

Climate change action focuses on tourist traps, say researchers

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Efforts to help Queensland's tourism industry to adapt to the effects of climate change are likely to be focused on areas that attract the most tourist dollars rather than those with the greatest need, according to new UQ research.

Researchers at The University of Queensland Business School fear that [natural heritage](#) such as The [Great Barrier Reef](#) and northern tropical rainforests could lose out if investment decisions are made on the basis of economic values that fail to take into account its environmental value.

The research by UQ Business School Masters students suggests that Queensland tourism could be badly affected by climate change.

With the industry generating close to \$19 billion in annual revenue and accounting for one in 10 jobs, measures to adapt to overcome the adverse effects would be necessary.

Using different [climate change scenarios](#), the students compared leading tourist destinations on their tourism revenue, their vulnerability to climate change, and their ability to adapt to it.

They found the south-east coast, from a purely [business perspective](#), should be given the highest priority for climate change action, with the lowest priority given to the Australian outback and northern tropical rainforest regions.

UQ Business School Lecturer and corporate sustainability expert Dr Martina Linnenluecke said: "This research is one of the first studies to combine insights into the costs of adaptation, as well as the vulnerabilities of different regions.

"It identified that those areas most vulnerable to climate change, including The Great Barrier Reef and northern [tropical rainforests](#), might be neglected in adaptation decisions, simply because they do not generate much of the tourism sector's overall revenue.

"The findings of this project are yet another indicator that governments, industry sectors and individual businesses need to carefully consider adaptation actions and decisions - and to consider both economic and environmental implications."

Provided by University of Queensland

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