



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For immediate release  
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### **Whitsundays' growth in international visitors highest in Queensland**

The Whitsundays has done it again!

Figures released today show that 248,000 international visitors came to the Whitsundays in the year to December 31, 2016 – the highest number of international arrivals ever recorded in the Whitsundays for a 12-month period.

The latest figures represent an increase of 19.2 per cent on the previous year, which is the biggest percentage increase of any destination in Queensland.

This follows figures released three months ago, which also showed a record number of international visitors into the Whitsundays for the 12-month period to September 30, 2016.

Of the 248,000 international visitors coming to the Whitsundays in the year to December 31, 2016, 239,000 (97 per cent) were holidaymakers.

The Whitsundays experienced strong growth across all markets, with the region's top five source markets all up significantly and, together, recording a 26.3 per cent increase year-on-year.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Craig Turner said the region had a focussed approach to the continued and sustained growth in its international markets.

“When you look at our percentage growth across all our international markets, we are in a very strong and robust position,” Mr Turner said.

“We don't rely on any one particular market, which ensures security for our tourism industry going forward.”

Double-digit growth was seen in four of the Whitsundays' top five source markets, with the UK up 14 per cent on the same period last year, New Zealand up 19.1 per cent, the USA up 29.4 per cent and China up 62.3 per cent. Germany was up by 6.7 per cent year-on-year.

Visitor expenditure was also up by 5.8 per cent, to \$204.4 million for the year, and the average length of stay was also up slightly and stood at 6.7 nights for the 12-month period.

“The tourism industry in the Whitsundays continues to work tirelessly in all our international markets, alongside Tourism Whitsundays, with a view to promoting what is arguably one of the most naturally beautiful destinations in the world,” Mr Turner said.

“The continued international growth is also a result of a strong and collaborative relationship with our partners including Tourism and Events Queensland, Whitsunday Regional Council and the local tourism industry.”

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