MAGNETIC ISLAND
ACTION PROGRAM
REPORT

September 2013

Report from EDA Regional and Remote Areas Training Program
Townsville City Council and Tourism Operators and Businesses Magnetic Island Queensland

Report of the Economic Development Australia (EDA) Regional and Remote Areas Training Program

Held on Magnetic Island, Queensland, 9 -11 August 2013
Background

The Townsville City Council (TCC) via the Economic Development & Strategic Projects Unit, Tourism Operators Businesses Magnetic Island (TOBMI) and Economic Development Australia (EDA) undertook a workshop to assist with developing a Tourism Action Program for Magnetic Island (MI).

The Townsville City Economic Development Plan 2013-2017 includes MI as a primary location in its Tourism Precinct Development Strategy. Key initiatives of the plan include developing and promoting MI as a sustainable tourism destination and increasing the proportion of visitors to the region to visit MI. Objectives and activities in the plan include:

- Strengthening MI advocacy by supporting and assisting TOBMI
- Strengthening accommodation, transport and visitor infrastructure
- Promoting MI as a sustainability and eco-tourism destination
- Increasing Townsville and regional derived visitation to MI

TOBMI have recognised the need to commence actioning aspects of current relevant reports which include:

- Nelly Bay Gateway Concept Plan (2012 TCC)
- Townsville Enterprise Walking Trails Signage Network Plan (2012 TEL)
- MI Community Plan Towards 2020 Plan (2013 MI Community Development Association)
- Understanding MI Markets Visitor Survey (May 2012)

Plus the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing have commenced a project regarding the Fort Complex and Cultural Heritage Sites.

The workshop focused on progressing opportunities outlined in these reports and plans. EDA’s Regional and Remote Area Training Program was used to assist with but was not limited to seeking outcomes for:

**TOBMI**

- a) Progressing the key steps for developing an implementation strategy to identify and attract resources
- b) Forming a task team that stimulates community discussion

**Townsville Enterprise Limited**

- a) Strengthen MI advocacy by supporting and assisting the development of MI Local Tourism Organisation
- b) Investigating solutions with the community to develop camping areas
- c) Promote MI as a sustainable eco-tourism destination
a) Facilitate opportunities for the revitalisation of the Nelly Bay ferry terminal and arrival gateway
b) Upgrade visitor and interpretive signage with a focus on: directional, interpretive and educational signage and include the opportunities of utilising digital technology

TCC organised for EDA members Adam Saddler, Matthew Gould and TCC Senior Economic Development Officer and EDA member Simon Millcock to meet with the community and undertake the Regional and Remote Area Economic Development Training Program developed by EDA. This program matches interested communities with economic development professionals who deliver the training and facilitate community engagement.

Acknowledgements

Special mention must go to Colin Foley from TOBMI for his coordination and those people who attended and contributed so generously of their time and expertise. Acknowledgment was made to TOBMI and TCC for assisting with hosting the EDA facilitators, Sealink for the assistance with travel to participants to and from MI and the Arcadia Hotel for the use of the facilities. There was genuine interest and involvement from a number of highly committed members from the community and Government which made the process extremely worthwhile.

Program

An orientation tour was undertaken on the Friday afternoon with some of the Government representatives and TOBMI members to allow the facilitators to visualize the areas being discussed.

Session One:

The Friday night session was attended by 19 people and provided the background to the workshop and the presentation of case studies which focused on their experience in tourism from other Australia Islands. This was followed by an opportunity to meet with community members and local businesses.

Session Two:

The Saturday morning session involved an abbreviated presentation of the “Economic Development Toolkit” due to the MI already having plans which had been developed that focused on economic development opportunities. This was an interactive session with practical examples provided from the facilitators.

Session Three:

This session involved a facilitated discussion that worked through a number of the opportunities with a focus on developing a series of realistic actions. There were notes taken during this session including using the Magnetic Island objectives and activities outlined in the tourism precincts development strategy of the Townsville City Economic Development Plan 2013-2017.

One on one meeting were held with some of the Magnetic Island businesses who took the time to meet with the facilitators on the Saturday night and Sunday morning.
Participants during the workshops included:

1. Simon Millcock – EDA / TCC
2. Matthew Gould - EDA
3. Adam Saddler - EDA
4. Mel Acar - FantaSea
5. Jason Fowler - FantaSea
6. Chantal Langridge - TOBMI member
7. Michelle Johnson - SeaLink
8. Norman Jenkins - TOBMI member / Sealink
9. Greg Bruce – TCC Sustainability Officer
10. Trish O’Callaghan – TEL
11. Jo Marks - TEL
12. Joel Savage - Adventurethon
13. Tamara Savage - Adventurethon
14. Jodi Hamilton - B D E - Quest
15. Darren Hanis - Principal Advisor (Boat Harbour Operations) Brisbane
16. Deirdre Bocksch - A/Maritime & Environmental Planning Officer & Finance Officer
17. Col Foley – TOBMI, Alpha & Bright Point Deluxe Holiday Units
18. Claudia Gaber - TOBMI member. Writer/photographer
19. Rick Braley - TOBMI C’tee, Aquascene Aquarium
20. Lorna Hempstead - TOBMI member and MICDA Pres. JCU
22. Kelvin Dyson - Business Manager, Best of Magnetic, Real Estate, Holiday Letting, Car rentals
23. Tania Thoreau – Consultant
24. David Lynch - TCC
25. Laurie Murphy - James Cook University
26. Heinz & Val Zimmerman – Island Breeze Apartments
27. Gary McGill – Arcadia Hotel
28. Denise Secomb – MI Community News

Discussions continued throughout all sessions and the following points were documented:

Reasons for attending:

- Look at community renewal
- Tourism should be part of island in community
- Maintain environment while seeing development
- Represent business unable to attend
- Sustainable eco-tourism development
- Keeping up-to-date with economic development and tourism development
- Environment tourism
- Future directions and decision making
- What the discussion is about ie what comes out from workshop
• Support and connections to State Government
• 2012 precinct plan – learning about Magnetic Island
• New ideas
• What’s the plan to go forward

Key points:

• Number of community groups on MI and ability to engage with them on the same level with the same messages
• Collaboration between operators and businesses provides strength in numbers and the need to have one voice
• Lack of business support for progressing of businesses and where do we find that support
• Lack of resources dollars and people for MI
• Which businesses need to be supported given that there are around 200 businesses of which a number are there for the lifestyle as opposed to some larger more commercial operators?
• Community attitude and engagement need to be developed and maintained.
• Loss of tradesman to mines etc on MI an issues
• MI as a product its, destination??? MI needs to be to develop as a stand-alone destination ie jewel of Townsville

Nelly Bay (Terminal and surrounds)

Due to the presences of Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) there was a specific discussion on Nelly Bay with Darren Hanis and Deidre Bockisch seeking feedback to identify implementation and priorities. Darren provided an overview of the role of DTMR.

Feedback

• The loss of car parking is no supported by the majority of the community (never enough from the beginning)
• TCC development of the Nelly Bay Precinct Plan appeared to have community feedback ignored (some confusion around progress of the plans). Need for further engagement by TCC with regards this plan
• Needs more land for parking but need beautification i.e. trees
• DTMR need to know what direction to go with to make it both transport hub and green area
• Missing a pedestrian management process/plan as part of any traffic parking plan
• Is this the first/entrance point that defines MI or should efforts be placed into both Ferry Operators and their terminals on mainland as the entry points to MI
• Before fixing have we agreed on MI Brand, we need to know who we are?
• Align to brand need to green up area
• Bus service received consistent negative feedback and bad image presented, drivers under pressure, they need to be ambassador for tourism and MI in general and this bad feedback is often peoples first experience when on MI (note the bus company were not in attendance)
- Signs for buses destination
- At a local level regular meetings of all transport providers to discuss opportunities linkage with buses operator and tourism industry
- Terminal just a shed not inviting, needs beautification, redesign, signage to soften building and visitor information services at terminal
- Breakwater sign well accepted as a design

Other matters

- Membership needs to be strengthened for the TOBMI with people who will to commit and consider better use of key partner’s resources. Identify the value for membership it was recognised there are lots of events and activities by too few actively involved
- TEL supports TOBMI and see MI as the “hero” destination and can support MI and work on improvements in collaborative marketing and promotion
- Recognise that the cost of the ferries is a factor on MI and will not be realistic to develop as cheaper public transport
- Linking the ferries and the bus timetables is critical
- Advocacy is supporting the MI community in new initiatives role for TEL
- E-marketing is the first key initiative agreed then National Parks re signage
- MI is accessible for walking as it is public land and there is no “traditional” camping ground at MI
- Engagement of various groups in the funding applications for tourism grants to ensure co-ordination
- Use of the Parks for tourism purposes main focus of strategy and not limited for national parks but for MI
- Orientation signs not provided
- Adventure based events...showcasing MI nationally and internationally...Adventurethon...MI the Adventure capital of Australia......match with natural assets for events on MI requires world class infrastructure
- Signage audit for all of Townsville re: MI or a Communication strategy to interrelate stories
- Downloadable app on the ferry that tourists can download onto their phones for signage
- “Solar Suburb” The solar panels on the roofs of houses are the smallest on the island and the partnering with Ergon. TOBMI have followed up with Ergon and waiting for response.
- Assist the second tier events to be developed into regional, state or national events
- Australia tourism data warehouse (ATDW), get everyone on MI loaded on the site
- A simple one pager guide for others to load their information on ATDW
- MI Interpretive Centre and VIC combination close to the terminal as possible and link with mainland locations, the FantaSea terminal and the Sealink terminal
- MI need to provide the VIC type information at Townsville where the captured audience is, tourists don’t hang around the pier and terminal on MI

Tourism Product Audit

Strong support for a "Tourism Product Audit" for Magnetic Island with Townsville Marine Parks Management Unit identified as a key lead agency given the DNPSR is supportive of projects that enable the public greater access to protected area for a range of nature based tourism and recreational activities.

This could see the development of a Tourism Industry Regional Development Fund (TIRF) grant. If successful the purpose of the grant will be to engage a consultant to undertake a “Tourism
Product Audit” for Magnetic Island. This could support the 5 point action plan for Queensland by promoting tourism and recreation access opportunities in national parks and the government’s Destination Q blueprint and in particular the draft Ecotourism Strategy. This would focus on product development and innovation, raising the profile of MI ecotourism experiences.

**Island Interpretative Centre**

The gateway experience VIC or interpretive centre/s does not have to be just on MI and the need to innovative in information delivery. There are currently no community resource centres and the need to identify sites including current community spaces e.g. solar city building and RSL. This should form part of Nellie Bay planning whilst also considering locations such as Forts car park, Horseshoe Bay.

**Townsville City Economic Development Plan 2013-2017**

**Tourism Precincts Development Strategy**

The strategy targets three tourism destination precincts in Townsville, which are:

- Townsville CBD
- Magnetic Island, and
- Balgal Beach and Surrounds.

Although visitor activity is not confined to these three precincts, they are strategically important areas of focus for existing and future tourism activity in Townsville. This is because they either possess a high level of existing tourism activity and investment and/or a high potential for further tourism development.

**Key Initiatives for Magnetic Island**

- Develop and promote Magnetic Island as a sustainable tourism destination and improve interpretative and pedestrian and cycling pathway facilities.
- Investment and support for attraction of major events.
- Local promotion initiatives to increase the proportion of visitors to the region visiting Magnetic Island and improve Townsville resident visitation.

The meeting worked through and provided the following with regards time frames, projects and status.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Key Partners</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.6 Strengthening Magnetic Island Advocacy</strong></td>
<td>Support and assist the development of a Magnetic Island LTO (TOBMI)</td>
<td><strong>Townsville Enterprise Limited</strong>&lt;br&gt;Local tourism business operators and interest groups&lt;br&gt;Townsville City Council&lt;br&gt;Tourism Queensland</td>
<td><strong>Short</strong></td>
<td>Business Plan to include:&lt;br&gt;Secure recognition by TEL, TCC, RDA and State Govt. that TOBMI is the LTO.&lt;br&gt;Increase the number of members by 20% and increase the level of active members.&lt;br&gt;Develop a formal communication program between TOBMI and TEL.&lt;br&gt;Identify within business plan and ensure MI tourism products are appropriately marketed e.g. events (home brewing), walking trails and snorkel trail through local and regional tourism marketing material and brochure distribution.</td>
<td>Draft business plan is occurring and to be finalised Finalised by October 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Short</strong></td>
<td>Identify and agree on marketing opportunities for TOBMI marketing tools such as website to link with TEL, National Parks, TCC, Sealink and FantaSea to assist with further development and maintaining.&lt;br&gt;Identify and secure funding for agreed marketing tools.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Key Partners</td>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|            |           |              | Medium     | Commence engagement with:  
|            |           |              |            | • State Govt.  
|            |           |              |            | • Townsville Chamber of Commerce  
|            |           |              |            | Develop regional and national alliances by engaging with:  
|            |           |              |            | • Regional Organisation of Councils Economic Development Practitioners  
|            |           |              |            | • Australian Small Island Forum  
|            | Investigate solutions with the community to develop camping areas on Magnetic Island, including boat based camping | Tourism Operators Businesses Magnetic Island  
|            |          | Local businesses and community Townsville Enterprise Limited Townsville City Council Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing | Medium | Develop the scope for strategy/plan on what is appropriate to MI including implementation for what and where re infrastructure, private investment, identification of user groups for MI, funding level and sources. Identify stakeholders/partners  
|            |          |              |            | Identify infrastructure requirements to support current events | Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing commencing  
|            |          |              |            | TOBMI to raise issue re strategy development at TEL tourism events advisory committee |        |
|            | Develop specific planning scheme provisions for Magnetic Island that facilitates sustainable development and enhances the Island’s unique character | Townsville City Council (City Planning)  
|            |          | TOBMI Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning | Short | Currently being progressed |        |
| 4.7 Strengthening Accommodation, Transport and Visitor Infrastructure | Investigate the development of a consolidated ferry, barge and bus terminal in Ross Creek | Port of Townsville Limited  
|            |          | Townsville City Council Magnetic Island-focused businesses including Sealink, Fantasea  
<p>|            |          | Department of Transport and Main Roads |        |            |        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Key Partners</th>
<th>Time frame</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Develop increased pedestrian and public transport options and promote use of alternative transport modes | **Townsville City Council (Infrastructure Planning)**  
Department of Transport and Main Roads,  
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection  
Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing | Medium                                                                      |            |          | Working with stakeholders to improve public transport patronage and developing trunk pathways to commuter connectivity. |
| Undertake planning for the revitalisation of the Nelly Bay ferry terminal and arrival gateway | **Townsville City Council (ED&SP)**  
Department of Transport and Main Roads  
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection  
Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning | Short                                                                       |            |          | Undertake the development of MI tourism action program  
Refer to actions from DTMR | Workshops completed action program to be presented in October |
| Upgrade visitor and interpretive signage on Magnetic Island as part of an integrated city signage strategy, which incorporates local, interstate, overseas and drive market requirements | **Townsville City Council (ED&SP)**  
TOBMI  
Townsville Enterprise Limited  
Sealink  
Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing | Medium                                                                       |            |          | Undertake the development of MI Tourism action program  
Prioritisation of walks and signage needs including signage on mainland improvement and audit for all of Townsville to allow for an integrated signage approach  
TEL Visitor Information Centre project | Workshops completed action program to be presented in October |
| 4.8 Promoting Magnetic Island as a Sustainability and Eco-Tourism Destination | Further develop Magnetic Island as a solar suburb and sustainable destination including:  
- continue supporting Solar Cities program  
- encourage high visibility solar power use  
- investigate savings from encouraging off-grid solutions to water, waste, power etc. on Magnetic Island, and  
- investigate potential for solar energy storage developments to demonstrate a more complete solar solution. | **Ergon Energy**  
Townsville City Council  
Tourism Queensland,  
Department of Environment and Heritage Protection  
Townsville Enterprise Limited | Ongoing                                                               |          | Establish and MOU between Ergon Energy & Community  
Undertake a marketing branding activity that fits with rest of Townsville approach to Eco-Tourism and sustainability. |
## Objectives

**Develop Magnetic Island as a demonstration community for sustainable technologies.**

Activities include:
- development of demonstration community collateral
- direct investment attraction for sustainable technology providers
- promotion and high visibility on Island of sustainable solutions, and
- establish interpretative facilities at Nelly Bay.

**Key Partners**
- Townsville City Council (ISS)
- Department of Environment and Heritage Protection
- GBRMPA
- TOBMI
- Townsville Enterprise Limited
- Sealink
- Tourism Queensland, local businesses and community

**Time frame**
- Ongoing

**Projects**
- MI Tourism Action Program

**Status**
- Initial workshop held actions being developed

### 4.9 Increasing Townsville and Regional Derived Visitation to Magnetic Island

Work with tourism operators to develop and support campaigns and events that increase the recognition of Magnetic Island within Townsville

**Key Partners**
- Townsville Enterprise Limited
- TOBMI
- Townsville City Council
- Local businesses
- Tourism Queensland

**Time frame**
- Ongoing

**Projects**
- Events strategy to market MI locally/regionally
- Current MI festival/event program out now to be utilized
- Utilizing Australian Tourism Data Warehouse listings
- TEL is active in this area and willing to work with TOBMI.

**Status**
- TEL to release Strategy as soon as practical
- Increase buy into warehouse from MI in general
- TEL to engage with MI news re events
- TOBMI one pager on process for promoting events to member/ community

### Feedback on the workshop

- Need to progress from workshop ie make it happen
- Good forum to throw ideas/concepts, information sharing
- Everyone on same strategy vision, working together
- Good to be a part of island direction
- Well run
- Decision made to move forward
- Good to have all players around table
- Good to have an outside perspective and step out of MI day to day
- Good experience from EDA
- Good to connect with island and other aspects of it
- Good to understand more fully how all different groups work and interact together
- Been worthwhile
- Need to let more people know about Magnetic Island
- Thanks to EDA good
- Good to know about the State government changes
- Good to know about potential assistance out there
- Productive forum, good to network again
- Good to involve community in planning, implementation and monitoring
- Good interaction with other people
- State govt is there for you, it’s different so contact us!
- Great experience in the room
- Thank EDA for the session and their pro bono is wonderful initiative
- A continental island that is a suburb of Townsville and a part of North Queensland
- Well run meeting, business point of view, good to understand how different groups interact
- Thanks for the EDA presentations, don’t take normal partners for granted. Great move to approach the state people, great opportunity
- Helped to recognise four areas of Gov., business management in the ebbs and flows
- 8 action items that will be started tomorrow
- A really productive forum
- A chance to report in the local newspaper of the planning and monitoring of the activities

**Actions**

1. **TEL**
   - Consider including MI in their review of Visitor Information Centre
   - Develop with TOBMI a 2013-14 Action Plan (draft plan listed below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>KPIs</th>
<th>Lead &amp; Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undertake campaign activity to increase local visitors to events over the low and shoulder seasons</td>
<td><strong>Assist in the promotion of Bay Dayz Festival</strong></td>
<td>1. 1 x Media Release 2. 2 x Social Media Posts on Twitter and Facebook 3. Promo panel on Townsville Holidays</td>
<td>Lead: MICDA/TOBMI Partners: TEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake campaign activity to increase local visitors to events over the low and shoulder seasons</td>
<td><strong>Assist in the promotion of My Island Home</strong></td>
<td>1. Post on social media 2. Guide organisers on social media strategy 3. Media support for competition</td>
<td>Lead: TOBMI Partners: TEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undertake development activity to increase international leisure visitation</td>
<td><strong>Youth and Adventure Campaign</strong></td>
<td>1. Development of youth and adventure collateral piece 2. Capture of digital content for the Youth and Adventure Sector 3. Cooperative sales calls to Cairns, Whitsundays, Brisbane that TOBMI operators can cooperatively participate in</td>
<td>Lead: TEL Partners: International Marketing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the reputation of the Townsville North Queensland Region and grow visitation and expenditure.</td>
<td>Deliver consumer marketing collateral with a feature on Magnetic Island</td>
<td>1. Distribution of Regional Guides</td>
<td>Lead: TEL Partners: TOBMI to assist in content generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the reputation of the Townsville North Queensland Region and grow visitation and expenditure.</td>
<td><strong>Engage directly with media to increase profile and awareness of Townsville North Queensland</strong></td>
<td>1. Host international media representatives 2. Host domestic media representatives</td>
<td>Lead: TEL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Enhance the reputation of the Townsville North Queensland Region and grow visitation and expenditure.** | Online support activity and social networking | 1. Develop a new Townsville Holidays website with a feature on Magnetic Island  
2. Share relevant social media content  
3. Create ‘Journey’ for Snorkel Trails within ATDW. | Lead: TEL  
TOBMI to assist in content generation |
| **Build the Region’s capacity through focused efforts on investment attraction, infrastructure planning, growth of access opportunities and enhancements of industry skills and capability.** | Build capacity and skills of the regions tourism industry and operators | 1. Operator attendance to the annual Tourism Regional Development Forum  
2. Operator attendance at development workshop for the North Queensland Tourism Awards held on Magnetic Island  
3. Applications into the North Queensland Tourism Awards  
4. ATDW Workshop to be held on Magnetic Island  
5. Digital Coaching session with TEQ’s Digital Coach team | Lead: TEL  
Partners TOBMI |
| **Build the Region’s capacity through focused efforts on investment attraction, infrastructure planning, growth of access opportunities and enhancements of industry skills and capability.** | Explore funding grants for the development of an Ecotourism Strategy for Magnetic Island | 1. Develop and deliver an Ecotourism Strategy for Magnetic Island | Lead: TOBMI |
| **Enhance the reputation of the Townsville North Queensland Region and grow visitation and expenditure.** | Organise a TEL Volunteer Familiarisation of Magnetic Island | 1. Number of volunteers on famil  
2. TOBMI presentation on famil | Lead: TEL |

### 2. Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Contact Manager of Translink to discuss bus driver behaviour
- Arrange signage for bus pick up points at terminal
- Follow up with greening terminal surrounds

### 3. TOBMI
- Finalise and updated their business plan

### 4. Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing
- Consider gaining support and exploring options for funding for Tourism Product Audit

### 5. Priority setting for Magnetic Island Action Program
- Simon Milcock to distribute draft report for feedback and to assist TOBMI with workshop on Tuesday 15 October 2013
Contact details:

Simon Millcock  
Senior Economic Development Officer  
Economic Development & Strategic Projects Planning and Development

P  07 4727 9472  
M  0407819000  
E  simon.millcock@townsville.qld.gov.au

Matthew Gould  
Executive Officer  
Economic Development Australia

P  03 85345049  
M  0407530168  
E  eo@edaustralia.com.au

Adam Saddler  
National Coordinator  
Regional and Remote Area Training Program Economic Development Australia

M  0448813800  
E  adam.saddler@bigpond.com