National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality*
- \$233,000 to enhance national and conservation parks in the region.

Growing a diverse economy and creating jobs

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

- \$594,000 for new trade apprenticeships as part of a \$4.91 million plan to provide 1,120 extra training places in the region by 2010
- \$664,000 for new Certificate IV and above training places as part of a \$4.65 million plan to provide 650 additional training places in the region by 2010.

Other Government initiatives to create and protect jobs in the region include:

- \$10.63 million State-wide to collect data to support mineral exploration and investment in Queensland as part of the four-year Smart Exploration Program
- \$6 million State-wide for the 14 Regional Tourism Offices and six Convention Bureaus to promote Queensland's tourism industry, with an extra \$1 million for destination marketing and development
- \$2.09 million to protect our agricultural industry through continued biosecurity programs
- \$600,000 for research and development targeted at pest and disease management in the vegetable industry to reduce pesticide usage and maintain access to domestic and international markets.

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

Ayr

Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water

Little Drysdale Street
Ayr QLD 4807
Telephone 4783 0450
Facsimile 4783 7291
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 5pm

Charters Towers

Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water

Tropical Weeds Research Centre
Natal Downs Road
Charters Towers QLD 4820
Telephone 4787 0600
Facsimile 4787 3969
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 9am to 5pm

Hughenden

Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water

Court House
65 Brodie Street
Hughenden QLD 4821
Telephone 4741 1657
Facsimile 4741 1412
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 4:30pm

Ingham

Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water

Ripple Creek
Halifax Bemerside Road
Ingham QLD 4850
Telephone 4777 2822
Facsimile 4777 2863
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 5pm

Townsville

Department of Communities – North Queensland Regional Office

Level 10, Suncorp Metway Plaza
61 Sturt Street
Townsville QLD 4810
Telephone 4799 5533
Facsimile 4799 5570
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 5pm

Townsville

Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation – Women's Infolink

Ground Floor State Government Building
Cnr Walker and Stanley Streets
Townsville QLD 4810
Telephone 4799 7815
Toll free 1800 177 577
Facsimile 4799 7810
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 5pm

Townsville

Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water

Level 3, Government Office Building
187-209 Stanley Street
Townsville QLD 4810
Telephone 4799 7200
Facsimile 4799 7125
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8:30am to 4:30pm

Townsville

Office of Economic and Statistical Research – North Queensland Regional Office

Level 1, State Government Building
Cnr Walker and Stanley Streets
Townsville QLD 4810
Telephone 4760 7650
Facsimile 4760 7651
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 9am to 5pm

Townsville

State Development Centre

Level 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

Townsville

Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

180-202 River Boulevard
Oonoonba QLD 4811
Telephone 4722 2688
Facsimile 4778 2970
Opening hours:
Monday to Friday – 8am 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