

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01HRS MONDAY 12 MARCH**

## Media release

### Mining boom causing tourism gloom for Cairns

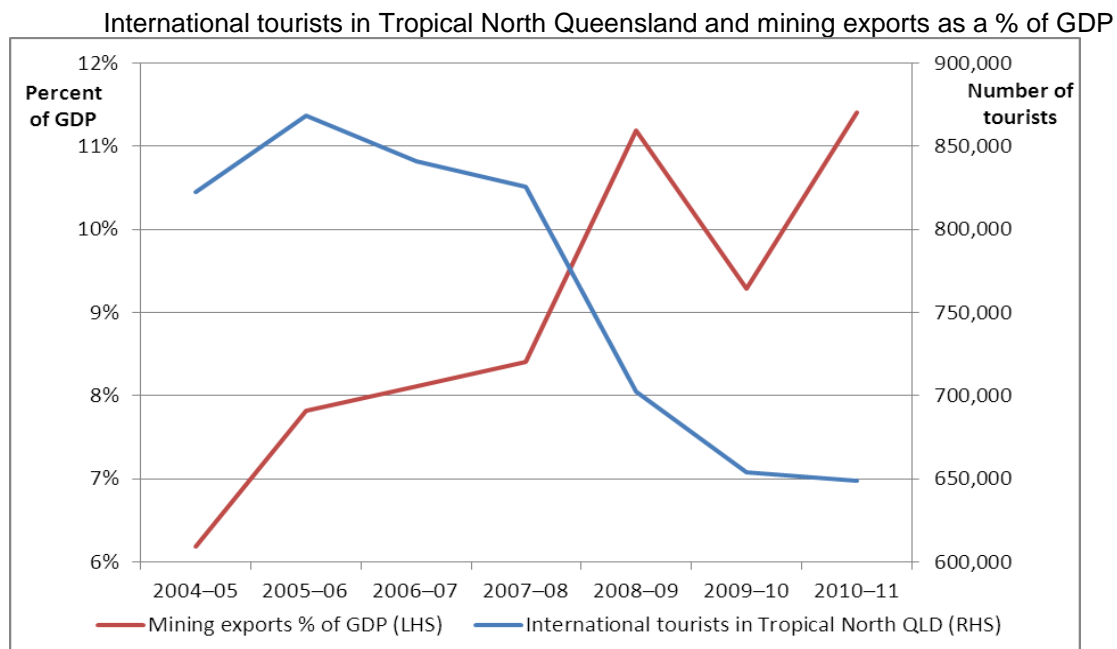
The mining boom continues to drive international tourists away from Cairns and Far North Queensland on the back of the high Australian dollar, according to a new analysis by The Australia Institute, a Canberra-based think tank.

The analysis shows that in Far North Queensland international tourism numbers have slumped from 868,303 to 648,959 over the past five years.

Executive Director Dr Richard Denniss said Queensland's mining magnates are great at talking up the benefits of their boom but refuse to take responsibility for the costs it imposes on communities like Cairns.

"While we have all heard stories about truck driving jobs earning big dollars, the reality for the 99 per cent of Queenslanders who don't work in the mining industry is high housing costs, higher mortgage interest rates and fewer jobs in tourism, manufacturing and agriculture," said Dr Denniss.

"It is ironic that while UNESCO is in Cairns inspecting the Great Barrier Reef for damage, the coal miners could destroy the tourism industry even if they stopped harming the beauty of the natural environment. Every new mine means a higher Australian dollar, and the higher the dollar, the fewer the tourists."



For media enquiries, please contact:

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“The number of people employed in Queensland manufacturing fell by 6.5 per cent in 2011 at a time when the economy is supposed to be booming. It’s pretty clear that the mining industry is driving jobs in the non-mining sectors of the economy down as quickly as it is driving the exchange rate up.”

This assessment was confirmed by the Queensland Government Office of Economic and Statistical Research in a report into employment projections which concluded that ‘weak employment growth may be experienced in occupations in trade exposed manufacturing industries’.

“The mining industry plays an important role in the Australian economy but the fact is it only employs one per cent of Queensland workers. There is no doubt that the mining boom is good for those lucky few who work in it but for Cairns and Far North Queensland tourism operators that means foreign tourists are choosing cheaper locations instead,” concluded Dr Denniss.

**A free public forum – *Cairns’ two-speed economy: who wins, who loses from Queensland’s mining boom?* – will be held on Tuesday 13 March, 6-8pm.**

**Event to be opened by Lyn Russell, CEO Cairns Regional Council**

Keynote speakers will include:

**Rob Giason**, CEO Tourism Tropical North Queensland

**Richard Denniss**, Executive Director The Australia Institute

**Carol Doyle**, President Study Cairns

**Date:** Tuesday 13 March

**Time:** 6-8 pm

**Venue:** Civic Reception Room, Council Administration Building, 119-145 Spence St, Cairns

#### **Notes for editors**

- This analysis is part of a larger research project “*Job creation or job destruction? An analysis of the mining boom in Queensland*” which will be released next week.

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