



ISLANDS
OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Media Release

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Ben sets sail for Hamilton Island Race Week

Ben Southall, Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World Island Caretaker, is preparing for an action-packed week of on and offshore activities as part of the 26th annual Hamilton Island Race Week.

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said Ben would be in his element as thousands of avid sailors, their families and friends and the media descended on Hamilton Island to take part in the annual festivities.

"As Island Caretaker, Ben's official duties will include meeting and greeting visitors, playing tennis with former Australian tennis star Todd Woodbridge, bantering with *Sunrise* sports host Mark Beretta, competing in an Audi Drive Challenge on the airport runway and sailing on 'Wild Oats X'," Mr Hayes said.

"Other highlights include, commentating the 'Hole in One' golf challenge with Australian rugby great/poet Rupert McCall and joining the 'Spirit of the Maid' crew to take part in some real on water racing.

"Amidst guest radio and TV appearances Ben will also be present when the Premier officially opens the new Hamilton Island Yacht Club and Hamilton Island Golf Club."

Mr Hayes said the 34-year-old Briton who beat more than 34,000 applicants from around the world for the coveted 'Best Job in the World' had an exciting week of island adventures ahead of him.

"It's certainly a tough gig and I look forward to reading all about it when Ben reports back via www.islandreefjob.com," he said.

"Since its inception, Hamilton Island Race Week has grown from just three divisions with fewer than 100 yachts in 1984 to 12 divisions and a record fleet of 225 in 2008, the 25th anniversary.

"It's great that Ben is available to witness the buzz that the festival generates.

"Ben is based on Hamilton Island during his six-month contract while he explores the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef and he's here at an exciting time for the





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region when there is so much development of the infrastructure taking place to support the increasing number of visitors to the region."

Mr Hayes said prior to Hamilton Island Race Week, Ben had recently returned from a visit to Lindeman Island where he had a tour of the new resort facilities on the island.

"Ben has already visited 15 different destinations in the short time he has been with us and has been busy reporting back about his adventures via his blog, video diary and media interviews," he said.

"The Best Job in the World has reached every corner of the globe, conservatively estimated to have generated more than \$330 million in media publicity.

"Ben's enthusiastic passion for Queensland and his adventurous nature has impressed everyone he has met so far and he is the perfect person to be tasked with the job of selling Queensland's Islands of the Great Barrier Reef to the World.

"Ben's blogs have already generated much discussion online and it is our aim to use the interest generated by these postings and turn it into tourist dollars for Queensland's economy, protect existing tourism jobs and hopefully create new ones."

For more information and updates on the Best Job in the World activities subscribe to Ben's blog at - www.islandreefjob.com

Further information

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