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Next generation of Savannah Guides train in Cairns

Australia's oldest professional tourism guiding course is incorporating modern citizen science activities into a field school in Cairns this week to train the next generation of Savannah Guides.

Savannah Guides Manager Russell Boswell said the 85th Savannah Guides Professional Development Field School would showcase Queensland's guiding excellence to more than 70 participants on 24-28 March.

"Among the highlights is the demonstration of a tourism citizen science model with Mandingalbay Authentic Indigenous Tours that any operator can apply," he said.

"We will show how guests can participate in landscape and bird surveys and assist with processing data from video and audio recordings as part of a cultural tour that gives visitors a role in conservation.

"Participants will explore Cairns icons including the Kuranda Scenic Rail, Cairns Museum and Cairns Cathedral for key storytelling lessons.

"They will also attend workshops on guiding skills, birdwatching and climate change impacts and there will be valuable networking including an Indigenous Tourism Showcase."

Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) Chief Executive Officer Mark Olsen said Tropical North Queensland was a leader in guiding excellence with the Savannah Guides program, which was founded in 1988, training more than 3000 tour guides and Indigenous Rangers over almost four decades.

"The successful Master Reef Guides program has been training guides on the Great Barrier Reef since 2019 and last year the Wet Tropics World Heritage Guides launched online after a decade of face-to-face training," he said.

"Together these programs give guides the communication skills, cultural awareness and scientific knowledge to better share the stories of our dual World Heritage areas.

"Accurate and compelling storytelling is an integral part of the Tropical North Queensland visitor experience, helping guests to understand the ecological and cultural significance of our spectacular landscapes.

"Tourism and Events Queensland has launched the Queensland Tour Guide Community of Practice to support tour guides across the State with resources linked to national EcoGuide certification for guides who deliver authentic, environmentally responsible and professional experiences."

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