

MEDIA RELEASE

10 November 2017

Tropical North Queensland shines at Queensland Tourism Awards

Tropical North Queensland tourism operators have taken out 15 accolades at this year's Queensland Tourism Awards, which celebrate the dedicated individuals and successful operators of the state's \$25billion tourism industry.

The region collected the highest number of awards, tying with the state's capital, and just passing the Whitsundays region.

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.

Tropical North Queensland collected 3 Gold, 4 Silver, 6 Bronze and 2 individual awards. Among the accolades, North Queensland tourism veteran, Wendy Morris took out the acclaimed Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual. For the first time in the Awards' 33-year history, Queenslanders were also given the opportunity to vote for their favourite tourism experience as part of the RACQ People's Choice Award, which saw Tropical North Queensland's Paronella Park come out on top.

Winners included:

RACQ People's Choice Awards	Paronella Park	Experiences and Services
Individual Award	Wendy Morris	The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual
Gold Awards	Bedarra Island Resort	Luxury Accommodation
	Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park	Qantas Award for Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Tourism
Silver Awards	Paronella Park	Tourist Attractions
	Hartley's Crocodile Adventures	Major Tourist Attractions
	Kuranda Visitor Information Centre	Visitor Information and Services
	Ocean Safari	Tour and Transport Operators
Bronze Awards	Passions of Paradise	Major Tour and Transport Operators
	Daintree Discovery Centre	The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism
	Daintree Discovery Centre	Tourist Attractions
	Gilberton Outback Retreat	Unique Accommodation
	Mossman Gorge Centre	Qantas Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism
	Ochre Restaurant & Catering	Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services

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Sunlover Reef Cruises

Major Tour and Transport Operators

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.

"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 Tropical North Queensland to grow the industry and deliver jobs for Queenslanders.

"Congratulations to all Tropical North Queensland 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.

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“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 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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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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