



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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### **Whitsundays' tourism operators shine at awards**

A total of 41 businesses have been recognised for their outstanding contribution to the local tourism industry at this year's Reef Gateway Hotel Whitsunday Tourism Awards.

More than 340 people attended the Gala Dinner on Hamilton Island last night [Saturday, September 30] to recognise their peers' achievements and celebrate the industry's successes.

While the champagne flowed, so did a few tears, as the tourism industry came together in an emotional night following a challenging year.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Craig Turner paid tribute to all the businesses and individuals recognised at the awards and also all the local operators and their invaluable teams who work tirelessly to ensure the Whitsundays remains a global "must-see" destination.

"It is these businesses and individuals that keep the wheels of the Whitsundays' tourism industry turning, day after day, week after week," Mr Turner said.

"They should *all* be congratulated for their contribution to the local tourism industry. To stand out amongst this very special crowd, through winning an award, is even more impressive and it is fitting that we come together as an industry to celebrate this.

"We all know it has been a particularly challenging year in the Whitsundays, so it was especially gratifying to see so many people attend the gala awards event in a show of strength and solidarity for our industry."

A range of different businesses were showcased at the tourism awards, which recognise operators and individuals who strive every day to perform at their absolute best.

The awards submission process also provides Whitsunday operators with an opportunity to review their business goals and achievements and establishes benchmarks for businesses new to the industry.

Guests at the Gala Dinner enjoyed a three-course meal, drinks all night and lively entertainment with the Potbelleez, who really "turned it up" for the evening. Courtesy buses and ferry transfers were provided compliments of Whitsunday Transit and Cruise Whitsundays.

Event platinum sponsors were naming rights sponsor The Reef Gateway Hotel, as well as Tigerair Australia, Paradise Outdoor Advertising, Cruise Whitsundays and Whitsunday Transit.

### Whitsunday Tourism Awards 2017 – Winners

CATEGORY	AWARD RECIPIENTS
Major Tourist Attraction Tourist Attraction	GOLD – Abell Point Marina GOLD – Whitsunday Regional council – Horseshoe Bay beach
Festivals and Events	GOLD – Spring Break Whitsundays SILVER – Whitsunday Reef Festival BRONZE – Whitsunday Regional Council FINALIST – Airlie Beach Festival of Music FINALIST – 2016 Bowen Offshore Superboats
Specialised Tourism Service	GOLD – Lure, Abell Point Marina SILVER – 8 Seconds – Where We Live BRONZE – Airlie Day Spa Whitsundays
Visitor Information Service Business Events Venue Major Tour & Transport Operator	GOLD – Bowen Visitor Information Centre GOLD – Coral Sea Resort GOLD – Ocean Rafting SILVER – Air Whitsunday Seaplanes
Tour & Transport Operator	GOLD – Redcat Adventures SILVER – Whitsunday Jetski Tours BRONZE – Providence Sailing
Adventure Tourism	GOLD – Redcat Adventures SILVER – Whitsunday Jetski Tours BRONZE – Ocean Rafting
Destination Marketing	GOLD – Bowen ‘Top of the Whitsundays’ App
Tourism Restaurants & Catering Services	GOLD – Fish D’Vine SILVER – Walter’s Lounge
Caravan and Holiday Parks	GOLD – BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort (Hall of Fame) SILVER – BIG4 Bowen Coral Coast Beachfront Holiday Park
Backpacker Accommodation	GOLD – Magnums Backpackers (Hall of Fame) SILVER – Nomads Airlie Beach
Unique Accommodation	GOLD – Whitsunday Escape SILVER – Cumberland Charter Yachts
Self-Contained Accommodation Deluxe Accommodation	GOLD – Pinnacles Resort GOLD – Mirage Whitsundays SILVER – Whitsunday Bliss
Excellence in Sustainable Tourism New Tourism Business	GOLD – Whitsunday Segway Tours GOLD – Island Jet Boating SILVER – Airlie Beach Skydivers BRONZE – Matador Whitsundays

Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer  
or Group  
Young Achiever Award  
The Bob Porter Award for Outstanding  
Contribution by an Individual

FINALIST – Whitsunday Bullet  
FINALIST – Heart Hotel & Gallery  
Whitsundays  
Bowen Tourism & Business – Christin  
Short and Jenn Honnery  
Rob Mohr, Walter’s Lounge  
Colin Crossley, Whitsunday Transit

ends

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