

MEDIA RELEASE

GREEN LIGHT FOR ENVIRO CREDENTIALS IN PORT DOUGLAS/DAINTREE

Port Douglas, 20th August, 2018 – The Port Douglas Daintree region is on track to become Australia’s first eco-certified region with “*eco champions*” appointed to lead the certification charge.

The Eco Champions have already been through the Eco Tourism Australia certification process and will shine a spotlight on sustainable and environmentally sound tourism experiences and business practices for other operators to follow.

The green credential from Eco Tourism Australia is a no-brainer for the region given it consists of two globally significant areas of outstanding natural beauty – the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest.

“Being green is standard practice for many of our tourism operators already – some of whom lead the country in environmentally sound practices,” said Tourism Port Douglas Daintree (TPDD) executive officer Tara Bennet.

“Our operators are committed to protecting, presenting, preserving and ensuring long-term, sustainable tourism experiences that are authentic, memorable and safe.”

Ms Bennett said eco-accreditation was also now a major drawcard for international tourism wholesalers.

“These sellers are actively looking for the eco-accreditation brand, whether it be an established trend in Europe, particularly Germany, or young generations in China, Taiwan and Japan, which have a rapidly growing appreciation for environmental credentials.”

A program to become Australia’s first eco-certified region has been developed by the Douglas Shire Council, TPDD and Eco Tourism Australia.

One of TPDD’s eco Champions, owner/operator of yacht charter business Sailaway Steve Edmondson, said the program was a perfect match to his company ethos. He said Sailaway “is proof you can be a green leader and an innovative and successful business”.

“We are carbon neutral, we have planted 5000 trees, we use bio diesel, we only fill up five times a year and a contribution from each ticket we sell goes to the environment.

“We are able to run a successful business with passion and at the same time have the privilege of showcasing this fragile and remarkable environment in a fun and innovative way. That’s what I like to champion.”

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Another eco champion, Back Country Bliss Adventures owner Jason Heffernan, said being eco-certified was a comprehensive exercise, but worth the effort

“It is a very thorough process, ensuring the businesses that do earn the little tick, are actually worthy of it,” he said.

He said his company’s green credentials include giving out reusable rather than disposable water bottles, working with Tangaroa Blue Foundation in coastal clean ups and contributing to Rainforest Rescue’s land purchases.

Jodie Westbrook, general manager of the Daintree Eco Lodge, joins Edmondson and Heffernan as TPDD’s third eco tourism ambassador for the region.

As part of its environmental focus the Douglas Shire is also vying for a place in the Sustainable Destinations Global Top 100 competition, – an elite award for the world’s best environmentally-observant tourism regions. The competition is run by the Green Travel Guide.

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