

MEDIA RELEASE



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Cairns & Great Barrier Reef open for business

Business events operators in Cairns & Great Barrier Reef have been welcoming visitors at venues and accommodation which are all operating under Queensland's COVID-Safe plans.

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef's General Manager Rosie Douglas said there was strong interest in the destination for events as planners looked to regional areas where delegates could enjoy space.

"The Cairns to Brisbane route is now the busiest in Australia with more flights scheduled for September to meet the demand," she said.

"Direct Gold Coast and Darwin flights are being introduced from September 1 and the Adelaide flights have been so successful that they are returning to 100 per cent of their pre-COVID capacity next month.

"Event planners even have a new venue to consider with the newly upgraded Cairns Airport domestic terminal ideal for interactive welcome events.

"In addition, the award-winning Cairns Convention Centre is setting a new benchmark for international and national conferences with their soon-to-be completed \$176 million refurbishment.

"The Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef team are conducting face-to-face site inspections for Queensland-based organisers and receiving leads for events up until 2025."

Business Events adopt COVID-Safe practices

Cairns & Great Barrier Reef business events operators have approved COVID-Safe plans with an added focus on the health and safety of all guests and staff.

Leading the way are the region's five-star hotels and resorts which have adopted increased hygiene standards by embracing new safety protocols, procedures and training, with a focus on safe dining, meetings and events spaces.

Riley, a Crystalbrook Collection Resort, has taken it a step further by becoming the first Australian hospitality company to introduce a cash-free environment.

Offsite venues, dining and touring suppliers are taking precautions to respect safe physical distancing with many adopting fun destination-themed signage and all embracing the required food safety practices.

Cairns Airport upgrade complete

This month Cairns Airport celebrated the completion of the \$55 million T2 Domestic Terminal upgrade after 18 months of construction and three years of planning. With an impressive line-up of shopping and dining experiences, visitors can taste and buy locally sourced products of Cairns & Great Barrier Reef.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Cairns Airport joined forces in an innovative campaign focusing on the wellbeing and safety of travellers to the region. Cairns & Great Barrier Reef themed COVID-Safe signage, including posters, floor stickers and digital screens plus floor-to-ceiling imagery, feature throughout the refurbished Terminal.

Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef General Manager Rosie Douglas said the transformation offered an improved customer experience.

"The terminal expansion and improved layout now offer the perfect opportunity for an interactive welcome event for delegates, adding a personalised touch to kick off a conference agenda," she said.

"This is all made possible by the region's operators being keen to collaborate and welcome business events back to Cairns & Great Barrier Reef."

Renewed Convention Centre

The award-winning Cairns Convention Centre will set a new benchmark for business events on the completion of a \$176 million refurbishment and expansion project in 2022. The major project will deliver an extra 10,000 square metres of meeting, banquet and exhibition space.

The Centre launched a new brand earlier this month, with the new logo incorporating both the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics Rainforest; representing the only destination in the world where two World Heritage-listed sites connect.

Cairns Convention Centre General Manager Janet Hamilton said the new tagline, *Passion is in our Nature* represented not only the Cairns Convention Centre team, but the spirit of the people of Cairns.

"Everyone you come across in Cairns has a strong passion for what they do," she said.

"From the marine biologists who are working on the reef, to the local farmers growing amazing fresh produce to our own dedicated team at the Cairns Convention Centre, everyone wants every event planner, every delegate and every visiting family member to enjoy their Cairns experience."

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