



Activities Report

Tropical Tablelands Tourism

Achievements & Outcomes for the

Atherton Tablelands

Atherton Tablelands Promotion Bureau Ltd, trading as Tropical Tablelands Tourism is the local tourism organisation for the Atherton Tablelands. The role of Tropical Tablelands Tourism (TTT) is to support, promote, facilitate, and encourage development of, a professional regional integrated and successful Tourism Industry for the economic benefit of members and the Tablelands Community.



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1.0 The Industry

TOURISM

THE SECOND LARGEST ECONOMIC DRIVER OF THE ATHERTON TABLELANDS

- Tourism is worth \$170 million to the Atherton Tablelands economy.
- \$80 million is generated by day visitors.
- \$90 million generated by overnight visitors.
- The flow on revenue is estimated to be \$160 million.
- Over half a million visitors choose the Atherton Tablelands as their holiday destination each year. The vast majority of visitors is generated by the domestic visitor and 81% of these originating from the drive market.

Tourism has been a part of the Tablelands economy for a long time. This is due to the region's scenic mountains, rainforest, lakes and waterfalls, its natural, geological and mining history, uniquely combined with outback landscapes to the west.

It is now being further developed as part of the process of diversification. This has been driven in part by declines in traditional Tablelands industries. (eg. Establishment of the Wet Tropics World Heritage and the consequent loss of the timber industry, decline in the Tobacco industry, the failure of alternative cropping such as tea tree plantations, and dairy deregulation), and accelerated by the impact of increased tourism market focus and visitation to Cairns and the broader Tropical North Queensland region.

The potential of our region centres on its attraction in other Queensland markets, its proximity to Cairns with its 2.2 million visitors, and the range of scenic attractions quite different to the coastal strip.

The visitor economy is much broader than 'Tourism and Events'. It includes a wide range of businesses that benefit from the direct and indirect economic activity generated to provide goods and services to overnight and day visitors.

Petrol stations, restaurants, cafes, newsagents, shopping centres, retail outlets – all benefit from visitor expenditure generated to support the local economy.

The region is waiting to be discovered and will reward those visitors with a travel experience that many travellers believe is the real Australia.

2.0 Current Position

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding Natural Environment • Pristine area complemented by World Heritage listed rainforests • Easy to recognize core experiences • Growing engagement with traditional trade • Demonstrated tourism visitation to the area with an extremely high satisfaction level • Close proximity to Cairns & Port Douglas as a tourism hub • Good access to the destination allowing access from Port Douglas, Cairns and then the southern areas of Townsville • Picturesque rural village surrounded by diverse agriculture with strong self-drive visitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion on what the destination name is • Centralisation of visitor number in one area (Kuranda) with no real dispersal further in to the Tablelands • No real sustainable funding • Tourism not recognized as being a key industry on the Tablelands • Lack of Trade Ready product to maximize visitation • Lack of human resources to undertake activity • Definite peak and troughs of the Tourism season • Visitation from Intra Region strongly geared towards weekends, where-as weekdays are very weak in terms of visitation
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of product wanting to engage with trade • Events on the Tablelands and Event Tourism • Taste Paradise – local food brand linked to food tourism experiences • Mountain Biking/Trekking destination development • Development of packages between product on the Tablelands to maintain visitation • Development of Unique Fauna as a unique selling point • Japanese Charters • Bird Watching • Development of Tourism Trails throughout the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding withdrawal by Key Stakeholders • Lack of activity • Products not recognizing how to grow tourism • Changing customer needs and wants • Products not recognizing that they are in tourism • Reducing membership • Funding concentrated to support other industries

As identified in the Tropical Tablelands Tourism Business Plan, the organisation has been faced with significant changes and challenges. These challenges required the organisation to address the operational philosophy and structure of the organisation. Through strategic planning Tropical Tablelands Tourism has been able to address our key responsibilities, define activities and initiatives to work through the challenges and is a very different organisation today.

In July 2011, Tropical Tablelands Tourism engaged the services of Marketing Consultants, Pinnacle Tourism Marketing. This decision has enabled the organisation to be provided with the guidance, support and strategies to effectively face the challenges for Tourism on the Tablelands.

3.0 Achievements

3.1 Corporate Activity

3.1.1 Board Governance

June 2012, the TTT Board endorsed a number of Policies and Procedures to ensure effective Board Governance. This manual of Policies and Procedures covers issues relating to values, Board Operations, Governance, Human Resources, Financial Management, Communications and Privacy. All Directors of the Board are now well informed of their responsibility to members and their duty as a member of the Board of Directors. These policies are reviewed annually.

3.1.2 Strategic Planning

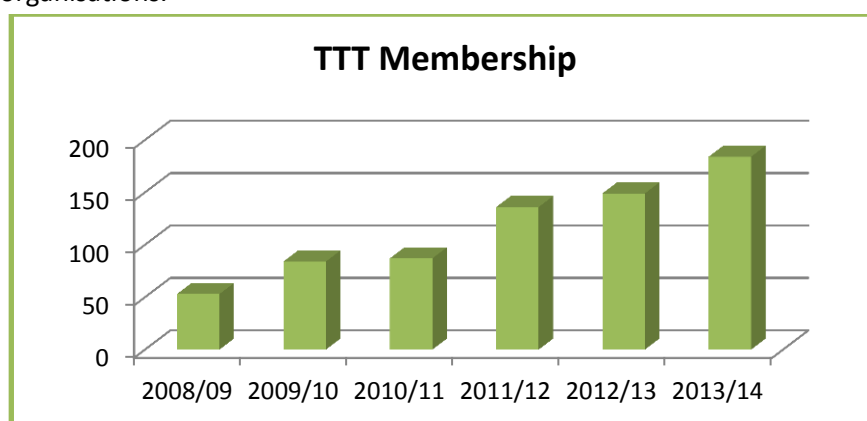
In 2008, Tropical Tablelands Tourism commissioned Klienhardt Business Consulting to develop a Tourism Business Plan for the Atherton Tablelands. This key document detailed the activities required to develop the industry in partnership with industry operators, community members, Government agencies and other relevant tourism industry organisations.

In 2011, the Business Plan was updated and a Strategic Plan developed to highlight the priority actions as outlined in the Business Plan. The Strategic Plan is now reviewed every 4 years and together with an annual Operational Plan and Marketing Plan outlining the specific tasks for both marketing and corporate activity, these documents form the framework for Tropical Tablelands Tourism.

3.1.3 Membership

Since 2011, Tropical Tablelands Tourism has seen a steady increase in membership numbers. This is due to the work being rolled out by the organisation in promoting the region and the products and services within.

The initiative by Tablelands Regional Council to support free brochure display in the region's visitor centres for TTT members, has contributed greatly in increasing membership numbers. This support by Council has also assisted TTT to educate operators on the role of TTT and a better understanding of the tourism industry. Further work and resources is needed to engage with and educate all businesses across the region that are currently not members of the organisation. Significant work is currently underway to address this issue through our region's Chamber of Commerce organisations.



3.1.4 Leadership

The Board of Directors consist of a maximum of eleven (11) financial members, elected by members at the annual general meeting. Directors are volunteers and are supported by contractors to meet the organisations objectives.

Board of Directors

Chairman	Michael Trout – Blazing Saddles & Mungalli Student Village Special Interest Director; appointed October 2009
Vice Chair	Patrice Fletcher – BIG4 Atherton Woodlands Tourist Director representing southern region 1; appointed April 2012
Director	Michael Lawrence – Inspire Business Consulting Special Interest Director; appointed December 2012
Director	Carolyn Sandaver – Mareeba Lodge Director representing northern region 1; appointed May 2013
Director	Robert Matthews – Kuranda Hotel Director representing Kuranda area; appointed December 2012
Director	Alan Gillanders – Alan’s Wildlife Tours Director representing southern region 2; appointed February 2013
Director	Michelle Bell-Turner – Mungalli Creek Dairy Director representing southern region 3; appointed October 2010
Director	Bram Collins – Undara Experience Director representing outback region; appointed October 2009
Director	Cr Jenny Jensen – Mareeba Shire Council Council representative; appointed February 2014
Director	Cr Rod Marti – Tablelands Regional Council Council representative
Director	Representing northern region 2 currently vacant

Contractors

Executive Officer & Administration – Bronwyn Cant

Marketing – Michael Nelson and the team at Pinnacle Tourism Marketing

Media & PR – Tanya Snelling

3.2 Marketing Activity

3.2.1 Consumer & Trade Show Representation

For years, TTT engaged the services of Pro-Active Marketing to showcase the region under the FNQ banner at over 15 Consumer and Trade Travel Shows held around Australia every year.

Since 2012, this developed to a standalone booth under the Drive North Queensland Banner at the 3 major Caravan & Camping Shows and this year the region is also promoted in a secondary booth with Caravanning Queensland.

Up until 2013, TTT participated in the Cairns Show held in July each year. Under the banner “Discover Atherton Tablelands” operators and Visitor Information Centre volunteers promoted the region through product display, brochures and prizes to the Cairns market.

2014 will be the first year TTT will be attending the Townsville Show.

Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE)

For the last 3 years, the region has been showcased at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE). ATE is Australia’s largest annual travel and tourism business-to-business event. It brings together Australia’s tourism industry in a forum to showcase their products directly to tourism wholesalers and retailers from around the world, through a combination of scheduled business appointments and networking events. It is also a unique opportunity for international travel Buyers to experience Australia first-hand.

Each year around 1200 Australian Seller delegates from approximately 460 companies, 600 key Buyer delegates from over 38 countries, and over 50 international and Australian media attend this global event.

In 2014, for the first time in its 35 year history, ATE is travelling to one of Australia’s premier regional destinations – Cairns. Right on the doorstep of Queensland’s stunning world-heritage listed Great Barrier Reef, Cairns is an exciting location for ATE14 and one of Australia’s best known leisure tourism destinations for the international market.

Interest in the Atherton Tablelands continues to grow from buyers. Self-drive itineraries and the diversity of the region is a major drawcard for the international market.

Outcome:

- Increased exposure of the region
- Atherton Tablelands featured in 7 out of 10 ATE delegates familiarisation itineraries
- Millaa Millaa Falls one of the iconic destination imagery displayed throughout Cairns CBD
- Region represented at both the ATE Airport Welcome initiative and Cairns Community Film Night during ATE 14

3.2.2 Domestic and Wholesaler Engagement

Due to consistent engagement and training of domestic and international wholesale agents and a heavy focus on self-drive itineraries showcasing the diversity of the region, the presence of the Atherton Tablelands has significantly increased. Since the implementation of the 2011 TTT Marketing Plan, sales trips are conducted nationally and internationally to build awareness of the region. Exposure of the region outside north Queensland has never been achieved until now.

Outcome:

- The Atherton Tablelands region is now recognised as a stand-alone holiday destination and exposure increased on travel websites and in traditional wholesale.



- The Atherton Tablelands was also well showcased in the 2013 Corroboree Europe Post famil. This trade famil included agent visits to Herberton Historic Village; Undara Lava Tubes; Rose Gums Wilderness Retreat; Millaa Millaa Falls; Lake Eacham; Yungaburra; Skybury; Rainforestation before returning to Cairns.

3.2.3 Drive North Queensland App

Funded by the Rural Resilience Industry Grant from the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation and membership funds, Tropical Tablelands Tourism developed a smart phone application for iPhone, iPad and Android platforms to showcase North Queensland drive routes including maps, tourist information, imagery and operator data drawn from the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse. The App also includes a social media arm to allow travellers to share their experiences while they are actually having them.

As part of this project, workshops were conducted in Townsville, Charters Towers, Mission Beach, Atherton, Cairns and Georgetown. The aim of these workshops was to help operators and Visitor Information Centre staff to understand how they can be involved.

Outcome:

- TTNQ incorporated the Drive North Qld App into the activities rolled out for the Drive North Qld Campaign under the 2012/13 Tourism & Events Qld Contestable Funding initiative and is the key marketing element in the 2013/14 TTNQ's Drive North Qld Campaign.
- Over 4,000 downloads since the launch of the App (December 2012 to June 2013)
- App available from iPhone, iPad and Android platforms; a decision was made by Tropical Tablelands Tourism members to cover the cost of the development of the android version to ensure a wider audience can be targeted; 25% of the total downloads are using the Android platform
- A fourth drive route has since been included in the App funded under TTNQ's Drive North Queensland Campaign.
- Significant awareness of Australian Tourism Data Warehouse for Operators to be involved.
- Increased co-operative marketing initiatives between the sub-regions of Tropical North Queensland.

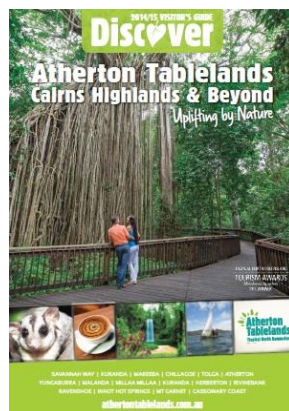
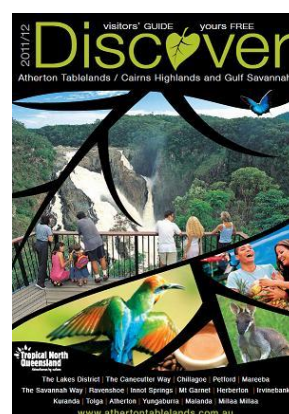
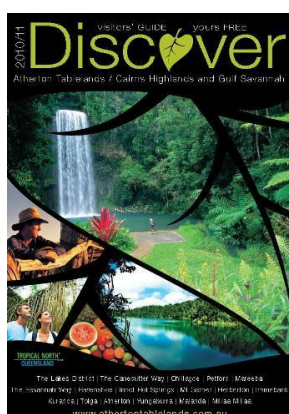
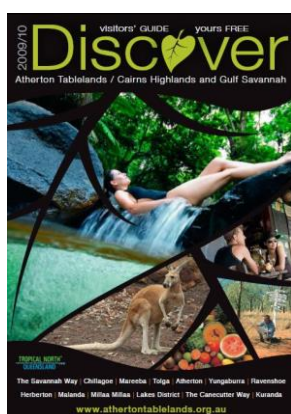


3.2.4 DISCOVER Visitors Guide

The Discover Magazine is produced annually and launched in conjunction with the Easter holiday break. DISCOVER is the primary form of collateral that it is utilised by Tropical Tablelands Tourism to promote the region. The print run for this magazine is 150,000 copies and is distributed right through the main touring routes of Queensland as well as car rentals around the region, the Visitor Information Centres, Hotels, Motels and on Tour Dex brochure boards.

Outcome:

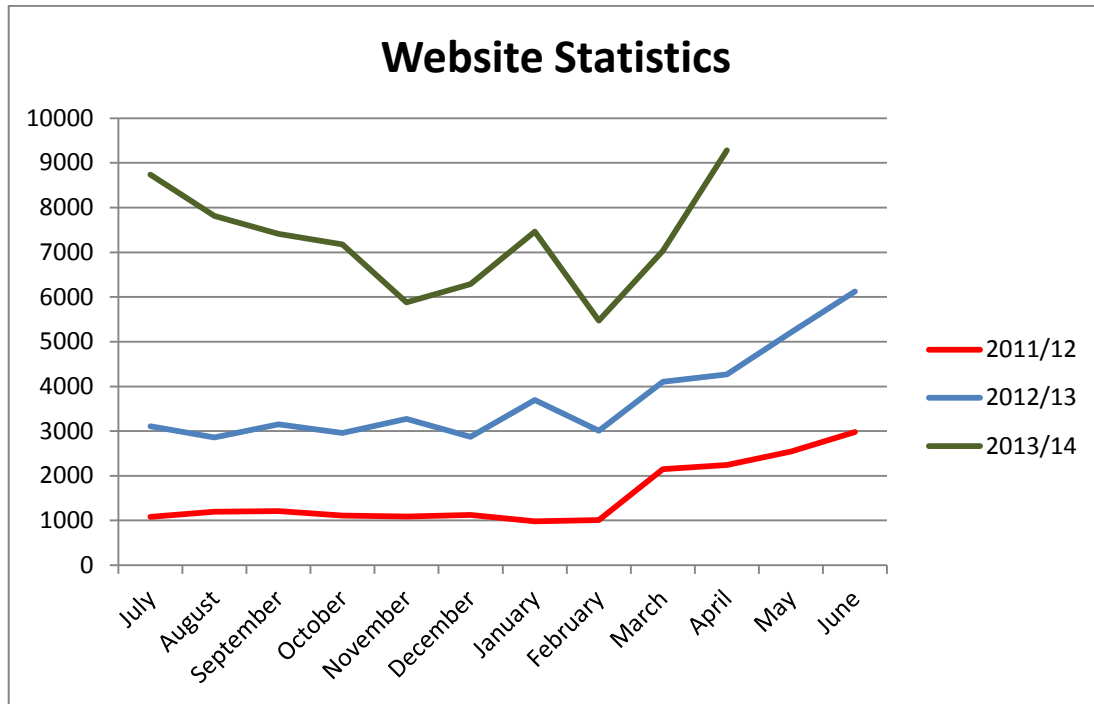
- In 2009, the production of DISCOVER was managed in-house. This has since resulted in this initiative to be a standalone project using no membership or Council funding contribution to produce the visitors guide.
- 150,000 copies are printed annually and all copies are distributed prior to the launch of the next edition.
- Since 2012, Discover is also available electronically with over 5,000 downloads recorded each year.
- 2010/11 edition – Winner in the 2011 TNQ Tourism Awards Tourism Marketing category
- 2011/12 edition – Finalist in the 2012 TNQ Tourism Awards Tourism Marketing category



3.2.5 Website

A new website promoting the destination was developed and launched in March 2012. This project was a significant milestone for the organisation and region.

Outcome: Since the launch, website visitors have increased by 97% - triple the number from the old website. (Source: Google analytics www.athertontablelands.com.au)

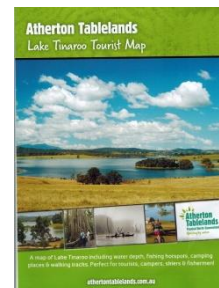


3.2.6 Consistent Branding of the Region

Tropical Tablelands Tourism was the first local tourism organisation to fully embrace an integrated marketing strategy utilising the new regional branding rolled out by TTNQ. The website, all marketing collateral and campaigns encapsulates the brand message for the destination. This proactive activity has resulted in a number of other organisations embracing the branding elements for the Atherton Tablelands including Tablelands Integrated Mountain Bike Alliance (TIMBA), a subcommittee of Tablelands Futures Corporation and Tablelands Regional Council mapping department ATGIS integrated the new branding elements into the Lake Tinaroo Tourist Map available for purchase at Visitor Information Centres.

Outcome:

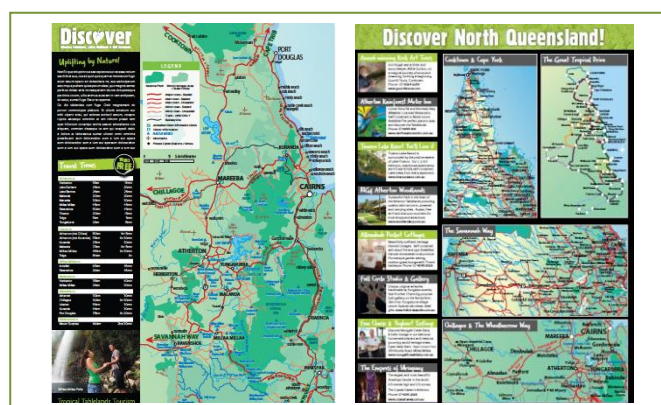
- Lake Tinaroo Tourist Map
- Tablelands Integrated Mountain Biking Alliance (TIMBA), a subcommittee of Tablelands Futures Corporation incorporated the branding elements into their new website showcasing the many mountain biking trails across the region – www.tablelandstrails.com. All destination information on this website is linked to www.athertontablelands.com.au



3.2.7 Other Marketing Initiatives including Print, Digital and Social Media

VIC 'tear off' Maps

An initiative by TTT was to develop 'tear-off' maps for the Visitor Information Centres. The map itself is based on the map currently in Discover magazine, A3 size and double sided in colour. Members were offered the opportunity to take out one of eight advertising slots. This was very well received by members with double the amount required expressing interest.



Total Solar Eclipse 2012

A webpage within the destination website was developed dedicated specifically for the Total Solar Eclipse. The page covered information on accommodation options, Solar Eclipse Tours and links to the official event website. Marketing of the region as the viewing destination for this event commenced 12 months prior.

TNQ Magazine

TTT, Tourism Kuranda and its members funded a double page spread with editorial content which featured in the Tropical North Queensland Magazine distributed through Southern States. This initiative was repeated again in early 2014.

Cycle Qld Rest Day Tours

In partnership with Tablelands Regional Council a series of tour packages were compiled for Cycle Qld's September adventure ride from Mission Beach to Port Douglas including a rest day in Yungaburra, Atherton Tablelands. A selection of tour packages were developed, showcasing the diversity of the region including the scenery (Hot Air Ballooning tour); Food & Wine tour; Heritage Tour and Nature & Wildlife. These tours were provided to Cycle Qld in conjunction with their online registration deadlines and bookable online. Destination information, imagery and an A4 flyer were provided to the event organisers.

Atherton Tablelands
Uplifting by nature
Cycle Queensland Rest Day Tours

Hot Air Ballooning
Experience the thrill of floating over the Atherton Tablelands from a unique perspective. Includes breakfast, lunch, and a professional pilot. \$150 per person.

Food & Wine
Enjoy a day of indulgence with a gourmet lunch and wine tasting at a local vineyard. Includes a picnic basket and a professional guide. \$120 per person.

Nature & Wildlife
Explore the diverse flora and fauna of the Atherton Tablelands. Includes a picnic basket and a professional guide. \$100 per person.

Click Here to Book Now

Discover
Uplifting by Nature

Home | What to do | What to see | Visitor info | Events | Get here | Media / Press | News

Packages

Cycle Qld Rest Day Tours | Food & Wine Tour
This package is available for the date selected. Click here to find the first available date.
The Atherton Tablelands is the heartland of the Tropical North. Enjoy a day sampling some of the best and tastiest produce the region has to offer.
Enjoy beautiful cheese and chocolate at Dulcis Cheese Factory, a refreshing cup of local tea at Harvie Tea, beautiful crafts and cheese at the local dairy and to finish the day some great views at Mt Ossa (optional).
Full day tour starting at 8:30 am
Priced from \$120.00
Available on Thursday, 12 September 2013 only.
Book this package

Cycle Qld Rest Day Tours | Get High Night Tour
This package is available for the date selected. Click here to find the first available date.
During the afternoon we make our way past fields and paddocks to the Dora Dora and Strigies to an amazing panoramic view of the Atherton Tablelands where there is the chance for a quick dip in Dora Dora in the high altitude national park.
Priced from \$150.00

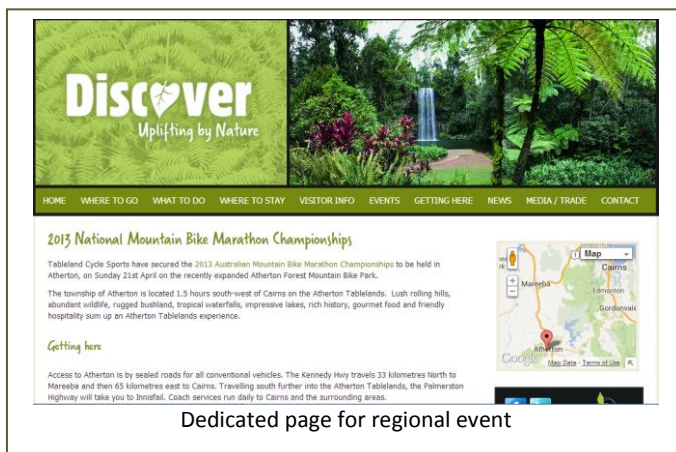
Self-Drive Campaign Trip

In partnership with AVIS and Budget, the self-drive campaign was launched over the Easter holiday period and was a great success. This campaign included an A4 flyer distributed to all hirers of rental cars through Cairns, Port Douglas and as far south as Townsville. The flyer detailed three self-drive itineraries encouraging visitors to enjoy all that the region has to offer and links to download the Drive North Queensland smartphone App. Eight (8) operators participated in the campaign by offering a discount to either stay at their accommodation or visit their tour or attraction. 10,000 copies of the flyer were printed and distributed.



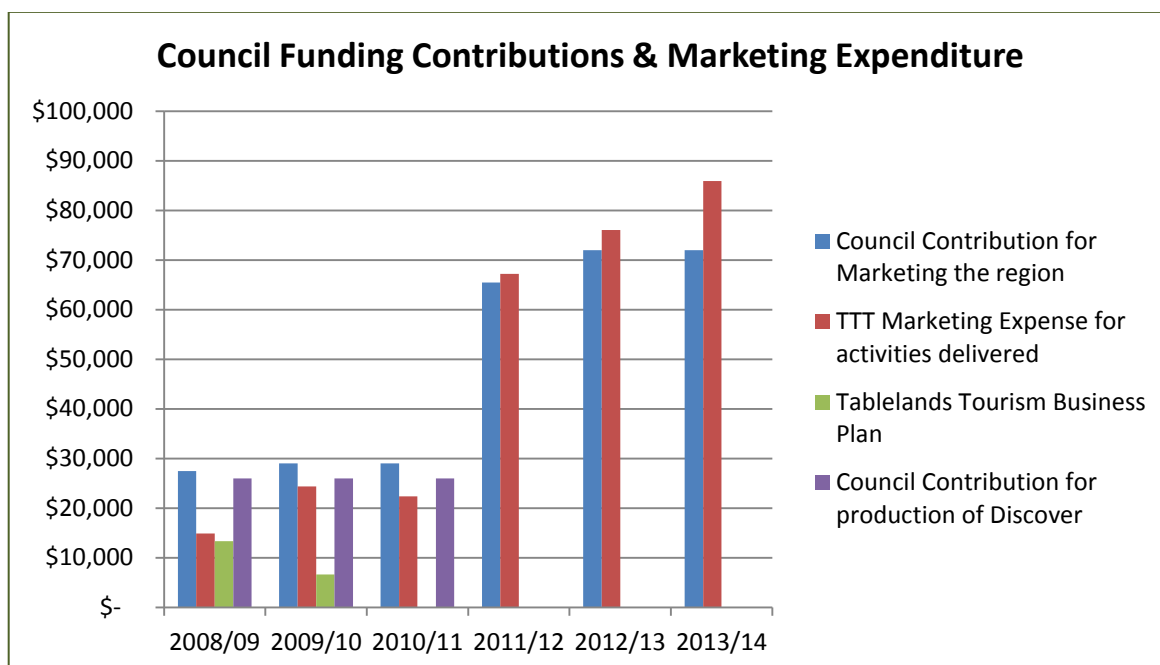
2013 National Mountain Bike Marathon Championships

In partnership with Tableland Cycle Sports, Tropical Tablelands Tourism worked with the event organiser Cycling Australia to provide information, imagery and “bike-friendly” accommodation options for the National Mountain Bike Marathon Championships held in Atherton April 21, 2013.



4.0 Financial Management

Tropical Tablelands Tourism receives income through membership, grant funding for specific projects; website commissions and Council contributions. Strategies are continuously being developed to pursue other income stream options to ensure the region's local tourism organisation can sustain a positive future and deliver measureable benefits to the Atherton Tablelands community.



	Council Contribution	Marketing Expense	Business Plan	Discover Contribution
2008/09	\$27,500	\$14,917	\$13,000	\$26,000
2009/10	\$29,000	\$24,379	\$6,667	\$26,000
2010/11	\$29,000	\$22,381	-	\$26,000
2011/12	\$65,454	\$67,222	-	0
2012/13	\$72,000	\$76,032	-	0
2013/14	\$72,000	\$85,928	-	0

5.0 Future Marketing Strategies

- Develop the annual marketing plan for the region in collaboration with Tourism Queensland, TTTNQ and TTT Stakeholders.
- Continue to collaborate with TTTNQ to invest in targeting the self-drive traveller and Drive North Queensland. The Atherton Tablelands stands to be a major beneficiary including direct benefits through famils with journalists, inclusion in campaigns with RACQ and other motoring bodies, development of supporting marketing collateral and attendance at Trade shows. TTT needs to be and will be at the table for all discussions of this campaign.
- Continue to build exposure of the destination at the major Caravan & Camping Shows.
- Continue to produce the region's visitor guide DISCOVER and ensure the magazine meets the needs of the consumer.
- Continue to engage with domestic and international trade on what this region as a stand-alone destination as to offer.
- Develop and implement strategies to engage with operators that are not members but clearly receive the benefits of a strong tourism industry.
- Deliver training programs for tourism operators to further expose their product to both the domestic and international markets.
- Continue to use and educate all operators in embracing the destination's brand elements and consistent imagery showcasing the iconic attractions (brand awareness).
- Implement strategies to develop the various trail networks as a visitor attraction including geology trails; food trails; mountain bike trails; heritage trails.
- Liaise with Tablelands Futures Corporation and Councils to target investment attraction for a large scale multi-purpose accommodation facility.
- Develop further the destinations website.
- Strengthen relationships with our regions Chambers of Commerce and Business Industry groups.
- Lift the profile of Tropical Tablelands Tourism.
- Work in partnership with TTTNQ to attract events to the region and developing strategies targeting event participants to extend the length of stay and dispersal of visitor expenditure across the region.
- In partnership with Tablelands Futures Corporation and TIMBA, develop strategies to market this region as a world class mountain biking destination.
- Continue to build strong partnerships with the region's visitor information centres to ensure TTT's role of pre-arrival and the visitor centre's post arrival responsibilities is working effectively.
- Develop opportunities for other funding sources to ensure a strong and sustainable organisation can continue to deliver professional and effective strategies to market the region in the long term.