

3) What makes people in your jurisdiction want to live in Northern Australia? What incentives from all levels of government could encourage people to live in Northern Australia?

- In 2021, the Queensland Government offered Queenslander's cash incentives to move to regional Queensland and take up a job in Tourism.
- The Work in Paradise Incentive Scheme (the Scheme) was part of the Queensland Government's Work in Paradise program. The Scheme targeted jobseekers from across Australia to take up a job in the Queensland tourism industry and offered small cash incentives. The Scheme is now concluded with the exhaustion of funds.
- The Queensland Government has introduced the workforce attraction incentive scheme (incentive scheme) to address challenges in attracting a health workforce, particularly in rural and remote Queensland. The incentive scheme takes effect from 1 July 2023 and will offer two programs:
 1. Interstate or international health workers – health workers from interstate or overseas who move to Queensland may be eligible for payments of up to \$20,000.
 2. Rural and remote medical practitioners – medical practitioners who take a job in regional or remote Queensland may be eligible for up to an additional \$50,000. The incentive scheme will run until 30 June 2025.
- The Rural and Remote Workforce Forum also focused on current and emerging supply issues, workforce sustainability and resilience in the immediate short-term (within the next 12 months).
- Implementation of the 'Future-proofing our rural and remote medical workforce' project recommendations are aimed at strengthening the supply of rural and remote doctors through improved co-ordination and planning, flexible workforce models and enhanced support.
- 'Make a Healthy Career Move' campaign has a specific focus on attracting qualified health care professionals to rural and remote Queensland.
- The Queensland Government engages with northern Queensland communities via the Regional Communities Forum, organised by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) on a regular basis to identify issues and action solutions. Issues raised to date include:
 - Path to Treaty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - Housing access and affordability,
 - Workforce attraction and retention,
 - Enabling infrastructure such as roads, digital communication and water and
 - Support to the emerging sectors of manufacturing and energy.
- The Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP) is working closely with local stakeholders to develop Regional Infrastructure Plans. The Central and Western Queensland Infrastructure Plan released earlier this year, is the first of these regional infrastructure plans developed to support the implementation of the 2022 State Infrastructure Strategy. By articulating each region's economic advantages and future priorities, these Plans can help drive private investment through increasing investor confidence. They will also inform the strategic planning of all levels of government, business and industry to support a more coordinated approach to sequencing and prioritising infrastructure planning and investment.

- One of the biggest attractions for the people we work with to want to live in the North is connection to country. Programs and initiatives that could support this would be support for essential infrastructure and additional programs that support caring for country, e.g. Ranger programs.

4) How do levels of government currently collaborate to address issues in Northern Australia, and how can collaboration and coordination be improved?

- As Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water, I am a member of the Northern Australia Ministerial Forum (NAMF) with responsibility for coordinating the Queensland Government response to the Australian Government's Northern Australia Development agenda. In this role, I take the issues and challenges raised by the Regional Community Forums to the Ministerial Forum with a view to raising greater collaboration across northern Australia.
- In support, the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water has formed an Interdepartmental Committee of relevant departments to contribute policy and to assist with addressing issues.
- A well-resourced Office of Northern Australia is essential to coordinating the northern jurisdictions and synthesising actions from the agreed issues. Housing, enabling infrastructure, First Nations participation, workforce attraction and support to emerging industry are all areas worthy of action and collaboration. We need to move the Northern agenda from identifying issues to a plan of joint action. The NAMF also agreed to a refresh of the Our North, Our Future: White Paper on Developing Northern Australia to inform a program of joint actions to progress the agreed priorities.
- The Department of Housing is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils and communities across Queensland to develop co-designed, place-based and community-led Local Housing Plans to respond to local housing challenges and priorities.
- In the 19 communities identified as remote and discrete (including Coen and Mossman Gorge) Local Housing Plans are being developed and implemented consistent with the framework of the Local Thriving Communities reform where government and communities will work together to co-design and deliver structural, service, and economic reforms. The Local Housing Plans are driven by community engagement and shared decision-making to identify and respond to local housing challenges and priorities and progress housing and homelessness responses at the local level.
- The Department of Housing has established the Strategic Quarterly Governance Meeting to provide an opportunity for stronger relationship-based governance between remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Governments which enables discussions of strategic importance to housing in remote and discrete Indigenous communities.
- In Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Government areas capital works programs are delivered in accordance with the principles of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan and the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021–2025 which enable community-led, place-based housing responses to housing needs.
- Program development and delivery (including housing design) of social housing-related construction and land development programs is led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Government Authorities with the \$40 million (M) Interim Remote Capital Program and \$105M Forward Remote Capital Program programmed to deliver new houses, land lot development for immediate and future use and extensions to current dwellings.
- Upgrades, repairs and maintenance and tenancy management services are provided in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland in collaboration with the Local Government.

- Many organisations exist in Queensland to foster collaboration and address issues across northern Queensland and northern Australia more broadly. Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a national network of Committees made up of local leaders who work with all levels of government, business and community groups to support the economic development of their regions. RDA Committees have an active and facilitative role in their communities with a clear focus on growing strong and confident regional economies that harness their competitive advantages, seize on economic opportunity and attract investment.
- Regional Organisation of Councils (ROCs) are a collaborative organisation representing members of Local Government councils. ROC member councils work collaboratively to solve regional issues and to contribute to the future sustainability of the region. They advocate on behalf of their member Councils and region on key issues and priorities. This includes advocating to all levels of government, relevant agencies and organisations on matters such as infrastructure planning and investment, waste and resource recovery, regional planning and development as well as service levels and liveability. ROCs make research and strategy driven submissions to State and Federal governments, as well as relevant agencies and organisations. This work contributes to public debate with the aim to highlight the region's concerns and priorities.
- Regional Managers' Coordination Networks (RMCNs) meet regularly to share information on Queensland Government priorities and cross-government collaborative opportunities. RMCNs provide a forum for senior officers across government within a region to meet and share information and have a mandate to assist agencies to achieve their outcomes through better regional engagement and coordination. RMCNs have an important role in engaging with RDA committees to validate and/or provide advice in the development of priorities, including providing information on current government activities in the region.
- There are also several well-established and effective Regional Economic Development Organisations (REDOs) across northern Queensland. For example:
 - The Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone is a regional economic development organisation covering seven local government areas – Mount Isa, Cloncurry, McKinlay, Richmond, Flinders, Charters Towers and Townsville.
 - Townsville Enterprise Limited is a not-for-profit organisation and is the official Regional Tourism Organisation and economic development body of the Townsville North Queensland region, extending from the Burdekin to the Hinchinbrook, west to Charters Towers and including the central section of the Great Barrier Reef and its island communities of Magnetic Island and the Palm Island group.
 - Advance Cairns is the peak independent non-government Advocacy and Economic Development Organisation for Tropical North Queensland.
 - GW3 (Greater Whitsunday Alliance) is an independent, regional economic development body that represents and advocates for the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region. It is funded by the three regional Councils along with project and grant funding. The organisation is led by an independent governance board.

7) What are the main issues your government is focused on addressing in Northern Australia, and what initiatives and policies do you have in place (or have you implemented) to address these issues?

- The Queensland Government engages with northern Queensland communities via the Regional Communities Forum (organised by DPC) on a regular basis to identify issues and action solutions. Issues raised to date include:
 - Path to Treaty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples,
 - Housing access and affordability; workforce attraction and retention,
 - Enabling infrastructure such as roads, digital communication and water and
 - Support to the emerging sectors of manufacturing and energy.
- The Queensland Government continues to allocate significant funding to support development across North Queensland. Investment in economic infrastructure is critical to ensuring the State's long-term prosperity.
- The Queensland Government welcomes the investment decisions made by the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) in Queensland to date and continues to work with the NAIF Office to progress Queensland loans that are in the advanced stages for execution and discuss proposals at the assessment stage.
- The Queensland Government looks forward to continuing the partnership with the Australian Government to ensure that NAIF funds flow to Queensland projects and deliver benefits for North Queensland.
- The Queensland Government is committed to meeting the Closing The Gap targets and responsibilities.
 - In response to the housing target to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) housing to 88 per cent by 2031, the Department of Housing is delivering capital works in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Local Government Authorities to address local needs and priorities and respond to overcrowding on the basis of local needs and priorities.
 - The most recent census reporting 81.2 per cent of First Nations people in Queensland lived in appropriately sized (not overcrowded) homes which is an increase from the 79.4 per cent baseline in 2016.
 - This is alongside the capital works being delivered across the State that will support Queensland First Nations households to be in appropriately sized housing.
- The Queensland Government is committed to increasing remote home ownership and continues with responses including:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan 2019-23, Action 9 – Pathways to Home Ownership, including the affordable sale of social housing in the Torres Shire.
 - The Remote Home Ownership (RHO) Program, which is a \$75M program, led by the Department of Housing and delivered in partnership with the former Department of Seniors and Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Councils, Trustees and communities.
 - The program aims to resolve the ownership of 345 social housing dwellings impacted by a lease or entitlement under the now repealed *Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985*, commonly known as Land Holding Act (Katter) leases and lease entitlements.

- To date, this investment has enabled the transfer of 205 social housing dwellings into the private ownership of local First Nations families in remote communities.
 - The program also aims to provide pathways to home ownership through 99-year home ownership leases or the grant of freehold.
- Supporting healthier home environments and reducing the risk of infectious disease in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is a priority we seek to address through focused health promotion and advice on healthy living practices in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Northern Australia.
 - A key initiative under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023, is the pilot of the Healthy Housing Program led by the Department of Housing, Department of Health and in collaboration with Department of Energy and Public Works.
 - The Healthy Housing pilot program will support healthier home environments and reduce the risk of infectious disease in remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, through focused health promotion and advice on healthy living practices connected to timely housing repairs and maintenance due to increased awareness in the households of the connection between the two from a healthy housing perspective. The program is designed to provide 'proof of concept' to enable consideration of a broader program beyond the pilot phase.

10) How is your government encouraging internal migration to Northern Australia? What policy initiatives would you suggest the Australian Government consider implementing to support State initiatives designed to encourage internal migration to Northern Australia?

- The Queensland Government has introduced the workforce attraction incentive scheme (incentive scheme) to address challenges in attracting a health workforce, particularly in rural and remote Queensland. The incentive scheme takes effect from 1 July 2023 and will offer two programs:
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- To enhance the attraction of choosing a career in General Practice (GP) for doctors, and improve distribution and retention of GPs in regional, rural and remote Australia, Queensland Health (QH) has responded to the Commonwealth's invitation to participate in piloting a Single Employer Model (SEM) across two sites in Queensland. Further consultation will be required with stakeholders both internal and external to QH to develop a proposal. A potential site could be in northern Queensland.
- QH held a Rural and Remote Workforce Forum in Cairns on 7 September 2022, to identify the system-level enablers and actions required to acknowledge, rebuild and retain current staff and multidisciplinary teams. Out of this forum the Rural and Remote Workforce Forum Action Plan has been approved with a focus on issues including accommodation, flexibility in workforce planning and increased workforce mobility, and streamlining the recruitment process.
- The Rural and Remote Workforce Forum also focused on current and emerging supply issues, workforce sustainability and resilience in the immediate short-term (within the next 12 months).
- Implementation of the 'Future-proofing our rural and remote medical workforce' project recommendations are aimed at strengthening the supply of rural and remote doctors through improved co-ordination and planning, flexible workforce models and enhanced support.
- QH has launched the 'Make a Healthy Career Move' campaign which has a specific focus on rural and remote Queensland.
- To make regional and remote Queensland an attractive place to work, live and invest, the Queensland Government has worked to ensure planning and regional issues are addressed.
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 - Support to the emerging sectors of manufacturing and energy.
- DSDILGP is working closely with local stakeholders to develop Regional Infrastructure Plans. The Central and Western Queensland Infrastructure Plan (CWQIP), released earlier this year, is the first of these regional infrastructure plans developed to support the implementation of the 2022 State Infrastructure Strategy. By articulating each region's economic advantages and future priorities, these Plans can help drive private investment through increasing investor confidence. They will also inform

the strategic planning of all levels of government, business and industry to support a more coordinated approach to sequencing and prioritising infrastructure planning and investment.

- The Queensland Government is keen to work with the Australian Government and the Northern Australia jurisdictions to agree to the important issues in the north and to propose joint policies and initiatives to jointly fund and deliver and develop the north.

15) Which industries and sectors do you consider have the potential to create lasting employment and long-term, local economic benefits for the north?

- The key industries for the north include traditional and emerging opportunities. Tourism, mining and agriculture and all the supporting sectors such as transport, supplies and services are essential and traditional areas of economic growth. Emerging industries in renewable power, information technology and space industries promise opportunities for the future, while defence provides a significant opportunity to support population growth in the north. Long-term policies and support are needed to ensure that growth in the north results in a firm foothold for continued prosperity of the north.
- Queensland now has a new-industry development strategy which will focus on global decarbonisation opportunities. The regions will be included in those opportunities via a catalyst called the Regional Economic Futures Fund to deliver initiatives that help regional economic transformation in communities that will be directly impacted by the transition to a low-emission economy. Queensland will establish a state-wide Local Economic Opportunities Network (LEO) to work with communities across the State to identify opportunities for economic diversification and promote these for investment consideration.
- The Department of Housing confirms the Building and Construction industry has the potential to create lasting employment and long-term, local economic benefits for Northern Australia, including remote and discrete First Nations communities.