

# Queensland Ecotourism Trails Program *Sustainability and commerciality - two sides of the same coin*

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# *Tourism in Queensland*

- There is increasing demand for authentic, experiential and transformative travel experiences.
- Travelers are now more likely to seek out experiences that include cultural immersion and experiential education.
- Queensland's breathtaking natural environment inspires millions of visitors every year - from World Heritage Areas to ancient Indigenous culture, the uniqueness and sustainability of these natural and cultural assets is a key competitive advantage.
- In the Tropical North, **tourism is worth \$3.1 billion** and supports one in five local jobs.
- The Queensland Government is supporting the future of the region through sustainable tourism growth, protecting the environment, and delivering new ecotourism experiences for visitors.
- The development of new, innovative ecotourism products is essential to satisfy visitor expectations and support the pathway to further tourism growth.



# *Queensland Ecotourism Trails Program*

- In 2013, The Nature Conservation Act 1992 was amended to provide for development of low-impact, purpose-built ecotourism infrastructure on national parks that is ecologically sustainable, is in the public interest and, to the greatest possible extent, preserves the land's natural and cultural condition.
- To facilitate this sustainable development, Queensland's Department of Innovation, Tourism Industry Development and the Commonwealth Games (DITID) are delivering the ***Queensland Ecotourism Trails program***.
- The program which aims to collaborate with Traditional Owners and regional communities to deliver new tourism opportunities for Queensland, founded on social, environmental and economic outcomes.
- The program has three three key pillars:
  1. Protecting culture
  2. Preserving and presenting natural assets
  3. Future-proofing regional communities.



# *Queensland Ecotourism Trails Program*

## *The Wangetti Trail*

- Approximately 94 kilometres in length, the proposed dual-use walking and mountain biking track travels through Tropical North Queensland's coast and hinterland from Port Douglas to Palm Cove.
- Local and international visitors will enjoy one-of-a-kind cultural and nature-based experiences, winding through the stunning coastal and hinterland scenery of the World Heritage-listed Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef.
- With internationally recognisable scenery and iconic lookouts, the Wangetti Trail may include guided tours, beach connections, unique flora and fauna and public campsites or privately-operated low-impact eco-accommodation.
- Visitors will be able to walk the trail from Port Douglas to Wangetti Beach over six days and five nights or bike from Wangetti Beach to Palm Cove in two days and one night, or up to three days for the full trail.



# *Queensland Ecotourism Trails Program*

## *Cooloola Great Walk*

- The Cooloola Great Walk, Great Sandy National Park is an existing 102 kilometre walking and camping experience that links Noosa North Shore with Rainbow Beach.
- The proposal is to complement and enhance the existing Cooloola Great Walk and its public infrastructure and amenity. The additions could include nature-based tourism offerings such as low-impact eco-accommodation, guided tours and additional bushwalking experiences.





# *Queensland Ecotourism Trails Program*

## *Thorsborne Trail*

- The Thorsborne Trail is an existing rudimentary 32 kilometres class 5 trail along the eastern coast of Hinchinbrook Island off Cardwell, Queensland. The island is home to the world's largest number of mangrove species and has significant environmental and natural attraction.
- The public has access to the track and associated facilities, albeit with a limit of 40 people at a time.
- There is a well-recognised potential for an upgrade of the track and boardwalks as well as construction of accommodation pods to enable 3 or 4 day walks.



# *Queensland Ecotourism Trails Program*

## *Whitsunday Island Trail*

- The Queensland Government committed \$2.78 million to establish a new multi-day walk across the island from Whitehaven Beach to Tongue Point and a \$5 million election commitment to establish unique, premium eco-tourism facilities and experiences (including eco-accommodation options) on the island.
- The Queensland Government intends to link via a multi-day walking track the southernmost point of Whitehaven Beach to Tongue Point. The 20 kilometre connection between those tracks is to be constructed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. Most tourists would cover the whole length of the proposed Whitsunday Trail in two days.



# *Ecotourism in Queensland*

Over the past year, PwC have been assisting the Queensland Government in developing and implementing this program investigating feasibility and commerciality of the proposed projects through an innovative and collaborative mode, focused on Traditional Owners and working in close partnership with other levels of government, tourism operators and the wider community.

Our role has been to recommend approaches to potential products and opportunities, particularly private investment in national parks. To date we have advised on:

- Wangetti Trail Business Case
- Whitsunday Island Trail Feasibility Study
- Ecotourism Trails Expression of Interest
- Cooloola Great Walk Transaction
- Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail.

PwC are advising on other major ecotourism projects across Northern Australia, including the Kakadu National Park Tourism Master Plan.

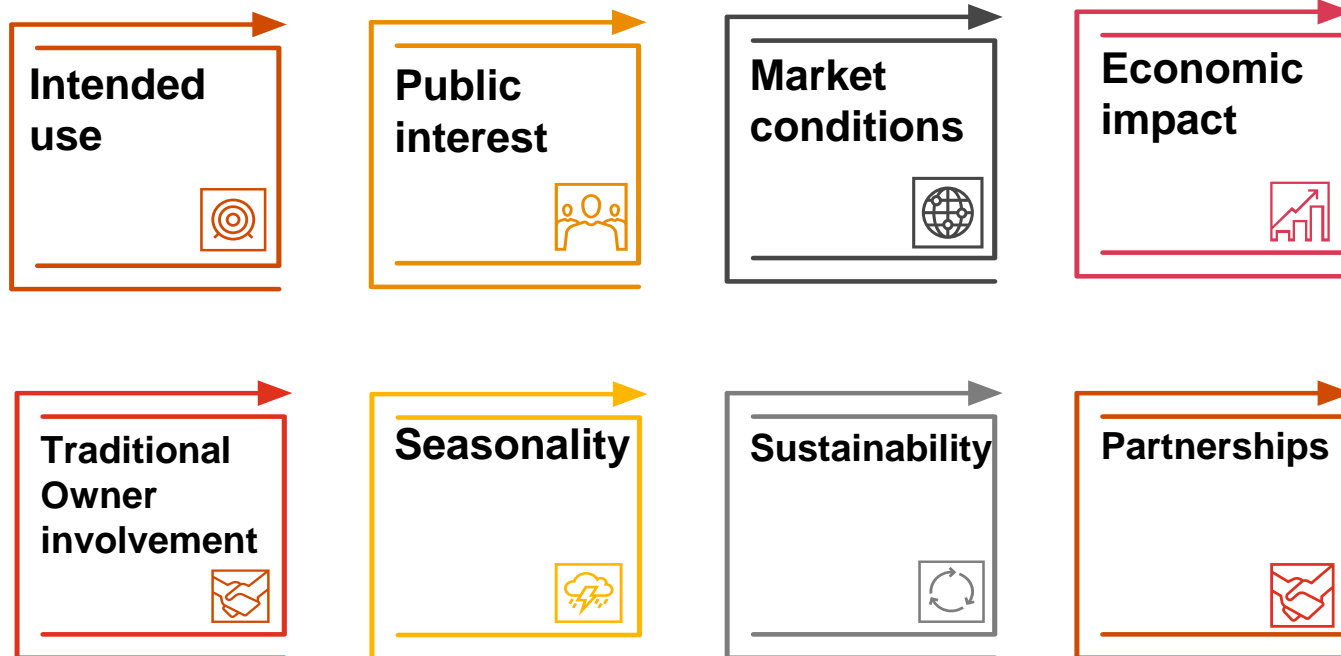


# Previous and current ecotourism projects

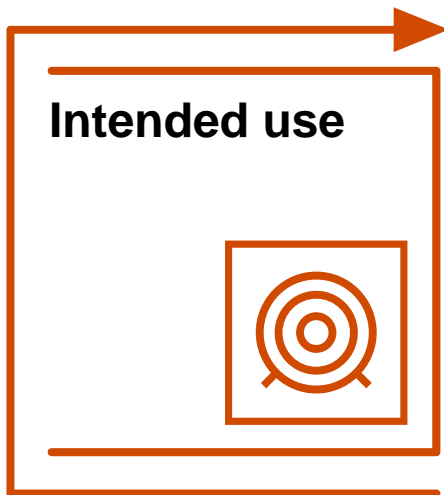
	Utilising existing attraction/s	Multiple uses	Private sector component	Traditional Owner involvement	Capital funding commitment
The Wangetti Trail		✓	✓	✓	✓
Whitsunday Island Trail	✓		✓	✓	
Cooloola Great Walk	✓		✓	✓	
Ecotourism trails EOI	✓		✓	✓	
Kakadu Tourism Master Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paluma to Wallaman Falls Trail				✓	

# Key considerations

Introducing commercial models into projects that are driven by sustainability principles and environmental protection has challenges.



# *Key considerations*



- Single use or multi-use?
  - Safety issues or perception
  - Different markets
  - Conjecture within industry around materiality of issues.



- Greenfield or brownfield?
- Proven vs unproven
- Different risk profiles
- Introduction of commercial activity into protected areas.



# *Key considerations*



- Market conditions in different areas
- How 'big' is the market?
- Are commercial outcomes possible?
- Procurement risks
- Market saturation.



- Difficult to determine full economic impact
- Public -v- Private drivers
- Spend data is limited and not granular.

# *Key considerations*

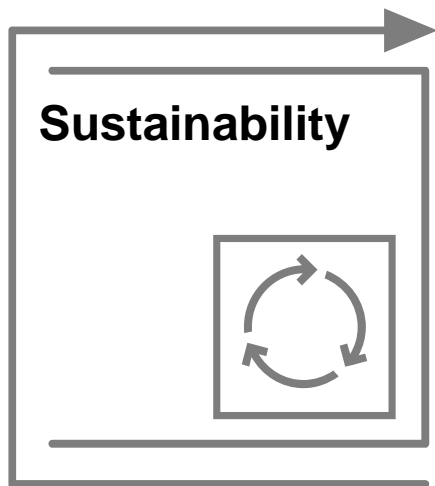


- Sustainability and acceptability is not just environmental but cultural as well
- Objective of improved economic and employment outcomes
- TO capacity and capability.



- Queensland and Northern Australia experience seasonality and extreme weather events
- Days of activity are limited
- Weather events are regular and can be severe
- Key consideration of commercial viability.

# *Key considerations*



- Using commercial opportunity to support sustainment of natural assets (e.g. maintenance)
- Encourage more visitors enabling greater promotion of environmental values.



- Between Government, Traditional Owners, QPWS, private sector.
- It has been proven elsewhere genuine partnerships and parties working together will result in positive outcomes.





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# Thank you

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