## Document Control

### General Details

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| Author(s):   | Chris Inness and Claire Dobbins (Thinc)  
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1.0. Executive Summary

Tourism has been recognised by the State Government as a priority for the economic success of Queensland. The State Government has recently signed a Partnership Agreement with Tourism Queensland to deliver the DestinationQ strategy.

Townsville Enterprise is the official Regional Tourism Organisation for North Queensland covering Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Charters Towers Regional Council, Burdekin Shire Council, and Townsville City Council. The area covered by Townsville Enterprise forms a fundamental part of the ‘The Tropics & the Great Barrier Reef’ region as defined by Tourism Queensland.

Tourism Queensland and Townsville Enterprise released the Destination Tourism Strategy 2012-2016 for the Townsville North Queensland Region in 2012. The vision outlined in the Destination Tourism Strategy for the Townsville North Queensland Region is:

Recognised as the proud, vibrant and thriving economic heart of North Queensland, the Townsville region is renowned for delivering enriching, entertaining and engaging visitor experiences year round.

The Destination Tourism Strategy highlights that the region is uniquely placed to be a centre for excellence for education, nature based and cultural tourism. Magnetic Island, as one of the key parts of the region, is able to deliver this experience through its diverse natural environment, rich indigenous and military history, as well as the wealth of educational and research activity.

Magnetic Island was also identified as a Sustainable Tourism Destination in the Destination Tourism Strategy and the Townsville North Queensland Tourism Opportunity Plan 2009-2019. There has been a substantial amount of work on this front undertaken by the Townsville Queensland Solar Cities project that has significantly changed the power consumption on Magnetic Island and provided a unique educational experience.

A key action of the Destination Tourism Strategy was that Townsville Enterprise commenced work on the Magnetic Island Walking Trails Signage Network Plan. This Plan follows a Physical Audit of the Signage on Magnetic Island and Consultation with the Community and Business. An overview of the Physical and Signage Walking Network on Magnetic Island has been provided, resulting in the identification of five key priority projects to significantly improve the visitor experience on Magnetic Island.
2.0. Magnetic Island

2.1. Overview

Magnetic Island, or Yunbenun as it is known by the Traditional Owners, is located 8 km north-east, or a 25 min ferry ride, from Townsville. Falling within the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area it is a key destination for local, domestic and international tourists in the Townsville North Queensland Region.

Seventy percent of Magnetic Island is National Park that is edged by 23 pristine bays with soft sandy beaches, which are nestled between rocky granite headlands. There are snorkel trails to take advantage of the coral reefs, shipwrecks, and marine environment. While the walking trails take you on an adventure with local wildlife through their natural habitat of hoop pine forests, grasslands, and eucalyptus woodlands.
2.2. Market Differentiators

Koalas

Koalas were listed as ‘vulnerable’ in Queensland by the Commonwealth Government in 2012 with concerns about the decrease in the national population. Koalas, as an iconic part of Australian fauna, are a priority for both national and international travellers, however, the experience is often limited to koalas in captivity.

Magnetic Island is well known for having a significant population of wild koalas. Until recently the size of the population on Magnetic Island had not been documented, however, a recent study by James Cook University found that there is a baseline population of around 825 koalas.

The size of Magnetic Island means that the density of koalas on Magnetic Island provides tourists the opportunity to see koalas in the wild. The Forts walk is frequently taken by tourists looking to sight koalas during their stay.

Shipwrecks and Marine

Magnetic Island is one of few islands on the Great Barrier Reef with permanent residents and a short commute to the mainland. The diversity in the flora, fauna and marine environment on Magnetic Island has been the focus of numerous honours, masters and doctoral research projects. The discoveries on Magnetic Island have been instrumental in the understanding of the scientific community on marine environments.

On the west of Magnetic Island there are mangroves and mudflats, while the north and east faces of Magnetic Island are host to idyllic beaches, unique reefs, and intriguing seagrass beds. With shipwrecks scattered around Magnetic Island and snorkel trails, visitors often take advantage of being able to see marine animals and plants.
Indigenous Heritage

There is important and interesting Indigenous history that would enhance the cultural experience on Magnetic Island, however consultation with the Wulgurukaba Elders (the ‘canoe people’) is essential before their history is published to the general public. There are a number of Aboriginal burial sites and middens, as well as cave drawings in a number of bays.

There is an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) on Magnetic Island with the Wulgurukaba people and in 2012, they had native title rights recognised over a 6 ha parcel on Magnetic Island. The Wulgurukaba Yunbenun Aboriginal Corporation has also been granted trusteeship of a further 55ha under the Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGiT).

Military History

Townsville is one of few regional cities to host two operational military bases, RAAF Townsville and Lavarack Barracks, which is the largest army bases in Australia. The North Queensland Region has a depth of military history and Magnetic Island is uniquely placed to educate people on the events of World War II with the best preserved and most accessible fortifications on an island in Queensland.

During World War II the Townsville Region hosted over 50,000 American and Australian Troops. Magnetic Island played a key part in the defensive strategy and recuperation of service men and women during this period.

Constructed in 1942 to 1943 to overlook Cleveland Bay, Magnetic Island has a Range Finder, Command Post, Observation Post, two Gun Emplacements an Ammunition Store, and remnants of permanent living quarters that were used during World War II. These facilities form part of the Forts walk and are maintained by Queensland Parks and Wildlife. The Forts ruins are protected under the Queensland Heritage Act 1992.
Townsville Solar Cities – Magnetic Island Solar Suburb

The iconic Townsville Queensland Solar City project showcases the future of sustainable living in Australia – with a ‘Solar Suburb’ on Magnetic Island central to its success. In its final term, after four years of significant engagement, the project is delivering game-changing results.

Importantly, it has achieved a key goal – to provide a replicable model of how solar energy and energy efficiency can deliver environmental and economic benefits. This re-usable energy behaviour change model includes hosting solar arrays for community rather than personal benefit.

The project has captured public imagination, enlisted local support and changed customer behaviour in an entire community to deliver a formidable assault on traditional models. To date the project has achieved an 80% participation rate with homes and businesses and saved electricity consumers over $925,000 when compared to business as usual.

A part of the Australian Government’s Solar Cities program, Ergon Energy leads the Townsville-based Solar City consortium, which also includes Townsville City Council, local developers and funding from the Queensland Government. The consortium working in partnership with the Magnetic Island community, is a prime example of government, business and community working together to achieve better social and environmental outcomes.

Part of the project was the adaptive reuse of the former Horseshoe Bay Sport and Recreation Club into the Smart Lifestyle Centre. The Smart Lifestyle Centre has been an information and interpretive centre that educates visitors on home and business energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Community actions have brought about a dramatic change in consumer behaviour with direct environmental benefits including:

- GHG emissions reduced by 54,000 tonnes so far, which exceeded the target of 50,000 tonnes.
- 40% reduction electricity consumption, which equates to a return to 2005 electricity consumption levels and exceeding the target reduction of 25%
- 46% reduction in Peak Demand from business as usual.
- Over one megawatt of solar generation installed by the project, including 100kW solar skate park and 345kW on Townsville RSL stadium.
- Hosted PV panels supply 6% of island electricity needs via distributed local renewable generation.
- Deferred $17M underwater supply cable eight years.
- Development of replicable and proven energy behaviour change model.
2.3. Public Consultation

Magnetic Island Visitor Walking Trail Survey (October 2012)

Research was undertaken in 2012 by Thinc on behalf of Townsville Enterprise to better understand the utilisation of the walking trails on Magnetic Island and the opinion of tourists and locals of the directional and interpretive signage.

The results of the survey identified that:

- 51% had taken one or more of the walking trails.
  - 65%, of those that had not used one of the walking trails, stated that their reason was either they were not aware of or could not locate the walking trails.

- The most popular walking trails were:
  - W5 – The Forts Walk (37%)
  - W1 – Hawkins Point (31%)
  - W2 – Picnic Bay to West Point (29%)
  - W3 – Nelly Bay to Arcadia (29%)

- Only 29% thought that Magnetic Island had enough signage to navigate the Island, with the most frequent comment being that it was too difficult to locate the start of the walking trails.

- Though 68% agreed that signs were not obstructed, 58% stated that the signs were not aesthetically pleasing with the comments consistently identifying that some signs were too faded to read the content.

- 75% of respondents stated that interpretive signage would have improved their experience on Magnetic Island.

Some of the comments from respondents were:

- Where there are rocks the path can be unclear.
- I think a signage display at the beginning of the track displaying what you will see on the track would be good. Eg. On this track you may see this kind of wildlife or plant. Just to make the experience better.
- More signage along the Forts Walk.
- All tracks need to have an info board at the start. Need to specify time to do, best time to do the walk, fauna and flora and grade of the walk. Info board needs to be placed in the very front of the walk not to the side.
- From an informative experience poor direction average.
Magnetic Island Visitor Survey 2011-12

Research was undertaken in 2011 by the School of Business at James Cook University and was funded by Townsville City Council and SeaLink QLD. The Magnetic Island Visitor Survey sought to provide information for tourism planning and development based on the Townsville North Queensland Tourism Opportunity Plan identifying Magnetic Island as a sustainable destination as being one of the catalyst projects. The research looked at four sustainable tourism products that were:

- Environmentally Friendly Camping Facilities.
- Guided Indigenous Cultural Tours.
- Self-Guided Electric Bike Tours.
- Art / Cultural Precinct.

The Magnetic Island Visitor Survey identified the following:

- 61.5% are repeat visitors.
- 80% of tourists are from Queensland.
- 32% of visitors were aware of the Solar Cities Initiative.
- Over 60% of were supportive that it is important to further develop Sustainable Initiatives.
- Over 40% of visitors are supportive of Magnetic Island becoming carbon neutral.

The top three reasons for visiting were:

- somewhere to relax.
- spending time in natural environments.
- seeing wildlife.

The top three forms of transport used or intended to be used by visitors.

- Walking
- Buses
- Personal Vehicles

Guided Indigenous Cultural Tours and Self-Guided Electric Bike Tours were identified as having the greatest overall appeal as well as having the greatest likelihood of encouraging a longer stay and making Magnetic Island more attractive to visit.

3.0. Walking Trail Network – *Physical*

3.1. Overview

The research has found that the three most common forms of transport on Magnetic Island are buses, vehicles and walking. Understanding these three primary forms of transport, Dot Dash produced a network plan to understand the primary movements of people on Magnetic Island. In discussions with Stakeholders various nodes of activity, walking trails and connectors were identified.

**Nodes**

Nodes are locations on Magnetic Island where a destination that provides a range of activities to engage in and multiple options in direction (and the mode) of travel.

There are six nodes that have been identified on Magnetic Island running along a single transport spine, the nodes are:

- West Point
- Picnic Bay
- Nelly Bay
- Arcadia
- Forts Junction
- Horseshoe Bay

**Walking Trails**

There are eight Walking Trails on Magnetic Island that are maintained by Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and Townsville City Council. These Walking Trails are:

- W1 – Hawkins Point
- W2 – Picnic Bay to West Point
- W3 – Nelly Bay to Arcadia
- W4 – Arcadia to Horseshoe Bay Road
- W5 – The Forts Walk
- W6 – Arthur, Florence and Radical Bay
- W7 – Horseshoe Bay to Balding and Radical Bay
- W8 – Horseshoe Bay Lagoon
3.2. Areas of Action

Maps and Guides

Having undertaken a physical audit of the signage, research into the available marketing collateral, and consultation with stakeholders, one of the critical elements that was repeatedly identified as requiring attention was the inaccuracy of maps and guides for Magnetic Island.

The two leading guides for Magnetic Island are produced by SeaLink and Island Impressions. These guides are largely up-to-date with some minor corrections required to the available walking trails when they are reproduced in the coming six months. There are, however, other maps and guides that are available, which do not accurately reflect the walking trails, and as a result create a negative experience for visitors to Magnetic Island.

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service regularly update on their website the map for the Magnetic Island National Park. This map shows the available walking trails within the National Park. Businesses and groups producing maps should refer to and discuss with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service the open and available walking trails within the National Park.

Common errors include:

- identifying walking trails that due to safety reasons are no longer open.
- incorrectly showing the location of lookouts and intersections on walking trails.

Rangers and residents often encounter lost or disoriented visitors who intended to use the walking trails on Magnetic Island.

Naming of Walking Trails

In addition, in an effort to clarify the walking network consideration should be given to naming various walking trails. Naming walking trails may be based on Indigenous, military, or European heritage and would provide a unique identifier to each of the walking trails.

Pedestrian Safety

Townsville City Council, with the support of Federal Government, over the last 15 years has continued to improve safety for pedestrians on Magnetic Island. The most recent project is the construction of an elevated walkway from Bright Point to Arcadia that is anticipated to be completed in late 2012. However, Townsville City Council needs the continued support of Federal and State Government to improve accessibility and safety on Magnetic Island.

Areas of concern include locations between Nelly Bay and Picnic Bay as well as around Arcadia, which require pedestrians to walk on the road due to rock formations or slopes.

The Forts Junction, as one of the nodes, is a key centre of activity that has a significant amount of pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Bus stops on both sides of Horseshoe Bay Road are well utilised and the car park, during peak season, often results in drivers parking in undesignated areas or obstruct other vehicles. The volume of traffic (both pedestrian and vehicular), vehicle movements, and line of sight issues should be considered in any future modifications to the road and car park. There is the potential for the Forts Junction to be developed to improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians as well as incorporating an interpretive centre and amenities.
4.0. Walking Trail Network – Signage

4.1. Existing Signage

A physical audit of the signage on Magnetic Island identified the signage hierarchy, branding elements, condition, and content of the existing signage.

**Signage Hierarchy**

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service have a structured signage hierarchy with the following five categories:

- Orientation Signs
- Interpretive Signs
- Management Signs
- Legislative Signs
- Safety Signs

Townsville City Council does not dictate a specific signage hierarchy, however they have a comparable stock of signage that relate to these five headings.

During the physical audit it was identified that there was a lack of pedestrian orientation signage on Magnetic Island. This signage issue is indicative of the public consultation undertaken in 2012 that identified that visitors found it difficult to navigate and find directions to various locations.

**Branding Elements**

The research identified that in 2002 to 2004 Townsville Enterprise along with Townsville City Council, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Magnetic Island community prepared a *Visual Identity Manual* for Magnetic Island. A fundamental part of this document was a graphic element that was to be shared between business, community, Townsville City Council, and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The graphic element emphasised the island’s natural environment and is consistently seen on signage across Magnetic Island, predominantly in the horizontal mono-colour format.

The graphic element has been retained in Townsville City Council’s Graphic Standards Manual as a precinct logo, and though it does not form part of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Signage Manual it has been used on Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service signage. Both Townsville City Council and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service are supportive of continuing to use this graphic element where appropriate on signage, which has been identified as being the orientation and interpretive signs.
Condition

There have been three categories of signs that have been identified on the basis of their condition, which are:

- Category 1 – Retain
  - Signs appear to be maintained and in a good condition.

- Category 2 – Repair
  - Signs that require a coat of paint or are able to be repaired without replacing parts.

- Category 3 – Replacement
  - Signs where the sign plate has been removed, faded beyond a readable standard, or damaged beyond repair.

The Physical Audit Report found that the majority of signage on Magnetic Island was in Category 1 with the majority of signs in Category 2 appearing to be due for a new coat of paint as part of Townsville City Council and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service maintenance programs.

There were very few signs identified in the physical audit that require immediate replacement, Category 3. However, the signage on The Forts Walk had been removed and in consultation with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service it was identified that these signs would have fallen into Category 3. Consideration should be given to aesthetic and placement of signs on Magnetic Island to avoid obstructing photographs, vistas and to provide an enjoyable experience.

The interpretive signs constructed in 2004 are the main package of signs that are nearing the end of their lifespan, which was ten years. The condition of these signs vary based on their location, however it is anticipated that these signs will need to be replaced by 2014.
4.2. Areas for Action

**Magnetic Island Walking Network (Orientation Signage)**

There is over 34 km of walking network on Magnetic Island stretching from Horseshoe Bay to West Point. Currently there is limited signage to assist people in navigating Magnetic Island and as indicated in public consultation visitors found it hard to find the start of walking trails.

*I think I would have found it hard to navigate without a guide.*

*There were a lot of rocky areas without much signage*

In order to improve visitor experience on Magnetic Island there is an urgent need for funding to support Townsville Enterprise, Townsville City Council, and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to have a collaborative and coordinated effort in planning, design and constructing signage on Magnetic Island to direct visitors around Magnetic Island.

This project is recommended to be undertaken in two stages to achieve better value for money:

- **Stage 1 – Planning and Design** (Estimated Cost $35,000)
  - Establish a working group for the orientation signage.
  - Survey users on how they use and access the walking trail.
  - Undertake a detailed signage study identifying the signage types and location of each sign.
  - Prepare and design the content (including maps for each suburb and Magnetic Island) for signs forming the signage package.
- **Stage 2 – Production and Construction** (Estimated Cost $225,000)
  - Production, construction and installation of new signage plates and structures.

The cost of Stage 2 is variable without a specific scope, however it is anticipated that there would be three Sign Types:

- **Totem signage** to confirm the direction of travel and distance remaining. (Anticipated Qty 25)
- **Directional signage** to identify the path and distance to a location(s). (Anticipated Qty 35)
- **Informational signage** to identify the current location, the surroundings, and paths of travel. (Anticipated Qty 30)

These signage types would need to conform to the appropriate standards and manuals from Townsville City Council, and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

Signs below are examples; the actual form and colour may vary.
The majority of signage on the Forts Walk was taken down in 2012 due to the signs no longer being legible. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service are supportive of a project to develop a Signage Plan to replace the signage on the Forts Walk.

The expected cost of installing signage on the Forts Walk is largely reduced as the existing structural footings and posts remain. There are fifteen existing signage posts for interpretive signage and it is anticipated that these should all be able to be reused. There is a number of orientation signs on the Forts Walk, however this would need to be reviewed as part of preparing the signage plan.

This package of works would be to would include:

- preparing the signage plan in accordance with the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Sign Manual,
- design and authorship of the signage,
- production and installation of replacement signage plates, and
- production, construction and installation of new signage plates and structures (if required).

The estimated cost is $55,000.

Marine and Indigenous Heritage (Interpretive Signage)

As a result of the physical audit and the liaison with stakeholders it has been identified that there are significant marine and indigenous heritage stories on Magnetic Island that are not currently available to visitors.

Discussions have identified that:

- Magnetic Island was the first place on the Great Barrier Reef where mass synchronised coral spawning was scientifically observed and reported.
- Diversity in marine habitats across Magnetic Island.
  - Western coastline – salt flats, mud flats, seagrass beds, mangroves
  - Cockle Bay – unique combination mud flats and coral reef
  - Eastern coastline – fringing reefs
- Coral bommies that were taken to AIMS for research from Nelly Bay that were uncovered during the construction of the Harbour. These Coral bommies are dated to be over 6,000 years old and are approximately 1.5 metres in height.

The estimated cost for design, production and installation of this signage is expected to be around $40,000 for the 12 signs.
Flora & Fauna, Landscape Ecology, Shipwreck Trail and Heritage (Interpretive Signage)

As previously mentioned in this plan, it is anticipated that a program of replacement will be required for the interpretive signage package constructed in 2004 in around 2014. Some of the signs that are in direct sunlight have faded considerably and are in need of replacement.

As part of preparing this report the content, graphics and designs of these signs have been sourced. The cost of replacing these signs would be considerably reduced through retaining the existing structures and reusing the previous images and content. Discussions with stakeholders have identified that some content needs to be updated as a result of research since 2004.

The estimated cost for replacing the signage plates is expected to be around $70,000 for the 45 signs in this package.

QR Codes

One of the unique aspects about Magnetic Island is the available mobile coverage across the walking trails in the National Park, in addition to the populated areas. Mobile coverage and technology create a number of opportunities to improve the visitor experience.

The development and application of QR Codes has grown in popularity over the last ten years. These codes provide smart phone users the ability to collect additional information or be directed to websites.

Magnetic Island provides a unique opportunity to implement QR Codes with a variety of applications:

- identifying the users location on Magnetic Island, in particular the walking trails.
- providing translation services for signage in particularly for Asian and European languages.
- providing additional content for educational purposes.

Magnetic Island provides an ideal trial site for a pilot program based on the size of Magnetic Island, the mobile coverage, the supportive local community, and the active involvement of business and Townsville Enterprise. A pilot program on Magnetic Island could be rolled out in stages, through the application of QR Codes on existing and new signage, while developing the website content for translation or educational purposes.

Note: Coverage does vary between carriers.
5.0. Acknowledgements

5.1. References


Island Impressions Magnetic Island, *Magnetic Island Guide May 2012 to October 2012*


Queensland Government (Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing), *Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Sign Manual* July 2011


5.2. Stakeholders

The following groups have been contacted and consulted with in the preparation of this report:

**Asset Owners**
- Queensland Government
  - Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing (Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service)
- Townsville City Council (TCC)
  - Construction and Maintenance
  - Community Services
  - Marketing Communications
  - Economic Development
- Townsville Port Authority

**Ferry Operators**
- Fantasea
- SeaLink

**Community and Business Groups**
- Magnetic Island Community Development Association (MICDA)
- Magnetic Island History and Craft Centre (MIHCC)
- Magnetic Island Residents and Ratepayers Association (MIRRA)
- Tourism Operators and Businesses Magnetic Island (TOBMI)

**Traditional Owners**
- Wulgurukaba Aboriginal Corporation (WAC)

**Education and Research Institutions**
- Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
- James Cook University (JCU)
  - Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Sciences, Department of Anthropology, Archaeology & Sociology
  - Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences, School of Business, Centre of Tropical Tourism Studies
- Museum of Tropical Queensland (MTQ)