

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

7 April 2009

## **New, brighter future for tourism on the Coast**

Sunshine Coast Regional Council and local tourism industry leaders have reached an in-principle agreement to support the creation of a new, regional tourism body designed to guide the future of tourism on the Sunshine Coast.

Local tourism organisations have vowed to embrace a spirit of cooperation that will see the new entity focus on the development of a Sunshine Coast brand whilst celebrating local diversity and protecting existing destination specific brands.

Late last year, Council commissioned an independent report to examine the existing tourism structure following advice from the State Government that the number of local tourism organisations throughout Queensland should be more than halved.

The government stated that regions prepared to consolidate and strengthen their local tourism industry would benefit from substantial funding.

Talks between Council and Coast tourism groups have been underway for some months and a Heads of Agreement has been drafted to reflect the outcome of those discussions.

It has been decided that the Maroochy Tourism Industry Advisory Board will be dissolved and a new central reference group will be appointed to oversee tourism activities in the area.

Tourism Sunshine Coast intends to cease operations when the new Regional Body that will be set up by the Tourism Advisory Board starts operation.

Tourism Noosa and Caloundra Tourism have expressed a desire to work in partnership with the regional body, under the new proposed structure.

The proposed structure will ensure a unified approach to marketing the Sunshine Coast and eliminate the competition of the past whilst protecting existing brands and local diversity in a highly competitive marketplace.

Mayor Bob Abbot said the changes would allow the Sunshine Coast tourism industry to take total control of its own destiny.

Cr Abbot said the restructure would send a clear signal to the tourism industry in Queensland and elsewhere that the Sunshine Coast was open for business and forging ahead.

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"We've been told that other Queensland tourism destinations have been saying behind their hands: 'If the Sunshine Coast ever gets its act together we're in trouble'.

"Well look out, because that's exactly what we're doing with these reforms.

"There has been a lot of goodwill and expertise injected into this process.

"Council wants this to be not only successful, but hugely successful."

Tourism Minister Peter Lawlor welcomed the announcement.

"It's a great day for the Sunshine Coast tourism industry," Mr Lawlor said.

"I understand there is a great swell of industry support for this move.

"This new unified approach will no doubt lead to an even more effective market presence for tourism operators in this region."

**ENDS**

**Media enquiries:**

For comment from tourism industry contact Di Ainsworth on 0412 000 606

For comment from the Mayor, contact Carolyn Tucker, Communications Officer, Executive Office on 0412 285 884