

QANTAS supports new Biosphere programme

A major corporate sponsor is helping to protect the Great Sandy region only weeks after it received international recognition as the Great Sandy Biosphere.

The Qantas Foundation has made a significant donation to support conservation efforts in the new Biosphere, recognising the contribution that Fauna & Flora International, an international conservation organisation could bring to their partnership with the Burnett Mary Regional Group.

The Group's Chairman Russell Stewart today welcomed the contribution and said he was delighted with the generous support of a well known brand like Qantas.

"This announcement proves what we have believed for some time – that businesses are prepared to help protect the biodiversity of our internationally recognised region," he said.

"I expect that the Biosphere will lead to more partnerships with the private sector, and I again thank the local community who gave us so much enthusiastic support for the nomination."

The Qantas Foundation funds will be used to develop a conservation strategy to safeguard the new Biosphere, working with the Aboriginal community to record ecological knowledge and a program for a natural resource management business forum to enable interested indigenous community groups to get involved in work taking place on the ground.

Australian Program Manager for Fauna & Flora International, Jody Gunn, said her organisation was proud to bring expertise from conservation projects around the world to contribute to the development of the Great Sandy Biosphere's conservation plans.

"We are fortunate that this has been made possible by the generous support of the Qantas Foundation," she said.

"It recognises the importance of one of Australia's most diverse areas, and in line with our vision, supports projects that always aim to include local people in the conservation process."

Encompassing the Bundaberg coastline, Hervey Bay, Maryborough and Gympie, the Great Sandy Biosphere is an area rich in outstanding natural landscapes and great biodiversity. It contains the majority of the world's rainforests growing on sand and significant populations of species which have declined elsewhere in Australia. It is a major migration route for humpback whales and is recognized as an internationally significant feeding and roosting location for migratory birds. It also supports highly significant dugong populations and breeding sites for oceanic turtles in the Pacific Ocean. Many people will know the region by such iconic landmarks as Fraser Island (UNESCO World Heritage site) and Hervey Bay (humpback whale migratory stop-over).



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Founded in 1903, Fauna & Flora International (FFI) is the world's longest-established international conservation organisation. FFI's vision is to create a sustainable future for the planet where biodiversity is conserved by the people living closest to it. FFI aims to do this through the conservation of threatened species and ecosystems worldwide, choosing solutions that are sustainable, based on sound science and take account of human needs.

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