

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 4 November 2022

Resilient tourism operators honoured at awards

After a bounce-back year, more than 1,000 tourism operators and individuals from around the state came together for the 2022 Queensland Tourism Awards at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre on Friday night.

From movers and shakers to Mum and Dad operators, Queensland's tourism industry was championed with a total of 78 awards, including 31 Gold, 26 Silver and 20 Bronze Awards presented across 30 categories.

Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) CEO Brett Fraser said the 37th annual Queensland Tourism Awards had brought together an outstanding selection of operators that truly reflect the diverse range of the state's quality tourism offerings.

"Collectively, this year's recipients are a testament to the strength and calibre of the state's tourism operators, and I applaud this great industry and its people for the innovation and resilience they have displayed," Mr Fraser said.

Leading the charge nationally, Queensland recorded its highest ever intrastate visitor rate, noting a 21.5 per cent increase totalling \$12.4 billion¹.

"As Queensland records its highest interstate and intrastate visitors ever, it's special to be able to celebrate Queenslanders supporting Queenslanders at this year's awards after what has been a tumultuous couple of years for the industry," Mr Fraser said.

"In true Queenslander spirit, we are embracing the difficulties we face together by re-connecting and discovering places in our own backyard, as together we are drawn to holidays within our home state.

"The past two years have re-defined how people live, work and travel, and the intrastate tourism we are experiencing is directly correlated to this.

"But this exponential growth doesn't come without major challenges for our operators who continue to battle with a lack of workforce."

Queensland Airports Limited (QAL), which owns and operates Gold Coast, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach airports, continues its long-term presenting partnership with the Queensland Tourism Awards – now in its 16th year.

Queensland Airports CEO Amelia Evans said this past year has been a mix of recovery and rebuilding for Queensland Airports Limited – and the entire Queensland tourism industry.

¹ [Tourism & Events Queensland \(2022\) Domestic Overnight Visitors to Queensland.](#)

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"It's so pleasing to be able to bring the industry together again after the challenges over the COVID-19 impacted period, in which the aviation and tourism industries were hit hard, following by a period of passenger numbers rapidly rebuilding," Ms Evans said.

"Since Queensland opened back up to domestic markets, and stayed open from December last year, passenger numbers across all our airports continue to increase at a rapid rate.

"This past financial year 4.4 million passengers travelled through our four airports, up from 3.2 million in 2021, these numbers show consumer confidence in this amazing state remains strong and we are looking forward to welcoming over 8 million passengers back through our airports this year."

Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said the Queensland Tourism Awards celebrated a remarkable year.

"It has been terrific to see Queensland domestic tourism bounce back so strongly with a nation leading \$19.6 billion in overnight visitor spending," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"We owe much of Queensland's achievements to the hard work, resilience and innovation of the State's tourism operators, some of whom are recognised by the 2022 Awards.

"Congratulations to this year's award winners and finalists for delivering world-class visitor experiences and making Queensland a destination of choice.

"With the rebuild of our international visitor economy underway and a runway of opportunities to the 2032 Games, Queensland tourism operators have reason to be confident."

Among the accolades presented was a new Hall of Fame winner, two RACQ People's Choice Awards and in its inaugural year, a Judges Choice Award.

The spotlight was on outback Queensland this year with eight rural operators taking out awards, as well as the Southern Great Barrier Reef region receiving an impressive 12 awards.

A hero in its category which recognises ecologically sustainable tourism, Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort received The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism, placing it in the Queensland Tourism Awards Hall of Fame – a prestigious accolade presented to entrants that have won in their selected Queensland Tourism Awards category for three consecutive years.

Each year, the Queensland Tourism Awards are judged by a panel of industry experts who volunteer their services to assess submission and travel across Queensland to experience firsthand the amenities and services of the nominated operators.

Select category winners will gain automatic entry into the Australian Tourism Awards, which will be held at Doltone House in Sydney on Friday 17 March 2023. Next year the Queensland Tourism Awards will be held at the Cairns Convention Centre on Friday 24 November 2023.

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– ENDS –

- A full list of Queensland Tourism Awards recipients is attached.

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Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is the peak industry body for tourism in Queensland representing more than 3,000 members. QTIC is a private sector, membership-based organisation which, since 2001, has worked to influence and shape the state's tourism business environment that directly contributes \$27.2 billion to the Queensland's economy and employs more than 237,000 Queenslanders.

Category	Place	Winner	Hall of Fame	Region
Major Tourist Attractions				
	1st	Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary		Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)
	2nd	Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum of Natural History		Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
	3rd	Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame		Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
Tourist Attractions				
	1st	Bundaberg Rum Distillery Visitor Experience		Bundaberg Tourism
	2nd	Wildlife Habitat		Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
	3rd	Amaze World		Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)
Major Festivals and Events				
	1st	Major Events Gold Coast - Cooly Rocks On		Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)
	2nd	Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers		Southern Queensland Country (Southern Queensland Country Tourism)
Festivals and Events				
	1st	Outback Queensland Masters		Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
	2nd	Rockhampton Regional Council - RockyNats 02		Capricorn Enterprise
	3rd	Isaac Regional Council - St Lawrence Wetlands Weekend Event		Mackay (Mackay Tourism Limited)
The Steve Irwin Award for Ecotourism				
	1st	Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort	Hall of Fame	Bundaberg Tourism
	2nd	Fun Over 50 Holidays		Brisbane Economic Development Agency
	3rd	Lady Musgrave Experience		Bundaberg Tourism
Cultural Tourism				
	1st	Fun Over 50 Holidays		Brisbane Economic Development Agency
	2nd	Paronella Park		Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
	3rd	Eromanga Natural History Museum		Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism				
	1st	Spirits of Red Sand		Brisbane Economic Development Agency
	2nd	Cape York Peninsula Lodge		Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
	3rd	Yura Tours		Brisbane Economic Development Agency
Tourism Retail & Hire Services				
	1st	Pelican Boat Hire		Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)

2nd	Whitsunday Coast Airport	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
3rd	Shute Harbour Marine Terminal	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)

Visitor Information and Services

1st	Quilpie Visitor Information Centre, Museum & Gallery	Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
2nd	Noosa Visitor Information Centre	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)
3rd	Agnes Water / 1770 Visitor Information Centre	Gladstone Area Promotion & Development Ltd

Business Event Venues

1st	Empire Apartment Hotel Conference Centre	Capricorn Enterprise
2nd	Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre	Mackay (Mackay Tourism Limited)

Major Tour and Transport Operators

1st	Sea World Cruises	Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)
2nd	Ocean Rafting	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
3rd	Exemplar Coaches & Limousines	Tropical North Queensland (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)

Tour and Transport Operators

1st	Fun Over 50 Holidays	Brisbane Economic Development Agency
2nd	Aquascene Charters	Townsville (Townsville Enterprise Limited)
3rd	1770 LARC! Tours	Gladstone Area Promotion & Development Ltd

Adventure Tourism

1st	Ocean Rafting	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
2nd	Ocean Safari	Tropical North Queensland (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
3rd	Aquascene Charters	Townsville (Townsville Enterprise Limited)

The Richard Power Award for Tourism Marketing and Campaigns

1st	Tourism Tropical North Queensland - Autumn Looks Great in Green	Tropical North Queensland (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
2nd	Rockhampton Regional Council - Explore Rockhampton	Capricorn Enterprise
3rd	Brisbane Economic Development Agency - Love, Brisbane	Brisbane Economic Development Agency

Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services

1st	Sea World Cruises	Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)
2nd	Humble on Duke	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)

Tourism Wineries, Distilleries and Breweries

1st	Tamborine Mountain Distillery	Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)
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2nd	O'Reilly's Canungra Valley Vineyards	Brisbane Economic Development Agency
3rd	Heritage Estate Winery	Southern Queensland Country (Southern Queensland Country Tourism)

Caravan and Holiday Parks

1st	BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
2nd	Julia Creek Caravan Park	Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
3rd	Ingenia Holidays Cairns Coconut	Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)

Hosted Accommodation

1st	Bli Bli House Luxury Accommodation	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)
2nd	Narrows Escape Rainforest Retreat	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)

Unique Accommodation

1st	Mitchell Grass Retreat	Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
2nd	Lady Musgrave Experience	Bundaberg Tourism
3rd	Cruise Whitsundays - Reefstays	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)

Self Contained Accommodation

1st	RACV Noosa Resort	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)
2nd	Pinnacles Resort	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
3rd	Mirage Whitsundays	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)

3-3.5 Star Accommodation

1st	Magnums Accommodation Airlie Beach	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
2nd	Lazy Lizard Motor Inn	Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)

4-4.5 Star Accommodation

1st	Cape York Peninsula Lodge	Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
2nd	Empire Apartment Hotel	Capricorn Enterprise
3rd	Rydges Gold Coast Airport	Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)

5 Star Accommodation

1st	The Reef House Boutique Hotel and Spa	Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
2nd	InterContinental Hayman Island Resort	Whitsundays (Tourism Whitsundays)
3rd	Emporium Hotel	Brisbane Economic Development Agency

New Tourism Business

1st	Wildcat Mackay	Mackay (Mackay Tourism Limited)
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2nd	Dorsett Gold Coast Hotel	Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)
3rd	Macadamias Australia	Bundaberg Tourism

Excellence in Food Tourism

1st	Creative Tours and Events	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)
2nd	Scenic Rim Regional Council - Scenic Rim Eat Local Movement	Brisbane Economic Development Agency

Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer or a Volunteer Group

1st	The Royal Theatre Winton	Outback (Outback Queensland Tourism Association Inc.)
2nd	Moreton Bay Region Industry and Tourism Volunteer Team	Brisbane Economic Development Agency
3rd	Australia Zoo	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)

Young Achievers Award

1st	Amy Gash	Bundaberg Tourism
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The Marie Watson-Blake Award for Outstanding Contribution by an Individual

1st	Paul Donovan	Gold Coast (Destination Gold Coast)
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RACQ People's Choice Award - Experience & Services

1st	Paronella Park	Tropical North Queensalnd (Tourism Tropical North Queensland)
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RACQ People's Choice Award - Accommodation

1st	RACV Noosa Resort	Sunshine Coast (Visit Sunshine Coast)
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Judges Award for Innovation and Resilience

1st	Maiala Park Lodge	Brisbane Economic Development Agency
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