



#QICA2019 Conference speaks to VICs in all regions of QLD

Over 65 delegates representing all tourism regions across the state descended on Bowen in the Whitsundays for the 2019 Bookeasy Queensland Information Centre Association (QICA) Conference from 15th – 17th October.

The annual conference was hosted by Bowen Tourism & Business (BTB) with support from sponsors across the industry and the collaboration of Whitsunday Regional Council and Tourism Whitsundays.

Incoming 19/20 QICA President, Mel Sands said “Congratulations to the team at BTB and Bowen’s Big Mango Visitor Information Centre for hosting a conference which proudly showcased Bowen’s key visitor experiences, incredible food offerings, particularly the seafood at Bird’s Fish Bar and that Bowen ticks so many boxes for tourism. And to no surprise, delegates promised to return”.

Representing 37 visitor information centres (VIC’s) the delegates enjoyed an insightful and fun-filled conference embracing the themes of collaboration and working together.

Guest speakers presented on themes of collaboration, social responsibility and creating strong teams.

Natassia Wheeler, CEO of the regional tourism organisation Tourism Whitsundays, said "The Whitsunday region is proud to be the heart of great events and we know from experience that the best events happen when everyone works together. It was fantastic to work with the team at BTB and QICA in putting on a hugely successful conference that brought so many organisations together, all with the focus of providing exceptional visitor information services."

The team from BTB were proud to showcase the region’s attributes at the waterfront venue at Bowen’s North Queensland Cruising Yacht Club and during the conference’s regional tour. Donning mask & snorkel to explore Bowen’s fringing reef was a highlight for the attendees.

BTB Chair Jenn Honnery said “Bowen is the perfect place for groups to come together, share and unwind in the Whitsundays. We were honoured to host this year’s conference in our beautiful region, which has been such a success thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of all involved.”

Delegates dressed to the nines to celebrate achievements across the network at the 2019 VIC of the Year Awards Gala Dinner held at Bowen’s Grand View Hotel. Category winners were announced for VICs managed or operated by:

- Local Government: Julia Creek VIC in the McKinlay Shire, Outback Queensland
- Local or Regional Tourism Organisation: Hervey Bay VIC on the Fraser Coast
- Volunteers: Parkyn Hut, Tewantin on the Sunshine Coast

Parkyn’s Hut VIC, operated by the Tewantin Heritage and Historical Society received the inaugural Travel Reimbursement Prize, provided to Volunteer run VICs for their community engagement in the past 12 months.



Throughout the evening prizes were drawn for the annual conference raffle, which raised \$1100 for the nominated local charity Bowen Neighbourhood Centre. VICs were encouraged to bring prizes representing their regions including a range of accommodation options, tours and cruises, local produce, hand-made crafts and jewellery, art and prints.

Closing the evening the 2020 QICA Conference host was announced, with Miles, in Queensland's Western Downs getting ready to welcome the visitor information centre network next year.

Announced at the AGM are the 19/20 executive team from a diverse background of VICs:

- President: Melanie Sands, Brisbane Airport VICs (Brisbane region)
- Vice President: Karen Williams, Miles VIC (Southern Queensland Country region)
- Treasurer: Christin Short, Bowen VIC (Whitsundays region)
- Secretary: Karen Grimm, Quilpie VIC (Outback region)
- Memberships: Jasmin Boyd, Noosa VIC (Sunshine Coast region)
- Newsletter: Catherine Harvey, Kuranda VIC (TTNQ region)
- Website: Andrew Ellis, Fraser Coast VIC, (Fraser Coast region)

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