

Submission to the **State
Development, Infrastructure and
Industry Committee** on the
**LAND AND OTHER
LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL 2014**

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QUEENSLAND TOURISM INDUSTRY COUNCIL

QTIC is the State's peak body for tourism in Queensland and represents the interests of business operators, 20 sector associations, 3,000 regional members and all of Queensland's 13 Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs).

QTIC works in partnership with government agencies and industry bodies at a local, state and national level to strengthen the voice of tourism in all relevant policy forums. QTIC's partnerships with the industry and government enable a greater level of responsiveness to increasingly diverse policy settings.

SUMMARY

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback to the State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee on the *Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014*.

QTIC supports the objectives of the Bill, particularly the implementation of the first phase of state land tenure reforms which improve tenure security for term leases used for agriculture, grazing and pastoral purposes and declared offshore island tourism leases issued under the *Land Act 1994*.

It is also a very welcomed move that the Bill implements the following accepted recommendations of the Committee's final report (No 25) tabled on 23 August 2013, *Inquiry into the future and continued relevance of government land tenure across Queensland*:

- Recommendation 8 and 24: the investigation of rolling leases to increase tenure security and investment certainty for rural and tourism tenures
- Recommendation 9 and 25: the review of trigger points for rural and tourism lease renewals
- Recommendation 14: incentives for freeholding of pastoral leases
- Recommendation 15: the review of the corporation and aggregation restrictions

QTIC commends the Queensland Government and the Parliamentary Committee on the achievement to date regarding land streamlining and improving tenure arrangements. QTIC with the support of industry have been advocating for these changes for some time. Involvement with these reforms included advocating on behalf of industry for these amendments as part of *DestinationQ*¹, providing a submission to the Committee on the *Future of land tenure arrangements in Queensland* inquiry, as well as appearing as a witness to the Parliamentary hearing held on 22 August 2012.

¹ DestinationQ is a partnership between the Queensland Government and the tourism industry, recognising tourism as one of the four pillars of our economy. In 2012, the Queensland Government and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council signed the landmark DestinationQ Partnership Agreement and 12 Month Key Action Plan. This agreement focused on the immediate actions needed by industry and government to get the industry back on track toward its target to increase overnight visitor expenditure to \$30 billion per year by 2020.

BACKGROUND AND QTIC'S POSITION

Consultation with our members and other stakeholders since 2012 had revealed that the land tenure environment for tourism businesses (particularly those that rely on access to protected areas) was proving complex, inflexible and costly for operators.

The capacity of Queensland to attract new investment in tourism was, and will be, largely dependent on the current commercial operating environment and on the regulatory and planning provisions for such investment. It was reported that the lack of certainty, lengthy approval processes, multiple agency responsibilities and disproportionate taxes and charges are powerful deterrents for capital attraction.

The Queensland land tenure arrangement system under the reforms are set to accommodate protected land use opportunities for the tourism industry as well as presents an almost unique opportunity to achieve multiple objectives, including regional development, ecotourism, indigenous engagement, the protection of cultural heritage and protection of Queensland's ecological values.

These reforms are demonstrating that government are showing greater appreciation of the value of protected areas and economic and community benefits can be achieved simultaneously and sustainably through tourism activities.

ECOTOURISM UNDER LAND TENURE REFORMS

World-class nature is the main motivator for international and domestic visitors to travel to Queensland, and ecotourism is now one of Queensland's greatest competitive advantages.

The *Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013–2020* released last year, seeks to provide tourism operators, government, community and other stakeholders with clear direction on how Queensland will leverage its competitive advantage to become a bold, innovative, world leader in ecotourism. These reforms to land tenure will undoubtedly provide the appropriate foundations for new ecotourism developments to succeed.

The reforms will assist in achieving the vision of the Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2013-2020: *Queensland is Australia's number one ecotourism destination and recognised as a world leader in ecotourism, delivering best practice nature-based experiences that contribute to the conservation of our natural resources and cultural heritage.*

Reducing red tape and providing certainty through the land tenure arrangement system will ensure developer confidence, and therefore foster thriving Queensland tourism operators who deliver world class experiences and demonstrate best practice and innovation.

ENQUIRIES

We thank you for considering this submission of support and welcome any feedback you may have. For all enquiries, please contact Daniel Gschwind (07) 3236 1445 or email policy@qtic.com.au.