

# Private Sector Pathways (PSP) Program Challenge Statement

## Advancing Sustainable Visitor Management Across Queensland's Ecotourism Sites

### Challenge statement

This Private Sector Pathways (PSP) Program Challenge seeks to partner with innovative Queensland based organisations with practical and scalable solutions to strengthen visitor management across ecotourism destinations within Queensland. Visitation to ecotourism destinations is expected to increase as Queensland champions 45 innovative ecotourism projects by 2045 as part of the broader Destination 2045 vision. Managing this growth, while delivering on Queensland's aspiration to become the world's leading ecotourism destination, requires a clear focus on protecting environmental values, respecting cultural heritage and maintaining safe and world class visitor experiences.

Some of the primary sustainability challenges faced by ecotourism destinations include:

- Managing the growing number of visitors and improving access to visitor data in remote areas.
- Promoting awareness of responsible visitor behaviours, such as avoiding environmentally sensitive zones like turtle nesting sites.
- Ensuring availability of and engagement with visitor information across various locations and platforms, tailored to specific environmental conditions and visitor and ecotourism operator needs.

These issues can impact natural and cultural attractions, infrastructure capabilities, and be detrimental to local communities.

Having better access to, and enhancing the use of data, can help understand visitor flows and visitor expectations, prioritise infrastructure investment and support the delivery of world class visitor experiences. Similarly, systems or tools that can help provide consistent communication to visitors and ecotourism destinations and that build greater education and awareness to drive positive visitor behaviours.

Given the diverse nature of Queensland's ecotourism destinations—ranging from remote islands and marine environments to rainforests and national parks—solutions must account for varying operational realities, including staffing, maintenance, and local capacity. This challenge calls for practical, adaptable, and innovative approaches to enhance visitor access, promote sustainable behaviours, and improve visitor flow management, delivering long-term benefits across multiple locations.

### Challenge owner

The owner of this challenge is the Tourism Division within the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI).

The department leads Queensland's tourism and environmental priorities, including delivery of the Queensland Government's commitment to responsibly showcase and deliver 45 innovative ecotourism projects by 2045. Success by 2045 will include the delivery of world-class ecotourism projects, expanded dark sky tourism experiences, increased light-footprint accommodation within protected areas and the continued conservation of Queensland's natural assets.

Tourism contributes approximately \$42 billion in annual visitor expenditure to Queensland's economy every year. The Tourism Division works to ensure that growth in ecotourism visitation is supported by responsible planning, appropriate infrastructure and the protection of the state's significant natural and cultural assets.

Through this challenge, the department is seeking to partner with organisations that can strengthen visitor management, improve visitor access to ecotourism destinations, drive positive behaviour change and support sustainable ecotourism outcomes across Queensland.

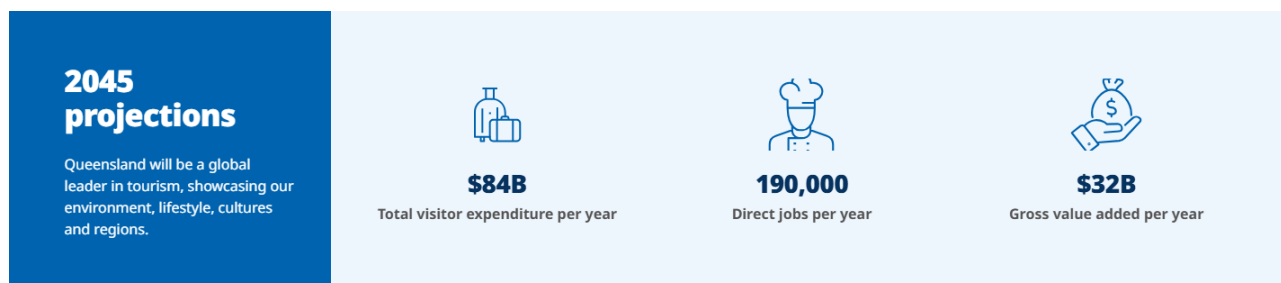


**Figure 1: Queensland Tourism Industry Projections by 2045** <https://destination2045.detsi.qld.gov.au/20-year-tourism-plan>

## Challenge context

### The current situation

Queensland's tourism sector is entering a period of accelerated growth, driven by the "green and gold runway" toward the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the broader ambitions of Destination 2045. The state has set a target to double annual visitor expenditure to \$84 billion by 2045. Increased visitation to natural areas and ecotourism destinations is expected as a result.

Queensland's natural areas span millions of hectares and include national and state parks, islands, campgrounds, walking tracks, beaches and marine access points. Many of these sites are environmentally sensitive and collectively attract millions of visitors each year.

Visitor flow and access remains a critical factor in ensuring visitors can enjoy world-class experiences at ecotourism destinations in a sustainable manner.

Remote ecotourism destinations often have limited or no infrastructure and connectivity, making it challenging to collect visitor data, including details of their stay, experience and expectations. As visitor numbers grow, so do expectations for experiences, available infrastructure, and environmental outcomes. Better understanding visitor flow and expectations enables better infrastructure investment, collaboration to build and deliver exceptional experiences, drive positive behaviours, and support environmental goals. Visitor information for ecotourism destinations varies by location and covers details like environmental conditions, expected behaviours, infrastructure, experiences, and accessibility. This information is shared through signage, websites, and information centres, but these methods can be labour intensive and costly, unavailable offline and vary across platforms. Enhancing visitor engagement and information delivery across the whole visitor journey can promote positive behaviours, improve accessibility, support environmental management, and enable tourism operators to provide sustainable, high-quality visitor experiences.

Increasing visitation at ecotourism destinations has an impact on multiple stakeholders, including visitors, tourism operators, park rangers, Traditional Owners and local communities. Expectations regarding sustainability, environmental protection and cultural recognition are likely to increase in the lead-up to 2045 and beyond.

## Challenge imperative

Improving visitor management across ecotourism destinations is essential to ensuring Queensland's natural and cultural assets remain protected and accessible as ecotourism grows. Clear guidance, information and data are essential to driving responsible visitor behaviour and supporting environmental outcomes.

Solutions must prioritise sustainability, accessibility and operational practicality. They should be capable of adapting to different landscapes and site conditions without creating additional maintenance obligations or reliance on increased staffing. Proposals should integrate with existing systems, leverage existing data and complement existing on-ground management practices rather than duplicate or replace them. Embedding these principles into solutions, the aim is that visitor experiences are not only enhanced but are also delivered in ways that minimise environmental impact, promote responsible behaviour and maintain the cultural and ecological significance of each site.

The department invites forward-thinking, tangible solutions that can deliver measurable improvements in sustainable visitor management, drive positive visitor behaviour and increase access to ecotourism destinations, while remaining practical to operate over the long term.

## Intended objectives or outcomes

Your innovative solution must improve sustainable visitor management at ecotourism destinations across Queensland and drive positive visitor behaviours to reduce environmental impacts. It may address one, multiple, or non-listed imperatives identified below.

| Imperative                                         | Short Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Cost effectiveness and scalability</b>          | <p>Affordable, scalable solutions will help ensure the solution can be implemented across numerous ecotourism destinations, creating sustainable long-term benefits for Queensland's natural assets.</p> <p>Noting the pilot project will receive \$100,000 (excluding GST) funding. Should the pilot be successful the cost of scalability needs to be reasonable and considered as part of the application.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Digital enablement</b>                          | <p>If the solution includes a digital element, it should support offline access for use in remote locations, while remaining highly scalable to accommodate tourism growth. The solution should tap into existing data sources where appropriate to enhance accuracy and efficiency and enable tangible measurement of outcomes. The solution should be designed to be intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible to a broad range of visitors.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Collaborative design</b>                        | <p>A successful solution should consider key stakeholders, such as tourists, tourism operators, Traditional Owners and local communities, ensure cultural inclusivity and address the diverse demographics of Queensland's tourism industry.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Visitor experience, education and behaviour</b> | <p>Solutions may enhance visitor experiences, increasing access to ecotourism destinations, by making it easier for visitors to prepare in advance, follow site rules, respect cultural heritage, adopt low-impact behaviours and access sustainable essential infrastructure. They should support safe, enjoyable visits while ensuring accessibility for all visitors, including diverse visitor groups (e.g. tour groups, independent travellers, budget travellers, non-English speakers, people with disabilities).</p> <p>Solutions may focus on increasing visitor knowledge and awareness of environmental values, cultural significance and sustainable practices. They should use clear, engaging and inclusive methods to encourage informed decision-making and foster long-term</p> |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | positive behaviour change, supporting visitors in acting responsibly across Queensland's diverse ecotourism destinations.                                                                                       |
| <b>Data</b> | Solutions could enhance and complement existing data captured by ecotourism destinations to inform sustainable visitor flow and management, inform decisions and the design of world-class visitor experiences. |

## Stakeholders

Improving visitor management across Queensland's ecotourism landscape involves a broad range of stakeholders. Each group brings valuable perspectives, in creating a vibrant ecotourism experience.

### Primary stakeholders

- **Visitors and tourists** are the primary users of ecotourism destinations. Their decisions, including trip planning, transport choices, on-site behaviour and compliance with site guidance, directly influence environmental impact, cultural respect and site safety. Effective visitor management provides clear, timely, and accessible information that supports responsible behaviour as the default option.
- **Tourism operators and accommodation providers** and other ecotourism businesses play a central role in shaping visitor expectations and behaviour. They provide key infrastructure assets and act as intermediaries between visitors and the environment through pre-visit information, booking systems, on-site guidance and operational practices, they influence how visitors access and interact with protected areas. Their ability to reinforce consistent messaging and responsible behaviours is key to sustainable enjoyment of ecotourism sites.

### Key enablers

- **Local governments** contribute through planning frameworks, infrastructure provision, waste management services and community engagement. Their policies and service delivery influence how ecotourism growth is accommodated at a local level.
- **Environment Managers and Rangers** are responsible for implementing site management plans, maintaining infrastructure and responding to incidents. They provide frontline insight into visitor pressures and operational constraints and are directly affected by gaps in visitor understanding or compliance.
- **Transport operators** influence visitor flow and access to ecotourism destinations. Through scheduling, routing, capacity management and in-transit communication, they can support demand management strategies, peak period controls and the dissemination of real-time information.
- **Visitor information centres and regional tourism organisations** act as trusted local intermediaries. They translate policy into practical guidance for visitors, align messaging across operators and collect feedback on emerging issues at specific sites.

### Strategic and supporting stakeholders

- **Traditional Owners and First Nations Groups** provide cultural knowledge, custodianship perspectives and guidance on the protection of culturally significant places. Their involvement supports respectful visitor behaviour and ensures management approaches recognise the cultural values of Country.
- **Research organisations and universities** contribute data, monitoring capability and evidence-based insights to inform adaptive management and long-term planning.
- **Queensland Government** through DETSI and related agencies, provides strategic direction, policy, funding, and the strategic roadmap through its Deliver 2045 plan, to facilitate improvements in visitor

management and support a sustainable future in alignment with its broader ecotourism goals. Through DETSI, it also actively manages and collaborates with ecotourism destinations to ensure world-class experiences and environmental outcomes are achieved.

- **Local Residents** experience the broader impacts of tourism growth. They contribute valuable local knowledge, community expectations and support accountability and continuous improvement.

## Challenge solution

### Outcomes desired

The desired outcome is the delivery of an innovative and scalable solution that can improve sustainable visitor management, access and behaviour across Queensland's ecotourism destinations that improves environmental outcomes as tourism and expectations increase.

### Technical and/or regulatory considerations

The solution must:

- be convenient, easy to use and free or low cost for all users.
- be accessible offline and suitable for remote locations with limited or no connectivity and digital infrastructure.

The solution should:

- provide streamlined and inclusive access for diverse visitor groups (e.g. tour groups, independent travellers, budget travellers, non-English speakers, people with disability).
- offer real time information, education and clear rules or guidance.

### Design benefits

The solution must:

- be commercially viable and scalable to meet expected growth in Queensland's tourism industry.
- consider environmentally responsible design and implementation to reduce impacts and promote a sustainable future.
- be easy to implement and maintain

The solution should:

- drive positive visitor behaviour by encouraging sustainable practices, environmental stewardship and cultural respect.
- improve access to visitor data in remote locations and support decision making of ecotourism destinations on visitor management and flow.

### Sustainability and implementation

The solution must:

- protect sustainability and conservation efforts by enabling responsible visitor management practices that minimise environmental impact and drive positive behaviour change
- be adaptable to the unique conditions of natural locations, ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience.

## How to apply

Applications can be submitted via the link [here](#) and should include the following:

- A clear description of the solution, including its key features, benefits and value proposition.

- A roadmap for implementation, including timelines, resources and milestones.
- A plan for measuring the impact and success of the solution, including metrics and evaluation criteria.
- A budget that outlines the financial requirements for implementing and maintaining the solution.
- A summary of the team's qualifications and experience, including relevant skills and expertise.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to pitch their solutions to an assessment panel, and the successful applicant will enter a contract and pilot their solution with the Challenge Owner.

### Successful applicant

The winning proposal will be selected based on its innovation, feasibility, impact and alignment with the challenge objectives. The successful applicant will receive grant funding of up to \$100,000 (excluding GST) through the department's initiative to develop and pilot their proposed solution for up to 6-8 months alongside the Tourism Division.

### Project duration

The duration of the project is estimated to be up to 6-8 months. If a suitable solution to the challenge is found, project commencement is most likely to start in June 2026.

As part of the assessment process, shortlisted applicants will be notified and invited to a Solution Presentation session on 20 May 2026. This will be an opportunity for you to present your proposed solution (either in person or remotely) to the Challenge assessment panel.

Presentations are expected to be up to 20 minutes long, with time afterwards for Q&A. Full details will be provided in due course.

### More information

The [Private Sector Pathways \(PSP\)](#) Program aims to solve corporate challenges with solutions generated by proven innovative Queensland small to medium enterprises and scaleups. For more information about the Challenge, contact DETSI Innovation Private Sector Partnerships team at [partnerships2@detsi.qld.gov.au](mailto:partnerships2@detsi.qld.gov.au).

Further information about DETSI strategies can be found at:

- [DETSI Strategic Plan 2023-27](#)

Further information can be found at:

- [Ecotourism - Queensland's Tourism Future | Queensland Government](#)
- [45 by 45: Getting Ecotourism Moving in Queensland | Tourism | Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation, Queensland](#)