



Hon Peter Lawlor MP
Member for Southport



**Minister for Tourism and Fair
Trading**

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Queensland tourism ambassadors take Korean media on tropical adventure

Best Job in the World Queensland tourism ambassadors Ben Southall and Juweon Kim are set to take Korean media for a ride in Queensland's adventure playground this week as part of a plan to lure more visitors to the region, Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor announced today.

Mr Lawlor said the visit was part of an initiative aimed at exposing the adventurous side of Tropical North Queensland in Korea, an emerging growth market for the region.

"In the year ending September 2009 the number of Koreans who visited Tropical North Queensland increased by 33 percent to approximately 12,000, spending approximately \$217 million on their visit to Queensland, an increase of 10 percent," Mr Lawlor said.

Parliamentary Secretary for Tourism and Member for Barron River Steve Wettenhall said Ben and Juweon along with the Korean media team were in for a whirlwind adventure tour of Tropical North Queensland to raise awareness for the region as Australia's number one natural adventure playground.

"The aim of the trip is to position Tropical North Queensland as a destination that offers adventurous travellers the ultimate experience within some of the greatest natural wonders of the world," Mr Wettenhall said.

"It's about showcasing the adventurous side of the region to visiting Korean travel media and giving them the opportunity to experience it first-hand, inspiring the journalists to want to further promote Queensland."

Mr Lawlor said the media group included representatives from AB-ROAD, Korea's leading monthly travel magazine, GQ magazine, the number one male lifestyle magazine in the country, and online bloggers.

"The action-packed week of adventure will include white water rafting, skydiving, scuba diving and scenic hot air balloon tours," he said.

"Ben has recently returned from a highly successful promotional tour of the US and Canada and upon his return we tasked him to take the Korean journalists on a wild ride in the Tropics.

"The trip is just another example of the type of work Ben will be carrying out as a Queensland Tourism Ambassador, educating people from around the world about all the wonderful places and experiences he was exposed to as Caretaker of the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef."

Mr Lawlor said Ben's passion for Queensland and energy levels make him perfect for this type of promotional activity and make him a fantastic spokesperson and advocate for Tropical North Queensland's adventure playground.

"Ben is an adventurer by nature and during his time as the Best Job in the World Caretaker of the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef he tackled a number of adventure style experiences such as skydiving, scuba diving, kayaking and sailing" he said.

"Juweon is Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World Queensland Tourism Ambassador in Korea and the adventure style trip marks his second visit to Queensland in his new role, having previously hosted an educational tour of the Gold Coast last year.

"Juweon has generated a lot of media coverage in Korea for Queensland through his popular radio program in Seoul, including interviewing Ben during his time as Island Caretaker."

Mr Lawlor said the tour followed a series of recent activities aimed at showcasing the adventurous side of Tropical North Queensland to emerging international markets including a visit by Korean travel agents to the region last year.

"International tourism is a key economic driver for Queensland and during challenging economic times, it's crucial to continue with activities such as this which increase the visibility and presence of Queensland destinations and products in international markets," he said.

"We're committed to generating interest from international markets and will do everything possible to maximise the benefits for Queensland.

"The Korean media adventure familiarisation is a Tourism Queensland joint initiative in partnership with Tourism Australia, supported by the local tourism industry."

To read more about Ben and Juweon's adventure activities in Tropical North Queensland visit - www.islandreefjob.com