



## Media Release

13 August, 2009

### **WANTED - 'Best mates in the World'**

Tourism Queensland will launch a global search for four mates to share exploring the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef with Best Job in the World Island Caretaker Ben Southall.

Premier Anna Bligh said since Ben arrived in Queensland in July he had been tasked with the envious job of exploring all 600 islands and 300 coral cays of the Great Barrier Reef and reporting back about his experiences.

"Six months just isn't enough time to sample everything so we're looking for some mates who can share in the experience with Ben," Ms Bligh said.

"The friends will report back to Ben about their experiences with photos, videos and via a guest blog on [www.islandreefjob.com](http://www.islandreefjob.com).

"This campaign has been a worldwide success and that is why my government has committed an extra \$1.9m to transfer interest from the campaign into visitors and bookings.

"Watch this space at the end of the month as we prepare to rollout a major domestic campaign off the back of 'Best Job'."

Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor said the latest campaign which was dubbed the 'Best Experience in the World' would roll out shortly through [www.islandreefjob.com](http://www.islandreefjob.com).

"To date 127,000 people have logged on to read about Ben's Queensland adventures," he said.

"Becoming a mate of the Island Caretaker is the ideal way to engage campaign followers and bring them closer to the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

"This unique, money-can't-buy experience to become Ben's mate will be available to anyone from around the world."

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said despite challenging times for tourism worldwide, the Best Job campaign has led to a spike in interest and bookings for local tourism operators.





ISLANDS  
OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

"Ben has held global media interest with French, Dutch, English and Australian documentary crews following his adventures and dozens of journalists seeking interviews and arranging to spend time with him here.

"A one-hour documentary about the Best Job campaign which recently aired on the BBC during prime time was watched by 3.7 million viewers and won the ratings for its time slot.

"Since starting a month ago, Ben has done more than 80 media interviews with outlets around the world - including CBC, Le Parisian, CNN, Shanghai Morning Post, the Observer, London's Daily Telegraph and Australia's Today Show - all promoting Queensland.

"Only last week Ben was visited by the crew from Getaway and Nine MSN who filmed a story about Ben's Best Job which will air tonight and as part of an Australian first will also feature on Nine MSN's online site."

Mr Hayes said results from Queensland's key international markets confirmed the campaign had raised global interest and desire to travel to Queensland.

"Print and online retail campaigns run by Tourism Queensland in Nordic regions have reaped fantastic results, with KILROY Travels reporting a more than a three-fold increase in bookings as part of its involvement in the Great Barrier Reef Sale," he said.

"The Great Barrier Reef Sale, run in partnership with seven tour operators across Sweden, Denmark and Norway generated just under 5,000 passengers to Queensland flying with Qantas in just three days.

"A campaign run by Goway Travel in America dubbed 'Vote for your favourite Island of the Great Barrier Reef' generated an additional 1,179 room nights for Queensland operators.

"Tourism Queensland marketing in conjunction with Down Under Answers also reported an impressive \$1.6 million in air/land bookings for Tropical North Queensland.

"In Europe, major German wholesaler Boomerang Reisen reported a 20 percent increase in bookings to Queensland following the launch of a recent road sign campaign."

