

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **CHINESE VISITOR SURGE**

True to the Year of the Ox, Tropical North Queensland is reaping what it has sown, an increase in Chinese visitors for the Lunar New Year celebrations.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland chief executive officer Rob Giason said 14 charter flights had brought almost 4000 Chinese holidaymakers to Cairns airport since mid January, a 30 per cent increase on the previous year.

"Travel agents say they were rushed for seats for the holiday airlift from Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Taipei and thousands more traveled to the city via Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne," he said.

"Chinese visitors generally spend two or three nights in Tropical North Queensland, but the charters take advantage of Lunar New Year public holidays in China to give visitors four and five night stays in Cairns and Port Douglas which is a huge bonus for our region in a time of economic stress.

"The Chinese Year of the Ox is said to bring stability and growth where patience and diligence pays off and those predictions ring true for Tropical North Queensland where we have been working hard in the Chinese market.

"Behind the scenes, Tourism Tropical North Queensland, Cairns Airport, Tourism Australia and Tourism Queensland have been working with airlines and the travel industry in China to pull off this outstanding result with the assistance of funding from the Australian and Queensland Governments."

Mr Giason said he was particularly pleased to see four China Airlines flights coming from Taipei as they were the first into Cairns for that airline and also the first from that port in several years.

"We also welcomed six Qantas flights from Hong Kong and it was great to see China Southern returning to Tropical North Queensland



with four flights after they made their first landing here during 2008 Chinese New Year.

“While visitors have been enjoying our iconic reef and rainforest experiences, we are also excited to hear anecdotal evidence from operators such as Skydive Cairns of a surge in business showing the Chinese market is diversifying.”

Mr Giason said the charter services from China at this traditional holiday time had been growing steadily over the past few years, with a 30 per cent increase in seat capacity this year from 3000 to 4000 seats.

“We will continue our hard work in China this year to ensure the next Chinese New Year Celebrations see a further growth in the Chinese market which is now the region’s fifth most important,” he said.

“Last financial year almost 50,000 Chinese holidayed in Tropical North Queensland, an increase of 76 per cent on the previous year.”

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