



16th December 2025

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Submission to Far North Queensland Regional Plan review

Outdoors Queensland is the peak body for the outdoor sector in Queensland.

We represent outdoor organisations and individuals in Queensland, consisting of a range of outdoor industry stakeholders, covering the five broad pillars of outdoor activities:

- outdoor recreation,
- outdoor education,
- outdoor health,
- nature-based tourism, and
- associated support services.

The mission of Outdoors Queensland is to ensure that Queensland's outdoor sector is empowered, supported and valued. Our vision that everyone can enjoy the health and well-being benefits of the outdoors through a thriving Queensland outdoor sector.

We believe that the Queensland Government strategies and high-level plans should encourage more Queenslanders to engage in outdoor activities and connect with Queensland's outdoors. This will mean that Queenslanders become healthier at a population-level, Queensland's economy is healthier through both avoided health costs and direct economic benefits (tourism and education), and Queensland's outdoor sector will continue to grow.

Outdoors Queensland welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Far North Queensland draft Regional Plan 2025.

Outdoors Queensland is pleased to support the Vision statement set out in the Far North Queensland draft Regional Plan 2025 – *FNQ will build upon its reputation as the powerhouse of northern Australia, excelling as a global economic hub for tourism, environmental protection, and agriculture.*

Outdoors Queensland supports the strong focus on nature, recreation and outdoor tourism throughout the draft plan which makes sense for the Far North Queensland region.



We note that the themes set out in the draft plan are Housing, Thriving Economy, Ecotourism and Biodiversity, Healthy and Liveable Communities and Infrastructure. Our submission will focus on Theme 3 Ecotourism and Biodiversity, Theme 4 Healthy and Liveable Communities, and Theme 5 Infrastructure, since those themes are most closely connected to the outdoors.

Theme 3 – Ecotourism and Biodiversity

Although FNQ is home to two World Heritage Areas (the Wet Tropics and Great Barrier Reef) which deserve significant focus, it is pleasing to note that the tropical savannah character of much of the FNQ region is also recognised in the draft plan.

Outdoors Queensland supports the recognition in the draft plan for the availability of nature-based recreational activities as a vital component of FNQ's character and lifestyle, along with the acknowledgment that the tourism industry in the region is *“based on reef, rainforest, nature-based tourism and ecotourism”*.

Outdoors Queensland supports Policy Outcome 1 and 2 on page 108 of the draft plan dealing with Ecotourism and Regional Water Quality.

We note that Policy Outcome 3 on page 109 of the draft plan includes Strategy 3.1 *“Identify FNQ’s natural values, natural resources, cultural heritage **and outdoor recreation** values in land use planning”*. We suggest that the other Strategies in this Policy Outcome could be strengthened to include “outdoor recreation” alongside tourism and other focus areas. For example, Strategy 3.3 could be modified as follows:

“Enable opportunities for primary production, renewable energy, ecosystem services, **outdoor recreation** and tourism in the RLRPA...”

Theme 4 – Healthy and Liveable Communities

Outdoors Queensland supports the inclusion of the Healthy and Liveable Communities theme in the draft plan. The Policy Outcomes and Strategies associated with this Theme appear to be well considered.

Outdoors Queensland is pleased to support the Community Identity and Wellbeing Policy Outcome and associated Strategies on page 120 of the draft plan, including the focus on improved walkability and access to open/green spaces, alongside active transport options.

We are pleased to see that the Natural Hazards and Safety Policy Outcome includes recognition of the positive role that natural features, greenspace and water have in mitigating extreme weather events and support for active transport and improving pedestrian comfort through increased tree canopy cover. We suggest that it would be worthwhile to include a strategy addressing the need for timely repair and improvement of community assets including trails, following natural disasters.



Theme 5 – Infrastructure

Outdoors Queensland strongly supports Strategy 1.1 and 1.2 under Social and Community Infrastructure on page 158 of the draft plan:

1.1 Plan for accessible social infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of the community to an appropriate standard in urban, regional and remote locations.

1.2 Plan for infrastructure to support a regional network of outdoor recreation experiences that enhance liveability for residents, attract visitors and support cultural and experiential tourism (such as nature-based experiences, ecotourism, sports, arts and event tourism).

The Tropical North Queensland Regional Mountain Bike Strategy 2024-2034 (which was recognised as winner of the 2024 Outdoors Queensland Government Achievement Award) provides an example of high quality region-wide planning for social and community needs. We believe this process could and should be replicated for other significant outdoor activities, including walking.

While Smithfield MTB Park and Atherton Forest MTB Park have been included in Table 4 of the draft plan as significant places in the Sport, Recreation and Events sector cluster, we note that the draft plan does not mention other significant places including the Davies Mountain Bike Park in the Mareeba Shire Council area and the Cardwell Tropical Mountain Bike Network in the Cassowary Coast area. We suggest these additional locations should be listed alongside Smithfield MTB Park and Atherton Forest MTB Park to demonstrate the strength of the region as a MTB destination.

Additionally, Outdoors Queensland calls for investment in infrastructure to support a wide range of outdoor activities, from water-based activities like fishing, sailing and paddling at Lake Tinaroo, canyoning in Barron Gorge, and rafting on the Tully River. Land/water managers require support through the planning processes to encourage provision of outdoor activities.

Outdoors Queensland looks forward to further involvement in this important process. We would be pleased to provide additional detail regarding elements of this submission.

We understand that this submission may be published as part of the consultation process. If you have any queries, please contact Executive Officer, Dom Courtney, on 0419 976 800 or eo@outdoorsqueensland.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



Dom Courtney
Executive Officer / Company Secretary

