



## **Chaos to clarity: the role of small to medium-sized tourism firms in a mature market**

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008**

**Shangri-La Hotel, Cairns**

### **Introduction**

Small to medium-sized firms (SMEs) have long been the economic powerhouse of the tourism and hospitality industry. As a consistent and sustainable source of international, national and regional wealth generation, employment opportunities and innovation the sector continues to go from strength to strength despite current challenges. The common catalyst for this success lies with the entrepreneur. These individuals are consistently innovative, creative and have an uncanny knack of identifying opportunities and seizing them. The region of North Queensland has an abundance of enterprising business founders who are blessed with an array of internationally renowned areas of natural beauty, notably the rainforests and reef.

This symposium is a celebration of small business success through the talents and endeavours of successful tourism and hospitality owners. It is also a recognition that the ability to embrace change creatively is a skill which can be shared for the benefit of the whole industry. This is a key coping attribute as broad environmental shifts, a maturing prime tourist destination and shortage of skilled workers represent an unprecedented set of new challenges for small to medium-sized tourism and hospitality firms. This theme is used to create a forum where ideas and strategies for sustainable regional development may be debated and discussed.

### **Format**

The symposium is designed for small business practitioners, professionals and researchers. Keynote speakers are drawn from the tourism and hospitality SME sector, government, education and peak industry associations. Delegates will therefore have immediate access to expert advice, commentary and cutting edge research findings with direct significance to regional firms.

### **Who should attend?**

Organizations, entrepreneurs and other individuals with an interest in services especially the tourism and hospitality sector and how they may effectively network for the sustainable economic and environmental development of the state and region including: Industry practitioners and professionals, small business owners/managers, government departments involved in associated strategies, small business development, indigenous entrepreneurs, regional and state tourist commissions and agencies and consultancy firms.