



Raising the bar for World Heritage Tour Guides

Wet Tropics World Heritage Area tour guides will participate in the region's first online training program 'raising the bar' for World Heritage tourism in the Wet Tropics.

WTMA has been working with tourism operators and guides to develop the online training program that will assist the industry to provide quality visitor experiences in and around the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The online training program was developed with funding secured by the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) and enabled the participation of the first 50 participants at no cost.

WTMA Executive Director Andrew Maclean said this is an excellent opportunity to ensure World Heritage values are represented accurately.

"Providing ongoing support to tour guides who are presenting the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to visitors, will also reduce the onerous task faced by tour guides when having to source new information to enhance the visitor experience," Mr Maclean said.

Tour operators involved in development of the training program have already indicated strong interest.

"We're very excited about the launch of the tour guide training. It is a fantastic resource. It fosters excellence in communication, thus creating a competitive advantage for the employee, employer and the region as a whole; whilst also inspiring and reinvigorating long term staff with learning and networking opportunities," said Sheena Walshaw from Jungle Surfing Canopy Tours.

The training program will also support a World Heritage Specialist Guide Network that will function as an 'Alumni', similar to that currently operated by Savannah Guides.

The network will foster information sharing between tour guides and specialists such as land managers and researchers on aspects of the World Heritage Area in a user friendly format that can be easily circulated.

"WTMA believes the World Heritage Specialist Guide Network will provide the industry with a crucial link to experts, management agencies, scientists and traditional owners; affording them the opportunity to network and continually improve the knowledge capacity of the guiding fraternity of north Queensland," Mr Maclean said.

"Although tour guides will receive preference in the first round of the training program, its ongoing use will not be restricted to those within the tourism industry.

It's also important to recognise the tremendous amount of information imparted by others who are in contact with visitors in and around the World Heritage Area - such as tour bus drivers.

At the end of the day, the aim of the training is to reaffirm the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area's position as a must-do destination," added Mr Maclean.

