

MEDIA RELEASE



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China market recovery underway in Tropical North Queensland

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) generated more than \$37 million in sales in the China market last financial year helping to grow the Chinese market by around 20,000 visitors for the region.

TTNQ Chief Executive Officer Mark Olsen said the results from the 28 campaigns in China utilising the Federal Government's International Tourism Recovery Program funding set new records for the destination marketing organisation's return on investment.

"The China Southern campaign with Tourism and Events Queensland and our key distribution partners achieved a 111:1 return on investment, while the China Eastern campaign returned 93:1," he said.

"This campaign activity supported direct services to Brisbane either side of Chinese New Year with Tropical North Queensland attracting the lion's share of the bookings.

"We secured 72 per cent of the China Eastern bookings and 57 per cent of the China Southern bookings demonstrating the popularity of our destination with Chinese visitors arriving in Cairns via domestic routes.

"We are now progressing to the second year of these partnerships utilising the Federal Government's International Tourism Recovery Program funding and anticipate stronger demand for our destination.

"In addition to the campaign activity we have hosted educational visits for trade partners AU Kings Tours, Chongqing Glorious Vacations, Zuzuche.com, PTC Express Travel and the China Industry Advisory Panel (CAIG) consisting of senior managers from 12 key distribution partners in China.

"Our trade and PR Agency Contineo Marketing has been very active training travel agents in-market and increasing our region's share of voice in China through proactive media pitching with leading luxury print and digital publications.

"Publicity opportunities have been strong with a group media famil hosted by TTNQ in partnership with TEQ generating \$16.5 million in publicity for the destination.

"Last month TTNQ accompanied nine members on a China Mission where we met with 23 agents and trained some 250 product managers and frontline staff across Beijing, Xi'an, Hangzhou, Hong Kong and Guangzhou.

"These activities are ahead of Cairns welcoming Cathay Pacific back from December 17 through to March 29 which will add up to 13,000 inbound visitors and an estimated \$20 million spend helping to support the one in five jobs in tourism year-round.

"China was our region's largest international market before the pandemic accounting for one in five international visitor nights and injecting more than \$200 million a year into our regional economy.

"In the year ending June 2024 there were 20,000 Chinese visitors to Tropical North Queensland who stayed 170,000 nights.

"While visitor numbers are lagging the records set before the pandemic, we are optimistic about achieving solid visitor expenditure results in the coming years.

"We are seeing a strong shift away from the large Approved Destination groups to a higher-value traveller coming in small groups and visiting family and friends who stay longer and spend more.

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“The Federal funding has also been used to connect operators to a digital management agency to navigate the complex Chinese social media space used by high-value travellers.”

The CaPTA Group Director of Sales and Marketing Ben Woodward said the professional digital assistance had been vital for CaPTA’s recovery in China where the market is changing rapidly, compared to the other international and domestic markets the Group works in.

“The new independent Chinese travellers are more tech-savvy and do much of the research themselves so it is important to connect with them effectively via WeChat and Little Red Book and will continue to be so in years to come,” he said.

“There has also been a huge turnover in staff in the Chinese travel trade and TTNQ’s recent mission allowed our industry to meet with the agents face-to-face as a region which was crucial in reconnecting with trade partners to discuss new strategies.”

TTNQ’s international activity received grant funding from the Australian Government, under the International Tourism Recovery Program administered by Austrade.

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