



# Cairns and TNQ – Destination Mountain Biking

*Positioning Queensland as Australia's destination of choice for visitors seeking the world's best experiences*

Mountain bike (MTB) tourism is a high yielding segment of the tourism market with significant potential for domestic and international growth.

In 2021, Tourism Tropical North Queensland commissioned tourism consultancy Tourism, Recreation and Conservation (TRC) to undertake market analysis of the mountain bike tourism sector and identify growth opportunities.

The resulting Tropical North Queensland Mountain Biking Market Analysis report highlights the potential for the region to generate an additional \$95 million per annum in visitor spend from mountain biking related tourism. Key actions to

unlock this opportunity include:

- Expansion of the Smithfield (Cairns) MTB trail network to provide the critical trail mass needed to compete with national and international mountain biking destinations.
- Attraction and long-term retention and growth of mountain biking events, including the iconic Crankworx Cairns.

With mountain biking an Olympic sport in 2032, there is also opportunity for the region to support a positive pre and post Games mountain biking legacy through Olympic training and development programs as well as Games visitation.

## At a glance

**Electorate:**  
Barron River.

**Government Alignment:**  
Towards Tourism 2032 (Olympic Legacy); Dept of Tourism, Innovation and Sport Strategic Plan 2022-26, State Infrastructure Strategy

**Queensland Government Minister:**  
Stirling Hinchliffe, Minister for Tourism Innovation and Sport

## Vision

### Smithfield MTB trail network expansion

The Smithfield MTB trail network is well established and has previously hosted world class MTB events including the UCI World Championships in 2017. In 2022, the Department of Tourism Innovation and Sport funded concept design works for the proposed expansion of the Smithfield MTB trail network.

**The resulting Smithfield Mountain Bike Park Expansion Concept report proposed an expansion of the Smithfield trail network from 30 kilometres to 82 kilometres, with an estimated capital cost**

**of \$12 million and annual operating costs of \$355,000 (ex GST).**

In parallel with the design work, an economic analysis of the expansion concluded the Smithfield MTB park had potential to deliver significant outcomes for the region should the network exceed 80 kilometres of trails.

**The work undertaken to date demonstrates feasibility of the expansion project. Detailed planning is now required to progress the project to investment stage.**

### Crankworx Cairns sustainable funding arrangement

The Crankworx World Tour is a multi-stop series of MTB festivals that brings together elite-level

competitors. It is the largest MTB tour event in the world with festivals taking place in Rotorua (New Zealand), Whistler (Canada), Innsbruck (Austria) and Cairns.

**The inaugural Crankworx Cairns event took place in October 2022 and was highly successful, generating an economic impact of \$7.7 million, delivering 25,307 visitor nights and attracting 3,711 out of region visitors. The event was broadcast globally through Red Bull TV live broadcasts and associated online platforms.**

The 2023 event will be staged from 17-21 May 2023, after which the current funding agreement expires. A sustainable funding arrangement needs to be reached to secure the event for 2024 and beyond.

## Community benefits

Expansion of the existing Smithfield MTB trail network together with delivery of sustainable funding arrangements for Crankworx Cairns will deliver a range of economic and social benefits for the community. These include:

- 1** Building the region's reputation as an international mountain biking destination, thereby delivering jobs and economic growth through tourism and visitation.
- 2** Enhanced health and wellbeing outcomes delivered through increased participation in mountain biking.
- 3** Enhanced liveability which positively contributes to workforce attraction and retention.
- 4** Enhanced amenity for users of the Smithfield MTB Park.
- 5** Improved environmental engagement by the community through increased participation in nature-based outdoor activities.
- 6** Expansion of the trail network also supports broader regional mountain tourism through links with existing and planned significant trail networks in the Cassowary Coast, Mareeba and Tablelands local government areas.

**“ I would welcome coordinated investment in projects to unlock the potential of bike tourism ”**

*Minister for Transport and Main Roads  
Mark Bailey MP, January 2023.*

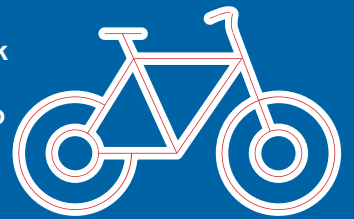
### What we need

To secure the long-term future of Crankworx Cairns (2024 and beyond), State Government commitments of:

**\$300k for 2024 and at least 70% of event costs funded for future events**

State Government to progress the Smithfield MTB Trail Network Expansion project to investment ready stage working with Council, TTNQ and stakeholders.

The Smithfield Mountain Bike Park Expansion Project has the potential to deliver significant economic benefits to the region\*.



During construction		Increased visitor expenditure
<b>46</b> FTE jobs	<b>\$5.9</b> million GRP	<b>\$140</b> million annually
During operation		Project benefit to cost ratio
<b>566</b> FTE jobs	<b>\$53.7</b> million annually GRP	<b>2.16 at a 7% discount rate</b>

\*Based on economic modelling by AEC Group