

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Holidaying in QLD still a popular choice

Domestic tourism was impacted by natural disasters and a continued growth in outbound travel by Australian residents in 2010-11. However, despite these challenges, the domestic segment has recorded an increase in visitors this year, according to Tourism Queensland. (source: [http://www.tq.com.au/fms/tq\\_corporate/research%20%28NEW%29/Economic%20and%20Forecasts%20Data/Tourism%20Forecasts%20-%20May%202012.pdf](http://www.tq.com.au/fms/tq_corporate/research%20%28NEW%29/Economic%20and%20Forecasts%20Data/Tourism%20Forecasts%20-%20May%202012.pdf))

Experienced Bed & Breakfast owners Bruno and Marlies Gehrig are excited by the turnaround. The Gehrigs have 20 years of hospitality experience, and established Kookas Bed & Breakfast in 2001, after travelling around the world, searching for new ideas and other business opportunities. Originally from Switzerland, once they had visited Cairns they new they wanted to stay.

The name of the Bed & Breakfast came from the vast number of kookaburras on the property. Bruno and Marlies describe Kookas Bed & Breakfast as a 'tropical haven'. It's their very own Swiss-style chalet nestled in the tropical foothills of Mt Whitfield, only 10 minutes from the city centre of Cairns.

Marlies Gehrig said, "We offer relaxing holiday; bed & breakfast accommodation, tour bookings and make sure the customers feel at home away from home. I love that fact that we are in effect working from home and we get to meet so many interesting travellers from all around the world."

"We have a beautiful home in a great location; love to talk to our customers about our region and things to do around Cairns. One of our unique attributes is that our website is in both English and German".

In 2010/2011 the Bed and Breakfast business was affected by floods that swept across Australia. The weather change and Cyclones had a big impact on the tourism industry in Cairns. Marlies and Bruno were accepted into the Small Business Advisory Services – National Disaster Assistance (SBAS-NDA) program that was set up to provide support to small businesses directly or indirectly impacted by all the natural disasters that occurred in Australia since October 2010. They now have the opportunity via the Belmont Business Enterprise Centre (Belmont BEC) to receive business assistance 'virtually' through 'My business incubator'. The program delivers support via one-on-one telephone assistance, email, mentoring through web meetings and group training webinars. All services are provided free or low cost, by specialist business advisors and with assistance from industry professionals.

Marlies Gehrig said, "We had a few "slow months" during floods, but used the time for maintenance on the building, marketing our bed & breakfast and undertaking additional training via the SBAS-NDA program. Now we're right on track again. We love Queensland!"

To find out more about the SBAS-NDA program or the business advisory services offered by Belmont BEC, log onto [www.mybusinessincubator.com.au/register](http://www.mybusinessincubator.com.au/register) or [www.belmontbec.com](http://www.belmontbec.com)

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Further information on the Belmont BEC, My business incubator

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'The services provided by Belmont Business Enterprise Centre Inc are funded by the Australian Government'

**About: Kookas Bed & Breakfast**

Bruno and Marlies describe Kookas Bed & Breakfast as a 'tropical haven'. It's their very own Swiss-style chalet nestled in the tropical foothills of Mt Whitfield, only 10 minutes from the cosmopolitan city centre of Cairns.

The lush, cool surrounds of Kookas Bed & Breakfast make this the perfect place to enjoy the warm climate of North Queensland. Located in the suburb of Edge Hill, it truly is a snapshot of the tropics. In fact, only a 20 minute walk from Kookas Bed & Breakfast is the acclaimed Flecker Botanic Gardens.

It's not surprising then that Kookas Bed & Breakfast is also home to a vibrant array of native birds and Australian animals. The name 'Kookas' actually comes from the Kookaburra, a popular 'laughing' kingfisher bird. Prepare to awaken to the sounds of the Kookaburra each morning.

The superb architecture of Kookas Bed & Breakfast makes the most of the property's magnificent surrounds. An inviting, open deck leads you out from the lounge and towards the expansive views of the south. Discover the refreshing pool, a real Australian barbecue, or simply do nothing at all – it's all yours to enjoy.