



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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FUNDING BOOST FOR WHITSUNDAYS EVENTS

Tourism and Events Queensland have this week confirmed renowned local events Airlie Beach Festival of Music, Hamilton Island Triathlon and Whitehaven Beach Ocean Swim have been confirmed for a funding boost of \$45,000 in total; with \$25,000 to Airlie Beach Festival of Music and \$10,000 for Hamilton Island Triathlon and \$10,000 for Whitehaven Beach Ocean Swim.

The funding comes as part of the Queensland Destination Events Program (QDEP), which can be applied for through the Tourism and Events Queensland website. The QDEP's aim is to build the crucial link between events and the destinations in which they are staged, extending the flow of the economic, marketing and social benefits of events throughout metropolitan and regional Queensland. Funding from the QDEP is applied for and can be used for marketing costs, strategic plan development, engagement of short-term specialised personnel and hire of temporary infrastructure.

Tourism Whitsundays CEO Tash Wheeler believes destination events are an important part of our economic growth.

“Destination events play a key role in supporting economic growth and regional tourism. Events can not only target new markets for visitation, they can also help with increased length of stay, dispersal and visitor expenditure within the region. We are very happy with the results of this latest round of funding and hope to see more events be successful with the QDEP program throughout the year.”

Tourism Industry Development Minister Kate Jones echoes these sentiments.

“Events provide the opportunity for visitors to spend more money with many extending their trip to explore the diverse and unique tourism experiences on offer.”

Set for November 8-10, 2019, and now in its seventh year, the Airlie Beach Festival of Music is becoming one of Queensland's premier live music events. With spectacular sea views from the main tent at the Whitsunday Sailing Club, it's a festival like no other in a tropical Queensland paradise. It's an opportunity to see some big-name acts and discover new talent – there is something for every musical taste. Airlie Beach really comes alive during the festivals three days, with live entertainment spread throughout 18 venues.

Airlie Beach Festival of Music founder Gavin Butlin welcomes the funding boost.

“It's fantastic to see Tourism and Events Queensland supporting our festival, this funding boost will be pivotal in helping Airlie Beach Festival of Music expand its marketing reach.”

Saturday 23rd November kicks off two of the Hamilton Island Endurance series events. Hamilton Island is one of Australia's most iconic destinations, with some of the most beautiful scenery the Whitsundays has on offer. The Hamilton Island Triathlon provides the ultimate test of endurance in the ultimate location. The rugged landscape of Hamilton Island's interior, of which 70% is preserved, and surrounding turquoise waters offer the perfect setting for the event's competitive 750 metre swim in Catseye Bay, a 20km cycle around the southern part of Hamilton Island encompassing the airport runway and a five km run around the marina and resort sides of Hamilton Island.

The following day 24th November is the Whitehaven Beach Ocean Swim. Whitehaven Beach on Whitsunday Island is one of Australia's most pristine and iconic beaches. World famous for its pristine white sand stretching for seven empty kilometres and crystal-clear water, Whitehaven Beach is regularly voted one of the world's top beaches. This annual 2km and 750m ocean swim meet, plus a fun 350m junior swim for children 13 years and under, is fast becoming as iconic and famous as its location.

Tourism Industry Development Minister Kate Jones believes the QDEP program is crucial in supporting state destination events.

"Since QDEP's launch in 2015, the Queensland Government has invested more than \$8.7 million through the program, supporting a total of 256 events, delivering strong benefits to the state's \$25 billion tourism economy."

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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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