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Loophole could see travellers stay put

THE state government is racing to close a loophole that could result in thousands of \$200 travel vouchers sitting on fridges instead of translating into tourism dollars.

More than 100,000 people entered the Cairns Holiday Dollars ballot to win one of the 15,000 vouchers to be used on travel experiences such as reef and rainforest tours.

However, winners are not obliged to redeem the vouchers and cannot transfer them to friends or family, meaning a large portion could theoretically go unused if people opt against travelling to the region.

Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe (below) rejected the idea outright, saying: "They wouldn't be applying if they didn't want to go to Cairns."

However, another government spokesman confirmed contingency planning was under way despite the government's belief the vast majority would be redeemed.

Leftover money will either be added to Tourism Tropical North Queensland's marketing budget, or TTNQ will be given the option to run a second-chance draw if numbers are high enough.

Only 2000 of the 15,000 vouchers were allocated to locals, who would presumably have a better strike rate at reef trip redemption since they would not need to travel.

Regardless of the uptake, TTNQ is the big winner, with some valuable cream on top of the \$3m program.



The entry process has farmed the details of 106,212 prospective travellers from across Queensland who will now receive direct marketing material in their emails — a list worth its weight in gold.

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