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Global award for tourism academic

The global contributions of Griffith University's Professor of Tourism Research, Prof. David Weaver have been acknowledged with an award for lifetime achievement to tourism research.

Presented at the 4th International Conference on Tourism (ICOT 2014) in Dalian, China, Prof. Weaver's 30-plus years of active service within the vital sector made him a worthy recipient.

"The purpose of this award is to recognise and honour Prof. Weaver who has made significant fundamental contributions to tourism research," said Chairman of ICOT 2014, Prof. Konstantinos Andriotis from Middlesex University London.

"It is without doubt that Prof. Weaver's contributions have had a lasting impact on the tourism field, having demonstrated a lifetime commitment to the progress of tourism knowledge.

"On these grounds, Prof. Weaver was selected to receive the award by the Chairman of ICOT 2014 based on the recommendation of the Conference Scientific Committee."

Prof. Weaver was a keynote speaker at ICOT 2014, which represented the first time the international body had met outside of Europe for their annual gathering of the minds.

Having held prior academic appointments in Australia, Canada (University of Regina), and the USA (George Mason University & University of South Carolina), Prof. Weaver is well versed in the many and varied applications of tourism.

"I was very honoured by the award, and especially because it was presented in China, which is the emerging 'superstar' of tourism. This has given me a good opportunity to reflect on my research accomplishments to date and what I want to achieve into the future," said Prof. Weaver.

"Having put together the results of some 100 journal articles and book chapters, I think my biggest accomplishment is to encourage and envisage ways for mass tourism and alternative tourism to work in harmony in an ideal model of sustainable tourism. I call this "enlightened mass tourism" and regard it as an aspiration that can be achieved through a 'dialectical' methodology."

Prof. Weaver sees the newly formed Griffith Institute for Tourism (GIFT), which has only just brokered a strategic research alignment with the United Nations World Tourism Organization, as 'a great expression of confidence in our longstanding strengths in tourism research, and an excellent vehicle for moving forward to make us even stronger.'

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Current research being undertaken by the award winning academic considers how enlightened mass tourism can be implemented in a variety of settings, but especially in major coastal resorts such as the Gold Coast that seem to be approaching their current environmental and social carrying capacities.

“The next few years on the Gold Coast will be really exciting with the efforts involved around the Commonwealth Games, the cruise ship terminal, the light rail, Chinatown, and other local initiatives that can really lift our tourism industry,” added Prof. Weaver.

“Destinations need to consider their resilience in the face of the increased likelihood of natural and man-made crises, and this is an important attribute of sustainability, and enlightened mass tourism.

“So if we intend to attract (like everyone else) more Chinese tourists, we had better provide them with a good experience, and one that is not detrimental to the quality of life we currently enjoy; I would like to see the Chinese and other emerging markets as something that adds to this quality of life, both for us as residents, and them as visitors.”

Prof. Weaver is also the editor of the Encyclopedia of Ecotourism and sits on the editorial boards of seven academic journals. In recent years he has been invited to deliver keynote addresses in Korea, South Africa, Russia, New Zealand, Norway and China, and has participated in consultancies in destinations as diverse as Thailand, Panama and Andorra.