



Media Release

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Entries open for Island Caretaker Ben's mates

Thousands of people from around the world are expected to apply for the chance to bring three mates to Queensland to assist Best Job in the World's Ben Southall explore the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef, Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor said today.

Mr Lawlor said interest in Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World campaign continued to reach every corner of the globe and thousands were expected to apply for the coveted competition which officially opened today.

"Ben has already received more than 300 comments about the competition on his blog with people offering to become his mate and assist him with the envious job of exploring the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef," Mr Lawlor said.

"It's generated a buzz on twitter with people everywhere - from Slovenia to India, from Russia to Greece - discussing this fantastic opportunity.

"The competition has also sparked interest in celebrity circles with American entrepreneur Russell Simmons and model Miranda Kerr tweeting about Ben's Queensland adventures."

Mr Lawlor said there were so many wonderful islands and experiences to sample that six months just wasn't enough time for one person.

"We are extending an invitation for one person to bring three mates to Queensland to share in Ben's experience," he said.

"The unique competition, which was launched by Ben in conjunction with Tourism Queensland today, will give four friends the opportunity to enjoy the ultimate holiday including a range of unique Queensland experiences.

"Ben's new mates will report back to him about their experiences with photos, videos and via a guest blog on www.islandreefjob.com.

"Competition details, including an itinerary for the 'Best Experience in the World', will continue to roll out through www.islandreefjob.com."





ISLANDS
OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Mr Lawlor said since the Best Job in the World campaign was announced in January www.islandreefjob.com had recorded more than 8.2 million unique visitors and in excess of 54 million page views.

"Since Ben arrived in Queensland, more than 191,000 people have visited the website to read about his Queensland adventures," he said.

"Helping the Island Caretaker explore the islands is an ideal way to engage campaign followers and bring them closer to the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

"This unique, 'money-can't-buy' experience is available to anyone from around the world."

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said Ben had been on an action-packed journey since arriving in Queensland and had visited more than 16 destinations in his first seven weeks on the job.

"Ben is doing a fantastic job travelling around the islands and reporting back about his experiences," Mr Hayes said.

"It's a challenging time for tourism globally and our focus is on making sure we continue to capture the world's imagination and transfer interest generated from campaigns such as this into bookings for Queensland tourism operators.

"The more visitors we generate for Queensland the more tourism jobs we protect."

Mr Hayes said people could apply for the 'Best Experience in the World' via www.islandreefjob.com from 9am today.

