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CAIRNS EDUCATIONAL TOUR COMPANY WINS GOLD AT STATE AWARDS

Cairns-based educational tour company Small World Journeys, a small business that operates multi-day tours for student groups, was awarded gold for Specialised Tourism Services in Friday night's Queensland Tourism Awards. The business was recognised for its ongoing contributions in the educational tourism sector and its focus on sustainability and giving back to community.

"Our goal is to make Cairns *better* because we exist", said Laurie Pritchard, owner and Managing Director of Small World Journeys. "We are educating young people on our tours, and we're planting seeds in their minds that supporting the community they are travelling is an essential element of sustainable tourism. It's so great to be recognised at this level for what we're doing."

The Queensland Tourism Awards are the tourism industry's peak awards – for more than 30 years the awards have been recognising and promoting excellence in tourism.

Small World Journeys runs tours from 4-14 days for domestic and international school groups that sync with curriculum to meet academic, cultural and sustainability goals. Activities on these trips include community engagement and service activities such as mangrove education and clean up, coral bleaching surveys, and the creation of re-useable sanitary pads for ladies in remote Indigenous communities and hygiene packs for the homeless. It is also company policy to include at least one activity with an Aboriginal guide in every tour to support Indigenous communities and their culture.

Speaker of the Queensland Parliament and Member for Mulgrave Curtis Pitt said that he was delighted to support Small World Journeys' nomination for the awards and congratulated Laurie and her team on their gold medal win.

"Most Small World Journey groups travel from interstate and overseas, so this is a wonderful opportunity to showcase Queensland's natural beauty, and educate future leaders about our diverse environment and rich cultural heritage.

"As part of their commitment to responsible and eco-friendly travel, Small World Journeys demonstrate a philanthropic approach to environmental sustainability and make either a donation to the Fitzroy Island Turtle Rehabilitation Centre or adopt a parcel of the Daintree Rainforest in each group's honour," Mr Pitt said.

Small World Journeys was also awarded gold in the Queensland Tourism Awards in 2018 for Specialised Tourism Services. This then took them to the national competition where they won the silver-level award.

About Small World Journeys: SWJ is an educational tour operator whose focus is teaching both Australian and international student groups about Aboriginal culture, sustainability and community service, among other topics.

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