



Hon Peter Lawlor MP
Member for Southport



**Minister for Tourism and Fair
Trading**

30 May 2009

Best Job in the World candidate Mieko named Queensland ambassador

Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World finalist Mieko Kobayashi will become a Queensland ambassador in Japan, Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor announced today.

He said while Britain's Ben Southall had been named Caretaker of the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef in the highly successful global tourism campaign, Mieko had so impressed Tourism Queensland, a new 'Queensland Ambassador to Japan' role had been created for her.

"Mieko's vivaciousness, energy, her infectious smile and her obvious love of Queensland was so impressive that there was no way we could let her go," Mr Lawlor said.

"In the months leading up to the Best Job in the World final selection event, Mieko achieved a huge amount of publicity for Queensland in Japan and we would be foolish not to keep that momentum going in what is one of Queensland's most important international markets.

"The Japanese place a huge amount of emphasis on celebrity endorsement and Mieko has been an unofficial Queensland ambassador ever since she was announced as one of the Top 16 candidates for the Best Job in the World in March.

"We are now formalising that arrangement and tasking her with promoting other parts of Queensland, not just the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef."

Mr Lawlor said Mieko would spend the next 12 months as a part-time ambassador participating in activities such as trade shows, media interviews, consumer events and PR initiatives.

She will also continue to blog about Queensland and update the loyal following she developed during her pursuit of the Best Job in the World campaign.

"Her new role has already started with a major Japanese network Fuji TV airing a prime-time documentary about Mieko's quest for The Best Job in the World earlier this week," Mr Lawlor said.

"The long-running program, called Unbelievable, focuses on ordinary people who pursue extraordinary dreams and it has a huge audience following of more than 15 million.

"Fuji TV spent three months documenting Mieko's experience as a Best Job in the World candidate and travelled with her to cover the final selection event at the Great Barrier Reef earlier this month.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for Queensland as the program will announce to viewers that Mieko has been appointed as a Queensland ambassador."

Mr Lawlor said Mieko's role as Queensland ambassador would be particularly beneficial for popular Japanese visitor destinations such as the Gold Coast and Tropical North Queensland.

"It's no secret that Japan visitor numbers have been in decline for some time due to a number of factors but Tourism Queensland and the Queensland tourism industry remain committed to the market," he said.

"Japan remains Queensland's second largest international market with 271,000 Japanese spending \$460 million in Queensland during 2008.

"Having a genuine person like Mieko, who has spent time in Queensland available to talk about her love of our state, is a brilliant move and proof that The Best Job in the World campaign has benefits for the whole of the state."

Mr Lawlor said Tourism Queensland was also looking at opportunities with several of the other Best Job in the World Top 16 candidates.

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