

Townsville Ecotourism Strategy 2000

Townsville City Council

Summary:

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy (TES) seeks to implement the key objectives of the National Ecotourism Strategy (NES 1994), and Queensland Ecotourism Plan (QEP 1997) at the local community level. Townsville Ecotourism Strategy builds on the recommended roles of local government in facilitating Ecotourism opportunities as specified in the Queensland Ecotourism Plan and provides a response relevant for the Townsville municipality and community. The Strategy recognises the regional tourism role of Townsville Enterprise Limited (TEL) and the State role of Tourism Queensland (TQ).

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy integrates the National Ecotourism Strategy and Queensland Ecotourism Plan with Townsville Council's Policy 2000 and the strategic directions and action plan that emerged from two community consultation sessions entitled the "Townsville Ecotourism Workshop" (TEW Aug 1998).), (see appendix A). Fifty-eight stakeholders attended, representing a broad cross section of the community, including academics, researchers, ecotourism operators, local government, Tourism Queensland and the regional tourism association, Townsville Enterprise Limited.

The strongest recommendation emerging from the Townsville Ecotourism Workshops was to encourage Townsville City Council (TCC) to facilitate ecotourism locally in co-operation regionally with TEL and at a State level with TQ.

- Private/Public Partnerships and
- the development of stakeholder interest "clusters" in support of the development of Ecotourism activities and infrastructure.

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy, seeks to:

- Complement Townsville's established mainstream tourism industry by a modest expansion into the burgeoning North Queensland Ecotourism market.
- Enhance local economic opportunities particularly for small businesses and members of Townsville's indigenous community by creating new jobs and investment opportunities in appropriate infrastructure.
- Most importantly Ecotourism has the potential to create a local economic vehicle for environmental and cultural conservation, preservation and ideally, enhancement.

Key Issues Addressed:

- Existing mechanism and institutions are not able to capitalise on the opportunities represented in Ecotourism.
- Co-ordination and facilitation of Public/Private Partnerships and the development of stakeholder interest "clusters" is the highest priority of all the defined strategic directions.
- There is a lack of: a) integration of products and infrastructure as well as: b) co-ordination in regulatory and promotional aspects of this niche industry.
- The public sector alone is not able to meet the funding needs of the emerging Ecotourism Industry.
- Public/private partnerships do not necessarily require local government expenditure.
- The Indigenous Community must be encouraged to participate in all aspects of the Ecotourism Industry.

In summary: Ecotourism with its significant emphasis on education, interpretation, and community economic involvement is well suited to Townsville's human and infrastructure resources and meets the criteria established in the Council's Policy 2000 "Tourism on Our Terms".

Definition:

The National Ecotourism Strategy (1994) and the Queensland Ecotourism Plan (1997) define Ecotourism as:

"Ecotourism is nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable."

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy broadens the above definition:

Ecotourism is nature and cultural based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the Townsville Experience which includes the diverse natural, multi-cultural and historic landscapes of our unique region. Ecotourism has the potential to create an economic vehicle to manage these assets to be ecologically sustainable.

Local Ecotourism Vision Statement:

The following vision statement was adopted by participants of the Townsville Ecotourism Workshop.

"To ensure an ecologically sustainable and economically viable ecotourism industry in the Townsville region. Where the rich natural diversity, cultural heritage, and unique lifestyle are so valued by the entire community, that they are proactive in its management and conservation for future generations. Ecotourism represents the pre-eminent form of tourism in the region and engages, educates and delights our visitors."

Background:

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy is built around significant environmental and cultural assets which include:

- The region has one of the most diverse arrays of nature based attractions on the east coast and include: the poorly understood monsoonal influenced savanna dry tropic habitats, Wet Tropics World Heritage rainforests, extensive world class Ramsar Listed wetlands (Site 42 Bowling Green Bay) and a variety of World Heritage Listed marine, coastal and estuarial habitats (Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area).
- The city has a very diverse multicultural population including a significant indigenous population.
- The significant maritime heritage of the Port of Townsville is well documented. Unlike most coastal ports, this heritage is clearly visible in the preserved architecture in the Centre. This heritage aspect alone could be the basis of a heritage port tourism precinct. Recent commitments by TCC and the State of Queensland to the CBD Urban Renewal Taskforce supports this view.

Economic Benefits

Ecotourism offers local and regional economic benefits similar to other tourism activities. There are direct benefits to local economies and indirect benefits to the environment.

Tourism Queensland (TQ) reports that Ecotourism now represents nearly 30% of the travelling public in Australia (Ecotrends March 1999).

Further according to a TQ survey: "...we are now seeing that ecotourism is not just a minute niche within the tourism market. The survey is showing us that nearly half the travelling public have an underlying disposition towards nature and learning as part of their vacation.

In 1999 survey of members of the Nature, Eco and Adventure Tourism (NEAT) Operators in Australia, led to the calculation that the NEAT sector is worth at least \$7-15 billion annually in this country.

Further evidence of the value of ecotourism can be demonstrated by Tourism Brisbane's Annual Report 1998/1999. This report quotes the potential economic impact for ecotourism activities in Brisbane City to be value added at \$3 billion and possibly to create 74,350 jobs by 2011.

Conservation of Bio-Diversity

Ecotourism as an opportunity is also supported via *the National Strategy for Conservation of Bio-diversity* (International Convention on Bio-diversity) and provides opportunities for Local Government to meet bio-diversity objectives identified in *the Local Government Biological Conservation Strategy (1999)*. Ecotourism offers a significant opportunity to provide the environment with a financial and economic value to aid in its protection. This can hold true for both public and private land.

Important Local, State and Federal Legislation, regulations and planning instruments relating to Townsville Ecotourism (natural and cultural) require consideration in the Ecotourism planning process and include:

- Townsville City Council's proposed New Strategic Plan "City Plan" (IPA) and Townsville Thuringowa Strategy Plan (TTSP).
- Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Bio-diversity Act 1999
- Queensland Nature Conservation Act
- Queensland Environmental Protection Act
- Commonwealth Native Title Act

Commonwealth's Local Interest in Ecotourism.

Importantly the proximity and juxtaposition of two World Heritage areas (Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef) and an internationally listed Ramsar site (Bowling Green Bay) to the urban environment mean that:

- a) Townsville is ideally placed to seek market advantage and lobby for funds from Commonwealth.

- b) the Commonwealth has a role in not only in the protection but also in the preservation and promotion of *World Heritage Values* to the Australian and the International Communities

State of Play:

The Townsville Experience is epitomised by a sense of cultural, historical and natural quality in visitor experience in contrast to more traditionally accepted "mass market" tourism initiatives. The intention is to focus on high paying visitors expecting a high quality and different experience and opportunity. This experience integrates the presentation by the community and business of the natural, cultural, historical and lifestyle of North Queensland and Townsville (referred to in Townsville Council's 2000 Policy as "Tourism on our Terms". It also refers directly to opportunities provided by Magnetic Island, Reef HQ, The Museum of Tropical Queensland and National Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP) accredited attractions such as Billabong Sanctuary

At present North Queensland attracts over one million visitors annually. However in Townsville tourism represents only 5.2% of gross regional product. Despite significant efforts to promote mainstream tourism products and services in the region, there has been little growth in the tourism sector. This mainstream promotional focus places the Townsville region in direct competition with adjacent high profile mainstream destinations.

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy provides clear objectives and catalytic actions from achieving progress in implementation. The catalytic actions build on the Action Plans identified in the August 1998 Ecotourism Workshops. The Action Plans remain relevant and are detailed in Appendix A.

Structure of this Report:

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy is composed of the following sections:

- Summary
- Definition of Ecotourism
- Townsville's Vision for Ecotourism
- Goals
- Key Issues Addressed
- Background
- Economic Benefits
- Conservation of Bio-diversity
- Important Legislation and Regulations
- Strategic Objectives and Catalytic Actions
- Table: Townsville Ecotourism Strategy Action Plan
- Table: Summary Time Line Townsville Ecotourism Plan Table:
- Appendix A: Comparison of Ecotourism Strategies
- List of Acronyms
- Townsville Ecotourism Workshop (1998) Data Matrices

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy:

There are nine (9) interrelated strategic objectives that need to be undertaken in translating the vision into reality. These are:

- Research (for Best Practice)
- Educational Interpretation and Discovery
- Economic Management
- Integrated Environmental Management
- Coping with Changing Politics
- Infrastructure and Management Development
- Bio-geographic Diversity
- Marketing
- Indigenous & Post Colonial Culture and Heritage

Strategic Objectives:

Listed below are descriptions of the key objectives followed by actions identified as being most important to achieve the objective.

Objective 1: Research (for Best Practice):

There is a need for greater research into the establishment and maintenance of ecotourism within the region. This includes:

- Conducting of audits to identify human, flora, fauna and community resources
- Identifying limits of acceptable change
- Identifying ecotourism values

Catalytic Action 1:

Actively promote research into the following areas essential to understanding and managing ecotourism:

- Documentation of Natural, cultural and historical assets including industry stakeholders
- World Best Practice (WBP) in Ecotourism
- Methods to ensure implementation and compliance of WBP within the tourism industry
- Encourage ecotourism operators to upgrade to WBP by becoming accredited under the National Ecotourism Accreditation Program of the Australian Ecotourism Association. (e.g. Billibong Sanctuary National Ecotourism Accreditation Program NEAP)

- **Supports and facilitates research efforts through its own environmental monitoring efforts and collaborative projects** with other institutions and private organisations.

James Cook University is a key resource that should be utilised in many of these activities. There are many other areas that can provide benchmarking in our attempt to achieve "World Best Practice".

In many cases natural and cultural heritage data already exists within the public and private sectors of the community. TCC supports and facilitates public access to this information through the development of a *Natural Assets Register Database* and in collaboration with Townsville Enterprise is investigating *Regional On-line Tourism* funding opportunities. This is also a regional initiative.

Objective 2: Educational Interpretation and Discovery.

For ecotourism to become the pre-eminent form of tourism in the Townsville region education of the community and visitors, together with high quality interpretation skills of tour operators, will be necessary.

Catalytic Action 2

Emphasise the importance of interpretation and community understanding of potential benefits of ecotourism. Townsville Ecotourism Strategy will facilitate these activities through continuing support of a range of activities including:

- **Ensure the importance of educational content and quality interpretation in creating the ecotourism experience is transformed into public facilities.**
- **Creation of high quality natural area interpretive facilities** (e.g. The Nelly Bay Habitat Reserve & Mundi Creek).
- **Develop and foster interpretative linkages with the regionally focused Museum of Tropical Queensland and Pandora Foundation** and the CBD Taskforce "CBD Shop" on Flinders Mall.
- **Continue to produce interpretative displays and promotions to international conferences and symposia** in Townsville (e.g. 1st International Tropical Marine ecosystems Management Symposium 1998, The International Rangelands Congress 1999, and the Soropotomist International South West Pacific Conference 2000).
- **Joint submissions to state and federal funding sources, including in-house traineeship programs which help to promote and interpret the environment** (e.g. TCC Mundi Creek natural area trainees and ATCV conservation projects).

Objective 3: Economic Management:

It is recognised that funding resources for ecotourism are limited, however there is a lot of work needing to be undertaken in order to maximise the sites available in the region to a standard of World's Best Practice.

This will require appropriate funding of resource management practices and the coordination of financially sustainable development projects.

Catalytic Action 3

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy acknowledges the need for integrated planning and development leading to the upgrade of existing sites and future ecotourism developments to WBP standards.

- **Foster partnerships between various levels of the public and private sector** (e.g. the partnership between TCC, the State of Queensland (SOQ) and the CBD Traders Association to establish the CBD Task Force). One objective of this partnership was the preservation of the cultural asset of Townsville's "Historic City Centre" as a "Heritage Tourism Precinct". The CBD Taskforce is a model that can be applied to other projects.
- Continue to **support and facilitate joint public/private** partnerships in developing appropriate ecotourism infrastructure.

Objective 4: Integrated Environmental Management:

There is a need for a holistic approach to the management of the environment within our region. There has been a lack of integrated planning and action, as can be seen from the poor state of many of the national parks and valuable sites. From an ecotourism perspective, little is known or understood about minimising impacts on the environment, how to balance recreation and tourism, the partnering with Indigenous communities or maximising the inputs from all levels of Government and private operators.

Catalytic Action 4

The Townsville Ecotourism Strategy recognises the importance of integrated planning and management of the environment. It is essential that the public assumes "ownership" of this Ecotourism Strategy and actively participates in all aspects of its implementation.

- Facilitate community involvement through **community education programs**; the community consultation process and active dialogue with members of TCC to enhance environmental awareness in the community, and seek community input in the establishment of budgetary priorities.
- **TCC's Environmental Planning Unit in promoting Council's Ecologically Sustainable Development** (Townsville Council's Policy 2000) continues to take an active role (proposed Ecotourism Office) in facilitating collaboration between stakeholders, including individuals, ecotourism operators, industry organisations and government departments to implement the objectives of the TES (role in accordance with Queensland Ecotourism Plan 1997).
- **Continue to actively support the CBD Taskforce** and Townsville Enterprise to develop and promote "Heritage Tourism" opportunities.
- Ensure **co-ordinated planning and resources by networking with Townsville Enterprise as the regional tourism promotional body** (e.g. TEL North Queensland Birdwatching Sub-committee).

Objective 5: Coping with Changing Politics:

There needs to be a co-ordinated approach to the development of ecotourism. At present there appears to be competing, and at times, overlapping interests within all spheres of Government. A synergistic approach to the development and maintenance of ecotourism is necessary if we are to successfully market our natural wealth to the world. This approach should include a mechanism to protect the long term development from the shifting priorities of new governments.

Catalytic Action 5

TES recognises that political change is inevitable, therefore the adoption of this strategy which integrates the long term strategies of the National Ecotourism Strategy, The Queensland Ecotourism plan with the values of the local community toward tourism development is the best way to ensure continuity between governments.

- **Co-ordinate Townsville Ecotourism Strategy with outcomes and objectives outlined in the Townsville Thuringowa Strategy Plan** (TTSP/Regional Planning document) and integrate Strategy with "City Plan" Townsville City Councils new strategic plan (Integrated Planning Act).
- Townsville has a large Aboriginal and Islander population, **TCC encourages indigenous participation in the development of cultural tourism operations**. TCC will continue to seek input from the indigenous community on issues related cultural and natural values and especially with regards to development on sites of cultural

significance.

Objective 6: Infrastructure and Management Development

The Townsville Ecotourism Workshop identified a number of issues that need to be overcome if Townsville is to create a first class ecotourism industry. There is a lack of access to National Parks; walking trails and tracks need to be developed and maintained; accommodation, toilet, lighting and parking facilities further developed. There is also a lack of infrastructure linking existing tourism attractions.

Catalytic Action 6

- Explore options for a major ecotourism interpretative centre, which focuses on Townsville's distinct environment (natural and cultural) and which complements the existing displays featured at the Museum of tropical Queensland.
- Continue to support and facilitate the development of high quality ecotourism interpretative facilities such as the Nelly Bay Habitat Reserve Interpretative Facilities through submissions for joint funding to state and national funding bodies.

Objective 7 Bio-geographic Diversity:

We have a rich bio-geographic diversity that is unique to our region, and provides us with a tremendous opportunity. We (the community) also have little understanding of what we really have available to us. There is a very big need for public education and protection of this diversity.

Catalytic Action 7

TES promotes the maintenance of bio-diversity and will endeavour to.

- Continue to research and add data to the local Natural Assets Registers and including identification of potential ecotourism sites and opportunities (on private, state and local government land).
 - To incorporate habitat protection and bio-diversity outcomes on private and public lands and to coordinate with community natural resource management initiatives.
 - Continue to support joint re-vegetation and habitat management projects with the Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers (ATCV), Landcare and other community conservation organisations to promote and protect the Townsville's bio-diversity.
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- Continue to **explore new funding opportunities and develop funding submissions in support of the conservation of habitats** with high conservation value and appropriate supporting infrastructure.

Objective 8 *Marketing*

There are many avenues available for the promotion of the Townsville region's ecotourism industry. We already have a large VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market. The self-drive segment is projected to treble in the next few years. We attract large numbers of European visitors to our area. The problem is we have not developed cost-effective vehicles for communicating to these market segments.

Catalytic Action 8

- TES encourages collaboration between the **local international** (nature based) **inbound tourism operators** (e.g. Mike Ball Dive Expeditions and Coral Princess Cruises) and **local ecotourism operators** (e.g. Billabong Sanctuary) and other natural/cultural tourism public and private attractions and facilities (eg. QPWS & Reef HQ). Collaboration can increase the duration visitors remain in the region.
- **Support Townsville Enterprise's and Magnetic Island Community and Commerce Association's efforts to expand their tourism promotions** to include special interest and ecotourism products.
- Continue to actively **support the establishment of an interactive data-base powered Internet Web Site for ecotourism.**
- **Support joint funding submissions for the development of international and domestic niche environmental and cultural tourism markets.**
- Supports the efforts of CBD Urban Taskforce and TCC to document and interpret the "Townsville Experience" for marketing and interpretative purposes.
- Develop quality on-line interpretative and interactive ecotourism booking options with tour operators (eg. e-commerce initiatives of TEL)

Objective 9 *Indigenous & Post Colonial Culture and Heritage:*

Townsville has a rich cultural diversity as well as a strong heritage that can be promoted to the world. This diversity covers pre-Indigenous, Indigenous and post-colonial heritage.

There are approximately 219 local art groups established in the Townsville region, and many of these provide ideal vehicles for the expression of our environment through the arts.

Catalytic Action 9

- **Supports the efforts of CBD Promotions and the CBD Urban Taskforce & TCC to document and promote the *Townsville Experience* as a unique blend of geography, bio-diversity, culture and history that underlies the proposed Heritage Tourism Precinct of the CBD.**
- **Encourage Indigenous people's involvement in ecotourism and cultural tourism through collaborations such as Dance North and the Mornington Island Dancers.**
- **Support a range of cultural activities, that can be used as "value added" components for regional ecotourism itineraries.** TES encourages collaboration between industry stakeholders and TCC's Community and Environmental Services

The TOWNSVILLE ECOTOURISM PLAN (based on recommendations of the Townsville Ecotourism Workshop Aug 1998)

Objective Description	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1. Research (for Best Practice):	1.1.1 Undertake a Stakeholder inventory that includes Indigenous Culture, Heritage, Fauna and Flora bio-diversity, and Community resources. This could be modelled on the successful “nature search” campaign using volunteers.	TCC, TEL, JCU, industry community	12 -24 months
	1.1.2 Identification of Best Practice for Ecotourism, then the development of an appropriate implementation plan that strives for the establishment of this standard within the region.	TEL, JCU/DT, TQ, Local Industry Association	12 - 36 months
	1.1.3 Establish the mechanisms necessary to ensure that visitors to our region receive a high quality experience that results in favourable word-of-mouth promotion. “Expectation equals Reality”.	TEL, Local Ecotourism Industry Association	6 - 12 months
	1.1.4 Initial research should be into the identification and management of the bio-geographic diversity of the Townsville region.	TCC, JCU/TESAG, AIMS GBRMPA, DPI,	12 - 36 months
	1.1.5 Establish processes that ensure that the community and visitors learn to live in harmony with our wild life.	TCC, DPI, EPA GBRMPA,	6 - 18 months
2. Educational Interpretation and Discovery	2.1.1 Develop interpretive programs.	CBDP, TCC, TEL, TQ, EPA, Regional Shire Councils	6 - 18 months
	2.1.2 Establish appropriate training programs for tour guides	TAFE, EAA, JCU, TQ	ongoing

Objective Description	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
2. Educational Interpretation and Discovery	2.1.3 Develop a process for educating the community		ongoing
	2.1.3.1 Ecofiesta	TCC,	annual
	2.1.3.2 School Programs	TCC, GBRMPA, EAA, EPA, QBuild	< 6 months
	2.1.3.3 Collaborating with existing attractions	TCC, MTQ, GBRMPA, ATCV, Coral Princess Cruises, Mike Ball Dive Exp Billibong Sanctuary	ongoing
3. Economic Management	3.1.1: a) promotes private and public sector collaboration in the establishment and operations of Ecotourism sites. b) Co-ordinates volunteer conservation and conservation travel programs 3) Identifies and coordinates funding opportunities for industry development. (TCC's Environmental Planning - Ecotourism Office)	TCC, TEL, TQ, EAA, Ecotourism Operators	< 6 months
	3.1.2 Establishment by Government of suitable private sector incentives that encourage development of sites and infrastructure.	TCC, SOQ, ATO SOQ/DOD	6 - 18 months
	3.1.3 Establish adequate infrastructure for core Ecotourism attractions within the region, before trying to establish additional sites.	TCC/EO, SOQ/DD TQ, TEL., TCC, EAA	6 - 48 months

Objective Description	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
	3.1.4 Establish adequate funding to provide a concentrated effort that will allow Townsville Common to be brought up to World Best Practice Standards	SOQ/DD, TCC	12 - 24 months
4. Integrated Environmental Management:	4.1.1 Establish a process that ensures an integrated management planning process is undertaken for Ecotourism in this region. (TCC Ecotourism Office)	TCC/EO, TQ, TEL, SOD/DOD, EPA, GBMPA, DPI, DNR	6 - 12 months
	4.1.2 Steps need to be put in place that will ensure the preservation of the environment and cultural heritage of the region.	TCC, TCC/EO, DPI, EPA, GBMPA, DNR,	ongoing
	4.1.3 Establish a small committee (Ecotourism coordination body) that will advise the proposed TCC/EO on the coordination and communication between all levels of Government, tourism operators, developers and the community.	TCC, TEL, TCC, Local Industry	< 6 months
	4.1.4 Establish a process whereby the Ecotourism vision and plan are integrated into community and industry planning. (TCC Ecotourism Office)	TCC, TCC, Local Industry (CITYPLAN)	< 6 months
	4.1.5 Private landowners need to be encouraged to become part of the planning and management process.	TCC, , Community	6 - 18 months
	4.1.6 The priority should be on the maximisation of existing sites and development of the heritage theme.	TCC, TEL	< 6 months

Objective Description	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
5. Coping with Changing Politics	5.1.1 Identify and establish a mechanism that encourages the respect for Aboriginal protocols to be observed when developing and maintaining eco sites.	TCC/EO, ATSIC,	6 - 18 months
	5.1.2 Establish appropriate review processes that will ensure the balanced development of the region.	TCC/EO, TCC, SOQ/DOD,	6- 18 months
	5.1.3 Establish a mechanism (TCC's Ecotourism Initiatives) that will facilitate collaboration between Government and Private Ecotourism interests.	TCC/EO, SOQ/DOD, DPI, , Local operators	< 6 months
	5.1.4 Integrate Ecotourism planning with town planning (proposed TCC Ecotourism Office) and regional Government planning (refer 4.1.1 and 4.1.4 above)	TCC/EO, TCC, Local Shires	6 - 18 months
6. Infrastructure and Management Development	6.1.1 Establish a major interpretation centre. This centre should provide visitors with an interpretive experience that educates, motivates and encourages them to participate in the world of Ecotourism, and in particular, the diversity of experiences available within the region.	TCC/EO. TCBDP, TCC, TCBDTF, TQ, SOF/DOD, , Local Shire Councils	18 - 36 months
7. Bio-geographic Diversity	7.1.1 Encourage private urban gardeners to plant and maintain the flora unique to our region.	TCC, EPA	ongoing

Objective Description	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
	7.1.2 The City Councils needs to encourage the maintenance of our bio-diversity	TCC, DNR, EPA,	6 - 18 months
	7.1.3 Concentrate flora experiences by careful design of tree plantings, etc	TCC, TCC/EO, EPA, ATCV	ongoing
	7.1.4 Develop an understanding of the rich marine environment Townsville has along the immediate coast and islands. Not just focus only on the Great Barrier Reef.	TCC/EO, TQ, TEL, MTQ, GBRMPA,, DPI	ongoing
	7.1.5 Encourage the development and promotion of the multiple wetland sites in our region.	TCC, TCC/EO, SOQDOD, TQ, ATC, TEL, JCU/DT	6- 18 months
8. Marketing	8.1.1 Establish marketing guidelines and promote Ecotourism at ALL TQ and ATC trade shows and suitable promotional events. This effort ensures: 1)The marketing matches the visitor experience promised 2)The promotion features Townsville's unique environmental position 3)The promotion highlights the importance of the Koala colonies on Magnetic Island 4)The promotion highlights the diversity and quality of our bird life.	TCC , TEL, WGF, ATC, TQ, MICCA, Local operators, EAA, Local Shire Councils	12 - 24 months
	8.1.2 Create a “Sense of Place” that positions the Townsville region in a way that capitalises on our unique bio-geographic location, and links to the Townsville Urban Re-development Task Force's concept of property development.	TURTF, TCC/EO, TCBDP, TCC,	6 - 18 months

Objective Description	Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
	8.1.3 Actively promote Ecotourism to our existing target markets of 1)VFR, 2)European visitors, 3)Self drive market 4)Conferences, special events.	TCC/EO, TEL, ATC, TQ, TCBDP, MICCA, Local operators, EAA, Local Shire Councils	ongoing
	8.1.4 Establish online services by linking with existing internet sites of Townsville Enterprise, the Education Consortium, etc.	TCC, TEL, TQ, ATC,	< 6 months
	8.1.5 Identify niche markets that our unique strengths will satisfy.	TCC/EO, TEL, ATC, TQ, TCBDP, MICCA, Local operators, EAA, Local Shire Councils	< 6 months
9. Indigenous & Post Colonial Culture and Heritage	9.1.1 Use culture and art as vehicles for communicating our diverse culture and heritage.	ATSIC, DN, TCC, TCC/EO	ongoing
	9.1.2 Respectfully encourage Indigenous people's involvement in Ecotourism, particularly through their art and culture.	ATSIC, SOQ/DOD, TCC/EO, EAA,	6- 18 months
	9.1.3 Create an appropriate story of our region's history so that everyone (community / visitors) gains an understanding of what makes Townsville unique.	JCU, TCBDP, TCC/EO, ATSIC, MTQ, SOQ/DOD	18 - 36 months
	9.1.4 Further develop art and culture as special event vehicles for the promotion of Townsville's story. e.g. Townsville International Arts Festival, winter arts & activities, etc.	TCC, TEL, TQ, SOQ/DOD, DN, JAMT	ongoing

Summary Time Line Townsville Ecotourism Plan

Key strategic actions (adopted from the Townsville Ecotourism Workshop) have been represented on the following Planning Matrix that indicates suggested broad timeframes.

Actions	Projects In Place to date	Within 6 Months	6-18 Months	18-36 months
Undertake Stakeholder Inventory	TCC Ecotourism Workshop, TCC Database	1.1.1		
Develop Interpretive Programs	Nelly Bay Habitat and Mundi Creek Interpretive Facilities	continuing		
Develop process for educating community	Ecofiesta, Ecotourism Day, World Environment Week	continuing		
Vehicle to promote private/govt. operations	CBD Taskforce	3.1.1		
Establish Coordination Committee	TEL/TQ Bird Watching Marketing Sub-Committee TCC Environmental Planning Project	4.1.3		
Encourage respect for Aboriginal Protocols	Mundi Creek and Nelly Bay Training Programs		5.1.1	
Facilitate Gov./Private Collaboration	Joint submissions to Regional Tourism Program	continuing		
Establish Interpretive Centre	Option Scoping Studies			6.1.1
Encourage Maintenance of bio-diversity	Collaboration with ATCV and Landcare	continuing		
Develop & Promote Multiple Wetlands	Wetland and Grasslands Foundation/ TCC/QPWS Cromaty, Serpentine Lagoon, Town Common	continuing		
Establish Marketing Guidelines	TEL/TQ Bird Watching Marketing Sub-Committee	8.1.1		
Create Sense of Place	Natural and Cultural Assets Register		8.1.2	
Promote Ecotourism to existing markets	TEL and Private inbound operators trade show presentations	continuing		
Establish on-line service links	Regional on-line Tourism program	continuing		
Encourage Indigenous Involvement	Nelly Bay Habitat and Mundi Creek Interpretation		9.1.2	
Create story of Regions History				9.1.3

Appendix A:

Comparison of Ecotourism Strategies

Comparison Chart			
	National Ecotourism Strategy (1994)	Queensland Ecotourism Plan (1997)	Townsville Ecotourism Workshop (1998)
Ecotourism Definition	<i>"Ecotourism is nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable"</i>	<i>"Nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable"</i>	<i>"To ensure an ecologically sustainable and economically viable ecotourism industry in the Townsville region, Where the rich natural diversity, cultural heritage and unique lifestyle are so valued by the entire community, that are proactive in its management and conservation for future generations. Ecotourism represents the pre-eminent form of tourism the region and engages, educates and delights our visitors."</i>
Objective 1	Facilitate the application of ecologically sustainable principles and practices across the tourism industry	Environmental Protection and Management: 1) Identification of areas with high natural and cultural values 2) Guidelines on allowable activities and sustainable use levels 3) Integrated system of permits and fees 3) Impact monitoring	Bio-geographic Diversity: 1) TCC to encourage the maintenance of biodiversity 2) Development and promotion of multiple wetland sites 3) Encourage urban gardeners to plant and maintain flora unique to our region 4) Develop and understanding of the rich coastal marine environment 5) Concentrate "flora" experience with better use of TCC tree plantings

	National Ecotourism Strategy (1994)	Queensland Ecotourism Plan (1997)	Townsville Ecotourism Workshop (1998)
Objective 2	Develop a strategic approach to integrated regional planning based on ecologically sustainable principles and practices and incorporating ecotourism	Ecotourism Industry Development: 1)Product Development 2) Management, Interpretation, safety and service skills training 3)Best practice 4) Measurement of contribution of Ecotourism to economy 5) Marketing 6) Marketing research	Coping with Changing Politics: 1) <i>Mechanism for collaboration between government and private ecotourism interests</i> 2) Respect of Aboriginal protocols at ecotourism sites 3) Review process to insure balance in development process 4)Integrate Ecotourism planning with town planning and regional government
Objective 3	Encourage a complementary and compatible approach between Ecotourism activities and conservation in natural resource management		Integrated Environmental Management: 1) <i>Establish Ecotourism Coordination Body</i> 2) Integrated regional management 3) Preservation of regional environmental and cultural heritage. 4)integrate ecotourism with community and industrial planning 5) Private landholder participation in planning and management processes 6) Development of heritage theme
Objective 4	Encourage industry self-regulation of ecotourism through the development and implementation of appropriate industry standards and accreditation		
Objective 5	Where appropriate, support the design and use of carefully sited and constructed infrastructure to minimise visitor impacts on natural resources and to provide for environmental education consistent with bioregional planning objectives.	Infrastructure Development: 1) Appropriate infrastructure and innovative technology 2) Ecotoursim accommodation 3)Presentation facilities and services	Infrastructure and Management Development: 1) <i>Establishment of a major interpretive centre.</i>

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Objective 6	Undertake further study of the impacts of ecotourism to improve the information base for planning and decision-making		Research: 1)Undertake a Stakeholder inventory 2)Identify limits of acceptable change 3)Identify ecotourism values
Objective 7	Encourage and promote the ethical delivery of ecotourism products to meet visitor expectations and match levels of supply and demand	Facilitate the establishment of high-quality industry standards and national accreditation system for ecotourism	
Objective 8	Facilitate the establishment of high-quality industry standards and national accreditation system for ecotourism		1.1.2 Identification of Best Practice for Ecotourism, then the development of an appropriate implementation plan that strives for the establishment of this standard within the region.
Objective 9	Improve the level of delivery of Ecotourism education for all target groups	Examine the business needs of operators and develop ways in which viability can be improved through collective ventures	Education Interpretation and Discovery: 1) Develop interpretive program: The Townsville Experience 2)Training programs for guides 3) Community education
Objective 10	Enhance opportunities for self-determination, self-management and economic self-sufficiency in ecotourism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders		Indigenous & Post Colonial Cultural Heritage: 1) Encourage Indigenous involvement in ecotourism 2)Create an appropriate history of the region 3)Use culture and as as a vehicle for communicating our diverse culture and heritage 4)Further develop art and culture as special events

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Objective 11	Examine the business needs of operators and develop ways in which viability can be improved, either individually or through collective ventures		Coping with Changing Politics: 1) Mechanism for collaboration between government and private ecotourism interests 2) Respect of Aboriginal protocols at ecotourism sites 3) Review process to insure balance in development process 4) Integrate Ecotourism plan
Objective 12	Seek to ensure that opportunities for access to ecotourism experiences are equitable and that Ecotourism activities benefit host communities and contribute to natural resource management and conservation.	Community Development: 1) Local community involvement 2) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander involvement 3) Environmental and cultural education to minimise environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness	Marketing: 1) Create set of ecotourism marketing guidelines 2) Create a "Sense of Place" that positions the Townsville region that capitalises on the unique bio-geographic location and CBD redevelopment 3) Actively promote ecotourism in VFR, European visitor, self drive and conference markets 4) Establish on-line services linking existing TSV web sites. 5) Identify niche markets

List of Acronyms

AIMS	Australian Institute of Marine Science	MI CCA	Magnetic Island Community and Commerce Association
ATC	Australian Tourist Commission	MTQ	Museum of Tropical Queensland
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Commission	NES	National Ecotourism Strategy
COT	City of Thuringowa	QDEH	Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage
DN	Dance North	SOQ	State of Queensland
DNR	Queensland Department of Natural Resources	SOQ/DOD	State of Queensland Department of Development
DPI	Department of Primary Industries	TCBDP	Townsville CBD Promotions
EAA	Ecotourism Association of Australia	TCBDTF	Townsville CBD Task Force
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority	TCC	Townsville City Council
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	TCC/DEP	Department of Environmental Planning
JAMT	Joint Arts Marketing for Townsville	TEL	Townsville Enterprise Limited
JCU	James Cook University	TES	Townsville Ecotourism Strategy
JCU/DT	James Cook University Department of Tourism	TEW	Townsville Ecotourism Workshop
JCU/TESAG	James Cook University Dept of Tropical Environmental Science and Geography	TQ	Tourism Queensland
		WGF	Wetlands & Grasslands Foundation

Townsville Ecotourism Workshop (1998) Data Matrices

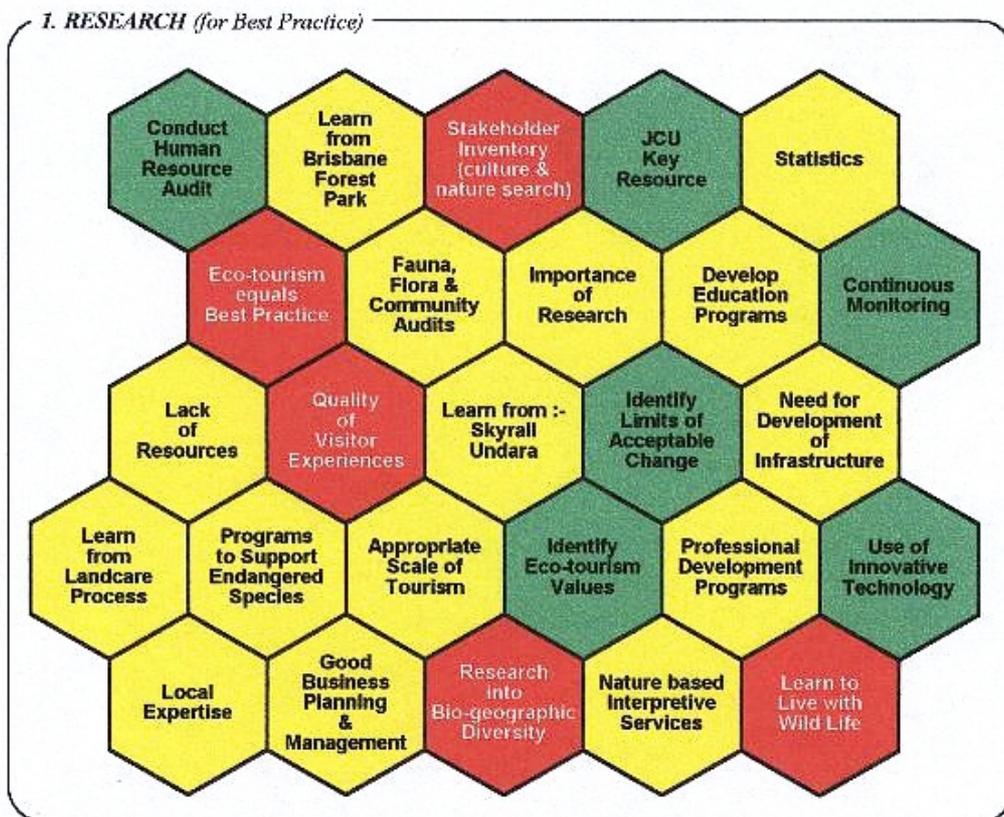
Ecotourism Planning Input Data:

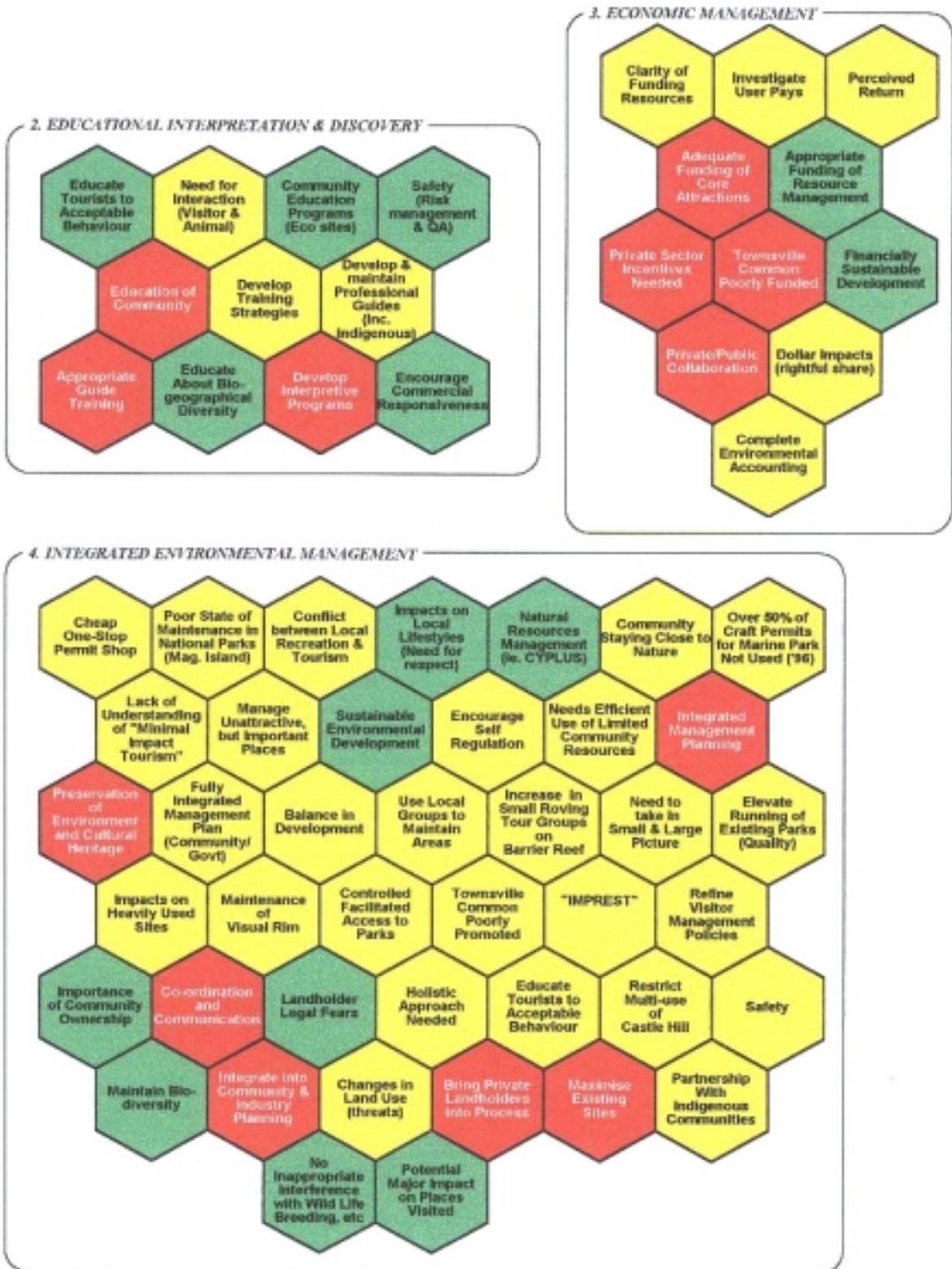
Legend:

Yellow Hexagon = Input Data

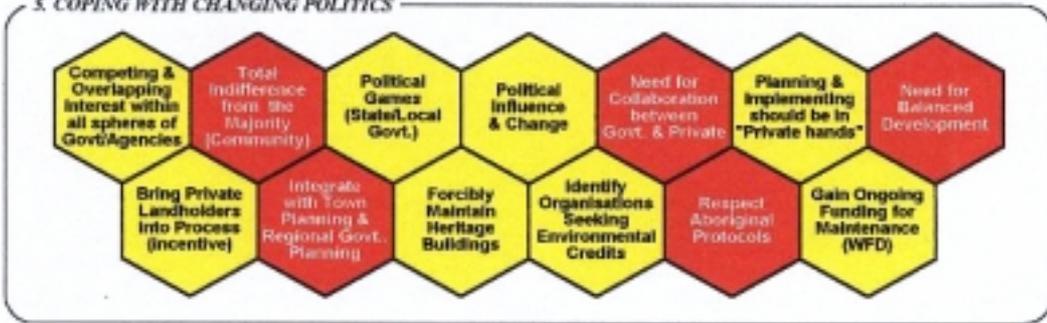
Green Hexagon = Important Issues

Red Hexagon = Must Achieve Issues (First Priority)

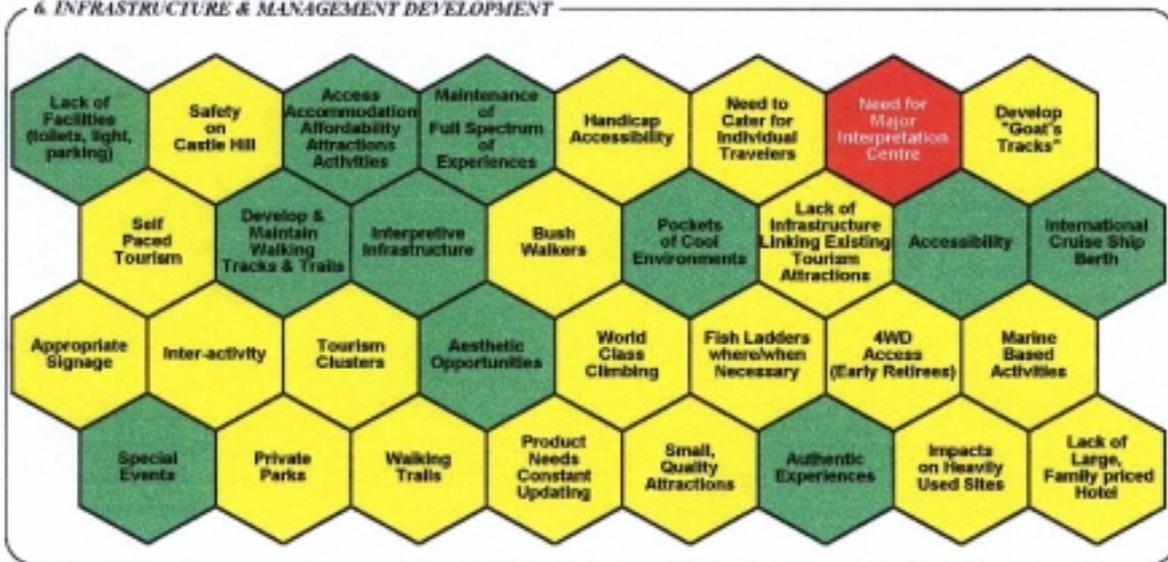




5. COPING WITH CHANGING POLITICS



6. INFRASTRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT



7. BIO-GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY

