



ISLANDS  
OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

## Media Release

31 August, 2009

### **Island Caretaker welcomes mum and dad to Queensland**

It could well be a case of 'The best son in the world' after Tourism Queensland Islands Caretaker Ben Southall welcomed his parents to his 2000km Great Barrier Reef 'office' this week.

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said he was delighted to hear Ben's parents - Duncan and Margaret Southall from Winchester in the UK - were visiting Ben.

"They couldn't have picked a better time to visit and see Ben 'hard at work' than during Hamilton Island Race week, which finished over the weekend," Mr Hayes said.

"Ben's had a tough week starting with a jet ski safari on Brampton Island, followed by hosting the 'Hole in One Challenge' on the new Hamilton Island Golf Course, bantering with *Sunrise* sports host Mark Beretta, competition in an Audi Drive Challenge and joining the 'Spirit of the Maid' crew for some real on-water racing."

Ben said he was ecstatic about having his mum and dad visit and share his exciting experiences on the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

"Mum and Dad are only here for a short time so I want to show them as much as I can and some of my favourite haunts," Ben said.

"During their stay I've planned to give them a tour of Hamilton Island, have breakfast with the koalas, go windsurfing, play golf, visit Reefworld and go for a walk through one of the many national parks in the area.

"My folks will be the first of a series of visitors heading my way, with friends scheduled to come and join me on my island adventures in October."

Ben said although he had only been in the job for roughly two months, it had felt like a lifetime because of the number of amazing things he had seen and experienced since arriving on 1 July.





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"At times I still can't believe I was successful in being offered the Best Job in the World and am so excited that my parents are able to share in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Mr Hayes said Ben's six month \$AUD150,000 contract required him to explore the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef, experience the destination, and report back on his adventures via a blog, video diary and media interviews.

"The Best Job in the World campaign has reached every corner of the globe conservatively estimated to have generated more than \$370 million in media publicity," he said.

"We're currently working on a variety of marketing activities that continue to generate interest in the campaign and in Queensland.

"Earlier in the week, entries opened for the Best Experience in the World competition which will give four friends the opportunity to enjoy the ultimate holiday inclusive of a range of unique Queensland experiences.

"It has certainly generated a buzz on Ben's blog, twitter page and a spike in visitation to [www.islandreefjob.com](http://www.islandreefjob.com) where people are able to apply.

For more information about Ben's Queensland adventures, log on to - [www.islandreefjob.com](http://www.islandreefjob.com)

For images of Ben's parents' arrival, go to [Tourism Queensland's Image Gallery](#).

