

## MEDIA RELEASE

10 November 2017

### Southern Great Barrier Reef shines at Queensland Tourism Awards

Southern Great Barrier Reef tourism operators have taken out seven accolades at this year's Queensland Tourism Awards, which celebrate the dedicated individuals and successful operators of the state's \$25 billion tourism industry.

The Queensland Tourism Awards are hosted by the Queensland Tourism Industry Council and presented by Queensland Airports Limited in partnership with Tourism and Events Queensland and supporting partner Tourism Australia.

The Southern Great Barrier Reef region, incorporating the Bundaberg, Gladstone and Rockhampton, collected 3 Gold, 2 Silver and 2 Bronze awards. Winners included:

|                      |  |   |
|----------------------|--|---|
| <b>Gold Awards</b>   | Empire Conference Centre<br>Rockhampton        | Business Event Venues                           |
|                      | Lady Elliot Island Eco Retreat                 | The Steve Irwin Award for<br>Ecotourism         |
|                      | The Waterline Restaurant,<br>Keppel Bay Marina | Tourism Restaurants and<br>Catering Services    |
| <b>Silver Awards</b> | Empire Apartment Hotel<br>Rockhampton          | Deluxe Accommodation                            |
|                      | Kellys Beach Resort                            | Standard Accommodation                          |
| <b>Bronze Awards</b> | Bundaberg Rum Distillery                       | Tourism Wineries, Distilleries<br>and Breweries |
|                      | Hinkler Hall of Aviation                       | Cultural Tourism                                |

A total of 83 awards, including 28 Gold, 24 Silver, 24 Bronze, 5 highly commended and 2 individual awards across 28 categories, as well as the inaugural RACQ People's Choice awards, were presented at Brisbane's Convention and Exhibition Centre tonight where 900 guests gathered to celebrate Queensland's tourism achievements.

*See separate list of all of this year's 2017 Queensland Tourism Awards winners.*

QTIC Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind said the 33rd Queensland Tourism Awards had attracted an outstanding array of tourism operators across all award categories, with more than 160 nominations received state-wide.

"This year's entrants across 28 business, event and individual categories reflect the diverse and dynamic range of tourism operators helping Queensland's tourism industry flourish," he said.

"Queensland's tourism industry continues to do much of the heavy lifting for the state's economy, this year growing by more than 5.5% and employing more than 225,000 people.

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“International visitor numbers for Queensland have seen record growth in the 12 months to June 2017, growing 5.6% per cent. Some 2.6 million international visitors generated \$5.2 billion in overnight expenditure.”

“While these numbers are certainly positive, the industry faces intense global competition for market share. Queensland must continue to excel in every business to capture the attention of first-time and returning visitors from Australia and around the world.”

Tourism Minister Kate Jones said the Queensland Tourism Awards recognised excellence in the tourism industry.

“The Queensland tourism industry is growing from strength to strength thanks to the hard work of our tourism operators who deliver fantastic products and experiences.

“The Palaszczuk Government will continue working with tourism operators in the Southern Great Barrier Reef to grow the industry and deliver jobs for Queenslanders.

“Congratulations to all Southern Great Barrier Reef region nominees and winners for your dedication and showcasing the best of Queensland to visitors.”

Queensland Airports Limited CEO Chris Mills said the annual Queensland Tourism Awards provided the perfect platform to recognise the industry’s leading operators.

“Our tourism industry is critical to the state’s ongoing growth and prosperity, and the Queensland Tourism Awards winners are the best of the best,” he said.

“We are proud of our 11 year association as presenting partner of the Queensland Tourism Awards, which highlight the contribution Queensland businesses and individuals have made to domestic and international visitors.”

The Queensland Tourism Awards are judged by a panel of industry experts who volunteer their time to assess written submissions and travel throughout Queensland to experience the amenities and services of nominated businesses.

Queensland’s Gold Business Award winners will gain automatic entry into the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, which will be held in Perth on 23 February 2018.

For more information, please visit [www.queenslandtourismawards.com.au](http://www.queenslandtourismawards.com.au) and follow the latest news and announcements on social media using the Awards hashtag **#QTA17** on:

- Facebook [‘Queensland Tourism Awards’](#)
- Twitter [@TheQTIC](#)
- Instagram [theqtic](#)
- LinkedIn [Queensland Tourism Industry Council](#)
- YouTube [QueenslandTIC](#)



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### **ENDS.**

#### **Note for Media:**

- Media are asked to refrain from contacting award recipients until after 10.30pm on Friday 10 November 2017.
- A full list of Queensland Tourism Awards recipients is attached.

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