



MEDIA RELEASE

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THE WHITSUNDAYS NAMED AUSTRALIA'S HAPPIEST TOWN

The Whitsundays has won the prestigious title of Australia's Happiest Town in the Channel 7 Sunrise program's 'Vaalia Happiest Town' promotion.

Tourism Whitsundays Chief Executive Officer Peter O'Reilly said Tourism Whitsundays had driven the nomination based on the success of the Smile Whitsundays initiative.

"As soon as we heard about the promotion we nominated the Whitsundays and encouraged everyone in our community to do the same," Mr O'Reilly said.

"The cornerstone of the nomination was our video about the Smile Whitsundays advocates who went to such effort on the launch day and continue to welcome their customers with a warm smile and great service," he said.

"This is a fantastic honour for the Whitsundays and something every single Smile Whitsundays business should be proud of."

The Smile Whitsundays initiative now has 176 business signatories who have committed to meet the elements of the Smile Whitsundays Customer Service Charter.

"It's great that our efforts to delight our customers are being recognized, and an inspiration to remain committed to the ideals of the Smile initiative," Mr O'Reilly said.

Sunrise will broadcast its weather segments live from the Airlie Beach foreshore (near the BBQ area) on Friday morning to showcase why the town is so happy.

"We are inviting all locals to come down to Airlie Beach from 6am on Friday morning and enjoy a BBQ Breakfast on the beach, face painting, fun kids games, and the chance to be on TV – but make sure you wear a smile!" Mr O'Reilly said.

"A key element of the Smile Whitsundays strategy was to generate publicity recognizing our commitment to customer service. On Friday morning much of Australia will be getting that message loud and clear," he said.

The Happiest Town promotion will reward happy towns monthly, with the Whitsundays being the first to be awarded. The \$10,000 prize from Vaalia will be used to further fund the Smile Whitsundays initiative.

"The cash prize allows Tourism Whitsundays, Tourism Queensland and Enterprise Whitsundays to continue and expand the Smile Whitsundays initiative," Mr O'Reilly said.

"We can now offer free smile kits to an additional 100 businesses, as well as provide additional industry training and marketing of Smile Whitsundays," he said.

"Changing our customer service culture will take time, but this is an excellent start to our campaign and we hope it provides the inspiration the whole town needs to keep positive."

To view the entry video, go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xhnN9r02aE&feature=channel_video_title and for more information on Smile Whitsundays, go to www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au/smile

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