



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

History is only the beginning for Cooktown & Cape York Expo

21 June 2021
COOKTOWN

Attracting government officials, international dignitaries, visitors and community members from across Cape York and Australia, the Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021 came to a spectacular close last night with the final performance of the *Warrma* and a fireworks display over the Endeavour River.

The largest event in rural Queensland since the COVID-19 lockdowns, The Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021 – which ran from 11-20 June – delivered more than 150 events, exhibitions, performances, installations, workshops, and a two-day Dynamic Business Symposium.

Designed to celebrate Cooktown's Reconciliation story, that is shared by Traditional Owners and the non-Indigenous community, the huge success of the event has anchored Cooktown at the heart of Australia's Reconciliation journey, reinvigorated regional tourism and the economy with more than 10,000 bed nights booked, and reiterated the message that the Cape is open for business.

"The cultural and artistic collaboration witnessed in Cooktown over the last ten days, mirrors the joint aspirations for economic and social development and sustainability in our region," said Cook Shire Mayor Peter Scott.

"We are so grateful to Traditional Owners, local Bama, Council staff, the production team and the Indigenous communities from across the Cape who really rose to the occasion and were an integral part of the success of this event.

"An event of this magnitude would also not have been possible without the generous financial contributions from the Australian and Queensland Governments, and all of the event sponsors.

"The Dynamic Business Symposium highlighted the capacity of remote communities to be able to host world-class business events. The workshops and speakers provided Cape York businesses with insights and understanding on how leverage innovated and resilience to future-proof their enterprises and secure a slice of the \$50 billion domestic tourism market," said Mayor Scott.

Three Legacy Projects were official opened and revealed as part of the celebrations after Cook Shire Council received \$5,455,000 in Commonwealth Community Development Grants. These included the \$1.2 million Reconciliation Rocks Precinct Development, the site of Australia's first recorded act of reconciliation, the \$575,000 Waalmbal Birri Cultural Centre and the \$1.98 million redevelopment of the Botanic Gardens, with the \$1.7 million Gamaay Dreaming Track Development still to come.



Cook Shire COUNCIL

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the countless people behind the scenes and the volunteers who worked tirelessly to ensure the Expo went off without a hitch," said Federal Member for Leichhardt, Warren Entsch MP.

"I want to personally acknowledge the unwavering passion, dedication and hard work of Loretta Sullivan and Alberta Hornsby of the Cooktown Re-enactment Association.

"Loretta and Alberta's detailed knowledge of Captain Cook's adventures in Far North Queensland is without question, as is their commitment to the "two cultures, one people" philosophy.

"The Cook Shire and Cape communities should be immensely proud of what they have achieved and the positive and lasting memories they helped create for the thousands of people who attended the Expo."

Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships Craig Crawford who attended the opening weekend events, applauded the Expo for authentically showcasing reconciliation in Queensland's Year of Indigenous Tourism.

"As we reframe our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on Queensland's Path to Treaty, the expo provided a respectful celebration of our shared history. It showcased art, artists, and cultural displays that encouraged attendees to reflect on the past, create a better understanding of the present and contribute towards a brighter, shared future between Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Queenslanders," Mr Crawford said.

"The success of unique regional events such this year's Cooktown & Cape York Expo also reaffirms our state's position as a leading destination for cultural tourism and experiences with opportunities for First Nations-owned businesses, workforces and communities to thrive."

"Over the last five years, Indigenous tourism has increased by 6.4 per cent - demonstrating strong demand and support for authentic First Nations experiences.

"The Queensland Government is proud to have supported the Cooktown and Cape York Expo 2021, and to support regional and remote communities working to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. Cooktown & Cape York Expo 2021 was proudly supported by the Australian and Queensland Governments and Cook Shire Council.

The sponsors are Westpac Indigenous Banking, NBN, Ergon Energy, PCYC, Essential Air Services, Skytrans, Apunipima, Cornetts IGA Cooktown, Cairns Hardware Cooktown and Reel Planning.

For more information contact Kristina Olsen, Senior Media, Marketing and Communications Officer, Cook Shire Council via email at mail@cook.qld.gov.au or phone on 4082 0500.

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