

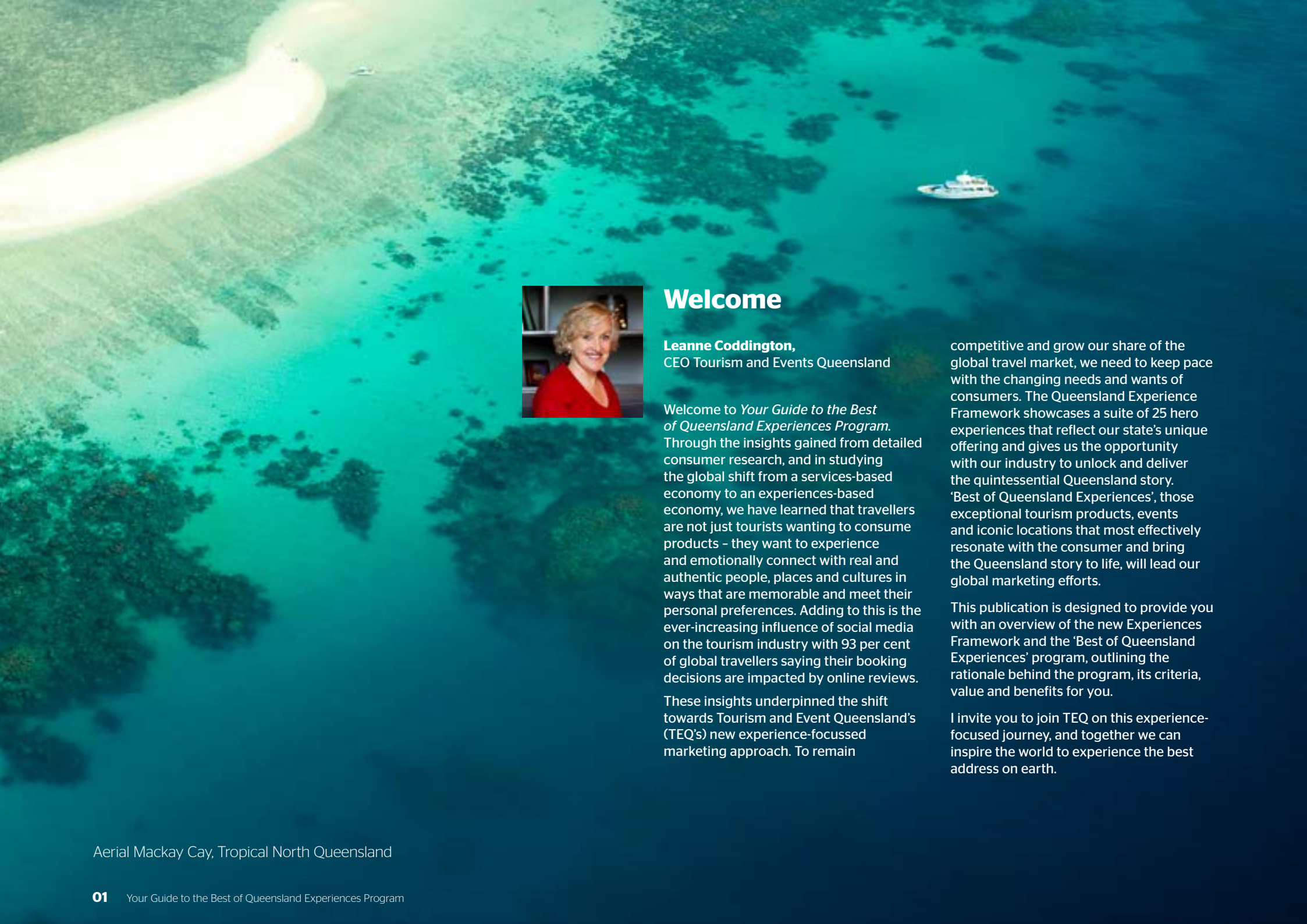
Your Guide to the
Best of Queensland
Experiences Program



TOURISM
& EVENTS
Queensland

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Welcome

Leanne Coddington,
CEO Tourism and Events Queensland

Welcome to *Your Guide to the Best of Queensland Experiences Program*. Through the insights gained from detailed consumer research, and in studying the global shift from a services-based economy to an experiences-based economy, we have learned that travellers are not just tourists wanting to consume products - they want to experience and emotionally connect with real and authentic people, places and cultures in ways that are memorable and meet their personal preferences. Adding to this is the ever-increasing influence of social media on the tourism industry with 93 per cent of global travellers saying their booking decisions are impacted by online reviews.

These insights underpinned the shift towards Tourism and Event Queensland's (TEQ's) new experience-focussed marketing approach. To remain

competitive and grow our share of the global travel market, we need to keep pace with the changing needs and wants of consumers. The Queensland Experience Framework showcases a suite of 25 hero experiences that reflect our state's unique offering and gives us the opportunity with our industry to unlock and deliver the quintessential Queensland story. 'Best of Queensland Experiences', those exceptional tourism products, events and iconic locations that most effectively resonate with the consumer and bring the Queensland story to life, will lead our global marketing efforts.

This publication is designed to provide you with an overview of the new Experiences Framework and the 'Best of Queensland Experiences' program, outlining the rationale behind the program, its criteria, value and benefits for you.

I invite you to join TEQ on this experience-focussed journey, and together we can inspire the world to experience the best address on earth.

Today's guests are sharing their experiences far and wide. They are making holiday decisions based on what they hear about exceptional experiences from their friends, peers or even complete strangers through social channels and review sites.

Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), in partnership with Regional Tourism Organisations across the state, is responding to the expectations of today's guests by embarking on a journey to identify the exceptional tourism experiences in Queensland to help us deliver our 'Best address on earth' promise to our visitors.

The tourism products identified as The Best of Queensland Experiences consistently

deliver outstanding experiences to our guests and demonstrate great business practices.

The Best of Queensland Experiences will feature in TEQ's promotional activity to drive increased visitation and expenditure to Queensland. Featuring the best of our tourism industry will ensure that we are directing visitors to exceptional experiences. Because we know that when visitors have exceptional experiences, they tell their friends, families and the wider community through social media, which helps us to inspire the world to experience the best address on earth.

Background

In 2016, TEQ undertook comprehensive research to identify consumer drivers as a basis for a consumer led, evidence based marketing approach. The findings led the organisation to a new marketing direction and brand architecture for Queensland, one which showcases those experiences that best define the Queensland story and represent where the State has a competitive advantage. To learn more about the Queensland Brand Story, visit teq.queensland.com/brand

To guide our new direction, TEQ developed an Experience Framework which identifies

five key Experience Pillars incorporating 25 Hero Experiences that reflect the heart and soul of the Queensland story. TEQ's experience marketing approach will be implemented through activity focusing on relevant Hero Experiences that have the best potential to drive visitation from our target market segments. The Best of Queensland Experiences program identifies the exceptional products, events and iconic locations that bring those Hero Experiences to life for our guests and which embody our 'Best address on earth' vision.

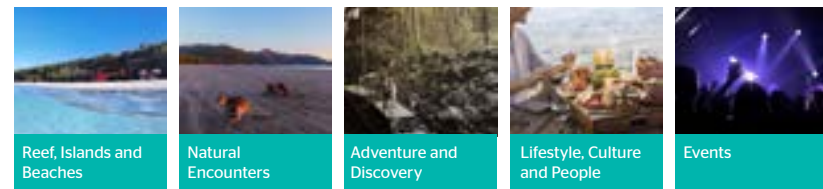
Queensland's Experience Framework

Queensland's Experience Framework identifies five key Experience Pillars and supporting Hero Experiences that reflect the heart and soul of the Queensland story and represents where we have a competitive advantage.

The Framework will guide TEQ's marketing activities by focusing on Hero Experiences that have the best potential to drive visitation and expenditure. The Framework will also identify Queensland's exceptional tourism products and guide the future development of quality and innovative experiences.

Experience Pillars

These five experience pillars have been identified through consumer research as categories that set Queensland apart. They form the backbone of Tourism and Events Queensland's creative strategy and define how messaging is delivered to consumers.



Hero Experiences

Each Experience Pillar has a suite of Hero Experiences that reflect the heart and soul of the Queensland story and represent where we have a competitive advantage.

- Great Barrier Reef
- Islands
- Beaches
- Diving and Snorkeling
- Sailing
- Natural Landscapes
- Wildlife Experiences
- Marine Life Experiences
- Adventure Experiences
- Dinosaurs and Fossicking
- Theme Parks
- Journeys
- Food and Beverage
- Outback and Country Life
- Local Characters
- City Experiences
- Indigenous Experiences
- Endurance Events
- Food and Beverage Events
- Country Music Events
- Music and Entertainment Events
- Brisbane's Cultural and Creative Precincts
- Blockbuster Sport
- Outback Events
- Indigenous Events

Best of Queensland Experiences

The Best of Queensland Experiences are identified as exceptional tourism products, events and iconic locations that bring to life Queensland's Hero Experiences.

Queensland
AUSTRALIA

Objectives

The objectives of the Best of Queensland Experiences program are to:

1. Foster trust in the Queensland brand by ensuring the best Queensland experiences are used to promote the Queensland 'Best address on earth' promise
2. Develop a robust and transparent framework for identifying the Best of Queensland Experiences
3. Recognise those Queensland tourism operators who consistently deliver high quality visitor experiences and celebrate the Queensland brand story
4. Work in partnership with RTOs and QTIC to support the Queensland tourism industry and community to consistently deliver quality visitor experiences through the adoption of modern business practices

What are the Best of Queensland Experiences?

The Best of Queensland Experiences bring the Queensland story to life and wow our visitors with quality, engaging and memorable visitor experiences. They are identified as the exceptional tourism products, events and iconic locations that deliver Queensland's Hero Experiences to our guests.

TEQ will assess tourism products who have a live listing on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) against criteria which corresponds with the expectations of today's guests and best practice industry standards. The assessment process will be undertaken annually and successful tourism operators will be notified that they have been identified as a Best of Queensland Experience.

This guide includes details about the criteria for tourism products to be identified as a Best of Queensland Experience.



Paronella Park,
Tropical North Queensland

A photograph of a person's legs hanging over the side of a white boat, with the ocean and a hazy horizon in the background. The person is wearing a white top and a gold bracelet. The boat is moving, as evidenced by the white wake in the water.

Recognition

Tourism products identified as a Best of Queensland Experience, who demonstrate their ability to deliver a high-quality visitor experience, will be prioritised by TEQ in all of our marketing activities. They will be the 'go to' products for TEQ and will be exposed to a number of potential opportunities including:

- A listing in TEQ's Best of Queensland Experiences Database accessed by TEQ's marketing team when planning and creating content across all channels
- A range of domestic and international marketing benefits which may include:
 - Preference in content creation and promotion
 - Prioritised display within search results on [Queensland.com](https://www.queensland.com)
 - Social media content featured through the #thisisqueensland social media feed on [Queensland.com](https://www.queensland.com)
 - Preference for inclusion in publicity activity, including media releases, media pitches and familiarisations
 - Strong product knowledge for TEQ staff to enable reactive and proactive opportunities
 - Preference for editorial opportunities
 - First preference for campaign advertising opportunities
 - Preference for inclusion in TEQ partner activity
- All operators on will receive an in depth report from ReviewPro that collates information on their experience from over 175 review platforms

Best of Queensland Experiences will be sent an Additional Information Form, which will assist TEQ to understand your business better and identify potential marketing and development opportunities. It's important this form is completed so TEQ can look for opportunities to feature your experience

Criteria

Best of Queensland Experiences are determined by weighted criteria and will need to achieve a score of at least 80 out of 100. The critical determinant is the delivery of an exceptional experience based on guest feedback.

A live listing on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) is a prerequisite for all experiences.

Criteria	Weighting Points
Consistent delivery of an exceptional experience, based on positive guest reviews	60
Website with secure online booking platform	15
Active and engaging social media presence	15
Regional Tourism Organisation membership	5
Accreditation	5
Total Score	100

Details on how the criteria are measured, why they are important and how your business can meet them are outlined in this guide.



Live listing on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse

Prerequisite

What is required?

Tourism products must have a live product listing on ATDW to be assessed against the Best of Queensland Experiences criteria.

How is this measured?

TEQ will use the ATDW registration database to determine who has a live listing on ATDW. Please make sure the information in your ATDW listing is correct and up to date.

Why is this a criteria?

The ATDW is the national platform for Australian digital tourism information and is the central distribution and storage facility for our tourism industry to be connected to consumers through Queensland channels including queensland.com, and the [Queensland Blog](#), which collectively had over 5.8 million visits in 2016/17.

Why is this important for your business?

The ATDW is an extremely cost effective form of online distribution. By listing your product once in the ATDW database, you will benefit from being listed on Tourism and Events Queensland's consumer website queensland.com, Tourism Australia's consumer website australia.com and through ATDW's extensive network of over 150 tourism distributors.

Being registered on ATDW allows you to generate more leads and sales. By regularly updating your listing with great images, direct booking links and social media details you will create an enticing product listing that profiles the experience you offer.

Why is this important to the consumer?

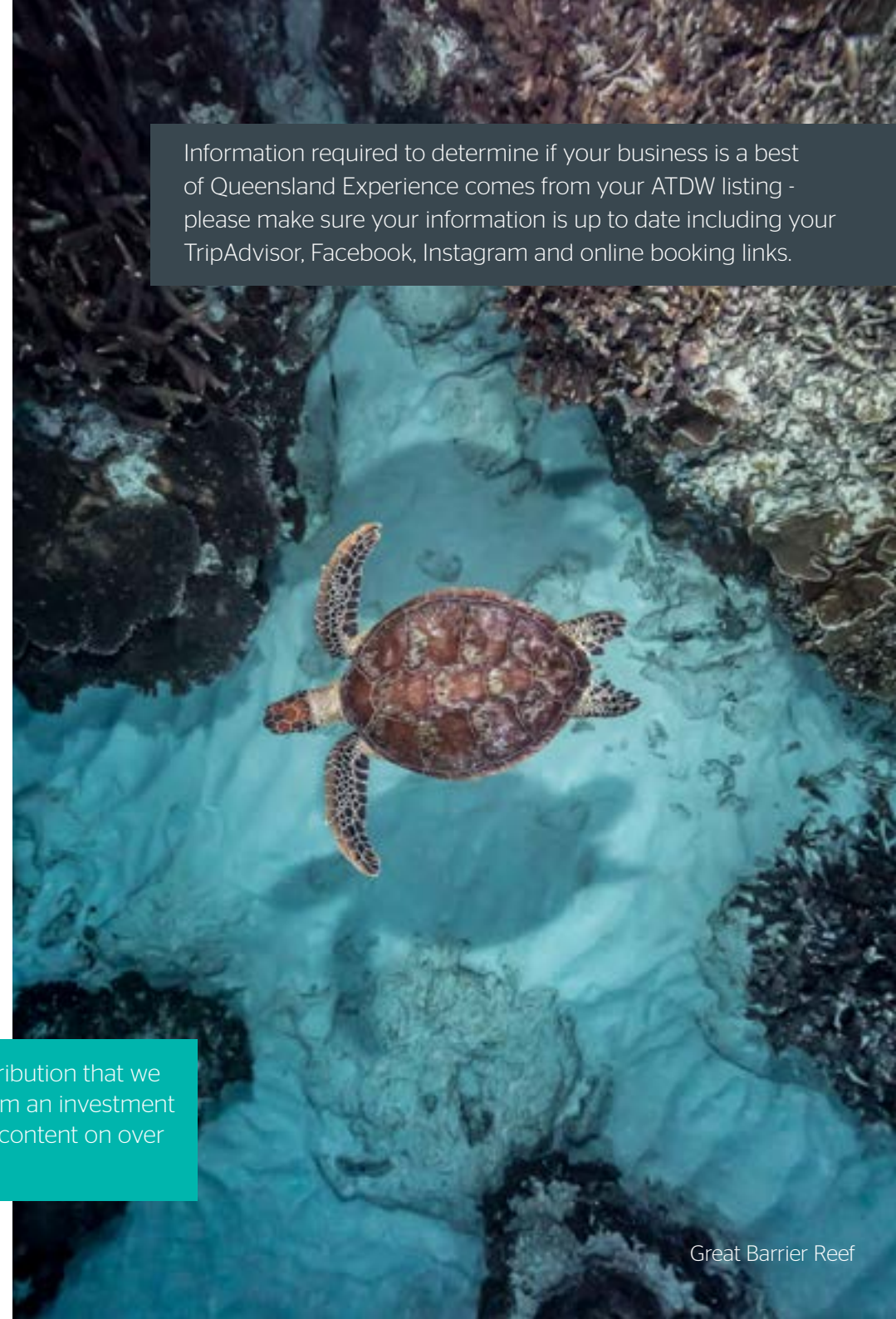
ATDW distributes your information to a wide network of websites where the consumer can more easily access information on your business while searching online.

How can a business do this?

To register for the ATDW and for tips on boosting your product listing visit teq.queensland.com/atdw

"Tasman Venture is registered with ATDW and the additional exposure and distribution that we have been able to generate through the use of ATDW has been significant. From an investment as low as \$150 per year, we have been able to feature written, video and photo content on over 60 websites world wide - that makes for a pretty good ROI!". *Tasman Venture*

Information required to determine if your business is a best of Queensland Experience comes from your ATDW listing - please make sure your information is up to date including your TripAdvisor, Facebook, Instagram and online booking links.



Consistent delivery of an exceptional experience

Weighting - 60 points

What is required?

A tourism product must consistently provide exceptional experiences and encourage guests to submit reviews via an online platform such as TripAdvisor, Facebook or Google.

How is this measured?

TEQ has engaged ReviewPro, a company that aggregates information for tourism businesses from over 175 worldwide online review platforms. The information is collated and provides a Global Review Index™ (GRI) score, out of 100 based on a combined measure of consumer star/bubble ratings from online review platforms such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, Expedia, Facebook and Google. A minimum GRI score of 80 must be achieved to meet this criteria.

See the next page for more information on ReviewPro.

Why is this a criteria?

Our guests ultimately decide what represents an exceptional experience, therefore TEQ believes this is the most important criteria for identifying the Best of Queensland Experiences. TEQ needs to be confident that we are directing consumers to the best experiences. Ensuring we promote experiences that drive consumer word of mouth and conversations online will build trust in our brand and create positive perceptions of Queensland.

Why is this important for your business?

Each review posted online by a consumer is a form of advertising for your business. Online reviews create greater awareness of who you are and what you do and can influence search engine results to make your business easier to find. Constructive criticism and suggestions can be a good opportunity to resolve guests concerns and improve business practices. Review sites also provide more exposure to your business, with over 150 million monthly active users on TripAdvisor alone.

Before making decisions on where to go, where to stay and what to do on holidays, guests want to hear about the experiences other travellers have had. The reviews they read have a significant impact as to what guests book with 88% of online shoppers incorporating reviews into their purchase decision. If there aren't any reviews for customers to read, it reduces their confidence to book your experience.

How can a business do this?

Deliver an exceptional experience! Make sure your business and staff are customer focused and encourage your guests to write reviews.

For more information and tips see www.reviewpro.com/blog/10-top-tips-climbing-tripadvisor-rankings/

"We have a very autonomous business. We have over 32 staff working in very varied roles - from catering staff, vehicle cleaners, Reservations and Operations' staff, sales staff, mechanical & fleet maintenance, skippers & tour guides. We are very proud of the fact that no matter what the role in the business is, it's just as important as anyone else's. This has created a culture where the vehicle cleaner knows he can have an influence on the experience we deliver by providing clean windows, and equally the catering team know they have the same 'power' by not forgetting the sauce for the BBQ lunch".

The Discovery Group

"We aim to offer an exceptional experience for our guests from the moment they book until we return them to their accommodation and beyond. By far the most important aspect of this, apart from the overall components of the tour and the destinations we visit, is the customer service provided by our staff. Our staff are an integral part of the operation and make the difference between a good experience and an exceptional experience. This is incredibly important to our business in regards to repeat business, word of mouth referrals and positive online reviews".

Ocean Rafting

Mackay Coral Cay, Tropical North Queensland

ReviewPro - Upgrade the guest experience

What does ReviewPro do?

ReviewPro helps tourism businesses around the world to improve their guest experience. Their cloud-based solutions provide an in-depth understanding of operational/service strengths and weaknesses which enables business to make improvements and deliver experiences that exceed guests expectations.

Comprised of industry-leading online reputation and guest satisfaction survey tools, guest intelligence data empowers businesses to focus on what will most positively impact the guest experience.

“ReviewPro is a one stop shop for Reviews, providing reviews across 175 online review platforms.

Our company doesn't have the resource capacity to be monitoring such a large number of sites, and imagine this would be true of most tourism businesses.

The tool is an effective means to gauge how consumers perceive us, provides an excellent source of pooled credible customer feedback, in which we can learn and improve our businesses”.

Sunlover Reef Cruises

Global Review Index

The industry-standard Global Review Index™ (GRI) is an online reputation score available exclusively to ReviewPro clients, which is used by thousands of tourism operators worldwide as a benchmark for reputation management efforts. Based on review data collected from 175 online travel agencies and review sites in more than 45 languages, it can be calculated for a given point in time (day, week, month, year, etc.)

Cornell University recently used GRI™ data to prove that a 1% increase in a hotel's GRI™ results in higher profitability.

[Learn more about how reputation drives revenue.](#)

TEQ and ReviewPro

TEQ has engaged ReviewPro to use their Global Review Index™ to measure the criteria of 'Consistent delivery of an exceptional experience'. Products with a GRI™ of 80 or above will meet this criteria.

Operators will have access to a summary report of their product including the GRI, amount of reviews and management response information.

Please see a sample report here (Please link to an example ReviewPro report to be designed separately)



Undara Experience,
Tropical North Queensland

Website and secure online booking platform

Weighting - 15 points

What is required?

Tourism products need to have their own website and consumers must have the ability to book their experience through a secure online booking platform.

How is this measured?

TEQ will attain website and online booking links through the ADTW registration database. Please make sure the information in your ATDW listing is correct and up to date.

Why is this a criteria?

Research shows that consumers have an expectation to be able to instantly book tourism experiences online. To be truly consumer driven, we need to make sure we are providing experiences that meet consumer expectations.

TEQ aims to create and deliver marketing and development initiatives that will lead to sales. To measure this, we need products to have the ability to easily and reliably measure bookings in an online environment.

Why is this important for your business?

Online booking is considered industry best practice. It allows your business to effectively manage and track bookings. It can also generate more revenue as anyone can book your product from across the globe in an instant. When comparing two tour or accommodation providers when all things are equal, the business that has a site with the ability to accept online reservations is more likely to get the customer. Source: www.thesearchengineshop.com/online-marketing-accommodation-hotels

Why is this important to the consumer?

Consumers have an expectation to book in real-time in the comfort of their own home or while travelling. Their booking experience needs to be fast, easy, convenient and secure.

How can a business do this?

There are a large range of options for online booking systems for tourism operators. Operators can purchase an existing booking system or have one developed specifically to meet their business needs. When purchasing an existing booking

system, operators receive guarantees and back-up support and can be confident that the systems have been tested and proven over time by others in the tourism industry. For more information see TEQ's Big Marketing Guide.

“Online bookings are essential for consumers to book instantly for any of our tour experiences or a ferry ticket to Magnetic Island. The easier the online experience is for the customer the more chance the customer will book with your business vs a competitor”.

SeaLink Queensland

Tour providers get 30-40 per cent more bookings after implementing an online booking system.

Source: TrekkSoft

Active and engaging presence on social media

Weighting - 15 points

What is required?

Tourism products must have an active and engaging presence on Facebook and/or Instagram.

How is this measured?

Facebook and Instagram data for each product is aggregated by a company called Meltwater. Meltwater provides TEQ with the number of posts per week and the engagement rate (likes, comments and shares) for each post.

To apply this data to the social media criteria, TEQ engaged Digital Marketing International (Liz Ward and Fabie Wintle), who have extensive experience working with small and large tourism businesses to improve their social media.

By looking at data for over 1,200 Facebook pages and 500 Instagram pages over a 4 week period, Digital Marketing International have set benchmarks across the three separate criteria outlined on this page in order to give us a good understanding of whether a product has an active and engaging on social media.

Importantly, a product needs to meet two of the three criteria to meet the Social Media criteria for the Best of Queensland Experiences program.

Criteria	Benchmark	Why
Average number of posts across a defined period	Post more than 4 times per week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a good indication as to whether an operator is invested in their channel strategy and communicates regularly to their audience The algorithms on Facebook and Instagram favor pages with a higher quantity of posts, allowing more exposure for content
Consistency of posts across a defined period	<p>Post consistently on channels</p> <p>E.g An operator will pass this criteria if they post 5 times one week, 4 times the next, 4 times the next and 5 times the next, because the amount of posts are consistent.</p> <p>An operator will not pass this criteria if they post 2 times one week, 10 times the next week, 0 times the next week and 7 times the next, because the posts are too inconsistent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a good indication as to whether an operator is invested in their channel strategy and communicates regularly to their audience The algorithms on Facebook and Instagram favor pages with a higher consistency of posts, allowing more exposure for content Gives the audience a consistent and reliable perception of the business and their availability
Quality of the posts and engagement with audience	<p>An average of 20 engagements per post is required, calculated by a point system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook: like = 1, comment = 2, share = 3 Instagram: like = 1, comment = 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audience engagement builds trust in brands, strengthens relationships with audiences and helps to spread messaging and content further

Active and engaging presence on social media - (cont.)

Weighting - 15 points

Why is this a criteria?

Social media continues to be an important and growing platform for guests to engage with businesses. Active social media channels encourage guests to share stories and photos, which drives word of mouth, which can result in additional visitation for your business.

TEQ has a huge social media network reaching thousands of consumers. When TEQ features businesses through our social media channels, we can tag your business and connect consumers to your social media channels, increasing the opportunity for conversion sales.

Why is this important for your business?

The benefits of social media in your marketing mix can be enormous. Social media platforms allow you to distribute content much further than can be reached via their website, and can target audiences who would never have thought of searching for you. Social media can be used to gain insights by searching what consumers are thinking, saying and doing in real time. It's also a great way to provide customer service, answer queries and respond to complaints or compliments.

Posting consistently on Facebook and/or Instagram provides a balanced approach for small businesses in terms of workload and capacity, and importantly affects the amount of exposure that the post will receive from their potential audience. If an operator posts inconsistently and less frequently, algorithms within the channels determine that the information is not displayed to as many people compared to when they regularly and consistently post.

Why is this important to the consumer?

52 per cent of consumers are more likely to trust a brand if it interacts positively on social media. Of social media users who research holiday, travel and accommodation, 59 per cent said the research lead to purchase. People are doing more than consuming content - they are researching and purchasing based on the information they see.

Source: <http://gofuturemedia.com/gofuture-media/new-australian-social-media-statistics/>

How can a business do this?

There are many courses, online tools and workshops to assist in developing your social media strategy. Tourism operators should contact their [Regional Tourism Organisation](#) for further information or review the social media section in [TEQ's Big Marketing Guide](#).

52 per cent of travelers were so influenced by social media that they changed their travel plans

Source: *Sprout Social*

"Social media has been very important to the success of our business. In the year ending June 2016, 40.31 per cent of all our website traffic was generated through social media, predominantly Facebook. This is a significant increase on the year ending June 2015, where only 2.45 per cent of all website traffic was driven through social media. We use our social media channels as a key means to keep customers engaged and to encourage repeat visitation. All guests are provided with a card when disembarking outlining all of our social media details, and are encouraged to 'follow' Tasman Venture on our social media channels to keep engaged".

Tasman Venture

Membership/Partnership with your Regional Tourism Organisation

Weighting - 5 points

What is required?

Membership or Partnership with your Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO)

How is this measured?

TEQ will track RTO Membership through the ADTW registration database. Please make sure the information in your ATDW listing is correct and up to date.

Why is this a criteria?

TEQ works closely and in strong partnership with RTOs across the state. RTOs play an important role in destination marketing, as well as destination, product and industry development.

Why is this important for your business?

Becoming a member or partner of your RTO offers significant benefits including increased market profile, resources, connections, marketing opportunities and gaining support needed to grow your business. It's an investment that delivers the best opportunity to be part of the major marketing activities for your region. The activities an RTO undertakes generate awareness, inspiration and ultimately conversion to drive visitation to your business.

Why is this important to the consumer?

The funding made available to RTOs from industry partnerships allows RTOs to market your destination to consumers and undertake activities that allow customers to more easily access information on your destination and your business.

How can a business do this?

To find out more, contact your Regional Tourism Organisation.

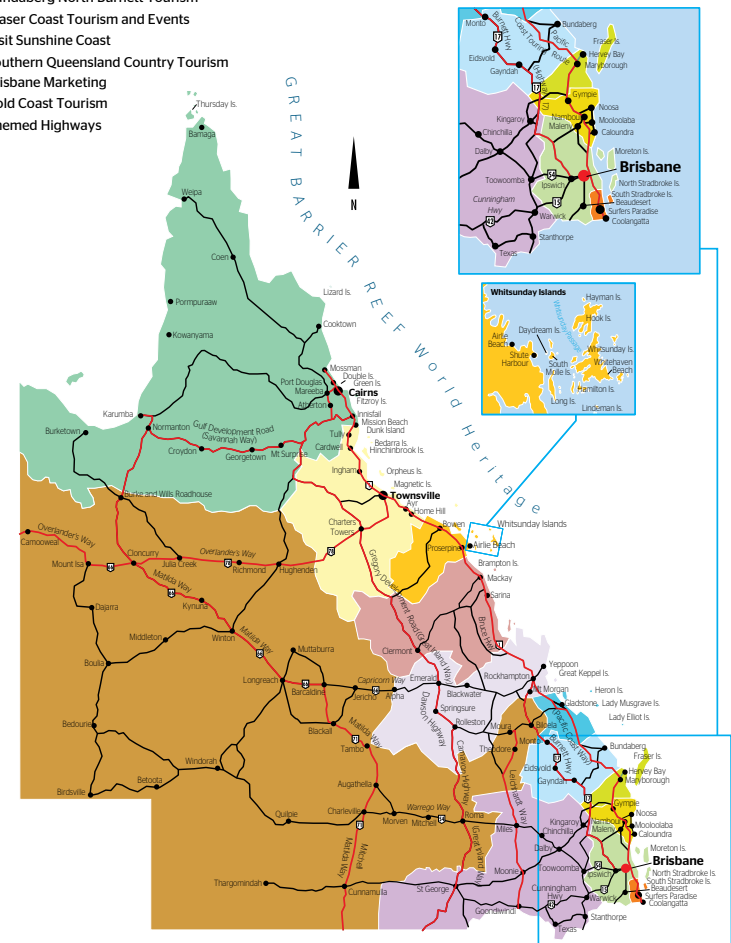
“Our RTO has been an amazing support unit for us. As a small, growing business, they have offered mentoring and professional development opportunities for our team to ensure our staff are growing with the business. We wouldn't be where we are today without Capricorn Enterprise”.

Great Keppel Island Hideaway

Queensland Regional Tourism Organisations

LEGEND

- Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- Townsville Enterprise Ltd
- Outback Queensland Tourism Association
- Mackay Tourism Ltd
- Tourism Whitsundays
- Capricorn Enterprise
- Gladstone Area Promotion & Development Ltd
- Bundaberg North Burnett Tourism
- Fraser Coast Tourism and Events
- Visit Sunshine Coast
- Southern Queensland Country Tourism
- Brisbane Marketing
- Gold Coast Tourism
- Themed Highways



Accreditation Weighting - 5 points

What is required?

Tourism products must be accredited by a recognised accreditation company to meet this criteria.

How is this measured?

This criteria is measured in partnership with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC), aligning to the accepted accreditation, certification and company programs identified for the Queensland Tourism Awards accreditation requirement. Recognised programs can

be found [here](#). This information will also be attained through your ATDW listing - please ensure your ATDW listing is up to date.

Why is this a criteria?

If the tourism industry is to achieve success in the increasingly competitive national and international markets, all sectors of the industry must develop quality experiences that will meet the expectations of their customers. To achieve this goal, all businesses involved in the industry must pay close attention to their business practices to ensure that the

experiences offered by them are reliable, consistent, predictable and sustainable. The accreditation process ensures these business practices are in place and results in customer confidence, which in turn leads to increased profitability.

Why is this important for your business?

Tourism products endorsed by tourism accreditation programs benefit from increased credibility, visibility and competitiveness. Accreditation programs help you focus on aspects of your business that provide resilience through leaner times, exploit better periods and further develop consistency of quality.

Why is this important to the consumer?

Being accredited allows consumers to trust that your business is a quality operation leading to potential purchasing preference.

How can a business do this?

For more information contact the Queensland Tourism Industry Council's Business Support team on (07) 3236 1445 or businesssupport@qtic.com.au

"I would like to say that becoming accredited was much more involved than I expected, but I found it a great tool to once again develop our business. The examples and templates were extremely helpful and I would recommend that anyone interested in going through the process use it as a business planning and development tool. It is something that I could use as a yearly planner for continuous improvement! Very impressed with the whole process".

Oceanview Estates Winery & Restaurant

Q&As

Please see the Q&A document for further questions or information.

Contact

For more information or to discuss this opportunity, please contact your [TEQ Destination Partnerships Representative](#), your [Regional Tourism Organisation](#) or the Experience Development team via experiences@queensland.com



Lady Elliot Island, Southern Great Barrier Reef