



ECO-FRIENDLY . . . Cr Ann Bunnell TSS66502

World ecotourism leaders to meet

HUNDREDS of delegates from all over the world will converge on Townsville at the end of the month for the 2006 International Ecotourism Conference.

Tying in with Ecotourism Australia's 15th year, the second international conference aims to share information and discuss challenges facing the international ecotourism industry.

Townsville City Council deputy mayor Ann Bunnell said the conference would be a first for Townsville.

"We are very fortunate to have it happen here because it not only puts Townsville on the map but also it's something we've been looking forward to for many years," Cr Bunnell said.

She said Townsville City Council was a major sponsor of the conference, working closely with other ecotourism groups around the nation.

"People from all over Australia and internationally will come for the conference that will also have a youth arm," she said.

Cr Bunnell said the conference would explore future actions and opportunities for ecotourism including climate change adaptation, thematic interpretation and cultural tourism, investment strategies and World Heritage and Natural Heritage sites valuation.

"The conference will not only involve participants from all continents but will also include public and private sector representatives, students, tourism organisations and operators as well as communities who work with ecotourism," she said.

Four regional-themed interactive workshops will be conducted with special focuses on Magnetic Island, Charters Towers and Townsville.

"Numbers for each workshop are limited and filling quickly," Cr Bunnell said.

The conference will be held from October 30 to November 3.