

## Jump start for new venture

THE owners of an award-winning North Queensland tourism venture leapt for joy this week when they saw their small family business up in lights.

Hidden Valley Cabins' three-day rainforest outback safari tours was named best New Tourism Development at the North Queensland Tourism awards recently and as part of the prize won a free billboard for a year.

The tours take small groups of tourists from Townsville to the highlands of the Paluma ranges where temperatures average 8C cooler all year round.

The tour operators are one of five Townsville finalists who will be judged at the National Tourism awards in Canberra in February.

The 3m-tall lime green advertisement depicting a man getting a 'jump start' with car jumper leads is one of the first things motorists see when they enter Townsville on the Bruce

Highway near Alligator Ck from the south.

Ross McLennan and partner Chelsea Cox, who run the business with Ross' parents Bonnie and Ian, said they could never have afforded such exposure.

"We wanted to be new age and catch attention and it is already doing that," Ms Cox said.

"We had four guests staying on Wednesday night and they said it was the only billboard they remembered between Ayr and the turn off at the bottom of the range.

"The billboard would have cost us more than \$10,000 if we had paid for it but we believe the exposure is going to be worth much more to us so we are rapt."

Paradise Outdoor Advertising director Mitch James said 6500 vehicles pass the billboard every day.

"It is the third year we have given a billboard as part of our sponsorship," he said.



EXPOSURE . . . Ross McLennan and Chelsea Cox in front of the billboard their business won