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**Premier announces Best Job in the World candidate Mieko as Japanese ambassador to the Gold Coast**

Best Job in the World candidate Mieko Kobayashi has been officially named a Queensland Tourism ambassador to Japan by Premier Anna Bligh on the Gold Coast today.

Meiko has developed a cult-like following in Japan and has been followed by the Japanese media since being named as Best Job candidate.

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh presented Mieko with her Queensland Tourism Ambassador certificate, which will see Meiko wave the Queensland flag at trade shows, media interviews, consumer events and PR activities aimed at enticing Japanese holidaymakers to visit the Gold Coast and Queensland.

Ms Bligh said Mieko gained a loyal following in Japan as she vied for Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World, bringing four Japanese film crews with her journey.

"Mieko is the perfect Queensland Tourism Ambassador and I'm delighted to present her with her official Queensland Tourism Ambassador certificate," Ms Bligh said.

"She is immensely popular in Japan and is well known by the media there, who are keen to cover her adventures.

"With a natural enthusiasm for Queensland, Mieko's role will help strengthen our exposure in Japan and entice more Japanese visitors to Queensland, which will maintain the prosperity of our tourism industry and protect and create Queensland jobs.

"A number of Japanese media – including Nippon TV and Kyodo News Agency – have followed Mieko's adventures this weekend as she took part in activities such as dolphin feeding, rainforest walking, wine tasting, sailing and today's Gold Coast Marathon."

Ms Bligh also presented a new 'Mieko'-branded jet ski to Surf Life Saving Queensland which had been sponsored by the Queensland Government and Tourism Queensland.

"The jet ski is branded 'Mieko's water rescue craft' in Japanese and English and will remind Japanese beach-goers of Mieko while they're holidaying on the Gold Coast," she said.

"Mieko is already familiar with the Gold Coast, having toured the world-famous destination after the final announcement for The Best Job in the World in May.

"Her initial visit to the Gold Coast and Whitsundays left her with a lasting impression of Queensland."

Mieko said one of her dreams had been to tell people in Japan about the beauty of Queensland and becoming a Queensland Tourism Ambassador was like a dream come true.

“I’ll do my best to promote Queensland in a way that captures my love and passion for this incredible holiday destination, and hopefully entice many people from Japan to come and visit,” she said.

Japan remains a vital international market for Queensland, with 252,000 Japanese visitors spending \$458 million in Queensland in the year to March 2009, which supports 3,500 tourism jobs.