



Hon Peter Lawlor MP
Member for Southport



**Minister for Tourism and Fair
Trading**

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Queensland's Best Job in the World winner appears on Oprah

Queensland's Best Job in the World winner Ben Southall will showcase Queensland to the world on the Oprah Winfrey show Premier Anna Bligh announced today.

Queensland's popularity as a world-renowned holiday destination is set to reach new heights following Ben's guest appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Show, which will air in the US on Thursday 22 October.

"Ben recently spoke to Oprah by satellite from Hamilton Island and I know he has been singing the praises of our beautiful state," said the Premier.

"His guest appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Show will be seen by approximately 7.4 million viewers in the US alone and broadcast internationally to an additional 145 countries around the world.

"Oprah has been the number one US talk show for 23 seasons and Ben's appearance will deliver an unprecedented level of publicity for Queensland.

"This is another major coup for Tourism Queensland during what has been a very challenging time for operators."

The Premier said Ben was more than half-way through his six-month stint as Caretaker for the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

"He is doing a great job and everyone's primary focus now is on harnessing the excitement he has generated to motivate viewers to act on their desire to visit Queensland," she said.

Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor said that as part of Ben's special guest appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Show, he also announced that the trip of a lifetime to Queensland would be up for grabs for one lucky member of the show's audience.

"During Ben's five minute chat with Oprah he was able to give a first-hand account of what it's like to have the Best Job in the World and enjoy a range of fantastic Queensland experiences, such as snorkelling, diving and bushwalking," he said.

Tourism Queensland acting CEO Steve McRoberts said Ben was the perfect tourism ambassador for Queensland, helping to showcase the best of Queensland to the world.

"Since arriving as the Island Caretaker on July 1, Ben has continued to fuel the buzz surrounding the Best Job in the World and sustain interest in Queensland," Mr McRoberts said.

"In addition to his guest appearance on The Oprah Winfrey Show, since arriving in Queensland Ben has fielded more than 150 media interviews from prominent outlets around

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the world such as the BBC, Le Parisien, CCN, Shanghai Morning Post, The UK's Daily Telegraph, CBC, Sky News, Germany's RTL and Israel's Yedoith.

"He has also hosted documentary crews and celebrities from the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan and Hong Kong around his 'office' - the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

"More than 8.4 million visitors have logged on to www.islandreefjob.com since the Best Job in the World campaign was launched in January and Ben has approximately 3500 followers on twitter."

Mr McRoberts said not only had the Best Job in the World delivered an unprecedented level of exposure for Queensland it had also helped convert awareness into tangible sales for Queensland tourism operators.

"German travel wholesaler FTI recently commented that while overall bookings to Australia were slow compared with this time last year travel to Queensland out of Germany was still up by nearly three percent," he said.

"Australis and Travelmood in the UK also reported that Queensland had maintained a healthy share of Australis's overall room nights, helping to secure more of the company's passengers than any other state in Australia.

"A recent comment on Ben's blog from a Kansas family also proves that Ben's experiences are converting into more visitors to Queensland - Our family began following your blog several months ago, long story short we booked a 10 day holiday cruising the Whitsundays so, if anyone is wandering if the marketing efforts are playing off let them know a family from Kansas, USA are the newest fans of Australia and the Islands."

Ben's guest appearance on The Oprah Winfrey show is set to air in the US on Thursday 22 October, an Australian air date is yet to be confirmed.