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Bidding war for eco conference

A BIDDING war has erupted between Townsville and the Douglas Shire over their efforts to host a national ecotourism summit in December next year.

Port Douglas Daintree Tourism Association chairman Rob Sutherland has pleaded with members to help raise an extra \$25,000 to increase the cash component of Tropical Tourism North Queensland's bid.

"We have reliable information that Townsville has put up a significant amount of money, resulting in their move to the top of the list of contenders," Mr Sutherland said.

The four-day 14th National

Narelle Hine
Port Douglas reporter

Ecotourism Conference would attract 400 delegates from all over the world and was estimated to generate more than \$650,000 for the local economy during the "flat" month of December.

Mr Sutherland said the Douglas Shire contained some of the most ecologically important areas in Australia, making it an ideal host site.

"We should pull out all stops to get this," he said.

Douglas Mayor Mike Berwick said his council may consider

contributing some cash toward the effort to attract the conference.

Bidding officially closed in September but Ecotourism Australia secretary Tony Charters would not reveal how many contenders were being considered by the board.

Mr Charters said the "highly confidential" bids from around Australia were being reviewed ahead of an announcement at this year's conference in Tasmania in less than three weeks.

"If a bidder puts in additional information then that can be taken into account," Mr Charters said.