



Report for Ecotourism Australia on the International Year of Ecotourism 2002

Prepared by Tourism Queensland
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INTRODUCTION

In 2002 Tourism Queensland, through the Sustainable Tourism Department (formerly the Environmental Tourism Unit), coordinated a comprehensive program of initiatives to assist the Queensland ecotourism industry capitalise on the United Nations International Year of Ecotourism. These initiatives when linked to the three core aims of the Australian IYE 2002 program (expertise development and exchange, education and marketing) helped to gain maximum domestic and international exposure for Queensland ecotourism products, as well as consolidate Queensland's position as the premier ecotourism destination in Australia.

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EXPERTISE DEVELOPMENT & EXCHANGE

In 2002 Tourism Queensland was involved in coordinating a number of initiatives aimed at fostering ecotourism expertise development and exchange. This included hosting and providing organisational support for two major tourism conferences and reviewing the Queensland Ecotourism Plan (QEP). These initiatives proved to be highly successful as they brought together some of the most respected and influential minds in Australian and international tourism to look at the issues, trends, partnerships, challenges and opportunities facing tourism and ecotourism at national, state and regional levels. In particular the major discussion points included native title and the level of indigenous involvement in tourism, sustainable tourism development, aviation, regional development, information technology, roads and infrastructure, education, research, marketing and product development. The QEP review also highlighted the expertise Queensland has in planning, developing, managing and marketing ecotourism.

Inaugural National Conference on Tourism Futures

In April 2002 Tourism Queensland organised the *Inaugural National Conference on Tourism Futures* at Couran Cove Island Resort, Gold Coast. The conference attracted over **250** delegates and generated over **\$200,000** in media publicity. It featured more than 40 presenters and workshop facilitators plus a panel of key representatives from industry, government and academia – including Queensland Premier Peter Beattie, Qantas Chief Executive Officer Geoff Dixon, Geoff Carmody of Access Economics and Sir Frank Moore, Chairman of the Tourism Forecasting Council and George Negus, Master of Ceremonies and Facilitator.

Main sponsors included The Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Department of Employment & Training, Main Roads, Queensland Transport, State Development, KPMG, Ernst & Young, CRC Tourism, See Australia, South Pacific Resort Noosa and the Australian Day Tour Company. It has been proposed that the Tourism Futures Conference become an annual event and the 2002 conference outcomes were instrumental in delivering a consolidated view of the current state of the Australian tourism industry for the Commonwealth's 10 Year Plan for Tourism (www.tq.com.au/tfconf/outcomes.htm).

International Ecotourism Conference

In October 2002 Tourism Queensland hosted Australia's first International Ecotourism Conference, "*Ecotourism - a world of difference*" in Cairns, Tropical North Queensland. The conference attracted over **400** delegates from 37 countries (25 percent from overseas) and generated an estimated **\$250,000** in media publicity (including radio interviews, television news stories and newspaper / magazine articles).

This event coordinated by Ecotourism Australia and supported by the United Nations Environment Program and World Tourism Organisation, was the wrap up event of the IYE international calendar and the landmark event of the Australia's IYE program. The conference was an important step towards furthering new partnerships, strengthening ties and heightening awareness of Australia as a world-class ecotourism destination. It was the first time in Australia world authorities on ecotourism had been brought together with tourism operators, government, academics and planning bodies.

A major outcome of the conference was the development of a *Cairns Charter on Partnerships for Ecotourism*. Tourism Queensland provided secretarial and



logistical support for the drafting of this pivotal document pre and post conference. The Charter builds upon the principles of the World Ecotourism Summit's Quebec Declaration on Ecotourism by supporting the establishment and operation of global partnerships on ecotourism policy, planning, research, accreditation and codes of practice (www.ecotourism.org.au/charter.cfm).

Tourism Queensland also raised over \$300,000 in support for the conference which included promotional collateral (videos, postcards and brochures), publicity, artwork and design assistance, sponsorship, technical equipment, mailout database, advertisements, media editorial, prizes and gifts, product familiarisations and a website (www.ecotourism.org.au/conf2002/index.htm),

Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2003-2008

During IYE Tourism Queensland undertook a review of the Queensland Ecotourism Plan, a five-year strategy released in 1997 to provide the framework for the planning, development, management and marketing of ecotourism in Queensland. The review process involved a series of workshops conducted in early 2002 throughout Queensland to gain input from the tourism industry and community. The *Queensland Ecotourism Plan 2003 – 2008: Sustainable tourism in Queensland's natural areas* was launched at the International Ecotourism Conference in Cairns by the Queensland Minister for Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading, the Honourable Merri Rose MP. The new Plan has five key objectives – environmental protection and management, ecotourism industry development, infrastructure development, community development and research – underpinned by 54 actions designed to achieve a strong ecotourism industry in Queensland over the next five years (www.tq.com.au/ecotourism/qep/index.asp).

EDUCATION

Throughout 2002 Tourism Queensland implemented a dedicated communications strategy to increase the profile of Queensland ecotourism tourism operators in a range of international and domestic media. This included product familiarisations for trade and media, sponsoring a Young Tourism Media Award, placing articles featuring ecotourism products in a range of media sources (ie. newspapers, television, newsletters and travel magazines) and participating in online ecotourism forums. These initiatives proved to be successful as they made efficient use of existing resources and provided Queensland ecotourism operators with a unique opportunity to access the world's media and showcase their products in key markets around the globe. The key activities for this initiative included:

Product Familiarisations

Tourism Queensland worked with its international tourism offices, Queensland's Regional Tourist Organisations and the Queensland tourism industry to develop ecotourism product familiarisations that enabled domestic and international travel agents (retail and wholesale) and media (print and broadcast) to experience Queensland ecotourism products first hand. This included establishing strong links with the Australian Tourist Commission's Visiting Journalists Program which hosts an average of 1000 international print and broadcast journalists, generates over \$2 billion in publicity and reaches well over a billion people worldwide every year.

Young Tourism Media Award

Tourism Queensland sponsored a major prize for second year students undertaking media & advertising studies at the Queensland University of Technology. Students as part of their course assessment developed comprehensive media kits for use in promoting the International Ecotourism

Conference. The winner will participate in a tourism media familiarisation with travel writers from the Courier Mail and submit a travel feature for publication in a Queensland metropolitan or regional newspaper in 2003.

Media & Publicity

Tourism Queensland supplied ecotourism fact sheets, product lists, research, NEAP, images and flyers for special ecotourism features in domestic and international media and travel trade. This generated over **\$6 million** in publicity, including:

- Nine Network "Getaway" and Channel Seven "Great Outdoors" travel programs valued at: **\$5 million**
- Ethical Investor Magazine, Australian Financial Review, The Weekend Australian Newspaper (Review and Weekend Magazine Sections), Business Review Weekly, Property Australia and Courier Mail valued at: **\$750,000**
- Local and regional newspapers and magazines valued at: **\$150,000**
- Travel industry magazines including the Australian Geographic, Travellink, Tourism and Hospitality Review and Outback Travel valued at: **\$25,000**
- Tourism Queensland and Australian Tourist Commission international offices for targeted overseas publications including ATE Daily, Singapore Market - NATAS Supplement and Italian Market - TTG Italia valued at: **\$90,000**

Online Forums

Tourism Queensland participated in a number of cooperative online forums (internet based) related to ecotourism and the IYE 2002 including: Planeta.com, ECOCLUB.com and Ecotourism Australia-Wide. These online forums were a powerful medium in which to promote Queensland's IYE initiatives (specifically the International Ecotourism Conference) and Tourism Queensland's environmental publications, research and website. They complemented official websites and helped to promptly circulate information to interested stakeholders. Examples of these online forums included:

- Planet.com is a global IYE forum that distributed information on ecotourism resources, events, environmental news, responsible ecotravel websites and the outcomes of regional preparatory conferences (www.groups.yahoo.com/invite/planeta_australia).
- ECOCLUB.com International Ecotourism Club is an international membership and internet-based network based in Athens, Greece with members in over 130 countries worldwide. It provides global information on ecotourism news, projects, events, accommodation, employment and access to global ecotourism experts (www.ecoclub.com).
- The National *Ecotourism Australia-Wide* online forum was a joint project of the Australian Heritage Commission and Ecotourism Australia that aimed to increase awareness of practical issues on developing, implementing and managing tourism that involves natural and cultural heritage. The forum held over two days in August attracted over 1600 visitors and 443 registrations from 15 overseas countries. Participants included representatives from Commonwealth, State and Local Government, the tourism industry, education and land management agencies (www.ecotourismaustraliawide.net).

MARKETING

Tourism Queensland supported a range of domestic and international strategic marketing activities aimed at promoting Queensland ecotourism products to consumers and trade during IYE. This included trade missions and events, cooperative brochures, advertising and product listings in retail and trade

brochures and website development. These initiatives proved to be successful as they made efficient use of existing resources and provided Queensland ecotourism operators with a unique opportunity to showcase their products in key markets around the globe. The key activities for this initiative included:

- Creation of five eco-fact sheets featuring information on Queensland ecotourism, World Heritage Areas, Accreditation and the IYE for distribution to industry on 100% recycled paper.
- Disseminating information on Queensland ecotourism, IYE, local and regional events and new products to the tourism industry through websites, Newsfax, Tourism Queensland News, Ecotourism eNews (Ecotourism Australia Newsletter) and New Tourism.
- Distributing National IYE print collateral (ie. flyers, posters and programs) to the tourism industry, educational institutions, local, regional and state government and tourism agencies.
- Supplied Ecotourism Australia and the Australian IYE 2002 Program with images sourced from the Tourism Queensland Digital Imaging Kit for use in producing National IYE print collateral (flyers, posters and conference programs) and as Desktop/Wallpaper downloads on the Australia IYE 2002 website (www.ecotourism.org.au/IYE2002/downloads.asp)
- Developed a dedicated IYE 2002 website which listed Queensland initiatives, updates and links to relevant industry websites. This website also featured an online form for ecotourism operators to register related events and activities occurring in 2002. In total 43 local, regional and state events and activities were listed ranging from *Love A Grey Nurse Shark Day* to *Frog Week* (www.tq.com.au/ecotourism/iye2002/index.asp).

Japan Australia Mission

Tourism Queensland designed a number of ecotourism fact sheets and promotional materials for the ATC's 2002 Japan Australia Mission (JAM) held in Osaka, Tokyo and Nagoya from February 18-22. A feature of the JAM 2002 trade mission was a series of workshops and training sessions on Queensland's ecotourism industry, World Heritage Areas, the International Ecotourism Conference, NEAP and IYE run by TQ and the ATC. The success of these workshops has prompted the ATC to include a special focus on Australian ecotourism in JAM 2003, including a dedicated website coordinated by EA which will include over 40 of Queensland's NEAP certified operators.

Australian Tourism Exchange

Tourism Queensland assisted in the promotion of the Queensland ecotourism industry at the 2002 Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) in Brisbane from May to June. ATE is the premier marketing event on the Australian tourism industry's calendar, costing \$8.3 million to stage and is the biggest tourism trade event in the Southern Hemisphere. It is organised by the Australian Tourist Commission and was hosted for the second consecutive year by Tourism Queensland. ATE ran for nine days and featured nearly 700 international buyers from 48 countries and 1,890 Australian delegates from 630 Australian tourism businesses. TQ CEO Stephen Gregg launched the Queensland Ecotourism Product CD and over 50 percent of the Queensland product exhibiting at ATE were nature-based or ecotourism operators. TQ also assisted Ecotourism Australia in undertaking the following activities:

- IYE 2002 theming in the concourse area and main exhibition halls
- Production of an International Ecotourism Product Guide featuring Australia NEAP certified products (ie. tours, accommodation and attractions). The brochure contained product descriptions, an indication of certification status,

background information on ecotourism and the NEAP, and the benefits to travel suppliers of listing genuine NEAP products.

- Provision of a portable Spyder display for Ecotourism Australia to use in promoting the IYE 2002.

Ecotourism Product CD

The Ecotourism Product CD was a cooperative effort between Tourism Queensland and participating operators aimed at raising awareness of Queensland ecotourism product during the IYE. Launched at ATE 2002 the TQ Ecotourism Product CD is a digital brochure designed to showcase a selection of Queensland nature-based and ecotourism products. The CD features 29 Queensland operators including product descriptions and images, fact sheets, travel stories, key contacts, generic Queensland ecotourism images and a short video on ecotourism. Three thousand CD's were produced and distributed worldwide to participating operators, international offices, wholesalers, industry contacts and media. It is available at: www.tq.com.au/ecotourism/ecocd

International Travel Planner

Tourism Queensland profiled Queensland ecotourism operators in it's international trade magazine the International Travel Planner (ITP). This included a full-page advertisement for the IYE and individual product listings for Queensland ecotourism products (NEAP certified products are identified by logos). The ITP is produced annually with a print run off 30,000. It is distributed to international trade through TQ international offices and contains product listings on a destination (regional) basis for accommodation, tours, attractions, transfers, shops, restaurants and vehicle hire.

Sunlover Holiday's Program

Tourism Queensland profiled Queensland ecotourism operators in its domestic retail program Sunlover Holiday's. This involved individual product listings for Queensland ecotourism products (NEAP certified products are identified by logos) in the Sunlover Holiday's brochure range. The Sunlover Holidays program is the largest wholesaler of Queensland travel products representing more than 750 Queensland tourism operators and in excess of 3,000 Queensland travel products in its range of 11 mainstream brochures. More than 2.2 million brochures are produced and circulated to 5700 travel agencies throughout Australia and New Zealand every year. The brochure range is destination based and includes accommodation, day and extended tours, car hire, theme parks, attractions, cruising, diving, golfing and rail holidays, romantic interludes, honeymoon packages and short breaks.

NEAP Support

Tourism Queensland has been one of the biggest supporters of Ecotourism Australia (EA) over the last five years including direct sponsorship of newsletters, annual conferences, research, marketing, extensive in-kind support for many aspects of the day-to-day operations and the development and growth of the NEAP. Tourism Queensland's support for the NEAP during IYE 2002 included:

- Funding to the value of **\$15,000** for the development and trial implementation of a regular and effective auditing protocol for the NEAP.
- Profiling of Queensland NEAP products in a variety of state, national and international print media. This generated **\$3.5 million dollars** in overall publicity for the NEAP.
- Increasing the number of Queensland operators with NEAP certified products from 64 in 2001 to **78 in 2002**.



- Developing a NEAP Product Brochure entitled "Discover the Nature of Queensland" as a Pre and Post touring option for delegates and partners attending the 2002 International Ecotourism Conference. The brochure featured 60 NEAP certified Queensland ecotourism operators with product listings including destination colour coding, hero images, bullet point descriptions, NEAP logos and contact details. The brochure was also produced on recycled paper using waterless printing techniques, chosen for their low environmental impact (www.ecotourism.org.au/conf2002/index.htm).

Queensland Ecotourism Award

In 2002 the Queensland Tourism Awards featured an Ecotourism Award (Category 5), which aimed to recognise ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that foster environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation (www.qtic.com.au/home.html). The 2002 winner, the Daintree Eco Lodge & Spa was recognised throughout the state in media releases, industry newsletters and television news reports. Other Queensland ecotourism operators also comprised over 20 percent of the 110 Queensland operators who were recognised as winners, finalists and Yellow Pages Directions Awards recipients. Of these ecotourism operators 90 percent were certified under the NEAP. Tourism Queensland also provided the following assistance to Queensland ecotourism operators:

- Letters of support to a number of operators and government agencies submitting entries
- Individual media release on ecotourism winners and finalists
- Media and promotional plans for ecotourism winners