



ISLANDS
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Island Caretaker to experience magnetic attraction of North Queensland

Tourism Queensland's Island Caretaker, Ben Southall, is set to experience the magnetic attraction of North Queensland this week as he embarks on a tour of Townsville, Bowen and Magnetic and Hinchinbrook Islands.

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said Ben would begin his commute to work over the weekend and arrive in Townsville in time to catch a glimpse of the North Queensland Fury soccer team in action against the Brisbane Roar at Dairy Farmers Stadium on Saturday night.

"Ben's a soccer enthusiast and it's great that his visit will coincide with this game, where he'll also have the opportunity to meet the players and take part in the half-time celebrity soccer challenge," Mr Hayes said.

"During his visit to Townsville, Ben will immerse himself in the underwater magic of Reef HQ where he will begin his dive induction and visit the National Reef Education Centre for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

"He will also have a behind-the-scenes tour of facilities with a tour of the turtle hospital and Barramundi feeding."

Mr Hayes said Ben had also planned to catch up with another star of the Best Job in the World campaign, the musical Mitchell Moffit from Canada, who was currently studying in the region.

"Ben has never visited North Queensland so I am looking forward to reading all about his first impressions of the destination," he said.

"North Queensland is a vibrant region that has beautiful coastal towns, rainforests, rugged country terrain and the reef which lines the region to the east.

"Ben's visit to North Queensland is a great way for us to showcase the diversity of the Queensland experience and natural beauty of the landscapes with island playgrounds, vast national parks and rich farming areas.





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"He will spend the week Coral Sea kayaking, attending the North Queensland Tourism Awards, diving the *S.S Yongala* (one of the world's top wreck dives) and blogging about his experiences."

Ben said his visit would be an opportunity to reveal the characters of North Queensland and help followers and prospective visitors engage with the region and its experiences.

"I'm really looking forward to camping and kayaking around Hinchinbrook Island and participating in a coconut bowling competition on Magnetic Island," Ben said.

"I'm especially excited about visiting Bowen, following in the footsteps of Baz Luhrmann, Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman when they visited during the filming of *Australia* the movie.

"I've heard Bowen is one of the state's undiscovered gems and has become increasingly popular since the filming of *Australia*."

Mr Hayes said Ben's visit to North Queensland followed an action-packed week in the Whitsundays for Hamilton Island Race Week and a visit to Brampton Island.

"Ben's visit to North Queensland will be a busy week thanks to the wonderful support of the local tourism operators, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Townsville Enterprise Ltd," he said.

"This won't be Ben's last visit to North Queensland either - he will be back again to explore other parts of the region later in his stay."

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

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

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