



# Advancing North Queensland

Investing in the future of the north



**Cover images (clockwise):** Gracemere cattle yard, Rockhampton; Cairns Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre; Mount Isa Mines (copper); City of Mackay; proposed North Queensland Stadium (artist's impression by Populous), Townsville.

**Above image:** Murgatroyd Road overpass, Cairns.

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# Advancing North Queensland

## A strong north equals a strong Queensland.

We believe that a strong, resilient and thriving North Queensland is critical to Queensland's economic future.

North Queensland boasts globally recognised expertise in tropical research and development, some of the world's very best tourist attractions, ample land suitable for a vast array of crops and grazing as well as untapped mineral resources.

Its geographic position makes it ideally positioned to be Australia's gateway to Asia and a key hub in the South Pacific.

Our plan for the region is to build on these strengths to drive future growth and employment.

We have engaged widely with the North Queensland community to develop a plan that enables government, industry, community and business to work together to maximise the region's potential and opportunities.

We have heard the message loud and clear. North Queenslanders want to increase the region's connectivity and investment by improving infrastructure—in particular road and water infrastructure—to develop supply chains and address water security. You also told us you want to see more innovation to encourage new industries and make existing industries more competitive.

In this document, you can see details of the numerous initiatives aimed at diversifying and advancing North Queensland's economy. These include a significant investment in regional infrastructure, the Accelerated Works Program, the \$100 million Back to Work Regional Employment Package, investment in protecting the Great Barrier Reef, the development of a biofutures industry, facilitating major bauxite and coal mining projects, and *Working Queensland* and *Advance Queensland* funding to create jobs now and jobs for the future.

We know that a whole-of-government approach is needed to harness the opportunities in North Queensland. That is why we are working with state and federal ministers and lobbying hard to make sure their focus is equally on the north.

Our plan for advancing North Queensland is based on five priority areas to create jobs and to develop the region's economy.

We thank all those passionate North Queenslanders who contributed to our plan for the future and we look forward to forming partnerships with business, industry, local and federal government and the community to drive this important agenda.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anastacia".

**Anastacia Palaszczuk MP**  
Premier and Minister for the Arts



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Coralee".

**Coralee O'Rourke MP**  
Minister for Disability Services,  
Minister for Seniors and  
Minister Assisting the Premier  
on North Queensland

# Making the north a priority

The Queensland Government is working to advance and diversify North Queensland's economy. We recognise the immense economic potential of the region and have a keen focus on delivering on the tremendous opportunities and competitive natural advantages the region presents.

The government's strong commitment to North Queensland is evidenced by a range of actions to date to create jobs and grow the north's economy, including more than \$2.4 billion in infrastructure improvements in North Queensland in 2016–17<sup>1</sup>, supporting up to 7500 jobs. This investment will create jobs now and jobs for the future. It will also create a more resilient and diversified economy that is better able to respond to global economic transformations.

This investment is being supported by the actions the government has taken since February 2015 to develop North Queensland's competitive strengths. The government has worked hard to strengthen North Queensland's tourism industry, which is currently experiencing a significant increase in visitor numbers. For example, domestic overnight visitors to the Whitsundays, Townsville, and Tropical North Queensland regions increased 12 per cent, 34 per cent and 33 per cent respectively in the year to March 2016. International visitors to the same regions also saw strong growth with 5.3 per cent, 1.4 per cent, and 11.1 per cent increases respectively over the same 12-month period.

The government has invested in roads infrastructure to reduce the cost of exporting from the region, and developed large-scale renewable energy projects while approving more traditional resources projects to generate sustainable jobs as the mining boom winds down.

Following extensive consultation personally led by the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, the Honourable Coralee O'Rourke, five priority areas have been identified to accelerate the government's efforts to develop and diversify North Queensland's economy.

The five priority areas being championed by the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, in collaboration with relevant Ministers, are:

- **Roads infrastructure:** Continuing strong state government investment in roads infrastructure for North Queensland through key projects in the \$3.9 billion Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program, and making sure Queensland

gets a fair share of funding under the Developing Northern Australia White Paper's \$600 million Northern Australia Roads Program and the \$100 million Beef Roads Program.

- **Water security:** Securing Queensland's fair share of funding and working to deliver funded projects under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. Also, continuing to undertake Regional Water Supply Security Assessments, and working with councils at risk of running out of water due to drought.
- **Research and innovation:** Engaging with stakeholders to create ongoing opportunities and influence to ensure a strong Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia that maximises industry involvement.
- **Tourism, trade and investment:** Ensuring a dedicated focus on North Queensland in the upcoming Queensland Trade and Investment Strategy and the proposed Advancing Queensland Tourism Strategy to bolster the tourism sector, and increase global exposure and access to Asian markets.
- **North Queensland Stadium:** Leading discussions and engagement with the federal government to secure federal funding to complement the Queensland Government's \$140 million commitment to build a world-class stadium, a vital catalyst for the development of an exciting entertainment, retail and residential precinct adjacent to the Townsville central business district.

The Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland has already made progress on this agenda, having successfully lobbied to secure headquarters in North Queensland for the \$75 million Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia and the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility.

These are positive outcomes, but more will be delivered to help the region reach its potential.

That is why we will continue to work with North Queensland stakeholders to implement these important initiatives.

<sup>1</sup> Source: 2016–17 State Budget Regional Action Plans. North Queensland identified as north of the Tropic of Capricorn.

# Queensland Government actions to advance North Queensland

The Queensland Government's first priority is working to create jobs now and jobs for the future, particularly in North Queensland. North Queensland has enormous potential to leverage its regional strengths. The region's tropical expertise, world-class resources and close proximity to the Asian market offer unique opportunities for expansion and growth.



**\$4.78 billion** in the 2015–16 State Budget to fund **rural and regional infrastructure**. A significant portion was allocated to North Queensland.



**\$440 million Accelerated Works Program**, largely targeting North Queensland to support **950 jobs**.



**\$405 million for the Advance Queensland initiative**, funding programs and targeted measures to help diversify Queensland's economy and create knowledge-based jobs of the future, including in North Queensland.



**\$6 million for Regional Innovation Hubs** encouraging connectivity and collaboration by local innovators and entrepreneurs.



**The Rural Assistance and Drought Package** includes **\$77.9 million** to assist rural producers affected by drought and debt.



**\$1 million booster pack** for remote area boards around the state.



**\$20 billion in private sector projects** facilitated by the Queensland Government in North Queensland.



**Building our Regions Program** allows **\$200 million** (for both rounds one and two) and **\$175 million** (for round three 2016–17) for critical infrastructure development in regional areas.



**\$140 million** commitment to the **North Queensland Stadium**, revitalising Townsville's central business district and supporting up to **700 jobs** during construction.



**\$240 million Skilling Queenslanders for Work investment** over four years **will support up to 32,000 Queenslanders into work**, and focuses on re-skilling youth, mature age job-seekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



**The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility** based in Cairns will enable the Queensland Government to work with the federal government to deliver on infrastructure opportunities for North Queensland, and tap into the **\$5 billion** concessional loans scheme.



**North West Minerals Province Taskforce** to investigate investment barriers in the region.



**\$1.5 million** over three years to stimulate research activity to progress the development of new agriculture in North Queensland, including through leveraging the **Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia**.

# Providing jobs for North Queenslanders

**\$100 million Regional Back to Work Jobs Package to support up to 8000 jobs**

Two-year package to give regional employers the confidence to take on new staff

**\$80 million for Back to Work employer support** to help regional employers take on up to 8000 new employees, including the long-term unemployed, young people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

**\$10 million for Back to Work teams** that know the local economy and local employers, and can connect jobseekers to opportunities and support.

**\$10 million to boost training** for eligible jobseekers to ensure they have the skills they need for work.

# Transport and roads



A reliable and efficient transport network is critical to the economy of North Queensland and for moving goods from production to export.

Stakeholder consultation identified key opportunities for sophisticated and interconnected supply chains through infrastructure development, including roads as an economic enabler. The government continues to play a key role in infrastructure maintenance and development.

With a significant land area, there is a challenge in moving goods from production to export. It is crucial that transport and main roads networks are reliable and support North Queensland trade.

The **Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2016–17 to 2019–20** allocates approximately **\$3.9 billion** to transport and roads infrastructure in North Queensland.

Key North Queensland investments include:

- **\$19.6 million** as the state's contribution for improvements to the **Kennedy Developmental Road** (The Lynd–Hughenden), known locally as the **Hann Highway**.
- **\$42.3 million** for a road-widening package on the **Gregory Developmental Road** (Charters Towers–The Lynd).
- **\$34.6 million** for a new high-level **Cape River Bridge** and approaches on the **Gregory Developmental Road** (south of Charters Towers).

The **\$25 million Townsville–Mount Isa Rail Line upgrade** will deliver a more stable and reliable track structure for freight services and will support **75 regional jobs**.

The **Townsville Eastern Access Rail Corridor** was submitted to Infrastructure Australia in September 2015. The Queensland Government has committed to equally fund the business case to progress this important project with the federal government.

The state and federal governments are delivering major investment on the **Peak Downs Highway**, including **\$189 million** for Eton Range crossing and **\$70 million** to replace four timber bridges to improve efficiency and safety.

An additional **\$30 million** per year is being provided to local governments from 2017–18, through the **Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme**, supporting communities across regional Queensland.

The 2016–17 State Budget allocates **\$34.2 million** for the **Bill Fulton Bridge duplication project** on

the Cairns Western Arterial Road, funded from the **\$180 million** Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program; **\$30 million** for the **Riverway Drive duplication** in Townsville; and **\$7.8 million** for the **Hervey's Range Developmental Road** safety upgrade.

The state and federal governments are investing **\$260.5 million** towards the **Cape York Region Package**, including **\$200 million** to upgrade sections of the **Peninsula Developmental Road**.

The Queensland Government has submitted high priority project proposals to the federal government under the **\$600 million Northern Australia Roads Program** and the **\$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Program**.

The 2016–17 State Budget has allocated state matching funding for high priority works. The Bruce Highway is being upgraded under the **National Partnership Agreement (2014–15 to 2018–19)**.

On the **Bruce Highway**, the Queensland Government, in partnership with the federal government, is delivering **\$8.5 billion** in capacity, flood immunity and safety improvements between 2013–14 and 2022–23. Under this commitment, key major upgrades in North Queensland include:

- Cairns Southern Access Corridor (stage 2)—**\$58 million**
- Cattle Creek and Frances Creek upgrade (south of Ingham)—**\$174 million**
- Townsville Ring Road (section 4)—**\$200 million**
- Houghton River and Pink Lily Lagoon upgrade (south of Townsville)—**\$515 million**
- Mackay Ring Road (stage 1)—**\$565 million**
- Rockhampton Northern Access upgrade (stage 1)—**\$121 million**.

Funding is allocated under the **Accelerated Works Program** for:

- widening and rehabilitation works in the Ayr region, including Didgeridoo Creek to East Barratta Creek, East Barratta Creek to West Barratta Creek and Lochinvar Station Road to Collinsons Lagoon, **\$8.8 million**
- overtaking lanes on the Bruce Highway between Dingo Creek and Emu Creek (north of Proserpine), **\$7 million**.

# Energy and water



The Queensland Government recognises that energy and water security for North Queensland are critical and has set policy to increase renewables, reduce emissions and provide water security to sustain agricultural industries and boost jobs and regional development.

Water security and water infrastructure needed to diversify future economic interests of the region were issues commonly raised by stakeholders throughout North Queensland. This also extended to the development of renewable energy opportunities. The government invests significantly across North Queensland in water and energy initiatives.

Australia's largest electricity distribution company, Energy Queensland, will be formed from the merger of Energex and Ergon Energy in mid-2016, and will be headquartered in Townsville. The merger will also create a new energy services business that will generate up to **500 jobs** over the next decade. Energy Queensland is backing the **\$400 million, 170-megawatt Mount Emerald Wind Farm project** that will create up to **150 jobs** during the construction phase and power up to 75,000 homes when it becomes operational (around 2017).

Aspects of the government's *A Solar Future* policy will drive renewable energy jobs and growth in North Queensland, including:

- a target of one million solar residential rooftops, or 3000 megawatts of installed photovoltaic capacity, by 2020 across Queensland
- the Queensland Productivity Commission's current inquiry to determine a fair price for solar power sold back into the grid
- the Queensland Renewable Energy Expert Panel inquiry on credible pathways to a 50 per cent renewable energy target for Queensland by 2030
- the installation of digital electricity meters to help low-income regional households reduce energy bills and make homes more energy efficient, with funding of **\$5.5 million** from the **\$180 million Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program** as part of the State Infrastructure Plan.



## Solar 120 program

Six projects representing 212 megawatts of capacity are competing for up to 120 megawatts support under the recently expanded Solar 120 program, in partnership with ARENA (Australian Renewable Energy Agency). This has the potential to create up to **250 jobs** during construction.



## The \$800 million Northern Gas Pipeline project

will run from the Northern Territory to Mount Isa, bringing energy supplies to North West Queensland and creating **560 jobs** through construction in the region.

The government will undertake the following water initiatives:

- up to **\$5 million announced under the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund** for economic and environmental feasibility studies for the Nullinga Dam
- the federal government has announced **\$19.8 million under the fund** to assess the economic and environmental feasibility of 14 more projects across Queensland
- securing capital funding under the **\$500 million National Water Infrastructure Development Fund**
- **the environmentally responsible planned release of more than 250,000 megalitres of industry-boosting water** to drive jobs and growth through the tender release for new water from five Gulf River catchments
- **the environmentally responsible planned release of 18,200 megalitres of water to support rural industries**, communities and jobs in the Great Artesian Basin.

# Energy and water



On 5 June 2016, the Premier launched the *Advance Queensland Biofutures 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan* at the BIO International Convention in San Francisco.

The government will invest almost **\$20 million** to facilitate the development of a **\$1 billion biofutures industry** by 2026 to drive investment and development of the industrial biotechnology and bioproducts sector. This will include:

- **\$5 million** for a **Biofutures Industry Development Fund**
- **\$4 million** for a **Biofutures Acceleration Program**

- **\$5 million** for a **Biofutures Commercialisation Program**
- **\$5 million** for the establishment of **Biofutures Queensland**.

Queensland has introduced a biofuels mandate to provide certainty to the biofuels sector. This will encourage investment and growth, leading to more jobs across North Queensland. It will also help create the foundation for a new high-value, knowledge-based biofutures industry in Queensland. The mandate sets minimum sales of ethanol-blended regular unleaded petrol and bio-based diesel and will come into effect on 1 January 2017.



Townsville RSL Stadium solar array

# Tourism, trade and investment



As North Queensland's economy diversifies, a greater focus on tourism, trade and investment will present significant opportunities to create jobs and increase economic activity. Ideally positioned at the international crossroads of the Asia Pacific, North Queensland is in close proximity to the growth markets of the world.

The Queensland Government has taken measures to increase North Queensland's global recognition by actively promoting investment-ready projects located in North Queensland through Trade and Investment Queensland, including aquaculture and agribusiness schemes, biofuels plants, tungsten mines and infrastructure projects to support tourism linked to the Great Barrier Reef. The government has also developed linkages with Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, including a mission to North Queensland showcasing the region's tropical and agricultural expertise in March 2016. The Northern Queensland Economic Summit held in Cairns in 2015 also attracted more than 250 investors who heard about the best investment opportunities across tropical Queensland.

This is critical to increasing export and investment in the region and helping to facilitate more globally competitive local firms. North Queensland's proximity and access to the Asia Pacific region makes it the ideal provider of tropical expertise across a wide range of sectors, including health, agribusiness and the built and natural environments.

Community and business stakeholders agree there are opportunities for greater branding and recognition of North Queensland to incentivise investment uptake and strengthen existing sectors, including encouraging growth in tourism. The Queensland Government contributes extensively across North Queensland in these important areas.



Heart Reef, Whitsundays



## Advance Queensland— Connecting with Asia strategy

The government is providing additional funding of **\$33.5 million** over four years to support an expanded focus on increasing Queensland's share of the Asian tourism market and driving tourism jobs growth in regional Queensland.



**\$400 million to Tourism and Events Queensland** over four years to focus on statewide marketing and events investment that will benefit North Queensland both directly and indirectly.



Boosting the tourism industry by committing **\$100 million to improve water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.**



## **\$10 million Attracting Aviation Investment Fund to secure more flights to Queensland,**

including North Queensland. The fund has secured more than 500,000 new inbound seats into Queensland, which will generate up to \$350 million for our economy every year. This includes Hong Kong Airlines year-round flights from Hong Kong to the Gold Coast, connecting to Cairns.

# Tourism, trade and investment



**\$5 million investment to create a vibrant social and entertainment hub, the Ideas Market, at Townsville's James Cook University campus.** Once completed, the space will be an area where the university and community can interact, encouraging ideas sharing and innovation.



**Opening new trade offices in Chengdu, China and Singapore with \$1.5 million** provided in the 2016–17 State Budget.



**\$10 million for the Transport and Tourism Connections Program, which will include transport and roads access to established tourist attractions through tourist signage, site access, improvements to intersections and sealing of carparks.**



**\$10 million contribution for the Cairns Innovation Centre.**



**\$40 million Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund to attract interstate businesses to Queensland.**



Other initiatives include:

- the Northern Queensland Economic Summit
- regular high-level trade missions
- signing agreements with China Southern Airlines and China Eastern Airlines
- Trade and Investment Queensland working with Asialink Business
- market-led proposals.



Northern Queensland Economic Summit 2015, Cairns

# Infrastructure and development



Infrastructure and development are critical to the success of North Queensland's economy. The Queensland Government is committed to advancing infrastructure projects that will benefit industry and consumers.

As North Queensland's economy transitions, the region's infrastructure will need to keep pace with diversifying industries and shifting demands. The challenge of North Queensland's growth and diversification requires long-term commitment from the public and private sectors, working together to produce positive outcomes for the region. The Queensland Government has demonstrated its strong commitment to providing infrastructure for North Queensland.

The **State Infrastructure Plan** outlines the vision for Queensland's infrastructure future:



- 86 North Queensland projects
- planned total investment of **\$5.4 billion**
- reforms to planning, priorities and investment in infrastructure.

The **State Infrastructure Fund** has also allocated **\$180 million** for the Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program across the state, including:



- Cairns Western Arterial Road, Bill Fulton Bridge (Freshwater Creek) duplication—**\$34.2 million**
- renewal of school facilities in Central Queensland—**\$26.4 million**
- Regional Education Infrastructure Enhancements—**\$20.3 million**
- social housing in a number of locations, including Townsville and Rockhampton—**\$14.2 million**
- Step Up/Step Down Mental Health Units in a number of locations, including in Mackay—**\$12 million**
- new Palm Island Primary Health Care—**\$8.5 million**



The **Building our Regions** program allows for critical infrastructure development in regional areas. Rounds one and two provide **\$200 million** with significant outcomes for North Queensland, including:



- Mission Beach Aquatic Facility
- enabling aged care in Mossman
- Kuranda Suburban Water Security Project
- Cooktown Airport Aviation Park
- new water reservoir in Georgetown
- Lockhart River Water Park
- Winton Geothermal Power Generation
- Doomadgee to Burketown Optical Fibre Link Project
- expansion of the Les Wilson Barramundi Discovery Centre in Karumba
- major infrastructure upgrade of the Cloncurry Saleyards
- Moranbah Resource Recovery Centre Replacement Project



The government allocated an additional **\$175 million** for round three in the 2016–17 State Budget, which will bring much needed infrastructure to regional areas.

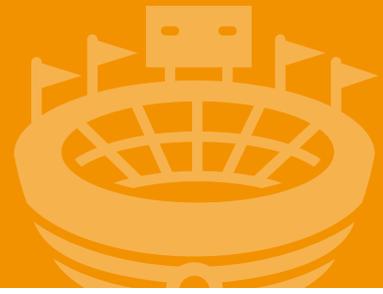


The **\$628,000 marine infrastructure upgrade** projects will benefit local waterway users and provide a boost for local tourism.



**Ports in North Queensland** are critical gateways to international markets. The Queensland Government is working with government-owned corporations, industry and key stakeholders to investigate options to improve supply chain efficiency and port infrastructure that supports economic development.

# Infrastructure and development



**\$10 million** investment for round one of the federal government's **Mobile Black Spot Program** has resulted in a total package of **\$53.85 million** for the state. Mobile coverage will significantly improve, with 68 new or upgraded mobile towers.

**\$15 million** has been allocated over two years in the 2016–17 State Budget to further leverage the federal program.

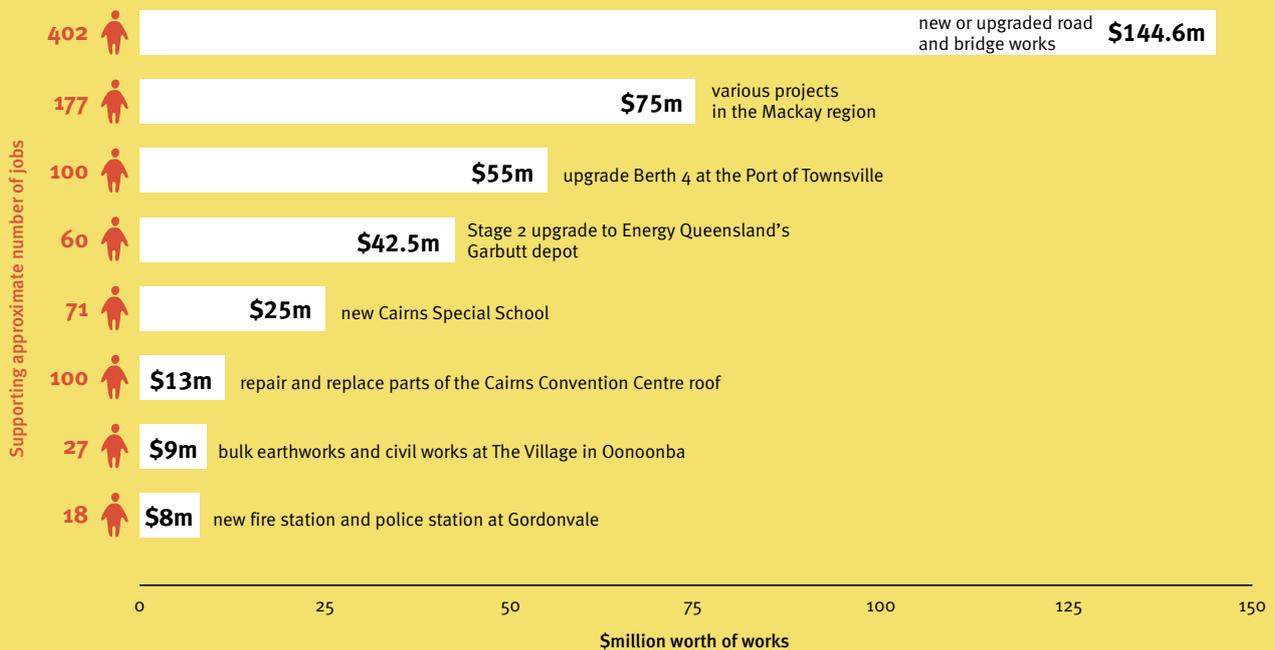


**\$13 million** for the **Cairns Convention Centre roof contract** will support around **100 local jobs**.



**\$6 million** for **Regional Innovation Hubs** to connect local efforts, leveraging key regional strengths and lifting the capability of innovative local firms.

## Accelerated Works Program for North Queensland



This chart represents a sample of the Accelerated Works Program being delivered in the region. It does not represent the complete list of Accelerated Works Program projects being delivered in North Queensland.

# Natural resources and mines



North Queensland has an established and sophisticated resources sector, with world-class minerals and extraction expertise. As the commodity cycle moves into a new phase, significant funding has been allocated to facilitate the transition and create jobs in the region.

Stakeholder consultation recognised key opportunities that North Queensland's natural assets afford us in economic and tourism growth. The government continues to play a role in developing these opportunities. North West Queensland's minerals province has significant investment opportunity and potential with:

- 75 per cent of Queensland's total metal resources—copper, silver, lead, zinc
- significant geothermal and non-traditional energy resources
- opportunity for vital exploration to support mining projects and jobs in the North West.

As part of the Industry Priority Initiative, **\$1.035 million** was allocated in 2015–16 to be spent on four geoscience projects to impact exploration effectiveness and success.

Three of the four projects are located in the North West, near Cloncurry:

- **\$90,000** to advance geochemical detection methods
- **\$400,000** to develop a new suite of geophysical tools, maps and datasets
- **\$354,000** to use advanced computer simulation to predict significant structural sites of new mineralisation.

## **\$2.6 billion Amrun bauxite mine:**

- supports the continued employment of **1400 people** based in Weipa and more than **2000 people** based at the Yarwun and Queensland Alumina Ltd refineries in Gladstone
- at peak construction, expected to provide work for **1100 people**, with an average workforce of **600 people** over three years.

## **\$21.7 billion of combined investment for the Adani Carmichael coal mine:**

- 11 billion tonnes of thermal coal
- significant mining and infrastructure development
- expected to generate more than **5000 jobs** at peak construction and more than **4500 jobs** at peak of operations (as estimated by Adani).

## **CuDeco copper mine, Cloncurry:**

- **\$637 million** to build investment
- expected to generate **300 jobs** at peak construction and **120 jobs** at peak of operations.

## **Dugald River zinc mine, Cloncurry:**

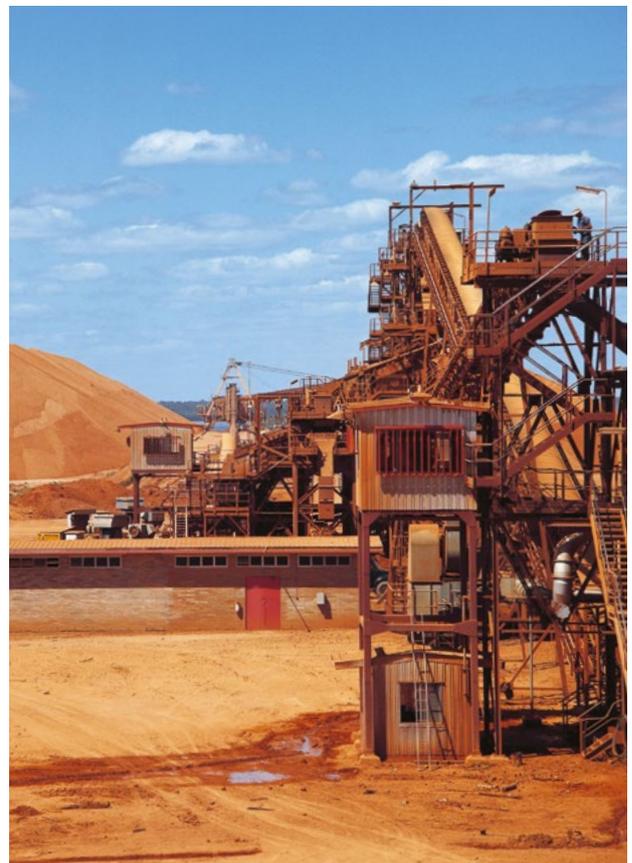
- **\$750 million** to build investment
- expected to generate **600 jobs** at peak construction and **500 jobs** at peak of operations.

## **Altona copper and gold mine, Cloncurry:**

- **\$294 million** to build investment
- expected to generate **250 jobs** at peak construction and **220 jobs** at peak of operations.

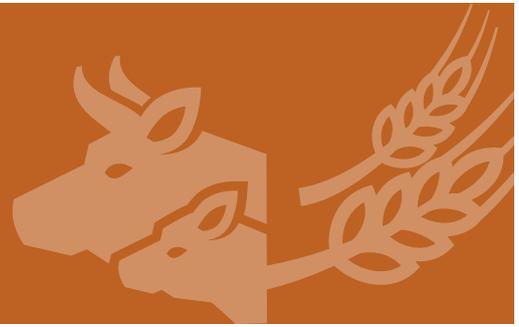
## **Isaac Plains coal mine, Moranbah:**

- expected to generate **150 jobs** at peak of operations.



Bauxite mine, Weipa

# Agriculture



North Queensland's agricultural industry plays a vital role in the state's economy and is world-renowned for producing high-quality, safe, clean and green food at competitive prices. Agriculture has been the backbone of North Queensland and continues to be a key source of employment for the region.

A strong theme from ongoing consultation with the north is the immense importance that the agricultural sector plays. Stakeholders all acknowledged there are key opportunities for strengthening existing operations and harnessing emerging opportunities in agriculture and aquaculture.

The Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) has developed a scaled, operationally focused investment strategy for the Australian food sector. This includes building more effective food supply chains that will be attractive to investors and operators. The Agribusiness Investment Platform invests along the value chain, concentrating on scale and integration. It will invest in both real assets and the operational entities involved in the production and distribution of food and will connect Australian food production to global food demand.

An example is QIC's signed agreement to acquire an 80 per cent interest in one of Australia's largest agricultural enterprises, the North Australian Pastoral Company. Through this interest, QIC recognises the significant potential of North Queensland as a food champion and the value of capitalising on strong beef demand driven by growth in Asia and our reputation for producing clean, healthy food.

As part of the 2016–17 State Budget, the government has provided:

- **\$10.8 million** to restore Queensland's biosecurity capability to world's best practice
- **\$7.3 million** funding to continue the response program for the Panama Disease outbreak
- **\$3.86 million** to pilot a new approach to moving Queensland's pipeline of agriculture and food technology intellectual property into commercially viable opportunities
- **\$1.5 million** over three years to stimulate research activity to progress the development of new agriculture in North Queensland, including through leveraging the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia.

The Queensland Government has implemented a number of initiatives to diversify North Queensland's agriculture and to sustain the industry through challenges such as drought.

The government, in partnership with industry, has invested significantly in developing farming systems and practices to improve enterprise resilience and business and environmental performance. This directly complements other environmental initiatives, particularly improving water quality in the Great Barrier Reef.



The government has taken steps to:

- drive growth, efficiency and sustainability
- support a modern and skilled workforce and labour availability
- advance research and development
- improve Queensland's biosecurity capability
- deliver service innovation.



The recently released **food and fibre policy** acknowledges a unique opportunity to develop our food and fibre industries in a sustainable way, embracing a whole-of-supply-chain approach.

The government is responding to the **Rural Debt and Drought Taskforce** and the **Rural Debt Banking Roundtable** and will continue to provide drought relief to declared drought regions.

The 2016–17 State Budget provides **\$77.9 million** for a **Rural Assistance and Drought Package** and demonstrates the government's commitment to assist rural producers affected by debt and drought.

The Queensland Government is capitalising on Free Trade Agreements with Japan, South Korea and China, as well as the new Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. This has included trade missions to key export markets, such as Japan, China, Indonesia and India.

# Priority areas for North Queensland

## Consultation

Strong community input and consultation with business leaders, peak groups and other key stakeholders has informed the priority areas and the development of a broader agenda to develop North Queensland.

Consultation will remain a key focus to inform the government's ongoing role in driving economic development in the north.

The role of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland has included:



Engagement with key stakeholders from finance, mining, agriculture, industry, education, peak groups and local government at

### **six business roundtables.**

- more than 130 participants
- June to December 2015 in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Brisbane, Rockhampton and Mount Isa.



Discussing funding opportunities with around **40 North Queensland mayors** at the **Townsville Economic Forum** to identify regional priorities.



Co-hosting the **Northern Queensland Economic Summit** with the Premier that was attended by more than **250 domestic and international investors.**



Leading a delegation of North Queensland mayors to Canberra to meet with federal government ministers and shadow ministers to leverage funding from the **White Paper on Developing Northern Australia.**



Continuing to work with the interim Chair of the **Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia.**

## Priority areas



**Roads infrastructure**



**Water security**



**Research and innovation**



**Tourism, trade and investment**



**North Queensland Stadium**

The ongoing work of the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland has already influenced the shape and direction of activities and priorities for the north, including strategic input to the State Infrastructure Plan. But more can be done to help North Queensland reach its economic potential.

The Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland will engage with stakeholders and work collaboratively with relevant ministers to ensure these priorities become a reality.

These priority areas will provide jobs for North Queensland and address the themes raised by stakeholders through the six business roundtables, Northern Queensland Economic Summit and the Townsville Economic Forum.

The Queensland Government will boost key economic infrastructure, including priority roads and water projects, a world-class innovation and research hub, a new stadium for North Queensland, and introduce new tourism and investment strategies to create new jobs.

These priority areas will see clear benefits, including increased construction and jobs, improved access to export markets and improved transport efficiency, greater water security, industry innovation converting to commercial realisation, and more investment from Asian markets. This means increased regional economic activity, and a diversified resilient economy that is ready for the jobs of the future.

# Roads infrastructure



Riverway Drive, Townsville

## This priority area will advance North Queensland through:

- Improving supply chain infrastructure.
- Providing investor confidence.
- Improving efficiency of the transport of goods.
- Stimulating jobs growth.

## This priority area has links to:

- the State Infrastructure Plan.
- the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP).

## The government has been advancing North Queensland by:

- Submitting priority projects and packages to the federal government.
- Making submissions to the federal government's **\$600 million Northern Australia Roads Program** and the **\$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Program**.
- Releasing the State Infrastructure Plan, foreshadowing a range of projects in North Queensland.
- Detailing the needs of North Queensland to Infrastructure Australia.
- Accelerating priority works in the 10-year Bruce Highway upgrade program.

Implementing North Queensland components of the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program, key investments include:

- **\$19.6 million** as the state's contribution for improvements to the **Kennedy Developmental Road (The Lynd – Hughenden)**, known locally as the **Hann Highway**.
- **\$42.3 million** for a pavement-widening package on the **Gregory Developmental Road** between Charters Towers and The Lynd.

- **\$34.6 million** for a new high-level **Cape River Bridge** and approaches on the **Gregory Developmental Road**, south of Charters Towers.

## The government will commit further to advancing North Queensland through:

### Priority roads and rail:

- Working with stakeholders to finalise implementation arrangements for **\$3.9 billion** for North Queensland under the **Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2016–17 to 2019–20**.
- Working to secure Queensland's fair share of funding under the Developing Northern Australia White Paper's **\$600 million Northern Australia Roads Program** and the **\$100 million Beef Roads Program**, and shaping implementation of these projects in the north.
- Engaging with the federal government to negotiate funding outcomes to:
  - » progressively upgrade the Mount Isa to Townsville rail corridor, including the Townsville Eastern Access Rail Corridor.
  - » accelerate the 10-year Bruce Highway upgrade works.
  - » progress the National Land Transport Network renewal.
  - » provide key upgrades to the Flinders Highway and other key freight routes.
- Ongoing advocacy for North Queensland to federal government ministers.

### Beef roads:

- Conduct discussions with local government and other key stakeholders.
- Deliver Northern Australia Beef Roads Program priorities in North Queensland over the next three years.

# Water security



Copperlode Dam, Cairns

## This priority area will advance North Queensland through:

- Establishing water priorities.
- Increasing investment.
- Improving infrastructure to enhance access to export markets.
- Stimulating jobs growth.
- Improving investor confidence.
- Stimulating regional economic activity.

## This priority area has links to:

- the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund (NWIDF).

## The government has been advancing North Queensland by:

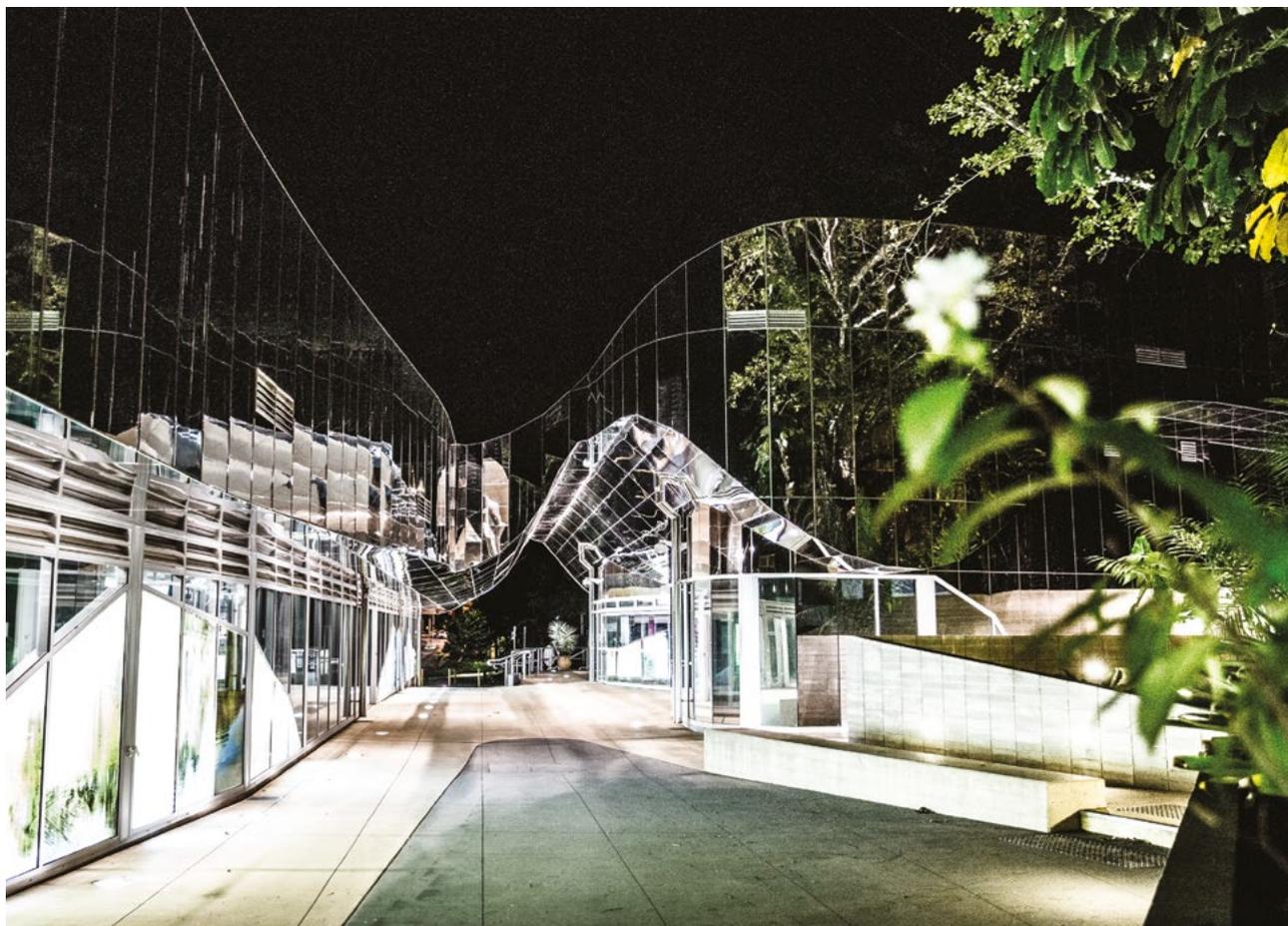
- Leading Queensland's response to the NWIDF.
- Providing advice on applications for dam and water feasibility studies under the NWIDF (Part 1).
- Engaging with the federal government on state priorities for a fair share of NWIDF funding.
- Leading a staged assessment of the previously announced Nullinga Dam feasibility study.
- Introducing the Cape York Water Resource Plan to deliver sustainable water management to the Cape, providing certainty and opportunity for development and Indigenous purposes. Preliminary hydrologic, socio-economic, cultural heritage and environmental technical assessments have been undertaken.

- Planning investment and delivery of water infrastructure, projects and regional water priorities, as outlined in the State Infrastructure Plan.
- Funding water infrastructure in North Queensland (Kuranda Suburban Water Security Project; new water reservoir in Georgetown).
- Advancing the proposal to raise the Burdekin Falls Dam.

## The government will commit further to advancing North Queensland through:

- Continuing to undertake Regional Water Supply Security Assessments.
- Leading state decision-making on the capital component of the NWIDF (Part 2).
- Continuing to work with councils at risk of running out of water due to drought.
- Engaging with stakeholders in the region when funding decisions have been made through the NWIDF and shaping implementation of these projects in the north.

# Research and innovation



Cairns Botanic Gardens Visitor Centre

## This priority area will advance North Queensland through:

- Influencing and advancing Australia's research agenda with North Queensland expertise.
- Generating at least **\$150 million** in research to improve the productive capacity of North Queensland's agricultural industry.
- Leveraging North Queensland's tropical expertise.
- Diversifying the regional economy.
- Creating sustainable jobs of the future.
- Physically basing expertise in the region.

## This priority area has links to:

- Queensland's food and fibre policy.
- Advance Queensland.

## The government has been advancing North Queensland by:

- Developing a capability statement in research for North Queensland agriculture and tropical health.
- Collaborating with industry and research partners.
- Meeting with the interim Chair of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Developing Northern Australia.
- Leveraging North Queensland's tropical research expertise.

- **\$1.5 million** over three years to stimulate research activity to progress the development of new agriculture in North Queensland, including through leveraging the **Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia**.

## The government will commit further to advancing North Queensland through:

- Considering program consistencies and leveraging opportunities between Advance Queensland and the CRC to influence the research focus for North Queensland.
- Building on the work of the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine.
- Identifying opportunities for private investment into North Queensland through the NAIF to maximise the CRC's commercial and social impact.
- Meeting quarterly with the CRC board once established.
- Developing the **\$10 million** Cairns Innovation Centre.
- Encouraging connectivity and collaboration by local innovators and entrepreneurs through implementation of the **\$6 million** Regional Innovation Hubs.

# Tourism, trade and investment



Cairns Domestic Airport

## This priority area will advance North Queensland through:

- Highlighting regional strengths in the Queensland Investment Strategy and Advancing Queensland Tourism Strategy.
- Increasing investment in the region.
- Improving North Queensland's global recognition.
- Increasing marketing tools to focus commercial investment attraction.
- Growing the tourism sector.
- Increasing market access for industry.
- Developing extra freight and export capacity.
- Reducing export costs.

## This priority area has links to:

- the Advancing Queensland Tourism Strategy.
- the Draft International Education and Training Strategy to Advance Queensland 2016 to 2026.

## The government has been advancing North Queensland by:

- Delivering **\$10 million** to the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund and **\$400 million** to Tourism and Events Queensland to focus on statewide marketing and events investment that will benefit North Queensland, including:
  - » the new Tourism Network Funding Program 2016–2019
  - » marketing iconic experiences, such as natural encounters, reef, islands, beaches, events and Queensland lifestyle
  - » supporting major and destination events including the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville, the Mount Isa Mines Rotary Rodeo in Outback Queensland, Cairns Indigenous Art Fair and Port Douglas Carnivale in Tropical North Queensland, Mackay Festival of Arts in Mackay and Whitsunday Reef Festival in the Whitsundays
  - » delivering experience development programs to assist industry.
- Supporting whole-of-government trade and investment mission activities, and promoting investment-ready projects located in North Queensland.

- Ensuring materials for trade and investment missions highlight the region's tropical expertise.
- Working with the tourism industry to showcase the best experiences of North Queensland to the world.
- Allocating **\$10 million** for the Transport and Tourism Connections program to allow local governments to access shared funding to improve approaches to tourist and culturally significant sites across western Queensland.
- Providing **\$33.5 million** under the Advance Queensland—Connecting with Asia Package to focus on increasing Queensland's share of the Asian tourism market.
- **\$40 million** Advance Queensland Industry Attraction Fund.

## The government will commit further to advancing North Queensland through:

- Promoting regional workshops through Trade and Investment Queensland, the Department of State Development and the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games.
- Developing a North Queensland investment strategy as part of the proposed Queensland Trade and Investment Strategy to highlight competitive advantages.
- Delivering the Advancing Queensland Tourism Strategy that will seize on Queensland's competitive advantages to grow tourism, including North Queensland tourism.
- Increasing air route seat capacity into North Queensland and attracting new aviation routes into North Queensland.
- Providing a forum for tourism operators and industry to maximise opportunities for North Queensland.
- Working with high-end tourism operators to better position North Queensland.
- Building relationships with emerging significant cities in Asia to attract visitors.
- Increasing the digital capabilities of tourism operators.
- Identifying opportunities for development or refurbishment of demand-driving infrastructure.

# North Queensland Stadium



Proposed North Queensland Stadium, Townsville

## This priority area will advance North Queensland through:

- Raising North Queensland's profile, creating jobs and improving liveability.
- Increasing public and private investment in North Queensland infrastructure.
- Stimulating urban renewal.
- Attracting more domestic and international visitors to Townsville.

## This has links to the government's election commitment:

- Contribute up to **\$100 million** for the construction of a new sports stadium for North Queensland.

## The government has been advancing North Queensland by:

- Committing up to **\$40 million** of additional funding to construct the stadium, meaning a total financial commitment of up to **\$140 million**.
- Recognising the need for a best-practice regional stadium model as identified through the business case.
- Progressing funding discussions and engagement with the federal government, the Townsville City Council, and the National Rugby League (NRL), to secure and realise funding commitments to build the stadium, including with other potential contributors.

- Advocating for federal government funding during the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland's delegation trip to Canberra in February 2016.
- Contracting KPMG to advise on procurement models and market-sounding delivery.

## The government will commit further to advancing North Queensland through:

- Finalising funding discussions with the federal government, the Townsville City Council, the NRL, and other potential contributors.
- Exploring and identifying uses for the stadium beyond the NRL (eg. V8 supercars events, the A-League, concerts, sports medicine facilities) to increase appeal to potential investors.
- Supporting the Queensland Government's best-practice regional stadium model as identified through the business case.

# Advancing North Queensland together

North Queensland has a great opportunity to build on the many strengths it possesses to drive future growth and employment. Our common goal is to maximise North Queensland's potential.

To achieve that requires a willingness to work together and to keep up to date with the latest developments.

The Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland will provide biannual progress reports on the five priority areas, as well as continuing conversations with key stakeholders to ensure a truly collaborative approach to developing North Queensland.

It will take more hard work and commitment but with a plan in place to build the region, now is an exciting time for North Queensland. The rewards are there for all.

**To make sure you stay up to date, contact:**

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Email: [dpcpolicyqld@premiers.qld.gov.au](mailto:dpcpolicyqld@premiers.qld.gov.au)

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Robert Watkins of Mt Uncle Banana Plantation produces banana flour, Far North Queensland





