



ISLANDS
OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Media Release

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American wins the Best Experience in the World, but yet to claim prize

Tourism Queensland's Island Caretaker Ben Southall will journey south this week in his quest to explore the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

Tourism Queensland Acting-CEO Steve McRoberts said Ben would spend the next ten days making his way from Mackay to Bundaberg and then further south to the Fraser Coast.

"Ben will kick off his working week being whisked away to one of the lesser-known gems on the Queensland coast, Keswick Island where he will conduct his usual Island Caretaker duties of snorkelling, fishing and bushwalking before returning to Mackay for a tour of the town," Mr McRoberts said.

"His next stop will be in the townships of Seventeen Seventy and Agnes Water where he will have the opportunity to retrace the footsteps of Captain James Cook - another adventurous Brit who explored Queensland's coastline more than 200 years ago.

"After trekking through the history books in Seventeen Seventy, Ben will have the arduous tasks of taking an amphibious LARC cruise, a wave kayaking lesson and tour Agnes Water by Chopper motorcycle, before sailing out to Lady Musgrave Island for a day of diving."

Mr McRoberts said the next stop on Ben's action-packed visit to the southern islands of the Great Barrier Reef would be to the home of the famous Bundaberg rum.

"Ben's first official duties in Bundaberg include being the guest of honour at the regional tourism awards, a great way for him to meet the locals and get tips on where he should visit," he said.

"A visit to Bundaberg's Hinkler Hall of Fame, Bundaberg Rum Distillery and Bundaberg Barrel, followed by a chance to watch the whales play in Hervey Bay off the Fraser Coast will finish up Ben's visit to the region."





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Mr McRoberts said travelling from Mackay to the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef would give Ben's followers a real sense of Queensland's diversity and natural beauty.

Ben said his visit would be an opportunity to reveal the colour and characters of the southern Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

"I've seen the northern islands of the Great Barrier Reef and I'm really excited to see the differences between the two regions," Ben said.

"It'll be a marathon mission covering more than 600kms of Queensland's coastline and I can't wait.

"I've heard a lot about the colourful characters in the region and can't wait to meet a few of the locals."

Mr McRoberts said Ben's trip to Mackay and the southern Islands of the Great Barrier Reef would be a fantastic week thanks to the support of the local tourism operators, Mackay Tourism, Gladstone Area Promotion Development Limited, Bundaberg Region Limited and Fraser Coast and South Burnett Regional Tourism Board.

"This won't be Ben's last visit to the southern Islands of the Great Barrier Reef - he will be back again to explore other parts of the region later in his stay."

For more information about Ben's Queensland adventures, log on to - www.islandreefjob.com

For images of his experiences, go to Tourism Queensland's image gallery.

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