

**QUEENSLAND TOURISM
INDUSTRY COUNCIL
STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION
2026-27**

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**QUEENSLAND
TOURISM INDUSTRY
COUNCIL**



Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC)

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is the peak industry body and leading advocate for Queensland's visitor economy, committed to the growth, resilience and sustainability of the state's tourism, hospitality and events sectors.

As a not-for-profit, membership-based organisation, QTIC ensures the concerns and needs of tourism businesses across metropolitan, regional and remote Queensland inform government policy development, investment decisions and regulatory settings. We provide a unified industry voice and strong representation in decision-making processes affecting the visitor economy.

Through delivery of workforce and skilling programs, and advocacy for attraction, access and enabling infrastructure investment, QTIC supports industry capability, productivity and long-term competitiveness. We also provide expert advice and practical support to members, including workforce and business development opportunities and access to vital industry insights that contribute directly to regional economic development and employment outcomes.

Strong Commitment Required for a Thriving Visitor Economy

Tourism is one of Queensland's most significant economic pillars and one of the state's largest export industries. It supports approximately one in every twelve Queensland jobs and plays a critical role in sustaining regional, remote and nature-based communities.

Queensland's visitor economy generates \$34.1 billion in overnight visitor expenditure and supports more than 260,000 direct and indirect jobs. Despite this scale, Queensland's national market share has declined relative to other states, reinforcing the need for sustained and targeted investment to remain competitive.

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reposition Queensland globally, drive long-term visitation growth and deliver enduring economic and social legacy. Realising this opportunity requires continued investment in tourism infrastructure, aviation access, major events, workforce capability and destination development.

QTIC strongly supports the Queensland Government's long-term tourism strategy to 2045 and acknowledges the Government's significant four-year funding commitment, which provides a strong foundation for advancing the visitor economy. This investment demonstrates recognition of tourism's role in driving jobs, regional development and economic growth. To maximise its impact, further focus is required on the critical enablers that allow industry and regions to deliver at scale in the lead-up to 2032.

QTIC Budget Priorities

QTIC undertook targeted consultation with tourism operators, destination organisations and peak bodies across Queensland to inform this submission. Feedback demonstrates strong alignment across industry on the priority actions required to sustain growth, improve productivity and maximise returns on recent government investment.

Industry priorities are focused on five critical enablers:

1. Reducing the cost of doing business for tourism and events operators



2. Improving transport and access infrastructure, including last-mile connectivity
3. Strengthening workforce attraction, retention and deployment
4. Accelerating tourism product and experience development
5. Embedding First Nations tourism as a core pillar of the visitor economy
6. Strengthening Leadership and Governance Capability Across the Regional Tourism System

A targeted focus on these priorities during the current funding period will strengthen delivery, improve productivity and ensure Destination 2045 investment translates into measurable outcomes for industry, regions and communities ahead of Brisbane 2032.

1. Reduce the cost of doing business for tourism and events businesses

Insurance affordability and availability have become a material constraint on the viability of Queensland's tourism and events businesses, particularly small and medium operators, regional businesses and activity-based or public-facing experiences. Evidence compiled by QTIC demonstrates sustained premium increases, insurer withdrawal from tourism activities, higher excesses and narrowing coverage, often disconnected from individual risk profiles or claims history.

1.1 Insurance is a Commonwealth responsibility, but the state sustains the exposure.

Insurance affordability and availability is increasingly recognised by industry as a national market failure requiring federal leadership and reform. Core levers influencing insurer behaviour, prudential regulation, reinsurance settings, taxation, competition policy and disaster risk financing, sit squarely within Commonwealth responsibility. However, the impacts of insurance market withdrawal and premium escalation are being acutely felt at the state and regional level, particularly by Queensland's tourism and events businesses operating in disaster-exposed locations. While Queensland cannot resolve structural insurance market failures alone, it bears significant downstream fiscal and economic exposure when businesses are unable to insure, recover or remain viable.

Insurance is not discretionary. It is a foundational requirement to operate, access land and infrastructure, host events and engage the public. Removing the state's stamp duty on insurance premiums would provide immediate, broad-based cost relief to tourism and events businesses and improve business viability during a period of heightened risk and cost escalation.

QTIC requests:

- Removal of Queensland stamp duty on insurance premiums for tourism and events businesses.
- Establishment of an annual grant program to offset up to 50 per cent of insurance premium costs for eligible small and medium tourism and events businesses, modelled on targeted relief programs addressing market failure.

This measure would reduce incentives for under-insurance, stabilise regional tourism economies and protect jobs while broader insurance reform is progressed. QTIC notes the New South Wales small business stamp duty exemption as a relevant precedent.

1.2 Shift the spend upstream to mitigation and preparedness to reduce Queensland's fiscal exposure through disaster recovery.



Queensland already carries a substantial financial burden through post-disaster recovery and reconstruction funding, with significant and recurrent expenditure flowing through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). These arrangements are essential, but they are inherently reactive. As disaster frequency and severity increase, recovery costs continue to escalate, placing sustained pressure on state budgets. Tourism regions, particularly coastal, regional and nature-based destinations, are consistently among the most exposed, with uninsured or under-insured businesses amplifying recovery costs, prolonging economic disruption and slowing regional recovery.

QTIC requests:

- Position pre-disaster mitigation investment as a fiscal discipline measure in every budget, reducing reliance on escalating post-disaster recovery and reconstruction funding through QRA and NEMA, and strengthening business continuity, regional employment and economic recovery outcomes.
- Create a dedicated, multi-year funding program focused on pre-disaster mitigation and preparedness for the visitor economy, particularly in disaster-exposed regions. Eligible measures should include risk-reduction infrastructure, resilience upgrades, business-level mitigation works and capability initiatives that demonstrably reduce future loss, downtime and recovery costs.
- Pilot co-funded accreditation support for tourism and events businesses in priority, disaster-exposed regions, delivered through QTIC, to support risk reduction, preparedness and business sustainability. The average cost of accreditation is approximately \$700 per business, representing a low-cost, preventative investment relative to post-disaster recovery expenditure.

Disaster recovery access, plus insurance access, still does not “solve” the underlying risk and resilience gap experienced by so many small to medium businesses.

2. Improve Transport and Access Infrastructure

Transport and access infrastructure, particularly intrastate aviation and regional connectivity, is fundamental to Queensland’s visitor economy. Queensland’s geography and distributed tourism assets require seamless, affordable connections between regions and global gateways to drive dispersal, length of stay and economic return.

The Queensland Government’s Connecting Queensland Fund is a positive step, unlocking new domestic and international routes. Continued and targeted focus is required in three priority areas.

These transport priorities are intended to be progressed through existing state transport planning, infrastructure and investment frameworks, with sequencing guided by visitor demand, workforce access needs and regional economic impact. Taken together, they represent a coordinated approach to unlocking the value of current and future tourism investment, rather than a series of standalone initiatives.

QTIC requests:

- Continued and expanded support for intrastate aviation to ensure reliable, affordable and frequent air services linking tourism regions and enabling direct dispersal. This is particularly important for Queensland outback regions.

- Explore the option to underwrite an extensive car hire initiative across the outback. There is a critical shortage of hire cars, which hinders drive tourism and access.
- Re-prosecute the light rail for the Gold Coast connecting the Coolangatta Airport. This missing piece of infrastructure would significantly improve visitor experience and workforce access when travelling to the Gold Coast by air.
- Investment in last-mile connectivity and public transport access to major tourism attractions, events precincts and visitor hubs, delivered through integrated planning between transport agencies, local government and destination stakeholders.
- Enabling infrastructure investment, including regional airport upgrades, airfield safety and security improvements, and corridor infrastructure supporting destination development.

These measures will maximise the value of aviation investment, improve visitor experience, reduce congestion and support regional employment growth in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032.

3. Tourism and Events Workforce

Queensland's visitor economy workforce challenge is structural, systemic and escalating, with high churn, constrained labour pools and misaligned education and migration settings undermining business viability and regional growth. Consultation outcomes highlight that tourism continues to be perceived as a short-term or stop-gap job rather than a genuine career, weakening attraction and retention across all cohorts. Fragmented pathways, limited engagement with parents and career advisors, inconsistent regional support, housing constraints and a shrinking trainer pipeline are compounding pressures, particularly for regional, seasonal and experience-based operators. Without coordinated intervention, workforce shortages will continue to limit operating capacity, suppress productivity and reduce the return on Queensland's significant investment in tourism infrastructure, experiences and major events.

QTIC calls on the Queensland Government to strengthen and coordinate a whole-of-system tourism workforce response through targeted investment and reform. This includes sustained funding to reposition tourism as a long-term career of choice from early secondary education onward; expansion of integrated workforce programs that link schools, TAFE, industry and regions through paid placements and clear progression pathways; and practical support for operators to improve retention, job quality and productivity. QTIC further seeks dedicated action on regional workforce housing and mobility, fit-for-purpose training delivery (including mobile and regional models), and stronger alignment between state workforce initiatives and Commonwealth migration and visa settings. These measures are essential to stabilise labour supply, reduce churn, support regional economies and ensure Queensland's visitor economy can grow sustainably in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and beyond.

QTIC delivers a suite of workforce programs supporting attraction, entry pathways and retention. However, industry feedback is clear that training alone is insufficient if workers cannot access housing or transition efficiently from education to employment.

QTIC requests:

- Fund an integrated, statewide tourism workforce pipeline
Invest in a coordinated end-to-end workforce model that starts in upper primary and secondary schools and follows through to employment and retention. This should include career storytelling and advisor toolkits, expanded paid placements and traineeships, and



sustained support for programs that link schools, TAFE and industry, with consistent delivery across metropolitan and regional Queensland.

- Deliver place-based workforce solutions in priority tourism regions
Provide targeted funding for regional workforce attraction and retention, including worker housing and mobility solutions, mobile or regional training delivery, and locally coordinated workforce support for small and seasonal operators. This should be focused on tourism-exposed regions where labour shortages are directly constraining business viability and visitor capacity.
- Strengthen training relevance, retention and productivity for operators
Support industry-led, fit-for-purpose training and capability programs that improve job quality and retention, including accelerated and return-to-work pathways for critical roles, practical supervisor and mentoring support, and simplified access to micro-credentials and recognition of prior learning. This will reduce churn, lift productivity and maximise the return on existing workforce and training investment.

These measures will improve completion rates, retention and workforce readiness while reducing reliance on short-term labour solutions and delivering enduring skills capacity across Queensland regions.

4. Greater Funding for Tourism and Events Infrastructure

Queensland has made a strong start on tourism product and experience development through the Tourism Icons Investment Fund and the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund. Both programs have been significantly oversubscribed, demonstrating strong regional demand and readiness.

With less than six years until Brisbane 2032, accelerated delivery of high-quality tourism experiences is critical.

QTIC requests:

- Expansion and top-up of existing tourism infrastructure grant programs, including additional rounds and increased funding envelopes.
- Assessment settings that prioritise investment-ready projects capable of delivering measurable visitor outcomes before 2032.

This investment will drive dispersal, lift yield, extend length of stay and strengthen Queensland's global competitiveness.

5. First Nations Tourism and Event Development

Dedicated, long-term investment is required to deliver the Queensland First Nations Tourism Strategy 2026–2032 and ensure First Nations tourism is embedded as a core pillar of the visitor economy.

QTIC requests:

- Sustained funding for Indigenous-led tourism product development, enabling infrastructure and market readiness, particularly in regional and remote Queensland.



- Multi-year funding certainty for Queensland's First Nations tourism peak bodies to deliver the Strategy, coordinate industry development and provide culturally appropriate business and workforce support.
- Establishment of a minimum percentage allocation within relevant Queensland tourism grant and investment programs for eligible First Nations-owned and First Nations-led tourism businesses, with unallocated funds released to the broader applicant pool where eligibility is not met.
- Increased investment in First Nations youth tourism career pathways, delivered across multiple Queensland regions and focused on practical training, mentoring and on-the-job pathways linked to Brisbane 2032 legacy outcomes.

These measures will deliver enduring economic, cultural and social benefits while ensuring Queensland meets global expectations for authentic Indigenous tourism experiences.

6. Strengthening Leadership and Governance Capability Across the Regional Tourism System

Effective leadership, governance and decision-making capability across Queensland's regional tourism system is a critical enabler of workforce development, investment delivery and Destination 2045 implementation. As funding flows, partnerships and delivery responsibilities increase through regions in the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, there is growing value in ensuring consistent governance frameworks, shared tools and leadership capability across the network.

Targeted support for director and executive capability does not reflect deficiencies within individual organisations. Rather, it provides a system-level uplift that supports delivery assurance, reduces duplication, and strengthens confidence in the effective use of public investment across regions.

QTIC requests:

- Funding \$109,200 to deliver a leadership and governance capability support framework for Queensland's regional tourism system, including director and executive training, standardised governance and operational templates, and a centralised resource hub, leveraging significant pro bono legal support.

QTIC's budget priorities are focused on practical, targeted interventions that reduce risk, strengthen delivery capability and maximise the return on Queensland Government investment in the visitor economy. By addressing insurance exposure, workforce stability, access constraints, regional delivery capacity and First Nations participation in a coordinated way, Queensland can build a more resilient, productive and inclusive tourism sector that delivers lasting economic and social legacy in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032 and beyond.

Kind regards,

Natassia Wheeler
Chief Executive Officer
Queensland Tourism Industry Council

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