



Media release

CONVOY SET TO TAKE OFF

Thursday February 13, 2020

Advance Cairns today releases final details of the region's biggest advocacy initiative for 2020 – next week's Cairns TNQ Convoy to Capital Q.

The two-day convoy to Parliament House in Brisbane includes the following highlights:

- More than 70 separate meetings
- Direct engagement with 39 MPs in total, including the most senior members of Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet as well as Katter's Australian Party
- 11 catalytic investment priorities (worth \$1.2bn)
- 13 vital policy reform recommendations
- 51 delegates across 12 industries

Advance Cairns executive chairman Nick Trompf said the *State Election Priorities* list had been developed over the past 12 months as an integrated plan to leverage growth across the broader economy for long-term regional sustainability.

"We know the constraints and drivers for our region's economy and the specific investments and policy changes that will allow us to unlock flourishing and diverse economic growth into the future," Mr Trompf said.

"Our plan features an intrinsically-linked series of initiatives across water security, roads, health services, marine maintenance, education and more. Central to revitalising the economy is State support to nurture industry investment and innovation in the region's biggest export industries in tourism, agriculture and education."

The CQUniversity Asia-Pacific Aviation Hub, the site of today's announcements, is an example of that type of investment and innovation.

CQUniversity Associate Vice Chancellor Jodie Duignan-George said CQU had funded the \$5m first stage and the Convoy was now seeking State investment of \$10m in stage 2.

"We already have a new generation of degree-qualified pilots in our pipeline, with little upfront cost to the student," she said.



“However, there are other significant career opportunities within the aviation sector that CQU would like to explore and the \$10 million would see two new programs developed – airport management and air worthiness – complete with research labs. These courses will really build capability to expand aviation services in the region.”

The Convoy is also seeking \$35m towards establishing Queensland's first University High School here in Cairns and \$50m for a new CBD campus for CQUniversity.

“The region's attainment of a bachelor degree or above is 54% lower than the national average. We still see many students leave the region to study, many of whom never return,” Ms George said.

“One way to stem this brain drain is to ensure that our region's universities have a comprehensive range of programs that students are interested in studying.”

International education has been highlighted as a key growth opportunity for the region.

Study Cairns president Janine Bowmaker said: “Aside from the economic benefit, international students play an integral part in addressing skill gaps we have in the region.

“Students are usually bilingual, have intercultural experience and understanding and are often happy to work in areas that other locals choose not to. International graduates have developed further skills alongside their international experiences that can assist to enhance our current professional industries.”

The Convoy, led by Advance Cairns, Tourism Tropical North Queensland and the Cairns Chamber of Commerce, is in Brisbane next Tuesday and Wednesday, February 18 and 19.

The 12 teams represented include agriculture; arts, culture & sport; defence & marine; education & training; energy; health; housing & construction; Great Barrier Reef; SMEs; tourism & aviation and water security.

-Ends-

For further media comment:

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Backgrounders:

- [State Election Priorities](#)
- [Full list of MP meetings](#)

