



## Media Release

7 August, 2009

### **Best Job Island Caretaker scores A+ for his first month**

Tourism Queensland's Best Job in the World Island Caretaker Ben Southall has recently undergone his one month performance review, exceeding expectations and proving he's attracting much-needed tourist dollars for Queensland.

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said Ben's work as Island Caretaker had exceeded expectations in helping to convert awareness into tangible sales for Queensland.

"Ben is now a month into the Best Job and despite the challenging times for tourism worldwide, the campaign continues to capture the world's imagination and has led to a spike in interest and bookings for Queensland tourism operators," Mr Hayes said.

"Ben has held global media interest with French, Dutch, English and Australian documentary crews following his adventures and dozens of journalists seeking interviews and arranging to spend time with him here.

"A one-hour documentary about the Best Job campaign which recently aired on the BBC during prime time was watched by 3.7 million viewers and won the ratings for its time slot.

"Since starting a month ago, Ben has done more than 80 media interviews with outlets around the world - including CBC, Le Parisien, CNN, Shanghai Morning Post, The Observer, London's Daily Telegraph and Australia's Today Show - all promoting Queensland and the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef.

"Only last week Ben was visited by the crew from Getaway and Nine MSN who filmed a story about Ben's Best Job which will air on Thursday 13 August and, as part of an Australian first, will also feature on Nine MSN's online site."

Mr Hayes said Ben had 127,000 people around the world following his blogs and thousands following him on Twitter.

"Celebrities are also getting in on the action with American entrepreneur Russell Simmons and model Miranda Kerr also tweeting about Ben's Queensland adventures," he said.





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Mr Hayes said results from Queensland's key international markets, captured in the Best Job in the World report card (attached) confirmed the campaign had raised global interest and desire to travel to Queensland.

"Print and online retail campaigns run by Tourism Queensland in Nordic regions have reaped fantastic results, with KILROY Travels reporting a more than a three-fold increase in bookings as part of its involvement in the Great Barrier Reef Sale," he said.

"The Great Barrier Reef Sale, run in partnership with seven tour operators across Sweden, Denmark and Norway generated just under 5000 passengers to Queensland flying with Qantas in just three days.

"In North America, NBC's TODAY show and its six million viewers recently voted Queensland and Hamilton Island as the location for the best honeymoon in the world, as part of the program's 10th annual 'TODAY Throws a Wedding' contest.

"A campaign run by Goway Travel in America dubbed 'Vote for your favourite Island of the Great Barrier Reef' generated an additional 1179 room nights for Queensland operators.

"Tourism Queensland marketing in conjunction with Down Under Answers also reported an impressive \$1.6 million in air/land bookings for Tropical North Queensland.

"In Europe, major German wholesaler Boomerang Reisen reported a 20 percent increase in bookings to Queensland following the launch of a recent roadsign campaign."

Mr Hayes said the Best Job in the World had reached every corner of the globe, conservatively estimated to have generated more than \$330 million in media publicity.

"With the additional \$1.9 million in State Government funding for the campaign we are deploying a series of 'Best in the World' campaigns to convert the global interest into visitors to Queensland," he said.

"The more visitors we bring to Queensland, the more tourism jobs we protect.

"In addition to the previously-mentioned campaign activity, Tourism Queensland is currently planning a series of online, print and retail campaigns focused on the 'Best' theme, which will roll out in coming weeks.





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"Marketing Ben's itineraries are a great example of how we are converting awareness of his travels into sales activities targeted at generating benefits for Queensland tourism operators."

Mr Hayes said throughout the recruitment, Tourism Queensland had very clearly promoted the fact that Island Caretaker would only be required to write one blog per week.

"Ben has outdone himself writing more than 12 blogs with stunning images and nine videos since he started a month ago," he said.

"Ben has also tweeted more than 183 times - we couldn't be more proud of the work that Ben is doing."

Mr Hayes said while Ben was visiting his Tourism Queensland workmates in Brisbane today he would also be online twittering between 5.30 - 6.30pm to answer questions about holidaying in Queensland and his job as Island Caretaker.

