

Discover



Tropical Tablelands Tourism



# Annual Report 2011/2012



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## 1.0 CHAIRMANS REPORT

Tropical Tablelands Tourism has experienced a very busy and successful year. Engagement of our Marketing Contractor, Pinnacle Tourism Marketing in July 2011 has enabled the organisation to professionally implement marketing strategies, engage with key industry stakeholders and promote this region as a destination. Never before has this region been included in training to international and national operators or has the organisation had access to professional marketing advice that will lift the profile of this region. For many years, strategies were implemented on a re-active basis and concentrated within the North Queensland region. It is vital TTT continues to engage these services for the long term economic benefit of this region.

For many years TTT's role has not been clearly understood. As the Local Tourism Organisation, our role is to market and promote the region and target visitors to plan their visit to this region as a destination of choice (pre arrival). The role of our region's Visitor Centres is to provide the information to visitors whilst visiting the region (post arrival). The relationship between Tablelands Regional Council and Tropical Tablelands Tourism (TTT) is now stronger than ever before. Key Council personnel are now involved in regional planning and strategic discussions. The relationship with our region's Visitor Information Centre staff has also improved and this was evident with the support from volunteers to assist with manning the annual Cairns Show "Atherton Tablelands booth". Clarification of roles and effective communication has no doubt assisted both organisations to now work collaboratively.

DISCOVER magazine is the major in-print promotional vehicle for the region's advertising and information. The publication is the key marketing tool for members and the only piece of collateral distributed by TTT outside the TNQ region. DISCOVER magazine is now self-funded and doesn't access operational and marketing funding to produce and distribute.

Since TTT took ownership of the production of DISCOVER magazine, for the first time, we entered the project into the 2011 TNQ Tourism Awards under the Tourism Marketing category. We were delighted to be awarded the winner of this category and this is a reflection on the great work of our production team and the advertisers – our members.

The 2011/12 Board of Directors consist of a highly motivated and passionate group of Tourism identities. Each of them have brought the organization a strong, consistent and experienced approach to achieving our goals. Many of the Director's, have been involved with the organisation longer than the standard two year term. This is a credit to the organisation as all Directors are volunteers.

The contract for Marketing Services was only achievable from cash reserves available through careful financial management undertaken in the 3 years prior to July 2011. The rewards of some very hard and often difficult decisions in recent years is finally been received. Now more than ever, TTT needs to continue to obtain the appropriate funding required to adequately market this region and achieve our long term vision.



Michael Trout  
Chairman  
Tropical Tablelands Tourism

## 2.0 LEADERSHIP

### Board of Directors

**Michael Trout (Blazing Saddles & Mungalli Falls Student Village)** Northern region 1 Director & Chairman representing members in the towns and surrounding areas of Chillagoe; Dimbulah; Mareeba; Julatten; Mount Carbine and the Tablelands gateways of Mossman/Port Douglas; Daintree & Cooktown

- *Appointed 2011 AGM*

**Neil McGilp (Jabiru Safari Lodge)** Northern region 2 Director representing members in towns and surrounding areas of operators within the western side of Kuranda to Mareeba; Walkamin; and the Tablelands gateway of Cairns

- *Appointed 2010 AGM serving second year of 2 year term; resigned November 2011*

**Mike Took (Miju Rainforest Retreat)** Kuranda region Director representing members in Kuranda

- *Appointed 2011 AGM*

**Jim Russell (Fascinating Facets & The Crystal Caves)** Southern region 1 representing members in towns and surrounding areas of Tolga; Atherton; Tinaroo; Kairi; Herberton; Wondecla and Irvinebank

- *Appointed 2010 AGM, resigned June 2012*

**Melanie van Haaren (Yungaburra Business Association President)** Southern region 2 representing members in towns and surrounding areas of Yungaburra; Malanda; Lake Eacham; Peeramon and Tarzali.

- *Appointed June 2011; resigned June 2012*

**Michelle Bell Turner (Mungalli Creek Diary)** Southern region 3 representing members in towns and surrounding areas of Millaa Millaa; Ravenshoe and the Tablelands gateway of the Cassowary Coast.

- *Appointed 2010 AGM*

**Bram Collins (Undara Experience)** Vice Chairman & Outback region representing members in towns and surrounding areas of Innot Hot Springs; Mount Garnet; Mt Surprise; Georgetown; Forsyth and the Tablelands gateway of Cape York.

- *Appointed 2011 AGM*

**Cr Rhonda Sorensen** representative appointed by Tablelands Regional Council

- *resigned following March 2012 Council Elections*

**Cr Rod Marti** representative appointed by Tablelands Regional Council

- *appointed April 2012*

**Doug Wilson (MaMu Canopy Walkway & DERM)** Special Interest Director 1

- *appointed by the Board February 2011*

**Marc Sleeman (Tourism Kuranda)** Special Interest Director 2

- *appointed by the Board September 2011*

**Patrice Fletcher (BIG4 Atherton Woodlands Tourist Park)** Special Interest Director 3

- *appointed by the Board April 2012*

### Stakeholder Representatives

- Amanda Riches, Tablelands Regional Council
- Gwyneth Nevard, Tablelands Regional Council
- Mayor Rosa Lee Long, Tablelands Regional Council
- Rob Giason, Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- Wayne Snelson (Membership), Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- David Inches, Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- Margaret Darveniza, Advance Cairns
- Jeff Gillies, Tourism Queensland
- Richard Blanchette, Mission Beach Tourism

### Contractors

1. Marketing – Pinnacle Tourism Marketing (engaged July 2011)
2. Media/PR – Mia Lacy, Libra Communications (engaged prior 2007)
3. Administration – Bronwyn Cant, Smart Data Virtual Office Solutions (engaged March 2007)

### 3.0 CORPORATE ACTIVITY

#### **Appointment of Marketing Contractor**

July 2011, the team at Pinnacle Tourism Marketing commenced a 2 year contract to provide tourism marketing advice on product and industry development to enhance the region's tourism sector. Pinnacle Tourism Marketing is directly responsible for developing and implementing the annual Marketing Plan.

#### **TRC Brochure Display initiative**

In partnership with Tablelands Regional Council (TRC), July 2011 a benefit to members is free brochure display in the TRC Visitor Information Centres. This resulted in an increase in membership and also a little confusion as to how the process worked.

#### **Cairns Show 2011**

The Atherton Tablelands was well presented at the 2011 Cairns Show. Tropical Tablelands Tourism was awarded the "Best Booth" in the Lifestyle Pavilion and received half the price in booth costs for the following year.

#### **2011 TNQ Tourism Awards**

Discover Magazine won the 2011 TNQ Tourism Awards "Tourism Marketing category".

#### **Tourism Trail (Newspaper article)**

For the purpose of engaging with operators outside the membership base, TTT ran a monthly article in the local newspaper, "The Tablelander" covering various tourism industry news and regional marketing activities. With resources and funding for this monthly article, the Tourism Trail column ceased in December 2011 and new strategies were developed including engaging with our local Chambers of Commerce and Business organisations.

#### **Export Market Development Grants (EMDG)**

Tropical Tablelands Tourism was awarded 'Approved Body' status under the Export Market Development Grants Act. This funding allows the organisation to claim expenses relating to international marketing compliant with funding guidelines. \$21,591 was received for 2009/10 financial year. AusIndustry has since changed funding guidelines and our 2010/11 application was denied. TTT is working with a Consultant to review how TTT can continue to access this grant under the new terms.

#### **Membership**

	Supporter	Bronze	Silver	gold	Platinum	Total
2008/09	0	11	14	51	1	77
2009/10	0	26	12	50	2	90
2010/11	8	31	11	40	2	92
2011/12	2	60	11	35	4	151

## **4.0 MARKETING ACTIVITY**

### **Marketing Plan 2011/12**

- Short Breaks Campaign July 2011 - promoting accommodation specials and packages and targeting both Cairns & Townsville as two specific markets.
- New Destination Website – launched March 2012
- Development of a Brand Toolbox –launched March 2012
- Discover Magazine 2012/13 – launched March 2012
- Local displays – ongoing
- Engagement of Domestic and International Wholesale trade – ongoing
- Implementation of Media/PR Plan - ongoing
- Development and Delivery of Trade Ready Program – not achieved; opportunity not taken up by members
- Organisation and Delivery of a trade famil – not achieved; opportunity not taken up by members
- Development of Self-Drive Itineraries for Campaigns and wholesaler inclusion – achieved April 2012
- Trade famil – April 2012
- ATE Perth – region represented June 2012
- Inbound Sales Trip – December & February
- Domestic Sales Trip – February
- Solo representation at Caravan and Camping Shows in Melbourne, Perth, Sydney and Brisbane – achieved March, April & June
- Other consumer and trade travel shows – all year round under Pro-Active Marketing

### **TNQ Regional Branding**

- TTT involved in TNQ Branding Exercise and new brand message for the Tablelands and how this can be incorporated into regional brand “Adventurous by Nature”
- Following a number of meetings between TTT Marketing Contractor Pinnacle Tourism Marketing and TTNQ, TTNQ came back with the destination branding that incorporated their new elements as well as Discover.
- Tropical Tablelands Tourism was the first Local Tourism Organisation in the region to adopt the new branding elements

### **Brand Toolbox**

- A Brand Toolbox was developed by TTT to ensure consistency in branding the region
- The Membership base were given access to this toolbox including imagery and guidelines
- Brand Toolbox is now available for non-members to ensure consistent message and imagery is used to showcase the region
- Brand Toolbox available on the TTT Website

### **Tourism Queensland Queensland on Tour Media Famil**

- 2 groups of media from Europe visited the region in November 2011.
- One group visited Herberton Historic Village before proceeding out to Undara.
- The other group visited Lake Eacham, Millaa Millaa Falls, Mamu Canopy Boardwalk and Paronella Park.

## **New website – [www.athertontablelands.com.au](http://www.athertontablelands.com.au)**

The new website for this region was launched March 2012 in conjunction with the launch of the new branding elements for Tropical North Queensland. This project was a significant milestone for the organisation and the region.

### Statistics for the period April 2012 (launch date) to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012

Visitors - 9,476; 77% of these new visitors (average 3,154 per month)

Prior to the launch of the new website, previous website averaged 1,223 visitors per month

#### Audience:

1. Australia 85%
2. United States
3. United Kingdom
4. New Zealand
5. Germany
6. Netherlands

#### Visited Content:

1. Listings (booking accommodation & tours)
2. Where to Stay
3. What to Do
4. Where to Go
5. Waterfalls and Lakes
6. Where to Stay Atherton

#### Top Referral sources

1. [Athertoninformationcentre.com.au](http://Athertoninformationcentre.com.au)
2. [Skyrail.com.au](http://Skyrail.com.au)
3. [Bookings.athertontablelands.com.au](http://Bookings.athertontablelands.com.au)
4. [Queenslandholidays.com.au](http://Queenslandholidays.com.au)
5. Facebook
6. [Cairnsgreatbarrierreef.org.au](http://Cairnsgreatbarrierreef.org.au)



### **November 2011 Domestic Sales Trip**

Operators called on during this trip included:

1. Blue Holidays
2. Sunlover Holidays
3. Infinity
4. Queensland Rail
5. RACQ
6. TQ Famil Unit
7. Qantas Holidays



### **February 2012 Domestic Sales Trip**

Domestic sales calls and training were conducted as follows:

1. Blue Holidays
2. Infinity
3. Jetset Travelworld Group (Qantas Holidays)
4. Queensland Rail
5. Tourism Queensland – International Trade & Media Relations
6. Sunlover/AOT

### **International Sales Trip UK/Europe**

UK and Europe sales trip completed March 2012; training with UK operators

### **Bird Trails Project**

Tropical Tablelands Tourism was awarded \$92,000 under the Rural Resilience Industry Grant funding from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation for the development of an iPhone app to promote the destination to Birders. The project also included an upgrade to [www.birdingtropicalaustralia](http://www.birdingtropicalaustralia) website and the development of brochures and collateral.

This project was completed in May 2012 and strategies are currently being developed to upgrade the application.

### **TQ North QLD Tourism Trails**

Tropical Tablelands Tourism was awarded \$99,200 under the Rural Resilience Industry Grant funding from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation for the development of a smart phone application using the data from the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

The project initially involved the development of a new drive route in North Queensland whereby drivers can rely on GPS and iPhone apps technology to navigate, targeting technology-savvy domestic and international tourists, retirees, back-packers and experience seeking tourists. An android version was later included in the project plan to ensure a larger market will have access to the app

Pinnacle Tourism Marketing were engaged for the Project Management of this project. The project is on track and expected to be completed December 2012.

### **Malanda Falls Infrastructure Project**

Tropical Tablelands Tourism was awarded \$49,436 under the Minor Tourism Infrastructure Grant funding from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation for the much needed improvement to the roadside picnic areas adjacent to the Malanda Falls Visitor Centre.

This project was managed in-house with Tablelands Regional Council and representatives from the Malanda community. This project is on track and expected to be completed November 2012.

### **Australian Cycling Classic**

Tropical Tablelands Tourism were involved with the organisers for the Australian Cycling Classic including engaging with neighbouring Councils and potential sponsors for the event. "Tour of the Tropics" proposed a road cycling track spread across three Shires (Cairns, Tablelands and Cassowary). This event is expected to take place in our region May 2013.

### **Rediscover Trade Famil**

The Pinnacle Trade Famil was an undeniable success with some of the attendees describing it as the best famil that they had ever been on. Member products involved have already had ongoing dealings with the agents involved. Member products that were involved in this were:-

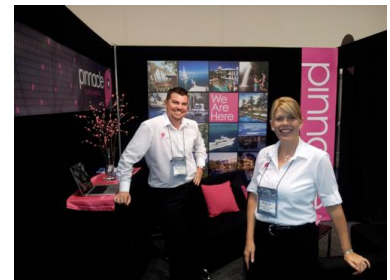
1. Hot Air
2. Mareeba Wetlands/Jabiru Safari Lodge
3. Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat
4. Mt Uncle Distillery
5. Blazing Saddles
6. Herberton Historic Village
7. Mungalli Creek Dairy

Other itinerary highlights were:-

- Millaa Millaa Falls
- The Crater Lakes
- Curtain Fig Tree
- The Malanda Pub

### **ATE Perth June 2012**

The Australian Tourism Exchange was held in Perth between the 18th and 22nd June. Over 90 appointments were conducted over the four days with the Tablelands featuring in most of these. The collateral that was developed was mirrored on the Avis campaign flyer with three conceptual day tours showcased, demonstrating the diversity of the region.



## 5.0 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The financial records for 2011/12 were audited by Jessups Accountants Cairns.

### Income

Membership	\$ 34,547.98
Council Contributions	\$ 65,454.55
Website Commission	\$ 1,832.21
Interest Income	\$ 1,120.13
Marketing Income	\$ 727.28
Website Featured Products	\$ 545.46
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 104,227.61</b>

### Expenses

#### Operational

Accounting & Audit Fees	\$ 1,000.00
Administration	\$ 36,000.00
Bank & Government Charges	\$ 1,025.62
Bank Merchant Fees	\$ 1,190.21
Insurance	\$ 2,539.71
Interest expenses	\$ 290.74
Meetings	\$ 612.82
Membership & Subscriptions	\$ 50.00
Print & Postage (General)	\$ 440.20
Print Media	\$ 162.55
TTNQ Tourism Awards	\$ 1,908.18
	<u>\$ 45,220.03</u>

#### 2012/13 Marketing & Promotion

Marketing Contractor	\$ 40,000.08
Media & PR Contractor	\$ 7,098.32
Promotional materials	\$ 1,992.91
Consumer & Trade/Travel Shows	\$ 14,413.45
Marketing Campaigns	\$ 5,314.44
Website (new development)	\$ 12,755.00
Website maintenance & fees	\$ 1,740.91
	<u>\$ 83,315.11</u>

**Total Expenses** **\$ 128,535.14**

**Operating Loss** **\$ -24,307.53**

Project funding received:

- \$ 99,200.00 - North Queensland Tourism Trails smart phone app project (DEEDI)
- \$ 49,436.00 - Malanda Falls roadside visitor facilities upgrade (DEEDI)
- \$ 92,000.00 – North Queensland Bird Trails project (Tourism QLD)