

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release
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CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS ARE 'FANS' OF THE WHITSUNDAYS

Over 50,000 cruise ship passengers on 43 ships arrived into the Whitsundays last financial year, and this number is expected to grow by 70% over the coming cruise ship season.

At least 77 ships are expected to arrive into Airlie Beach or Hamilton Island over the next year, between July 2016 and June 2017.

In Airlie Beach, passengers are welcomed onshore by the Cruise Ship Ambassadors and greeted with a friendly smile and a destination map of the town in the shape of a fan.

The new 'Welcome to Airlie Beach' Fan has been developed by Tourism Whitsundays in collaboration with the Cruise Ship Ambassadors, the Whitsunday Coast Chamber of Commerce, Whitsunday Regional Council and Tourism and Events Queensland.

In recognition of the iconic Heart Reef, the heart-shaped fan includes a map of Airlie Beach with useful information and key locations highlighted, as well as directing visitors to the visitor information website.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO, Craig Turner, says the Whitsundays is gearing up for a busy cruise season ahead, and the new Airlie Beach Fan is just one way the town is engaging with visitors.

"The Airlie Beach Fan is a great way for visitors to get all the crucial information they need on arrival, as well as being a nifty memento of their visit to the Whitsundays," he said.

"Along with the fan and the warm welcome they receive from our Cruise Ship Ambassadors, visitors will leave with a strong sense of our hospitality and this may encourage them to come back."

Australia is now ranked 5th in the world as a global cruising destination, with the number of cruise lines doubling over the last ten years, injecting an estimated expenditure of \$767 million into the Australian economy.

The latest update from Tourism and Events Queensland shows there is steady growth in the number of ship arrivals to the sunshine state, with Queensland the second largest Australian cruise shipping market in terms of activity and industry expenditure.

With ten new ships arriving in Australia last year and five more new ships expected in 2016-17, the cruise ship industry is well and truly steaming ahead in the Whitsundays.

The Whitsundays has a range of shore excursions on offer covering all the iconic experiences of a Whitsunday holiday, from trips to the Great Barrier Reef to go snorkelling or diving, to visits to the world-famous Whitehaven Beach, and scenic flights over the islands.

On the coast, passengers can experience a number of historical or food-based day trips, or spend the day meandering the main street of Airlie Beach, visiting the lagoon, picking up some souvenirs at the Airlie Beach markets and doing a spot of shopping.

An updated cruise ship schedule is available on the visitor information website, at www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au/whats-on

The Whitsundays will also be welcoming our half a millionth cruise ship passenger to the region in November this year.

Tourism Whitsundays is coordinating a prize for the half millionth passenger, and to get involved contact us now at international@tourismwhitsundays.com.au

About Us

At the heart of the Great Barrier Reef on Queensland's coast, the Whitsundays is made up of 74 island wonders in the tropical waters of the Coral Sea.

The Whitsundays is the perfect place to swim and snorkel, or charter a boat and cruise the islands, and witness the diversity of marine life including turtles, dolphins, countless species of fish and thousands of colourful corals.

To find out more about the Whitsundays and to book your next escape, visit www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au

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