



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 31 May, 2010**

## **Media Release**

### **Luxury Lodges of Australia Affirms the New Era of Experiential Luxury Travel in Australia.**

Fifteen of Australia's leading independent luxury tourism properties have formed Luxury Lodges of Australia, a new association launched this month to promote the uniquely Australian breed of luxury experiential lodges, domestically and internationally.

The 15 member properties represent both long-established and new lodges and camps, with a common theme of offering guests an outstanding experience connected to a clear sense of place - while ensuring key luxury standards. Ranging from wilderness lodges to vineyard retreats and dining destinations; island hideaways to luxe outback camps; the lodges demonstrate high levels of innovation and are clearly aiming to be the 'best'.

"In recent years, we have seen the emergence and consolidation of a new, unmistakably Australian breed of luxury properties and experiences. Luxury Lodges of Australia brings together a portfolio of sophisticated, experiential properties and will showcase it on the world stage for the first time," said Andrew McEvoy, Managing Director of Tourism Australia.

The association's website [www.luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au](http://www.luxurylodgesofaustralia.com.au) will provide discerning travellers with a comprehensive information and planning tool for completely Australian itineraries, linking closely and smoothly to each property's own website and booking systems.

The properties are spread across more than a dozen diverse regions of the country and include Wolgan Valley; The Louise; Lizard and Bedarra Islands; qualia; Longitude 131; Cape Lodge; Lake House; Spicers Clovelly Estate and Spicers Peak Lodge; Capella and Southern Ocean Lodges; and Wild Bush Luxury's Arkaba Station, Bamurru Plains and Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef.

Luxury Lodges of Australia was formed following a meeting in late 2009 where Jim Carreker, the owner of The Louise, invited the owners of the country's top lodge properties to discuss the potential of collectively marketing a diverse and uniquely Australian luxury portfolio, both domestically and internationally.

James Baillie of Baillie Lodges, and Chair of Luxury Lodges of Australia noted that the collection brought together many of Australia's innovators and leaders in hospitality, tourism, food and wine, and regional development.

"Having commitment and hands-on input from significant achievers such as Alla Wolf-Tasker, Skroo and Jude Turner, Charles Carlow and Jim Carreker reinforces my belief that now is the time to showcase the diversity and depth of Australian luxury experiences," he said.

"The association sets a benchmark for luxury travel in Australia and the hope is that a handful of new lodges that are in keeping with the ethos of a luxury experience, connected to a sense of place, will join in the next 18 months. Pooling our marketing resources will greatly help us raise Australia's profile as a luxury destination."

**END.**

## EDITORS NOTES

### Who are the Luxury Lodges of Australia?

1. **Arkaba Station**, Flinders Ranges - With 60,000 acres and just 5 rooms Arkaba's rustically chic homestead is an exclusive yet quintessentially Australian experience offering guests classic country hospitality while exploring the outback.
2. **Bamuru Plains**, Top End - Focussing on environmental sustainability and key luxury standards, this nine room camp exudes 'Wild Bush Luxury' bringing a touch of style to a remote and extraordinarily beautiful region.
3. **Bedarra**, Great Barrier Reef - A private hideaway, tropical island retreat, surrounded by lush rainforest and private beaches, Bedarra is all about understated luxury and as much privacy as is desired.
4. **Capella Lodge**, Lord Howe Island - Nine contemporary beach-style suites, personal service, exceptional dining and the option to enjoy a range of activities combine to deliver a unique and exclusive Lord Howe experience.
5. **Cape Lodge**, Margaret River Wine Region - Described as one of Australia's finest gourmet establishments, Cape Lodge sits within 40 acres on its vineyard in the heart of the Margaret River wine country.
6. **Lake House**, Daylesford - This acclaimed dining destination and accommodation lies on the shores of idyllic Lake Daylesford 90 minutes from Melbourne in Victoria's Spa Country, and is at the heart of a regional food mecca.
7. **Lizard Island**, Great Barrier Reef - A beautiful, natural, remote island retreat and northern-most reef resort with 24 white powdery beaches, five star cuisine and indulging spa treatments and an outstanding dive destination.
8. **Longitude 131**, Ayers Rock/Uluru - Luxurious, eco-sensitive and romantic. With just 15 luxury tents Longitude 131° is sited to face the majestic Uluru and is the ultimate, exclusive Australian outback experience.
9. **qualia**, Great Barrier Reef - Located at the edge of the reef on the secluded northern-most tip of Hamilton Island, with outstanding attention to design and an exceptional spa, the qualia experience is one of deep sensory sophistication.
10. **Sal Salis**, Ningaloo Reef - Where the outback meets the reef, and the best place on earth to swim with whale sharks, 9 wilderness tents and a team of passionate guides at Sal Salis offer an exclusive luxe wilderness experience.
11. **Southern Ocean Lodge**, Kangaroo Island - Offering a unique fusion of nature and luxury, 21 luxe suites, breathtaking views to the great Southern Ocean, all inclusive rates, first name service and personalised experiential itinerary... the ultimate Kangaroo Island experience.
12. **Spicers Clovelly Estate**, Sunshine Coast Hinterland - A relaxed environment with old world charm, French contemporary style, fine dining restaurant, 10 suites, 22 acres of lush grounds and excellent day spa facilities.
13. **Spicers Peak Lodge**, Scenic Rim South East Queensland - Australia's highest non alpine all inclusive lodge is spectacularly located on the World Heritage listed Main Range National Park, with a focus on fine food and wine, bushwalking and mountain-biking.
14. **The Louise**, Barossa Valley - This luxury vineyard retreat combines absolute luxury and inspired design with Appellation, one of Australia's finest regional dining experiences, in the world renowned Barossa wine region.
15. **Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa**, Blue Mountains - Set within its own 4,000 acre conservation and wildlife reserve, this spectacular resort offers 40 individual suites with private swimming pools, distinctive dining, luxury facilities and exceptional Timeless Spa.

A few properties could be added to the association in the next 12-18 months with the completion of new properties or existing properties undergoing upgrade or change of ownership.

The Board of Directors representing the members comprises James Baillie, owner Baillie Lodges (Chair); Jim Carreker, owner of The Louise (Secretary); Phillipa Harrison, General Manager Sales Hamilton Island, representing qualia (Deputy Chair); Charlie Carlow, owner Wild Bush Luxury (Arkaba Station, Bamuru Plains and Sal Salis); and Judith North, Director of Sales, Wolgan Valley. Executive Officer, Penny Rafferty.

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High resolution images available on request.