

MEDIA RELEASE

Global eco standing for Douglas

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A UNITED Nations endorsed organisation has given Douglas Shire tourism a big green tick, granting the region a place in a global top 100 list of most sustainable destinations.

The Shire is the only Australian region to feature in the exclusive list, which puts Douglas Shire closer to becoming the world's first eco-certified region. Council will be presented the worldwide achievement at the Global Green Destinations Conference in the Netherlands tonight.

Douglas Shire Mayor Julia Leu said the region's top 100 placing proved local tourism operators were global leaders in sustainable practices.

"Everyone knows Douglas Shire has a strong environmental charter, but now we have made it official and beamed it across the globe," she said.

"International visitors want more authentic and sustainable travel experiences; which Douglas Shire has now categorically proven under independent and international scrutiny.

"Douglas Shire is the only place where the Daintree Rainforest meets the Great Barrier Reef and we can really celebrate this."

Douglas Shire's credentials were measured against green criteria recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which is a United Nations endorsed organisation.

It comes as the region gears up to host Eco Fashion Week 2018 in Port Douglas and Mossman in November.

Other countries featured in the 2017 list include South Africa (Cape Town), Thailand (Tung Dap Village), Uruguay (Punta del Esta), Colombia (Lake Tota) and Netherlands.

Council is also working in partnership with Tourism Port Douglas Daintree and Eco Tourism Australia to boost certifications among tourism operators in the region.

European markets, particularly Germany, are showing the strongest interest in eco-accreditation, while the younger generations in the US and China Japan have a rapidly growing appreciation for environmental credentials.

Ecotourism Australia CEO Rod Hillman said Douglas Shire's inclusion in the top 100 would give international recognition to the region's sustainability practices and policies.

"Douglas Shire entering the Top 100 is the first step on their journey to become the World's first certified ecotourism destination, in partnership with Ecotourism Australia," he said.

"The certification brings credibility and authenticity to the Douglas Shire's sustainable and ecotourism credentials through independent assessment and verification against a globally recognised standard."

"International recognition such as Sustainable Destinations Top 100 and certified ecotourism certification positions the Douglas Shire as a global destination for eco tourists and responsible tourism.

"International visitors are increasingly looking for destinations that have credibility through external and independent verification that reassures the visitor that the experiences there will deliver on the marketing promise"

The Shire is the only entrant from Australia to be recognised in this way and we look forward to the December announcement of the final 'Top 100'.

Tourism Port Douglas Daintree Executive Officer Tara Bennett said foundations were in place to become to the first eco-certified region in Australia.

"This shows our industry is setting the benchmark high," she said.

"We live in an area of outstanding natural beauty that is globally significant and our operators are committed to protecting, preserving and ensuring long-term, sustainable tourism experiences that are authentic, memorable and safe."



Typical Top 100 destinations are dedicated to GREEN values:

- **Genuine and authentic:** supporting the celebration of local culture and tradition.

- **Responsible:** defending people against exploitation, human rights violation, and disruptive mass tourism (over tourism).
- **Economically sustainable:** involving the local business community and enhancing local community employment during and beyond the holiday season.
- **Environment & climate friendly:** combatting climate change and environmental degradation; ensuring public health and safety.
- **Nature, scenery & animal friendly:** protecting scenic views, habitats and wildlife, and respecting animals used in tourism.

Currently, there are 23 operators providing eco-certified tourism experiences in Douglas Shire as per the Green Travel Guide on www.ecotourism.org.au.

These are:

Daintree Specialised Tours Jungle Tours and Trekking Quicksilver Cruises Sailaway Thala Beach Nature Reserve Wavelength Marine Charters Wildlife Habitat Silky Oaks Lodge and Healing Waters Spa Daintree Discovery Centre Hartley's Crocodile Adventures Jungle Adventures Cape Trib	Ocean Safari Cape Tribulation Aquarius Sail & Snorkel Daintree Tours Back Country Bliss Adventures Reef and Rainforest Connections Tony's Tropical Tours Mossman Gorge Centre Daintree Ecolodge & Spa Daintree Wilderness Lodge Ferntree Rainforest Lodge Sweet Farm Tours Snorkel Port Douglas
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More details about the Global Green Destination Days Conference are available here:

<http://greendestinations.org/2018-global-green-destinations-days/>

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