

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND
SCREEN PRODUCTION
STRATEGIC PLAN



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Cover: Shooting a scene for *Sea Patrol* in Mission Beach

Right: Lilah Billy as Moara Lifu in *Blue Water Empire*

PREMIER'S FOREWORD



Far North Queensland is a unique destination with a vibrant and growing local screen industry, well-positioned to positively impact the state's economy and grow Queensland's position in the international market.

The *Far North Queensland Screen Production Strategic Plan* (the Plan) is a three-year strategy to boost job growth and maximise opportunities in Far North Queensland.

The Plan provides a clear vision to grow the local screen ecosystem, develop content from the unique perspective of the region, and deliver a range of productions across all platforms. The Plan complements and contributes to the delivery of the *Advance Queensland Screen Industry 10-Year Roadmap and Action Plan*, which was released in June 2018.

A key objective for the Queensland Government is creating jobs in a strong economy, with a focus on meaningful job growth—encouraging sustainable job creation that nurtures local industries and maximises local skills and talent.

Far North Queensland has a strong talent pool of artists working across the diverse screen industry. The Plan aims to harness the existing local talent and potential to drive growth in the sector and ensure that the Far North Queensland screen industry remains competitive in the global marketplace.

Globally, the screen sector is estimated to be worth US\$653 billion and supports more than 6.5 million employment opportunities. In Queensland, the screen industry contributes nearly \$1 billion and more than 7000 fulltime equivalent jobs annually.

To capitalise on the global and regional opportunities in the screen sector, the Plan aims to:

- strengthen and leverage community connections
- increase professional capabilities
- create local productions
- profile and celebrate existing creative talent
- deliver economic returns to the region
- foster a positive screen culture in the community
- support the next generation of storytellers to pursue careers in the screen industry.

The Queensland Government will work with the local community, industry and education and training partners to support local practitioners and boost professional capabilities, facilitate networks and connections across the screen industry

and complementary sectors. We will work with these key stakeholders to identify the unique direct and indirect creative, economic, tourism and community benefits that are possible through the screen industry.

The Plan is deliberately broad, in line with the breadth of the screen and creative industries, and recognises the need for a flexible approach to respond to the changing screen landscape in Far North Queensland and the international industry.

As the sector continues to grow and develop, the Queensland Government will ensure the strategy remains responsive to the future needs of the sector and the local community to harness the full potential of the screen industry in Far North Queensland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anastacia'.

**The Honourable
Anastacia Palaszczuk MP**
Premier of Queensland
and Minister for Trade

OUR VISION

Grow Far North Queensland's diverse screen ecosystem and cultivate the local industry to develop content for audiences from the unique perspective of the region and deliver a range of production across all platforms to create jobs and generate economic impact in the region.



INTRODUCTION

The screen industry is a key sector in the creative industries that is seeing exponential growth globally, dramatically outpacing other industries.

Queensland has significant opportunity to harness this growth, leveraging the state's well established, thriving screen industry.

In Australia, the digital creative industries are experiencing rates of growth twice that of the economy as a whole. The creative arts and entertainment industries also positively contribute to cultural identity and social cohesion.

The screen industry spans diverse storytelling pathways across film, broadcast, online content, games and innovative platforms including virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality. It supports substantial economic, employment and cultural activity with significant impacts at a global, national and state level.

Globally, the screen sector is estimated to be worth US\$653 billion and provide more than 6.5 million employment opportunities. Nationally, the screen industry's economic outputs are estimated to add \$3 billion and more than 25,000 jobs annually to the Australian economy.

At the state level in 2016–17, the Queensland screen industry was estimated to have contributed a total of \$981 million to the state's economy and employed more than 7100 people. Screen Queensland—a Queensland Government-owned company supporting the screen industry—invested in 67 productions across film, broadcast, online, innovative platforms and games between 2016 and 2018, supporting an estimated 4290 jobs and injecting up to \$347.5 million into the local economy.

The screen industry is clearly a significant contributor to the economic and cultural wellbeing of the state. To build on this contribution, it must respond and adapt to the global landscape, rapidly changing technology, shifting consumer preferences and emerging platforms, to open new opportunities and pathways to international markets and audiences everywhere.

The vision for Queensland to harness the opportunities of the screen sector are articulated in the *Advance Queensland Screen Industry 10-year Roadmap and Action Plan* (the Roadmap).

Screen Queensland invested in 67 productions between 2016 and 2018, supporting an estimated 4290 jobs and injecting up to \$347.5 million into the local economy.



The Straits

While this vision applies to the entire state, parts of regional Queensland experience unique screen industry opportunities and challenges in their communities.

Far North Queensland possesses the creative aptitude, talent, entrepreneurial culture, economic foundations, passion and community preparedness to maximise the opportunities of the screen industry and grow the local ecosystem. It has the potential to lead a regional screen industry development model unique within Queensland.

The three-year *Far North Queensland Screen Production Strategic Plan* is an action in the Roadmap and will allow the screen industry in this region to:

- strengthen and leverage community connections
- increase professional capability
- create local productions
- profile and celebrate existing creative talent
- deliver economic returns to the region
- foster a positive screen culture in the community
- support the next generation of storytellers to pursue careers in the screen industry.

To achieve these outcomes the Queensland Government will work with community, industry and the education and training sectors to:

- boost the capability of the Far North Queensland screen sector
- enhance local networks and connections across the screen industry and complementary sectors
- support existing local capability and seek new industry opportunities
- cultivate a positive screen culture.

This strategy is deliberately broad and the supporting actions are flexible. This allows an agile approach to respond to the changing screen landscape and ensure Far North Queensland can maximise the unique direct and indirect creative, economic, tourism and community benefits possible through the screen industry.

Karen Jones

Karen Jones of Kite Fish Film Pty Ltd (established in 1999) provides services sourcing, negotiating and managing locations for both film and television, with particular focus on the Far North Queensland region. Karen has worked with both international and domestic productions. Her credits as Location Manager include the recent Queensland film, *Celeste*, and other major productions including *Fools Gold* (USA), *The Pacific* (USA), *Unbroken* (USA), *The Mutiny* (UK), *Survivor* (US), *Get Me Out of Here – I'm a Celebrity* (UK), *The Code II*, *Blue Water Empire – the History of the Torres Straits* and the locally-produced TV series filmed in Cairns and the Torres Strait entitled *The Straits*.

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND SCREEN INDUSTRY

The region has a strong talent pool of artists working across diverse parts of the creative industries from writing through to the visual arts.

In 2011, the region recorded 2734 people employed in the arts and creative industries and experienced strong growth of 22 per cent in cultural and creative activity from 2006 to 2011. During the same period, Cairns, the largest city in Far North Queensland, demonstrated a 12 per cent increase in persons employed as artists, musicians, writers and performers, a 17 per cent rise in employment in professional photographic services, and the strongest growth in film and video production employment across northern Queensland.

In 2016, 112 people in the region worked in film and video production and exhibition. There was also a high level of screen activity reflected by the number of film permits issued by the Cairns Regional Council, more than doubling between 2015 and 2017, rising from 41 to 88. This activity directly employed crew and engaged with local businesses during production.

Far North Queensland, and in particular Cairns, is also a successful entrepreneurial and business hot-spot. Between 2014 and 2016, the region bucked the business trend as the mining boom subsided, and experienced a two per cent rise in micro businesses (employing between one to four people) and a four per cent rise

in small businesses (employing between five to 19 people), with particular suburbs in Cairns seeing a 20 per cent increase in micro businesses and a 58 per cent rise in small businesses.

Cairns also attracts lifestyle entrepreneurs including corporates or creative business owners, such as screen industry practitioners, who harness technology to start and grow their businesses, from their base in Far North Queensland.

The region has a positive entrepreneurial ecosystem and environment, burgeoning artistic hub and growing community of passionate screen practitioners with a drive and commitment to the screen industry. This creates the right economic and creative environment to catalyse and develop the screen sector to achieve sustainable growth, career pathways and employment opportunities.

Production and people snapshot

Far North Queensland has experienced periods of high-profile film and TV production activity in the last decade, with feature films and TV productions filming in the region including local talent working in key cast and crew roles. Screen Queensland has supported

24 screen projects since 2008 with more than \$5.5 million in film production and development investment in Far North Queensland. This is delivering an estimated \$73 million into the local economy, employing local cast and crew, showcasing the superb locations of the region and developing projects from local content creators.

Additionally, a range of independent productions from local content creators, funded from self-investment, crowd funding and other non-government sources, have been made entirely in Far North Queensland including low budget feature films, short films, webisodes and digital content and documentaries.

The Screen Queensland crew directory lists 25 crew in Far North Queensland across areas of expertise including directing, camera operating, editing and visual effects. The Screen Queensland locations app features 81 diverse locations in the region from tropical islands, rainforests, marinas, historical buildings, agricultural landscapes and more.



Elements—Lardil Earth
Murruwu Toby, painted as his totem, Thanbe the shovelnose shark dancing with two other Lardil young adults.



FNQ film and TV production activity

Feature films

- Great Barrier Reef 3D (2017)
- Celeste (2017)
- Fool's Gold (2008)

Broadcast

- BBC Great Railway Journeys – Queensland (2018)
- Spartan (2018)
- Wrong Kind of Black (2018)
- Iolo's – Great Barrier Reef Series (2018)
- Mutiny (UK) (2017)
- Can we save the Great Barrier Reef (2017)
- Straight out of the Straits web series (2017)
 - » Dinghy Gurls
 - » Yatha Pathayk: Coming of Age (2018)
- Boss Croc (2017)
- Wanted Series 1 (2016)
- Carry the Flag (2016)
- Wik vs Queensland (2016)
- Blue Water Empire (2016)
- Elements (2016)
- NITV Our Stories, Our Way (2016)
 - » Jemima to Jeremy
 - » Aeroplane Story and Bagu With Jiman
 - » Kustodians and Kustoms
 - » Stand Up
- David Attenborough's Great Barrier Reef (2015)
- Unnatural Selection (2015)
- Bushwhacked (2014)
- The Code Series 2 (2014)
- Operation Manhunter – Great White (2014)
- Life on the Reef (2013)
- Shark 360 (2013)
- Making Tracks Downunder (2013)
- Great Barrier Reef (2013)
- Reptile Battles (2011)
- Reef Doctors (2011)
- The Pacific (2010)
- The Straits (2010)
- Mabo (2010)
- Australia the Time Travellers Guide (2010)
- Sea Patrol Series 3,4,5 (2008–09)
- Chopper Rescue (2008)

Virtual Reality

- Untold Series SBS (2017)

STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Far North Queensland has unique strengths well suited to the screen industry that present key opportunities to leverage.

The region's screen industry is well positioned to build on its existing strengths and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Dynamic artistic community and unique stories

Far North Queensland has a burgeoning artistic and creative community across various mediums that showcase their talent through a network of landmark arts and cultural events and festivals including Cairns Festival, Port Douglas Port Shorts, Understory Film Festival, and the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair. Leveraging these artistic and cultural tourism events and accessing the vibrant arts community offers intersecting opportunities to celebrate screen culture with new audiences, cross-fertilise ideas between artists, and transfer skills across creative mediums.

The perspective and stories of regional storytellers reflects our diverse and unique culture to domestic and international audiences. Far North Queensland is also home to many Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a local population almost three times the state average and more than four times national figures.

There is also a high proportion of engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander screen industry practitioners in the region with 30 per cent of respondents in the 2017 screen industry survey identifying

as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Commitments from national broadcasters including the ABC, SBS, NITV, as well as Screen Queensland, to support the distinct storytelling voices of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, is a key opportunity for the region's Indigenous screen creatives. The storytelling done through the lens of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples provides rich screen content for audiences everywhere.

Skills, capability and convergence

There is a growing community of experienced and passionate filmmakers, with high-end equipment, and expertise with working in the tropics, that are a vital resource to productions in the region. Maintaining current industry skills and capability continues to be an essential foundation to ongoing growth in the screen industry. The next wave of talent is also coming through with enthusiastic emerging screen creatives supported by secondary, tertiary and vocational education and training in the region.

Encouraging training providers and new practitioners to develop capability in the digital story telling mediums, including animation, post-production and games, presents an opportunity to develop skills and a sector that can operate in any location. These skills also offer areas of convergence with education, health and wellbeing and taps into a global market to gamify content.

Far North Queensland has already shown an ability to meet global demand in underwater filming with one of the world's largest marine filming facilities based in Cairns. Run through a collaboration between natural history film company Biopixel, and James Cook University, this unique filming environment is utilised to capture animal behaviour for scientific and factual productions in a safe and ecologically friendly way.

This facility has been used by Biopixel to film for international clients including National Geographic, Animal Planet, Discovery Channel and the BBC. The Aquarium along with Biopixel's large-scale camera inventory of RED Helium and RED Dragon camera's, Phantom 4K Flex high speed, DJI Drones and Gates 2D and 3D housings, has enabled Biopixel to film high-end productions including Attenborough's *Great Barrier Reef* and the *Great Barrier Reef* 3D IMAX movie.

Community

There is a shared willingness among the councils of Far North Queensland, led by the five councils in the Screen Queensland Film Friendly Pathways program, to develop a screen industry in the region that is supported by strong connections and the sharing of expertise and knowledge to help all communities capitalise on the opportunities of the screen sector.



Locations, tourism and proximity

The diverse range of spectacular locations including pristine tropical beaches and islands, lush rainforest, agricultural landscapes, marinas and the Great Barrier Reef, offer dramatic backdrops for screen stories. This natural environment experiences good weather in winter and is bathed in superb natural light during this season.

These picturesque environments and natural wonders also attract tourists from around the world and have created a strong brand awareness of the region, particularly of Cairns and Port Douglas, with a diverse demographic of travellers from young backpackers through to mature domestic tourists. The region hosts more than two million visitors a year, accounting for almost one third of Queensland's international visitors.

Tourists are not only attracted to the natural locations of the region but also the culture and heritage, including the stories of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. More than half a million international tourists in 2015 stated this as the purpose of their stay.

This incorporates cultural tourism events and festivals such as the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair that attracted more than 280,000 visitors over the past decade and has generated more than \$6.8 million in arts sales. Stories and experiences of the

local environment as well as the region's culture and heritage clearly hold appeal for domestic and international visitors and audiences, presenting key screen industry opportunities to explore.

Our location within the Asia Pacific region is also a key attribute. The Cairns Airport is a world-class international airport with a regular schedule of flights that bring a global network of tourists to the region, particularly Chinese and Japanese visitors, who can choose from a vast array of accommodation options. These accommodation options are also important to service large-scale productions.

Jonathan M Shiff Productions

Jonathan M Shiff Productions is one of the world's leading producers of high-quality children's and family television, with their content sold to more than 170 territories worldwide.

Based in Port Douglas, their credits include *Ocean Girl*, *Pirate Islands*, the hit youth series *H2O—Just Add Water* and its spin-off franchise *Mako Mermaids*, *Reef Doctors*, *Lightning Point*, and recently *The Bureau of Magical Things*.

The company has been a significant contributor to the creative and commercial growth of the screen sector in Queensland and has trained several producers that have gone on to independent success. Screen Queensland has been a proud supporter of Jonathan M Shiff Productions, supporting many of its projects through development and production investment.

INDUSTRY CHALLENGES

Far North Queensland has key screen sector strengths however the region faces challenges that must be addressed to grow the sector and capitalise on emerging opportunities.

Access and competitiveness

Screen productions are constantly assessing their options for filming locations, considering risks, budget implications and incentives associated with the places they choose to film. A small number of scripts suitable for Far North Queensland, can also be shot at other locations in Australia and overseas that offer attractive production incentives to attract projects to their territories.

The Queensland Government provides incentives through the \$85.7 million Production Attraction Strategy, which has successfully lured a pipeline of large scale productions to the state.

The new Federal Location Offset Incentive provides an incentive uplift to 30 per cent. However, it is only able to sustain two to three productions throughout Australia per year due to its annual cap, adding further pressure to securing large-scale productions to the region.

Travelling to, and within, Far North Queensland can be a significant expense for productions when cast, crew and equipment need to be moved, adding financial pressure to productions. While there is crew and equipment in the region, larger-scale productions require a high number of experienced crew and specialised equipment that is currently not readily available in Far North Queensland adding transport costs for productions.

The wet season of the tropics is also a difficult time for productions to operate, as using film and TV equipment in this environment is challenging, and locations are often inaccessible. This is compounded by extreme heat that impacts the windows of time staff can work on location and intense sunlight makes filming difficult.

Stinger season during the summer months in Far North Queensland creates a safety concern for cast and crew filming in some water environments and can steer productions away for those scenes or, on occasions, steer productions away entirely if they are unable to alter their filming schedule. These factors further limit the possible windows of time productions can work in the region.

Networks and connections

Far North Queensland is geographically isolated from metropolitan areas where broadcasters and major screen business partners are located. There are limited opportunities for local screen practitioners to meet, network and build relationships with screen industry decision makers. The local screen community also has fewer opportunities to meet and connect with each other.

This can impact awareness of the skills and capability in the region and impede the flow of information on opportunities and initiatives available in the industry. This also impacts the understanding

Lone Star Company

Lone Star Company is a Cairns-based production company helmed by Aaron Fa'Aoso and Jimi Bani—two of Australia's most recognised Torres Strait Islander talents. Aaron is the creator-producer of ABC crime drama *The Straits* and is one of the producers and writers for the dramatised-documentary series, *Blue Water Empire*.

Jimi's other credits include *Black Comedy*, *Goldstone* and *Blue Water Empire*. Jimi has performed in leading roles on television series including *The Straits*, *Mabo* and *Redfern Now*.

Aaron is the creator of the hit theatre show, based on his family history and that of the Torres Strait Islands *My Name Is Jimi*. Lone Star Company has been supported by Screen Queensland to produce the landmark documentary series *Straight Out of the Straits* for ABC iView.



Elements – Lardil Earth

and access to complementary state and national funding programs that can also apply to the screen industry.

The sporadic nature of productions in the region creates a challenging environment to retain local creative and technical talent as screen practitioners often leave the community for work and career progression. Creating longstanding networks and motivation for skilled locals to return to the region is a challenge.

Productions are attracted to the region for the locations. Throughout the state, where sound stages are not available, productions use multipurpose warehouse spaces as temporary sound stages when required for wet weather cover or set build. Market demand and economies of scale obtained through a pipeline of productions, must be achieved in a region's screen sector before screen specific infrastructure is created by the market.

As such the priority steps are developing and promoting the region's existing screen capability and expertise, strengthening professional industry skills suited to major productions and creating local screen content that contributes significant cultural, development and economic impacts to the region now and build the foundations for future screen industry growth.

Production pipeline

Attracting larger scale productions to Far North Queensland will continue to be challenging and sporadic as many productions utilise visual effects to save on costs where once before they would have sought out specific physical locations.

However, investing in the production of local screen content presents greater potential for longer-term development and clear opportunities to tell Queensland specific stories that reflect the state's diversity. Committing to the ongoing creation of Far North Queensland content creates a more beneficial production pipeline that will help grow the local screen sector, continue to build industry skills and capability, and contribute to the cultural and economic strength of the region.

Creating longstanding networks and motivation for skilled locals to return to the region is a challenge for the community.

Beatrix Christian

Beatrix Christian is a critically-acclaimed screenwriter and playwright based in Oak Beach, near Port Douglas. She is best known for her work as writer on the recent Foxtel mini-series *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, adapted from the 1967 novel by Joan Lindsay.

Other significant credits include the feature film *Jindabyne*, directed by Ray Lawrence and based on a Raymond Carver short story and feature film *Hearts and Bones* starring Hugo Weaving.

Director Stephen Amezdroz (left) and cinematographer Richard Fitzpatrick filming on location in Far North Queensland



QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO DATE

The Queensland Government has invested in a range of initiatives and programs to support and grow the screen industry in the state as articulated in the Roadmap.

The following key actions have specific relevance to Far North Queensland and demonstrate government engagement to date.

Screen Queensland programs

Screen Queensland delivers numerous programs to support the Queensland screen industry with many directly impacting the Far North Queensland community and building career pathways for creatives and crew in the region.

Some of the key programs and outcomes for Far North Queensland include:

- Travel and Marketing Funding—supports Queensland producers and games developers to take their projects to key markets in Australia and internationally with a view to raising finance and securing commissions
 - » four practitioners have received support since 2015 in Far North Queensland with more than \$12,000 of funding in total.
- Screen Culture—builds a dynamic and vibrant screen culture in Queensland and celebrates the art of filmmaking, growing the screen industry and contributing to the economic and cultural wellbeing of Queensland
 - » *Port Shorts Film Festival*
 - » *Queensland Touring Film Festival*
 - » *Travelling Film Festival*
 - » *Understory*
 - » *Australian International Animation Festival*
 - » *Flickerfest—Travelling Film Fest*
 - » *Solid Screen*.
- SQ Attach—an attachment program to support early-career Queensland-based screen professionals to work on mid and large-scale productions
 - » since 2015 eight practitioners from Far North Queensland have been supported in this program with opportunities spanning major international feature films, global television productions and landmark documentaries.
- *Screen Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy 2016–19*—initiatives to advance the distinct storytelling voice of Indigenous Queenslanders
 - » from 2016–18 Screen Queensland allocated more than \$1.95 million for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander projects, talent and businesses of which more than \$305,000, or 19 per cent, of expended funds related to Far North Queensland.
- *Straight out of the Straits*—an Australian-first partnership launched in 2017 between Screen Queensland, Screen Australia and ABC iView, that provides opportunities for early-career writers, directors and producers to create authentic, character-driven Torres Strait Island stories for the screen, including *Dinghy Gurls* and *Yatha Pathayk: Coming of Age*.
- SQ Business Program—features initiatives to develop strong screen businesses and ensures production entities transform into thriving creative production companies through strong stories and good business understanding and partnerships
 - » Screen Business 101 Workshop was held in Cairns for producers in conjunction with Screen Producers Australia (2016).
- SQ Events and Workshops
 - » Directing Masterclass with Ivan Sen for Indigenous Filmmakers (2018)
 - » Screenworks, Screen Queensland Cairns Regional Council, Cairns Screen Industry Forum and Networking Event (2018)
 - » SQ Roadshow (2018 and 2015)
 - » Meet the Broadcaster event with ABC (2017)
 - » SQ Pathways to Filmmaking Panel (2015).



Advance Queensland

Since 2015, the \$755 million Advance Queensland initiative has been driving innovation and economic growth in Queensland through a range of programs and partnerships designed to build capability, foster collaboration, attract investment, stimulate jobs growth and encourage an entrepreneurial culture.

These programs have the potential to support and grow the Queensland screen industry by creating new opportunities for innovators, support industry divergence and strengthen regional capabilities.

Advance Queensland programs supporting Far North Queensland include:

- The Advancing Regional Innovation Program aims to turn our regions into hubs for innovation and enterprise. It will enable local entrepreneurs, business leaders and key industries to collaborate closely and with government to harness innovation and unlock business potential, strengthen existing industries and prepare regional Queenslanders for jobs of the future.
- The *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20* is creating an environment in which Queensland is the place for small business to start, grow and employ. This strategy focuses on stronger advocacy for small business,

simplified and coordinated service delivery, connecting small business to opportunity

- » Business Growth Fund—helping businesses purchase and implement highly specialised equipment or services through co-contribution grants up to \$50,000
- » Small Business Digital Grants Program—enabling small businesses to access the latest digital technologies through matched grant funding up to \$10,000
- » Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program—helping newly started businesses to access professional advice and support with up to \$5000 in matched funding
- » Advancing Women in Business—initiative that recognises the valuable contribution women in business make to Queensland’s economy by providing supporting programs and encouraging more women to start and grow their own business
- » Advancing Indigenous Business—initiative delivering targeted support for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are business owners and operators, enabling them to unlock their full potential to start and grow their own business.

Tourism and Events

TOURISM

The Queensland Government supports the development and promotion of tourism and events in the Tropical North Queensland region, working in partnership with the regional tourism organisation (RTO), Tourism Tropical North Queensland and industry to enhance the region’s profile as a tourism and events destination with the aim to increase visitation and expenditure in the region.

Total overnight visitor expenditure for Tropical North Queensland has grown to \$3.5 billion with more than 2.9 million visitors to the region. Further development of the screen industry in Far North Queensland has the potential to contribute towards increasing visitation and growing tourism across the region.

EVENTS

The Queensland Government through Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) manages and promotes an annual world-class Calendar of Events for Queensland that is promoted via the ‘It’s Live! in Queensland’ campaign. The 2018 Queensland Events Calendar was estimated to generate \$780 million in economic benefit across Queensland—up from \$380 million in 2015.



The table below provides a list of events in the Tropical North Queensland region occurring between now and the end of 2019 that have received confirmed investment from TEQ. While not an exhaustive list of all events occurring in the region, these provide potential collaboration points between the screen industry and tourism and events industry.

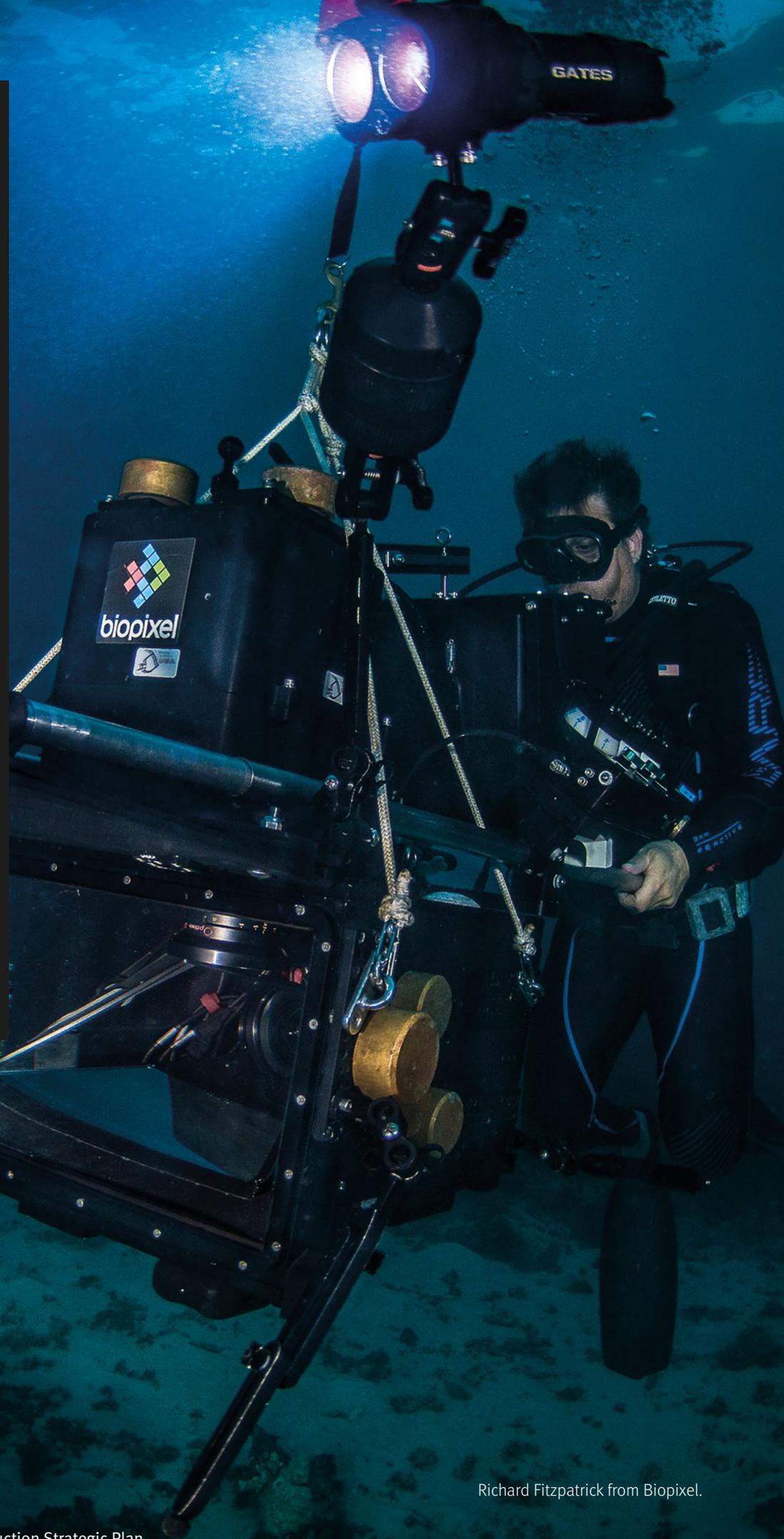
Event Name	Location
Crocodile Trophy (mountain biking race)	Cairns
Tastes of the Tablelands	Port Douglas
Tropical Journeys Great Barrier Reef Marathon Festival	Port Douglas
Yarrabah Band Festival	Yarrabah
Amway China 2019 Leadership Seminar	Cairns
Great Barrier Reef Masters Games	Cairns
IRF 2019 World Rafting Championships	Tully River
Croc Nash Hash	Port Douglas Sporting Grounds
Cairns Airport IRONMAN Asia-Pacific Championship and IRONMAN 70.3 Cairns	Cairns
Cairns Indigenous Art Fair	Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal
Targa Great Barrier Reef	Cairns
The Gulf Country Frontier Days Festival	Gulf Country, North West Queensland

Biopixel

Biopixel is an Emmy Award winning multimedia production company based in Far North Queensland and was founded in 2013 by specialist underwater cinematographer Richard Fitzpatrick and IT entrepreneur Bevan Slattery.

Working out of James Cook University in Cairns, Biopixel co-manage one of the largest marine filming facilities at the university and offer extensive on location filming capability in the region with state-of-the-art camera equipment. They are one of Australia's leading production service providers for natural history and behavioural sequences with a particular focus on aquatic life.

They have the largest stock library of the Indo-Pacific reef life in the world and have worked with National Geographic, Discovery Channel, Channel 9, NHK, Animal Planet and the BBC. In 2018 the company launched the 3D IMAX film showcasing the Great Barrier Reef at San Diego in America with further screenings across the country with support from December Media, Slattery Family Trust, Soundfirm, Film Victoria and Screen Queensland.



Richard Fitzpatrick from Biopixel.

FUTURE ACTIONS

Four key strategies will support further growth of the screen industry in Far North Queensland.

1. Boost the capability of the Far North Queensland screen sector

Maintaining relevant industry skills, professional capability and building meaningful career pathways is a key priority for the Far North Queensland screen community.

Actions in this strategy target greater support for emerging practitioners to develop strong foundational skills, while providing established practitioners with opportunities to solidify their expertise, elevate their profile and grow their portfolio.

These actions will also contribute to increasing screen industry employment and career development opportunities for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people of all ages and all abilities.

Equipping practitioners with the relevant creative, digital and technical skills needed to thrive in the industry is fundamental to these actions. Collaborating across industry, education and the community is also essential to provide holistic and sustainable development opportunities that create employment opportunities in the screen industry.

Actions:

- Deliver professional development workshops and masterclasses in partnership with community, industry, education and local expertise in key areas such as story development, pitching, producing, directing, screenwriting and editing. Specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workshops will also be delivered.
- Leverage the Mentoring for Growth program to provide advice and support to screen industry practitioners in the region, with a specific focus on experts in the region helping those in their community develop and grow.
- Deliver attachment opportunities on large-scale productions to upskill regional practitioners.
- Deliver the Youth Employment Program, delivered by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, will support any candidate who expresses a career interest in the screen industry and support those aspirations on an individual basis regarding possible careers and pathways into the industry.
- Pilot a 'creating and sharing stories' initiative in partnership with industry, education and the local council, in a remote community sharing screen stories from leading Queensland Indigenous screen practitioners and teaching young people how to create screen content on mobile devices.
- Create innovative online micro-film projects with new and emerging filmmakers with hands-on support from experienced practitioners. Specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content will also be delivered.
- Deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs with bespoke support to help create content for the region's unique stories.
- Consult with Department of Employment, Small Business and Training through Screen Queensland to identify qualifications or skill sets to support priority training needs that could be subsidised through the Annual VET Investment Plan. This includes all aspects of screen such as production, digital and visual effects, gaming, app development and augmented reality.



2. Enhance local networks and connections across the screen industry and complementary sectors

Strong networks and relationships are key ingredients to success in any industry and even more so in the screen sector due to the competitiveness of the sector.

The cost of productions, expertise required to create content and access to industry decision makers are all critical factors heavily influenced by connections and networks. Igniting local collaborations, highlighting existing skills and capability, and providing access to industry leaders will make a significant impact on the growth and success of the Far North Queensland screen industry.

Leveraging existing support programs in complementary sectors, diversifying and transferring skills, cross fertilising ideas and collaborating across disciplines, will also help drive creative and innovative approaches to meet the challenges of the Far North Queensland screen industry and ignite growth and development of the local sector and its practitioners.

Actions:

- Launch networking events for the local screen community including a guest speaker series with leading industry creatives.
- Support the creation of livestream hubs to connect with industry events across Australia.
- Launch 'meet the broadcaster/distributor' events in the region to help connect local screen practitioners with key industry decision makers, and to form a better understanding of the market opportunities and expectations.
- Build greater awareness of and access to complementary Advance Queensland grants and support with potential for screen businesses including:
 - » profiling screen industry recipients of Ignite Ideas funding
 - » business skills development through programs in the Advancing Small Business Strategy
 - » entrepreneurial networks and acumen through the Advancing Regional Innovation Program.
- Ensure Screen Queensland are in the region on a regular basis at key Far North Queensland hubs to meet with local practitioners and conduct talent spotting to find and foster the storytellers and stories.
- Work with Far North Queensland regional councils to leverage existing arts programs and funding to support screen practitioners access professional development opportunities e.g. Regional Arts Development Fund.
- Connect the local screen industry with the arts, cultural and creative sector through the Regional Arts Services Network and the Centre of Contemporary Arts Cairns.
- Encourage local Far North Queensland community groups to include screen industry businesses and practitioners in Queensland Small Business Week activities in the region to showcase the employment and economic benefits of the sector.



3. Support existing local capability and seek new industry opportunities

Far North Queensland has existing industry experience and local capabilities that can meet the needs of screen productions.

Leveraging and enhancing the profile of these capabilities, including crew and locations, is important to delivering productions in the region.

It is also essential to recognise new and emerging global screen industry trends and technologies with potential economic and employment opportunities for the region. This is particularly relevant in post-production, visual effects and the games sectors. There is increasing demand in these industries that is well suited to the growing community of lifestyle entrepreneurs and creative business owners in the region, who are harnessing technology to start and grow businesses that can work on projects in any location, from a Far North Queensland base.

Actions:

- Share expertise across film friendly councils in the region to assist other areas to best profile their regions and locations to prospective productions and engage with the Film Friendly Pathways Program.
- Investigate options for production facilities in Far North Queensland and assess the need for temporary and permanent infrastructure.
- Increase registrations on the Screen Queensland crew directory for suitably qualified and credited crew in Far North Queensland.
- Investigate options for Far North Queensland crew information on the Screen Queensland app and crew directory, to be available for local councils to use on their respective websites.
- Deliver a range of productions to the region in partnership with local regional councils, that employ Far North Queensland crew, and continue to solidify and grow skills and capability in the local industry.
- Build local industry, community and education sector awareness of the opportunities in emerging technology including games, VR, animation, post, digital and visual (PDV) effects and their potential for the region.

The Port Shorts Film Festival

The Port Shorts Film Festival held in Port Douglas was founded in 2016 and was developed to showcase Port Douglas as a premier location for filmmaking and provide a pathway for participants to further their careers and skills within the film industry.

The festival hosts a filmmaker forum and conducts workshops with industry experts to continue the skills development for the local Far North Queensland industry. The festival is aimed towards young filmmakers and local filmmakers and showcases the best shorts from across Australia.

Matt Hearn (Producer, *Wolf Creek* and *Rogue*), Stephen Curry (Actor and Producer) and Kier Shoery (*Blurred*) serve as ambassadors for the festival along with Festival Director, Alison George. The festival is supported by the Douglas Shire, Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and has grown each year out along with the festival.

Oversight of the Plan's implementation will be provided by the establishment of a Queensland Government screen industry inter-departmental steering committee.

4. Cultivate a positive screen culture

Leveraging existing arts and cultural tourism events in Far North Queensland offers intersecting opportunities to celebrate storytelling and screen culture with new audiences, cross fertilise ideas between artists, transfer skills across creative mediums and foster a dynamic and vibrant arts community.

These positive screen culture events will also create platforms to showcase and learn from high-end screen productions, and celebrate content created by Far North Queensland's diverse local practitioners, across different platforms and genres, that contributes to the economic, employment and cultural well-being of the local community.

Actions:

- Leverage existing arts and cultural events to include screen culture content.
- Grow positive screen culture experiences by supporting the development of greater connections with successful Queensland film festivals to expand the Far North Queensland film festival presence.
- Promote awareness through screenings of significant productions in the region to promote awareness of high-end screen content, bring the local screen community together and learn from experts in the creative team.
- Investigate further opportunities to enhance and promote entertainment-motivated tourism through ongoing liaison and participation from Tourism and Events Queensland and the Department of Innovation and Tourism Industry Development.



Sea Patrol crew shooting the cast
landing on a Great Barrier Reef island

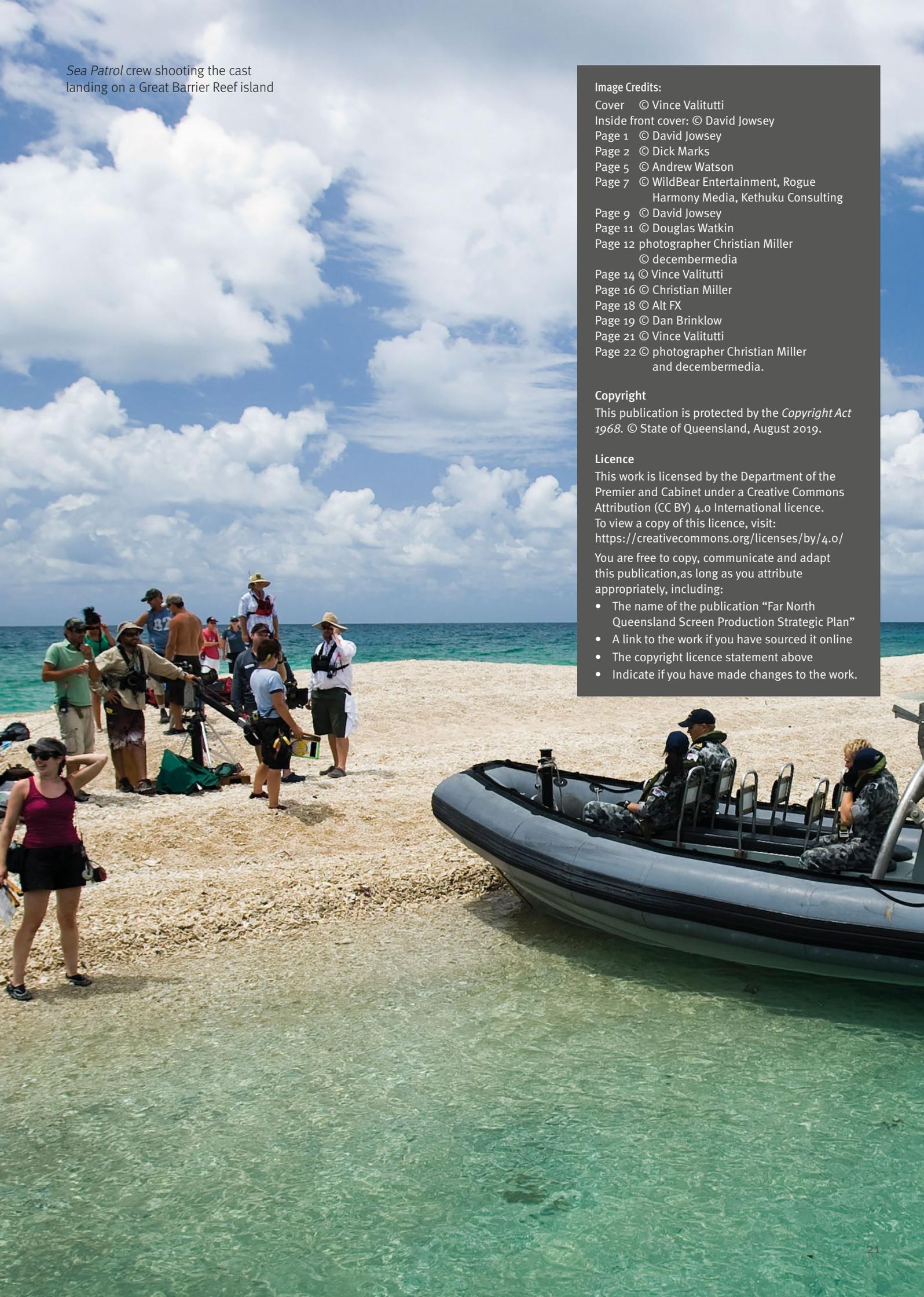


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*Great Barrier Reef 3D crew filming
on the beach in northern Queensland*