



ISLANDS
OF THE GREAT BARRIER REEF

Media Release

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Best Job in the World Island Caretaker touches down in Central Queensland

Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World Island Caretaker, Ben Southall will spend his next week at work enjoying a scenic tour over the Whitsundays before touching down in Central Queensland for a visit to Heron and Wilson Islands.

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said Ben would head further south to Central Queensland on Sunday where he would be exposed to a variety of new and unique island experiences.

"Ben will start his working week as a co-pilot on an Air Whitsundays scenic tour of the islands, which will be a great opportunity for him to gain a better understanding of the proximity of the Islands to each other and the mainland and also see the amazing fringing reefs and sheltered anchorages," Mr Hayes said.

"As the newly-appointed Island Caretaker, Ben will be introducing visitors to some of the highlights of the region including a visit to an underwater coral viewing chamber.

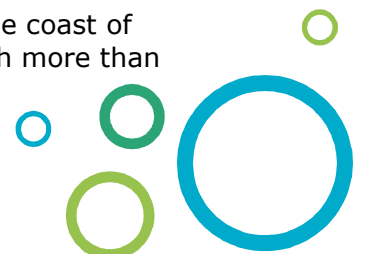
"After the tour, Ben will begin his trek down to Gladstone onboard Queensland Rail's Sunlander - a great way to showcase the different options for travelling up and down the coast.

"This will be Ben's first visit to Central Queensland and we are looking forward to hearing all about what he believes the destination has to offer from the perspective of a first-time visitor to the region."

Mr Hayes said after arriving in Gladstone, Ben would voyage over to Heron Island where he would be treated to a massage and some time out to get familiar with his new surroundings.

"While on Heron Island, Ben will also enjoy a sunset wine and cheese cruise before learning more about the island and surrounding reefs on a coral mentoring program and guided tour of the research station," he said.

"Heron Island is the perfect base for Ben to explore the islands off the coast of Central Queensland and will also help to satisfy his love of diving with more than 30 dive sites located within 15 minutes of Heron Island.





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"Ben has also been tasked with making a detour to visit the island caretakers on Wilson Island.

"Wilson Island is a fantastic spot for Ben to get acquainted with the islands' natural beauty and, as far as offices go, it doesn't get much better than being based in one of Wilson's secluded luxury safari tents!"

Ben said he was looking forward to his next week at work, particularly getting to know some of the lesser-known experiences that the islands off Central Queensland have to offer.

"I've heard Wilson Island is like a Robinson Crusoe castaway island and can't wait to go diving at Heron," Ben said.

"I'm also looking forward to meeting some of the locals at a tourism industry get-together in Gladstone and hearing all about the activities and sites that they like to visit."

Mr Hayes said Ben's visit to Central Queensland would give people from around the world an insight into the experiences available in the region and raise awareness for Central Queensland's laidback lifestyle and natural beauty.

"Following Ben's stay in Central Queensland he will head further south to visit his colleagues at Tourism Queensland's head office in Brisbane to catch up on his first month the job before heading back to Hamilton Island for some more rest and relaxation," he said.

"Ben's week at work in Central Queensland would not be possible without the support of the local tourism operators and Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited who have enabled Ben to experience Central Queensland's reef, coast and country."

Ben Southall, a charity events organiser from Petersfield in the UK, was named Caretaker of the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef, the Best Job in the World on May 6.

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

For more information about Ben's Central Queensland adventures, log on to Ben's Blog at - www.islandreefjob.com

For images of Ben's experiences, go to Tourism Queensland's Image Gallery.

