

Projects

Business Case and financial assessment of a multi-day walking trail

NineSquared developed the business case and financial analysis for a guided tour on the Thorsborne Trail on Hinchinbrook Island



LOCATION

North Queensland

CLIENT

Queensland Parks and Wildlife

FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL

Background

The Queensland Government's *Ecotourism Plan for Queensland's Protected Areas 2023–2028* set out a strategic vision for sustainable tourism across the state's protected areas. One of its six key priority areas focuses on partnering with First Nations peoples to deliver culturally appropriate tourism experiences that reflect Traditional Owners' values and aspirations.

In line with this vision, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) worked with a Traditional Owner group to explore opportunities for a low-impact, guided walking experience along a remote multi-day trail in north Queensland. The proposed tour would feature Aboriginal cultural interpretation, small group guided walks, and overnight stays in tents pitched at existing campgrounds, with no permanent built infrastructure. Over time, the Traditional Owners aimed to fully own and operate the tourism product as capacity and skills developed within the community.

Our role

NineSquared was engaged by QPWS to develop a business case for the commercial feasibility of the guided tour and to support ongoing engagement with the Traditional Owners.

NineSquared facilitated a workshop with members of the Traditional Owner Working Group to shape the potential product offering and understand aspirations for long-term ownership. The workshop provided an opportunity to identify key elements of the proposed experience, including cultural storytelling, operational models, and future pathways for Traditional Owner-led delivery.

To support the business case, a breakeven financial analysis, informed by the Traditional Owners' aspirations and operational realities was developed. The analysis found that the tour could be commercially viable, supporting both Traditional Owner employment and skills development. The

business case also identified key considerations for implementation and potential benefits for regional tourism.

The business case formed the basis of a public expression of interest (EOI) process to identify commercial operators who would partner the Traditional Owners to deliver the guided tour. The summary findings were shared publicly to encourage market participation.

Following the evaluation of bids, NineSquared facilitated a second workshop with Traditional Owners to support and inform the negotiation with the preferred commercial operator, helping to provide support to ensure the partnership reflected the values and aspirations of the Traditional Owners.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, find one of our experts at ninesquared.com.au/people