



BEST OF QUEENSLAND EXPERIENCES PROGRAM

TEQ.QUEENSLAND.COM

TOURISM
& EVENTS
Queensland

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INTRODUCTION

YOUR PATHWAY TO BEST

The Best of Queensland Experiences Program (BOQEP) is designed to recognise Queensland tourism businesses that consistently deliver the quality experiences today's visitors expect, while providing a pathway for businesses to continue improving their performance.

Whether you're working towards Best of Queensland recognition for the first time, looking to strengthen areas where you're not yet meeting the criteria, or ready to progress from Best to Silver or Gold, this workshop is about understanding where your business is now and what you can do next.

Your BOQE assessment provides more than a score. It can help you identify what's working well, where gaps or opportunities exist, and the practical improvements that could make the greatest difference to your business and your guests. For some, that may mean achieving BOQE recognition. For others, it may mean strengthening performance and progressing towards **Silver or Gold**.

IMPORTANTLY, THIS ISN'T SIMPLY ABOUT COLLECTING MORE POINTS.

At the heart of BOQE is the guest experience. Exceptional experiences create satisfied guests, stronger reviews, positive word of mouth and greater advocacy for your business and destination. TEQ describes the program as a means to encourage exceptional customer experiences that can generate positive word of mouth, attract more visitors, grow expenditure and increase market share.

Throughout this workshop we'll look at your business and BOQE performance through the eyes of the guest, exploring the Five Stages of Travel, how the BOQE criteria influence each stage, and how the information, tools and technology available to you can help turn insights into action.

The aim is simple: Understand where you are. Identify where you can improve. Keep making the guest experience better.

Because the pathway from **Best → Silver → Gold** starts with creating experiences your guests believe are worth talking about.

Please take the time to read this Guide before the workshop begins.

BOQEP CRITERIA AND SCORING

The Best of Queensland Experiences Program (BOQEP) is a best practice initiative that responds to changing consumer expectations and supports tourism businesses to continually improve their experience delivery.

In 2026, the program further evolved with the introduction of **new criteria, including Google Business Profile and Sustainability Certification, along with tiered recognition levels**. These changes reflect evolving industry best practice, while the tiered recognition provides a clear pathway for businesses to strengthen their performance and progress from **BOQE to Silver and Gold recognition**.

AUSTRALIAN TOURISM DATA WAREHOUSE:

Accommodation, Attraction, Food and Drink, Tour, Hire, Transport and General Services listings will be assessed **annually** against the program criteria



Consistent delivery of an exceptional experience based on customer reviews

60 POINTS



Website with secure online booking platform

10 POINTS



Google Business Profile

10 POINTS



Social media presence

5 POINTS



Regional Tourism Organisation membership

5 POINTS



Accreditation

5 POINTS



Sustainability Certification

5 POINTS

BOQEP CRITERIA AND SCORING

A business must achieve 80 points to qualify as BOQE. To achieve a silver or gold level, a business must meet both the Global Review Index and overall BOQE score benchmarks. If an operator only meets one of the two benchmarks, they will be recognised in the preceding level where they meet both benchmarks.

**80 OR MORE POINTS + GLOBAL
REVIEW INDEX™ SCORE 80+**



**95 POINTS + GLOBAL REVIEW
INDEX™ SCORE 90+**



**100 POINTS + GLOBAL REVIEW
INDEX™ SCORE 90+**

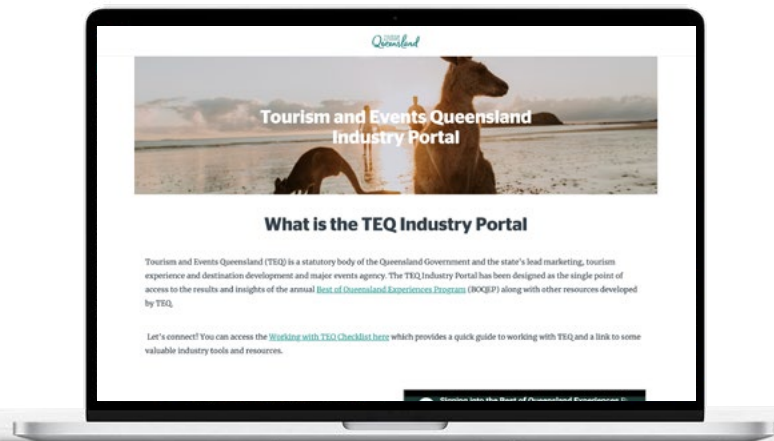


TEQ INDUSTRY PORTAL - YOUR BOQE CONSUMER INSIGHTS REPORT

The TEQ Industry Portal has been designed as the single point of access to the results and insights of the annual Best of Queensland Experiences Program, along with other resources developed by TEQ.

Accessed via portal.queensland.com your personalised, three-page BOQE report is more than a scorecard. It is a practical tool that shows where your business is performing well, where there may be opportunities to improve, and how your performance compares with other tourism businesses in your destination and across Queensland.

The information in this report is valued at more than \$2,000 so it's worth knowing how to understand it and extract the most value from it. Don't be overwhelmed by the numbers and graphs. You don't need to analyse everything at once.



START BY LOOKING FOR THREE THINGS:

1. Where are we doing well?

Identify the criteria where you are achieving full points and the aspects of the experience your guests consistently value.

2. Where are the gaps?

Look for criteria where points have not been achieved and areas where your results sit below destination or Queensland benchmarks. Page 2 allows you to compare your results specifically with similar products in your category, making the comparison even more useful.

3. What are our guests telling us?

This is potentially the richest part of the report. ReviewPro brings together guest feedback from over 175 review platforms, helping you understand how your experience resonates with visitors and where improvements could have the greatest impact. The report identifies both the positive and negative concepts affecting your GRI™ score, so you can move beyond “What score did we get?” to “Why did we get it, and what should we do next?”

Learn how to interpret the report **HERE** then turn the information into action. What should we KEEP doing? What should we FIX? What could we do BETTER?

MY BOQE SNAPSHOT

MY CURRENT BOQE SCORE:

MY CURRENT GRI™:

MY CURRENT RECOGNITION:

☐ Not yet BOQE

☐ BOQE

☐ Silver

☐ Gold

WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL?

WHERE ARE OUR BIGGEST GAPS?

WHAT ARE OUR GUESTS TELLING US?

THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY I WANT TO EXPLORE TODAY:

INTRODUCTION TO FIVE STAGES OF TRAVEL

It's important to understand your guest's experience with your business begins long before they arrive and continues after they leave.

From the first moment of inspiration to the review, photograph or recommendation they share afterwards, guests move through a series of stages. Understanding these stages helps you see how you experience shows up from your guests perspective , rather than simply through the day-to-day operations of your business.



The Five Stages of Travel shown below provide a simple framework for understanding this journey:



THE FIVE STAGES OF TRAVEL

01

DREAMING

“Where could I go and what could I do?”

This is the inspiration stage. Potential guests are imagining their next holiday and discovering destinations and experiences through search, social media, recommendations, reviews, advertising, media and other sources of inspiration.

02

PLANNING

“Is this experience right for me?”

Interest becomes research. Prospective guests compare experiences, read reviews, check locations, prices, accessibility, inclusions and practical information they need to confidently begin building their itinerary.

03

BOOKING

“I’m ready. How easy is it to book?”

The guest has made their decision. Clear availability, pricing, secure online booking, payment options and confirmation information can make the difference between intention and conversion.

04

EXPERIENCING

“Does the experience live up to my expectations?”

The promises made during Dreaming, Planning and Booking now meet reality. Service, welcome, quality, interpretation, accessibility, facilities and every interaction contribute to how guests experience, connect with and remember their time with you.

05

SHARING

“What will I tell others?”

After the experience, guests reflect on and share their experiences. Reviews, recommendations, social posts, photographs and word of mouth can influence the decisions of future guests.

TIP: The journey is a cycle. Sharing is not really the end of the journey. What one visitor shares today can inspire another visitor tomorrow. As you consider each stage, ask: What can I do to make it easier for my visitor to confidently take the next step?

BOQE MEETS THE VISITOR JOURNEY

At first glance, the BOQE criteria can look like a collection of separate measures: customer reviews, a secure online booking platform, Google Business Profile, social media presence, Regional Tourism Organisation membership, accreditation and sustainability certification.

But viewed through the Five Stages of Travel, something important becomes clear:

The BOQE criteria are not separate from the guest journey. They help support it.

Each criterion can influence how guests discover your business, build confidence, make a booking, experience your product and ultimately share it with others.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- Your **social media presence** can inspire someone during Dreaming.
- Your **Google Business Profile** can provide important information during Planning.
- A **secure online booking platform** makes it easier to move from intention to Booking.
- **Accreditation and sustainability certification** can provide reassurance before booking and contribute to expectations of quality and responsible tourism.
- The **experience you deliver** determines whether expectations are met during Experiencing.
- The **reviews** generated through that experience become powerful influences during Sharing and feed back into the Dreaming and Planning stages of future guests.

This is particularly significant because consistent delivery of an exceptional experience based on customer reviews accounts for 60 of the 100 BOQE points.

The experience you deliver today therefore has the potential to influence much more than today's customer. What they say about you can shape the decisions of tomorrow's guests.

TIP: Rather than asking: "What do I need to do to get more BOQE points?" ask: "What can I improve across my guest's journey?"

The following matrix brings the Five Stages of Travel and BOQE criteria together, helping you identify where your business is already performing strongly and where there may be opportunities to improve.

Better visitor journey → Better visitor experience
→ Stronger advocacy → Stronger BOQE performance

The following matrix brings the **Five Stages of Travel** and **BOQE criteria** together, helping you identify where your business is already performing strongly and where there may be opportunities to improve.

**Better visitor journey → Better visitor experience → Stronger advocacy
→ Stronger BOQE performance**

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	THE FIVE STAGES OF TRAVEL				
	1. DREAMING Inspiration & Research	2. PLANNING Planning & Decision Making	3. BOOKING Booking & Confirmation	4. EXPERIENCING The On-ground Experience	5. SHARING Sharing, Feedback & Advocacy
★ Consistent delivery of an exceptional experience based on customer reviews 60 POINTS	Positive reviews inspire and influence future visitors ✓	Reviews build trust and confidence in your experience ✓	Confidence to book knowing others had a great experience ✓	Consistent quality delivers memorable moments ✓	Great experiences generate positive reviews and referrals ✓
🌐 Website with secure online booking platform 10 POINTS	Your website showcases experiences and sparks interest ✓	Clear information helps visitors plan with confidence ✓	Secure online booking makes it easy to reserve and pay ✓	Pre-arrival information sets clear expectations ✓	Easy access for return visits and future bookings ✓
G Google Business Profile 10 POINTS	Appears in search inspiring discovery and exploration ✓	Key info (hours, location, prices) supports planning ✓	Directions, hours and updates support booking decisions ✓	Up-to-date info helps visitors find you easily and plan their visit ✓	Reviews and photos build credibility and encourage others ✓
♥ Social media presence 5 POINTS	Engaging content inspires wanderlust and awareness ✓	Content answers questions and helps with decision making ✓	Links and offers make booking simple ✓	Real-time updates and stories enhance the visitor experience ✓	Visitors share content and tag your business, extending reach ✓
🗣️ Regional Tourism Organisation membership 5 POINTS	Inclusion in campaigns and networks increases visibility ✓	Access to regional trip ideas and tools supports planning ✓	Partnerships and networks build confidence ✓	Collaboration supports quality experiences across the region ✓	Stronger region, stronger advocacy for future visitors ✓
🏠 Regional Tourism Organisation membership 5 POINTS	Accreditation signals quality and reassurance ✓	Assurance of quality helps visitors choose with confidence ✓	Quality standards reduce risk and build trust ✓	Meets recognised standards for a safe, enjoyable experience ✓	Trusted experiences lead to positive word of mouth ✓
🏠 Accreditation 5 POINTS	Communicates your commitment to responsible tourism ✓	Appeals to conscious travellers when planning ✓	Values alignment drives booking decisions ✓	Sustainable practices enrich the visitor experience ✓	Visitors feel good sharing responsible businesses ✓
🌱 Sustainability Certification 5 POINTS					
TOTAL SCORE 100 POINTS					

STRONG CRITERIA. SEAMLESS JOURNEY. EXCEPTIONAL OUTCOMES.

When each element is optimised, every stage of the visitor journey is stronger - driving satisfaction, advocacy and sustainable growth.

THE TAKEAWAY

Focus on these areas to enhance your Best of Queensland Experience score and deliver unforgettable journeys that keep visitors coming back.

RISE OF THE MACHINES: USING AI TO STRENGTHEN YOUR BOQE

Understanding where the BOQE criteria connect with the guest journey is one thing. Finding the time, skills and resources to continually improve each part of that journey can be another.

For many tourism businesses, this is where **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** can become a useful everyday business tool.

An ever-increasing number of AI tools can help you make better use of information you already have. They can help analyse guest feedback, identify patterns, review your external communications, generate ideas, identify gaps, ask useful questions and turn insights from your BOQE Operator Report into practical actions.

The opportunity is not simply to use AI to **write more content**. It is to use AI to identify gaps, improve consistency and make it easier for guests to move from **Dreaming → Planning → Booking → Experiencing → Sharing**.



EXAMPLES ACROSS THE FIVE STAGES OF TRAVEL ARE SHOWN IN THE TABLE BELOW.

BOQE / TRAVEL STAGE	ASK AI TO HELP YOU...	EXAMPLE PROMPT
Dreaming	Create inspiring content from what makes your experience distinctive	<i>"I operate a small wildlife tour in Queensland. Ask me 10 questions that will help identify what makes my experience different, then suggest five social media story ideas."</i>
Planning	Review your online information from a visitor's potential guest's perspective	<i>"Pretend you are a first-time visitor planning to book my experience. Review this information and identify the questions I have failed to answer."</i>
Booking	Identify friction or uncertainty in the booking journey	<i>"Review my booking information. What might make a visitor guest hesitate, abandon the booking or contact us before booking?"</i>
Experiencing	Improve pre-arrival information, FAQs, interpretation and guest communications	<i>"Turn these questions our staff are repeatedly asked into a useful pre-arrival FAQ for guests."</i>
Sharing	Analyse reviews, draft personalised responses and identify recurring themes	<i>"Analyse these 50 guest reviews. Identify our five strongest experience attributes, recurring complaints, improvement opportunities and the words guests most commonly use to describe us."</i>



YOUR ATDW LISTING

Having a live listing on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) is the only requirement you need to fulfill to start the assessment in the BOQEP.

The ATDW is the national database storing and distributing information on Australia's tourism products, locations, and events. Its main purpose is to provide small and medium-sized tourism businesses like yours with a one-stop shop to advertise your business information and have it widely distributed and published – not to mention making it easier for travellers to find the right information while planning their itineraries.

Ensure your ATDW listing/s are live and up to date by 31 December. TEQ assesses all eligible live ATDW listings as of this date, so if your listing has expired or is inactive at this time - it won't be assessed in the next BOQE program.

Resources:

Want to get more from your ATDW listing? Explore [TEQ's Best of Queensland Experiences Program Resources](#) or visit [ATDW Support](#) for helpful guides, tips and assistance. For personalised advice, you can also [book a free 30-minute ATDW Profile Optimisation Session](#) and work one-on-one with the ATDW team to identify ways to strengthen your listing and maximise its visibility.



TIPS FOR ATDW SUCCESS

1. Search for your listing on **Queensland.com** to see how it currently displays.
2. **Social Media.** Add your Facebook and Instagram URLs where applicable. Always include the full URL rather than only your @ handle.
3. **Google Business Profile** Check that the correct Google Business Profile link is included in your ATDW listing and takes visitors directly to your business.
4. **Images.** Upload at least three (up to 10) high resolution landscape images between 1–10MB in size. Note portrait images will not be accepted.
5. **No text on images.** Images with text or logos are often cropped or displayed incorrectly on some distributor websites.
6. **Image SEO and Ownership** Give images meaningful captions and alt text that describe what and where they are and always record copyright and photographer credits.
7. **Description.** Use the description to engage your customer and make them want to visit. Make your opening sentence interesting and informative to hook the reader in. Use language that gives practical information about what they'll experience. You have a maximum of 200 words for your business description so make them count.
8. **Language.** Use language that speaks directly to the customer. E.g. 'You will see...', rather than 'Visitors will see...'
9. **Other Info.** Don't forget to add your opening hours as well as features your business offers such as free Wi-Fi, accessibility facilities and other amenities.
10. **Booking Link.** Add your most direct online booking link – the less clicks a customer needs to make to book your product the better.
11. **Links.** Leave links, contact details and pricing out of the description – there are fields elsewhere in your listing for this.
12. **Deals.** Submit Deals regularly for free to link to your listing – submit your latest deals, including, images and a Call to Action and the dates the deal is in market. Deals will be displayed on Queensland.com and OutbackQueensland.com.au
13. **Events.** Submit Events regularly for free to link to your listing – if you have events that the consumer or community can attend – add it to ATDW.

And the final tip ... keep everything related to your ATDW listing in one place and note down your username and password!!!

ACTION FOR MY BUSINESS

- ☐ Nothing needed
- ☐ Check / update
- ☐ Priority action

What will I do?

REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION MEMBERSHIP

Operators who hold a valid membership with their Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) will be eligible for five points in this criterion.

HOW IS THE CRITERIA MEASURED?

Tourism and Events Queensland works in partnership with Queensland's network of **13 Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO's)** who provide the membership status of operators assessed in the program to TEQ. Operators must have their **membership up to date by 31st December**, the annual program cut-off date, to qualify. The 13 RTOs are:

- **Brisbane Economic Development Agency**
- **Bundaberg Tourism**
- **Capricorn Enterprise**
- **Fraser Coast Tourism and Events**
- **Gladstone Region**
- **Experience Gold Coast**
- **Mackay Isaac region**
- **Outback Queensland Tourism Association**
- **Queensland Country Tourism**
- **Visit Sunshine Coast**
- **Tourism Tropical North Queensland**
- **Townsville Enterprise**
- **Tourism Whitsundays**

HOW IT ADDS VALUE?

Your Regional Tourism Organisation connects your business to the **bigger destination picture**. Membership can provide access to destination marketing opportunities, industry research and insights, business development activities, networking, industry advice and connections with other tourism operators and decision-makers that can help strengthen your business.

For a small tourism business, membership also means you are **not marketing or developing your experience in isolation**. You become part of the collective effort to build demand for your destination and encourage visitors to stay longer, explore more and spend more within the region.

TIP: Think beyond the 5 points. How well are you using your RTO membership?

- Working With TEQ**
- Working With TEQ Checklist**

Each RTO will have either a **Working With Us** Guide or a dedicated team you can contact for advice, support and opportunities.

ACTION FOR MY BUSINESS

- ☐ Nothing needed
- ☐ Check / update
- ☐ Priority action

What will I do?

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Tourism products must have presence on social media across either Facebook or Instagram.

HOW IS THE CRITERIA MEASURED?

To meet these criteria, tourism products must have at least one active social media URL in the Facebook and/or Instagram field in their ATDW profile updated on ATDW by 31 December each year.

HOW IT ADDS VALUE?

For the guest, social media provides inspiration, current information and authentic glimpses of the experience, helping build confidence before they visit and giving them a way to engage and share afterwards. Social media can influence travellers across the entire travel cycle, from dreaming through to sharing.

For the business, it builds visibility, trust and relationships, drives traffic and enquiries, and extends reach when guests share photos, videos and stories with their own networks.

In simple terms: social media helps turn your guests into advocates and their experiences into inspiration for your next visitor.

ACTION FOR MY BUSINESS

What will I do?

- ☐ Nothing needed
- ☐ Check / update
- ☐ Priority action

TIP: Don't Post Alone! Who can you hashtag and mention to extend your reach?

Tap into industry social media networks – Follow, engage with and tag your local destination, Council, RTO and Tourism and Events Queensland where relevant. This can help increase your visibility, strengthen industry connections and create opportunities for your content to reach new audiences.

Who	Facebook	Instagram
Tourism & Events Queensland	@visitqueensland	@queensland
Queensland Tourism Industry Council	@theqtc	@theqtc
Tourism Australia	@seeaustralia	@australia

Who is your council, RTO or other connections?

ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM

Tourism products need to have their own website, and consumers must have the ability to instantly book their experience through a secure online booking platform. Online booking platforms must provide guests with an instant confirmation of the reservation.

Exemption Clause: There are some tourism products where the consumer does not expect to be able to book these experiences in advance, for example, shopping centres, breweries, galleries. If your business does not accept advance bookings from free independent travellers (FITs) through any method, whether this be online, via telephone or email, then you may apply for exemption from this criterion via the **TEQ Portal**. The 10 points for this criterion would then be allocated to Customer Reviews making that criterion worth 70 points.

HOW IS THE CRITERIA MEASURED?

TEQ will attain website and online booking links through the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW). Make sure the information in your ATDW listing is correct and that your website and online booking URL are entered.

ACTION FOR MY BUSINESS

What will I do?

- ☐ Nothing needed
- ☐ Check / update
- ☐ Priority action

HOW IT ADDS VALUE?

Travellers expect to be able to book online. Expedia Group research in 2024 across seven international markets, including Australia, found online channels play a major role in how travellers' book, with 51% using an OTA for their most recent trip.

For tourism operators, secure online booking means being **open for business 24/7**, making it easier for an interested visitor to become a confirmed guest from **anywhere in the world**.

WHICH ONLINE BOOKING PLATFORM TO USE?

Typically, the choice of booking platform is driven by the tourism industry segment you operate in and your specific consumer needs. There are a range of different platforms to suit accommodation providers and others to suit tour, attraction, activity or experiences operators.

Choosing the right system involves research, an understanding of the functionality you wish to provide to your guests eg offering a payment gateway, packaging options, gift vouchers etc and the business processes you wish to automate.

Resources: Find the Right Online Booking System **HERE**. Walk through the steps involved in selecting the right booking system for your tourism business so you choose the right tool for your business and your customer's needs.

ACCREDITATION

Operators who are endorsed by a recognised accreditation program will be eligible for five points in this criterion. BOQEP recognises 11 accreditation programs listed below. Operators must have completed an accreditation by the annual program cut-off date of 31 December to be eligible.

HOW IS THE CRITERIA MEASURED?

Accreditation is measured in partnership with the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) who work with accreditation providers to verify the accreditation status each year of operators who are assessed in the program.

HOW IT ADDS VALUE?

From your **guest's point of view** an accreditation is an indication that yours is a **purpose driven brand**, a brand that aligns with their own personal beliefs and values.

Accreditations demonstrate that you value business practises that make a difference to you, to them and in some cases the world. Ultimately, accreditations have the **power to influence consumers purchasing decisions**.

For **business owner's**, accreditation is a valuable business tool. In addition to providing your business with the tools and guidance to develop and grow, accreditation assists your business to **meet and exceed customer expectations** through:

- Adherence to industry standards and codes of practice
- Compliance to business and industry regulations
- Reliable and consistent delivery of sustainable business operations
- Development and implementation of business and marketing plans
- Assessing quality standards and helping to identify and establish continuous improvement and development goals for your business.

An accreditation is also a requirement if your business is to enter the Queensland Tourism Awards. Accreditations are designed for a diverse range of business practises; they can be time consuming to acquire and may have costs attached so understanding which accreditation suits your business and customers' needs is important.

ACCREDITATIONS RECOGNISED BY BOQEP

The following accreditation programs are recognised in the Best of Queensland Experiences Program. They cover business areas including customer service, ecotourism and cultural tourism across range of different tourism business types:

- **Caravan Industry Association of Australia National Accreditation Program**
- **EarthCheck**
- **EcoTourism Australia - Eco Certification**
- **EcoTourism Australia - Climate Action Certification**
- **EcoTourism Australia - Respecting Our Culture Certification**
- **EcoTourism Australia - Sustainable Tourism Certification**
- **Gold Anchor Program**
- **National Accommodation, Recreation and Tourism Accreditation (NARTA)**
- **Quality Tourism Accreditation**
- **Star Ratings**
- **Zoo and Aquarium Association Accreditation**

ACTION FOR MY BUSINESS

What will I do?

- ☐ Nothing needed
- ☐ Check / update
- ☐ Priority action

TIP: More Than a Tick - Find accreditation that delivers real value.

There is no single accreditation that is right for every tourism business. Before choosing, consider:

- Does it fit my business? → Will it help me improve? → Does it matter to my guests? → Can I use it to strengthen my story?
- Consider the standards involved, the support and resources available, the cost and time commitment, and how you could use the accreditation across the visitor journey.

Don't focus on the logo. Choose an accreditation that earns its place in your business.



SUSTAINABILITY

Operators who have an eligible sustainability certification will be eligible for 5 points.

HOW IS THE CRITERIA MEASURED?

A business must hold one of the eligible sustainability certifications by the 31st of December, the program cut-off date to be eligible. TEQ will access data from Ecotourism Australia and EarthCheck to assess this criterion.

WHICH PROGRAMS ARE ELIGIBLE TO MEET THIS CRITERIA?

A tourism product must have a globally recognised sustainability certification with either EarthCheck or Ecotourism Australia. These certifications have been chosen as they align with globally recognised criteria and require an independent third-party audit, ensuring credibility and transparency. These programs are evidence-based and include all aspects of sustainability – sustainable management, socio-economic impacts, cultural impacts, environmental impacts.

EARTHCHECK PROGRAMS

- **EarthCheck Evaluate** is an entry-level program that helps businesses align with the sustainability expectations of their guests, suppliers and destinations.
- **EarthCheck ECO** is for ecotourism operators. It offers certification for terrestrial and marine park operators of any size.
- **EarthCheck Certified** a 6-12 month commitment to showcase sustainability to the world.
- **Ecotourism Australia Certification**



ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA PROGRAMS

Ecotourism Certifications are designed for all nature-based and ecotourism businesses, primarily tours, accommodation, and attractions. There are two levels:

- **Eco Tourism** for operators who wish to use resources wisely, contribute to conserving the environment and help local communities.
- **Advanced Ecotourism** for operators who are committed to achieving best practice, using resources wisely, contributing to conserving the environment and helping local communities.

Sustainable Tourism Certifications are designed for all non-nature-based tourism businesses with a focus on sustainable practices. There are two levels:

Sustainable Tourism: Tourism businesses that minimise negative impacts on the environment and maximise positive impacts for community, culture, and local economy.

Advanced Sustainable Tourism: Industry leaders in best-practice sustainable tourism practices. Businesses that minimise negative impacts on the environment and maximise positive impacts for community, culture, and local economy.

HOW IT ADDS VALUE?

A globally recognised sustainability certification demonstrates a business’s commitment to minimising negative impacts while maximising benefits for the environment, communities and culture. It also strengthens our collective capability to deliver on Queensland’s vision of becoming a global leader in ecotourism.



ACTION FOR MY BUSINESS

What will I do?

- ☐ Nothing needed
- ☐ Check / update
- ☐ Priority action

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

An operator must have a Google Business Profile, a free tool from Google, to manage how your business shows up on Google Search and Google Maps to be eligible.

HOW IS THE CRITERIA MEASURED?

To meet this criterion, tourism products must have their Google Business Profile URL in the relevant field in their ATDW profile by the 31st of December, the program cut-off date.

HOW IT ADDS VALUE?

More people search for businesses online than anywhere else, so it's important to make sure your business listing can be found easily on Google and Google Maps. It allows you to manage how you appear on Google Search and Maps, providing essential information like location, hours, and contact details. It helps customers find businesses easily, build trust through reviews and updates, and ultimately drive more traffic to your business.

TIP: LOOK THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUR GUEST

Search for your business on Google as though you're a potential guest. Does your profile give you everything you need to confidently choose, plan and visit your business? What information is missing, outdated or could be improved?

Resources: Want to strengthen your Google Business Profile? Explore Google's **Tips to Improve Your Local Ranking** on Google for practical ways to improve your profile and increase your visibility in local search results.



TOP TIPS

Get Found. Get Chosen. Make Your Google Business Profile Work Harder.

Complete Your Profile

Fill in every relevant section of your Google Business Profile, including business description, contact details, website, opening hours, services, attributes and accessibility information.

Choose the Right Categories

Select the primary category that best represents your business and add relevant secondary categories. This helps Google understand what you offer and when to show your business in search results.

Keep Your Details Current

Regularly check your opening hours, phone number, website and other important information. Remember to update special or public holiday hours too.

Use Quality, Current Images

Show potential guests what they can expect. Add high-quality images of your experience, location, facilities, team and other features that help tell your story. Refresh them regularly.

Showcase Your Experiences

Where available, use products, services or other profile features to highlight the experiences you offer and make it easier for guests to understand what's available.

Post Regular Updates

Use Google Posts to share what's happening – upcoming events, seasonal experiences, new products, special offers or important updates.

Answer Questions

Keep an eye on questions asked through your profile and provide clear, helpful answers. Consider the questions potential guests commonly ask when reviewing the information available on your profile.

Encourage Reviews

Make it easy for happy guests to leave a Google review. Consider including your direct review link or QR code in post-visit communications.

Respond to Your Reviews

Acknowledge both positive and negative reviews professionally. Your response isn't just for the reviewer – future guests are reading it too.

Check How Guests Find You

Review your Google Business Profile performance and insights. Look at how people discover and interact with your business and use this information to improve your profile.

Don't Set and Forget

Your Google Business Profile should evolve with your business. Make checking and updating it part of your regular marketing routine.



GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE CHECKLIST

☐ Our business name and contact details are correct

☐ Our address/location or service area is accurate

☐ Our website link goes to the correct page

☐ Our primary and secondary business categories are appropriate

☐ Our regular opening hours are correct

☐ Our public holiday/special hours are kept up to date

☐ Our business description clearly explains what we offer

☐ Relevant services, experiences and attributes have been added

☐ Accessibility information is included where applicable

☐ We have current, high-quality photos showcasing the business and guest experience

☐ We regularly add new photos and remove outdated ones

☐ We use Google Posts/Updates to share relevant news, events or offers

☐ We monitor and answer questions about the business

☐ We have a simple process for encouraging guests to leave Google reviews

☐ We respond to both positive and negative reviews

☐ We regularly review our profile performance/insights

☐ We check our profile regularly to make sure the information guests see is accurate

☐ Our correct Google Business Profile link is included in our ATDW listing

ACTION FOR MY BUSINESS

☐ Nothing needed

☐ Check / update

☐ Priority action

What will I do?

CONSISTENT DELIVERY OF AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE BASED ON POSITIVE CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Tourism businesses that deliver an exceptional experience must also achieve both these outcomes to qualify for the 60 points allocated to the most important BOQE criteria. . You'll need to achieve both – there are no partial points for meeting only one.

- 1. Receive at least 25 positive online customer reviews over a 12-month period.**
- 2. Achieve a ReviewPro GRI™ of 80 or more.**

HOW IS IT MEASURED?

TEQ has engaged a global company, ReviewPro, to aggregate all your online customer reviews from over 175 global platforms including TripAdvisor, Google, Booking.com etc. Using the consumer star/bubble rating from these reviews ReviewPro provides each operator with a Global Review Index™ (GRI) score out of 100. This rating benchmarks your business against other tourism businesses in reputation management.

HOW IT ADDS VALUE?

Before digital technology disrupted the traditional tourism marketing channels a bad guest experience might have been shared with family and friends or in a community newsletter. Today that negative experience shared on social media and review platforms can go viral in the blink of an eye and your business reputation can be in question. Conversely a positive guest review shared in the same manner is a deposit in the word-of-mouth marketing account.

Ultimately, it's your guest that will determine the good, the bad and the truly outstanding experiences they have with you. Your business operations can influence that outcome, but you can't control what your guests share online.

The good news is that customer reviews are a free form of market research providing valuable insights into your guests likes and dislikes and where to adapt your business practises if required.

More importantly your guests can be encouraged to share positive experiences and how you deal with positive and negative guest reviews places your reputation management directly in your hands.

RESPONDING TO CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Businesses should respond to positive and negative customer reviews for several reasons:

- It shows that you value customer feedback. This can help build trust and credibility with customers.
- Demonstrates that your business is committed to providing good customer service. This can lead to increased customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth referrals.
- Provides an opportunity to address concerns or issues that customers may have had. This can help to turn a negative experience into a positive one and potentially retain a customer who may have otherwise been lost.
- Increases engagement with customers. This can help to build a sense of community and loyalty around a brand.
- Helps with SEO. Google and other search engines consider the frequency and quality of customer reviews and responses when ranking websites in search results.

Overall, responding to customer reviews is an important part of building and maintaining a positive brand reputation, as well as improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.



RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE REVIEWS

Negative reviews can be confronting and upsetting and sometimes completely incorrect. Responding to them can be a challenge yet with so many travellers using reviews to guide their planning and purchasing decision it is an important part of managing a tourism business.

Travellers look at reviews for patterns. If the same issue keeps coming up in multiple reviews, it's more important than ever to tell your full customer service and problem-solving story. Here are some steps to follow when responding to negative customer reviews:

- Respond promptly, ideally within 24-48 hours. This shows that you take customer feedback seriously and are committed to addressing any concerns.
- Maintain a professional and courteous tone throughout your response. Avoid getting defensive or confrontational, even if the review is unfair or inaccurate. Your potential guests are watching you interact with a customer that could be them!
- Start your response by acknowledging their concerns, and/or apologizing for the customer's negative experience. This can help to defuse any anger or frustration the customer may be feeling.
- Address the specific issues raised in the review. Provide a clear and concise explanation of what happened and how you plan to address the issue.
- If appropriate, offer a solution to the customer's issue. This could include a refund, a discount on a future visit, or some other form of compensation.
- Take the conversation offline if the issue requires further discussion or resolution. Provide a phone number or email address where the customer can reach you directly. This can help to avoid any further negative interactions in a public forum.
- Request for a review to be removed if it is obvious the reviewer is not reviewing your business. This can happen if your business has a similar name to another or the guest has become confused. Still respond to the review in an empathetic manner by suggesting they have made a mistake.

By following these steps, you can show customers that you take their feedback seriously and are committed to providing excellent service. This can help to build trust and loyalty, even in the face of negative reviews.



HOW TO ENCOURAGE REVIEWS

The most important criteria here is to make it easy for your guest to leave a review. The three ways to encourage reviews are to:

01

ASK YOUR GUESTS DIRECTLY



02

ENGAGE WITH THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY



03

NETWORK WITH TOURISM PARTNERS.



01 DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

- Make it part of the guest experience: Incorporate a review request into your guest experience, verbally or in some other form at the end of the visit. Be genuine in your request for reviews and be sure that you really have provided an excellent experience for your guests.
- Use a QR code – place a QR code in a prominent place in your business that guests can scan to leave a review during or immediately following their experience. Guests can share the QR code or link with other travellers who may also want to share their own review.
- Post-experience email or SMS communications - reaching out to your guests after their experience to thank them and ask for feedback is important. Write your email templates in a way that feels personal to your guests, keep it concise, and provide a direct link to your TripAdvisor page, Google Business Profile or website. Since guests often have mobile devices handy, text messages are useful for thanking your guests and asking for a review, ideally with a direct link to your TripAdvisor page, Google Business Profile or website.
- Send a 'thank you' video – for a very personal approach create a short (under one minute video) saying thank you, adding something unique that happened during their tour, using guest names if possible, and lastly, asking for a review. This shows your guests that you truly care about providing an exceptional experience and will encourage them to spend a few minutes sharing their feedback.
- To take things further, you can also explore video marketing testimonials since consumers tend to trust video testimonials even more than written ones. If this is something you have the capacity to dedicate more time towards it can be worth the additional effort.

ENGAGE WITH THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY.

- Interact on social media - engaging with your audience online means responding to comments and questions while maintaining a consistent presence. Consider highlighting reviews on your social media pages with an image and quote from guests. This tactic can effectively remind recent guests to write reviews while encouraging visitors to consider booking an experience.
- Promote reviews on your website - as prevalent as social media is, some guests may not use it or may not think to search for reviews on social channels. Display reviews prominently on your website or social media channels to show your guests that their feedback is important to you.



01 DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

NETWORK WITHIN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

- Take advantage of businesses and products that connect your company to travellers such as TripAdvisor and Google. If you haven't done so already, search for your tour company on these platforms and "Claim" your listing. You may already have reviews waiting for you. And in this case, you can 'claim' the listing and add more details, including photos, detailed tour descriptions and a link to your website.
- Share your reviews with RTO and TEQ - if they are willing to share some of your reviews with travellers the cross promotion can help to position you in front of more visitors. Positive reviews elevate the reputation of Queensland and your region as a bucket list destination with flow on benefits for the entire industry so don't be shy and start sharing.

TIP: Don't Just Respond. Learn.

Your reviews are a direct line to your guests. Look beyond the star rating to identify recurring themes, what guests value most, what falls short of expectations and opportunities to improve the experience.

Use these insights to inform changes to your product, service and visitor communications, then track whether those changes are reflected in future reviews.

Remember: every review can help you improve the experience for the next guest.



REVIEW ACTION PLANNER

Listen. Learn. Improve.

What are our guests telling us?

Look across your recent reviews and your BOQE Consumer Insights Report. Don't focus on one review – look for patterns and recurring themes.

WHAT DO OUR GUESTS LOVE?

What do they consistently mention positively?

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

What complaints, frustrations or unmet expectations appear more than once?

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

WHAT ARE GUESTS NOTICING THAT WE DIDN'T EXPECT?

Are there unexpected strengths, memorable moments or opportunities hidden in the feedback?

REVIEW ACTION PLANNER

TURN FEEDBACK INTO ACTION

Review Insight	KEEP	FIX	IMPROVE	What Will We Do?	By When?

CLOSE THE LOOP

After making changes, keep watching your reviews.

- ☐ Are fewer guests mentioning the problem?
- ☐ Are positive themes appearing more often?
- ☐ Are guests noticing the improvements we've made?
- ☐ Is our GRI improving?
- ☐ What is the next opportunity?

TIP: DON'T JUST RESPOND. LEARN.

Your reviews are a direct line to your guests. Look for patterns, make improvements and then watch future feedback to see whether those changes are making a difference.

RESOURCES

- Download this comprehensive ReviewPro **Guide to Increase Customer Reviews**
- Learn more from the experts by reviewing the suggestions from **Google** and **TripAdvisor** on how to increase and respond to reviews.
- Consider using an automated review response platform such as **TripAdvisor Review Express** to send customised review request emails to your guests.

END OF YEAR CHECKLIST

Are You BOQE Ready?

While 31 December is the annual BOQE program cut-off date, don't wait until the end of the year to check your progress. Many of the actions in this checklist can – and should – be completed and monitored throughout the year.

Start early, check regularly and give yourself time to address any gaps before the deadline.

CHECK YOUR BOQE READINESS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

ATDW

- ☐ Our ATDW listing is live and current
- ☐ Business information, opening hours and contact details are correct
- ☐ Website and booking links are correct
- ☐ Facebook and/or Instagram URLs are included
- ☐ Our correct Google Business Profile URL is included
- ☐ Images and business description are current
- ☐ We have checked how our listing appears on Queensland.com

Online booking – 10 POINTS

- ☐ Our website is current and working
- ☐ Guests can securely book online
- ☐ Guests receive instant booking confirmation
- ☐ Our correct website and booking URLs are included in ATDW
- ☐ If online booking is not applicable to our business, we have checked our eligibility for an exemption

Google Business Profile – 10 POINTS

- ☐ Our Google Business Profile is claimed and active
- ☐ Business information and opening hours are current
- ☐ Our website link is correct
- ☐ Our correct Google Business Profile URL is included in ATDW

END OF YEAR CHECKLIST

Social Media – 5 POINTS

☐ We have an active Facebook and/or Instagram presence

☐ The correct social media URL/s are included in ATDW

RTO membership – 5 POINTS

☐ Our RTO membership is current

☐ Our membership details are correct with our RTO

Accreditation – 5 POINTS

☐ Our recognised accreditation is current

☐ Our accreditation will be completed/current by 31 December

Sustainability Certification – 5 POINTS

☐ Our eligible sustainability certification is current

☐ Our certification will be completed/current by 31 December

Customer Reviews – 60 POINTS

☐ We are actively monitoring our reviews

☐ We have received at least 25 positive online reviews during the assessment period

☐ Our GRI™ is 80 or above

☐ We have a process in place to encourage reviews

☐ We regularly respond to guest reviews

☐ We are using review insights to improve our guest experience

MY BOQE READINESS CHECK

WHAT HAVE WE ALREADY ACHIEVED?

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE 31 DECEMBER?

OUR #1 PRIORITY:

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

BY WHEN?

MY NEXT BOQE CHECK-IN:



TIP: MAKE IT A HABIT

Add a regular BOQE check-in to your calendar. Keeping your information, memberships, certifications and digital presence current throughout the year is much easier than trying to fix everything in December.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNER

From Best to Better

Look at Your Business Through the Eyes of Your Guest

For each stage, identify one thing you're doing well and one opportunity to make the experience better.

Guest Journey	What's Working Well?	What Could Be Better?	Our Priority Action
DREAMING – How guests discover and become inspired by us			
PLANNING – How easily guests find the information they need			
BOOKING – How easy it is to choose and book us			
EXPERIENCING – How well we deliver on expectations			
SHARING – How we encourage advocacy, reviews and recommendations			

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNER

Now Prioritise

You don't have to fix everything at once.

KEEP

What is already working well that we need to protect?

FIX

What isn't working and needs attention?

IMPROVE

What could we make easier, better or more memorable?

EXPLORE

What new opportunity could we investigate?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLANNER

OUR TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Priority	Action	Who?	By When?	How Will We Know It Worked?
1				
2				
3				

CHECK. LEARN. REPEAT.

Review date:

At our next review:

☐

What did we complete?

☐

What changed as a result?

☐

What are guests telling us now?

☐

What didn't work as expected?

☐

What should we do next?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN BIG CHANGE.

Small, consistent improvements across the guest journey can strengthen the experience, your business performance and your pathway from **BOQE → Silver → Gold**.

KEEP EXPLORING. KEEP IMPROVING.

In addition to the reference materials already highlighted in this Guide, TEQ's website has a considerable number of resources and guides to continue your BOQE journey.

CREATE EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES

- Operator Case Studies
- Creating a Memorable Experience
- Extraordinary Experiences through Storytelling
- Storytellers – Bringing Experiences to Life
- Creating Moments of Surprise and Delight
- Inspiring Experiential Travel

EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Exceptional experiences don't happen by accident. These four bite-sized resources have been built to help you, our Queensland tourism operators, lift experience quality, align with the Queensland brand, and turn good ideas into practical actions. Each module pairs guidance with prompts and worksheets to help you reflect on your experience offering, better understand your customers, and strengthen the moments that matter most.

teq.queensland.com/experiences

THE SECRETS OF STORYTELLING

Bringing Exceptional Experiences to Life

Your story is one of your strongest points of difference, especially when it's told simply and delivered consistently. These advanced resources show you how to find, shape and share your story in a way customers remember, and your team can bring to life every day.

teq.queensland.com/storytelling

BUILD A STRONGER BUSINESS

Business Queensland also has a range of step-by-step guides, videos, calculators and templates that can help you deliver effective marketing activities. Visit the topics below, or start by:

- doing a quick and simple **marketing health check**
- watching a video on **writing a marketing strategy and plan** for your business
- watching a video on **ways to advertise and market your small business**.

SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE

If you really want to deep dive in to the strategies behind BOQE and understand the future direction of tourism in Queensland read the **Destination 2045 Tourism Plan**.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Before you leave today:

My #1 action: _____

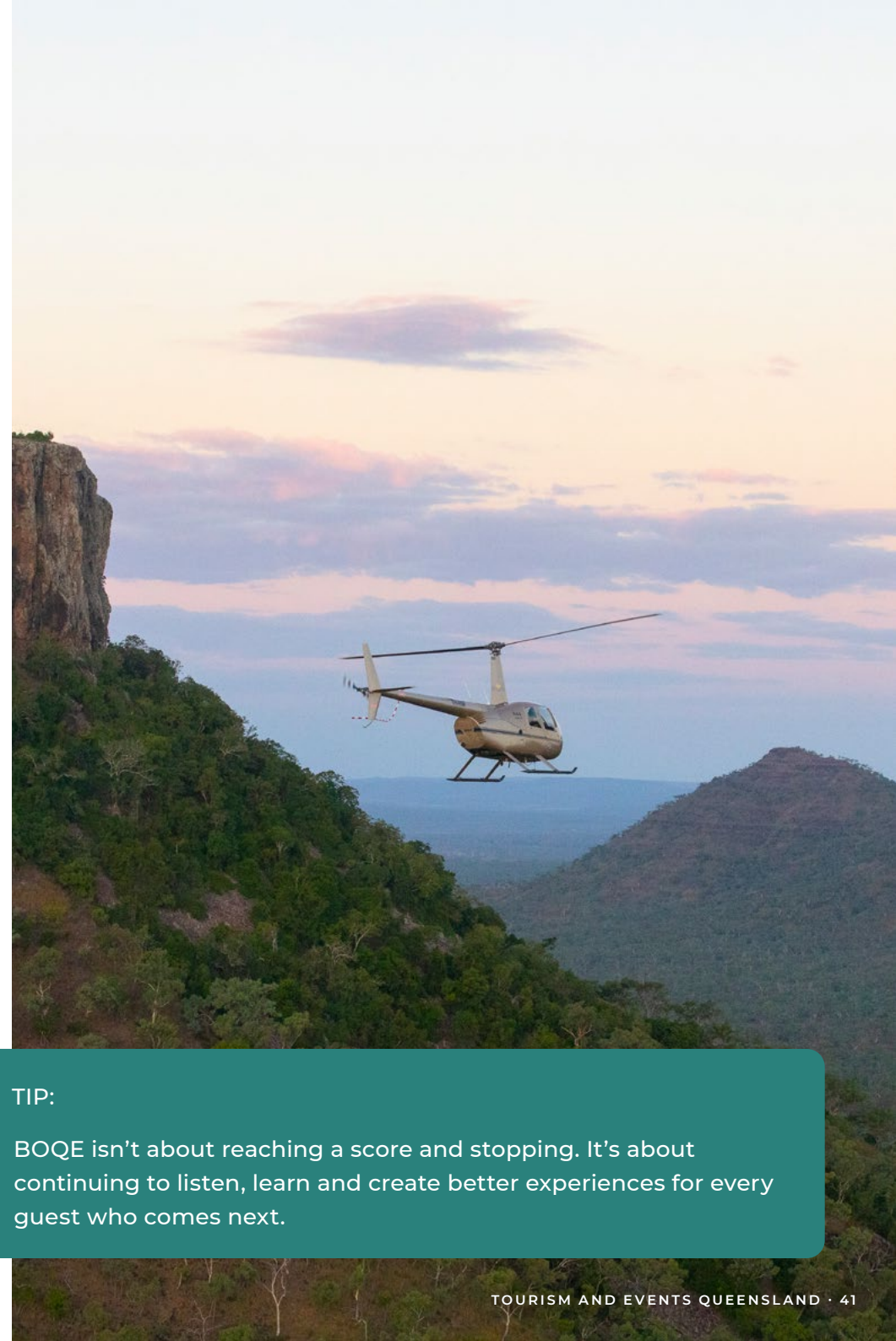
I will complete it by: _____

The person responsible is: _____

My next BOQE check-in will be: _____

TIP:

BOQE isn't about reaching a score and stopping. It's about continuing to listen, learn and create better experiences for every guest who comes next.





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