



Hon Peter Lawlor MP
Member for Southport



**Minister for Tourism and Fair
Trading**

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Ben hangs up his Best Job wetsuit and embarks on a global mission

Tourism Queensland's Island Caretaker Ben Southall will formally hang up his Best Job in the World wetsuit on December 31, but he will continue to sell Queensland to the world in 2010, Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor announced tonight.

Mr Lawlor said Tourism Queensland had officially farewelled Ben from his role as Island Caretaker on Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays tonight, and had welcomed him as the Best Job in the World Queensland Tourism Ambassador from January, 2010.

"While Ben might be hanging up his Island Caretaker wetsuit and snorkel it won't be the end of Tourism Queensland's relationship with him," Mr Lawlor said.

"I'm delighted to announce that Ben will stay on with Tourism Queensland and next month he'll kick-start a global sales mission as a special guest at G'Day USA in Los Angeles.

"G'Day USA: Australia Week 2010 is part of an annual celebration of all things Australian. Last year's event reached a global audience of 600 million."

Mr Lawlor said Ben's ongoing Queensland tourism ambassador duties would see him working closely with Tourism Queensland's 14 international offices to speak at a range of high profile events in countries such as the US, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, the UK, Europe and China.

"Following the US, Ben will head back to Tropical North Queensland to take part in a Korean media adventure tour with fellow Top 16 Best Job in the World candidate Juweon Kim in February," Mr Lawlor said.

"One of the key projects Ben will be working on in 2010 will be a 'money-can't-buy' adventure experience which he will project manage using his newly-acquired knowledge of Queensland's experiences.

"The next stop on Ben's global Queensland sales mission will be Japan for a variety of speaking engagements before heading to New Zealand where he'll be heavily involved with the tourism trade event Oz Talk."

Mr Lawlor said during his global sales mission Ben would re- unite with a several of his fellow Best Job in the World Top 16 candidates, who would work alongside him to fly the flag for Queensland in their respective countries.

"The remainder of the trip will see Ben return to the UK for a Queensland sales mission in March, a media tour of China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in April and a road show of Europe

Level 26 111 George Street Brisbane
GPO Box 1141 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3224 2004
Facsimile +61 7 3229 0434
Email dtrdi@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Website www.qld.gov.au

as part of Queensland on Tour in November," he said.

In 2010 National Geographic will air a six-part documentary that would take viewers on a journey exploring the islands through his eyes.

"The documentary series will take Ben and the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef into the living rooms of more than 315 million homes in 165 countries and will air in 34 languages," Mr Lawlor said.

"This is money can't buy publicity for Queensland."

Mr Lawlor said Ben had been the perfect tourism ambassador for Queensland, continuing to fuel the buzz surrounding the Best Job in the World and sustaining global interest in Queensland since he started in the role of Island Caretaker on July 1.

"In six months he visited 90 Queensland destinations, fielded more than 250 media interviews, has posted over 60 blogs of 75,000 words, 2000 photos and 47 video diaries. He also tweeted more 730 times," he said.

"More than 8.6 million people have visited www.islandreefjob.com since the campaign was launched in January 2009."

Mr Lawlor said 2010 was shaping up to be another exciting year for Tourism Queensland.

"We're currently working closely with our global creative agency Clemenger Harvie Edge on a new image for Queensland," he said.

"Our aim is to position Queensland as Australia's number one holiday destination.

"We hope to unveil the result in mid-2010 and we're hatching several 'big' ideas that will roll out as part of this new strategy."

For more information on Ben's Queensland adventures visit - www.islandreefjob.com

Further information

Minister's office: 3224 2002 or 0437 436 914

Tourism Queensland + 61 (0)419 171 196 or +61 (0)408 768 948

Photos of Ben's final adventures in the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef are available at www.tq.com.au/imagegallery.