

## MEDIA RELEASE

# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM EXPANSION TO DRAW VISITORS POST-LOCKDOWN

A BOUNTY of natural assets, headlined by the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest, will help draw travel-hungry visitors out of lockdown and into the Port Douglas Daintree region.

The local tourism industry gathered for the launch of the Port Douglas Daintree Destination Tourism Plan 2025 at the Palmer Sea Reef Golf Course last night.

Tourism Port Douglas Daintree (TPDD) has spent the past year taking a deep dive into visitors' perceptions and behaviour, community needs and an analysis of experience opportunities that align to the region's natural assets.

TPDD Chief Executive Officer Tara Bennett said while tourism has gone through a turbulent time, future planning was essential to remain focused on sustainable industry progress.

"The Cairns lockdown effectively cut Douglas off from the rest of Australia. Visitation has come to a standstill, and while we may not be in lockdown, the door has been shut on almost every market," she said.

"During this time, it's important we look ahead and plan for a strong future for tourism which contributes to 80% of the region's economy."

"Yesterday's launch of the Destination Tourism Plan 2025 provides a roadmap of actions and opportunities for sustainable tourism growth, expansion of experiences and addressing infrastructure needs."

The plan was informed by an extensive Brand Review, which listened to community and visitors' views on the region's brand proposition. Overwhelmingly respondents, both past and potential visitors, were in favour of the phrase: "Where the rainforest meets the reef" and identified the region's abundance of natural assets as top draw cards.

The Destination Tourism Plan and Brand Review are supported by the Port Douglas Daintree Events Strategy 2025, with the region firmly setting its sights on attracting new events that celebrate the region's natural drawcards.

"Events achieve a number of goals including attracting first time visitors, stimulating visitation in off peak periods, and amplifying a destination's profile," Mrs Bennett said.

Douglas Shire Council endorsed Tourism Port Douglas Daintree's (TPDD) strategies to lead the region's tourism sector into the future, recently committing \$1.35 million into the destination marketing organisation over the next three years.

Douglas Shire Mayor Michael Kerr said TPDD was well poised to cut-through a cluttered domestic tourism market.

"We want to target on regional events which generate tourism for the region, showcasing our destination and allowing us to share our story with a wider diverse audience," he said.

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### Destination Tourism Plan highlights include:

- Re-fresh the Reason by supporting new first nation, hiking, tropical food and eco luxe experiences.
- Elevate the regional experiences through large scale projects like Mossman Botanical Gardens, a multi-use all weather event facility and public art and visitor node beautification.
- Integrated pathways to support cycling and walking trails to encourage dispersal and travellers interested in active pursuits, health and wellness.
- Sustainability capacity programs and pathways to carbon neutrality and energy solutions

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