

Tourism key for RaptAir growth

By Angela Norval

Operating in the Bundaberg region since 2022 with Bundaberg Airport becoming the primary operational home of the business, RaptAir has continued to be known as a breathtaking tourism drawcard.

RaptAir chief pilot Mawgan Petersen said their tourism operations have continued to develop, now operating under the Southern Great Barrier Reef (SGBR) Helicopters brand.

“We have now also recently established a secondary satellite base at the Agnes Water Airstrip as we endeavour to station an aircraft there on a full time basis,” he said.

“Our most popular Bundaberg flight is our Coastal Scenic, which showcases our region perfectly: Burnett Heads, Mon Repos, Bargara, Elliott Heads, The Rum Factory, Bundaberg Brew, Macadamias Australia, Monsoon Aquatics, Tinaberries and gives passengers a really strong overview of the region from the air.

We are also seeing growing interest in our Champagne Beach Picnic Package, which combines the helicopter experience with a more exclusive destination experience on a secluded beach.

“That package is starting to gain real traction with couples celebrating anniversaries, birthdays and other special occasions, and it reflects the direction we are continuing to take our tourism offering creating experiences that go beyond simply taking a scenic flight.”

The drawcard of RaptAir is that as Mawgan shares, there is something completely different about seeing a place you know from the air.

For visitors, it gives them an immediate appreciation of just how diverse the region is the coastline, rivers, agricultural land and communities all come together in a way that is difficult to appreciate from the ground.

For locals, it is often even more special because they suddenly see familiar places from an entirely new perspective.

“We regularly hear people pointing out their homes, properties, favourite beaches or places they have visited all their lives and typically make a point of orbiting so that they can get some photos.

“For the RaptAir team, being able to share the



RaptAir is pleased to have the support of Bundaberg Tourism in its efforts to expand tourism options for helicopter flights. (Supplied)

Bundaberg region through our business is incredibly rewarding as this our home now as well, and after relocating to the region we wanted to bring something new while also helping people discover everything that already makes the Bundaberg and Southern Great Barrier Reef region special.

“Our scenic routes are designed not just to show the landscape, but to point out many of the incredible tourism experiences and operators throughout the region: where they are, what visitors can do there and where they might like to explore next.

“From the air, we can connect the dots between the coastline, reef, beaches, townships and attractions in a way that helps people understand the region as a whole.

“Many times, it is someone’s first helicopter flight, or part of a birthday, anniversary or family experience, and being able to create that memory while also encouraging them to experience more of our region is very special.

“We have continued to develop our scenic flight offerings to showcase not only the coastline and the Southern Great Barrier Reef, but also experiences that are genuinely distinctive to our region.

“A major part of that has been securing a joint Marine Parks permit with both the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Ma-

rine Parks, making us the only operator in the region currently able to officially offer our approved tourism packages within those areas.

“That allows us to continue expanding beyond traditional scenic flights into more immersive coastal, reef and destination experiences, while still offering private and customised flights tailored to what each passenger would most like to see.”

As a business member of Bundaberg Tourism, RaptAir has found their support extremely valuable for a locally based tourism business.

“Individually, we can promote our own experiences, but Bundaberg Tourism has the ability to position those experiences as part of the much bigger story of the destination.

“That collaborative approach helps businesses like ours grow while also encouraging visitors to stay longer, explore more of the region and experience more of what Bundaberg has to offer.

“Bundaberg Tourism provides an important connection between local operators and the broader visitor market through destination marketing, industry engagement, media opportunities and collaboration between tourism businesses.

“For us, that helps put a helicopter experience in front of people who may not necessarily have considered doing one before they arrived.

“It also allows our product to complement the other experiences the region is known for rather than operating in isolation.

“Community events such as Oceanfest are particularly important to us because they make helicopter flying much more accessible to local families and visitors.

“We also hope that by offering something a little different, we can contribute to the overall appeal of community events and give people another reason to stay a little longer, explore the precinct and make a day of it. It is great to be able to add another experience to an event that already showcases so much of what the region has to offer.

“We do this for other events such as: Baffle Creek Fishing Classic, Rocky Point Retreat Christmas in July, 1770 Festival.

“One of the things we would really like people to understand is that you do not have to travel away from Bundaberg to have a remarkable aviation or tourism experience.

“For us, SGBR Helicopters is about making those experiences accessible and giving both visitors and locals another reason to explore their own backyard.

“Whether it is someone’s first five or ten minutes in a helicopter, a private flight taking them somewhere they may never otherwise reach, or a completely tailored experience built around a weekend away, a fishing trip or a special occasion, we want people to see just how much is possible within our own region.”

Looking to the future, the team would also love to work more closely with accommodation providers, tourism operators and other local businesses to create experiences that perhaps have not existed here before.

“That might be as simple as having a helicopter arrive at an accommodation venue to collect or deliver guests, or it could involve building an entire itinerary around an idea someone brings to us.

“Ultimately, we want people to come to us with the question, “Could we do this by helicopter?” and give us the opportunity to find a way to make it happen.

“The goal is for every passenger to step out of the aircraft feeling that they have experienced this region from a completely different perspective.”

Labor and unions praise wage rise - but they're not impacted

Let me be frank – the great socialism experiment that is Federal Labor has failed our country.

It's intertwined in our government, our unions, even many of our schools, as was highlighted by the recent school demonstrations.

Socialism wraps things up in nice little packages like “wealth redistribution” and “intergenerational equity”.

They use terms like “fair” and “just” to describe the means used to control choice, eliminating the need for the masses to think, and to control the message.

It's the starting point of many socialist organisations, ones like the Nazi's or the USSR.

And as Thatcher once said, when socialists run out of money, they come for yours.

Including superannuation it now seems! So why this article, this week? Not because of the latest proposed changes



to the budget, which there seems little hurry to implement and fix the so-called Widows tax (not a Labor term – Labor call this an “oversight”).

It came from a social media post by a Labor politician outlining how much wages have gone up this year.

It was one of those self-proclaiming posts that many seem so fond of cutting and pasting rather than having an original thought.

But it got me thinking. They have absolutely no idea where the money for that pay rise comes from.

It's simply declared a fair amount by the Fair Work Commission. Fair enough.

But for all the work the government and the unions do to share the self-praise post, not a single one of them is impacted in any meaningful way by the decision.

Because every single pay rise comes from the profitability of a business, big and small, sole trader or company.

And before the usuals jump up and down about corporate greed, in this country 97 per cent of businesses employ less than 20 people.

This is not a problem of greed.

This is a problem of survival.

Today, profit is not only a dirty word, but something that socialist would argue needs to

be redistributed to others first.

Even though you as the business owner take the risks, make the investment, pay the bills and so on, it's apparently not enough.

Socialists will tell you more needs to be shared with whose labour we utilise, and while you're at it, those around you who aren't as fortunate in life.

So, the next time the Government or the union talk about the fairness of a wage rise or a cost-of-living measure, realise that it comes as a cost to business, and understand that a business really has only two choices – put up prices or close down.

No amount of protesting or staff abuse can change that fact.

And when prices go up again, enjoy your \$12 morning lattes.

That seems fair.

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