

World Environment Day – A Competitive Edge for Queensland Tourism

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‘Ecosystem Restoration’ is the theme for the 2021 UN World Environment Day and what better location to celebrate for the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) than at picturesque Hervey Bay with K’gari on their doorstep.

QTIC held its annual World Environment Day event on Friday 4 June to inspire operators to consider the opportunities that the industry will have in making sustainability and the environment part of the recovery of tourism – a competitive edge for Queensland in particular.

QTIC Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind said that protecting and restoring our environment is crucial to the growth of the tourism industry, especially post COVID.

“The tourism industry is an important partner with science and policymakers to bring about positive change for sustainability. QTIC has worked tirelessly in this space for a number of years now with our Accreditation program and with support and involvement in several other state and national initiatives.

“QTIC plays an important role in upskilling and guiding the tourism industry to a more sustainable future as we enter a more competitive post COVID market - our environmental edge will be a key advantage in our recovery.

“To evolve into a more sustainable industry we must continue to collaborate with industry operators and leaders, science, government and First Nations culture, as they all provide a unique insight into the future of tourism”, Mr Gschwind said.

UNWTO Secretary, General Zurab Pololikashvili was quoted in the UNWTO *Recommendations for the Transition to a Green Travel and Tourism Economy* stating, “Sustainability must no longer be a niche part of tourism but must be the new norm for every part of our sector”.

QTIC is not alone in supporting the growth of a sustainable sector with the Queensland Government indicating their focus on nature in their recent publication *Designing our tourism future – Action Plan for Tourism Recovery*.

“Tourism experiences showcase natural assets, promote conservation values and enhance outcomes. Conservation tourism has demonstrated that visitors can make a positive contribution to the protection of the natural environment.”

Hervey Bay tourism operator Tasman Venture knows firsthand the importance of sustainability, already being QTIC Accredited and Eco-Tourism certified.

Tasman Venture Marketing and Sales Manager, Kate Ernst said, “These programs have been key to the development and evaluation of the experiences that we offer our guests as well as the vital role these organisations play in our business.

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“As a spokesperson for the region that we operate in and having a responsibility to educate and inspire future generations it is important to lead by example. All operators should aim to operate with minimal impact to the environment, contribute to conservation and take the time to provide opportunities to help their community.

“With the current shift to a predominately domestic market, we are seeing more and more travellers wanting to feel transformed by their travel experiences. They are looking to connect with and feel renewed by their experiences with an emphasis on feeling enriched and giving back”.

QTIC’s World Environment Day event was a great success with keynote speaker Vikki Schaffer, a USC graduate who completed an undergraduate degree in Sustainable Tourism, BA Honours (Class 1) and Doctorate in Philosophy, giving some practical tips and solutions.

QTIC is committed to delivering the highest standard of eco-certified businesses, already partnering with Ecotourism Australia and EarthCheck to achieve this. If you are a tourism business wanting to be more sustainable take a look at QTIC’s Accreditation program and how you can be involved.

<https://www.qtic.com.au/industry-development/accreditation/>

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