

MEDIA RELEASE

LEADING THE WAY IN ECOTOURISM

Port Douglas, 25th June, 2018 – A bold new plan to recognise the Port Douglas and Daintree Region as Australia’s first eco-certified region in Australia has been welcomed by the industry.

Tourism Port Douglas Daintree executive officer Tara Bennett said the foundations were already in place with many of the country’s leading tourism product, found right here in the Douglas Shire, qualifying for the ecotourism accreditation tick of approval.

“We live in an area of outstanding natural beauty that is globally significant – the Great Barrier Reef and the Daintree Rainforest.

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

Ms Bennet said many of the Douglas region’s ecotourism businesses are small to medium sized enterprises.

“Ecotourism is about ensuring best practices across the board, whether you are a small independent tour guide or are larger commercial operation.

Under the new program being driven by the Douglas Shire Council, Tourism Port Douglas Daintree, and Ecotourism Australia, operators will be given guidance and assistance to complete their eco-accreditation.

“Our industry continues to set the benchmark high, and I look forward to working with trade to showcase these tourism operators as more and more become officially accredited.

“We held our first workshop last week and this was very well attended by industry.

“The pilot program will see Douglas Shire Council provide financial assistance to kickstart the process, with Ecotourism Australia providing mentoring for businesses to help guide them along the way.”

Currently, there are 21 operators providing eco-certified tourism experiences as as per the Green Travel Guide on www.ecotourism.org.au. These are:

Daintree Specialised Tours Jungle Tours and Trekking Quicksilver Cruises Sailaway Thala Beach Nature Reserve Wavelength Marine Charters Wildlife Habitat Silky Oaks Lodge and Healing Waters Spa Daintree Discovery Centre Hartley’s Crocodile Adventures Jungle Adventures Cape Trib	Ocean Safari Cape Tribulation Aquarius Sail & Snorkel Daintree Tours Back Country Bliss Adventures Reef and Rainforest Connections Tony's Tropical Tours Mossman Gorge Centre Daintree Ecolodge & Spa Daintree Wilderness Lodge Ferntree Rainforest Lodge
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Ms Bennett said the European markets, particularly Germany, are showing the strongest interest in eco-accreditation, while the younger generations in the US and China Japan have a rapidly growing appreciation for environmental credentials.

“There is a real opportunity here for the Douglas Shire to turn its unrivalled environmental reputation into a competitive advantage through the delivery of sustainable authentic sustainable tourism practices.”

Douglas Shire Mayor Julia Leu said eco-accreditation was a clear and recognisable brand that showed the world you practice leading environmental standards

“Everyone knows Douglas Shire has a strong environmental charter and now we have a real chance to beam this across the globe and draw more visitors in,” she said.

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