



**MEDIA RELEASE**

*For immediate release*

**March 2, 2019**

## **WHITSUNDAYS THE BIG WINNERS AT THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS**

The Whitsunday tourism industry was well represented at the Australian Tourism Awards last night in Launceston, with our Whitsundays operators all taking home awards in their respective categories.

The Whitsundays was lucky enough to have three operators in the running for the top spots across four different categories; Whitsundays Escape for Unique Accommodation, Big4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort for Caravan and Holiday Park and Red Cat for Major Tour and Transport Operators, and Adventure Tourism.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Tash Wheeler said "For the Whitsundays to have three national finalists up for four awards is a testament to the high standard of experiences on offer in the Whitsundays and once again demonstrates how our small region continues to punch well above our weight. It's an honour for the Whitsunday tourism industry to have these businesses representing us at the Australia Tourism Awards".

The Australian Tourism Awards is the tourism industry's peak awards recognising and promoting excellence in the Australian tourism industry. First established by the Federal Government in 1985, the Australian Tourism Awards are now owned and managed by Australian Tourism Awards Inc, on behalf of the tourism industry. A wide and diverse range of tourism businesses enter their state and territory Tourism Awards, from those awards over 200 state and territory finalist reach the prestigious status of becoming a national finalist.

In a major coup for the Whitsunday Tourism Industry all three Whitsundays finalist will be coming home with awards. Red Cat Adventures won Gold for Major Tour and Transport Operators, Big4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort have taken Gold for Caravan and Holiday Parks and Whitsunday Escape taking out Silver for Unique Accommodation.

Mayor Andrew Willcox said he was elated that Whitsunday operators were being recognised for their quality tourism products. "I am always a proud Mayor when representing the Whitsundays as our tourism stakeholders always excel on the national stage". "These awards are recognition for the amazing resilience and enthusiasm of our tourism operators and also the industry leadership by Tourism Whitsunday CEO Tash Wheeler and board chair Al Grundy," he said.

"We are the custodians for a wonderful and unique part of the world, so I am always keen to shout long and loud that the Whitsunday Region is the best tourist destination in the world."

Congratulations to Big4 Whitsunday Adventure Resort, Red Cat Adventures and Whitsunday Escape for their achievements and proudly representing the Whitsunday region.

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**About Tourism Whitsundays:** *Tourism Whitsundays (TW) is the organisation responsible for destination marketing and visitor attraction for the Whitsunday region. It is the lead agency recognised by Tourism and Events Queensland and the Whitsunday Regional Council to lead the promotion of the region as a tourism destination. Tourism Whitsundays markets all aspects of the region including the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsunday Islands and Coast, accommodation, boating and sailing, fishing, touring, recreational activities, adventure, dining, shopping, weddings and honeymoons, conferencing and business events.*

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