

Northern Beaches Leisure Trail

Active travel infrastructure supports healthy lifestyles and connects tourism experiences

The Northern Beaches Leisure Trail (NBLT) is a long-term priority of Cairns Regional Council, delivered in partnership with the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). When completed, the trail will provide 30 kilometres of continuous active transport (walking and cycling) between Palm Cove and the Cairns CBD, with connections into the northern beaches suburbs.

The NBLT is recognised by TMR as a principle route within the Queensland Government's Principle Cycling Network Plan, which has also been endorsed by Council, and the project is supported by Council's Active Transport Strategy CairnsPlan 2016. Combined, this sets a clear direction for sustainable development of the project.

High-quality active transport and leisure activity infrastructure (such as shared paths and cycleways) encourages higher levels of physical activity engagement in the community. This supports better health outcomes for individuals and may reduce the

risk of some disease and chronic conditions, leading to increased life expectancy and productivity.

The NBLT is being constructed in stages with substantial components already complete including the beachfront trail elements at Palm Cove, Clifton Beach, Kewarra Beach, Trinity Beach, Yorkeys Knob, Holloways Beach, and Machans Beach.

In 2023, Council will construct a major connection between Clifton Beach and Kewarra Beach across the foreshore and Deep Creek.

Once complete, the NBLT has been conservatively estimated to deliver a lift of approximately 72,750 visitor nights per annum in Cairns, through a combination of attracting events and cycle tourists, increased connectivity between tourism attractions, and improved amenity for visitors, leading to repeat visitation and increased length of stay.

The project is highly economically desirable, with the 2023 construction of the Clifton Beach to Kewarra Beach link delivering a benefit to cost ratio of 2.04.

At a glance

\$800,000

Capital investment:
\$800,000 estimated for detailed design and costing of both sections.

Electorate:
Barron River.

Government Alignment:
Queensland Cycling Strategy 2017-2027, Activate! Queensland 2019-2029, Towards Tourism 2032, State Infrastructure Strategy, Queensland Walking Strategy 2019-2029.

Government Minister:
Mark Bailey, Minister for Transport and Main Roads



Vision

The NBLT will deliver an iconic cycling and walking experience from Cairns to Palm Cove. In addition to recreational opportunities, the trail provides cyclists and pedestrians an alternative to travelling on the high-crash zones along the Captain Cook Highway. The trail will also cater for the growing active tourism market, providing visitors with options to explore destinations along the Cairns northern beaches, and contribute to the economy through booking accommodation, visiting local attractions and buying goods from local vendors and shops.

Community benefits

The NBLT provides a diverse range of users (including young families with prams, people with mobility devices, cyclists and walkers) with access to 30 kilometres of continuous path for safe active commuting, exercise and greater access to leisure activities, delivering significant community benefits that include:

- 1** Improved safety through the provision of a fully off-road route, particularly between communities and for local school student movements.
- 2** Increased leisure opportunities and foreshore facilities at the Northern Beach suburbs.
- 3** Creation of inter and intra suburb pedestrian/cycling connections.
- 4** Delivery of an iconic tourist route and promotion of other local tourism opportunities such as Cattana Wetlands, Earl Hill and Palm Cove.
- 5** Supporting economic development and employment through the construction and operations phases of project delivery.
- 6** Improved enrolment outcomes for northern beaches State Schools.
- 7** Reduced traffic congestion on the Captain Cook Highway during peak school hours.

“We know that, on average, every dollar we invest in bike-riding infrastructure will return nearly five dollars in economic benefit to Queensland with improved health outcomes, reduced traffic congestion, and lower transport costs.”

Minister for Transport and Main Roads Mark Bailey MP, June 2022.

What we need

State Government commitment of

\$800k

to fund detailed design and costings for the next two stages of this active transport / leisure trail network:

- 1** Kewarra Beach to Trinity Beach (from Kewarra Street to Navigation Drive)
- 2** Machans Beach to Aeroglen (from the Barr Creek Bridge to the Aeroglen Cycleway)

