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Best Job in the World's Ben Southall launches... The Best Expedition in the World!

The world will be able to track former Best Job in the World Island Caretaker Ben Southall on his latest Queensland adventure via a new website as he paddles, pedals and sails a Hobie kayak more than 1000 miles along the Great Barrier Reef.

Tourism Queensland today unveiled the new website for the Best Expedition in the World which will track the former Caretaker of the Islands of the Great Barrier Reef and now Queensland Tourism Ambassador as he explores the reef by kayak, reporting on his adventures along the way.

Tourism Queensland CEO Anthony Hayes said the Best Expedition in the World website www.bestexpeditionintheworld.com would host information about the expedition including an interactive map tracking Ben's location, interesting facts about the reef and tourism experiences along the way.

"The website will give people around the world the opportunity to follow Ben's progress as he makes his way along the Great Barrier Reef from the Town of 1770 through to Cooktown," Mr Hayes said.

"Ben will take his experiences to the world through www.bestexpeditionintheworld.com in the same way that he did during his time as the Best Job in the World Island Caretaker.

"He will depart on 21 May from the Town of 1770 in a Sunstate Hobie kayak and during his four months on the water will blog about his experiences, interaction with the reef and the vast tourism experiences available in Queensland to his global followers.

"Ben will also be assisted by a crew onboard a dedicated support vessel generously provided by Sunsail and stay with a variety of Queensland hostels in the YHA network when the crew visits the mainland along the way.

"Ben's trip and the associated website are a fantastic way for Tourism Queensland to profile not only one of the world's greatest natural wonders but also the experiences and guardians that are committed to protecting the reef for future generations."

Mr Hayes said since announcing the Best Expedition in the World late last year, Ben had secured a range of partners for his trip.

"The support for the Best Expedition in the World has been overwhelming and it's fantastic to see this project come to fruition," he said.

Approximately 1.9 million tourists and 4.9 million recreational visitors enjoy the Great Barrier Reef each year with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park estimated to have contributed approximately \$4 billion to the Queensland economy in 2006-07.

Ben said the Best Expedition in the World was a unique opportunity for him to raise the profile of the Great Barrier Reef, spread the message of research, education and conservation of the Great Barrier Reef, its islands and its vast tourism experiences.

"The aim of my trip is to encourage more people from around the world to experience the Great Barrier Reef for themselves, to engage in active participation in research and protection of the reef for future generations," Ben said.

"To support me with this objective I will also be working with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Queensland Park and Wildlife Services and Reef Check Australia."

To find out more about the Best Expedition in the World and to follow Ben's progress visit www.bestexpeditionintheworld.com

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Katie Macdonald, Market Communications Manager - the Americas

Tourism Queensland

katie.macdonald@tq.com.au

(310) 695-3253