1. Cairns is in the Cairns Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4), which covers a total land area of 21,338km2, and includes the Statistical Area Level 3 (SA3) regions of: Cairns North, Cairns South, Innisfail – Cassowary Coast, Port Douglas – Daintree, and Tablelands (East) – Kuranda.
2. The Cairns regional economy is dominated by its agriculture and tourism industries, with the region more heavily concentrated in agriculture (primarily bananas and sugar) and food and accommodation services than the rest of Queensland.
3. In 2020, Queensland has been affected by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which has created unprecedented challenges and uncertainty.
4. To support Queenslanders in this tough time, the Queensland Government has committed more than $6 billion in support. This includes state-wide economic stimulus and job-creating initiatives, that benefit the Cairns region, such as:
* up to $950 million in payroll tax relief, with 424 employers in the Cairns SA4 region receiving a total of $7.29 million in payroll tax relief, including refunds, payment holidays and deferrals for eligible businesses as well as a tax exemption for JobKeeper payments.
* a $1 billion concessional Jobs Support Loan Facility, which has supported 3585 jobs in the Cairns Local Government Area (i.e. 319 applications approved, worth over $46.7 million).
* $500 million in utilities bill relief for households and businesses, including a $200 rebate for all 2.1 million Queensland homes to offset the costs of water and electricity, and a $500 rebate for eligible small and medium sized businesses.
1. Cairns is also receiving specific support to recover from the impacts of COVID-19. This includes:
* $7.4 million for Cairns Regional Council, through the $200 million COVID Works for Queensland to support the delivery of job-creating new infrastructure, maintenance, or minor works projects, and
* more than $5 million in grant funding to five Cairns based tourism operators, through the Queensland Tourism Icons Program.
1. Cabinet noted an update on economic conditions and job-creating initiatives in the Cairns region.
2. *Attachments*:
* Nil.