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Origin demand spin-offs for FNQ

CAIRNS could be a huge winner from overflowing demand for North Queensland's historic State of Origin clash, with fans looking further north for hotels and flights.

Punters could soon be locked out of Townsville with hotels nearing capacity and direct flights from Brisbane being jacked up to as much as \$999 one way.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland boss Mark Olsen said the knock-on from the once-in-a-generation spectacle could be significant as thousands of footy tragics "make a holiday" out of their last-minute trip.

"There's always a spin-off for Cairns when something big come to Townsville and they don't get much bigger than this," he said.

"We hope the visitors who are attending the game that can't find accommodation will look to Cairns, or to Mission Beach, or other areas in the Far North.

"There is no better time to make a holiday, make a weekend of it, because our destination is looking spectacular at the moment," he said.

In addition to a likely influx in tourists next week, Cairns residents are tipped to line the bars and pubs in the city in record numbers as venues prepare for Origin parties.

Mr Olsen said the atmosphere across the region would be electric. "Cafes, pubs and clubs right across the Far North will no doubt be getting into the spirit of Origin fever," he said.

"We rarely get a chance to host something in the North as big as this.

"It will be a great lift for Cairns and, most importantly, I can't wait to see the Maroons get up."

The Jack Hotel general manager Jay Gwyn said he was expecting one of the biggest nights of trade for the year next week in what is expected to be a Maroons takeover.

"We will have the place fully decked out and we're expecting a massive game," Mr Gwyn said

"It will be a huge party atmosphere in Cairns and the match being just down the road just adds to the occasion."

Douglas Shire mayor Michael Kerr said he hoped to see day-trippers and weekend visitors in Port Douglas on the back of the series opener between Queensland and New South Wales next Wednesday, June 9.

"If we can benefit from some Origin-related tourism we will take it, and it's gettable," he said.

"It's always a great atmosphere in town during State of Origin anyway but even more so this year given the buzz around this.

"Macrossan Street (in Port Douglas) will be pumping," Cr Kerr said.

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