A Fresh Approach to Ecotourism Investment in Queensland

PRESENTATION BY:

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GENERAL MANAGER
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AT:

THE GLOBAL ECO-ASIA PACIFIC TOURISM CONFERENCE 2012 – OPTIMISING ECO WONDERS

15 October 2012
1. PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- LNP Policy commitment
- DestinationQ Forum, 25-26 June 2012
- Previous consideration and feedback
- Ecotourism Policy reforms
- Planning Reforms Agenda
- Tourism Investment Attraction Models
- Case Studies
LNP Tourism Policy

• Deliver a 20 year Strategic Plan to return Queensland’s tourism industry to number 1’, includes ecotourism
• Double the overnight visitor expenditure to $30 billion by 2020
• Re-invigorate whole-of-government support: DestinationQ
• Establish Tourism Investment Attraction Unit, DTESB
• Recognise the role of National Parks and protected areas in the delivery of high yield ecotourism
3. DestinationQ FORUM

DestinationQ forum on 25, 26 June 2012, Cairns

1. Improve access to protected areas through review of Nature Conservation Act 1992
2. Develop and implement a State Planning Policy, which recognises ecotourism use, and projects deliverable in 2 year timeframe
3. Streamline and reduce the duration of approval process
4. Develop a long term new Queensland ecotourism plan
5. Reduce cost and regulatory burdens to business
4. DestinationQ Partnership Agreement

Partnership Agreement Commitment

• Private sector investment in tourism will be encouraged
• Include tourism issues in planning: Tourism State Planning Instrument
• Encourage new ecotourism products
• Remove red tape for tourism operators.
• Develop a new Queensland Ecotourism Plan
• Review the Nature Conservation Act
5. PREVIOUS PILOT PROGRAM

1. Seven demonstration sites for ecotourism identified.

2. Six site prospectus prepared, three sites were offered through a two-stage tendering process, probity advisor engaged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Current status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ninney Rise</td>
<td>Site prospectus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jonah Beach</td>
<td>Site prospectus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eurong</td>
<td>Site prospectus</td>
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<td>Wallaman Falls</td>
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<td>Green Mountains</td>
<td>Site prospectus</td>
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<td>Mt Mee</td>
<td>Site prospectus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cowan South</td>
<td>Site prospectus</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Stradbroke Island*</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: * site not yet identified
6. LESSONS LEARNED

Investor Feedback

1. 10 year term of Agreements on park or 15 years off park are too prescriptive & do not necessarily reflect commercial realities.

2. 7% return to the State is also too prescriptive & does not necessarily reflect commercial realities.

3. Government selected sites; suitability questionable; not Best Practice

4. Restrictive accommodation options and infrastructure (safari tents)
Ecotourism Plan will provide a new vision for ecotourism in Queensland that facilitates commercial access to national parks.

**Key aims of the Plan are to:**
- Regain Queensland’s status as Australia’s number 1 ecotourism destination;
- Increase visitation to Queensland’s national parks;
- Improve the economic contribution and perceived value of Queensland’s national parks; and
- Provide for a more diverse and robust ecotourism industry.

**Expected outputs:**
- A new vision for ecotourism in Queensland
- Identification of Queensland’s unique selling points and hero experiences
- Options to improve access and red-tape reduction
- Ways to make ecotourism opportunities more attractive to tour operators
- An action plan with immediate, short and long-term actions including a list of catalyst projects that celebrate Queensland’s competitive advantage in ecotourism
- Consistency with proposed NCA Reforms
8. PLANNING CHALLENGES

- Tourism has not been given priority
- Development approval process – complex, ambiguous, multiple process driven, time consuming: Disincentive
- Ministerial ‘call-in’ powers recognise only large, significant complex tourism projects
- Restrictions on number of beds for tourism accommodation
- Restrictions outside urban footprints for tourism projects
9. PLANNING REFORMS AGENDA

1. **Temporary State Planning Policy (SPP) – 24/8/ 2012.**
   - A statutory instrument under the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009.*
   - Recognition of tourism as a legitimate land use.

2. **Purpose**
   - To ensure that economic growth is not adversely impacted by planning processes

3. **Promoting tourism**
   - Protecting Queensland’s tourism attractions and significant natural assets, for the benefit and sustainability of the tourism industry;
   - Facilitating tourism projects that complement local conditions; and
   - Removing hurdles and locational limitations for appropriate tourism development.

4. **Regional Plans**
   - Darling Downs Regional Plan
   - Central Queensland Regional Plan
   - SEQ Plan – **Mid 2014**

(Consultation October, 2012)
10. Investment Attraction – Private Sector Model

Application: Privately owned land (Freehold)

What is new: Tourism Investment Attraction Unit

- To promote awareness of Tourism Investment opportunities and practically support investors. Partners: TQ, IQ, TA, Austrade, TIQ, DNPRSR.

Identify challenges
Set milestones

Facilitate linkages & partnerships

Increase exposure & support capital raising

Investment secured:
After care

Developer Project Roadmap and clarify expectations of TIAU

Introduce stakeholders across all levels of Government to help clients navigate the system and overcome barriers to investment.

Host initiatives for proponents to pitch for investment.
Introduce and assist with partners (both domestic and international) to help realise the project

Engage with Clients post-investment to ensure completion of case management commitment and to investigate re-investment opportunities
11. CASE STUDY 1

Ozone Whitsundays Eco Resort and Fauna Park

• $30M project to develop a 4.5 star environmentally sustainable resort,
• 65 ha property, 10 kms from Airlie Beach. Comprises:
  – 149 rooms
  – extensive walking tracks to forest viewing tower and fauna park

• Fills product gap in region for this type of accommodation and nature-based tourism.

Support provided by DTESB:
  – Participated in Business Delegation China Mission with Tourism Minister in July 2012
  – China Mission – organised 5 pitching opportunities + networking
  – Pitching opportunities in Brisbane to 3 inbound delegations
  – Promoted through Tourism Investment Opportunity Register managed by DTESB
12. Investment Attraction – Public-Private Sector Model

Application: Publicly owned land (Protected estates, USLs)

What is new: Revamped Investment Model

- Model is to be consistent with Queensland Ecotourism Plan. Themes may include:

**Site identification**

**Site Preparation**
- Native title resolution
- Navigate planning matters
- Surveying, engineering and architectural/drafting services

**Broader community Consultation**

**Site Prospectus**
- Site prospectus developed

**Investor-led**
- Open to innovative ideas

**Government-led**
- Accommodation
- Experiences
- Attractions

**Going to Market**

**Tender Selection**
- Merit based process
  - Concept plan
  - Commercial viability
  - Compliance with environmental guidelines
  - Economic benefits

**Site open day**
- Pitch to potential investors
- Face-to-face meeting with investors

**EOI**
- Advertise EOI

**Terms & Conditions**
- Revised to respond to investor feedback

**Terms & Conditions**

**After care**
- Engage with Clients post-investment to ensure completion of case management commitment
13. CASE STUDY 2

OBI OBI ZIPLINE

The Sunshine Coast Hinterland Nature Based Tourism Plan, September 2009, identified Canopy Zip Line as a catalyst project.

Product option: New Zip Line potentially through the Kondalilla National Park would seek to provide adventure experience to visitors.

Challenges: to investment to be addressed:
- Native Title Resolution
- Tenure and Planning Issues

Proposed Approach
- Partnership approach - QPWS, Sunshine Coast RC, TQ, SEQ Water, DTESB
- Determine suitable options to deal with Native Title
- Develop Site Prospectus
- EOI process
Lake Bindegolly National Park – New Bird Hides

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BULCO SHIRE COUNCIL
QUEENSLAND PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, MAJOR EVENTS, SMALL BUSINESS AND THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Context:

Ecotourism Enhancements to Lake Bindegolly National Park

A meeting was held on 17 July 2012 at Bulco Shire Chambers, in order to examine the feasibility as well as roles and responsibilities of agencies to create bird hides and associated interpretative infrastructure, to enhance the visitor experience at the Lake Bindegolly National Park.

Agreement in Good Faith

All parties agree, in principle, to pursuing the creation of bird hides and related infrastructure, consistent with the objectives and intentions outlined, in good faith in this Memorandum of Understanding.

Signed:

Mike Hayward
CEO
Bulco Shire Council

Neal Muller
General Manager
QTESB

Chris Crafter
Operations Manager
QPWS

17 July 2012

THANK YOU