

## **BNBT Response to Mon Repos Master Plan Discussion Paper Survey**

### **Do you support the draft concept for the redevelopment of the Mon Repos site?**

Yes

Mon Repos has been identified as an iconic natural encounter experience and is a priority project to build tourism and its economic benefits for the region into the future.

### **Do you support the centre being re-named the Mon Repos Turtle Centre?**

Yes

The new name is to the point and self explanatory and best reflects the visitor experience.

### **Do you support the inclusion of a variety of ecotourism experiences at Mon Repos?**

Yes

Ecotourism has been identified through the CSIRO Megatrends research and the Queensland 20 year Tourism Plan as one of the key drivers of tourism into the future. The Mon Repos redevelopment fits neatly with Bundaberg being the gateway to the Southern Great Barrier Reef.

The proposed other ecotourism experiences should enhance the current Mon Repos experience and the opportunity to create a 12 month visitor experience.

### **With a view to improving financial viability, do you support the plan to engage with local tour operators and businesses to deliver some of the services provided on site?**

Yes

There are many good examples of private enterprise providing services in the ecotourism area. In some areas private enterprise may be more commercially focussed to deliver services in a cost effective manner. Ecotourism accreditation can ensure the standard of service is in line with industry standards. This can include specialised sunrise tours, turtle tour bookings, food services and souvenirs.

### **Are there any outdoor recreation opportunities you would like to see provided on site or in the adjacent conservation park?**

This would depend on the level of facilities provided under the redevelopment. There may be an opportunity for more interpretive displays in the beach/dune turtle trail areas for use in the off season. High quality permanent camping (glamping) is an international growth experience and it appears that Mon Repos could be suitable for that type of visitor facility.

**Do you agree with Mon Repos encouraging curricular based excursions for school groups?**

Yes

There is a great opportunity to educate our students on the conservation values based around Mon Repos and to encourage student groups to visit Mon Repos in the off and shoulder seasons to help build tourism in those periods.

**Do you believe the site redevelopment will improve the quality of experience for school groups and the local community?**

Yes

The current facilities are very dated and do not cope with the numbers of visitors especially during peak turtle season and inclement weather. The interpretive display is very basic and limited due to space and does not meet expectations of interactivity to educate, inform and entertain visitors. There is an expectation of 'living' the Mon Repos turtle experience twelve months a year.

We want to create visitor advocates for the Mon Repos Experience and the redevelopment will go a long way to creating an experience long remembered and talked about

**Would you like to see the local community involved in the delivery of the vision for the site?**

Yes

It is essential to have the local community on side and champions of the redevelopment of Mon Repos. They need to understand the balance of research, conservation and tourism and that it must be sustainable. It will also reinforce the need for campaigns such as Cut the Glow and inclusion in Youth Ranger education curriculum.

**Would you be interested in returning to Mon Repos if new experiences were available to get 'behind the scenes' with turtle conservation and research?**

Yes

There is a worldwide trend to understand why things happen, the increase in paid voluntourism is a great example of this. There could be real interest in a premium experience which would enhance and diversify the education and experience offered to the visitor on the values of turtle conservation at Mon Repos.

It would also create another higher value revenue stream and not impact on the normal experience.

**Do you want to see opportunities for close encounters with turtles continue at Mon Repos?**

Yes

There are many reasons for this. Mon Repos has an important role in educating the public about turtle conservation. It is an iconic ecotourism experience that is important to Bundaberg's tourism industry. It brings pleasure to a wide range of people and has the potential to do so much more.

**Do you support the Master Plan proposal to investigate opportunities for a year round turtle experience with research and education outcomes?**

Yes

There is an expectation from visitors that Mon Repos will deliver these outcomes in a quality manner twelve months a year as many seasonal natural encounters do around the world. National Parks will obtain greater usage of its facilities and the tourism industry will have a year round rather than seasonal attraction.

It will be important to justify and sustain the investment to create a 12 month visitor experience at Mon Repos. At the moment, Mon Repos is only operating at half its potential as there is great opportunity, part from our normal domestic drive market, for visitation over the winter months from the Grey Nomads, international visitation all year round and school groups.

**Would you be interested in sponsorship or donations to a Turtle Fund if funds went directly to assist turtle research and conservation?**

Yes

This would be an ideal avenue for corporate sponsorship plus the ability to build a donation into turtle experience package holidays.

**Do you have any other comments on the Master Plan for Mon Repos?**

It is vital that the full potential of Mon Repos is unlocked to stimulate tourism growth. In a tourism forum held in Bundaberg last year the redevelopment of Mon Repos was seen as the top tourism opportunity for the region. It has also been identified as a priority project in the Bundaberg North Burnett Destination Tourism Plan which is in draft format.

Domestic visitors to the Bundaberg region spent \$1.3 million per day in the year to June 2013, with the turtle season an important drawcard providing a major economic boost to the local economy.

The support of the Queensland Government for the Mon Repos Master Plan is vital to grow the tourism industry, achieve the Queensland Government's 2020 targets and improve the economic viability of the region.