



# Queensland nature-based tourism opportunities

Ninney Rise, Mission Beach, Tropical North Queensland

Site prospectus

April 2010

This report commissioned by the Queensland Government  
and undertaken by GHD

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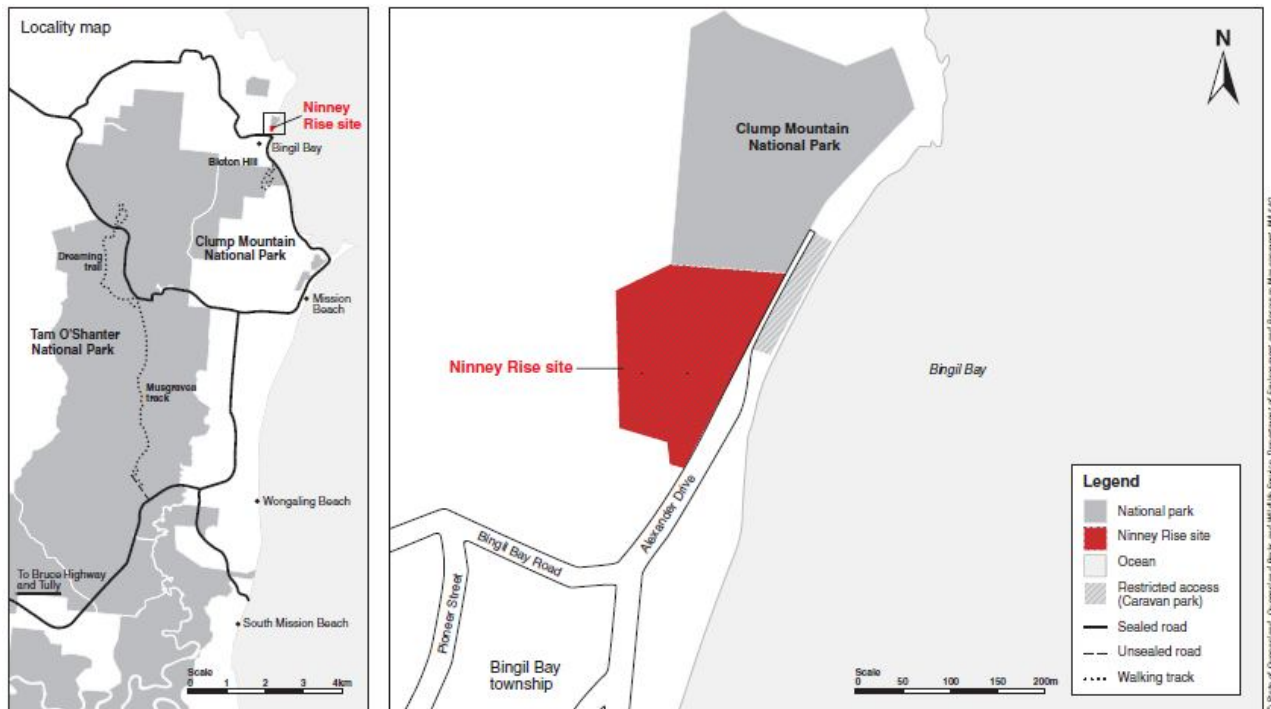
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# 1. Introduction

Ecotourism – “ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas, that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation”<sup>1</sup>

The Queensland Government is calling for expressions of interest to develop and operate low impact ecotourism accommodation at Ninney Rise, Mission Beach in Tropical North Queensland (See Map 1 below).

**Map 1 Ninney Rise Site**



Source: DERM, 2010

This site is the first to be released to private investors under a new ecotourism plan to improve tourism experiences and opportunities in Queensland and its protected areas, encouraging more people to appreciate Queensland’s incredible natural environment.

This document describes the characteristics of the site and surrounding area. It is part of the following suite of documents that provide comprehensive information to assist those wishing to express interest in this opportunity:

- ▶ Expression of Interest Guidelines
- ▶ Site Prospectus Ninney Rise, Mission Beach, Tropical North Queensland
- ▶ Sustainability Guidelines for Expressions of Interest

<sup>1</sup> Ecotourism Association of Australia

## 2. Ninney Rise – A Nature-Based Tourism Opportunity

Ninney Rise is located in one of the two locations in the world where two World Heritage areas meet. Nestled between the World Heritage Wet Tropical Rainforest and Great Barrier Reef, surrounded by tropical islands, pristine sandy beaches and oozing with history, Ninney Rise is the ideal location for the establishment of ecotourism accommodation

Ninney Rise in Mission Beach is located adjacent to a section of the Clump Mountain National Park in tropical North Queensland in one of Australia's most picturesque coastlines.

The site contains an existing historic homestead and two hectares of established gardens that provide elevated views of the Coral Sea below. The remnant rainforest on the property is home to many rare species of trees and wildlife, with the endangered Southern Cassowary often seen traversing the property.

The elevated tropical rainforest setting provides opportunities for a range of low impact development concepts to take advantage of the spectacular vistas of the national park and coastline, and the site's significant cultural heritage.

The area has been a holiday base and a source of inspiration for a variety of high profile identities. The late Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, used to holiday in the area. John Büsser - the artist, environmentalist and conservationist lived on the homestead during the 60's and 70's, using the site as the base of his historic 'Save the Reef' Campaign.

Mission Beach caters for the interests and needs of a wide range of visitors, from outdoor and adventure activities, to leisure and cultural tourism. The Great Barrier Reef and the world famous Dunk and Bedarra Islands are a stone's-throw away.

With Queensland enjoying stronger growth in ecotourism than any other Australian State or Territory during the years up to 2007, Ninney Rise presents a unique opportunity for the astute investor.

### 3. Ninney Rise Site

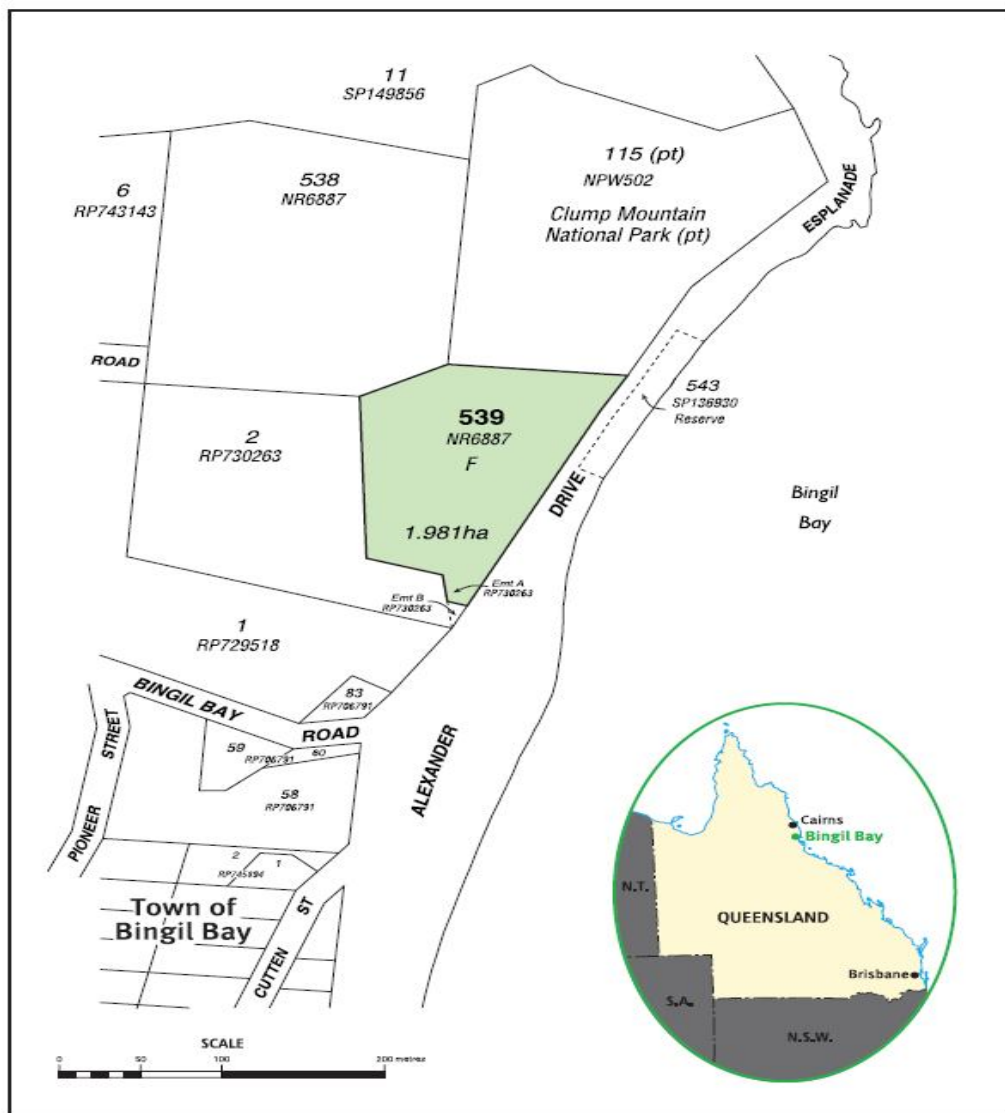
#### 3.1 Location

The Ninney Rise property is located at 405 Alexander Drive in Mission Beach on the Queensland coastline on the edge of a section of the Clump Mountain National Park. The site is approximately 239 Km north of Townsville and 138 Km south of Cairns in the local government area of the Cassowary Coast Regional Council in Far North Queensland.

#### 3.2 Property Description

The Ninney Rise Property is located at Lot 539 on Plan NR6887 as shown in Map 2 below.

Map 2 Ninney Rise Property Showing Lot and Plan



Source: DERM, 2010

The property covers 19,837.052 square meters of land separated from the beach by the roadway, and is adjacent to the *Wet Tropics World Heritage Area*.

The property comprises a house and a large park-like garden, with a section of remnant rainforest vegetation located in the uppermost section of the lot. The house is of brick construction, and includes an in-ground swimming pool and a large unattached garage. The garden occupies the majority of the site, and includes local, native and exotic tropical species. There are views of the Coral Sea from various locations in the garden.

The site is close to the beach with an elevation of approximately 15 metres above sea level. See Map 3 below.

**Map 3 Aerial Photograph of the Ninney Rise Property**



Source: DERM, 2010

### 3.3 Utility Infrastructure / Services

- ▶ The Ninney Rise site has existing Council connections to water but does not contain an existing sewer line.
- ▶ Existing electricity lines are provided to the site by Ergon Energy but this service is currently disconnected as the property has not been in use for some time.
- ▶ Telstra also has existing telecommunication lines running to the site but again the service has been disconnected as a result of the property's vacancy.

### 3.4 Site Use

#### 3.4.1 Past Land Use

The site was originally taken up as a 160 acre block in July 1884 by Sidney Cutten. Cutten became the first non indigenous owner of the land and used it as part of his wider horticultural land holdings. In 1928, ten acres of the site was transferred to Gertrude Alexander who built the Bitcon Boarding home. This boarding home operated throughout the early 1930's.

The site later became popular with artists due to its isolation, natural setting, and minimal human impact. During the 1940's, the famous artist and environmentalist - John Büssst, co-founder of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, leased the south-eastern corner of the site. The Büssst family lived on the site's homestead from the late 1950's, and the site was used as the base for Büssst's historic 'Save the Reef' Campaign during the 1960's and 1970's.

Büssst ran his campaigns from Ninney Rise, often with support from prominent politicians and international scientists. They aimed at protecting the environment; in particular, the Great Barrier Reef and tropical rainforests from development and mining pressures. Büssst's campaigns also lead to the formation of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and the declaration of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The late Prime Minister, Harold Holt, was introduced by Büssst to the area, and had a holiday home there, near to the heritage-listed Garner family burial ground.

Büssst's interests in conservation and ecology were evident in his artwork and continued to be reflected in his architectural interests. The historic homestead at Ninney Rise was built with the local environment in mind. It was designed to withstand tropical cyclones, provide shade in the hot climate and offer sea breezes from a slightly elevated ocean view location<sup>2</sup>. The spectacular coastal landscape and rainforest surrounding Ninney Rise was an inspiration to the great conservationist.

By 1979 John Büssst had passed away, leading to his widow Allison selling the site to American conservationist, Kate Tode, who named the property Ninney Rise. Kate Tode further developed the property with an additional two storey extension to the home. In 1982 Ms Tode excised 3.8 hectares of her property to the State Government, which was to be gazetted as National Park.

The remainder of the site was bequeathed to Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1990 upon Ms Tode's death. Ms Tode specified in her will that the site is to be maintained as close to its natural state as possible.

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<sup>2</sup> DERM, 2010b



### 3.4.2 Current Land Use

The house located on the Ninney Rise site is currently not inhabited or used for any defined purpose.

The house in its initial form was a single storey bungalow, approximately 25.5m long. The northern side of the house was extended to incorporate a second floor some years after its construction. This extension is comprised primarily of plasterboard and fibro building material. Verandas with a depth of 2.75m surround the majority of the property. The site also contains open gardens and an in-ground swimming pool. As the site has been vacated for some time, these features will require some minor restoration works if they are to be incorporated into any future development. The pool is currently drained and in poor condition. It is not considered to have cultural significance, and may be removed as part of future developments if required.

### 3.5 Site Access and Proximity

The Mission Beach region is located within reasonable proximity to a number of airports and is well serviced by road and rail.

Cairns International Airport, located approximately 145 Km to the north, is one of Australia's leading regional airports, with connections to a range of domestic and international locations. Townsville International Airport is located approximately 236 Km to the south.

**Figure 1 Direct Flight Routes into Cairns International Airport**



**Figure 2 Direct Flight Routes into Townsville International Airport**



### **Road and Rail**

The Bruce Highway extends in a north – south direction along the Queensland coastline, passing approximately 11.6 Km inland from the Ninney Rise site. The Bruce Highway can be accessed from the Ninney Rise site via two major roads. The standard of the Bruce Highway and other sealed roads surrounding the Ninney Rise site ensure that the property will remain accessible to tourists in a standard wet season. In events of extreme weather there is potential for some roads to be cut off with flooding, but it is considered that this is not a frequent or long term constraint to access.

A local bus company runs a service connecting Bingil Bay to Mission Beach from Monday to Saturday. A larger company – *Mission Beach to Dunk Island Connections*, provides a service that can be arranged for bookings 364 days per year. This service provides air conditioned buses that offers transfers, allowing for connections from Port Douglas through to Dunk Island and Bedarra Island; incorporating pickups from Northern Beaches, Cairns Airport, Cairns and Mission Beach.

Queensland Rail operates two major train services between Cairns and Brisbane. The Tilt Train runs from Brisbane to Cairns stopping in centres in proximity of the Ninney Rise site, including Innisfail, Townsville, Tully and Ingham. The tilt train operates four times a week and takes just under 24 hours to travel between Brisbane and Cairns.

The other major rail service available for passengers is the Sunlander - voted as one of the World's top 25 rail journeys by the society of International Railway Travellers. The Sunlander operates 3 times per week and takes 31 hours to reach Cairns from Brisbane. Like the Tilt Train the Sunlander also stops at centres in proximity of the Ninney Rise site.

### **3.6 Native Title**

Native Title has been extinguished over the Ninney Rise property.

**For more information visit the National Native Title Tribunal at:**

[www.nntt.gov.au](http://www.nntt.gov.au)

## 4. Mission Beach Region

Mission Beach is accessible from the Townsville and Cairns international airports and is well served by local infrastructure and services; including supermarkets, restaurants, medical centre, shopping, cafés, art galleries and various tourism providers. Essential services such as police, ambulance and fire brigade are also provided.

Mission Beach comprises the coastal settlements of Bingil Bay, Mission Beach (local business area), Wongaling Beach (business precinct) and South Mission Beach. It is the perfect base to explore the other wonders of the region; the Great Barrier Reef, Hinchinbrook Island, Dunk Island, Bedarra Island, Mamu Canopy Walkway, Johnstone River Crocodile Park, Atherton Tablelands and the Gulf Savannah.

### 4.1 Mission Beach Tourism Attractions

Mission Beach caters for a diversity of visitor interests and needs. Activities and attractions to choose from include:

- ▶ An extensive choice of adventure and outdoor activities including scuba diving, snorkelling, fishing, sailing and white water rafting;
- ▶ Ferries departing regularly from nearby Clump Point jetty transport passengers to world renowned Dunk and Bedarra Islands;
- ▶ Abundant natural attractions, lookouts and rainforest walks offering sighting and study of a range of endemic and protected wildlife and plants – being famous for being one of the best places in Australia to see the endangered Southern Cassowary in the wild;
- ▶ Heritage monuments and early settler history pertaining to the prominent Cutten family who settled there in the 1890s, and the heritage listed family burial grounds of the Garner family (1935-1968);
- ▶ Restaurants and cafés offering local and multinational cuisines as well as specialty shops, supermarkets and quaint nearby villages such as the palm fringed Bingil Bay.

### 4.2 Local Attractions

There are various local attractions within close proximity to the Ninney Rise site.

The *Mission Beach Visitor Information Centre* and the *Cassowary Information Centre*, located approximately 4 Km north of the site, provide extensive information on the environmental, historical and cultural aspects of the area.

Other local attractions include:

- ▶ Clump Point – a northerly facing headland considered to be a cultural landscape by the local Djiru Traditional Owners containing a number of important cultural sites.
- ▶ Clump Mountain National Park including a walking track to Bicton Hill lookout – providing spectacular coastal views over Bingil Bay and the Family Islands
- ▶ Various recreational walks approximately 5 kilometres south of the site, including the Cutten Brothers walk and the Ulysses Link walk, with the Norman Barnes Arboretum. Both walks depart near the Clump Point jetty.

- ▶ Fish traps associated with the Djiru Traditional Owners are located on either side of Clump Point as well as a ceremony ground. There are shells and other artifacts scatters along the coastline in this area (Pentecost, 2007).

### **4.3 Bingil Bay**

Bingil Bay, located 4.8 Km north of Mission Beach is a thriving residential area with a picturesque beach fringed with coconut trees. It contains a small general store and a limited range of holiday accommodation including 1 bed and breakfast, 1 hostel, 1 caravan park and 6 holiday homes.

## 5. The Local Environment

The Mission Beach area is situated within the World Heritage listed Wet Tropics. This area is renowned for its extensive tropical rainforest and is home to a range of endemic and protected wildlife and plants. The Clump Mountain National Park and surrounding lowland rainforest of Mission Beach are known habitat of the southern cassowary (*Casuarius casuarius johnsonii*). This species is classified as endangered under both the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999* and the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*. The species is also a significant tourist attraction that boosts the local economy of townships such as Mission Beach.

The Ninney Rise site consists of spacious park-like garden. Many of the species present are trees and shrubs common in the rainforests of the Wet Tropics. The garden contains some remnant vegetation and relatively few weeds and is in good condition.

### 5.1 Protecting the Southern Cassowary

A small section of the site, to the north of the house, contains remnant rainforest which is essential habitat for the southern cassowary. Being an open environment, it is possible that cassowaries may from time to time traverse the garden.

Recent studies have established that approximately 50 adult birds are resident in the Mission Beach area in densities of between 1 per 208 hectares and 1 per 426 hectares<sup>3</sup>. The area is considered to be an important population node within the Wet Tropics and has been listed as one of six priority regional Southern Cassowary Management Areas<sup>4</sup>.

One of the major threats to the southern cassowary is habitat loss and fragmentation. A small section of the Ninney Rise site contains intact remnant notophyll vine forest. This vegetation is mapped as the *least concern regional ecosystem (RE) 7.12.1.*, and as essential habitat for the southern cassowary. It is continuous with the rainforest on Clump Mountain National Park, which is located further upslope. For this reason it is unlikely that any encroachment on this vegetation will be allowable. Given the ecotourism focus of the proposed development it is considered that appropriate re-development of the site would accommodate retention of this remnant vegetation. For further information, potential investors should consult the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998.

Any tourism development should refrain from allowing cassowaries (or other native wildlife) from habituation with humans. This results in birds becoming accustomed to humans and cars and spending proportionally more time in dangerous locations, where they are exposed to vehicle strikes and dog attacks. Dogs are known to cause injury and mortality. As such any development should not allow dogs on site.

### 5.2 Preserving the Natural Values of the Site

Due to the close proximity of the site to the national park, noise and lighting levels will need to be kept as low as practically possible and comply with relevant legislation and guidelines.

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<sup>3</sup> Bentrupperbäumer 1998; Moore and Moore 2001

<sup>4</sup> Crome and Moore 1993; Latch 2007

## 6. The Local Climate

### 6.1 Historical Climate

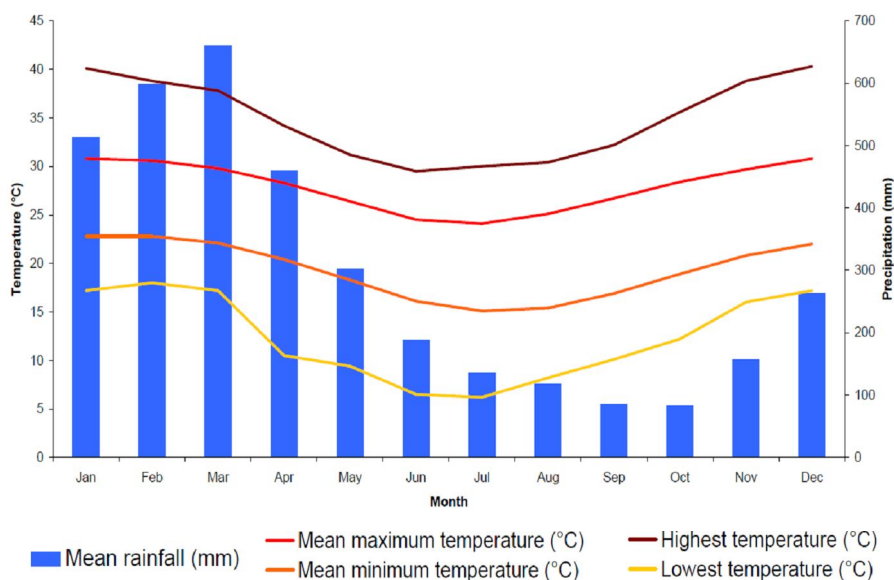
Ninney Rise falls within a tropical zone, with distinct wet and dry seasons. Most rainfall occurs between December and April, with the driest months being July to November. The annual average maximum temperature for Innisfail is 27.9°C. The warmest months are from November to March, and the coolest month is July. The average amount of solar energy that reaches the site (based on measurements for Innisfail is 20.2 MJ/m<sup>2</sup>).

Ninney Rise is located in an area prone to cyclones, flooding and severe storms. The cyclone season is from November to April which is also when extreme rainfall events (heaviest rain) and flooding occur. During the period from 1960 to 2006 six cyclones have passed within 50 km of the site at Ninney Rise and 16 cyclones have passed within 100 km.

The climate averages have been sourced from the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) 'Innisfail' site (BoM 2009a) for the period from 1881 to 2010. The Innisfail site was used as it is the closest site to the Ninney Rise site.

**Figure 3** illustrates the typical variation in rainfall and temperature for the region during the year.

**Figure 3 Local Climate Summary**



For more information on the region climatic conditions please visit:

[www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)

[www.climatechange.qld.gov.au](http://www.climatechange.qld.gov.au) (*ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland Report*)

## 6.2 Projected Climate Changes

### 6.2.1 Tropical Cyclones and Flood Events

Australasian regional studies indicate a likely increase in the proportion of tropical cyclones in the more intense categories, but a possible decrease in the total number of cyclones<sup>5</sup>. Studies show that the peak intensity of tropical cyclones may increase by 5% to 10%, and precipitation rates may increase by 20% to 30% (CSIRO & BoM 2007).

Storm surge elevations for the area above Australian Height Datum for the 100 year average recurrence interval cyclone storm surge plus tide event (1% annual exceedance probability) are described in the *Queensland Climate Change and Community Vulnerability to Tropical Cyclones – Ocean Hazards Assessment*<sup>6</sup>.

### 6.2.2 Sea Level Rise

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2007) projects that, under the A1FI Special Report on Emissions Scenarios, the sea level will increase by approximately 59 cm by 2100 with an additional contribution of 10 – 20 cm from melting ice sheets.

The Department of Climate Change Report - *Climate Change Risks to Australia's Coast* uses figures based on a range of sea level rise values obtained from research conducted subsequent to the IPCC 2007 report. The mean sea level rise based on these figures is 1.1 m.

### 6.2.3 Adaptation Strategies

It will be imperative that future developments to the site consider potential impacts of climate change, when assessing risk associated with storm tide inundation and tropical cyclones. It is expected that the new Queensland Coastal Plan will set out minimum requirements for to ensure the protection of people and property from coastal hazards, taking into account the predicted effects of climate change.

The minimum assessment factors for determining erosion prone and storm tide inundation areas from the Draft Plan are shown below:

- ▶ Planning period of 100 years;
- ▶ Projected sea level rise of 0.8 metres by 2100 due to climate change (relative to 1990 value);
- ▶ Adoption of the 100 year average recurrence interval extreme storm event or water level; and
- ▶ Increase in cyclone intensity by 10% (relative to maximum potential intensity) due to climate change.

The new Queensland Coastal Plan is expected to be finalised and released this year and will be available from the DERM website.

**For more information on the Queensland Coastal Plan visit:**

[www.derm.qld.gov.au/coastalplan/index.html](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/coastalplan/index.html)

<sup>5</sup> Abbs *et al.* 2006, CSIRO & BoM 2007

<sup>6</sup> Hardy *et.al.* 2004

## 7. Cultural Heritage

### 7.1 Indigenous Cultural Heritage

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation is a legally incorporated organisation that represents the interests of traditional owners from nine tribal groups of the region including Mission Beach Djiru Traditional Owners. Other Native Title claimants on crown property in the region include the Bandjin, Girramay, Gugu Badhun, Gulnay, Jirrbal, Nywaigi, Warrgamay and Warungnu.

Djiru People have claims over crown lands in the Mission Beach Area including the adjacent section of Clump Mountain National Park.

### 7.2 Non Indigenous Cultural Heritage

As highlighted in this prospectus, the Ninney Rise site is considered to have significant cultural heritage values due to its association with John Büss, a passionate environmental advocate who championed the “Save the Reef” campaign which ultimately led to the protection of the Great Barrier Reef. He was also instrumental in protection of the tropical rainforests through his activism that eventually resulted in declaration of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

Büss also had a strong interest in art and architecture and was involved in the creation of the Monsalvat community, upon whose philosophies he constructed the Ninney Rise house.

In recognition of Büss's life and work, the Ninney Rise property has been nominated for inclusion in the Queensland Cultural Heritage Register. The nomination process is expected to be completed during 2010.

The nomination includes the entire property with the original portions of the house, its immediate setting and coastal views being of primary heritage significance.

Depending on whether the property is eventually listed any development or re-use of the original building will be subject to certain constraints associated with the requirements of the *Queensland Cultural Heritage Act 1992*. The place is currently in good condition and the simplicity of its construction suggests that its care could be easily managed.

Irrespective of the listing nomination, it is envisaged proposals for low-key ecotourism accommodation to be established in the grounds across the western half of the property would be considered appropriate.

Depending on the wishes and needs of proponents a Heritage Agreement and Conservation Management Plan could be prepared for the property as part of a development application.

This would provide guidance for care and management of the place and certainty for any future development. Assistance would be provided to establish such an Agreement.

#### 7.2.1 Commonwealth Significance

Clump Mountain National Park is listed under the Commonwealth heritage register due to its outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history.



The National Park contains large areas of lowland mesophyll vine forest, which is classified as an 'endangered' ecological community by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA). This area was historically cleared for agriculture and, hence, its current status as 'endangered'. The lowland mesophyll vine forest vegetation community includes species that are endemic to the wet tropics region (DEWHA, 2010).

### 7.2.2 State Significance

Under section 35 of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*, the application for listing Ninney Rise on the Queensland Heritage Register meets the following criteria:

- ▶ *"The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history"; and*
- ▶ *"The place has a special association with the life or work of a particular person, group or organisation of importance in Queensland's history".*

Any major changes to the appearance or layout require approval from DERM in accordance with the provisions of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992*. Developments identified in a Heritage Agreement can be carried out under an exemption certificate while minor maintenance can be undertaken under a general exemption without any approval requirement.

Searches of the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management Cultural Heritage Register for the Bingil Bay area returned one search result: Garner's Beach Burial Ground (ID 601627).

Garner's Beach Burial Ground is also known locally as Clump Point Private Cemetery, Garners Beach Cemetery and Wilford Hill. The burial ground is located on Garner's Beach Road in Bingil Bay.

The site was established during the period 1930 to 1960. The burial ground has a close association with the Garner family, who were local farmers, boat builders and boat operators in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (DERM, 2010).

**For more information on Manuals, Codes and Guidelines for Heritage Conservation please visit:**

[www.derm.qld.gov.au/services\\_resources/item\\_list.php?category\\_id=204&topic\\_id=70](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/services_resources/item_list.php?category_id=204&topic_id=70)

## 8. Planning

### 8.1 Regional Planning

The Ninney Rise site falls under the regulation of the Far North Queensland (FNQ) Regional Plan 2009 – 2031 and associated Regulatory Provisions. Under the Far North Queensland Regional Plan the Ninney Rise site is located within the Regional Landscape and Rural Production Area (RLRPA). This designation includes areas that have regional landscape, rural production or other non-urban values.

Under this designation, conservation of existing environmental values is encouraged. The FNQ Regulatory Provisions restrict the following in the RLRPA:

- ▶ Further fragmentation of land holdings
- ▶ Urban development, except within specific urban zonings
- ▶ Residential development associated with tourist accommodation
- ▶ Expansion of rural residential development.

However, the FNQ Regulatory Provisions support diversification of rural economies by allowing a range of developments including:

- ▶ Small to medium scale tourist activities
- ▶ Small scale industry, business and community activities
- ▶ Sport and recreation facilities.

Any Development Application may need to be referred to the Department of Infrastructure and Planning as a referral agency under the provisions of the Regulations.

**For more information on the Far North Queensland Plan 2009-2031 and associated Regulatory Provisions please refer to:**

[www.dip.qld.gov.au/regional-planning/regional-plan-3.html](http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/regional-planning/regional-plan-3.html)

### 8.2 Planning Scheme

The Ninney Rise site is regulated by the former Johnstone Shire Planning Scheme 2006 administered by the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and it is located within the Rural (Rural Conservation Precinct) Zone.

Development proposals for future tourism or other development is likely to constitute a Material Change of Use under the provisions of the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*. A development application would need to be lodged with the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and would be assessed against the provisions of the Johnstone Shire Planning Scheme.

The Rural Conservation Precinct largely covers rural areas of the shire outside of established villages and towns and includes areas in which all or part of the lot contains land suitable for conservation. The zone also includes areas of significant conservation value and areas that may require revegetation. However, Council can exercise its discretion to allow for development at a higher density in exchange for permanent protection of habitat. Lots within the Rural Conservation Precinct may also include good

quality agricultural land suitable for agricultural uses, but the Ninney Rise site is not mapped as Good Quality Agricultural Land.

The purpose of the zone is focused on the protection of Good Quality Agricultural Land, the protection of rural amenity and the character of rural areas and, where relevant, the protection of environmental values. The assessment table for the zone identifies that tourism development and holiday accommodation (as defined by the Planning Scheme) are 'impact assessable'. It will therefore be necessary to demonstrate that any development proposed does not conflict with the Desired Environmental Outcomes of the Planning Scheme or the Specific Outcomes of the Rural Zone Code. However, considering the ecotourism focus for the site it is expected that these provisions should not constrain appropriate re-development of the property as low key ecotourism accommodation.

Other codes within the Planning Scheme will also be relevant to the assessment of any Development Application. Compliance with relevant codes will depend on the nature and extent of any future development.

**For more information on the Johnstone Shire Planning Scheme 2005 please refer to:**

<http://www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/development/town-planning/jsc-planning-scheme/>

### **8.3 Land Tenure**

The current registered owner of the Ninney Rise site is the State of Queensland, represented by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). There are several existing easements and rights of interest affecting the Ninney Rise property. They are as follows:

- ▶ Rights and interests reserved to the Crown by Deed of Grant No.20099021;
- ▶ Easement No 601512369 (N800669) established on the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1976 benefiting the land over easement B on RP30263; and
- ▶ Easement No 601512370 (N800670) established on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1976 burdening the land to Lot 2 on RP30263 over easement A on RP30263

**Note:** Easement No 601512369 – allows for access through Ninney Rise to adjacent property Lot 2 on Plan RP730263. The area of this easement is currently proposed to be excised from the Ninney Rise lot.

### **8.4 Vegetation Mapping**

State government mapping of regional ecosystems and remnant vegetation shows that the Ninney Rise site contains remnant vegetation. As there appears to be a discrepancy between mapped areas of remnant vegetation and some areas of the site that have been cleared of vegetation, DERM is preparing a Property Map of Assessable Vegetation to address any discrepancies to prevent unnecessary restrictions on future planned works.

### **8.5 Constraint Mapping**

A review of current constraint overlay mapping contained within the Johnstone Shire Planning Scheme indicates the Ninney Rise site is not constrained by any environmental or land use factors. Council

overlay mapping does not show the subject site as being adversely affected by any of the following constraint maps:

- ▶ Village zone precinct;
- ▶ Good quality agricultural land;
- ▶ Acid sulphate soils;
- ▶ Public consultation requirements;
- ▶ Water and sewer precinct;
- ▶ Scenic amenity value; and
- ▶ Flooding (100yr events).

## **8.6 Preserving the cultural values of the site**

The Ninney Rise property has significant cultural heritage values associated with previous owner John Büsst. Refer to *Section 7.2 Non Indigenous Cultural Heritage*.

## **8.7 Site Limitations and Constraints**

Site specific limitations and constraints include:

- ▶ The width of Alexander Drive presents a potential constraint to the site access.
- ▶ Inspection of the major roads in proximity of the site identifies that they do not feature drainage guttering but are otherwise in good condition and appear to be suitable for traffic associated with additional site development. Further analysis of the suitability of the existing road network may need to be undertaken when the detailed access requirements of the proposed development are determined.
- ▶ As the property contains the Southern Cassowary's rainforest habitat, it is recommended that no property fencing be erected that might limit the movement of the species.
- ▶ The road leading into the Ninney Rise site is narrow, but capable of allowing two cars to pass in opposite directions.
- ▶ The existing driveway, providing access from the road frontage to the Ninney Rise house, provides basic concrete tracks but remains capable of carrying vehicles. This driveway may require upgrading depending on the future nature of any development and its associated traffic requirements.
- ▶ Any major changes to the site appearance or layout will require approval from DERM, as the land owners.

## 9. Visitors Market

### 9.1 Visitor Profile

Visitor numbers to Tropical North Queensland (TNQ) demonstrated solid growth over the period 2000 to 2007, peaking around the end of 2007. Whilst overall demand fell in 2008/09 due to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), the growth trend is starting to re-emerge as global tourism markets recover.

TNQ features strongly as a destination compared to other parts of Queensland. For international visitors, TNQ ranked third behind Brisbane and the Gold Coast; capturing about 34% of the market<sup>7</sup>.

For domestic visitors, TNQ was ranked fifth behind Brisbane, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts and country Queensland, accounting for about 10% of the market.

Table 1 below illustrates the relative significance of the various source holiday markets for TNQ during 2009 (excludes visitors for business and visiting friends and relatives).

**Table 1 TNQ Visitor Markets, 2009**

Holiday market source	Visitor numbers	Visitors proportion	Nights	Nights proportion	Length of stay (nights)
Interstate	387,000	27%	2,818,000	31%	7.3
Intrastate	458,000	31%	1,668,000	18%	3.6
International	606,000	42%	4,730,000	51%	7.8
Total	1,451,000	100%	9,216,000	100%	-

*Source: Tropical North Queensland Regional Snapshot, year ended September 2009, Tourism Queensland, 2009*

The above data illustrates that international tourists accounted for over half of the visitor nights for the region, with interstate visitors accounting for almost a third of the market, and intrastate visitors accounting for the remainder.

#### 9.1.1 International Visitors

Figure 4 illustrates the breakdown of the source of international visitors to Queensland for 2009, which was dominated by visitors from New Zealand.

For the TNQ region, the most significant sources of international visitors are the United Kingdom (UK), Japan, the United States of America (USA), Germany and New Zealand. Figure 5 illustrates the breakdown.

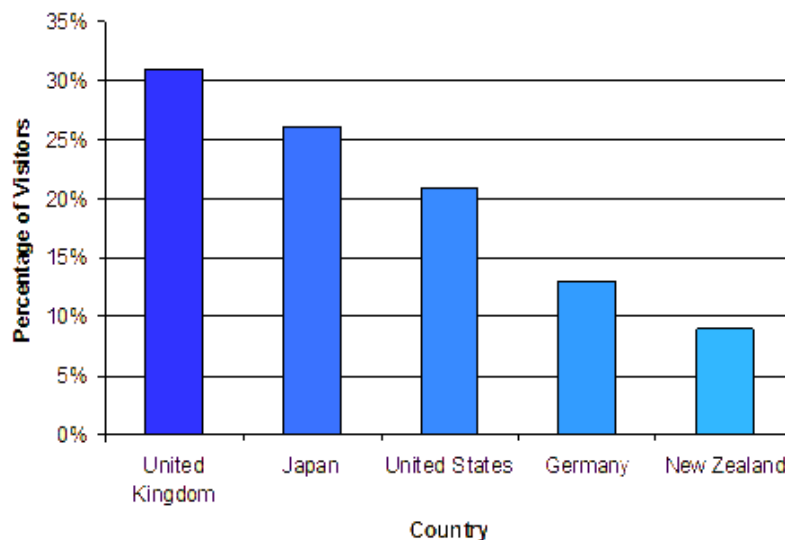
<sup>7</sup> Tropical North Queensland Regional Snapshot, year ended September 2009, Tourism Queensland, 2009

**Figure 4 Total International Visitors to Queensland, 2009**



Source: Tourism Queensland, 2010

**Figure 5 Breakdown of International Visitors to TNQ, 2009**



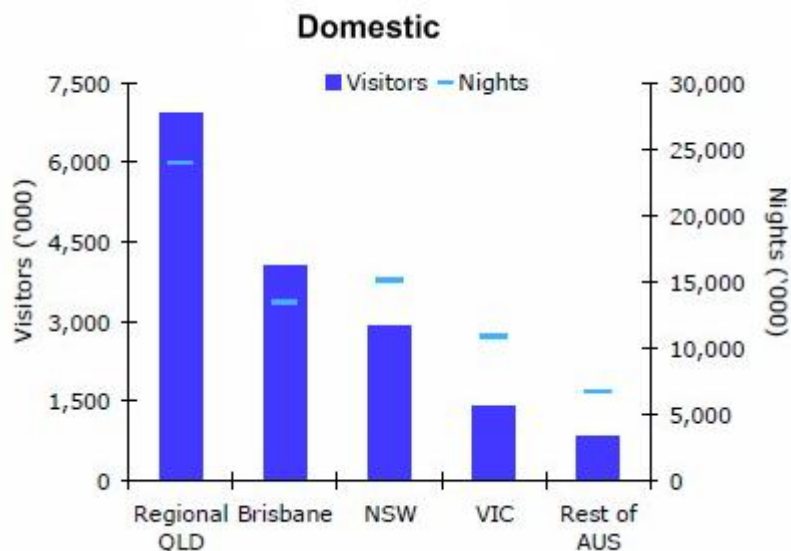
Source: Tourism Queensland, September, 2009

### 9.1.2 Domestic Visitors

In contrast to Australia and the broader Queensland State, TNQ recorded an increase in domestic overnight visitors in the year to September 2009. This was predominantly driven by the interstate market, particularly from Melbourne (up 24%). Intrastate and family holidays also increased, driven by economic circumstances and the availability of competitive holiday packages.

Figure 6 illustrates the breakdown of the source of domestic visitors to Queensland for 2009, which was dominated by visitors from Regional Queensland and Brisbane.

**Figure 6 Total Domestic Visitors to Queensland, 2009**



Source: Tourism Queensland, 2010

## 9.2 Purpose of Visit

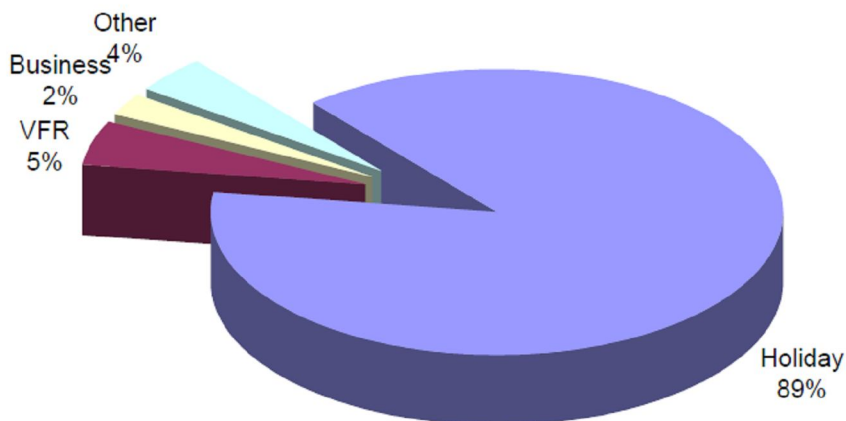
Figure 7 and 8 show the relative proportions of international and domestic visitors to TNQ by purpose of visit. 'Holiday' is the most significant purpose for visits, with 89% of international visitors and 52% of domestic visitors arriving for that purpose. In terms of visitor numbers, the domestic holiday market is of most significance, but the longer length of stay of international compared with domestic visitors (9.8 compared with 4.9 nights) makes this sector the most significant target market for ecotourism accommodation<sup>8</sup>.

The total number of visitors to TNQ for 'Holiday' purposes in the year ending September 2009 was 1,451,000 of which nearly 60% were from overseas, emphasising the importance of the international market.

The remaining purposes for visits include visiting friends and relatives (VFR), business, and other purposes. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these visitor groups are more focused on nature-based tourism day trips rather than overnight ecotourism.

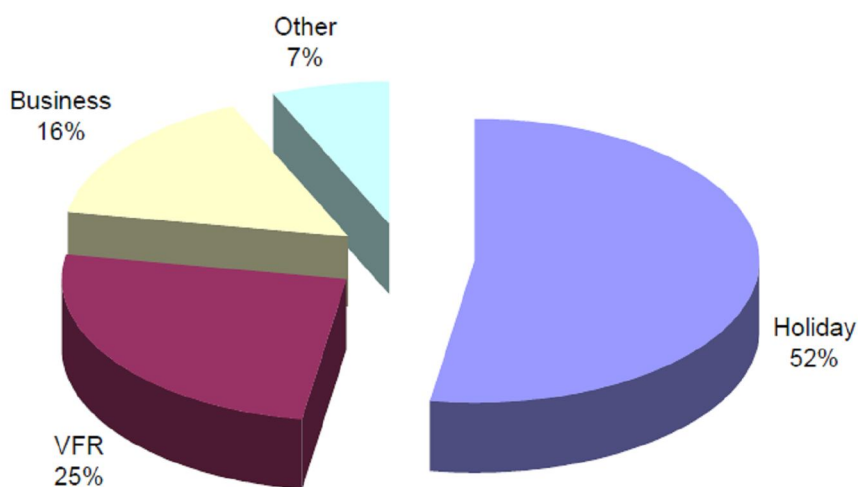
<sup>8</sup> Tourism Forecasts, updated December 2009, Tourism Queensland, 2009

**Figure 7 International Visitors to TNQ – Purpose of Visit**



Source: Tourism Queensland, 2010

**Figure 8 Domestic Visitors to TNQ – Purpose of Visit**



Source: Tourism Queensland, 2010

For more information please visit Tourism Queensland at:

[www.tq.com.au](http://www.tq.com.au)

### 9.3 The Nature-Based Tourism Market

Nationally, around 3.36 million international visitors participated in nature-based activities in 2008, representing 65% of Australia's international visitors, and an average annual increase of 4% since 2003.



The number of domestic overnight and day visitors participating in nature-based activities is much higher, but represents a small proportion of their respective markets (18% and 9% respectively) (Tourism Australia, 2008).

### 9.3.1 Nature-Based Tourism in Queensland

Nature-based tourism in Queensland has generally shown stronger growth over the period 2003 to 2007 than the rest of Australia. Growth figures during the period include:

- ▶ 5% per year in international visitors
- ▶ 7% per year in international visitor nights
- ▶ 5% per year in domestic visitors
- ▶ 4% per year in domestic visitor nights

Nature-based activities in Queensland are dominated by two core activities - visiting National and State Parks, and bushwalking or rainforest walks. Table 2 below illustrates that, of the international and domestic overnight visitors surveyed, a significant proportion participate in nature-based tourism activities.

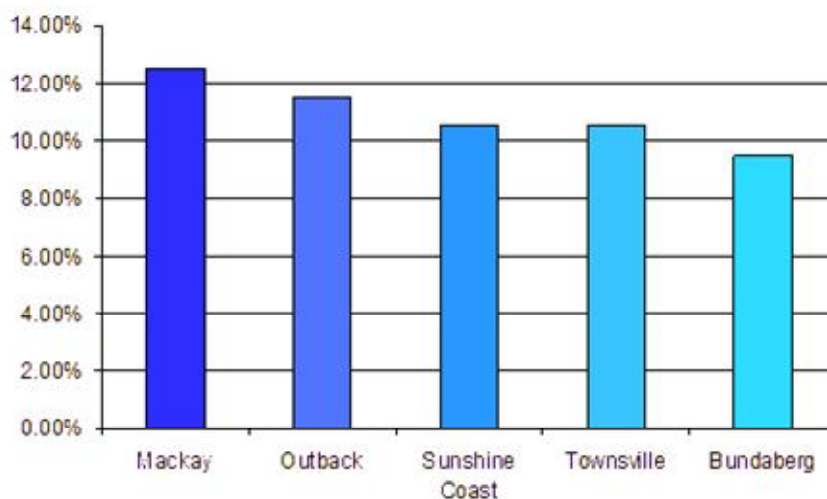
**Table 2 Visitor Activity Participation Profile, 2009**

Activity	International Visitor Indicative Participation Levels %	Domestic Overnight Visitor Indicative Participation Levels %
National & State Parks	39%	37%
Bushwalking or rainforest walks	27%	42%
Whale / dolphin watching	8%	5%
Scuba diving	8%	3%
Snorkelling	18%	8%
Visit the reef	No data	5%

*Source: Tourism Research Australia, International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Survey, 2009*

Figure 8 illustrates the domestic nature-based visitation growth rates for the top 5 Queensland regions.

**Figure 9 Domestic Nature-Based Activity Visitors Average Annual Growth by Region (2003-2007) – Top 5 Regions**



Source: National Visitor Survey, Tourism Research Australia, 2006

### 9.3.2 Future trends

Australia is one of the better performing international tourism destinations, and is forecast to improve across all key sectors through to 2018. Some key forecasts for Queensland include:

- ▶ Growth in visitor numbers of 3.5% per annum
- ▶ Growth in international visitor nights of 2.6% per annum
- ▶ Growth in domestic visitor nights of 2.2% per annum
- ▶ Future growth in tourism demand is expected to be stronger by active seniors (persons aged 55 – 69 years)<sup>9</sup>

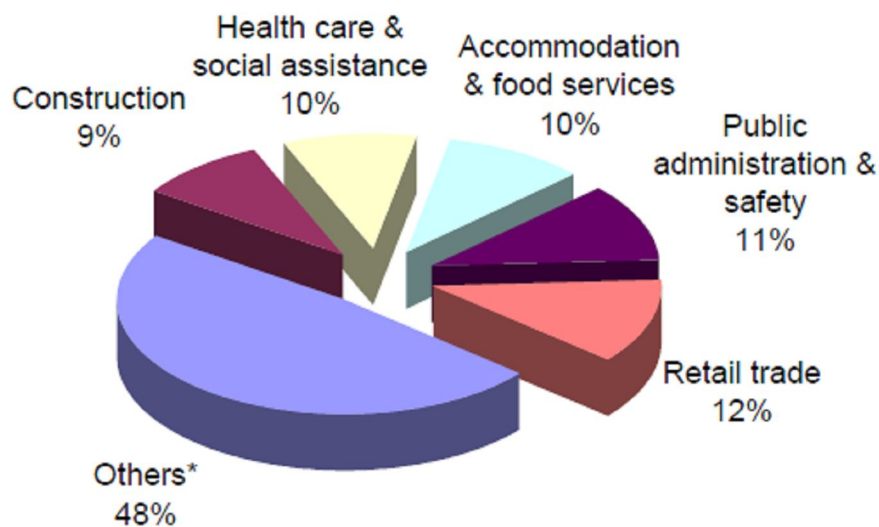
From the review of the tourism data and research, it is considered likely that the nature-based tourism market sector will expand over the next eight years, with active seniors becoming an increasingly important segment of the market.

<sup>9</sup> Tourism Forecasts, updated December 2009, Tourism Queensland, 2009

## 10. The Regional Economy

Census data recorded in 2006 by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that the key industries of Far North Queensland (FNQ) are: retail trade; public administration and safety; accommodation and food services; health care and social assistance; and construction. This data is based upon the number of employed persons over the age of 15 in each sector.

**Figure 10 Top 5 FNQ Industries of Employment**



\* Others include: Education & Training; Manufacturing; Transport, postal & warehousing; Agriculture, forestry & fishing; Professional, scientific & technical services; Other services; Administrative support & services; Wholesale trade; Rental, hiring & real estate services; Financial & insurance services; Arts & recreation services; Mining; Electricity, gas, water & waste services; and Information media & telecommunications.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006

For more information about FNQ Statistics please refer to:

[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

### 10.1 Tourism within Queensland

Queensland's natural assets underpin the competitive advantage of the state's tourism industry. Queensland is one of the world's most naturally diverse tourism destinations. With five world heritage areas and a multitude of national parks and forests, Queensland has a leading position in the Australian nature-based tourism market.

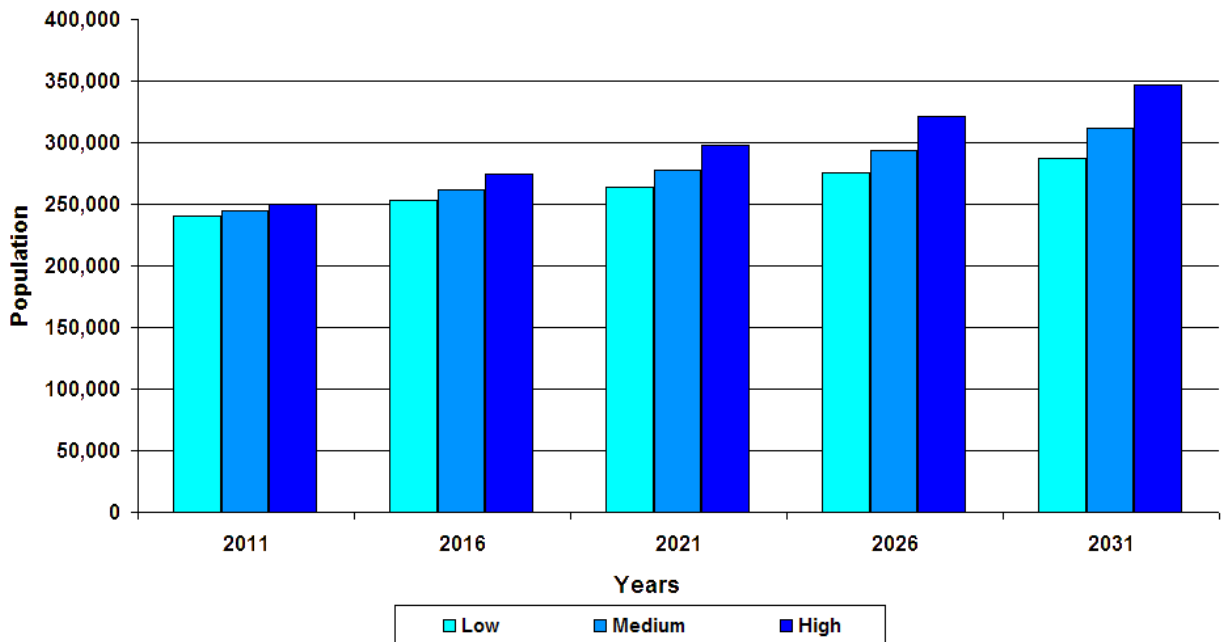
Tourism contributes approximately \$8.8 billion annually to the State's economy, accounting for 4.5% of the Gross State Product. Indirectly, tourism contributes an additional \$5.7 billion to the Queensland economy. As an export earner, tourism in Queensland generates \$3.7 billion, second only to coal exports.

## 10.2 Population

FNQ is one of Queensland's fastest growing regions. Between 2001 and 2006, FNQ recorded the third highest growth rate of any Queensland region outside South East Queensland. The regional population has increased by approximately 111,000 residents in the last 30 years growing from 111,320 in 1976 to 220,687 in 2006. By 2031 medium level projections as shown in Figure 11 anticipate that FNQ will reach a population of 311,411, which equates to growth of 41% over the period.

A considerable percentage of the tourism market in FNQ is comprised of residents local to Queensland. The projected growth of the local population places the Ninney Rise site in a dynamic position.

**Figure 11 FNQ Population Projections<sup>10</sup>**



Source: Department of Infrastructure and Planning, 2009

<sup>10</sup> Department of Infrastructure and Planning

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## Appendix A

# Threatened Species List

Scientific name	Common name	EPBC status	NCA status
<u><i>Erythrorchis radiatus</i></u>	Red Goshawk	Vulnerable	Endangered
<u><i>Rostratula australis</i></u>	Australian Painted Snipe	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
<u><i>Litoria nannotis</i></u>	Waterfall Frog, Torrent Tree Frog	Endangered	Endangered
<u><i>Litoria rheocola</i></u>	Common Mistfrog	Endangered	Endangered
<u><i>Nyctimystes dayi</i></u>	Lace-eyed Tree Frog, Australian Lacelid	Endangered	Endangered
<u><i>Dasyurus hallucatus</i></u>	Northern Quoll	Endangered	Endangered
<u><i>Hipposideros semoni</i></u>	Semon's Leaf-nosed Bat, Greater Wart-nosed Horseshoe-bat	Endangered	Endangered
<u><i>Pteropus conspicillatus</i></u>	Spectacled Flying-fox	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
<u><i>Saccolaimus saccolaimus nudicluniatus</i></u>	Bare-rumped Sheath-tail Bat	Critically Endangered	Endangered
<i>Esacus magnirostris</i>	beach stone-curlew	Vulnerable	Marine
<i>Casuarius casuarius johnsonii</i>	southern cassowary	Endangered	Endangered
<i>Arenga australasica</i>	Arenga palm	Vulnerable	Vulnerable
<i>Ilex sp. (Gadgarra B.P.Hyland RFK2011)</i>	-	Rare	-
<i>Rourea brachyandra</i>	-	Rare	-
<i>Ichnanthus pallens var. major</i>	-	Rare	-
<i>Chingia australis</i>	-	Endangered	Endangered
<i>Dendrobium superbiens</i>	Curly Pinks	Vulnerable	Vulnerable

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