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Island Caretaker Ben Southall gets a taste of tropic adventure

A taste of tropical adventure is on the agenda for Tourism Queensland's Island Caretaker Ben Southall this week as he ventures north, Tourism Queensland acting CEO Steve McRoberts announced today.

Mr McRoberts said Ben would cover hundreds of kilometres during his 17 day adventure from Masig Island in the Torres Straits through to Orpheus Island, 80 kilometres north off the coast of Townsville.

"Ben's extended working week kicked off with a scenic flight from Cairns to Cow Bay yesterday," Mr McRoberts said.

"He had a tour in the World Heritage-listed Daintree rainforest and finished the day with a session of 'Jungle Surfing' - a flying fox adventure through the Daintree canopy.

"While in the region Ben is visiting the picturesque village of Port Douglas and the Mossman Gorge.

"After his leafy adventures, Ben will journey back to Cairns before flying North to Horn Island, in the Torres Strait, for a historic World War II tour, where he will learn about the strategic role Horn Island played in the allied defence of Australia.

"During his visit Ben will also discover the cultural traditions of the Kaurareg people, who are the traditional residents of Horn Island."

Mr McRoberts said Ben's visit to the northern-most islands of Queensland was an important way of educating the Island Caretaker about Queensland's indigenous experiences whilst showcasing unique and remote areas of Australia.

"Ben will cruise through the inner islands of the Torres Strait including Prince of Wales, Goodes, Friday and Hammond Island, for a spot of fishing before pulling onto a beach to eat the day's catch," he said.

"Another highlight will be a visit to the Friday Island working pearl farm for a demonstration of the process involved with harvesting pearls and a visit to Thursday Island.





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"Ben will get an opportunity to meet the locals and enjoy some traditional island activities on Poruma or Coconut Island before flying to Yorke Island, traditionally known as Masig Island where he will meet the locals renowned for their navigation skills and detailed knowledge of the local reefs."

Mr McRoberts said Ben's return to Cairns would coincide with the Tropical North Queensland Bollywood-themed Tourism Awards.

"The next stop on Ben's action-packed 17-day adventure around the tropics will see him cruising around Dunk Island before visiting Orpheus Island, Mission Beach and Bedarra Island," he said.

"Bedarra is the perfect location for Ben to finish off his busy schedule, it's an ideal place for visitors to escape, unwind and experience the finer things in life."

Ben said he was extremely excited about the next part of his itinerary.

"I've seen a very adventurous side of Tropical North Queensland and I'm keen to explore this aspect of the region further," Ben said.

"One of the highlights of my trip so far has been my visit to the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park back in July, and I've heard there will be more indigenous experiences in store for me during this visit which is great.

"I'm really looking forward to exploring the Torres Strait culture, artifacts, legends and artwork in the area and helping to educate readers from around the globe about these remote islands and experiences.

"I'm also looking forward to cruising around the exclusive island retreats of Dunk, Orpheus and Bedarra and discovering some great dive spots."

Mr McRoberts said Ben's visit to Tropical North Queensland would be busy thanks to the wonderful support of local tourism operators, Torres Strait Regional Authority, Tourism Tropical North Queensland and Townsville Enterprise.

"His visit will give people from around the world an insight into the region and raise awareness of Tropical North Queensland as a destination that offers travellers the ultimate adventure experience within some of the greatest natural wonders of the world," he said.

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

