



Thrill for holidays

Cut-price program launched

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MORE for less. That's the message the North Queensland tourism industry is using to attract families and thrill-seekers for cheap holidays.

The region was dealt a significant blow recently when several airlines cut flights to the Whitsundays and Cairns airports.

In a bid to attract domestic tourists to the north, a \$500,000 campaign is intended to attract families and adventure-seekers from within Australia to plug the hole left

by international travellers.

The campaign — The Perfect Family Holiday for Pocket Money — will promote "value" holiday getaways and highlight tropical north Queensland attractions in the Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne markets, which are not traditionally targeted by the region.

Aimed at people feeling the pinch as a result of rising living costs, the campaign will tempt those who want a holiday without the hefty price tag that comes with an overseas trip.

But with airlines unlikely to lower prices, due to rising fuel costs, it is up to accommodation providers and tour operators to offer cheaper deals to attract visitors.

One adventure holiday operator, who wished not to be named, said it was important authorities supported the in-

dustry fully in order to prevent bustling tourism hubs from becoming "ghost towns".

Another resort owner said he had already slashed fees as far as he could, with his prices now as low as they were five years ago.

The new campaign, yet to be finalised, will include slogans such as "the perfect holiday, priced to thrill" and "prices down, come on up".

Tourism Minister Desley Boyle said uncertainty in the aviation industry meant Queensland's regions had to diversify their markets.

"The local family market offers unique opportunities

during school holidays periods so Tourism Queensland, Tourism Tropical North Queensland and the local industry have developed packages that

make it easier for families to book tropical north holidays," she said.

Thrill-seekers will also be targeted as operators hope to market the region as the adventure capital of Australia.

The region offers a range of thrills, including whitewater rafting, skydiving, scuba diving

and wildlife adventures. Coincidentally, a new \$25 million water park in Cairns was announced last week.

Construction of the Adventure Mountain Theme Park is expected to start in 2009 once approval is granted by state and local governments.

Package deals to be advertised during the campaign, aimed at those planning holidays in September and October, have yet to be finalised.

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HANG ON TIGHT: North Queensland resorts are having to cut prices to drum up trade